

**Elder Interview of Monique Gardiner (A:)**  
**Place: Ile a la Crosse, Saskatchewan**  
**Date: July 5, 2001**  
**Interviewed by: Mary Daigneault (Q:)**  
**Transcribed & translated by: Wayne Morin**  
**Present at time of Interview: Lilah Morin**  
**Type of equipment used: 8-mm video recorded c/w cordless microphone**

Time  
00:06:20

**Q: Where were you born and when?**

**A: I don't know.**

**Q: Where were you born?**

**A: Here in Sakitawak (Ile a la Crosse) at the point, I wonder where.**

**Q: The date, when were you born, November?**

**A: I don't know.**

**Q: November the 6?**

**A: I know November the 6.**

**Q: 1910?**

**A: 1910.**

**Q: Yes.**

**Q: How old are you?**

**A: Right now?**

**Q: yes, 90.**

**A: 91.**

**Q: Almost.**

**A: Almost, yes.**

**Q: Do you remember your dad's name?**

**A: Daniel Malboulf**

**Q: And your mom?**

**A: Marie, Marie Jourdain**

**Q: Do you know where they were born?**

**A: No.**

**Q: Around here maybe?**

**A: Around here, the Malboulf, I wonder where my grandfathers from, I don't know.**

**Q: What do you remember most of your mom and dad?**

**A: Nothing.**

**Q: What did your dad, and your mom past away early, talk about that.**

**A: My mom died giving birth. My mom first than my dad later died, I don't remember that well.**

**Q: Who raised you from than?**

**A: My godmother, Philomen, my godmother Philomen Larvieire and Magloire Morris that's who raised me, she my godmother.**

**Q: How many in your family?**

**A: I wonder how many. There was about 6, I think about 6. That's what I think.**

00:08:25

**Q: 3 men and 3 women?**

A: Yes, let me see, Jean Marie and Joe and Alex and me and Balagis (nickname), Begismis (nickname) and one baby died. Those are the only ones I remember.

Q: How did you make a living?

A: I wonder how, I don't know I was a small child then.

Q: Trapping?

A: My dad probably trapped. I don't know I was a small child, I don't know.

Q: Is there a lot of relatives like uncle, auntie and others?

A: Yes, there were lots of us.

00:09:10

Q: Whom did you marry?

A: At first Victor Durocher, your dad.

Q: How many children did you have?

A: Well, about 8 I think.

Q: You lost 2?

A: Lost 2, yes. When I got remarried I had 4, 12 children altogether.

Q: You remarried?

A: Yes, to William I had 4, altogether I have 12 children, and 10 are alive 2 are dead.

Q: Who help you in everyday life?

A: Nobody I taught myself. My godmother raised me she taught me some things. Then I got married.

Q: How do you feel about halfbreed, do you know anything about half-breeds?

A: I don't know what is half-breed, what is that? Avebreeds (laughs) I don't know.

Q: Why are we called that?

A: I wonder why?

Q: What did you like doing in long ago, making?

A: I made all sorts of things, I was taught all sorts of things. I didn't sew too often. I made hide, when we moved, I made hide, trimmed meat, I made dry meat. That's all I use to do, no welfare long ago, we move from place to place, meat, Ha.

Q: To you like the things that happened today like dances?

A: No, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing, even dance I never saw, nothing for me. I was never here, nothing, I don't like things like that. Fun at the dance means nothing to me, nothing.

Q: Do you like playing cards?

A: No, (laughs) that's the last thing all do is play cards.

00:11:51

Q: Do you remember anything from Christmas, Easter, 3 Kings' Day?

A: We weren't here to<sup>o</sup> often always living in the bush.

Q: What did you do for Christmas?

A: Nothing.

Q: The children?

A: We didn't do anything we were never here.

**Q:** When they had mass did you come?

**A:** Yes, we come to mass sometimes not all the time as it was tough we lived a long ways away.

**Q:** What kinds of music did the elders play long ago?

**A:** Only the violin.

**Q:** Violin?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** Did they use to dance?

**A:** Yes, they danced long ago.

**Q:** Just like in weddings?

**A:** Yes, not often, I wasn't involved in things like that, no. Just today things like that mean nothing to me. Especially now that I'm old, fun is nothing for me, nothing.

