

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: PAUL PELLETIER
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: QU'APPELLE, SASK.
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INTERVIEWER: MARGARET JEFFERSON
INTERPRETER:
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Paul: Pemmican, what they call the pemmican. You heard of that I suppose.

Margaret: Yeah.

Paul: Yeah. And they lived on that.

Margaret: And what else did they live on?

Paul: Oh well, wild meat, wild meat, make bannock. Outside on their knees, the women would pull their dress up, you know. No, no, no. (laughs) And they'd make their bannock outside you know, stand up (inaudible).

Margaret: What kind of, tell me about the clothing that they used to wear.

Paul: Well, they just wear this little bib.

Margaret: For the men.

Paul: For the men, oh, women wore dresses. They were all hides, buffalo hides. Mother would tan that, you know, make it

for, like, mocassins, soft, dresses, coats.

Margaret: Did your father ever tell you stories?

Paul: Oh sure, I could remember them.

Margaret: What kind of stories did he tell you?

Paul: Oh well, he used to tell me how they hunted, I could remember one year we're hunting himself when we were living (inaudible) used to go out and shoot a game. I was just a little boy about like that. Go out and see. Just open them up and bring the liver back. He'd tell my mother, "Cook this for breakfast." "Oh, good God," my mother would get mad, "cook your damn liver yourself." My mother wasn't quite a halfbreed like, like we were.

Margaret: What background was your mother?

Paul: Eh?

Margaret: What background was your mother come from?

Paul: Some place in, come from, well, she come from Ireland. Her father I guess, they were Irish. That's why they had these songs. Some of her brothers was in Batoche, that's where, in the time of the Rebellion, her brother got killed there, the time of the Rebellion. After the Rebellion, my mother went down there to see the grave of her brother.

Margaret: That was the Riel War?

Paul: The Riel War. For some reason, (name) wanted them. And they travel in a buggy all the way to Batoche.

Margaret: What did they tell you about Batoche?

Paul: Oh, they seen the guns, police, like, all the way on the roads. Yet they were still standing up after the war. About a year after the war.

Margaret: But did they tell you about the Batoche battle or anything?

Paul: Oh, they didn't know much. It was after the War, you know, after the War. But they seen the coffin, some people were still living there. There was no tombstone, no crosses. And some people that could remember, what the hell was my uncle's name, my mother's brother? I can't remember. He was my uncle. That was my mother's brother. Alex Swan. That was my mother's brother, he got killed in the War.

Margaret: And did any of your father's brothers...?

Paul: No, my father and them, they lived up here. You know, this is where the Mounted Police camped right in this

lot, where my house is.

Margaret: Now, where we're sitting now?

Paul: Eh?

Margaret: In this lot?

Paul: Right in this lot. When I first moved in here, there was no water in. I put water in here and I shingled it and I fixed this house up and put lights on and there was no water. I had to make an outside toilet. Still that old toilet is still standing up there, I'm using it for a tool shed. I was digging about three feet. I found an old gun, what the Mounted Police had lost in town here.

Margaret: Did you keep it?

Paul: I kept the goddamned thing. I used to be mink rancher, (name) come and borrow, "I'll buy that gun from you. I'll tell you what I'll do with you. I'll take it to Winnipeg and I'll put your name on, where you find it, the time of the Rebellion war," the Mounted Police lived right here, in this lot right here. A lot of people told me, that's where the Mounted Police camped right here. That's why they had that dump there. (Inaudible) I give it to that damn George (name) and never heard no more about it. (laughs) I'll bet you he got something for it.

Margaret: What was his name?

Paul: George Mason.

Margaret: George Mason. He took it to Winnipeg?

Paul: He took it.

Margaret: And you never heard from him.

Paul: He took it to a museum.

Margaret: Now about yourself, when were you born, what year if you can remember?

Paul: Well, you could figure it, that's 189-, I'll be 89 on the thirteenth of December. Just figure that out, back.

Margaret: 1893?

Paul: 1894 was it? 1893, yeah, yes. Well, I'm not 89 yet, the thirteenth of December I'll be 89.

Margaret: Where were you born?

Paul: Touchwood Hills, that's where my father settled. The buffalo hunting was over. He homesteaded there.

