



# Manitoba Living History Society

*La société pour l'histoire vivante du Manitoba*

Delivery of the

## NEWSLETTER

*in the Red River Settlement*

*December 2017/ January 2018*



*Winter Scene in Brooklyn 1817-20  
Louisa Ann Coleman*

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## Chair Chat/Editor Message

Hello to all. The serious brunt of winter should be passing soon. December was coldest on record for more than twenty years! I hope that all of your Christmas Wishes and Blessings came true and now another New Year has arrived!

The weather cooperated and was warmer January 1, a small reprieve. It was so nice to see so many of you at the Levee New Year's Day, at our count there were thirty-four of us; young and old. Great turn out everyone and we sure looked mighty swell! The Free Press captured a great picture of Anthony, with TV coverage from CTV and Global stations.

The Winter Gathering Metis House Party was a resounding success – with wonderful attendance and much great delight. Lots of music, dancing and eating and laughter. Well done everyone! With old and new members, forty-four attendees had a delightful time. I am so sorry to have missed it.

I have spent time contemplating the past year and am pleased with how the year unfolded. We succeeded in creating novel relationships within the historic community and we developed innovative partnerships. We worked together as a group to meet our common goals of learning and sharing our love of history. We stayed true with our 2017 goal; that decisions were always made with the membership in mind and to continue with what you - the membership want. The surveys are a great way to get your views, so we thank everyone who

returned them in a timely manner. If you have not completed the survey, please do so before the AGM. We will have surveys available to fill out at the AGM should have misplaced or lost yours.

We continue to acquire new research information of the Red River Settlement and the interesting history of the province. We will work on the many requests we have received so we can plan even better things to do.

It is looking like we have a rather large event calendar that is filling up nicely, MLHS has several new confirmed events with sponsors who sought us out, and we will work to provide the best for our group.

2018 is looking like an action-packed year for us and we have just started!

Hurray for History!

*As always, remember what an remarkable group of living history folks we all are! Thank you for your eagerness, hard work and commitment to supporting living history in all things that we do.*

... Until I see you next time,  
*Your humble and sometimes obedient servant*

**Marie**  
MLHS Chair  
MLHS Newsletter Editor



# January 1 New Year's Levee



Courtesy Winnipeg Free Press January 2, 2018





**Baggage**  
**January 14**  
*Marie*

Well I did not think I was going anywhere so soon after my hand surgery...but I was getting housebound and squirrely and we had so many things to share and talk about. So, I bundled up and away I went to Baggage for a few hours. Thankfully it was not the coldest day of the week...

It was a pretty good turn out, with lots of chatter and patterns and fabric and fitting, dressing and undressing and sewing and stitching and ripping stitches going on.

We looked at fabric samples and patterns for Selkirk Settlement and for the 1870's – to continue with our wide range of time periods, and of course we still worked on corsets.

James brought a floor length coat-like garment which was made of lovely woolen fabric with some silk lining and oodles of lace of an indeterminate time period – it was generally agreed that it was a theatrical garment and not of historic provenance. Lavonne shared a knitted reticule she had made and Ed modeled a pair of very ill fitting 1870's pants...you had to have been there for this modeling session.....Yikes!

Welcome to new members Alex and Samantha for taking the history plunge...

Thanks to Judy and Barry for pulling together a much-needed Baggage fix and opening their home. In attendance *Judy, Barry, May, James, Bernice, Kristine, Ed, Carol, Marc, Lavonne, Charles, Katherine, Elizabeth, Erle, Alex and Marie. Olivia and Frederick were over the day before....*

*Marie*

**Winter Gathering**  
**January 28 Metis House Party**  
**Cross Great Hall**  
*Barb & Judy*



It started with the realization that a) Dawn Cross doesn't get to attend many MLHS events because she's toting around three small children where ever she goes and b) Dawn Cross has a beautiful big house with the living room the size of a small community hall. On Dawn's suggestion, we decided to try the Winter Gathering at "Cross Castle".

The lead up to the event was rather like a treasure hunt...finding enough chairs and tables for about 50 people, choosing a theme, coordinating the pot-luck, sewing/acquiring clothing for newbies, arranging the gifts and finding entertainment. Barb took charge of organizing the W.G., which by and large, she accomplished single handed. Makes some of us tired just reading about all the hard work she willingly put in to make this gathering the success it surely was.

If it had not been for Barb's table and chair hoarding issues, we might have all had to sit on the floor. Who would believe that some 40 non-folding chairs could belong to one household! To put it in perspective though, it wouldn't be shocking for a household of 2 to have 10 chairs (incidentally, at least 10 of Barb's chairs used to live at Judy and Barry's house) so maybe it's not unusual for 8 people to also have 5 times their numbers in chairs...