**Q:** When a person was deceased what did they do long ago?

**A:** Nothing, they had a wake.

**Q:** Like today?

**A:** Like today sometimes a wake of 2 nights, than they would have mass and than bury it in the graveyard. That's how long ago, same thing, same thing like today.

**Q:** Do you remember about New Years, how would you start the New Year?

**A:** Nothing, the same.

**Q:** The same?

**A:** Yes, the same.

00:13:51

**Q:** Do you remember any old fiddle dance tunes?

**A:** No, I never was involved with things like that, no.

**Q:** How about square dancing?

**A:** No. I would sometimes see them square dance, but never.

**Q:** Who do you remember to be the best musician, like violin or harmonica?

**A:** Hey, I wonder who (laughs).

**Q:** When you were a child?

**A:** There were lots of good musicians, even your dad was good at violin.

**Q:** How about that old man that played fiddle at the point what was his name?

**A:** I don't know, Samuel, Samuel Gerard, yes. He use to play for nothing just for the kids to dance.

**Q:** How did you travel with horses or?

**A:** Hey, dogs only when we moved, dogs only. Dogs only nothing else

**Q:** Did you travel far?

**A:** From Wahtask Bay (Muskrat Bay) that's where we lived, that's the only place we moved to, with dogs. The children would only ride. It was tough long age, yes.

**Q:** No machines long ago?

**A:** Hey, nothing, like today nothing, nothing no machines, we would walk when we moved. We would use dogs the children would ride along with our clothes. It was tough no welfare long ago nothing, nothing, nothing.

**Q:** What kind of food was available to eat?

00:15:45

A: All we ate was meat from the bush, moose meat. Things like that, duck, that's all we had things from the bush. Not much from the store, flour, tea, sugar it all we would carry, nothing, wild food only.

Q: Do you remember your grandparents?

A: No, my grandfather no.

Q: How about your grandmother?

A: I remember my grandmother because I lived with her at the point. I lived with her to look after her until she past away; I looked after her at the point. My grandmother no body else. None of her children did she only have 2 I looked after her. When Begismis (nickname) got married I looked after my grandmother. When she past away at the point I was looking after her, my grandmother.

Q: Did she tell you any folklore?

A: No, she didn't tell folklore, nothing.

Q: So you don't remember any thing like that?

A: No, no, never.

Q: Do you remember any other villages around here?

A: What?

Q: Other villages.

A: No just Ile a la Crosse.

Q: You never went anywhere?

A: No.

Q: Buffalo?

A: Never Buffalo, Beauval, Canoe Lake, never.

Q: When you were a child?

A: No, I lived in Sandy Point with my godmother when I was an orphan I lived in Sandy Point for a while. That's the only place.

00:18:00

Q: Did they own the land?

A: Yes, they owned it.

Q: The place where they build homes?

A: Yes, like at the point they owned it, they owned the land long ago. Like in Sandy Point they owned the houses today there is nothing. All the old people have died, just like at the point too, there's nobody.

Q: Do you remember things called scrip?

A: No.

Q: When people got it in the form of money?

A: They use to talk about it but I don't know, no.

Q: You didn't get one?

A: No, I was just a child I don't remember. I use to here them say scrip<sup>d</sup>but I never knew what that was.

Q: How did you raise your children with the changing seasons?

A: All we did was move and raise children.

Q: Was there any other work around besides trapping?

A: Nothing, just trap, that's all, that's all and hunting that's all. Even family allowance was not available for 3 of my children, nothing, nothing available than, by the time it came they were too old. They never got family allowance.

00:19:47

Q: Tell us about the first time you moved, when you married my father the story you told me?

A: What?

Q: The first time you got married and moved to Alahlamat (creename)?

A: That is where we moved that's the only place.

Q: Tell us how?

A: Nothing?

Q: When you first moved, your first marriage?

A: We moved, your grandmother came with us, Grandma Millie.

Q: How old were you?

A: I was 16 years old when I got married, I didn't know much.

Q: Did you know the man you married?

A: Yes.

Lilah: She knew her husband?

Q: Did you know him well or was it planned?

A: That's Ok, I use to see him around before that. That's Ok.

Q: But you didn't know him well?

A: No.

Q: Do you remember what they use to build houses?

A: I wonder, I just don't know.

start w: 21:03

Q: Log home?

A: Long ago, logs, Log House long ago, it was tough long ago, Log House that's it they build it themselves. They made the roof out of hay, it was tough long ago.

