

Victoria Anne Belcourt Callihoo. (1861-1966)

Victoria was born on November 19, 1861 at Lac Ste. Anne, the daughter of Alexis Belcourt¹ and Nancy Rowand². Victoria married Louis Jerome Callihoo (b. 1858), in 1878. He was the son of Jean Baptiste Callihoo (b. 1832) and Angelique Bruneau.



Their children were:

- William, J. (1881-1954) married Anne English.
- Alvina Alice, (1895-1975) married Charles Baird.
- Annie (1879-1969) married Jean Baptiste Loyer, then Louis Daniel Loyer, then Stoney Boris.
- Dio Leon, (1880-1944).
- Hermine “Lizzie”, (1881-1976) married Benjamin Vandal.
- Adolphus, (1885-1967) married Christine Breland.
- Vital Victor, (1888-1972) married Clothilde Maria Hodgson.
- Henry, (1889-1939) married Clara Hazel Loyer.
- Alvina Alice, (1895-1975) married Charles Baird.
- Melvina, (1897-1898)

¹ Alexis (b. 1826) was the son of Joseph Belcourt (b. 1791) and Catherine L’Hirondelle.

² Nancy was the daughter of Antoine Rowand and Archange Nepissing.

- Caroline, (1897-1897)
- John, (1898-1915)
- Julia Mary, born 1901, she married Wilfred John Laderoute.
- Bertha Victoria, born 1903, she married Roderick Letendre.



Louis Jerome Callihoo (ca. 1898)

On September 23, 1878, Louis Callihoo's uncle Michel Callihoo (b. 1824) signed Treaty 6 on behalf of his band of Cree, Iroquois and Metis relatives. This band was given a reserve of 40 square miles northwest of Edmonton on the Sturgeon River. This reserve "Michel I.R. 132" was confirmed by Order in Council PC 1151 on May 17, 1889.

Victoria and Louis Jerome had moved to the Michel Band Reserve in 1880, at the time they had two children. Louis Callihoo was registered as Band # 29. After his uncle Michel Callihoo's death in 1911, Louis Jerome Callihoo was elected Chief of the Michel Band. Previously after many problems with Indian Affairs the band had petitioned to be put on an

“Independence List” and in 1906 had written a request to leave treaty in exchange for clear title of one section of land for each family.

Louis Jerome Callihoo served as Chief for four years. His cousin Solomon Callihoo succeeded him in 1917. Many band members subsequently left until 1958 when the band members were enfranchised and lost their Indian status.³ By 1962 all lands and assets had been distributed to the enfranchised band members.

The award winning⁴ Metis author Cora Taylor has done an excellent biography of Victoria: *Victoria Callihoo: An Amazing Life* (2008): she says:

Victoria was born before Canada was a nation and by the time Alberta became a province she was a grandmother. Victoria Callihoo's life spanned more than a century from travel by Red River carts to automobiles; from pemmican to fast food and from the vast herds of prairie bison she saw on family buffalo hunts as a young girl to the time when the only buffalo to be seen were in parks and zoos. She freighted for the Hudson's Bay Company and saw the introduction of currency take over from fur bartering. She talked to Alberta heroes like Father Lacombe and Lieutenant Governor Grant McEwan, but never lost her love of her Métis heritage, celebrating her 100th birthday by demonstrating how the Red River jig should be danced.

When Victoria was 91 years of age she dictated her memoirs which were translated into English and published. The interested reader should see:

Callihoo, Victoria. “Early Life in Lac Ste. Anne and St. Albert in the 1870s.” *Alberta Historical Review*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1953: 21-26.

Callihoo, Victoria. “The Iroquois in Alberta.” *Alberta Historical Review*, Vol. 7, no. 2, 1959: 17-18.

Callihoo, Victoria. “Our buffalo Hunts.” *Alberta Historical Review*. Vol. 8, No. 1, 1960: 24-25.

Reference:

Cora Taylor, *Victoria Callihoo: An Amazing Life*. Edmonton: Eschia books Inc., 2008.

³ In 1958, the Michel Band is “enfranchised” by Indian Affairs, and the reserve is dissolved. This is the only case of an entire band (save a few individuals) being involuntarily enfranchised.

⁴ Canada Council Children's Literature Prize (now Governor General's Award), 1985

R. Ross Annett Award, Writers Guild of Alberta, 1985

Ruth Schwartz Children's Book Award, Canadian Booksellers, 1986, short-listed

Our Choice, Canadian Children's book Centre, 1986, 1988, 1992, 1995, 1998

Book-of-the-Year, Canadian Library Association, 1986, 1988 (Honourable Mention), 1995



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