

Pierre Perreault

Submitted by Colleen Hanson-Harvey, 4th Great-Granddaughter

Pierre Perreault was born May 13, 1818 at Lavaltrie, Berthier Co., Quebec, Canada. On November 25, 1839 he married Louisa/Elise Marguerite Tellier-LaFortune in L'Assomption, L'Assomption Co., Quebec, Canada. She was born in L'Assomption on September 9, 1815. In the 1857 census, Pierre was listed as Peter, a mason and his wife listed as Lisette , township 111, range 26 in Nicollet County, north of St. Peter. After the 1858 Treaty of Traverse des Sioux, they moved to property they bought from Francois LaBathe across the river from the Lower Sioux Agency. The 1860 census had them listed as Peter and Eliza Paro in Beaver River, post office of Lower Sioux Agency. Pierre was then farming. Their neighbors were their two oldest daughters Elisabeth, married to Eusebi Picard and Marguerite, married to Clement Cardinal. (Marguerite and Clement's story is posted separately.) Pierre built a cabin for his wife and younger children 1/2 mile down the Birch Coulee Creek, on what had been known as La Croix Creek.

The morning of August 18, 1862 was a bright sunny day after several days of rain. Pierre had just brought in a load of hay. The natives advanced on the homestead wearing war paint. According to daughter Genevieve, they first entered the home and took her mother's rings. They took food, clothing and anything else of value before setting it on fire. Her father was laying at the base of a hay stack with a pitch fork in him. The natives had killed the oxen and set the hay on fire. It is not known what happened to Pierre's body. It is presumed he is still on the homestead, perhaps buried by the soldiers sent in later. A story handed down in one family was that his body was dragged into the burning home.

His wife and and younger children Genevieve, 11, Melina, 10, Joseph, 8, George, 6, and Philomene, 3, made their way along the river to Fort Ridgely, some 16 miles away. Daughter Elisabeth Picard's husband,

Eusebi, was also run through with a pitch fork. her rings taken and their home ransacked and torched. Elisabeth, her children Elisabeth (Elisa), 2, and Eusibi Jr., 4, were captured by Little Crow. Elisabeth had fallen from her horse and her captors, thinking her dead, left her and Eusebi Jr. behind. They left with 2 year-old Elisabeth. A neighbor Carl Witt who had just buried his own wife stopped to bury Eusebi Sr. The Witt family which included Carl's wounded son were on their way to Fort Ridgley.

Elisabeth and son also made it to the safety of the fort where she, her mother and brother-in-law Clement Cardinal have their names on the monument for their assistance in the defense of the fort. Clement's wife Marguerite and son Clement Jr., 4 months old, had been captured and taken 50 miles away near present day Montevideo along with niece Elisabeth Picard. They were held for 6 weeks, nearly staved to death at the encampment now known as Camp Release. According to Genevieve's daughter, Adele, the women used melted lye soap to throw at the natives for defense. Pierre's wife, Lisette, also known to some as Marie Elisabeth, never remarried. She passed away October 14, 1872 in Centerville, MN from tuberculosis. Daughter Elisabeth Picard remarried April 6, 1863 to Joseph Renaud (Reneau) and had 11 more children.

This story was pieced together using information submitted to the Brown County (Minnesota) Historical Society by Nancy Altman-Zuber, descendant of Genevieve Perreault-Luce and Tillie Reneau-Lakin, descendant of Elizabeth Perreault-Picard-Reneau. Additional information from Mary Girard-Richard and Colleen Hanson-Harvey, descendants of Genevieve Perreault-Luce.