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INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: ST. LOUIS
SASKATCHEWAN
INTERVIEW LOCATION: ST. LOUIS
SASKATCHEWAN
TRIBE/NATION: METIS
LANGUAGE: FRENCH TRANSLATED INTO
ENGLISH
DATE OF INTERVIEW: JULY 14, 1973
INTERVIEWER: CAROL PEARLSTONE
INTERPRETER:
TRANSCRIBER: HEATHER YAWORSKI
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- The informant is questioned on the Riel Rebellion, but remembers very little of what was said about it by his elders.

GENERAL COMMENTS OF THE SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES BOARD

Although the technical quality of this tape (both sides) is excellent, it is on the whole disappointing in terms of its content. For Mr. Boyer was not an eyewitness to the major historic event which takes up the greatest portion of the interview -- the Rebellion of 1885. What we get are mainly echoes from someone whose grandfather died in the Rebellion but who could only recall one anecdote with some detail (that his father told him) -- see 62' on SIDE ONE. (The anecdote, as

translated, has been reproduced here verbatim.)

The rest of the statements and answers in regard to the Rebellion and its aftermath are generalizations, opinions, speculations, guesses -- but not details, facts, the specific viewpoint of an eyewitness. As Mr. Boyer put it: (translated) "He don't remember his grandmother saying, because he was too young, not interested, of course." (60' SIDE ONE)
Carol: I'll ask you first of all when you were born. When were you born?

(French)

Translator: That's 1887.

Carol: And where?

(French)

Translator: He was born in St. Louis.

Carol: On a farm outside of town?

(French)

Translator: In the St. Louis district?

Alfred: About three miles south from here.

Carol: On a farm?

Translator: Were you born on a farm?

Alfred: Yeah. You know Daniel's Place?

Translator: You mean just out of St. Louis here? Oh yeah. Well, you see, he said south but this is really three miles west of St. Louis.

Alfred: Yeah, three miles west.

Carol: And how much land did your father have?

Translator: On what kind of land did you live? Was that on a river lot? How much land did your father own?

Alfred: One river lot.

Translator: One river lot.

Carol: And how many acres was that? 160?

Translator: Well, a river lot is about 160 acres, eh? Maybe less, it depends on how the river cuts the land, so it would be between 160 and maybe less.

Carol: And when did you move into the town here?

Translator: Do you want me to repeat some of this, because...

Carol: Okay.

Translator: After you left your place, how old was you when you left that place, how old was you when you left your dad's place?

Alfred: Twenty-five.

Carol: And where did you go then?

Translator: Where did you go after you left your dad's place?

Alfred: I went to Leacock, Leacock district.

Carol: Leacock? And where is that?

Translator: Leacock district is about nine miles west of here, nine miles west of St. Louis. So they moved west from where his dad had his place to this district of Leacock, about six miles further west yet.

Carol: And was that when you got married?

Translator: Where were you staying when you got married?

Alfred: I was staying with my dad for about a year then.

Translator: For about a year.

Carol: And then you moved to Leacock?

Alfred: And after I moved on the homestead.

Translator: And then you moved on the homestead.

Carol: At Leacock?

Translator: You moved in the district of Leacock? That's where you moved after you got married, you moved to Leacock?

Alfred: I moved to Bellevue district.

Translator: Oh, you had a homestead in the Bellevue district?

Alfred: Yeah.

translator: And then from there, how long did you live in the Bellevue district on your homestead?

Alfred: Oh, a couple of years.

Translator: And then from there you moved to Leacock.

Alfred: I moved down in the where the place Lepine is.

Translator: Oh yes. From his homestead he moved to river lots that were in the Lepine settlement, which was about nine miles west of St. Louis here. And about how long did you stay there?

Alfred: I stayed there till 1946.

Translator: He stayed there till the year 1946, on these river lots up in the Lepine settlement.

Carol: And then where did you live after that?

