



Patrick "Aun nish e nau bay" Gourneau Portrait by Rita Gourneau Erdrich

## PATRICK “AUN NISH E NAUBAY” GOURNEAU 1954–1958



**Patrick Gourneau.**

Patrick Moses Gourneau was born in 1904. He was born on the Turtle Mountain Reservation. His parents were Joseph and Eliza Gourneau. His grandfather was one of the warriors who signed the Old Crossing Treaty of 1863, Joseph Gornan. During his early years, he started a truck farm business. The business proved successful and lasted 23 years, supporting his large family. Patrick Gourneau was elected as Chairman of the Council in 1954. At that time, the council was known as the "Chippewa Advisory Committee." As chairman he testified before Congress against termination of the Turtle Mountain Band. He served on a national committee on civil rights and was instrumental in putting together the charter for United Tribes Development Corporation. During his term he worked to secure 75 percent of the jobs for

the Chippewa at the William Langer Jewel Bearing Plant. He resigned from the Council in 1958 because of ill health. He wrote a history of the Turtle Mountains and took a strong leadership role in revival of the traditional customs of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa. In 1986, he was awarded the North Dakota Heritage Profile Honor Award. He died in 1989.

[http://www.ndstudies.org/resources/IndianStudies/turtlemountain/leaders\\_contemporary1.html](http://www.ndstudies.org/resources/IndianStudies/turtlemountain/leaders_contemporary1.html)

## **History of United Tribes And Fort Lincoln**

### **Founding**

**<https://www.uttc.edu/about/history/founding.asp>**

*United Tribes Technical College is governed by a ten-member board of directors made up of the chairperson and one delegate selected from each of the five tribes located wholly, or in part, in the state: Three Affiliated Tribes of the Mandan/Hidatsa/Arikara Nation; Spirit Lake Tribe; Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate; Standing Rock Tribe; and Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa.*

UTTC's start is rooted in the vision and activism of tribal leaders in North Dakota in the 1960s. Faced with threats to their sovereignty as tribal nations, and the need for training and jobs development for their people, they joined together to form the United Tribes of North Dakota Development Corporation, chartered in 1968. This alliance became both a regional, intertribal organization and an intertribal training and education center controlled and operated by tribal government representatives. Their determined effort locally, and in the U.S. Congress, was successful in obtaining Fort Lincoln, the former military post south of Bismarck, as a training facility. Classes began at United Tribes Employment Training Center following a dedication program in September 1969.

The formation of United Tribes coincided with national discussions about shifting public policy toward "Indian self determination." The college became the second institution in the country founded as part of the "tribal college movement," the successful grassroots effort to establish tribally controlled higher education facilities. UTTC holds the distinction of being the first intertribally controlled and operated postsecondary vocational school in the nation. Modern educational buildings and equipment now combine with 100 year-old, repurposed military buildings, transforming the former government property.

Coming together as the tribes did proved the adage that "there is strength in numbers," and showed the level of success when working together. It bonded them in the common cause of seeking solutions for tribal people on their own terms and conditions. In the 21st Century, North Dakota tribal leaders remain unified through this intertribal organization. United Tribes of North Dakota is an active organization with an influential voice among the Tribes, the Federal government and States on a wide range of public policy issues, not only in North Dakota but throughout Indian Country.

**Pat Gourneau**  
**Writes of Turtle**  
**Mountain History**

*Bottineau Courant*  
*3/11/70*



Patrick Gourneau

Patrick Gourneau, longtime resident and well known leader of the Belcourt Community, has retired from his position with the William Langer Jewel Bearing Plant at Rolla, with which he has been associated for many years. His retirement came with the compulsory retirement age limit.

Mr. Gourneau is also a well known authority on Indian history and customs. He has taken keen interest of the hisotry of the Chippewa Indians of the Turtle Mountain area and in the history of the Turtle Mountains. Two of his recent publications are "History of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians" and "A Search for Boundary Butte". Both publications are offered for sale and may be purchased from Mr. Gourneau at Belcourt, or at the Bottineau Courant.

