

Victor Rose—Parks Canada Interview, February 16, 2012

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Amy Como (AC): Alright, today is February 16, 2012. And could you please tell me your name and home community?

Victor Rose (VR): My name is Vic Rose and what was the other one?

AC: And your home community? Your community where you are from?

VR: Oh, I am from Frenchman Butte. Frenchman Butte, Saskatchewan.

AC: Okay.

VR: At least that is where I live now.

AC: And who were your parents and grandparents and where were they from?

VR: My grandparents on my mom's side were Landrys and Falcons. My grandmother was a Falcon.

AC: Okay.

VR: And my grandfather was Landry. Joe Landry was his name.

AC: Okay. And where were they from?

VR: Well as far as I know they were from Saskatchewan, but I think they lived in Meadow Lake.

AC: Okay.

VR: My grandfather got killed out there. Fell off a wagon.

AC: In Meadow Lake?

VR: Yeah, out that way somewhere.

AC: Alright.

VR: I don't know if they lived in Green Lake or Meadow Lake, out there anyway.

AC: Okay.

VR: And my grandmother, they moved back to Cochin years ago. Later on, probably after my grandfather died.

AC: Does anyone in your family speak Michif?

VR: My mother did.

AC: Okay, just your mother?

VR: Yeah. Yeah, my dad spoke a little bit of English and Cree.

AC: Okay.

VR: He didn't have any education at all. He never went to school.

AC: Did anyone serve in the military?

VR: My brother did for a while but he got discharged for some reason.

AC: And do you speak ...

VR: I don't think he went overseas.

AC: No?

VR: That was Pete, my brother Pete.

AC: And do you speak Michif?

VR: Hm?

AC: Do you speak Michif?

VR: Me?

AC: Yes.

VR: No, I don't.

AC: Do you understand a little bit?

VR: Any language really. I was brought up that way. When mom couldn't remember a word or a sentence she would use French or Cree or English or whatever come first I guess.

AC: And how were the Métis treated in your community?

VR: They were treated pretty good as far as I know.

AC: Okay. Did your family encounter racism from the larger community?

VR: No.

AC: No, okay. What other Métis families lived in the Métis vicinity?

VR: Community...?

AC: Yes.

VR: There was the Delormes lived ... Delormes lived there and there was the Prudens.

AC: Okay.

VR: Let's see who other. Oh there was Laplantes ... can't really think off hand.

AC: Okay...

VR: There were probably other's but I can't think of them. There was Mitchells too.

AC: Mitchells. Do you know if any of those families spoke Michif?

VR: I think they did, yeah. Like Mrs Mitchell would have.

AC: Okay.

VR: That would be my brother's mother-in-law. They were an Irish name though, but they barely spoke any English at all I think. French, a little bit of English and Cree.

AC: Yeah, a mix. Do you know of any traditional Métis stories or songs?

VR: No, I don't, but I may have a little bit of a someone singing.

AC: Okay and that's on a ? You have a collection?

VR: Yeah, on my little recorder.

AC: What sort of resources did your families harvest? Do you know? Where and when they were collected?

VR: Like fruit and stuff like that?

AC: Yes.

VR: Well, we harvested, picked Saskatoons, berries, and vegetables. There were gardeners that lived not too far from us. Used to do a little work for vegetables or whatever. But we had our own garden too.

AC: Did you do a lot of hunting?

VR: We did quite a bit of that, yeah.

AC: And trapping?

VR: Not so much of trapping.

AC: No.

VR: We were very poor, so we used to hang snares, the boys, the Delorme boys and the Roses. They would go through the bush and they would get caught in the snare then we would pull them off. And we used to, we used to get some prairie chickens too. We used to put an old net or something like that. Get caught in a net, or if we could afford shells we would get shells and get ... Shoot them. There's partridge too. Get partridge just using a snare, walk right close to them, and put the snare over their head. Pull them down. I don't know if I could do that now but, I would they are pretty good eating.

AC: Yeah?

VR: They are pretty good eating.

AC: That's good.

VR: Yeah there's a lot of ... there's a lot of things you can get, you know, for food? Maybe get the odd deer, not too many though. My mother shot one, one time. I can remember that. We used to get ducks too and stuff like that.

AC: Rabbit?

VR: Yeah, lots of rabbit. Oh ,there was lots of rabbits.

AC: What sort of traditional medicines were used in your community and family?

VR: Well my mother used to...my mother was a, more like a herbalist. Used to learn from the natives. She cured a lot of people with herbs, I really don't know what she used, Seneca root and different herbs.

AC: Okay.

VR: Buckbrush.

AC: Sorry?

VR: Buckbrush, stuff like that.

AC: Buckbrush.

VR: There's a lot, I wish I had learned it.

AC: Yeah, it's a nice gift to have. Did anyone in your family live in a Métis road allowance community?

