

Joanna Blondeau Potyondi (b. 1939)

Metis Elder Joanna Potyondi was born on September 14, 1939 at Estevan, Saskatchewan, the daughter of James and Josephine Blondeau. Her grandfather, Alfred Blondeau (b. 1882)¹ ran a cold mine, at Old Taylorton, Saskatchewan (NE of Roche Percee). When her father was overseas during the Second World War Joanna went to her grandparents and was raised by them. Her father was killed in September, 1961 in a construction accident, he was 43 years old.



Jackie McLeod (left) and Joanna Potyondi (right) at Metisfest 2012, Killarney, MB. Joanna was holding a Capote making workshop at Metisfest. Photo by L. Barkwell

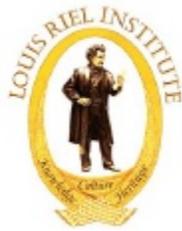
¹ Son of Louison Blondeau (b. 1855) and Marie Antoinette Robillard (b. 1863). They were married in August of 1878 in the Fort Qu'Appelle Mission. Louison was the son of Simon Blondeau. Simon Blondeau was a Metis leader in the Qu'Appelle River valley. On September 2, 1880 the Metis of the Qu'Appelle Settlement petitioned Governor Alexander Morris for land, hunting rights and trading rights. The leaders of this group were Pierre Bonneau Sr. (b. 1803), Peter Lapierre (b. 1827) and Simon Blondeau [Blondin] (b. 1827) and Augustin Brabant Sr. (b. 1828). Simon Blondeau was born on the Pembina River, the son of Louis Blondeau and Marie Louise Laframboise dit Franche. Louis Blondeau worked as an interpreter for the North West Company at Fort des Prairies in 1804 and at Cumberland House in 1815-16. He was present during the aftermath of the Battle of Seven Oaks. Simon Blondeau married Francoise Desjarlais, the daughter of Antoine Desjarlais and Marie Catherine Allery, in 1850 at St. Boniface. Their son John was married to the Augustin Brabant's daughter Caroline. Simon worked for his father-in-law Antoine Desjarlais at Fort Desjarlais in the Souris River Valley in the 1850s. His nephew Louis Blondeau Jr. was one of the men who manned the barricades on the La Salle River to prevent the entry of Canadian government officials in October of 1869.

Joanna was interviewed on January 30, 2003 at Fenwood, close to Melville by Cheryl Troupe of GDI. She said:

I had three children, Janet Lynn, her name is Jan Lynn Renson now, and two boys, Alfred A Thomas and another son called Andrew John. They both live in Estevan, my daughter lives here in Melville and works for victim services of Yorkton and works for the RCMP City. I have a farm out of Melville, just raise horses on it; I raise horses all summer. [She and her husband had previously worked with horses in Manitoba for a PMU operation, and also raised purebred cattle.]

[In the 1970s]... I got into sewing. I took an upholstery course from Parkland Community College in '78 and I was just finished my course when the college got me teaching and I have been teaching upholstery ever since, since 1978. So it was just something that I could handle, just like that. Like I could sit around and it don't take me long to see how it goes back together right from like you see the skeleton's of the chairs and that and I can put them together no problem.

Joanna is well-known for the clothing she makes; capotes, vests and bags of stroud or HBC blanket cloth.



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