

## Kathy Grant—Parks Canada Interview, December 19, 2011

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Darren Prefontaine (DP): ... Hello, this is Darren Prefontaine, it's December 19th at 1:30 pm and I'm interviewing Kathy Grant nee Trottier for the Fort Walsh, Grasslands National Park, Fort Battleford partnership with Gabriel Dumont Institute. Hi Kathy, how are you?

Kathy Grant (KG): Good. Thanks a lot Darren. I look forward to doing this interview with you guys.

DP: Yes. I'm looking forward to it too. Could you please tell me your name and your home community please?

KG: Okay my name is Kathy Grant and I am from Orkney right now, which is about 25 miles from Val Marie. I'm originally from Val Marie, and I was a Trottier, and I was raised here in the community.

DP: Okay, who were, and are your parents and grandparents and where were they from?

KG: Okay my parents were Buzz and Mary Trottier. My dad, Buzz, was from this, he was born and raised, well he wasn't born here, but he was raised here. His, my grandfather, his father, had homesteaded here.

DP: Okay.

KG: And my mother is, she's Irish, and she is from the Climax area which is about 45 minutes from here. And my grandparents were John and Anastasia Trottier and my grandfather homesteaded here in, I'm not quite sure, it's either 1909 or 1910. And they made a homestead here. And my grandmother was from the Gros Ventres [Fort Belknap Reservation] reservation south of Montana. And she was a Gladu.

DP: Okay. So they were both Aboriginal, but your mom's line was non-Aboriginal?

KG: Yep. My mom's line was non-Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal.

DP: Did or does anyone in your family speak Michif?

KG: Not that I know of. They might have when they were younger but not, I don't know.

DP: Just generally French or Cree and English?

KG: Yep.

DP: Okay.

KG: You know I just heard that word Michif probably maybe 15 years ago. And that was through my dad's, well my great-aunt Louise Moine. And she talked about the Michif language, but other than that I'd never heard of that before.

DP: So say when your grandparents were by themselves they would have spoke French or Cree together?

KG: They spoke Cree.

DP: So their Métis orientation was probably more of a Cree-First Nations than probably a French orientation?

KG: Yep. Absolutely.

DP: Did anyone in your family serve in the military?

KG: Yes.

DP: Could you name them please?

KG: My grandfather John Trottier served in both the First World War and the Second World War. And then my dad's oldest brother Lloyd, he served in the Second World War. He was very young, but he did serve overseas. My grandfather never ever went overseas, but my uncle did. They're the only ones that served.

DP: Did they receive any help at all being veterans from the government or were they kind of shunned?

KG: I don't know about my grandpa. My dad never ever said that but I know my uncle Lloyd, they kind of had a, gee I wish my dad was here because he kind of knew the trouble that uncle Lloyd went through. I don't know if it was because he lived in the States, because he lived in Whitefish, Montana. But I know he had to come up here, and my dad helped him with the Veterans Affairs. I don't know, they never said that he was shunned, but I know they had trouble getting assistance, or something but I never really questioned it, I just remember them talking about it.

DP: So your family, there's a lot of ties between Montana and Saskatchewan and back and forth?

KG: Yes, quite a bit.

DP: Were a lot of your relatives like dual citizens?

KG: I'm not sure if they were dual citizens. I know my grandmother was born in the US. And then they were married down in Malta. And then, let's see some of the kids went to school down there. My dad's one sister went to school there. Are they dual citizens? I'm not sure, but they're probably, probably most of them were born up here. There were ten siblings in my dad's family. And, but most of them, let's see, one, two, three out of the ten, there's three that lived in Canada and the rest all lived in the States.

DP: Now if they, I guess if they were Gros Ventres, they would be considered Native Americans and lived on a reservation. Like you said, some of your relatives did anyway.

KG: Well my grandmother did, I know she was raised on the Gros Ventre reservation. And I know that it's strange because well, three of my brothers live in the States now because of the hockey and they just you know, stayed down there. But I remember my cousins talking about a pay out with the Rocky Boy Reservation. So some of the kids got money and some of the kids didn't. So me and my sister never received anything, not sure if that's because we lived in Canada, but some of the other Canadian cousins that lived up here they received a payout. And I'm not sure why me and my sister were excluded. And we didn't really pursue it. But I know that all of my American cousins got a pay out. And all of the relatives did. But I'm not sure how big of a payout it was, but I remember my Calgary cousins talking about this payout and they were wondering why we didn't. I said, "Well I don't know if we were supposed to fill out some papers, I had no idea." We didn't pursue it anyway, we should of, we just didn't.

DP: Okay. How were the Métis treated in your community? Did you or your family ever encounter racism from the larger community?

KG: Yes, yes. Very strong French-Catholic village. And my dad talked about it a lot when he was, he talked about it quite a bit. But he was taught by the nuns in school, and he said when he was finally accepted was when they realized he could sing, and he had a gift for his voice and sort of a natural born singer, entertainer. He could play lots of instruments. So they called him "Little Buzzo." He was gifted very musically, but well accepted then by the nuns. But in the larger community, like they didn't come to town very often. They were about 5 miles south of town here where we were raised on this ranch. And he said when they used to come to town, the comments they would hear was that, "The Indians were coming." But the Indians were coming to town and what they would do is run to the window to see who the Indians were. He said as we got older we realized they were talking about us. So yeah, there was strong, yeah, I think quite a bit of racism. And, there was some when we were growing up as well. We heard the name calling like "Half-Breed" and "wagon burners" and "dirty Indians," and that was my generation. And when my kids went to school here they had no idea that there was anything like that until they got older, and they were called the same things and they were like, "What does that mean?" So they didn't even realize what that was all about.

DP: Would you say that it has gotten better, like say for your grandchildren's generation? Like now you're just Mister—

KG: I think so, yeah. There's just not that many of those strong French-Catholics left here. There's been a lot of turn over of those large French families here that no longer live here.

DP: And that's where most of that came from?

