

## Maurice Fagnan Interview by Norman Fleury – English Paraphrase

I was born in Winnipegosis. My parents lived in Camperville. My mother was Nellie Ledoux. My dad was Joe Fagnan. My dad was born in Pine Creek. My mother was born by the Winnipegosis Lake. My dad's parents were John Fagnan and Pauline McKay. My mother's parents were Felix Ledoux and Emery Brelboef.

My mother said her parents worked for farmers and in the bush. They also fished and dug seneca root. My dad's parents worked the same way. There weren't many roads in those days. They cut and sold wood. They also built roads and did scrubbing for road building. My grandfather helped build the church. My mother had relatives in Birtle and St. Madeleine and talked about them. My mom's dad came from St. Madeleine. My dad trapped and worked on the roads. He also did farm work.

My dad had a farm and raised chickens, cattle, horses, and pigs, had gardens. They had their own eggs and made big gardens. Made her own butter and had cream. My mother picked berries, such as chokecherries, raspberries, strawberries, and blueberries. My dad milked and also my brothers. They went to Cowan to pick blueberries at Kettle Hills. They also picked cranberries. We ate fruit with the farm cream. We are ten children in our family. There are four girls and six boys. My parents adopted three children, my sister's children.

I live in Winnipeg, MB for 18 years. The rest lived in Camperville and one in Saskatchewan, my brother. They worked in logging, sawing logs in sawmills. My dad also worked there and took his horses. My dad also sold water in the town of Camperville. He got money for the water or took trade or bartered with fish and rabbits. He also did local barbering and made a few dollars. My mother made tonics and perms. She would have liked to make a living from this and have a trade.

Mom also made big gardens, canned, and preserved. My mother put garden produce away and lots of potatoes. My dad hunted elk, moose, rabbits, and also trapped fur bearing animals. Dad skinned, stretched, and sold his furs. He sold blueberries in Cowan, MB stores. I have relatives in Camperville, MB. I remember my dad's dad and mom's dad a little.

For celebrations we had a lot of house parties and celebrated some of the old Métis ways. My parents did not drink alcohol.

I went to school in Camperville and bussed to Winnipegosis for high school. I graduated from Grade 12 in Winnipegosis. I worked in a tannery for two years, skinning and tanning hides. We tanned deer hides, elk, and moose. This was run by the Government. The wages were good. I like it there because I made a lot of money. I came to Winnipeg, MB looking for a job I liked. My job is helping people. I worked in my job for 10 years now.

When my dad was still alive I visited in Camperville a lot. I would go home for celebrations such as Christmas and New Years. We would go to midnight mass at Christmas. My mother cooked a lot for New Years. She'd bake cakes and pies. People came to eat and then they would go visiting. People invited

each other. They cooked turkey, lii boulette, and potatoes. They'd have dances, danced jigs and square dances. My uncle could call square dances.

We heard of roogaroo stories and other stories. I used to get scared. Especially during lent we heard these stories. One of my mom's aunts was a good storyteller.

When I was a child we spoke Michif and were raised Michif. I understand all of it but when I speak like this in an interview I have difficulty because I am not prepared. One on one I'm better. I speak to my brother and my sister in Michif. We lost our language when we went to school. We started to lose our language at that time. There was only English taught and some French. My dad said languages were lost because of residential schools. My dad went to residential school.

My mother went to Camperville school where she was taught by nuns and priests. I started my school there also. Camperville had two stores and a restaurant. Mrs. Bone had the café. Phillip and Nancy Flamand had a restaurant and pool at a later date. I went there to play pool.

I never did commercial fishing, just sport fishing. My dad fished for a living and he also hauled water year-round. They did net fishing. My dad sold fish in Winnipegosis. There were no license years ago, not like today. Years ago people hunted any time when they were short of meat. They weren't afraid of police or game wardens. Métis need harvesting rights license. The Métis would like to have hunting rights like First Nations. I like ducks. They are good, my favourite. I get my fist from Gimli fishery. I buy pickerel there. Years ago we didn't fillet very much. We scraped the fish. We boiled fish and potatoes like la rababoo. We also fried the fish. I buy my bannock, lii bang and wild rice at Neechi Foods.

In order to save our language Michif, we have to speak it at home and to teach at school. We always have to use and hear our language. We should speak like this all the time.

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