

The Boucher Family in the Pacific Northwest coming here 1806

My Boucher File

By Chalk Courchane

(excepting Jean Baptiste Boucher, our ancestor, who will be dealt with in another report))

Chalk Courchane October 21, 2011

Many years ago before computers were a common tool in genealogy I made contact with the then expert on the Boucher surname, Wilfred Bow. He sent me a number of pedigree charts and stories on "Jean Baptiste" Boucher's trying to figure out who my Jean Baptiste's parents were. We were unsuccessful.

Boucher, Jean-Baptiste Marie dit Waccan.

From Munnick's Catholic Church Records: "The name Boucher (Bouche) is so interwoven in the fur trade annals that is difficult at this late date to trace relationships with much certainty. Two main lines, which may or may not have been fraternal, develop in the Vancouver and French Prairie records. These are Jean Baptiste, born 1759 and died 1824, 'an honest man', and Baptiste 'called Wakan', who would seem also to have been born during the later part of the 1700's.

"In an article copied from "The Catholic Church records of the Pacific Northwest" published by the French Prairie Press, St. Paul, Oregon, (Harriet Munnick), we read "Boucher, Baptiste called "Wakan", "Dit Wakan" serves to identify one line of the Boucher descent, for such nicknames were inherited and often came, in time, to supplant the original surname. Jean-Baptiste Boucher (Wakan) was a half-Cree employee of the North-West Fur Company as early as 1806, when he was a canoeman with Fraser on the wild rivers of British Columbia. He was interpreter, informal policeman and, steward of supplies under successive postmasters, even taking charge of posts himself in the absence of an officer. He was "Wakan the Terrible" in his "ruthlessness" in dealing with malefactors. Father Morice in his book "History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia" devoted many words to an appreciation of Boucher's trustworthiness. Wakan's first marriage, which seems to have been brief was to a Carrier girl. His second marriage to Nancy McDougall, daughter of a Company clerk, James McDougall, with whom Wakan had long been associated." Wildred Bow

"A French-Cree Métis who was the most influential and respected man of his race west of the Rocky Mountains. Leaving on 20 May 1806 from a post directly to the east of this range, he accompanied Simon Fraser when the explorer discovered Stuart Lake. After that, Boucher settled permanently in the Far West." French-Canadians of the West CD-ROM Version

Two years later, he was still with the same explorer on his fateful voyage from May to August 1808 along the river that now bears his name.

In January 1811, Boucher was the first foreigner to come from the east who took a wife from among the natives, but the union which he entered into at that time with a Carrier woman must not have lasted long, since shortly after he married Nancy, the Métis daughter of trader James McDougall, with whom Boucher had been associated. “Thenceforth he became indispensable to the traders who succeeded one another in charge of New Caledonia, not only on account of his familiarity with the language of the aborigines, but especially owing to the wonderful ascendancy he had acquired over the latter through his indomitable fearlessness and boldness, which at times verged on rashness.” Morice, p250.

“In Harmon’s Journal” the author writes: “On Monday, February 18th, 1811, Baptiste Bouche, my interpreter, has taken the daughter of one of the Carrier Chiefs as a wife. She is the first woman of that tribe ever kept by any of the white people.” We note that he says, “white, does not mean pure French-Canadian? Agnes Laut speaking of Fort St. James in 1814 writes, “Nancy, wife of Bouche the interpreter and also James Douglas, the only white man there.” Wilfred Bow.

He served as an interpreter for the North West Company in New Caledonia during the winter of 1813-14.

“As early as 1827 we see him acting the part of the confidant and the trusted steward even over full-blooded whites. Almost every other page of the fort journal mentions his name, which in no instance that we can remember is coupled with words of blame or disappointment. Under date April 3rd, 1827, we read:

“Waccan and Boisclair arrived last night from convoying the party from Connolly’s Lake. They reached Tatla on the evening of the third day, which was excellent march, considering the weight of their loads. Waccan on his return collected ten cats [lynxes], forty-two martens, and one hundred and thirty hares from the Indians to be found along the Tache River.”

And further, on the 5th of November of the same year:

“This morning Waccan, accompanied by five men, left this place in a large canoe for the Babine Portage; they have, as load, leather intended for the Babine country. The object of sending Waccan is to prevent any waste of salmon whilst the people are carrying it across the portage, and at the same time to build a store at the west end of the same.”

Later on, in old Ogden’s time, we see him play repeatedly the role of the policeman. “Waccan having threatened to clear out of the camp the young men who are too lazy to start themselves,” we read in the gentlemen’s journal, “they took the hint and three started off this morning for Tache.” (January 5, 1838) And again, “Waccan went to the Indian village and stopped the

gambling.” (Feb. 21, 1838) A day later, “The Fond du Lac Indians took their departure, the alert of yesterday has had a good effect.”

