
The Daughter of Angus MacDonald

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THE DAUGHTER OF ANGUS MacDONALD*

My father was Angus MacDonald, a clerk and chief trader of the Hudson's Bay Company who was later prominent settler of Montana and died in that state in 1889. My mother was of mixed blood. Her name was Catherine Baptiste. Her father was an Iroquois Frenchman, long in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company, and a man of lively disposition and full of tricks and nicknamed by his superiors in the Hudson's Bay Company's employ, "Baptiste Rascale." Mother was a cousin of "Eagle-of-the-Light", the Nez Perce chief; she has sometimes been referred to as his sister, but this is due to a confusion of the Nez Perce word, the same expression being used for both sister and niece.

Mother has a brother, Alexander Big Knife, living at Arlee, Montana; Michel Stitsch-we ("two sticks" or cripple), now deceased, who lived on the Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation, her half brother; Alexander Bonaparte, or Red Ox, a noted Nez Perce warrior in their encounters with the Blackfeet, was also a half brother. Mother had one full sister, Elizabeth, the "Witch," a great medicine woman, credited with many feats by her tribe whom she is said to have once saved by bringing rain in a season of great drought; Antonie, Red Bird's wife, and Angelica Agden, both of whom were well educated, were her half sisters.

Another half sister, Celeste, full sister to Michel, died at old Fort Colville, she has, or had, a daughter, a fine looking girl—Terraises daughter—living across the Columbia River on the Colville Indian Reservation.

Father and mother were married at old Fort Hall in southern Idaho, in 1842, the civil ceremony being performed by Captain Grant of the Hudson's Bay Company whose remains are buried in the cemetery at Walla Walla. My oldest brother, John, was born at Fort Hall, in 1845, and I followed next on the 20th of September, 1847, being born on the Big Camas Prairie near what is now Boise, Idaho. When I was ten days old I was taken to the old

* This narrative was recorded for Mrs. Williams by William S. Lewis, Corresponding secretary of the Eastern Washington State Historical Society, who forwarded a copy for publication in this *Quarterly*. Jacob A. Meyers, of Meyers Falls, has supplied most of the footnotes.—Editor.

Hudson's Bay Company post at Post Creek¹, in the Flathead country. Shortly after father was transferred in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company post, Fort Colville. When we moved there [in 1852] I was so small that I had to be tied onto the saddle of the horse I rode. Going in we camped at the "fishery" on the Little Spokane—the former site of Spokane House. Weiser is a Frenchman's name; Touchet is also a French word.

At Fort Colville father and mother were again united in marriage by the Catholic marriage ceremony performed by Father Joset. I have two brothers buried in the old fort cemetery on the hill south of the old trading post. I have a picture of brother John made at Fort Colville about 1856 by a French artist who visited the post. I was just a little girl when Governor Isaac Ingalls Stevens and Captain (afterwards General) McClellan visited the post in 1853. I was nine years old when the Indian war broke out.

I knew Chiefs Kamiaken and Garry very well. They were both Indian gentlemen and often dined with father at the Fort, and I have waited on them at the table in the old fort. Kamiaken was a notable looking Indian. He used to wear—when visiting father² at the fort—a coat of Hudson's Bay broadcloth with red trimmings and brass buttons. I remember father telling Kamiaken that it was hopeless for the Indians to fight the white; that to kill a white man was like killing an ant, there would be hundreds more pour up out of the nest; that the whites would eventually overrun the Indian country; and that the more the Indians resisted or fought the more determined and more numerous the whites would be. Father tried to dissuade Kamiaken from starting the Indian war of 1855-56.

Spokane Garry was a short little fellow. He was the only Indian in that section of the country who had an education and he was doing his best to teach the Indians. My mother's sister, Antonie, was married to Red Bird, the Nez Perce who had been educated with Garry at the Red River Missionary School at old Fort Garry. Spokane Garry never raised his hand against the white, he was too loyal to them. He often said that he would never fight

¹ Angus McDonald was stationed at Saleesh House, four miles east of Thompson Falls, Montana, during the years 1847, 1848 and 1849. Post Creek House was not started until 1849. It was called Fort Connah. See, "Some Items of the West" in this *Quarterly*, vol. viii, pp. 188-229. Also, testimony of Angus McDonald in the matter of the claims of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company against the United States, taken at Victoria, B. C., September 25, 1865.—J. A. Meyers.

