

The Origins of the Indigenous Lafournaise dit Laboucane Family

Here is the story of the Lafournaise dit Laboucane who travelled widely across the plains and eventually settled in the Red River Settlement during its early formation.

Over time, the Lafournaise children and their descendants moved across a wide region of the northern plains. They settled throughout Red River, North Dakota, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, forming several Métis communities and family lines that continued into later generations.

Joseph Lafournaise dit Laboucane

Birth: 16 June 1775

Saint-Eustache, Deux-Montagnes, Quebec, Canada

Death: St. Boniface, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Joseph Lafournaise dit Laboucane was a Frenchman who was involved in the western fur trade during the late North West Company period and the early Hudson's Bay Company era. Records show him working in the Saskatchewan and Edmonton districts before later settling in the Red River Settlement. ¹

North West Company and Hudson's Bay Company Timeline

1804

Entered service with the North West Company as a voyageur.

Post: Fort des Prairies (present-day Edmonton). ¹

1814–1815

Working at Pelly Post. ¹

1817–1821

Returned to Fort des Prairies. ¹

1821–1823

After the merger of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company in 1821, Joseph Lafournaise does not appear on HBC employee lists. This suggests he was operating independently as a freeman hunter and trader. ¹

Oct 7, 1822 – Fort Edmonton

Recorded arriving from his hunting grounds with furs. ¹

Aug 8, 1823 – Fort Edmonton

Arrives again with other hunters. Families were noted at Sandy Lake. ¹

Apr 7, 1824 – Fort Edmonton

Arrives with Dumonte. Hunts reported smaller than previous years.

Oct 1, 1825 – Fort Edmonton region

Appears travelling with his wife and four young children between the Rocky Mountains and the Bow and Red Deer River headwaters. ¹

Oct 3, 1825

A record notes that a blacksmith was working for Laboucane, suggesting he had equipment and some standing as an independent hunter or trader. ¹

1831 Red River Census

Age 54, Catholic. Household included wife, one adult son, two younger sons, one daughter over 15 and three daughters under 15.²

