

## Reg and Beryl Bouvette.

In 2000, Reg Bouvette was inducted into the Porcupine Awards Hall of Fame which recognizes great Canadians who have done their share to preserve and protect our cultural heritage. Our heritage is the real folkloric, living tradition of the people of Canada. Reg was inducted as a fiddler who extended the lineage of the “Red River Valley Style” of playing. In 2006, Reg Bouvette and Andy Dejarlis were inducted into the Manitoba Aboriginal Music Hall of Fame. Reg became a legendary fiddle player and wrote over 200 fiddle tunes.

Reg Bouvette toured most of Canada’s major cities playing at rodeos, concerts, dances and special events, such as the Commonwealth Games, Klondike Days, The Pas Trapper's Festival and the Call of the Wild Festival. Reg found his match when he met Beryl Knott in 1972 and they were married in 1982. This would be Beryl’s second marriage, having raised two sons and four daughters from her previous union. She was that person when they say “behind every good man there is a good woman”. Beryl and Reg Bouvette performed at countless summer and winter festivals for nearly a decade. Starting in the early 80’s Reg played the fiddle and Beryl played the guitar they were



on the road for many months a year playing all over the country. *Back to Batoche* and *Festival du Voyageur* were two of the many venues that they played at. The Bouvette’s were warmly accepted at all festivals, and were invited back every year to play. Touring took the Bouvette’s throughout Canada from coast to coast and as far north as the North West Territories, as well as throughout the United States. Beryl also released her own recording “Sincerely Yours” with her husband Reg when he was still alive.

Reg has to his credit many albums recorded by Sunshine Records, these recordings feature many of his own compositions. The albums are titled *Home Brew*, *Red River Jig*, and *Looking Back*. Reg Bouvette was a four-time Manitoba fiddling champion, a winner, participant and judge at numerous National and International fiddling contests. Hailed as a major contributor to Canadian country music, in 1967, Reg renewed his career professionally with the release of a single called *Reginald's Waltz*. This waltz was later recorded by Don Messer and Andy Dejarlis. In 1968, Reg was playing pubs with a group called the Rhythm Rangers and running his own trucking firm as well, In 1972 Reg sold his business and began playing full time. In 1973-1975 Reg won the Manitoba Fiddling Championship for the first time.

Beryl Bouvette (nee Knott) was born and raised in the Metis community of Grand Marais, MB with two brothers and two sisters. The children of Wilfred and Christine Knott (nee Sinclair) were all musical and several members of the family, including Beryl, are recognized as prominent figures within Metis musical and cultural community today. Beryl remembers her father as a very industrious man, worked as a commercial fisherman on Lake Winnipeg for 65 years; she loved helping her father with fishing. Beryl handmade fishing nets for 15 years, and she and her sister and her sister's husband made a special presentation to the formally called Museum of Man and Nature of how these nets were made, and this information was recorded for preservation.

After her husband passed away 1992 from diabetes Beryl took a long break from playing. She retired from her job and was bored so she was convinced by many of her friends and family members to get back to what she loved the best and that was country music. After five year's she started playing music again. She started with Gary Lepine who had known the Bouvette's for many years. Beryl has also been a judge for many contests for fiddle square dancing and jigging competitions within the province.

Later on Beryl joined up with her family sister Marcella and her brother Tom who was also a well-known fiddle player and they started the group called *The Why Knott Band*. They released two CD's with Gospel Music. The *Why Knott Band* has played at many socials and senior homes throughout Manitoba. In the midst of her music playing she still finds time to sit as a volunteer Board of Director for the Indian & Metis Friendship Centre of Winnipeg and now she sits as an elected Senator for the Indian & Metis Friendship Centre. Along with her volunteering experience she has been the Entertainment Chairperson for Folklorama for the Metis People's Pavilion for a number of years. She is following in the foot steps of her mentor and Auntie, Elsie Bear. Elsie was also a Senator for the Manitoba Metis Federation and she volunteered for the Selkirk Friendship Centre for 25 years.



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