00:21:38

Q: Do you have any relatives that fought in the war?

A: My Brother Alex, Alex Malboulf.

Q: How did you feel about that, he was fairly young?

A: He was living where Rosa lives now, he was already married with children.

Q: When he left?

A: When he left, yes. With Vital, Vital Morin in a group.

Q: Did you pick berries or medicines?

A: No never. I pick berries but didn't touch medicines I don't know much about them. I use to pick a lot of berries, but never touch medicines.

Q: Since you can remember did you speak the Michif language?

A: Since I can remember, that's it. I speak a little French, I went to school.

Q: Where did you go to school?

A: Beauval, Beauval school.

Q: Did they keep you there, Grey nuns?

A: Grey nuns, Grey nuns that's it.

Q: They spoke French?

A: French only, French only long ago.

00:23:05

Q: When we speak we use CREE and French, Michif?

A: We use some French when we speak, Its strange (laughs).

Q: Is this language spoken in surrounding areas?

A: All over around here.

00:23:45

Q: Do you know any folklore, like Wesahkitak?

A: I don't know any folklore nothing, I never heard any body tell folklore.

Q: Can you name some of the rivers?

A: Rivers?

Q: In CREE, the places where you traveled?

A: There were no rivers where we traveled?

Q: How about?

A: Beaver River that's the only one?

Q: How about?

A: Just Deep River and Ile a la Crosse lake no other river here.

Q: How about nicknames of children who gave those?

A: We did it for fun.

Q: All the nicknames?

A: For nothing, nickname for the kids.

Q: You guys were good hearted?

A: We were good hearted, singing lullabies with them.

00:25:06

Q: The school in Beauval did they stop you from speaking CREE?

A: No, all we spoke was French and CREE. No English, nothing at that time. Just French and CREE that's it. We knew no English at all.

Q: The priest and Grey nuns did any of them speak CREE?

A: There was one that spoke CREE, I wonder where she is, a Grey nun. She disappeared; she spoke good CREE that Grey nun. But she disappeared I wonder where she went that Grey nuns, maybe somebody kidnapped her, I don't know. The rest of them spoke French and a little English, long ago there wasn't a lot of English spoken by the Grey nuns, just French.

00:26:06

(Takes a sip of tea)

Q: Do you know where this language came from?

A: No, I was just a kid I didn't know much. I don't know.

Q: Was there mass in CREE?

A: Yes, we did.

Q: Was there any different prayer?

A: The same like to today, CREE, CREE and French no English long ago, nothing, nothing. Today it's all in English, long ago just CREE and French that's it. No English long ago, the elders don't like that, no they don't like that.

Q: How do you feel about growing with prayer?

A: I still think the same today as I did long ago.

Q: The way mass is today what do you think?

A: Nothing, it's the same except mass is said in English all English. I don't understand English, no. Long ago all we spoke was CREE and French. Today all they speak is English in mass. I don't understand much now.

Q: Do you think prayer has changed?

A: Yes, it has changed. All they do is speak English, not like long ago.

00:28:04

Q: When you were going to school did the children call names and fight each other.

A: No, No.

End: 00:26:06

**Q:** Were you equal?

**A:** The same, same. We were raised the same. We were looked after at school, good.

**Q:** Did the children show hate?

**A:** No, nothing.

**Q:** In Beauval, when first started school what happened?

**A:** Nothing.

**Q:** What were you taught?

**A:** All sorts of things in French. Singing in French at mass. And we played, no English long ago, nothing. Today all they do is speak English.

**Q:** Were you taught other thing like to sew, cook things like that?

**A:** To cook yes, and to make things with yarn. We were taught things like that.

00:29:20

**Q:** Were you never taught English?

**A:** No never.

**Q:** Just French?

**A:** Just French, yes. That's it no English long ago, nothing.

**Q:** How about songs was there any in the half-breed language?

**A:** What songs?

**Q:** Do you remember any songs?

**A:** No, CREE songs?

**Q:** Any, do you remember?

**A:** No, there was not much long ago, not much long ago of songs.

**Q:** Who taught you to make hides?

**A:** Your grandmother, Grandmother Millie after I got married she showed me how to make hide.

**Q:** That's your mother in law?

**A:** Yes, my mother in law, your dad's mom.

**Q:** Did you do bead work?

**A:** Yes, I sewed.

**Q:** Did you make moccasins?

**A:** Yes, lots.

**Q:** Only moccasins?

**A:** Only moccasins long ago.

**Q:** How about jackets?

**A:** No, nothing.

00:30:56

**Q:** What kind of patterns did you like beading?

**A:** Nothing just moccasins

**Q:** Flowers?

**A:** Flowers different things.

**Q:** Before the Doctors arrived, do you know of any midwives?

**A:** I wonder whom. I had Ganas (nickname) in Fall River (river by Pinehouse) an old lady from there assisted me, she was good.

