

Darren R. Préfontaine (DP.) Interview – Stella (SL) and Jim Lavalley (JL) – 1999

On July 27, 1999, Darren R. Préfontaine interviewed Jim and Stella Lavalley. The interview discussed their life in the Métis community of Crooked Lake, traditional Métis life ways, their family, and Mr. Lavalley's experience as a soldier in the Canadian Army during the Second World War.

DP. ...first of all Mr. Lavalley, where were you born?

JL. We were born in a little place called Maryville . It's a settlement down in the Crooked Lake area.

DP. And that was in Saskatchewan?

JL. In Saskatchewan.

DP. And the both of you were born in Saskatchewan?

SL. Yes I was (inaudible).

DP. What were your father's and mother's names?

JL. My dad's name was Norbert Lavalley and my mom was named Catherine Pelletier.

DP. Pelletier. And do you know where they were born?

JL. They were born, around the same place I would think, ah I guess they were baptized in that and it was a church community.

DP. It was in and around Crooked Lake?

JL. I would think that was it; [they lived] around Crooked Lake all their lives. I don't think they went anywhere.

SL. That was my dad's first cousin.

DP. What do you remember most about your parents?

JL. Oh, I remember my parents were good because [inaudible]. You remember your parents and they were [inaudible]. At that time [inaudible], if I say it now and that time, we weren't poor. We were happy as hell. We were always out. Comes around May, we'd go out digging seneca root, and live, we lived on the land.

DP. Um huh. Digging seneca root, now that was a common activity amongst the Métis people?

JL. Amongst the Métis people, yes. You'd see it. A lot of times you're out some place and the next thing you'll meet somebody whom had a wagon full of kids and [inaudible].

DP. It's the thing the Métis did on the side.

JL. That's what they did, mostly you know.

DP. Were their any First Nations or Indians that were involved in the Seneca root picking or were the [just] Métis?

JL. I think that just Métis.

DP. I also thought that you would have picked saskatoon berries [inaudible].

JL. Oh yes [inaudible]. You lived off of the land. The only thing that they bought was flour and tea. The rest of it, it was off [inaudible].

DP. Did your family lead a similar lifestyle?

SL. Well my dad used to work just in a little farm, not too far away. [inaudible]

DP. That was his trade?

SL. Yes, he did a lot of that, he.

JL. He was a handyman...

DP. If I could ask you about your parents, how many children did they each have?

JL. [Inaudible]. My dad was married twice. He was married three times actually, but the first wife [inaudible]. There was somewhere about thirteen children, I guess. Not counting, my dad, we had stepbrothers and stepsisters.

DP. So, I would assume that your family was Roman Catholic, if they had that many children?

JL. Oh yes.

SL. Very!

JL. Very religious.

DP. Church observances and feasts and that they honored them. They went to Mass, took Communion quite regularly?

JL. [Inaudible]. You can't talk about a priest. [Inaudible].

DP. The Michif-speaking Roman Catholic society that lived off the land]. [Inaudible].

DP. Mrs. Lavalley how big was your parents' family? [inaudible].

DP. What is it that you do mainly as children? Pick berries, seneca root?

SL. Yeah that was about it, we didn't have very much, activities like we have now.

JL. We played ball when we were kids. We used to make our own balls. We'd take a bunch of rags, and wrap them up. And make them up into a ball, and tie them up with twine, you know?

DP. Did you play baseball or?

JL. Yeah, whatever [inaudible].

SL. You'd take a piece of stick for a bat.

JL. Yeah.

DP. Yep, uh huh [inaudible]. So, you made do with what you had, basically.

JL. What we had for toys [inaudible]. We used to keep sardine cans. Sardine cans because three sardine cans [inaudible] and that was our toys, whatever met our needs.

DP. What were some of the ideas of the [inaudible] of the Métis people back in your home community of Crooked Lake? Would you say that the Métis people were respectful of the earth, and didn't abuse it and took what they needed?

JL. They took what they needed. I don't think they ever abused anything like, ah, a lot of times I'd say you'd go out in a slough and might see some eggs, duck eggs. [Inaudible] My grandfather used to say "don't take the eggs because if you wait and the ducks are bigger and then you'd get much more out of it than taking an egg, one egg". One duck [inaudible].