Margaret: Can you tell me about your family when you were young? When you were a child? Can you tell me about your family, all your brothers and sisters?

Paul: Well, I was the only one that went to school there. My sister, (name), and Joe, they went to the Indian boarding school. The Muskowekwan Indian Boarding School they called it. Your mother would remember that.

Margaret: You went to...

Paul: No, I didn't go to that school. I went to just a day school. I went to school, about a mile and a half to school.

Margaret: And the others went to...

Paul: At the Indian Boarding School. I know they weren't allowed but them days there was even (inaudible). There was no feeling and Dad and all them, Alec Ryzak(?)... Remember Alec Ryzak? His sister, his sisters and brothers, they went to that Indian Boarding School. It wasn't only Indian, there was all kinds of nationalities, well, that's where Mama went to school.

Margaret: What kind of school was it? Was it a good school or...?

Paul: It's still going on. It's still, they had a big do there, that Joe Desjarlais yesterday at Petersborough. He's worked there forty years and got married right in school to a school girl. And forty years he got married there. Forty years of university (inaudible). They wanted me to go. Jack was the best (inaudible). He was only sixteen years old. That's when we were in (name). I was overseas. I joined in two World Wars.

Margaret: When you lived at home, did your mother and dad have a house on the wrong land or...?

Paul: Oh sure, we had a house there. My father had a homestead. I was too young, just before my father died, I took a homestead there. North of Lestock.

Margaret: Could you just go and pick any homestead you want?

Paul: Oh well, if it was open, if nobody had it, you could homestead on it.

Margaret: And then what did you do after you were living...?

Paul: My father died 1914. I couldn't stand it. We had cattle, horses, pigs, chickens, and there was only my sister and me and my mother. I told my mother, "That's it, I'm going to give it to my brother Norman. I give it to all. I'll go and build a house in Lestock." I joined the bloody army in 1914.

Margaret: 1914.

Paul: Went overseas in 1918.

Margaret: Where were you when you went overseas, in Germany?

Paul: Germany, Holland, France, Belgium.

Margaret: And how did you like it over there?

Paul: Oh, lots of good people. Got quite a few friends. They're still alive.

Margaret: And you came back after World War I.

Paul: And I joined up again 1940. I went overseas again.

Margaret: Did any of your brothers go?

Paul: No, no, no, they were all too old already. The last World War there, (inaudible), the last World War. I went to more countries in the last World War. I went to Sicily, Holland, France. I was in that VA parade. (Inaudible) Can you see yourself, oh Christ, I cannot see myself out of a crowd of people.

Margaret: What do you remember about it? Do you remember everything?

Paul: Oh yeah.

Margaret: So you lived in Lestock for a while did you?

Paul: Oh yes, until 19--, well I come back from the World, last World War. I got in the railroad. I worked in the railroad for about two years. Then I was writing my exams for to be a foreman and they sent me to Regina for (inaudible). I was already pretty near fifty. And the (name) said, "You're too old to be a foreman." He said, "You're going to kill somebody by accident. He said, "You better be a number one man." I says, "To hell with you (name). I'm not going to be pushed around all my life. I had bosses in the goddamn World War and bosses here. I quit." I quit right there. Then I got energy. I quit and I was walking to my sisters. They were living 200, oh you remember that, 200 block. A fellow called me by the Co-op there, the Co-op lumber yards. "Come here!" He says, "Are you looking for a job?" I says, "What kind of job?" I says, "I just quit my job." Well, he says, "Pile lumber for a couple of days." "Okay," I says, I had to wait for my cheque for two, three days before I get paid from where I quit. Then two days lasted eleven years. (laughs) I worked there eleven years for the Co-op. Then the union put me off again. I was a union man and I was too old to hold a job. I was 72 already.

Margaret: When you were living in Lestock, where did you live

in Lestock?

Paul: Right across the station there. You know where the old station used to be? We had a big house there.

Margaret: But did you live on the road allowances there?

Paul: No, no. Well, we lived, while we were in the army, eh, we lived in road allowances in Chicago there. (laughs)

Where your father was a (inaudible). Your father, your grandfather was up the hill and I was in the army, you know.

Margaret: What do you remember about that Little Chicago?

Paul: Not too much. Well, that's all I did was chase coyotes, haul wood to Lestock.