1843 Red River Census

Age 67 and still listed with family in the Red River Settlement. ²

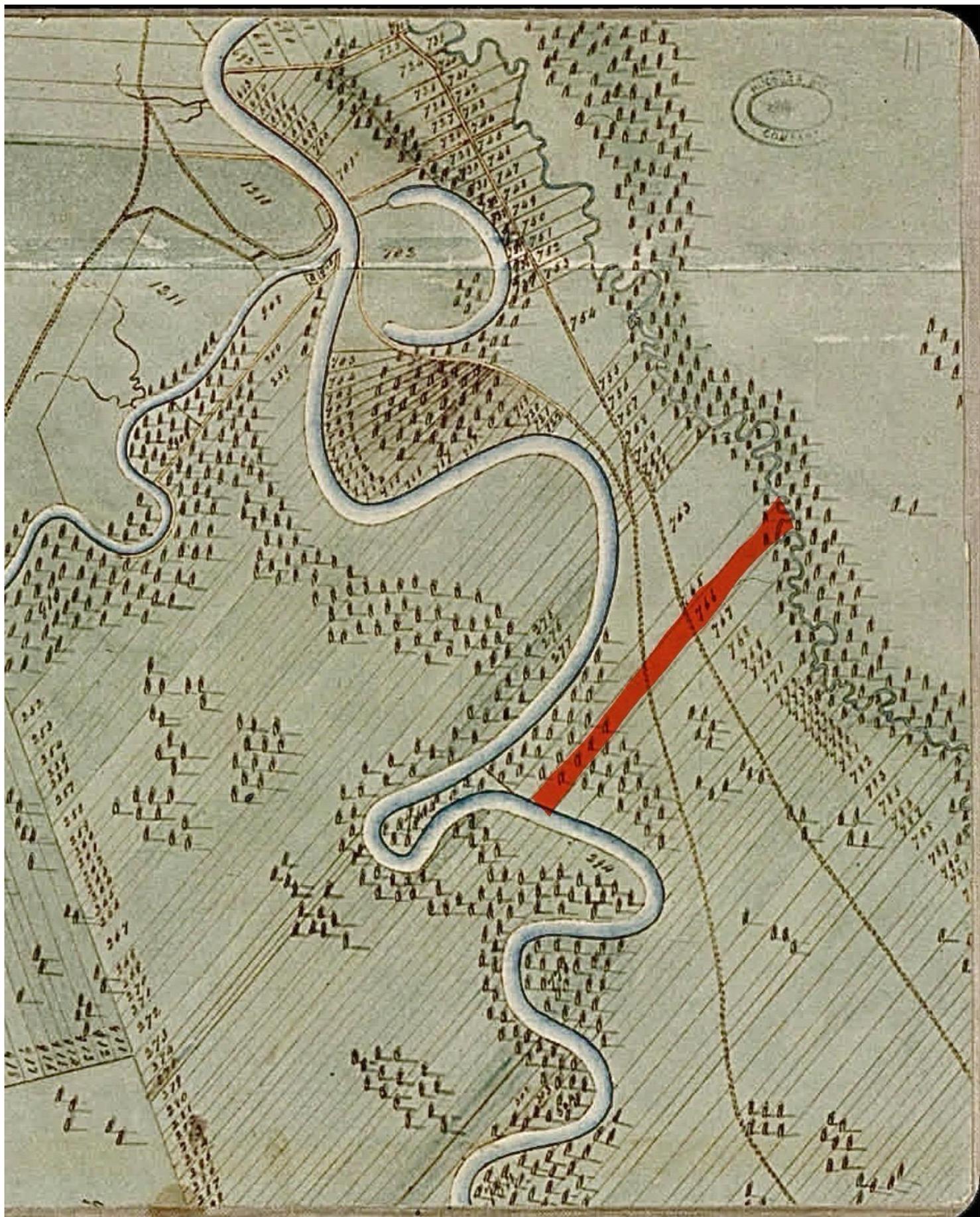
Red River Lot

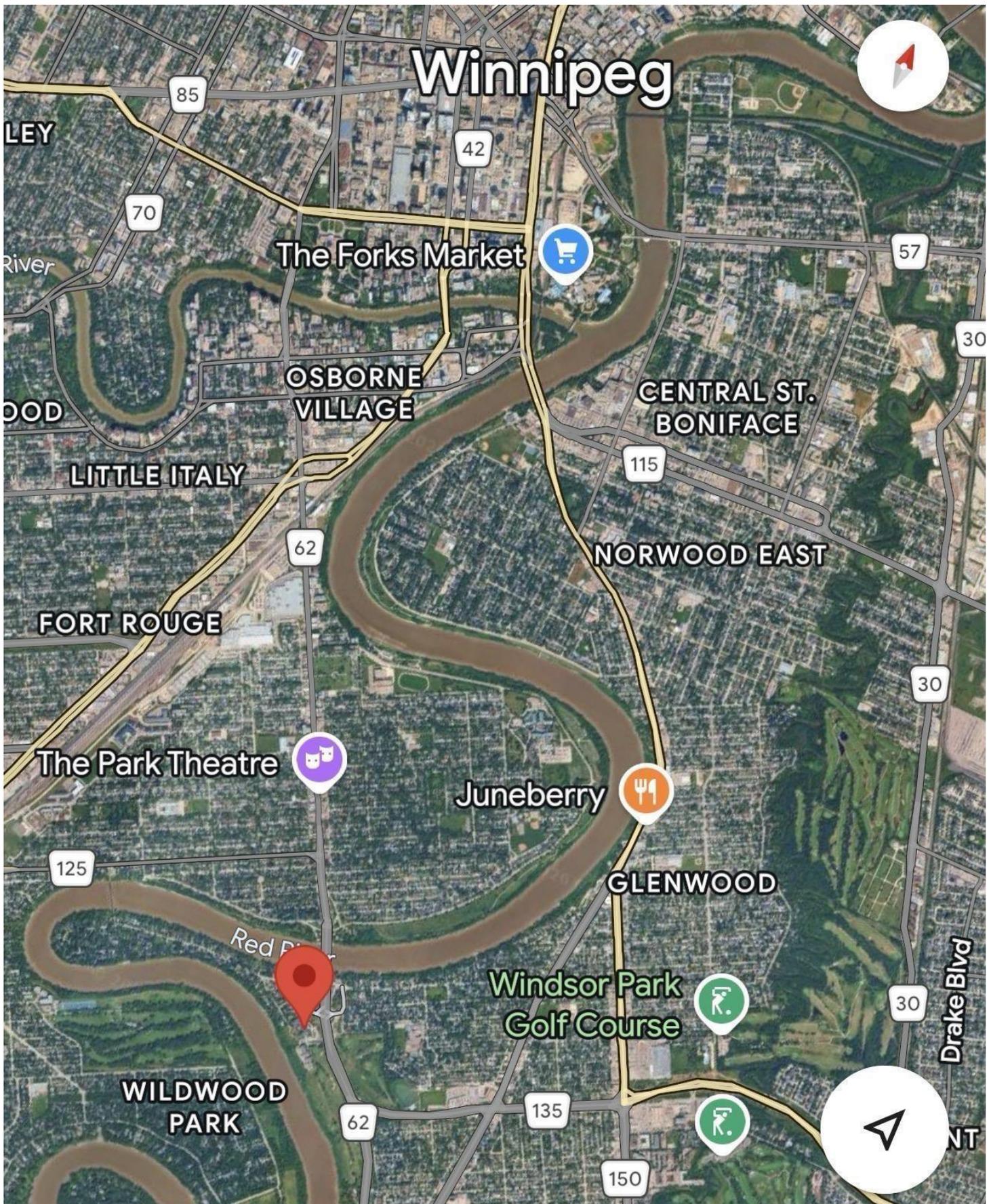
Lot 766 in the Red River Settlement was first held by Joseph Lafournaise dit Laboucane. He was the first holder of this property. ³

