The Cadottes, the Indian Department, and the War of 1812: Part 1

John P. DuLong, FCHSM member (dulongj@habitant.org)

Part 1 of this article discusses the confusion over the roles the Cadottes played in the British Indian Department during the War of 1812. It then reviews the controversial military career of Jean Baptiste Cadotte, fils (1761 – ca. 1818), Interpreter and Storekeeper. His half-brother, nephews, and cousins who also served in the Indian Department are covered in Part 2.

Several members of the fur trading Cadotte family participated in the War of 1812. They served in the British Indian Department as interpreters because of their mixed Ojibwa and French ancestry and language skills. However, historians and genealogists have confused the military careers of individual Cadottes. Even the card index to British Military and Naval Records at the Library and Archives of Canada (LAC) muddles the identity of different Cadottes. As a result of these mistakes, records of service are incorrectly assigned to individual members of the Cadotte family. By reviewing the surviving original records—and paying particular attention to dates and locations—it is possible to correctly identify and sort out the military careers of the Cadottes, which will be done in this article.

Most of the Cadottes who served in the War of 1812 were descendants of Jean Baptiste Cadotte, père (1723-1800). He in turn had served the British in the 1760s by persuading the Lake Superior Ojibwa not to participate in Pontiac’s Uprising. During the American Revolution he mobilized Sioux and Ojibwa warriors to fight against the American rebels and their Spanish allies at St. Louis. Given his close ties to his Ojibwa in-laws and their concerns about American expansion as well as his fur trade interests, it was only natural that he would have been loyal to the British. Consequently, his sons and grandsons also found it in their interest to back the British during the War of 1812. One of the Cadottes listed here is a descendant of Michel Cadotte, le petit, the cousin of Jean Baptiste Cadotte, père, and is occasionally confused with the latter’s son Michel Cadotte, le grand. The chart at the end of this part shows how all of these Cadottes are descendants of Mathurin Cadeau di Poitevin (1649-1729).

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2 For an example of mistaken statements regarding the military careers of the Cadottes see Lawrence Bankwell, *Métis Soldiers in the War of 1812* (Winnipeg, Man.: Louis Riel Institute, 2012), 20-22. He hopelessly confuses basic genealogical facts and relationships regarding the Cadottes. Even standard reference works on the war confuse Cadottes. L. Homfray Irving, *Officers of the British Forces in Canada during the War of 1812-15* (Welland, Ont.: Welland Tribune Print, 1908), 210 and 212, only mentions Lt. Jean B. Cadot, which should read Josepa, and interpreter François Xavier Cadot.


4 In addition to the Cadottes who served in the Great Lakes area of Upper Canada, they had cousins back in Lower Canada who served in the war. Sergeant Charles Cadotte was in the 3rd Battalion of the Select Embodied Militia which saw action at the Battles of Chateauguay, 26 October 1813, and Plattsburg, 6-11 September 1814. Index Cards, C.1061B, p. 29. Irving, *Officers of the British Forces*, 124-127. Jean Baptiste Cadotte of Ste-Genève
The Cadottes served in the British Indian Department. This was the agency that dealt with the Natives by distributing presents, providing interpreter services, and encouraging the Natives to remain loyal allies of the British. The Indian Department was divided between Upper and Lower Canada units. The Upper Canada (present-day province of Ontario) unit was headquartered at Fort George, near modern-day Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, but it had important establishments at Fort Malden, Amherstburg, Ontario, and at Fort St. Joseph, on the island of that name, Ontario. 5 While forging and maintaining alliances with Indians, the members of the Indian Department could find themselves in harm’s way. Some accompanied Native warriors and were engaged in combat. Members of the Indian Department were present at 36 engagements during the war including some of the fiercest fighting.7 Keeping the Natives involved in the war, given how shorthanded the British were compared to the Americans, was crucial, especially before the fall of Napoleon and the shifting of European based troops to North America.8 Without the help of their Native Allies, the history of the War of 1812 in the west would have been very different for the British and the fate of Canada.

The members of the Indian Department wore uniforms consisting of a red jacket with green lapels and cuffs. Most of the employees lacked officer rank. However, Joseph Cadotte, as a commissioned lieutenant, would have worn a single gold epaulette on his shoulder.

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parish was in the 1st Battalion, Boucherville Division, Beauharnois, District of Montréal, Sedentary Militia and received a $20.00 pension for his service. Canada, Department of Militia and Defence, Statement Showing the Name, Age and Residence of Militiamen of 1812-15: Who have Applied to Participate in the Gratitude Voted by Parliament in 1875, With the Name of the Corps or Division and Rank in which They Served (Ottawa: MacLean, Roger, & Co., 1876), 17. Irving, Officers of the British Forces, 189-191. Lastly, Louis Cadotte of the St. Ours parish was in the L’Assomption Division, Montréal District, Sedentary Militia which was incorporated briefly into the 3rd Company, 7th Battalion (Deschambault’s Corp) Sedentary Embodied Militia. Index Cards, C.1694, p. 9. Irving, Officers of the British Forces, 137-138 and 181-182. All men between the ages of 16 and 60 were expected to turn out for the Sedentary Militia who mostly performed transportation and logistical duties. From this group of men, volunteers and draftees would be pulled who were between 18 and 30 to serve in one of eight Select Embodied Militia Battalions. René Chartrand, British Forces in North America, 1793-1815, Gerry Embleton, illustrator (London: Osprey Military Men-at-Arms, no. 319, 1998), 20-21.

