

Monique Gardiner

Summary

She was born and lived in Ile a la Crosse all her life. She was born in 1910, November 6. She's 91 years old. Her father's name was Daniel Malbouef and her mom's name, Marie Jardine. She lost her parents at an early age and her godmother and her husband raised her. Their names were Philomene Lariviere and Magloire Maurice. There were six of them in her family: Jean Marie, Joe, Alex, Monique, Belashe, Bejimis and one died. Her first husband's name was Victor Durocher. She had eight children. She lost two. When she remarried, she had eight children. She lost two. When she remarried, she had four children. Her second husband's name was William Gardiner. She had twelve children. Ten are still alive. My godmother taught me how to survive, but mostly self-taught. I made hides. Made dried meat. We had to keep working to survive. She did not live in the town too often, therefore, did not celebrate the holidays. They lived in the bush where they trapped, fished, etc. to survive. Sometimes we attended mass at Christmas, but not often because we lived too far and it was hard traveling. When a person died, they would have a wake for a couple of days similar to today. Your dad, Victor, was a good violin player. Samuel Gerard was a very good violin player. We used to travel by dog sled. We used to go and play at Wacask Bay. It was hard (tough) and we were poor. It was hard to travel. The children used to ride along without belongings and we (the adults) would walk. There was no assistance of any kind available then. We ate wild meat, ducks, moose meat. We only had the basics like flour, sugar, salt, tea, from the store. I looked after my grandmother till she passed away. She lived at A la Point. She lived in Sandy Point where she lived with her godmother when her mom passed away. She never traveled to the other villages such as Beauval, Buffalo Narrows, etc. They used to own their land and homes too at A la Point and Sandy Point. The elders have passed away. Now hardly anyone lives there. I was sixteen years old when I got married. I went on a trapping trip with your dad & grandma. I did not really know my first husband, but I used to see him around. They used logs to build houses and dirt roof or hay roof, a long time ago. It was tough times. My younger brother, Alex Malbouef, went to fight in WWII. He went with Vital Morin and others as a group. I used to pick berries all the time, but I did not touch the herbs (medicine). She went to boarding school in Beauval. The Grey Nuns kept us and they mostly spoke French, therefore, I speak a little French. We use French and Cree in our language. That is the language used here and in the surrounding area. We were not taught to speak Cree when I attended school. We were just taught French, no English. There was one nun who spoke Cree, but she left. They used to say mass in Cree and French (Latin)? They never said mass in English. The nuns taught us how to cook, knit. Your grandmother Millie, taught me how to cure hides. Yes, I used to do beadwork, make moccasins. When I had one of my children at Fall time, an old lady delivered my baby. It used to be elderly women who delivered

babies and they were good at what they did. I used to work at Revillon for Alex Ahenakew. I worked indoors, cleaning, cooking, washing clothes. It was from here that I got married. It wasn't that long ago. I worked at the hospital. I got paid fourteen dollars a week. We used to wash the floors on our hands and knees. It was (hard) tough in those days, although things were not expensive. We used to go on camping trips so the men could hunt. When the men killed a moose etc., the women would make dry meat and tan the hides. It was a hard life. We'd make pemmican which we would sell to buy the basics. We moved around a lot even though we had children. It was not so bad in a way. I'd collect moss in the fall and dry it, because at that time, I had twins. I'd shred the moss and use it as a liner in diapers. The moss would get soaked and I would toss it out. It made it easier work. I would breast feed the babies and boil porridge which I would strain and feed it to the babies. This is how we survived living on the trap line. We would go on camping and hunting trips twice every summer. That was what it took to survive. When the kids were sick, camphor oil, because it was impossible to trek back to the village when they (children) were sick.