

METIS AND MERCHANT CAPITAL IN RED RIVER;
THE DECLINE OF POINTE A GROUETTE
1860-1885

BY

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the degree of

MASTER OF ART

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ABSTRACT

I examined the 19th century Métis dispersal from Manitoba by doing a detailed analysis of a specific Métis settlement. In Pointe à Grouette, lived nearly 70% of the Métis to be found south of the village of Saint-Norbert and north of the United States boundary. By 1900, Pointe à Grouette had become the village of Sainte-Agathe and the vast majority of its inhabitants were Francophone migrants. My basic working assumption for the thesis was that the dispersal had been the result of a situation of conflict and that 'conflict situations within groups and between groups can best be understood if examined as the competition for possession of desirable productive resources' (Leslie White, 1949:36). The theoretical framework which best complemented my basic assumption was the one outlined by Eric J. Hobsbawn (1968, 1974a, 1974b) a proponent of "Social History".

The thesis documents two major causes to the Métis dispersal. First, (deliberate) changes to section 32 of the Manitoba Act seriously weakened the land claims of many Métis. They were thus made vulnerable to the activities of speculators, along with the Roman Catholic Church. Second, research revealed the existence of very serious cleavages within the Métis group of Red River based on their economic activity. The class to which a Métis belonged prior to 1870 had a direct impact on his ability to withstand both the changes in the Manitoba Act and the changes within Red River Society in the 1870's and 1880's.

DEDICACE

Je dédie cette thèse à mes grands-parents,
Adolphe et Jeanne (Ritchot) Saint-Onge, et
à ma grand'tante, Rose Girouard, de
Sainte-Agathe du Manitoba

-Prefatory note-

In this thesis there are both footnotes and textual references:

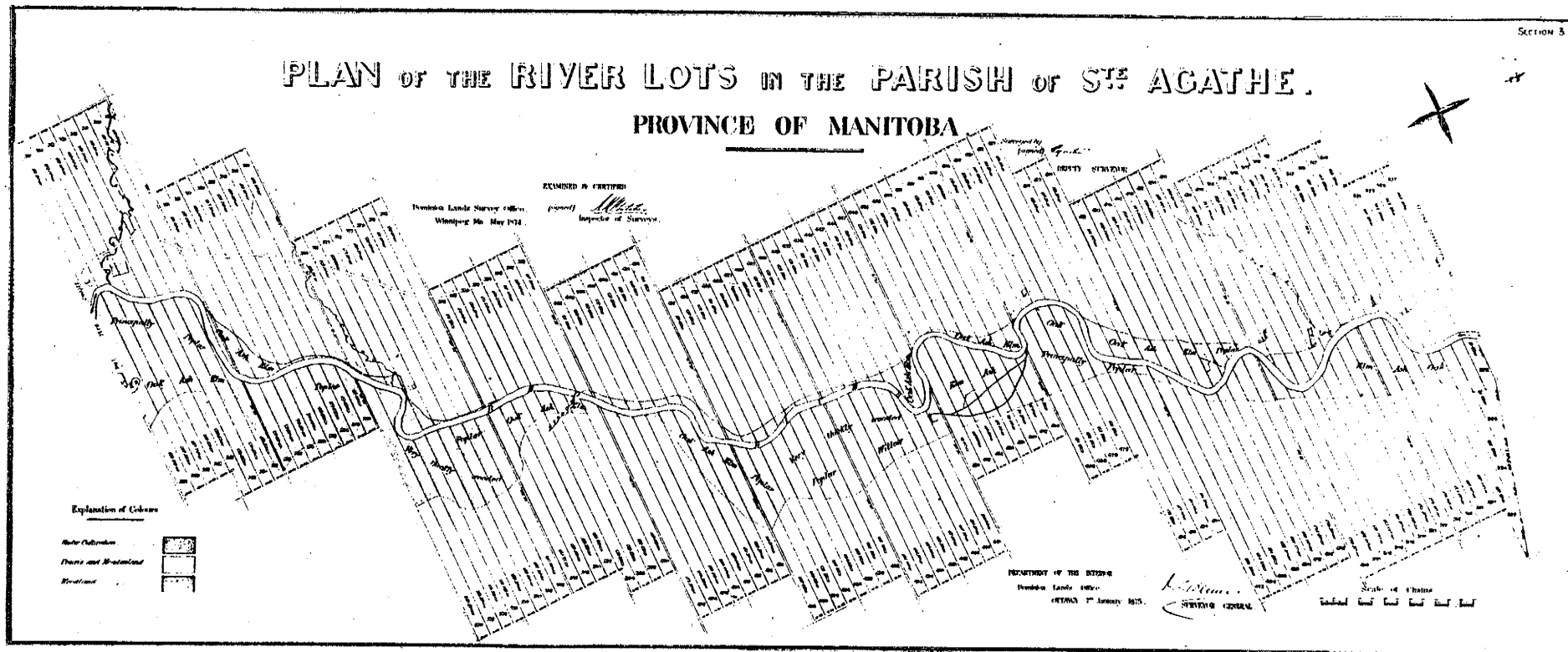
- a) textual references to published material are cited in regular journal style (name, date:page);
- b) references to unpublished archival materials which are the primary data supporting my arguments are cited by footnotes to a key to passages from the archives and these are quoted in the appendices.

Abbreviations Used in Footnotes

- A: appendix
- A1: Pointe à Grouette population chart (1870)
- A2: H.B.C.A., P.A.M., B60a/23, (Edmonton Journal)
- A3: H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D4/7 to D4/98 (Simpson Correspondence)
- A4: H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D5/12 to D5/42 (Correspondence to Simpson)
- A5: Pointe à Grouette , Heads of Families with Goulet Certificate
- A6: Pointe à Grouette , Heads of Families with Affidavits
- A7: Le Métis article 22/6/1871 page 1
- A8: Executive Relief Committee Data, Parish of Sainte-Agathe
- A9: Pointe à Grouette Agricultural Estimates (derived from A8)
- A10: Section 32, Manitoba Act
- A11: P.A.C., RG15, vol 229 p180 *ex 2*
- A12: Le Métis article 29/5/1871, pp. 2-3
- A13: Information on the different river lots claimed by Pointe à Grouette families extracted from P.A.M., RG17, D2, Sainte-Agathe Parish Lot files.

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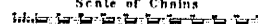


Modern limits of Sainte
Agathe (South):

Lot 497, West side

Lot 514, East side

PLAN OF RIVER LOTS IN THE PARISH OF ST^E AGATHE PROVINCE OF MANITOBA




Scale of Chains


Surveyed by
John M. Kelly
Joseph H. George
 Deputy Surveyors



EXAMINED AND CERTIFIED
W. M. Kelly
 ASSISTANT OF SURVEYS
 Dominion Lands Office
 Winnipeg May 1871

Explanation of Colours

Under Cultivation 
 Prairie and Meadowland 
 Woodland 

Dominion Lands Office
 OTTAWA
 1st January 1875
Surveyor General

Pointe a Grouette

was situated approx.
 between lots 551 and
 581

Modern limits of Sainte
 Agathe (North):
 Lot 623, West side
 Lot 608, East side

CHAPTER ONE: From Pointe à Grouette to Sainte-Agathe

Section A: Statement of Problem

Sainte-Agathe du Manitoba is a small French-Canadian parish situated 20 miles south of Winnipeg. It is a comparatively old Manitoban parish, having been inaugurated in 1876. The majority of its inhabitants are the descendants of turn-of-the-century Francophone migrants arriving from the province of Québec and from the State of Massachusetts.

Even before Sainte-Agathe was formally established and "outsiders" began arriving, the area boasted of a relatively large French speaking, Catholic population. These were Métis people, descendants of North West Company Voyageurs and their Indian wives. In and around the modern village of Sainte-Agathe (situated on a piece of land once designated as Pointe à Grouette prior to 1872) the George McPhillips Survey Field Notes from Sainte-Agathe (1873-1874) lists 34 persons claiming possession of river lots. In all, close to 100 individuals seem to have dwelled there just prior to the entry of Manitoba into Confederation.

Before the 1870's the Métis were unquestionably the dominant ethnic group in Sainte-Agathe. The 1870 District of Assiniboia returns for the parish of Sainte-Agathe lists only two non Métis individuals out of 157. However, this was going to change rapidly within the next three decades. By 1902 the Municipality of Ritchot account books do not

mention any of the original Pointe à Grouette families paying land taxes. The 1919 Parish census compiled by Father Rocan lists only two of the original Pointe à Grouette family names. Other documents, such as the Manitoba Directory for 1876-1877, the Henderson's Directory of Manitoba for 1881, the Sainte-Agathe Baptismal Records, started in 1872, also reflect this trend of changing family names. By the turn of the century most of Sainte-Agathe's Métis families had been displaced or were assimilated into Francophone families coming from the East or from the United States.

Literature on the dispersal of the Bois-Brûlés is quite extensive. Authors such as M. Giraud (1945), R. Painchaud (1969, 1977) and D. Sprague (1980a, 1980b, 1981) have proposed a whole range of cultural and economic constraints to explain Métis departure. Unfortunately many of these studies, especially the older ones, make broad generalizations on how and why the dispersal occurred with very little accompanying supporting documentation. That the Métis people moved out of southern Manitoba in the 1870's is a known fact, but the dynamics behind the event need to be elucidated. Authors such as Giraud (1945) and Stanley (1960) have suggested subsistence incentives, such as the need to follow retreating herds of bison west, as possibilities. Other authors, for example Zazlow (1971), Schimnowski (1950) and McAlduff (1966) put forward explanations of a 'psychological' nature. They are all

variants of a basic assumption that the Métis were simply unable to adjust to a rapidly changing 'fast-paced' society. Another author, Robert Painchaud, suggested in his 1969 M.A. thesis that Métis dispersal was linked to class related problems within Franco-Manitoban society. Unfortunately, his basic assumptions are rather faulty (see Section 5). More recently, Sprague (1980a, 1980b, 1981) has argued that the Bois-Brûlés lost their lands through the machinations of the federal government. He cites a whole series of government regulations which would have effectively hampered certain groups of Métis in their claims for land. Though valid and based on the careful analysis of available documentation this type of work is in need of detailed case-studies. With detailed analysis one should be able to ascertain to what degree the Métis were pushed off the land by different governmental proclamations. Or, whether other as yet undertermined factors came into play.

In this thesis I approached the problem of Métis dispersal from southern Manitoba by doing a case study; in other words by doing a detailed analysis of a specific Métis settlement. I focused my attention on the 110 river lots which are located within the modern-day boundaries of the parish of Sainte-Agathe. In this area lived nearly 70% of the Métis to be found south of the settlement of Saint-Norbert and north of the United States border. I believed an analysis which paid close attention to details of the documents found in the River Lot Claims files would

reveal whether any patterns or processes of Métis dispersal exist.

Preliminary work on the River Lot files' documents done prior to the submission of a proposal showed that these files could, in fact, shed light on the success or failure rate of Métis patent or scrip claims, litigation processes, and the patterns of buying and selling of lots amongst the Métis and from Métis to non Métis . They also showed rates of 'abandonment' of land claims, levels of indebtedness, difficulty in meeting land or tax payments, number and size of seed-grain mortgages, etc. These legal documents were accompanied by revealing testimonies and personal letters from resident Métis , along with comments by Justices of the Peace, land surveyors, priests and other dignitaries. An examination of these files, using previously published material as guidelines, did give a large enough pool of information to ascertain tendencies and patterns occurring within the dispersal movement and to point to some of the dynamics at work in the last three decades of the 19th century in Pointe à Grouette .

The approach to the problem of the origin and patterns of Métis dispersal used in this thesis was put forth by Eleanor Leacock in her "Commentary on the Symposium on the Concept of Ethnohistory" (1961). In this paper she stated:

The more detailed the analysis of a limited phenomenon, the more closely it can, if on the right track, approach a broadly applicable generalization or law.

(Leacock, 1961:259)

Section B: Basic Assumptions and Theoretical Approach

My one major "basic assumption" when approach problem of Métis dispersal was as follows:

Conflict situations within groups and between groups can best be understood if examined as competition for possession of desirable productive resources (White, 1949:136). Power to coerce and control is the key concept for the understanding of "society". Because of this, three central questions should always be kept in mind when doing research; what social group is exercising that power, on whose behalf, and to the detriment of what segment of the population?

The theoretical framework which complemented my basic assumption is that outlined by Eric J. Hobsbawm (1968, 1974a, 1974b), one of the main proponents of "social history". I have based my approach primarily on his writings. What interests Hobsbawm is the evolution of the economic patterns within a society. This in turn interests him because of the light it throws on the structure and changes in a society, and more especially on the relationship between classes and social groups (Hobsbawm, 1974a:3).

I readily agree with the belief held by many social researchers that 'economic' elements cannot be separated from the social, institutional, and other elements of a society. However, I do believe social processes can best be understood through the examination of the social relations of production and distribution within a society.

One might go further and argue (with Marx) that, whatever the essential inseparability of the economic and the social in human society, the analytical base of any historical inquiry into the evolution of human societies must be the process of social production.

(Hobsbawm, 1974a:3)

The type of Social History presented by Hobsbawm does not, in my opinion, have any highly formalized and elaborate model one could apply when doing research. Instead it postulates a series of ordered research priorities thus giving working guidelines for the generating and interpretation of information. This is very much in line with the way of thinking of many radical social researchers.

For Marxists, theoretical work has always generated propositions designed to explain and understand the real world, and to interpret concrete situations even if they cannot be verified by reference to empirical enquiry. Theory building cannot be an alternative to the attempt to explain real phenomena, but is, rather, a way of self-consciously defining the field of inquiry, clarifying and exposing to self-criticism the explanatory concepts used, and marking the limits of empirical comment.

(editorial collective, History Workshop, 1978:4)

The four Social History research priorities which were of special relevance when writing this thesis were as follows:

- A) First one should begin research by looking at the material and historical environment in which a people function.
- B) Then one should look at the forces and techniques of

production. In the case of this study the interdependent economic relationships of the Métis, the Hudson Bay Company, and eastern Canada were examined.

- C) With the information acquired researching the first two headings, one develops and presents a clear picture of the structure of the economy (division of labour, social relations of production, exchange patterns, accumulation process, distribution of surplus, control over productive resources, etc.)
- D) Finally, one would examine the social relations arising from the above three. Patterns of cooperation and of conflict would emerge and one would be able to understand how a specific group of people was able to either maintain itself or was transformed.

By researching and examining the information available on the Métis, by assuming a situation of differing economic interests and subsequent conflict and by using the above research priorities as guidelines, I believe I am in a position to better explain the disappearance in a given area of a seemingly ethnically based social economic grouping.

The practice is thus to work upwards and outwards from the process of social production in its specific setting.

(Hobsbawm, 1974:10)

Section C: Justification of Research Methodology

As mentioned in the "Statement of Problem" section, my principal interests were the patterns and processes of Métis dispersal from the Red River area in the last 30 years

of the 19th century. Also, as previously mentioned, what I perceived to be lacking in most research preceeding my own, were specific area case studies which could possibly reveal some of the dynamics behind, and the patterns of, the dispersal. As shown by an earlier quoted statement, Eleanor Leacock (1961) firmly believes a microstudy is the methodological approach Ethnohistory should take; the detailed analysis of a limited phenomena.

The choice of a situation of change as the studied "limited phenomena" was also an undertaking supported by the research principles of both Ethnohistorians and Social Historians. Joan Townsend in her article Mercantilism and Social Change (1975:21) clearly stated:

One of the more important objectives for both archaeology and ethnohistory is the study of change. Beyond simply documenting the material and social changes which have occurred from one point in time to another is an increasing interest in examining the processes which underlie and propel change.

(Townsend, 1975:21)

Hobsbawm also spells out this belief, stressing the usefulness of looking at situations of rapid change and conflict:

That they always dramatize crucial aspects of a social structure because they are here strained to a breaking point is not in doubt. Moreover, certain important problems cannot be studied at all except in and through such moments of eruption, which do not merely bring into the open so much that is normally latent, but also concentrate and magnify phenomena for the benefit of the student, while--not the least of

their advantage--normally multiplying
our documentation about them.

(Hobsbawm, 1874:17)

Section D: Justification of Material Used

1) The Land Files

It is my belief that the single most important set of documents for the purpose of this research was, the Sainte-Agathe Lot Parish Files. The parish files group together all documents relating to each and every river lot in Sainte-Agathe. Each folder holds: letters requesting patent to certain lots; surveyors' statements on evidence of occupancy, statutory declaration and affidavits by Métis and others to support the statement of evidence; relevant documents from registry offices; memoranda from the Commissioner of Dominion Lands; reports from the Agent of Dominion Lands; the homestead inspector or surveyor, etc. Also, some of the files contained letters from parish priests or other dignitaries discussing certain land questions and correspondence from credit companies, lawyers, speculators, etc.

With the information found in these documents I was able to examine the processes by which lands went from Métis hands to French-Canadian ones. The question of what were the incentives behind the sale or abandonment of the plots (denial of patent, debts, lack of capital for litigations, deaths, taxes, etc.) was also looked at. Other concerns of the investigation were: what exactly was the level of speculation; who exactly were the speculators and what were

their socio-economic backgrounds; what were the specific roles of speculators, law firms, clergymen, governments and the Métis elite; and what was the level of collaboration between these people? Though at times I had to refer to "auxiliary" primary sources and even secondary works (to better understand some of the material contained in the files), the Parish Files remained my major sources of information. They were the ones I spent most of my time on in the six months devoted to actual research.

2) Auxiliary Primary Sources

Listed here are nine other primary sources of information which were used to affirm or cast doubt on the insights given by the River Lot files. These are accompanied by an evaluatory comment on their respective worth. I also discuss some of the problems confronted in using them.

1. Cooperative Relief Committee Statistical Report (on Sainte-Agathe Parish)

This is a statistical report presented to the executive relief committee on November 1, 1868. After two years of crop failure the inhabitants of Red River colony were in dire straits, lacking even in basic foods. People appointed by the Executive Relief Committee were sent out to different localities to assess the needs of their inhabitants.

The report for Sainte-Agathe contains information on a) names of heads of families; b) number of people in each family (male, female, and under 12); c) number of heads of horses and cattle; d) number of bushels (potato and wheat)

usually sown; e) number of bushels grown in 1868 and in 1867. Finally, f) it also lists the number of able-bodied men capable of leaving home.

Though the data is skewed, having been collected during a time of severe stress when many Métis families had left for the plains, it still gives us a relative idea of the degree of commitment to farming within the Pointe à Grouette community. Only the people with a serious commitment to land cultivation were staying behind. Using this information and the land files I was able to determine to what extent prior land use had any bearing on the insistence of individuals to be recognized as the owners of certain plots.

2. Goulet Survey (pre-1870)

Though reported to be somewhat inaccurate, this survey and the accompanying issued certificates of land claims still gave me an idea of which heads of families were claiming ownership of river lots and in what general area of the parish they resided in the years before the entry of Manitoba into Confederation. A certificate from the surveyor for the Council of Assiniboia indicates to me which individual was actively interested in land as personal property and also which Métis were perhaps more aware of a rapidly changing situation and thus the need to regularize their possessions in an 'eastern' fashion. These certificates also allow a degree of independent verification of statements made by Métis heads of family about their

pre-1870 land ownerships.

3. Assiniboia (District of) 1870 Census Returns
For Parish of Sainte-Agathe

This invaluable document gave me several types of information. Reported in it were: a) the names of the surveyed people; b) their area of residence; c) their birthplace; d) their ages (next birthday); e) the names of their fathers; f) whether they were Métis, white, Indian; g) whether they were French or English Métis; h) whether they were Catholics or Protestants; i) whether they were married, single, or widowed; j) whether they were British or American subjects. Through this document I was able to ascertain that Sainte-Agathe boasted a remarkably homogeneous population prior to 1875. All, except two heads of families, were French Catholic Métis, having been born in Red River (except a few coming from "Nord-Ouest"). The two "outsiders" (Louis Laferté and Paschal Dionne) were Catholic whites from Canada, probably French Canadians, having married Red River Métis women (Caron and Philomène Morin). Their children were classified "Métis". This census also pointed to the fact that the Pointe à Grouette Métis community was a stable one with a tendency towards endogamy for at least three generations.

4. Baptismal Records for the Parish of Sainte-Agathe
(1872+)

It was the examination of these records which first gave me a clue to the relative importance of the Métis population before the arrival of French Canadians in this

area. Before the first French Canadian arrived in the area (in 1877 according to local folklore), 79 different couples had children baptized at the Pointe à Grouette Chapel! These records also reflected the rate of change in last names within the local population over the next two decades after 1870 and the degree of intermarriage between the Métis and French Canadian populations.

5. George McPhillips' 1873-1874 Survey Field Notes

These notes gave me a good idea of who lived where and claimed what as his in the years 1873-1874. The Survey maps were also useful since they give me some information on the number and size of dwellings, barns, and cultivated plots within each of the claimed lots.

6. Manitoba Directory for 1876-1879

The directory for that year gave the names of people claiming land ownerships in the parish of Sainte-Agathe and their stated occupations. With this information I was able to verify the degree of change occurring in family names. I was also able to note changes occurring in the general social structure of the Pointe à Grouette with occupations such as resident priest, school teacher, store owner, smith and carpenter appearing besides the names of people who had not lived in the area prior to 1870.

7. Sources from Hudson Bay Company

In the second section of the second chapter of this thesis I discuss Métis socio-economic formations in Red River and the forces that shaped them prior to 1870.

Simpson's Correspondence (D4/15-D4/77), Correspondence to Simpson (D5/12-D5/42) and Fort Journals (B60a) were invaluable sources for the light they shed on Métis occupations and attitudes and the Company's and Church's reactions to them before the entry of Manitoba into Confederation.

8. Henderson's Directory of Manitoba (1881)

Like the 1876-1877 one, this directory gave me some idea of the changes that had occurred in the composition of the population of Sainte-Agathe. Though the directory did not state the occupation of the listed 'Heads of families', it did give a legal description of the land they were claiming. This was obviously useful to me.

9. Book for the year 1902 of the Municipality of Ritchot

This useful book lists 38 names of people living in the parish of Sainte-Agathe at the time who had paid land taxes for that year. It also indicates what lot they were living on and how many acres they had under cultivation. This showed me the total non-participation of Métis in commercial farming enterprises. It also indicated the number of lots that were being left unworked, probably because they were in the hands of speculators.

10. 1919 Parish Survey by l'Abbé Rocan

In his parish survey (modern limits) l'abbé Rocan listed the name of the head of each family, his birthplace, his birthdate, the name of his father, his mother's maiden name, his wife's name, the name of her father, the maiden

name of her mother, her birthplace and birthdate. It also listed the date of their respective arrivals to the parish, the number of the lots they occupied, and the names, birthdate and birth-place of their children. In this survey Rocan only listed two Métis heads of families. However, an examination of the wives' maiden names and the men's maternal last names yielded some information on the degree of Métis assimilation within the French-Canadian population.

Section E: Ethical Dilemma

I had very few problems of an ethical nature in this research project. The only one I anticipated concerned descendants still living in Sainte-Agathe of French-Canadian men having married Métis women. I was worried that they might object to it being written that they had "feathers in the family". There seems to be a certain amount of sensitivity about this subject ("métissage") in the village of Sainte-Agathe. However a few discrete inquiries showed that this was more a matter of joking between the parishioners. This is probably because the amount of 'métissage' in Sainte-Agathe is rather small and also because there is no Métis population that perceives itself and is perceived as being 'Métis' still living in the area.

Section F: Critical and Analytical Review

The works presented in this section give, I believe, a good overview of the opinions generally held by the majority

of historical writers discussing Métis dispersal. Though one finds a lot of overlapping, they can be divided into four major explanatory categories. In the next few pages I will discuss the categories and give relevant quotes from each of the authors. Though Métis "culture" has been extensively studied, the dispersal for some reason rarely merits more than a paragraph or two. If anything, presenting a "critical and analytical review" has proved a problematic task more for lack of material than for any other reason.

1) Explanation of an Economic Nature for Dispersal

Three authors can be grouped under this heading. They are George Stanley (1960), Robert Painchaud (1976) and Marcel Giraud (1945). Though often straying into other, more nebulous, reasonings, all three see economic incentives as having played a major role.

G. Stanley in his book The Birth of Western Canada, sees the Métis move westwards as a rational economic decision. If they wanted to continue hunting they would have to move away from the colony westward to where the bison were displacing themselves. He does, however, place the ultimate decision on a "love of the wild", as the following quote shows:

For many years the Métis had set out from the Red River valley upon their great hunts over the western prairies, but the gradual withdrawal of the buffalo further and further from the eastern plains made their long journeys unprofitable. The Red River Metis were then faced with two alternatives, to follow the wild animals westwards or to settle down to a life of agriculture.

The Metis had a horror of a sedentary existence. The chase was to them a necessity as well as a pleasure, and many, choosing the easier road, followed the well defined buffalo trails into the interior.

(Stanley, 1960:178)

Stanley, like many of the authors discussed in this section, starts off with good ideas on the incentives behind the dispersal only to fall back on stereotypic explanations (i.e. "horror of sedentary life"). This involves perhaps less effort than searching for relevant explanations.

Robert Painchaud in his Ph.D. dissertation entitled The Catholic Church and the Movement of Francophones to the Canadian Prairies 1870-1915, sees two related reasons which would explain at least part of the Métis westward move. First, the Métis who had decided to stay and farm were faced in mid 1870's with a need for cash to repay mortgages the federal government had taken out on the lands of those who had been in need of seed grain advances. This grain had been needed in the early 1870's after grasshopper devastations. Many poorer Métis farmers were unable to pay back the government. During the same time a scheme was proposed to commute the claims of each Métis child by a fixed cash settlement (Painchaud, 1976:17). In fact, the following year (1878), by an Order in Council, patents were issued to all claimants irrespective of age and sex. Painchaud, as I understand it, believes that the Métis, plagued by debts they were unable to repay, simply converted into cash their claims and the land claims of their

children. They then headed west to try their luck there. Similar to Stanley's argument, Painchaud does not back his reasonings on Métis departure with very much data. We are left wondering how many Métis (what % of the total population) did in fact sell or abandon their lands when the mortgages came up. Did the government deal with the Métis in this matter in the same way they were dealing with the rest of the population? Or were they more lenient with the eastern colonists or the old Selkirk settlers?

Marcel Giraud, in his massive book Le Métis canadien, son rôle dans l'histoire des provinces de l'Ouest (1945), gives the reader a mixture of sound arguments interspersed with rather startling racist comments. Though his ultimate proposed reason for the Métis dispersal may be labelled "economic", he does first go through a whole series of cultural and what could be called "psychological" reasonings. All will be discussed here.

The first problem Giraud sees for the Red River Métis in the 1870's was their lack of a well developed cultural identity, a "principe culturel solide" (1945:1095). This, in his eyes, left them helpless, unable to take advantage of the rapid socio-economic changes occurring in the Red River area. Along with this apparent "wishy-washiness" the Métis were also faced with the problem of being undesirables in the old colony (1945:1109). Giraud sees Ontario migrants as having detested and despised the French Métis, blaming them completely for Scott's execution. Faced with acts of

humiliation and even violence, the Métis became discouraged and dispirited. These sentiments were increased by their "natural shyness", their "weak wills" and their belief that they were the victims of a grave injustice (1945:1109).

At the same time, the Métis were faced with an onslaught of immigrants and speculators who were trying to swindle them off their land (1945:1117). Giraud believes that the laws passed to protect the original inhabitants came much too late and were inadequate in overcoming the "intrigues of the one group and the weakness of the other group" (1948:1117). The fact that the government was slow in reacting to perceived injustices led the Métis to believe they were victims of "systematic governmental badwill" (1945:1117).

Despite all of the adverse conditions he describes, Giraud still sees the exodus as being caused by the Métis's love of the buffalo hunt and not by outside forces coming to bear adversely on the half-breed population!

Dans la plupart des cas, les Métis furent victimes de leur attachement à leur économie anachronique, des conceptions désuètes qui dominaient leur existence et qui prévenaient en eux toute possibilité d'adaptation aux méthodes et à la mentalité des Blancs.

(Giraud, 1945:1124)

The few Métis who did stay behind and tried their hands at farming fell victim to their ignorance of sound economic principles:

Tandis que se poursuivait cet exode des

Métis incapable de concevoir d'autre formule de vie que le nomadisme, beaucoup parmi ceux qui n'avaient pas abandonné leurs terres, se relevaient hors d'état de les gérer suivant des procédés rationnels. Ne pouvant subir les exigences de la nouvelle économie, dominés par leurs méthodes lentes et arriérées, étrangers à toute pensée de prévoyance, ils ne tardèrent pas à s'endetter.

(Giraud, 1945:1129, emphasis mine)

Giraud, more so than the other authors reviewed, with the exception of Sprague, provides good data-backed reasons why the Métis might want to leave the Red River area. In short, the Métis were victimized by both the immigrants and the federal government. Yet he falls back ultimately on vague explanations which places the bulk of the blame on the Métis themselves! The historian Judt provides a possible explanation for this disconcerting habit:

When historians are not concerned with the economic or political nature of the oppression, they conclude that there was something innately (or at best historically submissive or apolitical) submissive about the class or group in question...It is the refusal to consider class based relations of power which encourages such limited and pseudo-logical accounts of the history of individuals. Seen collectively and in terms of class, located in a particular historical situation, understood as a struggle, such behaviour looks very different.

(Judt, 1979:72)

1) The Call of the Wild

Though the works presented in this section are not quite as simplistic as the title suggests, they do tend to fall back on "yearning for the past" styles of explanations.

In other words they see the leaving of Métis from Manitoba as being due to their psychological make-up and not to any outside forces. They place the blame for the dispersal on the Métis worldview and lifestyle. Six authors are grouped under this category, F. M. Schimnowski (1950), M. Zazlow (1971), F. Pannekoek (1976), M. M. McAlduff (1966), A. S. Morton (1938), C. Martin (1938).

Florence Schimnowski in her thesis, Douze années d'immigration française au Manitoba 1870-1882, is very sympathetic to the federal government. She admires their "generosity" in allotting 1,400,000 acres to the Métis and bemoans the fact that "inevitable" delays and administrative problems hampered the distribution (1950:42). She believes many Métis were just not patient enough and did not understand that land distribution takes time. The Métis sold their lands for next to nothing and moved west because of their loss of faith in the government. To her credit, she also evokes the hate and resentment with which the Métis were perceived as also having moved some to leave.

In the end she falls back on the traditional type of explanation of "longing for their past life styles". As with many of the works presented, her explanations fall to the level of mere speculations. She does not have many good arguments backing her statements.

Morris Zazlow (1971) in his The Opening of the Canadian North 1870-1914, like M. Giraud, mixes hard facts with derogatory unfounded comments. He starts off by discussing

the Métis as being objects of distrust and hate for the Anglo-Saxon colonists:

The Métis, numbering some 15,000 in the prairie and parkland at the time of Confederation, and made formidable by their cohesive sense of nationality constituted a separate but equally grave problem. Their Catholic faith, their semi-nomadic style of living and their roles in the troubles of 1869-1870 made them an object of enmity and scorn to many Canadian settlers. Few of the new settlers or the Canadian government for that matter, were prepared to accept them as they were, or to concede to their customs. The Anglo-Saxon Protestant farming way was to be the one for the western prairies; and the Métis were to have the opportunity to secure land under these rules through the magnanimity of their conquerors...but as in so many matters implementation left much to be desired.

