

Palliser Expedition 1857

The Palliser Expedition, (1857-60), was initiated by John Palliser, who submitted to the Royal Geographical Society a plan to travel from the Red River Colony to and through the Rocky Mountains along the unsurveyed American boundary. The society expanded the project into a scientific expedition and applied for a grant of £5000 from the imperial government, which was then facing the problem of the future of the Hudson's Bay Company territories. They were to explore the old North West Company canoe route west from Lake Superior, the plains south of the North Saskatchewan River and the southern passes through the Rockies and find badly needed information about them. Dr James Hector was appointed geologist and naturalist, Eugene Bourgear botanical collector and John W. Sullivan secretary and astronomical observer. Magnetical observer Lt. Thomas W. Blakiston brought his delicate instruments by way of the Hudson Bay to join them on the prairies.

In the summer of 1857 the expedition left Lower Fort Garry with horses and carts, and with supplies provided by the Hudson's Bay Company. They continued via the Red River south to the United States border. The expedition then continued through turtle Mountain, Fort Ellice, Roche Percée, then north along the South Saskatchewan River to Fort Carlton, then along the North Saskatchewan River, where they spent the winter of 1857/1858. In the summer of 1858, Palliser split his expedition into three teams. The two led by Hector and Blakiston began the search for passes through the Rocky Mountains. With five companions (Samuel Ballenden, Robert Sutherland, Joseph Brown, Nimrod, and Peter Erasmus).

Palliser arranged to employ a number of Metis (12) and other Red River men to assist his scientific party.

John Ferguson: First guide. John was born circa 1808 at High Bluff. He was a voyageur with the NWC then with the HBC. From 1829 to 1836 he was a middle-man then bowsman in the Swan River District. From 1857 – 60 he was the First Guide for the Palliser Expedition. John married Monique Hamelin (b. 1823 at Pembina) the daughter of Jacques Hamelin and Angelique Tourengau. Their sons, Antoine and Leon and son-in-law David Dumas were active in the 1885 Metis Resistance at Batoche. They had the following children:

- Anne, born 1838, married Pierre Parenteau.
- Daniel, born 1841, married Genevieve Gladu.
- Antoine, born 1842, married Elise Jerome.
- Clara, born 1847, married Joseph Larence.
- Marguerite, born 1848, died 1851.
- Elise, born 1851, married Daniel Dumas.
- Joachim, born 1853, died 1875.
- Leon, born 1857, married Marie Rose Racette.
- Josephte, born 1859, died 1872.

Henry Hallett: Second guide. (1799-1871) Henry was either born on the North Saskatchewan River in modern day Alberta, or on the Turtlelake River in modern day Saskatchewan. Henry was the son of Henry Hallett Senior and Catherine, a Cree woman.

Henry married Catherine Parenteau (born 1799-1804) on October 18, 1824 at St. John's Anglican Church, Red River. At that time, Henry and Catherine were already married according to "the custom of the country", and had at least two children. The family would eventually expand to include some ten children.

Henry was a very famous and successful buffalo hunter. After his wife died in 1857 he signed on with the Palliser Expedition as a "second guide" to the Palliser Expedition in July of 1857. The purpose of this expedition was to gather information on everything that was encountered. Henry accompanied the journey from present day Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan to Fort Edmonton; Henry did not cross the Rockies with them in the spring of 1858. Henry acted as both guide and hunter during this journey.

Henry inherited his father's estate on Point Douglas. He lived there until 1865, when he sold it and moved to the Popular Point area of Manitoba to join his children. Henry died on May 9, 1871. (Written with contributions by Heather Hallett.)

Pierre Beauchamp. Pierre was born circa 1810, the son of Jean Baptiste Beauchamp and Josephte Daze. He married Marie Comtois dit Morin, circa 1831, then married Scholastique Versailles in 1863 at St. Norbert. His son Pierre Jr. signed Riel's petition for a Reserve in Montana.