KG: Yeah that's where it came from. You didn't hear it so much from the English-speaking people than you did from the French. The French were quite dominate dominant here at one point. You know it was mainly a French-Catholic so when you have this, you know, there was only two families that were Métis that I knew of and that was, well three I guess; the Moine, Joe Trottier, John Trottier family and Louise Moine. That would be the only three that I know of that were Métis in this area.

DP: And they were just basically, extended families?

KG: Yeah.

DP: Okay. You think the church played a big role in the racism in the community?

KG: Yes, I do.

DP: It was the main force do you think? Or one of them?

KG: You know I wouldn't blame them. I don't think that they were the ones to blame, but I think it was something that was passed on by generations.

DP: It was just tied into their culture.

KG: Very much tied into their culture, yeah.

DP: Okay. You mentioned music, this love of music, everyone in your family seems to have it. Did that come from your father or your grandpa or was that just something that your family has always had?

KG: No, it came from my grandpa, my grandpa John. And my grandma was musical too, Anastasia. She was a piano player and my grandpa was a fiddle player. And his brother Max was a fiddle player as well. So they used to play at all the little rural, what they called kind of schoolhouses I guess. So and then my dad, in my dad's family most of his brothers and sisters are musical. There might be oh maybe three of them that aren't, but the rest all played an instrument or sang. Yeah, and I think it was because my grandparents were. And I know why that was because a lot of parties happened there so that was the place to go to when the bar shut down or I know they used to talk about, my grandma and grandpa's house is right behind the Val Marie hotel.

DP: Okay.

KG: You just had to walk out the back door and, so yeah there was lots of drinking and partying and music. I think overall it was considered a fun thing. Although sometimes, I'm sure the drinking got out of hand. But I think for the most part it was fun.

DP: In terms of the music that your family would play now, you don't do much of the traditional Métis stuff, more, I guess, contemporary country type music now or?

KG: Yeah, now I do. My dad was a fiddle player too, and he played all those jigs that my grandpa played. I would think they were like a Métis jig because a lot of them didn't even have names.

DP: Just old Red River music basically, eh?

KG: My dad would say, "I'm going to play one of your grandpa's fiddle jigs," and we were like, "okay." So I never knew what the names were I just knew how they went.

DP: Okay.

KG: They were definitely jig-type music.

DP: Did they, your grandparents and your dad, did they sing like the old traditional songs too or just whatever was popular in their generation or you don't remember?

KG: I think what was popular in their generation. I don't remember my grandpa, I remember him playing the fiddle, but just the jig-type music. Yeah, they used to do some singing, but I can't remember what the songs were called. I could probably find that out from my dad's older sisters because a couple of them are still alive.

DP: Okay, that's be great.

KG: Yeah, I'll do that. I'm just going to put a circle around that question.

DP: Do you remember hearing any traditional Métis stories when you were a kid? Like Rougaroo stories or Chi-Jean or Wiisakaychak or anything like that?

KG: No, no.

DP: No stories eh?

KG: Sometimes, I think what I felt like as a kid once I realized there was this racism that existed, I really felt that my grandma wanted us to fit in. So she kind of kept all that kind of, her past and how she was raised a secret. She didn't want to share it because she didn't want us to be talking about it so that would be more reason for people to you know, kind of make fun of us I guess. She wanted us to really fit into the white, white people's ways. She used to say that. "You want to get along with these white people," she would say that to us. Because we would ask grandma, "How come they are calling us wagon burners?" And the worst ones were the ones that lived right next door to her.

DP: Okay.

KG: And then we found out later they applied for their Métis status. Because my sister worked for the Swift Current, like the Prairie Dog local, and she goes these same people were coming to me looking for their cards. And really, she goes, “Yeah isn’t that funny?”

DP: Well it’s ironic and it’s a story we hear a lot actually when we go to communities where Métis and French Canadians lived. There was a lot of racism, but at the same time people were so interconnected.

KG: Yeah, let’s see there was 1, 2, 3 families from here that I know of that went to her looking for their Métis status. So my sister she’s fairly, you know, jovial and she said, “Aren’t you the ones that used to call us wagon burners and Half-Breeds and red skins?” And they just joked about it, but really, that’s the way it was.

DP: Going to switch gears here now and talk about resources your family might have harvested and collected. In the area in and around Val Marie, what sort of resources did your family harvest? Like from the land and where and when were these collected? Like berries or bison bones or whatever you could think of, that would be great to help out here.

KG: Well we were raised on wild meat. My dad used to go out and shoot mule deer and white tail. We never ever had pheasants and stuff like that. He was never fond of that. But I think my grandparents did. And we used to always go berry picking like Saskatoons, goose berries. What else did we pick? We used to do that with grandma. She knew where all the places were at, what else did we live off the land? Well, and they used to always go beaver hunting every spring. That was what my grandpa did. It would always flood so he would get his boat out and go beaver hunting and then they’d like skin the beavers, and I don’t know how they did it but stretch the skin.

DP: Okay so they sold furs too?

KG: That happened every spring. That was a given.

DP: They did a lot of trapping then?

KG: A lot of trapping, yep.

DP: How was the trapping down there? Was it good like coyotes, lynxes and foxes, that sort of thing?

KG: Well the only thing I remember him trapping was the beaver. But there would have been a lot of coyote trapping. And maybe he did, I never saw it. I never saw my grandpa do that or my dad, but mainly what I remember was the beaver hunting.

DP: Okay.

KG: One thing I should bring up and I know they talk about this is my great-grandpa Patrice, he was, they claim he was the last buffalo hunter. He was the one that went on the last buffalo hunt in the area. So that date, now I’m not sure, I’ve heard 1869 is the date that I’ve heard , but I don’t know if that’s documented. I seen it in some writings but.

DP: Yeah. they generally disappeared in the 1870s from Saskatchewan so that sounds about right.

KG: That's what I've heard, 1869 was the last buffalo hunt here and my great-grandpa was on it.

DP: And he was kind of an interesting guy because he came from Quebec didn't he?

KG: Yes, he did.

DP: So he was actually a French Canadian that intermarried into Métis and First Nations out here?

KG: That's what I've been told too, Darren.

