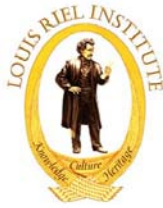


John “Johnny” Francis Grant. (1831-1907)

The Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site, Montana.¹



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

John Francis Grant was a Métis rancher and entrepreneur born January 7, 1831, at Fort Edmonton, the son of Richard Grant a Hudson’s Bay Company trader from Montreal and Marie Ann Breland the Métis daughter of a onetime Company employee and Freeman. Johnny was thus related to two famous Métis families, those of Pascal Breland and Cuthbert Grant Jr. Shortly after his birth, Johnny’s mother died and he was sent along with his siblings to Quebec to be brought up by their grandmother and aunt. He remained there until at age fourteen (1847), then he and brother Richard returned to the North West to join his father at Fort Hall, Idaho. He learned to trap and hunt, and in 1849 his father sent him to Fort Vancouver to be trained in the fur trade. On returning to Fort Hall his father set him up with a trading outfit. He initially lived with a Shoshone woman, partly to cement trading relations with that group. This became a pattern with him and he is known to have had relations with four different Native women who bore him at least twelve children. In 1861, he built a permanent ranch site at Cottonwood (Deer Lodge Valley) and recruited a number of Métis trading families to join him (Louis Descheneau, Leon Quesnelle, Louis Demers, David Contois, and Michael LeClair).



Grant was quite successful in the Deer Lodge Valley of Montana. In winter he traded with the neighbouring Blackfoot, Shoshone, Bannock, and Flathead Indians, and during spring and summer he went up the Oregon Trail to trade cattle with the immigrants. By the late 1850s he had over 1,000 head of cattle and by 1863 had over 4,000 head and some 3,000 horses. He supplied beef and horses for the Montana gold rush of 1861, and by 1863 his holdings were valued in the neighbourhood of \$150,000. He expanded his businesses by opening a store, saloon, dance hall, gristmill and blacksmith shop as well as a freighting business. Along with the Gold Rush came a

¹ Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site is located just about half-way between Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks, in the town of Deer Lodge, Montana.

criminal element and the advent of taxes in Montana, therefore Grant decided to pull up stakes and move to Manitoba. It is also noteworthy that the year he decided to leave the United States revenue officers seized his 700-gallon stock of alcohol. Grant sold his ranch and herd to Conrad Kohrs for \$19,000 in 1867. The ranch is currently a park: the Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site.



Johnny Grant's pouch believed to have been made by his wife Quarra Grant circa 1854-1857. She died of TB in 1867.

Upon arrival at Red River, Grant bought real estate in Winnipeg and bought land for a ranch in the Parish of St. Charles at Rivière aux Îlets des Bois (Carman, Manitoba). He brought a herd of 500 horses, 62 wagons, 12 carts and 106 men with him to Manitoba. He subsequently bought a large herd of cattle from the American Territories to start his ranching operation. He surrounded himself with Métis employees and his closest friends and relatives the Brelands, McKays, Leveilles and Rowands as he had done in Montana. It was here that he entered into his first formal marriage to Clotilde Bruneau, the Métis daughter of a former Judge in the Red River Settlement. As with the Breland and the other Grant families, Johnny did not join the Riel Resistance movement. After 1870, he entered into land speculation with Donald Smith (of the HBC) by buying Métis scrip and by 1882 he owned 13,000 acres. Unfortunately this was bought on credit and when the land boom collapsed in the mid-1800s he was ruined financially and had to sell off most of his holdings.

Grant sold his remaining cattle in 1891 and moved to Bittern Lake, Alberta in 1892. He homesteaded and lived there for eight years then went to Grande Prairie where he re-entered the fur trade. This did not go well, so he moved to Athabasca Landing and then to Deep Creek. In 1899, when Treaty Eight was signed in northern Alberta he was living in the ceded territory. He then became a spokesman for the children of the Manitoba Métis who had been disqualified from taking scrip because their parents had taken scrip earlier. His petition was not successful however.

