


# Seven Métis Songs of Saskatchewan

WITH AN INTRODUCTION ON THE HISTORICAL  
BACKGROUND OF THE MÉTIS

Collected and prepared by  
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DEDICATED TO:  
JOSEPH GASPARD JEANNOTTE  
OF LEBRET, SASKATCHEWAN

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## PREFACE

These Métis songs were all collected in Lebret, a little town in the Qu'Appelle valley, on the Saskatchewan prairies. They have been sung in this district for more than fifty years, but they probably represent the songs of the Métis from the Red River to the Saskatchewan. They are still sung by Joseph Gaspard Jeannotte at weddings and social events, and in his home to his friends.

Jeannotte's Métis background starts with his grandparents who were Indian and French, from what is now North Dakota. His parents, living in the North-West Territories, moved from the Red River to Saskatchewan about the time the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan came into being. By 1908 they had settled in Lebret and Joseph Gaspard Jeannotte had married a French girl, Nora Blondeau.

While these songs are of interest in themselves as a sample of the folk music of a particular group, they may also serve to remind us of the Métis people, whose story is part of the history of Canada. For this reason a brief account of the historical background of the Métis is included.

For those who may want to read more about the Métis, a list of publications to which reference has been made is included. All previously recorded or published versions of these songs, as listed in the Folklore Archives of the National Museum, Ottawa, and of the University of Laval Quebec, are given. In one instance a question as to the source of a song was referred to the music department of the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris.

The assistance of the following persons is gratefully acknowledged: Dr. Marius Barbeau, Canada's greatly revered folklorist, collector and author. He was the first head of the Anthropological section of the National Museum, and the founder of the Canadian Folk Music Society, of which he is now Honorary President.

Margaret Compline, of Regina, Saskatchewan, who began her research on the tune of *La Grenouillère* and its composer, Pierre Falcon, in 1934. Her treatise was published by the Royal Society of Canada in 1939, in Section II page 49, under the heading "Pierre Falcon's Chanson de la Grenouillère, by Margaret Compline, presented by W. S. Wallace, F.R.S.C.". Margaret Compline is no longer living, but her daughter, also of Regina, gave the author a copy of her treatise and suggested that this song be included in the collection, as her mother had always hoped that it would become better known.

Professor Luc Lacourcière, Director of the Folklore Archives, Laval University, Quebec.

Jacques Labrecque, French Canada's outstanding Folksinger and lecturer on French Canadian Folksongs.

Adolphace Pelletier, of Lebret, Saskatchewan, who sang the *Chanson du Roi Louis*.

Dr. Carmen Roy, Head of the Folklore Section, Department of Ethnology, National Museum of Canada, author, collector, and Past President of the Canadian Folk Music Society.

Alan Turner, Provincial Archivist of Saskatchewan.

The assistance of the following institutions is also gratefully acknowledged: The Saskatchewan Power Corporation, Public Relations Department, for the use of the illustrations by Saskatchewan Artists; The Legislative Library of Saskatchewan; The National Museum of Canada; Laval University, Quebec; The Music Department of the National Library of France.

Special thanks are due to Dr. Richard Johnston, Professor of Music at the University of Toronto, Director of the Summer School and well known author and composer, without whose help and encouragement this book would never have been published. The author first met Dr. Johnston in 1957, when he visited Saskatchewan to collect Folk Songs. It was the first time that anyone had suggested that there were any Folk Songs in Saskatchewan to be collected, and his enthusiasm was tremendous and infectious! Before he left, a Saskatchewan Folklore Society had been founded, with the help of Blowden Davies, who was acting Secretary of the Arts Board that year. When, inspired by him, the author decided to work in this field, he most generously offered the names of the people he had contacted, his tapes and his notes. Since then he has continued to be a source of encouragement and a good friend.

## INTRODUCTION

### THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE MÉTIS SONGS

The name Métis means *Mixed Blood* and is the most usual name given to the descendants of white and Indian intermarriage. They were also known as *bois brûlés* or charcoal faces, but more significantly as *gens libre* or free men, because they formed a new nation where the Caucasian strain, whether French, English or Scottish, showed in a marked degree, yet without dominating what were clearly their Indian characteristics. It was this "new nation" which populated the Red River Settlement, the heart of the ancient fur empire, with its isolated outposts accompanied by Roman Catholic and Protestant Missions, scattered along the lonely waterways.

There were Prairie Métis in the Red River Valley before 1775 and probably as far back as 1740, but it was after the fur trade from Montreal had grown into a regular and permanent industry that the Métis element increased rapidly. Around the trading posts were tepees and many permanent marriages were established, even though some traders, returning home, pensioned off or gave away their Indian wives.

These traders came from a variety of different places, and for a variety of different reasons. There were Americans from New York, Massachusetts and New Jersey and those who had joined the American Fur Company. There were many Scots who came after the Jacobite rising, and some English, including a sprinkling of officers who, in the Seven Years' War, had fought for Britain in America. Most of these formed part of the Hudson's Bay Company. There was also a large group of French, including many voyageurs and trappers who called themselves the North-West Traders.

The Indian population of the Plains and Prairies was also varied and comprised four great bands, Chippewas, Crees, Assiniboines and Sioux. The Chippewas were also known as *Salteurs* or *Saulteaux* because they came from the Sault Ste. Marie District.

