Joseph Despard and Lisette Chinook, St. Paul Settlers

Joseph Despard, also known as Joseph Frederick Despard, was born around 1793 in Yamaska, according to his Hudson's Bay Company biographical sheet, which lists his age as 31 in 1824.[1] In the 1845 Marion County, Oregon, census, he was named Joseph Despor Dit Frederick.[2] A "dit" name is a secondary family name, and Frederick was a common dit Despard dit name.[3]

In 1839, he married Lisette, a member of the Chinook Tribe, in the St. Paul Catholic Church. He was said to have been born in Saint Hyacinthe, District of Montreal, Canada.[4] Saint Hyacinthe is on the Yamaska River.

According to the 1850 Marion County census, Lizette was born about 1810 in Oregon. [5] When she died on 27 April 1851 and was buried in the St. Paul Catholic Church Cemetery, her age was given as 43 (born about 1808). [6]

Despard worked for the Northwest Company and the Hudson's Bay Company as a middleman and as a hunter, mainly on the Snake River Expeditions. His French Prairie cabin site is included in the National Register of Historic Places.[7]

Northwest Company

In 1816, Despard joined the Northwest Company, a fur-trapping company, and worked in the English River district.[8]

Hudson's Bay Company (HBC)

In 1821, the Northwest Company and the Hudson's Bay Company merged, and Despard worked for the HBC in the Columbia Department.

In 1824, Governor Simpson authorized an expedition from Fort George to the north to locate the Fraser River mouth. Despard was one of the 36 men selected for the trip. Chief Factor James McMillan was the leader. The men, their wives and slaves, left Fort George on 18 November.

Some of the other men later settled on French Prairie: Michael Laframboise, Alexis Aubichon, William Johnson, Andre Longtain, Andre LaChapelle, Louis Vivet, William Cannon, and Charles Rondeau.

It is not known if Despard was married to Lisette at this time. Their first known child was born in 1827.

The trip was rainy and difficult, but they did manage to travel to the Fraser River. They returned to Fort George on 30 December 1824.[9]

The map to the right was created by Dan McShane for his "Reading the Washington Landscape" blog.[10]



Slavery was a part of life for Northwest Indians. In 1836, Lt. William A. Slacum of the US Navy reported,

> "Slaves could be captured during war parties, traded, or sold. The price for a slave was eight to fifteen blankets. Slaves were expected to cut wood, hunt, fish, and do whatever else they were asked to do. Each man in a trapping party had two or three slaves to help hunt and take care of camp.[11] The trappers working at Fort Vancouver had from two to five slaves."[12]

Snake Country Expeditions

The objective of the Snake Country Expeditions was to trap all the beavers that could be found so that competing fur companies, specifically American companies, would find nothing – stopping them from moving into HBC territory. The expeditions covered parts of Oregon, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, and Northern California. Between 1824 and 1830, six expeditions covered the area and trapped out the beaver.

The brigades contained more than 100 people, including wives and children. Besides the usual wifely tasks, expedition women dressed the furs. They skinned, cleaned, and stretched the pelts for drying.

From 1825 to 1829, Despard was a member of Peter Skene Ogden's Snake River Expeditions. Peter Skene Ogden seldom named the trappers in his journals unless something serious happened. Something serious did occur in December 1825.

> "Monday, December 12th, 1825. At daylight began crossing over the river the rest of the property, but it was near night ere all was transferred. Having remained on this side with Mr. McKay to watch the motions of our new guide, I was not a little surprised to learn of the death of a slave who belonged to Mr. McDonald's party. The particulars are: Joseph Despard and deceased were employed taking the goods to the top of the hill when words took place between them, but no blows. Despard loaded himself to ascend and when nearly at the top of the bank, the deceased came up to him and struck him on the back. D- then threw down his load and a battle took place, continuing for about 5 minutes, when deceased went to his camp. During the night he threw up blood, and this day at 2 P. M., expired, prior to death suffering greatly. On examining the body, I could not observe any marks of violence or blows, except a hard swelling on the abdomen. A report having circulated that D- kicked the deceased, I made enquiry, but found it incorrect. I had a grave made and the body interred. It is not in my power to send D- to Vancouver. I have allowed the affair for the present to remain quiet until we return to headquarters. The poor man is miserable and unhappy. Weather mild."[13]

John Work's 1830 Snake Country expedition consisted of 115 individuals, including women and children. Despard may have been accompanied by Lisette and Joseph Jr, who would have been three years old at the time.

On Thursday, 21 September 1830, Work penned in his journal, "Three men, Laforte, Despard, and Longtain who slept out the last two nights arrived in the evening with 14 beaver which they took in Read's River..."

Work mentioned Joseph again in the following journal entry.[14]

> "Sunday, July 1st, 1831. Fine weather. Our road lay along the foot of the mountains 12 miles N. W. Part of the road very hilly and very stony. The stony road and continual mounting wearing out the horses' hoofs and rendering them lame. Though the mountains in our neighborhood have still patches of snow on them, the little creek where we are encamped barely affords sufficient water for the horses to drink. The hunters killed nothing today. J. Despard killed one of his horses.

As seen in the following letter from Dr. John McLoughlin to Michel Laframboise, Despard was a member of Laframboise's April 1832 expedition to southern Oregon.

Letter Number 239. No copy in H. B. Co. A.
M Michel Laframboise
Fort Vancouver 3 April 1832

Dear Sir
I received yours of the 30th March and in regard of Turner you must not allow him to go with you as he has engaged as I always understood to work for a year for [Jean] Dupaty— and as the last has paid us, we can have nothing to do with him till his time is expired— you must positively send for Thomas Chinook little Pierre and Louis as they must accompany you as we have not every year the means as you Know to make a party to go where you are going therefore we must send at present more and when the people are few they can hunt about the Willamette, at the Bottom of this is the names of the freemen on your list and whom you will advertise to go with you

I am Yours truly John McLoughlin

1 Alexis Aubichon

2 Michel Otoetanie

3 Louis Shacgostska

4 Thomas Chinook

5 Little Pierre

6 Charlo

7 Louis Andre

8 Louis Iuongway

9 Francois Charpentier

10 Alexander Carson

11 Pierre Despard [Joseph]

12 Charles Jeaudoins

13 Amable Quesnel

I am told Louis Shanagarate wants to go with you, you can let him go if you chouse — you must send word to those that have to come here to be equipt that they must send their families on after you or with you while they come here so as not to lose time the season is advancing no time must be lost and leave me a list of all those you have advertised in case of any one remaining that I may Know how to act, Mr. Douglas sends you the Axes and Knives you demanded and the Duffles for Borygne but every person ought to take all they want before leaving this place.— will go off in a few days and will overtake you and if any on your list refuse to go they Aubichon will have to go with the Snake party to replace the men I will send you to make up your number and you must get their Horses and traps from them to equip the men I will have to send

(signed) JMcL[15]

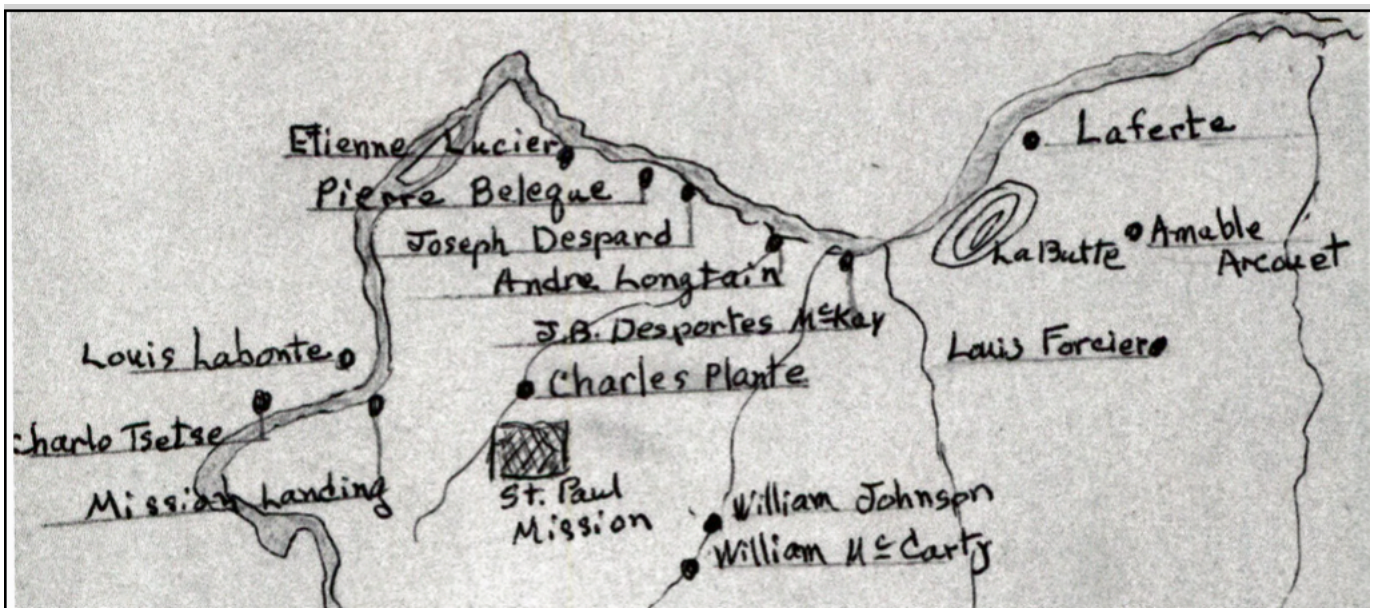
Indians murdered two HBC men near the Umpqua River, and McLoughlin sent the Laframboise brigade to avenge the killing.

