

Mark Calette—Parks Canada Interview, March 5, 2012

Disclaimer: *The views presented in this interview are those of the interviewee and are not the views of the Gabriel Dumont Institute. This interview is copyright of the interviewee and can only be used for reference purposes. It can not be republished and/or repackaged in any way without the written permission of the interviewee and/or his/her successors.*

This is Bradley Brown (BB), conducting an interview on behalf of the Gabriel Dumont Institute on March 5, 2012, for the Southwest Métis project that is being done in conjunction with Parks Canada.

BB: Question 1: Now sir, could you please tell me your name and your home community?

Mark Calette (MC): My name is Mark Calette, and my home community, where I live currently, is Warman Saskatchewan, but I pretty much grew up in Saskatoon, but my roots within the Métis community go back to Round Prairie.

BB: Question 2: Who were/are your parents and grandparents, where were they from?

MC: Primarily from Round Prairie, but André Trottier, who would be my great-grandfather, was from Maple Creek, yep.

BB: And that was your great-grandfather, right?

MC: Yes.

BB: Question 3: Did or does anyone in your family speak Michif or serve in the military? Do you speak Michif?

MC: I only speak a little bit of conversational Michif, my grandmother, who is still alive, is a fluent Michif-Cree and Michif-French speaker.

BB: ... And what's her name?

MC: Mabel Belcourt, but her maiden name would be Mabel Chartier. She's about 90 years old, and still alive.

BB: Oh wow...

BB: Question 4: How were the Métis treated in your community, did your family encounter racism from the larger community, do you have specific examples?

MC: As this relates to this project, I can really only speak from a Saskatoon examples, not sure if that applies...

BB: Yeah, we can take anything your willing to share ...

MC: Okay, I would say that growing up, being Métis in the urban setting of Saskatoon was, there certainly wasn't a good thing, to be known as Métis and thus, my family and my Dad, we didn't talk about it much, we knew we were different, but we didn't really know why, and I think that was hidden from us because Dad didn't want us to have to face the things he had faced as a youth growing up. And so, we didn't really know much about who we were, and that was on purpose, Dad did that to prevent us from suffering as he did. Yeah.

BB: Okay, did your Dad also have to live with that kind of hiding it too, or was it more ..?

MC: Oh yeah, Dad, Dad obviously, you know, growing up, I mean he grew up around Glaslyn and Midnight Lake, you know those areas that are, you know, strong Métis communities. That's where he grew up, and of course, growing up like that he was very aware that, you know, he was different, and he was treated differently, and so he made a conscious decision quite early on that, you know, he wasn't going to let his kids go through what he went through, because he suffered an enormous amount of racism. In fact, he was more content to let people think that he was Hawaiian or Polynesian, than he would Métis. Yep.

BB: Really, Wow. Yeah, 'cause the only reason why we ask is that's a pretty big theme, and I think it's a big theme in Métis history in that time period too, but we're finding a lot in that area too, a lot of families experienced what your family was experiencing too...

MC: Right. So, I mean, Dad obviously grew up in kind of what we would call maybe central to north Saskatchewan, but my, uh, great-grandmother and grandmother obviously spent time in Maple creek, a lot of time in and around Swift Current, Lac Pelletier ...

BB: Oh, Ok.

MC: In fact, the last census that's available, they're in a place called Eagle Quill Lake ... I don't even know where that is anymore, because nobody seems to know where that is! But that's where they took census, and a lot of the Trotters that took census at that time, whether they were, you know, kind of from the Val Marie area, or Lac Pelletier, or Swift Current, they all took census in the same location. So, you know, our family also has a strong connection with the southwest, both through our great-grandfather being from, being born in Maple Creek, to, you know, them spending an awful lot of time in the Swift Current area ...

BB: That's true, fairly close, places...

MC: Be interesting to find out where this, place where they took census, where that is, because it's likely a name of a place that has either changed or doesn't exist anymore. It'd be really neat to find out where that is.

BB: Yeah, go do some digging ...

MC: Yeah. I've asked but no one seems to know.

BB: Oh, really. Haven't found the right person yet, hey?

MC: Apparently not.

BB: Well, thank you for that. Question 5: What other Métis families lived in the vicinity? Were they Michif speakers?