It is interesting to note the ease with which the French united with the Indians, and as they tended to choose the most beautiful and intelligent Indian women a fine new race of people developed; living in harmony with both Indians and traders, and forming, in time, the largest population group in the plains between the Saskatchewan and the Red River. Mixed marriages were never seriously discountenanced by the political and religious authorities of that day. They were in fact, encouraged by the Intendant Talon and by King Louis XIV; while they were blessed by the church as a method of turning the Indians, by language and manners, into good Frenchmen.

The English attitude was never so favourable and despite their common Indian origin, the English half-breeds never acquired a real sense of solidarity with the French speaking Métis. Physically the Métis were stalwart, muscular, and active, equally at home with horses, guns, paddles, fishing or the pursuit of the buffalo. Emotionally they were excitable, imaginative and ambitious; passionate, restless, easily amused and generally devout.

In the subsequent battle for ownership of the Red River Territory, the Métis were the strongest political force opposed to political control from the East. This was understandable as being Indian and French, they had much in common with the American fur traders and the North West traders while as their children were

often sent to Quebec or Montreal for education and religious instruction, even though they returned to the land of their birth to live, they continued to feel that they had little in common with the English of Upper Canada.

Therefore, during the early struggles in the development of the North-West Territories, the Métis supported the North-West Trading Company against the monopoly trade of the Hudson's Bay Company, and in supplying the Company with wild berries, prairie turnips, fish, buffalo meat, skins and pemmican, gave them a great advantage over the ill supplied Hudson's Bay Company.

When the Métis were told that Selkirk and his settlement would take away their land, they joined with the Indians at Fort Qu'Appelle, and under Cuthbert Grant, destroyed the colony in the Battle or Massacre of Seven Oaks. It was their success in this struggle that confirmed their pride as a race and convinced them that they were indeed a new and lusty nation, a pride which is expressed in the song "Chanson de la Grenouillère."

This pride, and ability to take independent action is not surprising. The Roman Catholic Church had taught them the value of minority rights and their prairie environment had taught them democratic group action. In the organization of the buffalo hunt they had acquired the capacity for joint action under leadership of their own choice, and what had been developed for the hunt was transferred to the realm of politics.

When at length peace was restored and the Hudson's Bay Company was united with the North-West Trading Company, a fairly orderly society developed. Cuthbert Grant, the military leader of the Métis, was persuaded to become a settler, his money was invested in the Company, and he was expected to persuade his people to settle on the land. This was moderately successful; many of the Métis families cultivated gardens and land, but whereas the white settlers and English speaking half-breeds were quite happy to engage in small scale agriculture, the French and the Métis still preferred to lead a semi nomadic life, and remained a separate self conscious group. It was during this period of settlement that Cuthbert Grant was elected their President and became known as the Warden of the Plains.

The Métis had an enriched cultural life, as they inherited their love of dancing from the Indians and their enjoyment of singing from the lilting songs sung by the French voyageurs. From the French they also acquired their interest in instruments, particularly the Fiddle, which was played with great skill by many of the French settlers; and as in all folk music these songs and dances were handed on from family to family and adapted to suit their particular needs.

While it is interesting to look back on the early Métis administration, with its various councils and excellent "lists of rights", it is disheartening to see how the Métis gradually became disinherited and disillusioned.

The pressure to adopt an agricultural way of life increased as the buffalo population diminished due to the failure of the new settlers to observe the rules of the organized hunt. This pressure is illustrated by a song published in an issue of *Les Métis*, in 1872, two years before the last organized buffalo hunt, which is like a political tract; a dialogue between two Métis, one a harassed hunter and the other an apparently contented farmer! However, the Métis made poor farmers and their standard of life continued to decrease. As they became poorer they clung more fervently to the church, yet when the failure of the buffalo had reduced them to desperate want, the church sided with the settlers in refusing to share their grain with the starving Métis.

Over the years, American traders carried on illicit trade with the Métis, exchanging whiskey for furs, and, although this was later forbidden and a charter was drawn up, much damage had already been done. Their plight was further aggravated since, like the Indians, they were decimated by various imported diseases. Finally, although they had been encouraged to settle on the land, and had assumed that they had acquired ownership of it, they lacked sufficient education and understanding to meet the situation when their ownership was threatened and their land taken from them.

When by the Rupert's Land Act of 1868, the Hudson's Bay rule came to an end, and all titles of land conferred came to an end, the transfer to Canada was held up by the Métis insurrection under the leadership of Louis Riel. This insurrection was not only a protest against the company: it constituted a final struggle for a fair deal for themselves as a race, and Riel, as elected president of their provisional government, did much to assure them of their rights. He was ready to fight for the lands and privileges that he believed, by virtue of their Indian origin, belonged to them, but he was also ready to negotiate, and it was these negotiations which finally led to the passing of the Manitoba Act by the Canadian government.

After 1870, Métis displaced by the encroaching settlement in Manitoba moved into the Saskatchewan area, and a situation soon developed which was a repetition of the Red River situation of fifteen years ago. Riel was again asked to take over the leadership, and in spite of his banishment, illness and mental distress caused by his banishment and defeats, he was persuaded to return, because he was still convinced that he was, and could continue to act as their saviour.

