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SASKATCHEWAN  
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SASKATCHEWAN  
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INTERPRETER:  
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Victoria: Today is April 5, 1984, I am interviewing Aime Dumont  
at Duck Lake, Saskatchewan. Aime, where were you born?

Aime: St. Laurent.

Victoria: And could you describe to me what kind of a house you  
grew up in. Was it a log house?

Aime: Yeah it was a log house.

Victoria: And how many rooms did it have.

Aime: Three of them.

Victoria: Was the kitchen, living room together or...

Aime: Yeah.

Victoria: And a bedroom? Did you have electricity or running water?

Aime: No, no modern conveniences at that time.

Victoria: And what did you use to heat the house with?

Aime: Well we used to (inaudible).

Victoria: No but to heat the house.

Aime: Oh heat the house. Wood.

Victoria: Wood, you used wood, eh. What kind of furniture did you have? Was it store bought or handmade?

Aime: Handmade I guess.

Victoria: And where you lived, was it in a town?

Aime: No, right in the farm.

Victoria: Was it a homestead farm or was it some scrip?

Aime: Yeah, it was a homestead.

Victoria: How many acres was the homestead?

Aime: One hundred, sixty acres.

Victoria: So you had a fairly big yard then.

Aime: Oh yeah.

Victoria: Were there Metis people or white people that lived close? Which was your nearest neighbour?

Aime: Byers.

Victoria: They were Metis people?

Aime: Yeah.

Victoria: Was there very many white people that lived in the community?

Aime: No.

Victoria: About how far was the neighbour from your place where you lived?

Aime: Oh about a mile I guess.

Victoria: Have you ever heard of what they call road allowance people?

Aime: No.

Victoria: That was people who used to build houses on the road allowance. You didn't hear of any of this, eh? When you were growing up, when you were young did you have some responsibilities at home? Did you have chores to do?

Aime: Oh yes.

Victoria: What did you have to do when you were young?

Aime: I used to milk cows, and feed horses, chickens too.

Victoria: Your brothers and sisters, they had work to do, too, at home?

Aime: Oh yeah.

Victoria: How many brothers and sisters did you have.

Aime: I had one sister and eight brothers.

Victoria: So it was a big family then eh?

Aime: Oh yeah, big family.

Victoria: Did you family do special things together? Like, did they go camping, and hunting, and berry picking? Like, did everybody go together?

Aime: Well sometimes, yeah.

Victoria: Do you remember if there was ever anyone that you knew that done any storytelling?

Aime: No.

Victoria: Did your aunts and uncles live, you know, close around you, or your grandparents, did they live close to where you lived?

Aime: Yeah. My uncle lived a quarter of a mile from us.

Victoria: So you seen a lot of him then?

Aime: Oh yeah.

Victoria: Is there any more of your relations around where you lived?

Aime: Well, I have two uncles live close and my grandmother.

Victoria: Which grandmother was that? Was that your mother's mom or your dad's mom?

Aime: Yeah, my mother's mom.

Victoria: And your uncles, were they your mom's brothers?

Aime: Yeah.

Victoria: So it was your mom's side of the family that you lived close to, eh?

Aime: Yeah.

Victoria: Was there anybody in your family, like your aunts and uncles or your grandparents, when you were a small boy did you like one of them really a lot better than the rest of them?

Aime: No, I don't think so, about the same.

Victoria: Was your family were they a very close family? Like, did they stick together lots? Did they stick up for one another?

Aime: Oh yeah.

Victoria: What did your dad do for a living?

Aime: Well he was a farmer too, he was a farmer.

Victoria: So he did mostly just his farm work eh?

Aime: Yeah.

Victoria: Did he do odd jobs, like, to make money for the family, like, to support the family?

Aime: Oh no not much. He used to work at home all the time.

Victoria: Do you know if he used to cut, you know, cord wood or wood at all to, you know, for money, to bring in money?

Aime: I don't think so. For the house yeah.

Victoria: No, no. I was thinking about, did they do it for to bring in extra money? Like, they had quite a few jobs, you know?

Aime: No.

Victoria: Did they do any... did you hunt for your own meat in those days, like wild meat?

Aime: Oh sometimes, yeah.

Victoria: How about fishing, did they do much fishing?

Aime: Oh yeah, lots of fishing. Right along the river there, used to fish quite a bit.

Victoria: Did your parents grow a garden?

Aime: Oh yeah.

Victoria: Was it a big garden?

Aime: Not very big.

Victoria: Did you have any livestock on the farm?

Aime: Oh yeah.

Victoria: What did you have, horses and...?

Aime: Horses and cattle.

Victoria: Was there very many, can you remember how much there was?

Aime: Oh he used to have maybe 15, 30 cattle.

Victoria: Can you remember if there was any time that your dad didn't have a job at all, he made his living would you say from the, from his homestead?

