

Truthwaite – River Lot 104,

Jacob Truthwaite, began to work as a carpenter for the HBC at Fort Albany on James Bay while a teenager. His father, Matthew (from Yorkshire) had already been a carpenter for the HBC, but died in 1793 when Jacob was only 7 years old. From 1800-1829, Jacob worked as an oarsman, a trader and an interpreter. Eventually, he became a steersman and travelled the river routes to and from inland HBC trading posts.

Upon retirement, Jacob and his Metis children were granted a River Lot near the last of the "Grand (St Andrews) Rapids". He worked hard and by 1835, he had 9 acres under cultivation. He made a comfortable living by farming the fertile Red River soil. He and his family also took advantage of the excellent fishing and hunting possibilities. The scenic beauty of the rapids of the Red River must have appealed to this courageous man who had seen so much of the Northern wilderness.

From 1844 to 1849, Jacob and his family helped build St Andrews Church. One story is that he arose before dawn to get to the church site to be the first to begin digging the foundation, but when he arrived, he found that Rev Cockran had already been working for an hour.

In the early 1900's, the St Andrews Lock and Dam was built to flood out the St Andrews Rapids and make the river navigable by large ships from the City of Winnipeg to the Lake. Many of Jacob Truthwaite's descendants have worked on the lock and dam since its inception. Today, there are still Truthwaites living on the land that Jacob chose and still thrilling to the sight of white water splashing over the falls of the St Andrews Lock and Dam.

For more information of the Truthwaite family, please go to: redriverancestry.ca, or the Memorable Manitobans section of the Manitoba Historical Society website: MHS.mb.ca.