

2003.02.182

T978.03

INFORMNANT: MARY CALLIHOO  
nee CUNNINGHAM

SUBJECT: St. Albert,  
-autobiographical

PERIOD: 1895 - present

INTERVIEWED BY: A. Borgstede  
April 3rd, 1978

LENGTH OF TAPE:

- 001 - 005 Introduction
- 006 - 017 Mary Valerie Cunningham Dumont Callihoo, born 3 June 1895 on her father's farm by the Sturgeon River
- 018 - 043 Her father was JAMES CUNNINGHAM, son of JOHN and ROSALIE L'HIRONDELLE. He was born in Edmonton, his father was a "Hudson Bay man" and died before Mary was born. ROSALIE died at 91 years, c. 1920. Her father was JACQUES L'HIRONDELLE, from Paris, mother was JOSETTE PILON (native mother)
- 044 - 054 Her maother was MARY HODGSON, born in Edmonton, daughter of GEORGE HODGSON ROWLAND and MARY ROWLAND. GEORGE was Scottish and they were married by BISHOP GRANDIN in St. Albert. *cousin to ROWLANDS in St. Albert*
- 055 - 097 Settled on farm where NEIL ROSS, SR. later had his farm, later moved to 12 acres belonging to her grandfather GEO HODGSON when her father got sick (just after George, the third child was born) Father worked out when able as farm help, carpenter or butcher. -discussion on the loss of her father's tools. *He was chronically ill - stolen after his death*
- 098 - 121 Her grandmother LOUISE HODGSON owned the River Lot, Mary's father farmed it. Took ~~flour~~ to the mill and exchanged it for flour, bran and "short". Mother sewed quilts.
- 122 - 132 Eleven children: ELIZABETH, SOPHIE, GEORGE, HERMAINE, NAP, FRED, MARY, RACHEL, ROBERT, CLARA, ALICE. Happy family. *Never fought.*
- 133 - 154 Father: had grey eyes, streaked grey hair, later turned white, long beard (later shaved); was never strict with the children.
- 155 - 160 Mother was very kind, good worker, strict.
- 161 - 197 Life as a young child: lived in a log house built by grandfather, GEO. HODGSON, each fall patched mud that had fallen out in rain. Whitewashed inside in the fall and just before Christmas and Easter. -one room, bed and cupboard in corner, small cook stove in middle of the room, later a larger stove was put in closer to the wall which burned wood.
- 198 - 247 Older children worked out, SOPHIE married in 1906. All had chores, helped with gardening, hauled water from the river, watered in the evening, weeded, hilled potatoes. Grew potatoes, turnips, cabbage, carrots, beets, corn; stored in root cellar. Corn was stored by dipping in boiling water, hung by string to dry, put in sacks and hung in grainery. When needed it was soaked in salt water overnight and cooked. Onions tied and dried, stored in sacks.

