Today is May 24, 1982. The following is an interview with Mrs. Emma Pratt, matriarch, at 98, of Sioux Valley, Griswold, Manitoba. Mrs. Pratt and I are visiting in the comfortable living room of her Sioux Valley Indian Reservation home. Her cottage is located in a section of the reserve known as Prattsville, hence she is surrounded by many members of her extended family. She is intensely proud of her children. For instance, her son Donald is a World War II veteran. He has a beautiful baritone voice and is an ordained Anglican pastor. He ministers to the Anglican parish in Sioux Valley. Her granddaughter, Barbara Cameron, is an LPN. Her grandson, Stacey Pratt, plays hockey with the Brandon Wheat Kings. Daughter, Ina Whitecloud is in a liaison position with Brandon and Fort Labos(?) school divisions where Sioux Valley children attend school. Grandma Pratt still makes quilts and quilts and more quilts. Mrs. Pratt will try to recall for us her life as a child and young married woman. This interview will be conducted by Phillis Cairnes for the Westman Oral History Association project, "Voices of Yesteryear".
Phillis: I wonder if you would tell us your full name, please.

Emma: Emma Garland Pratt.

Phillis: When were you born and where were you born?

Emma: Portage La Prairie, out at the village along the other river. Just two miles out of Portage.

Phillis: And what year?

Emma: 1884.

Phillis: 1884. Well, for goodness sakes. That is a long time ago, isn't it?

Emma: Yeah.

Phillis: And could you tell us the names of your parents?

Emma: Well, they never, the Indians never had a parent. They never went by their parents' names.

Phillis: Oh, I see.

Emma: You just had a given name, an Indian name. And afterwards, of course, the white people baptized... When they're baptized they got an English name.

Phillis: So what was your given name?

Emma: My Indian name?

Phillis: Yes.

Emma: (Indian). I was just the second child, you see. The second child, so I was known as (Indian), and then I forget the third one.

Phillis: Well, that is fine anyway. So then your parents' names, were they, they would be in a... what was your language, Sioux?

Emma: Sioux.

Phillis: So your parent's names would be in Sioux also?

Emma: Oh yes.

Phillis: What were their names?

Emma: (Too-gone-hom-any)? was my mother's name and my father's name was... I was only three years old when he died. But I know it was (Cho-no-pa-sa-ta)? Black pipe.

Phillis: Black Pipe. And what did your mother's name mean?
Emma: A stone, rolling stone.

Phillis: Oh, isn't that interesting? And what are some of your earliest recollections? What are some of the earliest things that you can remember?

Emma: Oh, that I can remember? I can remember by grandmother. She was a little woman, a French girl my grandfather married. They were working close... One was working for Pratt's Landing at Portage and the other was... I can't think of the minister's name now. And the minister used to preach in Portage too. He preached there and he preached sometimes out at the village.

Phillis: And the village would be on the reservation?

Emma: Yes, just along the river bank. Just, not very many of them there in those days.

Phillis: What was the name of the reservation or did it just have a number?

Emma: No, it was just never nothing.

Phillis: It was just called the village. Very interesting. So where did your parents come from?

Emma: From South Dakota.

Phillis: What led to their immigration to Canada?

Emma: Well, that was the time that they had this fighting there and they left to Canada.

Phillis: They left North [South] Dakota to come to Canada.

Emma: Yes.

Phillis: As the Queen's subjects?

Emma: Well, there wasn't anything like that then when they left. Because they didn't know where they were going. They wanted to come and cross into Canada. They knew there was a line there -- they had to cross over it.

Phillis: Were they being chased out?

Emma: Yes, by the military. American soldiers were killing them right and left.

Phillis: Oh dear. So they went over the line and they were safe?

Emma: Yes.

Phillis: Did many come at that time?
Emma: Oh yes, there were quite a few came at that time. A lot of them weren't near there. You see, there is little villages here and there, different names of the Indians, where they camp. And some of them didn't join in this fight because there is trouble over some Indian that had, didn't know that this hen had chickens or was laying on her eggs, you see. And I think he took the hen, he stole it. Or he did something to it anyway, that whoever owned those, they chased him and of course, that (inaudible) them.