MC: Well, ok, of course we grew up in Saskatoon, but I don't know who was a Michif speaker or wasn't in the area in which we lived, but there were many Métis families living in the exhibition area around where I grew up. I just didn't know who they were. I mean, we had people living down the block that were our cousins, I find out now, that I didn't even know ...

BB: Yeah.

MC: ... So, you know, how many of those families spoke Michif, it's hard to know, but, within our family, you know, my Dad obviously, you know, does know some, and of course, Grandma, she can, she can speak, it fluently.

BB: Yeah. Thank you. Question 6: Do you know any traditional Métis stories or songs, and would you care to share them?

MC: You know... I'm gonna have to probably pass on that one because we weren't brought up with the culture, so I didn't really get raised with any of that information ... I know some stuff now, but that's only from learning later on in life, but, as far as growing up and in the communities in which we're from, I don't have any, anything to really add to that one.

BB: Okay, Well that's fine. Question 7: What sort of resources did your family harvest? Where and when were these collected?

MC: Well, we didn't do any harvesting growing up in an urban centre, but I mean, Dad growing up, around Glaslyn and Midnight Lake, that was just way of life ...

BB: Yeah. Was he an agricultural farmer, or ... ?

MC: Well, I think Dad helped out do that with neighboring farmers, but it think for them what harvesting meant to them, is like, keeping fed, and having food. Dad going out and trapping the food and for his grandmother who raised him. Like, our Kokum, our great-grandmother ... I mean, that's how they lived. They lived in the bush, and you know, that's how they kept themselves alive, was by using, you know, the traditional harvesting methods that, you know, have been passed down for generations and generations.

BB: So, for your Dad's generation, that was still a big part of their lifestyle?

MC: Yes. Yes. It wasn't until he moved out of there and to the city, that he didn't do that anymore, but, all growing up, that's how he lived ...

BB: Like, that's what he knew ...

MC: ... That's what he knew. Yeah.

BB: Okay, awesome, thank you. Question 8: What sort of traditional medicines were used in your community and family? Who were the medicine people in your family and community?

MC: My Kokum was the medicine person in our family, Dad speaks of having different teas, and different things that Kokum would use, from like the birch trees, and different plants. He doesn't quite know exactly what they all were, although we have some relatives that seem to know a lot more...

BB: Oh, that's good ...

MC: One thing for sure is, like, our Kokum, she cured a man of gangrene ... with her traditional remedies ...

BB: Really? Wow.

MC: Yes. And so there's someone in, you know, in the Métis community that didn't have to suffer the loss of limbs 'cause our Kokum used her traditional remedies to save him from that.

BB: That's amazing. That's amazing how much, you know, our traditional medicines can do for things like that ...

MC: Exactly. And so, Dad grew up having those things as a daily part of his life, and so did all of our cousins and people of Dad's generation, they still do. In fact, to this day, what I would call Dad's like, first cousins and stuff, they still harvest rat root or Belle-Angélique. They still do that, it's still a part of their way of life, and I'm able now to start to go in and learn from them, where this stuff grows, and how it's harvested. So, it's been a part of our life, at least that part never died off, and I still have access to it, through our family. So, I'm happy about that, there are still people in our family that have that information, so we're thankful.

BB: That's really good. I was going to kind of follow up on that and say did any of that kind of transcend into your generation, and what you do now? It seems like it has...

MC: It has, and what's good about it is, I'm still gonna be able to learn as time goes on, and take part in these traditional activities. It's just me making the effort to get out there ... but the opportunity is there.

BB: That's good, that's good. Question 9: Okay, moving on ... Did anyone in your family live in a Métis road allowance community?

MC: Yeah. Dad, and our Grandma, and our Kokum, they all did. In fact, if you want to use Highway 4 as kind of, the connector route, right from the American border down near Val Marie, right up, if you take Highway 4, right on up to past the Battlefords, and into Glaslyn, that was the route that

they often travelled and live on. Dad speaks of stories of living on the road allowance and never living anywhere long enough to get an education ...

BB: Oh, Okay. So, yeah...

MC: So his life was bouncing around from spot to spot, just because as improvements came through, or different things happened, they had to move.

BB: Yeah, exactly. As soon as things become more established or something ...

MC: Yeah, he had to move. So that's all Dad knew, up until his teen years. He only has about a grade 2 education for that reason, because they were never anywhere long enough for Dad to go to school.

BB: So how long were they kinda in flux like that for?

