

Manitoba Living History Society

La société pour l'histoire vivante du Manitoba



The Baggage Train

November 2008

52 Southmoor Road
 Winnipeg, Manitoba R2J 2P4
 204/256 6869
 email : baggage@mts.net
 website : manitobalivinghistory.com

PDF courtesy Michel Loiselle

Contemplations from the Chair..

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SURPRISES.....

While on the road to Mississinewa, Barry saw an ad for a sewing machine that looked like it would fill the bill for the one we are to purchase under the Grant. But that's not what I want to talk about. On the way to the little town of Niles, Michigan, we passed no less than FIVE antique malls. Ho Boy!! So the next day, we retraced that route and enjoyed a great day poking through the booths. We got two great flag poles. Okay, they come with actual flags that must disappear, but the poles are just right – long and light. At another shop – we found the two pointy spear head thingies for those flag poles. For Selkirk Settlement displays, we found a sturgeon spear and a sickle. We took a pass on a wonderful cased sextant, welded up iron braziers and other items too numerous to mention.



Then I found it. ... the booth with antique clothing!! I progressed no further and ultimately Barry had to drag me away. I tried on a hat of the 1890s but resisted the exorbitant cost, settling instead for a crocheted bag of that era. I could have had my pick of dresses and suits anywhere from 1835 to 1920. SIGH. What took my fancy the most was a dress dating to 1830-35 – huge gigot sleeves. It was the first dress of that era I have ever seen that was plain and not a print. Very pale yellow cotton in a somewhat rough finish. It is a low stomacher dress with the skirt attached only at the back. It has a belt to cover the sloppiness at center front. It is beautifully made with minimal trim.

.....and we did get the sewing machine. It belongs to MLHS/SHVM INC. and is available for the next year or so, to anyone who is sewing within the parameters of the Grant, and when that is done, it can be loaned to any member.



Ever in the past..... Judy McPherson

**Chairperson
Manitoba Living History Society**

Upcoming Events

- * indicates MLHS/SHVM events
- *Feb. 13-22, 2009, Festival du Voyageur,
- *May 23 - "Doors Open Event", Government House
- *May – Visit with the People of Red River, St.Boniface Museum

July 28 –Aug. 2nd 2009 – 250th Anniversary of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham (Cie de La Vérendrye)
www.laverendrye.ca

Past Events

Fall Gathering Report

Hello all Members,

In general, the Third Annual Fall Gathering was a happy weekend and the rain that accompanied Saturday dinner, and the off and on Sunday drizzle didn't seem to dampen anyone's spirits. Participants joined us from Fort William and Dryden. The Forces of Lord Selkirk joined us in good numbers. This year, La Compagnie was unable to participate as a unit, but a few did show up.

The Saturday visit by Lord and Lady Selkirk, together with the Scottish Ambassador to Washington and the Scottish Minister of the Environment and their families, was a highlight. Their entourage stayed a whole hour, enjoying the trade and craft demonstrations, as well as samples of Erle's roast of bison, and Olivia's cast-iron-cooked shortbread. His Lordship offered his support to MLHS as we continue to work towards the celebrations of the Bicentennial of the arrival of the Selkirk Settlers (2012). [As an aside, I'm not sure the visitors could have left any earlier if they tried, as their bus got stuck in the ditch at Fort Gibraltar.....]



Other highlights included Fran's quilt which she worked on all Saturday; Bill and Pedro's work at their forge and carpentry; Carol's wool dying; Olivia's querning; Erle's all-day bison roasts; the kids' games on Sunday; fencing demo; and the calliope!! It's like bagpipes – you either loved the calliope music or hated it. We know where Bill Fernie stands on that one!!! The Dutchmen who brought the calliope out for the afternoon had a great time and joined us for dinner. The kids loved it – got them all up dancing.

The Raffle draw was held after Saturday dinner and the winners were as follows:

- HAND MADE QUILT (donated by Fran Howard)
- HAND MADE WOODEN CHEST (donated by Bill Fernie)
- COUNTRY WIVES PATTERNS (donated by Country Wives)
- LIMITED EDITION ETCHING (donated by Michelle Desourdy)
- HAND WOVEN SASH (donated by Carol James)

- BRUCE ARNASON
- BARRY WEBB
- ERIN VERRIER
- FRAN HOWARD
- OLIVIA ARNASON

The Fall Gathering Committee met last Tuesday to review this year's event. Among the recommendations were: that we focus less on workshops because we get lots of hands-on workshops through the year at Baggages. Instead, we focus on cooking, socializing, and the kids' games.