-2-

- 248 - 264 River water was used; in spring chopped ice and stored. *Nowell.*
- 265 - 308 Mother made clothing from dyed flour sacks (natural root dyes), dresses, underwear, quilts etc. Sugar sacks were used and salt bags were hemmed and crocheted for hankies. Sunday clothes were bought in St. Albert and/or Edmonton (or were hand-me-downs from aunts in Edmonton) Mary began to sew at 7 years, would mend her own clothes.
- 309 - 316 Wore moccasins, had shoes for Sunday. Toys were all handmade, dolls, etc.
- 317 - 409 Mother had native blood, few skills were passed down. Her mother had died when she was 12 years, father had remarried LOUISE AUGER. Did leather tanning: stretched hide on poles, removed hair with bone implement and blade used at an angle, turned and removed fat, flesh. Soaked with water, wrung out on a pole to remove water, then worked over wire as it dried. Smoked over small fire, ready for use. Traded vegetables, butter, eggs for hides. Potatoes were traded in Lac Ste. Anne for fish. *(traded) whatever they had extra for hides traded*
- 410 - 443 Making pemmican: meat (beef) was sliced as thin as possible, dried over a little fire and in the sun. When really dry, it was pounded up, lard was added (tallow), saskatoon berries etc. It was mixed and molded into blocks, cut off in slices. Would be made for a change, a treat.
- 444 - 461 Language: spoke mixed French, Cree and English (didn't realize that they were not speaking one language when they were young)
- 462 - 531 Schooling: Taught by FATHER COUVENEAU (sp.?) along Big Lake. Older children all attended, school closed the year she was to start. Mary learned to read and write from her brothers and sisters. Attended the Convent for one year when she was 13. *(convent school)* The O'DONNELL SCHOOL was built when she was 16, too old to attend.
- 532 - 590 Convent: boarded there. Got up at 5:00 am, Mass at 6:00. Breakfast was porridge with syrup. Some of the boarders went to school, some did work. Mary took classes half days. Worked in the kitchen helping SISTER FLORESTINE, washing dishes, pots, etc. Milk was separated in the pantry, two boys worked the large butter churn. Peeled three tubs of potatoes for sisters. Helped SISTER DOMITIL to feed hired men, did dishes, washed floors, set table.
- 591 - 614 Board was \$17 per month. Because she worked, some was taken off. She washed clothes ironed, mended clothes, including the sister's.
- 615 - 657 Academic: reading, writing, arithmetic. Were taught in English. Went to bed at 8:00 pm.
- 658 - end of ~~tape~~: Christmas: Attended Midnight Mass; those who stayed home prepared a meal. Church was 5 miles away. *- 3 masses - 1 high mass, 2 low*  
Easter: Holy week - did washing on Monday, ironed, mended on Tuesday  
*and went to church the next day*  
Wednesday - house whitewashed, cleaned. Thursday on - no work at all.

## Side II

- 002 - 036 Holy Week (con't) On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday went to church. During Lent, attended Stations of the Cross every Wednesday and Fridays at 3:00. Would walk the five miles to attend <sup>as Penance</sup> Easter Sunday - got up early to watch the 'sun dancing on the window' Would have visitors, or would visit. Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday were fast days...no meat. Easter Sunday meal was roast beef, pork, chicken or duck with doughnuts, dried apple, rice with raisins.
- 037 - 095 Christmas: Advent was observed like Lent; no dancing etc. fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays. Family would come home late from Mass, and have a late meal with tea and coffee (made from wheat or corn dried in the oven), (Father had a bottle of whiskey for friends...mother didn't make wine)  
Meatballs were made by finely chopping meat with a little axe, putting in a large wooden bowl, adding suet, onions, salt, flour, mixing and forming into balls. A whole clove was put into each one and they were boiled.  
Pies and plum pudding made and then boiled in a flour sack for 6 hrs.
- 096 - 107 Didn't give gifts, got candies, apples. Didn't have oranges in winter until the trains came.
- 108 - 121 New Years Day: people would start coming to wish Happy New Years at 6:00 am and were given a full course meal.  
Family would then attend Mass and visit with BISHOP GRANDIN. <sup>on NY's day (not eve)</sup>
- 122 - 205 When she was 4 years old, Mary was very sick. BISHOP GRANDIN visited her; told her she had to be better to be able to visit him on New Years and she was. On New Years, the Bishop had a barrel of candy with a scoop. Spoke Cree to her, gave her candy in her skirt because she had no pockets.  
After New Years the bishop would announce what days he would be visiting each area. St. Albert was divided into four parts by the river and the trail. The family would be dressed in their best awaiting his arrival. He had dinner at BELLERIEVE's.  
When her mother was expecting Clara, she was sick and moved in with the grandmother (Mrs. LOUISE HODGSON). ELIZABETH was working at the mission. When the baby was born, BISHOP GRANDIN, BROTHER LANDRY and ELIZABETH came, the baby was baptized right there.
- 206 - 237 Pilgrimage to Lac Ste. Anne: Elizabeth, George and Sophie were working but the rest of the family would go. ROBERT was a baby. They travelled by wagon. Left on Sunday for the pilgrimage which started on Wednesday. Would travel in a procession, with the priests, camped at MAGLOIRE GREY's place on the Sturgeon River. Priests would say Benediction and Mass. Bishop's buggy always led the procession.
- 238 - 254 Neighbours: SANDY MACDONALD and ROMEY MACDONALD, DUNCAN MACDONALD married FLORA MACDONALD. Worked closely with neighbours; stoked for them.
- 255 - 306 Made trips to St. Albert about once a week for groceries, and again every Sunday and for funerals. Got groceries from FLEURI PERRON and HEBERT.