Phillis: That started the trouble?

Emma: That started the trouble, they said.

Phillis: Such a small thing.

Emma: Of course, as soon as they saw an Indian it didn't matter if that Indian over there didn't know anything about what was going on in this other village. They were shooting them right and left, you see. Then, you see, that was why a lot of them just left.

Phillis: No wonder! Such treatment! So, when your parents came to Canada then, did they come in the same group?

Emma: My mother was only... She wasn't born.

Phillis: Oh, so about what time did this immigration start, I wonder.

Emma: Oh, I forget, but I have got a book someplace.

Phillis: 1862, somewhere in there?

Emma: Yeah. Sixteen something.

Phillis: A long time ago anyways.

Emma: Yes, it is a long time ago.

Phillis: So that was even before your mother's birth.

Emma: Yes! Mother was born in Canada.

Phillis: Oh, I see.

Emma: This is where I told you he was married to this girl. That is in Portage.

Phillis: That is right. You did say that. So your grandmother on...

Emma: She was a French girl. Yes.

Phillis: Isn't that interesting? Well then, how long did you
live at Portage before you came up here?

Emma: Well, I was just a few months short of twenty when I came up.

Phillis: So, you would get schooling down around Portage, did you?

Emma: Oh yes. See we were in... When my father died, I was only a few years old. My mother was sick at the time and her sister was, her youngest sister was in the boarding school. See they had the boarding school going then.

Phillis: Even then, eh?

Emma: Yes. And so they took me. My aunt was in there, my mother's youngest sister, so they took me into the school for her to look after me, because mother was sick and she couldn't handle my younger sister -- there is a sister between us.

Phillis: So you spent a few years at the school then?

Emma: Oh, yes. Until I was fifteen. And then I left there, at the school, and Mrs. Brown -- he was the Mayor of Portage -- she was a school teacher at the boarding school, the Indian school. She was a teacher in there. So, when she got married, I went to live with them.

Phillis: I see.

Emma: So I was there five years.

Phillis: Did you take music lessons while you were at Portage?

Emma: Yeah, in the school. Yeah. See my aunt, you know, my aunt taught me. She took music lessons and then after she taught me some. But after I went to Brown's, Mr. Brown paid for my lessons. Miss (name)... What was his name? They lived at the lumber, he was the lumber man.

Phillis: In Portage?

Emma: No, here in Kenton.

Phillis: Oh, pardon me.

Emma: His wife, she came from Portage.

Phillis: Oh, I see, I don't know her.

Emma: She was (inaudible). Mrs. Rutan was her name. After I was at Brown's, I took music lessons from her. But I didn't go very far.

Phillis: You went far enough to give a lot of people a lot of enjoyment.
Emma: Yes, I did.

Phillis: How many years did you play at the church over here?

Emma: Seventy or seventy-one, I guess. Seventy-one years.

Phillis: Imagine that. When did you first come to live right here in Sioux Valley?

Emma: In 1904.

Phillis: Can you tell me something of the way of life at that time?

Emma: Oh, it was very lonesome. My mother... Like the Indians when their girls are ready, old enough to get married, they give them away to some young man. Well, that is what they did with me. And I cried and cried two whole nights.

Phillis: Your husband’s name?

Emma: Matthew Pratt.

Phillis: Well, I suppose you would have to get used to living there.

Emma: Oh yes. She said, well, there was a young man used to come around. I never thought anything of it. I didn't think he was coming to see me. But he used to come along when they were playing hockey games and that below the school there. And he was getting kind of liking me, you know. But there was nothing. I didn't understand what was going on. So that was why they wanted me to get a man. Well, this was my parents doing but I got married. I was...

Phillis: This was just a custom with your people?

Emma: Yes. It's a custom, yes.

Phillis: It would be a shock too, wouldn't it?

Emma: A shock? (Laughs)

Phillis: So how far from home did you go to live then, away from home?

Emma: Well, I have been here ever since.

Phillis: I know, but how far away from your mother were you?

Emma: Well, it was over one hundred miles. Down to Portage.

