

## 1853: Battle of La Loge de Chevaux<sup>1</sup> :

The site of this battle is south-east of Devil's Lake in Romness Township, Griggs County, North Dakota. The butte has an elevation of 1400 feet above sea level, according to the topographical map. The Sheyenne River makes a bend at that point that nearly touches the southwest base of the hill.

Allan Osmundson has recorded:

*The hill was named circa 1835, and that in about 1853 a group of people descended from French trapper fathers and Indian mothers, the children being called Metis. These Metis warriors had grazed a herd of horses near the hill, and then a group of full-blood Indians (Sioux) had tried to stampede and run off these horses, so a battle had ensued, and as a result 28 people of both groups were killed, and are buried on the sloping hillside, so graves were visible many years later, when the settlers came here in about 1880.*

An Indian boy, who was about fifteen years old, was along herding these horses when the battle occurred, and he was said to have related this event to Omund Nelson Opheim, the very first settler in Griggs County in 1879, I believe. Opheim had told of this event to Anton and Gilbert Olson, who then had told it to Major Wright.

*I have learned more about Horse Hill from my friend Louie Garcia of Tokio, N.D. The French name for the hill is La Loge de Chevaux, and the Sioux name being Sunkawakan Tipi, which equals "horse dwelling". This butte is a Medicine butte, home of a giant spirit horse. He states also that the Métis/Indian battle took place there, and that there were 28 graves noted on the slope of the hill nearby. This information comes from WPA records collected in the 1930s and 40s by US government activity.*

Source: Griggs County *Sentinel-Courier* February 19, 1999 - Page 7.



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

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

---

<sup>1</sup> Also called Horse Butte or the Sioux name of Sukawakan Tipi, which means "Horse Dwelling."