

## **Whitford, James (1792-1872)**

James Whitford was the Métis son of James Peter Whitford (1766-1818) and Sarah (Indian). James married Mary Nancy Spence, the daughter of Magnus Spence and Christiana (Cree) on November 27, 1820 at St. John's. His brother Peter was married to Nancy's sister on the same day. The couple had eighteen children. From 1799 to 1810 James' father was an Inland Trader for the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) in the York Factory District. He was probably born at Gordon House in the York Factory District. In 1810 James Jr. became an Apprentice Clerk with the HBC at Carlton House.

### Children:

- Jane, born, 1821 at St. John's, married Samuel Spence.
- John, born 1824, he married Margaret (Aboriginal) then married Mary Hudson.
- Mary, born 1826 at St. Andrews, she married George Sanderson.
- Philip, born c. 1828 at Swan River, he married Mary Morisseau, then married Rachel Bangs.
- Eliza, born c. 1828.
- James, born 1829 at St. Andrews, he married Mary Robillard.
- Peter, born 1832 at St. John's, he died at age four.
- Sarah, born 1833, she married William Norn.
- Francis, born 1835, he married Jennie Anderson.
- Andrew, born 1839, he married Eliza Gill.
- Margaret, born 1840, she married David Magnus Cusitor.
- Donald, born c. 1848, he married Margaret Cayen.
- Nancy, born 1838, she married Andrew Spence.

After the HBC and NWC amalgamation of 1821, the HBC began to downsize and large numbers of employees were retired and fired; James joined the class of the unemployed. He then relocated to Red River. James and his brother Peter both became Canoe Men at that time, requiring them to leave home. It was probably around 1817-18 that the rest of the family moved to Red River. In 1819 James Jr. spent his last year of HBC service back at Carlton House as a Labourer. He may have quit so that he could join his distraught widowed Sarah and his siblings at Birsay Village on the Assiniboine River. It was there that James and his brother Peter met, and began to romance the two eldest Spence girls, Nancy and Christie, the daughters of Magnus Spence the founder of Birsay Village. By mid-September of 1819, Birsay Village was abandoned and both the Spence and Whitford families moved east to the Kildonan area settlement along the Red River.

Scrip affidavit for Whitford, James; wife: Mary Whitford (nee Robillard, Métis and Deponent); died: April 16, 1872; father: James Whitford (Métis); mother: Mary Spence (Métis); heirs: widow and children: Mary (widow and deponent); Mary Anne, wife of Henry Charles Desmarais; Euphemia, wife of George Sanderson; James; William Rupert; Andrew; Peter Charles; John and Margaret; claim no: 2345; scrip no: 9685 to 9692; date of issue: May 8, 1876; amount: \$160.



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