

**Finding Aid to the
Nicholas Curchin Vrooman Archive of Turtle Mountain Chippewa Folklife**

Vrooman, Nicholas Curchin

Vrooman Archive of Turtle Mountain Chippewa Folklife, 1980-1993

1 linear ft.

96 cassette tapes

95 slides

Collection number: Mss 215

[Biography](#)

[Scope and Content](#)

[Box and Folder List](#)

OVERVIEW

Access: The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Institute.

Provenance: Donated by Nicholas Curchin Peterson Vrooman, 1997 (acc. 2463).

Property rights: The Institute for Regional Studies owns the property rights to this collection.

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Citation: [Identification of item]. Nicholas Curchin Vrooman Archive of Turtle Mt. Chippewa Folklife, MS 215, Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

BIOGRAPHY

Nicholas Curchin Peterson Vrooman received his bachelor's degree at State University of New York, Plattsburgh in 1973 with concentration in American Indian studies and environmental studies. In addition to a M.S. degree from State University of New York at Oneonta in 1979 in education; he was a Clark Fellow at State University of New York at Cooperstown where he earned a M.A. degree in 1979 in a combined program in history museum studies and American folk culture. In 1980 he became North Dakota's first State Folklorist with the North Dakota Council on the Arts. While serving in that position he was the recipient of the North Dakota Governor's Heritage Award, and served as a consultant to the

State Historical Society of North Dakota and the National Endowment for the Arts. He was involved in numerous exhibits during his tenure, including producer and curator for *Common Wealth: North Dakota Folk Art* (1981), co-producer for *Winter Wheat, Art of the Aging* (1982), and *Iron Spirits: Blacksmith-made Decorative Iron Grave Crosses on the Northern Plains* (1983). In 1984 he left the North Dakota Council on the Arts and established Wings/Hands and Co., a cultural conservation firm working to identify, protect and encourage traditional aspects of American life. Through that firm Vrooman was involved as a consultant, researcher and writer on various projects.

In 1990 Nicholas Vrooman became State Folklorist and Director of Folklore Programs with the Montana Arts Council in Helena, Montana. There he was responsible for the protection and encouragement of the state's traditional cultural heritage and leveraged \$1.3 million for traditional culture public programming. In 1994 he founded and continues to operate Northern Plains Folklife Resources at Helena, a community service cultural conservation, education, research mediation, interpretation, and production organization. Through this organization he has been involved in numerous folklore and cultural projects, working with the Nevada State Council on the Arts, National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution, Montana Historical Society, and the Metis National Council. He is the author of numerous articles and books, including *Iron Spirits* (1982), *Turtle Mountain Music* (1984), "Land of Vision: Folklore/Folklife and History on the Northern Plains" in *North Dakota History* (1989), *Plains Chippewa/Metis Music from the Turtle Mountains* (1992), and *Songs for Asking* (1997).

SCOPE AND CONTENT

Vrooman's collection consists primarily of his recorded interviews on cassette tapes with accompanying transcripts with members of the Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation in North Dakota. Automated versions of the transcripts were also donated and are on file. The interviews deal mostly with Metchif music, but some of the other topics discussed in the interviews are Chippewa music and baskets, dance, woodcarving, storytelling, medicine, and the history of the Metis in the upper Midwest and Canada. Vrooman conducted the interviews over several years (see folder 2 for specific dates). The collection also includes documents related to other projects/proposals dealing with the Metis in North Dakota. The collection is divided into fifteen series which follow Vrooman's original order: Administrative, Cree Family, Fred Allery, Fred Parisien, Delia LaFloe, Page Family, Frank Poitra, Raymond Houle, King and Alvina Davis, Tom Parisien Family, Smithsonian Fieldwork, NDCA Fieldwork, Turtle Mt. Music Recording Session, Brian Johnson and Higher Ground Festival International de Louisiane, and Metis Images.

The [Administrative Series](#) includes information related to Vrooman's project on the Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation and other related projects/proposals. The series contains published information on the film *Medicine Fiddle*, which features many of the same people Vrooman interviewed for his study, and a copy of "Buffalo Voices," written by Vrooman, which was published in *North Dakota Quarterly*, Fall 1991. The series also documents Vrooman's correspondence with Smithsonian Institution regarding the distribution of the Turtle Mountain CD and Vrooman's participation in the Smithsonian French Culture Program. The files also include his applications for NEA (National Endowment for the Arts) grants and a nomination for Alex Morin for a National Heritage Award.

The [Cree Family Series](#) includes audio tapes and transcripts of Nicholas Vrooman interviewing Francis and Rose Cree about the following: Chippewa baskets, Chippewa song, storytelling, Chippewa music, Round Hall Singers, and Francis Cree's life narrative.

The [Fred Allery Series](#) consists of audio tapes and transcripts of Allery playing his fiddle and talking about the music. The [Fred Parisien Series](#) includes tapes and transcripts of Parisien singing, translating the songs, and explaining the origins of songs. The [Delia LaFloe Series](#) contains tapes and transcripts of LaFloe singing and translating the lyrics.

