

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: BETSY GUNVILLE  
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: PRINCE ALBERT,  
SASKATCHEWAN  
INTERVIEW LOCATION: PRINCE ALBERT,  
SASKATCHEWAN  
TRIBE/NATION:  
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH  
DATE OF INTERVIEW: JULY 26, 1982  
INTERVIEWER: CONNIE REGNIER(?)  
INTERPRETER:  
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Connie: July 26, 1982 talking to Betsy Gunville. We'll be  
talking about schooling. Where did your parents attend school?

Betsy: (inaudible).

Connie: Do you know if they attended school?

Betsy: I don't think mother did, I don't think dad either.  
I don't know. (inaudible).

Connie: Did your parents speak another language?

Betsy: My dad spoke French. My mother talked French too,  
English and French.

Connie: No native languages at all?

Betsy: Well, mother, my grandmother spoke Cree. But at home we never talked, she never talked to us...

Connie: Just in English?

Betsy: ...in Cree, yeah.

Connie: More English.

Betsy: Yeah. Well dad he didn't understand too much English it was mostly French.

Connie: Where were you living at the time?

Betsy: At the time?

Connie: Yeah.

Betsy: What do you mean?

Connie: In your younger days.

Betsy: I went to school in Great Falls Mission in the States, and then I just went from September to June and then we come across to Canada. I was about seven years old then I guess.

Connie: Did you quit school after that?

Betsy: Oh I went for a little while. I went to (?) School about fifteen miles east of Walker.

Connie: So what grade...

Betsy: Three. But work out.

Connie: What did your parents do for a living?

Betsy: Oh dad he was a, I don't know what you call it, I guess you call it (?).

Connie: Vetrinarian?

Betsy: Yeah.

Connie: For all animals or just horses?

Betsy: Eh?

Connie: For all animals?

Betsy: Yeah.

Connie: Was that the only job he ever worked on was

vetrinarian?

Betsy: As far as I know of. Well he did farm once or twice, he wasn't well at all. (inaudible).

Connie: What did your mother do?

Betsy: My mother she had enough raising us.

Connie: Oh yeah. (laughs) Big family. What was your father's religion?

Betsy: Oh I don't know. You don't mind if I can't answer you?

Connie: No, no. What did you do for work when you were growing up?

Betsy: Farm work, milk cows and house work.

Connie: Where did your father have to go to, did he have a special office that he worked at?

Betsy: No, no. They used to come and get him, all the farmers around (?) to look after their sick animals.

Connie: Was he the only one around there?

Betsy: Yeah. He was the only one that could, like he got a lot of, well I guess some (?), but he got a lot of (?) raising too.

Connie: We'll talk a little about social life. Where did your parents meet?

Betsy: Eh?

Connie: Where did your parents meet? Do you remember?

Betsy: I think they met in the states someplace. Probably in Great Falls. My mother was married twice.

Connie: You know how they met at a fair or dance or something?

Betsy: Oh I don't know.

Connie: How large is your family?

Betsy: Sixteen in Toronto, and mother had six boys with the first husband, twenty-one all total she had. So when you wonder how she, what she done for a living! (laughs) You know, twenty-one lived in the same house. When dad married mother well he took one of them the rest was placed in school. When he married mother the baby was nine months old and he got the same name as my dad, Joe.

Connie: Where did they all live?

Betsy: Well we were in the States then. And they all died in the States there my half brothers.

Connie: Were they all boys?

Betsy: Yeah all boys then we lost, my dad and mother lost one girl in the States the oldest one. Eight girls in the family.

Connie: What kind of dances, and songs, and games were...

Betsy: Eh?

Connie: What kind of dances were going on at that time? Did you go to any dances at all?

Betsy: No we were just kids.

Connie: As you got older?

Betsy: As I got older we went when we lived in (?), oh it was mostly house dances, you know, and square dances, waltzes, and all those.

Connie: Did your parents teach you any games at all?

Betsy: No.

Connie: When you were young.

Betsy: Oh yeah, with out parents yeah. Dad used to play the fiddle for dances all over.

Connie: Where did the dances take place?

Betsy: In towns around (?) there.

Connie: There was no hall or anything?

Betsy: No, it was just a little, just a store, couple stores and a beer parlour that's all there was.

Connie: Your father looked after the entertainment then?

Betsy: Yeah.

Connie: Was he the only one?

Betsy: Him and my uncle.

Connie: You didn't play any games in school or anything, any types of games?

Betsy: Well, I didn't go to school very much.

Connie: Can't remember...

Betsy: No.

Connie: Were there any prejudism towards the people at (?)?

Betsy: What do you mean? No. Not that I can remember.

Connie: Okay we'll talk about religion. How much influence did the church have over the community?

