

## Union Nationale Métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba

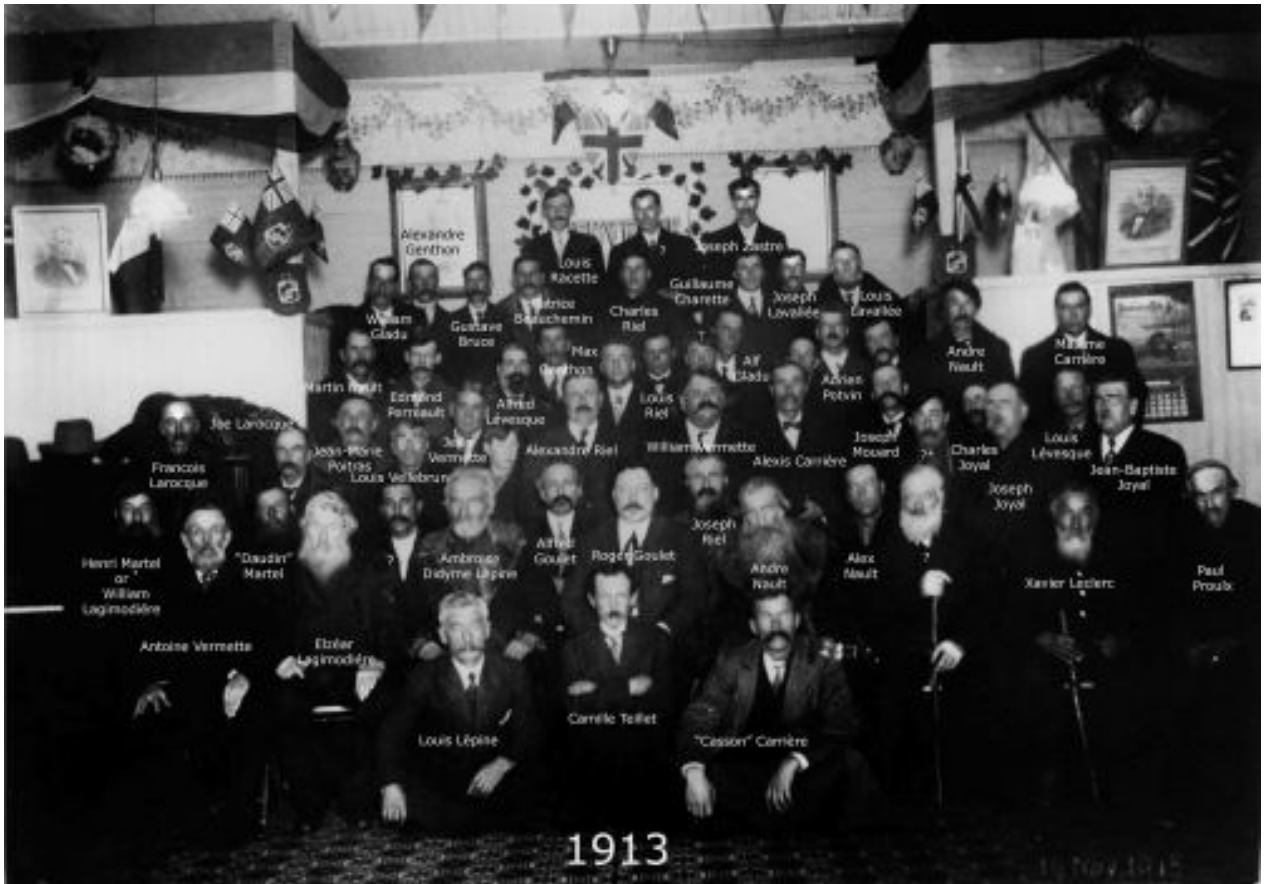
L'Union nationale métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba was founded on July 17, 1887, in St. Vital, Manitoba. It was founded by 23 Metis patriots at the residence of Mr. Joseph St-Germain. However, the origins can be traced to earlier in the history of western Canada. On September 24, 1884, at Batoche, in the presence of Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont, the Metis founded the Association nationale métisse. That is when Louis Riel chose St. Joseph as the patron saint. Shortly afterwards, the name was changed to L'Union nationale métisse. In any case, our origins can be traced to Batoche.

The founding members were: Pierre Delorme; Alfred Nault; Ambroise Didyme Lépine; Benjamin Nault; François Frobisher; Charles Genthon; Abraham Guay; Auguste Harrison; Martin Jerome; Elzéar Lagimodière; Pierre Lavallee; Louis Lepine; François Marion; Joseph McMullen; Jean-Baptiste Plouffe; François Poitras; Alexandre Riel; Joseph Riel; Joseph St. Germain; Joseph St. Germain (son); Pierre St. Germain; Henri Tourond; Antoine Vermette; and William Vermette.”

In Saskatchewan in 1887, the Metis at Batoche organized a society named for their patron saint, St. Joseph. This society was a focal point for property damage claims arising from the 1885 Northwest Resistance. They also began an annual observance of the Resistance, the forerunner to the present day “Back to Batoche” celebrations. On July 17, 1887 a group of Metis patriots gathered at the St. Vital home of Joseph St. Germain to form a new Metis cultural and historical organization. L' Union Nationale Métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba was incorporated on the 1st of March 1888. Its main purpose was to restore Metis pride and thus create meaning for their identity. In 1891 they erected a monument on Louis Riel's tomb in the St. Boniface Cathedral cemetery. The group provided an altar to honour St. Joseph, the patron Saint of the Metis in the Saint-Boniface Cathedral in 1909. In 1910, they created a Métis national flag. It consisted of a white background with a Union Jack in the top left-hand corner and three gold *Fleurs-de-lis* in the other corners. In the same year they also formed a history committee to correct the anti-Métis bias of most history books. This culminated in the publication of A.H. de Trémaudan's book: *La Nation Métisse dans l'Ouest Canadien* (1935).

In February of each year the organization participates in Festival du Voyageurs activities through its relay; L'Auberge du violon, in collaboration with Conseil Elzéar Goulet, which is the French local of the Winnipeg Region of the Manitoba Métis Federation.

L'Union nationale métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba commissioned Bernard Bocquel to write *Les Fidèles à Riel: 125 ans d'évolution de l'Union nationale métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba* (St-Vital: Les éditions de La Fourche, 2012). Bocquel took four years to do the research and to write the book, which is 700 pages long. It is a true encyclopedia about the Metis in Manitoba and in western Canada.



Members of the Union nationale métisse St-Joseph du Manitoba, 1913, including men who had actively participated in the Resistance of 1869 -1870 and who had been members of the Comité National des Métis and the Provisional Government of Assiniboia, notably: André Nault; Ambroise-Dydime Lépine; Paul Proulx; and Elzéar Lagimodière. Source: St. Vital Historical Society



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