Gifts were the very happy result of some senior MLHS members downsizing their historic knick-knacks and do-dads. It is so easy to accumulate paraphernalia and such a joy to redistribute the excess. Speaking of excess, Easton's green thumb produced a couple of hundred pounds of historic Mandan Bride Corn seeds and more than a thousand pounds of Hubbard Squash at Plum Ridge Farm in 2017. In the spirit of fairness and sharing, Barb thought everyone should have a chance to experience a harvest like that and now we can't wait to hear how much food those little gift baggies of seeds will produce by the fall of 2018. We will have to compare garden harvest notes at the 2018 Fall Gathering. Maybe a harvest competition for best beans, squash and corn or a competition for best recipe at the next Fall Gathering.

A Metis house party isn't much of an event if you don't have a fiddler. Knowing that Kaiti (bless her heart) is less than reliable at MLHS events and Cameron is very busy, Barb contacted the Manitoba Metis Federation and asked for Jigging and Fiddling suggestions and recommendations. In a world where everyone knows someone, the lady who answered the phone said her grand-daughter was just the jigging teacher we were looking for and she was married to the fiddler. Brittany and Jason came with their two-year-old son Jaxon and Jason's parents Jackie and Dean. Most everyone got up and danced. Kira-Lynn and Fran were braver than Dawn Cross and Dave Carey who claimed that they had no choice but to do dishes at that exact moment. Erle discovered that he was the official videographer and exempt from jigging. As a new jig step was being tried, Catherine was asked to dance. She got up with a smile, but before she could join in, little Brynja crossed the length of the room in a flash and demanded exclusive dance time with Catherine. The music and dancing rocked Dawn's house! I hope the enthusiasm didn't also crack the plaster walls.

It is said that all kids need to keep them occupied is a hill and a hole. Dawn's yard didn't disappoint. Even though it was a bit chilly, the kids supervised by Dave, David and Easton, spent lots of time outside sliding down the hill in their ski-pants, "skating" on the pond and playing King of the Mountain on the snow hill that Rick Cross had made from clearing the driveway. They came in rosy cheeked and ready to sit in small groups and play cards where unbeknownst to most of the adults, Marina was teaching them to gamble. While the bigger kids were outside, the under four bunch were surfing the floor under everyone's knees, being cute.

The talent portion of the event was especially funny when during the Phillips family's invisible bench skit, baby Cashtin slid a chair across the floor and created a very visible seat for a very surprised Elizabeth. It could not have been choreographed by an expert - his comedic timing was perfect. Donavin delighted us with a very sensitive Pachelbel's Canon in D and Gen had us guessing the origin of a passage from one of Jane Austen's novels, Emma. Her smooth delivery of the 200-year-old text was fun to listen to. Gwynn danced the Highland Fling and then the Seann Truibhas which had us imagining the unpopular trousers being thrown aside for the beloved kilt. Dawn explained the origins of the steps, seeming to have no trouble with the Gaelic pronunciations. Dave, on the other hand, delivered the "Address to the Haggis", but teetered over Robbie Burns Old Scots language of 200 years ago. Perhaps he might want to keep a mini-haggis and a dram of Scotch nearby so that he can work on his delivery throughout the year...or he could borrow one of Gwynn's dance swords to practice "*an cut you up wi ready slight, Trenching your gushing entrails bright*".

With the disappearance of the loaner bin of clothes, Barb stepped up\* (*\*It is not a MLHS*

event unless Barb gets to sew something at 1:00 AM), armed with a container of her own to clothe Susan, Isabel and Brittany. The shirt specially made for Jason almost fit. . Time to ask around for clothing donations to fill a new MLHS bin to help encourage new people to give this historic merriment a try. Although everyone's outfits were great, Judy's knife and (Barry's) beaded sash and Olivia's family's footwear and her beautiful hide jacket were especially cool. Had Barry made it to the gathering, he would no doubt have impressed us all with his new brain tanned white buffalo hide Metis vest with McPherson tartan back!

The food was varied and delicious. It took a bit to get it all organized but everyone was patient and forgiving. No one went away hungry. Thank you, Dawn Carey for the Haggis, (mixed reviews about that), and to Carol and Ed for making the trip even though Carol is recuperating with her health and for bringing their yummy creamy green beans. Rhubarb cake! Mmmm... Cherry cream cake! Mmmmm... Simply no room on each plate to try everything. Recipes\* will soon be requested! *\*When all receipts are received they will be included in a newsletter*

Great to see Kira-Lyn back with us after her long sojourn in England. It was also wonderfully heart-warming to see the children all playing and getting to know each other better.

The tipi that Erle had set up, sitting as a silhouette in the setting sun with only the Careys, Rieders, Crosses and Woodses left, the fireworks were set off to mark the end of another successful gathering.

Thank you for attending – all 44 of us! All our MLHS'ers make a great family!!