Aime: Yeah from the farm.

Victoria: So he didn't work out then so he wouldn't have been unemployed at any time eh?

Aime: Oh no.

Victoria: What did the other Metis people in your community... like, what did they do for a living?

Aime: I don't know.

Victoria: Did any of them every have a steady job?

Aime: Not around there.

Victoria: What was your first job that you had?

Aime: My first job was working on the farm.

Victoria: What did you do? Like, what was your job on the farm? What did you have to do?

Aime: Well I had to plow and seeding...

Victoria: Harvesting too?

Aime: Yeah harvesting.

Victoria: How old were you when you worked your first job?

Aime: About 16.

Victoria: Was there other kind of work that you did during the time when you were growing up, any other kinds of jobs that you did?

Aime: No.

Victoria: Was there much work in the community for kids your age that time? Was there other kids working then?

Aime: Oh yeah.

Victoria: What types of jobs did they do?

Aime: Well they was working in the farms too.

Victoria: Mostly farm work eh?

Aime: Mostly farm work yeah.

Victoria: What language did your parents speak in the home, like, when you were growing up?

Aime: French.

Victoria: What did you learn to speak first? What language did you speak first?

Aime: French.

Victoria: Did your parents talk about being Metis? Like, you know, as you were growing up, when you were growing up were they, like, did they talk about being Metis or they just not say anything? Everybody was the same? Did they... was there no difference?

Aime: No.

Victoria: So they were probably just... Nobody made any comments that there was any difference?

Aime: No.

Victoria: Do know if anybody in your family, like, even your uncles, grandparents, anybody who told stories about Metis history?

Aime: No.

Victoria: Did anybody talk about the Rebellion or anything like that?

Aime: Well sometime my dad, he used to talk about it, that there was fighting but I can't remember.

Victoria: You can't remember any of the stories at all?

Aime: No.

Victoria: Was he involved in the Rebellion do you know?

Aime: No. He was hiding in the bushes.

Victoria: So a lot of them, yeah we know a lot of them...

Aime: He was young then.

Victoria: Yeah he would have been young at that time.

Aime: Thirteen years old I think. He was hiding in the bush there.

Victoria: Did you have any of your relations that was in the Rebellion though, is there any of your descendants that were in the Rebellion?

Aime: Only my uncle.

Victoria: Which one would that be?

Aime: Gabriel Dumont.

Victoria: Oh he was your uncle?

Aime: Yeah.

Victoria: That would be your dad's brother?

Aime: Half brother. I got two. Another one was Isadore Dumont. He got killed.

Victoria: Isadore Dumont, eh. You don't remember none of the stories that they told about it?

Aime: No.

Victoria: Did your family, did they get together for weddings, or parties, or anything, kind of holidays?

Aime: Oh yeah, sometimes. New Year's. Dances lots.

Victoria: What was Christmas like for the family? Was it... did they celebrate Christmas quite a bit?

Aime: Not very much, New Year's.

Victoria: What did they do on New Year's?

Aime: (inaudible).

Victoria: Dancing?

Aime: Oh dancing too yeah.

Victoria: Do you remember if your dad owned a Metis sash, wore one of those big sashes around the waist?

Aime: No.

Victoria: You mom did she dress like the Metis women did, do you know if she had, you know they have a traditional dress that they had, I was wondering if she dressed that way?

Aime: Grandma. Oh yeah. Long dress.

Victoria: Did she do any bead work, do you know, your mom or your grandma?

Aime: No.

Victoria: Did they tan any hides do you know? Would they know how to tan hides?

Aime: I don't think so.

Victoria: Was anybody, could anybody in your family play the fiddle?

Aime: Yes, my brother.

Victoria: You?

Aime: I used to play a bit once.

Victoria: How about jigging, did they do much jigging in your family?

Aime: I was the one for jigging.

Victoria: You a jigger from the old days, are you?

Aime: And my brother.

Victoria: Was there very many white people that lived in the community?

Aime: Not around there, no not around there.

Victoria: Do you know if anyone in your family used Indian medicine at all? Did you ever hear of a sweat lodge?

Aime: Sweat lodge?

Victoria: Yes.

Aime: Oh no.

Victoria: Do you remember any real serious illnesses that they

had back in them times? Was there some sicknesses that they had back in those days that were, you know, really bad that people died?

Aime: Well the flu anyways.

Victoria: What about T.B. was it quite common back then?

Aime: Oh yes. We had T.B. there. All my brothers died of T.B. and my mother.

Victoria: Did any of them every go to the sanitorium?

Aime: Yeah me I went in the sanitorium.

Victoria: How long were you in there?

Aime: Oh, one year.

Victoria: Where was that at, where did you go?

Aime: Saskatoon. Yeah, one year the first time. The second time I stayed there just for one month when I was in the Army.

