

Norma and Joe Welsh, Sherry Farrell-Racette
Video 2

Start 3:34:07 Sherry Farrell-Racette: You get attached. Oh, here, look is that stooking?

Norma Welsh: Yeah, hmmm.

Joe Welsh: The individual sheaths, that's what put it together.

Norma Welsh: And you built them up, like you would a tipi.

Sherry Farrell-Racette: Did you tie them somehow?

Norma Welsh: Well, they came out tied.

Joe Welsh: They tie them on the binder.

Norma Welsh: Yeah, the binder tied them and ...

Joe Welsh: There's a picture here of an individual, well, you can see him better here, yeah. See, these, these were the sheaves here [?].

Norma Welsh: And they're all over here, but we used to go and some of us kids used to go on. We didn't have to do that really.

Sherry Farrell-Racette: So it wasn't child labour.

Norma Welsh: Yeah, no. But we liked doing it 'cause it was fun, we thought it was fun.

Sherry Farrell-Racette: So it'd come off the machine like that.

[Everyone talks at once]

Joe Welsh: ... this is a binder, but the swather, it would come off and there. So you can see there's a little canister there where they kept the canister of twine, and that would tie the sheaves individually, and then ...

Sherry Farrell-Racette: So they'd come off the shoot like that.

Joe Welsh: They'd come off like that, and then ...

Norma Welsh: You plow and then you have to stack them up.

Joe Welsh: Yeah, and then the big machines would move in there, what they, the threshing machines would move in, and that's when the threshing crews would come in the, take each sheath like that, feed it into the threshing machine, and it would separate the, the wheat from the chaff, I guess they call it. And walk it along and separate the, you know, the seeds. And they even had the separators working with the, separate the weeds. Like, in those days there's buckwheat and those kinds of weeds would, would be common. We'd even have the, the a separator that would separate the wheat sheaves from the, from the buckwheat and all those other kinds. And then again and separate the straw, and it come out the end of the, oh, there's a good a picture of a threshing machine here. But then they use that straw for, they would, they didn't have balers, or not many of them had bailers. But they bundled the straws and the haystacks and put it on a hayrack, and that would be the, that would be feed unless it was a bad year. But that would be the bedding for the, for the animals. You'd put in the barns and ...

Norma Welsh: In the barn, yeah.

Joe Welsh: Sure didn't waste much.

Sherry Farrell-Racette: Well, no, and, like, like, one of the things that, that I heard people talk about is how much of the farm labour in that whole region was done by Métis men. How many of the crews were Métis men that used to go work from farmer to farmer.

3:36:40 Norma Welsh: Well, my dad did that all his life except all the time we were here at the farm. He always had work on a farm.

Sherry Farrell-Racette: Did he hire himself out with a crew, did he have [?] men that he worked with?

Norma Welsh: No, he, he, just farmers called him, you know. They would not call, you know, by telephone or anything, but they would get a hold of him somehow and ask him to come to work 'cause he was a hard worker.

Sherry Farrell-Racette: 'Cause that was a big part of the economy of, for Métis people is working on the farms, like, doing the threshing and, you know, all of that.

Norma Welsh: Well, we used to go and pick potatoes for the nuns. They had this big potato farm out by Katepwa and they'd pay us a dollar a day to go and pick potatoes for eight or ten hours, whatever it was. But that, you could buy a whole, a whole bag of groceries with that dollar, you know. Hundred million child labourers.

Sherry Farrell-Racette: Oh gosh. So how would you dig the potatoes? Did you just stick them with a pitchfork, or like a fork or?

Norma Welsh: Well, somebody, they had a machine that went along and ...

Joe Welsh: And they had one of those?

Norma Welsh: Yeah.

Sherry Farrell-Racette: So you just flip it over and you get them all on, like, the side.

Norma Welsh: You'd have to do some along the diggin', but we had those little shovels or, you know, to dig any one that were further down like.

End 3:38.10.29