

“Bostonais” Peter (Pierre) Pangman, Jr. (1791-1850)

Bostonais Pangman was born on October 20, 1791 in the Saskatchewan River Valley, the son of a notorious and colourful New Jersey born fur trader, Peter Pangman, and Marguerite, said to be either Cree or Assiniboine.

Pierre Bostonais Pangman married Marguerite Angélique Wewgikabawik (1802-1852) and had eight children. He is believed to have had one son from a previous marriage. He passed away on March 4, 1850 in St. François Xavier (now Manitoba). Marguerite passed away on December 9, 1852 in Pembina Minnesota Territory.

Children of Marguerite-Angélique (Wewe-gekabawik) and Pierre ‘Bostonais Pangman Jr. (b. 1794):

- Angélique Pangman born 1814; married Jean-Baptiste Beauchamp, then Charles Ducharme.
- Marguerite Pangman, born circa 1819; married Michel Chartrand. Michel’s brother Pierre Chartrand was married to Marguerite’s sister Marie Pangman.
- Pierre Pangman born circa 1820; married Marie Short.
- Marie Pangman, born circa 1829, married Pierre Chartrand. Pierre Chartrand was the son of Baptiste Chartrand and Jenwah’bik’ahbik also a Saulteaux woman. Pierre Chartrand’s brother Michel was married to Marie’s sister, Marguerite Pangman. Pierre Chartrand is the great-grandfather of Metis law professor Paul L.A.H. Chartrand. The Chartrand family is one of the four founding families of Fond du Lac, Manitoba (now St. Laurent) on the southeast shore of Lake Manitoba. The other founding families of this community were the Pangmans, Lavallées, and Sayers.
- Theophile Pangman born circa 1831 and died in 1842.
- Catherine Pangman, born circa 1831, married Guillaume Sayer, the son of the famous Pierre Guiaume Sayer of the “Sayer Trial.”
- Marianne Pangman, born circa 1832, married Joseph Amyotte.



Pierre Chartrand and Marie Pangman and family.
Photo courtesy of Paul Chartrand.

As a North West Company (NWC) trader, Pierre's father travelled constantly, and thus the major influence in Bostonais's life was his mother. A skilled hunter, his horsemanship and hunting skills were recognized early on, and he was offered a position with the NWC at age fifteen. However, he preferred the Metis "freeman" life of hunting bison in the Pembina region. In October of 1811, Bostonais worked for Chief Trader John McLeod Sr. when they travelled up the Red River to establish a post at the fork of the Turtle River (present day Grand Forks). When Peter Fidler took over at this location, he refused to give the promised equipment to Pangman and Bostonais left the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) service.

In 1812, Bostonais saw the beginning of conflict between the HBC, the Selkirk Settlers and the Metis when the settlers occupied traditional Metis hunting territory. For two winters, the Metis provisioned the colonists with bison meat. However, this ended in 1814 with the implementation of Governor Miles McDonnell's Pemmican Proclamation, an attempt to reserve the resource for the settlers. This action united the Metis buffalo hunters, and Pangman's determination to resist the restrictions was further reinforced

when McDonnell had him arrested for hunting buffalo. This also agitated the NWC employees and they urged the Metis to destroy the colony, which they almost did on two occasions.

By June of 1815, they were demanding that the settlers leave the area. Metis treaty terms were drawn up by Cuthbert Grant, Bostonais Pangman, William Shaw and Bonhomme Montour (the four “Chiefs” of the Metis) and were accepted by James Sutherland and James White on behalf of the colonists on June 25, 1815.

Ongoing tensions eventually led to the end of the peace and the Battle of Seven Oaks in 1816, when the Metis, without Pangman, decimated a group of colonists who confronted them while they were crossing Frog Plain north of the settlement. Pangman’s half-brother Joseph Pelletier, also known as “Assiniboine,” did take part in the Seven Oaks Battle and later sought conciliation between the groups by dealing with Captain d’Orsonnens, leader of the Swiss mercenaries brought in by Lord Selkirk to retake the colony.

Subsequently, Lord Selkirk and Chief Peguis attempted to sign a treaty. This angered Pangman since he believed that as Aboriginal people, the Metis had equal right to the land and its resources. It is believed that Pangman told the Saulteaux Chief that if he made a treaty with Selkirk, without Metis input and consent, the Metis would forcibly expel the Plains Ojibway from the area. Bostonais Pangman, Cuthbert Grant and other Metis resistance fighters eventually stood trial in Upper Canada for their actions. They were acquitted.

Bostonais Pangman was an early Metis nationalist who only used force when absolutely necessary and he did so to preserve his people’s way of life. He was overshadowed in history by others such as Cuthbert Grant. Bostonais is an unrecognized Metis hero. He died at St. François Xavier on March 4, 1850.



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