

Turtle Mountain Police Force

By Larry Haag and Nicholas Vrooman



Turtle Mountain Police circa 1900: from the left Bernard Delorme, Mr. Delorme, Kanick, Peter Marcellais, Patrice Pa Chee Koo Delorme and Frank Longie Sr. The force consisted of: Eustache Roussin¹, Joseph Brunelle, Louis “Samatte Davis², Jacques Belgarde³, Patrice “Pachekoo” Delorme⁴, Bernard Delorme⁵, Kanick⁶, Ben Lagimodiere and Norbert Davis.

Photograph courtesy of the State Historical Society of North Dakota, A-1660.

¹ Eustache Roussin Jr. born on June 30, 1861 at St. Boniface, was the son of Eustache Roussin Sr. and Marguerite Caron. He married Madeleine Champagne. In January of 1917, Chief Kakenowash (Flying Eagle) and his interpreter, Eustache Roussin, went to Washinton, D.C. to represent the tribe.

² Louis Jerome St. Matte Davis was born October 24, 1869, the son of William Davis Sr. and Marie Valle. He married Marie Rose Parisien, the daughter of Hyacinthe Parisien and Marguerite Letendre. He was also known as “Wee-sug.”

³ Jacques Belgarde was born in August 1868, the son of Jean Baptiste Belgarde and Marie Emilie Hamelin. He married Cecile Laverdure, the daughter of Pierre Laverdure and Agnes Parenteau.

⁴ Patrice Delorme was born in 1862 at St. Norbert, the son of Alexis Delorme and Helene Frederick dit Paul. He married Madeleine Laframboise, the daughter of Narcisse Laframboise and Josephte Cantara in 1885. They lived in house # 283 at Turtle Mountain according to the 1900 census.

⁵ Delorme, Bernard. (b. 1855)

Bernard Delorme, a member of Turtle Mountain Band was born on Dec. 20, 1855, the son of Joseph “Akkway” Delorme and Isabelle Gourneau (daughter of Joseph Gourneau and Angelique Folle-Avioine (Wild Rice) a Chippewa woman born in Wisconsin). Bernard was married to Sophia LeRat and they were part of the Cowessess Band. She took discharge from treaty on September 5, 1890. His sister Isabelle was married to Jean Baptiste Trottier. Bernard and his family received Turtle Mountain Band annuity payments in 1873 and appear on subsequent census counts. Bernard was married to Sophia LeRat. She took discharge from treaty with Cowessess Band on September 5, 1890. He signed the 1878 Cypress Hills petition for a Metis Reserve.

⁶ Kanick (Walking with Thunder) was Treaty # 63.

Summary

By Nick Vrooman

By 1900 the Turtle Mountain reservation had a Metis/Indian police force of six policemen who struggled to control liquor traffic and problems arising from land disputes. Peter Marcellais⁷ was the first Captain of Police on the reservation. He served until the late 1920s. During this same period 1900 to 1932 Mr. Frank Longie Sr. (“Phuzinsh”), father of Ambrose Longie was a policeman in the Belcourt area. After Mr. Marcellais retired, William “Dieum” Frederick was appointed Chief of Police, followed by Joseph E. Parisien, then Leander Gourneau. Some of the early policemen on the reservation were Eustache Roussin, Joseph Brunelle, Louis “Samatte” Davis, Jacques Belgarde, and Kanick, a full-blood Indian. Ben Lajimodierre and Norbert Davis were policemen also.⁸

Included under the “Law Enforcement Service” section of the *St. Anne’s Centennial* book are five historic images: the one above, one naming Eustache Roussin, another showing Peter Marcellais and wife, one of Frank Longie, Sr., and one that shows six men named: Belcourt Law Officers, 1901. Front: Jacques Belgarde, Patrice “Pa-che-koo” Delorme, Louis “Samatte” Davis; back row: Bernard Delorme, Mr. Delorme, Mr. Kanick. This last photo appears to have been taken around the same time as the one above (not exactly, they are all wearing new hats in the named image, and worn hats in the one above, although their uniforms are the same).

From referencing each of the named photos in *St. Anne’s* to the one above, it appears that they are, from the left: Bernard Delorme, next, Mr. Delorme, Kanick, Peter Marcellais, Patrice “Pa-che-koo” Delorme, and Frank Longie, Sr.

This is a studied attribution, which may very well be error. Absent anyone who actually knew, it would really require a few of us sitting down with the *St. Anne’s* book and the above image to hash it out. Peter Marcellais’ horse, just a beautiful mount, sure looks like a captain's ride. And he may not be the biggest guy, but he's definitely the leader of that group.



⁷ Turtle Mountain Band member Pierre Marcellais was born on May 11, 1862 at St. Boniface, the son of Pierre Marcellais Sr. and Sophie Faille. He married Mary Decouteau sometime before 1905.

⁸ *St. Anne's Centennial, 100 Years of Faith*, (Belcourt, ND: Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation, 1985: 192-93.

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