

**Jimmy LaRoque, Guy Blondeau, Sherry Farrell-Racette**  
**Video 1**

**Start: 12:01.29.06 Sherry Farrell-Racette:** Right. One of the things that I know that your dad wrote about, Jim, were some of the New Year's traditions that happened in the, in the Métis homes. Do you remember some of the New Year's traditions when you were a boy?

**12.01.45 Jimmy LaRocque:** Oh, yes. Start off with usually that I can remember was my grandparents were gone forth, but the tradition was that you're supposed to go visit the oldest brother or the oldest person in your family at New Year's, so we'd get up about five o'clock in the morning and hook up the horse, and my uncle on top of the hill, John LaRocque, was the oldest brother living, eh? So, that's where we'd go and, we'd get, dad would get a drink, and I'd get a lunch, and the big thing for dad and me was raisin pie. So stuff like that, eh, and then from there you went to the next place you thought was in your line of seniority or whatever, eh? Visit every back and forth to the other brother on the side of the valley, so then we'd go there, get the same thing there. But as time went on dad used to go away by himself and organize old people that had, that danced on New Year's. Now, they were old people. They weren't seventy-five years old, they're eighty or ninety, eh? And then go you to you do at Johnny Blondeau's place, 'cause Johnny Blondeau was the oldest. Get him there and dad would bring a bottle of wine, give 'em each a glass of wine. They'd sit there and drink. And if they were able to get up and step dance, well, they would dance, square dance, eh. But that article I showed you there, that was the last one in '48. Before that year, before that was too much snow, and then '48 was alright, and the next year I think two or three were dead, including Johnny, I think.

**Sherry Farrell-Racette:** They had done that years ago, right?

**Jimmy LaRocque:** Oh yeah, that's thirty-nine years ago, 200 for sure, they used to say.

**Sherry Farrell-Racette:** All the people get together.

**12.03.51 Jimmy LaRocque:** Yeah. But it's, it was nice to see some of those old people, you know, are not that old even, and I can't do what they were doing. So it's, it's nice to see them get up and tell stories and tell about one another, what they did, here. Like that old Johnny Blondeau that we're talking about, he was, dad used to call him the last buffalo hunter. Not like the book. The book was Will's book about the buffalo hunter, but Johnny Blondeau was the actual last buffalo hunter in our area. Apparently the buffalo disappeared when the railroad came, eh? CPR railroad went through in '82 and it separated the buffalo. All the buffalo that were around the south side never came to the north side of the railway, and anything on this side of the railway never went to the south side, so there was, and after, I think it was '80, I'm not even sure, '80 or '70 something, someone come and told old Johnny Blondeau there's a buffalo on this side of the track by himself. Old Johnny threw the harness on horses and away he went. And he got that buffalo, and that's why my dad called him the last buffalo hunter. The last buffalo hunter in that age and in that area. Apparently the buffalo wouldn't go across the track, why, I don't know.

**Sherry Farrell-Racette:** They didn't like it for some reason, eh? It sounded like, yeah, but the pipelines like that, too. I didn't know that it still includes, and I know that, that, well, actually it was, it was your dad that wrote a lot of the articles, and some other people that he wrote about were Blondeaus. He wrote about one Blondeau, and a Simon Blondeau, St. Pierre Blondeau. I found an old picture of a St. Pierre Blondeau, and he's like this, and I know what he's, I know what stories he's telling, these old guys sitting there like this here.

**12.05.46 Guy Blondeau:** Yeah, my dad used to talk about the, this New Year's thing, you know, how the oldest the patriarch, whatever, you know,

whatever it was, he would not go visiting, but everybody came to visit him, eh, and then they'd go visit each other. But everybody had to come and see him, and he named one particular old gentleman who he said he had a big square back wicker chair of some kind, eh, and, and big armchair there. And he said, and he filled up that chair when he sat there, you know, his big, big body I can tell. And this guy would have a drink, but everybody who came in—every man I should say, the women were, were almost excluded from that, I think—but, but every, every man that came in, well, he would have a drink with him. And they said by two o'clock in the afternoon, and they, he was sitting in his chair and they were singing these, singing these old French songs, you know. They would match him drink for drink. Everybody who came in it was, I guess. Speaking of the hunting thing, I, I remember a story this was my dad's, back when, in the Depression, things, ammunition was, cost, cost money, and so he didn't want to waste any, eh? So the story is about this gentleman sneaking up on this big slough, eh, and there were two swans in this slough. And he sat there and he levelled his gun and he waited and he waited and waited, and then when the swans crossed like this, one shot through both necks. No kidding. You can believe it.

**Sherry Farrell-Racette:** Two with one blow.

**Guy Blondeau:** Or not believe it, but that's that was supposed to be. They say it's really true. That was it. You didn't waste ammunition. My dad, when he was a boy, was raised in a, they had moved to the St. Delphine district south of Ituna and Jasmin in that area, and he had gone a couple of times. They said he named, you know, the older relative took him muskrat hunting, eh, so they'd go for it. They'd gone four, five, six days, you know, and they'd camp and they'd set the traps, catch the muskrats, and bring 'em home and, and how he out did it is his, the old guy one time, eh, and so, but it got back because he shot one on the way back. So that they were even like, at least, but this is the same one, the, the older relative. He had trapped a weasel and he was riding on his horse, you know, holding the weasel in his hand, and,

and he said, you know, he tapped him on the nose and he said, "If you were alive I wouldn't be doing this." And I guess the weasel had was just stunned and he grabbed him and bit right through this finger, and the only, to get rid of him was you'd strangle them, eh, with the other hand. You'd strangle them until finally let go and he got his hand out. "I wasn't gonna [?] you were alive." But he had some, some stories about the, their childhood living in that area and how, you know, there was a Charlie Robillard and I forget who else, and everybody had a big dog, eh, you see, so there was some festive occasion and the different families were gathered and the dogs would come along. So these three big dogs there, well, the boy said, "I think you're about ten twelve years old." He said, "Let's, let's walk these guys up. They should be able to, to, you know, pull quite a bit." So they got the harnesses together, you know, they hooked the three dogs up. And just as they started off, the dogs got into a terrible fight and they chewed the harness, so, you know, they ripped the harness all up. And I guess the, the kids got a licking for the harness, you know, being it wasn't the dog fight, but the harness was, was damaged, eh, when the dogs were fighting.

**Sherry Farrell-Racette:** Was it harnesses from the horses?

**Guy Blondeau:** No, no, they had the dog.

**Sherry Farrell-Racette:** The dog had a harness.

**End: 12:10.03.19**