

Gaspard Chartrand. (1876-1952)

Gaspard Chartrand, the son of Michel and Isabelle, was born at the Waterhen in 1876. He married Mary Cecile Ducharme at St. Laurent, Manitoba.

With his wife and son, René and daughter Clara, he left St. Ambroise in 1905 with teams of horses and wagons. They put up shacks on the west end of Clear Lake in the Riding Mountains where Gaspard fished that winter and his wife ran a little store and trading post near the Indian reserve. That winter they hauled fish to Minnedosa with teams of horses.

In the summer of 1906, they moved to Winnipegosis, just south of where the village of Camperville is now. The next winter he freighted fish from Cedar Lake to Winnipegosis.

In 1907, Gaspard worked for the Hudson's Bay Co. as manager of the trading post at Egg Lake, Saskatchewan, later called Perigord. While there, he spent a lot of time and effort corresponding with the Bishop of St. Boniface to induce French speaking people to settle in the Egg Lake area. This work was rewarded when people started to move there in 1910 and by 1913 the settlement had attained considerable size.

Mr. Chartrand left the Hudson's Bay Co. in 1911 and started a store and trading post of his own at Perigord. He then took a homestead and the family began farming. He actively participated in raising funds to build a new church and school and subsequently served for fifteen years on the school board. He sold all his holdings in 1920 and returned to St. Ambroise where he established a fish and fur business. Subsequently, in 1928, he sold out and returned to Perigord. At this time the family had seven children. Due to declining fur trade in that area, and the fact that he wished to stay in that business, they moved to The Pas in 1926 and went to work for Revillon Freres as their fur buyer. He held this position until the company sold their store.

The following year he started his own trading posts at Cedar and Moose Lakes. He and René operated the latter post until the winter of 1952. At the same time he was buying furs at The Pas and established a fish business that lasted until the mid-1930s.

The Chartrands brought the first taxi service to The Pas in 1927. It consisted of two Chevrolet's and a Whippet. The boys, who operated the business where so tough on the cars that it went into the red and was soon sold.

Gaspard took a very active interest in politics. A confirmed Liberal, he was a member of the party's organization at The Pas for many years and was a prominent organizer, having earlier belonged to the Liberal organization in Saskatchewan. He was also well known in the north for his keen interest in the problems of the Half-Breeds and was esteemed as their advisor and advocate.

His death in 1952 marked the end of the era of the early pioneers in the fish and fur trade in Northern Manitoba. His grandson, Al J.G. Chartrand was the founder of Native clan Organization and the Chief Court Communicator of the Province of Manitoba.



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