By 1907 Grant was quite ill and he and his wife moved to Edmonton to live with their daughter and son-in-law. He died there on May first of that year. Before his death he dictated his autobiography to his wife Clotilde. The manuscript, "Very Close to Trouble," was completed in 1909 and is held at the Montana historic site that used to be his ranch. Part of the manuscript has recently been published by Lyndel Meikle (editor) *Very Close to Trouble: The Johnny Grant Memoir* (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1996). The title of this book "Very Close to Trouble" is a reference to Johnny Grant's attraction and marriages to numerous women. He was devoted to his children and also adopted many abandoned or orphaned children. He ensured that all of his children eventually obtained their Métis scrip.

Children of Johnny Grant:

Children with Aloysia Larpantis, also called Louise (b. 1833), a Shoshone woman.

- Marie Agnes b. 1851 Marie married William Dease
- Jane b. August 1854
- Aloysius or Louise b. c. 1855
- Mary b. 11/28/1855, d. 1/25/1933
- Richard b. c. 1858: Richard married Rosalie Hogue in 1881 at St. Charles

Children with Quarra (b.c. 1840, d. 2/24/1867). Quarra was a Shoshone, the sister of the noted chief Tenday. She died of tuberculosis at age 27.

- William b. 10/1/ 1856
- David b. 10/17/1858
- Julienne b. 1/7/1860
- John b.c. 1862
- Ellen b. c. 1863, d. 1/19/1868
- Charles Henri b.c. 1866

Child with an unknown woman who worked at the settlement of Cottonwood, located in the Deer Lodge valley in Montana. Quarra objected to Johnny bringing this baby home and he asked John and Mary Dempsey to adopt her.

- Mary Dempsey b. November 28, 1854. Robert Dempsey and his wife Margaret adopted Mary as a baby. Margaret was John Grant's sister-in-law, being the sister of his wife Quarra.

Children with Isabel Lucier (also Ruis) (described as a Blackfoot Half-Breed). She later married Captain D.W. Buck.

- Emma b. 1862, married Isaac Cooper.
- James or Joseph b. 3/6/1869 James married Marie Sarah "Jane" Delorme at Red River.
- Isabella married Philip Carr.
-

Children with Clothild Bruneau (b. 1850 at St. Boniface) married May 7, 1868.

- Charles Alexander b. 5/30/1869. He married Annie Sparks in 1907 at Edmonton.
- Marguerite Marie Anne b. 12/15/1870, died as an infant
- James b. c. 1871, died as an infant.
- Sarah b.c. 1874, married Colin Fraser Lennie.
- Maria, b. 1874, married Frank Nutt, in 1894 at Edmonton.

- Alice b. c. 1878, d. Feb. 1951
- Marie Corinne d. 3/23/1883
- Francis baptized and interred 5/9/1881



Child with Cecile Boyer.

- Cecile Welsh b. c. 1867

Children with Lily Bruneau, sister of Clothilde.

- Sara b. c. 1870
- Clara b. c. 1872

Adopted children: While in Montana Johnny adopted an orphaned Bannock Indian boy and brought him to Manitoba, he ensured that the boy got Métis scrip. Johnny also adopted three Afro-American Métis children, a boy and two girls, the orphans of Phil Barnes and his Shoshone wife. He left the oldest girl in Montana when he moved to Manitoba. It was John/Jack and Annie Barnes who came with him.

In Montana the La Vatta family (Thomas and Angélique) had worked with Johnny Grant. They were one of the many families who accompanied him on his move to Manitoba. Thomas LaVatta was known as the "Red Headed Spaniard," he was a freighter and trader. His wife Angélique was called Poor-Oh-Ge in Shoshone. Ultimately, they did not like Manitoba and returned first to Idaho and later moved to the Fort Hall Reservation. Their children Laura Delores LaVatta and Edward LaVatta remained in Canada with Johnny Grant and were educated at St. Boniface. Laura married Johnny's nephew, Joseph Richard Grant, however she died in 1885. She applied for Métis scrip (attested to by her adoptive father Johnny Grant) and the application was

approved. Edwards' scrip application was not approved, he likely returned to join his family in Idaho before this could happen.

Philip Vasquez-Grant was another adopted child who accompanied Johnny to Manitoba. Philip was the son of Emilie Langie Grant; Johnny's widowed sister-in-law, who had married Pike Vasquez in California.² The marriage did not last long. Philip used the Grant surname almost exclusively. John F. Grant successfully applied for scrip on Philip's behalf. Philip left Manitoba for Philadelphia in 1910.

