

Garneau, Lawrence (Laurent). (1840-1921)

The story of Lawrence (Laurent) Garneau is instructive as to how Métis even peripherally involved with the 1885 Resistance were treated by the government authorities. Lawrence “Larry” Garneau, born December 1, 1840 in Bay Mills, Minnesota, the son of Louis Garneau and Say-Shaw-Ne-Nie-Se-Ranze [Archange Cadotte].

Garneau’s father was Louis Garneau born 1790 north-west of Lake Superior and his mother was Archange Cadotte¹ born 1798 at Rainy Lake. Laurent Garneau started as a trader at age 19 (1859), when he traveled to the Missouri River basin. He was chased out of this area by the Sioux and was actually rescued by Métis buffalo hunters from Pembina. Shortly thereafter he arrived at the Red River Settlement. He served in Riel’s forces during the 1869-70 Resistance. At Red River he married Eleanor Thomas whose grandfather Richard Thomas was a Métis born in the Albany River District west of James Bay in 1800.²

Lawrence married Eleanor “Helene” Thomas who was born in the Swampy Cree Indian Village, in the Kildonan Parish, Red River Settlement. They married in 1864 at Little Britain Parish, Red River Settlement. She was the daughter of Alexander “Sandy” Thomas (1800-1861) and Victoria Taylor, the daughter of George Taylor and Jane Prince. Lawrence and Helene lived on river lots 96-97 in St. Andrews Parish along with the Taylors. Eleanor died on July 13, 1912 in St. Paul des Métis, Alberta. Her Funeral Service was held on July 18th 1912 at the St Anthony's Church in Edmonton, Alberta

The children of Eleanor and Lawrence were:

- Victoria, born October 22, 1870 near Lower Fort Garry.
- Louis, born August 21, 1871 in Lower Fort Garry area.
- Edward “Ned”, born April 03, 1872 in Little Britain, Manitoba.
- Henri Joseph, born November 12, 1874 in the North West Territories.
- Philomene Archange; born: September 2, 1876 at Strathcona.
- Lawrence, 1878 at Strathcona.
- Alexander, February 22, 1880 at Strathcona.
- Jean Marie, born: November 12, 1883 at Strathcona.
- Agathe, born: December 30, 1885 at Strathcona.
- Charlotte, born: 19 January, 1882 at Strathcona.
- Margaret “Madeleine”, born circa January 1883 in the North West Territories.
- Chile "Agathe", born November 12, 1883 in Strathcona District, east of Edmonton.
- John Michel, born December 30, 1885 in Edmonton District.
- Millicent "Millie", born July 04, 1888 in Edmonton District

¹ Both parents were Métis and lived at both Sault Ste. Marie and La Pointe. Archange Cadotte’s father was a Chief Factor for the N.W.C.

² Eleanor (Helene) Thomas was born August 12, 1852, a Gaelic, Cree speaking Métis of Swampy Village, Red River. She died on July 13, 1912 at St. Paul des Métis, Alberta. Lawrence then married Emily Hamelin, daughter of Métis voyageur Alexander Hamelin and Angelique Houle.

As part of the Métis exodus from Manitoba in the 1870s, Garneau sold his plots of land in St. Andrews to other Métis, and then he and his family traveled the plains for almost four years before settling in Edmonton in 1874.

Lawrence Garneau grew up in the Chippewa Territory of Michigan and Wisconsin. He was thrust into the middle of the Minnesota and Dakota Sioux Resistance Movement (1861-1863) resulting in his flight to Red River. He was then a participant in the Louis Riel Resistance Movement (1869-1870) which resulted in Manitoba's entry into Confederation. As a result of this involvement he was barred from running for the Assembly of the Northwest Territories in 1896 (as a Liberal candidate).

In 1885, Pierre St. Germaine, a Métis farmer from Battle River, after being himself threatened by the police, accused Garneau of being a spy for Riel. Jim Brady relates the story of what then transpired:³

During the 1885 rebellion, Canadian government troops arrived at Fort Edmonton and declared martial law. All local residents were ordered to retire within the fort. But, my grandfather and another French Métis, Benjamin Vandal, ignored the order to abandon their farms, as they felt that they were in no danger from the Indians. Vandal, who lived on the White Mud Creek about eight miles above Edmonton, had also (like Garneau) been a soldier in the Manitoba Métis army of 1870.

They were arrested and taken before a military court, given a summary trial, and sentenced to death for disobeying a military order under conditions of martial law...

Riel and his council had sent letters to my grandfather and Vandal inquiring as to the local situation and the degree of support that could be expected from the local Métis. My grandfather kept this letter to read to some of the Métis sympathizers who were illiterate.

My grandmother was in the kitchen when a sergeant and four constables of the North West Mounted Police galloped into the yard... (They had a warrant for Garneau's arrest and a search warrant for the premises). The sergeant bounded up the stairs to place my grandfather under arrest. The other police immediately ransacked the house. One policeman went to the actual spot where the letter had been hidden. It was evident they were acting on information from an informer. But they found nothing. My grandmother had acted with great presence of mind. She had been laundering when they came into the yard, and she reached up, placed the letter and other incriminating material in the washtub, and calmly destroyed them by rubbing them on the washboard until they were completely disintegrated.