² Angus McDonald's Indian name was "Oop-chin", meaning "whiskers". See Splawn, *Ka-mi-aktin*.—J. A. Meyers.

³ Sarah Tucker, *Rainbow in the North*, pp. 70-74; Alexander Ross, *Fur Hunters of the Far West*, pp. 156-158; John M'Lean, *Notes of a Twenty-five Years' Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory*. I 263.—J. A. Meyers.

the whites on equal terms. They were poor, had few horses, few guns, no ammunition. It was hopeless and useless to fight against the whites.

We were never in any danger from the Indians at Fort Colville. When the war broke out father, however, sent the family to the buffalo plains in Montana. After the war the soldiers came to the Colville Valley and Pinkney City was started. Father was very much the Scotch laird. He entertained the officers of the post with great hospitality and was very particular with our manners and would not allow us children to meet and associate with everyone. Father was also much inclined to take his ease and as I grew older became his special companion and acted as interpreter for him most of the time.

Among the United States Army officers at Colville I remember Capt. L. Browning (I have his picture here.) As a small girl I used to race him on his army horse and beat him. Father had several kinds of horses at the Hudson's Bay Company fort: hack or driving horses, short distance, or running horses, buffalo horses and pack-horses and ordinary Indian and Hudson's Bay Company ponies. My uncle, Archibald MacDonald, and father, Angus MacDonald, in connection with the Hudson's Bay Company, were the founders of the stock and cattle business of the Northwest. Even in those early days father had horses out here which could trot in three minutes. One special breed, from imported French roan horses, were as tough and hardy and as tireless as mules; they were called "sang'en" by our Canadian French employees, and were great travelers.

Captain McCabin of the United States Army gave father all his private library when he left the Colville military post and Major Rumrill left father his table, couch and bed. Father was very hospitable to and much liked by the officers. I remember the late L. V. Meyers of Meyers Falls. He was one of the last employees of the Hudson's Bay Company⁴ at the old grist mill which he afterwards purchased. Mr. Meyers taught me how to make corn bread. The site of the mill, now named Meyers Falls, was the place where the Indians caught the "little fish". In early days the Indians came to the little mill to have their wheat and corn ground—even the

⁴ L. W. Meyers was never an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, but he did do some cabinet work for the contractors, Messrs. Robertson & Co., who erected the new dwelling house at Fort Colville, January and February, 1863. He rented the Hudson's Bay Company's flour mill in June, 1866, subject to transfer to the United States, which occurred in 1868.—J. A. Meyers.

Nez Perces, until Spaulding built the mill at Spaulding Mission on the Snake River.

There was some talk of a grist mill being built on the Little Spokane above the "fishery". I understood the Catholic priests were going to get the pattern or plans for a mill from Gowdie who helped my Uncle Archibald MacDonald rebuild ours at Colville about 1842. Spokane Garry is said to have been connected with the enterprise. He often brought his grain by pack horse to be ground at the mill at Fort Colville.

I recall being down to the mouth of the Little Spokane once to meet the brigade with flour from White Bluffs. This was in the early 60's and after the Fort Colville-Fort Walla Walla military road had been laid out, but the Indian trails were shorter and better for the pack train use. I saw a number of small cabins standing there in 1866. The place was a great salmon fishery in early days and many Indians camped there. In the fall of the year one could hardly stay there from the stench from the dead salmon and refuse from the Indian fisheries. I remember running horse races there with the little Brown girls, whose father was an early settler near Chewelah. In addition to the small cabins there were then some signs of the old trading post foundations and chimneys, being a child I paid no attention to these. I do recall however that the place was a famous one for "ghost" stories of the Indians. Possibly the so-called cellar holes you mention are Indian camas holes which were made five or six feet deep. The principal Indian graveyard was in the high ground, just across the Little Spokane and the graves were decorated with horse hides, cloth blankets, etc., a custom which disappeared with the teachings of the missionaries.