> "Report from McLoughlin to Simpson, September 12, 1832
>
> I am sorry to inform you that Pierre Kuraquiron and Thomas Canasawarette were murdered last year by the Killinook Indians. The two deceased had not given any provocation and the only reason why these villains perpetrated this atrocity was to possess themselves of the property of the two deceased. On hearing this melancholy intelligence, I immediately sent Michel Laframboise who was in the Willamette with his party on their way to their hunting grounds to proceed and attack the village of the murderers; which he did and killed 6 of them."[16]

French Prairie

The Despard family settled on French Prairie on 1 November 1838.[17]

Harriet Munnick created a map showing the earliest French Prairie settlers, including the Despard family.[18]



The priests arrive

On 24 November 1838, Rev. F. N. Blanchet and Rev. Modeste Demers arrived at Fort Vancouver, where James Douglas, acting Chief Factor, welcomed them. They visited the local French-Canadian settlements. On 3 January 1839, Etienne Lucier and Pierre Belleque escorted Blanchet by canoe from Fort Vancouver to Champoeg. From there, they rode horses to the log church that would be named St. Paul.[19]

The first mass at St. Paul was held on 6 January 1839. Subsequent masses were held until 3 February 1839 and then from 13 May to 10 June 1839. Those sacraments were recorded in the Vancouver register.

- This 6 January 1839, we priest undersigned have baptized Marguerite, aged 8 months, natural child of Joseph Despard, farmer of this place * Godfather Joseph Gervais who as well as the father has not known how to sign. * and of Lisette, Tchinouke. one reference mark good.[20]

- This 21 January, 1839, in view of the dispensation of 2 bans granted by us Vicar General, and the publication of the third between Joseph Despard of Saint Hyacinthe, District of Montreal, Canada, and now farmer of this place, on the one part, and Lisette Tchinouke by nation, on the other part, nor any impediment having been discovered, we priest undersigned, Missionary, have received their mutual consent of marriage and have given them the nuptial benediction in presence of Jean Baptiste Dupati and of Pierre Stanislas Jacquet, witnesses before whom the spouses have recognized as their legitimate children Joseph aged 12 years, Marie Anne aged 5 years, Rose aged 3 years, and Marguerite aged 1 year the 18 April next. The witnesses as well as the spouses have not known how to sign.[21]
- This 22 January, 1839, we priest undersigned have baptized Marie Anne aged 5 years, legitimate child of Joseph Despard, farmer of this place, and of Lisette Tchinouk. Godfather Etienne Lussier who as well as the father has not known how to sign.[22]
- This 22 January, 1839, we priest undersigned have baptized **Rose** aged 3 years, legitimate child of **Joseph Despard** farmer of this place, and of **Lisette Tchinouk**. Godfather Etienne Lussier who as well as the father has not known how to sign.[23]

On 17 March 1839, "Frederick Despor" purchased lumber from Ewing Young's sawmill for use at the St. Paul Church. Items purchased were

- Three Hundred & 66 feet of Weather Boards for Church; $4.38 ½
- 676 feet of I Inch and ½ plank at .50; $10.14
- Halling; $1.00

On 16 April 1839, he purchased 1000 feet of weather boards for $12.00.[24]

In June 1839, "Frederick" brought in 3 ½ gallon kegs of butter, 12 pounds each, for a credit of $7.20 at Young's store. He also brought in a 3-gallon keg for a credit of $4.80.[25]

The following sacraments involving the Despards were recorded in the St. Paul Church register. In addition to events involving their children, both Joseph and Lisette were named in a number of their neighbors' events.

- This 22 December, 1839, we priest undersigned have buried in the cemetery Joseph of this mission the body of Joseph, natural son of the wife of William McKarty, deceased yesterday at the age of 14, after having received baptism at home. Present **Joseph Despard** and Jean Baptiste Jeaudoin, alone undersigned.[26]
- This 29 January, 1840, after the publication of 3 bans of marriage made at a Sermon of the parish Mass between Jean Baptiste Deguire, domiciled in this place, son of Jean Baptiste Deguire and of Eulalia Bernier of Ste. Genevieve, State of St. Louis, on the one part; and Marie Anne Perrault, domiciled in this place, minor daughter of Jean Baptiste Perrault farmer and of . . . tchinouk by nation on the other part, nor any impediment being discovered, and in view of the consent of the father of the girl, and inquiries made to certify the liberty of the young man, we priest undersigned missionary of the Columbia, have received their mutual consent of marriage and have given them the nuptial benediction in presence of Amable Arcouet, of **Joseph Despard** and of Jean Baptiste Mollens, witnesses, who as well as the spouses and the father of the bride present have not known how to sign.[27]

- This 3 March, 1840, we priest undersigned have baptized Genevieve born day before yesterday of the legitimate marriage of Andre Lonetain farmer of this place, and Nancy Okinogan. Godfather **Joseph Despard**, godmother Genevieve St. Martin, who as well as the father have not known how to sign.[28]
- This 10 August, 1840, in view of the dispensation of one ban of marriage granted by us priest missionary, and the publication of two others, between Etienne Lussier, farmer of this place, widower of the late Josephte Noete on one part, and Marie Marguerite Tchinouk by nation, on the other part, nor any impediment being discovered, we priest undersigned, missionary, have received their mutual consent of marriage and have given them the nuptial benediction in presence of **Joseph Despard** and of Pierre Beleque, who with the spouses have not known how to sign.[29]
- This 4 October, 1840, we priest undersigned have baptized conditionally **Joseph aged about 13 years**, legitimate son of J**oseph Despard**, farmer of this place, and of **Lisette Tchinouk.** Godfather Jean Baptiste Champagne, godmother Ursule Groslouis who have not known how to sign [30]
- This 29 November, 1840, we priest undersigned have baptized **Marie** born the 22 of October of the legitimate marriage of **Joseph Despard,** farmer of this place, and of **Lisette Tchinouk.** Godparents Andre Lonetain and Marguerite Lussier who have not known how to sign.[31]

After Ewing Young died, his property was auctioned off. In September 1841, Despard purchased two hogs for $8.50.[32]

- This 6 February, 1841, we priest undersigned have baptized Helene, aged about 2 months, legitimate daughter of Pierre St. Andre, servant of the Company, and of Marie Tumwater. Godfather **Joseph Despard, Jr.,** godmother Archange Lacourse, who have not known how to sign.[33]
- This 25 December, 1841, we priest undersigned have baptized Jean Baptiste born 8 days ago of the legitimate marriage of Jean Baptiste Deguire, farmer of this place, and of Marie Anne Perreau. Godfather **Joseph Despard**, godmother Reinette Perrault who have not known how to sign.[34]
- This 28 January, 1843, we priest undersigned have baptized Victoire, born the 15 of the present month of the legitimate marriage of **Frederic Despard** farmer of this place and of **Lisette Tchinouk**. Godfather Pierre Beleque, godmother Genevieve Martin who have not known how to sign. F. N. Blanchet, priest.[35]

The Despard family brought other people to their home. Some may have been slaves.