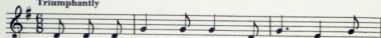
This time the situation was very different, although Riel did not seem to realize it. He again formed a provisional council and calling on the Indians to help him, prepared to fight for their rights if necessary. The clash with the Mounted Police came on March 26th of that year, at Duck Lake, and in less than three months this suicidal crusade was over, the Métis were defeated and Riel taken prisoner. In the hot debate that followed his capture the Métis were forgotten and no satisfactory land settlement was made, although a commission was set up to look into their status and titles.

It is not surprising that in Saskatchewan the Métis problem has remained acute. Here are free men of the plains, often rejected by white and Indian alike, living in material poverty and without hope, still carrying this great potential, the aspirations to a better status of society, when as a race they could live as they once lived, a free proud people. They did not wish to be government wards but they were unable to state their case, and would not have been heeded had they done so, while their pride prevented them from crying out for the help they so badly needed and still need.

Hearsay from the Qu'Appelle valley Métis points to a closer kinship with a more recent immigration from France, for it is said that small groups of men, many of noble birth and good family, came directly from France to assist Riel in his last stand. When the rebellion failed, the men scattered and having no money to return home settled in the Qu'Appelle valley. It is a romantic story, and one of many which has grown up around the figure of Riel and the settlement of Western Canada.

# Chanson de la grenouillère

Triumphantly



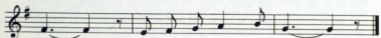
1. Vou - lez vous é - cou - ter chan - ter, Une chan -



son de vér - i - té? Le dix - neuf de juin



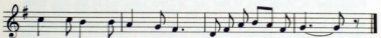
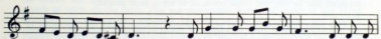
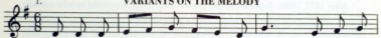
la bande des Bois - brû - lés Sont ar - riv -



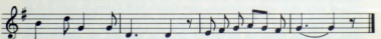
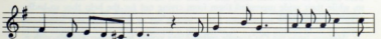
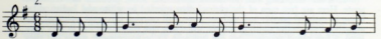
és ——— comme des braves guer - ri - ers, ——— .

1.

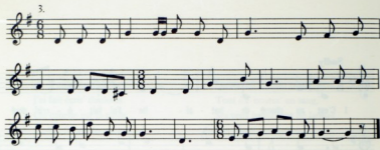
## VARIANTS ON THE MELODY



2.







1. Voulez-vous écouter chanter  
 Une chanson de vérité?  
 Le dix-neuf de juin la bande des  
 Bois-Brûlés  
 Sont arrivés comme des braves  
 guerriers.

2. En arrivant à la Grenouillère  
 Nous avons pris trois prisonniers:  
 Trois prisonniers des Arkanys  
 Qui sont ici pour piller notre pays.

3. Etant sur la point de débarquer  
 Deux de nos gens se sont mis à crier:  
 Deux de nos gens se sont mis à crier:  
 Voilà l'Anglais qui vient nous  
 attaquer!

4. Le Gouverneur qui se croit  
 Empéreur,  
 Il veut agir avec rigueur;  
 Le Gouverneur qui se croit  
 Empéreur  
 A son malheur, agit trop de rigueur.

### THE SONG OF THE FROG PLAIN

Here is a vivid description of the arrival of a band of Bois-Brûlés on June 19, 1816, at La Grenouillère, having taken three prisoners en route. About to set off once more they see the English and turn back to attack them. Taken by surprise the Grenadiers are surrounded, but even so the Métis are prepared to send an envoy to the Governor to discuss terms. The Governor, however, is angry and will not listen or wait; he tells his soldiers to fire. Pierre Falcon, the song writer, comments "The Governor must believe that he is an Emperor! and to his sorrow he acts with severity."

It was indeed to his sorrow as his army perished, all but four or five who saved themselves by running away.

## Chanson de Louis Riel

Sadly

1 C'est au champ de bat - ai - lle . J'ai fait é - crire' dou -  
eurs. On cou - che sur la paill - e Ca  
fait frém - ir les coeurs. Or, je r' - cois t'une -  
lett - re, De ma chè - re - ma - man — . J'av -  
ais ni plum' ni en - cre, Pour pou - voir leur z'e -  
crire — . Or, je pris - mon - can - if — Je le  
trem - pis dans - mon sang — . Pour éc - rir' t'un vieu'  
lett - re, A ma chè - re, ma - man.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>1. C'est au champ de bataille,<br/>J'ai fait écri'r' douleurs.<br/>On couche sur la paille<br/>Ca fait frémir les coeurs.</p> | <p>4. Quand ell' r'cevra cette lettre<br/>Tout c't' ecritur' en sang,<br/>Ses yeux baign'ront de larmes,<br/>Son coeur sera mourant.</p> |
| <p>2. Or, je r'çois t'une lettre<br/>De ma chère maman.<br/>J'avais ni plum' ni encre<br/>Pour pouvoir leur z'écrire.</p>        | <p>5. S'y jett' à g'noux par terre<br/>Appelant ses enfants:<br/>Priez pour votre frère<br/>Qu'il est au régiment.</p>                   |
| <p>3. Or, je pris mon canif,<br/>Je le trempis dans mon sang,<br/>Pour écri'r' t'un' vien' lettre<br/>A ma chère maman.</p>      | <p>6. Mourir, s'il faut mourir,<br/>Chacun meurt à son tour;<br/>J'aim' mieux mourir en brave<br/>Faut tou(s) mourir un jour.</p>        |

### THE SONG OF LOUIS RIEL

Thinking over the recent battle and defeat, Louis Riel, now in prison, feels discouraged and alone. He has received a letter from his beloved mother but as he has not been provided with pen and ink he uses his penknife and replies to the letter by using his blood as ink. He pictures his mother's tears when she receives it and he asks her to pray for him. Everyone, he says, has to die someday, but he prays that when his day comes he will die bravely.