MC: Well, Dad was born in like the mid-40s, and so for him that's going to be right up until the early '60s, I think. And then, by the time the early '60s come on, Kokum remarries, and they start living in a house, and have a place of their own, and stuff starts to ...

BB: Be a little bit more stable.

MC: Be a bit more stable, yeah. So he got to transition, right from the "never knowing, living wherever they could find a spot" to having more of a permanent home location, and so he kind of was in that transition period where they went from never knowing where they were going to live, to having a place that they could live in, and so he remembers that.

BB: Yeah. He probably would have seen a lot of change in his lifetime ...

MC: Yeah. And it's funny, 'cause it's not over a long period of time, but the transition just happened to be when he was a young person.

BB: Yeah, exactly. Question 10: Did you have anyone in your family that made beaded or embroidered moccasins or other items? Do you know what happened to these artifacts?

MC: Yeah. I mean, our Kokum knew how to do that. My Grandma/Kokum, Mabel Chartier, I don't know if she knows how to do that or not, because that wasn't something that Dad knew much about. But our first cousins, Dad's first cousins, they did that work, and I think to this day, still do. So, it was still a part of the overall family structure of teaching those things, but depending on whether you're a man or woman, and depending on what your interest level was because Dad's cousins and him all got brought up in the same house. So, these people that know how to do this, they got taught in the same household where he lived. So, this stuff was happening, but because Dad was more into the, his role was more into the gathering of food, and hunting for food, and fishing for food. So, he didn't necessarily get those things, but those things were passed off in his family household ...

BB: Yeah, It was just part of the roles, you know, and what people have time for nowadays, you know what I mean.?

MC: Exactly. So I think a lot of the female cousins, they know how to do this, and did it, and do beautiful work.

BB: Nice. Question 11: How did your family celebrate special occasions and holidays, such as Christmas, Easter, or New Years?

MC: They didn't really celebrate any of those holidays, really at all. The only thing that we did is, like once a year, the cousins would make up special meals and that, but it wasn't tied to any specific event or holiday, because our Kokum had a different faith than Catholic, so those things weren't important to her anymore, and so the kids didn't grow up with that. So the only special events and occasions that primarily got done were like marriages, anniversaries, you know? Different significant milestones, and then once a year, there'd always be some kind of special feast of some kind. But for us, living in Saskatoon, we would only get to go to those things just infrequently ... They were happening, but we didn't always go to them.

BB: Yeah, exactly. Question 12: Was anyone in your family involved with the Métis Society?

MC: You know, not directly. I would have to say no to that. I think there have been some members of the extended family certainly involved, but nothing close to our direct line of ancestry too much.

BB: Okay. Question 13: How are the local Métis connected to Fort Battleford, Fort Walsh, and/or Grasslands National Park?

MC: For me, it's the connection with the Trottier family. I think it relates back to 1885, and obviously it would probably be prior to that too, but certainly, when my family left the Batoche and Round Prairie areas, and scooted to the US and had to seek asylum there until things got better ... and then came back, using Highway 4 again as that connector route. That's why you see the Trottier family scattered right from Val Marie, through Biggar, Cando, Meadow Lake, Glaslyn... It's all along that highway, and all the way down. So, you'll see the family remnants all the way, right from the American border, all the way up. Then we also have the connection with my great-grandfather being born in Maple Creek, so that's our connection to the southwest, and to the US because I still have cousins in the northern US, as well ...

BB: 'Cause, the whole family probably ... did some of the family stay down there?

MC: Yeah, some didn't come back. So, with the Trottiers that are even in Val Marie, for instance, some of us have the same cousins in the States. It's interesting to note, if you read in Rita Schillings book, *Gabriel's Children*, there's a death bed pledge made from Antoine Chartier to Cpt. Charles Chartier, telling Charles, you know, take the family back to Canada when its safe, and that happened, its why were in Canada and not the States. In the publication, in that book that Rita did, there's that story. It's interesting, because it explains why some maybe just stayed, and there's some of the family that never did get back here, like Antoine's buried down, I think, in Havre. Antoine would be my

third great-grandfather, okay, so he was elderly in the 1880s. He was already quite elderly, and then he died down there, and then it was safe to bring the family back to Canada. I think that's one of the results of having your family be actively involved in the events at Tourond's Coulee, Fish Creek, and Batoche, we had to get out of Dodge, just like Dumont had too, and everybody who was involved got the heck out of here. That legacy still stays with us, because whether you ended up in Swift Current, whether you ended up in Val Marie, or any of the place, even Round Prairie, and that's the genesis spot for our family. Where did they come to from Red River? Well they came to Round Prairie. So when you think about that and the effect that had, is that really impacted the family greatly in what would come in future years. By not having a place of their own, being on the run, it affected them greatly, and how that goes down to our day is, a lot of the family poverty, the lack of educated people in the family, people still trying to dig out of that cycle, it all relates back to that.