DP: But he really adapted well and was one of the, I guess, leaders of the Métis community, I guess of the community in general.

KG: Yep.

DP: I had heard that your family had such expert knowledge of the land that they guided all the pioneers and farmers and ranchers to their sites. Is that true?

KG: Well I've heard that too, but I don't know exactly which ones. I've just heard that the Trotters were you know, they were scouts. But I never heard who that was. Like if it was Patrice or John, Jim or Max, I don't know. What I remember people talking about was these people, like my family used to be in the Lac Pelletier area, but they'd only stay there for a month, and they'd move on, and they'd come back there, and they never really settled there, but that was one of their stopping places. Does that make sense?

DP: Yep.

KG: That's what they used to talk about.

DP: So they moved in the area quite a bit in south-western Saskatchewan before they finally settled in Val Marie?

KG: Yeah because my dad was born on the Red Pheasant Reserve, up by Willowfield. I don't even know if it's there any more, but up by Battleford at Red Pheasant Reserve. That's where my dad's birth certificate, that's what it said on there. So I knew they were kind of migratory and nomadic.

DP: Were they mainly scouts, guides, ranchers, cowboys, that sort of thing?

KG: They were all of those things, scouts, guides, ranchers, and cowboys.

DP: In terms of the ranching aspect, was that the main, I guess area, of your families' operations after Patrice came out west?

KG: Yep, they had lots of horses. They were still there when my dad came back to the ranch in 1965. He came and took over the ranch for good. Like he used to come back in the summers before that and help with the haying. But then he came back in 1965, and there was just this big herd of horses there. I still remember that. They were my grandpa's.

DP: They were his?

KG: And he would use these horses for like rodeo stock, supplying rodeo stock to the rodeos in the area.

DP: Did they ride in the rodeos, your family?

KG: Yep. My dad's oldest brother Lloyd was the, well they said he was, could have been a world champion bronc rider.

DP: And your dad and your brothers did too?

KG: Yep, my dad and brothers did. They did more of the like, calf roping and barrel racing, not so much the bronc riding.

DP: I guess they wanted to save themselves for their hockey careers maybe.

KG: I think so.

DP: Yeah that 's a rough business.

KG: Yeah.

DP: What sort of traditional medicines were used in your community and family? Do you remember your grandma, like using any traditional medicines?

KG: I don't, she probably did but I don't remember what they were.

DP: Okay.

KG: Off the top of my head, I can't but I can ask this question to my aunts.

DP: Okay, that would be great.

KG: They'll know.

DP: Were there any people in the community that were good medicine people that you remember?

KG: I do remember people talking about Mrs. Carlier. Irvin Carlier's grandmother.

DP: Okay.

KG: She was a midwife in the area, and she delivered babies and made up her own concoctions, and had all these herbal remedies. So I remember that, I remember people talking about that. And that was pretty general knowledge, like everybody knew that, everybody talked about that.

DP: Did Louise Moine do any of that sort of stuff or?

KG: The only thing I know Louise Moine did was she made her own wine. And a lot of people thought it had a medicinal quality to it, I don't know that for sure. Or, if it just numbed the pain. If it was probably, but she used to make dandelion wine, Saskatoon, oh what else did she make? She had all kinds of different wines that she made. I never tasted them, but I know people commented on them, that they were good and strong.

DP: Did, this probably doesn't really apply to your family or the community so much, but in Val Marie did any Métis or anyone in your family live in a road allowance community?

KG: No, not that I know of. I've never heard that.

DP: They all owned their own land.

KG: Yep.

DP: Okay. Did anyone in your family make beaded or embroidered moccasins? And if so, what do you think happened to the artefacts?

KG: Yeah that's a good question. I know my grandma used to do some beading but her hands got so crippled up as she got older, but she sewed. She was a wonderful sewer. My grandpa used to make rawhide robes and lariats, and bosals. We called them hackamores. Used to make those from rawhide. My grandma made mitts and moccasins and I can remember that. Where they're at now I'm not sure. But, I have an aunt in Idaho and an aunt in Calgary and they might know. They might know where some of these things are at. But I know she made all that stuff, my grandma.

DP: Was that a source of income for your grandma and your grandpa as well or they just made it for the family?

KG: I think they just made it for the family, not that I know of, like, I don't think they were ever paid for it, but I don't know that for sure either.

DP: I'm assuming your family's background was traditionally Catholic, how did your family celebrate special occasions and holidays such as Christmas, Easter and New Year's?

KG: Well those, Easter wasn't as big as Christmas and New Year's. New Year's was probably—

DP: A big one.

KG: The big one. That's what I remember and I was pretty young then, but what they used to do is go house-to-house, bring their music equipment, like their, it was all acoustic. Like, not banjos, but guitars and fiddles, and they, I don't know if they hit every house. I don't know if they'd be welcome at every house, but it would start early in the day and go until all hours in the evening. And you know, us kids we used to just go along and as we got tired they just made a bed for us on the floor. But, I remember those being lots of fun. Lots of good times and it was our family.

DP: And that was New Years?

KG: That was New Years.

DP: Did they do a lot, like—

KG: More family, so big family get togethers.

DP: And that was when the big feast was.

KG: Yeah. That's when the big feast was.

DP: What sorts of foods did your family prepare?

KG: Well, I know we had the traditional turkey, but we had as well birds. Like, I would imagine it was goose. But the other things they had were like, they made headcheese from the pork.

DP: Okay.

KG: And blood sausage, there were other things. They ate everything like heart and tongue and liver. I'm trying to think of all the things. My grandma called things, "*poisson*." Now I really got to think because there was some things we didn't like as kids. Grandpa would tell us we had to try it. Didn't have to eat all of it but we still had to try it. I'm going to talk to my sister, she might remember more of that. She's a bit older.

DP: Okay, okay. And lots of desserts and things too?

KG: Yeah, oh yeah, lots of desserts. Like, what were some of the, we always had bannock, that was a main staple.

DP: You ate bannock a lot during your—

KG: Oh yes, we did. My mom, even though she was Irish, she was probably one of the best deer steak cooks and she like, canned the deer meat. Many people used to comment on her canned products and her bannock. She was as good a bannock maker as the Aboriginal people. I'm just going to write that down.