DP. Did people in the community kind of enforce the conservation on the younger people?

JL. Yep.

SL. Yes.

DP. Respect the earth? It pertained to everything. Picking berries, hunting, trapping, everything?

JL. Well actually when talking about the berries, you could pick as much as you wanted. Pick as much you wanted. Nothing would go to waste, they're not going to sit there, be there for a long time. They only got a certain time to pick the berries then they'll fall down [inaudible].

DP. So [then] what did you do with the berries? Did you make syrup?

JL. We [inaudible].

SL. We mostly dried them. [inaudible]. Dried them. Put them in the sun and dried them.

JL. [Inaudible]. They would dry there. I can see my granddaughter sitting down [inaudible].

DP. You basically, the Métis people [inaudible].

JL. [Inaudible]. They were dried up. [Inaudible].

DP. I suppose back then when women had babies, that there were midwives and things?

SL. Oh yes.

DP. Is it fair to say that the midwives delivered most of the babies?

JL. [Inaudible] Our family and I think those that settled around Crooked Lake, and we were [inaudible] There was Germans, French people, Indians and Half-breeds and they all went to the same church [inaudible].

DP. They all got a long.

JL. They all got a long so good.

DP. [Inaudible] The reason I asked that in some of the communities like Willow Bunch, that's down where I from, there was definitely discrimination. [Inaudible]. Another lady by the name of Clementine Longworth lived in our community and she said that [inaudible]. And with the people on the reserve the same thing. Indians and Métis got along good.

SL. Um huh.

DP. There were a lot of intermarriages between the Métis and the Indians?

JL. Yep. Yeah.

SL. Yeah.

JL. Matter of fact when we went there two weeks ago, we saw some people that she...

SL. I hadn't seen for over fifty years.

DP. Really?

SL. I used to work for them for quite a few years [inaudible].

DP. I guess, if you like, I can ask [about] some of your favourite hobbies and activities now and what you did a young [inaudible].

JL. I guess some of the guys what we, the only thing we did for a hobby I guess is dancing. We used to like dancing.

SL. It was really lovely [inaudible].

JL. [There were] [a] lot of house dances.

DP. Yes.

JL. That was a great thing, a beautiful thing. One guy [inaudible].

DP. So [then] that was like every Friday night or something like that, they had a different house party?

JL. I really don't think that they went for a weekend rather than weekdays because a lot of them really hadn't much to go to [inaudible].

DP. Jigging?

JL. No.

DP. Fiddle playing going on in the community?

SL. That was our entertainment.

JP. Yep.

DP. So [then] unlike today where I turn on a TV or go play a video game, you had to entertain yourselves it didn't come to you?

SL. That's right.

DP. Was there fiddle players, storytellers or musicians in your community?

JL. My grandfather was a good storyteller.

DP. What was his name?

JL. Xavier.

DP. That was the traditional stories?

JL. [Inaudible]. Grandpa used to talk French. But ah, the French people used to come down there and give him tobacco, and he knew what tobacco was. He knew that he had to tell them stories. They'd sit around.

SL. He was blind.

JL. No, he was deaf.

SL. Oh, I'm sorry. He was deaf.

JL. Yeah, but when you give him something, he knew tobacco. When he saw the few people, there he knew then. [Inaudible]. I don't really remember.

SL. That was really a long time ago.

JL. Yeah. He died in the [inaudible].

SL. He was one hundred and four year's old [inaudible].

DP. [Inaudible] the history. He saw Riel and all that happen.

JL. He did. He did. He, he had a [inaudible]. There was no doctor. [Inaudible]. And the ankle healed that way.

DP. He was really a part of Canadian history. Most Canadians don't know [inaudible] this place. [Inaudible]. Talk [inaudible] of Batoche. The Métis battles. The people kind of [inaudible].

JL. At that time I guess that was in there in their young days. That was [inaudible].

SL. That they could still remember any of it. Even the grandparents don't talk about it.

JL. The grandparents they were [inaudible].

DP. Everyone knew that they were Métis, no one hid that identity? [Inaudible]. 1885, it really effected people [inaudible] called themselves here Michifs? [inaudible].

