

Joseph Laframboise, II. (1805-1856)

Joseph was born at the Grand River Post, the son of Madeleine Marcotte and Joseph Laframboise. His mother is famous as the first businesswoman of Michigan and a very prosperous fur trader. Madeleine had taken control of the family business after her husband was murdered by White Ox for, a Potawatomi, for refusing to give him liquor. His murder happened in the fall of 1806 on their annual trip to Grand River Joseph's entourage of voyageurs were camped on the beach of Lake Michigan about a days travel from the mouth of the Grand River. Madeleine was thus left a widow at age 24. she carried on and went ahead with that season's trading. She sold the business to the American Fur Company (AFC) in 1821. John Jacob Aster, the owner of AFC became Joseph Jr's first employer in 1826. As an agent for the company he opened the Great Oasis, Murray County Post in the early 1830s. He worked in a number of posts as far west as Watertown, South Dakota. Joseph was married first to a Mdewakanton woman. His next two wives were Sisseton Sioux; daughters of Chief Sleepy Eye. Little is known about his fourth wife.

Joseph worked in southwestern Minnesota and eastern South Dakota from the early 1820s until his death in 1856. LaFramboise was a confidant of well-known figures of the time including Henry H. Sibley, George Catlin, Joseph N. Nicollet, and John C. Fremont.

In 1837, he was the interpreter for the Sioux and Chippewa Treaty negotiations. He also interpreted in 1851 for the Traverse des Sioux Treaty. LaFramboise was a third generation Metis who became a catalyst for the removal of the Santee Sioux from their land to facilitate white settlement. He engaged in the first commerce, became an agent for the further acculturation of the Santee Indians, helped establish overland routes, and guided those who mapped the region for subsequent settlers.

Reference:

Timmerman, Janet. "Joseph Laframboise: A Factor of Treaties, Trade, and Culture. Manhattan, Kansas: Kansas State University, M.A. thesis, 2009.



Compiled by Lawrence Barkwell
Coordinator of Metis Heritage and History Research
Louis Riel Institute