Phillis: Oh, she was still down there?
Emma: Oh, she came up here and they lived up here for a while. And then she said, "I can't, I'm not going to leave you alone," she said. "I am staying over here too." So they lived up there on the side of the hill over there.

Phillis: For a while?

Emma: For a while. About three years. And then step-father, he wanted to go back. He said it wasn't good hunting land here but... Because he used to hunt across the river, and he would bring home deer and moose and, not very many deer. He brought home big things. Great big horns on them.

Phillis: Moose have big horns, elk have big horns.

Emma: Yes. And he was very good at trapping and he sold all kinds of hides, you know, some of those martens and things, you know, are not alive now around there.

Phillis: They are extinct now.

Emma: Yeah. Well, that is what he used to trap. A lot of those mink and those kinds of things. All kinds of things.

Phillis: I wonder if he would get a decent price for them?

Emma: Well, Mr. Newman, the storekeeper, used to send them to Winnipeg -- the hides. And he would get quite a bit of money. So he banked it for him. He banked his money for him and he took out just as much as he had to have and then...

Phillis: As he needed it as he was home?

Emma: Yes, yes.

Phillis: Could you tell me something about how your mother used to cook the moose meat and things like that?

Emma: Well, I don't know how. I don't think it was any different to what... we cooked it over the fire. She would slice it thin, you know, and she would have a stick kind of leaning like that, over the fire. And then she would have some wires or sticks so that she could spread the meat out on it.

Phillis: Something like a barbecue.

Emma: Yes. We used to love it like that.

Phillis: Sure, it would be good.

Emma: She fried it too.

Phillis: In the summer you would cook outdoors?

Emma: Yes.

Phillis: In the winter you would have to cook indoors?
Emma: Yes. And grandfather built a log cabin. Oh, it was a nice big log cabin. And in the corner there was a fireplace and this was built up from the floor like this.

Phillis: Stones?

Emma: Stones, yes. And that heated the whole place. And I remember we had no light. Mother had no lights at night for when she was sewing. She had to sit near the fireplace and we kept the fire going. Just when we got home, we liked to do that. We were home for the Christmas holidays.

Phillis: Throw a log on and then the sparks would fly? That wouldn't be very good light for sewing by though, would it?

Emma: My step-father used to... Well, he bought toys, he bought blankets for us. Hudson's Bay blanket, with that strip behind it? Did you ever see one?

Phillis: Oh yes. I have seen them.

Emma: Oh, well they had some for little kids. Just our size, you know. And she had this around her and mother made rag dolls and she had it on her back. And the doll, and whatever she did, she let it slip and the doll fell in and part of it was burning. And she screamed and I went and grabbed it and her blanket was of course ruined.

Phillis: She would feel badly about that, wouldn't she?

Emma: Yeah, well Grandpa went the next day and got her another one. (laughs) Grandpa spoiled us. Everywhere he went, when he went for wood, we went along with him. And then when we got too far away, it was too cold for us to be playing around the sleigh and that and we used to run around behind and just to delay him. And he would take his gun and if he saw, you know, there was birds, woodchucks and that to eat, he would shoot them.

Phillis: What does a woodchuck taste like?

Emma: Just like prairie chicken.

Phillis: Is it?

Emma: Yeah.

Phillis: Nice and tender.

Emma: Oh my, yeah.

Phillis: And how would your mother cook the prairie chicken, say outside? If she was going to cook outside.

Emma: She boiled it.
Phillis: Oh, she did?

Emma: Yes. Well sometimes, if she had a big duck, she would fry it.

Phillis: She didn't cook them on a stick over the fire?

Emma: No. No, she boiled it.

Phillis: That would taste good too.

Emma: Oh yes, it was all boiled.

Phillis: And now you had quite a large family yourself, did you not?

Emma: Yes, I had. At the time of the flu, I lost three of them. Well, not right at the time of the flu but just gradually left them, with what they call at the time TB. A lot of them went. And I just was thinking when I see the young girls now, they'd be quite big women now, elderly women.

Phillis: Yes, they would, wouldn't they?

Emma: Oh, there was so many of them died.

Phillis: Whole families, right?

Emma: All of them, yes.

