

Setter – River Lots 9, 30 and 229

Red River Lots:

#9 John Setter,

#30 William Setter,

#229 widow of James Setter.

By 1870, the Setter family owned several lots along the Red River in St Andrews. The Setters descended from Andrew Setter (1777-1870) who came from the Orkney Islands and was married to Margaret Spence, a Metis woman whose father, James Spence, was also from Orkney.

As a steersman on the York boats bringing manufactured goods to the fledgling colony at Red River, Andrew Setter navigated all of the major rivers in the northwest. He also traded furs, interpreted and acted as a scout.

Legend has it that in his travels, Andrew saw a young fair-haired girl among the Sioux. Realizing that she might be the kidnapped child of a former HBC colleague, Setter resolved to steal the girl back. Shrewdly, he stationed fresh horses along his planned escape route and when he was chased, he out distanced his pursuers and succeeded in re-uniting the girl with her family. A few years later, this heroic cavalier married the girl and together they had 10 children, that lived. Infant mortality was very common in pioneer families and may be one reason that early families in St Andrews were so religious.

When he left fur trading, Andrew received land on the east side of the river, a little upstream from where Reverend Cockran had built his log mission house (later St Andrews Church) at the Grand (St Andrews) Rapids. By 1835, he already had 20 acres under cultivation.

For the times, this was an extremely large amount of land for one family to crop and harvest, so Andrew's sons and daughters must have been hard at work also. Since an estimated one acre per person was needed for survival during this period of frontier life, it can be seen that his farm was producing a surplus. He would be considered quite a successful farmer. It would not have taken long for his family to accumulate enough money to purchase more land or livestock.

Andrew Setter seems to have worked hard all his life and lived until he was 93. Margaret, his wife passed away at age 73 in 1868.

The offspring of Andrew and Margaret Setter became the pioneers of St Andrews, Clandeboye and Cloverdale districts. Through intermarriage Setters are related to almost every prominent settler family in the Lower Red River Valley, among them: the Norquays, the McDonalds, the Morwicks, the McKays, the Sutherlands, the Peebles, the Dewars, the Peels, and the Inksters.

It was Andrews's son, George (1815-1899) who married the sister of Captain Wm Kennedy and whose daughter, Elizabeth Setter, became the bride of John Norquay, Manitoba's future Premier.

For more information of the Setters, please go to: redriverancestry.ca, or the Memorable Manitobans section of the Manitoba Historical Society website: MHS.mb.ca or the "Beyond the Gates of Lower Fort Garry (1981)

The Setter Family descendants:

Andrew and Margaret's eldest son, James was born in 1810. He was a farmer, who married Jane Morwick ((1815-1857) daughter of James Morwick, (another prominent settler at River Lot 74) and Sarah Sabiston, in 1836 at the Rapids Church. They had eight children. These children have many descendants, both in this area and across Canada and the United States of America.

Their daughter, Nancy, had a son, George McDonald, who married Eliza Jane McKay. Their children included Elsie Isabel (who married William Reginald Sutherland). Florence, (who married George Pion), and youngest daughter, "Tina", Ada Christina McDonald.

Another son, Arthur, married Florence Hazel Carter. Their children included Graham and Eunice McDonald who live in the Lockport area.

Their fourth son, William, married Frances Peebles. Their daughter, Ada Theodora Christina married Arthur Andrews. Their son Harry and wife Jessie live in Selkirk.

Their fifth child, Jane "Jeanie" married Thomas Grieve. Descendants of their family are Dewars, Peels, and Grieves.

The youngest son, Alexander (Big Alex), (1856-1924) married Isabella Anne Sutherland, a daughter of William Richard and Margaret (Inkster) Sutherland. Alex and Isabella Anne Setter lived at Parkdale until the spring of 1891 when they moved to the new log house in the Meadowdale district. Grannie Setter lived with them for many years until she became ill, then she lived with her daughter Jeanie Grieve.

