

## **Manitoba's Provisional Government of 1870**

### **The Convention of Forty** (January 25, 1870 to February 10, 1870)

Without consultation the Canadian government passed the "Act for the Temporary Government of Rupert's Land by a Lieutenant Governor and Council" on October 1, 1869 and appointed William McDougall as Lieutenant Governor. McDougall traveled to Red River via Pembina and attempted to smuggle 250 rifles and 10,000 rounds of ammunition into Manitoba. The Red River Resistance lasted from November 1869, when the Métis blocked William McDougall's entrance, to August 1870 when the British military expedition, the Red River Expeditionary Force, arrived at Red River. During that period Louis Riel tried with varying levels of success to bring the English and French speaking portions of the community together in a single government that would negotiate terms of entry with the Canadian government.

The Métis had originally formed a National Committee of the Métis of Red River to turn back William McDougall and seize Upper Fort Garry, one of Riel's first acts was to call on the English speaking parishes of the community to send 12 delegates to meet with 12 French-speaking residents of the Métis parishes to debate the community's future. This Convention of 24 was able to agree on a list of rights that they wanted to see Canada recognize, but were unable to agree on a common strategy.

At a two-day open-air meeting in January 1870 HBC Governor Donald Smith promised to communicate the people's concerns to Canada. Another convention, this one with 20 English-speaking and 20 French-representatives met between January 25, 1870 and February 10, 1870 and agreed upon on list of demands to take to Ottawa. During the convention Riel acted as the English interpreter for the French speaking delegates and James Ross acted as the French interpreter for the English speaking delegates. After agreeing to the list of demands, the Convention of Forty proclaimed itself a provisional government with Riel as its President. It was the crowning point in the history of the resistance, bringing together both the English- and French-speaking halves of the community under a single government. The Provisional Government agreed to send Father Noel Joseph Ritchot an adviser of Riel's, Alfred Scott, a Winnipeg bartender, and Judge John Black, to Ottawa to negotiate with the Canadian government.

#### **French Representatives**

All of these men except Pierre Thibert and William O'Donoghue were Métis.

Baie St. Paul	Pierre Thibert Alexandre Page Magnus Birston
St. François Xavier	François Xavier Pagé Pierre Poitras
St. Charles	Baptiste Beauchemin
St. Boniface`	W. B. O'Donoghue Ambroise Lepine Joseph Genthon Louis Schmidt dit Laferté
St. Vital	Louis Riel Andre Beauchemin

St. Norbert	Pierre Parenteau Norbert Larence Baptiste Tourond
Pointe Coupe	Louis Lacerte Pierre Delorme
Oak Point	Thomas Auguste Harrison Charles Nolin
Pointe à Grouette	Georges Klyne

**English Representatives**

St. Peter's	Rev. Henry Cochrane (Métis) Thomas Spence (Scottish)
St. Clement's	Thomas Bunn (Métis) Alexandre McKenzie (Métis)
St. Andrew's	Judge John Black (Scottish) Donald Gunn Sr. (Scottish) Alfred Boyd (English)
St. Paul	Dr. Curtis James Bird (English)
Kildonan	John Fraser (Scottish) John Sutherland (Scottish)
St. John's	James Ross (Métis)
St. James	George Flett (Métis) Robert Tait (Métis)
Headingly	John Taylor (Métis) W.T. Lonsdale (English)
St. Mary's	Kenneth McKenzie (Scottish)
St. Margaret's	William Cummings
Ste. Anne's	George Gunn (Métis) David Spence (Métis)
Winnipeg	Alfred Henry Scott (English)

**Beauchemin, André, MLA.** (1824-1902)

A Métis politician, he served as the St. Vital delegate on Riel's Red River Council of November 1869. Later he was a delegate to the Convention of Forty and a councillor in the

provisional government. He was elected to the first Manitoba legislature in 1870 by acclamation to represent the riding of St. Vital. André was born on November 6, 1824 at Red River, the son of André Millet *dit* Beauchemin and Madeleine Ducharme. He married Geneviève Delorme, the daughter of Joseph Esnault *dit* Delorme and Brigitte Villebrun.