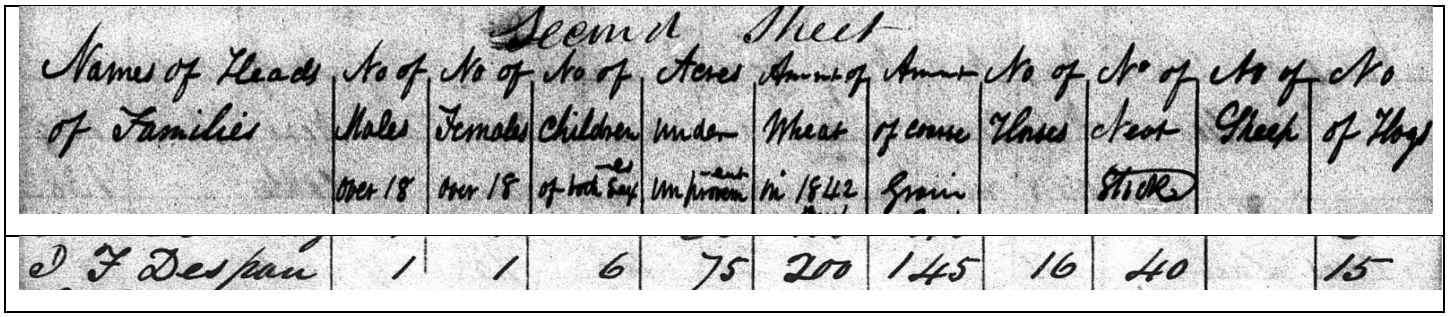
- This 5 July, 1841, we priest undersigned have baptized Josephte, illegitimate of an Indian girl in service at the house of **Frederic Despard.** Godfather **Joseph Despard,** who has not known how to sign.[36]
- The 10 October, 1843, we priest undersigned have baptized in danger of death, in **his hut on the field of** Frederic Despard, an old Indian of the nation of Tchinouk, aged about 50 years. **Godmother, the wife of Frederic Despard.**[37]
- This 17 November, **1843, we priest undersigned have baptized in a hut, at the place of Frederic Despard** an Indian girl in danger of death, aged about 18 years, under the name of Marie.[38]

The 1843 census

In September 1842, Dr. Elijah White, the first Oregon Indian Agent, arrived in the Willamette Valley with a wagon train of settlers. This was his return to Oregon. In 1836, the Methodist Church appointed him as a physician to the Willamette Valley mission. In 1841, due to differences with Jason Lee over mission policies, White resigned and returned to the States.

In 1843, White made a census of settlers in the Oregon Territory. He intended to show that the Territory could be farmed, and that the British had a foothold through their retired HBC employees. The Territory was under a "joint occupancy" agreement between the United States and England. Still, an overwhelming number of Canadian settlers could tip the balance of power, and Oregon could become an English possession. White's census included the number of men, women, and children, a summary of their crops, and the number of farm animals. His census included the J. F Despar household.[39]

Second Sheet



Names of Heads of Families	No of Males over 18	No of Females over 18	No of Children of both sexes	Acres under improvement	Amount of Wheat in 1842	Amount of coarse Grain	No of Horses	No of Neat Stock	No of Sheep	No of Hogs
J F Despar	1	1	6	75	200	145	16	40		15

Provisional Government

In 1843, wagons filled with resettlers arrived in the Oregon Territory. These newcomers outnumbered the French Canadians, and foreshadowed changes that would come to French Prairie. Up to this time, the territory was under joint control of Britain and the United States, and the HBC served as the de facto government.

On 2 May 1843, settlers at Champoeg voted on whether to establish a Provisional Government as a preliminary step towards aligning with the United States. By a 52-to-50 vote, the Provisional Government won.[40] Despard was one of the 50 who voted against the proposal.

The Oregon Provisional Government was established in the spring of 1843. Taxation was an issue, and the assembly adopted a resolution that there would be no taxes. Instead, they adopted a voluntary subscription. Unfortunately, that subscription did not bring in enough money to pay the government bills. In 1844, the legislature passed a voluntary tax act. There was a "catch" to the voluntary part. If a person did not pay the tax, he would not be allowed to vote or to defend his rights in court. The rights included land ownership and debts.[33]

In 1844, the first taxes were assessed on personal property. Despard was taxed on horses valued at $546, cattle valued at $750, and hogs valued at $84.[41] This compares to his three immediate neighbors and to Rev. Blanchet of St. Paul.

- Neighbor Pierre Belleque was taxed on a clock valued at $12.00, watches valued at $20, horses valued at $400, cattle valued at $1,000, and hogs valued at 35.[42]
- Neighbor Etienne Lucier was taxed on a clock valued at $12; horses valued at $360, cattle valued at $441, and hogs valued at $150.[43]
- Neighbor Andre Longtain was taxed on horses valued at $200, horses valued at $255, and hogs valued at $42.[44]

- Rev. F. N. Blanchet was taxed on one mill, valued at $2,000, a clock valued at $12, watches valued at $25, horses valued at $280, cattle valued at $1,800, and hogs valued at $150.[45]

The Oregon provisional government permitted residents to stake out claims and survey them. Any male could claim up to 640 acres (one square mile). Within six months of recording their claim, they were to build a home.[46] On 11 November 1848, Joseph Despar of Champoeg County claimed 500 acres. Church Creek was on the east. His neighbors were Pierre Belieque, J. B. Dubrivill, and Eiken Lucier.[47]

The provisional government authorized the sheriff to take a census after the first Monday in March 1845.

Despard was listed as Joseph Despor Dit Frederick on that census.[48] His household consisted of the following people,

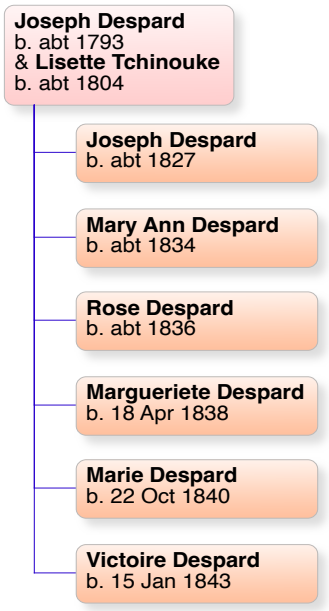
5 females between 12 and 18

1 male 18 to 45

1 male 45 plus

1 female 45 plus

The chart to the right shows the family as they were in 1845.



Back to the St. Paul Church records

• The 20 May, 1844, after the publication of three bans of marriage made at the sermon of our parish Masses between Pierre Gauthier farmer domiciled in this parish, of-age son of Joseph Gauthier farmer, and of Catherine Cartier of the parish of Sorel in Montreal, on one part; and Esther Dalcour, minor daughter of Jean Baptiste Dalcour and of Agathe of this parish, on the other part, nor any impediment appearing, the permission of the father of the said bride having been obtained, we undersigned missionary priest with sufficient powers, have received their mutual consent to marriage and have given them the nuptial benediction in presence of Francois Xavier Mathieux and of Joseph Corneille friends of the groom; of **Joseph Despart** and of John Young **friends of the bride,** who as well as the said spouses have declared not knowing how to sign except the said Mathieu.[49]
• The 8 July [1844], has been buried Benjamin, child of infidel parents deceased yesterday aged about 12 years, living at the house of Fred**eric Despaty** *[Despard]* baptized some days ago.[50]
• The 22 November, 1844, we the undersigned priest have baptized Joseph born yesterday of the legitimate marriage of John Hord and of Catherine Lonetain, farmer of this parish. Godfather **Joseph Despard,** godmother Angelique Lonetain who could not sign. The father absent.[51]
• The 8 March, 1845, we priest missionary of the Society of Jesus have baptized Marie aged about 5 years, born of infidel parents. **Godfather Joseph Despard** who could not sign.[52]

- The 27 October, 1845, we the undersigned priest have baptized Louise, aged 9 months, child of Kattasso and of Wataike, Tchinouk infidels. **Godfather Frederic Despard, godmother Louise, his** wife, who could not sign,[53]

- The 9 November, 1845, we the undersigned priest have buried in the cemetery of this parish the bodies of two little children of the Tchinouk tribe, deceased yesterday at the ho**use of Joseph Despard,** of whom the names have not been discovered at all. Present **Joseph Despard** and Amable Petit who could not sign**.**[54]

- The 31 December, 1845, we the undersigned priest have buried in the cemetery of this mission the body of a young man of the Tchinuk tribe, baptized privately in danger of death by Jean Baptiste Dubreuil and deceased yesterday at the house of **Joseph Despard.** Present Pierre Bellique and Louis Guilbeau.[55]

- The 31 January, 1846, we the undersigned priest have baptized Esther, aged 9 years, and Catherine, aged 9 months, daughters of Alkwatkwolki *[?]* and of Holokitsal, TchinooK, infidels. **Godfather Frederic Despard,** godmother Jane St. Martin.[56]