(Zazlow, 1971:20)

The content of the above quoted paragraph sounds plausible. What the author should have then tried to do after writing it is present evidence which supported the ideas. In other words, find information showing that the Anglo-Protestant element of the Red River and the Canadian government were not ready to tolerate a growing Métis element in the area. Unfortunately he does not pursue the subject.

Frietz Pannekoek, in his article "A Probe into the Demographic Structure of the 19th Century Red River", does not specifically deal with Métis dispersal. However, the opening comment of his work is worth reproducing here for the attitude it reflects. It is a good example of the racist and condescending assumptions that permeate a great deal of the literature on the Métis.

The first people to struggle for survival in this isolated flat and damnable wilderness were a motley and dispirited crew. The only creditable inhabitants were the Scottish remnants of the Earl of Selkirk's endeavor to create a land speculator's dream in North America and the retired officers of the Northwest and Hudson's Bay Company.

(Pannekoek, 1976:83)

M. M. McAlduff in her thesis, Joseph Dubuc, Role and Views of a French Canadian in Manitoba, (1966) comments that Dubuc, like a lot of his contemporaries, blamed the delays in the land question on the "blunderings of the federal government"; blunderings, that, in his way of thinking could not be avoided (1966:130). McAlduff seems to agree with Dubuc's way of thinking. At the time of Métis land claims, she sees the government of Canada embarking on a program of national economic integration. This was to be a three phase undertaking which included (A) the settlement of the North West; (B) the building of transcontinental transportation; and (C) industrialization of Ontario based on protective tariffs. The Métis and their land claims, in her eyes, were the inevitable victims of a period of transition and uncertainty.

As these elements of transcontinental development were in the trial and error stage when the halfbreed land grants and their related problems needed attention the results were confusion and conflict.

(1966:132)

McAlduff does not perceive the land problems as stemming from any government ill will. Rather, as shown in

the quote, she blames it on Canada's "growing pains"! But even so, in her theses McAlduff does not tie in Métis dispersal to the confusion involved in the land claims even though she dwells on these to a great extent. Instead she lays the blame on the Métis psychological make-up and their inability to adjust to a new way of life.

As the time passes, however, and immigrants from Québec came by the thousands to settle on farms along the banks of the Red, a cleavage became apparent between the ways of life of the old and new French speaking settlers. Only a minority of the old group were able to adapt themselves to the disciplined and industrious life of a farmer. This minority was gradually assimilated over the years into French-Canadian society. The majority of Métis, unequipped by education or experience to compete with the whites or share with them the responsibilities of citizenship, clung to their simple society which was based on their own primitive economy of the buffalo hunt.

(McAlduff, 1966:33)

McAlduff sees the deep seated living habits of the bulk of the Métis population as having rendered them incapable of coping with the encroaching white society. In other words they could not adapt. Though she admits there was serious hardship caused by the lack of government response to the land claims, she does not perceive this as a catalyst for Métis dispersal. Like many of the writers under review here, McAlduff places the blame for the dispersal on the Métis themselves, seemingly on some nebulous flaw to be found in their character or culture.

A. S. Morton in his "History of Prairie Settlement"

(1938) cites three reasons which might have acted as incentives to the dispersal. The Métis were faced with bigotry. They placed little value on land. And, finally, they were nostalgic for their "old" way of life.

Morton comments that, with the whites flocking into the Red River the Métis began to feel uncomfortable. Apparently they were insulted and beaten on the streets of Winnipeg "by loafers about the saloons" (1938:63). Moreover, their means of livelihood, the buffalo and freighting to St. Paul, were no longer open to them as of old. Métis, who set little value on their land, began selling it at what seemed to them a good price and migrating west. There in Morton's view, they could roam with the buffalo, find markets for their pemmican, and work as freighters.

In this work, Morton presents what may be some good points, but unfortunately he does not back them up. Sweeping statements should not replace well thought out conclusions based on research. There is little way of evaluating such a work.

Chester Martin in his work entitled "Dominion Land Policy" (1938) discusses at length the way in which the federal government handled the Métis land claims. Though he recognizes the delays and governmental mismanagement as problematic, he does not tie these to the Métis dispersal. The Métis left the old colony because of their love of the wild.

For the improvident and semi-nomadic
Métis--the buffalo hunter, the

freighter, and the fisherman--settlement duties were obviously irksome. Many also who would have disavowed Indian blood were not induced to claim it...Retreating to the Saskatchewan before the rising tide of immigration the Métis clung for another decade or two to the wild life of the plains and the rivers.

(1938:238)

The blaming the victim for its problems approach is in line with the rest of Martin's work. He considered the land grants made to the Métis as "lavish" (1938:238). He bemoans the fact that the Selkirk settlers and the retired Hudson Bay Co. men "who had borne the burden and the heat of the day" were not dealt with in the same manner (1938:238). He concludes his review of Métis land grants by stating that "the New Dominion thus began its administration with a comparatively clean slate"(!) (1935:239)

3) French-Canadians and the Métis

One work, an M.A. dissertation entitled Le Manitoba et l'immigration française 1870-1891 (1969) by Robert Painchaud deals with the Métis as members of a larger Catholic Francophone community. He seems to believe that several Métis migrated west because of their class position within Franco-Manitoban society.

En somme les vieilles familles franco-manitobaine ne pouvaient espérer jouer un rôle prépondérant sur la scène provinciale. Elles avaient choisis de se retirer loin des villes, car ni leur instruction, ni leur occupation ne leur permettaient d'occuper les sièges du pouvoir dans des institutions essentiellement urbaine. Ces Franco-Manitobains se voyaient relegués à un rôle minoritaire même au sein de la

Communauté française.

(Painchaud, 1969:136)

Or again:

Les Canadiens Français d'origine manitobaine n'occupaient pas une position enviable dans la province ni même au sein de la communauté française. Ayant décidé de ne pas se mêler aux activités des villes, ils optèrent pour la campagne et la vie agricole. Leur représentation au sein de cette classe agricole étaient très élevée, et indiquait leur manque de préparation pour entreprendre d'autres poursuites économiques. Ils avaient la nostalgie des plaines loin des habitants et de la vie trop organisée. Ils n'avaient pas reçu l'instruction nécessaire qui leur aurait peut-être permis de se faire à un nouveau rythme de vie. En somme ils occupaient une place au bas de l'échelle sociale économique. Leur prépondérance était du passé.

(Painchaud, 1969:165)

In essence, Painchaud argues that the Métis were anomalies even in French Catholic society. They had little education, lived "far" from urban centers on their little farms and were nostalgic for their old way of life. They did not have the capabilities of adjusting to a changed life style. Painchaud placed them at the bottom of the French socio-economic scale. Above them were the mass of French-Canadian farmers and above these were the French-Canadian elite (mostly clerical) residing in Saint-Boniface.

The socio-economic class division presented by this author sounds plausible until we look at the data it is based on. The only difference noticed between the Métis people (i.e. the "lower class") and the mass of

French-Canadian farmers (i.e. the "middle class") are the levels of education (1969:136)! In other words, there are more illiterates among the Métis population than among the French-Canadians. One wonders at this typically sociological approach to class differentiation: How valid is this difference as a basis for determining class membership in a 19th century farming community? Especially when other sources tell us Métis people in the older parishes were cultivating their land as extensively as the original white settlers (Sprague, 1980:79)! I think Painchaud's idea of examining class position as a possible source of Métis alienation and subsequent migration is good. However, I do not think looking at levels of education, especially when comparing farmers with other farmers, is basis enough for determining that one group is the "lower" class and the other is the "middle" class! In fact, the whole idea of trying to differentiate 'classes' on a totally non-economic basis is poor.

4) The New Approach

D. N. Sprague in his article "The Manitoba Land Question" (1980a) typifies a new approach to studies on the Métis. Rather than blaming the Métis, evoking some elusive character or cultural flaw, for their dispersal and subsequent chronic impoverishment, Sprague examines eastern power plays. He believes the Manitoba Act was no more than a gesture and that that the federal government, prompted by Ontario interests, was intent on the dispossession and

dispersal of the Métis population (1980:74). With this in mind he traces and analyzes the series of amendments made to the Manitoba Act which made it increasingly difficult for Métis to acquire their promised lands.

Sprague in this article also points out that the Métis, by the mid 1870's, were mainly interested in agriculture. Most were no longer (and perhaps never were) the freedom loving buffalo hunters they are generally portrayed as.

In 1875 the vast majority of Métis people were farmers, thus interested in hanging on to all the land they could get. According to surveyors Métis people in the older parishes were cultivating their land as extensively as the original white settlers.

(Sprague, 1980a:79)

This article is a very good "view from above" of Métis dispersal from Manitoba. He gives detailed data-backed information on the legal and judiciary pressures brought to bear on the Métis. What I believe is lacking to a certain extent in this article and what would be interesting to know is Métis response (percentage wise in one area) to each new amendment and growing difficulties. What percentage of the population entered litigation? How many lost their land to speculation? Were many Métis classified as winterers? How many Métis actually received title to their land? What about the educated Métis; what were their roles? This is what I believed would be interesting to investigate. In the end I would have a more "rounded" view of the whole process.

CHAPTER TWO: The East and the West on the Eve of 1870

Section A: Motives behind the Westward Expansion of the Canadian State

Two reasons are usually invoked to account for the westward expansion of the Canadian State in the early 1870's. The first deals with the structure of Canadian and British mercantile capitalism and its need for safe, lucrative areas of investment (Naylor, 1972). The second reason concerns the perception of Ontario's petty commodity producers of westward territorial expansion as the solution to economic decline and demographic stagnation (Gagan, 1978:293). Both will be discussed in conjunction with each other, for I believe them to be complementary rather than opposing lines of reasoning.

R. T. Naylor (1972:14) perceives Canadian political and economic development between 1867 and 1918 as 'the product of British mercantile and financial capital in action'. By 1867 British finance and trade interests had come to rely on the underdeveloped world as the major recipient of finance capital and as the only market which Britain's by then inefficient industrial system could capture (ibid:12). The financiers who were putting their resources into countries like Canada sought to use and strengthen the potential of the local governments, first to produce secure investment climates, and second, to acquire and develop for financial and merchant capital such perceived lucrative new territories as Rupert's Land. The British North America Act

is seen by Naylor as an attempt on the part of Britain's mercantile and financial elites to establish an aggressive central government in Canada which could best further their economic interests. This act was favored by Canada's political elite, whose members were often themselves important financiers and merchants. Naylor concludes:

The British North American Act was a document in public finance, reserving for the federal government every power critical to controlling the pattern of economic development. All taxes other than direct (which then implied land taxes), regulation of trade and commerce, banking credit, currency, bankruptcy, canals, telegraph, navigation, and all residual powers went to the federal government... As if this were not enough the federal government also assumed the imperial government's powers of disallowance over colonial (provincial) legislation.

(1972:14-15).

The termination of the Hudson's Bay Company's official and judicial monopoly of Rupert's Land and that region's subsequent transfer to Canada was facilitated by an overlapping of the interests of the British bankers, Canadian parliamentarians and merchants, the British Colonial office and the Hudson's Bay Company (Rothney, 1975:132). The debts incurred by the building of the Grand Trunk railroad were onerous and both the Canadian government and its British creditors saw the West as a place to secure much needed new commercial opportunities (ibid:133). These people perceived the newly acquired territories as a great source of primary produce (mostly agricultural) that would be flowing east, mainly in exchange for secondary manufactures

from the commercial metropolises of England and Central Canada (ibid:133). Transportation, storage and real estate dividends were believed by British and Canadian financiers to be further potential means of bolstering their riches (ibid:133). On the other hand the Hudson's Bay Company also stood to greatly enrich itself through huge real estate and retail profits, which Company officials assumed would be following the Canadian acquisition. Wealthy individual shareholders of the Company, such as George Stephen and Donald A. Smith (who was also a stockholder in the Bank of Montreal) also anticipated profiting immensely from the transfer, because of their vested interests in British Canadian finance capital and railway ventures.

Also, of special relevance to this paper, company men, and others, who had powerful political and economic ties with Central Canada saw the possibility of making huge personal profits by the private speculation in western lands. After 1870 there emerged a pattern of prime lands going from the original inhabitants of the North West Territories into the hands of businessmen who in turn resold them to incoming homesteaders. The Métis and Indians of the west were not dispossessed or pushed out of their lands by 'pioneers', as seems to be the case in the United States, but by the Canadian state structure itself, working for the interests of finance and mercantile capital. As Naylor (1972:16) points out, the horizons, and to a remarkable extent the personnel, of the federal government and of

finance and merchant capital were often inseparable.

Merchants, financiers and politicians were supported in their bid to secure the West by many of Ontario's Petty Commodity Producers. This singular consensus of opinion was due to several factors. The ties between financiers, merchants and their political allies have already been discussed, but why did Ontario's farming population become so receptive to the idea of a potentially rival western 'Agricultural Empire' (Owran, 1980:76)? As mentioned in the opening statement of this section, Ontario on the eve of the North-West Territories purchase was suffering from a sluggish economy and saw with alarm the continual outmigration of the younger elements of its population. According to Gagan:

The area was no longer a field for immigration; rural property values had plummeted; agrarian indebtedness had increased dramatically; sons could no longer afford to succeed their fathers in the family homestead; and there was a steady movement of population out of the province.

(1978:293)

The pre-1870 economic doldrums hit Upper Canada's rural population hard. The wheat trade, the staff of Canada West's economy had collapsed in the late 1850's and early 1860's (ibid:297). Also by the 1850's most of the arable land in Ontario had been taken up for farming or speculative purposes. Heads of families were no longer to augment their holdings or set up their children on nearby land without incurring ruinous expense (ibid:307). Faced with these

woes, it is not surprising that both the older established farmers and the younger generation of rural dwellers were receptive to the propaganda put out by the country's political and economic elite speaking of an agrarian Eden to be carved out of western wilderness. The prospect of vast stretches of cheap land renewed the hopes of these petty commodity producers of economic prosperity through the pursuit of a traditional occupation in a new setting. Many young farmers followed the westward tracks laid down by their financial, commercial and political leaders.

In certain areas of the West, such as the parish of Sainte-Agathe, the old Indian and Métis populations were eventually replaced by one French-Canadian and rural in origin. Like their Ontario counterparts, Québec farmers faced severe economic crises in the 19th century. If anything, the agricultural depression in French Canada was even more acute and lasted longer. According to John McCallum:

The crisis in Québec agriculture consisted of the failure of wheat as both a staple crop and basic consumption item, the failure to find a commercial substitute for wheat, and the consequent forced reversion to a subsistence level of farming characterized by periodic food shortages declining living standards, and mounting debt.

(1980:291)

In fact if anything, it is surprising that the number of Francophone farmers heading west was not greater! The reasons behind this are beyond the scope of this work, but authors such as Robert Painchaud (1977) consider the

attraction and accessibility of American industrial centers and the failures of Canadian propaganda and the Catholic Church to convince the Québec farmers of the agricultural potential of the west as possible deterrents. Also of importance were the distance and expense involved in migrating to Red River. Finally, reasons of a religious and linguistic nature also probably came into play. Manitoba was perceived as rapidly turning into a 'White Anglo-Saxon Protestant' stronghold.

Section B: The West

1) The Subsistence Basis of the Métis till 1850

From the 1820's to 1870 the French Catholic Métis formed the bulk of the Red River Settlement. They were the suppliers of cheap labor and of 'plains provisions', both of which the Hudson's Bay Company needed for the success of its western operations. Sealy and Lussier (1979:17) divide the Métis into three general economic 'categories'. They see some mixed-blood men being associated with the fur company as clerks, interpreters, canoe men and packers. Another segment of the Métis population made their living as fur trappers. These the authors see as having identified the most with the local Indian population. Thirdly there existed the famed 'plains hunters'. A majority of the Métis fell into this last category (Sprenger, 1972:20; Sprague, 1981:5). Marcel Giraud (1945:881) sees two other economic activities in which the 19th century Métis were involved. From 1849 on, he documents the development of a sedentary

farming population, which he misleadingly calls a 'bourgeoisie'. At the other end of the spectrum he discusses a category of Métis working principally as fishermen and defines them, again erroneously, as a sort of miserable 'lumpenproletariat'.

In the following pages I will concentrate on the Métis whose occupation it was to supply the pemmican market. Two major reasons determined this choice; first the vast majority of the Métis population were involved in this occupation. Second, most families living in the western and southern limits of the Settlement of Red River occupied themselves with the hunt (Sprague, 1981:5). Since our area of interest is situated just south of Saint-Norbert (the southern limit of the settlement) it is logical to assume that bison hunting was an important occupation for most of the Pointe à Grouette families.

As Sprague (1981:3) discusses in his draft paper, with the amalgamation of the North West and Hudson's Bay companies in 1821 many fur trade employees were found redundant. These now superfluous servants were encouraged to migrate to the Red River colony with their mixed-blood families. However, not all the people who were drifting towards the Settlement were obsolete company men. In fact, according to Giraud (1945:766) this internal migration began to involve needed personnel in alarming proportions in the 1830's. Quoting from the Simpson Correspondence, Giraud maintains that, presented with a choice, many Hudson Bay

Company men who worked in the northern areas abandoned their posts and headed South. Also, Mixed-bloods who had never been employed by either company began to concentrate at the Forks. According to him:

De 1830 à 1840 la tendance paraît s'être généralisé au point d'alarmer les secteurs les moins favorisés dans le district de la rivière Churchill et de l'Athabaska, les hommes obéissaient à une véritable 'manie d'immigration'; à York Factory, le chef Factor avouait son impuissance à retenir un exode que justifiaient la rigueur du climat et la pénurie de ressources... du district de la Saskatchewan un grand nombre de métis et d'hommes libres dont plusieurs n'avaient jamais occupé d'emplois réguliers dans les forts de traite s'acheminèrent à la même époque vers la Rivière Rouge. Dans la seule année de 1833 une centaine d'employés gagneront ainsi la colonie.

(Giraud, 1945:766).

Once the Voyageurs and Métis had settled themselves around the colony they formed a stable group, highly endogamous, despite its semi-nomadic lifestyle. In Douglas Sprague's (1981:4) eyes, one of the most striking features of the Colony's population prior to 1870 was its high rate of persistence: 'there were frequent enumerations of the people by the Company between 1824 and 1856, many of the people enumerated in at least one of the censuses, are found also in the enumeration of the population of Manitoba by Canada in 1870'. Specifically, for Pointe à Grouette, the marriage and descendance patterns revealed in the 1870 census - as shown by the population chart (1) - indicate a high degree of persistence and endogamy for at least two

generations.

From a subsistence point of view it seems logical for the bison hunters and their families to have made the colony their home base. Both the Hudson's Bay Company (2) and the colonists (3) living there offered a ready market for the pemmican produced. Besides the internal demand of the Hudson's Bay post and the colonists at the Forks, the Company had to also supply its shipping brigades, western posts and ecclesiastical missions with pemmican bought mostly from the Red River Métis. This need for 'plain produce' would remain constant throughout the 19th century. Anxiety over securing sufficient supplies was often reflected in the correspondence of Company officials, as in the letter written by governor George Simpson to a man named Barnston, December 17th, 1852:

I regret to notice the anually increasing difficulty of meeting the demands for voyaging provision arising, it would appear as well from the short returns of the Saskatchewan as the growing avants (sic) of the Company's business and the numerous missions throughout the country. I agree with that closer attention must be laid on this very important branch of the business... (4)

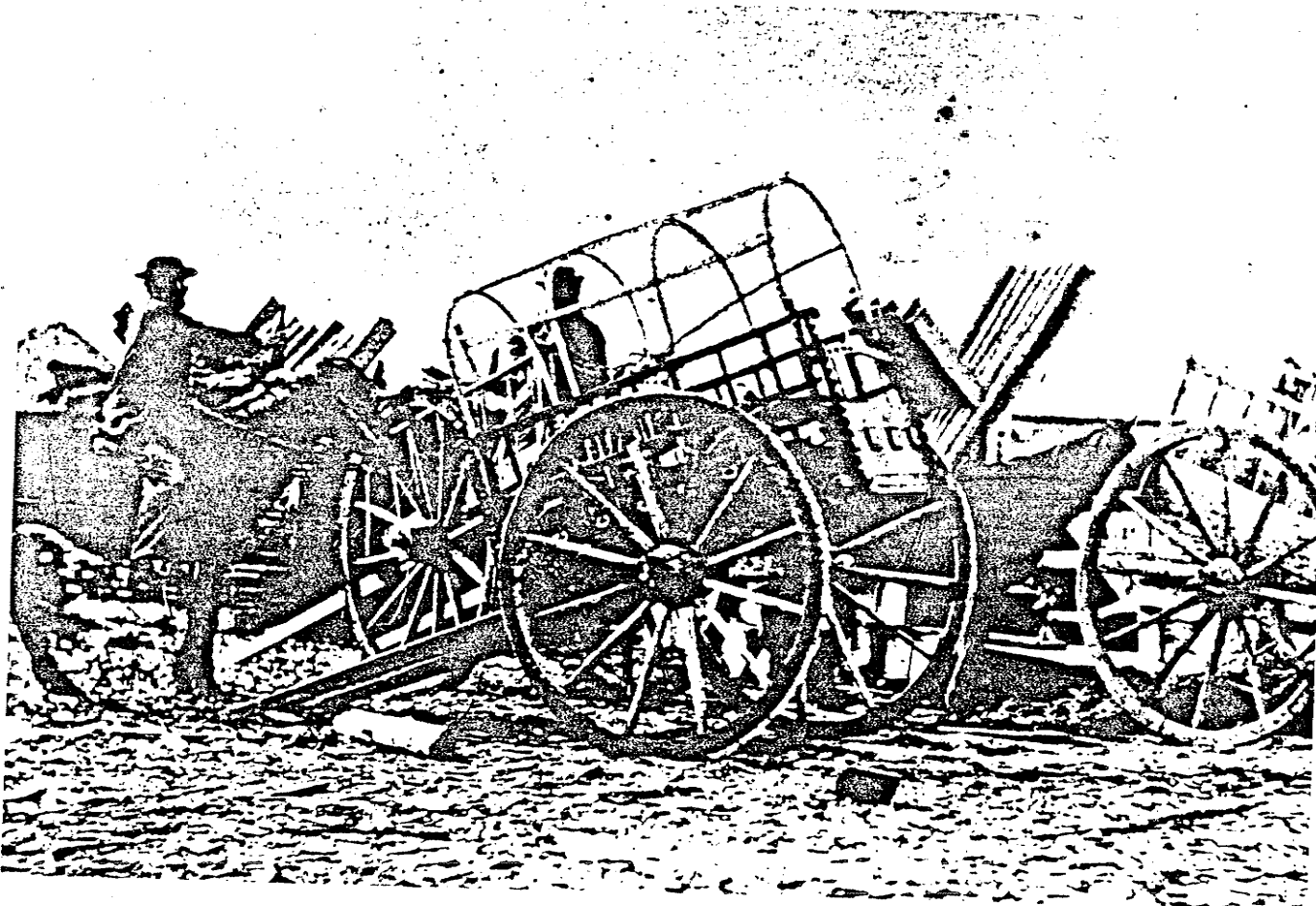
Or again, on December 9, 1856, a letter was sent from J. Swanston to Simpson discussing the impact of a bison hunt failure:

I am very sorry to inform you that the buffalo hunt has been a complete failure. This season as far as dried provisions are concerned...from these events our whole collection of Pemican (sic) this season, at this place, the

White Horse Plains and Pembina is only a trifle over 500 bags, consequently so over be it out of my power to meet the demands of Norway House and the Lac la Pluie and the Red River freighters this spring (5).

This constant demand for pemmican meant that a great amount of time was devoted by the Métis to the bison hunt and the production of pemmican. Sprenger (1972:30) shows evidence of large scale bison hunting expeditions having been organized as early as 1818. By 1825, 540 carts were following the Métis to the hunting grounds (ibid:31). To these summer expeditions autumn ones were added in 1826. By 1860, 1,483 carts, each with a carrying capacity of about 800 lbs, went out for the summer hunt (ibid:31).

Throughout the first half of the last century dependence on the selling of pemmican as a source of income grew among the Métis population of Red River. This was in part due to the fact that pemmican producers were nearly always assured of a good market for their produce. This dependence was also generated, as will be documented on these next several pages, by a lack of alternative remunerative occupations open to these Métis. This dependence would have a definite impact on the 19th century Métis social organization. Only one of the consequences and its ramifications will be addressed here: their apparent 'semi-nomadic' mode of existence. Month long sojourns au large limited the 'plains provisioners' in the diversification of their skills. For example, as Kaye points out, a Métis hunter had very little chance of gaining



expertise in agriculture:

The calendars of agriculture and the hunt so overlapped that the most a hunter could attempt was a garden patch and perhaps a cow and a few swines, along with a number of invaluable buffalo runners.

(Kaye, 1967:225)

It seems to have been policy of the Hudson's Bay Company to encourage the bulk of the Métis population to remain 'plains provisioners'. As the Simpson correspondence indicates, it required a steady yearly supply of pemmican (6), but had little use for agricultural produce (7). Agriculture was the only other subsistence activity which would have, perhaps, been able to support such a large population. G. Rothney (1975:105) comments that even 'staunch admirers of the Hudson Bay Company such as G. Bryce (1910) admit to the fact that it had nothing to gain from natives becoming sedentary'. Bryce's description of the Company's attitude towards the Indian as a fur collector can be easily transposed to the Métis as a pemmican producer:

The tradition of the company was to keep the Indian a hunter. There was no effort to encourage the native to agriculture or to any industry. To make a good collector of furs was the chief aim. For this the Indian required no education, for this was a wandering habit needed to be cultivated rather than discouraged... (8)

Though having no wish to alter the subsistence base of the Métis, the Company did try to develop needs and tastes in these people that could only be satisfied at their stores. This policy of increasing the consumption needs

within the Métis population is explicitly stated in a letter written by Simpson:

They would in time imbibe our manners and customs and imitate us in dress. Our supplies would then become necessary to them which would increase the consumption of European produce and manufacture and in like measure increase and benefit our trade as they would find it requisite to become more industrious and to turn their attention more seriously to the chase in order to provide themselves with such supplies (9).

In short, throughout most of the first half of the 19th century the Métis were increasingly in a state of dependency on mercantile capital. To meet their growing needs for manufactured goods they became involved in a specialized production activity which had only one type of major buyer: the Fur Companies. In Red River, only the Hudson Bay Company was in a position to buy pemmican on a scale large enough to absorb most of the plains hunters' produce. On the other hand, with its monopoly, difficult though it may have been to enforce, the Hudson Bay Company was the only supplier in Rupert's Land and the North-West territories of goods necessary for the Métis to 'outfit' themselves. The Company offered the hunters and their families guns, ammunition, steel knives, axes, kettles, riding saddles, harnesses, spy-glasses..., all prerequisites for bison hunting expeditions (Sprenger, 1972:35). Also, any seasonal surplus which successful Métis might secure above and beyond what was required to buy basic necessities was spent on goods which had come to have special meaning



communities. Isaac Cowie in his book Company of Adventurers (1913) writes of small traders, contracted to the Company, who followed the Métis to their wintering camps and enticed them with all the goods necessary to what was fast becoming the French mixed-blood national dress:

The end had amply justified the means, for these hunters, envious of him (the well dressed petty trader), and desirous to eclipse him, one after another began to give up the furs and robes which they had previously refused to trade with him, for fine blue cloth capotes with brass buttons, fine cloth trousers, broad 1/2 Assumption belts, fine colored flannel shirts, black silk neckerchiefs, and foxtail plumes, anointments of pomatum and scented hair oil, besides silver, finger rings and gilt earrings.

(Cowie, 1913:352)

Authors such as Rothney (1975:117), Sprenger (1972:73) and Giraud (1945:794) have discussed pemmican production as establishing a relationship of mutual dependency between the Métis hunters and the Hudson Bay Company. Interdependent they may have been but this relationship in no way resembled balanced reciprocity. The Métis were selling their pemmican on an individual or family basis and not as a united group. The Hudson Bay Company was, on the other hand, a highly organized single entity having monopolistic rights over vast regions. The Métis' relative lack of manoeuvrability was therefore a 'logical outcome of the comparatively enormous concentration of wealth, monopoly bargaining power and technological might of fur companies, relative to the position of individual groups of producer-traders, coupled with the capitalist drive for profit' (Rothney, 1975:117).

Instances of the Métis' relative lack of bargaining power come up in the Simpson correspondence (10).

It is apparent that throughout the 19th century the Métis were aware of their economic helplessness and dependence on the Company (11). Whenever the opportunity arose they resisted the Company's monopoly and tried to win some fundamental changes in policy (12) and some basic legal rights (13). Also, it would seem that within the framework of the fur trade the Red River Métis did try to diversify their subsistence base.

Three major Métis attempts at increasing their economic security through the diversification of their subsistence basis, and the accompanying relationships of production can be documented. These are the production of tallow, the search for new buyers for their pemmican, and the development of an illicit fur trade. I will also look at salt production, one of the minor alternatives.

First mention of a trade in tallow is in a letter sent by Simpson to Alexander Christie, Governor of Assiniboia, on May 31, 1838 (14). In this letter Simpson stated his approval of tallow production. He seemed to agree with Christie that it was a good thing that hunters (or their wives) 'make the effort' to prepare the tallow on the kill sites... Prepared, it would command a higher price at the settlement and thus be more profitable for Mixed-bloods. No figures were found in the correspondence which would indicate the importance assumed by tallow production.

However, a few years later, an interesting letter was written on the subject of tallow production by Simpson to the board of governors. This letter is revealing because it shows the resistance of the Company to the development to any great degree of new pursuits which it perceived as detrimental to its interests. The Hudson's Bay Company was dependent on the pemmican produced by the French Mixed-bloods for the functioning of its fur trade operations. It follows that any activity which might have reduced the amount of pemmican brought to its trading centers would have been discouraged. In this letter Simpson states:

...the tallow in question is not produced by the agricultural part of the community but collected by the buffalo-hunting parties of half-breeds and indians on the plains -- and it would be feared that if extraordinary facilities be afforded for conveying the practice of their hunt to market, they will give their attention not only to the collection of buffalo robes and tallow, but may interfere with the fur trade... (15)

Beside writing unenthusiastically about Métis bison tallow production, Company officials also engaged in actions directly aimed at discouraging the producers. In 1843 chief factor Finlayson refused to renew the freight contracts of the Métis McDermot and Sinclair. The official reason given was that these individuals were engaged in illicit fur trading. This action was to affect some twenty other Métis who were now forced to discontinue their shipments of buffalo tallow to Britain, which had formerly been

transported to York Factory in McDermot's boats (Klassen, 1963:11).

