

**Gilbert Pelletier, Norman Fleury, Sherry Farrell-Racette**

**Video 1**

**Start 12.09.00.27 GILBERT PELLETIER** – See my, my, my auntie, Mrs. St. Pierre, well that, Norman knows her. She's from Yorkton and she was a midwife too eh? But then we did have quite a few midwives around in the, in Métis communities, but she was one of them. And she's, and she's one that you'd like to talk to cause she's got a lot of interesting stories. She's 90 some years old now. She is, and you know, she'd be able to tell stories. I'm really interested in seeing her, listening to her tell stories.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** – Uh huh.

**43.3 NORMAN FLEURY** - You know, people never even thought about going to a hospital when they were going to have a baby. There was no such thing around home. You never, they would just say well, so and so is gonna have a baby so I'll be called over just about any time now. And, and true enough, there was a sleigh or a team of horses or somebody came and Grandma was gone. And, and, and they stayed with those, women had to stay in the bed in those days, they were taken care of for maybe 5, 6 days, they wouldn't let them get out of bed. They were well taken care of. My Grandma took care of those ladies really, really well.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** – That's better than they'd look after them in the hospital now.

**44.1 GILBERT PELLETIER** - And the kids. They never took their kids to the hospital. They'd say, well go see that one. You know, there's a doctor there, go see that one he was Métis.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - So you...

**GILBERT PELLETIER** - And one of the best that I've seen or heard of was a man by the name of Alec Perrault. He was my uncle. He was a real good doctor. I took my kids there.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - Yeah?

**GILBERT PELLETIER** - A few times.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - Where did he get his medicines?

**GILBERT PELLETIER** - He was the seventh boy.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - Oh yeah.

**GILBERT PELLETIER** - And they call him **(speaks Michif)**.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - Oh it's like a...

**GILBERT PELLETIER** - Yeah, that was...

**NORMAN FLEURY and GILBERT PELLETIER** – **(both repeat word in Michif)**.

**GILBERT PELLETIER** – **(Says the word in Michif)** they call him. That's the way we say it in Michif.

**(Video Time: 12:10.52.03) 44.8 NORMAN FLEURY** - The seventh one was always gifted eh? 5 boys, 7 boys or 7 girls. The seventh one was always gifted. And they never ever told you about it either. You had to go and ask them.

**45.0 GILBERT PELLETIER** - But he was the one that treated my kid. My, my kid took sick and we couldn't get him to the hospital because I didn't have the money, you know. So I was gonna fix that doctor but good, he would have needed a doctor himself, when I got through with him. But they got me out of there and Mom said "Well," my mother said, "Let's take him to, to Alex."

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - You mean they wouldn't look after him?

**GILBERT PELLETIER** - They wouldn't look after him because they, we had no, we had no money.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - They were gonna turn you away?

**GILBERT PELLETIER** - Yeah, they did turn us away.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - Really?

**GILBERT PELLETIER** - They did, because we had no money.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - That's awful.

**(Video Time: 12:11.37.24) GILBERT PELLETIER** - So we drove over there, we had to drive, I don't know, about 15 miles I guess out of town. So and this was in wintertime though, you know, it was cold and the roads weren't so good. But we made it there. And when we got there, the old man was drunk. You know, he was drunk when we got there. So he said, "That's okay," he said, "Don't worry about it." He says, and he was standing around here praying his medicine eh? He was trying to give it to him and he wouldn't take it, like it was just a baby, he wouldn't take it, you know, cause it tastes awful. "Oh," he said, "That's okay," he said. So he put out, he made the sign of the cross on her forehead with it and then he took him to the other room,

he took him to his bedroom. So he come out he says, "Oh," he said, "In fifteen minutes he'll be okay." You know, before he even got out he started playing, started playing around.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - That fast?

**GILBERT PELLETIER** - That fast. He told us in fifteen minutes he'll be all right. He says, "Don't worry about it. It won't happen again." And it never did.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - Wow, I wonder what he did?

**GILBERT PELLETIER** - Yeah he was a...

**46.6 NORMAN FLEURY** – They were, it was a mysterious thing and they were...

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - So you didn't know...

**NORMAN FLEURY** - They didn't know and you didn't try to find out.

**GILBERT PELLETIER** - And, no, you didn't try to find out, that was...

**NORMAN FLEURY** - Because it was one of those mysterious things eh.

**GILBERT PELLETIER** - It worked and that's all I worried about, you know. I didn't care how he did it so long as it worked.

**NORMAN FLEURY** - Mrs. Tom Fleury, Leah...**(Inaudible)**...was her name. She was the seventh, and she would do things also. Like, and there was another person too, I forget, this kid had a toothache and she said, "Well come here." So she just rubbed that kid, and the toothache was gone.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - Just to touch.

