

Alexandre Cayen, *dit* Boudreau. (1834-1886)

Alexandre, a red haired Metis, was also known as *Kee-too-way-how* (Sounding with Flying Wings). He is described as a stout, vigorous looking individual. He was born at St. Boniface, Manitoba, the son of Pierre Narcisse Cayen *dit* Boudreau and Adelaide Catherine Arcand (Kaseewetin).¹ On September 22, 1855 he married Marie McGillis at St. François Xavier. Marie was the daughter of Alexandre McGillis and Marguerite Bottineau. The couple had ten children. Their son, Alexandre married Marie Adeline Piché. They lived at Duck Lake. Alexandre Jr. was also active in the 1885 Resistance. Their daughter Isabelle (b. 1866 at Carlton) married resistance fighter Albert Trottier in 1886. Daughter Justine married William “Billy” McKay in 1891. Billy had been a scout and interpreter on the Dominion side during the Resistance. Their daughter Marie married Isidore Dumont III, the son of resistance activist Isidore Dumont Jr. and Judith Parenteau.

In 1876 Alexandre was a signatory to Treaty Six and took up a reserve at Muskeg Lake (Petequakey). His name appears on the first treaty pay list of 1879 and again in 1880 when he received his payments as chief. He subsequently left and in the 1880s Alexandre was living near the St. Laurent de Grandin Mission. Although he died in 1886, all his family members took Metis scrip. His brother Isidore (Petequakey) then succeeded him as chief of this Metis band.² At the time of the Resistance he, his brother, and his son Alexandre Jr. were active in the fighting. His son was a member of the Petequakey Band. Resistance activist Augustin Laframboise was also married to a woman from the same reserve. Shortly after the negotiations for Treaty 6 at Fort Carlton in 1876 Alexander Cayen had argued that Metis economic needs be considered:

We hear that the government are sending instructors. They are all from below, and if I were to have one, I would rather have one from the country, who understands the language, and with whom I could speak face to face, without an interpreter. There are not enough instructors sent up, and if more are needed, I hope half-breeds will be selected, as it will help them too. There are a lot of half-breeds who want to take the treaty and join the reserves, and who would be of assistance; but were told that they could not come in, as they had white blood in their veins. Some of the families of half-breeds were in the treaty, and the men would like to come in. He hoped a favorable view would be taken of their request³.

One of Cayen’s first assignments from the Metis Provisional Government was to provide a scouting report of activities at Battle River.

The Scouting Report of Alexandre Cagan (Cayen), April 26th, 1885

[After reporting what he was told by an Indian, La Graine D’Orignal, what had happened at Battle River] Alex reports: I started to come back this way; and after a days journey my son and son-in-law turned back to get flour and pork at Battle River... Then I came towards Muskeg Lake to the place where I met my brother (Petequakey). There on the day after my arrival, we broke up camp to go to the Mistawasis reserve, for they had no provisions. It was there I destroyed the pigs. When I was going to leave, my brother told me he was not with the Government since he was with the half-breeds. He had not as yet meddled in the matter. “But you see, he said, how I am in need of means. Many of the people are sick too.” He further said: “I am afraid of our people, the Crees, to go with the

¹ Kaseewetin was band member # 24 on the Petequakey Band treaty payroll.

² Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, “Chiefs of the Petequakey Reserve,” muskeglake.com, 1991, 1994.

³ Dewdney to Macdonald, report dated January 2, 1880, p. 45, NA, RG 10, Vol. 3704, file 17,858.

Government.” We are but two brothers, and he was waiting for me to know what I would say to him. There is only one in whom I trust and that is God. If he wills that I should die of hunger, I shall die so. When the Chief’s [Mistawasis’] people sent a runner to Lake La Peche, the agent replied: “Since he wants to go with the half-breeds, let the half-breeds feed him. Why did he not come with you Belangers?”⁴ He said that to the runner. I said to my brother: “Neither have I meddled in the matter, but I do not want to hold back, for one of my boys is there; and if they want us they know what to do. Otherwise I must be a coward, since my boy is there.” I think they wanted to follow me at once, and I cannot go aside from that, and if you would be afraid, I also would be afraid. I have never had much affection for Canada and I have still less at present. Belanger is between two fires; he is afraid to go to Prince Albert and he is afraid to come here.... The mail carrier told the Indians that all the forts are taken by the half-breeds and Indians toward Edmonton. Straw Man took 350 head of cattle, and two Indians took 40 horses. They have a lot of horses. They have 340 guns and much ammunition. My brother has eleven guns. I think they have no rifles, we have three. I gave them too much powder. Big Bear has all the Montagnais with him.⁵

