

Transcription  
Paul Pelletier  
-Tape 2-

Paul: Pemmican, what they call the pemmican. You heard of that I suppose.

Woman: Aha.

Paul: Yeah, they lived on that.

Woman: What else did they live on?

Paul: Oh well, wild meat, wild meat. Make bannock. Outside on their knees, the women would pull there dress up you know. No, no. (laugh) They'd make there bannock outside, standing up in a frying pan. Cook it there.

Woman: What kind of, tell me about the clothing that they use to wear?

Paul: Well, they just wear this little bib.

Woman: For the men?

Paul: For the men. All women wore dresses I guess, but they all were hydes, buffalo hydes. Mother would tan that you know to make mogs and stuff, make dresses and coats I guess.

Woman: Did your father ever tell you stories?

Paul: Oh sure. I can remember them.

Woman: What kind of stories did he tell you?

Paul: He use to tell me how they hunted. I can remember when they were hunting in Shellbrook when we were living in this town, they use to go out and shoot at deer. I was a little boy, about like that. Go out, I tell you. Just open them up and bring the liver back. You tell my mother, cook this for breakfast. Oh good God, my mother would get mad, and say cook the damn liver yourself. My mother wasn't quite a half-breed like we were.

Woman: What's the background of your mother?

Paul: Ha.

Woman: What background does your mother come from?

Paul: Someplace in, come from...well, he came from Ireland. His father at least, they were Irish, that's why they had this Swong. Some of his brothers was in Batoche, that's where...at the time of the rebellion, his brother got killed there at the time of the rebellion. After the rebellion, my mother went down there to see the grave of his brother. The Riel war. Just some Marie's and \_\_\_\_\_ went with them. Then they travel in the buggy all the way to Batoche.

Woman: What did they tell you about Batoche?

Paul: Oh, they seen the dummy police like all the way on the road, yet they were still standing up after the war, about a year after the war.

Woman: But, did they tell you about the Batoche battle and everything?

Paul: Oh, they didn't know much, it was after the war you know, after the war. They seen the coffins, some people were still living them. There was no tombstones, no crosses. Some people I could remember were, what the hell was my uncle's name, my mother's brother. I can't remember, it was my uncle. That was my mother's brother. Alex Swong. That was my mother's brother, he got killed.

Woman: Did any of your father's brothers or sisters?

Paul: No, my father and them lived up here. You know, this is where the Mounted Police camped right in this lot. Where my house is.

Woman: Now, where we're sitting now?

Paul: Ha.

Woman: In this lot?

Paul: Right in this lot. When I first moved in here, there was no water in here. I put water in here and I shingled this and I fixed this house up and put lights on, and there was no water. I had to make an outside toilet.

Woman: Aha.

Paul: Still, that old toilet is still standing up there, I'm using it for a tool shed. I was digging about 3 feet and I found an old blunt, what Mounted Police had lost. I kept the goddamn thing. Oh, I use to be a \_\_\_\_\_ Mission George makes common \_\_\_\_\_.

I'll buy that gun from you. I'll tell you what I'll do with you. I'll take it to Winnipeg and I'll put your name on, where you find it, the time of the rebellion war. Mounted police lived right here, in this lot right here. A lot of people told me that, that's where the Mounted Police camp right here. That's why they had that dub there and lost there gun. I gave it to that damn George Mason and never heard no more about it. I'll bet you he got something for the damn

Woman: What was his name?

Paul: George Mason.

Woman: George Mason. He took it to Winnipeg?

Paul: He took it to Winnipeg.

Woman: And you never heard it no more?

Paul: He took to a museum you know.

Woman: Now about yourself. When were you born? What year if you can remember?

Paul: Well, you could figure it right back 1918. I'll be 89 on the 13th of December. Just figure that out, back.

Woman: 1893, whatever?

Paul: 1894, would it be? 1893, yeah. While, I'm not 89 yet, 13th of December I'll be 89.

Woman: Where were you born?

Paul: Tortured Hills, that's where my father settled all these years. Buffalo hunting was over then. We homesteaded there.

Woman: Can you tell me about your family when you were young. When you were a child, can you tell me about your family, all your brothers and sisters?

Paul: I was the only one that went to school there. My sister \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ went to the Indian boarding school. Muskokin Indian Boarding School they call it. Your mother would remember that.

Woman: Yeah. You went to

Paul: No, I didn't go to that school, I went to just a day school. I ran to school, about a mile and a half to school.