Margaret: Why did they call that area the Little Chicago?

Paul: Eh?

Margaret: Why did they call it Little Chicago?

Paul: I don't know. There was a Chicago in Lebret too. And they took the name. (laughs) Lebret used to have a Chicago Street. Where the halfbreeds lived and there was a bunch of halfbreeds, (name) and Pelletiers and Desjarlais and (inaudible). I don't know why they call it Chicago.

Margaret: Do you know anything about when they moved all up to Green Lake?

Paul: Well, Joe LaRocque was going around taking names who was going to go down there. Come up to my place and then we had that house across the tracks there, that big house. "To hell with you," I says, "I'm not going to be shipped like cattle in a boxcar."

Margaret: Why did he want, why was he telling people to go up there?

Paul: I don't know. Just to live on welfare but I was getting war pension, you know. To heck with that, I lived right here and I could work. I started working here in the elevators, working.

Margaret: Were there a lot of them that went up there?

Paul: Oh God, my brother, that's where he went and died. Well, (inaudible). Lot of times. That's why they are having a big meeting around Chicago -- not, no, not Lestock, on seven.

Mrs. Pelletier: (Inaudible).

(Break in tape)

Margaret: When your brother went up to Green Lake, he didn't, he lived up there?

Paul: He lived down there till he died. I never saw him.

Margaret: What did he die from?

Paul: I don't know. I don't know to this day. Eh? You tell them, I don't know, I... What was it?

Mrs. Pelletier: (Inaudible)

Paul: A what?

Mrs. Pelletier: A bear chased him.

Paul: A bear chased him and give him a heart attack.

Margaret: Was he young?

Paul: Oh, he was older than me. He was getting his old age pension.

Margaret: And did he take his family up there too?

Paul: Well, he was married to that Charlie Davis' sister and her mother.

Margaret: So did, what did they tell you about the land up there?

Paul: Well, jobs was up there. And all they did was logging, logging, fishing, hunting, that's all they did. Well, they give them welfare, you see.

Margaret: Well, why did they want people to go up there, do you know why?

Paul: Well, to live on that welfare, you know, instead of getting paid welfare, they were logging and hunting fish. Well, they sold their fish, they sold their, whatever they call it, pulp wood or they made out of these logs.

Margaret: And what was wrong with living on the Chicago line?

Paul: They couldn't live there no... Well, you know, after they moved away, somebody went there and burned all them houses.

Margaret: Who burned them?

Paul: I don't know. I don't know who the hell did it. (laughs)

Margaret: Right after they left?

Paul: After they left, they burned up. Your grandfather had a nice house. Well, look at the house we bought off him. It was a nice house.

Margaret: So they couldn't go back.

Paul: No, they couldn't go back after their house was burned down. (laughs)

Margaret: So where did they go then? Come back to Lestock?

Paul: Well, they went to Green Lake.

Margaret: Green Lake, but where did, after they...?

Paul: Well, some of them came back, some of them lived all their lives up there. Andrew Morris, Joe (name), they all died down there, you know. That's what Jack was laughing at, just about seven, eight years ago. I had no fly swatter, I had fly swatter, "Wait, I'll make a couple." A went outside, "Oh my Mom," I said, "too goddamn bad both of us getting pension and you got to make these things. How poor we are!" (laughs) I was telling, where the hell, what the hell did you make that for. "Because we were poor, Jack." "Ah, go on, both of you is getting pensions. You weren't drinking, you were hardly smoking." (laughs) That's the way the old people along will save their money. They make their own stuff. We didn't, long

time ago there was no such thing as a fly swatter. After you's was born, they started to have them, what you call them stickers. There was no such a thing as fly swatters or stickers in those days. That's why I could remember when my father (inaudible). I made one. (laughs)

Margaret: Can you tell me about what you used to do when you were younger for social events?

Paul: Silly things?

Margaret: Well yeah, silly things I guess.