Samuel Ballendine (Ballenden) (1834-1903) Samuel was born at St. Andrews, Red River, the son of George Ballenden and Jane Black. He married Flora Chatelain, a member of the Mistawasis Band. Sam worked for the HBC at Fort Carlton, and Fort Edmonton and for the Palliser Expedition in 1857, to 1859. Just before the Metis Resistance of 1885, he was farming instructor on the Sweet Grass Reserve. He also worked for the N.W.M.P. and during the 1885 Resistance he served in the Battleford Home Guards, No. 2 Company. He was the man Crozier sent with a message to Big Bear and Lucky Man to surrender. He died at Bresaylor, Saskatchewan on May 23, 1903.¹

George Daniel. George Daniel was born in 1840, the son of Jacob Daniel (b. 1792) and Margaret Goodwin (Metisse) George married Elizabeth Voller.

Baptiste La Graise. In 1845, La Graise had been a guide for the Sinclair Expedition to the Oregon Territory.

Pierre "Tche-mar-nay" Falcon Jr. (1820-1892) Pierre was born on April 12, 1820 at St. Francois Xavier, the son of Pierre "Che-na-me" Falcon (b. 1793) and Marie Grant. He married Marie Louise Leveille (b. 1826), the daughter of Pierre Leveille and Julie McKenzie on February 3, 1845 at SFX. Their son Athanase Falcon (b. 1849) and Gre-

¹ Douglas W. Light, *Footprints in the Dust*. North Battleford: Turner-Warwick Publications Inc., 1987: 92.

goire Falcon (b. 1857) were part of the Metis force that rode from the Metis encampment at Turtleford with Joseph Jobin to join Gabriel Dumont's forces at Batoche in 1885. Their daughter Balsamine was born July 1, 1846. She married Andre Lesperance (b. 1835) the son of Alexis Bonami Lesperance and Marguerite Gourneau, on February 12, 1867. She then married Isidor Boucher, the son of Jean Marie Boucher and Catherine Minsey in 1891.

Pierre and Marie Louise Leveille had the following children:

- Balsamie, born July 1, 1846 at SFX, married Andre Lesperance, then married Isidore Boucher.
- Athanase, born May 8, 1849, married Nancy Parisien.
- Onesime, born May 18, 1851 at SFX, married Marie Laverdure, then married Marguerite Lesperance.
- Jean Baptiste, born December 19, 1852 at SFX, died June 3, 1853.
- Job, born March 1854, married Marie Rocquebrun dit Larocque.
- Gregoire, born August 1856 at SFX, married Marie Montour.
- Julie, born February 2, 1862 at SFX, married Daniel Lillie.
- Veronique, born May 9, 1864 at SFX, married Toussaint Ducharme.
- Pierre, born 1867 at SFX, married Marguerite Vandal.
- Marie Catherine, born February 1870 at SFX, married Dophus Harrison.

Amable Hogue (1833-1892) Amable was born on May 6, 1833 at St. Charles, the son of Amable Louis Hogue (b. 1796) and Marguerite Taylor (b. 1810). His step-son John Simpson was also part of this expedition. Amable later married Elizabeth "Betsy" Morrisette (b. 1843).²

Donald Matheson (1833-1907) Donald Matheson, b-May 22, 1835 Red River married before 1871 Christina Sutherland b-April 29, 1845. Matheson began his career as a farmer in Kildonan and also entered into partnership with J.H. Bell as a contractor and builder. Before the coming of the railroad he travelled extensively throughout the West to the Rocky Mountains. In 1858 he worked for the Palliser Expedition, assisting Lieutenant Thomas Blakiston. In 1859 he accompanied the Earl of Southesk on his travels. He was an elder of the Bird's Hill Road Presbyterian Church and for several years he served on the Kildonan School Board as well as on the municipal council. He died in 1907 at Bird's Hill, Manitoba.