*Missed you Marie, Get well quick Barry, Bernice and Marie's husband, Don so we can all be together at the next event.*

## Winter Gathering pictures





## Winter Gathering pictures



## The Wartime Quilts Made by Men from Military Uniforms

From a Blog by Allison Meier [allisoncmeier.com](http://allisoncmeier.com)

The American Folk Art Museum in New York is exhibiting wartime quilts made by British soldiers from their uniforms in the 18th and 19th centuries.



Artist unidentified, *Soldier's Hexagon Quilt* (Crimea or United Kingdom, late 19th century), wool from military uniforms, 85 x 64 in (courtesy the Annette Gero Collection, photo by Tim Connolly, Shoot Studios)

In an 1856 portrait by Thomas William Wood, Private Thomas Walker is shown sitting up in a neat bed. Clean white bandages shroud his head, hiding scars from numerous surgeries to extract skull fragments from a wound sustained in the Crimean War. On the bed is both his bright red uniform, and a quilt the British soldier is stitching from the same wool fabric. The painting simultaneously depicted Walker as a military hero and a civilian man, regaining his independence, using the traditionally feminine craft of quilting to convalesce. It was also a bit of propaganda for the British military, presenting their hospital and soldier as orderly and competent. It was even reported in the *Morning Chronicle* on December 25, 1855 that Queen Victoria had acquired one of Walker's geometric uniform quilts.



Thomas William Wood, *Portrait of Private Thomas Walker* (1856), oil on canvas (courtesy Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons of England)

A reproduction of the painting is included in *War and Pieced: The Annette Gero Collection of Quilts from Military Fabrics* at the American Folk Art Museum. The widely shared painting promoted quilting as occupational therapy, and contributed to the later belief that all military quilts were made by recovering soldiers. Yet as the exhibition demonstrates through its 29 examples, these "soldiers' quilts" or "convalescent quilts" as they're often called, were created for diverse purposes. What they share is that they were made by men, and utilize the wool fabric of military uniforms.

Some of the soldiers learned to quilt while in a hospital, or at home after the war was over, making heirlooms from their uniforms. Along with the portrait of Private Walker, pictures of soldier-quiltmakers were disseminated by temperance periodicals around the United Kingdom during the Crimean War. These visuals portrayed the needlework craft as acceptable for men, and a healthy activity that kept idle hands — which might otherwise be filled with liquor or playing cards — occupied. Others were skilled tailors before they enlisted, such as Samuel Sadlowski of the Royal Prussian Army, who was taken prisoner by the French amid the Napoleonic Wars. He repaired officers' uniforms during his internment, and used the leftover scraps to make quilts. One on view, dated to 1806, features a double-headed eagle at its center, with his initials and those of his wife nestled into the blocks of pattern.

These wartime quilts are incredibly rare, and Gero states in the release that "there are fewer than one hundred of these quilts in the world, and no two are alike." *War and Pieced* highlights their diversity, whether in the distinctive beadwork on quilts made by soldiers stationed in India in the 19th century, or the motifs of African shields and spears embroidered on a late 19th century quilt, likely made in tribute to those killed in the Anglo-Zulu War. A quilt made in India between 1860 and 1870 has its beads connected to small circles of fabric, the discs probably left over from punching buttonholes into uniforms. Although the conflict may be unnamed on the quilt, the patterns, needlework, and, above all, uniform materials, can place these fabric works in time.





*Installation view of War and Pieced: The Annette Gero Collection of Quilts from Military Fabrics at the American Folk Art Museum (photo by the author for Hyperallergic)*



*Artist unidentified, Anglo-Zulu War Army Quilt (South Africa or United Kingdom, late 19th century), wool from military uniforms, with embroidery thread; hand-embroidered, with pointed and pinked edges, 86 5/8 x 74 7/8 in (courtesy the Annette Gero Collection, photo by Tim Connolly, Shoot Studios)*

These are moving relics of the bloody battles that stretched across the globe in the mid-18th to 19th centuries, from the Prussian and Napoleonic wars, when elaborate intarsia quilts featured pictorial inlays of soldiers, to the Crimean War with its dense geometries. One from that mid-19th-century engagement has a checkerboard at its center, an example of the boards made from scraps of military

uniforms to fend off boredom. The spare fabric that formed the checkerboard may have been from uniforms of the dead or wounded, thus adding a somber memorial to an otherwise vibrant wool quilt.

Although there is a vision of hope in making something beautiful out of horror, there's an eerie echo of the suturing of wounds in each stitch of the quilt. The intense labor of some of those made in convalescence — one from 1890 involves 25,000 blocks, hexagons, and diamonds — represents the incredible amount of time these men spent recovering. Viewed together, the quilts in *War and Pieced* are haunting reminders of the lives given and maimed in the British Empire's global conquest, and those that continue to be lost to war.



