

Marilyn Richardson's Response to Fort Walsh, Grassland National Park, and Fort Battleford Questions

Disclaimer: *The views presented in these responses are those of the interviewee and are not the views of the Gabriel Dumont Institute. This interview is copyright of the interviewee and can only be used for reference purposes. It can not be republished and/or repackaged in any way without the written permission of the interviewee and/or his/ her successor.*

1. My name is Marilyn Richardson and my home community is North Battleford. I am a member of Metis Local # where all of my family are members.
2. My Dad is a Metis member in Saskatoon Local. His name is Gordon D. Clarke. My mom is Beatrice (Ptolemy) Clarke.
3. No family members speak Michif. I speak, read and write French fluently. I am an intermediate level Cree speaker. I am interested in attending CILLDI to be a community leader in Language preservation.
4. We knew little of our Metis background until I was an adult as it was necessary for my Grandma, Jean (Sanderson) Clarke, living in Dinsmore, Sk. to hide her identity to protect herself and my dad and his siblings from discrimination in this community.
5. Not known to me.
6. The only thing I can suggest is a Metis food that my Grandma called "Fritters". It is deep fried bread dough served with salt. Sometimes it was served with butter and jam.
7. We were always big on berry picking. We did not have a specific region but it would have been in the area somewhere near Dinsmore.
8. N/A
9. Not known. It is very possible as our people moved from the Red River Settlement to the Winnipegosis region. It can be checked in the Sprague book of genealogy. I will do some looking.
10. No
11. We gathered and ate together.
12. Not to a great extent that I know of.
13. Our Metis connections were with Manitoba as far as I am able to determine and eastern Saskatchewan-Sturgis Lake.
14. Not known.
15. Yes. The person to contact for all this information would be Jeff Baldwin of the Northwest Archaeological Association. I have visited Bresaylor with the Saskatchewan Archaeological Association. Bresaylor, and red river cart trails on the Edmonton Trail are still in fields near Paynton, Sk.
16. My Paternal Grandmother's Dad and Mom worked at the jail where Louis Riel stayed according to my Great Aunt Myrtle's statement as an informant. I have the information taken from my Grandmother's sister that her father (my great-grandfather)- George William Sanderson freighted for Louis Riel. My great-grandmother worked in Regina. "They used to have the Headingly Jail there. She worked there with her sister Mrs. Gunn. They cooked for the prisoners." I can send this if requested. It is quite extensive, was taken in 1983 and tells of life at in the mid 19th century and on to that date.
17. My great-grandparents were both Metis and were both from the White Sand River, Rupertsland, which is in Saskatchewan now. They knew each other when they were quite

small, living in that community. My great-grandfather was a carpenter, George William Sanderson, #4335 in the Sprague Bk of Genealogy, married to my great-grandmother Nancy (Ahdemar) Sanderson. Nancy Ahdemar was the daughter of William Ahdemar and Elizabeth Fidler of St. Andrew Manitoba. I have the rest of the genealogy or it can be viewed at <http://www.peterfidler.com/jonathanfidler.php>

Our Metis ancestor, Peter Fidler surveyed the Red River Settlement. He and his wife Mary MacKagone, of York Factory Manitoba travelled into the north and west in the late 18th Century. Their decedents lived in what is now Manitoba in the Winnipegosis area and Sturgeon Lake, Sk. My Grandmother moved away from her Metis Community to live in Dinsmore in the 1920's. My Dad, brothers, sister and our children are members Local 165 in Saskatoon.

18. See above. We seem to be in Saskatchewan before it was a province in the White Sand River area of Rupertsland or NWT.
19. Please read the information in the booklet I bought at Fort Walsh. It is called **A Short History of the Cypress Hills Country**. Contact dliboiron4@hotmail.com Or Fred Carson. This is an excellent reference done by local people. I think you would be interested in the first two articles in particular called **Naming of the Cypress Hills** and the second **Native Presence in the Cypress Hills**. Other articles in this same book are excellent. There are many names of informants in this book. Contact Fort Walsh bookstore or Parks Canada, if you cannot get info through the above email.
20. My great-grandmother, (**Nancy Ahdemar Sanderson**) as mentioned above, kept the Regina jail-called Headingly jail with her sister, Mrs. Gun around the time of the Resistance.
21. I was not able to find this information.
22. I would like to see a partnership between the bookstore and GDI. I suggest that GDI keep samples for handling out on the shelves and sell only new copies. The samples would be tax deductible business expenses for GDI and a lost leader for the products. The entrance admission for the Fort could include guided tours by appointment only at Bresaylor. I know that there is always a student hired in the summer to work at Bresaylor. Perhaps they could hire a Metis person with better historical knowledge of the site so that he or she [could] be able to use the materials on hand and the stories retrieved from informants. Also, the same play that is presented at Back to Batoche could make 2 visits to the Fort. One in July and on in August. I enjoyed seeing the theatre, dancing, fiddling on site at Back to Batoche. Maybe there could be a second production at Fort Battleford between Back to Batoche and the John Arcand Fiddlefest. These three events could be linked via SaskTourism on their website. Fiddlers definitely have a chain of summer events, possibly there could be more cooperation between the Fort and the Western Development Museum and even Bresaylor, to get the Metis stories, art, fiddling, jigging and the Michif language more alive. Since there were French Metis, English speaking (Scottish, Irish and English Metis), not all Metis were on the same page during the rebellions and it is important that they had language and cultural difference as well as the barrier of distance. Similarly, Poundmaker was walking with starving children and women to Battleford to make a case for the peaceful fulfilment of Treaties when other First Nation groups were involved in the Conflict. I think it is important that there were a lot of different sub groups of Metis, First Nations people and European and American settlers that had different parts to play in late 19th century. Looking at the conflict of 1885 with only the Metis, the First Nations and the European settlers does not do justice to all that is happening to these people groups.
23. May McLennan, Glenda Martin-Bird, Stacey Delorme, Don Light, Hap Boyer, if he is still