5 Irving, Officers of the British Forces, lists the Upper Canada personnel 209-214, the Lower Canada personnel 214-216, and what has to be a very incomplete list of Indian chiefs and principle warriors, 217-221. Although not without mistakes, these pages are useful for identifying officers and other members of the Indian Department mention in original documents.

6 After the war, the garrison on St. Joseph Island, which had been moved to the captured fort on Mackinac Island, was removed to Fort Drummond, Drummond Island. When it was determined that Drummond Island was American territory, the British moved to Penetangouishene, Ontario, in 1828.

7 Irving, Officers of the British Forces, 208.

For Americans the War of 1812 is an odd mixture of humiliating defeats and glorious victories that ended without any significant territorial changes. The war does not occupy the thoughts of most Americans compared to the American Revolution or the Civil War, but for Canadians this war is really about their national survival. There is a much stronger and patriotic narrative about the War of 1812 in Canada. To the extent that the Cadottes served the Crown, they helped Canada survive as an entity. However, we should be clear that for the Cadottes, their loyalty was to their Ojibwa and French relatives and to the fur trade, not to the British and not to what has become modern-day Canada. An observation that an English Royal Artillery officer made regarding the French-Canadian militia would probably apply to the Cadottes: “They perhaps did not love the English government or people, but they loved the Americans less; they therefore became loyal subjects, and made good militia.”

Let us examine what the surviving records tell us about the military activities of the five Cadottes identified as serving in the Indian Department during the War of 1812.

Jean Baptiste Cadotte, fils (1761 – ca. 1818), Interpreter and Storekeeper:
The son of Jean Baptiste Cadotte, père, and Athanasie, an Ojibwa, married first —?,—, an Ojibwa, and second Jeanette Piquette, a Mètis.\(^9\)

Jean Baptiste Cadotte, fils, had valuable skills that the Indian Department needed. He was literate and could speak French, English, Ojibwa, and even knew some Latin due to his education in Montréal.\(^10\) His


many years of fur trading and his Ojibwa ties would have made him an appreciated addition to the Indian Department, however, as will be seen, he had a serious character flaw that damaged his prospects.

Jean Baptiste is first mentioned in connection with the Indian Department in a letter between Sir James Craig, KB, Governor-in-Chief of British North America, to Francis Gore, Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, dated 11 May 1808:

A Mr. Cadotte had been most strongly recommended to me as being extremely well adapted to filling an office in the Indian Department. I am concern'd that I cannot at this moment reply to the letter that I have received concerning him, and I am unwilling to delay this until I can procure it. I have written to engage him to proceed immediately to put himself under our orders [at York]. My object is, that He should replace the Interpreter at present at St Joseph's who I understand is not well qualified.¹³

He appears to have spent the time before the war moving back and forth from St. Joseph to the Lake Ontario area and was even able to visit his wife and children who were living at Lac des Deux Montagnes, Oka, near Montréal. Around 19 July 1808, Colonel Claus noted that Mr. Cadotte was accompanying some Indian Goods aboard the brig *HMS General Hunter.*¹⁴ Between 25 June 1808 and 21 February 1809, he was at York working as an Interpreter for the Indian Department when he was paid an allowance for lodging since there were no quarters available for him in the fort.¹⁵ On 10 May 1809, he was employed in the Indian Department service at the head of Lake Ontario, probably the Kingston area.¹⁶

At the time of his 15 June 1808 marriage rehabilitation, he was a recorded as being a storekeeper and interpreter of the King at Fort St. Joseph.¹⁷ He apparently brought his family down from Sault Ste. Marie to Oka around 1804.¹⁸ Sir John Johnson, Superintendent of the Indian Department, mentions in a letter 12 February 1810 that Mr. Cadotte, now stationed at St. Joseph, was separated from his family then living under distress. His family was being forwarded by way of the Grand River off Lake Erie, Ontario, to

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¹³ Extract of a letter from Craig to Gore, 11 May 1808, *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections (MPHC)*, 25:245-247, citing Colonial Office Records, Q 107, p. 229. The LAC has digitized and made available online documents from Record Group 8, Series C, which are used in this article. For documents from other records or manuscript groups I have relied on transcriptions published in *MPHC* and elsewhere. In these cases, I indicate the source being cited for these transcriptions. I have also provided the reader with the volume and page numbers for the transcriptions of LAC, Series C, documents for their convenience. Nevertheless, it should go without saying that whenever possible it is always best to consult the original records rather than transcriptions that are prone to errors.¹⁴ Diary of Col. William Claus, *MPHC*, 23:59. It appears from this entry that the *Hunter* was northbound on or near the Detroit River.


¹⁶ Index Cards, C.256, p. 29. Letter from A. G. [Adam Gordon] Johnson, Secretary Indian Affairs, Montréal, to Lt. Col. Thornton, Military Secretary, 10 May 1809, LAC, RG 8, Series C, vol. 256, pp. 29-29a, microfilm C-2851, images 1237-1238. His absence from the post on official business was used to justify that his vouchers were not being included with the others of Fort George.


meet him presumably at St. Joseph. However, Jean Baptiste and Jeanette separated after 1810, and she moved back to Sault Ste. Marie with their children and lived in the former home of her father-in-law.