*"Samuel Attwood, an Army Tailor Making a Highly Complicated Quilt" (India, 1850–60) (courtesy Quilters' Guild of the British Isles)*



*Installation view of War and Pieced: The Annette Gero Collection of Quilts from Military Fabrics at the American Folk Art Museum*





*King George III Intarsia Quilt by an unidentified artist (United Kingdom or Germany, 1766), wool, possibly from military uniforms, with embroidery thread; intarsia; hand-appliquéd and hand-embroidered, 106 x 100 in (Collection Sevenoaks Museum, Kent County Council, United Kingdom)*



*Detail of a regimental bed rug by Sergeant Malcolm Macleod (India, 1865), wool, mostly from military uniforms, with embroidery thread; inlaid hand-embroidered*



*Artist unidentified, Soldier's Mosaic Stars Quilt (Found in Germantown, Pennsylvania, late 19th century), wool, 77 1/4 x 62 3/4 in (Collection International Quilt Study Center & Museum, University of Nebraska-Lincoln)*



*Army Uniform Quilt from the Napoleonic Era by an unidentified artist (Region unknown, possibly Prussia, late 18th/early 19th century), wool, probably from military uniforms; Silesian pieced*





*Hungarian Soldier's Intarsia Quilt by an unidentified artist (Austro-Hungarian Empire, 1820–30), wool, with embroidery thread; inlaid; hand-appliquéd and hand-embroidered*



*Intarsia Quilt with Soldiers and Musicians by an unidentified artist; initialed "J.S.J." (Prussia, 1760–80), wool, with embroidery thread; intarsia; hand-appliquéd and hand-embroidered, 55 x 43 in (courtesy the Annette Gero Collection, photo by Tim Connolly, Shoot Studios)*



*Detail of Soldier's Quilt by an unidentified artist (Crimea, India, or United Kingdom, 1850–75), wool, probably from military uniforms; inlaid; hand-appliquéd with buttonhole fabric discs*



*Installation view of War and Pieced: The Annette Gero Collection of Quilts from Military Fabrics at the American Folk Art Museum*



*Installation view of War and Pieced: The Annette Gero Collection of Quilts from Military Fabrics at the American Folk Art Museum*

### **From Article - War and Pieced: The Annette Gero Collection of Quilts from Military Fabrics**

Display continues through January 7, 2018  
American Folk Art Museum 2 Lincoln Square,  
Upper West Side, Manhattan, New York, U.S.A.

All photos by Allison Meier, author for  
*Hyperallergic* unless otherwise stated

With permission [allisoncmeier.com](http://allisoncmeier.com)

Article through Frederick Carsted via Johanna Handford



## In case you were not at the WG: Three Sister's planting info – Seeds from Easton & Barb

### Hubbard Squash

Was first recorded in Marblehead, Massachusetts as arriving there in 1798, either from the West Indies or South America. It was named by nurseryman James John Howard Gregory (1827-1910) of Marblehead after an Elizabeth Hubbard of Massachusetts, who had introduced him to the squash. The plants yield between 5 to 25 lbs of squash/plant. 110 days to maturity. 12 plants could produce up to 300 lbs of fruit in a really good year!



#### How to plant squash

- soak seeds overnight in water or plant directly in 4" pots indoors several weeks before last frost date
- use grow lights or a south facing window
- transplant in the evening when all danger of frost is past and the seedlings have been hardened off

#### How to harvest squash

- harvest squash just before a frost at the end of the season
- try to allow a bit of the stem to remain on the fruit

#### How to use your squash

- Go crazy. Squash can be used anywhere you would use pumpkin or zucchini.
- Squash can be added to mashed potatoes to make them more nutritious.
- when stored for long periods, winter squash will develop a hard skin.
- It can be cooked in the oven whole with a vent hole poked in it to keep it from exploding in your oven.
- Pumpkin seeds are highly nutritious.
- if necessary, smash open a raw squash with a hammer to retrieve seeds for planting next year.
- Each squash will produce more than 200 seed

### Mandan Bride Corn

Flour corn from the Mandan Indigenous people of North Dakota. Good for grinding into flour or as a beautiful fall decoration.

An excellent mix of colors with some striped kernels. The plants are 4-5' tall and produce 6-7" cobs. 90 days to maturity. 1 cup of seeds (600 plants) can produce about 300 cups of kernels



#### How to plant corn

- Soak the seeds overnight in warm water.
- Plant 1" deep in rich soil about 8 inches apart.
- Be sure the ground doesn't dry out too much during growing season.

#### How to harvest corn

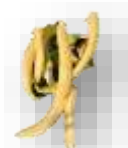
- When tassels are brown, pull cobs down and twist to remove from stalk.
- Shuck promptly and set to dry in an area where there is plenty of air movement. Be sure the cobs don't touch each other.
- Discard any cobs that have grey-green or yellow-green mould. This mould contains Aflatoxin and should not be consumed by people or animals.
- Corn is best stored on the cob in a cool dry place.
- When corn is ready to be used, it can be removed from the cob.