From the beginning of the monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company of the North-West Territories onwards the Métis searched for alternate buyers for their pemmican. During the 1840's frequent mention is made in the Simpson correspondence of the 'American traders' and the competition they were providing the Company with. At times, these traders seem to have forced the Hudson's Bay Company into buying all of the pemmican, bison tongues (18), tallow...etc., offered for sale by the Métis (16) and affording them a 'liberal price' for them (17). Unfortunately the Americans did not have to maintain long trade routes and numerous trading posts in the fashion of the Hudson's Bay Company. They did not have their British rival's large-scale need for pemmican. Therefore the Métis were not in a position to boycott the Hudson's Bay Company completely, even though they resented its monopoly powers greatly (19).

With the appearance of these American fur traders in the Pembina region several Métis were able to become small traders in their own right. Thus they no longer were directly involved in the production of pemmican. Rather, they worked as intermediaries, moving goods between the American traders and the Métis and Indians on Hudson Bay Company soil. The American traders outfitted the Métis rather than risk violating international law by themselves

entering British territory. Many letters written to and by Simpson deal with the havoc caused by this competition (20). This role of mercantile go-between seems to have been a very lucrative operation for some of the Métis. In a letter (21) written by Christie to Simpson on March 29, 1849, Christie observes that 'high prices given for furs at Pembina...enables the half-breeds...to realize very considerable profits'. Also, one finds numerous allusions in the correspondence to the Métis contention that they were 'natives of the soil':

Mr. Christie appears to be using every judicious measure for the protection of the trade, which fortunately, have not been productive of any violence on the part of the half-breeds who are led to believe, by those under whose influence they are acting, that the fact of them being natives of the soil gives them an unquestionable right of trading and hunting within Hudson Bay territory which cannot be affected by the company charter (22).

Competition from American fur companies forced the Hudson's Bay Company into active retaliatory actions which were also beneficial to the Métis. The British company outfitted its own Métis traders. The Métis were given 'permission' to trade on Hudson Bay territory but seem to have been encouraged to concentrate their efforts on American territory. This was supposedly of their own volition, thus the Hudson's Bay Company could not be held responsible:

We run no risk thereby of drawing the Honorable Company into explanations with Governments on the delicate subject of territorial right, as they cannot identify us with these people who may either be Americans or British subjects as suits their purpose being natives of the soil... (23)

Another minor occupation which seems to have been allowed to develop to a small degree within the framework of the fur trade was the production of salt. Emile Pelletier in A Social History of the Manitoba Métis (1974:89) states that Voyageurs and their Métis sons had been operating a salt plant as early as 1798 in the Winnipegosis area. In southern Manitoba there were three areas called 'Salines' exploited along the banks of the Red River. Two of these are in the Pointe à Grouette area. The first is situated on lot 531 (Sainte-Agathe) and the other one, designated as Petite Pointe à Saline (24) in 1874, by a man called Bérard, can be found on lots 511-513 (Sainte-Agathe). Mgr J. N. Provencher alludes to these Salines in a letter written in 1818 to Mgr J. O. Plessis of Québec. In it he states:

Il y a en nombre d'endroits des salines très abondantes, où l'on peut faire du sel très beau et autant que l'on veut, surtout en hiver parce que l'eau douce gèle et laisse le sel presque à demi fait. Ces salines sont un très grand avantage dans un pays dont les communications avec les autres sont toujours longues et difficiles. Avec ce secours on peut faire d'excellentes salaisons pour la saison des chaleurs; c'est ce qui a été peu pratiqué jusqu'à présent.

(Provencher, 1913:92)

As opposed to Provencher, Pelletier (1974:90) comments that

the salt obtained through a process of evaporation in the Red River district was of 'very poor quality' and 'brownish in color'. He adds that once a railroad was built to western Canada the cheaper salt from Ontario caused the salt operations to close (ibid). Operations were probably threatened prior to this by the American salt shipped up from St. Paul by steamboat or ox carts.

Since primary material examined by this researcher discuss salt production only in passing, it is difficult to assess the scale and impact of this industry on the Métis population. The descriptions presented in the one available primary source and the one available secondary source make one think of small one-family operations producing for local, limited markets.

These attempts by the Métis at diversification within their subsistence base seem to have been only partially successful. Except perhaps for the salt production, which had only a negligible impact on the Métis economy, all were dependent on foreign mercantile capital and markets for their success. Only large fur trading ventures had need, year after year, of an item such as pemmican. In fact, if nothing, during the 19th century Métis dependence on outside interests grew. Aside from such technological items as guns, knives and powder, which had early acquired significance among the plains people, the Métis were dependent on merchant capital for the acquisition of certain foreign manufactured goods which had come to be of social

significance. A good example of these goods is the famous blue 'capote' which typified Métis dress in the 1850's. The Métis may have had 'a fierce independent character' (25); a 'strong feeling of nationhood' and a 'great degree of political independence' (26) but they were utterly dependent on foreign merchant interest, especially the Hudson's Bay Company, for the functioning and very survival of their society. However, dependent though they were on the fur companies, they seem to have maintained only a generally antagonistic relationship with them (50), struggling to better their position whenever possible.

Farming was a difficult and often losing proposition in the Red River area for most of the 19th century. George Sprenger in his 1972 work, An Analysis of Selective Aspects of Métis Culture 1810-1870, states that between 1812 and 1870, there were at least 30 reports of partial or complete crop failures. These were due to a mixture of poorly adapted crops, inadequate technology and natural disasters (floods, frost, locust...). In fact, the agriculturalists were often dependent on the Métis hunters for 'plains provisions' to see them through the winter months. When both the hunt and the crops failed it was a source of great anxiety for the company officials, as shown in this letter from Christie to Simpson written Decembr 7, 1847:

...with much regret I have to notice the almost complete failure of the last crop, which generally speaking will be inadequate for the maintenance of settlers through the winter and to reserve enough seed for the ground next

spring.

The plains hunters were very successful during the summer trip, which enabled them to sell a considerable quantity of pemmican and tallow but from the early setting in of the winter, they were unable on the second trip to bring much dried provisions to the Settlement.. (27)

Years of plenty were as much a source of discontent to the settlers and of worry to Company men as were years of penury. The Hudson's Bay Company had only a limited need for agricultural products. As Kaye remarks (1967:178), it actively encouraged its trading posts to plant their own crops. Besides, as Simpson stated in 1836 in a response to a petition brought forth by 'Canadians' and 'Half-Breeds', a superior quality of flour could be gotten easily in Canada and the United States for a lower price than what the Company was offering the settlers for their produce (28). Also, though domesticated animals had been introduced to the Red River colony, the settlers could in no way match the quantity and cheapness of bison tallow and pemmican offered to the fur trade companies by the hunting Métis. The problem with agrarian over-production and the need for new outlets arise as early as 1831 in the Simpson correspondence:

...The means of living are abundant and therefor cheap...the people however are very poor, so there is little demand for the produce of their labour, and the small means they have among them which arose when in the Honorable Company's service, are now becoming so low that they find much difficulty in providing themselves with such absolute necessities of European produce and

manufacture as are required, which frequently occasions much discontent and leads to a desire of withdrawing to Canada and the States, where they could find a market for the fruit of their industry. I am therefore apprehensive that unless some plan be soon fallen upon to afford the benefit of an export trade, the great bulk of the respectable white population will abandon the Settlement (29). (emphasis mine)

The problem of unavailable markets was the subject matter of numerous letters and petitions between the settlement, Simpson and the board of governors in England (30). As late as 1855 we find mention, in correspondence, of surplus grain remaining in the hands of the producers (31). Giraud for all his apparent disapproval of what he terms 'nomadism' admits that, for the Métis to become completely sedentary would have been, between the famine and overproduction years, economic suicide (32); this is if the company would have tolerated the loss of its pemmican producers (33)! The Métis hunters were assured, no matter what the extent of the yields, to find a ready market for bison as food and robes for clothing within their families. The Mixed-bloods could also be fairly sure that the colonists would need a certain quantity of 'plains provisions' to tide them over winters. Finally, the Hudson's Bay Company, and to a certain extent the American fur traders, needed large quantities of pemmican year after year to satisfy all the requisites of the fur trade. Throughout the first half of the 19th century bison hunters were guaranteed more outlets for their produce than the

agriculturalists. Also, bison hunt failure rates seem to have been not quite as frequent or severe as those of agriculture.

2) Slow Shift in the Subsistence Base; 1850 Onward

The Métis, even during their heyday as commercial hunters seem to have had a very definite concept of private landed property and the knowledge of the potential importance of it. As early as 1835 Métis and retired Voyageurs were demanding that 'we be assured of legal possession of our land' (34). Throughout the 1840's they openly defied any claims the Hudson's Bay Company made to land ownership. This is well illustrated in a letter written on February 2, 1846 by Simpson to Sir John H. Pelly.

The conditions on which they hold lands are quite disregarded by the settlers contending as they do, that, they as nations (sic) of the soil, not the company are the proprietors, and so ignorant are they that reasoning and argument on the subject are of no effect... (35)

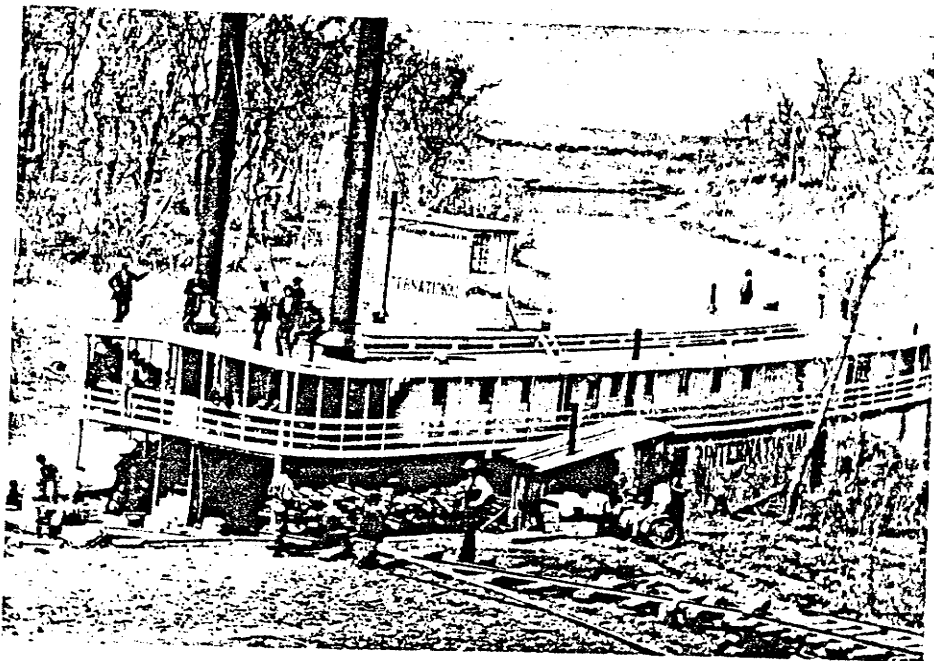
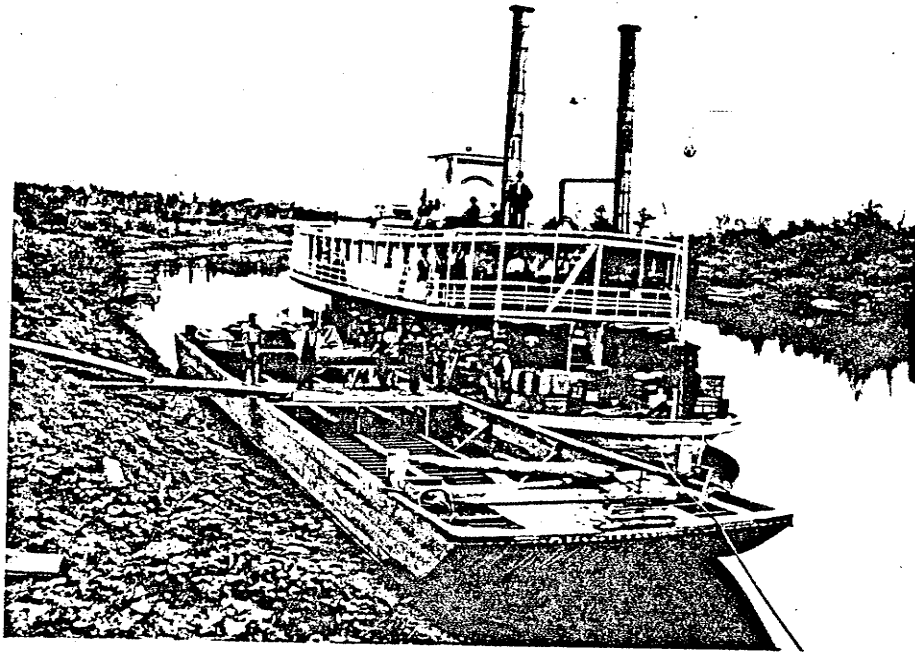
But it was only near the end of 1840's that a sizable section of the hunting population actually began to work on a relatively large scale (i.e. beyond a small garden plot) the land they claimed to possess. Giraud (1945:833) comments that by the year 1849 the average worked acreage for the 'natives of the soil' in the Catholic section of the Settlement was 5.10 acres. This average was in fact due to a small number of Métis families greatly expanding their worked areas. Another phenomenon occurring at the same time was the displacement of many hunting Métis and their

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families towards the Pembina area; a traditional wintering area. I believe both phenomena to be incited by certain transformations occurring at the production and distribution levels.

Two things were occurring at the end of the 1840's which affected the Métis hunters and the agriculturalists at Red River. First, as Rothney (1974:76) notes, bison herds were beginning to shrink seriously on the northern and eastern plains of Rupert's Land. Second, opportunities for the trade of agricultural produce with the States were increasing. In other words, agriculture was becoming a commercially viable pursuit. Because of this, along with the constant resistance of the Métis, the Hudson's Bay Company monopoly had fallen into disrepute. Simpson, in his report (36) of June 29, 1855, states that no less than 500 carts carrying 800 lbs of goods had left the Settlement for St. Paul that year. Also, by 1858 steamboat operations had begun on the Red River between the old colony and St. Paul. As Kaye (1967:226) points out, the inhabitants of Rupert's Land were linked up through the American merchants with 'Industrial America' and its markets.

As mentioned before, the majority of Métis hunters seem to have reacted in one of two ways to the changing circumstances. Several hundred of them moved south of the border to Pembina, North Dakota to continue as hunters or to become small traders. For those who wished to continue a

more 'traditional' way of life, this new site offered many advantages. It was in easy reach of the bison grazing grounds and it was closer to the lucrative American markets (major settlements on the Mississippi were only 400 miles away). Also, a large trading post owned by the American Fur Company and run by W. Kittson, a man who had extensive kin ties with Métis living in Saint-Boniface, was opened up in Pembina in 1844. (Klassen, 1963:8) Simpson (37) wrote in 1846 of many Métis migrating permanently towards the Pembina area, 'forming the nucleus of a settlement'. Kaye (1967:233) writes of 500 Métis leaving the Settlement in 1857 for Saint-Paul, situated 30 miles up the Pembina river. Simpson wrote again of a large Métis out-migration in his June 30th, 1849 report;

Mr. Belcourt <a priest popular with the Métis >who has established himself within a short distance of the American Fur Trading Establishment at Pembina, of American territory, has attracted a population of about 300 halfbreeds about him, and the prospects held forth in his letter to Paschal Breland, already referred to, have determined a great many others to the American territory, at Pembina this season, indeed. I think it likely that the greater portion of the Canadian halfbreeds of Red River will proceed there .. (38)

(emphasis mine)

Despite Governor Simpson's fear of losing all his Métis population many did stay behind at Red River. A segment of these remaining Métis attempted an adjustment to changing conditions. As Giraud (1945:881) pointed out, a segment of the remaining Métis population began to expand and develop

their land holdings. Made uneasy by the growing rumors of eastern expansion (Sprague, 1981:6) and aware that the bison herds were thinning out in the vicinity of the colony they escalated their demands for the regularization of their possession of the land and began expanding the importance of agriculture in their subsistence base. These efforts would continue well into the 1870's (39).

Métis attempts at securing official recognition of their possession of land can be documented in the Pointe à Grouette area. In accordance with the 1860 Council of Assiniboia proclamation 16 Pointe à Grouette heads of families requested between 1862 and 1869 that the official surveyor for Assiniboia, Roger Goulet, come and make official note of which tracts of land they were claiming (40). In total they claimed 28 river lots (10 to 16 chains wide, two miles deep). Another 30 Métis heads of families would later claim in personal affidavits to have taken possession of their lots and occupied them prior to 1870 (41). In short, approximately 60% of the river lots seem to have been occupied and worked by 1869.

If one examines the Executive Relief Committee's statistical report (42) for the Parish of Sainte-Agathe the different levels of commitment to agricultural pursuits among the Métis may be documented. This report asked the informants (heads of families) what the yield had been for the wheat and potato crops in 1867 and 1868. These figures should be regarded as minimums for, in 1867, crops were

partially destroyed by grasshoppers (Sprenger, 1972:86) and completely wiped out in 1868 (ibid:86). Obviously only 1867 figures will be examined. The 19 heads of families and their dependents that are listed as living in Pointe à Grouette had an average, per family, of 2.0 horses, 1.52 oxen, 1.94 cows, 1.89 calves in 1867. For that year they harvested 77.1 bushels of wheat and 47.2 bushels of potatoes each. These figures (43), however, are slightly misleading. Seven Métis family units harvested 1150 bushels of wheat and 670 bushels of potatoes among themselves. Averaged, each of these seven families had a minimum of 6.1 acres sown in wheat as opposed to less than one acre per remaining 12 families (44)! In other words, 78.4% and 74.6% of the wheat and potato crops were secured by 36.8% of the families in Pointe à Grouette. These seven families owned 45% of all the livestock.

These seven families are representative of a number of Métis who opted for a largely agrarian lifestyle. Four of these families along with 6 low agrarian productivity ones seem to have also been involved in the freighting business, for they owned two or more oxen. Joseph Berthelet senior and family, the most agriculturally productive unit in the area - he cultivated 12.03 acres - had 8 oxen! Combining freighting and farming was possible because freighting did not require specialized female labor, unlike the bison hunt. Women could stay behind and tend the land.

It is probably incorrect to look at these seven



Métis woman and child

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families as having independently achieved relative affluence. If one looks at the genealogy chart (45) some startling information shows up. Six of these seven families were very closely allied! The names of the seven Métis heads of family were (a) Joseph Berthelet senior, (b) Joseph Berthelet Junior, (c) Georges Klyne, (d) Louis Larocque, (e) Alex Morin, (f) Louis Morin, and (g) Jean Baptiste Dubois. Joseph Berthelet senior (a) had a son named Joseph Berthelet Junior (b). Joseph Berthelet senior (a) also had one sister, Marie, who was married to Louis Larocque (d). Joseph Berthelet senior had a daughter married to Georges Klyne (c). And again, Joseph Berthelet senior (a) also had a daughter, Ellice, who was married to Alex Morin (e). Alex Morin (e) had a father called Louis Morin (f). Jean Baptiste Dubois was the only head of an 'affluent' family without close kin ties to any of the above mentioned families.

Besides having close kinship ties, these families lived in very close proximity to each other (46). Joseph Berthelet senior claimed lots 582, 579 and 584. His son, Joseph Berthelet Junior possessed lots 583 and 585. Jean Baptiste Dubois lived on lot 581 and claimed lots 588 and 589. Louis Larocque occupied lots 568, 570 and 571. Morin senior worked lots 574, 576, 577 and 578 with one of his other sons, Louis Morin Junior. Finally Alex Morin lived on lot 575.

Though more examples would be needed to verify the

belief, I think these above discussed figures indicate that the decision to move away from hunting towards agricultural pursuits was a communal one. Extended families decided as a unit to either stay on their land and try out a life of farming and freighting with a more limited involvement in the bison hunts, or else to move to the Pembina mountains. From this it could be argued that the transformation in the subsistence base occurring between 1845 and 1870 did not disrupt greatly communal and family ties. Métis working and living within the context of large families had been a feature of their bison hunting and fur trading days (47). Nor did this shift in production basis change these people's relationship to merchant capital. In 1870 these Métis were still depending on the Hudson's Bay Company or the American traders to buy up their surplus produce so as to enable them to purchase necessary goods of foreign manufacture. A type of wage labor was continuing parallel to these developments in the freighting business but this was merely seasonal work handed out by these commercial enterprises. Freighting had more or less simply replaced the 'tripmen' jobs and did not seem to employ a very large portion of the population for great lengths of time.

3) Discussion

Nineteenth century Red River Métis history tells the tale of a people's growing dependence on outside merchant capital. From the amalgamation of the two rival fur trade companies and subsequent regrouping of many Mixed-bloods

along the banks of the Assiniboine and Red Rivers, we see a growing pattern of antagonistic relationships between dependent Métis producers and merchants; accompanied by a narrowing of resource bases for these producers...at least up to the 1850's. The 19th century also witnessed Métis attempts to react to a precarious subsistence base by resource diversification and militant economic and political demands (49). From 1821 to 1870 the interests of the Métis and those of the Hudson's Bay Company would be diametrically opposed; 'These are contradictions inherent to capitalist systems, mercantile or other; advantage for some necessarily implies disadvantage for others' (Lenin, 1967:175).

The change towards agricultural production opted for by some of the Métis in the late 1840's did not alter their relationship to merchant capital in any significant way. They were still dependent on the companies primarily for the buying up of surplus produce. This permitted the Métis to outfit themselves with real or perceived necessities not locally manufactured.

However this shift in the subsistence base may have had important internal ramifications for the Métis communities. It would be logical to think that, in the last years before the entry of Manitoba into Canadian Confederation, patterns of antagonistic relationships based on ownership along family lines of means of production and productive resources were developing in Métis communities. In Pointe à Grouette, for example, by 1867 there was an obvious difference between

a Joseph Berthelet senior who had harvested 320 bushels of wheat and owned 8 oxen and a Gabriel Houle or an André Morin who had little or no apparent means of subsistence (48).

In chapter three one of the things I will examine is whether the apparent process of internal differentiation and seemingly greater attachment by a segment of the Mixed-blood population to the land had any impact on the pattern of post-1870 dispersal. That all the Métis left the area under study is a given. But which family left when and for what apparent reasons (sale or loss of litigation process) has yet to be determined.

Footnotes

1. A1#1
2. A3#9
3. A4#3
4. A3#17
5. A4#9
6. A3#9
7. A3#3
8. Bryce, 1910 quoted by Rothney 1975; 105.
9. Merk, ed., Fur Trade and Empire; George Simpson's Journal, p. 181, quoted by Rothney, 1975:106.
10. A3#4
11. A3#4
12. A3#5
A4#7
A3#16
13. A4#8
14. A3#8
15. A3#10
16. A4#5
17. A3#15
18. See Giraud, 1945:79 for a discussion on bison tongue.
19. A3#16
20. A3#12
A4#7
A3#16
A3#20
A3#22
21. A4#7
22. A3#12
23. A3#12
24. P.A.M. RG17D2 Sainte-Agathe Parish River lot files, lots 511 and 513.
25. See Cowie, 1913, chapter 9.
26. See Rothney, 1975:95.
27. A4#3
28. A3#5
29. A3#3
30. A3#3
A3#4
A3#2
A3#13
A3#20
31. A3#20
32. See Giraud, 1945:792.
33. See Giraud, 1945:795.
34. A3#5
35. A3#11
36. A3#20
37. A3#12
38. A3#16 (emphasis mine)

39. A7#1
40. A5#1
41. A6#1
42. A8#1
43. A9#1
44. A9#1
45. A1#1
46. Data extracted from A5#1, A6#1.
47. A2#1
A3#1
A3#18
48. A8#1
49. A3#5
50. A3#16

CHAPTER THREE: The Dispersal

Section A: Introductory Comments

Sections B and C of chapter three deal with issues considered central by such authors as D. N. Sprague (1980a, 1980b, 1981) or Morris Zaslow (1971) to Métis out-migration of Manitoba after 1870. These issues center around: first, the Manitoba Act and the amendments to the Canadian government brought to bear on it; and second, the speculators whom native groups accuse of swindling the Métis population of most of its lands. One such group, the Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan (AMNSIS), further argues that these speculators had the tacit consent if not the outright collaboration of government officials.

The fourth and largest section of this chapter deals specifically with Pointe à Grouette and its Métis residents. This section, based on information acquired through an intensive study of the Sainte-Agathe River Lot Files, attempts to determine the impact of both the Manitoba Act amendments and the activities of the speculators, on the different Métis families of the area. Factors such as previous extended family land use, length of residency, level of education, extent of kin ties and relative wealth are examined for possible correlations with Métis departure dates.

Section B: The Manitoba Act

Because of the organized resistance put up by the Métis of Red River, a section of Rupert's Land entered the Canadian Dominion as the province of Manitoba. Its political and administrative structure was based on a document referred to as the 'Manitoba Act', which had been negotiated with varying degrees of good faith by the concerned parties in 1870 (Sprague, 1980a, 1980b, 1981). In this document Canadian officials recognized the most essential of the Métis demands without sacrificing much territory (Sprague, 1980b:74). The Manitoba Act was officially recognized by the British Imperial Government by means of an Imperial Statute known as the 'British North America Act of 1871'. Within this statute was a novel sixth clause which had not been part of the original document sent by the Canadian government. This clause, which would be conveniently ignored by Canadian officials in the years to come, stated:

It shall not be competent for the Parliament of Canada to alter the provisions of the Manitoba Act or any such statutes to be passed in the future... (1)

For the Métis who were living on river lots, the most relevant section of the Manitoba Act was section thirty-two (2). This section was purportedly for the 'quieting of titles' and 'assuring to the settlers in the Province the peaceable possession of the lands now held by them'. Subsections three and four of section thirty-two were the

ones which had direct relevance to the residents of Pointe à Grouette. Sprague (1980a:422) states in reference to subsection three:

Sub-section three gave the same assurance to another class of settlers, persons who occupied land with the sanction and under the license and authority of the H.B.C. without such land having been formally granted. This was to protect persons who settled without prior grant but whose occupancy had not caused protest, and received tacit recognition in accordance with a provision for homesteaders adopted by the Council of Assiniboia in 1860.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, sixteen heads of families, one French-Canadian (Paschal Dionne who married into the Métis Morin family) and fifteen Métis, fell into this category (3). They had a certificate by the land surveyor, Roger Goulet, describing the lands they claimed. They were, by and large, the group who had opted for a more agrarian life-style. The other inhabitants of Pointe à Grouette fell into subsection four of section thirty-two of the Manitoba Act. This subsection dealt with the people, whether within or without the settlement belt (4), who claimed possession of tracts of land but had never had even nominal Company recognition. Most of these, according to Sprague (1980a:427) were the hivernants who pursued a variety of non-farming occupations. Though they considered themselves and were considered by their neighbours (5), as being the owners of their parcel of land, they did not as such 'work' the land--aside from planting a garden and building a small house. A notable exception to this in

Pointe à Grouette was Joseph Berthelet sn. who was the area's most prosperous man. He never seems to have bothered acquiring a certificate of land claim from Roger Goulet! About thirty Pointe à Grouette heads of families fell into this category of peaceably possessing with limited improvements and no pre-1870 State recognition.

Despite clause six of the 'British North America Act of 1871' the Manitoba Act was to be the subject of numerous amendments in the years following the entry of Red River into Canada. According to Sprague (1980a, 1980b, 1981) these had the result of making it increasingly difficult for the Métis to acquire their promised letters-patent to the land they occupied. Métis falling into categories three and four of section thirty-two were especially vulnerable, having never been officially recognized as landed property owners by the previous administration. The only token recognition the Métis held, the Council of Assiniboia surveyor's certificate, did not seem to carry much weight in the eyes of the Canadian government. As mentioned above, all the residents of Pointe à Grouette were only nominal or unofficial occupiers of land in governmental assessments of the situation. Had the spirit of the Manitoba Act been followed, these people would still have become the legal proprietors of the land they considered theirs. However, as Sprague (1981:43) states:

John Schultz and Donald A. Smith received patents to 56 and 43 lots respectively. One thousand three hundred other persons identified as

heads of families on river lots in 1870,
received no such land at all...

Sprague (1980a) in his article "Government Lawlessness in the Administration of Manitoba Land Claims 1870-1887" discusses eleven statutory alterations to the Manitoba Act which occurred between the years 1870 and 1887. Five of these deal directly with the river lots and their occupants. The first of these amendments was passed on May 26, 1874. This statute repealed subsection three and four of section thirty-two and substituted a more stringent definition of 'peaceable possession' as the prerequisite for claiming a river lot (Sprague, 1980a:435). Improvements--i.e. agricultural work, housing, material possessions, etc.--had to be noted by the Canadian land inspectors. For the bison hunters who, as discussed in chapter two, had a calendar of activity which conflicted with agricultural pursuits this was to be a fatal blow.

If these hunting Métis persevered in their land claims they faced another major setback the following year (1875). On April 8th, 1875 the date for establishing occupancy to claim a river lot was altered for no obvious reasons from March 8th, 1869 to July 15, 1870. This does not appear as any great problem till one remembers that, by mid-July, most of the hunting segment of the Métis population was out on the plains (Sprague, 1981:36)! On the same date (8/4/1875), another amendment to the Manitoba Act was passed, termed 'an act respecting conflicting claims to lands of occupants in Manitoba' (Sprague, 1980a:435). Sprague comments:

The more stringent tests for establishing claims by occupancy began to generate complaints as soon as the measure was enacted. But a conflicting claim bill (1875:S.C.C.53) was passed in order to prevent such cases from coming to court...Laird explained that those (claims) against the Crown were to be settled through the Department...

This prevention of cases coming to court meant that the Métis had little recourse open to them if they felt they had been dealt with unjustly. The Department of the Interior had the last word. The Métis could protest seemingly arbitrary decisions to their elected representatives, but these seemed to have been equally helpless, or unwilling, to defend the 'Old Settlers' rights (Sprague, 1980b:82).

On April 12, 1876 an Act was passed dealing with 'roads and road allowances' in Manitoba. Because of these amendments, portions of river lots were withheld from patenting. Besides complicating and delaying the whole process, this meant that occupants received only bits and pieces of their original claim!

The final amendment which had a great impact on river lot claimants was entitled 'an Act for the final settlements of claims to land in Manitoba by occupancy' (Sprague, 1980a:436). This act was meant to resolve all outstanding squatters' claims 'by the simple device of time' (Sprague, 1981:42). All claims which were still outstanding after a certain date were simply nullified. According to Sprague (1980a:436), this was the final blow for Manitoba Métis, for it required:

All occupants of land described in S.S.3 and S.S.4 to apply for patents by May 1st 1882 and provided for the removal of unsuccessful applicants or non-compliant occupants after that date...

Section C: The Speculators

Three distinct groups emerged in the post-1870 trafficking of Métis lands. The largest, most powerful, and affluent of these was composed of 'white Anglo-Saxon Protestants' coming out of eastern Canada, especially Toronto. They were not only personally rich, but also represented eastern merchant, industrial and finance Capital and were often quite prominent politicians at the federal and provincial levels. Next came the Roman Catholic Church. With funds coming from Québec and from France, it purchased large tracts of lands, especially in the older parishes on the banks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. Finally, there existed an educated affluent Métis Petty Bourgeoisie centered in Saint-Boniface also engaged in the buying and selling of land, though on a much smaller scale.