When father first took charge of Fort Colville and the fur trade in that district the site of old Spokane House was still used as a trading point and a stopping place in carrying on business with the Pend d'Oreilles, Coeur d'Alene and Flathead Indians, but it was a little out of the way, so later father established a post which changed this trade from the mouth of the Little Spokane to what is now Peone Prairie as more convenient for the Coeur d'Alene and other Indians. A little post was built on the side hill on the Indian trails on the second bench near what is now Biglow Gulch and Baptise Peone,⁵ a Hudson's Bay Company employee of no education

⁵ The proper spelling of the family name is "Pion". See the Hudson's Bay Company list of employees of 1821, number 1231; also, Sir George Simpson, *Narrative of a Journey Round the World*, ch. 3, p. 85.—J. A. Meyers.

but a good fur trader was placed in charge. He married a local Indian wife, gave his name to the Prairie and was founder of the powerful Peone family among the Upper Spokane Indians. I don't know the date this sub-post was established, but it was about the time Antone Plant settled in the vicinity.

Antone Plant, like Peone, was a half breed French Canadian, I first saw him when a little girl, when he came to Fort Colville when the gold was first discovered. He was a hunter for the Hudson's Bay Company, and first took a farm in the Colville Valley for the Company. Later Antone Plant and his brother-in-law, Camile, located together on the Spokane River just above what is called Trent.⁶ Their wives were sisters from the Pend d'Oreille tribe. When they first established the ferry it was called Camile's ferry. Many Hudson's Bay Company men married Pend d'Oreille women. Mrs. John Work was a half breed Pend d'Oreille woman. Young John Work was often at Colville. David Thompson had a daughter by a Pend d'Oreille woman. A daughter of Antone Plant is a sister-in-law of my late brother Donald's wife.

I recall at old Hudson's Bay Company Colville an Indian named "La-let". My uncle Archibald MacDonald in charge of the post in the '30's had twin sons⁷ born whom his wife, Jane Klyne MacDonald, was unable to nurse and they were nursed by an Indian woman whose own child was raised on Cow's milk. This was an entirely new departure for the Indians and half breeds and the Indian youngster received the name of La-let.

About 1865—I have forgotten the year—father received notice at Colville to go to Portland and meet Mr. Johnson and the Americans in charge of the settlement of the Hudson's Bay Company claims under the treaty of 1846. Father was reluctant to go and talked first of going alone by bateaux down the river, but I persuaded him to let me accompany him. He brightened up at the thought of company and consented to my accompanying him. He ordered the hack and his best driving horses prepared for the occasion and we started off in style. The first night or camp was at Pat McKenzies on the old Hudson Bay Company farm in the Colville Valley; the second at the Forks of Deep Creek after passing

⁶ Antoine Plante was living on Spokane Prairie east of Trent in the spring of 1853. See *Pacific Railway Reports*, vol XII, part 1, p. 108. He was the guide of Lieutenant Saxton from Wallula to St. Mary's Mission, or Fort Owen. *Id.*, I, 512.—J. A. Meyers.

⁷ Donald and James Lumis are given as their names by Miss Lamb, postmistress of St. Andrews, Quebec. *La-let* is the Chinook jargon word for "milk".—J. A. Meyers.

through Walkers Prairie and crossing the Ferry operated by Spokane Jimmy (Monahon); the third night's camp was at Willow Springs on the Colville Military Road; the next camp seventy miles further on at Cow Creek, so named from the fact, as related to me by father, of his having once killed a cow there to feed the starving members of his pack train and left the hide with a note stating that the Hudson Bay Company at Colville would pay the owner, who ever he was, for it. It was a long day's drive by Colville Lake and many pot holes and we noticed lots of rattlesnakes. We reached Cow Creek in the evening, camping on the hill. We planned to catch the Snake River steamer *Idaho*. Some man then had a ferry on the opposite or south side of the Snake River from the mouth of the Palouse River. We crossed over and, leaving our hack and team, flagged the steamer.