On 1 February 1810, Jean Baptiste Cadotte was appointed to succeed John Askin, Jr., as the Indian Department interpreter and storekeeper at Fort St. Joseph. On the 4th Jean Baptiste had arrived at the fort from Sault Ste. Marie, and Askin anticipated being forced to turn over the storehouse keys to him. This appointment was the result of a nasty dispute between the fort commander, Captain Thomas Dawson, and Askin that started in January. Askin was accused of short changing the Natives. Captain Dawson sent for Jean Baptiste to replace Askin. However, by the 26th Lieutenant Governor Gore clearly expressed that he was not impressed with Jean Baptiste and objected to his being made a storekeeper. He reported that:

I regret, that I am constrained [to] observe to your Excellency, that the Dissipated Habits, and Extreme Intemperance of the Interpreter Cadotte, render him unfit for any Trust,—during his stay he made at York, he was almost in a continued state of Intoxication, and I was necessitated to order him away.

The head of the Indian Department, Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Elliott, Superintendent of the Indian Department, intervened on Askin's behalf, claiming that this squabble was damaging the impression the Natives had of the British and strengthening their opinion of the Americans. On 23 February 1810, Gore ordered Askin to be reinstated. Jean Baptiste would have held the post of storekeeper for only a brief interlude. However, he might have been retained at St. Joseph as an interpreter before eventually returning to the Niagara area.

19 Letter from John Johnson, Superintendent of the Indian Department, Montreal, to Lt. Col. Thornton, Military Secretary, 12 July 1810, LAC, RG 8, Series C, vol. 256, pp. 59-60a, microfilm C-2851, images 1285-1287, transcribed in MPHC, 23:84-85. Mention is made of a letter from Mr. Cadotte that was apparently attached to this letter, but it is no longer in existence. Reference is also made in this letter to two letters from Thornton on the 9 and 21 May 1808 regarding Cadotte's appointment as interpreter.

20 Theresa M. Schenck, comp., All Our Relations: Chippewa Mixed-Bloods and the Treaty of 1837 (Madison, WI: The Centre for Rupert’s Land Studies at the Univ. of Winnipeg and Amik Press, 2010), 104.


This unfortunately was not the first instance in Jean Baptiste’s life where alcohol was a factor. On 2 September 1795, he became a North West Company (NWC) employee.\(^27\) He was credited with opening up the Red Lake area of present-day Minnesota for the NWC and signed a contract to work that area for the NWC on 25 July 1796.\(^28\) His performance and connections were impressive enough that he was appointed as a wintering partner in the NWC on 30 June 1801 at Grand Portage with a 1/46 share.\(^29\) The NWC was at the time one of Canada’s leading companies. Unfortunately, Jean Baptiste’s partnership in the NWC was a short-lived moment of glory. On 19 July 1803 he was expelled for intemperance having:

... conducted himself improperly by neglecting his duty and indulging in drunkenness and Riot since the period of the Commencement of the said Copartnership or Concern, whereby he has render’d Himself unworthy and unfit to Continue any Longer a Partner therein.\(^30\)

He drew a pension of £100 annually from the NWC from 1803 to 1813 when it was withdrawn since he was now working for the Indian Department.\(^31\)

Despite his bad reputation for drinking, on 21 April 1810, Captain Dawson singled out Mr. Cadotte, the Indian interpreter, who:

... was at all times ready to render service to His Majestys Government since I have known him, and I must also beg leave to say that he was at all times perfectly steady, and evinced a readiness and loyalty when employed on duty that I have not before witnessed in Persons in his situation.\(^32\)

This praise might merely be the result of Dawson trying to justify his earlier confidence in Jean Baptiste and his past efforts to have him replace Askin.

The details of Jean Baptiste’s service during the War of 1812 are unknown. It seems likely that he moved from St. Joseph to the Niagara area before the war commenced. His half-brother Joseph is the Cadotte serving at St. Joseph when the war started and who was commissioned a lieutenant. Most mentions of Jean Baptiste Cadotte serving in this war refer to his nephew of the same name who was stationed at Amherstburg, and not to himself. Despite his half-brother and nephew being often mentioned in the records, Jean Baptiste appears to fade away just as they become active in the Indian Department. Jean Baptiste may have continued to work as an interpreter for the Indian Department at York and Fort George during the war, but he was not retained after the war.\(^33\) Sketchy information indicates that he died at Fort George around 1818.\(^34\)