Authors such as D. N. Sprague (1980a, 1980b, 1981) and members of the Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians in Saskatchewan (1978, 1979a, 1979b) have discussed speculation on Métis lands quite extensively in their publications. Though researchers have emphasized the patterns of alienation of the Métis land grants (section 31 of the Manitoba Act), as opposed to the Old Settlers river lot grants (section 32), certain similarities are noted. In both these types of land grants, the speculators seem to

have exploited the ignorance and illiteracy of the Métis, and in both situations managed to win the tacit or even overt cooperation of the federal government (AMNSIS, 1979:3-6).

Sprague, in his 1980b (pp. 78-80) article, states that a core group of 500 speculators, mostly from Ontario, worked their way through the old parishes in the 1870's, telling the Métis it was necessary for them to have an attorney in order to secure letters-patent to their river lots. Not knowing what they were signing, and often having witnesses who were equally illiterate and a Justice of the Peace who only knew how to sign his name, the Métis often put their crosses (in lieu of signatures) on documents which were outright deeds of land or assignments of land rather than contracts for an attorney. In some cases, documented by Sprague (1980b:80), the powers of attorney or assignments were completely fraudulent--they were made up without contacting the claimant at all. In some cases also, speculators would convince claimants that the land would never be granted to them by the government. Considering the obstacles (alterations to the Manitoba Act) the federal government was putting up, along with the delays due to an inept and inert centralized claim processing system, this probably sounded quite plausible to the long suffering Métis. The speculators would give the Métis \$25.00 (CND) in exchange for a surrender of title in case 'some small' portion would be granted' (Sprague, 1980b:79). In this

case, the government collaborated by issuing the patents on the scrip in the name of the Métis claimants but delivering these documents to the people who had rights or powers of attorney. In some cases, Métis would only find out that, first, they had given their rights away, and that second, the land had been patented and the deed sent to an assignee, when they went to the land office to inquire on the state of their claims (AMNSIS, 1979b:3)!

These speculators were successful in manipulating the federal government in three different areas (AMNSIS, 1979b:3). First, they ensured that the government took no action to protect the rights of the Métis and turned a blind eye to the fraudulent practices used by the speculators in acquiring powers of attorney and scrip assignments. Second, they convinced the government to recognize powers of attorney as legitimate and valid, and thirdly, they also convinced the government to accept assignments of scrip. These were not difficult tasks, for the speculators were often politicians or government officials themselves (AMNSIS, 1979b:6-8)! The concluding comments of an AMNSIS (1979b:21) paper summarized the situation well:

Although the government went through the motions of ensuring everything was legal, its real objectives were not to protect the interests of the native people, but to get the land away from them in a way which was expedient, which cost the government little, and which would stand up in a British Law Court. The goal, however, was to get clear undisputed title to the land, to push the natives out of the way, to establish a semblance of law and order, and to

promote settlement and development of resources... such actions (also) created a cheap and surplus supply of labour necessary for development activities such as the construction of railway... One can only conclude that where the government was concerned with issues such as economics, settlement and development, these considerations took precedence over ethics and morality.

The Roman Catholic Church can be implicated in the Métis land question, and the dispersal, on two levels. On one level, it facilitated the takeover process by the Canadian government in the area in 1870, both by getting involved in the negotiation, and by assuring minimum of political stability in the years following the entry of Manitoba into Confederation. This was done by using its considerable religious sway to control Métis, thus circumventing more militant indigenous actions. One example of the political involvement of the Church was Bishop Taché's order given to Louis Riel and A. Lepine to leave the country; "as Bishop I order you to go" (AMNSIS, 1979a:7). Taché thus deprived the Métis bison hunters of a leader, one they had formally elected member of Parliament, at a time when they badly needed one. Louis Riel's diary indicated that the Bishop's insistence was the only reason he left the country and that he had a good idea what the consequences would be. Thus, in the 1870's, only the religious authority remained to serve as spokesman for the Métis population. The Métis educated elite living in Saint-Boniface had played a largely passive role in les événements and were closely tied, economically, politically, to the

ecclesiastical leaders whose authority they did not question (Gasman, 1977:28). They did not act as spokesmen for the Métis hunters and small farmers.

On another level, the Roman Catholic Church became actively involved in the buying and dealing of Métis river lots. Robert Painchaud in his 1977 Ph.d. thesis, The Catholic Church and French Speaking Colonization in Western Canada, states that the Church leaders were well aware of the significance of the transfer, and the importance of their own involvement in influencing the course of ownership 'of this most precious natural resource' (p. 14). Taché, through the 'Corporation Archiépiscope Catholique Romaine de Saint-Boniface', began securing lands from the Métis. He also organized in 1874 'La Société de Colonisation du Manitoba', whose aim it was to promote the movement of French-Canadians into the province (Painchaud, 1977:28). Such land purchases were funded by "benefactors" from Québec, Manitoba and France. Some of these, who were especially active in the parish of Sainte-Agathe, were the count Arthur de la Londe and the barons de Villier and Blaziel from France. Others came from Manitoba, such as the notables Royal, Dubuc, Bernier and La Rivière (ibid:28). And from Québec there was at least one man named Lambert Sarrazin investing in Métis lands (ibid:29). Of course, the majority of these people were motivated by the possibility of profits, and expected some returns on their investments. Painchaud believes Taché and the other clergymen involved in

the land deals were only interested in 'control rather than profits', for they wanted to maintain a French-Catholic presence in the old parishes that the Métis were 'abandoning' (ibid:27).

To what degree the Métis were actually simply selling the land to the clergy after having taken the decision of leaving, or were being convinced by the clergy to head west and leave their lands for 'professional' French-Canadian Catholic farmers from the United States or Québec, is difficult to determine. What is known is that Taché had a low opinion of the old hunting and small farming segment of the Métis population and that he doubted their ability to withstand the 'enticement held out by the speculators' (Painchaud, 1977:15).

A Métis petty bourgeoisie developed after the events of the late 1840's when the ambitions of the free traders and the monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company came to a head and the traders won. This mixed-blood elite was centered in Saint-Boniface and closely allied with the ecclesiastical authorities to be found there. This nascent entrepreneurial class of free traders was willingly co-opted in the 1850's and 1860's into the paternalistic government set up by the Hudson's Bay Company. The company perceived this class to have interests similar to its own (Gosman, 1977:18).

In the two decades prior to the entry of Manitoba into Confederation, many political posts were filled by these affluent and educated Métis (ibid:19). During this time,

such Métis traders and farmers as François Bruneau, Roger Marion, Hébert Fisher, Paschal Breland, Salomon Hamelin, John Dease, William Dease, Roger Goulet and Cuthbert Grant rose to political prominence. With the partial exception of Grant, none of the Métis hunting class and only a few of the large farmers in Saint-Boniface ever had access to these positions. Small traders were the true Métis elite in Red River. These wealthy Bois-Brûlés seem to have had a greater sense of affinity with incoming French-canadians, the Company officials and the Clergy than their fellow countrymen who were of a similar 'ethnic' origin but of a different socio-economic class altogether.

These people on the whole did very little to promote the Métis cause while filling their appointed positions. The concerns of the Métis hunters and small scale farmers were not their own. As Gosman (1977:22) points out, they seem to have been more interested in promoting their own ends and enriching themselves through their positions. They at no time agitated to have public positions opened to the hunter class, and they actively engaged in nepotism and favoritism (ibid:23). Gosman (1977:28) describes this elite and its attitudes well:

The attitudes of the bourgeoisie of St-Boniface however, differed markedly from those of the hunting group. Nearly all those Métis who served on the Council of Assiniboia, for instance, were able to read and write, and some such as Bruneau had a very good education. They were overtly, more devout, had closer ties with Taché, and did not engage in the 'primitive'

pursuit of the hunt. More over their lives were more settled, and as a consequence their children were able to attend school regularly.

This indigenous petty bourgeoisie which enjoyed considerable power during the 1850's and 1860's was largely passive during 'les évènements', and rose to prominence after Manitoba's entry into Confederation (Gosman, 1977:15). With the advantage of relative wealth and education, these Métis were able to adapt to the new order of things quite successfully. In fact several of them, such as Salomon Hamelin and William Dease, became small time speculators in Métis land!

These facts are interesting. They point to the error made by many researchers (Schimanowski, 1950; Morton, 1938; McAlduff, 1966) in treating the Métis rebellions and the subsequent dispersal as 'ethnic' problems, i.e. one 'race' with a set of values and attitudes coming into contact with another 'race' with radically different attitudes and values. The fact that a certain very specific element of Métis society was able to adapt itself quite well to changed circumstances points to a class-related situation. The so-called rebellion and dispersal were the reactions of a specific socio-economic class (some non Métis such as P. Dionne lost land in Sainte-Agathe) being pressured out first by in-coming Eastern merchant and finance Capital (whether lay or clerical) and second by an indigenous petty bourgeoisie in a position to take advantage of the opportunities brought in by the above mentioned Capital.

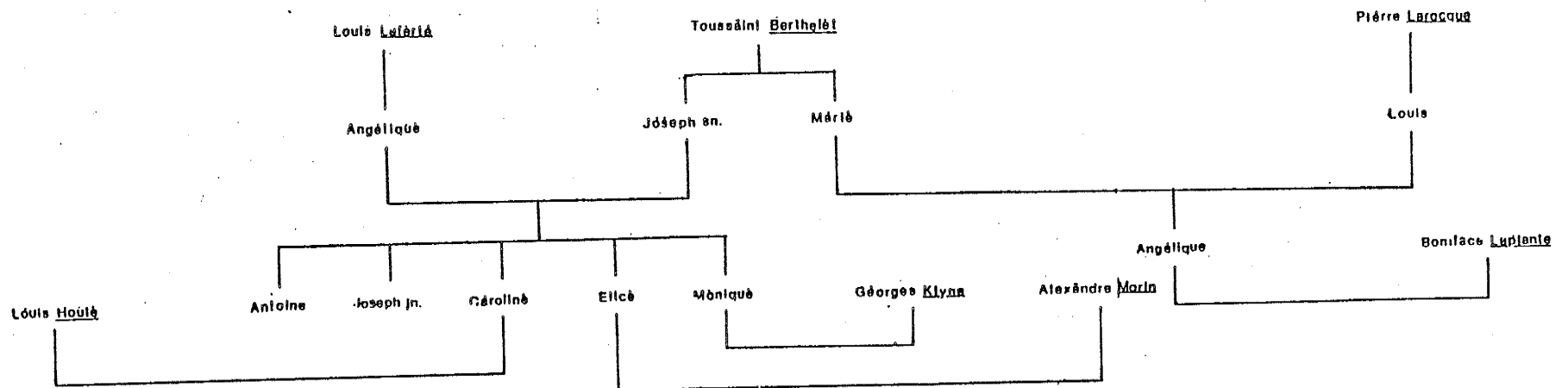
Section D: Kinship Patterns in Pointe à Grouette and their Relationship to Land Claims

1) The Berthelet Clan

Near the end of the 1860's, Joseph Berthelet sn. (dit Savoyard) was easily the richest man in Pointe à Grouette. In 1867, a year of partial crop failure, he had harvested 320 bushels of wheat and 130 bushels of potatoes. This meant he had at least twelve acres of land devoted to the cultivation of wheat, easily 45% more than the next most affluent man in the area, Georges Klyne ('Kleine') his son-in-law. Berthelet owned twice as many oxen and was raising more calves than anybody else. Only one man, again Georges Klyne, could claim to own more cows than he did. The only area where one could say Joseph Berthelet sn. was lacking was in horses; he only owned one in 1868! The man who did own the most horses (5) in Pointe à Grouette was Alexandre Morin, husband to Joseph Berthelet senior's daughter Elice.

Two factors, aside from ambition and luck, were probably crucial in Joseph Berthelet senior's material success. The first to be discussed is his ancestry. Robert Gosman, in his 1977 unpublished paper, "The Riel and Lagimodière Families in Métis Society 1840-1860", comments that among the up-and-coming agriculturally-oriented families in Saint-Boniface in 1849 was the family of one Joseph Savoyard. By that year he and his family were cultivating over 20 acres of land (Gosman, 1977:31). In all the early documents, for example the Relief Committee's

Berthelelet Extended Family (productive members)



Statistical Report of 1868, Pointe à Grouette 's Joseph Berthelet sn. is designated as 'Joseph Savoyard père' or 'Joseph Berthelet dit Savoyard'. His sons are only designated as 'Berthelet'. For example, in the 1868 report his eldest son is simply designated as 'Joseph Berthelet fils'. Joseph Savoyard of Saint-Boniface was probably a relation of Joseph Berthelet sn. of Pointe à Grouette, perhaps an uncle. He would have been in a position to help Joseph Berthelet sn. get started in agriculture. A youth passed in Saint-Boniface near a teaching Catholic clergy would explain why Joseph Berthelet sn. was one of the few older men in the parish of Sainte-Agathe able to sign his name. It would also explain why he took such an active and leading role in the setting up of a Catholic mission in Pointe à Grouette.

Another Saint-Boniface family mentioned by Gosman in his paper as having achieved agricultural success in 1849 is one headed by Louis Laferté. This may well have been the same man as Louis Laferty, Marie Laferty Berthelet's (Joseph Berthelet senior's wife) father. For, outside of the 1870 District of Assiniboia census returns, in all the legal documents contained in the Red River Lot files Marie Berthelet's maiden name is spelled 'Laferté'. If this is true, Joseph Berthelet sn. would have been able to count on the help of an affluent father-in-law. Some of Joseph Berthelet senior's sons-in-law seem to also have had illustrious family names. According to Gosman (1977), the

Klyne's and the Larocque's were also large farming units in Saint-Boniface.

Probably even more important than Joseph Berthelet's ties to Saint-Boniface was his extensive network within the community of Pointe à Grouette. This man had, that we know of, twelve children and one married sister living in the area in 1870. If his children's spouses, his grandchildren and his sister's family are counted, Joseph Berthelet sn. was closely related (i.e. father, father-in-law, brother, brother-in-law, grandfather, husband or uncle) to a grand total of 52 people! This means nearly one third of all the parish of Sainte-Agathe had a close kin relationship to him! No other senior family head could claim to have such an extensive kin network. The next biggest clan, even when counting in-laws, only amounted to 30 people. (42% less than the Berthelet). This was the Louis Morin clan.

The impression one gets when going through the Sainte-Agathe River Lot files was that, first, inheritance was bilateral, and that two, a man could expect an affluent father-in-law to give him land and probably also tools and animals. In the nineteenth century, when agricultural work was done by manual rather than mechanical means, it was probably to the advantage of an older man to have as many young healthy sons and sons-in-law as possible settling nearby. Exchange of labor, animals and tools could then proceed more easily through kin ties. The Berthelets, being such a large group, were thus in an ideal position.

In the area studied, indirect references, via affidavits written up for land claims, are made to eight gifts of land among kin. Three times the documents discuss a man giving land to his son-in-law, twice a man giving land to his own son, twice a man giving land to his daughter, and finally, once, a man giving land to his brother-in-law. After 1870, no gifts of land are recorded in the River Lot files.

Besides having close links to more people than any other head of family in the community, Joseph Berthelet sn. was closely allied with some of the wealthiest men after him in Pointe à Grouette. As the Berthelet family chart illustrates, Joseph Berthelet could lay claims of close family ties to four of the six other affluent men in the area! These are: Louis Larocque, his brother-in-law and fourth richest man in the parish; his sons-in-law, Georges Klyne and Alexandre Morin, second and seventh richest men respectively; and finally, Joseph Berthelet Jr., his son, fifth most agriculturally productive man in Pointe à Grouette. Three other young married men, not belonging to the group of 'wealthy seven' can be linked to Joseph Berthelet sn. The first two are his son Antoine Berthelet, and another son-in-law, Louis Houle. The third one is his niece's husband, Boniface Laplante. All three in the late 1860's had smaller younger families and were not as agriculturally productive as others of their extended family cohorts. This is probably explained by the fact that they

were younger and therefore had not had as much of a chance to establish themselves. Their crop yields and animals are included in the tabulations for the Berthelet's collective wealth.

The Berthelet's extended family in 1867 had a minimum of 40 acres under wheat cultivation. It had harvested 1,062 bushels of wheat and 515 bushels of potatoes. They had herds of 20 horses, 15 oxen, 19 cows with 19 calves. Taken as a unit the Berthelet extended family was by far the most agriculturally committed kin unit in all the parish of Sainte-Agathe.

Joseph Berthelet sn. and his family, besides having probable ties with Saint-Boniface and an extensive network of kin in Pointe à Grouette, also had ties with the judicial system. On May 29, 1871, two of Berthelet senior's sons-in-law were named Justices of the Peace for the county of Provencher! Georges Klyne and Alexandre Morin were officially designated to these positions by Governor Archibald (6). Georges Klyne was also nominated as one of the five judges for the county of Provencher in 1871 (7). This was besides sitting in the provincial legislature since 1870! Also, another of his sons, Joseph Berthelet jr. was nominated Justice of the Peace in the mid-1870's.

The Berthelet family, with its relative economic prosperity, its large support network, and its legal connections should have been the best placed of all the Métis families in Pointe à Grouette to withstand eastern

encroachment. However by 1919 the 16 river lots claimed by Berthelet or his kin had passed out of their hands. The patterns of this change-over are examined below. As shown in appendix 13#1 (8) the Berthelet extended family claimed ownership to 16 river lots possessed prior to 1870. They received patents for a total of five river lots. This is only a success rate of 31.0% for the most numerous, well-connected family in Pointe à Grouette. None of these river lots were in Berthelet hands by 1902. Three of these lots were worked by French-Canadians from Sainte-Anne des Plaines and Saint-Guillaume. One of them may have been Métis through his mother but she was a 'Vandal' not a Berthelet. One of the patented lots appears unworked in 1902 and 1919 and was probably held up for speculative purposes. The last of the five lots, lot 575 claimed by Alex Morin, was ultimately patented to him but delivered to a French-Canadian lawyer, J. A. Bernier, who apparently was his assignee. When the patent was issued in 1877, Morin was residing in St. John, North Dakota. From the text of the last letter dictated by Morin to the Canadian Government, it would seem the Métis had no idea he had handed over claims to his river lot (9)! This loss of right to land through dubious legal activities seems to have been quite frequent during years following the entry of Manitoba into Confederation. The Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan (AMNSIS) states in reference to Manitoba:

According to the Manitoba Métis Land Commission a great deal of outright fraud and collusion was practiced by speculators and government officials. In many cases the people entitled to land grants and/or scrips did not even know their titles or scrip had been granted. The practice of acquiring the right to land or scrip through the use of assignments was prevalent. Speculators had access to advance information as to when grants in a particular parish would be dealt with. They also had advance access to the parish list which identified the potential recipients. Assignments using quit claim deeds were often obtained years before a land grant was made and were then dated after the fact. Powers of Attorneys were also widely used...

(AMNSIS, 1979:3)

Of the other eleven lots, six were sold by their original claimants, before the patents were issued. They went for sums varying from \$350.00 to \$800.00 (CND) with another one selling for 'vingt-cinq Louis sterling' which was worth about \$121.50 (CND) circa 1870. None of these lots were sold to in-coming farmers directly. One, lot 579, was indirectly bought by Donald A. Smith, a prominent Montréal banker. Three were sold by the Métis to the Roman Catholic Church. Another was bought by one John Guidon who eventually sold it to Father Samoisette in the 1880's. The lot bought with sterling pounds went to the Honorable Joseph Royal. Finally, the last Berthelet lot to be bought went to the infamous Dr. John Schultz.

Of course it is difficult to know how valid these sales were. Since the Métis population was largely illiterate and Justices of the Peace had only to know how to sign their

names, it is impossible to know if the Bois-Brûlés actually understood the nature of the documents recording the transactions; indeed if they even realized they were making a sale. Certainly cheating them would have been easy. One wonders if they received the exact amount of money stated on these documents they couldn't decipher.

Another example, similar to Alex Morin's, of a Métis not realizing he had given away his rights to his land is that of Boniface Laplante. He claimed possession of lot 572. In 1897, Roger Goulet at the Land Claims office received an inquiry by Laplante regarding the state of his awaited patent. Upon research, Goulet found a letter dated 2/8/1895 from the land commissioner Smith writing to a Mr. Burgess stating that this land was recommended for patent in favor of Wm. Farace, a banker in Clinton, Ontario. Goulet then wrote to Smith on 8/3/1898 commenting: 'I told him <Boniface Laplante> I verily believed this lot had already been patented to somebody in virtue of his having sold it before...!' Laplante seems to have had no idea that he had relinquished his rights to the land. In fact, there is a quit claim deed to Wm Farace from Boniface Laplante in the files for a value of one dollar.

Of the remaining three lots, the interests of the one claimed by Catherine Laferté were relinquished to a Thomas A. Atchison for \$75.00. One claim was never entertained (lot 558) because the claimant, Louis Houle, lived and 'improved' only the section of his holdings which was on the

west side of the Red River (lot 559), leaving the east section for hay and firewood. He therefore, presumably, was unable to meet the occupancy requirements demanded by amendment no 3 of the Manitoba Act passed on 23/5/1873. The last lot had a patent pending for Alex Morin, but in 1899 he had still not paid certain 'seed grain mortgages' executed by him upon the lot. Three years later this lot was being worked by a French-Canadian from Roxton Falls (Mass.), Jean-Baptiste Courcelles. It is unclear how this lot ever ended up in Courcelles' hands.

The Berthelet extended family did not fare very well in the Pointe à Grouette area. Of the 52 people noted as family members in 1870, only four people, two men and two women, could be traced as descendants in the 1919 parish survey. One was Boniface Laplante Jr., whose great-uncle had been Joseph Berthelet sr. He had been born in 1863 of Boniface Laplante and Angélique Larocque. His (deceased) wife was Caroline Laferté of the Pointe à Grouette Laferté. He had had 6 children who in 1919 were between the ages of 10 and 26 years old. He must have been a very poor man because the Church did not require him to pay a yearly tithe in 1919. Also, no river lot number is found next to his name in the census.

There was also one Jean-Baptiste Berthelet living in Sainte-Agathe in 1919. He was the son of a Charles Berthelet not listed in the 1870 Census. However, Jean-Baptiste was born in Sainte-Agathe in 1887 and he was

presumably related to the Pointe à Grouette Berthelet. He too was considered poor and exempt from paying tithe. His mother was Marie Laplante who was still living in Sainte-Agathe in 1919. She was the daughter of Boniface Laplante and Angélique Larocque. Presumably, Marie married the son of one of her mother's cross-cousins.

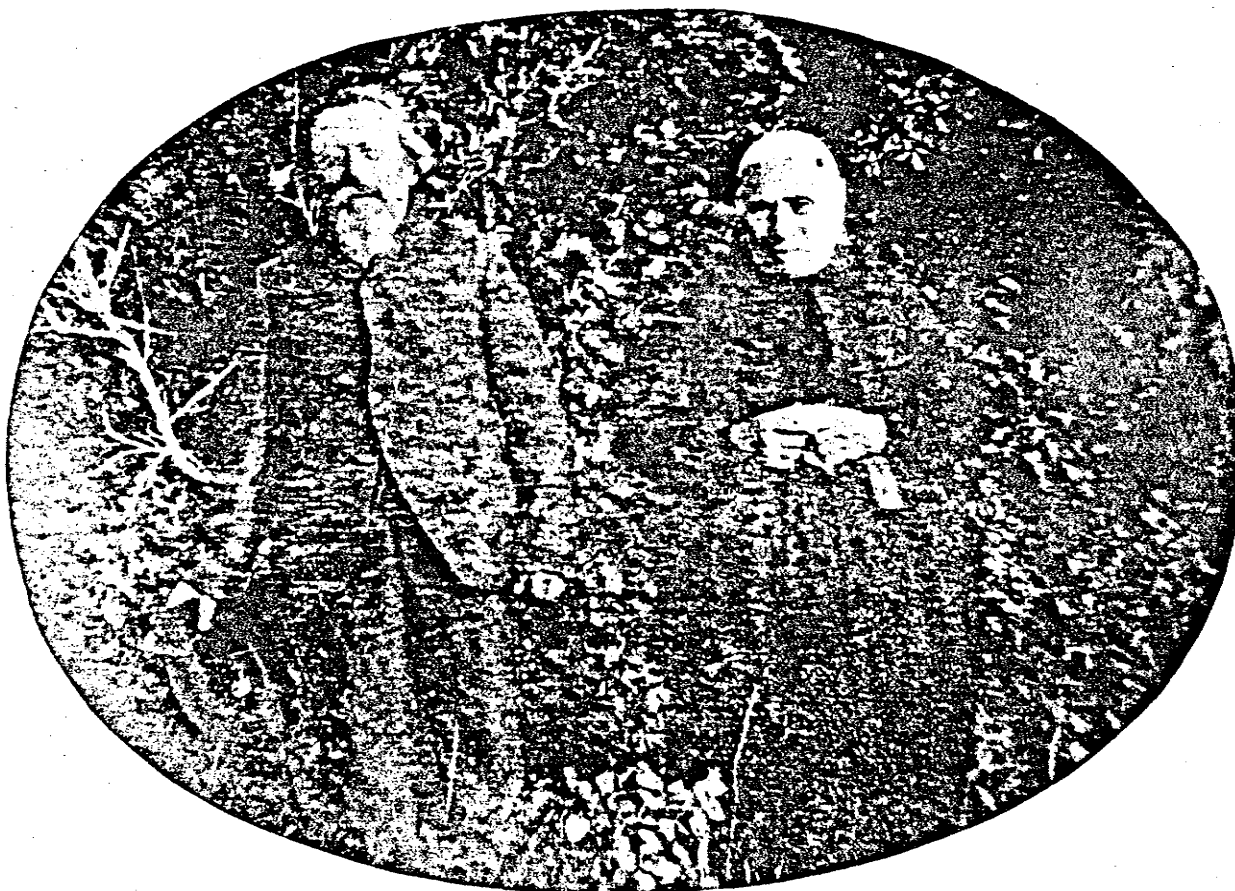
Also living in Sainte-Agathe in 1919 was one Ernestine Fontaine born on the 5/9/1870 in a place called Mattick (sic?). Her mother was called Philomène Laplante and may have been related to the old Pointe à Grouette Laplante. She and her husband gave a \$1.00 tithe to l'abbé Rocan for the year 1919. They worked river lot 573, whose original claimant seems to have been Boniface Laplante, but this file is missing from the archives.

Of the eight 'Berthelet' lots that appear as 'sales' in the River Lot files, five were sold after spring 1875; that is, after the first and second ultra vires amendments pertaining to river lots made to the Manitoba Act had passed. As discussed in section one of this chapter, these changes to the Act made it increasingly difficult for Métis heads of families to meet the necessary prerequisite for applying for a lot. The other lots on which the Berthelet Métis had presumably received patents were either sold, abandoned by the Mixed-bloods, or these people were kicked off... The tenth amendment to the Manitoba Act allowed authorities to do so.

What is interesting with this family is that

nevertheless there is documented proof that at least some of the Berthelet did not leave because of a 'love of the wild' and their 'distaste for sedentary life'. Given their pre-1870 commitment to agriculture, and their date of leave-taking, this would have been surprising in any case. Joseph Berthelet Jr., son of Joseph Berthelet sr. and fifth largest planter of wheat in Pointe à Grouette in 1867, sold his lot 583 to the Honorable Joseph Royal in 1874. Since he was residing on lot 585 at the time he may have had difficulty meeting the occupancy requirement. However, the second lot he claimed was patented in his name in 1877. Nothing in the files indicates whether the patent was received by him or sent to an assignee. What is known is that by 1885 Joseph Berthelet Jr. and his wife Françoise Caron had moved to the new settlement of Aubigny ten miles south (Eidse, 1980:222). His new farm was situated just south of the present-day site of the village. When he arrived the land was all bush and had to be cleared by human and horse power. After Joseph Berthelet Junior's death, his son Paul and his wife Rose-Emma Martineau remained on the family farm. Paul's brother Edouard, nicknamed 'Prosper', settled on a farm further south on St. Mary's Road with his wife Malvina Vandal. Children of both brothers are still living and farming in Aubigny today.

It is difficult to believe that Joseph Berthelet Jr. left Pointe à Grouette where he had cleared fields, a



Joseph Berthelet jr. and his wife,
Françoise Caron, circa 1900

Société historique de Saint-Boniface

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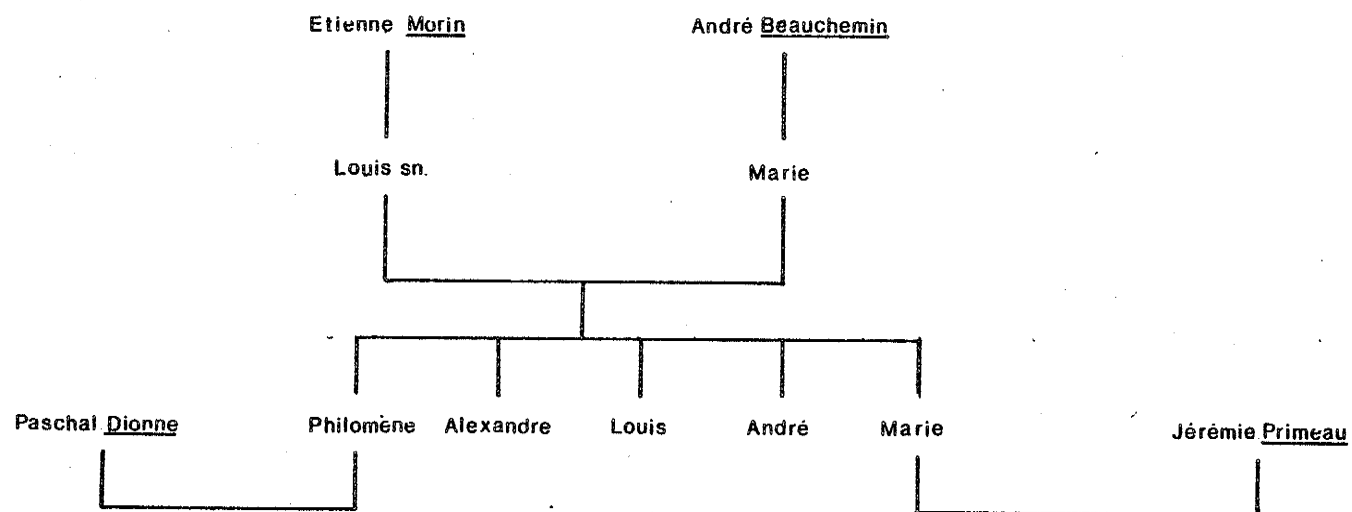
house, and lived all his life, willingly--especially to move just ten miles south to uncleared bush land! At a glance this case shows two things: Some Métis were deeply committed to agriculture and at least some of the Métis elite had the capital to begin again if they lost their pre-1870 land.

