

## Jean-Baptiste Sayer (b. 1853)

Jean-Baptiste was the son of Louison Sayer Sr.<sup>1</sup> and Suzanne Fleury. He was born at St. François-Xavier on November 16, 1853. He was married to Emma Pruden and they moved to the Bresaylor Settlement in 1882. He was the leader of the Indian and Métis group that captured a wagon train from Swift Current taking army supplies to Battleford on May 14, 1885. Douglas Light reports on this event:

*About 10 a.m. on the morning of May 14<sup>th</sup>, some fifteen miles south of Battleford, the wagon train was in the middle of a large level clearing when they saw a large number of Indians circling them at a distance. The teamsters quickly formed a circle of wagons and began to unhitch their horses and oxen. As a number of teamsters were busy fortifying the wagon corral with sacks of oats and bales of hay, nine of the group decided to 'make a run for it' on their horses. They headed south, hotly pursued by a party of Indians and Metis who were firing shots at them, which only increased the teamster's speed.*

*The larger group of Indians and Metis cautiously circled the wagon train at a fast trot, out of gunshot range, while the remaining teamsters prepared for battle. In a short time, Jean Baptiste Sayer, the leader of the Indians and Metis, came forward; threw down his rifle; and, holding his hands high over his head, asked the wagon master to come out and talk. Frank Cox warily ventured out while being covered by the rifles of the teamsters. The Metis told him to surrender immediately, and no harm would come to them; whereupon Cox returned to the corral and after a shot upon consultation agreed to surrender. The teamsters were then ordered to hitch up; and, being escorted by their captors, they proceeded a short distance to a valley where the main rebel camp was situated.<sup>2</sup>*

Jean-Baptiste's younger brother Guillaume was on the Canadian side, with the Battleford Rifles, during the Resistance. In June of 1885 he was arrested and charged with Treason-felony.<sup>3</sup> He was given a discharge on September 8, 1885 at Battleford. On May 5, 1888, Corporal G.H.L. Bossange reported on the Sayer brothers activities:

*Here I have come across two Breeds from Battleford, named Joseph Sears (sic.) and Louis Sears; they are brothers; Louis is about thirty years old; the other one about twenty-three. They came over after the Rebellion because they were in most of the fights and were afraid to get caught – I sleep here at the section house on the railroad; in the same room as them; so I expect to be able to get some information. They are at present working on the track.<sup>4</sup>*

---

<sup>1</sup> Louis Sayer held HBC lot 1180.

<sup>2</sup> Douglas W. Light, *Footprints in the Dust*. North Battleford, SK: Turner-Warwick Publications Inc., 1987: 461.

<sup>3</sup> Douglas W. Light, *Footprints in the Dust*. North Battleford, SK: Turner-Warwick Publications Inc., 1987: 444.

<sup>4</sup> G.H.L. Bossange to the Commissioner of the N.W.M. Police, May 5, 1888 from Fort Assiniboine, Montana, Dewdney fonds pp. 1345-1347.



**LOUIS RIEL INSTITUTE**  
*Knowledge • Culture • Heritage*

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