In line three, verse one, Jeannotte actually sings, "Vous êtes doux et fort-e!" but as this makes very little sense the line three which is sung in the majority of the versions of this song is substituted.

## Chanson du Roi Louis

Tenderly

The musical score is written on six staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and folk-like. The lyrics are written below the notes. There are three triplet markings (indicated by a '3' in a circle) under the notes for 'ces' in the second, fourth, and sixth lines of the score.

Le jour que je pris fem - me, je me suis ma - ri -  
é. Le jour que je pris fem - me, je me suis ma - ri -  
é. Le len - de - main des mes no - ces, y av - ait un com - mand' -  
ment. Pour — pren - dre les — arm - es et Ser - vir le roi Lou -  
is. Le len - de - main des mes no - ces, y av - ait un com - mand' -  
ment. Pour pren - dre les — arm - es et Ser - vir le roi — Lou - is.

1. Le jour que je pris femme, je me suis marié;  
Le jour que je pris femme, je me suis marié;  
Le lendemain de mes nocés y avait un command'ment  
Pour prendre les armes et servir le roi Louis.  
Le lendemain de mes nocés y avait un command'ment  
Pour prendre les armes et servir le roi Louis.
2. La campagne était longue, elle a duré sept ans;  
La campagne était longue, elle a duré sept ans;  
Au bout de la septième, je m'en suis revenu  
Pour venir voir ma maîtresse qu' avait changé d'amant.  
Au bout de la septième, je m'en suis revenu  
Pour venir voir ma maîtresse qu' avait changé d'amant.

3. En arrivant à la porte, je demande à loger.  
En arrivant à la porte, je demande à loger.  
La belle m'a répondu: "Nous sommes embarrassés  
Pour ce soir vous avoir à souper chez nous."  
La belle m'a répondu: "Nous sommes embarrassés  
Pour ce soir vous avoir à souper chez nous."
4. Le plus jeun' de ses frèr's m'invite pour souper.  
Le plus jeun' de ses frèr's m'invite pour souper.  
Quand on se met à table, il apporte des cartes,  
Pour jouer un jeu de dés: à qui aura la mariée.  
Quand on se met à table, il apporte des cartes,  
Pour jouer un jeu de dés: à qui aura la mariée.
5. "Tais-toi, vilain gens d'arme: celle-la t'appartient pas!"  
"Tais-toi, vilain gens d'arme: celle-la t'appartient pas!"  
Mais dit le soldat, "Voilà ces anneaux d'or  
Qu' je vous donnais il y a sept ans ce soir?"  
Mais dit le soldat, "Voilà ces anneaux d'or  
Qu' je vous donnais il y a sept ans ce soir?"
6. Le femme est tant surprise, qu' s'est mis' à pleurer.  
Le femme est tant surprise, qu' s'est mis' à pleurer.  
Elle a crié à Dieu et la sainte Vierge:  
"Je me croyais veuve et voici mon mari rentré chez nous!"  
Elle a crié à Dieu et la sainte Vierge:  
"Je me croyais veuve et voici mon mari rentré chez nous!"

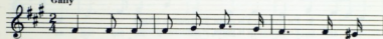
## THE SONG OF KING LOUIS

*(The Return of the Married Soldier)*

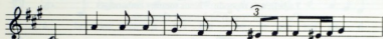
The day after his wedding a young man was ordered to go to war in the service of King Louis. He was away for seven years and when he returned home he heard that his wife had married again. He went to her house, and after some difficulty was admitted. At first his wife and her present husband did not recognize him, but when he showed her the rings that he had given her seven years ago, she realized that this was indeed her husband. Weeping, she told him that she had believed him dead and herself a widow.

## Le premier jour de l'année

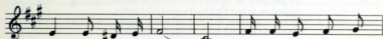
Gaily



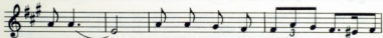
1. C'est au - jour' - hui le prem - ier jour de l'an-



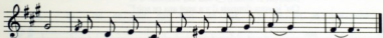
née, Il faut fê - ter tou' - zen pa ——— rents



Aim - ons nous en frères, Quand l'a - mi - tié est



sin - cère ———, Quel con - tente - ment qu'i'y a t-i' pour des pa-



rents, De - vant l'an - cien pro - verbe, tout l'an - née s'en — r'sent.