The [Page Family Series](#) has tapes and transcripts of Mike and Dorothy Page discussing Metchif fiddling and its origins, and Mike playing the violin. The [Frank Poitra Series](#) includes tapes and transcripts of Poitra playing his violin and talking about Metchif music. The [Raymond Houle Series](#) consists of tapes and transcripts of Houle playing the harmonica and talking about the music.

The [King and Alvina Davis Series](#) includes tapes and transcripts of King, Alvina, and Francis Davis talking about music and telling stories. The [Tom Parisien Family New Years Series](#) mainly consists of audio tapes made on New Year's Day, 1984, at the Parisien home. The documents in the file are summaries of the conversations rather than transcripts. The [Smithsonian Fieldwork Series](#) includes tapes and transcripts of Vrooman's interviews about Metchif music with the following people: Raymond Wilkie, Mary (Lawrence/Lavadure) Bruce, Rose Azure, Dorothy and Mike Page, Martin Belgarde, Alex and Christine Boyer, Jenny Jeanotte Schindler, Lawrence Keplin and Lawrence Allard, and Matilda Poitra.

The [North Dakota Council on the Arts Fieldwork Series](#) includes tapes and transcribed interviews with Alex Morin, Leo Wilkie, Mary Lavadure, Leona Patnaude, Mary and Patrick Gourneau, Agnes Peltier, and Emily Gourneau regarding Metchif fiddling and jigging, music and dance, woodcarving, storytelling, and medicine. The [Turtle Mt. Music Recording Session Series](#) includes audio tapes taken from the master tapes of music from the Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation. The [Brian Johnson & Higher Ground Festival International de Louisiane Series](#) contains audio tapes of the fiddle workshop and performance at LaFayette, Louisiana in 1992.

The [Metis Images Series](#) contains a finding aid, acknowledgements, and slides related to the Metis. The slides are both historical and contemporary. Most of the slides were taken from published sources, but a few of the slides were taken by Vrooman. Pictures of many of the people interviewed for the project are included in this collection.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box/Folder/Tape	Contents
1/1	Finding Aid, and Biographical information
	Administrative Series

- 1/2 Audio Cassette Tape and Transcript List, 1993
1/3 *Medicine Fiddle*, 1992
1/4 "Buffalo Voices," in *North Dakota Quarterly*, 1991
1/5 *Plains Chippewa/Metis Music from Turtle Mountain* recording reissue, 1991-1993
1/6 "Turtle Mountain French Culture Project," for Smithsonian Institution, 1989
1/7 National Heritage Award nomination, 1981-1984
1/8 "Tunes, Song, Dance and Stories from the Turtle Mountains," a film proposal to North Dakota Humanities Council, 1984
1/9 "Metchif Music: Music, Songs and Stories from the Turtle Mountains," grant proposal, 1983
1/10 "Turtle Mountain Music: Song and Tunes from the Metchif of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Cree" grant proposal, 1983

Cree Family Series

- 1/11/1 Francis and Rose Cree, Chippewa Baskets, 1980
1/12/2 Francis Cree, Chippewa Song 1983
1/13/3 Francis Cree, Storytelling, 1983
1/14/4 Francis Cree, Chippewa Music, 1984
1/15/5 Francis Cree, Chippewa Music, 1984
1/16/6 Francis Cree, Chippewa Music, 1984
1/17/7 Francis Cree, Round Hall Singers, 1984
1/18/8 Francis Cree, Life Narrative, 1989
1/19/9 Francis Cree, Life Narrative, 1989
1/20/10 Francis Cree, Life Narrative, 1989
1/21/11 Francis Cree, Life Narrative, 1989
1/22/12 Francis Cree, Life Narrative, 1989
1/23/13 Francis Cree, Life Narrative, 1989
1/24/14 Francis Cree, Life Narrative, 1989
1/25/15 Francis Cree, Life Narrative, 1989
1/26/16 Francis Cree, Life Narrative, 1989
1/27/17 Francis Cree, Life Narrative, 1989
1/28/18 Francis Cree, Life Narrative, 1989
1/29/19 Francis Cree, Life Narrative, 1989
1/30/20 Francis Cree, Life Narrative, 1989
1/31/21 Francis Cree, Life Narrative, 1989
1/32/22 Francis Cree, Life Narrative, 1989

Fred Allery Series

- 1/33/23 Fred Allery, Metchif Fiddle, 1983
1/34/24 Fred Allery, Metchif Fiddle, 1983
1/35/25 Fred Allery, Metchif Fiddle, 1983
1/36/26 Fred Allery, Metchif Fiddle, 1983
1/37/27 Fred Allery, Metchif Fiddle, 1983
1/38/28 Fred Allery, Metchif Fiddle, 1983
1/39/29 Fred Allery, Metchif Fiddle, 1984
1/40/30 Fred Allery, Metchif Fiddle, 1984
1/41/31 Fred Allery, Metchif Fiddle, 1984
1/42/32 Fred Allery, Metchif Fiddle, 1984