Métis Scrip:

Scrip affidavit for Grant, John F.; born: January 7, 1831; father: Richard Grant (Canadian); mother: Marie Ann Breland (Métis); claim no: 943; date of issue: July 18, 1876.

Scrip affidavit for Grant, Clotilde, wife of John F. Grant; born: 1850; father: François Bruneau (Métis); mother: Margaret Harrison (Métis); claim no: 944; date of issue: July 18, 1876

Scrip affidavit for Dease, Marie Agnes; wife of Wm. Dease; born: 1851; father: John Grant (Métis); mother: Louise (Indian); claim no.: 1815; date of issue: Sept. 20, 1876

Scrip affidavit for Grant, Richard; born: 1 December 1857; father: John Grant; mother: Louise (Indian) = Demande de certificat pour Grant, Richard; né(e): le 1er décembre 1857; père: John Grant; mère: Louise (Indien(ne))

Scrip affidavit for Grant, Charles; born: 30 May 1869; father: John F. Grant; mother: Clotilde Bruneau.

Scrip affidavit for Grant, Margaret Marie Anne; born: 15 December 1870; father: John Francis Grant, the deponent; mother: Clotilde Bruneau.

Scrip affidavit for Grant, John F., concerning the claims of his children: David J. Grant, born: 17 October 1858; John Grant, born: 16 October 1861; Julianne Grant, born: 7 January 1860.

Scrip affidavit for Grant, John F., concerning the claims of his children: Emma Grant, born: 22 September 1862; & James Grant, born: 6 March 1869. (mother Isabelle Lussier)

Scrip affidavit for Barnes, Joph; born: 1858; father: Philip Barnes; mother: An Indian; Deponent: John F. Grant Foster; father of that child.

² Scrip affidavit for Grant, Richard Jr.; born: 7 September 1848; father: Richard Grant (deceased); mother: Emilie Lange (French Canadian). The son of Emilie Grant and Pike Vasquez, born in California.

Grant Family Manitoba Land Holdings:

John Grant:

NW Quarter, Sec. 27, Township 6, Range 4.

SW Quarter, Sec. 27, Township 6, Range 4.

NE Quarter, Sec. 28, Township 6, Range 4. (Homestead quarter)

SE Quarter, Sec. 28, Township 6, Range 4. (Métis grant Sec. 32 of Manitoba Act.)

SW Quarter, Sec. 2, Township 7, Range 4. (Cattle Depot)

Lot 86, Parish of Baie St. Paul (1884)

Lot 92, Parish of St. Francois Xavier.

Clothilde Grant:

SE Quarter Sec. 27, Township 6, Range 4.

SW Quarter, Sec. 2, Township 8, Range 1.

Lot 156, Parish of St. Francois Xavier.

John Grant (b. Oct. 10, 1861, Deer Lodge, Montana, died 1939). Son of John Grant and Quarra "Cora".

NE Quarter, Sec. 23, Township 7, Range 5.

NE Quarter, Sec. 36, Township 7, Range 5. (Homestead, quarter)

