

Madeleine Deschamps Turcotte (b. 1859) Heroine of the 1885 Resistance

Madeleine was born at St. Francois Xavier, the daughter of Jean Baptiste Deschamps and Isabelle Henry dit Allery. She married Noel or Napoleon Turcotte (b. 1851) son of Jean Baptiste Turcotte and Angelique Paquin on May 7, 1883 at St. Ignace, Willow Bunch. Napoleon was born in 1851 at Turtle Mountain (North Dakota). His father, Jean Baptiste Turcotte and grandfather Vital Turcotte were both signators of the 1892 Treaty of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Band.

Madeleine's husband and her father were both active in the Resistance. Her sister was married to Resistance activist François Vandal.

After the fighting ended Metis and Indian families fled in all directions; north, west, east and south to North Dakota and Montana. By 1887, there were an additional 100 Indians. These increases resulted in part from Chippewa and 230 Metis living at Turtle Mountain, North Dakota.

Metis who came to Turtle Mountain after having participated in the second Riel Rebellion. With Riel's defeat and death, and in many cases because they had lost land in Manitoba, these people returned to Turtle Mountain as a place of refuge.¹

For these refugees, the timing couldn't have been worse, due to severe winter storms and summer droughts 151 people at Turtle Mountain died of starvation during the winter of 1886-1887.

After the 1885 battles the Turcotte's were one of the families that moved to Turtle Mountain Reserve. They are included in the October 1892 McCumber Census of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Half-Breeds. On the 1904 voter's list of Mixed Bloods off the Reservation Napoleon appears as # 458 (Band # 1012). It is believed that they lived in the Dunsieith area.



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¹ Stanley N. Murray, "The Turtle Mountain Chippewa, 1882-1905." In *Central Anthology of North Dakota History: Journal of the Northern Plains*. Bismark: State Historical Society of North Dakota, 1996: 53.