

## **Frank Walters (1898-1995)**

By Iris Vitt and Lawrence Barkwell.<sup>1</sup>

Frank Walters was born in 1898, the son of Eugene Walters M.D. and Eva Needham. Eugene, an orphan in England, spent some time in the Baptist Home for orphaned boys. He subsequently moved to Jamaica as a Baptist missionary in 1887, and then moved to Canada.

Eugene (b. 1863) took his undergraduate training at Hulme Cliff College in Derbyshire education. He subsequently went to the University of Minnesota for his medical degree in 1891 and returned to England after graduation. He completed his theology training at Harley College in London and completed his medical studies by interning in a London hospital. In 1904 the family immigrated to Winnipeg in Canada. In 1907, he took one year of Medicine at the University of Manitoba to be accredited here. The family lived on Balmoral St. and had a summer home at Petersfield. Eugene served as minister at Gilolo just north of Selkirk. This church served the local settlers as well as Peguis reserve. He would commute from Winnipeg by train and horse drawn diplomat to do Sunday services. At the same time he practiced medicine in Winnipeg. He was a director of the North Winnipeg Hospital on Burrows Ave.<sup>2</sup>

Frank Walters married Minnie Foord (1911-1989) a Metis woman. They had three girls and two boys. Frank had started in Agriculture at the University of Manitoba but did not complete a degree. Frank and Minnie had land at Netley Creek<sup>3</sup> (Petersfield, formerly called St. Louis<sup>4</sup> after Gabriel St. Louis). Frank engaged in mixed farming and trapped muskrats. They lived out at Netley Creek until the 1970s.

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<sup>1</sup> Iris is the daughter of Frank Walters and Minnie Foord.

<sup>2</sup> This was a 15 bed hospital serving the north end of the city. The hospital reportedly served three fifths of the city's poor.

<sup>3</sup> The North West Company opened a post at Netley Creek in 1803, on the west bank of the Red River. The Netley Marsh area as of 1805 was the most northerly limit of native horticulture. Historians believe that corn was raised by the Saulteaux. They kept gardens on levees within Netley Marsh. One was located approximately 1.5 miles (2 km) upstream from the Red River and Netley Creek Junction.

In 1813 the HBC established a second post just north of the junction of Netley Creek and the Red River. Sixty horses were kept here to be used for transport of goods to Brandon House on the Assiniboine River. However, establishment of the Saulteaux farming settlement nearby, by Rev. William Cockran of the Anglican Church, and construction of Lower Fort Garry resulted in this post being closed.

<sup>4</sup> Petersfield was originally called St. Louis, for its founder, Romuaid Gadeau Xavier Saint Louis. Much is learned about the culture of the district from Frank Walter's book "Pieces of the Past". Mr. St. Louis discovered the area now known as Petersfield when he came to explore the area with his friend Alexander Muckle, who had established a new life on Muckies Creek, almost three miles east of Clandeboye.

St. Louis visualized the possibilities of the Petersfield area as a summer resort and townsite when the railway bridged Netley Creek, in the early nineteen hundreds. St. Louis encouraged businessmen from Winnipeg to invest in the project which included the north side of Section 27 15 4E and the south side of Section 22 15 4E. St. Louis dreamed of having small acreage sold to families who could have cows. He could establish a cheese factory, a lumberyard and implement dealership. When his dream was slow to

Frank Walters was a Metis historian and cultural preservationist with a particular interest in the Bungee (Bungi) language of his wife's family. This language was spoken by the so-called Orkney-Cree Half Breeds who lived in the parishes along the Red River north of the Forks and up to Lake Winnipeg. It was the language of his wife's grandparents and great grandparents. Franks best known article on the Bungi language is "Red River Dialects: Bungee as She is Spoke" which appears in his book *Pieces of the Past*, Winnipeg: Bindery Publishing House, 1993: 68-71. This book contains many anecdotes and historical vignettes from the St. Andrews parish of Manitoba. It is an update of:

Walters, Frank J., *Pieces of the Past : A Collection of Tales of Old Red River*. West Selkirk, Man: F.J. Walters, c1989.

At the time the book was written it was estimated that less than 200 people were able to understand, explain, or write Bungee. Previously, Frank had published his Bungee article in the journal of the Red River Historical Society. Frank spent his later years telling his stories to classes of children in the Lord Selkirk School Division.

