

## **Jean Baptiste Berland (Breland). (1777-1838)**

Jean Baptiste was the son of Pierre Breland, who was born on September 29, 1758 in the city of Quebec and married Louise Belly “according to the custom of the country”. Louise died sometime before 1836. Pierre died on October 31, 1829 in St. Boniface, Manitoba at the age of seventy-one. Apparently, he also went by the name of Pierre Dubois dit Berland and by Breland dit Duboishue. He was a freeman in the fur trade in the 1800’s and served as a soldier in Canada. Governor Simpson of the Hudson Bay Company sometimes referred to him as Burleigh. He was a very good hunter and trader, who became quite wealthy. Apparently he had as many as six Aboriginal wives and a number of children. One of these children was named Jean Baptiste Berland.

It was Jean Baptiste Breland who the Berland River was named after. In fact, it was first called Baptiste’s River. In 1825, a botanist named Thomas Drummond explored the Jasper-Smoky River area with Jean Baptiste as his hunter and guide. Baptiste had his brother-in-law along for the trip. His brother-in-law’s wife was pregnant and according to the custom went off by herself to have the baby. The temperature was –38 degree F, so she died as a result. This led to a fifteen-day period of mourning. The group ended up spending three to four months along the river named in honour of their guide. It was a very severe winter with deep snow, so many of their horses ended up dying.

Jean Baptiste Berland married Suzanne McLeod Nipissing before 1807. Jean Berland and Susanne Nipising had the following children:

- Francois Berland, born 1807; married Therese Karakonti, died 1885.
- Catherine Berland, born 1813; Married George Ross, died December 05, 1878.
- Jacques “Napeesis” Berland, born 1817, married Therese (Cree), then Josephte Keskanakwato Turlibis.
- Edouard Valade Berland, born 1818; married Genevieve ZXanyeo Matooskees Mondion, then Cecile Callihoo, died January 21, 1877.
- Marie Anne Berland, born 1823, married Joseph Cardinal.
- Isabelle Berland, born 1827.
- Angelique Berland, born 1830, married Charles Cardinal.
- Nancy Berland, born 1835; married Richard Collin December 09, 1858 in Fort des Prairie (Edmonton).
- Henry Berland, born 1837.

Their son Francois, married Therese Karakonti L’Iroquois, who was a daughter of the legendary Louis Kwarakwante and Marie Katis, who lived near present day Grande Cache at Sheep Creek where it enters the Smoky. Therese and Francois had eight children; William (b. 1833), Rosalie (b. 1835), Josette (b. 1838), Francois (b. 1841), Marie Anne (b. 1843), Betsy (b. 1845), Alexander (b. 1848), Marie (b. 1854), Mariette (b. 1857) and Rosalie (b. 1857).



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