“Boucher, or more exactly "Waccan," since he was more commonly called by his Cree name, was brave to the point of recklessness. (Wilfred Bow writes, “nicknamed “Waccan” which in French means mouse.”) As such, he quickly acquired an unparalleled influence in the savage tribes. In 1828, his half-brother was killed by Babine Indians. Without hesitation, Waccan left alone on a one hundred thirty-mile trip to seek revenge. He went straight at the murderer in front French-Canadians of the West of several of his friends, shot him point blank and wounded one of the witnesses who appeared to be coming to his aid. Everyone else who was present stayed back, too stupefied by such daring to even think of touching him.” French-Canadians of the West CD-ROM Version

“Then we read in Simpson’s 1828, “Journey to the Columbia” vol. 10, p.27, edited by Mouce ,

“Jean-Baptiste Boucher dit Waccan – he was a poor French Cree half-breed and a half-brother of Duncan Livingstone (one source says Robert, interpreter for the Hudson’s Bay Company) who was murdered by two Babine Indians for his money. Boucher, after two years killed one of the Indians.” Again in James Douglas’ letter to William Connolly, dated August 3rd. 1828, he writes: - “Waccan is just arrived from the Babines where all is well. In his way hither he killed one of poor Duncan’s murderers.” Wilfred Bow

“Going further, Factor William Connolly’s letter to George Simpson, dated February 27th, 1829, from Stuart’s Lake says: “after what you mentioned in your letter of the 19th November regarding Waccan, I supposed he understood himself to be bound to serve two more years after this so I was surprised a few days ago by his giving me notice of his intentions to quit the next Spring. I then told him it was your wish that his wages be advanced to Thirty-Five English Pounds a year, but as he persisted in his wish, I therefore accepted his resignation and told him to go whenever he pleased. It would be hard indeed if the prosperity of the District depended upon such a fellow as this, the man is useful but any other who could speak the language would be equally so.” Wilfred Bow

“It was not surprising that when the foreman in charge of a fort established among these troublesome Indians was killed in 1843, Waccan was the leader of the group of Canadians sent from Stuart Lake to avenge his death. His name alone struck fear in the hearts of the nearby tribes. If Indians stopped off near Fort Saint James, where he resided, Waccan was entrusted with the task of making them give up the games of chance that wasted their time and getting them to go out and trap furs. Whenever an employee deserted his post, Waccan was sent to pursue him, and rarely returned without his man. If a convoy of rations needed special care, it was entrusted to Waccan. At the fort, he often replaced the commander during his many absences, even though technically he was only the head interpreter.” French-Canadians of the West CD-ROM Version

“When Reverends François-Norbert Blanchet and Modeste Demers appealed to the generosity of the Catholics of the northwest in 1841 to support their mission, Jean-Baptiste Boucher

contributed to their work according to his means, and the next year he benefited greatly from the visit of Reverend Demers, who baptized and taught his seventeen children.

Father A. G. Morice in his book "History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia (pp. 248-253) writes,

"Waccan, a typical Hudson's Bay man, was in his turn on strike for an augmentation of his wages. And here we may at once remark that he, at least, richly deserved such recognition of his many services.

We must confess to a feeling akin to remorse for having tarried so long before doing justice to the unique character which, however, has sometimes already forced itself to our notice under its real name of Jean-Baptiste Boucher. Waccan, the terrible Waccan, was the Company's gendarme and chief executioner in New Caledonia; he was the official avenger of the killed, the policeman who was dispatched to the villages in order to stir up the natives and send them hunting, or to put a stop to the endless gambling parties, which prevented them from exerting themselves on behalf of the white traders. He was the general purveyor of Fort St. James; when famine stared its inmates in the face, he was deputed to various Indian camps, whence he never returned empty handed. He was the faithful steward; assigned to the guard of the salmon or fur convoys, he always saw to it that no harm came to the one and good care was taken of the other. Nay, more, he was the perpetual right arm of the successive managers, their ex officio lieutenant, who was repeatedly entrusted with the charges of the main fort during the absence of its official head. Chief Factors came and Chief Factors went, but Waccan stayed under all governments. Finally, he was by regular appointment the interpreter of the central post."

"Wakan" Boucher can be found in the parish records for the Saint Paul mission in the Willamette in 1846.