BB: All, like, that 1885 displacement, like, as soon as that happened, you know, like even your father was still on, you know, on the run, or always in flux, you know, moving up to there? I mean you can trace, like, something that happened back in 1885 to your father's generation ...

MC: Exactly, I mean, he's really living the hardships of that. He tells me a story of he's a young teenager, and he's out working for a white farmer in the kind of Rose Town/Kindersley area. He's maybe 13 or 14 or whatever, he's trying to go out and work to bring money back home to help out his Grandma. He tells me the story; he works all summer, and has little tidbits of money given to him over the summer, and then when he goes to receive his final payment as agreed with the farmer at the end of the farming season, the farmer says to him, "Okay," they're trying to settle up, and Dad says, "Okay, well I'm ready to leave, and ready to get my final payment..." and he says, "I'm not paying you anything you little Half-breed."

BB: Wow...

MC: Yeah, so you have a situation like that, at that young age and you grow up like that, and that formulates what Dad would become later, and he didn't want his kids to have to go through that. And so, when you start to then take a look at the effects of what happened for a lot of Métis people from 1885, but especially for those who actually took part in the events there, like Charles Chartier was on Riel's Council on the Exovedate, he was on there, and they had brought up Whitecap and his warriors from the First Nation that was near Round Prairie, and engaged Middleton and them at Tourond's Coulee, Fish Creek, and later Batoche. Okay, and then you have to get out of there to go to the US just to survive, and then when it's safe to come back for everybody, whether that's Dumont, or our family, or any of the others that fled across the border, your life is turned upside down ... how do you move forward from that?

BB: Yeah, Exactly...

MC: I mean, it's one thing if you're a Métis person and you had a family homestead, and you got to keep it, and you suffered all the hardships that came along with it. It's a whole other thing to come back to Canada after being in asylum in the states and going "okay, what now?"

BB: ... Yeah, and having to live on a road allowance for how many years...

MC: Well, wherever right? I've got pictures of Norbert Trottier and Eliza Fisher, who would be my great-great-grandparents, with their grandchildren, and my Grandma's not even born yet, because she's the youngest, it's just some of her brothers and sisters, and there in a tent in the middle of nowhere. I can't imagine how that was; here they are trying to raise kids and a family and they're literally, like when you see the picture, they're literally in the middle of nowhere, and that's how they were living. So, I have a lot of respect for those people because they survived. They're not weak people; they're amazingly strong people. To have gone through all they went through and be survivors is an amazing feat on its own. Where they immune to the ill effects that face all Métis people: being poor, underprivileged, and looked down upon by the new immigrants coming in? No, they had those same problems like everybody else, but just the fact that they survived is amazing, and the fact that, coming down to our day, that were still around is amazing. 'Cause a lot of people would have never made it through those tough winters and tough times living in a tent in the middle of nowhere. In a ditch somewhere, who knows?

BB: Yeah, it's pretty hard to come through things like that.

MC: So, they spent a lot of lot of time, I mean I have a letter from Norbert Trottier, and he's in Swift Current, I think it's in the '20s, and he's trying to get his land back at Round Prairie. I don't think that went too good, by that time that land was already being given out to others. There are some members of the Trottier family that did have homesteads around there, but it didn't work out for everybody. Even for those that did, the land isn't good for anything except for maybe some grazing a little bit, because it's so sandy there. It's not farmland, that's for darn sure. So, in essence, even though that was land they had in the 1880s, and were squatting there even prior to that, at the time it didn't even help them that much 'cause it wasn't fertile for farming and unless you had other things to make money, it was just kind of a lot ...

BB: It was just kind of land to live on ...

MC: Yeah, and then eventually most of those people ended up moving to Saskatoon anyway.

BB: Okay. Question 14: Who are/were your family involved with Fort Battleford, Fort Walsh, or Grasslands National Park? So, do you know if you had any family involved with the forts in that area?

