

The Beauvais Family

By Dakota Bruder

The following information talks about the life of the Beauvais family that settled in what is now known as Beauvais Lake Provincial Park. I found this story/biography very interesting because the Beauvais family was very involved with their community and because the biography tells the story of how Beauvais Lake got its name. I think that if someone is to totally understand the community and environment of the park, they should know about the Beauvais family. I didn't go into every detail about the family because I think that would bore some people and be way too long of an essay. Plus, my main idea was just to give a brief background so that everyone has a bit of basic knowledge about the family and how Beauvais Lake Provincial Park got its name.

Remi James Beauvais was born on September 30th, 1825 in Laprairie, Quebec. As a young fellow he was married twice but acquired no biological children from either relationship. However, he had one surviving stepson by the name of Henere Camirand. Remi moved to Oregon in his early forties and married Marie Ducharme on December 26th of 1866 or 1868. Many are unsure of Remi's reasons for moving to Oregon but many people assume that the Eastern Oregon gold rush may have had an influence on his decision. During the fifteen years that Remi and Marie stayed in Oregon, they had made many places their home and bore six children. Earlier in 1882 they loaded their belongings into a covered wagon and went on a three-month trek that eventually ended near Pincher Creek, Alberta on July 1st, 1882. Today we now refer to this spot as Beauvais Lake Provincial Park. On their journey they were accompanied by the families of Mose La Grandeur, Max Brouillot, Alec LeBeouf, Henry LeBeouf, and Joe Mongeon. The Beauvais family had brought with them their racehorses. The year they arrived in Canada, Remi won a silver medal at the Hudson's Bay Company race with his horse Oealo. Along with raising racehorses, the Beauvais family also grew most of their own food and mined coal from the hills near their home. Many community gatherings took place at the Beauvais house, they hosted many dances and picnics. Remi and Marie had seven children together, their fifth child, Florence, died in 1888 at the age of eight. Remi and Marie's last child, their seventh, was born in 1886. This was also the year that the contract to build the first Roman Catholic Church in Pincher Creek was made and proposed. Mr. Beauvais held a leading role in the community, he donated money, time, and resources for the establishment of a local church. Father Lacombe was a Catholic Missionary and good friend of the Beauvais. Father Lacombe often stayed at the family's ranch and even asked Remi and Marie to let four children into their home. The mother of the children had died and the father was unable to take care of the children while tending to the land, so the Gregoire children stayed with Remi and Marie. If you are keeping track that is eleven children, seven Beauvais and four Gregoire. There was no school in the district so in 1888, when the first school was formed, Mr. Beauvais, Charlie Smith, and Ludgar Gareau were elected to be the trustees of the St. Agnes Catholic Public School. Later, the school and the district were changed to incorporate his name, along with the creek that flowed through his property and the lake that fed into it. In 1957 a local picnic area was named Beauvais Lake Provincial Park. Remi Beauvais died in 1899. His wife, Marie, continued living on the homestead with the youngest of the Beauvais children but eventually moved to the house Remi and herself had occupied for a short time when they first arrived in Alberta. She remained here for many years. While staying here she cared for cattle, horses and pigs. In 1908 Marie acquired an additional quarter section of land. At approximately the age of seventy-five, in 1915, Marie

died. Louise Beauvais was the eldest daughter of Remi and Marie. Louise married Joe Mongeon, they set up their homestead on Drywood Creek near Twin Butte, Alberta, and had four children. Louise died in 1902 and Joe placed the children in the Pincher Creek Catholic Covenant because he was unable to care for them. Alexander Beauvais was next in line, he married Mary Lucier and had no children. Caroline Beauvais married Theodule Cyr and had seven children. Their home was across the creek from Remi and Marie. Caroline died in 1921. Angele Beauvais married Paul Cyr in the fall of 1902 or 1903, they bore two children. Paul died in 1938 and Angele in 1952. Florence Beauvais was born in 1880 and died in 1888, Florence was two years old when the family moved to Canada. Franklin Beauvais was never married and had no recorded children. After his father's death, Franklin continued to live with his mother. In April of 1900, Franklin received his Certificate of Naturalization and applied for his own land, which was approved in 1904. He later owned livestock, had built significant fencing, and had cultivated a portion of land that he had applied for. Remi James Junior married Elise LeBlanc and they bore four children. Remi Jr. and Elise separated in 1910 and were legally divorced in 1912, Remi sold his ranch and moved to Polson, Montana where he enrolled his eldest son, Alexander Joseph, at the Indian School in St. Ignasas. Elise had enrolled the other three children in Lacombe Home in Midnapore. Elise died on June 11th, 1920 of goiter. Remi Jr. married Emma Senecal in 1914 and had one child. Remi's stepson, Henere Camirand, had been given a quarter section of land in Remi's will and continued to pay taxes on it until 1910.

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Father Lacombe

Father Lacombe was a missionary and his endeavours made a significant impact in the development of southern Alberta, cementing his name in our history. His efforts helped resolve many conflicts, which in some ways helped create this country. He was a big influence in the different First Nations people and how we have come to live with the First Nations people. This short paper highlights the contributions of this historical figure and how he helped create this park.

Father Lacombe was a zealous missionary whose mission covered from Lake Athabasca to American border over the course of some sixty years. He has starved, froze, survived epidemics, and battles. He went to Edmonton and spent a winter with the Cree and the Metis; then after spending time with them he traveled to the Blackfoot people. He acted, for a time, as the peacemaker in the wars between the Cree and Blackfoot people. Father Lacombe also helped with the Canadian Pacific Railway construction and when the railway was crossing into the Blackfoot land he negotiated with the Blackfoot and the Canadian Pacific Railway. When the Red River Rebellion started, it was his job to keep the plain tribes out. He established one of the school districts in Alberta, and he opened the St. Agnes Catholic Public school in 1896. He retired in 1913 and died three years later in 1916 at the age of 89. Lacombe had his body buried in the chapel St Albert, and his heart is buried in a small cemetery situated adjacent to the north side of the Convent of the Sisters of Providence which is located at 2215 - 28th Street SW, Calgary, Alberta.

While Father Lacombe's activities and contribution to our history are immeasurably significant, his contribution to Beauvais history seem tied to a friendship and a wedding. That friendship was with James Whitford, and the wedding he officiated was for James Whitford and his wife Mary – whose story appears in another short biographical overview.

Fun fact: Father Lacombe coordinated the construction of one of the first bridges in Western Canada.

Reed Hale

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William Gladstone

Mr. William Gladstone was a very well educated man. He spoke many different languages and was important to the Beauvais lake because, among many things, he was an important trader with the different First Nations people. Some of what makes him an interesting character to read about include his work with the Hudson Bay Company and, again, the several different languages he spoke including English, French, Blackfoot, and Cree. William Gladstone also knew many of the people around Beauvais Lake including the famous Father Lacombe. William Gladstone traded often with the First Nations people and travelled between many different forts including, and as was noted most, Fort Edmonton.

Tyler Monk

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