Translator: And where did you go after you left your place in Lepine?

Alfred: I came to St. Louis in that store.

Translator: From there he moved to St. Louis, the village of St. Louis here. And there he bought a store in the village.

Carol: And when was that?

Translator: That was in '46, you say?

Alfred: '46, yeah.

Translator: He moved to St. Louis here in '46.

Carol: And did you run the store until you retired?

Translator: You run that store for about how many years?

Alfred: Eight years.

Translator: For eight years. And that's when you retired?

Alfred: Yeah.

Carol: Okay. Do you know where your mom and dad came from?

Translator: Where did your mom and dad come from? They weren't born up west here?

Alfred: No, no. They was born in Winnipeg.

Translator: His mom and dad came from Winnipeg.

(Break in tape)

(French)

Carol: He doesn't know?

Translator: No, he doesn't know how old they were when they come up west.

Carol: What nationality were they?

(French)

Translator: He says that he always heard that his grandfather came from Montreal.

(French)

Translator: He says that on his mom's side, that she was a descendant of Scottish people. He says that her people came from Scotland.

Carol: What about her mother?

(French)

Carol: His mother's mother.

(French)

Carol: What was that?

(French)

Translator: His mother was a Bremner, and his mother was...

(French)

Translator: On his dad's side, the Boyers come from down east. And on his mother's side, his descendants come from Scotland. That's the...

Carol: Does he know who the first Indian ancestor was?

(French)

Translator: He has no knowledge of... his people were married... they were descendants, like he said, from Scotland. The Bremners were Scottish descent.

Carol: Okay.

Translator: And when he talked about Hogg, he said that the way he understands it, this man was a soldier that came to Manitoba. So...

(French)

Carol: Your mother's maiden name was...

Translator: His mother's maiden name was Maggie Bremner. Maggie Bremner (French).

Alfred: Marguerite.

Carol: And your father's first name?

(French)

Alfred: Magloire Boyer.

Carol: Well, what do you remember them telling you about the Rebellion?

(French)

Translator: The reason that he heard that they had the Rebellion was because they wanted their rights. And by their rights he understands that they wanted scrip.

Carol: What does that mean?

Translator: Well, that they wanted land.

Carol: And they didn't have land?

Translator: Do you think that your dad did get scrip? Did he get his scrip?

Alfred: I don't know.

Translator: Oh, you don't know. Oh, I see. But this is what you think was the cause of...

Alfred: The ones that had scrip, then, they was the... I don't remember what it was when they had their scrip. And her, she was a year too young.

Translator: Oh, I see. So they had to be of a certain age?

Alfred: Yeah.

Translator: And you don't know what age they had to be?

Alfred: I think they had to be before the Rebellion.

Translator: Oh, they had to be born before the Rebellion. If they were born after '85, then they could not get no scrip. You think that that's the way it was? But you have no knowledge that your dad got a scrip. That piece of land that he had was his homestead, was it? That was his homestead, so that wasn't a scrip.

Carol: So was it not clear then that he actually owned that land, was that the problem?

Translator: Your dad owned his land? He had taken that as a homestead and that was his land?

Carol: But he had no papers to prove it, is that it?

Translator: Well, once you took a homestead, that belonged to you, didn't it?

Alfred: Yeah.

Translator: Yeah, that was your land.

Carol: What about his dad, though?

Translator: Well, his dad owned that piece of land as well. That was his homestead.

Carol: But some of the people didn't?

Alfred: You take a homestead, you pay \$10. And then after about three years you would get your title. And it's yours, you can do what you like with it.

Translator: These homesteads weren't really scrips. They were, by what I understand and what he's been telling me, is that this was homesteads. You applied for a homestead and after three years, then... I think you had to do a little bit of work on it too, eh? On your homestead, you had to open up a bit of land.

Alfred: Oh yes. You had to break about 30 acres.