VR: Yeah, we lived east of Cochin in a road allowance there. I must have been about 4 or 5, I can't quite remember. We had a quarter of land, which Mr. McGuss talked my Dad into selling to him. He told my Dad to build a house on the Road Allowance and live there. My Dad built a little log house on the Road Allowance which was 300-500 yards from the land we sold him. I don't believe my mother wanted him to sell it. We lived there probably about 5 or 6 years then we moved to the Cochin area.

AC: Was there a lot of families there?

VR: I'd say three or four.

AC: Did anyone in your family make beaded or embroidered moccasins or other items?

VR: Well my mother used to do that. She would bead and then embroider. She used to also make mukluks.

AC: Do you know what happened to these artefacts?

VR: Probably wore out or something. They looked nice though.

AC: Oh, I'm sure they were beautiful. How did your family celebrate special occasions and holidays such as Christmas, Easter or New Years?

VR: I think we celebrated Christmas more than New Years. I think we'd eat up everything on Christmas so we couldn't celebrate on New Years. Yeah, we used to go to church. Midnight mass, they'd call it. Then we'd get home and have some, there's always a little wine or something, we drank. Sometimes, we didn't have any, but this time they did. Have a meal and go around, sometimes, we'd go to the reserve too if we were invited.

AC: Did you have family there?

VR: I don't have any family there, but the natives were, seemed to be different years ago. We'd just go for dinner. Not always.

AC: Was anybody in your family involved with the Métis Society?

VR: Pardon?

AC: Was anyone in your family involved in the Métis Society?

VR: Not really, because my dad wasn't educated at all, but my parents had a friend, his name was Babe Beauchesne, something like that. And Sam Pritchard, old Sam Pritchard. And they were quite involved in Métis.

AC: Okay.

VR: I used to have something from that Pritchard, but I guess I gave it to someone, and I don't know what he did to it.

AC: And were they from, which area?

VR: I think they were from Lac La Biche, this was a while back you know?

AC: Okay, how were the local Métis connected to Fort Battleford?

VR: Fort Battleford, jeez, I don't really know.

AC: Okay.

VR: I think my grandfather lived in Fort Battleford. I'm not too sure if he was in the military or not. But, he did have a farm out there.

AC: In the area?

VR: At Iffly, Saskatchewan, which is a small town southeast of Cochin.

A red-headed Scotsman. And that was Ernie Rose.

AC: Ernie Rose?

VR: My grandfather, Ernie Rose, on my father's side.

AC: Okay. So you mentioned your grandfather was involved with Fort Battleford, was anybody else, do you know, in your family?

VR: My great-grandfather Jonathan Rose.

AC: Okay. Are there any historically and culturally significant landscapes or historic sites within the Fort Battleford area that you consider to be important?

VR: The fort itself.

AC: Okay, you can think about it.

VR: I'm interested in one place, but I won't say where it is. It's where Gabriel Dumont buried his gold.

AC: I think everyone would be interested in a pile of gold.

VR: Yeah, I think if I find the time I will look for it.

AC: Was your family involved in the 1885 Resistance at or near Fort Battleford?

VR: I think that the Falcons were.

AC: Or any other area?

VR: I don't know if any of the Falcons or Landrys were involved. I can't say whether, Gabriel Dumont, I thought we were related to some of them.

AC: Okay ... Hello?

VR: Yes, I'm still here.

AC: Okay. It just sounded like I got cut off or something fuzzy.

VR: When someone is trying to phone me.

AC: Okay, do you have to go?

VR: Not really, not right now.

AC: Okay, we're almost there. Question 17, what happened to your family after the 1885 Resistance?

VR: I remember that my grandfather and mother they moved to Montana, I think. Maybe North Dakota or Montana.

AC: Okay so they moved south?

VR: My mother was born in Helena or Kalispell, Montana.

AC: In Montana?

VR: Yeah, and then they moved back to Saskatchewan.

AC: After your mother was born?

VR: Yeah probably a few years after, something like that.

AC: Has your family been in the area for a long time?

VR: Around Cochin?

AC: Yes.

VR: Yeah, they were there a long time.

AC: And how did they make a living?

VR: Usually my dad would get jobs, you know, contracts for stooking or picking rocks, brushing and picking the roots and all that. Different jobs, I guess. And, we were quite a big family so when they took a contract for stooking you know, only boys would be stoking, but we'd take a swath, each doing a strip of grain so that there were five of us working, that would be five tows wide at a time.

AC: It took a long time, I'm sure.

VR: It didn't take too long. We had all the boys working. But, when you're alone it takes a long time.

AC: I bet. What sort of relationship did the Métis have with the Mounted Police at Fort Battleford? Do you know?

VR: I couldn't really say. I think my grandfather joined the North West Mounted Police and then he moved onto Yukon.

