

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: ELIE DUMONT
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: DUCK LAKE
SASKATCHEWAN
INTERVIEW LOCATION: DUCK LAKE
SASKATCHEWAN
TRIBE/NATION: FRENCH
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH/FRENCH
DATE OF INTERVIEW: 03/11/84
INTERVIEWER: ALMA ROY
INTERPRETER:
TRANSCRIBER: HEATHER YAWORSKI
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Alma: You were telling me about your uncle Gabriel Dumont,
what do you remember about your uncle?

Elie: Oh well, what he told me, you know. He was pretty
good with the rifle, you know, he never missed. Yeah, one time
he told me they was looking for buffalo, you know, in the
prairie beside Saskatoon, I guess. In there there was lots of
buffalo that time. By God, they couldn't find nothing and they
have no, they didn't have no dinner, nothing. And they was
four, four of them, my dad and one Fleury and the other one -
there was four of them - one Fregatan and Pat Fleury and my dad
(inaudible). They was four on horseback and they was looking
for cattle, for buffalo. No dinner, couldn't find nothing.
What they seen was two geese, you know, they're big, you know.
He comes out with (inaudible). There was two in the slough.
Gabriel Dumont, he says, "You know what I'll do. I'll take the

horse (a race horse he got) and the rifle. I'll (inaudible) around there." Before they woke up, you know, they got up flying away, he was right there. Both, with the rifle, he killed them. And now, well, the next fellow, you know, and they take a half and half and there's four pieces there you see. In the brush there they cook them that way. "By God," he says, "they was good. They was good, fat, they was fat, in the spring, eh."

Alma: Did your uncle ever tell you other stories?

Elie: Oh yeah sure.

Alma: Did he tell you anything about what happened at Batoche?

Elie: No he never said very much about that. Well I don't know where, I think through to the border someplace over there, you know, before the riot. He went there in the morning, early morning. He was hunting and they said, "Look there (inaudible) in the prairie." He was hunting. By God, he find that man he slip like this. He take his whip, he always got a whip, you know, he whipping that way. By God, he whip. That was a Blackfoot. You know these Blackfoot, they big animal we call them. They (inaudible) stole horses. You come in Saskatchewan to steal horses, you know, and to go across like that. Well, when he told him, "You better go home from here. The Indians, they will kill you." It was not far from there. "If they see your tracks they'll kill you." By God, he went home, he went home to Montana over there. He come from there, that man that was a Blackfoot. And (inaudible) the Rebellion. He went away on horseback, you know, now he want to go across, across to the border because there they couldn't kill him, they had nothing to do with them, you know. Somewhere I guess...

Alma: Who wanted to kill him?

Elie: Eh?

Alma: Who wanted to kill him?

Elie: What?

Alma: You said kill him, who wanted to kill him?

Elie: He wants to go, he wants to move to Montana now on horseback. He went. What the hell, he meet a policeman. He was looking for him, you know. He stopped his horse, that policeman. "Where you going? What your name?" "Gabriel Dumont." That's the one he was looking for. After the Rebellion they want to hang him, you know, like Riel. Well, that's why he go across. They couldn't do nothing over there in Montana. Yeah, it's true he take his horse and he never bother, he was afraid to get shoot that man. He don't want to kill him, what for? He kill him and Gabriel Dumont. He come this way, I guess, that's about it. From in here, from Saskatchewan, you know, was looking for him, and over there...

He went to Montana, now he look for that man he was whipping. By God, he find him. He's over there so he went there. "Hey," cried that man when he seen the old man there. And the old man there, "That's my brother." He grabbed him and he kissed him. (inaudible) He give him five horses for present. Yeah.

Alma: And who was this old man?

Elie: The old dad, you know. He didn't want to kill him that man, He drove him to going home, not to steal horses, that's all. He gave him five horses.

Alma: Do you know why your uncle went to the border?

Elie: Yeah. And he meet somewhere Buffalo Bill down there. You hear about Buffalo Bill? That was his partner. (inaudible) Them days they went overseas after and came back over there. You know what they give him? A watch, to Gabriel Dumont, this Canadian, eh, they give him. That watch is right there, you know, it's in there in the museum. A gold watch is in there.

Alma: Who gave this to Gabriel?

Elie: This Canadian from Quebec. Yeah. And Bill -- this one here, this one too. Boy, that big gold. Yeah, and when you going to come back they went to see the Queen of Victoria, you know, the old Queen there. He gave him, that woman give him papers, he go any place they don't suppose to kill him now. That's the way he come across again. Yeah, and then they couldn't do nothing to him. He was a big man, you know, he was 250. He used to keep ferry in here, Gabriel Ferry they called it. That's his ferry, yeah. Oh well, I don't know the cause, I was not born, you know, at that time.

Alma: Do you remember your father or your uncle talking about it?

Elie: Oh yeah, they talk about it sometimes, sure.

Alma: What did they say, what sort of things did they say?

Elie: Oh they'd fight, you know, for scrips, land scrips, like. That's why the Rebellion it come. (inaudible) didn't have no scrip for land.

Alma: Did your father have scrip?

Elie: Oh yeah, the whole of them but not me. They say six months to (inaudible). I never got nothing. Oh well I don't care. Good view from here. Over there that's Baljennie. It's about eight miles from Batoche straight east.

Alma: Did you go to school?

Elie: Eh?

Alma: Did you go to school?

Elie: I went to school. That's where I went for two years, I guess, that's all. I was only in grade three, but (inaudible) you know. That family wants schooling here and you find another school about 50 miles that way. That's why I'm not educated very much.

Alma: What did they teach you in school?

Elie: Oh, just like the schooling here, the same thing. English and French.