"And even now, when he was nearing his end, his services were called into requisition by Paul Fraser to effect the arrest of a man, Jos. Jacques, who had deserted his post in Mr. Manson's absence to join the relatives of his Indian wife in the vicinity of Fraser Lake, where he was said to be encamped. On the 18th of May, 1847, Paul Fraser wrote from Stuart Lake to Peter Ogden at Fraser Lake:

"I was pleased to learn that the abode of Jos. Jacques, the deserter, was so near Fraser Lake, as you offered your services and requested those of Waccan with a man from this place to secure him, your wishes shall be complied with. It is indeed high time that some measures were adopted to put a stop to the scandalous practice of desertion now so prevalent in this district, and was Jacques taken from among the Indians and severely punished, it would, in my opinion, deter others from a similar conduct.

Waccan, consulted on the subject, declared that the present was not the proper time to apprehend the villain, and that it would be preferable to wait until the Indians were gathered at Stella, at the

opposite end of the lake, a suggestion that was immediately acted on. Then, on June 3rd, he left for Fraser Lake with a letter from the temporary manager of the district, in which Ogden was cautioned to be “much on his guard in case of treachery on the part of the natives, who, no doubt, will attempt to assist him to escape.” But then, he added, “Boucher) ‘Waccan’) is well acquainted with the Indians and their country, you could not have a more competent person to assist you.”

Eight days later, Paul Fraser was agreeably surprised by the arrival of Waccan and Jacques, “who having been cleverly outwitted, now professed the greatest repentance for his past conduct.”” Morice, pp 251-252.

“The last mention of the faithful old man we can find in the documents at our command is dated 27th of February, 1849, a circumstance which impugns the accuracy of a pencil note on the copy of John McLean’s book now in the library of Parliament, Victoria, to the effect that Waccan died in the winter of 1847-48. (footnote 2: Said note is in the handwriting of an old Hudson’s Bay Company officer, and it serves to prove that even such authorities are not always reliable.) In a letter to A.C. Anderson, Manson, after having recited the killing of the instigator of a murder, the victim of which will form the subject of our next chapter, goes on to state that in the unsettled condition of the lower part of the country, in consequence of that high-handed measure, as well as to help towards the apprehension of the real culprit, he sends Waccan down to Alexandria.

“Waccan and six men leave here on the 1st of March prox. For Alexandria,” he writes. “My principal reason for sending the old man is that he is known and respected by all the natives of the district, and therefore I am of opinion that his appearance there in the present state of affairs will have a very good effect.” (Manson to Anderson, Feb. 27, 1849)

Boucher died of measles in the spring of 1850 “in an epidemic that devastated the whole district and made a host of victims.” The last surviving member of Simon Fraser's expedition. He had been at Stuart Lake no less than forty-four years.”

French-Canadians of the West CD-ROM Version

Jean Baptiste Marie dit Waccan Boucher was married twice, first to the daughter of a Carrier (Dene) chief in Jan. 1811.

Second wife: Nancy McDougall, the Metis daughter of James McDougall, in 1817.

Of the 17 children:

(1)Elizabeth Boucher who married Peter Kirton, the son of Joseph Kirton and an unknown woman. (The record at rootsweb, only shows a daughter named Jessie Ann Kirton (born 22 Sept. 1867), w/o William Henry Isbister (b. 6 Dec. 1864, and he died 9 Apr 1922)).

(2)Jane Boucher

(3)Sophie Boucher

(4) Jean Baptiste Boucher(jr)

(5) Francois Boucher

(6) James Boucher. James was born c.1816 at Lake Stuart, British Columbia. He was married 2 or 3 times.

Spouse 1: A Metis woman , Rosalie Plouffe, d/o French trader Antoine Plouffe and Angelic Slawa. They were wed 24 Jul 1848 by Reverend Demers at St. Paul Mission in the Willamette. They had 7 or 8 children. She died in 1901.

Spouse 2: an Indian woman from Fond du Lac. (He either married again at the age of 83 yrs, legally to an unknown woman, or married his 2nd spouse legally. The biography is unclear in re. to this. The church records on the 17 children are in the church Records at St. Paul Mission in the Willamette.) Don't know what to think of this from <http://mdenney.proboards.com/index.cgi?action>

Sources: French-Canadians of the West CD-ROM Version; <http://mdenney.proboards.com/index.cgi?action=viewprofile&user=hermin12> 89-93; Wilfred Bow correspondence 1980s "Jean-Baptiste Boucher Dit Wakan or Waccan, One of the Pioneers of the Far West; Father A. G. Morice in his book "History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia (pp. 248-253); and The Catholic Church records of the Pacific Northwest" published by the French Prairie Press, St. Paul, Oregon, (Harriet Munnick).

