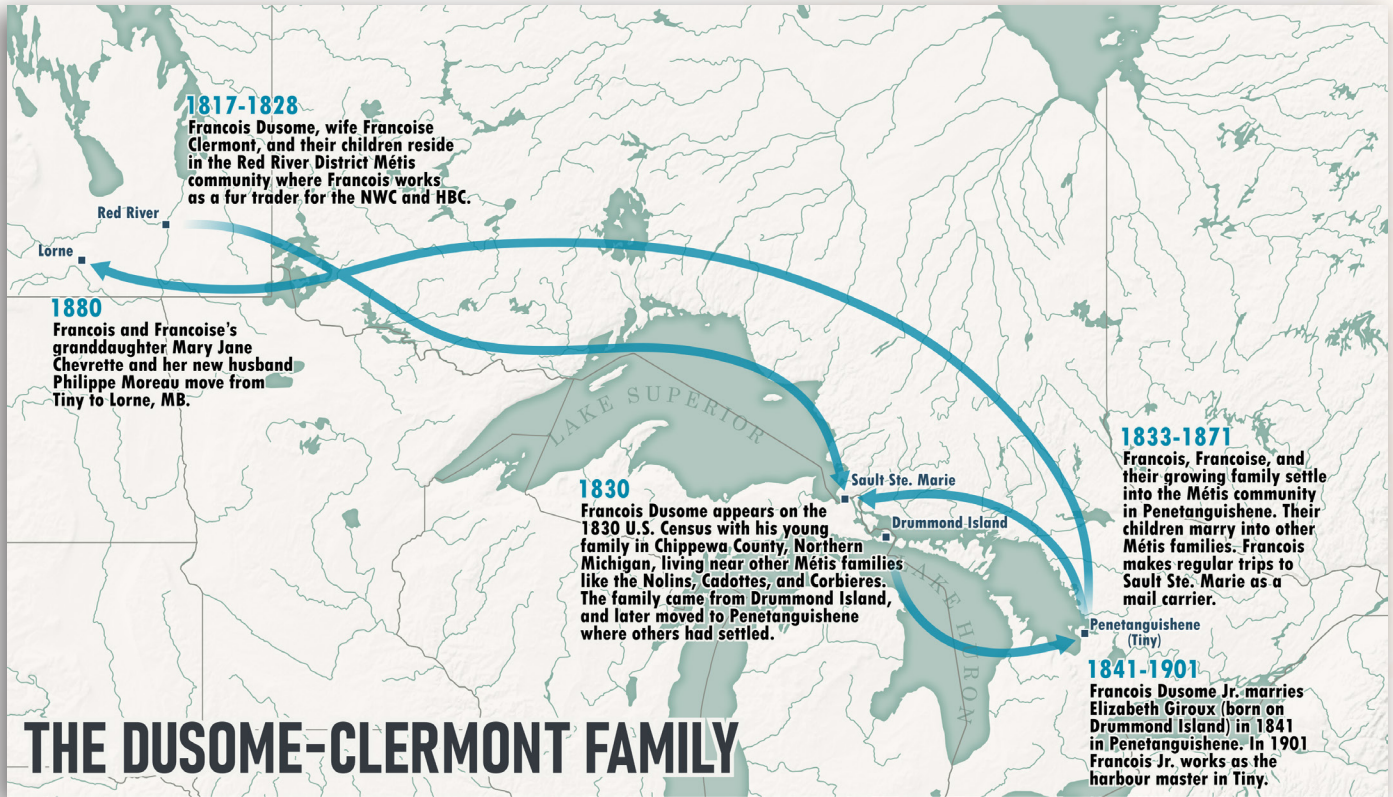


Dusome-Clermont



Francois Dusome arrived in Red River in a turbulent time. It was 1817, and the North West Company was engaged in a fierce rivalry with the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC). The year before, tensions culminated in the Battle of Seven Oaks, which saw the North West Company (NWC) and its Métis allies capture the HBC's Fort Douglas, located at the Forks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, both key trade corridors.

The NWC's victory was short-lived. By the time Francois arrived in Red River, the HBC had regained control of Fort Douglas, leaving the North West Company to rebuild its previous headquarters down the river at Fort Gibraltar, which the HBC had destroyed in 1816. At the same time, trade continued, and voyageurs like Francois paddled from Red River to posts throughout the Métis Homeland across West Central North America.

During his time in Red River, Francois met and married Francoise Clermont. The eldest of their Métis children were born in Red River, around the same time that the North West Company merged with the HBC in 1821. After the merger, Francois continued to work for the HBC and was posted at both Lower Red River and Upper Red River Districts over the next few years. Located along the Red and Assiniboine rivers, these districts saw people come to trade from throughout the Métis world, including Métis families from the Great Lakes, such as the Nolins of Sault Ste. Marie.



It was perhaps these Métis travellers who planted the seed for the Dusomes to relocate to the Upper Great Lakes. By the late 1820s, the Dusome family moved to Drummond Island, home to many Métis traders and families. After the island was surrendered to the United States in 1828 and the inhabitants forced to relocate, the Dusomes moved to Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, where they lived alongside other Métis families, the Corbieres, Nolins, and Cadottes. Francois and Francoise had several more children at Sault Ste. Marie before moving again, this time to Penetanguishene. There, they reestablished relationships with other Métis from Drummond Island. Francois didn't lose his connections with people in Sault Ste. Marie, however: he worked as a mail carrier, making many trips back and forth between the two communities, just like fellow Métis Michael Labatte.

Once reestablished in the Métis community in Penetanguishene, the Dusome family lived near one another and married and raised children with other Métis who had come from Drummond Island and Sault Ste. Marie. Children of Francois Dusome Jr. and Elizabeth Giroux, also a Drummond Islander, married into the Longlade, Berger, Beausoleil, and Cadieux Métis families. Families also worked together in land and water-based occupations like fishing and farming. An 1876 poem chronicled Fred Dusome as one of "Seven Young Fishermen" who fished together in Penetanguishene. The other names were members of the Longlade, Giroux, Gendron, and Precourt families. More than 20 years later, Dusome were still fishing these waters: In 1898, William Dusome protested the Ministry of Natural Resources and Fisheries at Gin Rock, when his traditional harvesting practices were threatened by government intervention. William invited others to join him in this fight.

While the Dusome family put down roots in Penetanguishene, their ties to the western parts of the Métis Homeland remained. In 1880, Francois and Francoise's granddaughter Mary Jane Chevette and her new husband Philippe Moreau, a descendant of the St. Onge family, moved from Tiny to Lorne, Manitoba.

I. A group of voyageurs, 1895. Lewis Solomon, John Bussette (Brissette), James Larammee, Francis Dusome. Credit: Ontario Historical Society. Papers and Records Volume 3, (Toronto, 1901); page 126

II. Dusome sisters (Red River, MB) in Penetanguishene (black dresses). Credit: Cherie Dimaline

III. The Mail Carried Across Lake Huron from Penetanguishene to Sault Ste-Marie, 1853. Credit: Library and Archives Canada, Acc. No. R9266-422 Peter Winkworth Collection of Canadiana

IV. Marguerite Dusome Marchand. Credit: Debby Diver

V. Winter peep at the Little Lake, near Dushome's Clearing, Penetanguishene, March 1895. Credit: Library and Archives Canada, Acc. No. 1995-28-12