Victoria: Was there ever any discrimination while you were growing up about you being Metis? Did people ever say anything to you about it?

Aime: No.

Victoria: You were never denied a job, they didn't give you a job because you were Metis at all?

Aime: No.

Victoria: So it doesn't make you feel uncomfortable where you go around where white people are then, eh?

Aime: No.

Victoria: Were you treated fairly, you know, by the town people like judges or police or anything like that? You never had any problems with anything like that?

Aime: No not much, no.

Victoria: Did your family go around very much to, you know, social events like dances, or different places where white people were? Did they associate very much with them?

Aime: Well some of my brothers did.

Victoria: Did they get along okay with the white people of the community?

Aime: Oh yeah.

Victoria: You never had any bad dealings with government agencies of any kind?

Aime: No.

Victoria: Was there a church close by when you were growing up?

Aime: In Batoche about six miles from home.

Victoria: Did your family go to church often?

Aime: Yeah we went to church.

Victoria: Once a week or...

Aime: Oh yeah, once a week.

Victoria: Did the priest come to visit in the homes back then?

Aime: Yeah, oh yeah.

Victoria: Do you know what kind of things he talked about when he came to visit? Is it like, was it, did he talk about the same things as what they talk about today when they come out into the homes?

Aime: Yes.

Victoria: Do you think that the church had more influence on the people then than what it does now?

Aime: Oh I don't know.

Victoria: Like do you think the people listened and went to church more often than they do now?

Aime: Well some I guess, yeah.

Victoria: Do you think that the church helped Metis people when they had problems?

Aime: Oh I don't know.

Victoria: Did they teach regular school, the school work when you went to school? Like was it reading and writing and arithmetic and this type of stuff?

Aime: Yeah. We used to go to school only in the summer time. And in the winter time didn't go to school.

Victoria: About how many months, can you remember how many months out of the year did you go?

Aime: Oh about five months maybe.

Victoria: Five months all together, eh?

Aime: Yeah.

Victoria: What were your schools like where you went? Was it one big school or was there different rooms?

Aime: Usually one room.

Victoria: And your teacher was she a nun, was she a Catholic nun or was it just a school teacher?

Aime: Oh well, we had all kinds.

Victoria: Were you allowed to talk French in school, or any other kind of language?

Aime: Yes.

Victoria: Did you like going to school?

Aime: Not very much, no.

Victoria: You felt uncomfortable when you went to school?

Aime: (laughs)

Victoria: Did your parents want you to go to school? Did they encourage you to go?

Aime: Yeah.

Victoria: Do you remember if they taught anything about Metis history or Indian history in school when you went?

Aime: No.

Victoria: Was there white kids that went to school with you too?

Aime: No there's not really many white people who were there at that time.

Victoria: So what do you think about your experience going to school, do you think it was very positive or negative?

Aime: (laughs)

Victoria: I think from the sounds of things it was pretty negative, eh. (both laugh) Did your parents vote back in those days?

Aime: Oh yeah.

Victoria: Were they involved in any, you know, party politics? Did they go campaigning for any parties?

Aime: No.

Victoria: They just voted when it was voting time?

Aime: Yeah.

Victoria: Do you remember what party they voted for?

Aime: Liberal.

Victoria: Why do you think they voted Liberal?

Aime: I don't know why.

Victoria: You don't remember any special reason why they voted that way?

Aime: No I don't know why they voted Liberal.

Victoria: Do you remember if any politicians used to come and visit at the house?

Aime: No I don't remember that.

Victoria: Do you think the church was ever involved in politics?

Aime: I don't think so.

Victoria: I don't know about today but I'm wondering, you know, if maybe they did in the old days, if they got involved.

Aime: I don't remember that.

Victoria: Did you ever hear the older people talk about politics back in them days? I'm just wondering what was, what they thought about it, you know, what they thought about politics itself; was it an important thing for them?

Aime: I don't know.

Victoria: Do you vote the same way as your parents did?

Aime: Oh yes.

Victoria: You still vote like that? See a lot of, the reason we ask that is because we are trying to find out if your parents influenced your life the way you live now, you see. So for very many of them it did, eh. What their parents did, if they voted that way that's the way they still vote, eh, and it still, I think it still happens down into the generations even now to the younger ones, eh. Do you get very active in politics or in the elections?

Aime: No.

Victoria: You don't participate in campaigning eh?

Aime: No.

Victoria: Do you know of any of your friends that, you know, go campaigning for different parties?

Aime: No.

Victoria: Do you think that the Metis people voted for a party back then that did the best for them like it spoke up for them and got things for them?

Aime: I don't know.

Victoria: Well you know it would be pretty hard to tell back then because... Do you remember, you know, back in the '30s and '40s did you ever hear about what they called the old Saskatchewan Metis Society?

Aime: I don't know.