DP: And Christmas and Easter were more religious?

KG: Easter we celebrated probably not to the extent that a lot of Catholics do, but I don't remember people coming home for that.

DP: Just basically Lent and a mass sort of thing?

KG: Yeah, you'd go, yeah. We never ate fish, or we always ate fish on Friday. Never ate meat, you know, during that holy time.

DP: And Christmas wasn't what it is now, it was just mass and then a meal at midnight?

KG: Yep. No the meal was the night before it.

DP: Christmas Eve?

KG: Yep. That was the big celebration, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, but they were both big. It wasn't until I got married that I realized that, you know, it was usually just one or the other.

DP: Yeah when I come from south-western Saskatchewan, and my family was nominally Catholic and we always had a big spread, Christmas Eve too.

KG: Yep we did.

DP: And everyone thought, "Well isn't that after mass?" And I said, "we didn't go to mass anymore." We just, that just became the tradition.

KG: Well we went to mass because we were usually doing the music. Yeah, so sometimes they'd ask my dad to do some special songs for the midnight so we always went.

DP: Okay.

KG: It was ... but we always had lots of family around like his brothers and sisters, and it was big. Those days were big.

DP: Would you say there was a better sense of family back then? Like for extended families and people weren't so disconnected like they seem to be now?

KG: Yeah, oh definitely. Family was huge. I know all my cousins, I know all of them because I spent lots of time with them.

DP: Nowadays you look at young people and they hardly spend any time with their cousins.

KG: It is sad. It's so sad.

DP: Was anyone in your family ever involved with the Métis society or Métis politics? Or, I guess even mainstream politics?

KG: Yeah my dad was involved with the Métis Society.

DP: And what was he, a local president or?

KG: You know what, he was probably a local president. And I need to ask my sister. My sister is involved with the Métis Society.

DP: Did any of that extend back to your grandparents' generation or just your dad's time?

KG: I think just from my dad. Because I remember people driving into my mom and dad's yard, and that was the very first time I heard Métis, before that I always heard Indian. I never heard that word Métis before people drove into my mom's yard, or my mom and dad's yard. They were from the Métis Society and they were from Ponteix. And she was a Liborion.

DP: Okay, and the Liborions were Métis?

KG: Well she was because she was a Lamotte. L-A-M-O-T-T-E.

DP: Okay, okay. Because I know some of them, I forget the name of the young guy [Dominique] I know but I've met a young guy who was university-educated who was a Liborion.

KG: Yeah and he'd be Métis?

DP: I'm not sure. I think his dad was the amateur archaeologist. I don't remember his name but I do remember coming across the name a lot dealing with Ponteix for sure.

KG: Yeah that's where this lady came from.

DP: I'm going to ask you some questions relating to Grasslands National Park in a minute, but I think I should probably ask you about some of your famous family members since we're on the topic since they're Métis.

KG: Sure.

DP: Could you tell me a little bit about your brothers and their hockey careers and what, do you think, they mean to Métis people and people in general in the region?

KG: Yep. So my oldest brother Bryan, he was drafted in 1974 by the New York Islanders. And what they did with him, they didn't think he was quite ready, he was only 18 so he was kind of under age. What they did with him, they told him he had to play one more year of junior hockey like, so he did in Lethbridge. And then he made the jump to the NHL, like he went and tried out and ended up winning Rookie of the Year that year for the NHL. He won many awards like he's won most valuable player, leading scorer. He's won humanitarian awards, he's won 6 Stanley Cups as a player, and then one as an assistance coach. What else has he won? Well my mom had received an award, and it was with an Aboriginal because it was, I got to think of all the people that were there. I can't even think off the top of my

head. He was an actor. I'd have to go through my mom's stuff ,but I know that she has a lot of information in a book. And he goes, Bryan visits all these Aboriginal communities and is a spokesperson.

DP: So he's very proud of his heritage?

KG: Oh absolutely, he speaks of it you know all the time. From the time he's been little and young, he's a very gifted athlete. He was good at everything, he could have made it in baseball. He had a chance to try out, but he decided he wanted to do hockey. He was good at everything, he was good at rodeo. He was good at track and field, he was good at swimming. He was good at everything. Good at music, just very gifted. And so, yeah, gosh I wish I could remember those names, anyways, I will get them to you . And then my other two brothers got drafted into the NHL too, my younger brother Monty was drafted by the New York Islanders, and Rocky was drafted by the New Jersey Devils. They only spent a little short stint in the NHL, and then they went and played on the farm teams. And they haven't been as connected to the Aboriginal as what Bryan has. Bryan's name is really like, I don't want to say household, but you know if you mention that name Bryan Trottier lots of people will associate it to hockey, to Aboriginal plus to the music. I just know he's very gifted that way.

DP: So it was just you and your three brothers then?

KG: Yeah and I have an older sister.

DP: An older sister, right. So two sisters and two brothers.

KG: Three brothers.

DP: Oh sorry, three brothers.

KG: There's five of us kids in the family.

DP: And your oldest sister is involved in Métis politics?

KG: Yep, yep, she is. She works at the Friendship Centre here in Swift Current.

...

DP: How is Cecile [Blanke] related to you folks?

KG: Okay, it goes back. Let's see. She's a LaRocque and my great-grandmother's mother, I think was a LaRocque. I think that's how it goes. Because my great-grandmother was a Whiteford. It must have been here, but it dates back, but it's there. You know Mark Calette sent me some genealogy history, and it's probably there. I can check that out.

DP: Okay, great.

KG: Because I have that. I really appreciated getting that.

DP: Now, I'm going to ask you some questions about this Parks Canada initiative.

KG: Great.

DP: There's going to be a bunch of them coming up. How were the local Métis people connected to what's now Grasslands National Park? Like in terms of the land and how it was used? Was it mainly just ranching and resource gathering and sometimes farming?

KG: Not a bunch of farming, mainly ranching.

DP: Mainly ranching.