1. C'est aujourd'hui le premier jour de l'année,  
Il faut fêter tou'-z-en parents,  
Aimons-nous en frères,  
Quand l'amitié est sincère,  
Quel contentement qu'i' y a-t-i' pour des parents,  
Devant l'ancien proverbe, tout l'année s'en r'sent.

2. Commenç'ons l'année du mieux que nous pourrons,  
Faisons disparaît 'e ce qu'il a de pas bon,  
    Tout chacun s'engage,  
    Tout chacun se contente,  
Quel contentement qu'i' y a-t-i' pour des parents,  
Mais quand une famille qui s'aimé si tendrement.
3. J'hais la boisson, vous le savez tous,  
Mais j'hais pas d'en prend'e un p'tit coup,  
    La moitié d' mon verre  
    M'y jett'ra pas à terre,  
Buvons un p'tit coup en ménageant le tout,  
Afin que ce soir i' y aura personne de soûl.
4. O ma bouteille, tu me fais plaisir,  
T' as bien faite la ronde, t' as pas baissé beaucoup,  
    T' as fait ton devoir-e,  
    Ca t'a pas coûté cher-e,  
D'avoir fait la ronde et revenir-z-ici,  
Ah! si ça continue, je crois qu' ça va bien aller.
5. Ah! mes amis, que je suis content,  
Etes tout près de moi, êtes-t-ici présent,  
    Mon coeur vous le révèle,  
    Je désire encore vous conserver-z-avec-que moi,  
Dans le monde encore, encore bien des années,  
Dans le monde encore, encore bien des années.

### NEW YEARS' DAY

This song describes a typical New Years' day celebration, with the gathering of relatives and members of the family. Drinks are handed round and toasts are drunk, resolutions are made to "begin the year well, and do away with the things that are not good." The last toast is drunk to "your good health and many more good years!"

# Le départ du soldat

Steadily

1. Je suis par - tout à mon ais - e Quand —  
ma mie est au - près de moi. Je suis par - tout — à mon  
ais - e quand ma mie est au - près de moi. Oh!  
temps en temps je la re - garde, Oh! belle, en leur dis -  
ant, Belle, em - brass - ez moi, Oh! temps en temps je la re -  
garde, Oh! belle, en leur dis - ant, Belle, em - brass - ez moi.

1. Je suis partout à mon aise  
Quand ma mie est auprès de moi.  
Je suis partout à mon aise  
Quand ma mie est auprès de moi.  
Oh! temps en temps je la regarde,  
Oh! belle, en leur disant:  
Belle, embrassez-moi.  
Oh! temps en temps je la regarde,  
Oh! belle, en leur disant:  
Belle, embrassez-moi.



2. Comment veux-tu que je  
t'embrasse,  
Tout le monde m'en parle de toi.  
Comment veux-tu que je  
t'embrasse,  
Tout le monde m'en parle de toi.  
Ils m'ont dit que tu partais,  
Engagé, oh! c'est pour la guerre,  
Au service du roi.  
Ils m'ont dit que tu partais,  
Engagé, oh! c'est pour la guerre,  
Au service du roi.

3. Cher, cher, en guerre s'en est allé-e  
Cher, cher, en guerre s'en est rendu.  
Cher, cher, en guerre s'en est allé-e  
Cher, cher, en guerre s'en est rendu.  
J'embrassera' les Italiennes,  
Oh! qu'elles sont cent fois  
Plus jolies que toi.  
J'embrassera' les Italiennes,  
Oh! qu'elles sont cent fois  
Plus jolies que toi.

### THE SOLDIER LEAVES FOR THE WAR

In taking leave of his love, the soldier asks for further tokens of her affection. He is refused on the grounds that he is leaving and that already everyone is talking about them. The soldier replies that if this is the case, as he is indeed going to war, and as Italian girls are more beautiful than she is, he will ask them to please him!

## Adieu de la mariée à ses parents

*Wistfully*

Tout du long — d' - un riv - age, tout du long d'un coul-lant  
 ru' - sseau, J'en - ten - dus la voix d'un  
 ois - eau di - sant dans son lan - gage: Que Dieu — bé -  
 nis - se ces jeunes gens, qui se —  
 mett - ent en mén - age. Que Dieu — bé - nis - se ces jeunes  
 gens, que se — mett - ent en mén - age.

1. Tout du long d'un rivage,  
 Tout du long d'un coulant ru'sseau,  
 J'entendus la voix d'un oiseau  
 Disant dans son langage:  
 "Que Dieu bénisse ces jeunes gens  
 Qui se mettent en ménage."  
 "Que Dieu bénisse ces jeunes gens  
 Qui se mettent en ménage."

2. Le premier jour, c'est les noçes,  
 Quel habit nous faut prend'e,  
 Il faut donc prend'e l'habit  
 blanche,  
 L'habit de réjouissance,  
 Aussi le chapeau de souci,  
 Le collier de souffrance.  
 Aussi le chapeau de souci,  
 Le collier de souffrance.

3. Le lendemain des noçes,  
Il faut faire les paquets,  
Regardant-z-à la porte  
Avec un grand regret,  
Ah! oui, je regrett'rai bien fort  
L'endroit de ma naissance,  
J'avais toujours, toujours bien dit  
Quittez le mariage.

