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MRS. PELLETIER-Atikokan

Mrs. Pelletier will be 79 in December 1975. She has lived in Winnipeg, Emo and Atikokan. She has eight children and has also raised two grandchildren. She is a deeply religious person, now she has four dogs and says she is very good at playing cribbage she has played since 1949.

She would have liked to have more for her children when they were growing up, she said she was like the Old Woman In The Shoe, her children were always clean and were never in rags. She always washed and ironed and patched all their clothes. In those days if you had to manage on seventy dollars a month you did. They paid \$800 for their house and paid \$20 a month without interest and of course she had her garden. Today she owes nothing to anybody. Inflation doesn't affect her to much, she says she is careful with her money and is used to hard times. She said as long as her children were fed and were comfortable it didn't bother her. She thinks you have to live from day to day and make the best of it, you've got to be willing and accept it. Her husband was different from her she was very outgoing he didn't like it but when she wanted to go out she did her work at home and slipped out. He never stopped her from going out.

If she had to do it over again she said she would never live like this, she would have travelled or taught. Shes had had it rough and cried a lot but stuck it out. She never had the pill so the babies kept coming and coming and she never had one of her children in the hospital.

MRS PELLETIER ATIKOKAN

Mrs. Pelletier will be 79 years old in December 75, has lived in Winnipeg, Emo and Atikokan and raised 8 children of her own and 2 grandchildren.

INTERESTS

Religion

Mrs. Pelletier a deeply religious person states "So many things of course we think about it, no matter how we are raised.....
..... some belief of our own even if we don't talk about it or discuss it with nobody else our faith grows to be in such a way, you know. You believe and I believe and some things we don't believe and we think doesn't make sense and so on. And it was like that with me, but I'm against certain things. If it's supposed to be that way OK let it be, don't matter to me but, don't make sense to me so I let it go over my head."

Mrs. Pelletier makes reference to a recent stay at Avila Center which she enjoyed.

Dogs

Mrs. Pelletier has 4 dogs in the house,....." My Baby sleeps beside me."

Cribbage

....." I've been playing since 1949, not that I'm a real expert at it but I can handle some real experts too."

On her pioneer life

*Notes
Stereotyping*
What I hated most was to wash his jeans and iron them and patch them. It had to be done, my dear lady, we would have been in rags and it's something that no matter how little I had and how many children, I was like the Old Woman in the Shoe, my children never went with soiled clothes starting the day; they were all clean: they had dirty faces during the day, but at night they were clean, and the washing was done. In those days everything had to be ironed, nobody went out with clothes that wasn't ironed or in rags. You never did and you know some women Often wondered how I done it but it had to be done. They wondered how I baked. My husband was working and I had to bake something for for his lunch that was better and of course with the children I had to. Pies maybe for Sunday.

Question

"Were you ever really unhappy with your life?"

Answer

" I would have liked more for the sake of my children, I always wanted something. I would have liked enough money, but when I needed it, I needed to buy a pair of shoes I could go and buy it, but I always had to wait, sometimes 'till pay day, 15 days maybe sometimes a month before I could go buy the pair of shoes and I hated like heck to go to the store and say "Well, could you wait 'till next payday so we can pay for that pair of shoes."

.....I suppose everybody was hard up but they and 2 children. Oh it was 40 below that morning, so cold so after my breakfast....."She had been up all night just making fires, she had only dry poplar wood to make fires, it's a fire that don't last and no heat. She had been up all night just keeping the fires, so cold. So I took them all in, her and her 2 little children and I kept them a couple of days."

Question

"Could you manage on \$70.00 a month in those days?"

Answer

"When you had to, you do."

Question

"Did you have to pay for the house?"

Answer

"We paid \$20.00 a month on the house. We bought it for \$800.00 but they made it easy. We paid \$20.00 and no interest. Of course we had our garden too, and the seeds were not much in those days, 6 Packages of seeds for 25¢."