Sale J.A. Ross	Sale R.V. Henderson	Manitoba Sch. Lands Sale To C. Montgomery et al	Manitoba Sch. Lands Sale J.R. Thompson	Sale W.A. Byers	Homestead Thomas Merrighan	M.B.C. Stewart Mulvey	Homestead John Swain	Sale Christopher Hill	Sale Wm. F. Leggo	Sale George Brown	Sale A. Ouellette
3	↓	32	32	33	33	34	34	35	↓	36	↓
Sale Dorothy Ann Ross	Sale John F. Grant	Manitoba Sch. Lands Sale M.A. Myer	Homestead George Seasmith	Military Bounty Grant Sale To R. McKnight	Homestead Pierre Laverdure	M.B.C. W.N. Kennedy	Sale John Swain	Homestead Chris. Hill	Homestead Wm. F. Leggo	George Brown	A. Ouellette
Homestead Dorothy Ann Ross	Sale John F. Grant	Homestead Knaggs	Sale. Ryer Olson	M.B.C. Richard McKnight	Homestead John F. Grant	M.B.C. J.F. Grant	M.B.C. J.F. Grady	H.B.C. Grant	Homestead Catherine Ferguson	Homestead Richard McKnight	Sale Richard McKnight
30	↓	29	29	28	28	27	27	26	↓	25	↓
M.B.C. W.A. Farmer Carmen	Homestead J. Kennedy	Homestead Samuel de Kennedy	H. Stead Ryer Olson	Sale H. J. Kennedy	Grant under the Manitoba Act To J.F. Grant	M.B.C. J.F. Grant	Homestead Henry Morgan	H.B.C. Lola Armit Inman	H.B.C. Lola Armit Inman	Time Sale Lola Armit Inman	Sale Thomas McGulloch
Sale W.A. Farmer	Sale W.A. Kennedy	Sale Sam Kennedy	M.B.C. Chas. O. Evans	Sale H. J. Kennedy	Sale Isabella Took	Homestead Robert Took	Homestead Wm. McKee	M.B.C. Wm. McKee	Sale William Clerely	Homestead William Clerely	Sale Mark Williams
19	↓	20	20	21	21	22	22	23	↓	24	↓
Sale J. Reid	Homestead J. Reid	Sale J.F. White	N.W.M.P. Grant J.F. White	Homestead G.W. Kennedy	Sale Livingstone	Homestead Richard Salter	M.B.C. R. Johnston	M.B.C. D. Paisley	Homestead F. Morgan	Sale F. Morgan	Mark Williams
Homestead Mitchell Huston	Homestead M.N. Kennedy	Sale William McGill	7	Sale John L. Baker	John L. Baker	Homestead Angus McLennan	Sale A. McLennan	John Morgan James Parrot Francis Morgan Angus McLennan Chas. D. Evans Robert Harrison Joseph Ross	Homestead Booth	Sale Henry S. Westbrook	Sale R.F. Harrison
18	↓	17	17	16	16	15	15	14	↓	13	↓
Homestead C.E. Laidlaw	Sale M.N. Kennedy	Sale A.R. Ruth	Sale Abner R. Ruth	Sale Joseph G. Baker	Sale J.B. Baker	Sale Angus McLennan	Homestead James Parres	Homestead Payton Booth	Homestead Thomas Booth	Sale Henry S. Westbrook	Homestead R.F. Harrison
Sale Thomas Salter	Sale T. Salter	H.B.C. Grant	8	Homestead Joseph McGill	N.W.M.P. Police Grant Joseph McGill	Sale A. Ostrander	Sale Wm. Ostrander	M.S. Lands Sale D. McDonald	M. Sch. Land Sale T. Hodgson	M.B.C. Grant F.E. Cornish	Sale A. McLennan
7	↓	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	↓	12	↓
Homestead O. Gillespie	Sale Isabel Took	H.B.C. Grant	7	Homestead Stephen Miller	Steven Miller	Homestead A. Ostrander	Sale Wm. Ostrander	M. Sch. Land Sale S.S. Miller	M. Sch. Land Sale A. McLead	Sale F.E. Cornish	Sale F.E. Cornish
Sale David Pritchard	Sale D. Pritchard	Time Sale D. Pritchard	Time Sale Jacob Shaver	Sale J. Shaver	Homestead James Morrison	Homestead Henry Ardington	Homestead John Thomas Ardington	N.W.M.P. Grant J. McKinley	Homestead Andrew McKinley	Sale Edouard Richard	Sale Edouard Richard
6	↓	5	5	4	4	3	3	2	↓	1	↓
Sale James Jones	Homestead James Jones	Sale Chas. Jones	Homestead Chas. Jones	Sale M. Durant	Homestead M. Durant	Sale Henry Ardington	Sale J.T. Ardington	Homestead J. McKinley	Homestead D. McKinley	Time Sale Orlando Dunn	Sale O. Dunn

Township 6, Range 4, W.P.M.

