

Gabriel Leveille (1841-1883)

Gabriel was born December 1, 1841 the son of Pierre Leveille Sr. and Julie McKenzie. He married Elize Cyr dit Poitras (b. 1844). She was the daughter of Pierre Poitras and Marie Bruyere. He was with his parents at the Battle of the Grand Coteau in 1851 when he was only eleven years old. Gabriel was accidentally killed by his nephew, Paul Caplette on April 8, 1883.



Children of Gabriel Leveille and Eliza Poitras:

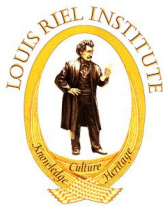
- Patrice, born 1865, married Marie Rose Gariepy in 1886 at Duhamel.
- Florestine, born 1868, married Philippe Paul in 1885 at Duhamel.
- Elise, born 1870, married Noel Salois in 1885 at Duhamel.
- Octavie, born 1872, died 1873.
- Theophile, born 1874, died as an infant.
- Pierre, born 1875, Cypress Hills, died 1876.
- Marie Eleanore, born 1877, married John Gariepy.
- Gabriel, born 1880, married Clara Johnson.
- Joseph, born 1882, Red Deer River, married Marie Rose Lafournaise.

Gabriel and his brother Pierre were with the Half-Breeds living in the vicinity of Cypress Hills who petitioned the government for their own reserve in 1878.¹ This is a petition requested a re-opening of the buffalo hunt between November 14th and February 15th each year and the granting of Metis “reserve” land. The request was for a strip of land 150 miles long along the American border beginning where the Pembina River crosses the border, running west for 150 miles into Saskatchewan. This strip was to be fifty miles from south to north. The petition did not receive a favourable response.

¹ Canada Sessional Papers, No. 45, 1886: 10-12. Received through the North-West Council, not dated, covering letters from the Lieut.-Governor of the North-West Territories, dated 30 September 1878.

One Métis family, the Leveille family of Maple Creek, has a unique history. Their mother was Julia MacKenzie, half-breed daughter of the explorer Alexander Mackenzie. In 1874, Louis Leveille (b. 1828, son of Pierre) and some of his brothers met the North West Mounted Police at Old Wives Lake south of present day Moose Jaw and acted as their interpreters and guides. This association lasted for 30 years, staying firm through the Riel Rebellions.

A legend told by Gabriel Leveille, son of Louis Leveille, provides evidence of the faith the Métis held in their priests. One day Lestanc and a First Nations guide were being hotly pursued by a war party of Blackfoot. After riding all day, they were forced to stop and camp for the night. Rolling himself in his blankets, Lestanc was soon peacefully asleep. The guide, however, was restless and fearful until he rose from his bed and found the reason for the priest's calm. Before retiring, Lestanc had waved his arm and had created a lake around the hill on which they were camped, thus protecting them from their enemies. Any listener doubting this story would receive such a withering look from Gabriel that one would hastily agree that the good father must indeed have possessed great medicine.



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