AC: Onto where, sorry?

VR: To the Yukon.

AC: To the Yukon.

VR: For the gold rush.

AC: Okay, do you know his name?

VR: Yeah his name was, my great-grandfather's name was Jonathan Rose.

AC: Jonathan Rose.

VR: And my grandfather was Ernie, and my dad was Boniface Rose.

AC: Boniface Rose. Okay ...

VR: And one time my dad was given a cheque and he opened it, and it was quite a bit of money though, but we didn't know who Boniface Rose was. So, he ripped the cheque.

AC: Oh no!

VR: It was from the Wheat Pool.

AC: Okay.

VR: We could have used the money then, but we didn't know our dad's name was Boniface Rose. He was known as Joe Rose.

AC: Oh.

VR: And here I have his name also. Victor Boniface Rose.

AC: Well that's different.

VR: I'd kind of like to look into it, but I'm not educated enough. Maybe I could get another cheque.

AC: Maybe, they'll have to reissue another one. Do you know if any of your ancestors took Métis scrip at Fort Battleford, Fort Walsh or Wood Mountain or anywhere else?

VR: They might have. Like the Falcons or something like that. I think Falcons would have. I don't know if the Landrys did or not.

AC: Okay. How can Parks Canada make Fort Battleford more inviting for Métis visitors?

VR: How, you say?

AC: How can Parks Canada ...

VR: How can they, that's a good one. I don't really know if they have anything going in summer time now too. I thought maybe they do. I'm not too sure.

AC: So many events?

VR: In the Fort Battleford there.

AC: Okay, that would be a good idea.

VR: Yeah, because I live about a hundred miles away from there right now.

AC: How might Parks Canada include more information on the Métis history of these areas?

VR: How can Canada?

AC: Parks Canada include more information on the Métis of the area?

VR: How can they do that ... Well that's a good one. You know, I'd have to stop and think.

AC: No problem. They're long questions. So, we are on number 23 of 25. We have three questions to go. Are there specific people or community groups that you would recommend Parks Canada to contact to improve their interpretation of Métis history and culture?

VR: Well maybe my brother-in-law might be interested in that. He knows quite a bit. His name is Gordon Howard. [Gordon passed away in May 2012].

AC: Gordon Howard.

VR: Yeah, in Frenchmen Butte.

AC: Did you or any of your ancestors spend time in the Grasslands National Park or area and if so, what type of cultural activities did you do?

VR: No we didn't.

AC: No, okay.

VR: After we were grown up, we kind of scattered, you know?

AC: Yeah, that usually happens.

VR: Boys got married.

AC: Okay. Are there any particular landscapes or historical sites within the Parks that you as a Métis person consider significant?

VR: The park is very nice.

AC: Okay, and the last question we're on, is kind of a long one. And so I'm going to read it all out and if we need to review we can.

VR: I see that.

AC: A cultural resources value statement is being developed for the Grasslands National Park. The Park has identified a number of potential cultural values that may be important to the history of the Park. Would any of these identified potential value themes be important to you as a Métis person, if so, which ones and what connections do you see? And on that other paper that you should have that I faxed to you, it has a list and it says the following themes have been identified as of interest: the trading post, relationship with the bison, ranching, farming, Great Depression, governance and administration, and so on. So are there any of those themes that you find important?

VR: Trading post, well I could remember the Great Depression.

AC: Okay, the Great Depression. Is there any themes that you would like to add?

VR: Oh, I could remember trading post, but I don't think that had too much to do with the Métis, trading post and the bush, where they would trade there whatever they had. They would leave whatever they had, and they would take something that they liked. Then my brother and probably my cousins, they went and knocked the trading post down. That was

the end of the trading post. This was a Native trading post which was a very tall stump where people could leave stuff to trade.

AC: Alright Victor, well that's the end of our questions. We went through them fairly quick.

VR: Yeah I do have a picture of our house in the road allowance, the log house.

AC: Oh that's a great keepsake.

VR: And my father holding my little sister that had passed, had died. Holding my little sister in the coffin.

AC: Oh, okay.

VR: And then another one when we moved out. When we moved out from the road allowance, I don't know how old I was, probably about 10. I can't quite remember. We rented a house and we then moved to Cochin, bought some land out there. And I got a picture of that, probably Christmas, mom was dancing and there was George DeLaronde playing the violin.

AC: Well that's a great memory.

VR: The gray paper for the ceiling.

AC: Sorry?

VR: Grey building paper for the ceiling.

AC: Alright Victor ...

VR: In my teenage, I left there.

AC: Teen years.

VR: Is that it?

AC: Yes. That is it. We are done the questions, and I thank you for your time and all you had to share.

VR: Yeah, well I guess that's all I can do for now.

AC: No, we really appreciate it, and you've really helped a lot.

VR: Very good, you're quite welcome.

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