The lot is recorded in the Archer Martin Hudson's Bay Company land tenures. Today the location corresponds to the area where the Canoe Club Golf Course stands in Winnipeg.

The lot was sold by Gabriel Lafournaise, son of Joseph Lafournaise, to Captain Francis Michael Dease (1786 to 1865).

The HBC record says the sale happened "in the year of the high." This likely refers to the year of high water on the Red River, the 1852 flood. The land was originally granted during the Selkirk settlement period. ³





Winnipeg

The Forks Market

OSBORNE VILLAGE

CENTRAL ST. BONIFACE

LITTLE ITALY

NORWOOD EAST

FORT ROUGE

The Park Theatre

Juneberry

GLENWOOD

Windsor Park Golf Course

WILDWOOD PARK

Red River

Drake Blvd

NT

Marriage

Joseph Lafournaise married Susanne Allard dit Leclerc.

Date of marriage: February 8, 1830

Parish: St. Boniface Roman Catholic Church, St. Boniface, Manitoba

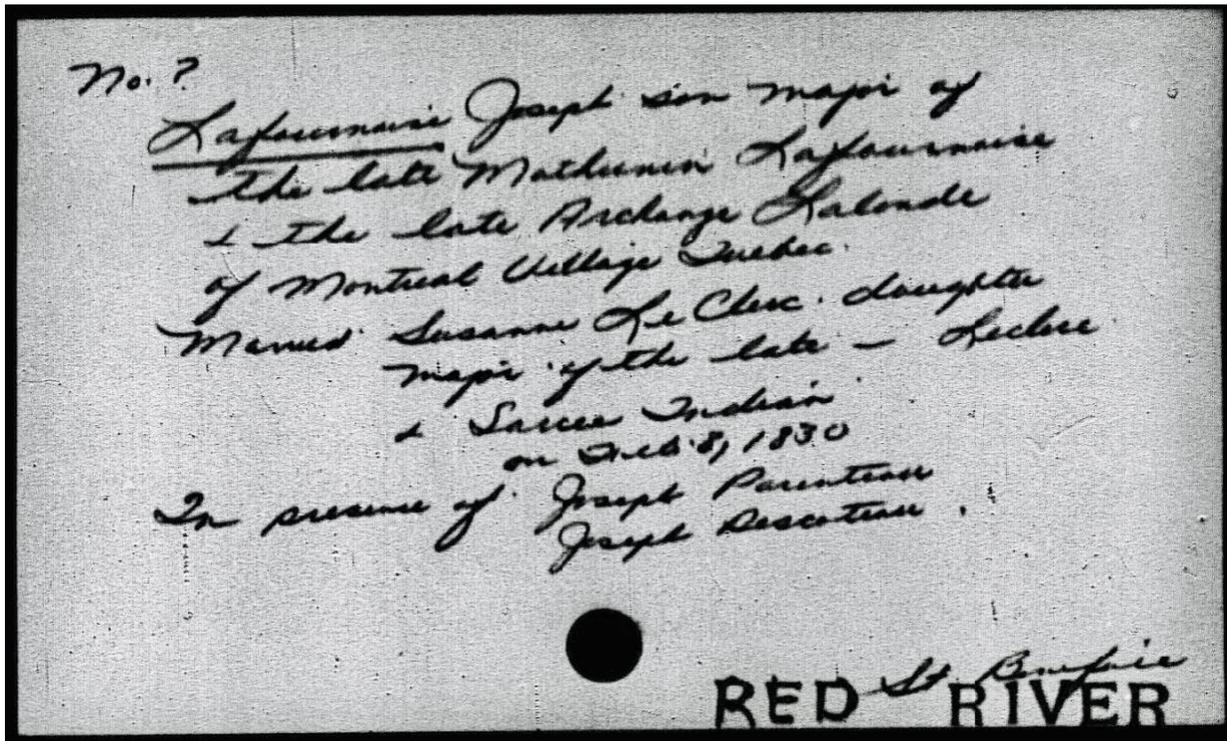
Witnesses:

Joseph Parenteau

Joseph Descoteau

Remarks recorded on the marriage certificate state that Joseph's mother was from Montréal, Québec, and that the bride's parents were listed as Leclerc and a **Sarcee** woman.

Suzanne Leclerc, also recorded as Susanne Leclair dit Allard, was a Métis woman identified as **Sarcee** on her marriage record. ⁴



Susanne Allard dit Leclerc

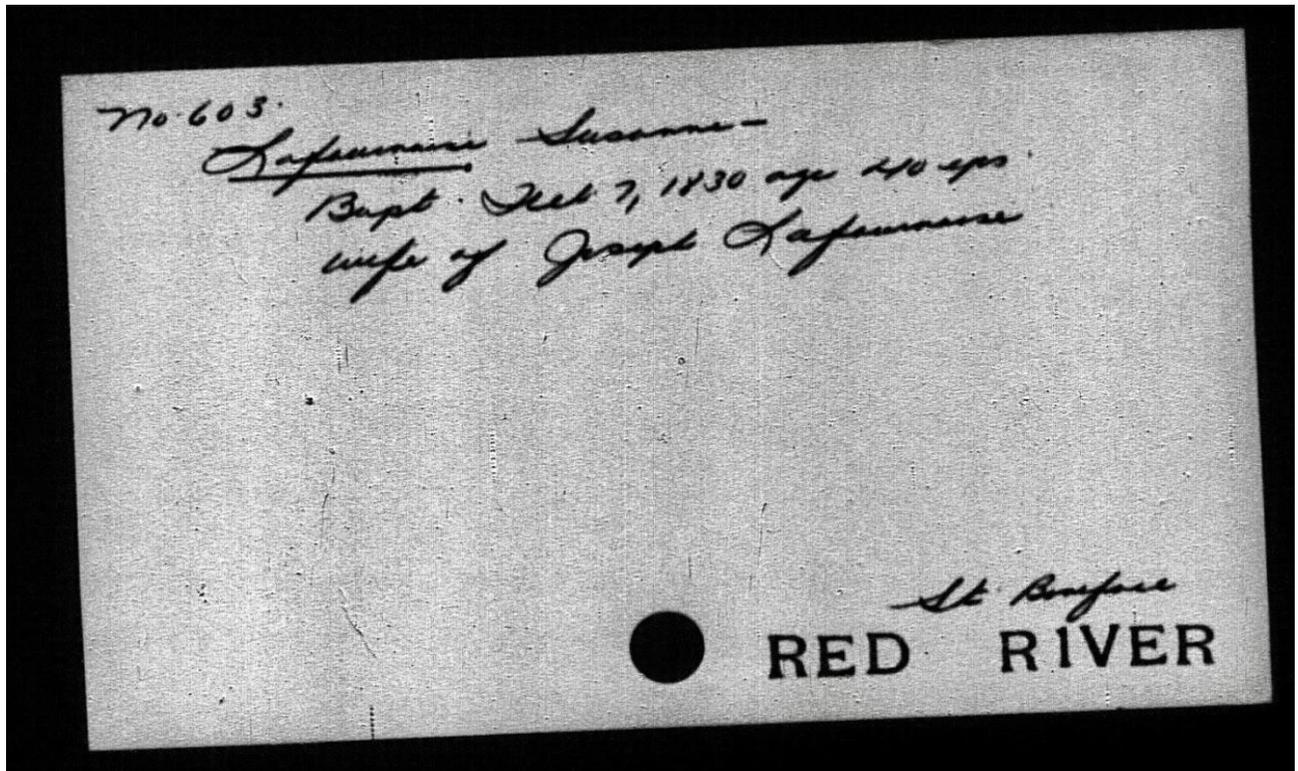
Birth: about 1776 Red River, Manitoba, Canada

