

Fighting For Land in Buchanan Township

Gerald Nadeau, Transcript

“And what happened was, poor old Joe wanted to get the piece adjoining to the one he had already got, so his two sons could live side by side. Of course, Baptiste [Leduke] wanted a piece of that, and he didn’t want to sand dunes. The sand dunes were worthless, as far as growing anything. So, what someone did was said ‘OK, you two guys are pretty good defenders of your rafts. Let’s see which one of you will get the piece of land.’ This was a fair competition between people who did not dislike each other. It was a physical—what would we say—test in a sense, but not in an anger way. Just as two wrestlers might compete, and when it’s over they shake hands and the winner takes the purse, you know? So this is how that was done. It wasn’t done in a sense of anger, no.

Isidore Richard was the referee for fair play at this meeting. I suppose they would just have a piece of ground that would be big enough that they would not have room to move, and of course the families of both be as today’s ball games go, cheering for the side you wanted to win. And the old fella that I got this story from said his father had told him about the goings on at this meeting, and Baptiste’s... Mrs. Baptiste was running around in circles around the outside telling him in French to ‘Hit hard, hit hard!’ because he wasn’t hitting hard enough. And she knew the outcome was not going to be good.”