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\(^{27}\) Wallace, Documents Relating to the North West Company, 90-91.
\(^{28}\) Wallace, Documents Relating to the North West Company, 91-94. His exploits during this period were chronicled by his nephew, Warren History of the Ojibway People, 205-210. He was never in charge of the Fond du Lac department of the NWC as is mentioned in some sources including Warren, History of the Ojibway People, 206, n. 3. At the time, he was only a senior clerk in that department and John Sayer was in charge. Wallace, Documents Relating to the North West Company, 428 and 497.
\(^{29}\) Wallace, Documents Relating to the North West Company, 170-173.
\(^{30}\) Wallace, Documents Relating to the North West Company, 183-188. As early as 1798, Perrault had noticed Jean Baptiste disorderly conduct and neglect of business due to drinking. John Sharpless Fox, ed., “Narrative of the Travels and Adventures of a Merchant Voyageur in the Savage Territories of Northern America Leaving Montreal the 28th of May 1783 (to 1820) by Jean Baptiste Perrault,” MPHC, 37:508-619, see 575.
\(^{31}\) Wallace, Documents Relating to the North West Company, 267-268. The decision to cut off the pension was made on 15 July 1810, but he was allowed to collect it until 1813.
Jean Baptiste was undoubtedly a man of talent, well educated, multilingual, bold, and well connected. His failure to thrive due to his intemperance is indeed a sad moral lesson for all of us. Despite his disappointing behavior, he probably remained influential enough that he was able to encourage his half-brother and nephews to join the war effort and to help them secure positions in the Indian Department.

**Cadottes and the War of 1812**

Mathurin Cadeau dit Poitevin  
(1649 - 1729)  
m. Marie Catherine Durand

Jean François Cadot  
(1693 - 1743)  
m. Marie Josphee Proteau

Jean Baptiste Cadotte, père  
(1723 - 1800)  
m. (1) Athanasie Equaowace, an Ojibwa  
m. (2) Catherine, an Ojibwa

<table>
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| Jean Baptiste Cadotte, fils  
(1761 - ca. 1818)  
m. (1) —?—, an Indian  
m. (2) Jeanette Piquette | Michel Cadotte  
(1763 - 1837)  
m. Marie Madeleine, an Ojibwa | Michel Cadotte  
(1792 - bef. 1846)  
m. Monica Labadie |

| Michel Cadotte, le grand  
(1763 - 1837)  
m. Marie Madeleine, an Ojibwa | Lt. Joseph Cadotte  
(1788 - ca. 1836)  
m. Angelica Constons | Michel Cadotte, le Petit  
(1764 - 1837)  
m. Charlotte Apikigakwe, an Ojibwa |

* Served during the War of 1812 in the British Indian Department

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33 He is not found on the 1815 or 1819 list of Indian Department members to be retained on the peace establishment. LAC, RG 8, Series C, vol. 258, pp. 80-83a and 86-89a, microfilm C-2852, images 905-909 and 912-916. LAC, RG 8, Series C, vol. 262, pp. 225-227a, microfilm C-2854, images 481-484. The Jean B. or Jean Baptiste Cadotte on this list refers to his nephew at Amherstburg.

34 His brother Michel claims that Jean Baptiste died in 1818. American State Papers, Public Lands, (Washington, DC: Gales and Seaton, 1832-1861), 5:259. Testimony in the U.S. Supreme Court, “United States vs. Repentigny et al.” land case is conflicting. Jacob M. Howard Papers, 1860 1864, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, manuscript ZR2, “United States vs. Repentigny et al.,” hereinafter Howard Papers. François X. Biron, the son-in-law of Michel Cadotte, le petit, the cousin of Jean Baptiste Cadotte, fils, testified that Jean Baptiste died near Toronto, Howard Papers, 72. Louis Gurnoe, his son-in-law stated that he died at Fort George in Upper Canada during the War of 1812, Howard Papers, 73. And Archange (Cadotte) Gurnoe, his daughter and the wife of Louis Gurnoe, gives the same testimony as her husband, Howard Papers, 76. She indicates that her father left Sault Ste. Marie about 1810, Howard Papers, 88.
**Cadottes and the War of 1812**

Mathurin Cadeau dit Poitevin  
(1649 - 1729)  
m. Marie Catherine Durand

Jean François Cadot  
(1693 - 1743)  
m. Marie Josephe Proteau

Michel Cadotte  
(1729 - 1784)  
m. Marie Anne Cossette

Jean Baptiste Cadotte, père  
(1723 - 1800)  
m. (1) Althanais Equawwe, an Ojibwa  
m. (2) Catherine, an Ojibwa

Michel Cadotte, le grand  
(1763 - 1837)  
m. Marie Madeleine, an Ojibwa

Michel Cadotte, la Grand'te  
(1788 - ca. 1836)  
m. Angelica Corntons

Michel Cadotte, le Petit  
(1764 - 1837)  
m. Charlotte Apikigiokwe, an Ojibwa

Fransou Xavier Cadotte  
(1792 - bef. 1846)  
m. Monica Labadie

* Served during the War of 1812 in the British Indian Department
The Cadottes, the Indian Department, and the War of 1812: Part 2
John P. DuLong, Ph.D., FCHSM member (dulongj@habitent.org)

This concluding part covers the military careers of Lieutenant Joseph Cadotte (1788 – aft. 1835), Michel "Mishone" Cadotte, fils (1787 – 1856), Jean Baptiste Cadotte, le gros (1790 – aft. 1852), Interpreter, and François Xavier Cadotte (1792 – bef. 1846), Interpreter.

