

Heroine of the 1885 Resistance: Josephte Desjarlais Delorme. (1863-1936).
Spouse, William J. Delorme.

Josephte Desjarlais was born February 12, 1863 at St. Francois Xavier, the daughter of Jean Baptiste Desjarlais and Josephte Fleury. On August 9, 1881 she married William Delorme at St. Vital. William was born at St. Francois Xavier, the son of Norbert Delorme and Charlotte Gervais. He was first married to Adelaide Cayen *dit* Beaudreau, the daughter of chief Keetoowayhow (Alexandre Cayen) and Marie McGillis in 1878. William and Josephte had five children. William died in 1889 and Josephte subsequently married Alexandre Robillard *dit* Hayden.

Josephte gives the following account of the events at Batoche on May 12, 1885:

I remember seeing the soldiers coming down the hill, they were all in red uniforms. I could hear the bullets flying all around me and I put my baby Sarah in a wash tub so I thought that would protect her life and my husband came to me, "You better run away because we are going to get killed." Then I took my baby and ran to the river bank. And I looked at the water, just like it was raining heavy. It was the bullets from the soldiers, and I seen all kinds of men killed around me and I went through without a scratch. The Half-Breeds and the Indians broke little trees and hung their coats and caps there and the whitemen fought the coats and caps all day. We were sitting down the river bank. And I think that day we got many soldiers killed, there were thirteen Indians killed and three Half-Breeds, and we lost everything we had. They took all our horses (about 35), all the wagons, all but my little black mare that used to be wild, her name was Jessy. She broke her rope and ran into the bush and hid herself and the whiteman couldn't find her.¹

And on May 13, 1885;

So the next day my husband went back OK and he happened to see the little black pony and he called her by name, Jessy. She came back right to him and he jumped on her and he came back to where we were hiding. You must remember this is the pony we left Prairie Pheaze (now Melville, Saskatchewan) with. Then we decided we would run back to the Rocky Mountains (where they had lived at Spokane Washington, earlier). We were only three families. We just tied two poles across the ponies' backs and there were five kids riding on the poles. We walked all night, the women and the men walking. In the daytime we hid in the bush.²



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¹ Wiebe and Beal, 1985: 126.

² *Ibid.*: 128.