

Gilbert Pelletier, Norman Fleury, Sherry Farrell-Racette

Video 2

Start: 9:02.10.21 **NORMAN FLEURY** - Yeah cause, like as director of the Michif languages I, I'm, and also a person that spoke this language, you know, like we were talking about yesterday, I spoke Michif as, as a young man, as a young boy, as a child. And, but I always was curious about what was this Michif all about because when we were kids, when I was a young person we were, we were les Michifs. We weren't les Métisse or we weren't Métis, we were les Michifs. And so I asked my grandmother I said, you know I said, I said "Nokohm, **(Speaks Michif)**." I said, "We call this Cree but where, where's this language come from?" And so she explained to me briefly she said, "**(speaks Michif 34.8 – 35.9)**." So, and it was, what she was saying is, when God created man he gave them, he gave them a language. Also when he created the English people he gave them English was their language, and the French, the French people...**(Inaudible)**...when he created us, he also gave us a language." So she looked at our language as a God-given language, a spiritual language, and that's our Michif language. But also with other, les Michifs, other Métis people, they spoke, they were very diverse in, in different languages, like they spoke different languages. But those language don't belong to us. The Saulteaux, if you speak Saulteaux it don't belong to you, it belongs to the Saulteaux people or the Ojibway people. If you speak Cree, it don't belong to you, it belongs to the Cree people. And that's what in essence she was saying, that this belongs to us. This is ours. It was given to us by God as a new creation as a new Nation. So I always looked at Michif as this, as a God-given spiritual language, it's something that belongs to the Métis people. We could say it's ours.

37.1 GILBERT PELLETIER – And something that nobody can take away from you.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - Your special language.

GILBERT PELLETIER - Yes.

37.2 SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - Did people speak about the language when you were growing up?

37.3 GILBERT PELLETIER - Oh certainly, the same way.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - Same way? That it was special?

GILBERT PELLETIER - Yeah, it was special and it was yours, you know, it was your own language that you, you couldn't give it away, nobody could take it away from you. That's, that was yours.

(Video Time: 9:05.59.24) 37.6 NORMAN FLEURY - And it's very, it's a very, so enriching and it's, it's very emotional when you talk about something like that because, you're talking about your ancestral right. You're talking about a right that you have, culturally, traditionally, as a new people. And a lot of people, I think, when, when we talk to different people they, they try to invent something about we, the Métis people and what was our lifestyle and who we were. Well when I grew up and where I grew up at St. Lazare, Manitoba, close to, the very enriching community of a rich culture in Ste. Madeleine wasn't too far away and Fort Ellice. And in Saskatchewan, we had relatives in Saskatchewan also and we were, we were pulled together by our culture. There was no such things as boundaries, like Saskatchewan didn't separate us or any other provinces. There was no such thing. Or the States. The relatives were in the States also and our language was the strongest thing that made the bonding between us. Even though I never knew Gilbert ever in my whole life, as soon as we met, we had a bonding because we had something that was very common, it was our language. As soon as I said, "Tansi," and I'd say to him "**(Speaks Michif)**" or I might

even say, "mon cousin," and there's no relation. But we were powerful in our, our, and the relationship was so strong.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - Because of the language?

NORMAN FLEURY - Yeah.

GILBERT PELLETIER - Because of the language.

NORMAN FLEURY - And my brother-in-law, he'd be my brother-in-law, he'd be my nistow or he would be mon cousin or...

GILBERT PELLETIER - Yeah, my cousin.

NORMAN FLEURY - You know, and, mon frère, you know, my brother, and, and those were the kind of things that were very, very powerful at home. My Mom to this day, like well there's not many left now, but she's a 101 years old. But I remember when her first cousins come to visit, they would be ma soeur and mon frère, like my, my brother and my sister. And so like that was very enriching, like that kept us together and it also, it made you very conscious of your, your family, the family tree, and there was no, no incest involved also because the relationship of family was so powerful. You were told, that's your cousin, you don't go with your cousin, you don't marry your cousin, and those were again another teaching that was very powerful and you made sure, and it also was to do with respect like, very much so. And all the older people that were Nohkom (**Speaks Michif**) even if you weren't related to them it was (**Speaks Michif**).

(Video Time: 9:08.50.11) 40.7 GILBERT PELLETIER - Yeah, because of the age, there was, they're that much older than you had, you had respect so you call them Grandma and Grandpa. Grandma and Grandpa. Moshom, Nohkom.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - You said the same?

GILBERT PELLETIER - Yeah.

40.9 NORMAN FLEURY - Ma tante and mon oncle, even if you weren't related.

GILBERT PELLETIER - Even if you weren't related.

NORMAN FLEURY - You know, if I met Gilbert and his Dad and Mom were there, I'd call them right away ma tante or mon oncle.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - For respect?

GILBERT PELLETIER - Yeah. But even if there was no relations. And like he said, you know, we call each other cousin or brother when we meet each other, and that was a, that was as soon we met each other, cause we had that special thing between us.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - You shared a language?

GILBERT PELLETIER - It's the language.

(Video Time: 9:09.36.29) 41.4 NORMAN FLEURY - It was also in the family eh? Like my Grandma, like her older brothers and sisters, there's a special word in our language. It's, they would say, **(Michif Word)** which is an older sister. Okay, and **(Michif Word)** is my older brother. And then if you talked about my younger, you'd say, **(Michif Word)**. You see would be my little one, my younger one. And that's how they, they looked at the family lineage and it, and it also was for respect. And they would say **(Michif Word)** to, that was something else, they'd say **(Michif Word)** would be

somebody older than you. And they'd use that, but I know my, with my grandmother, especially my Mom's mother, I, I learned a whole lot of who I am and what I'm all, what I'm about as a Métis person. And I still refer to those you know, although they're not used everyday like we used to, it was, it was something that, but if she'd always, she'd talk about her brothers and sisters, she'd always use that **(Michif words)**. And they were because they were older than her and younger and that was for respect again, to respect your older. And they had the older brothers and sisters also had certain responsibilities as older brothers and sisters in the family. Like if you lost your Mom and Dad, those people, the, those older brothers and sisters, if they're old enough would, they would take on the family. They would become your parents. And then being Catholic, your Godparents, they made an oath.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - So that's who would raise you?

NORMAN FLEURY - That would raise you. They took that oath right away, because I remember when I was a kid they said well, **(speaks Michif 43.6 – 44.2)**.

End: 9:12:09.25