Death: St. Boniface, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada ⁵

Some sources also identify her as **Nakota Métis**. ⁶

Her name appears in multiple records as Susanne Leclair dit Allard. ^{6 7}

She was baptized a day before the marriage ceremony on **February 7, 1830**. ⁸



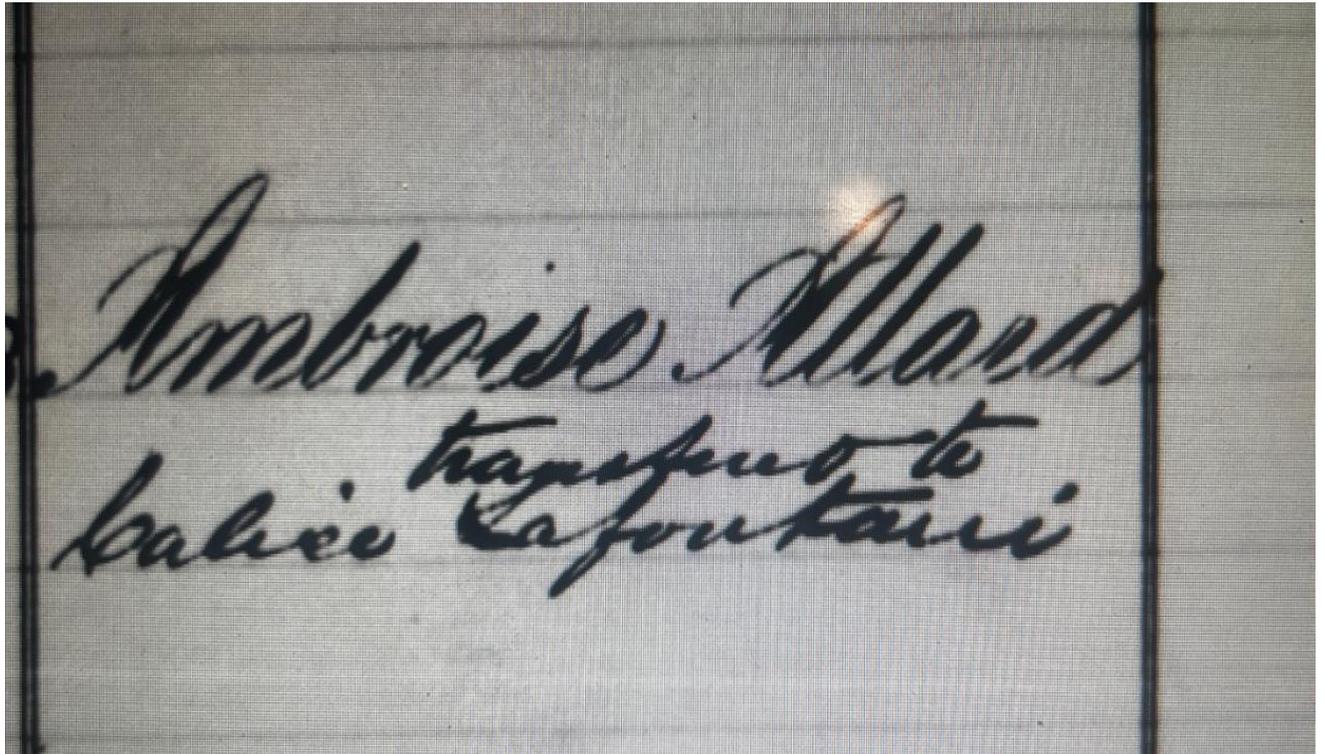
FamilySearch.org lists her death occurring on the same date as the marriage, though a separate death record has not been located. ⁹

There has been confusion about her parentage. The only identifiable surname connection appears through the Allard name.

Records from the Archer Martin Hudson's Bay Company land tenures list an Ambroise Allard as the first holder of Lot 1458 in 1821.