alive and others should be contacted. Yes, Deanne Kasekeo, (First Nations) who is doing a database of First Nations informants in our area at the same time as this study. Jeff Baldwin, head of the Northwest Archaeological Society. Both the previously mentioned people are lawyers. Ron Bourgeault@uregina.ca Professor at U of R, Velma Foster 895-4813 who lives at Bresaylor, Western Development Museum, who host the Fiddling Contests in our Area, the Allen Sapp Gallery, known internationally for art. Leah Dorion has some of her original work there. Bresaylor, itself, as a community and remnant of an English speaking Metis community, should be registered as a Provincial Historical site, at the very least. Better still it really is a National Historic Site, with value for the entire country that does not even have information about the Metis in the National Museum in Ottawa: the Museum of Civilization. When I last visited the Museum of Civilization in 2011, I was appalled. There was one wall about the French fur trade from Montreal and New York. Nothing about the Hudson Bay Fur trade through Moose Factory or York Factor, Cumberland House, and Fort Carlton. Most of the materials that should have been labelled Metis were called Ojibwa beadwork, etc. There is great need for our country to have information about the activities of the English Metis and the life of Peter Fiddler and his family. He is truly the forgotten explorer. Anyway, making Bresaylor a National Historic Site would benefit our country in have a more complete picture of the history of the plains. I believe that Bresaylor could be a UNESCO site. Down the road from North Battleford, on the way to PA, there is a World UNESCO Environmental site at Redberry Lake.

24. N/A

25. None. It is however important to note that so little is known of the English Metis because there have little knowledge of the English-speaking Metis that came yearly on their York boats from Europe to York Factor, Cumberland House, Fort Carlton and went north to the Athabaska, Meadow Lake regions. This history should be preserved. Last summer I stopped at the Meadow Lake Museum and [it] has no inclusion of the contributions of Peter Fidler, its founder and the founder of Bolsover House trading post. All is lost to that Metis Community. They know nothing of their Metis heritage as far as what might be shown in their museum, read in school books or found on the internet. Although all of this activity was going on well north of Meadow Lake, Europe had arrived at Meadow Lake in the person of Peter Fidler, the Hudson's Bay Company's sole surveyor. In 1799, his group travelled along the Beaver River which extends from Ile-a-la-Crosse south to Green Lake then west all the way into Alberta. His group turned off the Beaver into the Meadow River, travelling south to its source which was called "Lac des Prairies", the original name for Meadow Lake. Here, his group built a 12 foot by 12 foot log building as a company post and called it Bolsover House, after Fidler's birthplace in England.

Quoted from <http://www.meadowlake.ca/2008-06/history.php>

Peter Fidler soon continued on his journeys, with three other men, to Red Deer Lake in Alberta, leaving seven other men at the Meadow Lake post. But their post didn't flourish. It remained open for one season only.

To pay homage to Peter Fidler, a monument was erected in 1955 in Meadow Lake's Elk's Park by the Government of Canada. The monument's plaque reads "Peter Fidler (1769 - 1822) Surveyor and fur trader, born in Bolsover, England, Fidler came to Canada in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1788. He established trading posts such as Bolsover and Greenwich (1799),

Chesterfield House (1800), and Nottingham (1802), but it was as a surveyor that he made his great contribution to the exploration of the west. He made the initial survey of some 5,000 miles of waterways in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and surveyed the Selkirk settlement and the boundaries of the district of Assiniboia. His compiled maps and his journals are basic historical sources. He died at Fort Dauphin soon after his retirement."

Thanks you so much for taking an interest in the Metis of Bresaylor, Fort Battleford, Delmas, Cochin and area.

Sincerely,
Marilyn Richardson
Dec. 1, 2011