5. Pour se mettre en ménage,  
Ce n'est point pour un an,  
Qu'il soye-z-ou bien-z-ou mal-e,  
I' y faut y rester,  
I' y faut donc tou' y passer,  
Tou' chacun notre tour-e,  
Pour moi, m'y voilà mariée,  
Pour le reste de mes jours-e.

4. O ma fille-z-ô ma fille,  
Qui c' qui vous a forcée,  
Qui c' qui vous a fait prend'e,  
C'est votre volonté.  
Je vous ai-t-i' pas toujours dit  
Que dans le mariage,  
Que Dieu bénisse ces jeunes gens  
Qui se mettent en ménage.

6. Adieu père-z-adiou mère,  
Frères et soeurs et parents,  
Je m'en va's en ménage,  
Ce n'est point pour un an,  
C'est pour le restant de ma vie,  
Aller dans la misère,  
C'est pour le restant de mes jours,  
Je m'en vais-t-en ménage.

### THE FAREWELL OF A BRIDE TO HER PARENTS

There is something haunting about this farewell, for it carries with it more than a farewell to parents. It is a farewell to youth, to change, to personal possessions, and dreams of the future. There is a brief note of excitement when the wedding dress is mentioned but no excitement about the future husband, in fact he is not mentioned at all! Perhaps it was a marriage of convenience; perhaps an "arranged" marriage? Perhaps in heedless play on the shore, or beside the running creek that she loved so much, she had been less than circumspect. Whatever the cause, it is a song in which marriage is regarded as the inevitable lot of women — each will have her turn, and as a religious duty — God blesses the young people that are getting married.

## Chanson du petit cordonnier

Rhythmically

The musical score is written on a single treble clef staff in 3/4 time. It consists of four lines of music with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: "J'ai fait - une maî - tres - se trois - jours - i' y a point long - temps. Le di - manche, j'y vais la voir - e le lun - di j'en fais la de - mande, le lun - di sans re - tar - der - Je m'en va's - la de - man - der." The melody is simple and rhythmic, with a mix of quarter and eighth notes. There are some rests and a triplet of eighth notes in the second line.

J'ai fait - une maî - tres - se trois - jours - i' y a  
point long - temps. Le di - manche, j'y vais la voir - e le lun - di j'en  
fais la de - mande, le lun - di sans re - tar - der -  
Je m'en va's - la de - man - der.

1. J'ai fait une maîtresse  
Trois jours i' y a point longtemps,  
Le dimanche, j'y vais la voir-e,  
Le lundi, j'en fais la demande,  
Le lundi, sans retarder,  
Je m'en va's la demander.
2. Son père qu' est aux écoutes,  
Quand il entendit cela:  
Non, non, tu n'auras point ma fille  
Qu'elle me coûte de mille en mille,  
Car c'est un garçon de rien,  
Il la prendra pour son bien.

3. Son frère qu' est aux écoutes,  
Quand il entendit cela:  
Arrêtez, mon très cher père,  
Et apaisez don' votre colère,  
Car c'est un garçon d'honneur,  
Laissez-'i-z-avoir ma soeur.
4. Lisette, ô ma Lisette,  
Prête-moi ton mouchoou,  
Ca s'ra pour essuyer les larmes,  
Qu'elles coulant dessus mon blanc  
visage,  
Ah! des pleurs, oh! mes doux yeux,  
Adieu don', Lisette, adieu.
5. Oh! des mouchoous de poche,  
Mais j'en ai point sur moi,  
Allez-y don'-z-y dans ma chambre,  
Z'ouvrir ma blonde toilette,  
A la tête ah! de mon lit,  
Adieu donc, mon bel ami.
6. Qu' en a fait la chansonnette,  
C'est un petit cordonnier  
A cheval sur sa selle,  
Zen coudant, coudant de ces  
semelles,  
En cognant, mais du talon,  
Qu'i' la compose la chanson.

### THE SONG OF THE LITTLE SHOEMAKER

*(Lisette, Oh My Lisette!)*

Here is the story of the impetuous love of a young man, who in three days falls in love, proposes to his loved one and goes to ask for her hand in marriage. Alas! He is penniless and her father rejects his suit, in spite of intervention on his behalf by Lisette's brother, who declares that he is an honourable young man and worthy of consideration. Both young lovers are stricken with grief, many tears are shed and locks of hair are torn out, but, what can be done? Under the circumstances it can only be "farewell". In the final stanza we are told that this sad story was made up by a little shoemaker while he was on horseback.

# AN INDIAN OUTPOST



*McGregor Hone*

# FUR TRADING IN SASKATCHEWAN

THE BUFFALO HUNT  
AND THE FUR TRADE IN THE WESTERN PROVINCES



*R. Kohlruss*

# THE BUFFALO HUNT

With Henday who later developed the fur trading posts



*McGregor Hone*



# LOUIS RIEL



*Ted Godwin*

## GENERAL NOTES ON THE SONGS

According to Marius Barbeau the melodies of the early folk songs were usually superior to the words: since the melodies, derived from good prototypes, were easily remembered, and even if changed were not necessarily spoiled. The words, however, were less easily remembered: their meaning seemed less important, and when changed, they were often clumsily changed. As a result one can enjoy folk melodies without words, but can seldom enjoy the words without the melodies!