Also discussed was whether MLHS should consider the purchase of a rain-plan marquee which would not only be useful at the Fall Gathering, but at other events during the year. The main issues about a marquee are, of course, the cost, and the need to get one that could be put up by 3 or 4 people. Barry will apply for a grant to help cover the cost of this major item, and we'll see where we go after we get a response to that request.

The Committee also was pleased with the very little raffle we ran and will likely do that again, if we get donations. We would like to open up the raffle to a longer selling time and to people who don't need to be present during the draw to win. We do NOT want to give our members pressure to sell!! Nope.

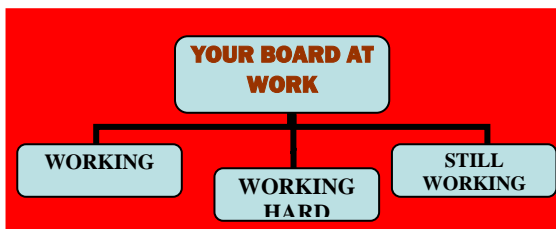
The Committee noted that the camp setup needs to be reviewed to allow more space between tents and a different layout.

The Committee discussed how to make best use of sharing the fire pits for cooking, without the need to dig up too much of the grass at Whittier Park.

This year, with the funds from the Raffle, and with more careful use of wood, and because we sold the uncooked bison roasts, we can report a balance of \$284.00 remaining after expenses.

The FALL GATHERING COMMITTEE wishes to thank everyone who came out for the weekend, and especially to everyone who offered a workshop – helped with set-up – acquired necessary permits – chopped wood – cooked the food – ran the games – and so on. (I hope I haven't missed anyone.) Janet filled in admirably for Carol D. who was ill and unable to be there at all during the weekend. The Committee sends a really special thanks to all those (and there were lots of you) who stayed behind on Sunday to help take down and pack the tents and flies, cover the fire pits, clean up the site. Many hands make light work. And it did. Before the rain started again.

Judy McPherson



1. PROGRESS REPORT: MLHS GRANTS

As part of the conditions that flow from the grants awarded to MLHS/SHVM INC. by the Dept. of Culture & Heritage (Province of Manitoba), the Board must submit a November progress report. We are pleased to share with you what has been accomplished to date.

Draft patterns and sample garments have been produced, and the Chair acknowledges the time and effort put into this process by Jo-Anne, Giovanni, Claire, Diane, Michelle, Barry and myself. Phase II in the production of patterns and sample garments has been taken over by Elizabeth of Levy's Leathers, one of the co-sponsors of the Selkirk Settlement Bicentennial Costume group. Elizabeth has graded the waistcoat patterns and has supervised the production of two sample garments. Within the next couple of weeks, she will have completed a Workman's Jacket and will move on to the tailcoat.

As we write, the instructions are being assembled, and in the fullness of time, we will have to decide whether

or not to market these patterns commercially under the well established Country Wives label. As noted elsewhere in this newsletter, the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 has created a significant market for these patterns.

Janet is moving ahead professionally on the artwork for the young persons Introduction to the People of Red River, and once the two of us have returned from Vancouver, we expect to move ahead rapidly. The Costume Manual for the People of Red River is slowly coming together with contributions from Jo-Anne, Janet, Barry and me. This document will be as well researched as is possible, and will include textile and clothing glossaries as well as a bibliography for those who really want to delve into the costume of the epoch.

As part of the grant, money was put aside for a decent sewing machine for the use of those sewers who either don't have a sewing machine, or who have found their own sewing machine to be less than adequate for handling heavy textiles. Using the designated funds, we have purchased a mid-range Singer. A small amount of grant money has been used to acquire a light box, and to defray the costs of some of the ink cartridges that have been burned up in the pre-production part of the documents. All other major purchases are in abeyance until the Board has a handle on the production costs of the first of the two books.

