

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: MRS. ALEXANDRINE NICOLAS 2  
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: DUCK LAKE  
SASKATCHEWAN  
INTERVIEW LOCATION: DUCK LAKE  
SASKATCHEWAN  
TRIBE/NATION: METIS  
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH  
DATE OF INTERVIEW: JULY 11, 1973  
INTERVIEWER: CAROL PEARLSTONE  
INTERPRETER:  
TRANSCRIBER: JOANNE GREENWOOD  
SOURCE: SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES BOARD  
TAPE NUMBER: IH-136A  
DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC 27A  
PAGES: 3  
RESTRICTIONS: THIS MATERIAL SHALL BE  
AVAILABLE FOR READING, QUOTATION, CITATION, AND ALL OTHER  
RESEARCH PURPOSES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS WHICH MAY  
HAVE HERETOFORE BEEN OR WHICH MAY HEREAFTER BE ESTABLISHED BY  
THE SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES BOARD OR ITS SUCCESSORS FOR THE USE  
OF MATERIALS IN ITS POSSESSION: SUBJECT, HOWEVER, TO THE  
PROVISION THAT NO COMMERCIAL PUBLICATION OR BROADCAST OF THE  
INTERVIEW IN WHOLE OR IN PART SHALL BE MADE WITHOUT PRIOR  
WRITTEN PERMISSION OF THE INFORMANT, HIS HEIRS, LEGAL  
RESPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS.

NOTE: This a poem. No index required.

MRS. NICOLAS

(Mrs. Alexandrine Nicolas of Duck Lake, Saskatchewan)  
(A poem for a summary)  
(Paraphrasing her actual wording)  
(Interviewed by Carol Pearlstone, July 1973)  
(Mrs. Nicolas was born in Duck Lake on October 8, 1887)

\* \* \* \* \*

She is  
someone who does not try and know  
what is this and how is that?

When asked  
she does not know  
what World War I was all about  
what World War II was all about  
what Korea was all about  
even though

her brother came back from the first war wounded  
and gassed  
and died eight months later  
even though  
her son Archie came back from the second war  
fixed with silver plates  
and he limps  
he's a farmer  
even though  
her son Robert came back from Korea in '53  
she and her daughter took the train to Saskatoon  
to meet him at the airport  
with his shoulderblade all mashed  
and his arm all open inside  
The station agent delivered the telegram  
This isn't a sad one, he said  
And he came to me smiling the last days of July

And she does not know  
who Riel really was or what he was like  
why the Rebellion took place in 1885  
although her parents talked about it, sure  
and she remembers things her mother told her  
and she went to Gabriel Dumont's funeral  
in 1906 but she doesn't remember  
what he was like although  
he was her grandfather's brother-in-law  
she calls him Old Gabriel  
Oh she remembers he lived in France for a time, in Paris  
and he worked for Buffalo Bill  
and he returned to Batoche before he died.  
Oh mercy she remembers the Depression yes  
but she does not know  
why there was one  
only that she could buy  
ten pounds of butter for one dollar  
from a German woman every Saturday  
and instead of selling rye at 11 cents a bushel  
that was thrashed at 22 cents a bushel  
she and her husband crushed it  
to feed the cows before the grass was green  
Her husband died in October 45  
and she moved here to this little shack in Duck Lake  
where she's been living ever since.

What about people on welfare  
and do Metis have a tougher time  
getting jobs than whites?  
Oh she has  
got enough of her own affairs  
for heaven's sake.

She does  
an awful lot of sewing  
not fancy but all kinds  
quilting embroidery crochet  
all those things

and when her daughter got married  
she was left alone  
but she's never home  
she's out visiting her children  
or her sisters in Prince Albert  
And when she was on the farm  
she always had something to do  
feed the pigs  
look after the chickens  
and milk the cows  
She had ten children--seven girls and three boys  
Later she had three foster children from Green Lake  
taking care of them for twelve and a half years.

It is possible  
she is going to live a century  
(she's 85 already)  
and she will not speak of politics  
for she has got enough of her own affairs  
and does not try to know  
other people's business

She is  
one that does not go  
and bother anybody.

Mick Burrs