

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: HARRY BULLETT  
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: MANIGOTOGAN  
INTERVIEW LOCATION:  
TRIBE/NATION: METIS  
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH  
DATE OF INTERVIEW:  
INTERVIEWER: MARGARET STOBIE  
INTERPRETER:  
TRANSCRIBER: JOANNE GREENWOOD  
SOURCE: ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS  
ELIZABETH DAFOE LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA  
WINNIPEG, MANITOBA R3T 2N2  
TAPE NUMBER: IH-MS.003b/.014b  
DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC 41  
PAGES: 5

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HIGHLIGHTS:

- General discussion of his life.  
Harry: Of course, I'm ahead of my story. The Hudson's Bay  
Company had posts. One on Clement's Point and one on  
observation, you see. They had little stores, supply all  
along, but nothing in Manigotogan. Manigotogan was never  
anything. Wood settled at the falls. But he settled there for  
the power. He had to get power for to saw lumber. He was the  
first, for his mill here. And I don't know just how long Mr.  
Wood lived. They had Annie there. I guess Annie was born in  
about '77, about '79. Annie was born and I guess old Johnnie  
was born in about '81 and so on. I was born in 1890. My  
father was living. So all those Woods and then he was married

and he was married about four years, three or four. I had a brother and a sister older than me. Alec died in 1911. He was 24 when he died. I'm the oldest in the family, the oldest that's living. I had a sister older than me, Mrs. Bumstead.

And it was my father carried on that lumber business here, in the province of Manitoba, from 1877 to 1935. We were in partnership since 1916. That is when I started my lumber mill, in 1916. Of course, I am skipping but I could always go back and tell you things that happened between that time and up till the time that me and my dad went into the business in 1916. It was the James Drake Lumber Company came in in about 1898. When I was eight years old Old Drake took over after Mr. Wood died, and he run the sawmill down here till 1905 when he failed and went under, and the Lake Winnipeg Lumber was here and took over. And they ran until 1907 and they went under. Lumbering wasn't successful, you know. Not too bad today because the prices are better and it is better getting it out. They lost a lot of their lumber in transporting it on water -- no power. They didn't have power to pull those barges. That's why they went broke. But I, we put in... It was 49 years ago, it would have been on the sixteenth of September, since I started with my dad. I think we have been the longest in the lumber business of any company. From 1916 up until now, that is 49 years, you see, that we have been in the lumber business.

I am older now and trying to sell out. I want to retire. I left this place five years ago to go and look after things up there. My business was up there and I was too far away from it so I moved in there and I got an offer to sell out at the price that I want so I started moving back to my old place here. We only been here less than a week. Got a house in Bisset. We got the camps over there for fifty men and we got everything there. We got lights in the rooms. And we have been...

Mind you, I have never done nothing else, only lumber. When I was the age of 13 in 1903, there was no school to go to and it was a big family and the wages were small. My dad had to keep

quite a few of us -- there was ten altogether in our family -- and you can see that we were pretty much all there in 1903. There was only about two born after that, there was eight of us. And the wages were very small. I worked for seventy-five cents a day and I worked for forty cents a day sometimes. And dad was running camp, big foreman for twenty-six dollars a month. Well, you know, you have eight children to look after... So we had to dig out and no school to go to, so I had to go to the bush pretty young.

However, I have learned to read when I was, after I had been out on the cold, (inaudible) lumberjack. There was a fellow that came from Toronto, Rorick, his brother was one of those guys that he was working for Stewarts. The Selkirk Record in Selkirk -- a writer, you know. He come up here and drank very heavy and my dad run across him in Selkirk and thought he would save his life and bring him out here for the winter. And he found out that I had no education at all, that I couldn't read

and was kind of lost. So he sent out for a slate -- that was in the winter of 1904-05. And in the bunk, in that old bunk house, we had to put the light out at nine o'clock. There was fifty men in there. He learned me to read and write on that old slate, this man, Andrew Rorick. And I learned to read there and I never went to school one day in my life -- that is a school, you know. And that is where I learned to read and write a little bit.