In relation to all that is going on and has gone on, the number of hours of “sweat equity” that were built into the grants has been met, and indeed has been surpassed.

Related to the Selkirk Settlement project but outside of MLHS, the Pavilion of Scotland has authorized the acquisition of two mannequins which can be used to display some of the costumes for public viewing.

2. OTHER GRANTS

Two grants are pending:

1. It is hoped that we will receive some support for a large marquee,
2. It is hoped that we will receive support for the production of a copy of the Earl of Selkirk’s personal flag.

Once the legal barriers have been put to one side, we anticipate applying for a grant to support MLHS ordering period appropriate display blankets. The membership should be ever mindful of the fact that any of the items received through pending grants from the Hudson’s Bay Company must remain the property of MLHS in perpetuity.

3. CONSTITUTION

The Board is working on completing a constitution. This work will be ready for the membership to review prior to the next AGM.

Glimpses of the past

Anne Lindsay

Nanette Sutherland Keith

Born about 1790, Nanette (Ann) Sutherland Keith was the daughter of James Sutherland and an unidentified Native mother who was probably Chipewyan or part Chipewyan.¹ It is likely that Nanette Sutherland met and began a relationship with George Keith (1779-1859) sometime in 1806 at or near Fort of the Forks, and she may have accompanied him to Fort Biskaga in the summer of 1806. Sixteen-year-old Nanette was pregnant with the couple’s first child when George Keith moved from Netla Fort to Biskaga



¹ Probably a North West Company engage who served at Fort of the Forks as late as 1808. See Lloyd Keith, ed. *North of Athabasca: Slave Lake and Mackenzie River Documents of the North West Company, 1800-1821*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001, 259-260. See also: Jennifer Brown, “Keith, George”, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography online* VIII (1985).

Fort in 1807. On 20 July 1807, a daughter was born. In total, the couple had eight children, including Fanny (Born 20 July 1807), Robert, Betsey, (born at Biskaga Fort 15 November 1809), Louise, born at Great Bear Lake, Sophia, Mary (born ca 1838) and Jane.²

After their fur trade life ended with George Keith’s retirement, Nanette Sutherland Keith and her husband George formalized their marriage in a Christian ceremony and then set out for Scotland in 1844. The Keith family lived only a short time in Aberdeen, soon moving into a comfortable farm, Morningside Cottage, where Nanette raised and sold farm produce and garnered local interest in her handiworks.³

Nanette Sutherland Keith’s adjustment to European living was quite remarkable, especially considering she spoke little English when she arrived in Scotland. In 1847 Keith wrote that “the Gud-wife . . . has acquired a considerable smattering of the English language, together with some comparative degree of civilized polish” then later that year he wrote “all things considered I think she deserves some credit for acting or playing *her part* so well as she does.”⁴ In 1850, Alexander Christie and his wife Ann Thomas moved near the Keiths, and the two women became fast friends. George Keith died 22 January 1859.⁵ On a visit to the Keiths in 1852, Letitia described Nanette “...The old lady ... is hideously black & ugly but is wonderfully lively, even hilarious in her manner.”⁶

After George Keith’s death, Nanette, who her husband called “Ann” and her daughter Mary returned to Montreal. Nanette (Ann) Sutherland Keith died in Montreal 4 April 1862, age 72 Years. Mary died in Montreal, 4 January 1869, age 31 years.⁷

² Keith *North of Athabasca*, 259-261.

³ Brown, “Keith, George”. *DCB*.

⁴ Quoted in Brown, “Keith, George”. *DCB*.

⁵ Brown, “Keith, George”. *DCB*.

⁶ Margaret Arnett McLeod, *The Letters of Letitia Hargrave*. Toronto: Champlain Society, 1947, 142.

⁷ This latter information is inscribed on the marker in Nellfield Cemetery, Aberdeen, Scotland. 3-31-07. Lloyd Keith, personal communication, 31 March 2007. See also, Quebec National Archives, non-Catholic burials database: Keith, Mrs. Ann, Church: Saint-Paul’s Presbyterian Church (Montreal), 1862, Centre d’archives de Montréal, CE601,S130.