KG: Yeah, because Joe [Trottier] didn't farm much other than maybe a few acres of oats, which would be it, and that's what my dad did too. Mainly hay that they got off the hay bottoms, like the hay flats.

DP: And that was just feed for the horses basically?

KG: For the horses and cows.

DP: Okay, how do you think other Métis families would have used the land? Same thing?

KG: Same thing, yeah. Absolutely.

DP: And that would be the greatest extent of how your family would have been involved with the lands in and around Grasslands National Park?

KG: Yes, for sure.

DP: And a little bit of resource harvesting too?

KG: Yeah little bit of resource like beaver hunting and the mule deer and white tail.

DP: Okay, were the game laws very restrictive for hunting and trapping? Do you think like the police and the game wardens turned a blind eye or everything was bought with a licence or?

KG: I think my dad used to get a licence. What he used to do, what I remember as a kid from hunting season, our place was kind of the place where everybody came, and my dad would take people out so they could get what they were supposed to get. Now, I don't know if my dad needed a licence, I don't think so. I don't remember that ever being an issue. He'd only go out and hunt if we needed, you know, for meat in the house. And then he'd take other people out, and it was our place that people came to so that they could get what they needed. He would take them out to wherever they needed to go.

DP: Are there any culturally or historically significant landscapes or historic sites within the Grasslands area that you would consider important as a Métis person?

KG: Well there's just, and I just found this out recently, Sharon Thompson who is the cultural person at the Winnipeg service centre, the archaeologist. She said that there's a bison drive lane on my dad's old place.

DP: Oh, okay.

KG: She asked me about that, if they ever talked about it because she said they don't know where the pound is or where this drive lane leads to. And she was wondering if there was something that my family would have talked about when we were younger. She said, "Were there any kill sites or pound sites.?" No, they never, nobody ever talked about that. But, I do know where that bison drive lane is. There's also kind of an appealing, sacred site on my dad's, across from where my dad was raised. And Katherine knows about this site, like our, us. But I don't know exactly where that's located. But, I would think those are two pretty sacred sites and they might be connected to the Métis, but I don't know that for sure. That's the only two that I know of that would be close to where the Métis families were at. But I don't know if they celebrated anything that was ceremonial or spiritual like a healing lodge or a vision quest. I don't think so.

DP: They might have just been Catholic. Sometimes Métis people did both. I guess it depended.

KG: Yeah I don't remember any of my family talking about that.

DP: Not even from your Gros Ventre side of the family?

KG: No.

DP: They were Catholic too?

KG: I think so. I'm pretty sure my grandma was Catholic.

DP: Any other historic sites that would be important to you as a Métis person to preserve?

KG: Well the only one that I know that Lise Perrault talked about this. There was this butte where this last buffalo hunt took place. It'd be so important if we could put, that this was where the last buffalo hunt was at.

DP: Okay.

KG: So I said yeah, that would be important, but I'm not sure exactly. I kind of know the location, but it's not in Grasslands National Park. You know, it'd be on somebody's private land.

DP: Was your family involved in the 1885 Resistance at Grasslands or elsewhere?

KG: Not that I know of no.

DP: Okay, this question relates to ancestry and time, but your family has been in the area since at least the 1860s.

KG: Yep, absolutely.

DP: What sort of relationship did the Métis have with the Mounted Police in and around Grasslands National Park, Val Marie?

KG: I think it was good. I don't know of any altercations that took place.

DP: Did they, say your great-grandpa Patrice, do you think he worked as a scout for them sometimes, guide or?

KG: Could have, yeah.

DP: 'Cause the time line would have definitely been there if he ...

KG: Yeah, I think so because he probably would have known the area.

DP: The early 1870s?

KG: And known it well.

DP: Is there a lot written about Patrice or has it just been handed down, whatever Louise has written?

KG: I think it's mainly what Louise wrote. I don't know of any other stuff that exists anywhere.

DP: And that would have been her grandfather?

KG : That would have been her dad.

DP: Her father? Oh okay, yeah I guess, she was almost a hundred when she passed.

KG: Yep. That was her dad.

DP: Okay, did any of your ancestors, well I guess you answered that. I was going to say at the posts at Fort Battleford, Fort Walsh or Wood Mountain, but you more or less answered that. Did any of your ancestors take Métis scrip?

KG: I don't know the answer to that one. That's that, Métis scrip it was a certain type of paper that ...

DP: Yeah, what it did was that it extinguished a person's Aboriginal title to the land so you either got money, a certificate or land.

KG: Right.

DP: And it usually followed where the treaties went. Say for instance, Treaty 6 here in Saskatchewan you know I think, or no, better example Treaty 8 in northern Alberta, was in the 1890s. The scrip commissioner followed the treaty commissioner and they just did it that way. So First Nations generally took treaty and were entered in the treaty and Métis received scrip to extinguish their Aboriginal title.

KG: Right. Not that I know of, I don't know that Darren.

DP: Not that you know of? Okay.

KG: I'm not sure how I can even find that out.

DP: I think maybe having some ancestry in the United States would definitely complicate that, I don't know.

KG: Yeah probably.

DP: I might be able to look into that for you. I'll make a note.

KG: Okay sure.

DP: Let's see here. How, now this, you might be in conflict here so you don't have to answer, ask this one but how can Grasslands National Park be more Métis friendly? Do you have any ideas?

KG: Well I think they need to help tell the story.

DP: Just tell the story and work with the people.

KG: Yep. And make, try to be as authentic as they can. And I don't mean we need to go down that road of you know, how they were, you know there's a little bit of that you know, racism and all that, but I don't think it was, it was bad, but I don't think it was real bad. I just think, there wasn't enough Métis here. And I think the Métis here were trying to make a living the best they could in a white man's world. And that's what they did through the ranching. So I just think the role that Parks Canada, you know, I don't think it's in conflict with my job. I just think it, I would say they should help tell the story.

DP: Switching gears back earlier, relating to Métis and Grasslands in general. Was there any connection to your family to some of the Métis in Val Marie, say with Métis in the east block area? Like Wood Mountain, towards Rockglen, and Willow Bunch?