Mr. Gourneau's Indian name is Aun nish e Naubay.



Old postcard found in Canada, circa early 1970s. Pat enjoyed dancing and encouraged the youth to participate in powwows, reviving interest in a time when it was not the popular activity it is today among the Turtle Mountain people and everywhere. He often organized powwows with the youth and other supportive elders such as Charlie Cree, Joseph and Emma Greatwalker and Elma and Lawrence Wilkie.

#### A STORY OF PAT GOURNEAU

He was born on February 11, 1904 or February 11, 1905 on the Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation. He is puzzled about his birthdate because he is listed as enrolled in the tribal roll of 1904, but he is listed as being born on February 11, 1905 according to his baptism certificate. He commented that he preferred the date of 1905 so he could claim to be one year younger and to be employed one year longer. His preference was accepted for Social Security.

He spent his childhood and youth in Indian boarding schools and wandering around in search of labor to help his parents and family back home at Turtle Mountain. In 1930 he was married to Mary Cecelia Lefavor, the daughter of an East Grand Forks truck farmer he had worked for and learned the business from.

They set up housekeeping in a log cabin which is still standing today, and he went into the truck farming business. Their homestead is located on a 120-acre tract of land he purchased from a white man owner in Minnesota and in 1947 he purchased another 80 adjoining acres from a neighbor. The 200 acres are held in trust by the government as Pat was able to get the U.S. Government to identify the 200 acres as allotted land, tax exempt.

The first school Pat attended was a reservation day school named Gourneau Day School, a one and a half mile walk from his father's home during the spring, summer, and autumn of 1911. In the autumn of 1912 the first group of Turtle Mountain Reservation students attended the Wahpeton Indian School, and Pat stayed there until 1914. Then he went to the Indian school at Fort Totten, North Dakota from 1915 to 1919. Fort Totten is a former military post on the Devils Lake Sioux reservation which is now preserved as a historical tourist spot. He went to the Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kansas in 1919 and the Wahpeton Indian School from 1920 to 1923. After leaving school in 1923 to satisfy his money earning ambitions he traveled through several states in search of labor, mainly seasonal agricultural work. In 1928 he married the daughter of a large scale market gardener in the state of Minnesota. Charles LeFavor operated a 27 acre market garden close to the Red River on the south side of East Grand Forks, Minnesota, at an area known as the Point.

After working two years for his father-in-law and learning to be a market gardener, the occupation also identified as a truck farmer, he decided to enter into the same type of business so he moved back to his home reservation in 1930 and purchased the land which he still owns and started development of his business. He also raised livestock on a fairly small scale as a part of his business venture.

He stayed in this good business for 23 years until 1952 when he was drafted into tribal affairs because many residents of the reservation and BIA officials considered the operation of the tribal government, the Advisory Committee, needed extensive improvement to remove its action of complication. He became tribal chairman in July 1953 and held the title until he resigned in January, 1959. He was highly successful in tribal affairs and many prominent people of the nation complimented him for his successful efforts to provide benefits for his people, especially to eliminate termination of the Turtle Mountain Band and other tribes and clearing up the Turtle Mt. Band tribal debts through strictly personal money making business efforts, totally approved by the Advisory Committee. Debts were cleared up a little over five years after he became tribal chairman and before he

resigned he deposited a little over \$30,000 in the U.S. Treasury for the tribe, the first time that earned money was deposited for the tribe.

When the William Langer Jewel Bearing Plant began operations in 1953 the Turtle Mountain Ordnance Plant, he accepted the position of security guard of the plant on August 22, 1953. He retained this position until February 1966 at which time he was appointed Supervisor of Maintenance and Guards and held this position until February, 1970 when he had to retire according to the mandatory retirement rule of the Bulova Watch Company, the company which operates the William Langer Jewel Bearing plant under contract with GSA. Since his retirement of three years he offers free of charge help to the Jewel Bearing Plant when necessary. When retired he received a 7 year citation of merit from the Bulova Watch Co.

