

Harry Daniels. (1940-2004)

Harry came from Regina Beach, located on the shore of Long Lake Saskatchewan, the son of Harry Alfred Daniels (b. 1893) and Emma McKay (b. 1903 at Loon Creek). His paternal grandparents were Alexandre Daniel (b. 1867 on the Souris River) and Elise Martin (b. 1861). His maternal grandparents were William Henry McKay (b. 1853 at High Bluff) and Marie St. Anne Bellegarde (b. 1862 at Wood Mountain). Harry was the great-great grandson of fur traders John Richards McKay (b. 1792)¹ and Jacob Daniel of Fort Albany.

Harry was also the descendant of families that were part of the great Nehiyaw Pwat or Iron Alliance, a polyethnic Indigenous Alliance that controlled the borderlands of the Old Northwest in the 1800s. It was members of this alliance who were with Cuthbert Grant in 1816 at “La bataille de la grenouillère” on June 19, 1816.

Harry’s great-grandfather was William Daniel, the son of Jacob Daniel (b. 1792) and Margaret Goodwin (English-Metis), born on August 20, 1822 at St. Andrews. William was first married in 1843 to Margaret Linklater, the daughter of John Linklater and Elizabeth Sanderson. He married Betsy Ross in 1847. He then married Isabelle Trottier Mitchell, the daughter of Colonel David Dawson Mitchell and Josephte Nancy Deschamps,² in 1853 at St. François Xavier. William had one son, John with Margaret Linklater and then he and Isabelle had thirteen children; eleven boys and two girls. This was a buffalo hunting family.

In the 1901 census Isabelle Daniel is listed as living in File Hills. She is living with her two younger sons, George and Zechariah, and a grandson named Peter. She is 60 years old and says her birth year as 1840. Both her sons working as farm laborers and she is listed as a widow and born in the US. She had four children that died in infancy or very young. They seemed to live in the File Hills area. She is living near her daughter, Catherine.

Harry had a long and diverse career as a political activist at the provincial, federal and international levels. From 1976-1981 he was President and Chief Executive Officer of the Native Council of Canada. He also completed a term as President of the Congress

¹ John was the Métis son of John McKay Sr., a Scottish fur trader and Mary Favel a Métis. Called *Ma-ak-gy-gan-naise* or “The Bear Skin,” a symbol respect, McKay was educated in England before joining the HBC in 1808. He worked initially at Brandon House under his father then at Pembina River, and at Qu’Appelle House where he supervised its’ reconstruction. McKay subsequently worked at Fort Hebrina in the Swan River district. John lost his job as a result of the 1821 amalgamation of the NWC and HBC, briefly opened a school at Red River, went back into the fur trade on the upper Missouri, then was rehired by HBC in 1831. He took charge of Fort Ellice in the summer of 1833 and was clerk then postmaster until 1843. His dismissal by the company in 1843 is somewhat of a mystery; however, he was rehired in 1846 as postmaster at Partridge Crop (Fairford), then from 1848 to 1854, he served at Shoal River. He retired in 1859.

² Mitchell was born on July 31, 1806, he married Josephte Nancy Deschamps in 1834 in Fort Union. Thus, David Mitchell was son-in- law to the notorious François Deschamps, who was one of Cuthbert Grant’s men at the Battle of Seven Oaks. His next marriage in 1840 was to Martha Eliza Berry. Mitchell was the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for most of the time from 1841 to 1853. Born in Louisa County, VA, he became a clerk for the American Fur Company in St. Louis in 1828. He built Fort McKenzie in 1832. Another fur trading post, Fort Mitchell, was named after him in 1833. In the Mexican War he was the Lt. Col. of the Second Missouri volunteers, commanded by Col. Sterling Price. When Price, a Col. Alexander Doniphan became involved in Indian troubles, Mitchell was ordered to lead the advance towards Chihuahau. In 1855 he promoted the Missouri and California overland mail and transportation company and became its president. He supplied mules for the army in the Mormon war of 1858. Mitchell died on May 31, 1861, in St. Louis at age 54.

of Aboriginal People in 1997 to 2000. One of his most important contributions to the Métis community was ensuring that the Métis were legally recognized and named as an Aboriginal people in the *Constitution Act of 1982*.



Harry's first elective office was that of Vice President of the Métis Association of Alberta. During 1974-75, he held the elected office of Secretary Treasurer of the Native Council of Canada and as noted above became President of that organization in 1976.

Harry was well known for his writing and acting abilities. He was in the cast of National Film Board production *Mistress Madeleine* from the *Daughters of the Country Series* which won a Gemini Award in 1987. He played Gabriel Dumont in *Big Bear* a 1998 TV mini series.³ He published several books, including *We are the New Nation*, *The Forgotten People*, and *A Declaration of Indian and Métis Rights*. He received his Master's degree in 1985 at Carleton University in Ottawa. He had guest lectured on Aboriginal issues at universities across Canada.

