

**Mary Briere, (Trotchie). (1911-1982):
Fiddler's Hall of Fame Member**

By Jackie Trottier¹

Métis fiddler Mary Bruyere (Briere) was born at Whitewater, Montana, the daughter of Gregoire Bruyere and Alphonsine Mary Allary. Her father was born in 1872 at St. Francois Xavier and her mother Alphonsine, the daughter of Andre Allary and Josephite McGillis dit Hamelin, was born in June 1877 at Wild Horse Lake. Mary married George Edward Trotchie (Trottier) the son of Andre Trottier and Susie Wallace; he was a descendant of Charles Trottier who led the Métis fighters from Prairie Ronde in the 1885 Métis Resistance at Batoche. He was also a descendant of Ursule Lafromboise Trottier.

Mary showed an interest in fiddling from a young age and was taught by her father and uncles, Alec and Sam Allery. She also listened to Canadian Métis fiddlers, Andy Desjarlis and Ned Landry on the radio. She toured as a performer with the Cecil Nichols' Hawaiian Show where she was featured as a dancer and as the "Ukulele Queen."



Mary began competing in fiddle contests in the 1950s and took many honours over the next thirty years, such as the Northwest Regional Fiddle Championship in 1969 (first place, Women's Division), the National Fiddle Contest in 1969 (first place, Women's Division). With this later win she was elected to the Fiddler's Hall of Fame in Weiser,

Idaho. Mary began playing the fiddle at the age of four. Because her hands were too small to get around the neck of the fiddle she taped small sticks on the end of each finger and thus she could play..

Marie Louise Bruyere's grandfather Jean Baptiste Bryuere (b. 1844) and brothers Louison (b. 1842), Jeremie (b. 1854), and Cleophas (b. 1856) all signed the 1878 petition of the Métis hunting band at Cypress Hills which requested a re-opening of the bison hunt between November 14th and February 15th each year and the granting of a Métis "reserve." They requested a 150-mile strip of land along the American border beginning where the Pembina River crosses the border in Manitoba and thence west. This strip was to be fifty miles wide from north to south.

¹ Jackie is Mary's daughter.



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