

Vera Richards née Hunt. (1913-2002)

Vera Clara Richards was the Metis daughter of Robert Larned Hunt and Mary Anne Kirton. Her grandfather was Frank Larned Hunt who married Henriette Gunn on November 29, 1860.

Vera was born and raised in the town of Poplar Point, near Portage la Prairie. After finishing high school she moved to Winnipeg where her first job was at the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. She met her husband Gordon Alexander Richards there and eventually worked at several other jobs including; a supervisor at the Manitoba Home for Girls, a social worker at the Manitoba Metis Friendship Centre, a social worker in the law courts and finally at the Manitoba Health and Social Services where she retired. Later years were spent enjoying her grandchildren and her many hobbies such as quilting.

Vera Richards was a delegate to the 1964 meeting of the Indian and Metis Conference where thirteen Metis people submitted a "Report of a Meeting of the Manitoba Metis Association." Vera Richards was involved with Amy Clemons in the early years of the founding of the Winnipeg Indian and Metis Friendship Centre. She and Earl Duncan worked out of the Friendship Centre in the mid 1960s as Aboriginal Courtworkers employed by the Attorney General's office. She was the first woman in this position. When the National Native Women's Association of Canada was formed in 1973 she became the acting chair.

The family, through Vera's grandfather Frank Larned Hunt¹, has ties to Louis Riel's provisional government during the 1869-1870 Red River Resistance. She was the custodian of a Louis Riel letter to John Bruce of St. Boniface. Following the news, announced in the *Le Nouveau Monde* on October 2, 1869, that William McDougall the Lieutenant Governor Designate from Canada was coming to the Red River colony, Louis Riel wrote this letter inviting John Bruce to a meeting at Baptiste Amable's on October 20, 1869. The envelope that accompanies the letter contains an entry by Frank Larned Hunt: "Within is a letter from Riel to John Bruce — it may in the future be not amiss in the Records of some future Historical Society of Manitoba — F.L. Hunt." Vera's sons Francis and Gordon Richards donated their great-grandfather's letter to La Société historique de Saint-Boniface in 2011.

Reference:

Canada, Secretary of State, "Vera Richards" in *Speaking Together: Canada's Native Women*. Ottawa: 1975: 70-72.

Francis "Frank" Richards, Vera's son, personal communication, September 25, 2014.

¹ The only newspaper to send a correspondent to the Treaty Four negotiations was *The Manitoban* which sent F.L. Hunt who was at that time married to a Cree/Assiniboine woman named Kah-nah-nah-Kah-po-mit (Harriet Fox). Hunt and Kah-nah-nah-Kah-po-mit were hosted in the Indian camp by her brother Okanese, as their father Chief Mahkaysis (The Fox) had recently passed away. Mahkaysis (Fox) was a son of Le Sonnant and younger brother of Kahkewistahaw (He who Flies Around). He was a renowned hunter, peacemaker, and linguist who was head chief of the eastern Cree by mid-century. Okanese and Pasqua, who were both sons of Mahkaysis, signed Treaty No. 4, made at Fort Qu'Appelle in 1874, as did their uncle Kahkewistahaw. Reference: LAC, RG10, Volume 3612, File 4012, "Frank L. Hunt to Lieutenant -Governor Alexander Morris, Qu'Appelle, September, 1874. F.L. Hunt, "The Indian Treaty! Scenes en Route. The Fair Valley of the Qu'Appelle. Letters From Under a Cart" *The Manitoban*, September 26, 1874.



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