Lieutenant Joseph Cadotte (1788 – aft. 1835):
The son of Jean Baptiste Cadotte, père, and Catherine, an Ojibwa, married Angelica Constons, a Métis.¹

On 14 March 1812, John Askin, Jr., the storekeeper for the Indian Department at Fort St. Joseph, wrote to William Claus, Deputy Superintendent General of the Indian Department, about the qualities of Mr. Cadotte as an interpreter.² During the summer of 1812, he was involved in mobilizing the Natives of Lake Superior and Lake Huron to support the British.³ In June 1813, Askin assigned Joseph to accompany Lake Superior Natives being sent to York to insure they did not harm loyal subjects.⁴

Joseph may have participated in the surprise capture of Fort Mackinac, given that he was stationed at St. Joseph where the attack originated. He was known to have been present at the Battle of Mackinac Island on 4 August 1814. He also participated in the capture of the USS Tigress and USS Scorpion on 3 September and 6 September 1814 respectively.⁵

Several times an imaginary Lieutenant Jean Baptiste Cadotte has been created by misunderstanding. However, Joseph is the only Cadotte who was commissioned as an officer in the Indian Department. He was promoted from Interpreter to Lieutenant by Garrison Order at Fort Mackinac on 27 October 1814, effective from the 24th, and this was confirmed by a General Order at Montréal on 9 December 1814.⁶

Lieutenant Joseph Cadotte was present at a council with some Winnebago chiefs at Mackinac Island on 3 June 1815.⁷ Soon thereafter, 18 July 1815, the British surrendered the fort to the Americans per the terms of the Treaty of Ghent and departed Mackinac Island to relocate on Drummond Island.

² Index Cards, C.638A, p. 32, this entry is attributed to François Xavier Cadot, but he served at Amherstburg, not St. Joseph and the month is mistakenly recorded as April on the card. Also, it is unlikely to be a reference to Jean Baptiste Cadotte, fils, as he was probably serving in the Niagara area by 1812.
⁴ Letter from John Askin, Jr., Michilimackinac, to D. Cameron, York, 3 June 1813, Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections (MPHC), 15:310-311, citing LAC, Manuscript Group (MG) XI.
⁷ Wisconsin Historical Collection (WHC), 10:142.
On 25 August 1815, Joseph was recommended to be retained in the peace establishment of the Indian Department at Drummond Island:

I have already stated Mr Johnson's claims to His Excellency. Mr. Brisbois & Mr. Cadotte have repeatedly distinguished themselves by their ability & useful services—they are all three, Young men of education & respectability that do credit to the Department.  

Soon after news of peace reached the frontier, on 10 May 1815, William Woodbridge, the American Secretary of War, complained to the British authorities that Joseph was inciting the Natives to remain hostile to Americans after the war was ended. Specifically, he claimed that:

Cadot (the same British agent who is known to have offered money for the scalps of Chabonai and Vrinice [Chadronet and Kinzie]) is stated recently to have told the Indians that the fortifications at Michilimackinac were all in a situation to be blown up, if at any time the Americans should go there, and that the peace was but an artifice.  

There is a flurry of communications regarding these charges and courts of inquiry that investigated them. The first court of inquiry was held at Amherstburg after 12 August and before 4 October 1815, and the second was held at Fort Drummond from 6 to 10 October 1815. Joseph testified at both hearings. His commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Robert McDouall at Mackinac Island, had ordered him to recruit warriors on the Grand River off Lake Michigan for the defense of Fort Mackinac. He had arrived at Mackinac Island with 84 Natives on 3 May 1815, two days after the news of the treaty had reached the post. McDouall also tasked Joseph with taking prisoner the traitors Chadronet and Kinzie who were conspiring with the Americans and Natives against British interest. Joseph denied the charges and no evidence was found to substantiate any claims against him. He was cleared of any misconduct as he was operating under the orders of his commanding officers and verified confirmation of the end of the war had not reached him before his return from his mission. The court of inquiry reported:

11 Court of Inquiry held at Amherstburg, LAC, RG 8, C Series, vol. 258, pp. 305-343, microfilm C-2852, image 1214-1254. Court of Inquiry held at Fort Drummond with associated correspondence, LAC, RG 8, C Series, vol. 258, pp. 373-8396a, microfilm C-2682, images 1288-1313, Transcriptions for these courts of inquiry can be found in MPH C, 16:207-214 and 325-334.
13 Chadronet was also wanted for the murder of his uncle Lt. Charles Chadronet of the Indian Department who had been sent to arrest him. See Wisconsin Historical Collection (WHC), 10:112-113, n. 1, in which he is called J. B. Chadornet. Irving, Officers of the British Forces, 210 and 213, n. 28, gives the surname as Chadnonet and claims that the murderer was the adopted son of Lt. Chadronnet. Lt. Col. McDouall testified that the lieutenant was married to Chadronet's mother's sister and acted as his father, MPH C, 16:328.-329. The Ottawa Chief Assignack testified that Lt. Chadronet was killed in July 1814 at the entrance of the St. Joseph River, MPH C, 16:332.
In closing the evidence upon this case, the Court feel it to be a duty incumbent upon them to bear testimony to the zeal & good conduct of Lt. Cadotte, being fully convinced, that all his actions emanated from a thorough conviction that the war was still in progress, the Court conceive him to be highly deserving of the thanks which he received from his commanding officer upon that occasion.  

Joseph, along with other Indian Department employees, received extra rations for their families on 11 December 1815 at Drummond Island. On 27 June 1816, he was granted a building lot on Drummond Island and allowed to ship supplies at government expense. We know that he enjoyed reading the London Times as he is found on a list of subscribers living on Drummond Island.