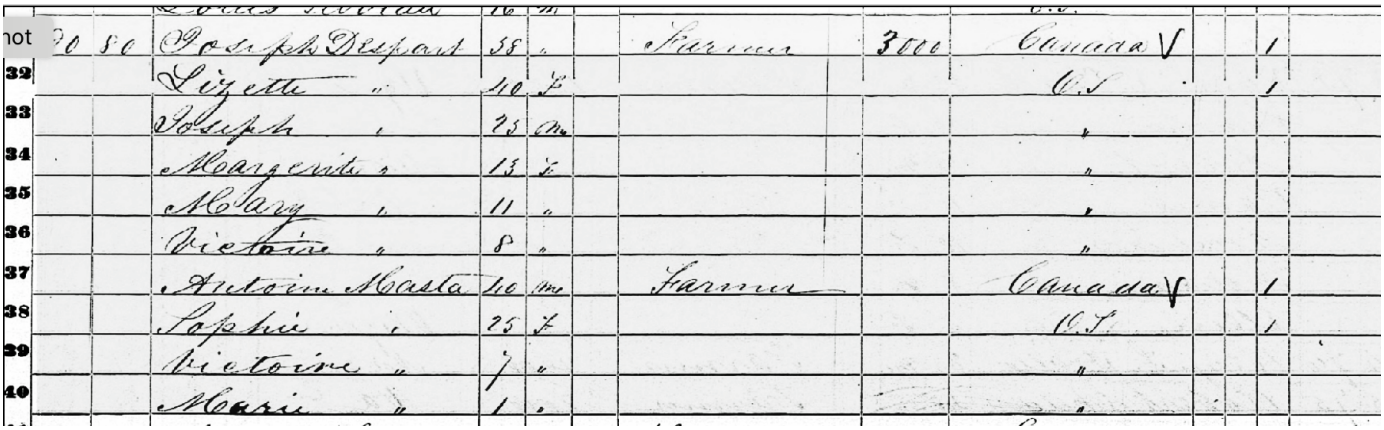
A daughter marries

Marie Anne Despard, the oldest daughter, was born about 1834. She married Joseph Rivet on 16 November 1846 when she was twelve or thirteen years old. At that time, under Catholic Canon Law, girls aged twelve could marry.[57] Oregon law allowed girls to get married at fourteen. If the girl was under 21, she had to have her parents' permission..[58]

- The 16 November, 1846, after the publication of three bans of marriage between Joseph Rivet, widower of Rose Lacourse, on the one part, and **Marie Anne, minor daughter of Frederic Despard and of Louise Tchinook**, on the other part, nor having discovered any impediment, we the undersigned priest have received their mutual consent to marriage and have given them the nuptial benediction in the presence of Pierre Bellique and of Antoine Rivet, who as well as the said spouses could not sign.[59]

The 1850 Marion County census shows the Despard family with four children at home.[60] Despard's real estate was valued at $3,000.

Rose was missing. No marriage record or death record is found for her in the St. Paul Church register.



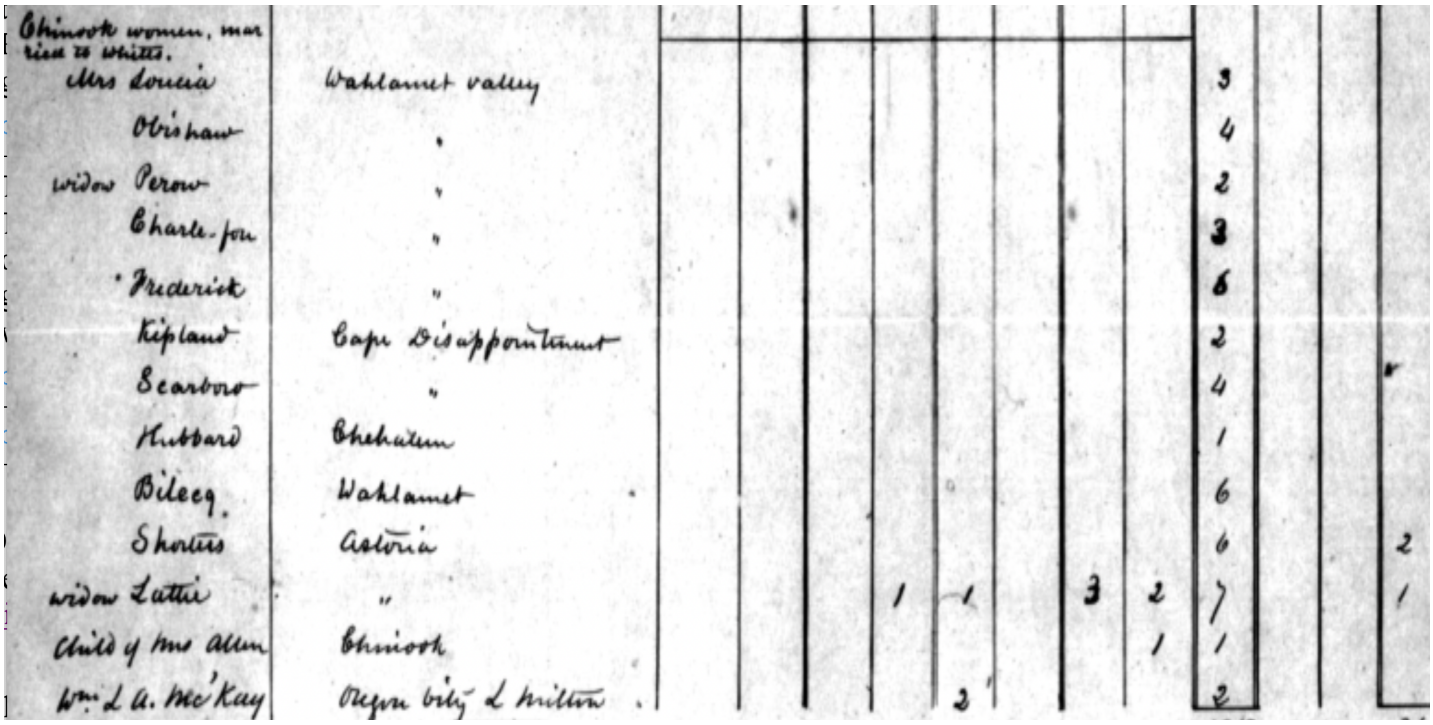
Daughter Marianne and her husband, Joseph Rivet, were also enumerated in the Marion County census. Joseph's children from his first marriage were in the household, as were his parents.[61]

The Antoine Masta family was living with the Despards. Masta married Sophie Chinook on 3 February 1840 in St. Paul.[62]

In 1851, Joseph De Saint Amant, a Frenchman, visited St. Paul. Antoine Masta, now a single man, invited him to spend the night at his cabin. This is part of what Saint Amant wrote about the visit.

> "I quickly learned the whole story of his affairs. A former trapper, he had been born in Canada to French parents from Tours (in the Touraine region); he had secured a land grant, married the prettiest woman of the Chinook tribe, and had two children—one of whom, ten-year-old Fainée, was being raised by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in the French Prairies. Yet his life had been poisoned by the infidelities of Madame Masta. Being a man of little patience, he had tried to bring her back into line with harsh beatings; but this adulterous wife was not of the same mold as Madame Sganarelle, so the remedy backfired: she fled and abandoned him, taking the youngest fruit of their union back to her savage kin. When he wasn't beating his wife, he worked her like a galley slave. A tireless worker himself, he undertook Herculean tasks; without regard for the physical limits of the fairer sex, he would harness his wife alongside his two horses—a regimen that suited her all the less given her heritage, which—much like in certain "national workshops"—knew nothing of what it meant to work up a sweat."[63]