Woman: The others went to

Paul: That Indian Boarding School. They weren't allowed, but then there was even \_\_\_\_\_ there. George Nofield, his dad and all them, Alex Rizak, remember Alex Rizak?

Woman: Oh yeah, I remember.

Paul: His sisters and brothers, they went to that Indian Boarding School. Wasn't only Indians, there were all kinds of nationalities, that's where momma went to school.

Woman: What kind of school was it? Was it a good school, or?

Paul: They still go now. They still. They had a big do there, at Joe Desjarlais yesterday, that's Peter's brother. He's worked there 40 years and got smart right in school. Went to school again. 40 years he got smart. 40 year university use to be. They wanted me to go. Jack was the best student going. He was only 16 years old. That's when he was in Chicago, remember. I was overseas. I joined the 2 World Wars.

Woman: When you lived at home, did your mom and dad have a house on there own land?

Paul: Oh sure. We had a homestead. My father had a homestead. I was too young. Just before my father died, I took a homestead. \_\_\_\_\_.

Woman: Could you just go and take any homestead you wanted?

Paul: If it was open, nobody had it, you could homestead the land.

Woman: What did you do after you

Paul: My father died 1914. I couldn't stand it. We had cattle, horses, pigs, chickens. It was all in my \_\_\_\_\_. My sister and me and my mother. I told my mother, that's it, I'm going to give it to my brother Norman. I'll go and build a house in Lastock. I joined the bloody army in 1914. Went overseas in 1918.

Woman: Where were you in overseas? In Germany?

Paul: German, Holland, France, Belgium.

Woman: And how did you like it over there?

Paul: I got hit three times. Got wounded three times. I'm still alive.

Woman: Then you came back after World War I.

Paul: Then I joined up again 1940. I went overseas again.

Woman: Did any of your brothers go?

Paul: No, they were all too old already. The last World War, there, there's my picture there, in the last World War. I went more countries in the last World War. I went to Cicily, Holland, France. I was in the air parade. Showed that on the TV here the other day, the air parade. Jack would say, can you see yourself? Christ, can I see myself out of one thousand feet.

Woman: What do you remember about it, do you remember everything about it?

Paul: Oh yeah.

Woman: So did you, you lived in Lasnoff for a while.

Paul: Oh yes, till 19. Well, I come back from the war, the last World War. I got in the railroad. I worked in the railroad for about 2 years, then I was writing my exams to be a foreman, and they sent me to Regina to do a test 10 hours. I was already pretty near 50. Damn doctors, Paul, they say, you're too old to be a foreman. They say, you're going to kill somebody by accident. You'd better be a number one man. I say the hell with you \_\_\_\_\_ I'm not going to be pushed around all my life. Boss with the goddamn World War and bosses here, I quit. I quit right there.

Then I got in a jeep...I quit and I was walking to my sisters. They lived on the 200 block, oh you remember that 200 block of \_\_\_\_\_ by the Co-Op there, Co-Op lumber there. Come here, are you looking for a job. I said, what kind of job, I just quit a job. Pile lumber for a couple of days. Okay, I said, I have to wait for my cheque anyways. 2-3 days before I get paid from where I quit. Then 2 days lasted 11 years. (laugh) I was there 11 years for the Co-Op, then the Union put me off. I was a Union man, and I was too old to hold a job. I was 72 already.

Woman: When you were living in Lastock, where did you live in Lastock?

Paul: Right across the station there. You know where the station use to be, we had that big house there.

Woman: But did you live on the road awhile?

Paul: No, well we lived, while we were in the army. We lived in road\_\_\_\_\_ in Chicago. Where your father was a member there. Your grandfather was up the hill, that was in the army you know.

Woman: What do you remember about that Little Chicago?

Paul: Oh, not much. Well, that's all I did is chase coyotes. Haul wood to Lastock.

Woman: Why did they call that area the Little Chicago?

Paul: Ha.

Woman: Why did they call it Little Chicago?

Paul: I don't know. There was a Chicago and LaBrette too, and they took the name. LaBrette (mumbling) Chicago Street. A bunch of half-breeds lived, a bunch of half-breeds, Sayers, Tantsie's , Desjarlais, so they named it Chicago. I don't know why they named it Chicago.

Woman: Well, do you know anything about when they moved all up to Green Lake?

Paul: Well, Joe LaRocque was going around taking animals, going to go down there. Come up to my place, and then we had that house across the track there, that big house. I said the hell with you. I said I'm not going to be shipped like cattle in a boxcar.

