

Museum to celebrate Métis Settler John Francis Grant

➤ Grant's Journey across Canada in 1800s is part of a special historical display

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For The Valley Leader

John Francis Grant was a Métis rancher and entrepreneur, who was born on January 7, 1831 at Fort Edmonton.

Shortly after his birth, Grant's mother (Marie Ann Breland) died. Consequently, he and his siblings were sent to Quebec to be raised by their grandmother and aunt.

Left at age 14

When he was fourteen, he and his brother (Richard) left Quebec and journeyed to Fort Hall, Idaho, which is where their father (Richard Grant) was residing.

After learning how to hunt and trap, Grant travelled to Fort Vancouver so he could learn the fur trade business. Once he returned to Fort Hall, Grant and his father established a trading business.

When Grant was 30 (1861), he

built a ranch site at Cottonwood (Deer Lodge Valley, Montana) and he recruited many Métis trading families to join him at his ranch.

During the winter months, Grant traded with neighboring Shoshone, Bannock, Blackfoot, and Flathead Indians.

In the spring and summer months, Grant went up the Oregon Trail to trade cattle with the immigrants. As a result of his trading prosperity, Grant was able to establish several businesses, such as a saloon, a store, and a blacksmith shop.

Manitoba became his home

Grant decided to make Manitoba his home in 1867.

He bought real estate in Winnipeg and he bought land for a ranch in the Parish of St. Charles at Rivière aux Ilets-des-bois (near Carman, Manitoba).

For his ranch, he bought several horses, wagons, and carts. Just as he had done in Montana, he surrounded himself with Métis employees and his closest friends and family.

In 1892, Grant moved to Bit-

tern Lake, Alberta. He lived here for eight years and then he journeyed to Grande Prairie where he re-entered the fur trade.

This move did not prove to be successful so Grant moved to Athabasca Landing and then to Deep Creek.

Spokesman for Métis kids

Shortly after, Grant became a spokesman for the children of the Manitoba Métis who had been disqualified from taking scrip because their parents had taken scrip earlier.

His petition, however, proved to be unsuccessful.

By 1907, Grant was quite ill and he and his wife moved to Edmonton. He died there on May first of that year.

Grant had several children during the course of his life. There are still descendants of Grant's who reside in Carman.

The Dufferin Historical Museum celebrates the life and times of John Francis Grant by dedicating a portion of the museum to this important historical figure.

The display includes informa-

tion and literature on Grant. Photos of Grant are also included in the display.

Children's program

The children's program at the museum is in full-swing.

On July 10, children will be able to come to the museum in old-fashioned clothing and then they will tour the museum looking at antique clothing.

They will then colour and cut out pieces of old-fashioned clothing on card stock.

And on July 17, children will be able to explore their musical side. They will make a shaker and then they will learn a traditional song.

The children will learn how to incorporate the shaker into the song.

Then on July 24, children will be

able to explore the antique jewelry in the museum. Then, they will make a beaded necklace and bracelet.

The cost for each day is \$5.00. If you would like to sign your child up for the entire summer, the cost for all seven sessions is \$25.00.

Children ages 6-10 are encouraged to participate. Limited space is available so make sure to register your child as soon as possible.

To register your child, please contact Rachael at carmuse@mymts.net or call 745-3597.

The museum is located at 20 Kelly Hand Drive (the Corner of King's Park Road and Highway 245) in Carman.

For more information, please email Rachael at carmuse@mymts.net or call her at 745-3597.