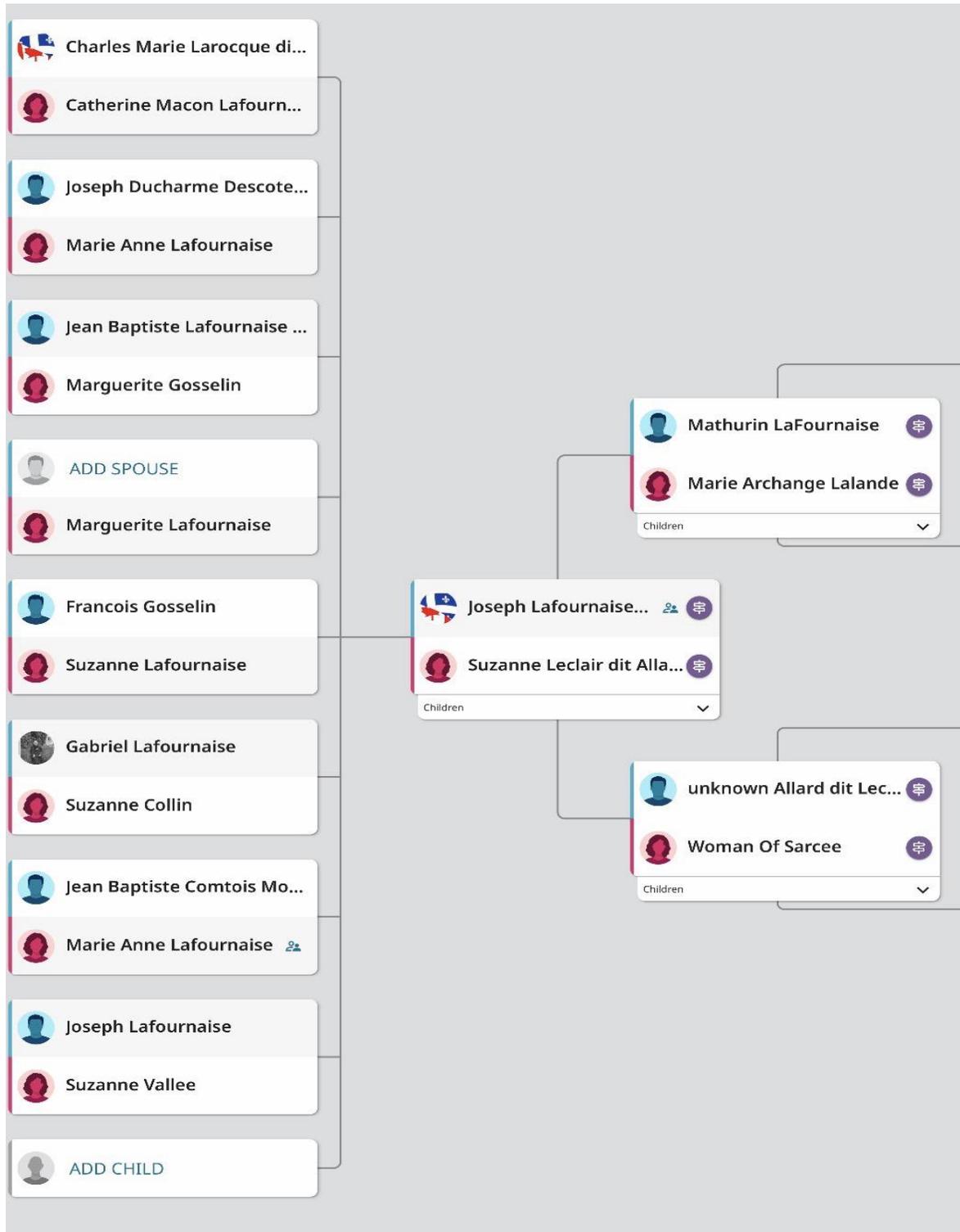
The land was later *transferred to* a name that resembles *Lafournaise* in cursive.

This may indicate a possible family connection to Suzanne Allard.



It is my understanding that the Indigenous ancestry of the Lafournaise dit Laboucane family traces back to Suzanne.

Children of Joseph Lafournaise dit Laboucane and Suzanne Allard dit Leclerc



Catherine Macon Lafournaise (1800–1864) Married

Charles Larocque (1768–1871)

Their Larocque descendants later participated in the Red River Resistance of 1869 and the North West Resistance of 1885 with Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont. ¹⁰

Marie Anne Lafournaise (b. 1803) Married

Joseph Ducharme Descoteau (b. 1795)

A later census record lists Mary Decouteau, born about 1803, age 90 in 1893 at Devils Lake, North Dakota (Turtle Mountain), identified as Chippewa. ¹¹

Jean Baptiste Lafournaise (1815–1884) Married

Marguerite Gosselin (1816–1887)

Jean-Baptiste Lafournaise, known as Laboucane, worked as a voyageur and later as a hunter for the Hudson's Bay Company in the Edmonton region.