.....
You have to do it. When you think exactly what you need. With my pension I live good, keep somebody, give them a cup of tea, what you like to do. Each day I'm above board, I owe nobody nothing, I want something extra.....and I have still something in my pocket

QUESTION

"Do you find inflation affecting you much?"

Answer

" Not me personally, guess because I'm careful, I'm used to hard times. It's the best time in my life, the easiest time, because when I have my little babies as long as they were fed, dressed and I know they were comfortable, nothing mattered to me. It didn't matter if I had one dress to wear. I'd take it off at night, wash it at night, let it dry through the night and put it on the next morning, it didn't matter to me. I would have liked to have more, but as long as my baby was comfortable.

Sometimes I felt there was not enough to go around, but I got something that had to be got. My husband was working outside, he had to have clothes that was warm. It was far more expensive to dress him up than anyone else. There was a few things that my mother gave me or my sister gave me, I could always cut it to make a little dress for my girls....."knitted mitts, knitted sox and scarves for my 8 children, I don't know how I done it but I never stopped..

.....

"I think you have to live from day to day and you got to be willing to accept what comes and make the best of it."

"We lived in a small town, Emo. All my girls had to leave home to learn something for their future"

"My husband was not a man to mix....or take part in something."

Question

"You are a very outgoing person"

Answer

"Yes I am. I'm the opposite"

Question

"Did you find it frustrated you?" "Yes"

"How did you live with it" "Oh you have to."

"Was he unhappy because you were outgoing?"

Answer

"Oh he was, but for me to live couped like that, when I want to go out, not that I leave my work, my work has to be done, when I see that it's done then I slip out and I like committee work."

Question "Was your husband ever mean to you because you went out?"

Answer

"Oh he told me a piece of his mind."

Question

"He didn't stop you from going?"

Answer

"No I was too determined."

.....

"My self, if I had the chance in life, believe me I would have done nothing like I did do. I wouldn't have lived this way. I would have been travelling, teaching and in mission work but I didn't have that chance I just have public school, in fact I didn't learn English in school, I just picked up English."

"I wish I could live another 10 years like I live now, I'll have some fun in that 10 years."

.....

"I cut grass" (This was the first year she didn't dig the garden twice a year herself)

"At First it was hard."

"When you marry a man, we think we know him but we don't. After we sign that papere he's not the man we think he is before we signed that contract, he's a different man altogether. And you have that disappointment, and if you want to stand on your own two feet you have some arguments too, I've shed tears and had it plenty rough, through hard times. But I stuck to my bargain."

.....

There was no pill in that time and the babies were coming just as fast as I could have them, without all the necessaries. The only time I was in the hospital sick in my life, not that I felt good either, it was when I had a broken knee about 9 years ago.

Question

"You never had a baby in the hospital?"

Answer

"No I won't know what to expect to have a baby in the hospital. I always stayed home." "Of course, in those days it was a 10 day stay in bed but I think I needed those 10 days."

Atikokan, Ontario.
March 6, 1929.

We, the undersigned, residents of Atikokan in the vicinity, respectfully solicit your kind assistance in securing a medical practitioner for this village and surrounding territory. We feel unable to support a doctor in full, and would need assistance in the way of retainer fee, etc.

We are situated on the Canadian National Railways, the first terminal west of Port Arthur and have a large number of railway men running into this village and quite a number of employees in the local yards and shops. Our nearest doctor to the east is located at Port Arthur, 140 miles away, and to the west at Fort Frances, 90 miles distant. Our only means of transportation is a tri-weekly train service each way. We have no roads or highways. In case of serious illness we must wait for two or three days on train service.

We have created a small Red Cross Hospital here where the Society maintains a nurse. This would be an advantage to a doctor.

Your kind cooperation and consideration is earnestly requested.

Signed:

Mark Whitehead
A. Chomyshyn
Clarence A. Jungs
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Clarence Jeffery
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