MC: I don't know if they had any involvement with the forts, the only connection I have is that the one grandfather was born in the Maple Creek area. Obviously, my family spent a lot of time in the Val Marie, US, Swift Current area, closer to Grasslands. That's more my connection. Especially, even when talking to, and I think GDI already had Grandma's, a little bit of her oral history on video already, but she remembers being in Montana as a little girl. She remembers them travelling and living down there, and living in that southwest part of the world. Then you move up into, as her parents were trying to find a place to live, it was pretty well all in that southwest Swift Current area and south of there. So that's my connection to that place. I would suggest that Fort Walsh I

wouldn't know, and Fort Battleford I don't know, the only connection I have to Battleford is that's kind of where the family ended up, in that area, in fact Dad was born in North Battleford. So he's part of what would now become that Battleford and district Métis community, in fact, most of our family still kind of lives in that area.

BB: In that vicinity...?

MC: Yeah. If you take in Biggar, Cando, North Battleford, and Glaslyn, most of them are still there.

BB: You guys are occupying the towns!

MC: They are occupying the towns! I recently went to a funeral of my uncle in Battleford, and that's where they made their home.

BB: Oh, Sorry to hear that...

MC: Yeah. So, that's still where a big core of the family moved, but again, before they lived up there, they were trying to make their way south of there, and I think as time went on, I think, that they got pushed up in that direction. By the time you get into the '20s or '30s, they're already starting to move up there, like my Grandma was born in Meadow Lake. And yet, not too long before that they were living in Eagle Quill Lake, down near Swift Current somewhere or south of Swift Current. Again, I think they were just trying to find somewhere to eke out an existence.

BB: Okay, Thank You. Question 15: Are there any historically and culturally significant landscapes or historic sites within the Fort Walsh/Battleford area which you as a Métis person consider important? And I guess we could probably extend that into Grasslands too, if you know anything within those areas, like is there any landscape or anything..?

MC: No, the only thing that's significant to me is that Grasslands is known for their snake habitat, and rattlesnakes, and our Kokum remembers living in those areas, and remembers the snakes, and remembers being a part of that whole region in terms of wildlife and how they lived. But, for me, by the time I come along, Dad has already spent a good part of his time in central Saskatchewan, and then by the time we come along now, we're living in Saskatoon ...

BB: Yeah, you're pretty far removed. It seems like when your family was in that area, they were moving, so that would be different from someone who had grown up there, their entire life where there might be some very significant landmarks, but ...

MC...Not for us. They were just trying to find a place to hang their hat, and yet they did spend an awful lot of time down there, probably because their family was there. Kathy Grant's family and mine took census together. They were cousins, but they took census together in this "Eagle Quill Lakes" or whatever it is. Now Kathy's experience is different than mine because they stayed there, that's where they chose to stay. For the cousins across the border, that's where they stayed, and for people along the path going up towards I guess Meadow Lake, people have stopped and planted roots wherever they could along that path ...

BB: Yeah. It's really interesting to see some of the different trends that come along out of that whole region, because they're really diverse, you know what I mean?

MC: It's funny, they all came from the same place, but how things end up in the end are pretty different. Some of the family ended up in that desert-y kind of Bad Lands area, and then some of the family ended up more north, in the bush. How that all played out is, I think, a result of the times, you know? You went where you thought could make a go of it, I guess.

BB: And I'm noticing a lot too, that a lot of the Medicine Hat people we talk to, ranching was a big part of their lives, but that whole 1885 event, they're so far removed from it, and had no involvement, that they made their livelihood ranching in southern Saskatchewan or just across the border, so it's really interesting to see how that all played out ...

MC: Right, and I mean, if you back far enough, obviously everybody comes from Red River if you're in that same grouping of families, and Round Prairie was the major spot where they first came, and then they spread out to different places after that. And then, depending on where you were at the time, and how you were involved, or how your cousins were involved, or where you were at the time, it just depended on how things played out for you. But everybody was related, and everybody was a part of what we would call these regular trading patterns. They seem to have a lot of connection to Havre and Malta in the northern US, Missoula too. There seems to be pockets of them that ended up in the southwest and stayed there, and then there are other ones that seem to migrate (trails off...) ...But, when you look at the whole family history coming from Red River, and they all pretty well came together, by and large, not everybody, but by and large ...

BB Yeah, there are a few different experiences, but a huge chunk...