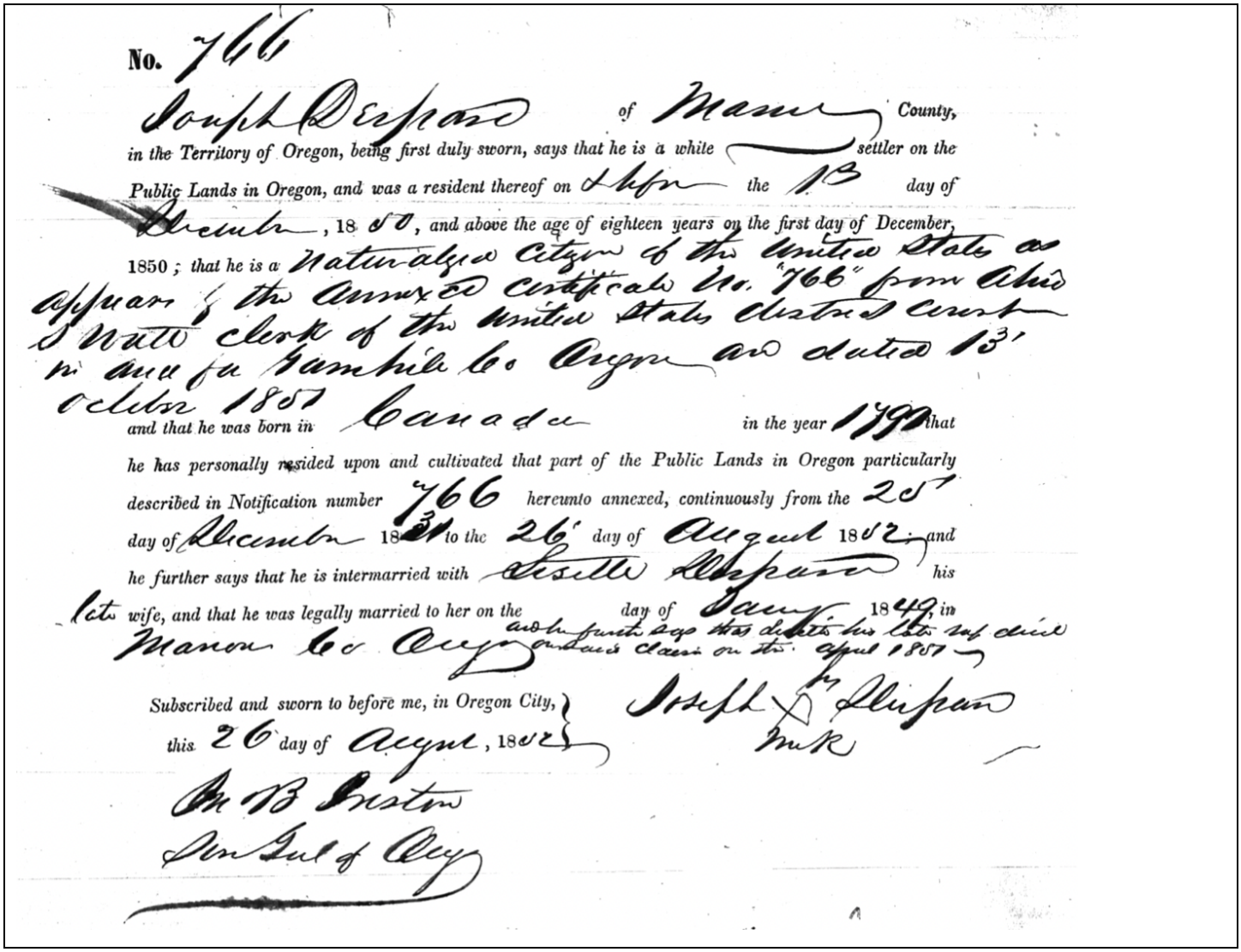
In January 1851, Robert Shortess, Indian sub-agent in Astoria, took a census of the Chinook Indians. A woman named "Frederick" was living in the Willamette Valley. She had six Indians living in her household.[64]. Given the use of the dit name Frederick, this is likely Lizette Despard.



Donation land claim

The provisional claims became null and void when Congress passed the Donation Act of 1850. That act, effective 1 December 1850, granted 320 acres to every American white male settler or American male half-breed Indian over eighteen who filed a claim. The "American" requirement meant the claimant had to be a United States citizen or had declared an intent to become one. For married men, their wives received 320 acres in their own right, and a proof of marriage had to be submitted.

Joseph Despard, a naturalized citizen, claimed 637 acres in Section 34 of Township 3S, Range 2W and Sections 3 and 50 in Township 4S, Range 2W. The north half was his, and the south half was given to Lisette Despard, his "late wife."[65]



No. 766

Joseph Despard of Marion County, in the Territory of Oregon, being first duly sworn, says that he is a white settler on the Public Lands in Oregon, and was a resident thereof on & before the 13 day of December, 1850, and above the age of eighteen years on the first day of December, 1850; that he is a naturalized citizen of the United States as appears by the annexed certificate No. "766" from Alvin S Watt clerk of the United States district court in and for Yamhill Co Oregon and dated 13 October 1851 and that he was born in Canada in the year 1790 that he has personally resided upon and cultivated that part of the Public Lands in Oregon particularly described in Notification number 766 hereunto annexed, continuously from the 25 day of December 1851 to the 26 day of August 1852; and he further says that he is intermarried with Lisette Despard his late wife, and that he was legally married to her on the day of January 1849, in Marion Co Oregon and he further says that Lisette his late wife died on said claim on the April 1851

Subscribed and sworn to before me, in Oregon City, this 26 day of August, 1852

Joseph Despard
Mk

Jn B Preston
Sen Genl of Oreg

Lisette died on 27 April 1851. Because she was alive when the Donation Act took effect, she remained included in the claim.

- The 29 April, 1851, by us priest undersigned has been buried in the cemetery the body of **Marie, [wife of Despart]** deceased 2 days ago, aged 43 years. Present Amable and Charles Petit who have not undersigned.[66]

The Despard home

In 1991, David R. Brauner placed the Joseph Despard cabin site on the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination does not list an address.

An early archaeological project found 693 artifacts. Among the several hundred glass fragments, archaeologists found 35 flat glass fragments, indicating the Despard house had glass windows.

Archaeologists found almost 200 green bottle glass fragments. During the Despard family's time in the cabin, green bottles were used for alcohol and medicine.

Fragments from cast iron kettles suggest they cooked in a fireplace.

A large number of china fragments were found, showing the family used beautiful dishes at their table. The Willow pattern was the most common, with Excelsior (Voilet) coming in second.

Pipe fragments dated from circa 1840 to 1857.

In 1951, Harriet Duncan Munnick started collecting French Prairie artifacts -- china fragments, nails, bricks, bottles, glass, and so on -- found around where the early settlers had their houses. She collected samples of patterns found at the Etienne Lucier, Pierre Belleque, Joseph Despard, Joseph Gervais, and Michel Laframboise house sites. Helen Austin and Joe McKay joined her at various times.

Here are three patterns found at the Despard site.



Canovian[67]

Made between 1818 and 1834

Found by Helen Austin



Siam[68]

Joseph Clementson maker



Union Wreath[69]

Circa 1822 – 1847

Spode; Copeland & Garrett

Harriet took her collection of china fragments to the next level. She collected complete pieces and ended with the largest collection of ceramic ware from the early French Prairie area.[70]

She donated many of these to the St. Paul Mission Historical Society, and some have been cataloged and uploaded to the Society's website. This image is an example.



Willow pattern

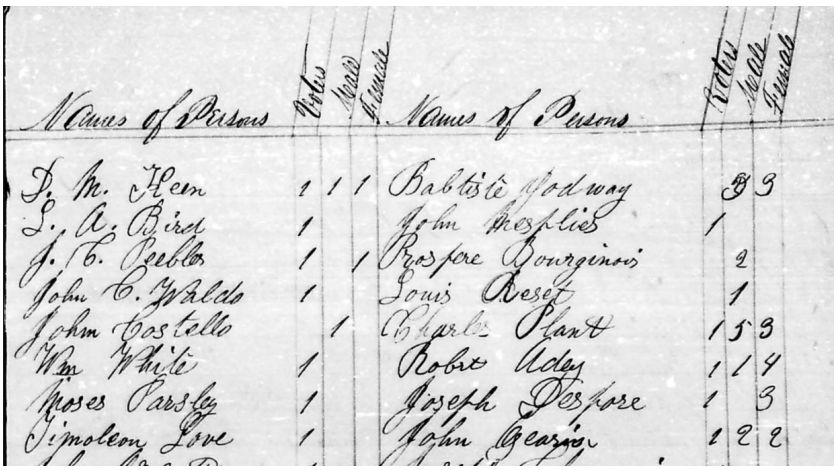
Material: earthenware
Style: handled
Decoration Type: blue transfer

Pattern Date: c.1780-20th century (Chapman, 1991, p,162)

Maker's Mark: none present[71]

The Despard family grows

In 1853, a census was taken. This portion shows the Joseph Despore household. There was one voter in the family. Since only males could vote, that would be Joseph. Three females completed the family.[72]



Daughter Marie Anne's husband, Joseph Rivet, died on 11 March 1852, leaving Marie Anne with two infants. She married Francois Xavier Gervais on 2 May 1853.