I had a small hand valise nearly full of gold dust. Father being tired from the trip laid down to rest. When the captain asked me for my ticket I told him to see that gentleman over there pointing to father. He said, "Oh! your husband," and I told him, "No! my father." Father, when approached, told the Captain to go back to the young lady, telling me to give him some of the gold and I would pay; so I opened the valise, took a handful of the gold and I said, "Take your pay." The Captain's eyes widened at the sight of the gold and he walked off and didn't come back until dinner time, by which time he had discovered who we were. Father was dressed at the time in a buckskin suit. The Captain treated us well and we became great friends.

At Wallula a Mrs. Hull kept the hold, and we transferred to another steamer for Celilo. Transferring to the portage road for The Dalles everyone wanted to carry the valise full of gold. At The Dalles another steamer in charge of Captain Will Gray, son of the old Captain, took us to the Cascades where, crossing the portage road, we embarked in another steamer for Portland. At Vancouver, Washington, we met Dr. Tonsier of the Hudson's Bay Company and at Portland Dr. Tolmie and two clerks, and took another steamboat for Astoria. The ladies of the party were all sea sick. I recall one of them, a Mrs. McGowan, whose daughter used to be at Colville.

At Astoria we went to the hotel and met Mr. Johnson of the United States party, a very tall, dark man who I recall was wearing crepe around his hat for Lincoln. The party went out to the site

of Fort George and Astoria which I recall was then about one mile from the little town of Astoria. The gentlemen pointed out and discovered things and the clerks wrote down what they dictated. Nothing remained then of Astoria but the foundation rocks of the chimney. Dr. Tolmie pointing out the site, said, "There was where Ranald was born, referring to my cousin Ranald MacDonald. The chimney site was easily identified. I went back to the hotel. The party remained there about three days.

I remember at the hotel a fine looking young lady, a sister to the lady who ran the hotel. She expressed a liking for me and wished to spend the night with me. Her sister said there are lots of other beds, but the girl evidently wanted a confidential girl's visit with me. She had evidently heard of my having Indian blood in my veins and told me that she had been taken prisoner by Indians when a very little girl, and liked the Indian life and that some day she was going back to her foster Indian mother who had treated her so well. I after wondered what became of her. At Astoria it was planned to give a ball in honor of the gentlemen. Father did not want to attend on account of the recent death of my brother John, and as Mrs. Captain Gray, whose husband then kept the light house wanted me to stay with her, I stayed with her two nights. The clerks and other members of the commission all had a good time.

Returning to Portland the party proceeded to Oregon City. Father said he would leave me with Mrs. Dr. McLaughlin while he tended to his business. Dr. McLaughlin was then dead. I met many charming ladies there. The Doctor's daughter Louise, sister of Dave (Mrs. Dr. Rae who afterwards married B——), and Mrs. Dr. Barkley, a daughter of Mr. P. M. Pambrum, were both beautiful women. The latter had a sister named Carrie. Mrs. Captain McGovern's sister gave a fine dinner for us at Oregon City, and I recall Mrs. McGovern's mother-in-law, an old lady, pointing out to me, on the Columbia, the ribs of a wrecked ship beached there some twenty years before. The first cultivated currants I ever ate, I ate here at the McLoughlin's. It was a beautiful place, well furnished and kept up. I remained there three or four weeks while father was making proof of the Hudson's Bay Company's claims and then I returned to Portland. From Portland we went to Vancouver, Washington, and finally took the steamboats back to Lyons Ferry on the Snake River. Here we found that our

horses, left at the mouth of the Palouse, had been stolen. One of them of imported blood could trot a mile in better than three minutes. We secured new horses from Jim Collins and young Sinclair, the husband of Hudson's Bay Company trader Grant's step-daughter. Her maiden name was Kitchem [Kittson?] and her mother afterwards married Grant.

