

Whitford, James François Sr. (1827-1908)

James Whitford signed the Cypress Hills 1878 Métis petition for a reserve. In 1878, the Half-Breeds living in the vicinity of Cypress Hills petitioned the government for their own reserve. This is a petition requested a re-opening of the buffalo hunt between November 14th and February 15th each year and the granting of Métis “reserve” land. The request was for a strip of land 150 miles long along the American border beginning where the Pembina River crosses the border, running west for 150 miles into Saskatchewan. This strip was to be fifty miles from south to north. The petition did not receive a favourable response.

Jimmy Whitford was born at St. John’s on January 10, 1827, the son of François Whitford (b. 1807) and Marie Gladue, the daughter of Charles Gladu and Marguerite Ross. He married Marguerite Fagnant, daughter of Jean-Baptiste Fagnant and Josephite Monet dite Belhumeur in 1852. Their four oldest sons and their daughter Marie were all part of the Cypress Hills hunting band.

Their daughter Marie born November 6, 1852 married Jean-Baptiste Desjarlais, the son of Antoine Desjarlais¹ and Louise Richard, in 1874 at St. François-Xavier. They were members of the Cypress Hills Métis group and Jean-Baptiste Desjarlais signed the petition.

James’ sister Sarah (b. 1834) was married to Peter Hourie (b. 1827) who ran the HBC Qu’Appelle Post and later became farm instructor on Crooked Lake Reserve. James died in 1908 at Willow Bunch.

Children of James Whitford and Marguerite Fagnant:

- Marie, born Nov. 6, 1852, she married Jean-Baptiste Desjarlais.
- James, born September 14, 1854, he married Sarah Gladu.
- Maxime, born Nov. 16, 1856, he married Adelaide Campbell.
- Elzear, born Feb. 6, 1859.
- Louis Napoleon, born Sept. 8, 1861. He married Rose Marie Lingan.
- William, born Oct. 7, 1863, he died in 1865.
- Athalie Rose, born Mar. 23, 1866.
- Genevieve Marguerite, born April 4, 1870.
- Jean Marie, born Oct. 1873, he married Marguerite McGillis.
- Isabelle, born July 1877, she died as an infant.

Scrip application:

Whitford, James; heir to his deceased daughter, Isabelle; Whitford; address: Willow Bunch; born: July, 1877 between Oxboro and; Estevan; died: 4 days old; father: James Whitford (Métis and deponent); mother: Marguerite Fayant (Métis); scrip cert.: form F, no. 1808; claim no. 1233.

¹ Antoine was an HBC interpreter at Fort Ellice 1857-58.

In this application James said he was at Willow Bunch for ten years, previously at Griswold 8 years and “on the plains”. He says Isabelle was baptized by his sister-in-law Isabelle McGillis.

Whitford, John; address: Willow Bunch; born: 3 October, 1874 at Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; father: James Whitford (Métis); mother: Marguerite Fayant (deceased Métis); scrip cert.: form E, no. 90; claim no. 90.

Whitford, James; address: Dunseith; born: 10 January, 1881 at Oak Lake; father: James Whitford (Métis); mother: Sarah Gladu (Métis); scrip cert.: form C, no. 440; claim no. 793.

James Jr. says he has been living at Belcourt, ND for thirteen years.



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