JL. Around my, around wherever they signed Treaty [inaudible] When my grandfather signed there were only two brothers that [inaudible] one signed and one didn't want to. See one [inaudible] there's [inaudible] got into the reserves. They were told you get into reserves [and] you can't go out of reserves. That's reason, you didn't go.

DP. They say in French, they said [inaudible].

JL. They lived off the land. [Inaudible].

DP. So [then] that was a big part of Métis identity with the independence?

JL. Yeah.

DP. Not to have the whole say [inaudible]. You must go do this, this, this in order to [inaudible].

JL. They wanted to be their own boss. They wanted to go and stop wherever they wanted. Pitch a tent there and stay there as long as they wanted.

DP. [Inaudible] you remember that were special in your community? [Inaudible] Was he kind of in that role or?

JL. No, my grandfather. I didn't really [inaudible].

DP. It doesn't matter. I guess the person that most people feel [inaudible].

JL. Like my dad [inaudible]. A strong Catholic [inaudible].

DP. Did they go to an English school?

JL. A different school. The nuns [inaudible] mostly the Native. [Inaudible].

SL. A very tiny school.

JL. The English [inaudible].

DP. So [then] it was a small school then? Taught by nuns?

SL. Um huh.

DP. So [then] you go through [inaudible]. The Métis people in your community would you say that they [inaudible] received [an] education.

JL. There was no school where they lived. [Inaudible]

DP. I'm going to ask you some questions about Michif, if you like, and then I'll ask a few more questions about you [inaudible]. Ah, so [then] I understand you both speak Michif?

JL. Yes.

DP. And you spoke it all your lives?

JL. All our lives.

SL. That's right.

DP. So [then] you are fairly well versed in it. You can carry on a conversation with people? [Inaudible] You were growing up with that. Is it fair to say that your first language is Michif? [Inaudible] All the other Métis people in the community [inaudible] Anybody else speak Michif in your community or was it just the Métis? Like did the Indians or the French Canadians [inaudible] Everybody in your family spoke Michif?

JL. Yep.

DP. Even your siblings that are alive today [speak Michif]? [Inaudible] [Are there] people in Regina that you could speak Michif with? [Inaudible]

SL. Very few people in Regina, eh?

DP. Very few.

SL. There's some odd ones here and there. [Inaudible]

DP. I asked that, I guess there's different dialects of the language. [Inaudible] The Michif that your family spoke was the same in the whole area? [Inaudible]

JL. Around the Crescent Lake area it was [Inaudible] a Michif settlement there too.

SL. This is south of Yorkton.

JL. [Inaudible] I remember from Crooked Lake you'd be able to travel [Inaudible].

DP. The Métis may have traveled and did things like [Inaudible]. [Did the Métis in your community] Understand somebody from Lebret or somebody from Manitoba? [Inaudible]

JL. No

DP. Your grandfather Lavallée when he told stories did he tell them in Michif? [Inaudible] Depending on the audience.

JL. Depending on the audience [inaudible].

SL. I think mostly French, eh?

JL. If you came, in those days the French people were able to afford cigarettes, I mean tobacco. [Inaudible]

SL. Mostly French people came.

DP. Any special stories that he may have told only in Michif, or did he share with anybody?

JL. There were some stories that he talked [Inaudible]. If there was, if you had visitors around like if somebody come and see you. They'd sit down and there would be a little story, a short story to the [inaudible] [Tape stops].

DP. It's happened before.

JL. Is that right?

DP. Yeah. Not to me but to someone else. They traveled way up north from Saskatoon on a four or five-hour drive [Inaudible] Your home community of Crooked Lake was it known by different names? Like in Michif was there a name for it or did everybody say it [inaudible]

JL. [Inaudible]

DP. The community [Inaudible] It's so [then] here's Crooked Lake and then here's a great big hill or ravine [Inaudible]

JL. I know what you mean yeah. There's some places they used called it [Inaudible] I don't know "la veille du mort(e)", you know? [Inaudible] They had little things added on to them. [Inaudible] by a big ravine there was [Inaudible] There was a nickname it was not her real name. [Inaudible]

SL. Yes, there were.