My first husband and the last clerk at the post, James McKenzie, a Scotchman, was a clerk of the Hudson's Bay Company under father at Fort Colville. The post was abandoned in June 1878 and Mr. McKenzie and I left overland for Victoria, B. C., with the records.⁸ We took Joe LaFlure one of the old Hudson's Bay Company men with us. When we came to Christina Creek, LaFlure said in French, "Here is your Creek, Christina." Christina Lake and Creek are named after me. The water was high. LaFlure swam across with the horses. Then a tree was felled from each side crossing in the middle making an improvised bridge. McKenzie crossed first with the gold dust. LaFlure tied a rope of braided buffalo hair to me and taking up his pack and one end of the rope crossed ahead, I followed. In some way LaFlure forgot and dropped the rope and when he got across nearly fainted to find he had not kept hold of the other end of the rope he had so carefully tied to me. At Clinton LaFlure turned back to Colville with the horses and we proceeded to Victoria.

At Victoria, in 1870, my husband James McKenzie was promoted to Chief Trader at Kamloops and we at once established ourselves there. In 1872 he resigned and Mr. Tate from Gar-a-mouse took his place. He now opened a trading post of his own which Mr. McKenzie operated until his death, in 1873. During this period I spent much of my time back at old Hudson's Bay Company Fort Colville. Father still lived there but wanted to sell out and make a home at Horse Plains, now Plains, Montana, where mother had moved with the children, in 1870. Father soon joined her, and my brother Donald took possession of the old Hudson's Bay Company post site as a prospective townsite.

I was often in Victoria, B. C., in early days, either with father or my husband. Once an old gentleman came up with father there a—little old man— and brought me a beautiful bouquet. He brought them to me several mornings. He was Gowdie, the old

⁸ Fort Colville was finally abandoned by the Hudson's Bay Company on June 8, 1871, and all the personal property taken over the old Hudson's Bay Company trail, now Sherman Creek trail, and not up Kettle River. See L. W. Meyers letter of March 18, 1874, to Secretary Delano of the department of the Interior.—J. A. Meyers.

Fort Colville blacksmith and milwright. He had a little piece of land at Victoria and told me he was selling flowers for a living. He was a Scotchman and had an Indian family. He was a stocky, low-set man about five foot five inches tall, and told me how he took a granite rock at Kettle Falls and dressed it down for the Hudson's Bay Company mill at Colville (Meyers Falls) when it was rebuilt under my uncle's administration in the early forty's.

For all his years in the Northwest, father was never weaned from his Scotch habits and ways. Once when I was with him in Victoria he engaged a coach and, taking Big McLean, a bag pipe player, we set off to pay a visit to s'gatch poose Anderson,⁹ a fellow countryman and old acquaintance who lived near Esquimalt, and was so named by the Indians on account of a gathering or scar on his cheek. He was an old Hudson's Bay Company man formerly from Fort Colville.

Driving to Anderson's the woods rang with McLean's spirited playing. Anderson and his wife, when they heard the pipes, cried with joy, and said its Angus coming with his pipes. They were overjoyed to see us. The next day Mr. Anderson told us that on hearing the pipes the Indians had all run away from the neighborhood, thinking there was a big fight going on.

On Mr. McKenzie's death I was appointed administrator of his estate and took charge of and ran the trading post at Kamloops in competition with the Hudson's Bay Company and the independent traders, and a woman and with limited capital. I more than held my own with them, for I was raised in the fur-trade, and had been a companion of my father so long that I knew the business thoroughly.

I have made lots of money. I met Sir James Douglas in Victoria when I was there buying goods. He was a large handsome man. He was the highest man in the Province, and though a close family friend, I did not care to meet him, as I had no time for visiting or society. I was buying shoes by the case when he came up to me and said, "So you are Christina MacDonald." He took stage line run by Hamilton, Steve Tingley and Bernard. He was a very jolly, companionable man—a great ladies' man—and his special business seemed to be to entertain and look after the Company's lady passengers. He was a true sport, treating and drinking with

⁹ Alexander Caulfield Anderson. Mr. Anderson succeeded John Lee Lewes, in charge of Fort Colville, and was succeeded by Mrs. Williams' father, Angus McDonald.—W. S. Lewis.

my hand and held it and stroked or petted it all the time he was talking. "I see that you are administratrix for your husband's estate and for your children, I wish my own daughter (Mrs. Bushby) was as competent," etc. I had met Mrs. Bushby some years before.