#### How to use your corn:

- Tortillas-To release as many vitamins as possible, soak the corn in solution of lime overnight (research Nixtamalization), grind, form into tortillas and fry in a hot pan.
- Grind the corn and use in your favourite cornbread recipe, polenta or whatever you like best.

### Arikara Yellow Beans

A very historic bean that helped sustain the Lewis & Clark expedition through the winter of 1805 at Fort Mandan! Lewis obtained seeds from the Arikara Indians and brought seeds to Thomas Jefferson and in 1809 Jefferson planted the Arikara bean at Monticello. Bernard McMahon also offered it in his 181 catalogue. The pods can be harvested very young as snaps but this bean is best used in the dry state for soups, stews or baking. Oscar H. Will carried the Arikara bean in his catalog in the early 1900s. Productive, very early and an excellent baker.



#### How to plant beans

- Plant your first crop of beans a week or two after the date of the last expected frost.
- Sow the seeds 1 inch deep in heavy soil and 1½ inches deep in light soil.
- Firm the earth over them to ensure soil contact.
- Plant most bush cultivars 3 to 6 inches apart in rows 2 to 2½ feet apart.

#### How to Harvest Beans

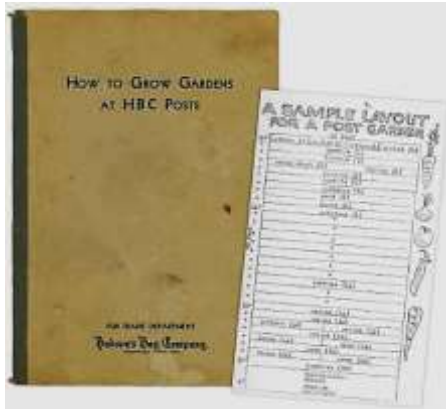
- Dry or dried beans—also called shell beans—are beans grown to full maturity and left in their pods to dry before being shelled and stored for later use.
- Dried beans can be stored in a cool, dry place for up to a year or more. These beans also can be harvested at the green, shelling stage—when seeds are still tender—and eaten before they dry.

#### How to cook your beans

- Rinse well, then cover with cold water and soak for 6 hours or overnight.
- Transfer beans to a soup pot and add water to cover by 1 inch. Add onion, bay leaf and bacon and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a bare simmer, partly cover pot with lid, and cook for 1 hour, stirring occasionally.

## Hudson's Bay Company Gardens

*Despite the harsh northern climate, gardens proliferated at Hudson's Bay Company posts, providing fresh food and helping to maintain the health of HBC employees and their families.*



*"A handy manual of gardening" published by the HudHBC 1940 HBC Corporate Collection*

Wherever the Hudson's Bay Company established posts, European-style gardening was introduced not long after — no matter how inhospitable the climate. HBC gardens were more than just a way to promote the health of its overseas servants; there was a clear economic benefit to them as well.

In the remote areas where HBC operated, everything had to be imported. Foodstuffs were a major expense and occupied valuable cargo space. As early as 1674, seeds for vegetables and grains were included in the annual outfit shipped overseas, the intent being that posts could grow their own crops, thereby reducing the need for costly importations. However, initial results were not encouraging. Grain crops, particularly wheat, rye, barley, and oats, did poorly. The London Committee's belief that North American growing conditions would be the same as those of European locations sharing the same latitude proved to be more optimistic than scientific.

Early Company archives contain information and correspondence about the success and failure of gardening efforts, not least of which was the difficulty in procuring tools: "Sir, I am sorry that I cannot do better than I have done, as for the Garden I cannot help it for we sowed all the seed that we could spare for we had a very poor last year and this year is as bad as last year and for want of a Spade is as bad ... I sent for Spades every year since I came and at last there was one last year and this is the only one that is here ..."

- Joseph Turnor, Frederick House, March 25, 1808.

Certain crops did flourish, even in the harsh conditions along Hudson and James bays: cabbages, turnips, parsnips, carrots, and peas did well, as did mustard greens, potatoes, and onions. When the Company moved into the interior after 1774, oats and barley became reliable staples: "John Mannall deserves to be particularly recommended to Your Honours' Notice by his economical management at Frederick House. He has made a saving of European provisions that will render it unnecessary to send much meat up to that settlement next Spring ... He cultivates such quantities of oats that he hath no occasion for oatmeal from the Factory and has plenty of that article both to serve his men and give the hungry Indians and the expenses of the place are reduced and the trade increased." — John Thomas, **Moose Factory**, September 20, 1791.