2) The Morin Clan

The next most prolific kin group in the Pointe à Grouette area was the Morins. Including Alexandre Morin, who was married to Elice Berthelet and had four children in 1870, there were a total of thirty people who could claim kin ties (through 'blood' or marriage) to this family. Louis Morin, son of Etienne Morin, and his wife Marie Beauchemin, daughter of André Beauchemin, were the elders in this family. They were the most affluent of the Morins and were the third largest sowers of wheat in Pointe à Grouette after Joseph Berthelet sn. and Georges Klyne. According to the 1868 Relief Committee Reports, only one other Morin unit had harvested over 100 bushels of wheat in Sainte-Agathe in 1867. This was Alexandre Morin, who also happened to be Joseph Berthelet senior's son-in-law! He ranked seventh in agricultural output in 1867. As the Morin chart indicates, Louis Morin was kin to other agricultural producers in Pointe à Grouette, but these were producing at a much smaller scale than he was.

There were six producing units in the Morin clan in 1877. Combined, they harvested 350 bushels of wheat and 284

Morin Extended Family (productive members)



busbels of potatoes. Compared to the Berthelets, they had a smaller and slightly older labor force. The Morins were harvesting 67.1% less wheat and 33% less potatoes than the top ranking family. They had two thirds less land under wheat cultivation. They owned only 11 horses, 10 oxen, 12 cows and 13 calves. In total, the Morins claimed possession to twelve river lots in Pointe à Grouette, as opposed to the sixteen Berthelet land claims.

According to Robert Gosman, Louis Morin sn. does not appear to have been connected in any way with the Saint-Boniface elite. He does not seem to have been related to the affluent trading or farming families through his wife or through one of his sons' or daughters' spouses. The only possible exception is Elice Berthelet, Alexandre Morin's wife. Only one of his sons, Alexandre, and none of his sons-in-law were Justices of the Peace. There is no evidence that Louis Morin knew how to sign his name, let alone read and write.

Despite their lower overall level of 'eastern-style sophistications'--knowledge of reading and writing, commitment to agriculture, involvement in the judicial system--the Morin clan did proceed to claim twelve river lots in the early 1870's. Five of these had even been registered as claimed by Roger Goulet, the surveyor for the Council of Assiniboia before 1870.

The land files of the Morin family (10) river lot claims are much less complete and certainly more obscure

than those of the Berthelets. Three of the river lots have incomplete files that end abruptly while the Métis were still presumably living on these lots and had not yet received letters-patent. These file segments are either lost or still in the hands of the Department of Justice. One lot, claimed by Paschal Dionne, a French-Canadian, is 'recommended for patent' but no date appears on the memo which states this. Besides, in the 1902 Municipality of Ritchot tax books no mention is made of this lot (563). Also, the name Dionne does not appear in the 1919 Church census, whether discussing heads of family, their mothers' name, their wives' names or their wives' mothers' names. As discussed under the Berthelets, Alexandre Morin's patent to lot 574 was still being held up when the files end. Louis Morin, the most agriculturally committed of all his family, made a claim for lot 577. The file for this lot ends abruptly in 1877. Again there is no mention of this lot being worked in 1902, indicating that it and lot 563 were probably being held up by speculators. Another file, lot 555, claimed by the Métis Jérémie Primeau, has no information whatsoever in the file except to state that at one time or another it was claimed by Primeau but that it was eventually patented to a Joseph Lemay (Lemoine?).

Two other Morin river lots were sold to Rev. C. Samoisette parish priest of Sainte-Agathe. Talking about the activities of the Church in Sainte-Agathe, Robert Painchaud, in his Ph.d. dissertation The Catholic Church and French

Speaking Colonization in Western Canada 1885-1915 (1977:29)

states:

T. A. Bernier who had planned to settle near Turtle Mountain was one of those who went instead to Sainte-Agathe where he worked closely with the curé Cyrille Samoisette, to prevent lands from falling into the hands of the Protestants. The abbé Samoisette later formed a "petite compagnie d'acheteurs...<qui> aura je pense un capital de \$20,000 à \$25,000" and which would save at least fifteen properties from going to the "English". Samoisette took out mortgages on lands and probably received additional support from Lambert Sarasin of St-Hyacinthe, attorney for the Soeurs du Précieux-Sang, who placed a few thousand dollards in the hands of T. A. Bernier to speculate on lands. These monies as well as those coming from <count> Arthur de la Londe and the Baron Blaziel, were applied to the purchase of lots along the Red River at Sainte-Agathe.

Three other lots were sold to individuals. One man, a carriage maker, bought two lots in 1877 just to resell them four months later at a profit. The third lot was sold in 1882 to a man from the North-West Mounted Police. No mention is made of these three lots either in the Municipality of Ritchot Tax books or the 1919 Census by abbé Rocan. A fourth lot was indirectly sold to Donald A. Smith through his attorney, Sedley Blanchard. In all the transaction involving Smith as the ultimate recipient in the Pointe à Grouette area, Sedley Blanchard is always the middle buyer and William Dease, an affluent Saint-Boniface Métis, is usually the Justice of the Peace. Dease was the grandson of Hudson Bay Company Chief Factor John Warren



Father Cyrille Samoisette
Société historique de Saint-Boniface
GF13

Dease. Both William Dease and his father, John Dease were politically active merchants in pre-1870 times. Both weathered the annexation well.

Three of the lots claimed by the Morin extended family were patented to the original occupants. As discussed previously, Alexandre Morin was never to see the patent for lots 574 and 575. Lot 565 was patented to Paschal Dionne. No mention is made of an assignee or of a sale. Nevertheless Dionne and his family did not hang on to the land for long. By 1902, according to the tax books, Cyrille Nolette, a nephew of Cyrille Samoisette, would be living on this river lot. Nolette arrived in Sainte-Agathe in 1902. Another lot previously discussed, lot 562, claimed by Antoine Morin, was patented to the original claimant months after he had supposedly sold the land!

Only three letters-patent can be documented as having been made out in the names of the original claimants while the Métis were on their (unsold) land. This means a probable failure rate of 75% for the second most affluent, most numerous and most agriculturally committed family in Pointe à Grouette. By 1919 there were no Morins living in Sainte-Agathe, whether as a family head or as a Morin married into a French-Canadian family. All the names associated with the Morins through marriage, 'Dionne', Beauchemin, Primeau, Grandbois and Houle, with the exception of Berthelet, also seem to have left no trace directly or indirectly in the Sainte-Agathe area. By the second decade

of this century there was nothing left to indicate in the parish that the Morins had ever lived there.

3) Larocque family

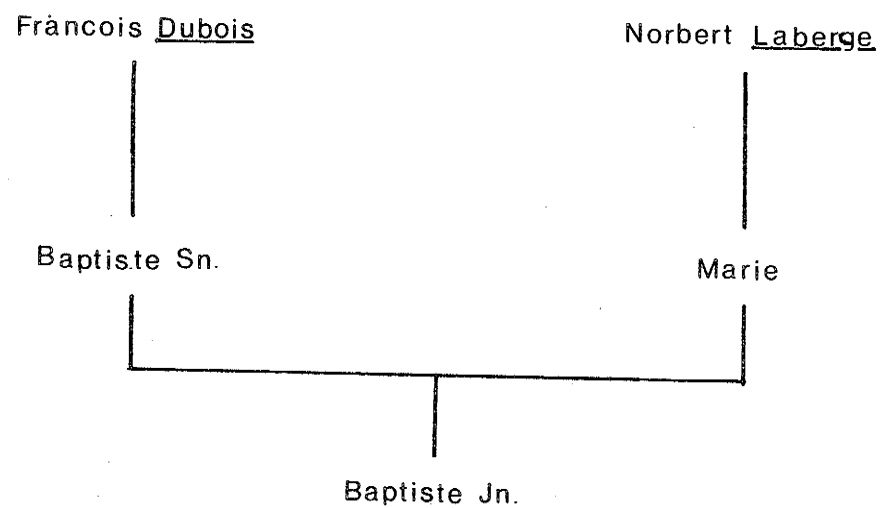
The Larocques were discussed under the Berthelet clan because of their close alliance with that family. The only 'affluent' member of that family, Louis Larocque, was married to Joseph Berthelet senior's sister.

4) Dubois family

Jean-Baptiste Dubois sn. ranked sixth in agricultural affluence in Pointe à Grouette. His was the youngest of affluent families in the area. Of the ten Dubois family members noted in the 1868 Relief Committee Report, five were under the age of twelve. In the 1870 census there were still only eleven people in the (extended) family and of Baptiste Dubois senior's eight children only one, Baptiste Dubois Jr. was married. At the time there were still no offspring from the second marriage. As the Pointe à Grouette kinship chart shows, the Dubois seem to have been isolated from the other 'affluent' families in the area. Also, from the information available in Gosman, they had no ties to any of the affluent merchant or farming mixed-blood population in Saint-Boniface.

The Dubois in 1867 only had 4.1 acres minimum under wheat cultivation, that is, about a tenth of what the Berthelet extended family were working. They possessed only three horses and one oxen. However in 1867 Jean-Baptiste

Dubois Extended Family (productive members)



Dubois sn. had harvested 120 bushels of potatoes, only 10 bushels less than Joseph Berthelet sn.!

Along with having many as yet unproducing members and having few kinship ties within Pointe à Grouette, the Dubois Métis also seem to have been politically isolated. None of the Justices of the Peace mentioned in the files carry the Dubois name. Even the families they were allied to, the Laberges and the Laurences, did not seem to be very influential. They are not mentioned in Gosman's study either.

The Dubois claimed three river lots in Pointe à Grouette (11), lots 580, 581, 589. Lot 589 was discussed under the Berthelet claim since the lot was sold before the entry of Manitoba into Confederation. The two other lots went to the groups most involved in the speculation of Métis lands, the Roman Catholic Church and merchant-finance capital from the East. Three months after making a formal claim to lot 581, Jean-Baptiste Dubois was selling it. Georges Stephen bought the land through the same middleman as his cousin Donald A. Smith. He obviously was buying for speculative purposes. If Jean-Baptiste Dubois sn. actually did receive \$700.00 for the lot this is a relatively good price for the time. However since Dubois, like most of the

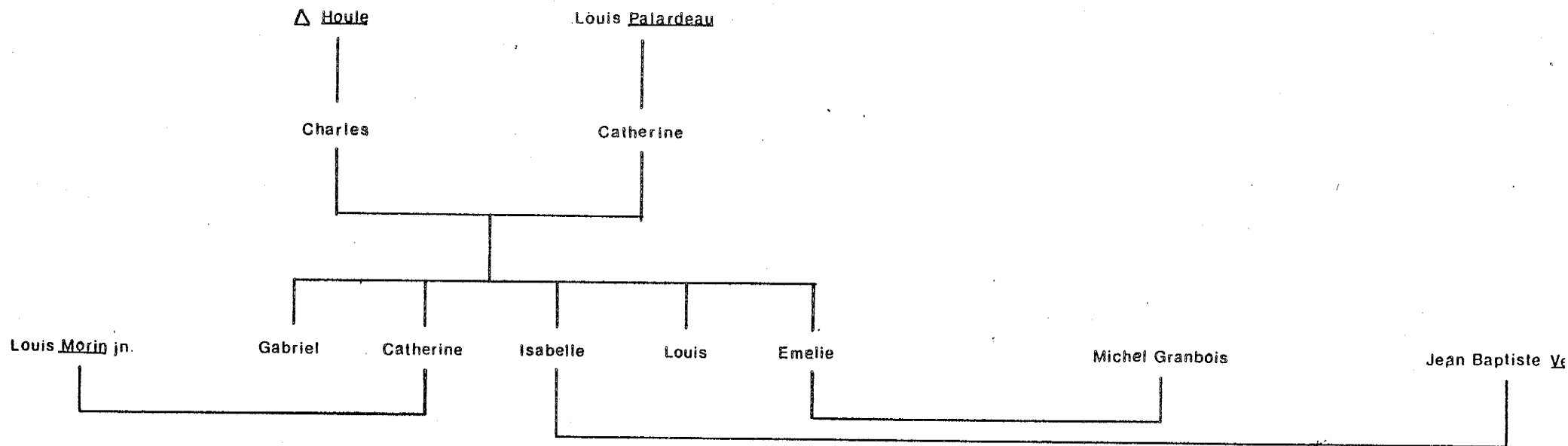
Métis in Pointe à Grouette, was illiterate, it is impossible to know if he was aware this was the amount he was selling for. Dubois would have been especially vulnerable since he did not have a sympathetic Justice of the Peace kin who could have attempted to decipher the document. Lot 580 was sold to the Roman Catholic Church at an unknown date for an unspecified amount of money. The Dubois family is not mentioned in the 1919 Census.

5) Houle family

The Houle extended family was a larger grouping than the above mentioned Dubois. However, they were much less committed to agricultural pursuits than any of the previously discussed families. Individually not one Houle family member reaped 100 bushels of wheat in 1867, that is the arbitrary minimum to be considered as committed to agriculture and reasonably affluent. Collectively, the three producing Houle heads of family mentioned in the Relief Committee Report harvested a mere 80 bushels of wheat indicating a cultivated area of three acres. As a unit, in 1868, they owned 5 horses, 6 oxen, 3 cows and 3 calves. They harvested 110 bushels of potatoes.

Charles Houle and his wife Catherine Palardeau, Louis Palardeau's daughter, could lay claim to a fairly large kinship network in Sainte-Agathe. As the Houle chart indicated they were related to the Berthelets and the Vandals by virtue of having married sons and to the Morins and the Vennes through their married daughters. This meant

Houle Extended Family (productive members)



they had kinship links with, among other, two of the most powerful families in Pointe à Grouette.

The Houle do not appear to have had any direct kinship ties with the Saint-Boniface elite, merchant or agricultural. However, they did have some political connections, since Louis and Catherine Houle had children with Justices of the Peace as in-laws. By 1870 they had registered possession of seven lots through Roger Goulet with the Council of Assiniboia. By the early 1870's they were claiming a total of sixteen river lots (12). This total included Louis Morin Junior's joint claim with his father of four river lots. Six of these lots were claimed by Charles Houle or his sons and nine were claimed by his sons-in-law. By 1882, twelve lots, or 80% of the total land claimed by the Houle family, had been 'sold'. By the turn of the century none of the lots were being worked by any of the original claimants. At the time of sale, all these lots had yet to be patented, even though, by 1875, the majority of the original claimants had submitted a description of their land and the nature of their claim to it along with supporting affidavits. In fact, ten of the twelve lots were sold after the two major alterations (affecting bison hunting Métis) to the Manitoba Act had passed: That is, the May 26, 1874 statutory alterations to the Manitoba Act repealing subsections three and four of section thirty-two and substituting a more stringent definition of 'peaceable possession', and the April 8, 1875 ultra vires amendment of

the Manitoba Act which arbitrarily altered the date for establishing occupancy of a river lot from March 8, 1869 to July 15, 1870--a date when a substantial part of the hunting Métis population was out on the plains.

It is impossible to determine if the Métis themselves became discouraged of ever getting letters-patent for their lots, because of their lack of eastern defined 'improvements' or because of their non-residency at the amended date, and simply abandoned their lands or signed quit claim deeds for very small amounts of cash. The Pointe à Grouette bison-hunting residents may have been convinced their claims stood little chance of being patented by speculators interested in acquiring these lands. This was probably the case, since requests for patents accompanied by quit claim deeds usually showed a direct chain of titles from the original claimant. These claims were presented by speculators to the government.

Three of the lots sold went to a Métis merchant of Saint-Norbert named Joseph Hamelin. He was the grandson of the Hon. Salomon Hamelin, a wealthy, well-educated merchant of Saint-Boniface who became a judge for the province of Manitoba under the new administration. Joseph Hamelin himself had a certain amount of education and knew how to make a profit. The River Lot file for lot 545 indicates that Hamelin bought it for \$25.00 and that he later sold this lot along with an adjacent one for \$1,000.00! These two lots would eventually fall into the hands of George

Stephen. This success of a Métis getting involved and profiting from the river lots speculation again points to the fact that this was not an ethnic problem but a class one. First, the Houles were much less successful than the local Pointe à Grouette elite, the Berthelets and the Morins, in securing letters-patent for their lots, and second, the Houles were bought out by some of their own 'people', Joseph Hamelin in this case.

Five of the Houle extended family lots found their way into the hands of the French clerical elite. Three were bought by Rev. C. Samoisette. Two of these, the priest bought directly from the original owners, and the third he bought from a speculator named 'Stoddart'. Part of lot 546 was patented on the name of the Baron de Villier of France. This baron was one of the partners in the land company organized by Samoisette, which included, Bernier, Count de la Londe and the Baron Blaziel (Painchaud, 1977:27-29). Lot 560, claimed by Charles Houle was bought for \$100.00 by the Corporation Archipiscopale Romaine de Saint-Boniface in 1875.

Three other lots were sold to a Winnipeg carriage maker named John Wilton (558, 557, 556). Nothing could be found about him except that he never actually lived in Sainte-Agathe. He was another one of the merchant-speculator class rather than an agriculturalist.

Two lots, 503 and 550, actually seem to have gone from Métis hands to French-Canadian ones. It is interesting that

the validity of these claims in terms of the altered Manitoba Act was in both cases in doubt. By 1890, both of these lots had yet to be patented.

One lot was actually patented to a Houle by 1877. However by 1902, Louis Houle was no longer working lot 559. Since no land deed exists, it is impossible to know if Houle had already sold the lot when it was patented.

The claim to another Houle lot, number 551, was lost when the widowed Emilie Houle moved with her children to Pembina, North Dakota. She had had this lot, along with 550, surveyed by Goulet in her son's name, Patrice Grandbois. There is a note stating that both lots were 'sold' while Patrice Grandbois was still underage.

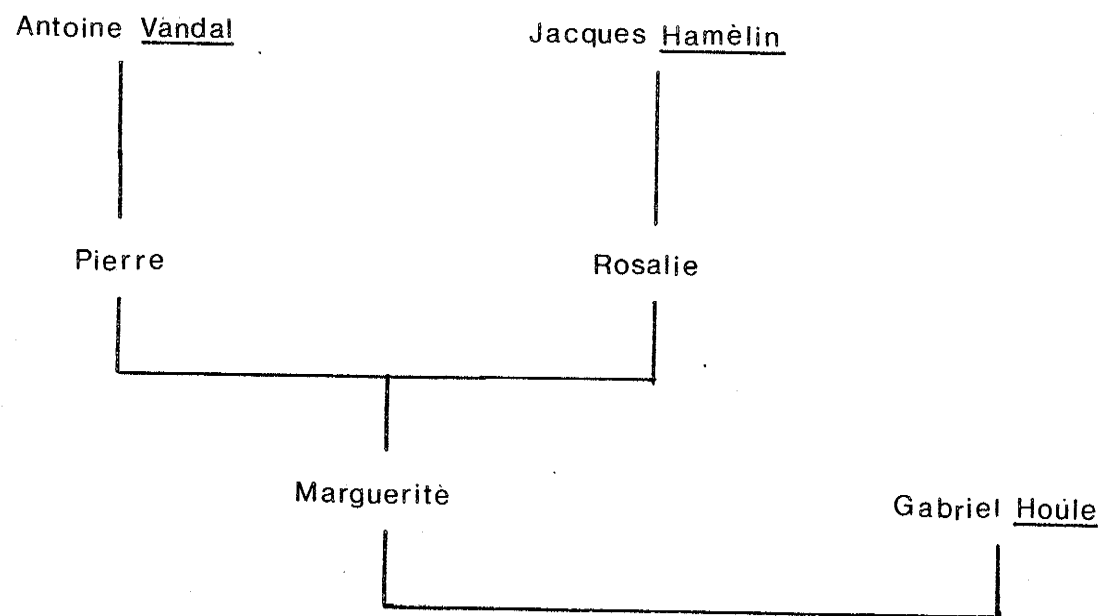
Pre-1870 differences in degree of commitment to the practice of agriculture seem to have had an influence on the pattern of post 1870 Métis dispersal from Pointe à Grouette. In the Houle extended family, twelve river lots were sold prior to 1882 and prior to patenting but after spring 1875. The Berthelets, on the other hand, had four lots patented to the original claimants before they were sold. Also the Berthelets received (supposedly) an average of \$342.00 per lot while the Houle sold their land for slightly less than \$286.00 (known sales). Also, several of the Berthelet clan members remained in Pointe à Grouette past the 1880's into the 20th century and had some contact with the in-coming French-Canadian population, while the Houles seem to have been all gone by circa 1885.

The Houles, with their smaller involvement in agriculture, their greater commitment to the exploitation of bison herds and perhaps their work in the frattage business had greater difficulty or were so convinced by speculators and government officials, in meeting the requirement of the changing Manitoba Act. This is especially true when one considers the stipulations of the fourth and fifth amendments. They also lacked the Berthelet's ties to Saint-Boniface, their great affluence, larger support networks and overall greater level of 'eastern-style sophistication and know-how'. Even though the Houles knew the importance of land ownership, as shown by their securing the services of Goulet in the 1860's, and by their prompt sending of request for letters-patent in the early 1870's, they seem to have been unable to hold on to the land for much more than a decade. Whether the Houles actually sold their lots because they wanted to leave or because they were convinced they would never get patents is difficult to tell from the available information. However, it would be surprising for the Houles to have bothered to make official claim to the land they possessed, only to sell it for rather small sums of money a few years later without some form of coercion being involved.

6) Vandal family

From the information available in the 1870 Census, the Vandals appear to have been a rather small family grouping. Counting in-laws, they were a total of only thirteen

Vandal Extended Family (productive members)

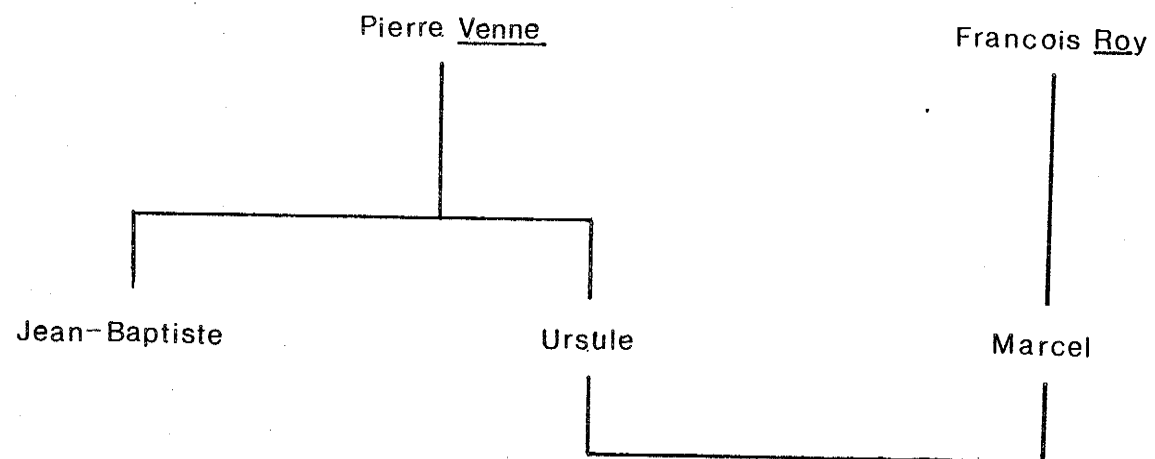


individuals. In the 1868 Executive Relief Committee Report only one Vandal is noted. This is Pierre Vandal, who had planted nothing in 1867 or 1868 but who did own four horses, along with one ox, one cow and a calf. After Alexandre Morin it was Pierre Vandal who owned the most horses in Pointe à Grouette. The Vandals are probably representative of the hivernant group living in the area. Nevertheless, Pierre Vandal claimed possession of several lots before 1870 and even took the precaution of having them noted down by the surveyor Roger Goulet (13).

The Vandals claimed five lots in the Pointe à Grouette area. Three of the lots, 546, 545, 547, were certified by Roger Goulet as having been claimed prior to 1870. Two of these lots (545, 547) were sold to Joseph Hamelin in 1873. One of these lots (547) would again end up in George Stephen's hands. The third lot, claimed jointly by Pierre Vandal and his son-in-law, Gabriel Houle, which was also surveyed before 1870, was sold in 1878. The buyer was again Joseph Hamelin of Saint-Norbert. Pierre Vandal sold his two remaining lots in 1879 to a francophone from Saint-Boniface named Pierre Gauthier. All lots were sold by 1880. None of these lots were patented at the time of sale.

In the 1919 Census taken by l'abbé Rocan, 'Vandal' was not listed as a family name. One Adolphe Fontaine living on lot 585 stated that his mother was a 'Louissa Vandal'. However it is unclear whether she was a member of the Vandal family of pre-1870 Sainte-Agathe. Some French-Canadian

Venne Extended Family (productive members)



families coming out of Québec at the turn of the century had 'Vandal' as a family name.

7) Venne

The Vennes were, like the Vandals, a very small family unit. Including in-laws and children, they totalled nine people in 1870. Neither the Vennes or their married daughter's in-laws, the Roys, are recorded in the 1868 Executive Relief Committee's Report. Only Pierre Venne's son, Jean-Baptiste Venne, had in-laws which are recorded in the 1868 report. They are Charles, Louis and Gabriel Houle. However, these are among the less agriculturally productive heads of families in 1867-68. Taken together the Vennes and the Roys (dit Contois) claimed eight river lots (14).

Of the eight lots claimed by this extended family, four found their way into the hands of the clergy. Goulet did not issue possession certificates for any of these four lots and none were patented at the time of the sales (late 1870). Rev. C. Samoisette made a 63% resale profit on lot 499 and lot 501 was sold by the same priest for 950% more than the original amount given to Jean-Baptiste Venne! Two lots, one owned by Marcel Roy dit Contois (538), and one by Francois Roy, dit Contois (536), were bought by the Rev. Pierre Jolys of the Rat River Settlement (Saint-Pierre) in 1881. He paid \$50.00 for each of the lots. Except lot 538, the clergy managed to clear quite substantial profits on the resale of Métis land. I believe this shows that the clergy of Saint-Boniface were motivated by financial ambitions as well

as a concern for maintaining a 'French-Catholic presence in the West'.

Of the four remaining lots, two were bought by French-Canadians or Métis living in Saint-Boniface. Both were resold quickly for a profit. Lot 537 went to A.G.B. Bannatyne and the other (539) went to a Henry C. Clark. Lot 497 was sold in 1879 to an easterner named Herbert Archibald for \$40.00. Lot 503 was given for an unknown amount of money to a Métis named McCarthy (dit Mercredi).

On the average, the Vennes sold their lots for \$160.00, which is quite a bit less than the Berthelets, Morins or even the Houles. The fact that they sold half of their land to the Catholic clergy, who seem to have consistently paid the least for Métis lands, may explain in part the low prices. However, the Vennes and their in-laws were perhaps the least committed Métis family in Pointe à Grouette to agriculture. This had a serious impact not only on their ability to receive patents for their lands, which was a generalized problem, but also on their being able to command even average prices for their lots. Buyers may have been unwilling to pay more because the Venne land claims were so weak due to the ultra-vire Manitoba Act amendments. It should be noted that none of the Venne extended family left the area before 1875, that is, before the third and fourth amendments to the Manitoba Act. This again shows, I believe, that the Métis left Manitoba not because they were unwilling to make the transition to full time agricultural

pursuits but because they realized the federal government had no intention of fulfilling the promises made by it in 1870.

G) Other families

The six major extended families in Pointe à Grouette whose members are listed in the 1870 District of Assiniboia census returns for the parish of Sainte-Agathe claimed a total of 47 lots out of the 107 considered. Most of these claimed lots were specifically in the area designated as Pointe à Grouette, that is between lots 551 and 581. The MacPhillips' plan of river lots in the parish of Sainte-Agathe (1874) show these 30 lots to be the most cultivated in all the 623 lots that make up the old parish territory. The other 60 lots which are, along with Pointe à Grouette, comprised within the modern boundaries of Sainte-Agathe were either never claimed by Métis, claimed by Métis not listed in the census, or claimed by Métis not allied to one of the major families of Sainte-Agathe. In several other cases, the files for certain lots are missing. Only lots having belonged to Métis at one time or another will be examined here. Lots which seem to be unclaimed in 1870 or whose files are missing are of little value to this study.

François Laberge claimed lots 586 and 587 in the parish of Sainte-Agathe. He is listed in the 1868 Relief Committee Report as having three horses, one cow and one calf and having reaped 45 bushels of wheat and 70 bushels of

potatoes. The 1870 District of Assiniboia census does not point to his having had any ties with the Berthelets or any other of the 'affluent' families in Pointe à Grouette.

On May 16th, 1871, Laberge sold lot 587 to the Hon. Salomon Hamelin, an affluent and politically active Métis from Saint-Boniface, for the sum of 42 'Louis sterling'. Hamelin would resell it to Sedley Blanchard in consideration of \$500.00 on July 10, 1873. On October 15 of the same year, Donald A. Smith requested letters-patent for this lot. Laberge's other lot, 586, was patented to him on the 28th of January 1886. By this time he was living in Cavalier, North Dakota. Though the patent appears to have been delivered to him, Laberge never returned to the area. Lot 586 was not being worked either in 1902 or 1919.

Joseph Lambert does not show up in the 1868 documents but he is noted in 1870 Census, along with his father, Antoine Lambert, and one brother and two sisters. The Lambert were Métis who did not seem to have any ties with the area's other families. On the 12th of March 1874, Joseph Lambert made a formal request for letters-patent to lot 602. His son Guillaume resided on this lot from 1880 till his death in 1884. The widow of Guillaume Lambert, Marguerite, was told November 5th, 1888, that she could purchase lot 602 as a 'first class staked claim' (160 acres free, balance at \$1.00 an acre). On September 3, 1889 a deed to the lot was being prepared in Marguerite Lambert's name for lot 602.

Only one Lambert was living in Sainte-Agathe in 1919. This was Albert Lambert born in Crookston, Minnesota and married to Dilvina Boutin of Oakwood, North Dakota. They returned to Sainte-Agathe in 1917. It is not likely that he was a close relation to Guillaume Lambert. He and his wife settled on lot 623.

Olivier Laferté (or Laferty) and his family are the only Métis listed in 1870 as being born in the 'Nord-Ouest' and not the Rivière Rouge district. In the 1868 Relief Committee Report, he is listed as having harvested no crops in 1867 or 1868 and as owning only one ox, two cows and one calf. He died sometime in the early 1870's, before receiving patents to the lots 590 and 591 which he was claiming. On the 15th of October 1883, lot 590 was patented to the heirs of Olivier Laferté and was sent to W.E. Macara, their 'assignee'. On January 1st, 1885, Madeleine Laferté gave François Gringas power of attorney to draw scrip for the hay privilege appertaining to lots 590 and 591.

In 1902, lot 590 was being worked by Alexis Beaulieu, who arrived in the area in 1893. Beaulieu was born December 1875 at Great Slave Lake. His mother was Marie Laferté and his father's first name was Alexis. It would seem in this case a lot stayed (indirectly) in the hands of a Métis family for a longer period of time. No Beaulieu now lives in the area. No mention is made of lot 591 after 1885.

