

George Klyne, Bob Desjarlais, Sherry Farrell-Racette

Video 1

Start: 13.13.34.09 (Video Time: 13:13.34.09) BOB DESJARLAIS - I, I, I remember years ago, when I was a kid, we used to really like going to visit Grandpa, old Isadore Amyotte, Uncle Rene's Dad. When I was a kid there Grandpa Isadore was, oh heck, already he was in I think his early nineties eh. And he used to tell us stories years ago when he was a kid eh? And he was telling us when they left the Red River settlement he was, he was sixteen years old when they left over there. And he left driving six oxen on a wagon and he had a wagon box full of flour and he was bringing it West to these settlements down here eh. They were bringing stock from Winnipeg, this way. And, and then that's when the, the people moved West eh. Left the Red River settlement. But this old, my old Grandpa Isadore Amyotte, he was telling us that he, he was sixteen he said. Drove this six oxen West. And then when they got here, well him and his two friends they didn't want to go back to the Red River settlement 'cause they were chasing them out of the Red River settlement with guns actually, they'd shoot people eh? So they said, well we're not gonna go back over there you know, just get shot, you know. We'll stay here eh? So they stayed here but here at that time there wasn't that many wild horses around so they were looking for wild horses, mustangs eh, they were looking for. And they couldn't, couldn't really find too many, there was some in the foothills of Alberta, I guess. And then, but there's quite a few they said, into the States...

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - In Montana.

BOB DESJARLAIS – In Montana. So, oh Grandpa Isadore and his two buddies they decided well, he said we decided we'd go to Montana to go and get some horses he said. To go get horses over there eh, from the, the Indians over there. So anyway, that was fine. They went down there and my golly they, they succeeded, they got thirty-two head of horses.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - Oh, who'd they get them off?

BOB DESJARLAIS - Got them off the Indians.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - Do you know which ones?

BOB DESJARLAIS - On the reservations.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - Oh right off the reservation?

BOB DESJARLAIS - Ya, right off the reservation, ya. And, and, and, you know, he said, those guys chased 'em and they had those horses going full blast. And making all that dust he said, and we're right in that dust, he said.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - So he couldn't see them?

BOB DESJARLAIS - They couldn't, they couldn't see us he said. But goddamn it he said, they got one of our buddies, there, one of their buddies got shot and killed there. But they never slowed down, they never stopped, they never looked back at all, he said him and his other buddy they kept chasing these, this, the herd. And by golly they, they, finally those Indians gave up and went back I guess, and they, they got back here with the, I think twenty, twenty-two head of horses I think they got back with. But they sold them, they sold a couple along the way...

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - Along the way.

BOB DESJARLAIS - ...and they, and they sold, and they lost it, a few along the way eh. But they got here, he said, with twenty-two head of horses and, and that's where most of the Métis got their horses was from was old Grandpa Isadore Amyotte when they went and got...

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - Went shopping.

BOB DESJARLAIS - Went shopping, horse shopping, and they brought back these horses.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - I wonder what kind of horses they were? How they looked, did he say how any of them looked?

BOB DESJARLAIS - Well I guess they were, they were pretty good horses. Apparently, oh god, they could go, they can go like I don't know what, those horses. And they weren't real heavy horses, they were, they were kinda in between horse, you know, like probably a 1200, 1100 pound horse eh, ya. You know, they weren't big horses, but boy I guess they were good horses. And then and, and, they sold them all eh. Like guys here and there bought, bought their horses. But that's, that's how they, they, he, he told us that they brought these horses here. But he was just a kid himself at the time.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - How old would he have been about?

BOB DESJARLAIS - Well he was sixteen when he came here, he'd probably be about seventeen or eighteen.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - So just a bunch of young guys got a crazy idea...

BOB DESJARLAIS - Ya, got a crazy, they just decided they were gonna go get horses and that's all there was too it. There was nothing gonna stop them. Ya they went out. Like he told us he said, like, they were to the point where, they weren't scared of anything. He said, "We weren't scared of nothing." I said, "Weren't you scared?" I said to Grandpa, "When you guys got over there," I said, "There are rattlesnakes." "Oh heck," he said,

"Rattlesnake don't bother you." He said, "We were scared there were enemies at us. Guys we had to watch the rattlesnakes, they didn't bother us."

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - Just the guys' horses you're getting...

BOB DESJARLAIS - Ya, the guys they got the horses from, the guy that had to watch. But that's, he told us, that story, and I remember it real good.

(Video Time: 13:19.47.26) 68.2 SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - I never thought of that but I guess there really weren't very many horses in Saskatchewan cause I've never heard of wild horses in Saskatchewan.

68.4 BOB DESJARLAIS - No, you see, what happened years ago, there was quite a few I guess at one time. But when the buffalo was here they took over. They scared all the horses out of here.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - Oh right cause all of them used to eat buffalo in the country eh?

BOB DESJARLAIS - Oh ya, oh ya, there's so, so many buffalo in, in Saskatchewan here that there wasn't very many horses. Well the, the buffalo were chasing the horses away.

68.9 SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - And they were hard on the, like they sort of destroyed, like when there was so many of them, they were hard on the prairies...**(Inaudible)**...

69.0 BOB DESJARLAIS - Oh, boy, everyday they ate a lot of, lot of hay and grass eh, and there wasn't that much for the horses. So they found a lot of that, like, I think they still have in Alberta, in the foothills there's still wild mustangs there yet they tell me.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - I think they still have them in Montana too.

BOB DESJARLAIS - Ya, ya.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - Down there, oh that's neat.

BOB DESJARLAIS - But they, they, they were short some over there, in Montana cause Moshum got them.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - They were short thirty horses eh?

BOB DESJARLAIS - Yes. That is, they started out, they started out with a good herd he said. But they lost some along the way there, and they, they sold a couple he said on the way too, to keep alive eh?

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - Did he keep any?

BOB DESJARLAIS - Oh ya, ya, ya.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - So they would know how to break them and all of that eh?

BOB DESJARLAIS - Oh yes, oh ya. And a lot of them were broken already.

SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - Oh right cause they, they kinda got that ready made.

BOB DESJARLAIS - ...**(Inaudible)** riding them, everything, all they had to do was brace them with harness...**(Inaudible)**...everything was, was done eh? But as far as saddle riding there pretty well 99% of them were, you were able to ride eh?

70.4 SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE - So he would have maybe left the Red River settlement just before the war?

BOB DESJARLAIS - Oh yes.

End: 13.21.47.15