

Mary Rose Davis, (McGillis). (1886-1980)

Mary Rose was the Metis daughter of Michel Davis¹ “Nubun-ay-gar-bon” and Flavett Allery (Henry). Her mother was Flavie Henry dit Allary, the daughter of Pierre Henry dit Allary and Angelique Parisien. Her husband was Pierre McGillis, born October 26, 1874 near Brandon, the son of “Star” Nestor McGillis² and Elise Burston.³

Mary lived both in Canada and on a tract of land north of St. John, North Dakota and many other locations since her family were truly nomads of the plains. They roved from the banks of the Red River to those of the Missouri River, from hunting encampments on the plains to those of their friends, the Crees Chippewas and sometimes Sioux. She was passionate about the treaty process in the USA and how it affected the Michifs down through the years. How it was so long a time to wait. “With tears in her eyes she mentioned how her family, parents, relatives, friends, waited and waited for something that never came.” The land she says, “Was made for all people and was not to be fenced off for one’s own use. To the Metis - to share and share alike was a value well respected.”

Contrary to what historians say about the naming of the Turtle Mountains, Mary Rose said that the Michifs were the to call those hills the Turtle Mountains. As a child she recalled the stories and turtle hunting trips the Metis made following the Mouse River through its course to the Missouri. There was an abundance of turtles - turtles two and three feet in diameter. She recalled how they were killed for food, how the turtle eggs were found in mud holes along the river banks - how the meat and eggs were dried out for future use - she said that she had always known that part of the country to be called Les Montagnes Tortue (Mountains of the Turtles) by the Michif because of their abundance.

Reference

St. Ann’s Centennial Committee, *St. Ann’s Centennial 1885-1985*. Belcourt, North Dakota: St. Ann’s Centennial Committee, 1985: 463-464.



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¹ Michel was born November 2, 1852, the son of “Kug-kay-dway-wash-kung”, William Davis Sr. and Marie Enno.

² Star was born c. 1849, the son of Alexandre McGillis and Marguerite Bottineau, the daughter of Charles Joseph Bottineau and “Techomehgood” (Assiniboine).

³ Elise Burston was the daughter of William Gaddy Burston and Madeleine Gonneville.