Betsy: Had quite a bit.

Connie: Did the church laws differ than today?

Betsy: Oh quite a bit different. Before you could receive communion you had to go to confession, now I don't, we don't do that.

Connie: Were there any special laws that the church laid down for the people?

Betsy: I don't know.

Connie: Did you have to go to school, have to go to church when you were young every Sunday?

Betsy: Yeah.

Connie: Did you or your parents ever attend shrines or retreats?

Betsy: You mean like pilgrimage?

Connie: Yeah.

Betsy: Oh yeah.

Connie: Were they an annual thing?

Betsy: I don't know what you mean.

Connie: You know, like held every certain date.

Betsy: Oh yeah, it was in July some time. Sixteenth I think.

Connie: Oh just like Batoche?

Betsy: Yeah. Just like (?), Batoche and places. And there's one week of (inaudible), you know.

Connie: Did your parents ever celebrate weddings or Christmas?

Betsy: No.

Connie: Never? Not even Christmas?

Betsy: No. They were great for celebrating New Years though.

Connie: (?) time eh. (laughs) Okay talk about food and clothing. How did your parents get food?

Betsy: Well dad used to buy it.

Connie: Did he ever hunt or trap?

Betsy: (?)?

Connie: No hunt or trap.

Betsy: Oh. Well he used to kill some deers in the fall, is that what you mean?

Connie: Yeah.

Betsy: And then in the summer he'd shoot a lot of ducks. (laughs)

Connie: Was there any special way that they prepared the food?

Betsy: Oh yeah. They butcher every fall, you know, and cow, pigs. Am I answering right?

Connie: Yeah. How did you get your clothing?

Betsy: Oh, like our teacher used to help us out a lot, help mother out a lot with clothes. Otherwise it was pretty hard. She used to make our, you know, you call them slips now (inaudible). She used to make them out of flour bags.

Connie: So all your clothing was hand made then?

Betsy: Yeah. When I got working and the others got working then we bought our clothes.

Connie: Do you remember any especially harsh shortages of food?

Betsy: Oh yeah, I remember.

Connie: During the depression?

Betsy: Yeah.

Connie: Was there any certain time that you guys were really low?

Betsy: Yeah.

Connie: What did you do?

Betsy: Oh we, mother used to know how to make us live anyways. (laughs) We didn't starve. (inaudible) next door to us maybe.

Connie: If somebody was really short would somebody else give you something?

Betsy: Yeah. They give us eggs and sometimes some people would give us chickens to make soup. We got help, but...

Connie: Would they help the mother prepare? Was there a doctor available to your family in town?

Betsy: No, we had to go to Wakaw.

Connie: How far was that from you?

Betsy: Fifteen miles.

Connie: Did he ever bring medicine to your people?

Betsy: Yeah. He'd come out.

Connie: How would you contact him?

Betsy: Oh (inaudible), you know, some of the neighbors we'd get them to phone.

Connie: Would he make rounds every week or...

Betsy: Oh no. That's just when somebody was sick in the family.

Connie: Did anybody in your family make their own medicine?

Betsy: No. I don't know if I'd want to drink it if they did. (laughs)

Connie: Was there any special people in the community that helped like a mid-wife?

Betsy: Yeah. Mother was a mid-wife.

Connie: Okay talk about the depression. What kinds of jobs were available during the depression?

Betsy: I don't know really just whatever you can get I guess.

Connie: Did a lot of people move to the city then?

Betsy: Eh?

Connie: Did a lot of people move into the city?

Betsy: Oh no.

Connie: From the country.

Betsy: No.

Connie: Was there enough food and clothing to go around for your family there?

Betsy: Yeah there was enough.

Connie: Well, did your father have a job during the depression?

Betsy: Well like I say, just whatever you could get.

Connie: Okay we'll talk about politics? Was your community active in politics?

Betsy: I don't remember.

Connie: Your parents weren't involved in politics at all?

Betsy: I don't think so, not that I know of anyway.

Connie: Was there any special person that your parents liked?

Betsy: They liked all (inaudible).

Connie: How about dislike, was there anybody that they really hated?

Betsy: No I don't think so.

Connie: Have you ever heard any stories or, about native leaders?

Betsy: Might have.

Connie: You know like leaders in the Rebellion or anything.

Betsy: Oh about you mean Louie Riel and that?

Connie: Yeah. Anybody that was in the rebellion.

Betsy: I did hear some but I forget what it was.

Connie: Okay these are just general questions. Do you think things were better then than they are now?

Betsy: Better now.

Connie: Do you think the native people are stronger and wiser because of their experiences? Like the Rebellion how they fight.

Betsy: Oh (inaudible)...



(END OF SIDE A)  
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