**NORMAN FLEURY** - Yeah.

**(Video Time: 12:13.12.24) 47.4 GILBERT PELLETIER** – And, you know he used to take the long way when we're walking around with Alec and he's telling me all these, you know, you see some flowers, certain flowers eh? And he'd pick them, he said, "This is medicine." You know how to mix this, this is good medicine and for certain things, different things, different kind of plants are for different kind of sickness eh. He used to say, "But you got to mix it with something else," but he'd never explain what else you had to mix it with.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - It was quite complicated I think, all that they knew.

**GILBERT PELLETIER** - And you had to dig certain roots, or certain plants that you had to dig up.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - Certain time...

**GILBERT PELLETIER** - Yeah, at a certain time.

**NORMAN FLEURY** - Yeah, to be a botanist mostly is what they were.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - Yeah, I think so, botanist, yeah.

**48.4 NORMAN FLEURY** - They were botanists, you know, like my grandmother used, she'd tell us certain things about medicines, like she'd say le boum. That mint eh? **(Speaks Michif)** was another one, that's for

when women are having their, you know, women problems. And there was different medicines for the heart, there was medicines for the heart.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - How do say that in English, (**says word in Michif**)?

**NORMAN FLEURY** - Just mint eh?

**GILBERT PELLETIER** - Mint yeah, yeah.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - There's two kinds?

**GILBERT PELLETIER** - Yeah.

**NORMAN FLEURY** - There's (**says word in Michif**) that's mush, in the muskeg you get that.

**GILBERT PELLETIER** - Yeah, the muskeg you get that.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - The low?

**NORMAN FLEURY** - Yeah, the low, and the le boum that's the, it's more of a purple flower and it grows taller.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - On the higher ground?

**NORMAN FLEURY** - On the higher ground, but another thing she'd tell us too, is, there's certain things that they did with medicines. You did things in odd number or even numbers, that's for stopping things, making things go. And, and then when you're also, if you have let's say you have a root and, and you want to make the blood flow, you'd scrape your medicines

downwards, so that would make it flow. But if you were gonna stop something you scraped your medicines up.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** – The other way.

**NORMAN FLEURY** - And it stopped it. So those are the kinds of things...

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - So everything was part of it? All of your...

**NORMAN FLEURY** - Everything was all a circle of, of wisdom. They knew the botany, and they knew not only that, but they also knew how to deal with, with Mother Nature, basically, and what, you know.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - So if two was to stop and three was to get something?

**NORMAN FLEURY** - Well there was an odd number and an even number.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - Odd number?

**(Video Time: 12:15.30.13) NORMAN FLEURY** - Yeah, and then there was the even number, that, that's, they used those. When you were making your medicines, you'd put odd, three of this, and three of that, and you'd put two of this and two of this and something else.

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - That would help you remember too eh?

**GILBERT PELLTIER**: Oh yeah.

**NORMAN FLEURY** - Yeah. So, so, so...

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - Cause everything was in the memory...

**GILBERT PELLETIER** – No, nothing was written down, they...

**NORMAN FLEURY** - My Grandma couldn't read or write, she never went to school.

**GILBERT PELLETIER** - No they didn't.

**NORMAN FLEURY** - But it was just something you learned by nature. It was something they learned by nature, but they were gifted again.

**(Video Time: 12:16.02.02) 50.6 GILBERT PELLETIER** - So they didn't have to write nothing down, they never did forget either. They wouldn't forget it. Like, you know, I gotta write, I gotta write things down now, otherwise I forget it. But they don't. They never forgot it.

**SHERRY FARRELL RACETTE** - That's amazing eh? All what they knew.

**GILBERT PELLETIER** - All what they knew, and they knew a lot.

**50.8 NORMAN FLEURY** - See my grandmother told me that she learnt a lot of her medicines, there was a lady she was Cree. A Cree lady, a Cree medicine woman, and she taught my grandmother all these, the treatments...

**SHERRY FARRELL-RACETTE** - Like took her on.

**NORMAN FLEURY** – And, and how to treat. My grandmother treated, she cured tuberculosis, and she also cured many different ailments, you know. And it's sad that nobody actually took on, because in that community where you lived there was so many people, Métis people in the community, some person would have been a potential follower if they were taught, and some of



them were gifted, they, they, they actually were born with, with like, this, septieme, les septieme.

**GILBERT PELLETIER** - They, yeah, they were born with it, they weren't...

**NORMAN FLEURY** - You know, but some people actually had the potential, like not everybody was a good midwife, and not even, they didn't even attempt to be, or pretend to be. Cause you were either, or you weren't. You would have to be able to play the role, and if you didn't, the lives of those people were in danger. Like you didn't pretend, like it was too, too much of a sacred thing and it also.

**End 12:17.34.23**