

Catherine Lacerte: Manitoba Schoolteacher (1843-1922)

Catherine Lacerte was born on October 15, 1843 at Île-à-la-Crosse, the daughter of Louis Lacerte Jr. and Josephte Vandal. Her paternal grandparents were Louis Lacerte and Marie Martin; her maternal grandparents were Joseph Vandal and Marie Lachevrotière *dit* Charette. Louis Lacerte subsequently married Charlotte Lesperance at St. Francois Xavier in 1879. He was a St. Vital delegate to Riel's council at the Convention of 24 in November 1869 and represented Pointe Coupée at the 1870 Convention of Forty.

In 1843, the family was enumerated at St. Boniface and on June 17, 1845 at Norway House. By 1850, the family was enumerated at Pembina, Louis Lasert (sic) was shown as a blacksmith. They then moved with the rest of the Metis to St. Joseph to avoid the annual flooding at Pembina. Later, in 1855, Father Belcourt sent Catherine and another Metis girl to Longueuil, Quebec for instruction from the Soeurs des Saints Noms de Jésus et de Marie and they returned three years later to enter the new group Belcourt had formed, the Soeurs de la Propagation de la Foi. This group disbanded because of an undetermined scandal and Catherine became the school teacher for the mission at St. Joseph. She continued teaching there until she married Joseph Mulaire on November 24, 1862. He was the son of Joseph Mulaire Sr. and Henriette Paul de St. David. Her husband was a mail carrier between Fort Garry and Pembina. The couple settled close to her parents who were now living at Pointe Coupée now known as St. Adolphe, Manitoba. Her husband died of pneumonia in 1871.

In 1866, Catherine began teaching again at the St. Adolphe School and she continued until 1882 after which she taught out of her home located between St. Adolphe and St. Agathe. From 1893 to 1895 she taught at St. Nicholas and finished her teaching from home, now at Otterburne. At one point she was recognized for winning prizes at the London Colonial Exhibition for some of her pupils' accomplishments.

Catherine died at her daughter's home on April 23, 1922.

Reference:

Diane Michelle Boyd. "The Rise and Development of Female Catholic Education in the Nineteenth-Century Red River Region: The Case of Catherine Mulaire. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, M.A. Thesis, 1999.



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