

RIEL IS LAID TO REST

FUNERAL SERVICES OF THE DEAD METIS CHIEF HELD AT ST. BONIFACE

Removal of the Remains From St. Vital— Half-breeds Testify Their Respect For Their Dead Leader—Very Impressive Ceremonies

Winnipeg, Man., Dec. 12—This morning Riel's body was laid to rest in St. Boniface churchyard. The Cathedral was well filled as early as 9 o'clock, by Winnipegers and persons from St. Boniface and vicinity. It was expected that the procession would arrive by 9 o'clock, but it was about 10 before it came in sight. Crowds thronged the sidewalk to witness the train pass along. It was a novel sight, indeed, and one which revived the memories of days long gone by. To show the great esteem in which the deceased rebel was held, his people bore his remains upon their shoulders all the way from St. Vital, almost six miles. The names of the pall-bearers were: Benjamin Nault, Chas. Nault, Elie Nault, Prosper Nault, Pere Harrison, W.R. Lagimodiere, Louis Blondeau, Romain Lagimodiere, Norbert Landry, Roman Nault, Norbert Landry, Alfred Nault, Martin Nault, Andre Nault, Louisson Desrivieres, Francis Poitras, Joseph Lagimodiere, St. Pierre Parisien, Francois Marion. They were dressed mostly in buffalo coats and wore beaver caps and moccasins. Red colored sashes encircled their waists. They wore a white sash each across their shoulders and breast.

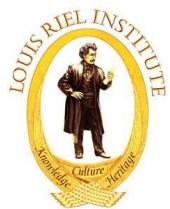
The casket, a magnificent rosewood one, was covered with a beautiful cloth, the form of a large white cross being worked on it. Two paces in front of the coffin walked Riel's two brothers, Joseph and Alexandre, both stalwart specimens of their race. One wore a heavy buffalo coat and the other an ordinary frieze coat. On either side of the bier marched in single file order a row of half-breeds, about thirty yards in extent. They acted as a sort of guard in case of a surprise, which was feared.

The first sleigh in the procession contained Riel's mother, his two sisters and his wife. The poor old woman, on leaving the house, insisted in walking in the procession, and did so as long as her failing strength would bear her up. She was at last obliged to ride in a sleigh. The service in the church was the ordinary requiem mass, without alteration, and was celebrated by Rev. Father Dugas, curate of the parish. He was assisted by Rev. Father Cloutier as deacon, and Rev. Father Messier as sub-deacon.

Among the clergy who also lent assistance were His Grace the Archbishop, Rev. Father Ritchot, parish priest of St. Norbert, Rev. Father Maisonneuve, and the Rev. Father Luscier, of St. Boniface College. The musical service was that known as the Gregorian, and consisted of plain chants. Rev. Father George Dugas of St. Boniface, conducted the choir, and Mr. Alfred Betourney presided at the choir. Messrs. Wm. Lamothe and Philion of St. Mary's church, assisted the Cathedral choir. The services lasted about an hour and a half, and at conclusion, the crowd left the church and gathered around an open grave just outside the church entrance.

The procession left Riel's home at St. Vital about 8:30. Half-breeds from the surrounding country, to the number of six or seven hundred, were present. Some sad scenes were enacted.

THE DAILY BRITISH WIG, DEC. 14, 1885.



Compiled by Lawrence Barkwell
Coordinator of Metis Heritage and History Research
Louis Riel Institute