Ballendine (McLeod), Sarah (1818-1853)

Sarah Ballendine was married to John Ballendine. She was raised at posts in the Mackenzie River and Columbia districts, and was sent to the Red River Settlement for her education in the 1830s. In 1850 she found herself at the center of a scandal which had serious racial and social repercussions. What appeared to have been an indiscreet flirtation on the part of Sarah Ballendine with a Captain Christopher Vaughan Foss provided fuel for gossip. By mid 1849 rumours were circulating that the relationship between the two was such that her husband would have grounds for divorce. The three-day trial in 1850 brought into the open the racial tensions that had been growing in the colony’s social elite between the whites and the métis community. No truth could be discovered in the accusations of an adulterous relationship between Mrs. Ballendine and Foss.¹

- Alexander Roderick McLeod (1782-1840)

Bannatyne (McDermott), Annie (1830-1908)

Annie Bannatyne was highly educated and devoted much of her time to charitable works. One of her interests was the Winnipeg General Hospital which had been built on land donated by her father and her husband, Alexander G.B. Bannatyne.²

- John McNab (d.ca.1820)

Connolly (Pas-de-nom), Suzanne (ca.1788-1862)

Suzanne Pas-de-nom was a 15 year old Cree native when she was married to William Connolly according to “the custom of the country”. They were married for twenty-eight years when Connolly returned to Lower Canada where he married his cousin Julia Woolrich. In a will dated 1848 Connolly left his considerable property to Julia and her children. Suzanne was returned to Red River with her family, and two years following her death her son launched an action in the Superior Court against Julia claiming one sixth of one-half of his father’s estate. At issue was whether Connolly’s marriage to Suzanne was legal, and whether a community of property existed between them. The significance of the trials was the judgement that marriage with a native woman, entered into only with the consent of the two parties, was valid at least if followed by long co-habitation, and that the children were entitled to share in the disposition of the father’s property. Suzanne Connolly has the distinction of being the only Canadian woman the legality of


whose marriage became a case for the Privy Council.³

- William Connolly (ca. 1786-1848)

**Davis, Mathilda (1820-1873)**

Mathilda Davis was sent to England to be educated and upon her return to Red River she devoted her life to teaching. A young ladies school was started at Red River about 1840 with Mathilda as the teacher. Miss Davis was assisted in her teaching by several women prominent in the colony. After her death her name was long remembered in Red River for the pioneer educational work she did and loved so well.⁴

- John Davis (d. 1824)

**Finlayson (Simpson), Isobel Graham (1811-1890)**

At the time of her marriage to Duncan Finlayson in 1838, Isobel’s health was considered too delicate to allow her to accompany her husband in the spring of 1839 to Rupert’s Land. Determined to join her husband the following year, she journeyed from England to Red River in 1840 and her account is one of the few records of fur-trade travel left by a European woman. However, she did not adapt well to life in the Red River Settlement. She visited Norway House in 1842, but she was not unhappy to leave the west in 1844 when her husband was transferred to Lachine, near Montreal. Here Isobel lived, except for extended trips to Britain, until her husband retired to London in 1859.⁵

- Finlayson (fl. 1796-1797)
- Simpson (n.d.)

**Hargrave (McTavish), Letitia (1813-1854)**

Letitia McTavish spent most of her early life at Kilchrist House, the family home near Campbelltown, Scotland. She received a good education and the social training befitting her


family's position. After her marriage to James Hargrave in 1840, she accompanied him by ship to York Factory. She wrote to family as frequently as possible, describing her situation in lively detail. This unique collection of letters, written by one of the few white women living in the HBC territories in the 1840s, provides an intimate picture of social life of the fur trade in the mid 19th century from a feminine point of view. In 1850 she moved to Sault Ste. Marie with her husband.6

- Lachlan McTavish (fl.1778)

**Kennedy (Cripps), Eleanor E. (1825-1908)**

Eleanor E. Kennedy was married to William Kennedy. She was a talented painter and musician. A notebook of original botanical paintings in English and Manitoba plants survives in the library of the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature. She taught music at Miss Davis' School in St. Andrew's, and was the organist and choir-leader at St. Andrew's Church. She was a leading figure in the Settlement in charitable work, notable among these was an early attempt to establish a hospital in Red River.7

- Alexander Kennedy (1781-1832)

**Lagemonier (Gaboury), Marie Anne (1782-1875)**

At the age of fourteen Marie Anne Gaboury became an assistant housekeeper at the rectory of Maskinonge. It was here that she met and married in 1806 to Jean Baptiste Lagemonier. They left shortly after their wedding for the North West arriving at Pembina. It is said that Marie Anne was the first white woman in the West.8

- Jean Baptiste Lagemonier (1778-1855)

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See also George F.G. Stanley, “Gaboury, Marie-Anne”, Dictionary of Canadian Biography Volume X 1871 To 1880 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 296-97.
Ross, Sally (ca.1798-1884)

Sally Ross was born into the Okanagan people. In 1826 she accompanied her husband, Alexander Ross, to the Red River Settlement. She seldom appeared in public, except in church, but she was a central figure in her large household. In his trilogy of histories of the west, published between 1849 and 1856, Ross stressed the dependance of the fur trader upon his native wife. Illiterate herself, Sally may well have contributed much of the detailed information of a native tribal life which was included in his first two books. She was a link between native tribal life, the metis and the new white communities of traders.9

- Alexander Ross (1783-1856)

Simpson (Simpson), Frances Ramsay (1812-1853)

Frances Ramsay Simpson was brought up with all the accomplishments and graces expected of a Victorian lady. She sailed with her husband, Governor George Simpson, from Liverpool in 1830 for North America. After her arrival in Montreal, she accompanied the canoe brigade for the trip from Lachine to York Factory. Her arrival in Rupert’s Land had serious repercussions on fur-trade society. Most of the HBC officers had married native woman “after the custom of the country”. But with the British marriage of Governor Simpson, who had himself cast aside a native wife and family, racial prejudice increased. She returned to London in 1833, and spent the summer of 1838 at Lachine. She was returned to Lachine in 1845 when Governor Simpson decided to settle his family permanently there.10

- Simpson (n.d.)
- William Sinclair (1766-1818)
- George Taylor (fl.1800-1807)

Work (Legace), Josette (ca.1809-1896)

Josette Work likely grew up in the environs of the fur trade posts along the upper Columbia River. She accompanied her husband, John Work, on most of his trading expeditions, including those into the Snake River country in the early 1830s. In 1852 John Work built a mansion in Victoria for his family. As the wife of one of the most prominent early landowners in the colony,

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9 Laurenda Daniells, “‘Ross, Sally (Sarah)’, Dictionary of Canadian Biography Volume XI 1881 To 1890 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 775-76

Josette learned to play the role of a Victorian matron.\textsuperscript{11}

- Pierre Legace (fl. 1809)