Antoine Comtois dit Morin. Antoine was born in 1830, the son of Antoine Morin and Therese Larocque (b.1813) the daughter of Joseph Larocque and Therese (Assiniboine). He married Louise Apicito Tanner at St. Joseph's 1864. Antoine died 1883. Antoine Morin was one of the signatories to the Half-Breed hunting rights document sent to Alexander Christie, Governor of the Red River Settlement in August 1845.

² She married twice: [i] Amable Hogue in 1860; and [ii] Germain Degane in 1899 she died August 7, 1914 in the St Boniface.

John Foulds. (1830-1903) John Foulds was a member of the Palliser Expedition. The Palliser Expedition, (1857-60), was initiated by John Palliser, who submitted to the Royal Geographical Society a plan to travel from the Red River Colony to and through the Rocky Mountains along the unsurveyed American boundary. Palliser arranged to employ a number of Metis (12) and other Red River men to assist his scientific party.

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John Foulds was born on June 27, 1830 in St. James, the Metis son of John Foulds Sr.³ (b: 1798 in Liverpool, England d: August 27, 1868 in St. Andrew's Parish) and Mary Fiddler (b. June 27, 1811 in Chalk Portage and baptized in Norway House) Mary was the Metisse daughter of Peter Fidler and Mary-Muskegon-“Metheweman” John married Ann “Nancy” Adams (b: 1835) on January 4, 1855 at High Bluff. She was the daughter of George Adams (b. 1796) and Anne Haywood. John Foulds died in 1903 at Lindsay, Saskatchewan.

George Morrison. George Morrison was born in 1840, the Metis son of James Morrison and Fanny Sanderson. He farmed at St. Andrews.

Charles Racette. (1833-1876) Charles was the Metis son of Charles Racette Sr. and Reine Boucher. He was married to Helene Boyer (b. 1834) the daughter of Baptiste Boyer and Helene McMillan. Their sons Jerome and Charles were both active in the Metis Resistance of 1885. Their daughter Marie Rose (b. 1861) was married to Leon Ferguson (b. 1857) another participant in the 1885 Metis Resistance. Their children were:

- William Racette, born 1857.
- Marie Rose Racette (b. 1861) was married to Leon Ferguson (b. 1857) another participant in the 1885 Metis Resistance.
- Jerome Racette, born March 24, 1859, the son of Charles Racette and Helene Boyer. He married Caroline Nolin (b. 1867), the daughter of Charles Nolin and Marie Anne Harrison.
- Charles Damase Racette was born in 1864 son of Charles Racette and Helene Boyer. He married Marie Jane Ouellette (b. 1870), the daughter of Moise Ouellette and Isabella Dumont

³ In 1823-24 John was listed as a servant to Donald McKenzie (1783-1851), the Governor of Assiniboia. John continued as a Labourer at Fort Garry until his contract expired in 1825, after which he left the HBC service to become a Red River colonist.

- Patrice Racette, born 1866 was married to Julie Lafond (b. 1873).
- Virginie Racette, born 1869 married Abraham Ouellette (b. 1867) the son of Baptiste Ouellette and Cecile Courchene.
- Anne Racette, born 1871.
- Isabella Racette, born 1872 at Fish Creek, married Albert Welsh (b. 1871), the son of Norbert Welsh and Cecile Boyer.
- Helene Racette, born 1875 at St. Laurent.

John Ross. (1832-1885) Ross was born on October 21, 1832 at White Horse Plains. He was the son of Hugh Ross and Sara Short, brother of Donald Ross who was killed at Batoche. He married Marguerite Grant the daughter of Cuthbert Grant, they then moved to the Duck Lake area. He supported Riel in the 1885 Resistance and was a member of the Exovedate. Council minutes indicate that John was in charge of the cattle supplies.