Victoria: Did there used to be what they called an old Saskatchewan Metis Society, it was just called Saskatchewan Metis Society then and it was during the '30s and '40s and there was a bunch of people that used to go around visiting and talking about the Metis Society and getting locals formed in the areas. A lot of people told me they weren't called locals then, they were called chapters and there was a guy named Joe LaRocque and Joe Ross, Tom Major, and a Joe McKenzie, and a Solomon Pritchard. You haven't heard any of those names?

Aime: Joe Ross, I think I remember him, he was in the san., that guy.

Victoria: I'm not sure if he was in the san. or not. I believe he was blind though.

Aime: Yeah, he was blind.

Victoria: He was a blind man?

Aime: Yeah.

Victoria: That's the one. I think he used to come... See the difference was between the people in the north and the ones in the south, see it was kind of a split Metis Society then. And some of them went north and they never ever got together in the Metis Society. Like, the north and the south didn't get together because there was such a difference between their needs there and the needs here. This Joe Ross he travelled quite a bit through this part of the east country eh, the southern part.

Aime: I don't know.

Victoria: See Solomon Pritchard was a part of this too. He was, he went around to do a lot of politicing for the Metis

Society back then too.

Aime: Pritchard?

Victoria: Pritchard, Solomon Pritchard. Sam Pritchard they used to call him.

Aime: Was in Battleford?

Victoria: Battleford, Baljennie, (name), all through there.

Aime: I know a Pritchard. He was at the san. too, with me there, a long time ago.

Victoria: A Pritchard?

Aime: Yeah.

Victoria: He could have been. A Joe Ross too?

Aime: Yeah.

Victoria: It could have been them, quite possibly. So you don't remember, you know, anything about the old...

Aime: No. I know that Pritchard he come from Battleford.

Victoria: Not Baljennie?

Aime: Somewhere over there.

Victoria: Yeah he was quite active in the Rebellion too. I bet you I know which one you're talking about, you're talking about George Pritchard.

Aime: I don't remember his first name.

Victoria: He'd be about your age?

Aime: Yeah.

Victoria: Yeah, that would be George, either George or Pat Pritchard. Yeah, I remember George was... that would be in the '40s he was going around. He used to have a big truck, a big three-ton truck and he would go around to the different areas and talk about the Metis Society then too. But Solomon Pritchard, that's his dad, and he was quite active in the Rebellion. Like, he... the Indians took some white women and they held them captive, you know. They held them captive there and, I don't know, they went and negotiated and brought them back; so they were quite busy during the Rebellion too.

(END OF SIDE A)

Victoria: Do you think that your life was interesting while you were growing up?

Aime: Yeah.

Victoria: It was an interesting life?

Aime: Yes.

Victoria: Was it a satisfying life? Were you happy with your life?

Aime: Oh yeah.

Victoria: Was it a life of hard work? Did you have to work hard when you were growing up?

Aime: Well, we work hard sometimes, once in awhile, you know, but I was happy.

Victoria: Do you think it was better times back then than now?

Aime: No.

Victoria: You think they are better now, eh?

Aime: Oh yeah.

Victoria: Was your life do you think better than what your dad's was or your grandfather's?

Aime: No.

Victoria: You think theirs was a better way of life than what we have?

Aime: I don't know for sure.

Victoria: It's pretty hard to know what theirs was like, I suppose, back in the old days. What are some of the things that were really important to you in your life while you were growing up? Was there some things that were really important to you?

Aime: No, only work that's all.

Victoria: You enjoyed your work did you?

Aime: Oh yes.

Victoria: How about religion was it important to you while you were growing up?

Aime: Not very much. (laughs)

Victoria: Education was that important to you?

Aime: (laughing)

Victoria: Do you think it would have been different for you if you would have been born, say, a white person or a treaty Indian? Would life have been different for you?

Aime: (laughter).

Victoria: If you had a chance to be born all over again what would you do different?

Aime: Oh I don't know. (laughs)

Victoria: Wouldn't you have changed anything at all in your life?

Aime: No.

Victoria: You're still going to live the same kind of life?

Aime: Yeah.

Victoria: Would you have liked to be a woman though?

Aime: (laughs) No I never thought of that.

Victoria: Do you think that in years from now, like in the future, do you think that native people are going to be better off by moving way up north or just moving out into the country, or living in the city -- what do you think is going to be the best place for them to be?

Aime: I think the best would be in the city.

Victoria: Why do you think they would be better off in the city?

Aime: Well, if they go up north they have nothing to do up there.

Victoria: And the country you think...

Aime: The country, well, yeah, I think there ought to be something to do.

Victoria: You mean if there were jobs available, you know, if they could get a job they would be okay in the country?

Aime: Oh yes.

Victoria: But you think that their best opportunity is to live in the city, do you?

Aime: Yeah, for me anyway.

Victoria: Okay thank you very much for the interview.

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