

Tape #8
Crescent Lake Video Shoot

I had seven children. Two of my children, the same month. Four girls and three boys. Two of my boys have passed on.

Did you live here?

No, not here. Down that way. Close to the school.

Where were you born?

Eh? No, me. I come from Crooked Lake. My deceased is from Manitoba. We met here. No. Manitoba. Him. They come here with his parents to live. Then we moved to Regina. My husband worked at university. Six of my kids were born here and one in Regina. I used to call her my Mom, Mrs. Pat Langan.

How did you make a living?

They hunted. It was cheap in those years. There used to be lot of dances or we'd meet here and have a few drinks. Just some used to do sewing. One lived here that did that. We had a lot of little children. We had to sew. Yeah. We'd make bannock, bread. Sometimes we used to cook outdoors. That's where we used to live, close to the highway. They really didn't have cars, just some of them. (I cannot hear Mrs. Lafontaine. Too much noise. Kids. Motors and rain and/or fire.)

I was born in Marieval.

In a house or where?

In a house.

Kids?

Yeah. Twelve. Six boys, six girls. Long ago, one baby boy died here and Flora, oh yeah. A log house. Small house. No windows. Just a door. For windows, they used flour bags. Just one room, of course. He used to go working around here for farmers, cutting wood, stooking, thrashing.

Do you remember during the war, we used to go picking bones?

Yeah. I remember deceased Dad and them used to, by the wagonful and take them into town to sell. They were sent away to be made into glue.

Roots?

Oh my yes. As soon as they were in bloom, we were already moving on to go digging them and if Dad found work here and there, we'd stop for he had to chop wood.

Where did we get water?

From the lakes. In sloughs.

What did we eat?

Rabbits, ducks and deer. What they could kill. Oh yeah, gophers. We used to drown them out. Oh they were beautiful. Ha ha. Ah goose eggs. My God, we used to be mean to them and we didn't know it. We were just trying to live. Eh no, I don't know why. Whatever. I don't know. Oh yeah.

Didn't Dad used to have a garden?

Oh yeah. Well they always had big gardens. That's what saved us. And Mom used to can and save for the winter.

Remember we used to go picking raspberries?

Oh yeah. I remember they were plentiful. There was lots of bush; wherever you went there was berries. Not like today. There's no bush. Oh yeah. I remember they'd crush them and dry them for the winter. They'd lay them, like on a board and turn them over now and then to dry. When they were dry, they'd put them away for the winter. Well, we'd cook them in water and sugar, you know, a little bit of lard. Eh he.

Did we used to dry saskatoons too?

Yeah, for sure. You'd cook them the same way. You'd put a little water, lard, flour, sugar. Yeah. Eh he.

Do you remember when Dad would go hunting and kill a deer? What they did with the meat? When they dried it?

Oh yeah. You had to with no cool cellars and no fridge. Nothing like that. Oh definitely, but in French is how. We used to say the rosary. I think when we moved here is when we quit, when we moved in to town. No. Still here. Oh yeah. We still used to all say then, rosary. Remember they brought a church here and on Sunday we all used to go, but after we moved from here, nobody does that anymore. Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

How many kids do you have?

Eleven.

Do they all live here?

Eh no.

All over?

Yes. No. Eh he.

When did you get married?

1954. Forty-six years ago. Oh yes, I get sick a lot. Oh God, I can't remember it. Maybe. Yeah. Long ago.

Like two years?

Yes.

Just two?

Oh Yeah. Sometimes we go play bingo. (Laughing.....) Oh my, that is for certain. The old lady too. Well she's alone all day, eh. She gets lonely, but she's never been in the hospital. She's in good shape. Oh boy, oh boy, for sure. Yeah. Is that it now?

This house you're living in, did you buy it?

Yeah. That was long ago. Twenty years already.

Okay. Thank you.

Maria Campbell and Gil

Which part of this do you cook?

This?

This one.

Eh had that too. They used to use a lot of this too. You see this they used to use a lot of this. Look when I do this. They'd put it like this and they'd tie it, then they'd boil it. This is medicine. This is good medicine. They sure used to use a lot of this. This way they'd tie it and boil it and drink it.