Michel Venne does not appear on the 1868 Relief Report or the 1870 Census. However, Roger Goulet, surveyor for the

Council of Assiniboia, does testify to having surveyed lot 543 for Venne in 1869. Venne sold his claim to a Pierre St-Germain in about 1872. This Métis resold the claim five years later (5/7/1878) to another Métis, Napoléon Bonneau, for \$700.00. Bonneau turned over all claims to the lot eleven days later to a William McIndoo for \$600.00! Letters-patent to this lot were issued to McIndoo on February 12, 1880.

Lots 540, 541, 498 and 500 were claimed by one Salomon Venne, another probable member of the Pointe à Grouette Venne family. Lot 540 was surveyed for Venne in 1869 by Goulet as his 'Outer Two Mile' (hay privilege) for his west side property (lot 541). Lot 541 was recommended for patent on February 3, 1877. In 1878, Venne sold lot 541 to one Alex Christie with whom he was locked in dispute over the ownership of lot 540. Lot 541 was sold for \$350.00. Unfortunately, since the file for lot 540 is incomplete, we do not know the outcome of the lawsuit. Lot 498 and 500 are contained in an 1884 list of unsettled claims prepared by a man named Walsh for the parish of Sainte-Agathe. The claimant for the two lots was listed as being Salomon Venne. The files for these lots are not to be found in the Archives of Manitoba or the Public Archives in Ottawa. No Vennes were listed as paying taxes in 1902.

Jean-Baptiste Chew, husband of Josephète Vandal, is listed in the 1868 Relief Committee Report as having one horse, two oxen, one cow, one calf but no crops to his name.

He resided on lot 549. Chew died prior to the transfer and his re-married (to Pierre Grandbois) widow proceeded to lay claim to the lot. But in 1872, Pierre Grandbois and Josephète Vandal sold lot 549 to Rev. N. Ritchot for the sum of \$200.00. On the 25th of January 1879, Ritchot still had not received letters for this lot. This lot does not appear worked in 1902.

Alexandre Winzel sn. was married to a Marie-Anne Laferté. She was the daughter of Louis Laferté, one of two French-Canadians residing in Pointe à Grouette. In the 1870 Census, her mother, herself and her siblings are all classified as Métis. In the 1868 Relief Report she is designated as 'Veuve Winsell (sic)' for Alex Winzel sn. died 'suddenly' on January 27, 1860. Her sons, Alexandre Jn., Joseph, Boniface and Olivier jointly claimed lots 592 and 593. Roger Goulet testified having surveyed these lots in their father's name in 1866. Lot 593 is not mentioned again but there is a deed of land between Alex Winzel Jn. and William Hespeler handing over lot 592 for \$460.00 on March 29, 1878. Changes in lot boundaries make the files for these lots exceedingly difficult to understand. The end product, however, was that the Winzel sons had lost any claim to land in Sainte-Agathe by 1880. Lot 593 was worked in 1902 by a Félix D. Lemoine of Saint-Robert (Québec), married to a Mary Jane Mathieu of Massachusetts.

Alexander Winzel Jn. also claimed two other lots, 595 and 604. He sold lot 595 to Rev. N. Ritchot for \$145.00 on

the 2nd of October, 1880. Winzel made formal applications for letters-patent to lot 604 on March 22nd, 1878. His grandfather and his uncle, Louis and Jean Laferté signed affidavits in his favor. In the early 1880's Winzel sold his land to Napoleon Bonneau for \$200.00. In 1882, Bonneau signed a quit claim deed in favor of Duncan McDougall of Saint-Boniface for \$125.00. In 1889, lot 604 was still not patented. In 1902, lot 595 was being worked by Félix Lemoine of Sorel (Québec) widower of Philomène St-Michel. They arrived in the Pointe à Grouette area in 1890.

The Pilon family claimed three lots, 594, 596 and 600. They claim to have resided in this area, which they designated as Petite Pointe de Roches (just north of Pointe à Grouette) prior to the transfer, even though their names do not appear on the 1867 Relief Report or the 1870 Census and R. Goulet does not testify in any of the claims. Antoine Pilon received the letters-patents for lots 600 and 594 in spring of 1878. However, the Dominion Land Officer Donald Codd refused to hand these over to Pilon until some government relief mortgages for seed advances registered against the lots were repaid. These lots were not being worked in 1902, however, the Pilon's are registered in the parish of Sainte-Agathe in 1902 or in 1919. It is uncertain if these Pilon's are of Métis or French-Canadian descent.

Lot 596 was claimed by a Toussaint Pilon who later gave it to Abraham Pilon. There was a house on this lot and 3 acres cultivated. Unfortunately, in the mid 1870's, the

North-West Transportation Company's steamship ran out of wood near Petite Pointe de Roches and proceeded to dismantle the small shack to use as fuel! Pilon seems to have been au large (on the prairies) at this time. To make things worse the inspector chose that summer to examine Pilon's claim of 'possession and improvements'. The inspector declared, seeing there was no house, that there was little proof of occupancy and that his claim could not be entertained! Abraham Pilon, understandably discouraged, then sold his claim to A.G.B. Bannatyne for \$450.00. Ironically, this lot was subsequently auctioned off as unoccupied land by the Dominion Government and bought up by William Hespeler. Hespeler received patent for this lot in 1886 over Bannatyne's protest. This lot does not appear to have been worked in 1902.

Pierre Landry applied for patent of lot 598 on April 17, 1874. Alex Morin was the Justice of the Peace. Landry claimed to have been living in the area since circa 1853! On the 24th of October 1878, the patent still not issued, Landry sold his claim to William Hespeler for \$350.00. In 1882, Hespeler deeded lot 598 to Meyer and Meyer (barristers at law). The River Lot File for 598 ends in 1891. At that time, the lot was still not patented. This land does not appear to have been worked in 1902.

François Charette, son of Joseph Charette, bought lots 552 and 553 from Célésie Handry in circa 1873. Handry had been using these lots as a wintering place and had a house

on lot 552 prior to the transfer. On July 8, 1874, François Charette and his wife Margaret sold to Sedley Blanchard in consideration of \$532.00 their rights to lot 553. On the 2nd of November 1874, Blanchard conveyed to George Stephen the rights to lot 553. On December 1, 1874, George Stephen applied for patent. It was recommended for patent December 12, 1876. In 1902, the lot was still not being worked by anybody. In 1877, François Charette sold the rights to his other lot, 552, to Dr. John Schultz in consideration of \$300.00. No Charettes were noted in Sainte-Agathe by the 1919 Census of l'abbé Rocan.

Lots 534 and 533 were claimed by one Cyrille Dumas (or Dumais) whom Goulet certified had a house and four acres ploughed in 1868. In 1870, he sold lot 533 to Louis Riel Jr. In July 1875, this land was sold by Riel's mother to Joseph Delorme for \$550.00. The patent for this lot was granted to Joseph Delorme on April 14, 1880. Delorme seems to have never received it, for on February 15, 1881, he was inquiring about the state of his claim telling the minister not to hesitate delivering it "since I am neither a Sauvage or a Métis ". Patent was issued to Cyrille Dumais for lot 534, but there is no evidence that the patent was actually delivered to him. In 1902, lot 533 was being worked by François Pallard and his wife Marie Guédon, both of France. There is no information on lot 534.

Finally, lots 530 and 520 were claimed by one Joseph L'Espérance. At the time of the survey (early 1870's)



"Demoiselles Venne à Pembina", granddaughters
of Jean Baptiste Venne of Pointe à Grouette

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Cyrille Dumas: a Pointe à Grouette
winterer

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PF109



L'Espérance had one house and (he claimed) 10 acres under cultivation on lot 530. On April 24, 1874, he sold this lot to a "Baldwin Jhibaudou (sic)", barrister at law for \$150.00. Baldwin and Margaret Thibaudeau sold their claim to lot 531 to J. W. Huges for \$300.00. In 1880, the land was patented in Huges' name. The land does not appear worked in 1902.

Joseph L'Espérance also claimed on the 24th of November, 1873 to have been in possession of lot 520, Pointe à Saline, since June 8th, 1870. Unfortunately, the Department of the Interior wrote to L'Espérance in November, 1874, that to qualify for a patent he would have to have been residing on lot 520 since March 8th, 1869! This statement was written five months before the Dominion Government changed the date to establish occupancy on a lot from March 8th, 1869 to July 15, 1870. Had L'Espérance waited a year his claim would have been valid. As it was, in 1879, L'Espérance left for Missouri (U.S.), never to come back. Lot 520 was not worked in 1902.

The first fifteen lots considered in this subsection were claimed by people who were either noted in the 1868 Relief Committee Report, found in the 1870 Census, or had the same last name as one of the six major kin groupings in Pointe à Grouette but were not listed in the census. The only exception was the Winzel family. However, though the head of family did not show up in any of the documents, his widowed wife did. The widow, a member of the Lafonté

family, claimed two river lots in her deceased husband's name. She even had Goulet note down the claims. From the evidence available in the files, it would appear she and her children integrated themselves into the Laferté family after Alex Winzel senior's death in 1860. The Lafertés supported her claims and the claims of her children in the 1870's.

Of the fifteen lots considered, ten were not being worked in 1902. Presumably, they were being held for speculative purposes by absentee owners. Of these ten lots, three had no files to be found in Ottawa or Winnipeg. Of the remaining seven, five lots, 587, 543, 549, 592 and 604, went through the hands of obvious land dealers and speculators. People such as Salomon Hamelin (Métis from Saint-Boniface), Sedley Blanchard (attorney for Stephen and Smith), Napoléon Bonneau (Métis), William Hespeler (immigration officer for Manitoba and the North-West) and Father Ritchot were involved in the alienation of Métis lands. If the legal documents reflect reality, the Métis who were selling their lots to the speculators received on the average \$238.50. This sum is less than any of the six family groupings previously considered. Three of the five lots were sold in 1872, prior to the detrimental legal alterations of the Manitoba Act. Of the remaining two lots, lot 592, claimed by the Winzel heirs, was sold in 1878. And finally, the last river lot was sold in the early 1880's.

The other five lots of the first fifteen were being worked in 1902 by French-Canadians. Of these lots, one,

593, had nothing in its files except the statement of occupancy made by widow Winzel. Two lots, 586 and 590, were patented to the original claimants, though the documents for at least one of the two were sent to an assignee. Finally, the two remaining lots were sold, after the alterations to the Manitoba Act but before the lots were patented, for an average of \$275.00 to land dealers.

The last 10 lots of the 25 considered in this section were claimed by individuals who do not appear in the 1868 and 1870 sources and whose family names are not listed in the 1870 Census. This, however, does not mean their claims to having possessed land in Pointe à Grouette prior to 1870 are false. The 1860's were exceedingly hard years for both the farmers and the buffalo hunters. Many Métis were forced to stay au large for several years in a row, making few, if any, visits to the river lots they considered theirs. This was not out of any lack of interest in landed property but out of sheer economic necessity. As Wright (1949:49) comments:

Most of the last ten years that the colony was under the rule of the Hudson Bay Company were years of famine. In 1861 yields of wheat were poor and barley and potato crops were perfect failures. In the spring of 1862 dozens of starving people besieged the H.B.C. offices at Fort Garry, begging for food to eat and wheat to sow. For the next five years drought and grasshoppers afflicted every crop, and in 1867, disaster was added to disaster by the simultaneous failures of the buffalo hunt and the fisheries.

Of these ten lots, nine were not being worked in 1902,

again presumably being held for speculative purposes! Of these nine, five were sold to obvious speculators such as A.G.B. Bannatyne, Hespeler, Blanchard and Dr. Schultz. The Métis received, supposedly, an average of \$395.00 for these river lots, all of which were sold prior to patenting. This is higher than the average received by the most affluent and influential family in Pointe à Grouette, the Berthelets. One of the reasons the average is so high is that none of the lots were bought by Church officials. These people always paid quite a bit less than lay speculators. However, whether the Métis actually received the amount of money stated in the documents is up for debate, since the vast majority of the Métis, even their Justices of the Peace, were functional illiterates. Of the remaining four lots, three were patented to their original claimants. However, of these three, two were withheld because of seed grain mortgages incurred in the 1860's. The last of the four lots, claimed by one Joseph L'Espérance, was refused consideration by officials at the Department of the Interior and the claim was cancelled.

The only lot worked in 1902 was 533. It was first sold to Louis Riel Jr. who, since he was 'persona non grata' in the province, could not claim it. The lot was sold in 1875 to an apparently non Métis Delorme who subsequently received patent for it.

Three things stand out when examining these 'fringe' Métis claims to river lots and the subsequent history of the

lots. The first is that most of these lots had changed hands by 1880, a minimum of fourteen ~~lots~~. Of the remaining eleven, only two lots have their first sale dated after 1880. For the nine other, this type of information is simply not available in the River Lot files.

The second surprising finding for these lots is the low level of activity of Church officials in the buying and selling of these lots. Only two lots, 8% of the total, went to a Church official, père Ritchot of Saint-Norbert. Rev. O. Samoisette and his associates did not purchase any lots from this group of people! Perhaps the Church had less sway over these people, who did not seem to have been around much in the 1860's, when the Catholic Church was increasing its level of activity in Pointe à Grouette. Another explanation would be that the Catholic authorities had little faith in the strength of these 'fringe' Métis land claims.

The third interesting finding is that a rather high number of these lots were apparently still in the hands of speculators at the turn of the century; 19 out of 25 lots (76%)! Most of the forty-two lots held by the more 'established' Métis families in Pointe à Grouette were in French-Canadian hands by 1902. This may be in part due to the greater activity of land-buying by Church officials among the affluent Métis. The clergy do not seem to have held on to the land for very long periods of time. In the parish of Sainte-Agathe, in any case, they quickly resold

river lots to in-coming French-Canadians. Also, patents were delivered for lots claimed by 'agriculturally-minded' affluent Métis sooner, it would seem, than for lots held by hivernants. A clear title to a lot would have facilitated the buying and selling of it.

In this chapter, 67 lots out of a possible 107 (62.6%) were accounted for. For the other 40 lots the information was either not available or the lots were not claimed by 1870. Two lots, 564 and 567, were given by the Métis (Berthelet and Morin) prior to 1870 to the Catholic Church for the purpose of building a mission.

Footnotes

1. See D. N. Sprague, 1980b:77 quoting from Statutes of Great Britain, 34 and 35 Vict. Chapter 28.
2. A10#1
3. A5#1
4. A11#1
5. An examination of the River Lot Files shows that these people signed personal affidavits and had neighbours corroborating them stating that they had always been considered owners of the land in question. And this to the point of conducting transactions of buying and selling these lots.
6. A12#1
7. *ibid.*
8. A13#1
9. A14#1
10. A13#2
11. A13#3
12. A13#4
13. A13#5
14. A13#6

CHAPTER FOUR: Concluding Remarks

In 1874, David Laird, then minister of the Interior, made explicit in one of his letters to governor Morris the Canadian government's general contempt for persons of partly Indian ancestry. Referring especially to the hivernant class he admitted they knew "something of farming" but could not see them adapting to a commercially agricultural Manitoba. He believed they would be useful mainly as a reserve labor force. As Sprague (1980b:81) states:

He [Laird] wanted to see them evicted from their river lots and encouraged to move north and west "around the different large lakes which abound with fine white fish". There they would pose no obstacles to the development of commercial agriculture in the south. Also, they could be called upon as a labor force from time to time to work on "roads and bridges...as well as the freighting of stores and provisions.

Eastern finance and merchant Capital wanted the Métis off the river lots for three principal reasons. As stated above, government officials and capitalists wanted a reserve labor force to build, among other things, transportation and storage facilities. These would be further potential means of bolstering their riches (Rothney, 1975:132). They also wanted to free up lands in Manitoba in order to profit from the potential productive worth of the land, rather than the actual returns received from farming it. In other words they wanted to engage in real estate speculation. Thirdly, eastern interests wanted the rapid development of Manitoba

as a commercial agricultural empire which would send its primary goods east in exchange for secondary manufactures from the commercial metropolises of England and Canada. They believed colonists coming from the East would do the job best. Thus the politicians and capitalists stood to gain on every ground. They would make profits by reselling Métis river lots to 'professional' farmers. They would receive substantial income through the transportation and storage system needed by the farmers to get themselves in and their crops out. They would be making enormous retail profits by providing and maintaining stores and other necessary services for this expanding population. Financiers also stood to make money through the creation of such banking facilities as the 'Manitoba Bank', owned and operated by the likes of George Stephen, Donald A. Smith and J. J. Hargrave. Also, by dispossessing the Métis they would be creating a cheap labor force in the West and opening land for the surplus farmers from Ontario, thus relieving political and economic pressure there. (Gagan, 1978:293-307).

The Canadian state structure, working closely with finance and mercantile capital, organized the dispersal of the Métis element of Red River in two ways. First, changes in the Manitoba Act effectively annulled the claims of a whole group of hivernant Mixed-bloods and increased the difficulties and delays encountered by more agriculturally oriented Métis. Second, speculators and swindlers were given a free hand, and indeed were to some extent

encouraged, in their activities. These are in fact two sides of the same coin. The political elites of Manitoba and of Ottawa were often also very important capitalists who engaged, as it happened, in the speculation of Métis lands. For example, Donald A. Smith who with his cousin George Stephen secured patents for seven river lots in Pointe à Grouette, was the representative of the county of Selkirk in the House of Commons (Le Métis, 8/3/1873:2). As mentioned in chapter two, Smith was also a large shareholder in the Hudson Bay Company and had, again with his cousin, extensive banking interests as well. A decade later, the two became principals in the Canadian Pacific Railway syndicate. Or again, lawyer Sedley Blanchard, who was instrumental in the Stephen-Smith Sainte-Agathe land deals, was appointed clerk to the provincial Executive Committee (Le Métis, 19/6/1872:2). In addition, he linked himself to the Hudson Bay Company by marrying the daughter of M. Clark, a prominent Hudson Bay Company Bourgeois (Le Métis, 18/8/1876:2). Other speculators, such as A.G.B. Bannatyne, Wm B. Thibaudeau, Wm Hespeler and Alexander Christie, all land buyers in Pointe à Grouette, were public figures wielding considerable clout. A.G.B. Bannatyne, a wealthy merchant, represented the county of Provencher, of which Sainte-Agathe was a part, in federal politics between 1875 and 1879. (Le Métis, 3/4/1875:1). Wm B. Thibaudeau was named a public notary for the province of Manitoba (Le Métis, 14/2/1874:2). William Hespeler,

who acquired three lots in Pointe à Grouette, was named Immigration agent for Manitoba and the North-West Territories (Le Métis, 1973:2). Finally, Alexander Christie was named Justice of the Peace for the county of Lisgar in 1874 (Le Métis, 3/1/1874:2).

'WASP' speculators were not the only ones who used the state apparatus to further their own interests. As it had done prior to 1870, the Métis Petty Bourgeoisie centered in Saint-Boniface actively engaged in politics. Public figures such as the Hon. Salomon Hamelin, Hon. Pierre Delorme, Hon. Charles Nolin and Louis Schmidt divided their time between civic duties and the buying and selling of Métis lands.

The Roman Catholic clergy also engaged in the process of land ownership. Two main reasons appear to have motivated them. First, they wanted to secure lands for incoming 'professional' French Catholic farmers, thus strengthening their socio-economic power base in Manitoba. Second, certain members within the Church appear to have been spurred by profit-making reasons. Priests like the Rev. C. Samoisette generated large amounts of money for themselves and their French-Canadian and French noble backers. In fact, the three fathers most active in the buying and selling of lands in Red River, Rev. Pierre Jolys of Rat River Settlement, Rev. C. Samoisette of Sainte-Agathe and Rev. N. Ritchot of Saint-Norbert, were all secular priests; secular priests make no vows of poverty.

The Roman Catholic Church was backed in its land

dealing endeavors by such French-Catholic politicians as Hon. Joseph Royal, Hon. A.C.C. Larivière, Hon. Joseph Dubuc. The clergy and its French-Canadian acolytes appear to have had an ambivalent attitude toward the Métis winterers and the small farmers in the 'fringe' settlements. In Pointe à Grouette, they do not seem to have helped the Métis in the course of land claims and litigations. Few affidavits or letters of support written in favor of Métis claimants, even the 'wealthy ones', are found.

The Métis as a people were not uniformly affected by the combined impact of the three groups of speculator-politicians and the transformation of the Manitoba Act. As previously mentioned, the Petty Bourgeoisie weathered the change quite well. Having closer cultural and economic ties with the clergy and the incoming merchants and financiers than with the hivernants and the small farmers, they seem to have had few scruples about being involved in Métis land dealing. In Pointe à Grouette, these Métis bought river lots owned by the hivernants who were listed in pre-1871 documents: the Houles, the Vandals, and the Vennes, as opposed to the 'wealthy' Berthelets and Morins or the 'very fringe' Pilon, Lamberts or Dumas. For example, Joseph Hamelin, a wealthy Saint-Norbert merchant involved in provincial politics (Le Métis, 14/2/1874:2), bought four lots from the Houles (2 lots), the Vandals (1 lot) and the Vennes (1 lot) between 1873 and 1878.

Within Pointe à Grouette itself the impact was not

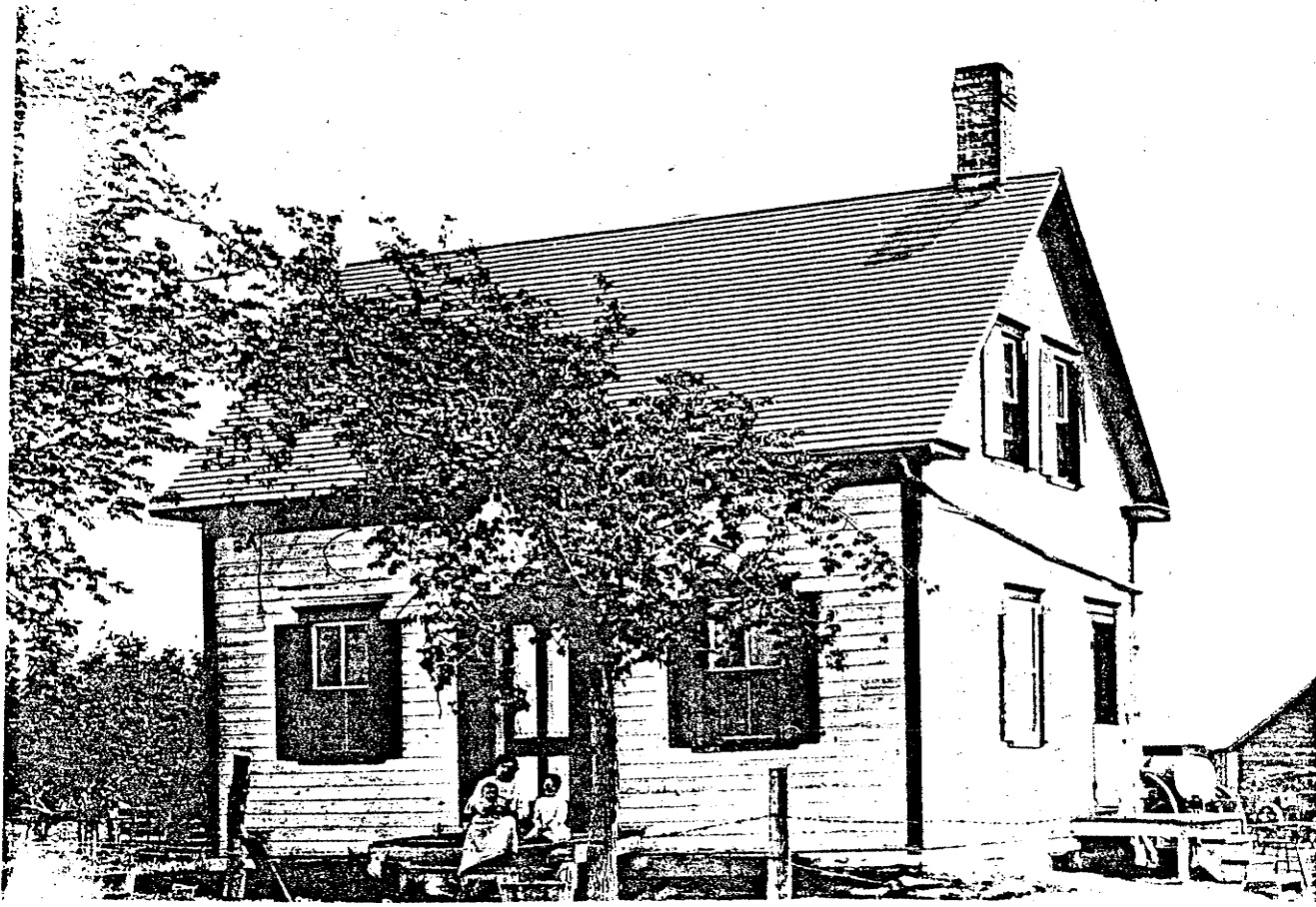
uniform. As the family based river lot analysis of chapter three indicated, differences between kin-based units did occur. These may be traced to pre-1870 differences in the production base among the area's families. Those families who were agriculturally committed, had a large kin network in Sainte-Agathe, and had ties with the Saint-Boniface elite, weathered the first few years of the transition better than their bison-hunting counterparts. These farming families identified with the Saint-Boniface elite and the incoming Easterners, as is shown by their marked lack of support for Louis Riel Jr. during the 1869-1870 crisis. Riel had his support base among the bison-hunting group, and the hivernants were a minority in the parish of Sainte-Agathe. Le Mètis, in its February 2, 1874 editorial, comments that 'it is in this parish that the nucleus of those who opposed Riel in 1869-1870 is to be found'. In 1874, Sainte-Agathe was the only parish out of the six forming the county of Provencher where a majority opposed the re-election of Riel. They favored by a margin of five votes a merchant cum speculator, Joseph Hamelin. Rev. A. Morice, o.m.i., in his Dictionnaire Historique des Canadiens et des Mètis Français de l'Ouest (1908:137) writes of Georges Klyne, the second largest farmer in Pointe à Grouette and son-in-law of Joseph Berthelet sr.:

Passait pour un mètis français et fut élu membre de la Convention du 26 septembre 1869 à la Rivière Rouge. Il représentait le district électoral de la

Pointe à Grouette, et fut un des trois métis considérés comme français malgré leur nom anglais qui firent opposition au gouvernement de L. Riel.

These affluent heads of families were actively involved in the provincial administration in the 1870's. Georges Klyne was elected member of the provincial legislature in 1870. He and Alexander Morin were also named Justices of the Peace a few years later. Alexander Morin was also nominated Sainte-Agathe representative to the Provencher Agricultural Society in the mid-1870's. Baptiste Dubois served as a government land-appraiser. Joseph Berthelet sn. served as a tax collector for the parish of Sainte-Agathe. Louis Morin became a road inspector. Joseph Berthelet Jn. was the pound-keeper. And finally Antoine Berthelet became a constable. These families were also aware of the growing importance of education; Georges Klyne, Joseph Berthelet Jn. and Alex Morin were designated commissioners in charge of education in 1871. By December 1871, they had opened a school in Pointe à Grouette and hired a lay teacher. The first year, they had 41 children registered and kept one of the best attendance records in Manitoba (Le Métis, 12/6/1872:2)! An examination of governmental appointments, as they were published in Le Métis, show that the importance of these Métis families in provincial and federal politics declined sharply after 1878.

The Pointe à Grouette 'fringe element' were the hivernants. These were the families who had, in the 1860's, continued bison hunting as their livelihood but had decided



Georgiana Morin of the Pointe à Grouette's
Morin, once one of the affluent families
in the area. In 1915 she worked as a maid
for Félix D. Lemoine.

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against moving to Pembina (North Dakota). Not one of these Vandals, Vennes, Houles, etc., were ever involved in politics or received governmental appointments. They were probably the 45% of Sainte-Agathe who favored Riel in 1874. Politically weak and socially isolated, they were in no position even if they wanted to, to secure letters-patent for their lots. These Métis were unable to effectively contest amendments to the Manitoba Act. They sold, or lost, their lands earlier (usually before 1878) for smaller sums of money. Because of their livelihood, these Métis had problems presenting strong claims that circumvented the new date of possession and the new occupancy requirements. These difficulties did not prevent them from showing an active interest in land ownership: they presented their claims, wrote out affidavits and, in some cases secured certificates from Roger Goulet. However, these people were emerging from an especially grim decade and were crippled by pre-1870 and early 1870's relief mortgages. Because of the diminishing returns of the bison hunts, they were probably not, for the most part, in a position to finance a complete change-over to agriculture and thus meet the possession requirements. These Métis eventually did move to the Saskatchewan or the Dakotas. In the 1870's bison hunting could still be a lucrative option, if successful. In the spring of 1871, for example, bison robes were selling for \$5.50 a piece, 'good or bad' (Le Métis, 5/6/1871:3), and 'ordinary' pemmican was selling for 'one shelling sterling'

per pound (Le Métis, 25/7/1871:1).

In the end, all the families who had been in Pointe à Grouette before 1870 left the area. However, different families departed for different reasons. Pre-1870 economic activities and social ties made differences in how the families could adapt to changes in the Manitoba Act and resist the activities of speculators. The bison-hunting kin groups left earlier, sold their lands for less, and usually departed before the patents had been issued. The lands of these Métis, by and large, ended up in the hands of Eastern, English-speaking merchants and financiers also involved in politics. For example, of the seven lots handled by Sedley Blanchard, only two had been claimed by affluent Métis. Lots not being bought by WASP speculators went to the Métis Petty Bourgeoisie.

Established Métis left for the most part after 1878. They sold several lots to the Roman Catholic Church and their French and French-Canadian backers (Bernier, Royal, etc.) Few Métis speculators were involved in these land deals. Several received their patents before selling the lots and, on the average, these Métis commanded more for their lands than their hivernant counterparts. Most of these river lots were patented in the name of the original claimants, even if they had been sold prior to patenting.

It is difficult to understand why the so-called affluent Métis families eventually left Pointe à Grouette. Indications are they felt little attraction to bison hunting

and bison hunters, were committed to agriculture, and were eager to pursue such 'eastern' interests as education and political involvement. In fact, some of these Métis, for example for Joseph Berthelet Jr., simply moved to river lots farther south. Others, like Georges Klyne, sold or abandoned their river lots in favor of lands au large (inland). These Métis were in some cases victims of deceit. For example, those lands claimed by Laplante and Morin were sent to "their" assignees. They may also have had a cash flow problem in the 1870's and were, like the 'fringe' Métis, unable to pay back their seed (and grasshopper) mortgages. Such was the case of Alexandre Morin. After 1878, the Métis elite's influence in the political and economic sphere seems to have dropped sharply. For example, few Métis speculators are active after the end of the 1870's. These 'affluent' Métis from Saint-Boniface and in Pointe à Grouette may no longer have been in a position to protect their interests against more affluent and better connected easterners.