And I guess it is mostly experience is what is carrying me through, and honest work. I was always a good worker. I could put my hand to anything. I built, in my time, I built thirteen big sawmills and, you know, that is a record for me. I'm half Indian and half French and as a rule them are bad people. They get so darn stubborn, they don't want nothing. They just want to raise hell, you know. (laughs) And they are free.

And I never drank nor used tobacco till I was 27, in 1917. We had prohibition. We had an election here in the fall of October, 1915 and we were putting the country dry on account of our boys dying under the influence of liquor in France. But we were just fooled. There was a bunch of us people, there was a certain amount of people... All my brothers that were old enough and fit to go to war, they went to war. Somebody had to produce lumber and somebody had to produce food. There was some of us left. But very few. We had to be good men, useful men. We had to produce lumber, we had to produce something, we had to work, women and all. Everybody worked hard during the First War. Women were sewing night and day, no matter where you went, we were all working and losing a lot of people over there. Well, the captain's people went to the women and said,

"Here, your son is dying over there under the influence of liquor. Let's stop it. If we stop it here, we'll stop it over there." And that was one of the worst things we ever did. It was just like trying to make that river run upstream. Three weeks after this, the sixth of June in 1916, was the date that the bars were closed in Manitoba. They had to send to Kenora or Yorkton, Saskatchewan, to get liquor after that. Three weeks after that date you could see people smoke anywhere, under a tree. They were making home brew. Of course, in that society you could smoke cigarettes and I never seen a women smoke till that time. We started something that will never finish in that time.

I went along in 1917, heavy into drinking and I used to smoke a little bit and it got progressive. I would have one and I would want a little more, a little more and I become the age of 65 then, I started blacking out and I began to lose out everywhere. Losing respect for myself and my family. I didn't know enough to come home. Whenever that place was open I was there just to have one cold beer for today, just one. That was all I wanted but I wasn't satisfied with one. I had to have twenty-five. And I had found out that one was plenty and twenty-five wasn't enough. So five years ago I made up my mind as I was in a rut and been trying to get out of it. I haven't taken anything like that now for over five years. I'm living

happier and I think to myself if everybody would... I don't want to brag about it because I had a big job to try and straighten myself out and yet I had been half as long as I live. I'll never be a drunkard again. I think I value a lot more than that. I feel a lot better. To learn to love one another and to do more for ourselves. I was saving a little bit of money and everything. I know that I'm not spending much that way. I had a good earning capacity and people knew it and they found out I was in the beer parlor, they would come from all over. Just come and, "Oh, the old man got lots. He won't mind." And that is the way it goes.

But now, you take that lumber business and one of the things that has kept this place going, the lumber. We never fished here and we didn't farm very much. I did when I was raising my family. I always had cattle, chickens and horses. All my girls and boys, they had to clear land and we worked early and late. This is the second home I built. The first one was a log building that me and my wife lived in in 1914 before we had too many children. We had two kids. We built it ourselves and we were clearing the land and growing more vegetables. We kept digging our cellar bigger, you know, to hold all our crops. But one wet summer, I think it was in 1930, the cellar caved in and my house went down about four inches into my cellar. So then I had to tear it down and build this. This is the second house I built right here.

That was past and we have never been very much done here other than lumber. But I still have hopes that there is another industry you could start in here because there is wonderful brick clay here. Red brick. In 1913 I came here on the ninth of August. I was born and raised here. Then after mother died in 1907, the home was broken up. I was born and raised right across the river. In that house, see that house? Seventy-five years ago last February. I didn't live here all the time. I been out looking for a little here and there, but this is where I was born, across there. We were married on the sixth of January, 1912 and we moved up here in August of 1912. And I homesteaded here in the spring of 1914 and me and her we had one horse and a cow. We built our house out of logs. This is where we raised our family and we had thirteen altogether. We lost two and there is still eleven living. We lost two girls. One was very young, a baby only about 7 months old and then here in 1947 we lost a girl. She was 17. So that is about the time that we quit farming when we lost her. Things seemed to go against us then. And then along about 1952 we were... I had a nice house, a nice business here.

(Recording ends abruptly 16 minutes into tape.)

(End of Interview)

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