

Antoine Houle. (b. c. 1781-1787)

Antoine was one of the principal Metis who took part in the battle of Seven Oaks in 1816. He and Michel Bourassa were the two Captains of Grant's party.

Antoine was born between 1781 and 1787, the son of Antoine Houle Sr. and Elise an Indian. Antoine was a NWC interpreter. Antoine married Josephte Lauzon, they lived at Grantown. He died on March 27, 1867 at St. François Xavier. He is reputed to have killed Mr. James Moore during the battle. Their children were:

- Jean Baptiste
- William
- Francois, b. 1806, married Marguerite Gariepy.
- Therese, b. 1808, married Joseph Ouelette.¹
- Francoise, b : 1811, d: April 1868; married Norbert Delorme.
- Antoine Jr., b. 1812, d: February 07, 1890 in St. Francois Xavier; married Marie Larocque, then Magdeleine Ledoux.
- Josephte, b. 1816, married Michel Leclerc dit Allard.
- Madeleine, b. 1818, married Francois Piche.
- Louis, b. 1825, d: October 1870, married Marguerite Ross.
- Louise, b. 1826, married Alexis Pelletier.
- Marguerite, b. 1831, married Joseph Short.
- Charles, b. 1833, married Felicite Martel.

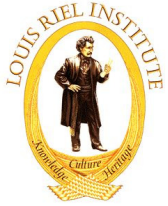
On the night of March 17, 1816, the NWC Fort Gibraltar was attacked and seized by Colin Robertson of the HBC. On March 30, Selkirk had written to Robertson instructing him to expel the rival company from the HBC domain—if necessary resorting to force to do this. On June 10, 1816, the NWC Fort Gibraltar was destroyed, some of the logs were sent to Fort Douglas and the rest burned.

It was in this context that Michel Bourassa and Antoine Houle were leading a party of armed men to transport 20 bags of pemmican below Fort Douglas to the NWC brigade coming from Montreal. The group consisted of 6 Canadiens, 6 Indians and 52 Metis. Their orders were to avoid the fort. This they did by riding as far west as they could get without being in the swamp. Even then they reported their horses were up to their bellies in water. They were ordered by Cuthbert Grant not to attack Fort Douglas, but to defend themselves if attacked. Governor Semple spotted them and went out with 27 of his men. After a confrontation with Boucher over Semple's destruction of Fort Gibraltar the HBC men fired on the Metis, after which Holt and Semple were shot in return. An Indian named Machicabaou finished off Semple. Twenty HBC were killed as opposed to one Metis and one Indian from Grant's party. The wounded HBC men were apparently finished off by a Canadien, François Deschamps and his Metis sons.

¹ Joseph was killed on the final day (May 12th 1885) of "The Battle of Batoche", during the 1885 North West Resistance.

Coltman reported:

Antoine Houle had said more positively, that if the colonists did not immediately surrender their arms, they must fire upon them; and that he would give a shout, as a signal, when to begin; for they must not be allowed to escape.²



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

² Coltman, 1819: 184.