On 12 September 1829, Joseph was residing at Penetanguishene and a petition for land in Upper Canada was submitted on his behalf. In part his petition claims that "...he was an active Zealous officer and possessed Considerable influence over the Indians." William MacKay, Superintendent of Western Indian Nations, testified that Joseph had joined the Indian Department as an Interpreter on 12 August 1812, was promoted to lieutenant in October 1814, and was reduced to half pay at Drummond Island on 18 June 1816. His petition was approved on 24 November 1829. However, he did not appear to settle on any land in present-day Ontario.

After being active in the fur trade in Manitoba, Ontario, and Minnesota, including taking a part in Métis disturbances along the Red River and being implicated in the murder of Owen Keveny, he eventually settled with his family at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. He died after 6 September 1835 and before 24 September 1836.

Michel "Mishone" Cadotte, fils (1787 – 1856):
The son of Michel Cadotte, le grand, and Marie Madeline, an Ojibwa, married Esther Kagwaian called Assinahjewmunoqua, an Ojibwa.

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15 MPHIC, 16:294, citing I.D.O. [Indian Department Order]. He was given two bags of flour and 30 pounds of beef.
16 Index Cards, C.515, p. 109, this entry is again mistakenly assigned to Jean B. Cadot, but it is clear from the context that it was Joseph Cadotte who received this lot as he is addressed as a lieutenant, Indian Department, Western Nations. LAC, RG 8, Series C, vol. 515, 106-109, microfilm C-3062, images 178-181, transcribed in MPHIC, 16:478-479.
17 Index Cards, C.121, p. 8. LAC, RG 8, C Series, vol. 121, 8, microfilm C-2682, image 1213, transcribed in MPHIC, 16:422. He was entitled to "Barrel Bulk" in January 1816. Barrel Bulk is "A measure of capacity for freight; five cubic feet; eight barrel-bulk equals one ton." MPHIC, 16:422, n. 1.
18 Lt. Cadotte paid three pounds to subscribe. Clipping from the London Times, 8 July 1816, scanned image attached to an email from Heather Armstrong to John P. DuLong, 24 November 2012.
19 LAC, Upper Canada Land Petitions, C-1723, images 776-778. As we know that Joseph was literate, it is unclear why this petition is signed with his mark and not his signature. It was written at York and I suspect it was submitted by others on his behalf and that he was not present to sign it.
Michel participated in the successful attack on Fort Mackinac on 17 July 1812. According to John Askin, Jr.:

It was a fortunate circumstance that the Fort Capitulated without firing a Single Gun. For had they done so, I firmly believe not a Soul of them would have been Saved. My Son [Jean Baptiste Askin], Charles Langlade, Augustin Nolin, and Michelle Cadotte Jun' have rendered me great Services in keeping the Indians in order.\(^{23}\)

It was customary for Indians to take revenge on fallen enemies, but on Mackinac Island no atrocities were committed after the surrender of the Americans. Furthermore, the property of the islanders was left unharmed.\(^{24}\)

William Warren, the historian of the Ojibwa people, wrote about the military service of his uncles Michel and Jean Baptiste:

Of the Ojibway half-breeds, John Baptiste and Michel, sons of Michel Cadotte, Sr., of La Pointe, were captured or enticed by the British of Isle Drummond, and there given the option, either to go into confinement during the war, or act as interpreters, and use their influence to collect the Ojibways. They accepted the latter alternative, and were actors in all the principle Canadian battles, and were present on the occasion of Tecumseh’s death. Jean Baptiste was severely wounded, and is now a pensioner on the British government. Michel is also living, minus one arm, at La Pointe, on Lake Superior.\(^{25}\)

This statement must be used with caution as it contains several flaws. Drummond Island was not a post until after the war. Warren probably meant St. Joseph Island. There is no evidence that the Cadotte brothers were coerced into serving the British. They were undoubtedly willing participants and eager to recruit their Ojibwa kinsmen. Only much later, after the British cause was long lost and the Cadottes had adjusted to being American, would this myth of coercion be created.\(^{26}\) Their father Michel Cadotte, *le grand*, took out American citizenship on 15 August 1820 so the family could continue to trade with American Indians in northern Wisconsin.\(^{27}\) The Cadottes depended on the good will of American officials for the renewal of their trade license with the Indians so it would be awkward to cling to the


\(^{24}\) The War of 1812 was marred by several atrocities including the Fort Dearborn Massacre, Chicago, and the River Raisin Massacre, Monroe, Michigan. Although with proper leadership, Natives could be controlled. For example, after the surrender of Detroit, the Natives again showed restraint. The Americans are not without blood on their hands. The Ojibwa did not refer to Americans as *Kitchimokomanag*, that is, Big Knives, in admiration for their cutlery. Warren, *History of the Ojibway People*, 249. Americans were not hesitant to use large scalping knives and swords in committing outrages against Natives.


\(^{26}\) Not only did Warren downplay the role his family played in the War of 1812, he also stated that the Ojibwa warriors of Lake Superior and the Mississippi regions decided to remain neutral. Warren, *History of the Ojibway People*, 267-270. This claim is also suspicious. I am not alone in believing that Warren misrepresented the role of the Lake Superior Ojibwa in the War of 1812. See Howard D. Paap, *Red Cliff, Wisconsin: A History of an Ojibwe Community: Volume 1, the Earliest Years: The Origin to 1834* (St. Cloud, Minn.: North Star Press, 2013), 113-115. Warren was very much an American and writing for an American audience.