MC: ... A huge a chunk of them come to Round Prairie, and where they go after that is all a little different, but certainly the events of 1885 had a huge effect on where people ended up after those events, because up until that time, people were still trying to squat and make improvements, and claim title. Trying to figure out where they were living in terms of Saskatchewan at the time. Because let's face it, it's like Dumont said, they moved away from there to get away from all that stuff going on in Manitoba. Promises weren't kept, things didn't happen. I mean, when you go back to the progenitor of our family, André Trottier and Madame [Marguerite] Paquette, and now were talking, 1820s, 1830s and '40s, in Red River. The entire family comes from them, everybody's roots back there, and they all started moving west because that just wasn't working out in Manitoba...

BB: Exactly, and then something similar happens in Saskatchewan that displaced everyone ...

MC: Exactly, so that's kind of a link to the place, I'd have to say that my linkages are probably strongest in Grasslands, just because I know that my family lived down there, and spent an awful lot of time there with other family, crisscrossing across the border to those other places where they have strong connections and family. So for me that connection is in Grasslands, but I wouldn't have any historical landmarks like other people would that actually grew up there.

BB: Yeah, exactly. Question 16. Moving on, we've kind of already touched on this, but if we could do a quick overview that would be great. Was your family involved with the 1885 resistance at or near Fort. Battleford, or Fort. Walsh, and/or Grasslands National Park? If not, were they involved elsewhere?

MC: They were involved at Tourond's Coulee, Fish Creek, and Batoche. You know, there was so many of the family at those events. I don't even completely know who all was even there. One of the great uncles is buried at Batoche. He's one of the ones on the monument, one of the ones killed. We had some adopted people from our family that died at Tourond's Coulee, who were kind of adopted into Charles Trottier's family. But, all those events lead us to where we end up today, and a lot of that path goes right through Grasslands into the States, and then back once it was safe...

BB: So, in large, what happened was: You had a large portion of your family who was involved in 1885, and because of that, they had to go down south. They eventually made their way back up, but people started settling everywhere, right?

MC: Yeah, I'll share the letter with you afterwards, but it's really telling. When you see your great-grandfather writing a letter for land and he just gives a brief overview "... I squatted on this land, and then during the rebellion we had to leave, and now I'm back. They burned all my buildings down, and they killed all our animals..." You get a little different insight in to what they were dealing with, and how that would affect them for the rest of their lives.

BB: Absolutely, not just where they geographically lived, but a lot of other things transcended into their lives too ... Question 17: What happened to your family after the 1885 Resistance?

MC: Yeah, well we kind of already went over that, but our family definitely took a real brunt of the fallout from that...

BB ... Of what happened and the consequences. Question 18: Has your family been in the area for a long time? How did they make a living? Do you know how your ancestors made a living in the region?

MC: I would suggest that, as it relates to the parks and sites, I think they were just trying to do what they could, and in my case it's more Grasslands, and in that area. As they moved up to the Battlefords too, it was just survival. That's all, it wasn't a complex issue; it was like "where are we going to have sustenance and covering." That was the bare necessities of what they were trying to accomplish.

BB: Yeah, for sure. Question 19: What sort of relationship did the Métis have with the Mounted Police at Fort. Battleford, Fort Walsh, and/or Grasslands National Park? Can you speak to that at all or..?

MC: Well, I think I can speak to that not so much in terms of my family, but maybe from a Parks Canada perspective, and talking with people. I think, initially, the police were seen as a help, in the early days prior to 1885. I mean, a lot of Métis families ended up marrying the soldiers, and then of

course a lot of the Métis ended up being scouts for the police. So I think at all those locations there was a fairly... I wouldn't say it's a good relationship; I wouldn't go that far, I don't know that it was good, but it was a relationship based out of need. The police were getting help from the Métis to set up shop here in the prairies and be who they are, and I guess from the Métis perspective, if there was any kind of ways that they were able to make some money doing that or other means of benefit from those relationships, it was a benefit of, "Hey, we kind of know the territory, and you guys need our help, and maybe there's some benefit to us." I think it was based on that, and then as we move forward into more the events of 1885, I think at least in more central Saskatchewan, that that relationship starts to deteriorate.

BB: Yeah.

MC: But it wasn't like that at first. You hear about guys like Jerry Potts and the different characters down right at Fort Walsh, I think the relationship isn't, maybe it wasn't free from racism and free from suspicion, but it was a relationship out of need, and they were making it work.