Lower  
Volume

Medical services: All children were delivered by mid-wife. Grandmother Hodgson was a mid-wife. No doctors in St. Albert until DR. TIERNAN came (1895-1902) and then DR. GIROUX.  
Used home remedies or "Indian medicines"

- 307 - 342 Family stayed on the farm (12 acres). Mother died 11 Jan. 1930. Family moved into St. Albert, land was sold, bought a house (JEFF MCMILLIAN;s) father lived there with ALICE. *Moved to St. Albert 1930*  
*Mary bought the house for dad & sisters*
- 343 - 363 From age 14 - 24 Mary worked for DENNY's who bought the rest of the land, slept at home.
- 364 - 404 Married 3 June 1918 to LOUIS DUMONT, in St Albert in the chapel at the Bishop's palace. They worked in Camrose and in the fall moved to Mulloy where Louis had a homestead.  
Met at ELIZABETH's in Guerneville at a dance, about 4 or 5 years earlier. He died 27 November 1918.
- 405 - 445 Flu epidemic: Husband and she and his parents all had it. Louis and his mother died, brother Pete came with his wife to look after them.  
After her husband died she returned to St. Albert, worked for MR. ASSELIN, at the St. Albert Hotel. She continued to work there after he died and Mrs. Asselin returned from California. MAURICE LEMER leased the hotel and in 1921 bought the Morinville Hotel.
- 446 - 511 Lived at the hotel in one room with two other girls.  
There were two busy hotels in town; dining room was busy, served travellers. Wages were \$25.00 per month and tips.
- 512 - 549 Other businessmen: VENESS & SANDERS had hardware store in DAWSON BLOCK. Built by DAWSON, bought by ANDREWS who died suddenly. LEMER had store there RINQUETTE was a clerk.
- 550 - 603 Memorable women: MRS. ASSELIN was a pretty woman, dressed so well, took over running the hotel when her husband died. Had two boys and two girls from first marriage to FARRELL. Oldest daughter married DR. TIERNAN. Other children were EVA (Mrs. Letourneau), ROMEO (moved to states) and LAWRENCE.
- 604 - 671 In 1931, Mary married FREDDIE CALLIHOO from MICHEL RESERVE, met at a dance. Married in the Cathedral (Edm) by Father Burke; lived on the reserve near Villeneuve. Had two quarters, cleared with small tractor hitched to two horses.
- 672 - end of tape: Old MICHEL CALLIHOO and FREDDIE's grandfather were brothers.  
First crops were only wheat; built a frame house, big barn, graneries.

## TAPE II - SIDE I

- 004 - 014 Location of the reserve, other Callihoos there *Johnny, Tommy (who vented his hand), Alex, Archie*
- 015 - 056 Had a well near the house. Mary's ability to "witch" a well; use of a red willow fork. Could predict the depth that water would be found. Wells "witched" with a gold watch.  
Had no electricity. Raised cattle, about 65 head.