DP. Everybody had a nickname? [Inaudible]

JL. That old lady got along with the younger people. She had a fairly big house and she had made a lot of dances, and younger people loved to go there too. [Inaudible]

DP. You have no problems understanding the Cree and French words?

JL. There were some French added in there.

SL. A lot of [Inaudible]

JL. Not much "enfant chienne" [Inaudible]

DP. Where I'm from down south that was a big Métis swear word "enfant chienne".

JL. Oh yeah.

SL. Ha, ha.

DP. "Tabernâcle"

SL. Ha, ha. Whatever that means.

DP. So [then] all the swear words were generally in French then?

JL. Yeah.

DP. Okay. [Inaudible] When you spoke Michif were you allowed to speak it in your school, like were the nuns [Inaudible]

JL. I don't think so, I think mostly at the time everybody wanted to learn English. [inaudible] They have to talk English now. [Inaudible] People call themselves [Inaudible]

DP. This came from [Inaudible] it was something [Inaudible] you might say we are [Inaudible].

JL. They didn't bother with that. [Inaudible].

DP. I was going to ask you some specific questions about [Inaudible] translate well for us to transcribe them, but I'll give a few anyway. Were there [inaudible] or prayers that were spoken in Michif or [Inaudible]

JL. If you did pray in English than it when in French [Inaudible]. I never heard of a Michif saying prayers unless [Inaudible] it's either in English or [Inaudible].

DP. [Inaudible] That the older generation lost, like did they only speak French [Inaudible] or the Métis people [Inaudible] in English [Inaudible] where they could speak [Inaudible] to your generation [Inaudible].

JL. A lot of it I guess this Michif language was [inaudible] they made up their own. That's what is all this Michif [Inaudible].

DP. [Inaudible] So [then] New Year's, Easter, Christmas did they have [Inaudible] Midnight Mass that was probably the event of the year wasn't it?

JL. That was the event of the year [Inaudible].

SL. Yes it was [Inaudible].

DP. Do you think that it is important to the Métis [Inaudible]. I think there are probably anywhere between 600 –2000 people that speak Michif [Inaudible] an important piece of Métis heritage and history.

JL. [Inaudible] it is a very important part of Métis heritage [Inaudible] the two of us we talk [Inaudible] They don't understand it.

DP. I guess we will have efforts to preserve the language. Do you think it will stay?

JL. It's going to stay [Inaudible] we have to bring our younger generation [Inaudible].

DP. There's one area that I forgot to ask each of you about [Inaudible], ask you about right now a few questions about Road Allowance.

JL. Um huh.

DP. Does that mean anything to you that concept?

JL. Sure, a lot of people lived on road allowances, in log houses [Inaudible].

DP. Did they necessarily own the land? They may have squatted?

JL. It was very few that owned the land.

SL. [Inaudible]

DP. Do you think the Métis people had no right to the land? Are you familiar with scrip?

JL. Yes, I do. I always studied that. When the Treaty was signed, they also, those that didn't want sign Treaty got a form [Inaudible] but they did, the municipality got in and started charging them taxes, and they didn't want to pay taxes because that's their land. That's it then they lose their land and it probably went to the Hudson's Bay [Inaudible]. When they lose their land, where else can they go? They got to go to a road allowance [Inaudible].

DP. [Inaudible] own land or was on [Inaudible] live on a road [Inaudible].

JL. [Inaudible] Never lived in a road allowance. They were what you call a [Inaudible] the Indians leased that [Inaudible] it was a reservation [Inaudible]. No, no.

DP. Just certain families?

JL. Well like my grandfather, my father [Inaudible]. Sometimes my uncle [Inaudible] sometimes they lived on the road allowance.

DP. It goes back to the Métis idea of being [Inaudible] of controlling their own destiny.

JL. I think so.

DP. [inaudible] live on the road allowances, right?

JL. A lot of them [Inaudible] keep their living on the road allowances [Inaudible] ended when they sold their farms. When I came back from the army, we had bought some

land [Inaudible] where they could build a school. In that place, I sold that to the government [inaudible] to keep houses there for the Michifs.

DP. So, that was the Métis farm colony?

JL. That was the Métis farm colony. They called it a "Co-op". They had a little garden there, they had some eggs there, chickens things like that.