British cause or to remind officials of their past loyalty to the Crown. Furthermore, there is no mention in the surviving official documents of Michel Cadotte, fils, being at the Battle of the Thames where Tecumseh met his death or at any other “principle Canadian battles.” Lastly, he lost his left arm not in military service, as Warren implies, but in an accident on New Year’s Day 1838.28

Michel apparently never had a formal position with the Indian Department. He was used to deliver dispatches from Mackinac Island to York in January 1814.29 However, there are no further records of his participation in the war.

**Jean Baptiste Cadotte, le gros (1790 – aft. 1852), Interpreter:**
The son of Michel Cadotte, le grand, and Marie Madeline, an Ojibwa.30

According to his land petition, he was formerly an interpreter in the Indian Department at Amherstburg starting in the summer of 1812 and continued in service until 24 December 1822.31

Being posted to Fort Malden at Amherstburg, he may indeed have been present at several of the events on the Detroit front. On 10 August 1812, a Cadotte was leading a group of about twenty warriors from the Niagara area to Amherstburg and had fallen behind the main reinforcements of 350 soldiers.32 He would probably have arrived in time to witness the surrender of Detroit to the British on 16 August 1812. He might have accompanied the British forces as they retreated up the Thames River and could have been present, as Warren alleges, at the Battle of the Thames at Moraviantown, near present-day Chatham, Ontario, on 5 October 1813. However, no official record has been found to verify his presence at the battle.33

On 22 May 1815, Jean Baptiste was recommended to be retained as an interpreter as part of the proposed peace establishment of the Indian Department at Amherstburg.34 He was probably the J. Bth. Cadct who acted as interpreter for an Indian Council at Amherstburg on 16 October 1818.35 "Jean B Cadotte" of the Indian Department is on a list dated 24 March 1819 when he contributed 1 pound, 11 shillings, 8 pence for a monument in memory of the late Princess Charlotte of Wales.36

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28 Warren, *History of the Ojibway People*, p. 267, n. 3. Wisconsin Historical Society, Warren Papers, Marie (Cadotte) Warren to William Warren, 20 January 1838. He was shooting off the American Fur Company (AFC) cannon and did not sufficiently swab the barrel before he loaded the third shot which shattered his arm. As a result of this accident his arm had to be removed.

29 Letter from John Askin, Jr., Michilimackinac, to Lt. Louis Grignon, La Bay, 28 January 1814 and 1 March 1814, WHC, 10:100-101 and 106-108. He left on the 18 January and was expected back a few days after 1 March 1814.

30 Schenck, *All Our Relations*, 35 and 37.


32 Letter from Lt. Col. John MacDonald to Duncan Cameron, Assistant Secretary, Indian Department, Upper Canada, Port Talbot, 10 August 1812, in Ernest Alexander Cruikshank, *Documents Relating to the Invasion of Canada and the Surrender of Detroit, 1812* (Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada, 1912), 130-131. Cruikshank assigns this mention to Lt. Jean B. Cadot, but again only Joseph was commissioned and he was not at Amherstburg or on the Niagara front.

33 Schenck, *All Our Relations*, 37, reports that Jean Baptiste and his brothers Michel and Augustin served the British at Mackinac and were probably at the Battle of the Thames. I have found no original record mentioning their brother Augustin as participating in the War of 1812.

34 Index Cards, C.258, pp. 81 and 86. LAC, RG 8, Series C, vol. 258, pp. 80-83a and 86-89a, microfilm C-2852, images 905-909 and 912-916.

35 *MPHC*, 16:643-644, citing LAC, MG 13, p. 36.

36 Index Cards, C.246, p. 37. LAC, RG 8, C Series, vol. 246, pp. 37-38a, microfilm C-2847, images 1330-1332. When the names on this donation list are compared with the names on the 1819 Indian Department list it becomes
Jean Baptiste applied for a land grant in Upper Canada on 21 January 1823 at Amherstburg. In his application he is called a yeoman in the Western District and was awarded 200 acres by an order of council, 5 March 1823. In his paperwork we learn that he was on reduced status in the Indian Department from 20 October 1819. It is not clear if he ever settled on his land grant or immediately sold it.

He may have returned to the fur trade as early as 9 July 1819 when the AFC hired a Jean Baptiste Cadotte at Mackinac as a boatman (voyageur) to go to L’Anse on the Keweenaw Peninsula, Michigan. He was back at his father’s trading post at La Pointe, Madeline Island, Wisconsin, in the 1820s. He eventually moved to Calumet Island (Ile du Grand Calumet), Québec, where his sister Marguerite (Cadotte) Lemaire dite St-Germain lived. Apparently, he never married and left no descendants. According to Warren, writing around 1852, his uncle received a pension from the British government. However, to date no record of a pension has been found. No pensions were issued to War of 1812 Canadian veterans by the British government, and the Canadian government did not start issuing such pensions until 1875.

Francois Xavier Cadotte (1792 – bef. 1846), Interpreter:
The son of Michel Cadotte, le petit, and Charlotte Apikigikwe, an Ojibwa, married Monica Labadie.