**Beauchemin, Jean Baptiste.** (1838-1900)

Jean was the son of Benjamin Beauchemin and Marie Parenteau. He was married to Margeurite McMillan. He represented St. Charles at the Convention of Forty in 1870 and served on Riel's second provisional government.

**Bird, Curtis James, M.L.A.** (1838-1876)

Bird was a member of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. In 1873 he was tarred for his opposition to a bill for the incorporation of the town of Winnipeg. Bird, a physician, trained in England, was the son of Chief Factor James Curtis Bird Sr. and Mary Lowman. Curtis James was not Métis although all his step-siblings from James Curtis Bird's first marriage were. Thus, Curtis was the stepbrother of the famous Métis plainsman Jemmy Jock Bird.

Curtis James married the daughter of Donald Ross in 1866. She was the widow of Charles McDermot. Bird was educated at St. John's College in Winnipeg before studying medicine at Guy's hospital in London. Upon his return to Red River he was appointed coroner, and succeeded Dr. Bunn in 1861. He became a member of the Council of Assiniboia in 1868, participated in the Convention of Forty 1870 and represented St. Paul's in the first legislative assembly of Manitoba. Dr. Bird owned a pharmacy and this drugstore was reputed to have had the first soda fountain in Western Canada.

**Birston (Burston), Magnus Bernard.** (b. 1828)

Birston was a Scottish Half-Breed from St. François Xavier, the son of William Birston and Angélique Bercier *dit* Marchand. He has been described as one of the leaders of the "English Plains Buffalo Hunt" along with William Hallett. He was married to Madeleine Paul (b. 1828). Birston had been appointed to the Council of Assiniboia on August 6, 1868. The Council existed for 35 years, 1835-1870. He was the St. Paul delegate to the Convention of Forty.

On October 10 1885, he was tried for treason-felony at Regina for his Resistance activities at Duck Lake on 26<sup>th</sup> March and 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1885. He appeared before Judge Richardson on Monday October 26, 1885 and the judge stated that although some evidence weighed against the prisoner there were some favourable points for him, and sitting as a juror he could not convict. He warned the prisoner to be more careful of himself in the future. He was the only Métis other than Riel to go to trial.

Hillyard Mitchell had left Birston in charge of his store at Duck Lake before the battle there. Birston may have looted the store and burnt down Mitchell's house but there was little evidence.

**Black, John (1817-1879)**

Black was born in Scotland and accompanied Recorder Adam Thom to Red River in 1839. He entered the service of the HBC and rising to the post of chief trader. In 1845 Black married Margaret Christie, daughter of Alexander Christie the governor of Assiniboia. From 1850 to 1852 he served as chief accountant of the Upper Red River District. After his wife's death in 1854 he went to Scotland and Australia, returning to Red River in 1862 to become recorder and president of the General Quarterly Court of Assiniboia.

Black apparently had acquired some legal training in Scotland; his procedures in the court were Scottish rather than English. In 1862 he joined the Council of Assiniboia. He was ready to resign as recorder in 1868 after much criticism of his judicial activities, but agreed to stay on. He was still in office when the Red River Resistance began. He kept a moderate course. He was elected English delegate from St. Andrew's to the Convention of Forty in 1870 and was chosen as

its chair. On February 4 and 5, 1870 he spoke at length against the immediate creation of a province and the continued use of an appointed council. He was subsequently chosen as a delegate of the Provisional Government to the Canadian government to negotiate terms of entrance into Confederation. In Ottawa he was far less enthusiastic than his colleagues about a large land settlement for the Métis. He left Ottawa for the United Kingdom before the agreement with Canada had been fully implemented. He retired in Scotland with a chief trader's pension, although he died in St. Andrew's Parish, Manitoba.