In 1811, the garden at Fort St. James in the northern interior of British Columbia was producing potatoes, turnips, and barley. As the Company expanded, posts were established whose main function was as logistical support for others. Fort Dunvegan on the Peace River was founded in 1805 by the **North West Company** (NWC) largely to act as a provisioning post, supplying bison and moose, and maintaining gardens, especially for the brigades. After 1828, its gardens routinely produced 250 or more kegs of potatoes a year (a keg was approximately nine gallons / 41 litres). **Donald Smith**, later 28th Governor of HBC, operated a seven-acre farm at North West River in Labrador in the mid-19th century that grew cucumbers, pumpkins, potatoes, and peas, and featured a greenhouse for more tender produce.

The arrival of the 20th century in no way lessened the Company's encouragement of staff gardens. Edith May Griffiths ran a school for white and Métis children at York Factory from 1912 to 1915. Her memoirs describe the use of techniques such as raised beds and cold frames to achieve success: "On account of being built up summer gardens did well in producing some vegetables ... The frost never left the ground deeper than 18 inches. Lettuce and radishes thrived. Potatoes grew slightly smaller and turnips about the size of hen's eggs. Carrots and beets were small, but good. Peas and beans developed ... The garden owned by the Company was near the school. It was enclosed by a picket fence and a gate. The ground was formed in small elevated plots ... to take full advantage of the sun's rays

during the long hours of daylight of the short summer ... Vegetables that grew above the ground did well. Some things were planted in a hot bed to escape the early frost.” — *Edith May Griffiths*

By the mid-20th century, handbooks on gardening could be found in the libraries of all posts of the Fur Trade Department. The health and well-being of both staff and customers in remote areas were a primary concern and gardening was considered a practical means to promote it. Tools, seeds, fertilizer, and manuals were provided free of charge, and prizes for the best post gardens encouraged healthy competition. In 1942, proud gardeners could enter the fruits of their labour into one of four categories: vegetables, champion vegetables, flowers, or Arctic gardens (restricted to contestants living in the far north).



## Early History of Wheat Growing in Canada

*A.H. Reginald Buller's Essays on Wheat*

The earliest record of wheat cultivation in Western Canada is connected to the arrival of the Selkirk settlers in 1812. This small group of pioneers arrived from Scotland with the help of Lord Selkirk to colonize the 160,000 square miles of territory granted to him by the Hudson's Bay Company. The first group of 22 settlers came to the area where the Red River meets the Assiniboine on 30 August 1812 and planted the winter wheat they had brought with them from Scotland. In the spring of 1813 they also planted spring wheat of the same origin. In the fall of that year the settlers, whose number had grown to 100, reaped a very poor harvest from that first planting. In a letter to Lord Selkirk dated 17 July 1813 and preserved in the National Archives in Ottawa, Miles Macdonell, the governor of the settlement, writes: "The winter wheat crop was completely wasted because it was planted too late. The same thing happened with the spring wheat, pea and English barley crops."

Their luck was no better the next year: the harvest of 1814 also failed. However, the persistent Scotsmen did not give up and their third attempt to grow wheat resulted in a decent harvest.

The first two bad harvests had been caused by inexperience: these settlers had been fishermen in

Scotland, not grain farmers. They did not have a single plough or harrow among them. They worked the soil with hoes. Although their grain crops had failed, they had a good harvest of potatoes and turnips in 1813 and 1814. In the spring of 1815 they planted wheat and barley again but in June the northeastern Métis attacked and destroyed everything the settlers had built. The governor of the colony was also captured. Some families managed to escape to Upper Canada, while 13 households fled up the Jack River to settle in an area north of Lake Winnipeg called Norway House.

A relief expedition arrived from Montreal a few weeks after the colonists had been driven away. It was sent by Lord Selkirk and headed by Colin Robertson. The dispersed colonists were brought back to the original settlement. Those who returned were glad to see how everything they had planted had grown. That was their first grain harvest.

In 1816 the Métis attacked again, causing heavy damage. The next year the harvest was good but a hurricane destroyed everything in the fall. In 1818 there was a good harvest of wheat, potatoes, turnips, and peas. But their hopes were dashed again by the sudden arrival of billions of grasshoppers that covered the sky like a black cloud. They devoured every growing thing -- even the leaves on the trees -- over the last two weeks of July. The settlers had no way to continue farming. This cruel misfortune had been completely unexpected. People stared at the sky and wept.

The grasshopper plague of 1818 was not the only one recorded in the history of Canadian agriculture: it was repeated in 1864 and again in 1867. After the plague of 1818, the settlers moved to Pembina and avoided starvation by hunting buffalo.

In the early spring of 1819 the settlers returned to their old homesteads and planted the fields with their remaining seed grain. However, new grasshoppers appeared from the eggs laid the previous year, destroying everything by the end of June. In some places, the layer of grasshoppers on the ground was four inches thick. All the vegetation was destroyed. Even the water in rivers was poisoned, glutted with billions of grasshoppers. By 1820 no seed grain remained in the settlement.

