

Norma and Joe Welsh, Sherry Farrell-Racette
Video 1

Start 4:16:56 Sherry Farrell-Racette: Did people still have house parties and sort of, like, old time, you know, with the jigging and the fiddling and stuff when you were growing up?

Norma Welsh: Oh, yeah.

Sherry Farrell-Racette: Oh, yeah?

Norma Welsh: That was just such a fun part of our lives, like, and everybody'd go, like, mom and dad would go and make take all of us kids. We all went, hitch up the, the wagon, or in the wintertime it would be the sleigh. We would go, and Larocques had a quite a few good parties. And everywhere we went, like, the women were just marvellous dancers and they'd be square dancing and jigging, and these kids would be watching in awe, you know, they were so good at it. And there'd be some pretty big women and just light as a feather on their feet. And this happened, actually, you know. And especially in the summertime, quite often we'd be at somebody else's place each time, you know, and you could see the, the, of course, the floor was just boards, you know, the boards would just be shaking and moving up and down, but yeah, it was a wonderful experience going to that.

Sherry Farrell-Racette: What, what was it about the women's dancing that made it stand out so ...

Norma Welsh: Well, to me it was how light they were on their feet, you know, and even one of the old ladies could play the fiddle. They could call a square dance and they were just really wonderful at what they did.

Sherry Farrell-Racette: Who played the fiddle? What woman played the fiddle?

Norma Welsh: I don't know if I'm supposed to give names, but Cliff Larocque's mom.

Joe Welsh: Oh yeah.

Norma Welsh: She used to, she used to play the fiddle. And there was always somebody, even my dad could play the fiddle. There was always somebody that had a fiddle and that's all. There would be no other instruments, just fiddles, and it was marvellous. And we'd sing, of course, we'd have singsongs, too. So it was quite fun.

Sherry Farrell-Racette: Was there anybody that, say, sang any French songs, or songs in Michif? Actually, I remember Jimmy Parisienne could sing songs in Michif. I heard him singing songs in Michif.

Norma Welsh: I don't remember.

Joe Welsh: I remember there, there were a couple, there was, what was that called, they, they were French songs from France, from **(French name)**, and there was one about three ducks Trois Beaux Canards.

Sherry Farrell-Racette: Oh, oh, yeah.

Joe Welsh: And there was a voyageur song **[sings song]**. And that's all I remember.

Sherry Farrell-Racette: But it's amazing, like, how many generations some of those songs must have travelled down...

Joe Welsh: Yeah. Yeah. Yes.

Sherry Farrell-Racette: ...to still be part of, you know, your life growing up, like, that's hundreds of years, you know.

Norma Welsh: Well, my dad spoke French and he could sing in French, you know. He used to converse with the priests. Like, a lot of them just spoke French and, of course, Grandpa, Grandma—I believe she's from Quebec—Grandma Welsh. 'Cause in the, in the family thing that Dennis did, it shows she was from Quebec. Exactly where I can't remember. Reading it now, have to go back and read it some more, but my son did a, a family tree going back to fourteen generations, and, oh my gosh, I think I'm related to everybody in Canada. Including the Sauvés. Because...

Sherry Farrell-Racette: Oh, yeah, yeah, you're related to Sauvés cause Norbert Welsh's mother was a Sauvé, yeah.

Norma Welsh: Chartiers, Boyers.

Sherry Farrell-Racette: She was from James Bay or Hudson's Bay? She was from way up north?

Norma Welsh: Yeah.

Sherry Farrell-Racette: I found her scrip application.

Norma Welsh: Yeah, I've got that, too, that's in that package Dennis did, yeah. So it was very interesting, and a lot of these people were from all over, like, Paris, Europe, all way back when.

Joe Welsh: Germany.

Norma Welsh: Yeah, Germany.

4:21:47 Sherry Farrell-Racette: When you went to the, went to the dances, did people have jigging contests? Do you remember people having jigging contests?

Norma Welsh: No, no, we just went up. It was just usually house parties. I know there were jigging parties around, like, contests and stuff, but we were never at them.

Sherry Farrell-Racette: It was mostly square dancing that people did.

Norma Welsh: Yeah. And there'd be jigging, too. I think everybody in the world could jig at that time. But that was our entertainment, though, and it was wonderful.

Sherry Farrell-Racette: Do you remember how they used to jig?

Norma Welsh: Well, I've seen a lot of it on TV, like, the way they, they, they jig, and most of it is was the same.

Sherry Farrell-Racette: The same?

Norma Welsh: Yeah.

Sherry Farrell-Racette: Did the men and women dance the same, or were there differences between the men and women?

Norma Welsh: I, I can't remember any differences. Like, a lot of the jigging there, there was no really high stepping, you know. I noticed some jiggers really step high, but I, as far as I can remember, it was the same.

Sherry Farrell-Racette: So the, the steps were lower?

Norma Welsh: Yeah.

Sherry Farrell-Racette: So there wasn't as much. I just find it interesting because sometimes when people watch, they say, "Oh, that's not right, that's not right." That's not the way that I remember it. You know, or...

Joe Welsh: Yeah, yeah. Especially in Batoche there.

End 4:23.13.29