**Boyd, Alfred M.L.A. (c1836-1908)**

Alfred was born in England but was in Red River by 1858. He resided at "Redwood" and owned a store in St. John's Parish that was managed by Maurice Lowman, and he engaged in fur trade with the mercantile firm of Inkster and Boyd. Boyd was elected as an English delegate to the 1870 Convention of Forty from St. Andrew's. Although he was not a leading member, Riel later described him as "one of the most decided against us." Boyd certainly opposed Riel's election as president and favoured territorial over provincial status. His critics later charged that he had received inflated reimbursement for "rebellion losses" (he claimed \$55,500 in general damages and was awarded \$2,505.18 for guns seized by the insurgents), but he always insisted that real goods had been involved. In any event, he was appointed provincial secretary in September 1870 and was elected to the Legislative Assembly from St. Andrew's North on 30 December 1870. He resigned as secretary to become minister of public works and agriculture.

Boyd was heavily criticized by incoming settlers for his failure to make public improvements, and he resigned on 9 December 1871 to be replaced by John Norquay. In January 1873, he became a founding member of the Council of the North-West Territories. He was returned to the Executive Council of Manitoba for a short period in 1873. Boyd left Manitoba about 1889, dying in England a wealthy man, on 16 August 1908.

**Bunn, Thomas, M.L.A. (1830-1875)**

Thomas Bunn was the first son of Dr. John Bunn and Catherine Thomas, both Métis. He was raised in the parish of St. Paul (Middlechurch) and educated at the Red River Academy. He married Isabella Clouston in 1854 and Rachel Harriot in 1859.

In 1868, he was appointed to the Council of Assiniboia having previously served as clerk of the Council and the Quarterly Court of Assiniboia from 1865-1869. Bunn was made a delegate to the Council from St. Clements in 1869. He was a supporter of Riel and chaired the famous open-air meetings of January 1870 when Donald A. Smith spoke to the Red River population. Bunn then served on the committee arranging the elections to the Convention of Forty and he himself became one of the delegates to the Convention representing St. Clements. He served as Secretary of State in the Provisional Government. In Manitoba's first election of December 1870, Bunn was elected as MPP from St. Clements. Bunn was called to the bar in 1871 and was clerk for the first General Quarterly Court in May of 1871.

**Cochrane, Henry (c1834-1898)**

A Protestant mixed-blood, Cochrane married Elizabeth Budd (1844-?). He was ordained an Anglican cleric in 1859 and was the incumbent of St. Peter's from 1867 to 1874. In the 20 January 1870 meeting between the Red River settlers and Donald Smith of the HBC Cochrane served as Indian translator and took part in five treaty negotiations. He was elected a delegate to the Convention of Forty from St. Peter's. He later served as a missionary and schoolteacher in the North. He died at Jackhead, Manitoba.

**Delorme, Pierre, M.L.A., M.P. (1832-1912)**

Pierre was born October 1, 1832 in St. Boniface, the son of Joseph Fafard Delorme and Josephite Bellisle. From 1852-56, he worked for the HBC at Swan River as a middleman. In

September 1854, he married Adélaïde Millet *dite* Beauchemin and in 1857 they bought lot 21 at Pointe-Coupée (St. Adolphe) where they built a log-framed two-story house. They raised five sons and two daughters. Pierre farmed, traded and ran a boarding house for Pembina Trail travelers and later operated a cart brigade to northern Saskatchewan.

During the late 1860s, Louis Riel and the other Métis political leaders started meeting at Delorme's home to strategize on their response to the planned transfer of Rupert's Land to Canada. Delorme took an active part in the Provisional Government and in 1870 was elected to the Convention of Forty as the member from Pointe-Coupée. In the first provincial election of December 1870 he was elected as MLA for St. Norbert. He was elected as a federal MP in 1871, for Provencher riding, defeated in the next election (1874) and re-elected in December of 1878 by acclamation. As a Captain of the Métis he captured Major Boulton and others when they attempted to take Upper Fort Garry on behalf of the Canadian Party. In 1871 he was elected a Captain of the Métis from Pointe-Coupée to defend Manitoba against Fenian invasion from the United States.