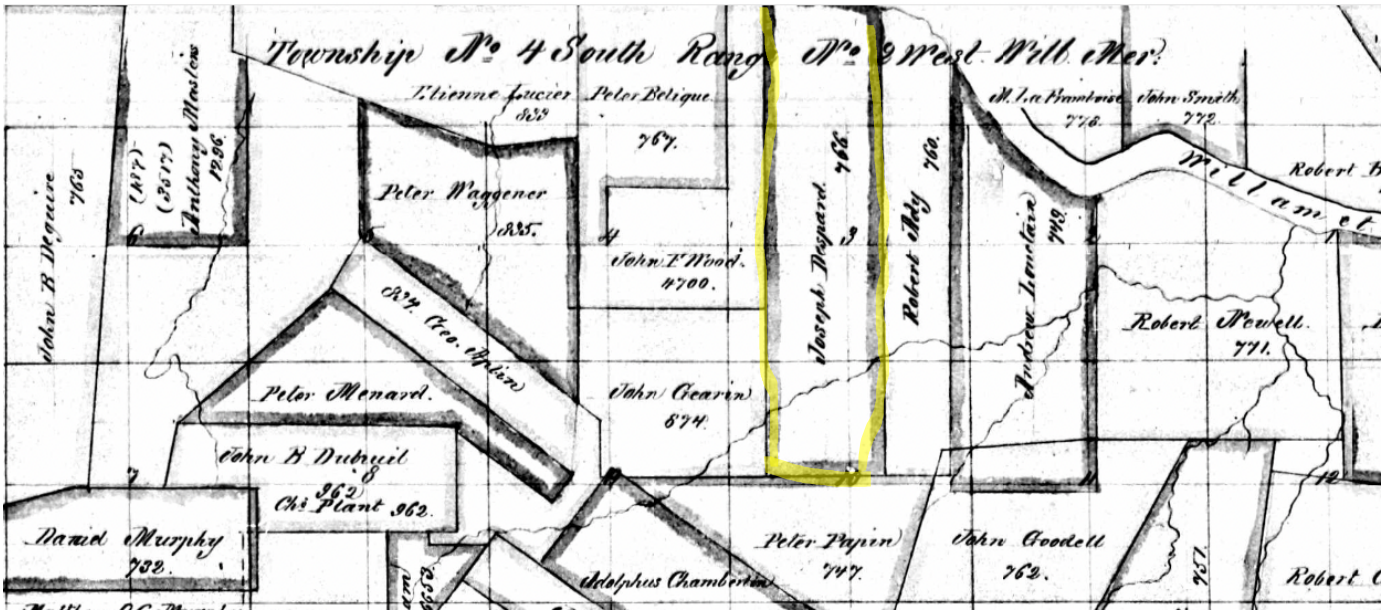
- The 2 of May, 1853, in view of the publication of three banns of marriage made at the sermon of our parish masses of St. Louis, of-age son of Joseph Gervais, inhabitant of the same parish and the late Marguerite Clatsop on the one part, and **Marianne Despard,** of the parish of St. Paul, of-age daughter of **Joseph Despard**, inhabitant of the same parish and of the late **Lizette Tchinook**, and widow of Joseph Rivet; nor having encountered any impediment, we undersigned parish priest of St. Louis have received their mutual consent to marriage and have given them the nuptial

benediction in the presence of Joseph Gervais father of the groom, of Joseph Despard, father of the bride, of M. Lebas, priest who has signed with us, Fabien Maloin and Georges Rondeau.[73]

- The 30 August, 1854, we undersigned parish priest of St. Louis have baptized Françoise born the 12 of this month of the legitimate marriage of Xavier Gervais and of **Marie Anne Federic [*Despard*]** inhabitants of this parish. Godfather Fabien Maloin, godmother Victoire Laderoute who has signed with us.[74]

- The 3 July, 1855, in view of the dispensation of two publications of banns granted by power conceded by Archbishop F .N . Blanchet, and considering also the dispensation of the impediment of public propriety by reason of the betrothal contracted with the sister of the wife and after the publication of one bann of marriage between Leon Morel son of Louis Morel and of Josette Chaudiere of Canada, of Vancouver's Island, on the one part, and **Marguerite Despar, daughter of Joseph Despar and Lisette Chinouk,** of this mission, nor having discovered any impediment, and with the consent of the father of the bride, we priest undersigned have received their mutual consent to marriage, and have given them the nuptial benediction in the presence of **Joseph Despar** and of Adolphe Chamberland, Casimire Gardipie.[75]

On 1 October 1856, Joseph Despard sold the north half of his donation claim to J. B. Ducharme. The purchase price was $1,050.[76] The north half bordered on the Willamette River and was where the family had their house and farm. This map shows where the Despard claim was located.[77]



The family still attended the St. Paul Catholic Church. Daughter Marie married Francois Bernier.

- The 22 May, 1858, dispensation having been granted for the 3 bans of marriage between Francois Bernier, son of Francois Bernier and of Genevieve Ayotte on the one part, and **Marie Despard**, of-age daughter of **Joseph Despard and Lizette Chinook** on the other part, we undersigned have

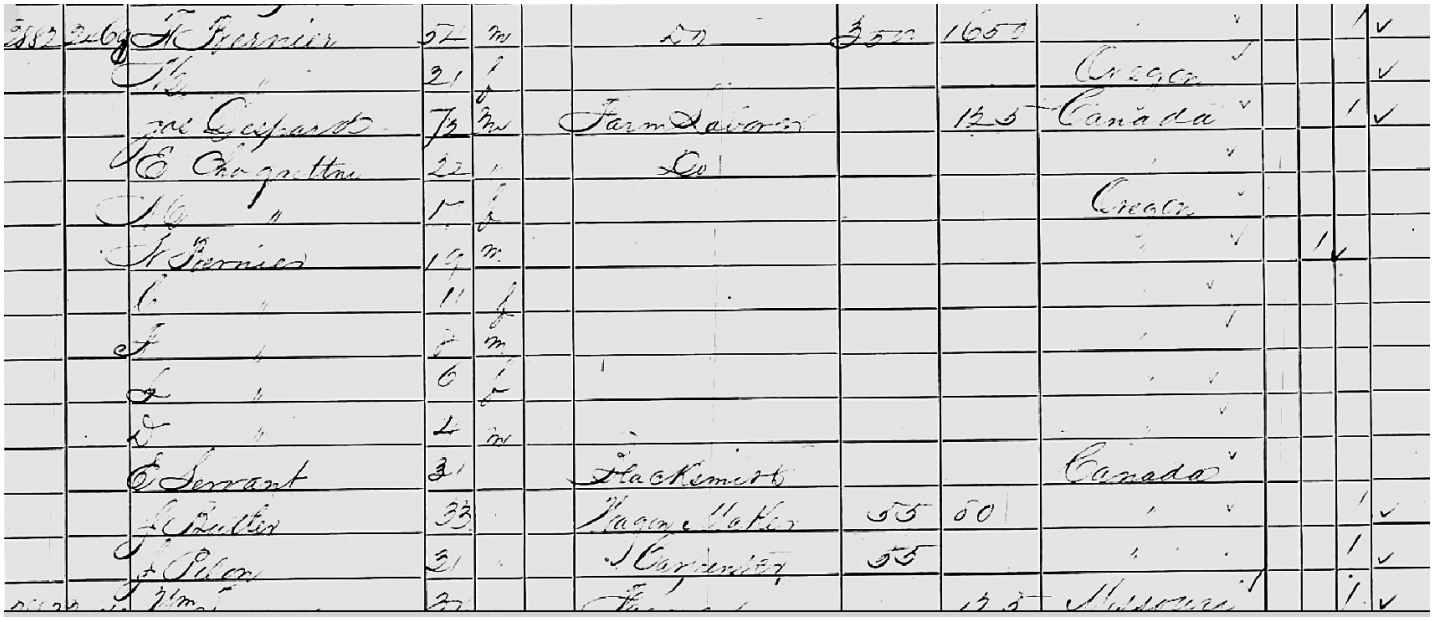
received their mutual consent to marriage and have given them the nuptial benediction, in the presence of Amable Petit and of William Tison, witnesses.[78]

Victoire, the youngest Despard daughter, gave birth to a son on 22 July 1857. A year later, she married Roque Pichet, the father.

• The 13 June, 1858, has been baptized by us undersigned priest, Jacques born the 22nd of July, 1857, son of Roch Pichet and of **Victoire Despard**, the godfather Pierre Lacourse, the godmother Marie St. Martin.[79]
• The 21 July, 1858, after the publication of one bann of marriage (dispensation being granted for the others) between Roque Pichet, son of Louis Pichet and of Marguerite Bercier, of this place, on the one part, and **Victoire Despar, minor daughter of Joseph Despard**, of this place, and of **Lisette Chinook**, deceased, on the other part, we undersigned have received their mutual consent to marriage and have given them the nuptial benediction in the presence of Charles Prévost and of Francois Poirier, witnesses.[80]
• The 18 March, 1860, we parish priest undersigned have baptized Esther, born this day of the legitimate marriage of Roch Pichet and of Victoire **Despart**, of this parish. Godfather Dominique Pichet. Godmother Marguerite Lacourse who as well as the father could not sign.[81]

In 1860, Joseph Despard was living in the Berniers' Fairfield household.[82]

Fairfield, six miles south of St. Paul, sat on the Willamette River and served as a wheat shipping point with a steamboat landing. In 1860, it hosted one of Marion County's nine post offices.