Phillis: Even in the white communities also.

Emma: Oh yes. There was two families in Griswold died. But out here there was a whole family. When the father saw all his little ones going in one place, he shot himself. That last one that died, he was sitting up when the neighbor called for the youngest boy. He was looking down at his little brother being put in the coffin and then he went and lay down. And when they came in from finishing burying him, here the poor boy was dead.

Phillis: He couldn't stand it. How tragic.

Emma: Oh, things like that happened and it was a terrible time.

Phillis: Who was your doctor in those days? Was there one at Griswold then?

Emma: No, this was in Portage.

Phillis: Oh pardon me, that is Portage you were talking about. Who was the doctor at Griswold when you came out here?

Emma: When I came, Doctor Hicks. And there was one man here before that but I just can't remember. The other day, I was
just trying to think of that man's name.

Phillis: So Doctor Hicks would be your doctor then? He would come here to...?

Emma: Yes. And then after that -- quite a few years, of course -- Doctor Purdy came.

Phillis: Well he was here a long time.

Emma: Oh, yes. He was here a long time. At the time of the flu he was here.

Phillis: He was here at the time of the flu?

Emma: Yes.

Phillis: I remember reading about him being here then. Now, when your children were young, where did they go to school?

Emma: They went to Elkhorn. We had to send them.

Phillis: To that residential school?

Emma: Residential school, yeah. Well, they went here to the day school. It was about the same time, I guess. There was a day school here. Down at that church. And now...

Phillis: When your children were young?

Emma: Yes. They went there for a while but they gradually were put into Elkhorn.

Phillis: Did you have a choice whether they would go there or not?

Emma: Oh yeah.

Phillis: Or were you just told?

Emma: We were asked if... Well, if they graduated they had to go. They just taught them up to grade three and...

Phillis: Oh, I see. Was the mission...?

Emma: She was the school teacher there.

Phillis: That mission lady?

Emma: Yeah.

Phillis: What would her name be? Names, I shouldn't ask, should I? (laughs)

Emma: Well, Miss Wilkins was the helper. She had a helper there.
Phillis: You mean Deacon Stapleton?

Emma: Stapleton, yeah.

Phillis: And before her, who was there before Miss Stapleton?

Emma: Oh, there was a Mr...., can't think of it. Now that girl came out of England and she was here last summer to see me.

Phillis: Oh, Jones?

Emma: Jones.

Phillis: Her name is Jones now, isn't it?

Emma: Yes. That's her.

Phillis: It was her father.

Emma: Her father is dead now.

Phillis: Yes, but he was the minister here before Miss Stapleton.

Emma: Yeah, before Miss Stapleton. Mr. McGraw was there too. Before Miss Stapleton. He didn't, he was a Hodowa(?) Indian from the other side. Southeast of Winnipeg. From a little village of a... there are none of them there now. They are all scattered, I think. And his name was McGraw, John McGraw.

Phillis: He would be able to carry the services in your own language?

Emma: No.

Phillis: Oh, he didn't?

Emma: He didn't know our language. But he learned it pretty quick when he was here. He had his own language. Whatever that language was, I never heard him speak it. He married an English woman in the States before he came. He left the family there because she had, she was a widow and she had a grown family, like her boy was 16, and one was nine, and two girls. So that was when the mission house was built. Then he brought them up.

Phillis: So that is quite a few years ago then?

Emma: Oh, yes. See, the mission house isn't there now. It had to be torn down.

Phillis: Is it now? I hadn't noticed. You mean that big two story place?

Emma: Yeah.
Phillis: Oh really. When was that torn down?

Emma: Last year. No, the year before. Because the boys, you know, they were wrecking it.

Phillis: Oh, what a shame.

Emma: Because there was nobody living in it.

Phillis: Buildings go to pieces when people don't live in them, don't they?

Emma: Well, you see that big Agency house -- it is gone. Just because boys were fooling around in there with matches and burned it down.

Phillis: What a shame. Can you remember your first car?

Emma: It was a Ford.

Phillis: So was ours. Never mind, they got you there.