*This section is based on Chapter I, section 1-5 of A.H. Reginald Buller's Essays on Wheat. (7, pages 1-12)*



## Approach to Research

Barry McPherson

The purpose of this document is

- to tell the story of one voyageur/settler, with particular reference to the personal articles and clothing he was able to purchase for himself and his family
- to demonstrate to the membership that the process of identifying textiles available during the formative years of the Red River Colony is difficult, but not impossible. There are resources available, not only within the context of the Hudson's Bay Archives, but also in the archives of Fort William.

*In the preparation of this document, I have had some assistance from re-enactors south of the border, particularly in dealing with the difficulties faced by J-B Lagimodière on his return from Montreal. If you have any further questions please feel free to let me know. I have gathered documents into my computer and I have kept them as hard copies in binders.*

JEAN-BAPTISTE LAGIMODIÈRE (variously spelled Lagimonière – Lajimonière - Lagimonière - Legemonier) – first employed by the North West Company, but became a freeman. He was in the Red River district as early as 1801, and in 1807 brought his Canadian (French) wife, Marie Anne Gaboury, to Pembina. In 1812 he was retained by Miles Macdonell as a buffalo hunter for the colony. In 1814, Lagimonière, his wife, two boys and four girls were residing at Red River. On the winter of 1815-16 he travelled for almost five months over 1800 miles, mainly on snowshoes, from Red River to Montreal carrying dispatches from Colin Robertson to Lord Selkirk, informing him of the re-establishment of the colony. To avoid the North West Company posts along the route, he passed through the United States territory to Fond du Lac. On April 1, 1816 he was sent back by Selkirk. He was intercepted at Fond du Lac by the Nor'Westers, and he and his party were beaten, the dispatches taken away, and the canoe plundered. He was taken as a prisoner to Fort William, but was released and returned to Red River.

According to J-B's court testimony of July 17<sup>th</sup>, 1816, he and his three-man party were roughed over and robbed at Fond du Lac (Superior, Wisconsin), of two canoes, a barrel of assorted grain, 6 lbs. of gunpowder, a gun, a silver watch, a keg of rum, 3 cotton shirts, 3 pair of deerskin shoes, a small mirror, 2 lbs. of soap, 6 lbs. of sugar, a necklace and a silk handkerchief. The latter items were believed to be luxuries being taken back by Lagimodière and his companions for their wives. In charge of the NorthWesters at Fond du Lac, was the notorious *battalieur* Pierre Bonga/Bonza. He was directly responsible for the rough handling that occurred at Fond du Lac.

As a reward for this mission, he received a grant of land from Lord Selkirk, on the east side of the Red River, thus becoming a pioneer of St. Boniface. Lagimonière continued as a voyageur for the Hudson's Bay Company for many years, and later became a successful farmer. He was the grandfather of Louis Riel. He died at St. Boniface on September 5, 1855, at age 75, and was buried in the St. Boniface Cathedral Cemetery.



Detail – "Travels in Canada", John Lambert, 1806. –  
Note; hair style, straw hat, wine neck cloth,  
short jacket (grey or blue) with button holes  
on the pocket & lapel

Lagimonière's clothing purchases at Red River in 1816 give us a solid background of what he and his wife – Marie-Anne Gaboury - had in their possessions. *Definitions follow*

3 yds. of white duffle

Gartering

Green cloth

1 flannel waistcoat

1 pair of drawers

1 white cloth jacket

1 cotton shirt

---

1 pair blue cloth trousers

1 blanket, 2-1/2 point

1 portage strap

2 yards white flannel

2 yards cloth

2 yards Superfine cloth

1 oz. colored thread

1 cotton shirt

1 skein of fine twine

---

1 yard of striped cotton

13 yards of narrow fancy lace

---

3 yards white duffle

6 yards gartering

¾ yards green cloth

1 flannel waistcoat

1 pair flannel drawers

1 white cloth jacket

2 oz. white thread

2 oz. colored thread

2 pair of worsted stockings

2 yards of white flannel

8 yards Superfine gartering

4 yards of narrow fancy lace

1 pair of horn combs

---

¼ oz. of thread



*This image of 1831 by Lady Aylmer, is a very good indication of how J-B Lagimodiere would have dressed*

## DEFINITIONS

GARTERING – narrow tapes or perhaps even ribbons; appears as flowered, yellow, striped, scarlet and worsted

DUFFLE – a coarse felted woolen, blanket-weight cloth with a thick nap

CLOTH – normally refers to wool, finely woven

FLANNEL – a plain, or well woven fabric with a brushed surface; can be cotton or wool in various weights; usually white

DRAWERS – men's under clothing, cut very similarly to men's trousers or breeches, usually linen, but wool in cold climates. Not commonly worn.