Their family are listed below.

Margaret, (1888-1967) married Frances William Philpott (1884-1972).

Anne Inkster Setter, (1891-1972) married a train conductor, Frank J. Hawby. Anne was a school teacher. She moved with her sons Norman and Clifford to the United States of America in 1926.

William James (1891-1892).

Archie, (1894-1979) a bachelor who farmed in the Meadowdale district on #8 Highway. He lived his last years in Selkirk.

John Richard married Mary "Mamie" Brown. They had four children. Mamie remarried after John's death.

Lionel was in Australia for a while. When he returned to Canada, he lived in Vancouver, married, and died there.

Joyce married Maurice Baisley. She was a nurse and he was a fireman. They lived in Clandeboye until their house burned and they moved to Powell River, British Columbia. They had twin boys, Kenny and Pat, and a daughter, Jeanine.

Daughter Lois Anne married Delmar Robinson of Clandeboye. They have three children, Gregory, Debbie, and Darlene. They lived in Winnipeg and have since moved to Cochrane, Alberta.

Arlene never married. She lives in Vancouver, BC.

Alex and Isabella also raised Agnes Margaret Sutherland, a daughter of Colin Sutherland.

Ernest Setter (1900-1968) married Roberta Frances Kirkness. They lived on the home farm in Meadowdale. Their house burned while they were away on a visit. They then moved to BC. Ernest was a councillor for a number of years.

Their family are as follows.

William Alexander married Muriel Bligh who died in a house fire after they moved to the coast. He later remarried. Shirley married John Wienicki. They have a son named Michael and live in Vancouver, BC.

Gwendolyn Doreen married Vern Nelson. They lived in Germany for a number of years. Vern died just before they were due to return home. They had three children, Sherri Lynn, Sabine, and Shelley. They now live in BC.

James was born in 1930 married Idella Aitkins who was born in Boissevain. Their children are David (1963-), Mary

Jo-Anne (1967-), and Robert (1968-), who were all born in England.
The family now lives in Winnipeg. James was the Rector of All Saints Church.

The legend of Andrew Setter by Scott Norquay (from Beyond the Gates of Lower Fort Garry (1981))

An interesting story has been told regarding the granddaughter of Isaac Batt and his Indian wife. The daughter of Isaac Batt and his wife Margaret married James Spence, an Orkneyman born in 1754, and they had a daughter named Margaret. As a young girl, Margaret Spence was carried off by the Sioux.

Now, it seems that in his travels, Andrew Setter, (born in Westray, Orkney in 1777), had noted this fair-haired child picking berries with a group of Indians and resolved to rescue her. He is said to have set up a relay of fresh horses along his escape route, then rode into the group at an opportune moment and grabbed her away from her companions. He took her to the Red River Settlement. They eventually married. Andrew was 16 years older than Margaret. In any event, Margaret Spence Setter would be my grandmother Elizabeth Miller's grandmother.

Nestichio was the Cree name of the daughter of Isaac Batt and his Cree wife. She did not receive the Christian name, Margaret, until after 1820, when she arrived in Red River Settlement. Nestichio's birth year was about 1757; her birthplace was likely York Factory, Manitoba. She formed a marital union with Orkneyman James Spence (1754-1795) around 1781, and at least four children were born: James, Andrew, George, and Margaret. Also known as Peggy, Margaret's year of birth was about 1795, according to St. Andrew's cemetery records, and her place of birth was likely at Buckingham House, Alberta.

Andrew Setter joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1800, serving at York Factory Manitoba, Paint River, Manitoba, and Fort Edmonton, Alberta before his appointment to Upper Red River in 1816. He retired in 1823 and remained with his family in Red River Settlement (St. Andrews) until his death in February 1870 at the age of 93. Margaret died two years before him, in March at 1868, at the age of 73. Both were buried in the cemetery of St. Andrews.