In about a decade, 1870 to 1880, the Pointe à Grouette Mixed-bloods lost a conflict over a prized economic resource: the river lots. However, the loss was not as straight-forward as it initially seemed. If anything, this thesis points to the fact that the 'dispersal' was an immensely complex process. It was not simply the result of a series of interactions between Métis speculators and the Federal government, each being a separate homogeneous

entity. Grouped within the 'speculator' group were the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern merchants and financiers, the Saint-Boniface French-Canadian and Métis elites. Each of these bought and sold lands from different Pointe à Grouette subgroups. For example, the Church representatives bought several lots from the 'affluent' Métis of the area. On the other hand, the Métis petty bourgeoisie concentrated their efforts on the mixed-blood hivernant whose claims were in relative order and whose names showed up in pre-1871 documents. Finally, the Ontario-based English speculators secured several claims from the 'fringe' Sainte-Agathe Métis whose claims were hit the hardest by the changes in the Manitoba Act and who were the first to leave the area. Also, as indicated in chapter three, each of the subgroups within the Métis and speculators' groups had very different attitudes towards, and relationships with the Provincial and Federal governments.

Besides showing the complexity of the dispersal process, this thesis points to the need for further critical analysis of nineteenth Métis social relations. It is my contention that the concept of 'Nation', as used, for example, by Auguste-Henri de Trémaudan (1979) or 'Society', as used by George H. Sprenger (1972), cannot be applied to the Métis. Both authors (among many others) describe in fact only one segment, albeit the largest one, within the Métis population of Red River; one with a very specific socio-economic position within British/Canadian Capitalist

social system.

This thesis illustrates well the fact that there were serious cleavages developing within the Métis population during the nineteenth century. These were brought to the forefront during the Evènements of 1869-1870. The real supporters of Riel were the Métis bison hunters who had most to fear from a change in the area's economy (from a fur trade one to one of commercial agriculture). Bois-Brûlés who saw themselves as profiting from the annexation of Assiniboia and the North-West by Canada remained neutral or were frankly hostile, as shown by the Pointe à Gravelle farming segment, to Riel and his demands.

Sprenger (1972) argues that the Red-River Métis formed an essentially unified ethnic group with a well developed esprit de corps. The Métis saw themselves, and were seen by others as forming a distinct social entity (Sprenger, 1972:19). They held in common certain values and attitudes such as hospitality, the sharing of material goods and the belief in the importance of friends and family (Sprenger, 1972:21). Sprenger further argues that the Métis placed a high value on their political independence (1972:22). These people also showed their apartness by wearing a distinctive style of dress. But, in Sprenger's view, the most important criteria of all was the fact that they identified themselves and were identified as being a distinct group. In his thesis he states (1972:21):

Other groups in the Settlement and throughout the Northwest, such as

French, Métis Anglaise, Scots, Cree, Saulteaux and Assiniboine regarded the Métis as an ethnic group. The Indians referred to them as 'wagon men' (Howard, 1965:41) and every resident or traveller-explorer who has left us a written record, clearly indicates that the Métis were different from both the Indian and the Whites.

But is Sprenger describing the Métis population as a whole, or rather a segment that holds a specific economic function: i.e. the bison hunters? As Gosman, (1977) comments, only the bison hunters argued political independence. The Métis elite was quite happy to be co-opted into first, the council of Assiniboia, and then the provincial government's administrations. As well, the Pointe à Grouette farmers certainly showed little enthusiasm for Riel provisional government! The Saint-Boniface elite and even the farming segment did not wear the distinctive blue capote, l'Assomption belt and black shawls. Also, the value placed on hospitality, sharing, family, etc., were common also to both the Indian and French-Canadian populations in the area and were probably simply good survival techniques in a harsh environment. Finally the Indian description of Métis as 'wagon men' has to refer only to those who actually went au large : the bison hunters.

Sprenger's most important criterion for seeing the Métis as a distinct social entity is the 'we-they' one; the feeling of 'apartness' from non Métis and of an internal unity within the Métis group. But does this 'we-they' criteria hold when discussing the Métis population as a

whole? Basing myself on the evidence produced in this thesis I believe it does not. The 'we-they' feeling only hold when one is discussing the Métis bison hunters and not when one refers to the farming or merchant populations. These last two groups identified with the incoming farming and merchant French-Canadians. This statement is further supported (unwittingly) by J. Honorius Daignault (1945:28) in his description of the parish of Saint-François-Xavier in the 1860's:

Il y avait à Pigeon Lake à l'ouest de l'église un bon nombre de familles métisses qui avaient conservé intacte les coutumes primitives de leurs ancêtres maternels; les femmes portant châles et mocassins et parlant plutôt le Cree. A l'église elles ne prenaient jamais place dans les bancs avec les hommes, elles préféraient s'asseoir sur le plancher...il y avait par contre à l'est, au sud de la rivière, un autre groupe plus nombreux et plus avancé qui affectait d'imiter les Canadiens français dans leurs coutumes et leurs vêtements, les femmes portant chapeaux et chaussures françaises. C'est de là que leur est venu le nom de "Petit Canada" que leur donnaient en dérision les gens de Pigeon Lake, pendant que ces derniers recevaient en revanche le nom de "purs"... Au Petit Canada, on trouvait ce qu'on était convenu d'appeler l'aristocratie métisse: Maxime Lépine, frère de Didyme, les Lavallée, les Deslauriers, les Lespérance, les Dauphinais, les Bellehumeur, les Pagé, etc.

(emphasis mine)

By the use of terms such as 'Society' and 'Nation', researchers of the Métis have tended to obscure the fact that they were dealing with a specific socio-economic class within the context of a developing capitalist society.

Mixed-blood merchants and farmers identified more with French-Canadians who had similar occupations and interests; that they were of Métis ancestry was secondary to the fact that they were merchants or farmers. Only the bison hunting segment of the Métis population had the strong group feelings, internal cohesion, political awareness, sense of independence, characteristic dress, etc., which have been used, erroneously, to describe all the descendants of the Voyageurs and their Indian wives.

I believe we are dealing here with what researchers such as Karl Kautsky (1928) and Abram Leon (1974) have termed a 'people-class'. What Leon wrote when defining the position of Jews in a historical context could be applied to the Métis. In his book The Jewish Question a Marxist Interpretation (1974:74) Leon states:

Above all the Jews constitute historically a social group with a specific economic function. They are a class or more precisely a people-class...The concept of class does not at all contradict the concept of people. It is because the Jews have preserved themselves as a social class that they have likewise retained certain of the religious, ethnic and linguistic traits.

When dealing with groups of Jews which became assimilated to the larger population, Abram postulated a 'law' which again could be of some relevance when studying the Métis petty bourgeoisie:

The law of assimilation might be formulated as follows: Wherever the Jews cease to constitute a class, they lose more or less rapidly, their

ethnical, religious and linguistic
characteristics; they become
assimilated.

(Leon, 1974:81)

Of course I am not advocating a simple one to one correlation between the histories of the Métis and Jewish people. There are obvious differences. However, I do believe a marxist class analysis (using such concepts as 'people-class') would go a long way in furthering our understanding of the Métis people and their history.

Metis house, built circa
1860 (St-Adolphe, Man)



Appendix 2,1

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., B60a/23, 1/10/1825

Edmonton Post Journal

Joseph Lafournaise dit Laboucane with his family which consists of four strong men Half Breeds besides his wife and four young children also made their appearance this evening, between them they may have 120 Beaver skins. This family passed the summer between and the Rocky Mountain and the _____ of bow and Red Deer Rivers...

Appendix 3,1

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D4/15, p. 32v, 18/4/1825

Simpson to Henry

I was yesterday favored with your letter of _____ covering check on the Montréal Bank of L50 in payment of supplies furnished to your family in the interior; and in consequence of the difficulty we sometimes have in getting money for similar advances, I have made up my mind to allow no further supplies be given on an account of any person unless means were deposited in our hands to meet such advances; we shall on such handling furnish them with supplies to the sum of L25 this season _____ too your request.

Batosh applied to me last season for a voyage for your family to this country, but I refused it, considering that in your present situation they might be unwelcomed visitors, and be consented to keep them, alone on my assurance, that you would provide for them; the poor man is burdened with a prodigious number of dependents and followers, nearly 40 in all and his means are inadequate to their support, he cannot therefore afford to maintain your family unless a regular allowance be made for that purpose...

Appendix 3,2

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D4/7, p. 32, 26/8/1820

Simpson's Report

The settlers and half-breeds were less disposed to encourage the Americans last year than the former, and altho' our opponents were seated close to us at Pembina and the Turtle Mountain they drew few skins from us, indeed I believe they had but a very small proportion of what was collected in their own territory as Nolin and his followers who purchase small outfits at our stores and have licenses from us to trade within the Hudson Bay Company territory bordering on Pembina take their own licence to trade within American lines, and this we find least expensive and least troublesome yet most effectual mode of opposing our neighbours and protecting the trade, with the further advantage that we run no risk thereby of drawing the Hon. Co. into explanations with governments on the delicate subject of territorial rights, as they cannot identify us with these people who may either be Americans or British subjects as suits their purpose being natives of the soil...

Appendix 3,3

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D4/98, p. 25, 18/7/1831

Simpson's Report

...It is confidently said by the American Traders that a military Post is to be established at Pembina this season, but that does not appear probable as the Indians in that quarter are peaceable and well disposed, therefore no military force is required to keep them in awe and the trade is not of sufficient importance to call the attention of the Govt. to its protection; but should any difference hereafter arise between Great Britain and the United States it is the point from whence the Hon. Co. is most likely to be disturbed, and which will therefore require to be most closely watched, as the Settlement would readily furnish the necessary means to overrun the Country; indeed we have more to apprehend in that case from its own inhabitants, say the retired servants of the Company and their half breed families than from our declared enemies; as they are Traders, Guides, entrepreneurs, Boat and Canoe men, who have very little good feelings towards their late employers and would instantly assert their independence under and impression that any change would improve their condition, and this feeling will continue to exist until some measure be adopted by which their labour can be turned to better account than merely affording them a subsistence...

The means of living are abundant and therefore cheap...The people however are very poor, as there is little demand for the produce of their labour, and the small means they have among them which arose entirely from their saving when in the Hon. Co. service, are now becoming so low that they find much difficulty in providing themselves with such absolute necessities of European produce and manufacture as are required which frequently occasions much discontent and leads to a desire of withdrawing to

Canada and the States, where they could find a market for the fruits of their industry. I am therefore apprehensive that unless some plan be soon fallen upon to afford them the benefit of an export trade the great bulk of the respectable white population will abandon the Settlement.

Appendix 3,4

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D4/99, p. 4, 10/8/1832

Simpson's Report

The affairs of Red River Settlement I am happy to say are in an improving state, the people are becoming very industrious, the necessaries of life are abundant, and tranquillity and good order prevail throughout. After my return from the last fall, the halfbreeds, who are in a habit of following the buffalo during the summer and autumn were rather clamorous and dissatisfied because I declined purchasing all the pemmican they presented for sale, although we have no occasion for it, and they took the opportunity of agitating several claims, which are numerated in a letter endorsed _____ and others, under date August 10, 1831, which will be found in the bundle of letters of the season, herewith transmitted. Their leaders however were men of no weight or influence, so that we had little difficulty in bringing them to order conceding no single point.

Our greatest evil is the want of a market for the surplus produce, which occasions much dissatisfaction, as the ready money brought to the Settlement is almost entirely drawn away by the demands for European supplies, and every settler being a farmer, all are settlers and none are buyers. The consequence is that they cannot provide themselves with clothing, work, and other European produce and manufactures from our stores, and unless we soon fall upon a remedy for this evil, the Settlement must either break up or the Settlers will direct their attentions to the fur trade, and under American protection they would be formidable opponents indeed. A market must therefore be provided and as soon as possible.

Appendix 3,5

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D4/102, pp. 45-46, 1835

Simpson's Report

We the Canadians and Half-Breeds established in the colony of Red River belonging to the late Earl of Selkirk assembled all together, have unanimously taken the following resolutions.

That we are assured the legal possessions of our lands, as soon as can possibly be conveniently done, for this purpose that the executors and heirs of the late Earl of Selkirk be informed of the earnest and respectful supplication made to them by the settlers of the Colony for the payment of their land at the price estimated and fixed upon by the late late Earl of Selkirk himself, that is 5 shilling sterling per acre, payable with the produce of their respective lands, according to the testimony of persons yet living who have been _____ witnesses of his Lordships declaration and promise...

...That the Heirs and Executors of the late Earl of Selkirk be informed of the low price of wheat in the Colony discouraging the Settlers of their ever permanently settling themselves except if some regulations fixing a price proportionate to the expense of cultivation in this country, which in our humble opinion could not be less than 5 shilling sterling per bushel, saleable in seed or grain...

...In reply to the address of the Canadian and canadian halfbreeds of Red River Settlement delivered to me at a public meeting held at Fort Garry the 16th instant I beg to assure them...

...In regard to the price of flour, I conceive that which the Hon. Co. now pays, say 11/6 per _____, to be very liberal. Flour of a superior quality to any produced in Red River can be purchased in the U.S. or Canada at a lower price. I cannot therefore hold

any prospects of the price of this article being advanced; but in order to afford the Buffalo hunters an equal advantage to that which the resident settlers enjoy, from the increase price given of late years for Beef, Pork and other produce. I am willing to give an increased price of 2 1/2 p lb for good pemmican this ensuing year...

Appendix 3,6

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D4/102, p. 23, 10/6/1835

Simpson's Report

Owing to the disturbed state of Red River Settlement, we had more difficulty in hiring tripmen and recruits for the service than we anticipated and did not get the full number required, this however will not be attended with inconvenience as Chief Factor James Keith has obtained the number required from Canada, at the terms we had fixed...

Appendix 3,7

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D4/102, pp. 1-2, 23/7/1835

Alexander Christie's Report

The disease <influenza> to appearance is now on the turn, and the Saskatchewan with the Columbia Brigade (altho' much indisposed) took their departure hence on the evening of the 15th instant, and the other brigades are following in succession; I am nevertheless under serious apprehension for the recovery of the halfbreeds and Indians employed in the hired transport craft, upon whom we are entirely depending for inward freight to the Red River Settlement.

Appendix 3,8

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D4/23, pp. 161-162, 3/5/1838

G. Simpson to A. Christie

I am much concerned to learn the crops of last year were so unproductive owing to early frost and unreasonable wet weather, but hope no privation has been experienced from that cause and that efficient seed may have been forth coming for the past spring...

The settlers generally speaking are exceedingly improvident so much so that they are constantly from hand to mouth and the consequence is that some day we shall be awkwardly circumstanced from their inability to supply the grain required for the service unless we lay up a stock from year to year in advance...

I am glad to find the hunters are turning their attention to the preparation of tallow, as an article for export, it is highly, desirable they should give more attention to the preparation of it than before; as in that case it would command a better price here and we could afford to give them a proportionably higher price for it, instead of purchasing it after being brought to the settlement...

Appendix 3,9

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D4/39, p. 108, 1840

Simpson to Ballenden

Expect that nearly all the provision at Norway house and York will be expended this season. You ought therefore to trade all the pemmican you can from the Red River plain hunters, and if the harvest turns out as plentiful as it promised _____ you will be enabled to increase the stock of grain.

Appendix 3,10

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D4/64, p. 39, 27/3/1844

Simpson to board of Governors

With reference to that part of Finlayson's dispatch where in he touches the permission you have been pleased to afford to W. Sinclair to forward Tallow to the English market in the Company's ship at a low rate of freight. I would respectfully suggest that parties making similar applications in the future be referred to the governor council, who will either comply with the request, if they see that no danger or inconvenience is likely to arise therefrom or transmit the application to your honors with their report...

The tallow in question is not produced by the agricultural part of the community but collected by the buffalo-hunting parties of half-breeds and indians in the plains ___ and it is to be feared that if extraordinary facilities be afforded for conveying the produce of their hunts to market they will give their attention not only to the collection of buffalo robes and tallow, but may interfere with the fur trade withdrawing them from agricultural pursuits and habits of civilizations and encourage their return to the conditions of indians from which they were beginning to emerge...

Appendix, 3,11

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D4/67, p. 629, 2/2/1846

Simpson to Sir John H. Pelly _____ (confidential)

The conditions on which they hold land's are quite disregarded by the settlers contending as they do that, they as nations of the soil, not the company are the proprietors, and so ignorant are they that reasoning and arguments on the subject are of no effect...

Appendix 3,12

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D4/67, p. 70, 24/2/1846

Simpson to Pelly

_____, _____, an other american traders made their appearance last autumn, as was expected establishing themselves at Pembina, immediately within the U.S. boundary line and have attracted therewith a number of half-breed families (forming the nucleus of a settlement) are employed in collecting furs throughout the adjacent country forming a troublesome opposition which will become very formidable unless we have the means of enforcing our revenue and protection laws.

Mr. Christie appears to be using very judicious measures for the protection of the trade, which, fortunately, have not been productive of any violence on the part of the half-breeds who are led to believe, by those under whose influence they are acting, that the fact of them being native of the soil gives them an unquestionable right of trading and hunting within Hudson Bay territory which cannot be affected by the Company charter...

Appendix 3,13

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D4/68, p. 264

Simpson to board of Governors

The want of a market, which has been a source of discontent to the settlers has prevented any agriculturalist from expanding their farms and increasing their livestock beyond the requisite quantity to meet the demands of the Company and their own absolute wants...

Appendix 3,14

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D4/69, p. 57, 1/5/1847

Simpson to the committee

On my way hither, I visited Red River settlement which, I am happy to say, is in a healthy and tranquil state. The winter has been unusually severe, and the thermometer on several occasions standing at 48 degrees below zero and the improvident Canadian and french half-breed settlers suffered much privation from the failure of the crops last season...

If our apprehension of the second failure of the crops be confirmed it will become necessary for a large portion of the Canadian and half-breed settlers to withdraw to the states as a measure of preservation...buffalo hunting and fishing affording little to depend upon...

Appendix 3,15

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D4/71, p. 6, 16/2/1850

Simpson to Committee

...As our previous advices from the Settlement comes down to the early part of september, there is nothing very novel in Mr. Baillendens last communication; tranquillity prevailed the harvest, which was completed, was fully as abundant as expected and the plain hunters have started on a second trip to the buffalo well pleased with the liberal price afforded them by the Company for the produce of their market.

Appendix 3,16

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D4/70, pp. 518-521, 30/6/1849

Simpson's Report

The fur trade of the settlement and of the neighboring posts on the Winnipeg River, Bering River, Fort Pelly, Fort Ellice and on Swan River was much disorganized during the winter by the presence among the Indians of the R.R. Halfbreeds, taking with them supplies of food and liquor, who set the Company's chartered rights of trade at open defiance and succeeded, by intimidation, misrepresentation and other means, in collecting a great many furs, a large proportion of which was taken to the American traders at Pembina who had outfitted these people, and it was only by giving, in some cases, fully as much for the furs as they are likely to yield in London. That we obtained a share of the trade, indeed the competition was so high that, I think both the Americans and the Hon. Co., will in that part of the country, lose money by the business this winter.

...Unless therefore the presence of a force of regulars may be obtained, we may be said to live among the settlers by sufferance... Mr. Belcourt, who has established himself within a short distance of the American Fur Trading Establishment at Pembina, on the American Territory, has attracted a population of about 300 halfbreeds about him, and the prospects held forth in his letter to Paschal Breland, already referred to, have determined a great many others to the American Territory at Pembina this season, indeed, I think it likely that the greater portion of the Canadian Halfbreeds of Red River will proceed there and in all probability imbibe the national hostility towards Great Britain which so much characterise the American frontier population.

Appendix 3,17

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D4/73, pp. 186-187, 17/12/1852

Simpson to Barnston

I regret to notice the annually increasing difficulty of meeting the demands for voyaging provision arising, it would appear as well from the short returns from the Saskatchewan as the growing avants of the Company's business and the numerous missions throughout the Country. I agree with you that closer attention must be laid on this very important branch of business.... As regards to missions however it would be impolite on many accounts to refuse compliance with their demands as much for the odium which it would be attempted to throw upon us, as that it might induce the missionnaries to extend their dealings with the indians which commencing with provisions, would soon extend to leather, robes, furs for private uses, until every mission became an opposition trading establishment.

Appendix 3,18

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D4/73, pp. 328 and 331, 20/6/1853

Simpson's Report

English River I have the satisfaction to state the returns of this district exhibit an improvement of L1825 as compared with the preceding year, the quantity of beaver has increased 100 per cent, castonium 400%, minks 400% and martens 50%, no other reason being assigned for this increase beyond the favorable character of the season for hunting. By the minutes of Council it will be observed that a _____ post is to be established in the district in the neighborhood of Portage la Loche the principal object of which is to afford the necessary facilities for over that portage, all the plans that have hereto been tried for providing horses and oxen having failed. For some years past, a band of horses has been provided every spring from the Saskatchewan to the portage under the charge of a freeman named Desjarlais, but we find that this man as for some time past been interfering with the trade, getting up goods on private account which he traffics with the Athabasca and English River Indians who frequent the portage in summer _____ and he now contemplates getting in to it on a more exted scale. Desjarlais has a very large family connections (exceeding one hundred) over whom he has much influence, and if he were permitted to carry into effect his present intention of seating himself down permanently on the portage with his followers, he might become exceedingly troublesome; we have therefore determined he shall no longer be employed by the Company...

Appendix 3,19

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D4/74, p. 345, 30/6/1854

Simpson's Report

I have much pleasure in reporting that the tranquillity which during the past winter pervaded this settlement and was noticed in every communication from hence, has not, up to this day been disturbed. Nothing worthy of remark has occurred here since the day of the former _____; the requisite number of voyageurs was, without difficulty procured both by the Company and the private freighters and the men are now absent on their respective journeys; while the portion of the population who devote their attention to hunting buffalo are off for their usual summer excursion to the plains...

Appendix 3,20

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D4/75, pp. 407-408. 29/6/1855

Simpson's Report

This Settlement continues to progress in the habits of civilized life and the inhabitants appear at the present time more contented and energetic in their pursuits than at any former period within my recollection. The crops of last season were very bountiful and I am informed a considerable quantity of grain of last years growth remains in the hands of the producers, after supplying all the wants of the Colony and the Company and after meeting the annually increasing demand from American Settlements on the frontier. There is a large number of residents here who have no connections with the illicit fur trade who find ample means for the profitable employment of their time and capital in farming, freighting and mercantile pursuits, that class being the most prosperous in the country, few if any of those who make hunting and fur trading their chief occupation being in easy circumstances, which is the more noticeable when contrasted with the conditions of the agriculturalists. There is one feature in the present state of the colony that occasions considerable uneasiness and I fear is pregnant with trouble in reference to our future relations with adjoining States. I allude to the rapidling increasing intercourse across the frontier and the growing sympathy of the Red River settlers for the American connexions. It is comforting that not less than 400 carts have this summer been sent across the plains to Saint-Paul for goods, and from England by that route at less cost than by the Company's vessels via York Factory... The latter part of the transport (Saint-Paul to Red River) is performed by the settlers themselves in carts carrying 800 lbs of goods, 8 or 9 carts driven by one man being equal to the cargo of an inland boat...

...The Americans on the frontier outfitted the free traders who employed last winter to scour the country as far as the Saskatchewan and English River districts supplying them with goods, whiskey, etc. of United States manufacture upon credit to be repaid in furs, the traders themselves bringing the goods into the Company's territory so that the Americans incurred no responsibility in the way of smuggling. Our difficulties from this source are as yet only in their infancy but they will undoubtedly increase from year to year, and it is a subject of serious consideration whether measures should be adopted to maintain the ascendancy of the York Factory route for the supply of this settlement and territory generally or whether business should be allowed to adapt itself to the most convenient channel in which are however it is to be feared the fur trade of the country will in due course be diverted from England as the chief market and concentrated at New York.

Appendix 3,21

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D4/76a, p. 735

Simpson's Report

At this period of the season the settlement is always extremely quiet, the population being reduced by the absence of the great majority of the young and active men, who employ the summer either in accompanying the buffalo hunters to the plains, or the traders to Saint-Paul or by engaging as 'tripmen' in the boats sent to York Factory and Portage la Roche. This quietness as may have been noticed by the reports from time to time addressed to London by the gentlemen in charge here, has been characteristic of the past 2 or 3 years.

Appendix 3,22

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D4/77, pp. 959-961

Simpson's report

Cumberland We encountered a very strong opposition in this district last winter... This result in the face of the difficulties against which we had to contend, is cheritable to the officers and people in the district. I noticed at length last year the injury done the Company's trade in the district by the mission establishment at the Pas, which has become a rendez-vous for Red River people... To check this evil we last season placed a clerk there to watch the indians, by which means we have saved a large number of furs that would otherwise have fallen into the hands of the opposition. It is important to meet our opponents vigorously in this quarter in order to prevent their approach to this more valuable country lying to the Northward with this view we have further increased the supply of goods and compliment of servants this season and trust to make the trade so unprofitable to the Red River people, as to induce them to withdraw from the context.

Swan River We are under the necessity of employing principally Red River half-breeds as servants and managers of posts in this part of the country. These people are active handy and well adapted for our service, but whom, opposed to their own country men they cannot be relied on; they are frequently found plotting against their employers and playing into the hands of the fur traders who they invariably join as soon as their periods of engagement with the Company expires. We should be enable to make a more effectual stand against the opposition and also conduct the trade more economically could we substitute Europeans for half-breeds. The scarcity of the former in this country at present renders that desirable change impracticable. Out of 34 servants in this district, nearly all

half-breeds, 27 quitted the service this year, including four interpreters, who had small charges, all of whom are now preparing to oppose their old stations. The conduct of these halfbreeds servants is not worse in Swan River than elsewhere...

Red River The collection of furs in the settlement increased, and may be expected to increase from year to year, as the fall trade movements extends, in as much as a large portoin of the furs collected at the inland districts, in opposition to the Company's posts, is purchased by us in Fort Garry. To prevent this falling into the hands of the americans, owing to the competition we have to pay such high prices as to render it questionable whether our margin of profit remains in our Red River purchases, but, even if attended with loss we could not discontinue the system as the Company's withdrawal from the field would encourage the Americans to embark more largely in the trade which would eventually be deviated from British to U.S. channels. The furs and robes collected at Red River this season at country prices, are valued at about L95000 against L6500 last year. Four of these traders operated on a very large scale as appears by the amounts paid them for their collection offers. Say

Paschal Breland	687.17.9
Michel Chartrain	339.6.8
M. J. C. McGillis	410.19.3
J. B. Laboucau	307.10.2

The total payments for furs at Fort Garry between the 1 May and 19 June in cash were L2036.4.7. Much of the cash paid out for furs is again drawn in at the Company's shops... Many of the Red River people obtain their supplies from merchants at Saint-Paul on credit, to be repaid in furs. Amongst the articles thus furnished we regret to learn there is an annually increasing quantity of wiskey, between 3000-5000 gallons were smuggled across the frontier last year... There are now settled at Red River, two or three american traders,

who carry on a traffic of furs and robes and with considerable success. Their operations as compared with the Company's, being conducted at very little expense.

...As regards to servants, we find that in the present condition of the business it is impolite to trust to the natives of the country, whose sympathies are with the free traders and who consequently fail us when we have most need of their support. They are, moreover, insubordinate and difficult of management. Whilst we had a preponderance of Europeans, this evil was not apparent, but at present we have in some districts (as the Saskatchewan and Swan River) a majority of Red River halfbreeds, thereby placing ourselves quite in their power. The want of efficient servants is seriously felt, also in that important branch of the service, the transport; the amount of which is increasing annually while our means for conducting it are constantly diminishing. This season it will only be at great efforts that we shall succeed in getting the returns conveyed to you for shipment and the outfit taken from thence inland...

Appendix 4,1

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D5/12, p. 593, 28/12/1844

_____ to Simpson

...and we have not been able to raise the importance of the other concerning the fall hunt, again this reason almost totally failed, and eight days of incessant heavy rain at the most critical time of harvest occasioned considerable loss of the other _____ grain and the crops of spring wheat though much greater in bulk in the straw will not I fear exceed that of the last year, and other kinds we have far less, only about 500 bushels Barly, 760 Peas, 800 Oats...

Appendix 4,2

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D5/6, p. 339, 18/12/1841

Finalyson to Simpson

There is nothing to communicate to you this season, out of our common routine. We have been blessed with a very abundant harvest, and our Plain Hunters have been unusually successful in pursuit of the Buffalo; so that no dearth of provisions will be felt in the settlement, during the winter, _____ amidst this abundance some of the people are importunate for a market for their surplus produce, but all the ingenuity hitherto exercised towards the attainment of this very desirable object, has so failed to discover one, likely to prove advantageous to all parties concerned in it...

Appendix 4,3

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., p. __ , 7/12/1847

A. Christie to G. Simpson

...with much regret I have to notice the almost complete failure of the last crop, which generally speaking will be inadequate for the maintenance of the settlers through the winter, and to reserve enough seed for the grown next spring.

The plain hunters were very successful during the summer trip, which enable them to sell a considerable quantity of pemican and tallow but from the early setting in of the winter, they were unable on the second trip to bring much dried provisions to the settlement.

Appendix 4,5

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., pp. 339-340, 24/11/1848

J. E. Harriott to Simpson

...after remaining <Pembina> about a week I returned to this place <Fort Garry> to avoid giving debt to the Plain Hunters who were then starting for their fall hunt and went up again to meet them on their return. I secured all or nearly all of what was worth having and the general feeling seems to be in our favor. Though some of the cunning ones see plainly the advantage of supporting the opposition <American Traders>...

Appendix 4,6

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., 05/24, p. 364, 10/3/1849

Ogden to Simpson

You are of course fully aware that the fur trade and civilization can never blend together and experience teaches us that the former invariably gives way to the latter. Indians and whites can never amalgamate together...

Appendix 4,7

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D5/25, p. 225, 29/3/1849

Christie to Simpson

I regret exceedingly, having to mention recent circumstances, which have to disturb the peace of the settlement. The outbreak arose from Wm Ballenden, having found necessary, to institute a prosecution before the last quarterly court on the 17 inst. against Sayer, for trading furs from the Indians about Manitoba Lake; ____ It is said that on the man being apprehended and bound over to appear before the court, some of the most influential Half-Breed went up to Pembina to obtain advice from Revd W. Belcourt who gave his opinion in a letter addressed to ____ Ireland, and which he read at the catholic church, the Sunday before the meeting of the court, adding "that it was expected every men would come armed, and fully prepared to assert their rights". The result was upwards of 200 men, Canadians and Half-Breeds, assembled near the court house, threatening destruction of all who might attempt to oppose their infuriated designs ____ James Sinclair, who it is reputed, was compelled to accompany them! ____ with other delegated, were appointed to enter the court house and communicate the sentiments of those assembled out doors, which was written document dictated in the most presumptuous and authoritative manner.

I am in the anxious expectation of being ere long favored with the pleasure of a personal communication, and therefore trust you will be pleased to excuse my further observation on this very important subject, ____ except mainly to observe that the high priced

given for Furs at Pembina during the last winter, has enabled the Half-Breeds, who are occupied at trading excursions throughout the company's territory to realize very considerable profit and if their prices are continued, I apprehend the most serious consequences will ensue to the trade hereafter.

Appendix 4,8

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D5/28, p. 248, 1/6/1850

_____ to Simpson

Last year we demanded from you that the Judge Adam Thom should leave the country and that half the concillors should be of our people and chosen by the public, you in part accorded both the one and the other, and it is on account of that promise, and from deference for certain persons, whom we respect in the country that we have allowed ourselves so to speak to be insulted by Mr. Adam Thom without reply, and not from want of energy and firmness as they pretend.