For what kind of sickness?

Any kind. This was good for any sickness. Upset stomach, headache. This was good.

What is it called?

I don't know how to say it in English. My Dad used to make this stuff. Lots. All the kids used to drink this here too. A different kind of medicine was taken and used. That's the one. This one too. This is medicine; they used to boil this too. This is the part they made medicine from and this part too. This too. They made medicine from and this too they'd boil. You drink it when you boil it. It doesn't taste very good. Really, it tastes bad. They used different plants. That medicine used to do a lot of good. Not like today. No one knows how to make it. My Grandma used to do this for a bee sting. Eh ha. Something else here too. When you prick yourself or cut yourself, they would put this on there to stop the bleeding and clean the wound, then you'd be okay. You keep it on for a day. Take it off the next and your fine. Old people were pretty keen doing things like this.

Those then are they any good?

No. Not these.

What about these?

No. You know, they even drank what they used to call little broomstick. That too, they made medicine from... Nothing here. Perhaps here in the bushes. This too, they boiled.

All of it?

Just this, with this and this too. Sometimes they'd mix this in. This medicine sure didn't taste very good. You peel this. My Dad would peel this. Like this he peel and he would chew it and put it on his ear when he had an earache.

Did you ever eat this?

Yeah, he and ah, what did they call that now? They use to put up just like the way they used to make arbors with all this stuff. Yeah. Yeah. They used to use a lot of plants here. Even from the bushes. If someone knew, when somebody knew about these medicines, they are plentiful around here. If they knew, they can pick a lot from here. This medicine and this medicine is all good too. Not like what the doctor gives you.

What about the stuff they called, La baume?

Eh ha, they are plentiful by the sloughs. That's where you'll find it. When we used to live here, just past here, just past here, we'll find some. You'll

know right away. Some say nothing will happen if they came and build here again. So many of them really would like to come back here. Me too, I'd like to come back. I'm gonna try. I am gonna try yet. They still would love to come and live here. Not far from here is where we used to live, but this is where I'd love to come and homestead. Sometimes I get lonely for this place. I love it here. I love it here. When we used to go to school here, we used to have a lot of fun here. (A sunflower) If someone only knew. This here is the slough. This is where you get Le baume from, by the sloughs. That's where we used to pick Le baume. Cause here is just water. No one walks here. That's why Le baume grows good here. This was a far walk with no road. When the snow was deep and cold too. When it was nice day, it was still cold in the winter. They didn't clean the snow away. It took a long time for us to walk across here. After we past it, then we'd start running fast. I ran fast. He would come chasing me, an old horse. He didn't know. I startled him. I scared him and he doesn't know where I came from. Instead he come chasing me. Oh did I run for dear life. There was a pile about this high. I jumped over it, just like nothing. My godfather's horses use to roam all over. That's where I caught him about a mile from here. No, you can't eat that. Well, I taught them how. Those ones can speak. I taught them how, but they forget, though. In Michif. We use to gather and save these for the winter. It lies up right away. Yeah. We used to chop wood. Just with an axe.

What about this?

I don't know what's edible around here. All old people knew. Okay, we are going to do plastering. He has to use straw. He'd have straw to plaster with. Now, he'll put this in water. First, he'll put dirt, then that. The way to make it is, we used to stomp on the mud. That's what this little girl is going to do as soon as this white man is done then. That's enough. Now you stomp at it. That's what us kids used to do. Before we'd plaster, you have to put more dirt in. You have to do it good, too, or it won't work well. He just about put too much water. Don't you need more straw? Just a little more. Women were real good at plastering. That's why his old lady is helping him. They were better than men. Just about now. That's the way. As she does it. Yeah. We used to use just mud on the roof of the house. Is it ready? Ham. This woman made a good job making mud. Women were slick at making mud. Just like this old lady. Now he's gonna do plastering and from there, he's going to start. You have to plaster good or the rain will come through. These guys are pretty slick at plastering too. Where you plaster a house real good, it doesn't rain through. Not only on the outside, we also have to plaster on the inside too. So that's the way you do plastering.

End of Tape #8