The Quartermaster's Quarterly

Olivia Arnason

Fire-baked Scottish Shortbread



Cooking Scottish shortbread in a Dutch oven over a fire was a tasty experiment of Olivia & Judy at our Fall Gathering. For those of you who would like to enjoy this treat, this is what was done.

3 ingredients are required. 1 lb butter
1 cup dark brown sugar (golden may also be used)
4 cups flour

Implements used: a wooden shortbread cookie mold (a flat round circle can be made if this isn't available), a Dutch oven, a metal trivet, a clay casserole dish
Depending on the size of the mold, this recipe will make about 3 large shortbread.

First, prepare a fire so that when the shortbread is ready to be cooked, there is a supply of hot coals.

In a bowl, the butter is cut up into small pieces and then mixed with the sugar til fluffy, and then the flour is added and mixed. It is then kneaded on a floured surface, rolled lightly to flatten, and then placed over the floured wooden cookie mold. The dough is pressed lightly into the mold, then any excess trimmed from around the edge. The shortbread should be about 1/2 - 3/4 inch thick. Gently, the dough is peeled away from the mold and placed on an ovenproof casserole dish. This is in turn placed onto a trivet inside a Dutch oven. The lid is placed on top and then an even layer of coals is placed under the pot and on the lid. It is cooked in about 20 minutes with a light sprinkling of coals. Too many coals, especially underneath, will cause the bottom to burn. When removing from the oven, remove the casserole dish first, then the large piece of shortbread can be removed and set to cool.



Knit, Stitch, & Fix

Maryse Gagné

Making a Cape

The Lagimodière girls made capes recently. It was easier than making anything else. We were able to make three capes in



one evening! We were going to make a chemise, but with winter coming we figured we would be warmer with a cape.

For this occasion our friend Sophie flew in from Edmonton to join us. While Sophie and Chantal were cutting, they were entertained by Allegra and Maryse.

Happy to be making things!



Opening the Cassette

St. Boniface park honours Metis martyr



According to David Dandeneau, past chair of the Conseil Elzéar-Goulet Local, the idea for the park has been in the works since 1995 as part of a Destination St. Boniface project.

"It is a really nice interpretive park," he said. "There are some soft berms that represent the waves of the water, some half walls with the Elzéar Goulet story on it and a Metis infinity sign imbedded into the ground in white concrete."



Dandeneau is also pleased with the way the park was designed using bilingual signage which tells the story of Goulet's life and death.

"There are a lot of rocks on the site which is very symbolic of the way he died and there is a lot of writing, so it is a history lesson in itself just to read and go about the park," Dandeneau said.

On 13 Sept. 1870 Goulet was recognized in the hamlet of Winnipeg by a member of the Canadian faction who had been a prisoner of Riel during the period of the provisional government. This man, whose identity cannot be determined, and two uniformed members of the expedition of Garnet Joseph Wolseley*, pursued Goulet, apparently to apprehend him for complicity in the death of Scott. Goulet fled on foot to the Red River and tried to swim to safety on the Saint-Boniface side. His



disappointed pursuers threw rocks, one of which struck him on the head, stunning him, and he drowned. When the body was recovered the following day, it bore the mark of a blow on the head.

Goulet's drowning took place within a month of the arrival of the Wolseley

expedition at Red River and just 11 days after the arrival of Manitoba's first lieutenant governor, Sir Adams George Archibald*.

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Photo *Source*: [Archives of Manitoba](#), Personalities -

Elzéar Goulet,

N21685, c1870.



Ponderings...

Erle Einarsson

3rd ANNUAL FALL GATHERING



I think that this gathering was very well put together, and also very much fun. With the exception of having a very heavy rain just as we were going to sit down for supper.

Friday was set up. I arrived at noon, to start with the setup of my tepee, and Bill was already there. We sat around and waited for awhile, then started hauling out the poles for Festival's tepee. These poles are quite long and very heavy, after we hauled them out I called Colin to see if he would come and open the South tower so I could get the tepee out. It was at this time that I realized, I didn't make arrangements to use it this year. As a result of this oversight, I have decided that from now on I will use my own, smaller tepee instead. After set up there was a Camp meeting, where Judy went over the house keeping and camp rules.

