

Charles Alex Fleury Interview by Norman Fleury – English Paraphrase

My name is Charles Alex Fleury.

Mother Annie Ledoux.

Father John Edward Fleury.

I was born in the Valley in Binscarth where we lived. I was born Jan 27, 1932.

We did live in St. Madeleine then we moved back to Binscarth. Dad worked for farmers. The farmer gave 10 acres of land to Dad. We were 11 in our family. There were 3 girls and 8 boys. My dad was born Jan. 27, 1900 in St. Madeleine.

My mother was born September 1903. My dad's father was Frank Fleury. His dad was Lodia Fisher.

I remember my grandparents. My Grandfather passed away in Russell hospital. My grandfather was a good worker. He cut a lot of wood.

The old people, Grandpa, and John Fleury sang in French. They sang songs in celebration. Jimmy Ledoux was my Mom's cousin.

Dad didn't go to school. Mom went to Lebret school.

Paul, Ernestine went to Lebret school. The Métis and First Nations went to Lebret school.

My dad mostly worked for farmers. Dad cut wood and stoked. He also did scrubbing for farmers to clear land. Dad had horses, chicken, and made big gardens.

He grew enough potatoes to sell and for the family. Mom picked berries, strawberries, raspberries.

We would go digging seneca root for 2 to 3 days. We went towards Birtle, MB. Mom sold berries such as chokecherries and other berries.

Mom made homemade mats and sold them. Mom worked in the hotel and then she did her work at home. She made her own blankets. We had a two bedroom home built with logs. We lived on Wilbert Rice farm where I was born.

Some where born in St. Madeleine. We lived there until 1972. My mother passed away in 1963 and Dad passed away in in 1974.

Dad moved to the town of Binscarth. People danced a lot during New Years and wherever you went you ate. Mom baked bread, cakes, and pies. We ate deer meat, meat balls. We went to midnight mass to the corner at Fouilliard town.

Dad used horses and hitched them to wagon, sleighs, buggy and cutter. Dad took good care of his horses and dressed them up on New Years. Chi Tom and Jean Louis had horses.

I started working when I was 13 years old. I worked in the Duck Mountains in Minitonas, cutting wood when I was 17 years old. I cut cord wood and it was sold in town.

I went with Pete Ducharme and his family to work. We got \$2.00 and \$2.50 a cord.

I married Violet Moar from Shoal River, MB in 1980. We had an old fashioned wedding. We got married at the corner. We made a platform and danced. Dave Genaille and Alex Henry played the music. My wife had two daughters. I lost my wife in 2001 in March.

I worked all over the place. I worked for farmers. I operated different equipment. I took care of cattle, we used horses. I picked a lot of stones and roots in the fields. We would start work around 6am until 9 at night.

I went to school 6 miles from Binscarth in Belmore school. I made Grade 1. Some of my brothers and sisters went to school on the corner. My sister Eleanor was the oldest, then Frank, and my sister in Edmonton. I am the next oldest. We entertained ourselves playing some games and cards.

A priest taught us la barouche. His name was father Poulette.

We had a lot of dances. Many played the main instruments, fiddle and guitar. We went to picnics in Binscarth and Russell.

We are losing Michif because of speaking just English and mixed marriages. George Fleury's family doesn't speak Michif. Mervin Fleury speaks a lot of English to his family. My dad spoke like we are speaking and English. My mom spoke some English and Cree. My mom was a Ledoux and had 3 half brothers. My dad had full and half brothers and sisters. I have a lot of nieces and nephews. From the Yukon to Ottawa. Two of my nephews that are police are in Ottawa and Yukon. I speak like we are speaking English and some French. We have to speak our language and speak to our children.

In Camperville and Duck Bay, Michif is spoken more frequently. Chinese aren't embarrassed of their language. Everyone wants to speak English.