F. Bernier, 54, m, farmer, born Canada
M. Bernier, 21, f., born Oregon
Jos Despart, 72, m, Farm Laborer, personal estate valued at $125, born Canada, cannot read and write English, a check mark in the column for "Whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, idiotic, pauper, or convict"
E. Choguette, 22, m. Farm laborer, born Oregon

N, Choguette, 17, f, born Oregon
N. Bernier, 19, m, born Oregon, attended school within the year
C. Bernier, 11, f, born Oregon
F. Bernier, 8, m, born Oregon
I. Bernier, 6, f, born Oregon
D. Bernier, 4, m., born Oregon
E Servant, 34, Blacksmith, born Canada
J. Butler, 33, Wagon Maker, $55 real estate, $50 personal estate, born Canada, cannot read and write English, check mark in the column for "Whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, idiotic, pauper, or convict"
J. Pelon, 31, Carpenter, born Canada, cannot read and write English, check mark in the column for "Whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, idiotic, pauper, or convict"

More marriages

- The 7 September, 1861, we parish priest undersigned have baptized Joseph, born the 5 of the legitimate marriage of Frs. Bernier and Marie **Despart**, of this parish. Godfather Amable Petit, godmother Victoire Despart, who could not sign.[83]

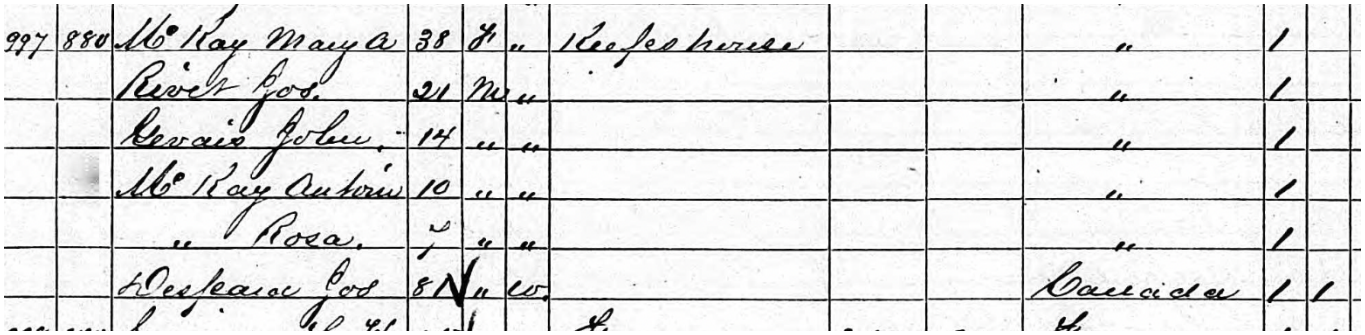
- The 20 July, 1862, we parish priest undersigned have baptized Marie Jeanne born the 15 of the legitimate marriage of Roch Pichette and of Victoire **Despart** of this parish. Godfather Frs. Bernier, godmother Marie Despart who could not sign[84].

On 3 February 1863, Joseph Despard, Rock Pichette, and Victorie Pichette sold 36 acres of Despard's donation claim to Peter Papin for $108.[85]

On 8 February 1866, Joseph Despard, Rock Pichet, and Victoria Pichet sold 68 acres in the south part of the land claim to Charles Dupie and Andrew Shallifoe. The price was $140.00.[86]

On 10 June 1867, Joseph Despard, Mary Ann McKay, Mary Bernier, and Francois Bernier sold 210 acres of the land claim to James McKay. The purchase price was $262.50[87]

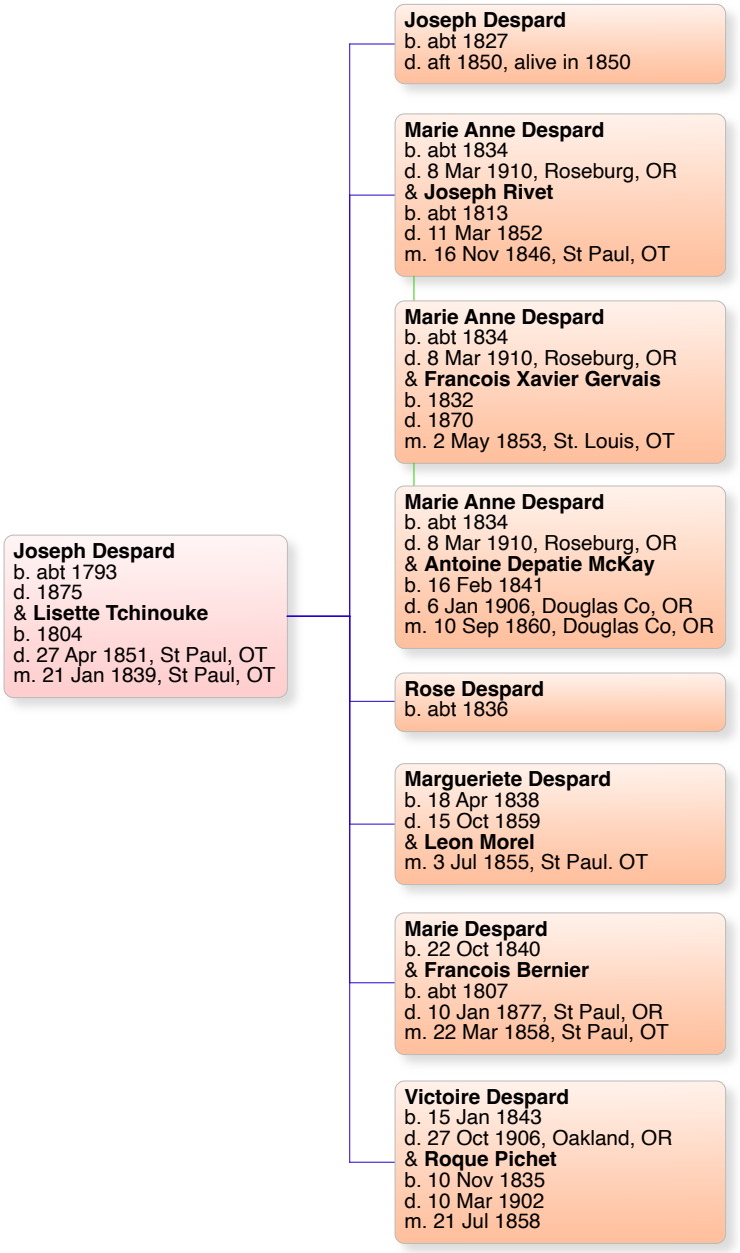
In 1870, Despard was enumerated in his daughter Mary Anne's Fairfield, Oregon, census. Mary Ann's children by three fathers were in the house.[88]



Joseph dies

- On May 11, 1875, we the undersigned pastor of St. Paul have buried **Joseph F. Despard** of this place, deceased on the 9th instant, at the age of 87 years. Present, Roch Pichette and David Mongrain.[89]

Joseph and Lisette's children



Connie Lenzen, 4 September 2026

End Notes

[1] Joseph Despard's Hudson's Bay Company biographical sheet, https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/_assets/docs/hbca/biographical/d/despard_joseph-frederick.pdf.

[2] Julie Kidd, *1845 Census of the Territory South of the Columbia and West of the Cascade Mountains* (Portland, Oregon: Oregon Territorial Press, 1997), 4.

[3] Despard nicknames, *Programme De Recherche en Demographie Historique*; https://www.prdh-igd.com/.

[4] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *Catholic Church Records of the Pacific Northwest: Vancouver, Volume I* (St. Paul, Oregon: French Prairie Press, 1972), p. 27, M-5.

[5] 1850 Marion County, Oregon Territory, federal census, p. 156, dwelling 80, family 80, Joseph Despard; *Ancestry.*

[6] 1850 Marion County, Oregon Territory, federal census, p. 156, dwelling 80, family 80, Joseph Despard; *Ancestry.*

[7] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Register_of_Historic_Places_listings_in_Marion_County,_Oregon.

[8] Joseph Despard biographical sheet, https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/_assets/docs/hbca/biographical/d/despard_joseph-frederick.pdf.