In the song *Adieu de la Mariée à ses Parents*, the melody was sung at local weddings as a cheerful and suitable song, yet the words are neither cheerful nor particularly suitable! The *Chanson Du Roi Louis* provides another example of the same sort of thing. Here there is a very beautiful melody, not unlike the Huron Carol, and easily remembered: but with words which adapt themselves uneasily to the melody and do not seem to suit its mood.

The same folksong is often sung for many different occasions, as traditional singers tend to prefer to sing songs they know, rather than learn or make up new ones which might be more suitable. Jeannotte commented that he sang the *New Year Song* not only at New Year but also at the *Fête de L'Ane* (Feast of the Donkey), a festival in commemoration of the flight into Egypt.

This Festival, which was celebrated in the Qu'Appelle Valley as recently as eight or ten years ago, was one of two festivals which were very popular in the time of the European Mystery and Miracle plays of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The other festival, *Fête de Foux* (Feast of Fools), performed at the feast of the Circumcision, did not survive because, although it began as a light-hearted festival of fun, it developed later into a Saturnalia, like the festivals of pagan Rome, and as such it was condemned by the church and gradually died out.

## NOTES ON THE INDIVIDUAL SONGS

### 1. *Chanson de la Grenouillère*

This song is of special interest historically as it expresses the Métis' pride in their victory at the battle of Seven Oaks. It was sung by one of their balladeers, Pierre Falcon, who wrote this and many other songs. It was said to be composed at Frog Plain, the same evening that the Métis were celebrating their victory. Later it became one of the best remembered songs and was sung again by the Métis in the Red River rebellion. This version was certainly known in the Qu-Appelle valley area as early as 1896 for a clerk living in Fort Qu-Appelle reported having heard the Métis of Lebret and Katepwa singing this song at that date.

Pierre Falcon, the balladeer, was the son of a North-West Company clerk and an Indian woman. He was born in the Swan River district in 1793 and died in 1876. He was educated in Quebec and at the age of fifteen became a clerk for the North-West Company. In 1812 he married Marie, the daughter of Cuthbert Grant.

Like Riel, he had the gift of words, and to this he added the gift of song. He described everything he saw in song, and although his airs and verses were primitive, for they were the product of a primitive life, he was the only person of that period who put the story of what was going on into song, and thus into history.

The Voyageurs who passed through the trading post where he worked, picked up his songs and sang them as they travelled to and from Montreal. He was known as the Bard of the Prairies and some time later Falcon lake along the canoe route in Manitoba was named after him.

Further details on this song can be found in Margaret Compline's *Pierre Falcon's Chanson de la Grenouillère* in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada. Another version can be found in Margaret Arnett Macleod's *Songs of old Manitoba*, as *La Bataille des Sept Chênes*. In *Canada's Story in Song*, by Edith Fowke, Alan Mills and Helmut Blume, it appears as *Falcon's Song*.

### 2. *Chanson de Louis Riel*

This song is also of some interest historically, as the words are purported to have been written by Louis Riel. In view of the fact that Riel wrote verses and poems all his life, and particularly during his period of imprisonment, there is a real possibility that these actual verses, or verses of a similar nature from which these were taken, were written by him.

The story of Riel is both remarkable and romantic. Throughout his life he was strongly influenced by two factors: his pride in his Indian and French ancestry; and his devotion to his mother, a deeply religious and, as far as her son was concerned, ambitious woman.

He was sent to the Sulpician College in Montreal to be educated as a priest, but judged to be more interested in politics and law than the priesthood, he returned to the Red River district where he became leader of the Métis. He worked and fought to protect the Métis' land rights, and was even elected to parliament in 1873 and again in 1874, although eastern hostility made it impossible for him to take his seat. Towards the end of his life there was a certain 'Joan of Arc' quality about Riel. He was convinced that he was God's instrument for the regeneration of his people, the Métis, and during his periods of ill health and mental suffering he saw visions which confirmed him in this belief. The church considered these visions religious deviations and finally persuaded him to repudiate them. However, within himself, Riel never lost faith in his mission.

Following his return from banishment, his defeat at Batoche and his subsequent capture, he was imprisoned in Regina and executed in 1885. Although he was buried in St. Marys' church, Regina, he had asked to be buried with his family, so in December of that year, his body was secretly transferred to the Red River, and hundreds of Métis came to pay him homage. Finally it was the Métis who carried his coffin the last six miles through the snow to its final resting place in St. Boniface, where he had been born in 1844. In his last words he said that he died in peace with God and man, and thanked all those who had helped him in his misfortunes.

His memory lingers on and before Jeannotte sang this song we drank a toast to the memory of Louis Riel!

Two other songs attributed to Louis Riel are available. Verses of Riel are given in the *Song of the Métis Maiden* in *Songs of Old Manitoba*, edited by Margaret Arnett Macleod and *Riels' Song* collected by Dr. Richard Johnston with English words by Alan Mills and given in *Canada's Story in Song* by Edith Fowke, Alan Mills and Helmut Blume. The only references in the National Museum Archives are to the version given here and the version collected by Dr. Richard Johnston.