Translator: About 30 acres. And then you were entitled to get... and then it was yours. According to this, his dad did not have a scrip. Because... I don't remember that my dad had a scrip either. What were they entitled to get under a scrip? You don't know that either?

Alfred: No, I don't know.

Carol: Does it mean that they didn't actually have the papers to prove that the land was theirs? And that it wasn't clear where their land ended and somebody else's started?

Translator: Well, really I would not be able to say what a scrip was. I know that they were talking about scrip, but that was before my time. And I'm not sure, really, who did get some. I think that in this neighborhood of St. Louis, I don't think that there was ever any scrips given here, not that I know of. It seems to me that around Batoche there was some scrips given. Because I don't know of anybody that had scrips around here, because this land that they had here was homesteads, wasn't it? That's what that was.

Carol: See, there's two different...

(French)

Translator: As he remembers, he says that some got money and some could take land. But he said that he don't think that the

amount of land was very much.

Carol: Did your father fight in the Rebellion?

Translator: His father was too young.

Carol: Too young?

(French)

Translator: His grandfather got killed in the Rebellion.

Carol: What was his name?

(French)

Translator: Isadore Boyer.

Alfred: Oui.

Translator: His grandfather got killed in the Rebellion.

(French)

Carol: In Batoche?

(French)

Carol: What was that?

Translator: When he...

(French)

Translator: He says that they come up west a few years before the Rebellion.

Carol: His grandparents?

Translator: Yeah, well, his grandfather and his mother and dad too, you see, but they were young people. But his grandfather come up before the Rebellion, a few years before the Rebellion.

(French)

Translator: St. Louis.

Carol: What was that?

Translator: He says that when they moved from Winnipeg west, he thinks that St. Louis is where they came and stayed.

(French)

Carol: What was that?

Translator: I'm trying to find out where his grandfather lived, but... we know that he got killed in the Rebellion but we don't know where he lived, where his family was living.

Carol: Do you remember your...?

Alfred: (Inaudible)

(French)

Translator: He thinks that his grandparents lived -- that would be about four miles west of St. Louis here, because he says that his youngest uncle, the youngest of that family, that's where he lived, so he thinks that must have been where his grandfather had his place.

(French)

Carol: The stories that you heard about the Rebellion, did they... Were the people sad that they lost? How did they feel about it?

(French)

Translator: He says that he don't remember his grandmother saying how they felt about it, because he said that he was too young and he wasn't interested, of course.

Carol: Did his parents talk about it very much, his father?

(French)

Translator: He said that one story that he heard his dad saying was that they were young -- so they were, I suppose, too young to be in the battle line -- so they used to go and try to see if they could see anything about the fighting, and they noticed that there were some humps along the road. So the

first thing they noticed, they realized that there was somebody there, so they turned and started to run. But this was Mounties, and they started to shoot at them. They never got hit, but they could hear the bullets whistling by their ears, but they were fortunate enough not to get hit. But this was Mounties that was hiding there and shooting at them.

Carol: This was where?

(French)

Translator: He says that was near Fish Creek, on the way between Batoche and Fish Creek.

Carol: When your father and your uncles and any of your relatives talked about the Rebellion, were they angry, were they sad? How did they feel about it?

Translator: You mean any of his relations?

Carol: Yeah.

Translator: Well, I had asked him that before and he said that... (French)

Alfred: (French)

Translator: I asked him if after the Rebellion he at any time heard that they were displeased, they were going to revenge or anything, and he said he never heard anything about that.

Carol: Were they afraid of the Mounties, of the police in those days, or what?

Translator: (French).

Alfred: (French).

Translator: No, he said that he don't know about that.

Carol: What about when he was a boy?

Alfred: (French)

Translator: As much as he remembers, he said that there was no repercussion after the war. He said that what he remembers, that they were told to go back home and farm and seed.

Carol: Like, as a boy, did you remember, did you have any experiences with the RCMP, or your father when you were a boy?

