

Louise Gregory Interview by Norman Fleury – English Paraphrase

Louise Marie Gregory

Born – Gladstone, Manitoba

Mother – Eleanor Flamand

Mother's parents – Louise Tanner and Christom Flamand

Dad – Frank Gregoire

Dad's parents – Frank Gregoire and Julie Lavasseur

I think my grandmother is from WayWay. My mother was born in Selby Town. My grandmother had a little farm, she raised cattle, chicken, etc.

I was born in Gladstone in a tent. Mom was alone when I was born. Mom was a midwife.

I have nine children. I have 12 grandchildren. I have a grandson in Thailand.

We always spoke Michif at home. There is Dolphice Maschamin died at 32, Albert, Bill Phci William, and myself.

We must speak Michif at home and speak to our children in Michif.

We can speak and teach Michif in school but some might be embarrassed. Some people are still ashamed to be Michif and don't want to be known and accept being Michif.

My mother spoke Saulteaux and my Dad spoke Saulteaux and English. Mom didn't speak English. I remember my mother's mom a little. I was too young. They didn't live in St. Madeleine, they always were in Selby Town.

New Years was a big celebration. Food was a big part. We ate whatever we had. Mom cooked and baked. She made lii boulette with deer meat, rice pudding, bannock. The Métis danced every night. We would go to St. Lazare to dances. There are no more dances anymore. Some of the fiddlers were old Jean Louis and the late Doug, the late Charlie Vermette, Willie Boucher. There were a lot I guess. We also went to dance at Willie Boucher's and Geordy Ledoux.

Ineda wa a caller and Jouille, he's a Pelletier. Dolphice was also a fiddle player. We were never short of fiddle players. Old Jean Louis used to clean his pipe on his fiddle, tuk, tuk, tuk (laughs).

The women made gardens. My mother made a lot of gardens. My mother canned. We had a cellar and stored our potatoes, turnip, carrots, and other things. Mom picked wild berries, like chokecherries and cranberries. My mother made jam and canned. She would fry crushed chokecherries and add sugar.

As we talk you remind me of a lot of the past.

When we lived in Selby Town we travelled with horses. We went to school at the church in Fouilliard Town. The church was called St. Hubert. We all went to school at the church. There were different kinds of teachers. My mother worked away from home every day as dad had left us. Mom worked for farmers, doing house work, cleaning, laundry. Mom was a good provider, we never were hungry. My mother was a good worker.

Some of our pastimes were playing cards and playing games. If we stayed too long, you could hear mom calling for us. Other games were also baseball. We always went to church. One priest I remember was Father Poulette. Then priests came from St. Lazare, and Russell then the church was finally closed.

Pauline Pelletier was a good storyteller. We would go to see her if we had an urge to hear about things. When it was lent we were told not to go dancing and don't go out late at night or you will meet someone, a ghost, or roogaroo. No one made dances during lent. They scared you, so you didn't go anywhere.

The rosary was said every night at different homes. The statue of the virgin Mary was kept at each home for a week and we made our rounds. This could have been for the month of May or lent. Years ago there was a lot of visiting. People socialize not like today. We are losing the old ways. My children are also the same. My brother Albert visits me. My brother Dolphice is going blind. When someone died years ago we were very respectful. We mourned for a long time. The wakes were for 2 to 3 days. It is not the same today. Now people go to the funeral home. No one stays all night like years ago. At the Friendship Centre they also will have wakes. The ways are different now. The system has changed.

My dad got remarried in Long Plains after he left mom. My dad liked to drink. He worked for farmers. Mom had a few drinks, but didn't look for it. Years ago women didn't drink much.

I was involved with the Métis Federation and then I went to Alberta working. I worked in Russell, MB in the truck stop as a cook. I found walking was hard for me to go to work. I've lived here in Yorkton for 15 years. My children all left home. My oldest will be 50 and my second oldest 43.

I sew for a pastime. I make quilts for my grandchildren. I make braided rugs. When I get lazy I don't do very much.

I always wish that my children finish school, leave and go to work. I wonder now why I said that. Now I wish they were all here. There are two living in Yorkton, my baby in Winnipeg, two in Canmore, AB, and one in Airdrie, AB. I get a little upset but I have to live with it. Maarsii.