Boucher, François.

An interpreter at Lake Athabasca (Fond du Lac) in 1804.

Boucher, Reverend François.

He was born 12 March 1804 in Saint-François de Beauce. After studying in Nicolet, he was tonsured and left for the Red River at the age of 25, replacing

Reverend Thomas Destroismaisons. Boucher was ordained at the Red River by M gr Provencher on 16 August 1829. He rendered great services to the population

of this region, especially by his devotion in teaching the catechism and the attractive manner in which he performed this task.

In 1833, he returned to the East and became CURÉ of l'Ange-Gardien, without, however, completely abandoning his ministry to the natives. Each summer, he went to serve Les Postes du Roi 97 and the natives in the Mingan and

Chicoutimi territories. In September 1844, he was transferred to the parish of

Saint-Ambroise, and despite the great size of this parish, he still wanted to care

for the Montagnais of Lac Saint-Jean, the Hurons of Jeune-Lorette, and the Micmacs of the province of Québec. He was one of the pioneers in the colonization of the Lac Saint-Jean area, a friend of the aboriginal races

and a
father to the children whose spiritual and temporal needs he attended to. He
died
at Saint-Ambroise on 4 December 1880. After his death, M gr Antoine Racine
said
of Boucher that he "had nothing to give in his will, since he had given it
all during
his lifetime."

Boucher, François-Firmin.

The Member of Parliament who was at the Battle of Seven Oaks. He was
a pureblood French-Canadian who was employed as a clerk by the North West
Company.

On 19 June 1816, Boucher was part of a group of Métis that was
transporting PEMMICAN to the Montréal canoe brigade under the command of
Michel Bourassa and Antoine Houle [1]. When the group arrived at the fork
of

the Red and Assiniboine Rivers near Fort Douglas, they noticed Governor
Semple

of the Hudson's Bay Company and his entourage moving towards them, though
they were trying to pass unnoticed. Boucher's group made an about-face,
formed

their ranks into a crescent so as to keep the English between both points
and went

to meet them. Boucher, who could speak English, then detached himself from
the

Métis and set off towards the governor, indicating that he wanted to speak.

"What

do you want?" he asked Semple. "What do you want, yourself?" Semple
answered. "We want our fort," [Gibraltar] said Boucher. "Well then! Go to
your

fort," replied the governor. "You damned rascal, you destroyed it!" cursed
the

French-Canadian.

At that, Semple berated the French-Canadian for speaking to him like that,
seized the bridle of Boucher's horse and reached for his rifle to disarm
him,

calling for his men to take Boucher prisoner. Boucher then jumped to the
ground

to escape and a shot rang out almost immediately, killing one of the

governor's
lieutenants. In the official North West Company report, it is said that a
bullet
grazed Boucher's ear.
As a result of the part that he played in this "battle" and Semple's death,
Boucher was put on trial in York (Toronto) at the end of October 1818. He
and
fellow Nor'wester Paul Brown were charged with the murder of Governor
Semple. The two were defended by Levis Peters Sherwood, who called none
other than William MCGILLIVRAY, one of the partners of the North West
Company, to serve as a character witness for both men. Boucher and Brown
were
acquitted of the charges. At that time, Boucher was young and his father was
a
respected landowner in Montréal.

Boucher, James.

Son of the following and Nancy McDougall. He was born about 1818 at
Stuart Lake, British Columbia, and inherited his father's influence with the
Indians, to some extent. Like his father, he was an interpreter for the
Hudson's
Bay Company at Fort Saint James on Stuart Lake. While still young, he went
to
Oregon with the northern brigade and was living at the Saint Paul mission on
24
July 1848, when he married a Métis woman at the by the name of Rosalie
Plouffe.
His wife, daughter of fur trader Antoine Plouffe and his COUNTRY WIFE
Angélique
Slawa (a Chaudière woman), was baptized at the age of four on 7 November
1838
at Fort Vancouver by Reverend Modeste Demers.
However, in an incident that was hardly honorable for him, Boucher killed
his father-in-law 98 in self-defense and hastily returned to the North. He
was
employed in the country of the Carriers, where he took up with an Indian
woman
from Fond du Lac Fraser who gave him seven or eight children.
These circumstances poisoned his life as a Christian until 1901, when the
death of his legitimate wife allowed him to enter into a new marriage, which

he immediately did, despite being eighty-three years old. After his father's death, he was the liaison between the northern traders and the Indians, being of special assistance to chief trader Manson on many occasions. James Boucher was still living in June 1907. He was also known as Jim or "Tshem."