Translator: (French)

Alfred: (French)

Translator: No, he says that he never had.

Carol: When they talked about the Rebellion, what did they talk about mostly, you know, what parts of it did they talk about mostly when they talked?

Translator: (French).

Alfred: (French).

Translator: (French).

(End of Side A)

(Side B)

Translator: Well, what he was telling me was that there was an Indian had went to take the gun from one of the RCMP, and this is how they started to fight for this gun. You think that it

was Joe McKay that shot the Indian, by what you heard?

Alfred: Well, I'm not very sure, but he say in the paper here that Joe McKay fired the first shot anyway.

Translator: Joe McKay that shot the first shot?

Alfred: Yeah. That start the fight. I don't know if it's at Carlton or Batoche. It must have been at Carlton.

Translator: This started before the trouble in Batoche, anyway.

Carol: When your people talked about the Rebellion, did they talk mostly about the fighting, or mostly about how bad they were treated? Like what kind of things did they talk about the most? Do you see what I mean?

Translator: What you're asking is that what the people were more interested in talking about?

Carol: Yeah.

Translator: That is, after the Rebellion?

Carol: Yeah, stories that he heard.

Translator: Well, after the Rebellion you were telling me that they didn't talk too much about the Rebellion, did they? They didn't say the reasons that... did they mention anything about...?

Alfred: They didn't talk very much because I was young, eh. And after I was about 10 years old, I didn't hear much about it.

Translator: Then you didn't hear no more about it. It was just when you were real small and you don't remember too much about it? You didn't pay too much notice about what was going on.

Carol: I wonder why he thinks they stopped talking about it, because his father would have been at least a teenager, right? Because if he was born in 1887, his father would have been at least a teenager.

Translator: During the wartime?

Carol: Yeah. So you'd think his father would have remembered, because in those days teenagers were men. You know, when they were 16 or 18 they were already taking men's responsibilities and everything. So you'd think, you know, if you saw your father...

Translator: He's older than I am, but then again, as I say... For instance, like myself now, eh, I didn't hear that much

about the Rebellion. Of course, we weren't interested. I was like Mr. Boyer here. When we talked... we did talk... In fact, it seems to me that we talk more about it now than we did when we were young people. It seems that we are reviving again from the effects of that rebellion.

Carol: Why does he think that they didn't talk much about it. Do you think they didn't talk, or just wasn't very interested at that time?

Translator: (French)

Alfred: (French)

Translator: He says that they had to be satisfied. He thinks that's why they didn't talk about it, is because there was a certain arrangement made, and the Rebellion was over and there was nothing they could do about it. So I guess maybe that's the reason that they didn't talk too much about it.

Carol: Does he remember the priests talking? Did the priests talk at all about it?

Translator: (French)

Alfred: No.

Carol: Does he remember his father saying much about Dumont or Riel?

Translator: (French)

Carol: Not just his father, but any talk he heard about it?

Translator: (French)

Alfred: (French)

Translator: He said that his dad knew Gabriel Dumont very well, but he said that he didn't hear very much about Gabriel Dumont.

Carol: Did he talk much about Dumont, or talk mostly about Dumont or more about Riel? Or which person seemed to be the biggest leader in the Rebellion from what he heard?

Translator: (French)

Alfred: (French).

Translator: He says that sometimes they'd talk about them, but he didn't pay notice, so he don't know which one was the most important man. (French)

Alfred: (French).

Translator: You see, his mother, his grandmother, his father's mother, he don't know her name. He has no record of who she was, that's his father's mother. (French).

Alfred: (French).

Translator: (French).

Alfred: (French).

Translator: (French).

Alfred: (French)

Translator: He says that he remembers that his grandmother was a dark woman, his father's mother, she was a small, dark woman. But he said that he don't know her family name. (French)

Alfred: (French).

Translator: He's not sure of her name. He thinks she was Henry but he's not certain. (Break in tape) Old man Lepine was in the Rebellion, and old man Nolan.