BB: Yeah, absolutely, and that's a very common thing of what we've been hearing down there too. Question 20: Did any of your ancestors work for the mounted police at the mounted police posts at Fort Battleford, Fort. Walsh, and/or Wood Mountain? If so, can you tell us anything about them?

MC: I'm not aware of any of that.

BB: Question 21: Do you know if your ancestors took Métis Scrip at Fort. Battleford, Fort Walsh, and/or Wood Mountain? Did they take it elsewhere?

MC: I'm certainly not the scrip expert on our family, that's for sure. I honestly can't say how scrip worked with them. I'm not entirely certain that they didn't take scrip all over. I'm just not sure how that all rolled out. I've seen some evidence of scrip being taken even in Manitoba, but by the time they get here, I don't know. The only thing I know is that they really, really wanted to make Round Prairie work, I know that they were, my family anyway, really active trying to make the southwest work, and then ended up going north. How that worked with them for scrip, I haven't gotten that level of detail from anyone in our family.

BB: That'd be very difficult too, because they would have been in so many places at the time where scrip was taking place where it would have been. It's pretty complex.

MC: Yeah, I don't know if they ever even got offered scrip, to be perfectly honest. I'm just not sure.

BB: Yeah, Exactly. Question 22: How can Parks Canada make Fort. Battleford, Fort. Walsh, and Grasslands National Park more inviting for Métis visitors? How might Parks Canada include more information on the Métis history of these areas?

MC: Well, I think what parks can do is just facilitate the sharing of these stories, how the stories relate to the landscapes, and the history. So, at Fort Walsh, it's not hard, there's a big Métis influence there, and I think it's just sharing those stories. Grasslands, I think it's a lot more of

connection to the land, and the connection to, really, where Grasslands is located now was a huge part of where they lived, and also where they traveled. I think those are the interesting stories, and the stories relating to how Métis people that decided to make that their home, what did that mean for them? And what did that mean for their journey, and their evolution? I think there are some interesting stories around that. I think Fort Battleford had an active involvement with the Métis, both around the events of 1885, but also just as Battleford was becoming a community of sorts, and how the Métis played into that. There are also different stories about how the Métis were involved in some of the perceived crises that happened at Fort Battleford. They never were ambushed or sieged, but yet, many of the overall community, and I say that of the Battlefords, felt like the Métis and First Nations were going to be having a real impact, and taking over the Fort, and taking over the community. Then I think too, in and around the Battlefords, there's that whole interesting Bresaylor story, that also relates to 1885, but it's also talking about different families in that area that had a neat impact, but I don't think is often told. So, I think that you have got different opportunities at different locations, and I think they all basically speak to the formation of what we know now as Western Canada, and I think that all relates to all those locations. The history in Saskatchewan is not that old. So, when you're thinking that the Métis people would have had an impact at every one of those locations, both from a very historical, and even the out working of how things transpired from a historical perspective. But, they also connect to the place, because they were there as these places were being formed, and these events were unfolding.

BB: Yeah, absolutely.

MC: So, I think that if Parks Canada can allow opportunities for those stories to be shared, I think people that come to any of these locations will be quite fascinated to hear that, because this won't be anything that's maybe been spoken about that much before. Especially, if it can be done in a way that's engaging, I think there's a lot of value, both for the Métis community, for institutions like GDI, and also for Parks to have those messages get shared, and have that be an interesting part of peoples overall experience to these locations. Because people are going to go to Fort Battleford, Fort Walsh, and Grasslands for different reasons, you know? If you're going to go to Grasslands, you might be going there to do bird watching; you might be there to see the snake habitat, who knows? But if people are allowed to hear things that, and maybe even take part in activities even, and demonstrations of different things that relate back to the land, or relate back to the history of the historic sites, I think that makes the overall experience richer, and Parks Canada wants that.

BB: That's good, thank you for that Mark. Question 23: Are there specific people or community groups that you would recommend Parks Canada contact to improve their interpretation of Métis history and culture at Fort Battleford, Fort Walsh, and/or Grasslands National Park?

