

Private Francis “Frank” J. McCoy III’s great-great-grandparents were Peter Cuthbert James Grant Sr., born in Cromdale, Strathspey, Inverness-shire, Scotland, and died in 1848 in Lachine, Québec, and Marguerite Macheyquayzaince Utinawasis Son-Gabo-Ki-Che-Ta (Clear Sky Woman), born in 1776 in Ruperts Land Qu'Appelle Valley, Saskatchewan, and died in 1864 in St. Eustache, Manitoba. The family were Métis, a distinct Indigenous people with a unique history, culture, language, and way of life. The Métis Nation is comprised of descendants of people born of relations between First Nations women and European men. The offspring of these unions were of mixed ancestry.

Private Francis “Frank” J. McCoy III was born October 5, 1847, in what later became Newport, Minnesota, son of Francis McCoy, Jr. (1818-1888) from the Red River Settlement in Hudson Bay, Saskatchewan, and Louis Cadotte McCoy.

Frank’s grandparents were Francois Xavier Makaye McCoy (1782-1860) and Margaret Grant Sagan Lagrue (1794-1872); and Benjamin Cadotte (1792-1858) and Joseph Saulteaux Cardotte (1800-1832).

Private McCoy’s great-grandparents were Francois McCoy McQuois (1760-1840) and his wife, Winona, and Peter Cuthbert James Grant, Sr. (1764-1848) and Marguerite Macheyquayzaince Utinawasis Son-Gabo-Ki-Che-Ta (Clear Sky Woman); and Laurent Cardotte Sr. (1766-1874) and Suzanne Unitawasis Maskegonne (1766-1874).

Private McCoy’s great-great-grandparents were Peter Cuthbert James Grant, Sr., born in Cromdale, Strathspey, Inverness-shire, Scotland, and died in 1848 in Lachine, Québec. His parents (and Frank’s great-great-great-grandparents were Angus Ballaguachaidh Grant (1742-1805) and Mary Ann McKenzie Grant (1743-1817); and Marguerite Macheyquayzaince Utinawasis Son-Gabo-Ki-Che-Ta (Clear Sky Woman), born in 1776 in Ruperts Land Qu’Appelle Valley, Saskatchewan, and died in 1864 in St. Eustache, Manitoba. Her parents (Frank’s great-great-great-grandparents include Delonais Ojibwaince Songab Okichita Son gabo ki che ta, and Claire Equaywid Ahdik Songab Doodem Nokomis).

Frank’s grandfather, Francois Xavier McCoy, was a Chippewa Métis, born in 1782 in Red River and married in 1818, at Red River to Margaret Sagan a.k.a. Lagrue. McCoy and Lagrue are Chippewa. They moved to Minnesota in 1830-1831 according to Ruth G. Clasrest. The Mayke or Makye are believed to be a distortion of McCoy or possibly a camp or tribe name in or near Red River.

In the Minnesota region during the eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries, *métis*, or mixed-ancestry, people often acted as bridges between white and Native American communities. The Métis cultural community of Pembina formed out of fur trade dynamics and influenced Minnesota during its territorial birth.

The term *métis* has multiple meanings. One references a person with mixed ancestry (*métis* means “mixed” in French) and is usually written with a lowercase “m.” For example, in Minnesota before statehood, having one Dakota parent and one Scottish parent made one métis. Another meaning identifies present-day members of the Métis Nation of Canada. This specific mixed-ancestry group practices distinct ways of life. People representative of both groups — the métis and the Métis Nation — were involved in the fur trade era in pre-territorial Minnesota and around the Great Lakes.

Mothers of Métis and mixed-ancestry children of the Great Lakes region came from the Dakota and Ojibwe nations as well as the Menominee, Potawatomi, Meskwaki, Sauk, Ho Chunk, Odawa, Cree, and Assiniboine. Scottish, Irish, French, and British fathers lived during the French, British, and American periods of colonization. They were *coureurs de bois* (French or métis traders), voyageurs, artisans, merchants, soldiers, officers, and government workers. Additionally, some mixed-ancestry children had one Black parent and one Native parent. Historical accounts describe marriages of men with African ancestry with Native women. James Thompson (eventually freed from slavery) married a Dakota woman in 1833. Joseph Godfrey escaped slavery and married a Dakota woman named Takanyeca in 1857. Pierre Bonga, a free man, married an Ojibwe woman, and their son George Bonga married Ashwewin, who was Ojibwe as well. These men lived and died in close association with their wives’ communities.

