

Alexandre Fisher Jr. (b.1841)

Alexandre was the son of Alexandre Fisher Sr.¹ and Susanne Desjarlais. He married Marguerite Racette and they had four children. After she died he remarried in 1877 to Marguerite Primeau who was the widow of Joseph Pelletier. At the time she had four young children from her first marriage, Isabelle (b. 1865, Elizabeth (b. 1867) Sarah (b. 1868) and William (b. 1869).

The couple's first child, François was born in 1877 at Cypress Hills then Etienne was born in 1880 at Willow Bunch and died two years later at Wood Mountain. Louis Henri was born in February of 1885 at Blackwood. Having just given birth prior to the fighting, it is not clear where Marguerite was living during the Resistance fighting. Three daughters from their blended family were with the nuns at St. Laurent, then the group moved to the Fisher home but the nuns never mention Marguerite in their journal.

Alexandre Fisher was one of the Métis hunters who had signed the Half-Breed petition from Lake Qu'Appelle in 1874. Fisher purchased Batoche's ferry in 1877 and built a house along the trail to the crossing on the west bank of the South Saskatchewan River.

As Gabriel Dumont's secretary, Fisher wrote up the February 1878 petition to the government regarding Métis land rights, representation on the Territorial Council and a request for a French-speaking magistrate. He was active during the 1885 Resistance. During the battle at Batoche he was heading the men guarding the Batoche ferry. Alex was one of the fighters on the west side of the river who were responsible for taking the Northcote out of action. He and Pascal Montour lowered the ferry cable thus destroying the ships smokestacks and signalling whistle. Alexandre was arrested on May 19, 1885, and on August 14, 1885 at Regina he was found guilty of treason-felony and sentenced to seven years in prison for his participation in the 1885 Resistance.

In his testimony of August 13, 1885 at the Regina trial Father Alexis Andre says:

Alexander Fisher I have known for twenty-five years, part in Manitoba and in the Saskatchewan. He is an innocent, flighty kind of fellow, who is always ready and anxious to create a laugh. He was the owner of the ferry and it was all he had to support his family. He was compelled to remain to try to save his ferry and wire cable, as it was his all. He was always opposed to the Riel movement, and it was only abject fear of death that caused him to remain in the camp in addition to the fact that his three little daughters were in the convent school, and he feared if he escaped they would suffer for him. I am told that a great deal of importance is attached to the paper signed by him as governor of the Saskatchewan, or of some other silly joke of that kind. Surely no one can be mistaken in seeing that the poor creature was joking. He is of so volatile a disposition that he will do any kind of silly folly to make people laugh. Again he is I believe accused of signing a declaration of neutrality. Well, it may be a crime to do so and it may make a man disloyal, and guilty of high treason to do so. The poor Half-Breeds are not very deeply versed in the noble science of law, and they may be perhaps pardoned for doing that which their priests were objecting to under superior force, to save their lives and to be able

¹ Alexandre Fisher held HBC lot 779 at Red River.

to assist the authorities whose neglect had left them at the mercy of a lunatic or tyrant. For he never took up arms. He has lost all his property, he is guilty of being obliged to do the best he could to save his life and that is all his guilt. In all other respects he is perfectly innocent. He has three children whose mother is dead. (CSP, 1886, Vol. 13, pp. 384-385)



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