Fred Parisien Series

1/43/33 Fred Parisien, w/King & Alvina Davis, 1984
1/44/34 Fred Parisien, Chanteur, 1984
1/45/35 Fred Parisien, Chanteur, 1984
1/46/36 Fred Parisien, Chanteur, 1984
1/47/37 Fred Parisien, Chanteur, 1984
1/48/38 Fred Parisien, Chanteur, 1984
1/49/39 Fred Parisien, Chanteur, 1984

Delia LaFloe Series

1/50/40 Delia LaFloe, Chanteuse, 1984
1/51/41 Delia LaFloe, Chanteuse, 1984
1/52/42 Delia LaFloe, Chanteuse, 1984
1/53/43 Delia LaFloe, Chanteuse, 1984

Page Family Series

1/54/44 Mike and Dorothy Page, Metchif Fiddle, 1983
1/55/45 Mike and Dorothy Page, Metchif Fiddle, 1983
1/56/46 Mike and Dorothy Page, Metchif Fiddle, 1983

Frank Poitra Series

1/57/47* Frank Poitra, Fiddler/Chanteur, 1984
1/58/48* Frank Poitra, Fiddler/Chanteur, 1984
1/59/49* Frank Poitra, Fiddler/Chanteur, 1984

Raymond Houle Series

1/60/50 Raymond Houle, Harmonica, 1983
1/61/51 Raymond Houle, Harmonica, 1983

King and Alvina Davis Series

/ /52 Gregory "King" and Alvina Davis, Stories/Songs (tape only), 1984
1/62/53 Gregory "King" and Alvina Davis, Stories/Songs, 1984
1/63/54 Francis Davis, Stories, 1984

Tom Parisien Family New Year's Series

1/64/55 Tom Parisien Family, New Year's Day, 1984
1/65/56 Tom Parisien Family, New Year's Day, 1984
1/66/57 Tom Parisien Family, New Year's Day, 1984
1/67/58 Tom Parisien Family, New Year's Day, 1984

Smithsonian Fieldwork Series

1/68/59 Raymond Wilkie, Metchif Music, 1989

1/69/60 Mary (Lawrence/Lavadure) Bruce, Metchif Song, 1989
1/70/61 Rose Azure, w/Dorothy and Mike Page, Song and Story, 1989
/ /62 Martin Belgarde, Metchif Song (tape only), 1989
1/71/63 Alex and Christine Boyer, Metchif Music and Story, 1989
1/72/64 Jenny Jeanotte Schindler, Metchif Story/Fairy Tale, 1989
1/73/65 Lawrence Keplin, w/Lawrence Allard, Music and Stories, 1989
1/74/66 Matilda Poitra, French Stories/Narrative, 1989
1/75/67 Rose Azure and Matilda Poitra, French Song and Story, 1989

North Dakota Council on the Arts Fieldwork Series

1/76/68 Alex Morin, Metchif Fiddle and Jigging, 1980
1/77/69 Alex Morin and George Longie, Music and Dance, 1981
1/78/70 Alex Morin and George Longie, Music and Dance, 1981
1/79/71 Leo J. Wilkie, Woodcarver, Sculptor, 1981
1/80/72 Leo J. Wilkie, Storytelling, 1981
1/81/73 Leo J. Wilkie, Storytelling, 1981
1/82/74 Leo J. Wilkie, Storytelling, 1981
1/83/75 Mary Lavadure, Dance and Story, 1981
1/84/76 Leona Patnaude, Music talk, 1981
1/85/77 Mary and Patrick Gourneau, 1981
1/86/78 Agnes Peltier, Dance and Medicine, 1981
1/87/79 Emily Gourneau, Music and Dance, 1981

Turtle Mountain Music Recording Session Series

/ /80 Recording Session, 1984
/ /81 Recording Session, 1984
/ /82 Recording Session, 1984
/ /83 Recording Session, 1984
/ /84 Recording Session, 1984
/ /85 Recording Session, 1984
/ /86 Recording Session, 1984
/ /87 Recording Session, 1984
/ /88 Recording Session, 1984
/ /89 Recording Session, 1984
/ /90 Recording Session, 1984
/ /91 Recording Session, 1984
/ /92 Recording Session, 1984
/ /93 Recording Session, 1984

Brian Johnson and Higher Ground Festival International de Louisiane Series

/ /94* Higher Ground, Fiddle Workshop, LaFayette, La., 1992
/ /95* Higher Ground, Performance, LaFayette, La., 1992
/ /96* Higher Ground, Main Stage, LaFayette, La., 1992

Metis Images Series

1/88/ Finding aid and acknowledgements

1/89/

Slides (95 images)

* Digital copy on file