He is the author of a historical document account of his tribe. The history is in brief form and is designed for use in classrooms and short recitals. It took him a long time and a lot of work during the summer of 1968 to condense the lengthy history subject to brief form. The main reason was because he was called upon fairly frequently to deliver lectures on Indian history culture and language and was usually requested to deliver so much within a half hour in meetings, conventions, programs, and classrooms.

In those days, shortly after he became tribal chairman, the Federal Government took serious action against the Turtle Mountain Band. The first declaration was by an Act of Congress, that they and several other tribes would be terminated so that the Federal Government be relieved of its liability to support them, a second action was to declare their credit in default, the same as foreclosure. From then, all tribal income collected had to be delivered to the U.S. government as payment for tribal debts. A few months later for three and a half years he had to spend much of his private funds to handle tribal affairs but due to a motion made at an Advisory Committee meeting by Leo Jeanotte and approved by the federal government he was awarded a salary of \$20.00 per week. However, sometimes he still always had to use some of his own money plus his awarded salary to handle tribal affairs. However, in cases where he needed financial assistance for a special reason, he was donated money from whom he regarded as his best helpers and good friends, white men mainly from Rolla, No. Dak.

Every year he considers Rolla business men as reliable to help financially when a Pow Wow is scheduled during the summer as the annual pow wow within the Turtle Mountain reservation. Mentioning the word pow wow reminds me of the

pleasant short stories he told about the distant pow wows from his reservation in which he participated as a dancer. Indian dancing is one of his greatest pleasures and he loves to go and associate with other Indian dancers and drummers. His favorite pow wows in which to go and dance in are the city of Spokane, Washington, the Yakima Indian reservation in Washington, and the Red Lake reservation in Minnesota and at Fort Totten, No. Dakota because they all are attended by so many Indians from different places. Many years ago, when he attended a national pow wow at the big Woolarock Ranch in Oklahoma, he was the only Chippeway dancer there.

When the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippeway were called by microphone to dance, he was alone and had no drummers and singers so he asked his pals from the Fort Berthold, No. Dak. reservation to beat the drum and sing for him. He danced fast on the outer edge of the big arena, and when he approached a fairly large group of ladies standing on the edge of the arena, the drummers cut loose for high and fancy dancing. He immediately cut loose for high and fancy dancing and when he passed the group of ladies one of the ladies screamed this loudly to the audience BOY BOY, that Turtle Mountain Chippeway is some JITTER BUGGER! Eeeeeee! The audience was highly humored--(Here the pages are missing.)

#### INDIAN STORY TELLERS BY PATRICK GOURNEAU

Indian communities of the past such as traveling and wintering camps, and later on when settled on the reservations in log cabins and possible better types of housing, the Indian storyteller was regarded as a source of entertainment and amusement to while away the idle time. Whenever he was called upon for storytelling service or when he offered it without request, the storyteller's audience or individual listener was always ready to lend a willing ear. Some of the stories they told included legends, handed down stories, personal experience stories of their own or others, and fictional tales. The fictional tales embraced a mix up of some truth, falsehood, evil and good gossip fright and frolic. Sources of the stories were usually based on legends, narratives, mythology, superstition, mystery, fright and frolic.

When requested by youngsters to entertain with stories, the storyteller usually switched the stories to similarity with fairy tales involved with comedy and humor to produce laughter. Many times just before bedtime, the stories were made up to frighten so that they would induce the youngsters to spend the night in good behavior. Sometimes, however, the frightening edge of a story scared some youngsters to the point where they became so excited and nervous that

their desire and ability to sleep was scarce. I can still remember that some of the fearful stories I listened to as a youth before bed time rendered me sleepless enough to gaze around in the dark with imagination, wondering if a Manito (spirit) or a fairy would become visible.

One day a group of youngsters approached Ahgaw mushk (Across the Meadow), an elderly Chippeway story teller of the Turtle Mountain Band, and to express their request they said: Grandfather, will you tell us a story of your exploits with the Sioux enemies during your life as a warrior? To comply with their request and entertain them, he started his story by telling them that because he was a Chippeway he was a traditional enemy of the Sioux and whenever it was necessary he had to fight them.