Marriages with Native women allowed the men to build bonds with their wives’ extended families. These husbands tapped into new economic opportunities, accessed hunting areas, influenced trading, and benefited from the many skills and kinship ties of their Native wives. The women themselves also gained social status, influence, and access to resources. Some of these marriages were *á la façon du pays*, French for “according to the custom of the country.”

The métis were able to use different parts of their identity to survive day to day. This made for a variety of life stories. Jane Lamont, the Scottish and Dakota granddaughter of the Dakota leader Mahpiya Wicasta (Cloud Man), lost both parents before she was 19 years old. She was at first a teacher, then chose homesteading and marriage to the nephew of missionary Samuel Pond.

In the 1820s, the number of mixed-ancestry families and children in Minnesota soared. This

began to change in the mid- to late-1800s, when the need for the métis as go-betweens declined. Pelagie Faribault, a woman of mixed Dakota ancestry, received land through an 1820 treaty with the Dakota. Roughly between 1830 and 1851, the Lake Pepin region contained land set aside by treaty for mixed-ancestry families. Much of it was lost to white colonists or exchanged for land certificates (scrip) in other locations.

Métis intermarried and passed on a culture combining what their parents had brought from their own backgrounds. Certain symbols persist as markers of Métis life. Brightly colored sashes and the sash dance, floral beadwork, and the infinity symbol flag are symbols of Métis culture. Métis music and dance traditions include jigging, fiddling, and tunes such as the Duck Dance Fiddle Song. Some Métis families celebrate Easter and maple sugar season with specific foods, like crepes with maple syrup. Linguists recognize the French Métis language and Michif as official languages spoken in the United States and Canada.

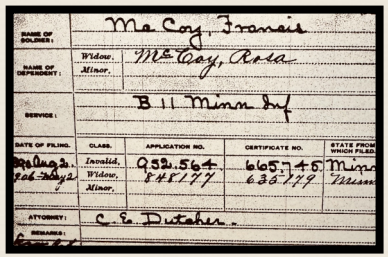
Francis “Frank” J. McCoy III volunteered to serve in the Civil War at age 17. He was described as 5’5”, with hazel eyes and brown hair. He became a private in Company B, 11th Minnesota Infantry.

In the National Park Service’s Civil War site: Organized at Fort Snelling, Minn., August and September 1864. Moved to Chicago, St. Louis, Mo., and Nashville, Tenn., September 20-October 5, 1864. Attached to railroad guard Louisville & Nashville Railroad, Dept. of the Cumberland, to March 1865. 4th Sub-District, District of Middle Tennessee, Dept. of the Cumberland, to June 1865. Service: Assigned to duty guarding line of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad from Nashville to the Kentucky line. Company “B” at Edgefield Junction October 1864, to June 1865. Moved to St. Paul June 26-July 5. Mustered out June 26, 1865, and discharged at St. Paul July 11, 1865.

Private Francis “Frank” J. McCoy III married Rose Laramie in 1871. They had four children: Cecelia Nellie, Nellie Rose, John, and Thomas Alexander.

On April 13, 1906, Private McCoy died in Savage, and he was buried at Valley Cemetery in Shakopee. Rose died in 1925, and was buried near her husband in Shakopee, according to *Find a Grave*.





Bibliography

Davies, J. “Frank ‘Frank’ McCoy.” *Find a Grave*, 4 July 2010. www.findagrave.com/memorial/54460111/francis-mccoy.

SHAKOPEE HERITAGE SOCIETY
2109 Boulder Pointe, Shakopee, MN 55379
952-693-3865
shakopeeheritage.org



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Private Francis “Frank” McCoy

1847-1906

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