Josephine Renville (Poitra). (1864-1962)

Josephine was a well-known Métis medicine woman and midwife who delivered over 2,000 babies, only losing one in a breach birth. Josephine never spoke English: she always spoke the Michif language of the Métis people. Josephine was the daughter of Joseph Renville (b. 1823) and Frezene (Euphrosine) Belgarde[1], they are listed on the Annuity list for Little Shell's Band in 1866-67. Josephine was born at St. Joseph, N.D., on June 3, 1864. This was a family of fur traders. Renville Counties in North Dakota and Minnesota are named for her ancestors. Josephine died at Belcourt on July 21, 1862. Every summer, her family would travel west of the present site of Stanley to hunt buffalo, pick berries and gather food for the winter. In winter they would locate on the Missouri River near Fort Buford (near Trenton) where they would live in a log cabin. Josephine's brother, Joseph George later moved to Boggy Creek, Manitoba.

Josephine married Joseph "Knee-Cross" Poitra (1854-1908), the son of Joseph Poitra Sr. and Susan Laverdure. They married in 1881 in Lebret, Saskatchewan. His grandparents were André Poitras and Marguerite Grant. Joseph and Josephine are listed on the Turtle Mountain Census from 1884 to 1892. After Joseph's death she married Charles Joseph Champagne (1915).

Children:

- Joseph George, born on January 13, 1882 at Lebret, Saskatchewan.
- Charles Frances was born on 18 April, 1886 in Belcourt.
- Moses, born circa 1890.
- Alphonsine, born 1889
- Francis was born on 21 June 1904 in Belcourt.

Compiled by Lawrence Barkwell
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[1] Renville, Mrs. [*1866-7]   P149.14b
Pembina Annuity Roll, Little Shell's Band, 1866:3/14
                    - 1 man, 1 woman, 5 children $ 17.50pd
1867:194   - 1 man, 1 woman, 5 children $ 28 paid