### 3. *Chanson du Roi Louis*

This song which is listed under the title *Le Retour du Mari Soldat; Seconde Noce*, can be found in the Annual Report of the National Museum for 1948-49 page 66, and under sister Marie-Ursule's name in *Les Archives de Folklore* (Laval University) vol. 5-6, 1951, pages 297-298. Further versions listed in the Laval Archives are one version from each of Prince Edward Island and Manitoba, seventeen from Nova Scotia, four from Ontario, and seventy-five from the province of Quebec. Four versions are listed from the United States (three from Louisiana and one from Maine), fourteen from France and four from Switzerland. In the versions that the author has heard the melodies are quite different although the words are similar. It was drawn to my attention by Alan Mills, the well known Canadian folk singer, when he heard this song, that it is very like an old French song of the seventeenth century, "Ma Belle Si Ton Ame," which was in the repertoire of John Goss in 1935 when Alan toured with the London Singers, (John Goss' male voice quartet). The sentiments of this love song are far more in keeping with the beauty of the tune than the Canadian words to which it is now wedded. Of course the seventeenth century song may well be derived from an earlier folk song, and it would be interesting to know in which form it was first sung in Canada.

#### 4. *Le Premier Jour de L'Année*

This song is most likely an original Canadian folk song from the Province of Quebec, as apart from this Saskatchewan version and one from New Brunswick, the other twenty-six versions have all been collected in Quebec, and there do not seem to be any European versions. One of these versions, by E. Z. Massicotte, is printed in the *Bulletin of Historical Research*, vol. 26, no. 12, Dec. 1920, pages 361-362. The other is under sister Marie-Ursule's name in *Les Archives de Folklore*, vol. 5-6, 1951, page 328.

#### 5. *Le Départ du Soldat*

This song is well known in France, where eighteen versions have been collected. The Folklore Archives of Laval University also have five versions from the United States, all from Louisiana, and thirty-six from Canada: New Brunswick seven, Nova Scotia two, Newfoundland three and Quebec twenty-four. A printed version can be found under the name of sister Marie-Ursule in *Les Archives de Folklore*, vol. 5-6, 1951, page 343. As this song is a typical "war time" song which has travelled from France it is a little surprising that it is not more widely known.

#### 6. *Adieu de la Mariée à ses Parents*

This song is much better known, and a printed version can be found in the *Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 32, no. 123, January-March 1919, pages 55-56, also in *Chansons Folkloriques Françaises au Canada*, Marguerite et Raoul D'Harcourt: Quebec, Presses Universitaires Laval; Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1956, page 252, no. 90; page 253, no 90 bis. In the Folklore Archives of Laval there are two versions from Prince Edward Island, fifteen from New Brunswick, three from Nova Scotia, one from Ontario, one from Newfoundland and fifty-two from Quebec. The United States versions comprise one from Connecticut, six from Louisiana and one from Missouri. There are also two from Belgium and ten from France.

#### 7. *Chanson du Petit Cordonnier*

The final song, called by Jeannotte, *Chanson du Petit Cordonnier*, is listed under the title of *Lisette O ma Lisette*; and *Galant, Retirez-Vous*. One version of this song can be found in *Canadian Songs* by P. E. Prevost, published in Montreal in 1907, page 114. The Folklore Archives of Laval list one version from Prince Edward Island, two from New Brunswick, one from Nova Scotia, two from Ontario, twenty-four from Quebec, two from Belgium and twelve from France.

The music department of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, describes this song as a very popular one. They have fifty-two versions collected by Patrice Coirault and they noted that further references could be obtained by consulting the chapter on music and popular songs in *Le Manuel de Folklorique Contemporain*, vol. 4, by Van Gennep. It was also noted that the French versions referred to here are not in the same style as the Canadian versions although the sentiment of the words is the same.

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## BARBARA CASS-BEGGS

Born in Nottingham, England, daughter of a clergyman, graduated from the Royal College of Music, London. Married an engineer which involved rather frequent moves between Wolverhampton, London and Oxford in England, Toronto, Canada, Swansea (South Wales) U.K., Regina, Saskatchewan, Montreal, Quebec, and now Ottawa, Ontario. Some journeys were less pleasant than others particularly the first trip to Canada with a three year old daughter on the Athenia, and shipwreck in mid Atlantic, in 1939.

The war period in Toronto was divided between looking after the young family, now increased to three by a boy and girl twins, giving song recitals and later organizing music at the Victory Aircraft Plant. Towards the end of the war, she became director of the University Settlement Music School, which provided musical training for underprivileged Toronto children, often new Canadians finding their feet for the first time in Canada.

After the Welsh interlude the Canadian West in Saskatchewan was an opportunity and a challenge. Amongst many musical activities perhaps the most rewarding were music classes for very young children and the founding of the Saskatchewan Junior Concert Society, which brings first rate musicians to thousands of school children.

Woven into all these activities was a love and interest in folk songs, and these were always included in recitals and teaching programs and were very much part of the family life. Collecting folksongs in Saskatchewan opened a new field of interest and she became particularly interested in the Indian and Métis people, their songs and their history.

As an active member of the Canadian Folk Music Society she hopes to continue to collect, write and persuade more people to sing and enjoy their own folk songs. Her interests are probably too many for her own good! or for their satisfactory achievement, however, life is always interesting.

Her children are now grown up; a social psychologist; a musician, and a former architecture student, now married to an architect.