[9] "Journal of John Work, November and December 1824," from *Washington Historical Quarterly* III (1912); https://user.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/html/jwork/work02.html.

[10] Dan McShane, "From the Columbia River to the Fraser River in 1824 – John Work;" https://washingtonlandscape.blogspot.com/2020/12/from-columbia-river-to-fraser-river-in.html.

[11] *Memorial of William A. Slacum Praying Compensation for his services in obtaining information in relation to the settlements on the Oregon river December 18, 1837* (Fairfield, Washington: Ye Galleon Press, 1972), 10.

[12] Slacum, *Memorial*, 6.

[13] *Peter Skene Ogden's Snake Country Journal*, 1825-26, taken from *The Journal of the Oregon Historical Society*, Vol. X, No. 4 (Dec 1909), 342; *Internet Archive*.

[14] T. C. Elliott, "Journal of John Work's Snake Country Expedition of 1830-31. Second Half." *The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society* 14, no. 3 (1913): 308; http://www.jstor.org/stable/20609938.

[15] Burt Brown Barker, *Letters of Dr. John McLoughlin Written at Fort Vancouver 1829–1832* (Portland: Binfords & Mort, 1948), 266 – 67.

[16] R. Scott Byram, "Colonial Power and Indigenous Justice: Fur Trade Violence and Its Aftermath in Yaquina Narrative" (University of California, Berkeley, 2008), 371; Oregon Websites and Watersheds Project, Inc.; http://www.orww.org/1828_Umpqua_Memorial/References%20/Byram_20080920.pdf.

[17] Oregon Donation Land Claim, Oregon City Land Office, claim no. 3166 for Joseph Despard, citing National Archives microfilm publication M815, roll 40; images obtained from Genealogical Forum of Oregon, Portland, Oregon.

[18] Harriet D. Munnick, *Priest's Progress* (Portland: Binford & Mort, 1989), 67.

[19] Wilfred P. Schoenberg, *A History of the Catholic Church in the Pacific Northwest 1743-1983* (Washington, DC: The Pastoral Press, 1987), 42.

[20] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *Vancouver*, p. 25, B-22.

[21] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *Vancouver*, p. 27, M-5.

[22] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *Vancouver*, p. 30, B-57.

[23] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *Vancouver*, p. 30, B-58.

[24] F. G. Young and Joaquin Young, "Ewing Young and His Estate: A Chapter in the Economic and Community Development of Oregon," *The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Sep, 1920), 223; *Jstor;* http://www.jstor.org/stable/20610165.

[25] F. G. Young and Joaquin Young, "Ewing Young and His Estate, p. 222.

[26] Harriet Duncan Munnick, comp. *Catholic Church Records of the Pacific Northwest: St. Paul, Oregon 1839-1898* (Portland, OR: Binford & Mort, 1979); Vol I, p. 3, S-2.

[27] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. 1, p. 5, M-1.

[28] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. 1, p. 6, B-17.

[29] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. 1, p. 15, M-17.

[30] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol.1, p, 17, B-281.

[31] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. 1, p. 20, B-296.

[32] F. G. Young and Joaquin Young, "Ewing Young and His Estate, p. 283.

[33] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. 1, p. 21a, B-309.

[34] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. 1, p. 41, B-122.

[35] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. 1, p. 66, B-93.

[36] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. 1, p. 173, B-29.

[37] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. 1, p. 81, B-47.

[38] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. 1, p 88, B-60.

[39] Lists of settlers west of Rockies, 1842 by Elijah White, Indian Agent," *FamilySearch* DGS 8276177, image 117; citing List of Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1842 – 1880, Oregon Superintendency, NARA M234, reel 607, image 112.

[40] Charles Henry Carey, *History of Oregon*, Vol. I (Chicago: The Pioneer Historical Publishing Company, 1922), 379.

[41] Leslie M. Scott, "First Taxpayers in Oregon, 1844." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (1930): 14; http://www.jstor.org/stable/20610516.

[42] Leslie M. Scott, *Taxpayers,* p 13.

[43] Leslie M. Scott, *Taxpayers,* p. 18.

[44] Leslie M. Scott, *Taxpayers,* p. 18.

[45] Leslie M. Scott, *Taxpayers,* p. 12.

[46] Lottie Gurley, comp. *Genealogical Material in Oregon Provisional Land Claims*, Abstracted; Volumes I-III, 1845-1849 (Portland: The Genealogical Forum of Portland, 1982), Foreword.

[47] Lottie Gurley, *Genealogical Material in Oregon Provisional Land Claims*, p. 257.

[48] Julie Kidd, *1845 Census of the Territory South of the Columbia and West of the Cascade Mountains* (Portland, Oregon; Oregon Territorial Press, 1997), 4.

[49] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. 1, p. 96, M-6.

[50] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. 1, p. 100, S-15.

[51] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. 1, p. 104, B-41.

[52] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. 1, p. 110, B-59.

[53] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. 1, p. 124, B-110.

[54] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. 1. p. 125, S-50.

[55] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. 1, p. 128, S-57.

[56] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. 1, p. 128, B-125.

[57] Edward Peter, "Too Young to Marry," *CanonLaw.Info* (https://www.canonlaw.info/a_tooyoung.htm).

[58] La Fayette Grover, *The Oregon Archives: Including the Journals, Governors' Messages and Public Papers of Oregon* (Salem: Asahell Bush, Public Printer, 1863), p. 31, Article 17.

[59] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. 1, p. 144, M-27.

[60] 1850 Marion County, Oregon Territory, federal census, p. 156, dwelling 80, family 80, Joseph Despard; *Ancestry.*

[61] 1850 Marion County, Oregon, federal census, p. 98 (stamped), dwelling 373, family 373, Joseph Rivet; *Ancestry*.

[62] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. I, p. 5, M-3.

[63] M. De Saint Amant, *Voyages to Californie et Dans L'Oregon* (Paris: L. Maison, Libraire, 1854), 195; *Internet Archive*, https://archive.org/details/voyagesencalifo02saingoog/page/n7/mode/2up/.

[64] David G. Lewis, "1851 Census of the Chinook tribe of Indians," in "Early Counts of Western Oregon Tribal Peoples," *NDNhistoryresearch*; https://ndnhistoryresearch.com/2017/09/24/early-counts-of-western-oregon-tribal-peoples/1851-1-chinook-census/.

[65] Oregon Donation Land Claim, Oregon City Land Office, claim no. 3166 for Joseph Despard, citing National Archives microfilm publication M815, roll 40; images obtained from Genealogical Forum of Oregon.

[66] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. I1, p. 36, S-11.

[67] Judith Sanders Chapman, *French Prairie ceramics: The Harriet D. Munnick archaeological collection circa 1820-1860 : a catalog and Northwest comparative guide*. (Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University, Dept. of Anthropology, 1993), 132-3.

[68] Judith Sanders Chapman, *French Prairie ceramics,* p.155.

[69] Judith Sanders Chapman, *French Prairie ceramics,* p 158.

[70] Judith Sanders Chapman, *French Prairie ceramics,* p 1.

[71] Willow pattern, *St Paul Mission Historical Society*; https://spmhs.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/55CA2438-26F1-414C-9C77-023174181030

[72] 1853 Marion County census; originals at Oregon State Archives, Salem, Oregon.

[73] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *Catholic Church Records of the Pacific Northwest: St. Louis Register,* (Portland: Binford & Mort, 1982), Vol. 1, p. 4, M-3.

[74] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Louis*, Vol. 1, p 67, B-24.

[75] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. I1, p. 73, M-3.

[76] Marion County Deeds, Vol. 2, p. 85.

[77] U.S., Indexed Early Land Ownership and Township Plats, 1785-1898; *Ancestry*.

[78] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. I1, p. 94, M-6.

[79] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. I1, p. 95, B-10.

[80] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. I1, p. 97, M-9.

[81] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. I1, p. 106, B-11.

[82] 1860 Marion County, Oregon, federal census, Fairfield Precinct, Fairfield Post Office, page 288, stamped 391, dwelling 2882, family 2469; *Ancestry.*

[83] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. I1, p. 120, B-21.

[84] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. I1, p. 131, B-29.

[85] Marion County Deed, Vol. 6, p. 187.

[86] Marion County Deeds, Vol. 8: 398.

[87] Marion County, Oregon, Deeds, Vol. 9: 378.

[88] 1870 Marion County, Oregon, federal census, Fairfield Pct, Fairfield Post Office, page 114, dwelling 997, family 880, Mary A. McKay; *Ancestry.*

[89] Harriet Duncan Munnick, *St. Paul*, Vol. II1, p 83, S-7.