Emma: The boys were going to teach me to drive it so I could... You know, I used to go around, you know, working and painting and papering here and all of the farms around here, up there, up to Virden. (laughs)

Phillis: So they thought if they taught you to drive it, then you could take yourself.

Emma: Yes, I could take myself. So one day they told me they were going to show me how to drive. Archie sat beside me and so he started it right down here, across the field and I... (laughs)

Phillis: You weren't quite used to it yet. You didn't run over anybody?

Emma: No, but I turned around and came back and I nearly knocked the gate down. I bumped into it. (laughs)

Phillis: Oh, it could have been worse.

Emma: They couldn't stop laughing. I said, "I am a nervous wreck. I will never be able to work tomorrow."

Phillis: So how did you go after that? Did they still have to take you?

Emma: I had to drive myself. (laughs)

Phillis: With the horses?

Emma: Yeah. There is a horse there exactly like the one I used to drive.
Phillis: Oh, this one here?

Emma: Yeah. It is just a picture of that horse.

Phillis: You felt safer with the horse than you did the car? Can you think of any other funny things that happened with the cars?

Emma: Oh no. That is the only time that I ever was in a car, you know, trying to drive. I wouldn't touch it again. (laughs) Yeah, we had lots of fun with it.

Phillis: Well, they are a wonderful invention if they are used properly.

Emma: Yeah, of course.

Phillis: What do you think has been the thing that has made life easier for people through the years? As inventions came along? What do you think has done the most for us?

Emma: Inventions? Well, I don't know. Everything has its use, like. You can't say a certain thing that's any better than the other, like.

Phillis: What about electricity?

Emma: Yes, well, electricity, yes. We depend on everything for that.

Phillis: Don't we though?

Emma: Yes, electricity.

Phillis: I was wondering... When I asked that question, I was wondering if you might say electricity, maybe, has changed our lifestyle almost more than anything else.

Emma: Well, it took me a long time to think about it.

Phillis: But now you are thinking about it, is there anything else that has helped us more in our homes, do you think?

Emma: No, I don't think so. Well, we used to get along without it at one time.

Phillis: Sure we did.

(End of Side A)

(Side B)

Phillis: Would you like to tell us an interesting story about your family or friends? You can start with that.

Emma: Well, what... there are a lot of interesting... For the
last two years is Stacey being such a good hockey player, and Wendy, she is in the college in Kingston now. She was in Ottawa at the Indian Affairs office, worked there. And, well, she is learning, and then she is in Kingston University now, she and her husband and they are studying, the both of them, for lawyers.

Phillis: And what about Stacey now? Is he a grandson or a great-grandson?

Emma: He is Donna's grandson.

Phillis: Oh, so he is your great-grandson?

Emma: Yes. He is my great-grandson. Brian is...

Phillis: Brian is his father?

Emma: No, Brian is his cousin. His mother was Brian's sister.

Phillis: Oh, I see.

Emma: Stacey, yes.

Phillis: So you have great hopes for Stacey?

Emma: Oh, yes. We have great hopes for him. He is really good at it.

Phillis: He is a splendid looking young man anyway. And I wonder if you could tell us a few things about your son Donald, from the time he was a boy.

Emma: Well, he was always a boy that tried to study. No matter what he took up, he always was good at it. And they had him, in Elkhorn, when he was in Elkhorn school, they had him reading the service in the morning before school, the prayers and the Bible reading and that, they always had him do that. Gradually, he got on to studying it by himself in the evenings, and at evening prayers he would take over. He was just a young boy then. But when his father was sick, he had to come home. He left school.

Phillis: Somebody had to look after the farm.

Emma: Yes.

Phillis: Was he at the Elkhorn school at the same time that Ahab Spence was?

Emma: Yes.

Phillis: I went to school with Ahab.

Emma: You did?

Phillis: Yes. Grade ten and eleven. He was a nice boy.
Emma: Yeah, he knew Ahab Spence.

Phillis: Now then, when did Donald get his... how did he get his degree for the ministry?

Emma: He studied by writing.

Phillis: Correspondence?

Emma: Correspondence.

Phillis: He never attended University?

Emma: No, he didn't attend University but he had schooling from the ministers.

Phillis: Oh yes.

