

Gabriel Azure. (1824-1907)

Gabriel Azure followed the buffalo west to Montana and was a hunt leader and leader of the Michif Council. Gabriel Azure was born at Pembina, the son of Antoine Azure (b. 1801) and his Assiniboine wife. Gabriel married Cecile Laframboise (b. 1829), the daughter of Augustin Laframboise and Josephthe Gonnevillle. They were enumerated in the Pembina census of 1850 as family # 61. Gabriel is listed as a hunter. The couple had nine children:

- Alexandre, born 1848 at Pembina, married Adelaide Swain then Eloisa Morin.
- Antoine, born c. 1850, married Julienne Collin.
- Cecile, born 1850 at Pembina.
- Josephthe, born 1852, married James Swain (Swan).
- Gabriel, born 1854 at Pembina.
- Melanie, born 1857, married Modeste Gladu.
- Marguerite, born 1860 at Pembina, married Alexandre Azure.
- Pierre Azure, born 1875.

Gabriel was then married to Margaret Howard, the daughter of George Howard and Catherine Turcotte (March 7, 1883 at St. Peter's Mission, Montana).

Sam O'Connell an employee of Juneaux's trading post on the Milk River recalls that the Metis located there "had a code of laws and were governed by a Council of Twelve, under their chosen leader Gabriel Ausur [sic]."¹

Katie Pollack notes that in 1878 the Azure-Berger Metis hunting band escaped deportation off the fort Belknap Reserve:²

In October of 1878, The Gros Ventres and Assiniboine of Fort Belknap voiced their opposition to the growing Metis presence on their reservation. Accusing these Metis of befriending Natives hostile to the Gros Ventres and Assiniboine and bringing poverty to the reservation, they asked that they be removed, and became increasingly frustrated with their return to the area. In asking for their removal in 1878, however, both the Natives and Indian Agent requested that certain Metis be allowed to remain, but "...restricted to hunting only, on the north side of the Milk River."³

¹ Samuel O'Connell. "Juneaux's Trading Post on Milk River, Montana Territory: Story of Medicine Lodge Known as Juneaux's Post." Montana Historical Society, O'Connell Papers, SC 597, box 1, folder1.

² Katie Pollock, "From Borderlands to Bordered Lands: The Plains Metis and the 49th Parallel, 1869-1885. University of Alberta, MA Thesis, 2009: 52.

³These individuals allowed to remain included Gabriel Azure, Pierre Berger, and their followers – equalling approximately forty families in total. Major of 7th Infantry at Fort Belknap Guido Ilges to Acting Adjutant General of Montana District, 11 October 1878; Record 12149, 1878 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M666, Roll 362); Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General 1881-1889; Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1775-1928, Record Group 94; NAB.



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