Walters, Frank J. "Bungee As She Is Spoke." *Red River Valley Historian and History News. The Quarterly Journal of the Red River Valley Historical Society*, 3 (4), 1969–1970: 68-70.

Frank was a primary Bungee speaking informant for linguist Dr. Eleanor Blain. Eleanor's first major foray into linguistics was in her M.A. work at the University Manitoba with Dr. H.C. Wolfart. She wrote her M.A. thesis on Bungee – a mixed-language born out of Scots-Cree intermarriage. Her thesis is perhaps the main source of information about the language. It's of particular interest to people who are interested in studying modern varieties of Cree-English contact, such as so-called 'Indian English' or the kind of Cree that Métis people speak on settlements (some varieties of which show strong English contact).

While completing her thesis "The Bungee dialect of the Red River Settlement," Eleanor collected an oral history of the Red River Settlement and the Bungee dialect. She donated her transcribed tapes to the University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections. She has placed this collection (1989) in the Eleanor Blain/Frank Walters Fonds at the University of Manitoba. Part of this collection contains the material collected by Frank Walters for his book *Pieces of the Past*. The fonds thus consists of two collections: the Walters Collection of Lower Red River Oral Histories (12 reels of tape recordings and 13 audio cassettes transcribed by Eleanor Blain; and the Blain Collection of Bungee Dialect Recordings (9 audio cassettes, as of now all these are off restriction).

On the Metis side of the family Frank's wife Minnie Foord (1911-1989), was the Metis daughter of Frederick John Foord (1879-1961) and his Metis wife, Margaret "Tina" Christine Kirkness (1886-1944). His Metis great grandparents were Joseph Kirkness

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evolve, his investors got restless and he bought them out. After his death in 1909, the area began to be referred to by the Railway Company as Peter's field, because Peter Bye looked after that area.

(1856-1922) and Margaret Phillips (1867-1947). His Metis great-great grandparents were on the paternal side; Andrew Kirkness (b. 1820) and Sarah Setter (b.c. 1820) and on the maternal side; William Phillips (b. 1842 in Birsay, Orkney Islands) and his Metis wife Charlotte Lambert (b. 1846).<sup>5</sup> Frank's grandmother "Tina" Margaret Kirkness is in the photograph below.



*The William Phillips Family*  
*L-R, Back Row: Joe, Tom, Bill*  
*Centre: Jemima (Settee), Annie (McRae), Christy (Pearson), Katie (Taylor)*  
*Front: Nellie (Eden), Jack, Charlotte, William, **Margaret (Kirkness)**, Archie*  
*(From Beyond the Gates of Lower Fort Garry)*

### Family Scrip

Scrip affidavit for Kirkness, Andrew; born: 1820; father: Andrew Kirkness (Scot); mother: Mary (Swampy Cree); claim no: 1014; scrip no: 7690 to 7697; date of issue: July 30, 1876; amount: \$160

Scrip affidavit for Kirkness, Joseph; born: April 6, 1855; father: Andrew Kirkness; mother: Sarah Settee

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<sup>5</sup> Charlotte Lambert was the daughter of Michel Lambert (1792-1875) and Margaret Favel (1803-1891), both Metis.

DOMINION OF CANADA.

PROVINCE OF MANITOBA.

County of *Selkirk*  
City of *Winnipeg*  
Parish of *Winnipeg*

I, *Joseph Kirkness*  
of the Parish of *St Clements* in  
the County of *Saskatoon* in the  
Province of Manitoba, *Farmer* make  
oath and say as follows :

1. I claim to be entitled to participate in the allotment and distribution of the 1,400,000 acres of land set apart for Half-breed children, pursuant to the Statutes in that behalf.

2. I was born on or about the *6<sup>th</sup>* day of *April* A.D. 18 *53* at the Parish of *St Melers* in said Province; and am now of the full age of *Twenty one* years

3. *Andrew Kirkness* a halfbreed is my father  
*Sarah Pettie* " " " " my mother;  
my said *parents* was the half-breed head of a family resident in the Parish of *St Clements* in the said Province, on the fifteenth day of July, A.D. 1870.

