

Emma Rose Sansaver (St. Sauveur). (1884-1925)

Emma was born in 1884 near Havre, the daughter of Edward St. Sauveur¹ (1859-1891) and Marie Rose Laframboise. Marie was born in 1858 near Prince Albert, the daughter of François Laframboise, (Métis) and Marie Trottier², (Métis). She married Edward St. Sauveur in 1875 at Edmonton.

Emma Rose was a member of a girls' basketball team that was organized at Fort Shaw School in 1902. Emma and her younger sister Flora had attended St. Paul's Mission School at Fort Belknap before transferring to Fort Shaw. In 1903, the team twice defeated the women's basketball team from Montana Agricultural College, once in Great Falls (36-to-9) and again in Bozeman (20-to-0). The Fort Shaw girls defeated nearly every high school and college girls' basketball team in the state, as well as several high school boys' teams. The team ended its first year as undisputed (if unofficial) state champion.

In 1904, school superintendent Fred Campbell agreed to send his girls' basketball team to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, better known as the St. Louis World's Fair, in St. Louis Missouri. To fund their trip, the team stopped at numerous points along the way to play exhibition games against other high school and college girls' teams. After each game, the girls donned traditional native ceremonial garb and charged a fee (50 cents) for a program of dance, music, and recitations.



Emma Sansaver is in the front row holding the basketball.

¹ Edward was the son of Pierre St. Sauveur (b. 1835) and Marie "Wapasthak" Gouin (1842-1933)

² Marie Trottier was the daughter of Andre Trottier and Marguerite Paquette.

Members of the 1904 World Champions Fort Shaw Women's Basketball Team pictured are (standing from left) Nettie Wirth, Assiniboine; Katie Snell, Assiniboine; Minnie Burton, Lemhi Shoshone; Sarah Mitchell, Assiniboine; and (seated from left) Genie Butch, Assiniboine; Belle Johnson, Piegan; Emma Sansaver, Chippewa-Cree. Not pictured are Genevieve Healy, Gros Ventre; Rose LaRose, Shoshone-Bannock; Flora Lucero, Chippewa. Jessie Tarbox took this picture of the Fort Shaw girls' basketball team in 1904 on their visit to St. Louis.

Part of the United States' pavilion at the World's Fair was a Model Indian School. The girls would live and take classes at the school, and twice a week would hold intra-squad exhibitions. The girls also agreed to take on all challengers. The girls departed from Fort Shaw on June 1, 1904. The 11 girls defeated every single team they played over the next five months, earning themselves the title "world champions."



Emma St. Sauveur is in the front row on the left.

Over the course of five months, more than three million fair-goers gaped at Indian students demonstrating their skills in domestic and industrial arts, drama, and music. However, the almost all-white audience devoted most of its fascination to ten Indian girls playing basketball and, between games, reciting Longfellow's "Hiawatha" in distinctive buckskin dresses. Standing (from left) are Nettie Wirth, Genevieve Healy, Josephine Langley, Belle Johnson, Minnie Burton, Sarah Mitchell, and kneeling (from left)

are Emma Sansaver, Gertrude LaRance, and Rose LaRose. (Photograph by Andrew P. Williams, MHS Photo Archives PAC 80-79 M3)

Laframboise, Marie - Concerning her claim as a child - Address, Swift Current - Born, 1858 near Prince Albert - Father, François Laframboise, (Métis) - Mother, Marie Trottier, (Métis) - Married, 1875 to Edward St. Sauveur - Children living, five - Children deceased, one - Scrip for \$240 - Claim 1479.

Her scrip application in 1885 had affidavits signed by Basil Parenteau of St. Boniface and Moise LaPierre of Turtle Mountain.

St. Sauveur, Marie; for her deceased children: William, born: 25 December, 1877 at Red Deer; died: 1898 at Fort Benton; Ellen, born: 1881 at White Mud River; died: 11 months old at Teton River; address: Sun River, Montana (Fort Shaw); father: Edwin St. Sauveur (deceased Métis); mother: Marie Laframboise (Métis and deponent); heirs: Marie St. Sauveur, scrip cert.: form D, nos. 1162 and 1172 for \$48.00 each; Marie Dubois, scrip cert.: form D, nos. 1164 and 1174 for \$48.00 each; Isidore St. Sauveur, scrip cert.: form D, nos. 1166 and 1176 for \$48.00 each; LaRose St. Sauveur, scrip cert.: form D, nos. 1168 and 1178 for \$48.00 each; Flora St. Sauveur, scrip cert.: form D, nos. 1170 and 1180 for \$48.00 each; claim no. 1174.

Marie notes that the family was employed freighting from Cypress Hills to Fort Benton. They lived at Swift Current, Duck Lake and Carlton before that time.

St. Sauveur, Marie; for her living children: LaRose, born: August, 1883 at Maple Creek; Flora, born: December, 1884 at Ten Mile Creek, Fort Walsh; address: Sun River, Montana; father: Edwin St. Sauveur (deceased Métis); mother: Marie Laframboise (Métis and deponent); scrip cert.: form C, no. 736, LaRose; scrip issued for 240 acres, Flora; file ref. 62347A; claim no. 1172.



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