

# Visit by Sir James Grant of Grant, Lord Strathspey, 33<sup>rd</sup> Chief of the Clan Grant July 12<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012

## 1 INVITATION

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Knowing that Sir James Grant wished to develop a closer relationship with the descendants of the Grants living in Canada, the St. James Assiniboia Pioneer Association Inc. of Winnipeg invited him and his partner Judy Lewis to visit Western Canada. They gladly accepted and arrived in Winnipeg on July 12, 2012. The Pioneer Association which operates Grants Old Mill Museum was in charge of arrangements.

## 2 CUTHBERT GRANT DAY

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This year Cuthbert Grant Day was very special because of the presence of Sir James Grant and Judy.



The day started with the arrival of the honoured guests via a Red River Cart. They were piped in by the Scottish Pipers which added to the pomp. The Red River cart was courtesy of Armand Jerome of Jerome Carts Works. This was certainly a hit with the visitors as well as Sir James and Judy. This was an experience they will never forget.

The Living History Society was present with their display. They had about 20 people in period clothing and they had on display historical artifacts.

NCI radio set up and broadcasted from the park for most of the day. Big Bear was present and did interviews with the many guests.

CJNU radio also was on site and carried out interviews.

We had group of five canoes arrive loaded with furs for which our Cuthbert Grant traded beads. This was a demonstration of a fur trade for Sir James. This activity was courtesy of the Charleswood Historical Society.



We had three BBQs going manned by members of the Charleswood Historical Society. Over the course of the day we sold 500 hotdogs and about 100 smokies.

City Councillors Grant Nordman and Scott Fielding attended. Also Sharon Blady MLA and Jim Rondeau MLA were in attendance and welcomed our special guest.



Steven Fletcher, MP came to bring greetings from the Federal Government.

The attendance was estimated to be around 500.

We had descendants from many parts of the country including Saskatchewan, Alberta, BC, Montana and the Yukon in attendance.

This was a day of Metis music and Metis musicians and included the likes of Sierra Noble, Ray St. Germain, and J.J. Lavallee. Sara Hayek, 4<sup>th</sup> great granddaughter of Cuthbert Grant and Marie Desmarais had the pleasure of entertaining him.

### **3 THE SUNDAY**

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The Highland Scottish Chief created a new branch of a 1,000-year-old clan the next day.

It was a Highland ceremony with elements of Métis tradition but it dates back to ancient Celtic times.

Sir James Grant, in his role as the 33rd chief of the Clan, conducted the rites, at the invitation of the St. James-Assiniboia Pioneer Association.

The ceremony recognized 18th-century Métis leader Cuthbert Grant as a Clan member, which means his descendants are members of this official Sept (branch) of the Grant Clan: Siol Cudbright.

The Grant Clan is better known for its territorial proximity to Loch Ness and its fabled sea monster than for its links to Manitoba's Métis, which makes the event singular.

Sandra Horyski was appointed the official steward of the newly formed Grant Clan Sept, a historic first in Canada and, at long last, recognition for Cuthbert Grant Metis descendants. The official term as steward of Siol Cudbright will be for 5 years. Michael Morin, a descendant from Saskatchewan, is the official assistant. The official warrant papers were given at Dunhil, Strathspey, Scotland, June 30, 2012 and carried over by Sir James Grant. These papers will be on display in the museum.

We toured St. Francois-Xavier, formerly known as Grantown, a town just west of Winnipeg established by Cuthbert Grant in 1824. We also took the Chief down Grant Ave. in Winnipeg, named in honour of Cuthbert Grant.

### **4 MACROBBIE GRANTS**

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The descendants of William Grant of Trois-Rivieres held their Grant reunion in Winnipeg at the same time as the Chief's visit. This was organized by Anita Steele of the Yukon. She organized a tea for the Chief at the Fort Garry Hotel. At the tea, the Chief officially named the cadet branch the MacRobbie Grants of Trois-Rivieres and Anita was named their steward. These Grants came from BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan Yukon, and Montana. It was great to have them included in the festivities.

### **5 THE BANQUET**

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The following Monday a banquet was held in honour of Sir James at the local Canad Inns hotel. It was attended by about 150 guest. There was an exchange of gifts. These gifts

included a Metis flag, a Metis sash, T-shirts and tote bags, presented to him by Grant's Mill President, Nancy Fluto. He was also presented with a replica of a Red River Cart by Sandra Horyski. He gifted to the descendants of Cuthbert Grant a beautiful pewter quach, inside was engraved "for the descendants of Cuthbert Grant from Lord Strathspey". He also presented us with a bottle of Scotland's finest whiskey. The highlight was the presentation of the keys to the City of Winnipeg to Sir James by city Councillor Scott Fielding. It was a great event where many of the descendants got to mingle and get to know each other.

## **6 THE TRIP TO SASKATCHEWAN**

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It was decided to take Sir James to the Qu'apelle Valley in Saskatchewan which has a strong connection to the Grants. Our destination was Labret.

One can be certain that both Cuthbert Sr., and especially, Cuthbert Jr. travelled back and forth through the valley on many occasions, whether on trading missions to the various First Nations tribes in the area or to visit friends and relatives who called the beautiful valley home. In late 1860s when trouble was brewing in the Red River, many of the residents of St. Francois Xavier moved west. It was because they did not want to be involved in any trouble, they were looking for a peaceful life, they wanted to keep up their way of life and the west seemed to offer this. A large group settled in the Lebret/Fort Qu'Appelle/ Katepwa area. Some travelled to Turtle Mountain, ND first, but eventually made their way north again via, Willow Bunch, Wood Mountain and the Cypress Hills.

Lebret, which has been the Catholic Mission since the 1860's, always has been a special gathering place for Métis people. Many people were baptized and married in Lebret, many lived here on and off and many found their final resting place here. At least 50 of the graves in Lebret are members of the Grant Family.

On the way to Labret we stopped at the site of Fort Esperance. Cuthbert Grant Sr. as well as Cuthbert Grant Jr. worked out of Fort Esperance, founded by Robert Grant, brother to Cuthbert Grant senior. This NWC Fort was located at the east end of the Qu'Appelle Valley very near the current Manitoba border.

There was a good crowd of descendants who live in the area who came out to meet Sir James and Judy. Mitchild Morin arranged for a two nights stay at a wonderful Bed and Breakfast. Lunches and dinners were held at local eateries. Time was allotted to mingle and get to know each other. Several descendants met for the first time.

July 20<sup>th</sup>, too soon it was time for Sir James and Judy to return home. It was great to share the Metis culture and bridge the gap between the old and new world. We parted with the promise to keep in touch.

Ken Fluto  
St. James-Assiniboia Pioneer Association Inc.  
Grants Old Mill Museum