To narrate one particular exploit, he commenced the narration by telling the youngsters that his camp's food supply was running short so he started out on a hunting trip on the plains of their hunting grounds. He said he was armed with two revolvers of six shots each and a fourteen shot repeating rifle. After arriving at a fairly long distance from his camp he decided to get a better view of his surroundings so he guided his horse to a top of a distant hill. Upon reaching the top he was horrified to find a large war party of the Sioux hiding and waiting for him in a grove of trees a short way down the hill. A quick glance convinced him that his survival depended on his ability to escape. With that thought uppermost in his mind, he wheeled his horse and headed in a direction which he thought offered the best avenue of escape. Although he was mounted on a horse of great speed, the horses of the enemy were much speedier.

In no time at all they had him trapped at the edge of a cliff. Being fully aware that all avenues of escape were cut off, his decision was to make a last stand. His first act was to kill his horse and use it for a barricade. With that margin of safety in his favor, the do or die task of self preservation was underway.

Chanting a war song, he began firing what he termed dead shots. He told the youngsters that each time he fired an enemy fell dead but still they kept coming. When all his weapons were empty he had no time to reload them so each in their turn was hurled at the enemy with the same accuracy as when they were fired. With each hurling his claim was that a foe was accounted for as killed.

The story he unfolded left no doubt in the youngsters' minds that his prowess as a warrior was exceeded only by his reputation as a storyteller. At this point one youngster interrupted to ask, "Grandfather, when you no longer had anything to fight with, what did the enemy do to you?" To him he replied, "They did the only honorable thing they could do to a brave warrior--they killed and scalped me."

That remark created an immediate burst of loud laughter. Grandfather chuckled amusingly to himself and felt well satisfied.

Chuckles were not for him alone, however. When they were out of earshot of Grandfather, one of the boys said to the others, "Having skin like a maiden, Grandfather doesn't have one scar to mar the wrinkles on his face nor the lack of hair that was supposed to have been scalped. Ha! Ha! Ha! He is really a great story teller."

Another story teller of the Turtle Mountain Band who made up a humorous story was my uncle Joseph Kahishpa, also known as Joseph Gourneau #2. He was known as a successful hunter and trapper before the reservation settlement, and then as a try hard to succeed farmer when the reservation was settled in the early 1900s. He continued his farming success efforts until the lower half of the 1920s when advanced age forced him to give up.

According to his story, perhaps in the late 1870s when winter was over with and spring was well on its way, he decided to take a trip to Butte St. Paul, climb to its top and make observations. The day he made the trip he said it was warm, clear, calm and sunshiney. To relax when he climbed to the top of the butte he loaded his pipe with a kinnikinnick and tobacco mixture, lit it up and enjoyed a long relaxing smoke. While smoking he finally noticed a skeleton lying in the woods a fair distance from the top of the butte. To satisfy his curiosity, he then descended the butte to find out what kind of a skeleton it was.

When he approached the skeleton he noticed it was a moose. He said that since he had no immediate nor for a few months plans to fulfill, he decided then and there to test his possession of a skillful tracking ability and so he picked up the moose tracks and started to follow them right away. His future difficulty was to keep abreast with the Turtle Mountain area wandering of the moose tracks, and to keep himself food fed. To conclude his story he said: "After three months of tracking I found out where the moose was born--close to where the town of St. John is."

Another place where it was common to hear storytellers was when wakes were attended in homes before a burial. There were also many popular storytellers among the Metis (Mechif), and their stories were mostly recited in the "Mechif" Cree and French language. French fairy tales were well known by them and well told, sometimes with their own personal additional make-up. My father, Keeshke mun eshiw, was capable to tell stories in Mechif Cree, French, real Cree, and Chippeway. (Note: This is an autobiography written by Pat Gourneau in his declining years, before 1980.)