

Story of Delorme Massacre (Copybook Letter No 459, Page 821.)

U. S. Ind. Agt.

*Copybook Letter No. 459, page 821 (STORY OF DELORME MASSACRE AND THAT
'BRAVE BEAR' the murderer IS IN THIS AGENCY)*

Devils Lake Agency D.T.
February 18th 1878

Hon. Thomas VanEtten
U.S. Court Commissioner
Bismarck, D.T.

Dear Sir,

Yours of the 7th inst. is received and in reply will state that as far as I have ascertained, the facts are substantially as follows. On or about the 28th of June 1874 "Wapepa" with four other Indians arrived at this Agency from Standing Rock. They were mounted on ponies and remained here about five days, and then left as they stated to return home. One of the Party failing to induce the other four to return home left for Standing Rock alone, and on the following day an Indian of this reservation named "Towacihay" who lives 19 miles east of the Agency, reported that four strange Indians were at his place, and that he did not like their appearance and that he suspected that they were on a horse stealing raid. They left his place and started southward, but he was surprised when looking for his oxen the same evening to strike their trail about two miles north of his house on the old road leading to Saint Joe, which settlement is about ninety miles distant from his place. This was on July 3rd 1874.

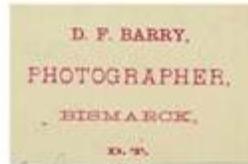
On the morning of July 5th 1874 four Indians visited the house of Joseph Delorme, near St. Joe, talked some time with the family and wanted to trade horses. Joseph Delorme started to the stable to show them his horses when they at once killed him, and his son Louie Delorme, also his son-in-law Baptise Moran. They scalped one of the men. Nancy Delorme, wife of Baptise Moran, and her mother, wife of Joseph Delorme, whose maiden name was Isabella Gurneau, were both wounded. The Indians all supposed that all five were dead but the women were only stunned and shortly afterwards recovered their senses. In the meantime the Indians had taken all the horses they could find around the farm (some seven or eight head I believe) and started for home. They passed the Indian "Towacihay's" place on their return on the morning of July 6th 1874, and camped near Lake Belland in the early part of that night. They were seen there by several freighters who were camped near them and with whom they wanted to trade horses. They arrived in Jamestown early in the morning of July 7th 1874, while there they boasted that they had killed some Chippewas up north, and showed on fresh scalp. Henry Belland, Sioux Interpreter and guide at the military post of Fort Totten, saw them there and caroused with them.

Mrs. Isabella Delorme and Nancy Moran are yet living and reside at St. Joe, Pembina County, D.T.

I was acting Agent here at the time and saw them every day for the four or five days that they remained here before going to St. Joe. I could identify "Wapepa" any where. The Indian "Towacihay" saw them going to and returning from St. Joe. Edward Lohnes of Fort Totten met them leading the extra stock.

"Wapepa" better known along the Missouri as "Brave Bear" was arrested for this offense and confined in the Guard House at Fort Lincoln for some time. I have never learned for what reason he was released but have heard it rumoured that he escaped from the Hospital there and was never recaptured. He is now here along with another one of his accomplices in the Delorme Murder whose name is "Isha Kiyape". It is my opinion that they intend leaving here and going north early in the Spring and if it is deemed best to arrest them, there is no time to be lost.

Yours very respectfully,
James McLaughlin
U.S. Ind. Agt.



Joseph Delorme dit Akkway: Joseph was born in 1815, the son of Amable Fafard *dit* Delorme (b. 1788) and Josephte Belly, the daughter of Antoine Belly and his Cree wife. He married Isabelle Gourneau (1818-1904), the daughter of Joseph "Little Thunder" Grenon and Angelique Kwayzanchewin sometime after 1836. The family was enumerated at Pembina in 1850 as Family # 96. The census shows Joseph age 35, hunter, Isabella age 32, Isabella age 14, Joseph age 13, Ann age 9, Elizabeth age 7, Sarah age 5, William age 3, and Louis age 3.

Children:

- Isabelle Delorme, born circa 1836 Red River; married Jean Baptiste Trottier, son of Joseph Trottier and Marie Sauteuse, 20 Aug 1855 Assumption, Pembina; married James Campbell, son of William Campbell and Elisabeth Ross, 17 Sep 1877 St. Joseph.
- Joseph Delorme, born Mar 1838; married Angelique Gingras.
- Nancy Delorme, born circa 1841 Red River; married Jean Baptiste Morin.

- Elizabeth Delorme, born 1843; married George Baker.
- Marie Sarah Delorme, born circa 1845; married Joseph Frederick.
- William Delorme, born circa 1847; married Angelique Herman.
- Louis Delorme; born circa June 1850; died 5 Jul 1874 St. Joseph.
- Jean Delorme; baptized 30 Aug 1852 Assumption, Pembina; died 26 May 1883 at age 30 Olga; buried 27 May 1883 Olga.
- Bernard Delorme, born 20 Dec 1855; married Jossett (--?--).
- Patrice Delorme dit Akkway; born 24 Mar 1858, baptized 25 Apr 1858 Assumption, Pembina (ibid).



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