TROUSERS – first mentioned by Alexander MacKenzie in 1793, which is a very early date for trousers as opposed to breeches.

2-1/2 POINT BLANKET – Trade blankets were marked with black lines, or "shoots" indicating their size. According to inventories, the source of point blankets was in Whitney, England.

PORTAGE STRAP – or BURDEN STRAP – was a leather strap that passed from the bottom of a fur bale to the forehead of the voyageur. This created a situation that caused the voyageur to walk in a tilted manner (see illustration).

SUPERFINE CLOTH – woollen coating fabric much fullered and sheared for a soft finish; expensive.

SKEIN OF FINE TWINE – a wrapped unit of yarn

WORSTED STOCKINGS – or YARN

STOCKINGS – often imported from Westmoreland in England. Worsted is a fine smooth yarn, spun from combed, long staple wool.

HORN COMBS – hair combs made from the horns of a variety of animals.



*A voyageur's "bosse" – created from many years of carrying heavy loads using a portage strap. [Museum of the Fur Trade – Exhibition Catalog", Spring/Summer 2009, Vo. 45 No. 1-2, p. 15]*

## Second Last Page



### Our Condolences

Our sympathy to Dawn and Dave Carey  
and family on the passing of Dawn's  
mother in December

### Our Condolences

Our sympathy to Frederick and Cathy  
Carsted on the passing of Frederick's  
mother in January

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### Tweets from Fran



*Boy's Suit c.1860*  
*The MET (Source: metmuseum.org)*

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### Our Industrious Barb!!!!

*There's something canny about Barb...*

Barb created workshops to teach various aspects of  
preparing, canning and storing foods from the  
farm.

- Sauerkraut, Kombucha and Milk Kefir
- Everything Pumpkin
- Heritage corn - from Cob to Tortilla
- Making Cherry and Rhubarb Jam, Jelly and Syrup

Watch for more coming up in the new season

## Offering

### Opportunity for Members



**Do you have sewing that needs to be  
done to complete your historic ensemble?**

*Are you a new member who needs help getting your  
clothing under way?*

*Would you like something new, but do not have the time?*

*Do you have outfits that need finishing?*

**Two MLHS members  
are available  
for your Sewing Needs**

*To make an appointment please contact:*

**Gen Woods** [bothofus@inthewoods.ca](mailto:bothofus@inthewoods.ca)

**Dawn Cross** [cross6677@gmail.com](mailto:cross6677@gmail.com)

---

Make sure you select appropriate patterns, fabric,  
historic buttons\* and all findings *If you are not  
certain, contact MLHS to verify your pattern and fabric  
selections before you begin*

*Any arrangements made are between yourself  
and the sewers*

**MLHS holds no responsibility or liability**

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### Of note:

*\*McPherson's Mercantile Store has several thousand  
historic buttons to choose from and many other exclusive  
findings they wish to divest themselves of at historically  
low prices (twill tape, exotic trims, ribbons, etc.)*

*\*Zorniak Woolens – lots of metres of woollens for  
garments*



## The Last Page



### Seeking

Olivia Arnason

To my fellow members of MLHS, I wish to buy single samples of Fur Trade Era glass beads

As a part of my family's Indigenous/Metis interpretation for MLHS, I am trying to assemble a sample display showing the beads commonly used during the Fur Trade Era.

What I need is a single bead of each type. I have acquired 30+ of probably the most common ones, but I wish to expand this collection.

If you have any such beads, and would be interested in selling a single bead, I would love to opportunity to buy one from you.

Please email me at [Olivia.arnason@gmail.com](mailto:Olivia.arnason@gmail.com)

I will bring my display to the AGM so folks may see what is in the display so far.



Thank you!  
Olivia

## Upcoming Events

### 2018

February 3	St Norbert Heritage Day
February 11	Sir John A Macdonald Kilt Skate
February 17	Heritage Winnipeg Awards
February 19	Heritage Awards
February 24	AGM/Baggage
March TBD	Baggage
April 6	Tartan Day
May 16-19	Rupert's Land Colloquium Grande Prairie, Alberta
May 27-28	Doors Open Dalnvert
June 1	Visit with the People of Red River
June 2/3	Spring Gathering
July 1	Canada Day Ross House*TBD
July 15	Provencher 200
August 10	St Vital Agriculture Days
August 11-15	Folklorama
September	Pine Falls Powerview

*And more yet to announce....*



*Please support our members – Barb and Easton*




*Let's always make history happen...*

*Until next time*

*Marie*



# Manitoba Living History Society



Remember to  
RSVP for the  
AGM and Send  
in your Surveys

*Your Première Living History Group  
for more than  
35 Years in Manitoba*

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