DP. And that was started by Tommy Douglas, the CCF in the forties?

JL. The forties. [Inaudible].

DP. [Inaudible] in Crooked Lake or?

JL. It kind of went on there. Some people started moving away and we had to move too from Crooked Lake in about fifty-five, eh? There was no future in there. I guess we knew that because we were raised there. There was nothing there and you couldn't get too much education. [Inaudible] the kids [inaudible].

DP. Actually

JL. It only took one family to move away and the other ones will find out 'he's making a good living'. 'He's got a good job'. 'He's in a good place'.

SL. Gradually they all moved.

JL. Yep, yeah.

DP. Kind of [Inaudible] not enough.

JL. Not enough for everybody to live.

DP. Not enough land.

JL. The population was getting bigger they didn't have enough land [Inaudible].

DP. As you [Inaudible] probably the main reason why the farm colony did not last there?

JL. That's right. A lot of them, they didn't have enough money to pay anybody so they had to go [Inaudible]. A lot of them decided 'well we'll have to make a good living somewhere else'. [Inaudible] So [then] they all went, mostly moved away. [Inaudible] I think so there was [Inaudible] like her brother [Inaudible] homesteaded near Calgary. He died there. [Inaudible].

DP. Mr. Lavalley I guess I can ask you some questions about the military, and then I'll ask you a few general questions and I guess your interview is over. [inaudible] military service like is there any like that [Inaudible]

JL. No we are trying to get our Michif language back.

DP. It's like the Michif Language Conference in Yorkton, you hope that that goes on and on.

JL. We hope that it is going [Inaudible]. I think that we are sorry now that we didn't teach our kids. [Inaudible]

DP. In the case of all Aboriginal languages [Inaudible]

JL. We probably won't see it, but then I always think another fifty or sixty years [Inaudible].

DP. In a way it was a catch twenty-two for your generation [Inaudible] you kind of turned your back on your heritage.

JL. That's right.

DP. You forgot, like with Michif a lot of the old ways are tied to the language, like the way you see the world right? [Inaudible] I know in Cree that chairs and things like that are not inanimate that they are considered a living thing [Inaudible] can't speak Michif [Inaudible] At the Institute we recently put out a book about Métis veterans, have you seen it? [Inaudible] research that we do know is related to Métis veterans, both women and men, because of course women served [Inaudible] in Korea and beyond. So [then] we are trying to get a database of Métis veterans and try and get their story. [Inaudible] I'll ask you were any of your family that you know of did they go to World war One?

JL. Yes. My uncle [Inaudible]

DP. And what was your uncle's name, please?

JL. Jean-Baptiste.

SL. "J.B."

JL. "J.B."

DP. Jean-Baptiste Lavallée?

JL. Yep.

DP. And he fought in World War One?

JL. Well I don't know if he fought, but he was in the army. Three brothers were there. My dad was not in. [Inaudible] I [had] seen pictures of them no too long ago.

SL. It seems I [had] seen [Inaudible].

DP. Mrs. Lavalley did you have any family that served in World War One that you [Inaudible] From Crooked Lake there were probably a few people that would have went over.

SL. [Inaudible]

DP. Yeah [Inaudible] There were a lot of folks that went [Inaudible].

JL. My two brothers were in the army, but didn't go overseas. [Inaudible] They were able to go see, were able to go [Inaudible]

DP. So, they were in the Home Army then?

JL. They were in the Home Guard, yes. One of them was discharged.

DP. There were probably quite a few Métis that didn't go [Inaudible]

JL. I [had] seen a lot of Métis from here [Inaudible] for sure there was two of us joined the army together and we were overseas together. [inaudible]

DP. Mrs. Lavalley did anybody in your [Inaudible].

JL. At Sun-Set Beach, they were taking names there and then they'd give you your transportation [Inaudible] send you by train from Regina and that's the way it goes. [Inaudible] the war started in thirty-nine [Inaudible].

DP. [Inaudible] Patriotism, to get better jobs?

JL. Well, not mainly. I used to work for a farmer. I was not around Crooked Lake at that time. I worked for a farmer. [Inaudible]

DP. Watch out for him.

JL. Watch out for me.

DP. And for you too.

