

## The Métis in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Conference

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Saskatoon

Day 2, Laliberte Sessions (A)

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**Heather Devine:** And then things get really complicated. You get situations where you have several brothers and cousins who have joined up as engagés. They do their three year hitch and then when it's over and they've become Freeman, they all move from various places in Rupert's Land and join up together in one spot. And the Desjarlais family does this. They sign up in different posts, but after a while they all seem toglom on together at places like Lac la Biche. They end up at Red River. They're all in one spot. Another place that's really interesting is at Pembina, where you end up with all these engagés and Freeman and they're all descended from an extended family network that was originally founded by Paul Hus [sp?] in the parish of Sorel [sp?]. The Pelletiers, Aubichons, Millet dit Beauchemins, the Mainvilles (or known as Mandeville down there), the Azures, the Tessiers, the Duvals, the Lavallées, the Pauls—they were all related in Quebec before they even came out to Rupert's Land. They were all related back there. So when they get here, what they're doing is they're doing their thing. They have their country wives, then they all seem to migrate down to Pembina where they then start intermarrying again. Now what you get out of all of this is you've got people, Métis people, who are related to one another by blood through their mother's line and their father's line. They are also getting really tight unions because you've got multiple unions with the Freeman; he's got three wives, they all have children, they're marrying other Freeman. Then there's another generation and they're all intermarrying. And I can only say that it really got tough for the priests because, of course, they have to find out if people are allowed to marry to make sure they're not breaking the consanguinity laws, and it's just a headache. They're literally tearing their

hair out. It's quite funny to read the stuff actually, and that brings us to religious influences. (How am I doing?)