



GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE

of Native Studies and Applied Research

Interview of Elder Rose Fleury
Conducted by Darren Prefontaine
March 22, 2013

1) Could you please tell me your name and your home community?

Rose Fluery from Prince Albert.

2) Where were you born?

I was born seven miles north of Duck Lake at placed called Chante Lake. There was no community there, just a lake. Grandpa had his house there along the lake and it was not on a road allowance. They use to call it David's Lake and then they changed it to Chante Lake.

3) Where did you grow up?

Chante Lake till I was seven years old and then in Duck Lake.

4) Where have you lived most of your life?

In Duck Lake

5) Who were/are your parents and grandparents? Where were they from?

My parents were Élise Paul and Charles Gariepy, and my grandparents were David Lafond and Elmire Paul. They were both from Duck Lake. Elmire Paul was Bernard Paul's daughter with Marguerite Trottier. She was Clarence Trotchie's great-aunt. I related to the Round Prairie people.

6) How did you spend your life as an adult regarding work, family, or in any other ways you'd like to share?

I went to school at the convent in Duck Lake until Grade 10, and then after that, I worked in a store to tie up sugar, bread, tea and everything until I was 16. Then I came to Prince Albert to work. I wanted to be a nurse, so I went to Victoria Hospital, and that's where I started my nursing. I was a nurse for four years. I was a practical nurse with certification. I started my family in 1947. I was married in 1946. As for my life, well, most of it, I had to make a living. I couldn't make it alone. After you have kids, you can't make it alone and the wages were so low that the women had to work too. We had a two-income family. I worked almost through my whole marriage. If

you have a family, you have to look after them the best way you can. You have to make it so you don't go into dire straights because my great-grandmother always said, "If you can't make it, you'll have to learn a trade to make your living." She said that, "Where there idle hands, there were idle minds."

7) What do you enjoy about being Métis?

Being Métis is being different from any other culture, but yet you are what you are. You can't change that. My grandmother said, "You got to make the best of every day that and you have and share." Her motto was, "If you don't share anything with anybody then you have done nothing."

8) What has been the most challenging thing about being Métis?

Putting my kids through school until graduation was a challenge. There was only one of them out of six that didn't graduate. We encountered racism in an illiterate way because in those days, literacy was so bad. In those days, they didn't know illiteracy was so bad. They didn't know what was bad or good for anybody. They just made do with what they had. In the end, they had to get along with everybody. Grandmother was a high-handed person. You had to behave yourself. If there were elders around, you couldn't cross in front of them or talk ahead of them or while they were speaking.

9) If you were advising yourself as a Métis youth, knowing what you know now, what would you tell yourself in a sentence or two?

I would tell myself, "You are what you are and you have to be what you are. No matter what, you can't change it, so you got to do the best way you can to make a living and to get good grades and to be good at work and get along with your work companions." My motto is, "If you don't share your knowledge, you haven't done anything." My grandmother said, "Always share because you'll never take it with you, and always leave the best for other people." Now, it's me, me, me and my pockets. Even in your own family, there are lots of them that won't even share with their sisters or brothers. I don't know what the world is getting to now. It appals me what happens. I work in the school two days a week at St. Michaels and two days a week at West Mount. At my age, they say, "Why do you have to work?" I said, "It is not that I have to work." I see that the kids are not getting the knowledge from their parents. They don't share that knowledge for their kids. I think that's an appalling thing that's going wrong in this world.