4. I was not the head of any family at the last named date and I have not made any claim other than the above in this or any other Parish, nor have I claimed or received as an Indian any annuity moneys from the Government of said Dominion.

Sworn before me at the Parish and County aforesaid on the *6<sup>th</sup>* day of *July* A.D. 187*0* having been first read and explained in the *English* language to the said deponent, who seemed perfectly to understand the same, and *made his* mark in my presence.

*Joseph Kirkness*  
Mark

*Smaldopp*  
Agent. *Wm. David*

Commissioner

Scrip affidavit for Phillips, Charlotte; born: 1847; husband: William Phillips; father: Michael Lambert (Métis); mother: Margaret Lambert (Métis); claim no: 277; scrip no: 2082 to 2089; date of issue: May 1, 1876

DOMINION OF CANADA.  
PROVINCE OF MANITOBA.  
County of Lisgar

I, *Charlotte Phillips (Lambert)* of the Parish of *St. Andrew* in the County of Lisgar, wife of *William Phillips* in said Province, ~~do~~ make oath and say as follows:

- I am a Half-breed head of a family resident in the Parish of *St. Andrew* in the said Province, on the 15th day of July, A.D. 1870, and consisting of myself and ~~my husband and children~~ and I claim to be entitled as such head of family to receive a grant of one hundred and sixty acres of land or to receive Scrip for one hundred and sixty dollars pursuant to the Statute in that behalf.
- I was born on or about the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ A.D. 1847 in the Parish of *St. Andrew* in said Province.
- Michael Lambert half-breed* my father; and *Margaret his wife* my mother.
- I have not made or caused to be made any claim of land or Scrip other than the above in this or any other Parish in said Province, nor have I claimed or received, as an Indian, any annuity moneys, from the Government of said Dominion.

*Charlotte Phillips*

Sworn before me at the Parish of *St. Andrew* in the County of Lisgar, on the *23<sup>rd</sup>* day of *July* A.D. 1875, having been first read over and explained in the *English* language to said deponent who seemed perfectly to understand the same and *signed* in my presence.

*J. M. G. ...*  
Commissioner.

*Affdt. N° 294*  
*Claim N° 277*  
*Scrip N° 2082 to 2089. \$ 160.00,*  
*Scrip issued on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1876.*  
*15-4-86. J. M. G.*

Scrip affidavit for Lambert, Marguerite; born: 1803; wife of Michel Lambert; father: Thomas Favel (Métis); mother: Sarah Favel (Indian); claim no: 165; date of issue: May 1, 1876

DOMINION OF CANADA.  
PROVINCE OF MANITOBA.  
County of Lisgar.

I, *Marguerite Roubert (Con. No. 1)*  
of the Parish of *St Andrews* in the County  
of Lisgar, *W. Schab Roubert* in said  
Province, *wife of* make oath and say as follows:

1. I am a Half-breed head of a family resident in the Parish of *St Andrews*  
in the said Province, on the 15th day of July, A.D. 1870, and consisting  
of myself and *Nicholas and Children*;  
and I claim to be entitled as such head of family to receive a grant of one hundred and sixty acres  
of land, or to receive Scrip for one hundred and sixty dollars pursuant to the Statute in that behalf.

2. I was born on or about the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ A.D. 1800 in the  
Parish of *North-west* in said Province.

3. *Thomas Paul Roubert* was my father;  
and *Carah Paul Indian* was my mother.

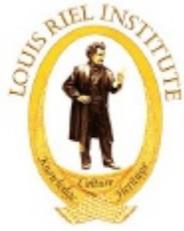
4. I have not made or caused to be made any claim of land or Scrip other than the above in  
this or any other Parish in said Province, nor have I claimed or received as an Indian any annuity  
moneys from the Government of said Dominion.

*Marguerite X Roubert*  
*wife*

Sworn before me at the Parish of *St Andrews*  
in the County of Lisgar, \_\_\_\_\_ on the  
*22<sup>nd</sup>* day of *July* A.D. 1875, having  
been first read over and explained in the *English*  
language to said deponent who seemed perfectly to  
understand the same, and *made her mark*  
\_\_\_\_\_ in my presence.

*J. M. Macdonald*  
Commissioner.

*Claim No. 165 - scrip issued 1<sup>st</sup> May 1876*  
*27/3/88*



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