

## **Metis Children’s Land under the Manitoba Act: The Story of Urbain Ross.**

**By Sam Corrigan<sup>1</sup>**

What was the quality of the justice and land system of the Canadian government for Urbain Ross?

Urbain was the child of a “Half-Breed Head of Family”<sup>2</sup> under the *Manitoba Act* and was thus entitled to receive land under Section 31 of the *Manitoba Act*. Young Urbain was allotted parts of Sections 10 and 15 in Township 10, near Dakotah, Manitoba, some 240 acres in all. The allotment was made in 1880, when Urbain was 15 years old. Six years later in 1886, when he turned 21 and thus arrived at his majority, he learned that he no longer had any land. It seems the Province of Manitoba decreed that persons 18 years of age and older were subject to land taxes. Urbain, not being able to gain title to his allotment while still a minor—that is until he turned 21—did not pay taxes. Accordingly the land was seized and sold for taxes shortly before his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. It was of course perfectly legal. It might not have been fair, but it was legal.



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<sup>1</sup> See Sam Corrigan “Conclusion”, In S.W. Corrigan and L.J. Barkwell (Eds.) *The Struggle for Recognition: Canadian Justice and the Metis Nation*. Winnipeg: Pemmican Publishers Inc., 1991: 218.

<sup>2</sup> Urbain Ross was born on February 4, 1865 at St. François Xavier, the son of Roderick Ross and Marie Delorme. His paternal grandparents were Hugh Ross and Sarah Short; his maternal grandparents were Urbain Henault *dit* Delorme and Madeleine Vivier.