

Baptiste “Little Bat” Garnier. (1854 -1900)

Baptiste Garnier, known by friends and comrades as ‘Little Bat,’ was a scout and interpreter for the United States Army at Fort Laramie and Fort Robinson. In *Fifty Years on the Old Frontier*, author James H. Cook stated that Garnier was one of “the best known army scouts and interpreters in the land of the Sioux.”.

Although Garnier’s father was French, he lived amongst his mother’s people, the Sioux. ‘Little Bat’ was well thought of by those who knew him and he was considered one of the best interpreters and big game hunters in the Rocky Mountain region of the Nebraska Territory. Garnier was “good natured and even tempered at all times... [and] a fine specimen of manhood.” His “honesty and fearlessness were never questioned,” and his skill as a hunter and knowledge of Sioux culture made him invaluable as a government scout. Both his wife, Julia and his sister Eulalia were artists noted for their great sewing and beading skills.



In the photograph above Baptiste wears an exquisite matched set of beaded jacket, vest and leggings. These were likely made by his wife Julia Mousseau. Her father was Magliore Alexis Mousseau who married Ellen the Yellow Woman. The Nebraska State Historical Society has erected a plaque at 20, Main Street, Crawford, Nebraska in memory of Garnier.

The Chief of Fort Robinson Scouts, Baptiste “Little Bat” Garnier was shot by James Haguewood, bartender, in this building known as Dietrich’s Saloon, December 16, 1900. "Little Bat" died near the center of the street intersection about 3 a.m. and was buried at the Fort Robinson cemetery. The record of death and interment states: "Deceased was brutally shot while wholly unarmed and without cause or

justification." On a plea of "self-defense," Haguewood was acquitted. Garnier served his country well in bringing peace to the frontier.







U.S. Army Scout Frank Grouard noted that: “Little Bat was the greatest hunter that he ever met, and that he could outrun the fleetest horse in a long distance contest. He has known him to start out after a band of elk, shoot them as he ran, and followed them until he had killed every last one in the band. He was an excellent shot, and never wasted ammunition. Cool and brave, he made a dangerous enemy, but a royal good friend.”¹

Reference:

Cook, James H. *Fifty Years on the Old Frontier*. Oklahoma City: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957: 161-171.



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¹ Joe, DeBarthe. *The Life and Adventures of Frank Grouard, Chief of Scouts, U.S.A.* St. Joseph, Mo.: Combe Printing Co., 1894: 544.