Boucher, Montbrun.

A French-Canadian who was a ferryman on the Assiniboine River. He married a Franco-Montagnaise Métis after arriving at the Red River. Boucher was rarely in a foul mood and to commemorate this fact, a piece of land near the fork of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers was named "la Pointe-à-la-Malice," after a nickname that he earned due to his spiritual repartees. Literally "Malice Point," the name is a pun on "[Il n'est] point à la malice," meaning "He is never angry."

Boucher, Pierre.

In June 1819, this voyageur was with John D. Campbell and Benjamin Frobisher, two bourgeois from the North West Company, when they were arrested at Grand Rapids (Manitoba) and made prisoners of the expedition led by William Williams (see Charles Racette), from the Red River. Louis Mageau, a companion of Boucher, was also with them. All four men were momentarily incarcerated in Racette's cabin. Frobisher, who had attempted to resist arrest by former DE MEURON soldiers, was treated with such brutality that he fell to the floor unconscious after being hit in the head with a rifle butt. Soon after, Boucher and his companions were deported to an island under the soldiers' guard, where they were forced to suffer all sorts of indignities until the 22nd of the same month, when they were forcibly set off in separate canoes for the Jack River. The following first of July, they arrived at the York Factory on Hudson Bay.

Being held in strict captivity without the ability to communicate amongst each other, the men, malnourished and sick, wondered what would become of them when they were brought back to Canada to stand trial. Campbell and the two French-Canadians were brought back first, and Joseph Paul and his son were taken later. Their captors specifically deprived the North West Company of these last two, in an effort to assure that company's loss. After arriving at Montréal on 30 November of the same year, they were all let go, due to lack of proof of guilt.

As for Frobisher, he was left to languish in prison with his two companions, Amable Turcotte and Joseph Lépine, until he was able to escape with them. He then met a terrible death not far from his own Company after a long and difficult voyage in the middle of winter (see Amable Turcotte).

Boucher, Xavier.

A foreman and guide under John McDonald from Garth. Towards the end of 1805, he could be found travelling up the Saskatchewan River, in an expedition to reach the post where his boss had been sent. When McDonald left the expedition temporarily to conduct some business with a band of Indians, he left Boucher in charge of the brigade of small boats and canoes with orders to not continue his route until a specific day.

The banks of the river were quite steep, preventing anyone on the river's edge from seeing what was happening on the prairie beyond. One day, someone who climbed up the riverbank announced that he had seen what appeared to be a party of Indians on horseback. Boucher was advised to leave immediately to avoid danger, but he refused to comply, seeing as his orders indicated the next day as the date of the brigade's departure. During the night, a volley of bullets was discharged at his tent, killing him and two companions. The enlisted men who remained on the boats were able to defend themselves by returning fire to the best of their ability. As for those who were sleeping under the overturned canoes, they

lost two of their number while trying to set out on the water.

99 There are two Jean-Baptiste Bouchers on the list of contributors, one who gave two pounds and

one who gave one pound. It is assumed that the second is his son.

98 Rosalie's father Antoine Plouf or Plouffe (born 1804 in Sorel, Québec) was a boatman at Fort

Colville. He died before 1848 and Joseph Plouffe dit Carillon, probably his brother, became

guardian of Rosalie, though he himself had a daughter named Rosalie. Joseph, a blacksmith at

Fort Vancouver, was killed by a musket ball in Oregon City in 1849, making it Joseph, not

Antoine who was killed by Boucher.

Ron" <ronm1@gte.net> Subject: [METISGEN-L] Boucher Date: Sun, 7 Oct 2001 10:02:29 -0700 METISGEN-L Archives French-Canadians of the West ☐ CD-ROM Version 89-93

Ms. Smith-Josephy, who has a history degree from Simon Fraser University, worked as a reporter until recently for the Cariboo Advisor newspaper which has since closed. A few years ago, she curated an exhibit for the Quesnel and District Museum's River of Memory project. She traced the family tree of Jean-Baptiste Boucher, a Métis interpreter and guide who arrived in what was known as New Caledonia in 1806. Known as Waccan, perhaps a derivative of "watchman," he had a reputation as a fair policeman and a fierce trader. He died of measles in 1849 and was buried in an unmarked grave. His name, including such spellings as Bouche, Bouchie and Buschie, can be found gracing place names through the Quesnel area. As well, hundreds of his descendants still live in the Cariboo. "The enigma of Lillian Alling ." Tom Hawthorn Victoria From Wednesday's Globe and Mail Last updated Monday, Oct. 18, 2010 10:54AM EDT