Alma: What language did you speak at home, your parents and yourself?

Elie: Oh, we talk French and Cree mixed up, you know, that's the way.

Alma: Did you ever vote when there were elections? Did you ever vote?

Elie: Vote? No.

Lady: Yes.

Elie: What about vote? What you mean?

Alma: Well...

Lady: (French language).

Elie: Sure. Yeah.

Alma: Did you know about the Metis Society? Have you ever heard about it?

Elie: No.

Alma: In 1930s was when they were quite active. You didn't ever hear about them?

Elie: No.

Alma: Do you ever remember being discriminated? (Cree)

Elie: No. (Cree)

(Comments in Cree by several people)

Alma: I'll go back to (Cree). What did the other people do (Cree) your neighbours? (Cree)

Elie: Oh well, they worked for the farmers, you know. You mean young boys, like?

Alma: (Cree)

Elie: In the fall we was threshing, you know, that's the way we make the money. Stooking, that time, not like now. Now

all big machines, combines, you know. There's no money. You don't make no money now, not like long ago.

(Comments, different voices, Cree and/or French)

Alma: What do you remember most about your mom? What was your mother like? Like, what did she do?

Elie: Oh, at the house you mean, like?

Alma: Yes.

Elie: Yeah.

Alma: Did you ever hear about road allowance people?

Elie: No.

Alma: (Cree), different people (Cree)?

Elie: You mean...

(INTERVIEW CARRIES ON IN FRENCH LANGUAGE. English words "road allowance" are used several times.)

Alma: So there weren't very many people (French) that you were associated with other than (French) eh?

Elie: Yeah.

Alma: (French)?

Elie: Well, in the winter you know where I go. I used to work in the bush when I was young.

Alma: How old were you?

Elie: Cutting logs, and that's one of my jobs, and cord wood and everything like that, ties. Every winter. Sometimes I would like to go to work in the bush right now. I'm still good, you know.

Alma: What would you do?

Elie: Eh?

Alma: What would you do?

Elie: Selling posts, sell that, you know.

Alma: You miss working?

Elie: Oh God, I miss working. I don't like that there stay at the same place... Some would feel better to work than to stay without no work. No good.

Alma: When you had your own family did you have a big

family?

Elie: No, two boys I got, that's all. One is in B.C. and one is here in Duck Lake.

Alma: Where was your home?

Elie: My home? Well, my home I used to stay in Duck Lake, and here all the rest of my life I would say. Duck Lake and down to Batoche, St. Laurent. In the fall, you know, we go to thresh long ago, threshing and we stook, that's what we do. We stook first to the farmers if they need some man you see. Sometimes 35 days, 30 days of threshing, just threshing, travelling horses, you know. That's what we do.

Alma: And it must have been a long trip to go to Saskatoon by horse.

Elie: A long trip. Well I used to stay in Saskatoon.

Alma: Did you go... when you went to Saskatoon from Duck Lake, how did you go?

Elie: I take the train. There was no bus, not like here, at that time, no bus. You got to take the passenger, the train.

Alma: Did you ever go by horse?

Elie: Oh no. The first time I seen a car, you know, like, what you got here, by God? I was about 14 years already. I was working on the farm. Somebody come there. I never see that in my life -- a truck -- like, there was nobody... I said to myself, "By God, that man he will kill himself."

Alma: Did you ever drive a car yourself?

Elie: No. Never. The first time I seen a car, well, of course we had a bunch of horses all the time, we used horses. And that fellow was coming from Rosthern. That's the first car. Joe Breggan, I know him good that man he got a car. I said to myself, "What the hell is that?" First we plow with oxen. Two oxen we plow, walking plow. I work for an old man, I work for him, a farmer. "Well," he says, "I'll give you \$1 a day." All right, \$1 a day. That's quite a bit money, you make a dollar a day. I plowed with oxen, cut through.

Alma: How much did you have to plow?

Elie: Well I plowed about two acres a day, that's good enough.

Alma: Hard work?

Elie: No, they walked to the slough, them oxen, so there they go into the water. A fellow had time to turn back. They sit there, they stand up there, they don't want to get out from

there on a hot day, you know. So when I got to go there in the water to here, I take them here and I put them on the road, I start to plow again. Oh Jesus Christ, that's a hell of a job.

Alma: For \$1 a day?

Elie: For \$1 a day. But that time \$1, you know, that was quite a bit money.

Alma: Was that your first paying job?

Elie: Yeah, I was young, I was about 16 then, or 15. I was a young boy.

Alma: When you were a young man did you ever go to dances or weddings?

Elie: Oh yeah.

Alma: What were they like?

Elie: First time I went to Rosthern here. There was a dentist there. He pulled out all in here. Next time I went to Montana, (inaudible) Now I got nothing, no teeth.

Alma: I'm talking about dancing, you know, (Cree)

(Conversation carries on in Cree/French)

Elie: I thought you said dentist. (laughs)

Alma: What were these dances you used to go to? What were they like?

Elie: I used to play fiddle, you know. About 20 years I play fiddle, all over. I went all over. I used to dance jig too, Red River jig, old-timer, you know.

Alma: Where did you learn how to jig and to play fiddle?

Elie: Well, at home.

Alma: From your parents?

Elie: No, they never showed me nothing. Well, there was lots of guys, they used to play fiddle, you know. I learned from them, you know.

Alma: At these dances, was this a time when you met other people and stuff from the area, this was a meeting place like?

Elie: Oh yeah.

Alma: What other sort of, like, social things happened that people got together? Like, you know, you go to dances. Is there something else that people used to do together?

Elie: Well, it would depend what it is.

(END OF SIDE A)

(END OF INTERVIEW)