**Q:** She must have assisted a lot other women also?

A: Yes there was a lot of old women that did that. That's all we had long ago, women were good at that.

Q: The children growing up in Ile a la Crosse who do you think taught them the ways of life?

A: I don't know, I wasn't here too often. I was never here I grew up else where.

00:32:10

Q: Did you work later on?

A: I worked later on for Alex Ahenakew at the Ravioa. I work there when I got married. I was working there.

Q: What did you do there?

A: I worked indoors, cooking, washing clothes, washing floors I did every thing.

Q: Where else did you work?

A: No where.

Q: In the Hospital?

A: Long ago, long ago. Wasn't that long ago I worked in the old hospital.

Q: How much did you get paid?

A: 14 dollars a week that's all.

Q: 14 dollars?

A: 14, 14 dollars a week with Adelaide, Adelaide Kenny. We got paid ever week on Sunday, 14 dollars a week and we work hard. We would be on our knees washing the floor, and today they use a mop. And us we would be on our knees, that's all we did, 14 dollars week that's all. Oh lord!

Q: It was tough?

A: It was tough but things were not expensive.

Q: Things were cheap?

A: Things were cheap, it was tough to work long ago no tools like today.

Q: Did you have a garden?

A: No.

Q: You didn't grow anything like a farmer?

A: No, we were never here we would always be moving from place to place. There were probably gardens but we didn't have one.

00:34:15

Q: Talk about one of your moving trips?

A: (talking with one of the older ladies) We moved, the men would hunt, we moved again, the men would hunt. When they killed something I would slice the meat and smoke it, made dry meat. Than we made hide, it was tough long ago.

Q: When you made dry meat did you make the stuff that's crushed also?

A: Yes, I did. I would trade it for food. We moved a lot long ago, that's the only way no welfare long ago. (Pause) All we did was move we didn't depend on welfare, no. We move and moved even though we had children. But it was all right we didn't suffer we were well.

Q: How about moss?

A: In the fall I gather moss and dry it out for the winter. I had twins I would still move.

Q: What did you use the moss for?

A: I would shred it and put it on the cloth diaper. Only the moss would get soiled. I would throw that way. It didn't create a lot of work this way. I was

never stuck, no. Even though I had twins and always moving I didn't find it hard I was blessed. I breast-fed them and feed porridge too. I would boil the porridge to make milk. That's all.

00:37:07

Q: That's all your babies ate?

A: That's all, porridge its good, better than milk. You boil it slowly, slowly than strain it slowly; it's the best. I was never stuck, no. Never stuck I was a good worker, I was never stuck, no.

End: 00:37:39:04

Q: It that it?

A: That's it.

Q: You shared a lot with us.

A: I shared a lot, yes.

Q: that's what they wanted to hear.

A: That's how we survive. I went to Kazan Lake many times to make dry meat. It would be about this time when I would leave, June. This one time I moved 2 time in the spring, 2 times that's all we did. We were well.

Q: Where did you stay in tents?

A: In tents there were no houses, it was good, good.

Q: Was there a group?

A: Sometimes there was, sometimes. Sometimes there were lots of us; sometime we would go alone. I remember this one time I was left alone I was real scared. I saw bear tracks, I was alone with Leleap (nickname) and Jean. I didn't sleep a wink all night. The bear was making noise all night. We the men returned I gave them hell for leaving me alone even though they knew the bear was around here. They never left him again, I'll tell you. That's all right, a bear is not dangerous unless its provoked. Many times I had it hard, many times. I would backpack 4 miles at a time.

Q: When children were sick what did you use?

A: Nothing much, I used cod oil that's all I used. When they had fever I would rub them with cod oil from head to toe. It was tough to come to town, so I would treat them myself. They didn't get sick much, not very often, no.

00:40:39

Q: Thank you Mom, Thank you.

00:40:41

End of Interview