

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: MARY HENRY  
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: ROBLIN,  
MANITOBA  
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MANITOBA  
TRIBE/NATION:  
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH  
DATE OF INTERVIEW: AUGUST 12, 1982  
INTERVIEWER: CINDY PALEY  
INTERPRETER:  
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Cindy: I'm speaking with Mary Henry from Roblin, Manitoba.  
Mrs. Henry, could you tell me a little about yourself? What  
was your father's name?

Mary: Gerard Lafontaine.

Cindy: What did he do when you were growing up, what was he  
like?

Mary: He work in the farm, our farm over here in Balcoat.

Cindy: Your farm was in North Dakota?

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: Did he tell you any stories when he was young, about when he was younger?

Mary: He tell, but forgot now. (laughs)

Cindy: Can't remember any...

Mary: No.

Cindy: Your husband, Roger, was telling you something about when he was twelve years old he was in the Rebellion.

Mary: My dad is that.

Cindy: Oh your dad's dad?

Mary: Yeah.

Husband: Well your dad was there too twelve years ago.

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: Do you know what he did when, in the Rebellion?

Mary: Yeah,...

Husband: He was picking the shells.

Mary: In Saskatchewan?

Cindy: Up at Batoche.

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: He picked shells?

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: Did he tell you anything about his experiences up there? What he felt like and, you know,...

Husband: After the finish they took a cow and they brought the family to Lebret, they had a cow he chop up them, what you call that piece of wood they used to use?

Cindy: Yokes?

Husband: Two wheel.

Cindy: Oh, river cart?

Husband: Yes. He took a cow that's all they had, they lost everything.

Cindy: This was after the Rebellion?

Husband: Yeah, they move away they sneak away from over there they come to Lebret.

Cindy: About how old were you when you moved from North Dakota?

Mary: 1917 I was born 1906.

Cindy: So you were approximately eleven years old.

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: Where did you move to?

Mary: To Manitoba.

Cindy: You never stayed in Saskatchewan or anything?

Husband: Yes. They come...

Mary: Went there one year.

Husband: They come in winter they cross over there at Crooked Lake and in the spring time 1918 we moved to Manitoba again.

Cindy: What was life like in North Dakota, was it a lot different?

Mary: Oh yeah.

Cindy: What was it like?

Mary: It was nice in North Dakota.

Cindy: Do you remember anything of your childhood there?

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: What were the things that you can remember most about?

Husband: They had cattle.

Mary: Yes we have cattle.

Cindy: What did, like when you were younger how was it, like did you play a lot with other kids?

Mary: No.

Cindy: Were you on a reserve, or was it like a Metis community?

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: Which one was it? Indian reserve or...

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: Do you, what was it like, like how much land did your dad have there?

Mary: Well a quarter.

Cindy: A quarter. Was your, were you guys brought up to be Metis like were you proud of being of your ancestry?

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: Did you receive any racism, bugged about being Metis and not being white or Indian? When you were younger.

Mary: No.

Cindy: Did you go to school?

Mary: No.

Cindy: Why didn't you?

Mary: Well, in Balcoat over there you have to go and see the doctor first and I was sick, the doctor didn't want me to go. There were only Davis Lake.

Cindy: How far was that?

Mary: About twenty miles.

Cindy: You had to go to school, that was where you had to go to school?

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: So you'd have to, did you...

Mary: And we move out there.

Cindy: Did any of your sisters go to school?

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: And where did they go?

Mary: Davis Lake.

Cindy: What was your, do you remember when you were small your social life. What did your parents do for entertainment?

Mary: Well, was working the farm my dad.

Cindy: Like I mean, no. During their free time like did they, what did they do? They didn't play cards or dance?

Mary: No.

Cindy: What language did you guys speak at home? When you were at home what was your language? Like did you speak English or...

Mary: Cree.

Cindy: Outside of the home like when your sisters came home did you also speak that?

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: What was your religion?

Mary: Catholic.

Cindy: What was your priest's name?

Mary: I can't remember.

Cindy: What kind of role did he play in your life, your lives when you were younger?

Mary: Oh just play around like. (laughs)

Cindy: No, like I mean the priest what, what did he... Did he, he never came and visited you or anything like that?

Mary: No.

Cindy: So it was more, was it a more kind of a religious role nothing else like?

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: He didn't... Did you feel, or did your parents feel that it was necessary to hide their Indian, their relationship with Indians like their relatives after the Rebellion?

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: Were there very close ties with your Metis relatives? Like your other relatives that were also Metis.

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: What was your home like, like your house what was it made out of?

Mary: Logs.

Cindy: What kind of furniture did you have?