JL. Yeah, but we visit in Regina here, and then [Inaudible]. I asked to go to re-enforcement [Inaudible] about three months [Inaudible] After I joined I was drafted in Nova Scotia. [inaudible]

DP. Oh, you went and trained.

JL. I went trained as a re-enforcement.

DP. Protect the garrison then?

JL. Well, whatever it is, but I mean at time when I brother was in Nova Scotia [Inaudible] He said I got bad news for you, and I said 'what kind?' [Inaudible]

DP. So your brother, who you wanted to go serve with, is sent back and they sent you to Europe?

JL. And I went on overseas.

DP. With the Regina Rifles, you went overseas?

JL. Yep.

DP. [Inaudible] And from history [inaudible]

JL. Many, many people from all around 'PA' (Prince Albert) and all over [Inaudible] we'd sit around and talk Michif.

DP. That could be an advantage of being able to speak Michif with the Germans [Inaudible].

JL. There was a lot of Native people that were [Inaudible] that had no education [Inaudible] and then they talked [Inaudible] to themselves and then they'd pass it on to their commanding [Inaudible] nobody but they were going to understand. [Inaudible] French, English different languages [Inaudible] European countries [Inaudible] some of them could understand except Native, they didn't understand. [Inaudible] Anybody in [Inaudible] that served in the Signal Corps [Inaudible] They talk about [Inaudible] Indian people with education were able to talk, communicate with one another, and pass it on [Inaudible]

DP. It's a skill that the Métis [Inaudible] soldiers had. They were the best at that.

JL. That was something that ah, ah [Inaudible] but those people there were talking and nobody else could understand them, except between themselves and they would pass it on to their commander. Nobody else on the radio could understand what they were talking about.

DP. Would you say that the Métis and the Indians [Inaudible]

JL. They got respect, a lot of respect. There was no such thing as an Indian or Michif

DP. English

JL. Or, English in the army, in the Canadian Army. They were all Canadians.

DP. So [then] the racism didn't really cause a problem during the war?

JL. No, no.

DP. Even before going overseas?

JL. Before going overseas, yeah I was plain Métis [Inaudible] I worked for a farmer, a Ukrainian farmer [inaudible]

DP. So you... thought of yourself as a Canadian before you went over or when you were in the war?

JL. At that time I didn't think that I was Canadian when I was working, [inaudible] I was just an ordinary guy. It's only after I joined the army that I would say I'm a Canadian, but they told me [Inaudible] I asked them what [Inaudible] What you are [Inaudible] you were nobody but a Canadian. In the army, it doesn't matter. [Inaudible]

DP. When the civilians [Inaudible] had seen "Canada" on the sleeve of your jacket

JL. I don't think that they were ever, pretty different. I think [Inaudible]

DP. Where would you say things changed? [Inaudible] A lot of racism in your life personally?

JL. No, I don't think that I ever had any.

DP. [Inaudible] your rank and what were your duties?

JL. A lance corporal and demoted to a rifleman.

DP. Like a private?

JL. Ah, it's above a private, but if you were a good shot well, you gained in the regular [Inaudible] I was never a sniper. A sniper is, no I, we didn't, when I went in for a sniper we didn't get along. [Inaudible] if you didn't get along with the instructor [Inaudible]

DP. So as a rifleman what were your general duties? [Inaudible] Belgium, did you serve in Italy as well or?

JL. Yeah, I was in Italy.

DP. [Inaudible] So [then] you were in [Inaudible] and Italy?

JL. [Inaudible]

DP. So [then] you were a "D-Day Dodger" and you were in Normandy as well? You were in the Falaise and all that, going into Belgium?

JL. Um huh.

DP. In the war [Inaudible].

JL. Well either that or I think you'll never talk about war. That was something that you didn't like to talk about [Inaudible] You know the thing is you were never the boss of yourself. One day, when I was transferred from Regina Rifles to the [inaudible] they only gave me one hour [Inaudible]. I was in the army, I joined the army and we were always together in Crooked Lake, I could not tell him where I was going [Inaudible]. They'd tell you where to get off and there would be somebody there to meet you. Somebody to tell you. Then you'd go and start up, start making friends again. Those guys with who you are going, you [had] never seen them before. Start up again. It goes on and on. You'd pack [Inaudible]. You can't say "where am I going?" [Inaudible]

DP. [Inaudible] That is your buddy, like the military is basically like [Inaudible] and it was more about looking after your own than carrying a Canadian flag. Would you say that was true of your experience?