- 057 - 081 Sale of produce: took wheat to elevator in Villeneuve, sold cream which was picked up. Sold butter and eggs. Butter at 10¢ per pound, Cream at 10¢ and eggs for 3¢ dozen.
- 082 - 116 Depression: Barley - 4¢ per bushel; oats - 3¢ per bushel and wheat 7¢ per bushel. They did not have to pay taxes on the land as it was an Indian reserve.  
They never considered quitting; loved the farm, had a big garden. Later they hired help which allowed them to take two weeks holiday every year to the States or to B.C.
- 117 - 165 Made trips to Edmonton where things were cheaper; more variety; at first perhaps once a month even in winter by Ford car or cutter and team.  
-recalls taking a load of 60 pigs to Swift's packing house by sleigh and receiving \$61.00. Would stay overnight in a livery barn on 95th Street; would take own blankets, etc.
- 166 - 185 WW II: No problem getting help. Brother George's son (Wilfred) was wounded. Not many from the reserve enlisted. *Siblings were too old to go.*
- 186 - 213 Farming improved; got threshing machine. Relates how just she and Freddie threshed feed for the stock.
- 214 - 241 Children: took an unwed mother and her 12 day old son in, girl stayed with them. They provided her with clothes, paid her \$40 per month. Legally adopted her son when he was two years old. (JOSEPH) Lawyer ARCHIBALD, looked after the adoption. *Mother stayed after adoption eventually got married.*
- 242 - 256 Discussion on unwed mothers. *Then she was an outcast. Couldn't work. Now she would get help.*
- 257 - 299 *Ho's* Social Life: local dances - there was no hall, used a school, barn or home.  
Christmas, New Years and Easter were still important.  
Music played by local violin players, refreshments served at the table.
- 300 - 332 No drinking at dances.  
Danced square dances, waltzes, polkas etc. Also tradition Metis dances such as the Reel of Eight, Reel of Four, jigs, Drops of Brandy and Duck Dance.  
Mary danced in Native Dance Festival and took a prize at 80 years.  
*\* Nellie Courtepatte was Mary's cousin*
- 333 - 390 Farm was making money when band wanted to sell the reserve land. Freddie was chief, opposed to sale; had to quit because of ill-health. RODERICK CALLIHOO became chief and was for selling. Reason for selling was that Indians could not go into bars.  
When Indian agent, policeman and lawyer brought blue franchise cards; first stops were all the bars that they had been kicked out of: St. Albert, Stoney Plain, Onoway, Spruce Grove, Morinville.
- 391 - 449 Lost all the benefits of treaty Indians: no taxes, no medical bills, Only three opposed the sale. Those who had farms kept them, unoccupied land was sold, money was divided among the band people.  
The band kept two quarters near a lake, kept all mineral rights, each receives a dividend in December and June.

Callihoo

Freddie  
Mary  
Dick

*Heart was enlarged*

450 - 489 Freddie died in 1958 at 58 years. Taxes on farm were \$500 for two quarter sections; Joe was too young to farm. Sold farm to WALTER FRANK, had auction for machinery.

490 - 546 Moved to Callihoo; bought house and 1 acre. Had put power on the farm in early 1950's; had all electric machinery; all buildings had electrical wiring, electric pump. *Mary did welding*

547 - 585 Moved to Callihoo in 1960 (on St. PArtick's Day), stayed until 1970<sup>4</sup> (Florence took it over). St. Patrick's Day was celebrated with special High Mass, band played Irish songs; all wore "little green ribbons."

586 - 645 *6 kids* SAM CUNNINGHAM was her uncle; lived close to CUNNINGHAM BRIDGE; first wife died. He went <sup>to</sup> teach at the Narrows at Lac Ste. Anne for awhile, then went with BOUDREAU (HBC.) to work at store in Slave Lake. Remarried and stayed in Slave Lake.

646 - 665 Her Uncle EDWARD CUNNINGHAM was the first Metis priest ordained, stationed at Onion Lake; grandmother (ROSALIE) went to stay with him.

666 - 697 Reflections: misses the farm, and the two weeks holiday.

End of tape.

*CAR  
w. buds*  
↓