

Clarence Trotchie (b. 1925)

Clarence Trotchie or Trottier was president of Metis Local 11 (Saskatoon) of the Saskatchewan Metis Society. Clarence was the son of Justine Landry and Peter Trottier. His mother Justine, was the daughter of Moise Landry and Philomene Laframboise. Peter was the son of Alexandre Trottier and Catherine Laframboise. Peter's grandparents were Michel Trottier and Angelique Desjarlais.

Cheryl Troupe reports:

For the Saskatoon Métis, it was not until the 1960s when they once again became politically active under the leadership of Clarence Trotchie, a great nephew of Charles Trottier and Ursule Laframboise. Interestingly, in the early sixties, there was an effort by Clarence' father, Peter Trotchie, to document those that were buried at Round Prairie in recognition of the connection between the Round Prairie Métis community and the growing Saskatoon urban Métis community. According to Rita Schilling, Trotchie was only 16 in 1906 when he had dug the grave for his great aunt, Ursule Laframboise, Charles' wife. Charles had earlier donated the land for the cemetery.¹

The Saskatoon Métis community began to reorganize itself as a Saskatchewan Métis Society local, under the leadership of Clarence Trotchie, in late 1968-69. By this time, Trotchie and other community members were already involved in the new Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre that had opened in 1967. When organizing Local 11, the community once again relied on past traditions of having male leadership that was supported by the women in the community. In his efforts to organize the community, Trotchie sought the assistance of women in the community to encourage active community participation in social events and political meetings.

Over time, Trotchie came to rely on the efforts of the women in his family including his sister Irene Dimick as well as his half sisters, Kay Mazer, Marge Laframboise, Dorothy Askwith, and Bertha Ouellette. He also sought the help of his wife Phyllis, his niece Nora Cummings (then Nora Thibodeau), and other Métis women who worked tirelessly alongside Trotchie and other male leaders to help organize Métis Local 11.²

Early in the 1960's, Pete Trottier, great nephew of Charles Trottier, began a movement among his people to remember his relatives buried at Round Prairie. The memory of the cemetery was sketched in his mind, for he had been the one to dig the first grave in 1906, at the age of 16 years, for his great aunt, Charles Trottier's wife, Ursula (Laframboise) Trottier. His great uncle Charles had donated the land from his holdings.

¹ Cheryl Troupe, "Métis Women: Social Structure, Urbanization and Political Activism, 1850-1980. Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan M.A. Thesis, 2009: 111-112.

² Cheryl Troupe p. 114.

Then in the 1970's, Clarence Trotchie, Pete Trottier's son, and President of Métis Society, Local 11, picked up where his father left off, and in 1973 Round Prairie Cemetery was restored as a historic site unearthing at least part of the story of Round Prairie. The cemetery was fenced, crosses were built and a memorial cairn and plaque were dedicated.

In interview Clarence recalls:

My mother grew up in Helena, Montana, where they lived along a big river and there was lots of game and they always had lots of food and lots of good fresh water. They talked about all the Metis that lived in the Montana area there as far as, Havre, Great Falls, and all these places where we originated from.

Just after the War years, when I came back from overseas I didn't even know where I lived. We had no address. My mother and I were living in a little shack on the road allowance this side of Saskatoon here. My brother Alex was in a little shack on the road allowance, my brother Irvin -- he come back the year before me -- and he was living in a shack. And I think a lot of the Metis people in Saskatoon, here, they were all living in little shacks just south of Saskatoon on the road allowances.

Reference:

<http://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/01023.pdf>

Karen Louise Trotchie interview with Clarence Trotchie, February 22, 1984.

Cheryl Troupe, "Métis Women: Social Structure, Urbanization and Political Activism, 1850-1980. Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan M.A. Thesis, 2009.



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