

Jonas Ranville and Marie Louise Monet dit Belhumeur.

By Randy Ranville and Lawrence Barkwell.

Jonas Ranville was born on June 16, 1856 at Pembina, the son of Francois Ranville (b. 1815) and Marguerite Belgarde. Francois and Marguerite were enumerated at Pembina in the 1850 Census as family #99.¹ Marguerite was born in 1817, the daughter of Alexis Belgarde (b. 1792) and Marguerite Dufort.²

Francois Ranville was the son of Joseph Ranville³ born in 1779 at Lac Qui Parle, Dakota Territory and Marie “Tokanne” Little Crow, born 1889 near Fort Snelling. Joseph Ranville (Renville) II. (1779-1846) was the son of a Dakota woman, Miniyehe, and a French Canadian fur trader, Joseph Renville Sr. Joseph Renville is best known for translated the entire Bible into the Dakota language in 1837. In 1804, Joseph Jr. married Marie “Tonkane” Little Crow, the daughter of Petit Carboneau and the niece of chief Little Crow.

Joseph Ranville was educated in Canada, then returned to Kaposia village where he was born, upon the death of his father in 1795. From then on he lived with the *Gens du Large* (Sioux of the Prairie). At age twenty-six he left Prairie du Chien and worked as a guide and interpreter for Zebulon Pike during his exploration for the source of the Mississippi. During the War of 1812, he attained the rank of captain while acting as an interpreter for the British. He was commander of the Dakota warriors at the siege of Fort Miego. After the war he traded for the HBC at the headwaters of the Minnesota or St. Peter’s River. After the 1821 amalgamation of the HBC and NWC, he helped establish the Columbia Fur Company with headquarters at Lake Traverse in the Minnesota Territory.

Jonas married Marie Louise Belhumeur dit Monet, the daughter of Francois Belhumeur dit Monet (b. 1838) and Louise Morisseau on December 27, 1880 at Flat Willow Creek, Montana. Francois Belhumeur was born on September 8, 1838, the son of Andre Belhumeur (b. 1805) and Marguerite Maron. His older brother Michel Belhumeur was married to chief Little Shell’s daughter Josette. Francois Belhumeur’s older brother Jean Belhumeur (b. 1832) married Marie Malaterre and they were the parents of Marguerite Belhumeur, Louis Riel’s wife.

¹ Francois Renville, age 35, voyageur, born Pembina, Marguerite, age 33, born Pembina, Francois Jr. age 13, Marguerite age 9, Marie, age 7, Genevieve, age 5, Adelaide age 3, Baptiste age 2.

² Alexis and Marguerite were enumerated in the Pembina Census of 1850 as Family # 137.

³ In July 1823, Joseph joined Major Stephen H. Long’s Expedition to the source of the St. Peter’s River. He was highly valued and was chosen by Colonel Dickson to command the Sioux contingent of the expedition at the rank equivalent to a captain in the British Army.

By the time the American Fur Company bought the Columbia Fur Company, Joseph was established at Lac qui Parle and maintained an army of warriors known as the Tokadantee or “Prairie Dogs.” This group later evolved into the Renville Rangers under one of his sons. The Lac qui Parle Mission was established in 1835 largely through the influence of Joseph Renville. A Native Christian Church was established there in 1837. Renville’s greatest work was in assisting the missionaries at Lac Qui Parle to translate the Bible, books of hymns and other material into the Dakota language. Joseph died at Lac Qui Parle on March 18, 1846 and buried on a hill by the stockade.

Jonas and Marie Louise Renville's son François Renville (b. 1882 at Wood Mountain) married Henriette Nepinak (b. 1899 at Pine Creek).



Jonas Renville (with beard) and his wife Marie Louise on the right.
(Photo courtesy of Randy Renville)



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