During the hostilities the Metis Council sent Alexandre back to Muskeg Lake to bring more of his men. The April 20, 1885 Council minutes (order 31 and order 32) passed two resolutions to provide Alexandre with two “good horses” so he could go for his people at Muskeg Lake Reserve. Cayen was a member of Captain James Short’s company, one of the 19 *dizaines* led by Gabriel Dumont during the 1885 Metis Resistance. Alexandre played a key role in the 1885 Resistance. He was Gabriel Dumont’s envoy to the Assiniboine Indians when the Metis were requesting their support. On May 23, 1885, Alexandre delivered Poundmaker’s letter of surrender to General Middleton. At Alexandre’s trial in Regina Louis Cochin who had been a prisoner in Poundmaker’s camp gave a sworn statement that Joseph Arcand, Pierre Vandal, Alexandre Cayen (and his men) had been instrumental in saving his life and the lives of the teamsters who were being held prisoner.

Dr. Mulvaney gives a report on his meeting with Cayen on board the Northcote at Carlton:

A few minutes later a young Indian, as nephew of Poundmaker, and son of one of the biggest scoundrels on the plains, came on board followed by a well-dressed, middle-aged Half-breed named Alexandre Cadian (sic), a gentleman who some years ago was the chief of the Indian tribe at Muskeg Lake, but who of late has been a resident of Duck Lake.

The story as learned from the interpreter, was as follows:—Riel had sent his emissary, Alexandre Cadian, with others, to Poundmaker to ask his assistance at Batoche’s, should the government forces meet him there. The day after his arrival, news of the disaster to Riel’s men reached Poundmaker, through a friendly Half-breed, with the advice that he should lay down his arms if he wished to avoid having his people killed. Poundmaker did not believe the messenger, and Cadian and the others started for Batoche’s to ascertain the truth; but after their departure the news was confirmed by couriers sent by Beardy. Poundmaker’s nephew had in the meantime been dispatched with a letter to Prince Albert, where it was thought General Middleton was camped, but finding that he had gone to Carlton followed and overtook him as stated. Cadian was captured near Duck Lake, and brought to Carlton also. As wired you he was one of the most prominent in the rebel ranks. His former chieftanship stood him in good stead, and he easily influenced his old braves at Muskeg Lake to go on the warpath. In other ways, especially with the Savages, he was an invaluable aid to Riel and the rebel cause. He was sent to Prince Albert where he will be incarcerated with the other prisoners.⁶

⁴ Chief Mistawasis’ Metis name was Pierre Belanger. He had Belanger relatives living on Petequaakey’s reserve.

⁵ CSP, 1886, Vol. 43, pp. 25-26.

⁶ Charles Pelham Mulvaney, M.D. *The History of the North-West Rebellion of 1885*. Toronto: A. H. Hovey & Co., 1885: 353-355.

Alexandre was arrested on June 1, 1885 and on August 14, 1885 at Regina was sentenced to a seven-year prison term for his participation in the 1885 Metis Resistance. Before sentencing, Robert Jefferson gave a statement on Keetoowayhow's behalf:

Arcand and Cadieux, above mentioned, were at Battleford during the latter part of the rebellion for the purpose of standing between the Indians on one side and the half-breeds and teamsters and other white people on the other, and they did nothing else during their stay in the camp.

I saw Alexander Cadieux, above mentioned, alias "Kitty-way-hoe," standing at the door of the tent of the scout Fontaine a prisoner about the sixth day of May last past, and keeping the Indians away from said tent. (Sworn August 11, 1885)⁷

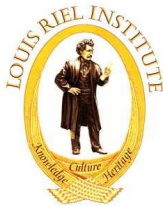
In his testimony of August 13, 1885 at the Regina trial Father Alexis Andre says:

Alexander Cadieux, or Kitwayo, is pure Indian but has lived with the Half-Breeds. I have known him for seventeen years; he is a hunter and has a great deal of influence with the Indian tribes. He has a very large family of ten children and their mother. Two of his children are cripples, and he is an old man nearly sixty (sic) years of age. He spent the winter hunting away two hundred miles at Turtle Lake, and only arrived about the end of April when he was visited by Riel and forced into his service. He was not present at any battle and rendered very signal service in saving the lives of the teamsters when the Indians were about to massacre them, after taking them prisoners. He has lost everything. (CSP, 1886, Vol. 13, p. 386)

On the same date Father L. Cochin testified:

Alexander Cadieux (sic) alias 'Kitty-way-hoe' (sic) came to the camp with the other above mentioned (Pierre Vandal and Joseph Arcand). He is a fine savage, but has lived among the half-breeds, and is very ignorant. He had a great deal of influence with the savages, and through this influence he was enabled to save the lives of the teamster prisoners who were on the point of being killed by the Indians who were very furious and determined. (CSP, 1886, Vol. 12, No. 45 p. 28)

In spite of these pleas by the clergy, Alexandre was sentenced to seven years.



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

⁷ CSP, 1886, Vol. 13, No. 52, 399.