Highway transferred
to Prov. by O.R.G. 6-1-90
P.C. 2718-51C 15-8-18

Surveyed by Deputy Surveyors
(Signed) *Walter & David Beatty*
May 1872

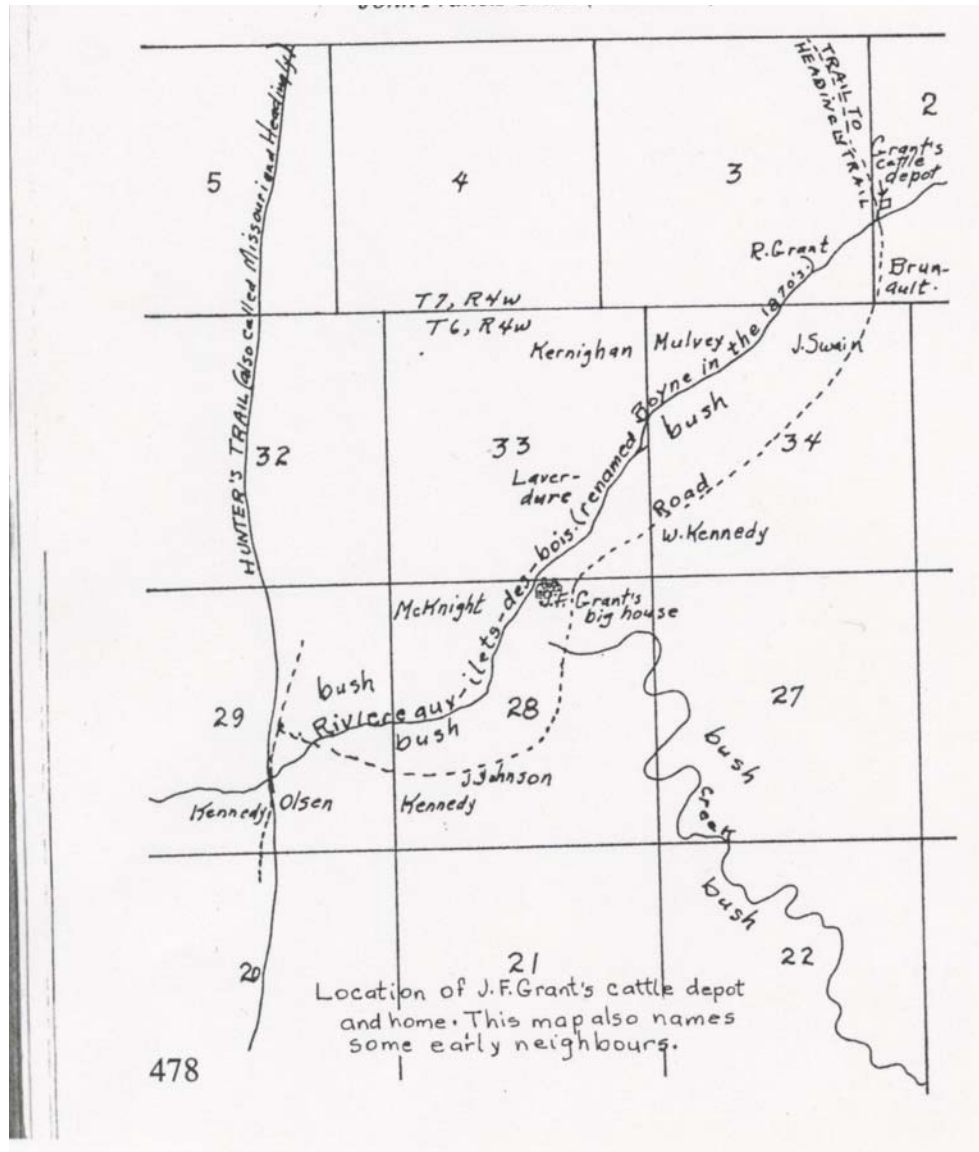
Field Book No

13 January 1873
Approved and confirmed Roads
Walter
Surveyors General

Contents.

Net Area 22975.27 Acres
87108
Water
Total Area 22975.27

Map of 1872 Survey showing John Grant's land.
From the R.M. of Dufferin (community history) 1982: 23.



Map showing Grant's home and Cattle Depot
From the R.M. of Dufferin (community history) 1982: 478.

Reference;

Meikle, Lyndel (editor) *Very Close to Trouble: The Johnny Grant Memoir*. Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1996.



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

Note: Regarding children of Johnny Grant, I am a descendant of Mary Grant Dempsey and Jacob A. Cline. DNA analysis connects me with the Robert Dempsey family, not Johnny Grant. Therefore I question text noting Mary Grant Dempsey was the daughter of Johnny Grant and an unknown Indian woman and believe it is in error. Mary was a daughter of Robert Dempsey. Perhaps her mother was Quarra, wife of Johnny Grant and sister of Margaret Dempsey.

This update note was sent to the Gabriel Dumont Institute by Gerry Lee Kline on April 1, 2017.