...At the same time it appears to us fitting to await your arrival, but at present our patience is exhausted, and we therefore respectfully warn you to take measures that he leave this without disturbance, and we are fearful that you may find some pretext for putting it off for another year we give you understand that we can wait no longer, and that if you leave us to ourselves, refuse us our just demands, and some awkward accident occurs you can not reproach us as we have expresly given you notice of it _____ We have often been called a band of savages, and this ie it may be said with truth; for we are now without justice, without magistrate and we may well say without counselor, for those whom we have are without the confidence of the nation, and that from the fault of the Judge whose has caused laws generally contrary to our interest to be chartered and has annulled the good laws. In word we object o have for a juge a man whom we do not understand...

(sgd) William McNillen	François Bruneau
Solomon Amelin	J. Bte Lagimodière
Antoine Morin	John Dease
Louis Letendre	Amable No
William Dease	Alexis Gambois

Louis Rielle	Baptiste Branconnier
Paschal Breland	Jean Marie Bosecher
Charles Montigny	Abram Martin
Daniel McGillis	Joseph Genbois
Alex McGillis	
Baptiste Leron	

Appendix 4,9

H.B.C.A., P.A.M., D5/42, pp. 443, 9/2/1856

J. Swanston to G. Simpson

I am very sorry to inform you that the Buffalo hunt has been a complete failure this season, as far as dried provisions are concerned. The loss of the summer hunt was caused by the half breed hunters collecting all the Saulteux they could muster and going on a war party after the Sioux, but after roaming over the Plains for 4 or 5 months without seeing so many, they then began to look after the Buffalo, but the season was then so far advanced many of the hunters returned to the settlement with little or nothing in their cart. This fall their failure arose from the early setting of the winter and heavy fall of snow which was so deep on the ground that their horses and oxen could get nothing to feed on in the Plains, the consequence that 67 of them died from starvation, and as the hunters had run out of firewood they burnt upwards of 50 of their carts, from these events our whole collection of Pemican this season, at this place, the White Horse Plains and Pembina is only a trifle over 500 bags, consequently so over be _____ out of my power to meet the demands of Norway House and the Lac la Pluie and the Red River Freighters this spring.

Appendix 5,1

P.A.M., RG17 D2, Sainte-Agathe River Lot files

Concept of private property in Sainte-Agathe pre-1870:
Goulet's Survey

- 534-533: Cyrille Dumas erected a house and cultivated 4 acres in 1868 certified by Roger Goulet
- 536-537: François Roy alias Contois had lots 536 and 537 surveyed by Goulet in 1869...certified by Roger Goulet
- 538 : Marcel Roy had lot 538 surveyed by Goulet in 1869...certified by Roger Goulet
- 540-541: Solomon Venne got Roger Goulet to survey lots in 1869...certified by Roger Goulet
- 543 : Michel Venne had lot 543 surveyed by Roger Goulet in 1866, built a house, fenced 10 acres...certified by Roger Goulet
- 548 : Jean Baptiste Cheore occupied lot 548 (date?)...certified by Roger Goulet
- 556-557: Louis Morin got Roger Goulet to survey lots 556-557 in 1864...certified by Roger Goulet
- 558-559: Louis Houle got Roger Goulet to survey lots 558-559 in 1864...certified by Roger Goulet
- 560-561: Charles Houle got Roger Goulet to survey lots 560-561 in 1866...certified by Roger Goulet
- 564-565: Paschal Dionne had Roger Goulet survey lots 564-565 in 1865...certified by Roger Goulet
- 568 : Louis Larocque had Roger Goulet survey lot 568 circa 1865...certified by Roger Goulet
- 570-571: Louis Larocque in 1866 had Roger Goulet survey lots 570-571...certified by Roger Goulet
- 577 : Louis Morin sn had Roger Goulet survey lot 577 in 1862...certified by Roger Goulet
- 581 : Baptiste Dubois had Roger Goulet survey lot 581 in 1863...certified by Roger Goulet
- 588-589: Baptiste Dubois had Roger Goulet survey lots 588-589 in 1868...certified by Roger Goulet
- 590-591: Louis Laferté had Roger Goulet survey lots 590-591 in 1865...certified by Roger Goulet
- 594-595: Alex Wencell had Roger Goulet survey lots 594-595 in 1866...certified by Roger Goulet
- 547 : Pierre Vandal had Roger Goulet survey lot 547 in 1866...certified by Roger Goulet

Appendix 6,1

P.A.M., RG17, D2, Sainte-Agathe River Lot files

Concept of private property in Sainte-Agathe pre-1870:
Affidavits stating early occupancy

- 501 : Jean-Baptiste Venne pris possession 1866 (personal affidavits)
- 511 : André Bérard pris possession avant le transfert (personal affidavits)
- 531 : Joseph L'Espérance claims having at 'time of survey' one house and ten acres under cultivation (personal affidavits)
- 542-544: Pierre Vandal pris possession six ans avant le transfert (personal affidavits)
- 546 : Gabriel Houle (gendre de Pierre Vandal) pris possession avant le transfert (P. Vandal declare avoir pris possession 542, 544, 546, 547) (personal affidavits G. Houle)
- 549 : Jean Baptiste Cheone and Josephite Vandal occupied lot 549 since 1864 (affidavits by François Charette)
- 552 : Celesie Handry taken as a wintering place three years before transfer (affidavits by François Charette)
- 553 : Alexie Jérémie took up lot in 1867 (affidavits by Pierre Vandal)
- 555 : Jérémie Primeau first occupied lot 555 (shows up on Dennis Survey notes)
- 562-563: André Morin occupied lots 562-563 since before the transfer...first occupant was Paschal Dionne (personal affidavits)
- 569 : Paschal Dionne first occupant then was purchased by Louis Larocque in 1870 (affidavits by Wm Dease)
- 575 : Alexandre Morin declare avoir occupé terre depuis 1861 (personal affidavits)
- 576-578: Louis Morin fait arpenter sa terre par Goulet pre-1870 (affidavits par Paschal Dionne)
- 582-584: Joseph Berthelet sn. (alias Savoyard) declare occupé terrain depuis 1865
- 583-585: Joseph Berthlet Jr. (alias Savoyard) extract from surveyor's returns one house, 5.75 cultivated acres, occupied for 15 years (1862)
- 586 : Michel Laberge réclame un lot occupé depuis quinze ans (1859) (personal affidavits)
- 587 : François Laberge réclame lot occupé depuis 12 ans (1860)
- 589 : Baptiste Dubois sn. claims having occupied lot for 17 years (1861)
- 590 : Antoine Berthelet occupied lot in 1868 (affidavits by Joseph Berthelet)
- 592-593: Alexandre Wincell took possession in 1860 (affidavits by his widow Marie Anne Wincell)

597. : Catherine Laferté Sanders always claimed lot and exercised acts of ownership...community recognized it as hers (personal affidavits)
- 598 : Pierre Landry prise il y a vingt et un ans (1853!) (personal affidavits)
- 602 : Joseph Lambert made hay on lot since two three years before 1864
- 604 : Alex Wincell took peaceable possession of the lot eleven years ago (1867) (personal affidavits?)
- 617 : Paul Frederick (died 1863) lived on lot fifteen years...gave his lot to his daughter Julie who afterwards married James White (affidavits by A. Ladouceur and B. Bernauld)
- 619 : James White pris possession Juin 1862 (personal affidavits)

Appendix 7, I

please refer to:

Le Métis

22/6/1871, p. I

Appendix 8,I

please refer to:
Executive Relief Committee Report
II/I2/I868
(Parish of Sainte-Agathe)
P.A.M.

Appendix 9

P.A.M., (derived from) Executive Relief Committee Report, 11/12/1868

Pointe à Grouette 's Heads of Families in 1867; Agricultural Production Estimates

<u>Head of Family</u>	<u># of people in Family</u>	<u># of horses, oxen, cows, calves</u>				<u>bushels of wheat, potatoes (harvested)</u>	
1-Charles Houle	4	2	1	1	0	8	10
2-Louis Houle	4	1	3	1	1	42	50
3-J. Bte Cheone	4	1	2	1	1	0	0
4-Pierre Vandal	8	4	1	1	1	0	0
**5-Louis Morin sn	5	2	3	3	2	150	125
6-Louis Morin jn.	5	2	2	1	0	30	50
**7-Alexandre Morin	5	5	2	2	1	110	65
8-Gabriel Houle	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
9-Paschal Glon (Dionne)	5	2	3	4	4	60	8
**10-Louis Larocque	8	4	0	2	4	150	90
**11-J. Bte Dubois	10	3	1	2	3	110	120
**12-Jos. Berthelet sn.	6	1	8	3	6	320	130
**13-Jos. Berthelet jn.	8	3	0	2	2	130	80
14-Antoine Berthelet	2	1	2	2	0	70	0
15-François Laberge	6	3	0	1	1	45	70
16-André Morin	2	0	0	2	3	0	0
17-Boniface Laplante	6	1	0	2	1	60	40
18-Olivier Laferté	7	-	1	2	1	0	0
**19-Georges Klyne	5	4	0	5	3	180	60

**heads of families having harvested over 100 bushels of wheat; considered 'affluent'

Averages per family:	horses	2.10
	oxen	1.52
	cows	1.94
	calves	1.87
	wheat (bushels)	77.10
	potatoes	47.20

N.B. "By the 1860 the Co. had what was certainly the largest and most efficiently run farm in the whole settlement attached to the lower fort. They had 150 acres under wheat there in 1860 which was expected to yield 4000 bushels" (Kaye, 1867: 272). Therefore 1 acre on the most efficient farm yielded 26.6 bushels of wheat in the 1860's...

Appendix 10

Section 32 of Manitoba Act

Manitoba Law Journal, Vol. 10, 1980, number 4, page 434

1. All grants of land in freehold made by the Hudson's Bay Company up to the eighth day of March, in the year 1969, shall if required by the owner, be confirmed by grant from the Crown.
2. All grants of estates less than freehold in land made by the Hudson's Bay Company up to the eighth day of March aforesaid shall, if required by the owner, be converted into an estate in freehold by grant from the Crown.
3. All titles by occupancy with the sanction and under the license and authority of the Hudson's Bay Company up to the eighth day of March aforesaid, of land in that part of the Province in which the Indian Title has been extinguished, shall if required by the owner, be converted into an estate in freehold by grant from the Crown.
4. All persons in peaceable possession of tracts of land at the time of the transfer to Canada, in those parts of the Province which the Indian Title has not been extinguished, shall have a right of pre-emption of the same, on such terms and conditions as may be determined by the Governor in Council.
5. The Lieutenant-Governor is hereby authorized, under regulations to be made from time to time by the Governor General in Council, to make all such provisions for ascertaining and adjusting on fair and equitable terms, the rights of Common, and of cutting hay held and enjoyed by the settlers in the Province, for the commutation of the same by grants of land from Crown.

please refer to:
McPhillip Survey Notebooks
I873-I874
(Parish of Sainte-Agathe)
P.A.M. RG I5, vol 229

Appendix I2,I

please refer to:
Le Métis
29/5/I87I, pp 2-3

Appendix 13,1

P.A.M., RG17, D2, Sainte-Agathe River Lots files

The Berthelet Land Claims

1-Joseph Berthelet sn. (dit Savoyard) and Angélique Lafenty

Lot 579

- makes an affidavit claiming land on the 19/5/1873
- in the course of the summer (1873) Joseph and Angélique Berthelet sn., jointly sell this lot for \$800.00, William Dease served as Justice of the Peace
- extract of deeds in file dated 13/10/1873 handing over all claims to lot from Blanchard to Donald A. Smith
- N.B.: Surveyors Extract dated 10/11/1874 states that lot 579 is owned and occupied by one William Dease

Lot 582 and 584

- Joseph Berthelet sn. sells on the 20/3/1879 lot 582 to Mgr Taché for \$325.00
- Joseph Berthelet sn. also sells on 20/3/1879 to la "Corporation Archépiscopale Catholique Romaine de Saint-Boniface" lot 584 for \$350.00
- both lots sold to T. A. Bernier (French-Canadian lawyer and politician)
- lot 584 patented in the name of C.A.C.R. de Saint-Boniface (no date)
- T. A. Bernier still demanding patents for lot 582 on 4/8/1890

2-Joseph Berthelet Jn. and Françoise Caron

Lot 583

- Joseph Berthelet Jn. sells lot 583 on the 9/12/1874 to the Hon. Joseph Royal for the sum of 25 louis sterling
- Joseph Royal receives letters-patent (no date)

Lot 585

- Joseph Berthelet Jn. officially claims lot 585 on 4/11/1873, his brother-in-law Alex Morin was the Justice of the Peace
- patent was issued to Joseph Berthelet Jn. on the 17/10/1877 (end of River Lot file)
- by 1902, based on tax books from the municipality of Ritchot, lot 585 was being worked by Adolphe Fontaine (Mother Vandal)

3-Antoine Berthelet and Catherine Laferté

Lot 589

- Antoine Berthelet in 1874 sold lot 589, which had been given to him by his father, back to his father for \$425.00. The deed of land had been signed by Antoine and Catherine Berthelet
- Joseph Berthelet sn. on the 24/7/1877 makes a formal affidavit in support of his claim
- on the 27/5/1879 a second bill of sales between Antoine and Joseph Berthelet (first selling lot 589 to second) is made, this time for \$800.00!
- on the 14/2/1880 lot 589 is patented to Joseph Berthelet sn., also receives hay scrip

Lot 588

- considered 'Outer Two Miles' of lot 589. Did not have separate file from 589

Lot 597

- lot claimed by Catherine Laferté Sanders (first husband was probably Antoine Berthelet) on the 15/3/1875
- lived in York Factory for a time, did not continually reside on land though she and the Pointe à Grouette community always considered it hers
- claim to land relinquished to Thomas A. Atchinson for \$75.00 in 1879 by Catherine and William Sanders

4-Louis Houle and Caroline Berthelet

Lot 558

- surveyor's extract "claimant has improvements and resides on the west side" (no date)
- claim cancelled (no date)

Lot 559

- lot 559 in Sainte-Agathe was patented on the 16/10/1877 in the name of Louis Houle (end of River Lot file)
- in 1902 based on Ritchot Municipality Tax book this lot was being worked by an Edmond Guertin born in Verchères

5-Louis Larocque and Marie Berthelet

Lot 568

- Roger Goulet surveyed lot for Louis Larocque in 1865
- Louis Larocque gives it to his son-in-law Norbert Dubois (no date)
- Norbert Dubois sells it to John Guédon (no date)

- John Guidon sells it, 18/3/1880, to Rev. C. Samoisette for \$500.00
- 1889 patent withheld because of grasshopper mortgages (end of River Lot file)
- in 1902, based on the Municipality of Ritchot Tax Books, this land was owned by a Pierre Beaudoin. The 1919 church census of Sainte-Agathe states that he was born in Saint-Henri de Marcouche (Québec)

Lot 570

- lot 570 was worked by Louis Larocque and his son-in-law Boniface Laplante
- sold jointly by Larocque and Laplante to Dr. John Schultz (no date, end of file)
- worked in 1902 by Adeland Fontine of St-Guillaume

Lot 571

- lot was surveyed for Louis Larocque by Goulet in 1866
- Goulet gives formal affidavits that Louis Larocque had always been in peaceable possession of the lot on 8/1/1879
- Louis Larocque sells south four chains to Rev. C. Samoisett (no date/amount)
- 16/1/1877 Louis Larocque is recommended for patent (end of file)
- in 1902 Stanislave Alarie from Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines lived on this lot

6-Alexandre Morin and Elice Berthelet

Lot 574

- "Alexandre Morin filed for patent many years ago _____ intiled upon payment of certain seed grain mortgages executed by him to a patent for said lot" (memounisgned dated 16/10/1899)
- in 1902 Jean Baptiste Courcelles was paying taxes to the Municipality of Ritchot for this lot. He came from Roxton Falls, Mass. (U.S.)

Lot 575

- 1877: lot was patented in the name of Alexl Morin
- on the 11/12/1885 Morin writes from the U.S.A. requesting that patent be forwarded to him. Told by the Dept of the Interior that patent was sent to T. A. Bernier "who appears to be your assignee"
- N.B.: Morin, a Justice of the Peace, had no idea he had given powers of attorney to Bernier and made him his assignee.

7-Boniface Laplante and Angélique Larocque

Lot 572

-sold without Laplante realizing it to Wm Farace (banker in Clinton, Ontario) for \$1.00

Appendix 13,2

P.A.M., RG17, D2, Sainte-Agathe River Lots files

The Morins Land Claims

1-Louis Morin sn. and Marie Beauchemin

Lots 556-557

- affidavits by _____ "Louis Morin settled in 1864 on the last side (556) and built a house and stable. Broke at least 1.5 acres on lot 557, also made his hay and wood on lot 557"
- act of indenture between Louis Morin and John Wilton (carriage-maker) for lots 556-557 for \$400.00 on the 4/6/1877. Stewart MacDonald was commissioner
- sale of 556-557 for \$500.00 on the 16/10/1877 from John Wilton to Albert Marshall
- 27/7/d1882, Aikins, Culver and Hamilton (land speculators) request information from Lindsay Russel "will Marshal get patent?" (end of file)
- there are no mention of these lots either in the 1902 Tax books of the Ritchot Municipality or the 1919 parish census

Lot 576

- lot claimed by Louis Morin in 1861, surveyed by Roger Goulet same year
- lot sold to Rev. C. Samoisette by heirs of Louis Moin. North half sold for \$150.00 on 5/5/1880, south half sold by same group of heirs on 8/2/1882 for \$175.00. Total received for lot \$325.00.
- on the 22/9/1881 lots 576 and 578 sold to Edouard and Louis Léveillé for \$1,350.00 by Rev. C. Samoisette
- patent-letters still not issued in 1884 (end of file)
- in 1902 lot was being worked by Euclide Olivier born in Berthier who arrived in Sainte-Agathe in 1882 and married a woman from Saint-Pierre, Manitoba, Elisa Sicotte

Lot 577

- on the 4/11/1873 Louis Morin requests in french for his patent lettres for lot 577. His son Alex Morin is the Justice of the Peace
- 8/1/1877 supporting letter stating pre-1870 possession and occupancy sent by Roger Goulet
- 16/1/1877 extract from surveyors returns confirming R. Goulet statement (end of file)
- Louis Morin is listed as the occupant of this lot in the 'Survey Field Notes' of Sainte-Agathe by George McPhillips
- no mention of this lot is made in 1902 and no family with a Morin surname is listed in the 1919 parish census

2-André Morin and Adelaide Grandbois

Lot 562

- claimed possession of this lot since the winter of 1868-1869
- André Morin sells lot 562 on the 7/6/1882 for \$1,000.00 'cash' to Alexander R. MacDonald of the N.W.M.P.
- patent issued in the name of Morin in 1882 after sale

3-Alexandre Morin and Elice Berthelet

- see Berthelet clan (2 lots)

4-Paschal Dionne and Philomène Morin

Lot 563

- "recommended for patent, Manitoba Act, Paschal Dionne, Sainte-Agathe (farmer)" (no date on memo, end of file)
- nothing is said of lot 563 in files in 1902 Tax books and the name "Donne" does not appear in the census of 1919

Lot 564

- Paschal Dionne claimed possession in 1867
- on the 22/5/1883 Paschal Dionne sells lot 564 for \$2,000.00 to Rev. C. Samoisette
- patent made out to Cyrille Samoisette 18/5/1886
- Rev. Samoisette receives \$175.72 to commute hay rights on lot 564

Lot 569

- Paschal Dionne occupied it till 1870 and then sold it to Louis Larocque (no papers or amount stated)
- 1/4/1873 "Indenture between Marie and Louis Larocque and Sedley Blanchard in consideration of \$200.00 grant a track of land at a place called Pointe à Grouette" William Dease was Justice of the Peace
- 23/7/1873 deed transferring ownership of lot from Sedley Blanchard to Donald A. Smith
- 15/10/1873 Donald A. Smith applies for patent
- extract from surveyor's returns dated 10/11/1873 lists William Dease as the owner-occupant

Lot 565

- Paschal Donne applied for patent Nov. 1873
- letter for patent request signed by Alex Morin J.P. (Dionne's brother-in-law)
- lot 565 patented to Paschal Dionne 16 Oct. 1877, no special reservation

-1902 Municipality of Ritchot Tax books states that Cyrille Nolette paid taxes on lot 565. He was the nephew of Rev. C. Samoisette, priest for Sainte-Agathe. Arrived in 1980 to Pointe à Grouette from Québec

5-Jérémie Primeau and Marie Morin

Lot 555

-claimed by Jérémie Primeau in the early 1870's
-patented in 1877 to Joseph Lemoy (Lemoine)
-end of file

ST. N

?

Appendix 13,3

P.A.M., RG17, D2, Sainte-Agathe River Lots files

The Dubois Land Claims

1-Baptiste Dubois and Marie Laberge

Lot 580

- on the 3/2/1874 Jean Baptiste Dubois sn. requests his letters-patent for a lot situated in Pointe à Grouette. Lot taken in 1866. Alex Morin acts as Justice of the Peace
- lot 580 patented to the Roman Catholic Church (undated memo)
- Elie Fontaine was working lot 580 in 1902 according to the Municipality of Ritchot Tax books

Lot 581

- Jean Baptiste Dubois sn. requests letters-patent for lot 581 on the 3/2/1874
- on the 7/5/1874 a deed of land is signed from Jean Baptiste Dubois to Sedley Blanchard in consideration of the sum of \$700.00 hand over rights to 581 on the presence of Herklots and Bain
- extract of land deed from Blanchard to George Stephen sale of lot 581 dated 2/11/1874
- 1/12/1874 Geroge Stephen applies for patent lot 581
- Joseph Joyal was paying taxes on lot 581 in 1902. Born in Saint-François du Lac, Québec, he arrived in 1882 with his wife Véronique Cartier

Lot 589

- Lot was originally claimed by Dubois but sold to Joseph Berthelet sn. before the transfer

Appendix 13,4

P.A.M., RG17, D2, Sainte-Agathe River Lots file

The Houle Land Claims

1-Charles Houle and Catherine Palardeau

Lot 560

- Charles Houle requests letters-patent for lot 560 (and 561) in 1873. Pre-1870 possession is certified by Roger Goulet. Alex Morin, brother of son-in-law, acts as Justice of the Peace
- claim has 'cancelled' written over front page, probably failed residency requirement. Charles Houle lived on plot 561
- memo in file "lot 560, no claims under Manitoba Act"
- on 14/8/1875 land deed for lot 560 between Charles Houle and Mgr tache in consideration of \$100.00. Louis Houle & Paschal Dionne, witnesses

Lot 561

- Charles Houle claims 561 (and 560) in 1873. Pre-1870 possession certified by Roger Goulet
- 15/4/1875 letters-patent for lot 561 requested by Joseph Hamelin
- 12/6/1875 land deed between Charles and Catherine Houle and Joseph Hamelin in consideration of 45 louis sterling and 10 shelling
- 16/1/1877 lot recommended for patent in the name of Charles Houle
- in 1902 this lot was being worked by Félix Lemoine, a native of Sorel, Manitoba. His wife was Philomène St-Michel also from Québec. They arrived in 1890.

2-Louis Houle

- discussed under Berthelet (2 lots)

3-Gabriel Houle

Lot 546

- 12/7/1878 Gabriel Houle and (father-in-law) Pierre Vandal sell lot 546 for \$360.00 to Joseph Hamelin
- on the 5/5/1880 Joseph Hamelin sells claim to Joseph Tellier for \$400.00
- on the 28/6/1880 Joseph Tellier sells to Arthur Olivier for \$125.00
- on the 8/3/1889 Arthur Olivier sells to Charles Dubeau lot 546 for \$50.00
- Baron de Villier receives patent for 6 north chains of lot

546

- in the 1919 Church survey this land is said to be occupied by Martial Fenez from northern France. His wife was Malvina Péloquin from Saint-Laurent, Manitoba

Lot 545

- Gabriel Houle lived on this lot from 1866 to 1873
- 1873 sells it to Joseph Hamelin (no deed in files)
- 11/5/1874 Joseph and Julie Hamelin sells lots 545 and 547 to Sedley Blanchard for \$1,000.00, G.M. Micken acted as Justice of the Peace
- 2/11/1874 Sedley Blanchard conveys to George Stephen lot 545 and 547
- 3/12/1883 deed of land between Gabriel Houle and Joseph Hamelin for lot 545 for 425.00 (second deed?)

4-Michel Grandbois and Emilie Houle

Lot 550-551

- surveyed by Roger Goulet for Emilie Houle, widow of Michel Grandbois. Emilie intended this lot for her son Patrice Grandbois
- 23/4/1881 Isidore Grandbois residing in Saint-Vincent, Minnesota sells lot 550 to Joseph Tellier for \$800.00
- "intended for son Patrice Grandbois, left without traces, sold when he was still under 21"... Grandbois heirs all left for Pembina" (undated memos in file)

5-Louis Morin Jn. and Cathrine Houle

- worked 4 lots with his father Louis Morin sn.
- (see under Morin section)

6-Jean Baptiste Venne and Isabelle Houle

Lot 503

- on the 2/12/1892 Jovite Gratton declares having "bought this lot in 1878 _____ Gratton who had it from McCarthy <Mercredi> who jumpe the lot in 1876 from J. Bte Venne...got a deed from Venne" declaraton from Jovite Gratton end of file
- in 1919 this lot was occupied by Alfred Quimet, his mother, born in 'Bridget Mawning' (sp?) and his wife Eveline Hébert. The Quimet were from St-Michel, Québec and the Hébert from Oakwood, North Dakota

Lot 501

- 13/7/1878 quit claim deed from J. Bte Venne to Alexander Stoddart in consideration of \$80.00 made in the presence of David Lowee

- 3/10/1881 Alexander Stoddart requests letters-patent for lot 501, Joseph Berthelet, Justice of the Peace
- 24/9/1886 Alexander Stoddart sells lot 501 to Cyrille Samoisette for \$700.00 (deed post-dates sale)
- 12/12/1881 Rev. Cyrille Samoisette sells lot 501-499 to Cyrille Hébert for \$3,200.00. T. A. Bernier was Justice of the Peace
- 14/11/1887 Hébert sells back lots 501-499 to Samoisette for the sum of \$2,500.00. Azarie Gauthier was Justice of the Peace
- lot 501 patented on the 20th/6/1892 to Louis and Joseph Toupin of St-Ephreme, Québec (both married to Québec-born women, Alida Gratton and Léa Tessier)

Lot 499

- approximately 1881 J. Bte Venne sells lot 499 to Rev. C. Samoisette for \$600.00. Joseph Berthelet acts as Justice of the Peace
- on the 26/4/1882 Rev. C. Samoisette requests letters-patent
- N.B.: lot sold with 501 to Cyrille Hébert on the 12/2/1881 bought back by Samoisette on the 14/11/1887
- lot patented in the name of Rec. C. Samoisette (no date)
- lot is not mentioned in the 1902 Municipality of Ritchot Tax books

Lot 497

- sold to Hébert Archibald by J. Bte Venne for \$40.00 on the 31/10/1879
- Archibald still not granted patent June 1886
- Dr. Schultz also claiming lot

Appendix 13,5

P.A.M., RG17, D2, Sainte-Agathe River Lot files

The Vandal Land Claims

1-Pierre Vndal and Rosalie Hamelin

- R. Goulet certified that Pierre Vandal took possession of lot in 1866, he built a house and fenced in 10 acres (no date)
- Vandal sold the lot to Joseph Hamelin in 1873 (no amount stated)
- Joseph Hamelin sold to Sedley Blanchard lot 545 and 547 for \$1,000.00 on the 11/5/1874
- S. Blanchard conveys claim to lots 545 and 547 to Georges Stephen on the 2/11/1874 for both lots

Lots 542 and 544

- took peaceable possession six years before transfer, worked lot 544 and after sale of lot 547 moved house to lot 542 (statement by Pierre Vandal)
- in 1879 Vandal sells lots 542 and 544 to Pierre Gauthier of Saint-Boniface for \$1,000.00 (end of file)
- the 1919 Sainte-Agathe census shows that Pierre Gauthier, his wife Victoria Lizotte and his children were still living on the lot at that time. He came from St-Roch-des-Aulnaies in 1877, she followed in 1881

Lot 546

- see Gabriel Houle

Lot 545

- only information on lot found in file lot 547

Appendix 13,6

P.A.M., RG17, D2, Sainte-Agathe River Lot files

The Venne Land Claims

1-Jean Baptiste Venne and Isabelle Houle

- claimed four lots
- see under Houle family

2-Marcel Roy and Ursule Venne

lot 539

- R. Goulet declares having surveyed lots 539 and 538 for Marcel Roy in 1866
- on the 20/6/1872 Marcel Roy sells lot to Prosper Ducharme for 41 louis sterling
- on the 20/9/1872 Prosper Ducharme sells lot to Henry C. Clark for \$300.00
- on the 7/9/1878 Henry C. Clark sells the lot to Elizabeth Ferris for \$1,000.00
- in 1884 land was patented in Marcel Roy's name but sent to an assignee
- by 1902 taxes were being paid to the Municipality on this lot by Ignace Dumesnil born in Coteau du Lac, Québec and his wife Marie
- Anne Alarie born in Sainte-Anne des Plaines

Lot 538

- on the 30/5/1881 lot 538 was sold by Marcel Roy to Rev. J. M. Jolys of Saint-Pierre for \$50.00
- 2/6/1881 sale of land between Rev. J. M. Jolys and Joseph Delorme in consideration of \$50.00 for lot 538
- 1884 "because of Outer Two Miles lot 538 should be patented to M. Roy whose assignee received rights for 539" (unsigned memo)
- 13/5/1885 "Delorme must provide some assignment or conveyance from Marcel Roy
- 28/8/1885 script and patent forwarded to Rev. G. Cloutier, Archbishop's Palace, Saint-Boniface, Manitoba
- in 1902 this lot was occupied by one Amable Toupin who arrived in 1899 from Québec

3-François Roy (J. Bte Roy's father)dit Contois

536

- R. Goulet certifies having surveyed two lots (536 and 537) for François Roy dit Contois
- on the 2/5/1881 lot 536 is sold by François Roy to Rev. J. M. Jolys for \$50.00

- on the same day 2/5/1881 sale of land, lot 536, between Rev. J. M. Jolys and Napoleon O. Bourassa for \$50.00. T. A. Bernier was Justice of the Peace
- lot patented to N. O. Bourassa in the mid 1880's
- Onesime Bourassa still working lot 536 in 1902
- Bourassa and his wife, Agnes Poirier came to Sainte-Agathe in 1872 from Fall-River, Mass.
- in 1919 the land was being worked by Paul Péloquin born in Sorel, Québec. He arrived in 1878

Lot 537

- Goulet surveyed lot 537 for François Roy in 1869
- François Roy sold lot to Joseph Saint-Germain prior to 1876
- on the 27/12/1876 deed of land between Jos. Saint-Germain and Andrew A. G. B. Bannatyne in consideration of \$150.00
- 13/11/1877 A. G. B. Bannatyne applies for patent

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