Emma: In Brandon. They really helped him along but he was very quick to learn.

Phillis: So, he was doing that at the same time as he was farming?

Emma: Yes.

Phillis: He was busy. That would keep him busy, wouldn't it?

Emma: Yes.

Phillis: So how many years has Donald been the minister here in Sioux Valley?

Emma: Ever since he was ordained. I forget what year that was.

Phillis: It was a number of years now.

Emma: Yes.

Phillis: You must be very, very proud of him.

Emma: Yes, because when he was four years old, this flu came along and he was, he had double pneumonia and I had Doctor Purdy out to see him. Doctor Purdy was busy every day out here. He would come and see him and on his way home, he would come in again and he would give him up every time. He had double pneumonia and I just, I just worked on him, would you believe it, I never slept for three whole nights. Three whole nights when the doctor says he couldn't do any more for him. "Oh," I said, "what am I going to do?" I just worked on him, I put pads on his feet, I rubbed him with camforated... something, whatever it was. It wasn't camforated oil at the time, it was something else. Anyway, I rubbed his feet and I wrapped him up with a damp towel, warmed. And then I warmed a hot water bottle. We had a big jar and we filled it with hot
water and kept that.

Phillis: That would keep the life within him anyway.

Emma: Oh yes, and then I kept washing his face and washing his hands and...

Phillis: Poor little boy.

Emma: I put the hot pad, when we were through with his feet we would take it off and put it on his chest. I never thought that when the doctor said that, you know.

Phillis: Well, if you had given up, it would have been all day with him then.

Emma: He wouldn't take anything. He was breathing so heavy that, well, he was really almost gone. And then one night, about eleven o'clock, there were quite a few people came there because they knew the doctors gave him so many days and if he has, if he is going to live, he will, this is his last night. So he said he sat at the phone to see if we needed him, you know.

Phillis: Doctor Purdy?

Emma: Yes. He didn't leave the house and he sat there waiting. And we, I just kept working at him all the time. And I noticed a change in him when he opened his eyes and he says, "Mom, I want a drink."

Phillis: Wasn't that a miracle?

Emma: It was a miracle. And he has been my special son since.

Phillis: You love them all but certain things happen and...

Emma: Yeah, I had to look after him all. See that he didn't get his feet wet and that in the spring. If he got a chill and got water in his rubber boots and run around and played, like that, and his feet were just near frozen when he came in.

Phillis: That is how it started?

Emma: That is how it started.

Phillis: Kids don't stop if they are having a good time, do they?

Emma: No.

Phillis: How old is Donald?

Emma: He is sixty... Dorothy is sixty-one or sixty-two. He is two years older than Dorothy. He'd be about sixty-five now.

Phillis: That is just a little bit younger than me. That is
wonderful. We missed him in the choir. He sang with the community choir for a long time and it got too much.

Emma: Well, it was just that his voice, you know, with his chest like that, you know, his voice was changing. And when he got a cold, he couldn't, so he thought he might as well just not go at all.

Phillis: Well, we certainly missed him anyway. Well, I wonder if you think we have bothered you enough?

Emma: I think so.

Phillis: You are getting tired, aren't you?

Emma: Yes. (laughs)

Phillis: I would like to thank you very, very much for being so patient.

Emma: You are welcome.

Phillis: For helping us. So, would you permit me to take your picture?

Emma: Yeah!

Phillis: Oh, thank you. I have my camera here. And I hope you will be feeling a little better in a day or two, after the flu. And thank you ever so much.

Emma: You are welcome.

(End of Side B)

(End of Interview)

INDEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDEX TERM</th>
<th>IH NUMBER</th>
<th>DOC NAME</th>
<th>DISC #</th>
<th>PAGE #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FOOD</td>
<td>IH-015</td>
<td>PRATT</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8,9,10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-preparation of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARRIAGE</td>
<td>IH-015</td>
<td>PRATT</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-arranged</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIOUX INDIANS</td>
<td>IH-015</td>
<td>PRATT</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-movement to Canada</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIOUX INDIANS</td>
<td>IH-015</td>
<td>PRATT</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-persecution by</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>