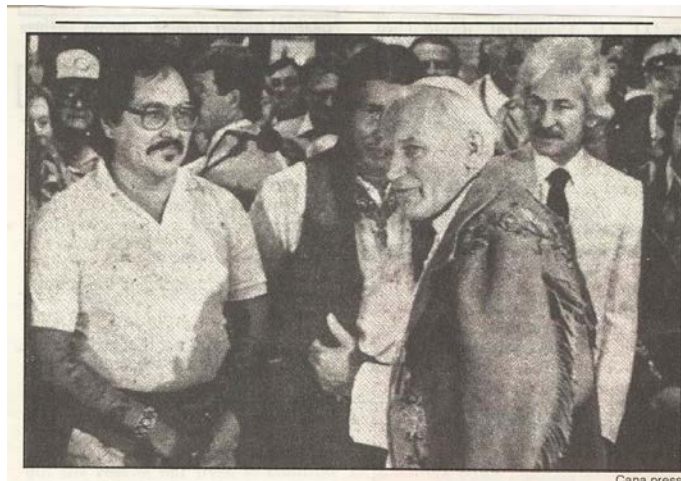
Mr. Daniels was a member of many research teams; in 1973 he was a researcher for the Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research Group of the Indian Association of Alberta. In 1979, Harry served as Commissioner of the Métis and Non-Status Indian Crime and Justice Commission. In 1981, he was Commissioner of the Métis and Non-Status Indian Constitutional Review Commission (Native Council of Canada). In 1988 he was a researcher for Manitoba's Aboriginal Justice Inquiry. He also worked as a constitutional advisor for many provincial Métis organizations. For these many contributions he was awarded honorary membership in many Aboriginal political organizations across Canada. In 2003, Harry received an honorary Doctorate of Law from the University of

³ Gordon Tootoosis played "Big Bear" and Tantto Cardinal played "Running Second" in this series directed by Gil Cardinal.

Ottawa and on March 12, 2004 he was awarded the *Order of the Métis Nation* by the Métis National Council.



“Harry the Hat” was a larger than life personality known for his sartorial elegance, his quick wit, his storytelling and “joie de vivre.” Harry is shown above in his black hat characteristic of the ones worn by the Métis buffalo hunters of yesteryear. When Pope John Paul II made his historic visit to the Northwest Territories in 1984, he intended to go to Fort Simpson, but couldn’t because it was fogged in and his plane was diverted to Yellowknife. Harry, then vice-President of the Native Council of Canada, greeted him in Yellowknife, and in a gesture of welcome, Harry took off his jacket and put it over the Pope’s shoulders as a gift.



Harry Daniels (left) gives Pope John Paul II a traditional gift, a Métis beaded jacket, during the Pope's visit to Yellowknife Sept. 18, 1984 (Photo from *Indian Record*, Vol. 48, No. 4, pg. 23).

Harry Daniels Genealogy

Parents:

Harry Alfred Daniels (b. 1893 Regina Beach, SK.)

Emma McKay (b. 1908 Lestock, SK.)



Harry and Emma Daniels

Emma's father, William Henry McKay was a scout for the NWMP in Fort Qu'Appelle. Subsequently when they lived at Regina Beach he tripped, fished and worked the farms during harvest. Her mother, Marie Bellegarde was from the area north of Belcarres. They were married at Lebret.

Maternal grandparents:

William Henry McKay (b. 1858 High Bluff)
Marie St. Anne Bellegarde (b. 1862 Wood Mountain)

Paternal grandparents:

Alexandre Daniel (b. 1807 Souris River)⁴
Elise Martin (b. 1861)

Paternal great-grandparents:

William Daniel (b. 1822 St. Andrews)
Isabelle T. Mitchell⁵
Abraham Martin (b. 1833 St. Boniface)
Rose Gervais (b. 1843 St. Francois Xavier)

Maternal great-grandparents:

William Henry McKay Sr. (b. 1823)
Susanne Josette Versailles (b. 1832 St. Norbert)
Joseph Bellegarde
Marie Klyne (b. 1841)

⁴ Daniel, Alexander; address: File Hills; claim no. 731; born: January, 1865 at Souris River near Estevan; father: William Daniel Senior (Métis); mother: Isabella Mitchell (Métis).

⁵ Scrip affidavit for Daniels, Isabella; wife of Wm. Daniels; born: 1858; father: Colonel Mitchell (American); mother: Nancy Deschamps (Métis); claim no.: 2933; date of issue: May 28, 1879.



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