

Jean Baptiste “Sha-how-tow”Dumont dit Larken. (1805-1884)

Jean Baptiste Dumont was born on February 01, 1805 in Ft Vermillion. Jean Baptiste Dumont was the son of Jean Baptiste Dumont Sr. and his Sarcee wife Josephte. His brother Isidore “Ecapow” Dumont was also a Metis leader and buffalo hunter. Jean Baptiste and his brother Isidore lead the peace negotiations with the Dakota held at Devil’s Lake in 1862. Isidore was the father of Gabriel Dumont. Jean Baptiste Jr. married Marguerite Lafromboise, the daughter of Joseph Laframboise and his Assiniboine wife Josephte, April 14, 1834 in St Boniface. Their children were: Vital (b. 1830) and Jean “Petit” (b. 1833).

Jean Baptiste died at St. Laurent, Saskatchewan on October 27, 1885.

In 1850, Major Woods reconnoitered the "North-Western Frontier of the Territory of Minnesota" at the behest of Secretary of War,¹ acting as an advance man for the treaty-making expeditions to come. He described his meeting with the Chippewa Métis Indians at Pembina:

I urged them to organize themselves into a band, and appoint their chiefs that they might have some order and government amongst themselves with chiefs ...; that as they were, if the United States had any business to transact with them, there was no person to address from whom *the wishes of the people could be obtained, &c., &c.*

Major Woods also organized the French people he identified as half-breeds:

On the 24th of August these people had returned from their Spring hunt, and about 200 of the hunters came to see me. They had appointed four men as their speakers. *I told them that in virtue of their Indian extraction, those living on our side of the line were regarded as being in possession of the Indians' right upon our soil; that they were on our frontiers treated as component parts of the Indian tribes; that they either came under the Indians' laws or regulations, or formed such for themselves. I urged them to organize themselves into a band under a council or chiefs, invested with ample authority to act in their name, in all matters which might arise to affect their interests ... The next day they returned in about the same numbers, and presented me with nine names as the committee they had selected for the future government of the half-breed population within our borders.*

The Metis presented the following names as their elected chiefs and councilors: J.B. Wilkie, **Jean B. Dumont**, Baptiste Valle, Edward Harmon, Joseph Laverdure, Joseph Nolin, Antoine Azure, Robert Montour, and Baptiste Lafournaise.²

¹ Major Samuel Woods, *Pembina Settlement*, Executive Document No. 51, House of Representatives, 31st Congress, 1st Session.

² Alexander Ramsey, Letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, October 21, 1850. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs 1850*, pp. 43-64



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