Woman: Why did he want, why was he telling people to go up there?

Paul: I don't know. Just to go live on welfare. But I was getting War Pension, you know what I'm saying. The heck with that I said, I'll live right here and I can work. I started working here with elevators.

Woman: Was there a lot of them that went up?

Paul: Oh God, my brother, that's where he went and died. A lot of them. Didn't your grandfather want it.

Woman: Yes.

Paul: A lot of them. That's why they're having a big meeting here on Chicago, not a (walking away from mic) (mumbling)

Woman: When your brother went up to Green Lake, he lived up there.

Paul: He lived down there till he died, I never saw him.

Woman: What did he die from?

Paul: I don't know. I don't know to this day.

(background talking)

Paul: A bear chased him and gave him a heartattack.

Woman: Was he young?

Paul: Oh, he was older than me. He was getting his old age pension.

Woman: And did he take his family up there too?

Paul: Well, he was married to that Charlie's baby sister.

Woman: Did, what did they tell you about the land up there?

Paul: Well \_\_\_\_\_ up there. All they did is logging, fishing, hunting, that's all they did. They gave them welfare you know.

Woman: Why did they want the people to go up there, do you know why?

Paul: To live on that welfare there instead of getting straight welfare, they were logging, and hunting and fishing. They sold there fish, they sold there, whatever they call it, popwood, what they made out of these logs.

Woman: What was wrong with living on the Chicago line?

Paul: They couldn't live there no more. Well, you know after they moved away, somebody went there and burnt all them houses.

Woman: Who burnt them?

Paul: I don't know. I don't know who the hell did it. (laugh)

Woman: Right after they left?

Paul: After they left there, they burnt it up. Well, your grandfather had a nice house, and look at the house we bought off him, which was a nice house.

Woman: So they couldn't go back?

Paul: No. They couldn't move back after there houses burnt down. (laugh)

Woman: Where did they go then, to come back too?

Paul: They went to Green Lake.

Woman: Green Lake. But after they

Paul: Some of them came back, some of them lived all there lives up there. Andrew Morris, Joe Hardy, they all died down there, you know. That's what Jack was laughing at this, about 7, 8 years ago. I had no flyswatter wait I'll make a couple. I went outside. Oh my, momma said, too goddamn bad, both of us getting pension, and you got to make these things, how poor we are. (laugh) I was telling her where the hell, what the hell did you make that for Jack. Because we were poor Jack. Oh, go on, both of you are getting pension. You only drinking, you, hardly smoking. That's the way the old people around there saved there money. They made there own stuff. A long time ago, there was no such thing as flyswatter. After you's were born, they started to have them, what you call them, stickers. There



was no such a thing as flyswatter or stickers. That's why I can remember my father made....

Woman: Can you tell me about what you use to do when you were younger for social events?

Paul: Silly things.

Woman: Silly things, I guess.

Paul: My father wouldn't allow me to smoke. I didn't smoke until I was about 25. Long ago they had no tobacco, cut tobacco. They had what they called \_\_\_\_\_Plugs, big plug tobacco. Cut their own tobacco. Smoke pipes. I stole a little bit of my father's tobacco. And when coming back from school, I made a hole in the ground, a long time ago, what the hell you call these. A hole in some kind of a wood. I stick this thing in the hole, I made a hole in it, and I put my tobacco in it. I smoke in the ground. I'll be a son of a gun if my father had seen me coming up the hill. Where in the hell is he going down the hill there. I was going down to smoke. I didn't see my father coming, what are you doing! I stepped on my pipe, my mud pipe. There used to be an old well there, that's the time of the Rebellion too. Police was there, camped there. There were some heads there yet. Skeleton heads. Indians were killed long, long time ago.

Woman: Where was that?

Paul: In Tortured Hills yet. That's where the government's well, they use to call it. Long ago, they didn't bury Indians.

Woman: What did they do with them?

Paul: They hung them in the trees and made a scaffold up in the trees and left the person there to turn into bones. And I found this old head, this skeleton head, and I took it back to my mom. Oh gee, my mother said. She was so excited and me I thought it was something funny to see this. I was about 12 years old, stupid and silly. Get up, she yelled at my father. Look at what Paul brought back again. Father comes. Where did you get that from. I picked it up off the ground \_\_\_\_\_government well. My father used to talk \_\_\_\_\_.

Woman: They called it the Government well?

