

Pierre “Kitikaniapnatch” Berger Sr. (b.c. 1822)

Pierre Berger, born circa 1822 at Red River Settlement, was the son of Jacques Berger (b. 1780) and Cécile Dumont. In 1845, the family moved to Pembina (North Dakota). He is Band member # 148 on the Pembina Annuity Roll, Way ke ge ke zhick’s Band, 1868.

Pierre married Judith “Chatka” Wilkie (1828-1885), the daughter of Jean Baptiste Wilkie and Amable Azure. Pierre, Judith, and three of their children applied for land as Pembina Half-Breeds under the 1854 treaty with the Lake Superior and Mississippi Chippewa. Nine years later, under a treaty with the Chippewa of Red Lake and Pembina (1863-1864), the U. S. government issued Pierre



and his son, Pierre Jr., scrip, again as Pembina Half-Breeds. In 1879, Judith and her husband Pierre Berger, led twenty-five Metis families to central Montana in search of the diminishing buffalo herds. Pierre, Judith, and their family, as well as Judith’s brother’s family (Alexandre Wilkie) were hunting on the Milk River. When the U. S. government and reservation agents pushed the Metis out of the Milk River area, Pierre led a group of families to Spring Creek in the Judith Basin of Montana where they founded the town of Lewistown.¹ They applied for homestead land in 1883. Their cabin was located three miles east of the trader’s establishments along what was later called “Upper Breed Creek.” Pierre and his brother-in-law Alexandre Wilkie held the church services in their homes.

Elizabeth Swan gives the following account:²

Along the Milk River between Harlem and Chinook, Montana, was a large settlement of Red River Half-Breeds, as they were known at the time, who had come from the Red River Country of North Dakota, and Canada, following the buffalo trails, at the same time in search of a permanent location, which after a sojourn of

¹ Martha Harroun Foster, “‘We Know Who We Are’: Multiethnic Identity in a Montana Metis Community.” [Ph.D. diss., University of California Los Angeles, 2000].

² Elizabeth Swan, “A Brief History of the First Catholic Pioneers of Lewistown, Montana,” file. 541, Merrill G. Burlingame Special Collections, Montana State University Library, and in the Joseph Kinsey Howard Papers, MC 27, Montana Historical Society, Helena, Montana. Elizabeth Swan was a granddaughter of Pierre Berger and Judith Wilkie.

eight years or so their livelihood was diminishing fast. Then they began to think seriously about their future knowing they could not their way of life forever. After some discussion they began to break up into groups. Some went back to North Dakota and Canada and to different points of Montana.

Pierre Berger and his family of eleven children were amongst the settlement. One of these children, a daughter³, and her husband Frank Azure, and the Gladeau families, with others went to St. Peter's Mission, Montana, where the elder Azures were already located.

Mr. Berger had been thinking, then he made up his mind to tell his relatives and friends how he was very much interested and anxious to come further west to look for a certain locality he had heard about from an Indian friend, where there was an abundance of wild game, and other good chances of good prospects. He had also been directed as near as possible to the location. Consequently, it was considered a good idea for him to go. A Band of about (25) twenty-five families, including the Bergers agreed to follow Pierre Berger to his new adventure. The children who accompanied their parents were Peter, Barney, Catherine and Frances. The married children with their families were Isaie, Isidore, Jake and John B. Berger. Mrs. 'Adele' Vital Turcotte and Mrs. Amable Frank Ouelette; Alexander Wilkie and Antoine Fleury two brothers-in-law of Pierre Berger. Their friends, Benjamine Kline⁴, the Lafountains, Doney's, Fayants, Turcottes, Ledoux Gayions and Mrs Laquoit, an elderly widow known to all as Old Ellen.

Scrip record:

Berger, Pierre Sr. [R.L. Scrip #138]

Minnesota Territorial Census, Pembina County, 1850, family 59/59, born Red River Br., occupation Hunter
National Archives, RG 75, Entry 363, "List of Persons to Whom Scrip was Issued under Red Lake & Pembina Treaties... " Halfbreed Scrip No. 138, Schedule B., issued March 5, 1873, under the authority of Secretarial Decision, June 12, 1872, delivered March 5, 1873
National Archives, RG 75, Entry 364, "Treaty of April 12, 1864, Red Lake and Pembina Half-Breeds," Scrip Stubs, Number 138 [checked], dated March 5th, 1873, 160 Acres, delivered March 6th, 1873, issued to Pierre Berger, Sr., delivered to Agent E.P. Smith
husband of: Berger, Indigne (1813), born Pembina
issue: Berger, Pierre (1841)

³ Marie Berger, b. 1857, married François Azure on January 29, 1878 at Milk River.

⁴ Benjamin Klyne. (1847-1932)

Ben Kline was born on October 13, 1847 at what is now known as Fort Totten, near Mni Wakan (now called Devil's Lake), North Dakota. His father Michel Klyne Jr. was born in 1811 at Edmonton, a Half-Breed descendent of Michel Klyne Sr. and Suzanne Lafrance a Métisse. His mother was Madeleine Millet *dit* Beauchemin, whose father was a French Canadien, Andre Millet *dit* Beauchemin who had married a Half-Breed Crow woman Charlotte Pelletier. Benjamin's parents moved to Pembina from Red River in the late 1840s. On August 6, 1880, he signed Louis Riel's petition to Major General Nelson Miles requesting land for the Montana Metis.

Berger, J. Savir (1844)
Berger, Isedore (1846)
Berger, J. Baptiste (1849)\

[also listed: Berger, Narciss (1830), born Red River Br., occupation Hunter]

On August 6, 1880 Louis Riel sent a petition for a Metis reserve in Montana to General Nelson A. Miles. Pierre Berger and his sons, Isidore, Jacques, Jean Baptiste, Bernard, Francois Isaie and Pierre Jr. all signed the petition.

Pierre “Kitikaniapnatch” Berger Sr. and Judith “Chatka” Wilkie had the following children:

- Pierre b. 1841
- Isidore b. 1844, married Clemence Gourneau.
- Isaie b. 1846, married Domtilde Laframboise.
- Jean baptiste b. 1849, married Betsy Keplin.
- Jacques b.1851, married Philomene Ouelette.
- Amable b. 1853
- Bernard b. 1855, married Caroline Depousse.
- Marie b. 1857, married Francois Azure, then Joseph Graveline.
- Adele b. 1859, married Vital Turcotte.
- Catherine b. 1862, married William Laframboise, then Modeste Rocheleau.



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

Reference

Martha Harroun Foster, “We Know Who We Are’: Multiethnic Identity in a Montana Metis Community.” [Ph.D. diss., University of California Los Angeles, 2000).