

Pierre (Pierriche) Laverdure. (1798-1902)

Pierre was born July 1798 in the Pembina district, the son of Alexis Lavedure (b. 1776) and Angélique “Kisi-kawpskup” Montour.¹ They were married according to the custom of the country in 1797. She was the daughter of Nicolas-Jean Menard Montour and “Oom-na-ho-wish” (Swampy Cree). She was born circa. 1780 in Pembina district and died March 18, 1902 in Lewistown, Fergus County, Montana.

Pierre married Catherine Charette circa 1832 in St Boniface Parish Church, Red River District (either in Manitoba or North Dakota) Their family is identified in the 1850 Pembina Census, as residing in House #108 in Pembina. Catherine was the daughter of Jean Baptiste Charette and Charlotte Sansregret. She was born July 1815 in LaChapelle area, in the Pembina district, and died October 2, 1907 in Lewistown, Fergus County, Montana.

SON OF HUDSON BAY TRAPPER WHO DIED AT THE AGE OF 110



There are many old timers in the Judith Basin who knew well one of the most interesting frontier characters of that section, Pierre Laverdure, a French half-breed, who died some 15 years ago at the age of 110 years and was at the time of his death believed to be the oldest man in Montana.

Laverdure was born in 1793 in what is today North Dakota, and was 13 years old when Lewis and Clark passed through the Mandan village on their way to the Pacific coast. His father was a Hudson Bay trapper and his mother a Mandan woman. In his boyhood days Laverdure ran buffalo with the Indians and trapped for beaver. In later days he was an Indian trader. He took part in the Riel rebellion against the Canadian government, and he traveled the far reaches of the frozen north, having frequently cut ice in Hudson Bay in the summer time.

There has probably been no other Montana resident who has lived through a greater stretch of American history than Laverdure. Born when George Washington occupied the White House, he died when Theodore Roosevelt was president. He was a man grown when Napoleon met defeat at Waterloo, and was a hunter and warrior when the war of 1812 was fought. He was approaching old age when the Civil war began and yet lived to help celebrate Dewey's victory at Manila Bay. In his last year of life, although deaf and almost blind, he was impatient at the restraint of confinement within doors and often begged to be taken out on to the prairie, where he could smell the west wind and feel the warmth of the sun.

The winter before he died the old frontiersman felt the call of the wild once more and made up his mind that he would die alone out on the prairie that he loved. He waited till a fierce blizzard was raging for his chance. For hours during the winter afternoon he sat by the fire, listening to the freezing blasts hurl themselves against the log cabin, and dreaming of old victories won in the hunt and on the battlefield; of old friends so long departed that their faces had grown dim in his mind's eye.

Night came on and the lamps were lighted, while outside the storm grew in violence. The old man pretended to go to bed, but in reality he only lay down with his clothes on and pulled a blanket over him. Presently the other members of the household retired. Old Pierre Laverdure waited till he was sure they were asleep, and then groped his way to the door. He opened it in the face of the bitter blast and stepped out into the night.

But his opening of the door had aroused a member of the family, and his absence was discovered. The alarm was given and parties of neighbors went out to search for him. On a nearby hill they found him lying beneath a fir tree, nearly dead from the cold and exposure. He was taken home and revived, but he never fully recovered the use of his faculties and when spring came he passed across to the other world, where he believed his old-time friends awaited him.

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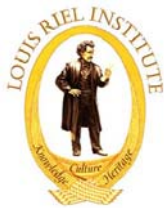
Pierre Laverdure, Who Died at Lewistown in His 111th Year and Had Seen Every Phase of Life in the Western Plains and Mountains; He Was 13 Years Old When Lewis and Clark Came West.

The children of Pierre Laverdure and Catherine Charette were:

- Jean François-Xavier, born 1843 in Pembina District, married Marguerite/Margaret Lafontaine circa 1864 in Red River District.

¹ Children of Alexis Laverdure and Angélique-"Kisi-kawpskup" Montour were: Pierre/Pierriche, born July 1798 in Pembina district; Joseph, born 1804 in Pembina district, died August 16, 1888 in Turtle Mountain district, near Belcourt, North Dakota; Marie, born 1810 in Lake Superior district, North West Territories; Alexis, born 1812 in Lake Superior district, North West Territories; Louis, born 1814 in Pembina district; Nancy, born 1816 in Pembina district; Josette, born 1818 in Pembina district; Suzanne born c. 1820; and Isabelle, born 1826 at Ste. Agathe.

- Catherine, born 1845 in Pembina District, North West Territories; died 1867.
- Pierre Jr., born August 22, 1847 in Pembina District.
- Eliza, born Abt. 1848 in Pembina District, married Francois Dagneau circa 1866 in Red River District.
- Jean-Baptiste, born June 16, 1850 in Pembina District, married Marie-Anne Azure September 27, 1871 in St Joseph's Church.
- Francois, born March 11, 1853 near Pembina; died 1888 in Lewiston, Fergus County, Montana. He married Marie Turcotte January 15, 1879 at St Peter's Mission, near Havre.



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