Saturday was an exciting part of the Gathering. I started cooking the roasts at about 10:45am, this part was very uneventful. By 3:00 pm the roasts were getting to be almost done, quite well done on the outside but still very rare inside. Around the same time we had a number of VIP visitors;

Lord and Lady Selkirk of Douglas

Hon. Michael Russell, Scottish Minister of Environment

Stuart MacLean, 2nd Seceretary, U.K. Embassy, Washington

Mr. & Mrs. Dennis MacLeod (Funded original statue in Helmsdale, their 17 yr. old daughter Kayleigh).

Vernon Ness, President, St. Andrew's Society

Dr. Grogan

These persons came by our gathering to visit for a while and wound up staying, I think, a little longer than planned. When their bus came to the Fort, it kind of fell into the ditch and leaned into the gatepost at the West access to Fort Gibraltar. After getting off their bus they came to the camp and were greeted by the Forces of Lord Selkirk. After reviewing the troops, Lord Selkirk spoke to a few of the other people there, then came over to my fire to be introduced by Barry and to taste some of the bison roast that was cooking. After tasting it, he introduced his aide, whom he said was supposed to taste everything before Lord Selkirk did. So I gave the aide some too, that way if one was poisoned then the aide would be too. After they moved on the rest of the visitors came to have a taste as well. While this tasting was going on the Forces of Lord Selkirk were doing drill to the east near the hill. I believe that all of the visitors had a great time, in as far as the time spent with us is concerned. After they left it was time for the rest of supper to be cooked, everyone was putting pots on fires all over camp with; Bread, veggies of various colours and flavours, and most importantly, deserts. After all of this activity and grand cooking, just as we were sitting down to supper the darkened sky opened up and poured rain on us. Some scrambled for the house and some of the others came into my tepee with me. After the rain was over we went back outside but it just didn't quite stop. Most people were leaving by 8:30-9:00pm.

Sunday was quite laid back, there were some workshops, a church service, activities for the kids and some just visiting. I held a workshop at my fire, it was a tea drinking and cigar smoking workshop and was quite well attended. In fact I held about 3 or 4 of them throughout the day. We finally started take down about 3:30 or 4:00pm. And were out of the park by 5:00pm.

I think the gathering is getting better each year as we learn what we have done right and most importantly learn from the things that have gone wrong. There will always be things going wrong, but as long as we continue to use them as learning tools, then we should have a first class gathering in no time.

**From the office of Lord Selkirk of Douglas,
PC, QC,
House of
Lords,
London**

Dear Barry,

Very many thanks for your message of 17th October.



From across the Atlantic Ocean we in Scotland are enormously proud of the Selkirk Settlers. When they came to Red River they suffered many hardships and during those extremely harsh winters and there was an intense struggle for survival. It was because of the courage of those first Settlers, and others who came

after them, that Winnipeg became one of the very great cities of Canada and North America. It was their sacrifice which enabled their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren to succeed beyond their wildest dreams.



Indeed the remarkable and wonderful story of how those early Settlers took their fate in their hands and made their way from Scotland to Canada is one of sustained fortitude and heroism. We remember them and will always remember their example with warmth admiration and pride.

With best wishes,
Yours sincerely,
James Selkirk



In the Wardrobe

Barry McPherson

Trials and Tribulations

As part of the preparatory work for costuming some of our interpreters who will be involved in the 2012 Selkirk Settlement Bicentennial, Barry has endeavored to obtain a modest number of blankets woven



in the colors and qualities of the first quarter of the 19th century. BOY!! What a minefield! Suffice it to say that the Hudson's Bay Company treasures its heritage and zealously guards its legal right to the manufacture and sale of "point blankets". We have had terrific support from Dr. Katherine Pettipas, and Debbie Keffer with the Heritage Dept. of the HBC in Toronto to obtain special dispensation for the blankets that we wish to order. At the moment, we can finally see light at the end of the tunnel, and fully expect that MLHS/SHVM INC. will be able to place an order with the weavers in November.



Childhood Ramblings

Les filles Lagimodière



The Fall Gathering

Sleeping in a tent for the first time was very exciting. It's helped us become closer. In spite of the rain we had a lot of fun. The Selkirk skills competition was fine but it would have been better if every team would have gotten a prize if they won a competition.

Happy to be independent!