John McKenzie Simpson. ((1829-1900) John Simpson was a member of the Palliser Expedition. The Palliser Expedition, (1857-60), was initiated by John Palliser, who submitted to the Royal Geographical Society a plan to travel from the Red River Colony to and through the Rocky Mountains along the unsurveyed American boundary. Palliser arranged to employ a number of Metis (12) and other Red River men to assist his scientific party.

John was born in 1829, the Metis son of George Simpson and Marguerite Taylor. Marguerite was the daughter of George Taylor and Jane (Cree or Dene).⁴ His father, Sir George Simpson (1786-1860) was Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company from 1820 to 1860. John married Amelia Amy Fidler, the daughter of Charles Fidler and Ann Saunders in 1859 at St. James. The couple had six children. John's step-father Amable Hogue was also part of the Palliser Expedition.

Thomas Sinclair. (1809-1870) Thomas Sinclair was born circa 1809, the son of Chief Factor William Sinclair (a Scot) and his Cree-Metis wife Margaret Nahovway. Thomas first married Hannah Cummings the daughter of North West Company clerk Cuthbert Cummings and Susette McKee (Métisse) on February 9, 1832 at St. John's. Hannah died October 23, 1846. He then married Caroline Pruden on April 3, 1850 at St. John's. He had seven children with Hannah and six more children with Caroline Pruden. Thomas was a Magistrate and councillor of Assiniboia. He was a boat brigade captain who worked as an independent freighter and trader out of St. Andrews and he also operated a windmill near the rapids on the Red River in St. Andrews parish. He also held appointments as a petty magistrate and Councilor of Assiniboia.

He died on March 23, 1870 after a long illness, and the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia made a motion of condolences to the family on March 26, 1870 and noted that his son, Thomas Sinclair Jr. was to continue with the offices held by his father.

⁴ Taylor and Simpson were not married. He "turned her off" and she then married Amable Hogue in 1831. Hogue was one of Governor Simpson's elite crew of voyageurs and the person he "picked" to take care of Margaret once he had married Frances, his Scottish cousin.

Robert Sutherland. (1830-1907) Robert was born in the Parish of Kildonan in 1830, the son of Big John Sutherland and Catherine Matheson, and baptised at St. John's on 9 March 1830. On 6 May 1850, he married Jane Henderson, who died in 1898. He was one of the earliest Red River freighters to make regular trips between the Settlement and St. Paul. He later moved to Headingley and from there to Burnside. In 1882 he homesteaded south of Griswold.

George Taylor. (1829-1919) George Taylor was born on October 1, 1829 at York Factory, the son of George Taylor II and Jane Bruce or Prince. George married Isabella Cooper, the daughter of Charles Cooper and Catherine Thomas in 1850 at St. Andrews. George was a sailor for the Hudson's Bay Company before accompanying the Palliser Expedition across the West in 1857. He later settled near Lower Fort Garry and in 1879 moved west to Prince Albert to homestead. He died in Edgerton, Alberta.

In 1827 the HBC sent his father George Taylor II on a journey to ascertain the American Boundary Line and in his journal of 1827-28 (Hudson's Bay Archives B.235/a/9) Taylor records arriving at the site of Old Brandon House on 3rd November, 1827, where he met Cuthbert Grant's people.

George Taylor's brothers, Robert Taylor (b. 1836) and Edward Taylor (b. 1841) were both members of the 49th Rangers, the Metis Scouts of the 1873-74 Boundary Commission. In 1872, the formal survey of the border between Canada and the United States began. The Commission surveyed from the Northwest Angle of the Lake of the Woods to the Red River over the winter of 1872-73. They used Metis guides and Chipewewa men to assist them with this task. The British Commission employed William Hallett and 30 armed Metis guides and scouts.

Joseph Vermette. (1832-1885) Joseph was born on February 8, 1832 at St. Boniface, the son of Joseph Vermette Sr. and Angelique Laliberte. He married Marguerite Sayer the daughter of Guillaume Sayer and Josephte Frobisher sometime before 1855. He fought and died in the Metis Resistance at Batoche in 1885.

Pascal ?



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