MC: Just the local communities, I think there are some interesting people in the US that could be talked to. Now, how available that is, might end up being by phone or email or something, but I think there are some opportunities there. Even in some of the cities now, where people are living, there are people who can speak to the different parts of these stories. It's a part of today's mosaic that... People live in the cities; they don't live in these places much anymore, and so you may find

that there's community people that have their history in Grasslands, or Fort Battleford area, or Fort Walsh area that now live in the cities, and can share what they know about their grandparents and great-grandparents, and what life for them, how it evolved, and how that has affected the way they live their lives today. I think part of the strategy too, is reaching people in the urban centres that may have these connections that are not easily found. Like, when you go to the communities and you have an open house right at Grasslands, or at Battlefords, or right at the Fort Walsh area, or Maple Creek, you're going to get some of the people, but think of how many people maybe were in these smaller communities, and now live in Regina or Saskatoon. I think that there's a wealth of information still out there, it's just tracking those guys down that's going to be the tough part. But I think there's still a lot of stuff to be told, but those people don't necessarily live in those areas anymore.

BB: Yeah, exactly, we went to Medicine Hat. We've had a lot of really good reception come from out there. We had to go a bit outside the province, but a lot of people had that history that went down there, so I think that's an example of what you're talking about...

MC: So the ongoing journey might be to just keep learning, from wherever people are bringing the stories in from.

BB: Absolutely. Question 24: Did you or any of your ancestors spend time in the proposed Grasslands National Park, or surrounding lands? If so, what type of cultural activities did you, or they, participate in? Are there any particular landscapes or historical sites within the park that you as a Métis person consider culturally and historically significant?

MC: I haven't personally, because I didn't grow up in those areas, I wouldn't have had much to do with them, but I think the one thing that struck me when I started to be able to go to these places was, when you go into the cemetery at Fort Walsh, and you see all the names there, and it's primarily Métis people buried there, that kind of struck me like, "Wow, really? I wouldn't have ever thought that." So for me personally, I think that was a significant moment thinking "You know what, there are still a lot of stories out there, and need to be told, and that I could travel this far and see the same names that you're going to see at Batoche, or the same names you're going to see in the Battlefords area." So everybody's connected, you know, it's all interconnected, and I think that was for me, the one landmark that I could say really made a difference in me getting my head around how much the early people travelled, but also how it's all interconnected.

BB: Absolutely. Question 25: A cultural resource value statement is being developed for Grasslands National Park. The park has identified a number of potential cultural values, which may be important to the history of the park. Would any of these identified potential value themes be important to you as a Métis person? If so, which ones, and what connections do you see? Are there any other cultural themes, which may have connections to Métis people that should be considered? So in creating this statement, some of the prevailing themes that are being considered are things like: the Trading Post, relationship with the bison, ranching, farming, the Great Depression, governance and administration, creation of the national park, paleontological and geological features, early

exploration and surveys, historic use of the area. So these are identified themes. Do any of these themes, for you as a Métis person, do any of them really hit home for you, or are there any other themes that you think should be identified?

MC: I think, for the most part, all those things are good. The only thing that, maybe would relate to Grasslands in terms of a theme or story, and it's probably listed under one of the last ones there, the relationship to the land, or..?

BB: Historic use of the Area...

MC: Yeah, historic use of the area. So I'm going to expand on that one. There are stories that there were huge Métis camps that were on the buffalo hunt on Grasslands, and that because that Highway 4, or what we today call Highway 4, was probably a main artery for these wagon routes to go. I think that's a real significant part of that story, as well as then the ranching and the people that ended up staying there, I think is an important part of the story. But, if you want to go pre-established community, I think that those lands were a very integral part of the route that a lot of the bison hunters and the traders used. That they would camp there and have huge caravans that assembled there and camped there, and that was part of their regular route. I think that's pretty meaningful.

BB: Yeah. That's a pretty big thing.

MC: You know, I think that use of the land, because I mean First Nations were using that land long before the Métis people had had that as part of their travels, whether you had the contact from however the trading happened. But, I think the secondary story is the Métis use of that land, as they evolved as a people, and as they defined their own culture and their own way of life. To me, that's the big one. You know, when you think of Grasslands, it's such a big place, right? What is the main thing, well, what's our relationship to that land? Well I think a big part of it is that it was one of the important kind of hubs, where they would camp and do their hunting, or even being a place where they would camp while they were going to and fro to their traditional hunting lands. Because I don't know if we know enough about where they did all their hunting, but certainly there are stories of there being large caravans camped out in the Grasslands area. So, I think learning a bit more about that would be really interesting.

BB: Awesome, Okay well that is it for the question part.