Country Wives



The Country Wives "girls" have had a busy busy summer, which unfortunately, has not allowed them to giggle their way through the next sets of patterns. But they WILL!! Keep an eye out for the second Selkirk Settler woman's set, to include the Luton Bedgown. (We have agreed to provide an honorarium to the City of Luton for the use of the name and the research from the original bed gown.) Also you can look for the Métis Woman's package, and the Sauteaux Woman's package in a few months.

Meantime, patterns for men's clothing are well on the way to being generated – by Judy and the newest associate Country Wives (???) – Barry and Jo-Anne, who have developed the Working Man's Jacket, now being graded. Also, with the help of Claire, a new waistcoat pattern has been designed and already graded and as soon as instructions can be put together – that pattern will be marketed under the C.W. label. On the

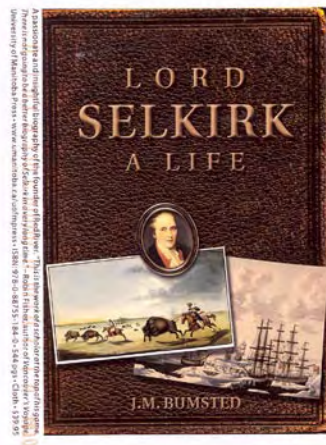
horizon – look for trousers featuring unique styling details not seen in any other commercial patterns. And look for the tailcoat pattern – it’s coming along too, and should be ready for grading over the winter.

Our patterns are now scattered from Virginia through to New England and all over Ontario. We’re neither famous nor wealthy, but we have a very loyal and supportive following.

Judy McPherson -one of the Country Wives

From the Book Shelf

The University of Manitoba Press and Mr. J. M. Bumsted presented the new book, Lord Selkirk A Life, at an afternoon tea and book launch at **Dalnavert Museum**



Mr. Bumstead thanked the MLHS members present for such a colorful addition to the event.

Trader’s Page

WANTED – the following items for VISIT WITH THE PEOPLE OF RED RIVER

Must be in good condition for use by students

- 1 bushel basket
- 2 scrubbing boards – small size – maximum \$18 each
- 3 mid-size laundry wash tubs

WANTED – NEW HOME FOR THE FOLLOWING

- 1 pr. black figure skates about size 8
- cake decorating set (how historic THAT!)
- 1850-60 dress pattern with dress cut out, partly made up – light brown – about size 10

Contact Judy – 256-6869 – baggage@mts.net

ACTIVE HISTORY ASSOCIATES FOR SALE.....

TOP HATS – BOWLERS and others..... We have too many of the above that are taking up space. Limited sizes, some wool felt, some fur felt. Inquire.

Country Wives Patterns © – day caps, men’s cap, women’s jacket and the new patterns: “Two Chemises” and “Settlement Series: A Dress Set”. Special prices: wholesale to members of MLHS only.

As requested by members, we have purchased for resale two folding camp chairs and we’ll turn them over on a first-come first-serve basis. These are \$77.00 (Cdn.) each plus GST.

Contact: Barry or Judy – 256-6869

CURMUDGEON’S CORNER

Barry McPherson



We had some discussion after the Fall Gathering regarding open fires and in particular, the usage of wood. I had all but forgotten when Martin Lake of Mississinewa 1812 brought the subject up. His bill for firewood has increased dramatically year by year. He and I acknowledged that open fires are relaxing, and even therapeutic. From time to time, they are even useful for preparing meals. That being said, wood does cost money. This year, Martin told registrants to bring their own wood. Many did, and many did not. Martin had no option but to put in repeated orders for wood, and as he pointed out, so many people had a stock pile of wood in their tents “just in case” – that would be left on the ground after the end of the event.

We both felt that in some way participants at historic events should make a brave attempt to follow the lead of their ancestors: a hot little fire for breakfast and a fresh fire for the evening meal. No fires necessary between breakfast and supper. Both of us understand that this kind of practice would have to be self-imposed without some unfortunate soul having to police fires. We also understand that individuals involved in preparing communal meals for supper would have their fires burning most of the afternoon.

Please consider these ramblings as we must keep our own expenses within reason.

Please send ideas, photos, and comments to the Editor at clesdesol@mts.net

Thank you,
Jo-Anne Desanges
Editor