

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: CAROLINE VANDALE
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: DUCK LAKE
SASKATCHEWAN
INTERVIEW LOCATION: DUCK LAKE
SASKATCHEWAN
TRIBE/NATION: METIS
LANGUAGE: FRENCH AND ENGLISH
DATE OF INTERVIEW: JULY 11, 1973
INTERVIEWER: CAROL PEARLSTONE
INTERPRETER:
TRANSCRIBER: J. GREENWOOD
SOURCE: SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES BOARD
TAPE NUMBER: IH-140a
DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC 24
PAGES: 6
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Mrs. Vandale was born in Carlton in 1902.
- What her father told her about the cause of the Riel Rebellion.
- The Metis people in relation to the Depression, WWI and WWII.
- Attitudes of police, teachers, government agencies, etc. to the Metis people.

Carol: Okay, you were born in Carlton in 1902 and what did your parents do?

Caroline: (translated) I don't remember what my parents did for a living. I don't know if they were farmers. I don't remember what my dad used to do.

Carol: Were they both Metis?

Caroline: (translated) Yeah, they were both halfbreeds, Metis.

Carol: What about your grandparents?

Caroline: (translated) My grandparents were Metis. And my grandfather, one of them was Joseph (---?---).

Carol: Where were your parents born?

Caroline: (translated) I don't know where they were born. I remember my grandparents and they were around Carlton when I was young but I don't know where they were born.

Carol: Do you know anything about the Rebellion? Do you remember hearing anything when you were younger?

Caroline: (translated) My father was there and I remember him talking about it but he was too young to fight at the time. He was only 18 years old. He didn't go fighting but he was there.

Carol: Do you know why the Rebellion took place?

Caroline: (translated) I think it was about, it must have been about land. Something like that.

Carol: Do you think the Metis had a just cause?

Translator: I asked her if when her parents were talking about it, they seemed to be resentful against the police or the white guys and she said yeah, to her, that is the attitude that they did have.

Caroline: (translated) The reason why they were angry was because they were not treated justly and they were... I figure they thought they had been cheated by these different groups.

Translator: I asked her why they felt that they were cheated and she said that they were not educated and they did not understand sometimes what was expected of them and therefore they reacted in the way that they thought they

were cheated. They did not understand. They weren't educated therefore they didn't understand the white guy's way of wanting things and therefore they thought the white guys would probably take advantage of them because they did not understand. They proposed different things then.

Carol: Do you think they were cheated?

Caroline: (translated) Personally, I don't know at the time if they had been cheated. Maybe I have a different idea today, but at the time, I don't know if they were.

Carol: Do you remember, can you tell me something about the Depression years and how you managed in those days?

Caroline: (translated) Yeah, it was pretty hard. Naturally the biggest thing is that we were poor. Poor in the ways that we didn't have enough to eat, clothing, not enough clothes. We weren't able to buy clothes, in the catalogue or at the store.

Carol: What did you do to make money?

Caroline: (translated) We would dig roots, senega roots. Our

way of life was digging senega snake roots and then we would get 10 a pound green and 25 a pound dry. But that was not bad because in those days things didn't cost so much. So it was not a bad living.

Carol: What about the war years, the First World War and the Second World War, did people from around here go?

Caroline: (translated) My brother, he is dead now, went to war but he was a deserter so he died there. The reason he deserted was because he did not want to go to war and I think that he was tricked into signing the paper. He didn't know why he was signing and then, when he had signed, he was supposed to go to war so he deserted. I feel that quite a few of the people were caught that way and that probably more Metis. There were a few others but probably... he wasn't educated and because he wasn't educated, he got into this without knowing what it was.

Carol: Did most people not want to go then?

Caroline: (translated) There must have been lots that didn't want to go because if you deserted after they did go to war....

Carol: Did they tell them what the war was all about and where they would be going and all that?

Caroline: (translated) I think that the main reason why they went, they thought it was a moneymaking deal. I mean, being a soldier wasn't important to them, or fighting for a cause, it was because they thought they could make some money and they were told they would get paid to go to war.

Carol: What about the Second World War?

Caroline: (translated) I don't really remember it too much in detail but I feel that more people were willing to go in the Second War.

Carol: Do you know why?

Caroline: (translated) They were more educated and those that went probably understood more about what was going on. I know people that did go to war but none of my sons or people like that did. They were mistreated, but naturally, things happen like that during wartime.

Carol: Do you think that the Metis people are treated any differently by the RCMP as compared to the white people?

Caroline: (translated) Really, I don't know too much about law or anything and I have had no personal experiences or knowledge of people telling me this. But, I have heard of a few, like, murder and stuff like that, that they did not get long jail sentences.

Carol: What about at the school, does she think that the kids

are treated any differently than the white kids by the teachers and...?

Caroline: (translated) My kids, they didn't like school because they were mistreated. Probably could be because they were halfbreeds. They would laugh at them and things like that.

Carol: The other kids or the teachers?

Caroline: (translated) The other kids, yeah. They would laugh at them, especially the way they dressed. They weren't well dressed and they would laugh at their lunches, what they would take to school to eat. I would give pretty good lunches, bread and bologna, not bannock. It was probably to hurt them. I don't know why.

Carol: What about the teachers?

Caroline: (translated) As far as I know, the teachers weren't too bad.

Carol: What about the people in the church, the priests and the nuns and, the children and the adults?

Caroline: (translated) What I know or see, the priests are being fair.

Carol: What about the Social Welfare Department, is there any difference in how they treat the Metis compared to the whites?

Caroline: (translated) I feel that there is a great deal of difference in the way people are treated by the Welfare but I don't see that it is racial. It is more individuals. Sometimes it is the white guy that is not treated nice while another white guy is. The same with the Metis, some of them are well-treated and some are not. But I don't see that it is Metis and white.

Carol: What about jobs, do Metis people get jobs as easily as the whites?

Caroline: (translated) If they are educated, I don't see that they should have less reason to be treated differently. Just, that there are quite a few that are not educated and that is where the problem is. Because they are not educated, they will get the tough jobs like picking stones and roots and things. But if they are educated they probably could get the better jobs, on the machines and things like that.

Carol: Why do you think they are not as well educated?

Caroline: (translated) From further back, it is probably the parent's fault. They did not really try to send their kids to school. Probably were too far and something like that and because of that, it just goes on. The interest is not there to send their kids to school.

Carol: You said the white kids don't treat the Metis kids as well, wouldn't that make them...?

Caroline: (translated) Many of the Metis kids don't like school, don't want to go to school, and yet they have no reasons for quitting. That could be a reason because they don't feel as well treated at school. I don't care whether I am Metis or not. Certain things that happened, happened the way they did because I am a Metis. I have a few white friends but I prefer to be with the Metis because I don't talk good English and I don't feel very comfortable with the white.

Carol: You said some things that happened, happened because you were Metis, what things?

Caroline: (translated) Really, I couldn't say anything specific but maybe it is my way of thinking that I feel that way, that people think about me a certain way.

Translator: I asked her if she figures the Metis, if there was sort of a division between the Metis and the white and she said that the Metis do tend to start things but they don't usually succeed. But she doesn't know why. She feels to some extent that there is sort of a division.

Carol: Okay, good. Thanks.

(End of Side A)

(End of Interview)

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