Mary: You bought the furniture, my dad bought the furniture.

Cindy: Were you better off than most Metis in your

community? Did you...

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: You didn't feel that you were poor or anything?

Mary: No.

Cindy: Was there, there was no open discrimination against you from other like from the Indians or from the white race?

Mary: No.

Cindy: Was it possible for you to see a doctor when you were younger?

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: What did he do like, did he help a lot?

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: And if you had no money would he have come to you like even though you had no money to pay for him?

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: How old were you when world war one started?

Mary: About ten years old.

Cindy: Was any of your family...

Mary: No.

Cindy: Was there any affect on your family because of the war?

Mary: No.

Cindy: What year did you move from North Dakota to Canada?

Mary: 1917.

Cindy: What year did you get married?

Mary: What who?

Cindy: What year?

Mary: What year?

Husband: That's sixty years ago. It was what?

Mary: 1922, yeah.

Cindy: During the depression you were already married,

right?

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: Was there any affect on your family like did you have to work a lot harder?

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: What kind of work did you do?

Husband: Had to cut wood haul down to (?).

Cindy: How many children did you have at that time? Between 1930 and 1931 after that would help you.

Mary: Nobody.

Cindy: Nobody! Okay. So what kind of work like did you have do everything plus look after your children?

Mary: Oh, make (?) and cut wood.

Cindy: How did you get, like how did you get food then?

Mary: Well we...

Cindy: Did you have to trade anything like if you had garden stuff did you have to trade for other stuff?

Mary: No.

Cindy: You had everything, did you have to buy a lot of stuff?

Mary: No.

Cindy: What kind of things did you have to buy? Like what kind of food?

Husband: Well we're (inaudible). (laughs)

Cindy: Did you have a garden then?

Mary: Well, I didn't have no garden, freeze everything.

Cindy: And your transportation, what was your transportation? How did you get around?

Mary: Horses.

Cindy: Like how? What did you use to get from one place to another?

Mary: Horses.

Cindy: And in the winter?

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: Horses too? How old were you when world war two started?

Mary: (inaudible).

Cindy: You were in Boggy Creek then?

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: What were things, did you have a hard life then?

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: What kind of things did you have to do for your family?

Mary: Hard everything, hard. (laughs)

Cindy: Did your lifestyle change in any way during this time?

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: In what ways did it change? How did it change?

Mary: (laughs)

Husband: Exchange power you get more.

Cindy: Can you remember your move from North Dakota here, like what happened during was there anything that you can remember from that journey?

Mary: From North Dakota yeah some of it.

Cindy: What can you remember from it?

Mary: Well, we make good living over there. My dad made lot of money, agency.

Cindy: What kind of agency?

Husband: See, they had land. The old man he was (?), they rent the land away, the old man he, they were making a good living out of that.

Cindy: So in other words it was sort of like renting out land for money?

Husband: Yeah.

Cindy: Okay. When you were moving, like when you came can you remember what kind of things that happened on the trail? How long did it take you to move from North Dakota up here?

Mary: About two weeks.

Cindy: Can you remember anything from that trip?

Mary: Oh we moved with horses.

Cindy: And was it wagons too?

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: How much stuff did you have in the wagon?

Mary: Oh, two wagons full and one donkey.

Cindy: When you came down what was your house like when you first came down what was this...

Mary: Have a house. (inaudible).

Cindy: What did you live in at first then?

Mary: Nothing.

Cindy: What was the house like that he had built?

Mary: Log.

Cindy: Log.

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: What kind of furniture was in it?

Mary: Oh not too much.

Cindy: Was it homemade or bought?

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: It was homemade. What was the furniture like?

Mary: (inaudible) table.

Cindy: What was the mattresses, what did they make mattresses out of?

Mary: (laughs)

Cindy: Can you remember?

Husband: (inaudible). (laughs) That's true. Yeah.

Cindy: What were your clothes like? What kind of clothes did you wear when you were younger?

Mary: Granny...

Husband: That was long dress.

Mary: ...dress.

Cindy: Can you remember what color they were? They were no specific just one color?

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: Didn't matter. What did the men wear?

Mary: Overalls.

Cindy: Can you remember anything like when your father went out hunting or trapping?

Mary: Yeah.

Cindy: What can you remember?

Mary: Well, he (inaudible).

Cindy: And how many did he bring home at one time?

Mary: Oh sometimes nothing. (laughs)

Cindy: What was the most he brought home?

Mary: I don't know. (laughs)

Cindy: He wasn't a trapper. (laughs)

Mary: (laughs)

Cindy: Well, I think that's about it.

(END OF SIDE A)

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