The death sentences handed out to Resistance participants created a great backlash in Edmonton from the Catholic clergy, Hudson's Bay Company people, the Honourable Frank Oliver (founder of the Edmonton Bulletin), free traders, early White settlers and even the Protestant clergy. Bishop Grandin was summoned to intervene with Colonel Ouimet, the military commander. Grandin added an appeal to the Minister of the Militia, Sir Adolphe Caron, and a personal friend, urging a stay of execution. The Minister did reverse the verdict of the court martial. However, the prisoners were held in custody until

³ Jim Brady, "The Wisdom of Papasschayo, a Cree Medicine Man." *The Brady Papers*, Glenbow Institute, n.d., pp. 3-4.

after the rebellion, then tried in civil court and sentenced to six months imprisonment (Ibid: 3-4).

Brady continues, on subsequent events:

Here Papasschayo⁴ entered the scene. After the rebellion, considerable animosity and attitudes of revenge appeared among the Anglo-Saxons against the defeated Métis. In those days social aid and other amenities of the welfare state were unknown. My grandmother and eleven children were left destitute to shift for themselves. The Whites, it seemed, without thinking about it, punished them for my grandfather's rebellious spirit. They would have starved but for the enduring friendship, compassion and generosity of Papasschayo. For during this period of imprisonment, they fed both the Garneau and Vandal families. My grandfather never forgot this (Ibid. 4).

Later pressure from the railway and land speculators forced Papasschayo and his band off their land. They dispersed and wandered the valleys of the foothills of the Rockies.

In 1901 Garneau moved to the St. Paul des Métis colony 150 miles northeast of Edmonton. His sons and sons-in-law followed him to this location. The area they inhabited became known as Garneau Village. Several years later son-in-law James Brady Sr. (married to Garneau's daughter, Philomena)⁵ also moved his family to this village.

Years passed. Three years later (1904), and nearly twenty years after the rebellion, my grandfather heard that Papasschayo was old and in straightened circumstances. So he journeyed to the foothills and brought the Chief back to St. Paul des Métis. The Cree band of earlier days had broken up; it now existed only in the memories of old timers...a comfortable cabin was built for Papasschayo across a small lake near our trading post, and here Papasschayo lived with his two wives. The summer seasons were spent in the old style prairie teepees (Brady, op. cit.: 6).

(Written with contributions by R.D. "Dick" Garneau, Lawrence Garneau's great-grandson. This first appeared in *Métis Legacy, Vol. I*, Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 2001.)

Family Scrip:

Garneau, Eleanor (Wife of Lawrence Garneau) - Scrip number 4508 - Amount 160.00\$ - Certificate number MS. 1887/06/20. File. RG15-D-II-8-f. Volume/box number: 1396. File number: 143511.

⁴ Chief Papasschayo (also known as John Gladieu-Quinn, Papachase, Passpasschase, and Papastew), his brothers, and their families were finessed and maneuvered into taking scrip in July of 1886. They were henceforth referred to as "Treaty Métis" or Indians of Métis descent.

⁵ Philomena Archange Garneau was born at Strathcona, NWT, September 24, 1876. She lived in Winnipeg from 1898 to the time of her Scrip Application in 1901. She became Alberta's first registered nurse of Métis ancestry. She married James Brady Sr. in Edmonton, on November 28, 1905.

Garneau, Lawrence; for his deceased daughter, Victoria Garneau; claim no. 3092; born: 22 October, 1870 near Lower Fort Garry; address: Strathcona; father: Lawrence Garneau (Métis and deponent); mother: Eleanore Thomas (Métis); died: 18 December, 1899; file ref. 768987.

Garneau, Lawrence; for his children: Jean Marie, born: 12 November, 1883 at Strathcona; Agathe, born: 30 December, 1885 at Strathcona; address: Strathcona; father: Lawrence Garneau (Métis and deponent); mother: Eleanore Thomas (Métis); Jean Marie, scrip cert.: form E, no. 2358; Agathe, scrip cert.: form E, no. 2360; claim no. 3079.

Garneau, Archange; address: Winnipeg; claim no. 1370; born: 2 September, 1876 at Strathcona; father: Lawrence Garneau (Métis); mother: Eleanore Thomas (Métis); scrip cert.: form E, no. 3394.

Garneau, Charlotte; address: Strathcona; claim no. 3077; born: 19 January, 1882 at Strathcona; father: Lawrence Garneau (Métis); mother: Eleanore Thomas (Métis); scrip cert.: form E, no. 2340.

Garneau, Alexander; address: Strathcona; claim no. 3076; born: 22 February, 1880 at Strathcona; father: Lawrence Garneau (Métis); mother: Eleanore Thomas (Métis); scrip cert.: form E, no. 2338.

Garneau, Lawrence; address: Strathcona; claim no. 3078; born: 1878 at Strathcona; father: Lawrence Garneau (Métis); mother: Eleanore Thomas (Métis); scrip cert.: form E, no. 2342.

Genealogy Reference:

Eileen Horan at <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/MÉTISGEN/2015-04/1428943322>



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