KG: Yep there was.

DP: So there, like people, I guess ...

KG: The Lakota because that's how I know those Lakota over there. I just thought we were kind of all the same.

DP: In Wood Mountain?

KG: Yeah.

DP: You were all horse people and did rodeos and all that?

KG: Rodeos, through the rodeos. And Bill Ogle, that's how he knew my dad. He'd come visit uncle Joe, and then my dad. I knew your dad was musical plus he was a calf roper and that's what I did, and so yeah there was connection there. Yeah, and they visited. I don't think they were closely, like visited close, but I think they visited on occasion, when it worked out for them.

DP: Like no extended marriages or anything like that, just visiting?

KG: Yeah, just visiting.

DP: Trading horses, that sort of thing.

KG: Yeah, probably. Yeah, there was probably lots of horse trading going on.

DP: Okay, are there any specific people or community groups that Parks Canada should be working with to improve the interpretation of history and culture at Grasslands?

KG: Let's see ... You mean in this area?

DP: Yeah.

KG: No, I don't think so.

DP: Okay.

KG: Other than with you guys I think you guys are going to help us put that story together.

DP: Okay.

KG: Fill the bits and pieces that you know, we might be missing.

DP: This might be a bit repetitive, but again it relates to some of the questions that Adrian wanted answered. Did you or any of your ancestors spend time in the proposed Grasslands National Park or surrounding lands?

KG: Yes.

DP: If so, what sort of cultural activities did they participate in?

KG: Well, they were ranchers, cattlemen and horse people. Livestock. Yeah, they were, let's see cultural activities ... rodeos.

DP: Okay. Now I think you answered pretty well the landscapes and historic sites as you as a Métis person consider significant so I think that part would be a bit redundant. But, I'm going to get into the cultural values resources statement. You're familiar with that. A cultural value, pardon me, a cultural resource values 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? Now themes listed are: the trading post... now...

KG: Relationship with bison.

DP: Relationship with bison, yes.

KG: The ranching.

DP: Farming, great depression, governance and administration, creation of the national park, paleontological and geological features, early exploration and surveys, historic use of the area. Are there any of these areas that you would like to comment on and talk about? Like for instance the trading post, do you have any information about that you would like to share?

KG: I don't, I don't have anything about that Darren that I don't have anything relating to that.

DP: Okay, relationship with bison?

KG: Yeah, I think there is a relationship with bison, the Métis people. And I definitely, they're telling me that my great-grandpa was on the last buffalo hunt so he probably helped kill, he probably helped guide, hunted. You know, that's what they did.

DP: How do you think Patrice would feel about the bison returning to his land?

KG: Oh well, if I had to speak on his return, I'd think he'd be quite happy.

DP: Quite happy. Is there a sense by all the ranchers that you know, they could co-habit with the cattle, the bison? Like do you see a conflict there?

KG: I don't really see a conflict because I think Grasslands is doing a really good job with looking after the bison, and making sure they stay in where they need to stay in. And I haven't heard anything, I haven't heard any controversy out there. And plus, we're grazing in the park right now, with cattle and that seems to be going really well. So I think that's something that's going really well and that's something that's going to continue.

DP: Okay.

KG: No I think that's going good.

DP: In terms of ranching in the region, would you say that ranching is the dominate culture in Val Marie and Grasslands? Like, it was the main source of employment and pretty much everyone was involved in that?

KG: Yep. Yep, yeah I would say that. There's one here that we're probably missing and it's I don't know if we'd identify it as rodeos or cowboys.

DP: That culture.

KG: Yeah, and then the guys and scouts, I don't know where that would fit in, but I think that was something that was really, that was something that was like, the Métis people were depended upon and helped guide people out to this area because they knew it so well. But, I don't know which theme that would fall under.

DP: Maybe, yeah, that could be ranching to a lesser extent.

KG: Ranching, farming, like the early homesteading.

DP: But pretty much the dominate culture there was ranching?

KG: It was ranching, yeah.

DP: Farming to a lesser extent, more to the north would you say?

KG: Yeah. It wasn't right in Grasslands.

DP: So more towards Swift Current, say Val Marie then the farming would pick up more?

KG: Oh yeah for sure. More farming there, and even to the west a bit more.

DP: Great Depression. Do you have any stories from the Great Depression relating to your family or things about the Métis or people in Grasslands in the Great Depression that you think are important?

KG: Let me see, what do I know about what they talked about. Well, I know my grandpa was gone during part of the Great Depression, like gone to war, getting ready, so my grandma was left alone with her children to try and keep the ranch going. And she struggled, like she really struggled. She wasn't a strong person that way. She left a lot of that load and responsibility on my dad and my oldest, my dad's oldest brother. But they tried to keep the ranch together with the cattle and the horses. And my grandma didn't provide a whole lot of support. She lived in town so the kids could go to school, my dad and his brother were left on the ranch alone. And they'd have the odd hired man come out there and help them, I guess. But according to my dad, yeah they struggled, they really did struggle with kind of having a leader there like man of the house, I guess.

DP: Do you think the Depression, well I guess in that part of the world everyone was pretty much adversely affected?

KG: Yep, I think what kept them going was raising the horses, providing them at different rodeos. And that kind of stuff and plus maybe, my dad often said we'd just get a horse broke, barely broke, and it'd be gone, sold. So, I think that's what kept them going. I don't even know if they sold cattle during that time. It was more the horses.

DP: Okay. Governance and administration, I guess that would relate either to the park itself or to larger society. Did any Métis take part in local government in the area or was that something that non-Aboriginal people did?

KG: No, that was more non-Aboriginal people.

DP: So they governed and administered the town?

KG: Yep.

DP: And the area I guess?

KG: Yep.

DP: Creation of the national park, now the park, the idea for the park came in the '70s, and it wasn't created until the 1990s, right?

KG: Well, actually, how the park was created, it was started way back in the 1950s, so it was a Saskatchewan Natural History Society.

DP: Okay, okay.