JL. That's true. You have to. Your friend was part of your eyes. [Inaudible]

DP. Because you had to rely on everybody, and really [Inaudible] racism in Canada had no place, because the guy you might be sharing a slit trench with [Inaudible] You had to rely on him for your life and yours.

JL. He was a brother to you.

DP. So [then] all the petty stuff it was just gone.

JL. He was [Inaudible] they watch out for you.

DP. In 1945, the war ended and [inaudible] when you came home to Canada what was it like, do you think the country changed a lot? And [then] how were you welcomed as a Métis veteran?

JL. After the war ended, when we would chum around [Inaudible] that was Cochin. [inaudible] when you'd start talking that's [Inaudible] you went every year overseas [Inaudible]. Remember this [inaudible]. If you want to join the army, again in when you Canada you can do so, but from here [Inaudible].

DP. So [then] they discouraged [Inaudible] the people that saw combat were withdrawing, yet they were going to send people who hadn't had much combat over to fight the Japanese.

JL. That's right.

DP. Did things change in Canada when you returned? Like with Métis people [Inaudible] things get worse, the poverty?

JL. When I got back, I don't think there were any changes.

DP. No.

JL. No. I didn't see any changes. I didn't see any changes of life or, they still lived the same way. I think the big change came around '52.

DP. The Métis farm?

JL. There was a Métis farm and the way that the farmers seem to have got [Inaudible] seemed to be going up well now. [Inaudible] The crops were getting bigger money, and that time a lot of people were still farming with horses, they were starting to buy tractors and combines. [Inaudible]

DP. And that's basically the time that you decided to move to the city?

JL. That's right. Years ago before that there was a thrashing gang, about six or seven teams. [Inaudible]. It was not long after that one man [Inaudible] the combine. Back then they could find work around that area. That's when we decided to [Inaudible]. We've got a family. We've got four kids. What about working, what are we going to do? [inaudible].

DP. They didn't offer you an opportunity to go get a trade or go to school or [Inaudible].

JL. No [Inaudible] unless maybe some did. I don't know, I didn't ask for these. They offered me a job when, before I was discharged in Regina. [Inaudible] this was the job that they offered me [Inaudible] a long, long time ago. When I went back to my community, I started farming again.

DP. After you left your community, what career path did you take?

JL. I beg your pardon?

DP. After you left Crooked Lake and left farming, and moved to Regina, what career did you take?

JL. I took some, I had some, and I started off on construction. I went to school for [Inaudible] university. I had started as a janitor and I worked my way up, because I could not [Inaudible].

DP. Mrs. Lavalley were you a [Inaudible] or a mother and home-wife most of your life?

SL. I did after the kids grew up. [Inaudible].

DP. I guess we can call it an interview. Was there anything you may have wanted me to ask each of you?

JL No, no. Well for each of us, for me, and my old lady here we've been married for fifty-two years. [Inaudible]

SL [Inaudible] twelve grandchildren.

DP How many grandchildren?

SL Twelve.

DP Twelve grandchildren. So at Christmas time this must be a real busy place?

SL And [then] four great grandchildren.

DP Four great grandchildren.

JL And we have one heck of a happy family. They never forget us, the kids. They drop in any time they want.

DP You see all the bad that goes on in the streets [Inaudible] and we get news from Toronto or the United States [Inaudible].

JL Our kids think that there are no better parents than their parents.

DP You raised a family. You've had a nice life together.

JL We've had a lovely life together. We've stuck together, we've had some bad times, but we [Inaudible].

DP That's the beauty of people from your generation. When you had diversity, you didn't go to divorce court.

SL Yeah.

JL Yeah.

DP You worked things out.

JL You worked things out. We had some bad times. We had some rough times.

DP Now I'll stop the interview.

SL Okay.

DP On behalf of the Gabriel Dumont Institute, I thank each of you, and it was a pleasure for me to come here. [Inaudible].