

Pierre “Nap-pah-kee-tche-quonish” Laverdure Sr. (1819-1902)

Pierre Laverdure was the son of Alexis Laverdure (b. 1744) and Angélique Montour. Pierre Laverdure inherited his father’s farm on Riviere Sale upon his death in 1850 and apparently abandoned it in 1855. Pierre married Catherine Charette, the daughter of Jean-Baptiste Charette and Charlotte Sansregret circa 1836. He died in 1902 at Lewistown, Montana. He was special constable upper Fort Garry (10 Feb 1868); farmer, buffalo bone collector, plains hunter after 10 February 1868. He and Catherine Charette were enumerated in the census in 1880 Judith Basin, Meagher County, Montana. They had the following children:

- François Xavier, b. 1843, married Marguerite Pelletier.
- Catherine, b. 1845, died 1867.
- Eliza, b. 1847, married Francois Dagneau (Daniels).
- Pierre b. 1847.
- Jean Baptiste, b. 1850, married Marie Anne Azure.
- Joseph, b. 1853, married Marie Alexina Welsh (Wells).
- François, b. 1853, married Marie Turcotte.
- Virginie, b. 1856, married Francois Janeaux.
- Louise, b. 1858, d. 1858.
- Daniel, b. 1859, married Mary Natalie Wells.
- Caroline, b. 1860.
- Alphonsine, b. 1863.
- St. Pierre, b. 1867.
- Lasrose, b. 1868.

Born in Pembina around 1819, Pierre applied for scrip as a Pembina Half-Breed under the 1854 and 1863/64 (#396) Chippewa Treaties. He and Catherine are found in the 1850 Pembina census (Family #108)¹, and, by the 1870s, were on the Milk River. In 1880, Pierre signed Louis Riel’s petition to Major General Nelson Miles requesting land for the Montana Métis. A year earlier, as members of a group of Métis families, he, his wife Catherine Charette, and several of their married and unmarried children settled near Spring Creek and founded the town of Lewistown, Montana. Their daughters Virginia and Eliza had married traders Francis Janeaux and Frank Daniels (Eliza), who were among the first to apply for homesteads in the Spring Creek settlement. Pierre is still celebrated today as a community pioneer. (Martha Harroun Foster, “‘We Know Who We Are’: Multiethnic Identity in a Montana Métis Community” (Ph.D. diss., University of California Los Angeles, 2000).

¹ He and Catherine Charette were enumerated in the census on 10 September 1850 Pembina, Minnesota Territory. Also in the family: Eliza Laverdure, Catherine Laverdure, François Xavier Laverdure, and Jean Baptiste Laverdure. 108, 108, Peter Laverdure; age 31, M, Hunter, b. Pembina; Catherine, age 30, F, b. Pembina; J. Savier, age 7, M, b. Pembina; Catherine, age 5, F, b. Pembina; Eliza, age 3, F, b. Pembina; Baptiste, age 1, b. Pembina (1850Ci-MN, page 29, Dwelling 108, Family 108.). He was a hunter on 10 September 1850 Pembina,

Obituary of Pierre Laverdure in the *Fergus County Democrat*, 21 March 1902:
"Death of Pierre Laverdure.

In a log cabin on the south side of the city, on Tuesday morning at four o'clock died Pierre Laverdure, a half breed French and Indian who had lived in Fergus County for more than twenty-five years. It is not known just how many years Pierre Laverdure had participated in the joys and sorrows incumbent upon an existence on earth, but his age was without a doubt more than a hundred years and has been variously estimated at from a hundred and six to a hundred and eleven. The early pioneers of this section who have known him since he first settled in the vicinity of Lewistown say that he showed traces of extreme old age when they first knew him, and beyond a doubt with the passing Pierre Laverdure ended the life of one of the oldest persons in the world. His life had all been passed on the frontier and with the spread of civilization westward he moved with the advance guard of hunters, voyagers and trappers until old age unfitted him for a life of activity and as a fitting ending to such a life he chose his last camping ground in a country where frontier customs and scenes are still fresh memories. Pierre Laverdure was an uneducated man and consequently was not able to leave behind him an account of the vast panoramic changes which he must have witnessed in a life so generously blessed with years, and it is to be regretted that no one has ever recorded the story of his career as a frontiersman in the time when those that are now called the pioneers of our great state were still babes in arms. He was a fair-sized boy when the Lewis & Clark expedition passed through Montana, and hunted and trapped on the mountains and plains of the northwest before the establishment of a military post had been even dreamed of, or the country had been looked upon as a land other than one which would remain in its primitive wilderness for all time to come. He was born in the country that now forms the state of North Dakota, his father being a Canadian Frenchman and his mother an Indian woman. He was always known as a quiet, inoffensive man and was respected by all with whom he came in contact. For some years past he had been almost blind and the cause of his death was due to the exhaustion from long usage of the machinery constituting the human body. Funeral services were conducted from the Catholic church Wednesday afternoon and interment was made in the Catholic cemetery."



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