KG: They knew that this was kind of a special area because for one thing we had the prairie dogs, and they also realized that this mixed grass prairie ecosystem was diminishing. Like with all the agriculture that was going on. So they lobbied the government, and it took until 1981 when the two governments, the federal and the provincial government did like, a handshake because it was through oil and minerals who had those oil and mineral rights. They finally agreed on yes, they would create a park here. So that's when, you know, the idea for the park was finally here. Yes, we're going to do this. Then they bought their first, when was it, 1983? They bought out Walt Larson, which was over 50 sections of ranch land, that kind of created the core of the park. And it was after 1983, that more people started selling out. So yeah, it started, the idea started really in the '50s, but it took that much lobbying and red tape to get through. Finally, in 1981 they said "yes, we will form a park." And in 19, oh let's see 88, they built this administration building here. But in 2002 was when we were gazetted as a park, which means that we fell under the national park act. Before that we were just governed like we were a national park. I guess there's a difference between being gazetted until you're gazetted. Yeah, so that 's how the creation of this park came about.

DP: Were there any hard feelings in the community about, about ...

KG: Absolutely.

DP: ...the creation of the park.

KG: Lots of hostility, lots of opposition. A lot of people didn't want to see this park happen, a lot of people did, but there was a big majority that didn't. I think the feeling that I remember, we were just newly married in 1981, the feeling I got was that the land was going out of circulation, it will never come around again, so how are young people going to get established here. They weren't thinking about how it might bring other people in, help save this community. Because basically the park has saved this community from being a ghost town.

DP: It's the largest employer I would think.

KG: Absolutely, the best thing for this town, bar none, that I know of.

DP: I was struck by what a profile it had in the community. And then you think how many professionals from the park live in the community.

KG: Oh for sure.

DP: Compared to you know, farming or ranching income, someone who gets paid 60 thousand dollars straight, or whatever it is a year, buying a home and paying taxes, that's a big thing.

KG: You bet it is, yep. And when the park first came around it was always people away from here that they were hiring. But in the last ten years even, it's, they're really looking for locals. That's really made a difference on how people perceive the park now. The perception of the park is changed. I mean there's still a bit of hostility, but nothing like it was.

DP: You discussed, well I guess we discussed earlier, the paleontological features, the First Nations items. Are there famous, well not famous, but geological features in the park that you think are important?

KG: Yes absolutely. The 70 Mile Butte, which is right across from where we lived, where we were raised. Very important geological feature. I mean it was important way back when the North West Mounted Police were patrolling this area. They looked for that because it's such a high point in the park that you can see it for miles and miles. And so the North West Mounted Police would look for this feature. And why they would look for it was they knew they could cross on either side of the butte. And they used to call it the "Five Mile Crossing," or some people called it "70 Mile Butte Crossing" because for five miles on either side of the butte it was easier to cross the river, the Frenchman River. It played a very significant role, and it still does. It's one of our more popular places for the visitors to go to because it's just a great. It's a special unique place because of how high it is, what you can see, what's up there. Lots of geological, the survey is up there right on top of the butte. And then, what else is there, yeah, I think I touched on all of it. But they called it 70 Mile Butte because it was 70 miles from the Eastend post, which was to the west of us, to the Wood Mountain post which was to the east of us. It was exactly 70 miles.

DP: 70 okay.

KG: But I have to tell you this story.

DP: Okay.

KG: As kids, and I heard this even with my great-grandparents would say this, 70 miles, how we thought the name came about was “70 miles to Swift Current, 70 miles to Malta Montana, 70 miles to Wood Mountain to the east, and 70 miles to Shaunavon.” That’s how we came up with that name.

DP: Oh wow.

KG: And these were all places where rodeos were happening, and I think that’s how my family perceived the 70 Mile Butte name.

DP: Okay. Mainly buttes in and around the Grasslands, most of them hills?

KG: Well, there’s quite a few buttes. There’s Pinto Butte, there’s 70 Mile Butte, there’s Eagle Butte. There’s McCarthy Butte where they say the last buffalo hunt was but it’s not in the park.

DP: Okay.

KG: There’s Pinto Butte in the park, but they’re nearby.

DP: Okay, okay. But the same landscape. Uh, early exploration and surveys, do you know anything about that in the area, say for instance, the Red Coat Trail coming through or uh....

KG: The boundary commission trail.

DP: So you know where those are in the area?

KG: Yeah roughly. I do know that with the, what do they call that, when Brenda was just talking about it. The Red Coat Trail. They have their little markers.

DP: Yes.

KG: They’re like white with a little bit of black, kind of with a thing on top of it that points in the direction. The Red Coat Trail, yeah because she just pointed out, she said, “Have you ever noticed any in the park?” I never noticed any in the park, but there are some that are close to the park. But not any that I know of that are in the park. But, I know that the Boundary Commission wagon train that went through here in the late 1980s, I think or early ‘90s, yeah. I’d have to check on the date when they had it, but it went right through the park. It went kind of right through my dad’s old place. There’s a camp there. So yeah, there’s that, what else do I know about? That’s the only two that I would know of I think.

DP: Last one, historic use of the area? And I think we pretty much touched on all that in the questions I asked you. In terms of, I guess, First Nations aspect, I’m going to switch gears

just one last time here. Do you think there was a lot of respect for the Métis for First Nations, like say tipi rings and remnants of sweat lodges or any First Nations artefacts?

KG: With the Métis people?

DP: Yeah, like was it something that was respected even though it might not be practiced or adhered to?

KG: Yeah, I think there was a respect, I do. I don't think it was something they visited like made treks to like, but I think they knew they were there.

DP: Okay. Now, do, now obviously you don't want to talk about non-Aboriginal people in a negative light but do you think a lot of the, the First Nations artefacts in the area, do you think they were respected the same way? Like were a lot of them preserved or do you think a lot of them were ploughed over or destroyed?

KG: Well, I think some of them were ploughed over and destroyed, but I think it's because they just didn't know they were there.

DP: Didn't know or didn't know what they were, just a bunch of rocks.

KG: I think that, I don't think it was "Oh these are tipi rings and let's get rid of them." I don't think that ever existed. If it did, if that kind of attitude existed, not to my knowledge. I just think that people were unaware and just didn't know.