Paul: Well, my father wouldn't allow me to smoke. I didn't smoke till I was about twenty-five. Long ago, they had no tobacco, cut tobacco. They had what they call TV plugs, great plug tobacco. They cut their own tobacco and smoke a pipe, see. Smoke pipes. Well, I stole a little bit of my father's tobacco and I went and coming back from school, I made a hole in the ground. Long time ago, this, what the hell you call this, no, no, there is a hole in it. You know, some kind of a wood. I stick this thing in a hole, I made a hole in it and I put my tobacco in it. I was smoking the darn thing. (laughs) I'll be a son of a gun if my father didn't see me coming up the hill. I was sitting down smoking. I didn't see my father coming. "What are you doing?" I jumped. I stepped on my pipe, my wood, my mud pipe. There used to be an old well there. That's the time of the Rebellion and the police was there, camped there. There were some heads there yet, scalping

heads. The Indians was killed long, long time ago.

Margaret: Where was that?

Paul: In the Touchwood Hills there. That was a government well, they used to call it. Long ago when, they didn't bury Indians.

Margaret: What did they do?

Paul: They hung them in the trees, they made a scaffold, like, up in the trees and left them there. (Inaudible) scaffold broke. And I found this old head, this skeleton. I took it back to my house. Oh Jesus, my mother got so excited with me, I thought there was something funny to see this boney nose and mouth. (laughs) I was about twelve years. Stupid. "Get out!" Yelled at my father, "Look what Paul bring back here." Father comes in, "Where did you get that from?" "I took it from up in the mountains." (Inaudible) government well. My father used to (inaudible).

Margaret: They called the government well.

Paul: Government, (inaudible). There used to be water in the well there, and the gophers fell in the well and drowned. My brother-in-law (inaudible) he was thirsty, thirsty. My brother Norman got his hat and they drank this goddamned gopher. (laughs) So he was telling me. He thought he was going to die for thirst. Mind you, it was poison in that. (laughs) Oh, that old fellow died a couple years ago. Did you go to the graveyard? (Inaudible).

Margaret: What did you used to go to dances when you were younger?

Paul: Oh, (inaudible). Old man's down there, you remember. (Inaudible) years ago. (Inaudible). Yeah. (Inaudible)

Margaret: What did you dance, what kind of dances?

Paul: Oh, square dancing, waltzing and there was anthing thing, pushing up and down. (laughs) That's the way they dance nowadays isn't it? Just like they were (inaudible). (laughs)

Margaret: How did you have to dress when you went to the dances?

Paul: (Inaudible) (laughs)

Margaret: But what kind of... (laughs)

Paul: If my old lady allowed me (inaudible). We had cattle and horses.

Margaret: But what did you wear to the dances, clothes, what

kind of clothes did you wear?

Paul: Oh, didn't have a sort of clothes. We were dressed like human beings. Yeah.

Margaret: What role did religion play in your life?

Paul: Eh?

Margaret: Religion, with your mother and father, what religion were they?

Paul: What (inaudible)?

Margaret: No, religion.

Paul: Catholic, all Catholic. Oh, we're all Catholic.

Margaret: Were they strong Catholics?

Paul: Oh yes, yes. That's why I go to church, eh. (Inaudible) we went to church, you know. Yeah. You know who would tell you a lot of them old stories, Hank (name). Through his grandfather, his grandfather was old. That bugger remembers better than me. Yeah. He could tell you a lot of them stories, well, he wouldn't remember about my dad's stories but through his grandfather. That was my uncle.

Margaret: Can you tell me, did anyone ever make you feel that it was necessary for you to hide the fact that you have a native background? Did anybody ever make you feel bad because you have a background of native ancestry, in your background?

Paul: No, I never had no...

Margaret: Did you ever have to visit any of the Indian people on reserves? On the reserves? Did you ever have to go on the reserves?

Paul: Working with people on the reserve. Got wood off of the Indians. Hay, and put up hay and chairs from the reserve, like, for the Indians. And poor bands did the same thing.

Margaret: ...when you were a child, as you were growing up. Were there hospitals and doctors that you used to see?

Paul: Well, not much. Not much, not unless -- well, there was a doctor. The hospital started way after. I had to build that hospital, me and Jack Coopas built that hospital. Well, started to build and put the foundation first.

Margaret: What did you do if you got sick?

Paul: Eh?

Margaret: How did you...

(Break in tape)

(END OF SIDE A)

(SIDE B)

NOTE: Although there is documentation for Side B of this tape, there is nothing to be found on the tape that is in our collection.

(END OF TAPE)