Paul: Government. (mumbling) Max Desjarlais, it would been 1963, momma's \_\_\_\_\_ They told me, it use to be water in the well there, and gophers buried and drowned and my brother-in-law and my momma. \_\_\_\_\_ they were travelling and this Max Desjarlais already had been born. He was thirsty, thirsty. My brother Norman got with his hat the water. And he drank this goddamn gopher. (laugh) Someone was telling me, if you're going to die from thirst, you might as well poison him, Max. That old fellow died, how many years ago? Did you go there to the graveyard?

Woman: What, what did you use to go to dances when you were younger?

Paul: Oh, you bet, I was crazy. Poor man's down there, remember. Momma getting carried there when you were all small. Go in a bobsled. School dances. School dances.

Woman: What did you dance, what kind of dances?

Paul: Oh, square dancing, waltzes. None of this horsing up and down. That's the way they dance nowadays isn't it. Just like they were wrestling.

Woman: How did you have to dress when you went to the dances?

Paul: (mumbling)

Woman: What kind of

Paul: If my old lady allowed me, she use to raise hell with me. We had cattle and horses.

Woman: What did you wear to the dances, clothes? What kind of clothes did you wear?

Paul: Oh. We dressed like human beings.

Woman: What role did religion play in your life?

Paul: Ha.

Woman: Religion, with your mother and father. What religion were they?

Paul: What nationality?

Woman: No, religion?

Paul: Catholic, all Catholics. Oh, we're all Catholics.

Woman: Really, well strong Catholics?

Paul: Oh, yeah. That's what I go to church. I still go. Oh yes they go, we went to church a lot. You know who would tell you a lot more stories, \_\_\_\_\_, or to his grandfather. The grandfather told. That bugger remembers better than me or anyone. He could tell you a lot of them stories. He wouldn't remember about my dad stories, but through his grandfather, that was my uncle.

Woman: Can you tell me, did anyone ever make you feel that it was necessary for you to hide the fact that you had native background, that your parents were native. Did anybody ever make you feel bad because you have a background with natives, ancestry in your family?

Paul: No. I never had no.

Woman: Did you ever have to visit any of the Indian people on the reserves?

Paul: No.

Woman: Did you ever have to go out on the reserves?

Paul: Oh, I was working in the reserves. Got wood off of the Indians. Put up hay. And chairs from the reserves like, for the Indians. Poor bands were there (loud noise, end of talking)

Woman: When you were a child, or as you were growing up. Were there hospitals and doctors that you could see?

Paul: Not much. Well, there was a doctor. The hospital started there way after. I had to build that hospital. Me and Jack Opus built that hospital. We started to build and put the foundation.

Woman: What did you do after you got sick? How did you (tape stop...end of side 1)

Paul: During, the 30's, during the Depression, 1930's, what did you do?

Woman: Well, I was North of Ramoard, we didn't know hard times us. I had cattle. And the farmers couldn't sell there grain, wheat was always 25 cents a bushel. Farmers didn't have no, like coal or no fuel, like what they burn. They had to burn wood. My land was all bush there. They come and haul wood from me, Christ, brought a pig for a load of wood. Brought a big heifer for 2 loads of wood, I had no goddamn meat. Sack of flour, 2 sacks of flour for a load of wood. I was making a killing, Christ. I lived high.

Other woman: Tell them how you made your fridge.

Paul: Oh, I dug a hole in the ground and I put some ice in it and some sawdust, and I kept my meat there, covered it with ground and kept the meat there all year round. That was my refrigerator. (laugh)

Woman: Would the farmers come to you?

Paul: They use to come and camp with us there. They come all the way from Seemon's. Christ, sometimes (tape stop)

Paul: Me and my old lady would go in the bush and chop up 2 - 3 loads of wood and haul it to the yard. By Friday all my wood would be gone. Son of a gun. Then Sunday, and all we had to work, haul wood again. Yeah. We didn't know no depression. They use to spite guys that haul wood. Regina, people are starving.

Woman: You didn't have a time when you were hungry?

Paul: 1912 in Regina, I had seen some of them old buildings \_\_\_\_\_ lop-sided. I don't know whether they're up now, they must have fell those old buildings. No, we didn't know no depression. We didn't know it where we were. We were living \_\_\_\_\_. We weren't short of anything. Save an odd load of wood for my tea and tobacco, sugar and salt. Had all the goddamn flour all the damn meat we wanted. Just get salt, tea and sugar. Once a week we use, once a month we use to go Quinton, that's where we, the closest town, 14 miles from town. That's about all I can tell you, all the lies that (end of tape)