Governor Douglas wanted to take me home in the carriage, but I compromised, and he later sent his coachman to the hotel for me and I dined with him and met Lady Douglas and the girls. Mrs. Douglas was a little woman. We talked in our excitement in French, in Indian and in mixed English and Lady Douglas remarked how she liked to hear the old language again. I remember Governor Douglas saying, "Do you remember the *sardren* (French roan horses)," and asking if we had any.

In the spring of the long, hard winter, 1873-74, the stores or trading posts at Kamloops had exhausted their stocks. The Hudson's Bay Company and wealthy merchants had hired ahead of me all the available transportation, oxen, mule and horse teams, to get in their own supplies, and thought they had gotten ahead of me. I sent word by Indian courier to Letton to the Indian pack train at In-gomen that I was going to load with groceries and supplies, and for them to be ready. I took 1500 martin skins and other furs, and selling them for \$35,000 bought my supplies, with instructions that the goods be shipped to Yale, B. C. When the freight arrived at Yale the Indians met me and came to In-gomen and we proceeded over the mountains with my goods long before the big freight teams of the Hudson's Bay Company and the big merchants could get through. I sold all my groceries, tobacco and whiskey to them before their own supplies arrived. I never lost a pound of tobacco nor a bottle, nor a drop of liquor while it was handled by my Indians. The road from Yale to Kamloops and into the Cariboo was terrible one in early days. In my journeys to and fro on the stage I used to set on the seat with the various drivers and when their hands were stiff with the strain and cold I would take the lines myself and spell them off, something which few men could do.

I first met my cousin, Ranald MacDonald of Japan fame, at Clintook, B. C., about 1874. He was reported to have made \$60,000 in the Cariboo mines but had lost it all through bad luck, and trickery of sharpers. I met him at old McLean's building, the Bonaparte House, or Bonaparte Station in the Cariboo, where the roads to Cariboo and Kamloops fork. He was in the employ of the

the men, dancing all night with the ladies and showing them the little courteous, polished attentions noticeable for their absence among the rougher elements of the West.

The following winter of 1875 he came over to Kamloops where I was conducting the store—as I said I am an old fur-trader—and helped a little on my books. He spent most of his time about the holds, being a jolly, likeable fellow and an entertaining talker, telling of early times in the Northwest. In 1877, I sold out my store and business and moved to a ranch on Suys-waps Prairie on Thompson River where I had purchased some time before from Donald Walker. I didn't know much about land titles and one night Provincial Constable, John Archer, came to my store and said that two men, McBride and McPherson, were in Kamloops intending to jump my ranch and told me to take his horse and ride to the ranch, thirty miles away, by daylight, so as to forestall them. It was a cold, snowy night about April 20th. I got on Archer's black horse and reached the ranch at daylight, and at once started a fire. When McLeon and McPherson approached they saw the smoke and abandoned the enterprise. Constable Archer was afterwards killed by McLean. In 1877, Ranald MacDonald stayed with me and my family at the ranch, and then he left for my brother Donald's at old Fort Colville, where he spent most of his time up to his death in 1894.

My son Alexander was born at Victoria, B. C., in 1870; my daughter Katherine at Kamloops, in 1872, and my daughter Mary Christina at Kamloops, in 1876. I lived on Thompson River until 1888, when I moved to Cow Creek, Montana. Cousin Ranald occasionally spent some months with us, and devoted a great deal of time to the children, teaching the girls to dance the heel and toe polka, and how to mount from the palm of his hand into side saddles. He was very insistant upon their manners, and was always quiet, good-natured and mannerly himself. He wrote out part of his Japanese story at our home in Kamloops in the eighty's, and at one time requested my financial assistance in publishing the book, but this, coming during the hard times of the early ninety's, I could not aid him. In 1888, when we were living at Cow Creek, Montana, he gave some of his books, records and pictures to my daughter Catherine (Kitty), and said, "Kitty, some day you will publish them."

CHRISTINA MACDONALD MCKENZIE WILLIAMS.