DP: Because I did notice when I was down there that the farmer worked hard to make sure that, or rancher, that that would be protected.

KG: But I believed that it happened, I know it does in our place. My husband has known about tipi rings since he bought the place in 1973, and has always had a high respect for them. He just farms around it.

DP: Another question I just thought of, in terms of Métis and buried and cemeteries, were all the Métis, were they buried in like the community Catholic cemetery or just where ever the people lived?

KG: Yeah, no in the Catholic cemetery.

DP: Okay. There might have been people born on the prairie, say in your great-grandpa's time maybe.

KG: Yeah, well my great grandpa is buried in Ponteix in the Catholic cemetery, and his wife. But my grandpa and his brother and any of those relatives connected were all buried here in the Catholic cemetery.

DP: Okay. Did any of your family go to a residential school?

KG: Yes, my grandpa did, and all of his family like Louise [Moine] and that whole generation.

DP: Did they experience any traumatic, like were there traumatic experiences or?

KG: Yes. They were so traumatic that they didn't speak about them. But what I do know is that my great-grandmother Tillie, so she wanted her children to be educated so she willingly wanted her kids to go. Where I know there's some that didn't want their children to go, kind of taken away and forced. That wasn't the case in my grandpa's family because I don't think the kids wanted to go, but the mother wanted them to go. She knew that they would, and I know Louise talked about this, she said, "We would benefit from the education." And like, she said, "My mother knew that so that's why she let us go or that's why she made us go"

DP: She did write about Talia did she not Louise?

KG: Yep, she did. And I'm pretty sure that's what ... and I interviewed Louise probably back in, I'm not sure, 2000 or 2002 or something. We talked about that. She goes I resented my mother for sending me but then I was grateful once I got my education because it made me be accepted into society.

DP: Did Louise face, I interviewed another person from your home community and this person said that Louise faced quite a bit of adversity and racism. Was she finally able to overcome that? Because I noticed when we were in the meeting, pretty much everyone in the community had a lot, that I talked to had a lot of respect and reverence for her soon as her name was brought up. She kind of became the community elder in the end, would you say?

KG: Absolutely.

DP: So that was just universal respect?

KG: Yeah, I do think so.

DP: Okay, that took a lifetime to get that.

KG: Yeah, it did.

DP: Because she faced quite a bit, I talked to Jackie and she said her mother faced a lot of real ugly moments in that community.

KG: Right, I believe that. No, I really believe that. But, she was very you know, well respected at the end. I remember we had a 90th birthday party for her. My dad was still alive at that time, and it was just a huge turn out by the community. Which kind of in a way shocked me, I was like wow.

DP: And everybody came.

KG: Everybody came. And they were like we just came because it was aunt Louise's 90th birthday. They didn't even think twice that she was Aboriginal or anything like that. It was here's somebody who's 90 and we need to come and celebrate it.

DP: She was accepted. Well, I guess the community elder I guess, that would be the way to describe her.

KG: Yeah, exactly.

DP: She was the oldest person in the community.

KG: And it's funny because they did finally, I don't know, if Jackie talked about this, but they, when they first put her in the old folks home in Ponteix she was really put out. Louise was really put out because she said, "How dare they put me with all those old people in there?" And she was like way older than they were, like by ten, 15 years.

DP: She just was younger in spirit.

KG: We laughed about that. Like, I remember talking with Jackie and laughing about that. She said mom was really put out about that and I said yeah I remember her saying, "All these old people but mom's way older than them." So, that was kind of comical.

DP: Is there anything else you would like to add Kathy for the interview?

KG: No other than I always knew that I had this Aboriginal heritage, I was never ashamed of it. Like, I said one time when I went down to visit Custer's Last Stand, how they made that story like, into the Indians ambushed Custer. And, I was really ashamed at that time. I was like 8 or 9-years-old. But, I remember feeling, "Like oh, I don't want to be Indian because look at what they do to those white people." But after going there years later that whole story changed. And then I was like wow, the real story wasn't told. I've always been very proud of my heritage, always. Even when we were looked down upon in the community, I was still very proud of it because my mom took it on so well, and she is as white-skinned as they come, but she told us this is something to be proud of. And I'm happy about that. She had no Aboriginal blood, like none whatsoever in her, but she always made us proud of that. Probably even more so than my dad because he was always so used to being ridiculed, you know the racism? And with the success of what Bryan had accomplished for the town of Val Marie then that kind of attitude kind of switched after that. You know, people more looked at my dad like wow, "What you raised for a son and their kids are very successful and he went through a lot of, you know, abuse before that."

DP: Well I have to be honest until I met people in Val Marie, I only heard of your three brothers that played hockey and Louise. But, if people had any stature, I'm sure there's many. But you know what I mean, it just goes to show that there was only two Métis families, but those two Métis families had famous people in them. So, that speaks a lot.

KG: Yeah. I'm very, very proud. Somebody once asked me if I was ever, like with Bryan, if I ever felt like jealous that he had all the attention. I said wow, "That thought had never crossed my mind." He had always been such a role model for us even before he was ever

famous. He was always so gifted in everything he had done, like this is how we got to be you know? He kind of set the bar for us and we rose to that level, you know, wanted to be that same thing.

DP: Well, I guess the thing is, you know he's still your brother no matter what. And also—

KG: Yeah, I don't even look at him as, I just look at him as somebody that had a passion ,and was very successful in that passionate nature that he had.

DP: And another thing is, no matter the fame or aggregation, people are humble and remember where they come from.

KG: Yep, and he's one of those people.

DP: Yeah, I've noticed that and you know that's something you speak proud of. And that speaks to what your parents did. Because I think a lot of people when they're remotely famous it gets to their head right away.

KG: Oh yeah.

DP: So your parents did a good job?

KG: Yeah they're wonderful parents. Absolutely wonderful. Especially my mom, she really paid a big part in how we turned out. Dad gave us all the opportunities, to you know excel but mom was the, mom was our grounding person. But anyway, I'm so happy to do this.

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