

Jeanne Pelletier, Clementine Longworth, Maria Campbell
Video 1

Start 2.10.49 Maria Campbell: And, and what about you, Jeanne? What year, year were you born?

Jeanne Pelletier: 1940.

Maria Campbell: 1940, so you're the same age as I am.

Jeanne Pelletier: Hmmm.

Maria Campbell: And what was it like in Crooked Lake when you were growing up?

Jeanne Pelletier: Well, when, when asked that question, I always say I wouldn't trade, trade it all for today. Like with me, we used to live in a road allowance and my dad worked for farmers, too, like one farmer. And then, after that we moved to a beach, like an old beach. So we looked after that, my parents looked after that place till I was about eleven years old, but we had nothing.

Maria Campbell: You mean by the lake?

Jeanne Pelletier: Yeah, right by the lake, used to swim and used to cut ice in the winter and store it. And in the summer time we sold ice and fish and minnows, used to hunt minnows, catch minnows.

2.11.43 Maria Campbell: Who would you sell them to?

Jeanne Pelletier: It was sold, like it was property from people that lived in the States, so they sold out to people who, who lived in Melville. So when those people bought it, we were there for about a year after like, after the

new owners come. When we left, we moved to the, to the village where all the Michifs lived, Métis people. We moved there in, like, I was seven years old when I started school, so.

Maria Campbell: Was the school in the, in the Métis community or did you go to school ...

Jeanne Pelletier: No, we had to go across the river to a little school we used to call Bannock School. It was a little um, cement building.

Maria Campbell: Why did they call it Bannock School?

Jeanne Pelletier: Because that's, that's what they, they said we ate, we were bannock eaters. We called it Bannock School, but I don't know its real name. That's all I know it by, was Bannock School.

Maria Campbell: Was it a big school?

Jeanne Pelletier: No, it was just a little one room house, little one room house that was by the, there's a little creek, it was by there, by itself. I guess, well, after we got our school, some people used to live in it. But that, that school, for us it was haunted. Sometimes when we were sitting quiet, we used to hear somebody walking upstairs, and the Sister would make us kneel down and we had to pray. So that Sister that time, was that, do you remember, you heard her in the news, that Mother Theresa? She was the nun then, that was my first nun.

2.13.19 Maria Campbell: Mother Theresa?

Jeanne Pelletier: Yeah.

Maria Campbell: You mean the one that went to India?

Jeanne Pelletier: Yeah, that old lady that was in India.

Maria Campbell: She was in Crooked Lake?

Jeanne Pelletier: Yeah, she was one of our school teachers.

Maria Campbell: Really?

Jeanne Pelletier: Yeah. I don't know how long she was in Crooked Lake, but when I started school she was the one and then I didn't have her too long. She left.

Maria Campbell: Oh for goodness sakes.

Jeanne Pelletier: Yeah, she left for Africa. When she came back about a year, and she, like, she was talking to the older boys that knew her, well, because I didn't know her that well, I was just.

Maria Campbell: But she was your teacher?

Jeanne Pelletier: Yeah, yeah.

Maria Campbell: Was she a good teacher?

Jeanne Pelletier: I guess she was a bit, I don't know, I wasn't ...

Maria Campbell: It would be hard to say she wasn't.

Jeanne Pelletier: I didn't have her long enough. Yeah, she must have been a good teacher because she got along well with the boys. Like, you know, she, anybody, she got along well with in school. But the other teacher we

had, well, she was good, but she was mean because my mom made me wear those old, some old short dresses. I was fat and they were above my knees, and she gave me a strapping and told me I had to tell my mom to put longer dresses on me. I'm not supposed to show my legs. So I went home and I told my mom, "I'm not going to school," and I told her why she slapped me with the little strap across my legs because my dress was too short. So I didn't like that nun and about uh...

Maria Campbell: Is this Mother Theresa?

Jeanne Pelletier: No.

Maria Campbell: Oh no, the other one.

Jeanne Pelletier: Miss Sister St. Javee [?], that was her name. And this, this nun, me and my friend were playing on a teeter totter, like it was three of us that used to hang out together—me and Margaret [?] and Germaine Gregoire. We used to go on the teeter totter and she came and she told us to that she'd sit on one side and three of us would sit on one side, and then we can go on the teeter totter. And I looked at her and, I don't know, I just, I just didn't want to. After I went up and come back down, I just didn't want to sit on the teeter totter with her so I got off. When I got off she come flying down here, just like, today I just laugh about it, because it was like, those grey hens. She was just tumbling off the teeter totter. I, I never got hell for that.

2.15.55 Maria Campbell: When did they build that school did they build it

...

Jeanne Pelletier: They built a new school for the Métis kids in the early fifties.

Maria Campbell: That's the one, that's the one that's Bannock School?

Jeanne Pelletier: No.

Maria Campbell: Bannock School—what year did they build that?

Jeanne Pelletier: Oh, heck, it was, it was, it was there when you were there, eh?

Clementine Longworth: Yeah. Long time ago.

Maria Campbell: So, it was there when you were there?

Clementine Longworth: Oh yeah, yeah.

Maria Campbell: How come you didn't go to it? They didn't ...

Jeanne Pelletier: It wasn't the school then. People were living in that ...

Maria Campbell: Oh, it was a house.

Jeanne Pelletier: It was ...

Clementine Longworth: ... people that were living there.

Jeanne Pelletier: It was a house from the mission, like the priests, it was on that land.

Maria Campbell: So there was a big mission there?

Jeanne Pelletier: Yeah, there was a ...

Clementine Longworth: Oh yeah, it was a big mission there.

Jeanne Pelletier: There was a priest house and barns and places for people to, to live like their staff and a great big boarding school. We didn't go to the boarding school.

Maria Campbell: It was like an Indian boarding school.

Jeanne Pelletier: and ...

Clementine Longworth: Yeah.

Maria Campbell: Oh, I see.

Jeanne Pelletier: I think my mom used to go to school there when she was young.

2.16.58 Maria Campbell: Did the Métis people work at the boarding school?

Jeanne Pelletier: No.

Maria Campbell: So it was across the creek then, or across the river then ...

Jeanne Pelletier: Yeah, it was.

Maria Campbell: And when you started school there, when did they open the house up for, for the Métis people to go to school there?

Jeanne Pelletier: Oh, I was in ...

Maria Campbell: How old were you when they ...

Jeanne Pelletier: Grade Three, Grade Three.

Maria Campbell: But where, but where did you go to school before?

Jeanne Pelletier: We used to go to school at that old Bannock School, that old building, and then after that when I went to Grade Two or Three, we went, we went across the river. They built a school for us and they were giving all the Métis people houses to live in.

Maria Campbell: Who's they?

Jeanne Pelletier: The government.

Maria Campbell: The government?

Jeanne Pelletier: Yeah. They said they had signed a deal, a hundred year deal, and now today, it's not even a hundred years.

Maria Campbell: So was that like ...

Jeanne Pelletier: It's all gone.

Maria Campbell: Was that like a Métis farm?

2.17.56 Jeanne Pelletier: Yeah. When they were putting up those Métis farms, they started putting buildings, but the first thing that was put up was the school.

End 2:18.05.16