

Paul Chartrand Interview by Spenser Thibault, November 20, 2021

One of them maybe I could start off with is a story of my cousin Cha-Bay. That's his nickname, Albert Chartrand, my cousin, my father's brother's son, my first cousin. Mon père son frère son garçon. Anyway, he has a lot of good stories. He's just an absolutely amazing storyteller. Y'know, there was Cha-Bay, up here [Paul gestures with his hand way up high] and then, down here [Paul gestures with his hand well below the other] there's nobody, nobody in my life has ever come close to him. When he told a story, you could smell it; you could hear it, you could visualize it. I would much rather listen to him tell stories than go to a movie or read a book, 'cause he was that good. That's a really good storyteller. He'd come up with words, and I can give you some examples. He'd come up with words that would just jump out and make you see the picture so vividly. Man that's a rare talent! It's too bad we didn't record them I guess, there's lots like that, the more we talk with people you remember these things.

But that's what people did, in the old days, y'know. They'd talk a lot about the families and events that had happened, and it was a way of just passing the time and getting along, enjoying life. It still happens, when you go back and get together with your friends or relatives, to tell stories. So, I can tell you some of Cha-Bay's stories, and I can tell you about some of the other ones that a number of families will know, and some of these stories ... three or four years later, somebody else tells you that same story. They're those kinds of stories, that are known amongst a number of families, so that reinforces those stories. It's not just one person making them up, but some of them obviously are made up. So there's different kinds of stories, eh? There are true stories: "This happened, one time" that's one kind of story, but then the other ones, they're more for entertainment because you know they're not true, they're a big exaggeration!

[Spenser: You told me these are called, what, "Lii Blagues de ..."]

Lii Blagues de Cha-Bay.

[Spenser: What does that mean, "*Lii blagues*?"]

Lii Blagues de Cha-Bay? Lii blagues, that means "lies!"

[Spenser: I think of that word as meaning, like a joke, but it means "lies" in your language?]

Yep, but I think, une blague, I came across it some day, French speakers will know, but I think une blague is actually a pouch, like a tobacco pouch. I think is a blague, I'm not sure, but, I'd have to look it up. So, we use words that mean different things.

[Spenser: That's so amazing.]

Then I can tell you some other ones that are really funny, but it's kind of funny to tell a story and then laugh by myself. That's what I was saying, if we could get somebody else, it would be a bit more natural.