In 1850 he was listed among nine Métis leaders presented as elected chiefs or councillors during discussions with U.S. Major Samuel Woods concerning organization of the Métis population near Pembina. ¹²

Six of his sons later helped establish the Laboucane settlement in Alberta. ⁵

Marguerite Lafournaise (born 1815)

Partner not confirmed.

Suzanne Lafournaise (1818–1903) Married

François Gosselin (b. 1817)

François Gosselin served as a leader among the "49th Rangers," a Métis scouting group connected to the British Canadian Boundary Commission. ¹³



49th Rangers, back row left to right: William Hallett, William Gaddie, Gabriel La Fournaise, Francois Gosselin and Donald McDonald.



Gabriel Lafournaise

Gabriel Lafournaise (1816–1910) Married

Suzanne Collin (1825–1876)

Gabriel Lafournaise served as a sub-leader in the 49th Rangers during the Canada–United States boundary survey of 1872–1873. ¹⁴

He was known as a skilled plains hunter and was described in historical accounts as travelling regularly on buffalo hunts and trading with the Sioux. ⁵

Gabriel and his family were among the early inhabitants of the parish of Saint-Pierre-Jolys in Manitoba.

By 1882 he lived along the Roseau River near Saint-Malo and died in 1910 at the Taché Hospice in St. Boniface. ⁵

Marie Anne Lafournaise (1822–1867) Married

Jean Baptiste “Comtois” Morin (1813–1896)

Joseph Lafournaise (born 1826) Married

Suzanne Valle (1832–1919)

A census record lists Susan Lafournaise, age 52, in 1889 at Devils Lake, North Dakota, identified as Chippewa. ¹¹

Laboucane Family History

The Laboucane family constructed the La Fournaise Log House in 1872 in the Rural Municipality of De Salaberry, Manitoba. ¹⁵

Descendants of the Lafournaise (Laboucane) family also participated in the Battle of Batoche during the North West Resistance of 1885. ^{16 6}

Laboucane Settlement

The Laboucane family is connected to the Laboucane Settlement in Alberta, later known as the Duhamel Settlement. ¹⁷

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Further Reading

<https://todd-genealogy.ca/Laboucan/laboucan.html>

<https://webouest.ca/lafournaise-dit-laboucane/>

<https://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/149561.Metis%20dictionary%20Biography%20L%20catalog%20Feb%202019.pdf>

Sources

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https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/_assets/docs/hbca/biographical/1/lafournaiseditlaboucan_joseph.pdf

2. Red River Census records, 1831 and 1843.
3. Archer Martin. Hudson's Bay Company Land Tenures, Red River Settlement.
4. Library and Archives Canada. Marriage Index, St. Boniface Roman Catholic Church, 1830.

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5. WebOuest historical biography. <https://webouest.ca/lafournaise-dit-laboucane/>

6. Métis Museum. Métis Dictionary Biography L Catalogue.
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7. Métis Museum biography: Jean Baptiste Lafournaise.
<https://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/14377.Jean%20Baptiste%20Lafournaise.pdf>

8. Canadiana Heritage archives – St. Boniface baptism record.
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10. Patrick Stewart. Riel and Families.
<https://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/150782.Riel%20and%20families%20by%20Patrick%20Stewart%206.2.pdf>

11. United States Native American Census Rolls, 1885-1940.
12. Métis Museum document: Jean-Baptiste Lafournaise.
<https://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/14377.Jean%20Baptiste%20Lafournaise.pdf>

13. Boundary Commission documents – 49th Rangers.
<https://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/14182.Boundary%20Commission%20July%202014.pdf>

14. Métis Museum biography: Gabriel Lafournaise.

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15. Manitoba Historic Resources Branch. Franco-Manitoban Houses.

https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/hrb/internal_reports/pdfs/franco_manitoban_houses.pdf

16. Métis Museum. Families of the 1885 Resistance.

<https://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/07158.Families%20of%201885%20Resistance.pdf>

17. Métis Museum. Laboucane Settlement.

<https://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/14461.Laboucane%20Settlement.pdf>

18. WisdomLib. Origin of the surname Leclerc.

<https://www.wisdomlib.org/names/leclerc>