Alfred: (French).

Translator: But old Nolan, did you ever hear that he took part? How did that work out? Do you know if he... Some seem to think that he run away from the army or from the Metis people. You don't? (French)

Alfred: (French).

Translator: He says that in this paper that he read, there's the name of Maxime Lepine and Charlie Nolan.

Carol: Does he think the Rebellion was a just cause? Does he think the Metis people had a just cause that they fought for?

Translator: (French).

Alfred: (French).

Translator: He says that he thinks that Riel is the one that was trying to make arrangements. And being that the government didn't go along with this, well then, he said that he thinks that it was up to them to defend themselves.

Carol: Right. Do you know what your father thought about it?

Translator: (French).

Alfred: (French).

Translator: He don't know. He said that he don't know. His grandfather got killed but he said he never heard that his father said that that was the right thing to do or not.

Carol: Did any of your friends when you were a boy disagree with you about that? Did you ever talk about that with your friends when you were a boy?

Translator: (French).

Alfred: (French).

Translator: He said that we didn't know nothing about it so he said we didn't talk about it.

Carol: What do you think of the government for having treated the Metis people so badly then? The government and the RCMP?

Translator: (French). This is what you're asking, to see what he thinks about the idea of Rebellion. If it would have been better if the government would have made some arrangements in place of coming to the point of the Rebellion.

Carol: Well, I just mean, what does he think of the government for doing that? I mean he thinks the Metis cause was just, and yet the government put it down, right? And the army and the police and everybody.

Translator: You mean you're asking what he thought of what happened at that time? Like what he thinks about the government in the way that it turned out?

Carol: Yeah.

Translator: (French).

Alfred: (French).

Translator: He don't think the government should have acted in that way. He says he thinks that Riel was brave to do what he did, because they didn't have the power.

Carol: What does he think about the government now and how it treats the native people, and the RCMP and that?

Translator: (French).

Alfred: (French).

Translator: (French). He says that what they're doing today, like, he thinks that they're trying to get their rights as he understands it. It must be that they didn't get their rights in them days and that's why they're doing something about it again today. (French)

Carol: So he thinks that the Metis have a just cause today too?

Translator: (French).

Alfred: (French).

Translator: (French).

Alfred: (French).

Translator: He says that he thinks it would be a good thing if people did get certain rights, but he said he don't know if they will. But he thinks that he don't see nothing wrong with the people trying to do something about it. (Break in tape)

..trap and things like that. And he says that, well, we had to raise a bit of grain and raise a few pigs and chickens and... Because he said there was no money so he had to do something. That's the way he got his start.

Did you get any help from your dad, or how did you make a start? Where did you, how did you get going on the farm? Who helped you?

Alfred: (French).

Translator: He says that the way they helped them to get started was that they helped them to build and... Did you stay with your mom and dad till you got married?

Alfred: I stayed there one year.

Translator: After you were married yet?

Alfred: Yeah.

Translator: So you never left your home? You stayed with your old people all the time till you got married?

Alfred: Yeah.

Translator: In the old days it seems that was the way. The people didn't leave and go out or something, they stayed together. (Break in tape) Then you had to make your own living. And I'll have to say Mr. Boyer here done real well. He made a living for his family and then he managed to get a store and he retired with a few dollars, so he done pretty good. He was one of the better ones. (Break in tape) How old were you when you quit school?

Alfred: I quit school when I was about 13.

Translator: What grade was you?

Alfred: Six or seven.

Translator: At that time that was pretty good schooling, six or seven. (Break in tape).. teacher? Who was the teacher?

Alfred: His name was (inaudible).

Translator: (French).

Alfred: And the second one was Miss Tucker. And after, Miss Dubuc, came from Prince Albert. And after was a schoolteacher, Charron, and after the nuns.

Translator: And then you finished with the nuns.

(End of Side B)

(End of Tape)

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