His land petition on 1 April 1825 states that he is a British subject and he has subscribed to the Oath of Allegiance. He was a farmer, with a large family to support (a wife and seven children), living at Baldoon (near present-day Wallaceburg), Dover township, Kent County, in the Western District of Upper Canada. He had the honor of serving as an interpreter in the Indian Department under the late (Lieutenant) Colonel Elliott. He requested 200 acres of land based on his service at both Amherstburg and Detroit. His petition was favorably recommended on 16 April 1825.

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clear that even though the donation list was made out at Fort George, the donors on this list adjacent to his name were all stationed at Amherstburg, therefore, this is, undoubtedly, Jean Baptiste Cadotte, le gros, and not his uncle as I had previously believed. LAC, RG 8, Series C, vol. 262, pp. 225-227a, microfilm C-2854, images 481-484.  
37 LAC, Upper Canada Land Petitions, microfilm C-1723 images 1303-1308. In late 1818, he was listed as an interpreter in the Indian Department establishment at Amherstburg. He received 85 pounds, 3 shillings, and 4 pence for his services. LAC, RG 8, Series C, vol. 262, 225-227a, microfilm C-2854, images 481-484, transcribed in part in MPHC, 16:649.  
38 “American Fur Company Employees, 1818-19,” WHC, 12:156. With peace, his future with the Indian Department was probably bleak, and he may have sought alternative employment before he was given reduced status in October 1819. He was probably given half pay while he was in reduced (reserve) status until he finally departed the service in December 1822.  
39 George Johnston Papers, Journal, 1824-1827, Clarke Historical Library, microfilm mss. F-5, he is mentioned several times in this journal starting on 18 January 1826 when he was living at La Pointe.  
40 Schenck, All Our Relations, 37 and 111-112.  
41 Warren, History of the Ojibway People, 267, he wrote the manuscript for his history around 1852, see xiv.  
42 It is possible that the provinces of Ontario or Québec issued a pension before 1875, but I can find no collection of records for any provincial pensions. We know that his cousin, François Xavier Cadotte, was granted a gratuity at the end of his service with the Indian Department, perhaps Jean Baptiste also received a gratuity and this is what Warren meant by a pension. Also, there are several sets of records relating to War of 1812 pensions at the LAC that have not been digitized and that I have not yet had an opportunity to consult that might contain pension information for Jean Baptiste. Kenneth G. Cox, Call to the Colours: Tracing Your Canadian Military Ancestors (Toronto: Ontario Genealogical Society, Dundurn Press, 2011), 35 and 47.  
44 Lt. Col. Mathew Elliott, Sr., was the Superintendent of the Indian Department at Amherstburg, L. Homfray Irving, Officers of the British Forces in Canada during the War of 1812-15 (Welland, Ont.: Welland Tribune Print, 1988), 209. Baldoon was a Scottish settlement Lord Selkirk founded that was not very successful. Ontario’s Historical
As he is mentioned as having served at Detroit, he may very well have witnessed Major General Isaac Brock’s capture of that city on 16 August 1812. He is noted as seeing action at the Battle of Frenchtown (present-day Monroe), Michigan, 22-23 January 1813.  

It appears that François Xavier did not finally quit his interpreter position with the Indian Department until 1837 when he was given a gratuity for his service.

**Conclusion**

The confusion over the Cadottes and their roles in the Indian Department was at least in part caused by the desire of Warren to downplay his family’s loyalty to the British. He never mentions the role of his great uncles in the war and he falsely claims that his uncles were coerced into participating. Furthermore, he emphasizes the lack of participation of the Lake Superior and Mississippi Ojibwa in the war. These Ojibwa very likely did ally themselves to the British and the Cadottes undoubtedly urged them to do so.

The British officials were probably also befuddled by five different Cadottes, all relatives, serving simultaneously with the Indian Department and two with identical names. It is no wonder that occasionally they made mistakes with names in official documents.

Lastly, because they were a mixed ancestry family, living on the frontier where genealogical records were not accurately kept, it would be natural on the part of historians and genealogists that there would be some misunderstanding over the members of this family.

Hopefully, this article has clarified the military actors in the Cadotte family and their roles in the British Indian Department during the War of 1812.

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46 Index Cards, C.678, p. 19, this entry is assigned to J. B. Cadotte, but it is clearly François Xavier Cadotte. I have been unable to find an original copy of this record. There is a notation that it was moved to C.695-B, but I cannot find it on the corresponding microfilm, C-3172. However, it was printed in MPHC, 15:240, with his name listed as F H Cadotte. This misplaced report is also found in William Wood, Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812, 3 vols. in 4 (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1920-1928), 2:12, which has him listed as F. X. Cadotte.

47 Report of the Public Archives for the Year 1943, (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier, 1944), 142, inquiry regarding his gratuity, Audit Office, 26 January 1837. He may have left the Indian Department well before 1837, as he is not found listed on the 1815 or 1819 lists of Indian Department members to be retained on the peace establishment. LAC, RG 8, Series C, vol. 258, pp. 80-83a and 86-89a, microfilm C-2852, images 905-909 and 912-916. LAC, RG 8, Series C, vol. 262, pp. 225-227a, microfilm C-2854, images 481-484.