He contested the 1870 election, running as a Conservative and won the seat of St. Norbert South, which he held until defeated in 1874. In 1871 he ran federally in the Provencher riding and became one of Manitoba's first members of the House of Commons. From 1873 to 1875 he served on the Council of the North-West Territories. He nominated Riel for the seat in 1872, but it was withdrawn so he could nominate George-Étienne Cartier, who had been defeated in his Montreal riding. Cartier was elected by acclamation. After Cartier's death in 1883, Delorme was again active in attempts to nominate Riel and have him elected for Provencher.

In 1878, Premier Norquay named Delorme Minister of Agriculture and President of the Executive Council. In the provincial election of that year, he was elected by acclamation for the riding of St. Norbert. Upon retiring from politics, he returned to St. Adolphe as a farmer and businessman. He argued for Riel's amnesty and was deeply involved with the Métis lands issue. (Contributed by Fred Shore.)

#### *Reference*

Shore, Fred. "Pierre Delorme." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Vol. XIV (1911-1920). Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998: 280-281.

#### **Flett, George.** (b. 1840)

George was born October 24, 1840 at St. Andrews, Red River, the son of George Flett Sr. and Charlotte Tourangeau-Diolette. George was a mixed blood English delegate to the 1870 Convention of Forty. He represented St. James at the Convention of Forty.

#### **Fraser, John.** (1819-1920)

John Fraser was a Protestant who was an English-speaking delegate from Kildonan to the 1870 Convention of Forty. He was the son of James Fraser and Ann Bannerman, both Scots. He married Jane Matheson. He ran in the provincial election of December 23, 1874 and tied with John Sutherland. The seat was declared vacant and Sutherland won the run-off By-Election of April 1875. Fraser lived on River Lot 16 in Kildonan. His brother, William Fraser (1831-1909) lived in Middlechurch and was a Councillor of Assiniboia from 1868 to 1870.

#### **Genthon dit Dauphinais, Joseph.** (b. 1830)

Joseph was the son of Maximilien Genthon and Louise Jérôme, born on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 1830. He married Josette Marion, the daughter of Narcisse Marion and Marie Bouchard. Joseph was a Red River Métis who served as a delegate from St. Boniface to the Convention of Forty in 1870. He did not side with Riel during the Resistance. His father was a Councillor of Assiniboia.

**Gunn, Donald. (1797-1878)**

Born in Halkirk, Caithness, Scotland, he entered the employ of the HBC in 1813, serving at York Factory, Fort Severn, and Oxford House. Gunn criticized both the Company and Lord Selkirk, later writing as if he had been a Selkirk settler. In 1823 he settled at Red River in “Little Britain” (St. Andrew’s Parish) as a farmer. He also served for years as a justice of the petty court, and he was foreman of the jury in the Sayer trial of 1849. A prominent Presbyterian, he taught for 18 years in the Church Missionary Society parish school before the establishment of a Presbyterian church in Red River, and served as the settlement’s librarian for years. He became a member of the Council of the Institute of Rupert’s Land in 1862, and he was a meteorological correspondent of the Smithsonian Institution, later collecting specimens for its museum.

Gunn was chosen as a delegate to the November 1869 council from St. Andrew’s, and English delegate to the 1870 Convention of Forty from the same community. He was later appointed to the Legislative Council of Manitoba, serving from 1871 to 1876. He supported the council’s abolition. His *History of Manitoba* was completed by his nephew Charles Tuttle and published in 1880. It displays an anti-Selkirk and anti-HBC, as well as an anti-clerical, bias.

**Gunn, George. (1833-1901)**

A Scots mixed-blood, George was a Poplar Point merchant and farmer. He was a delegate to the November 1869 council from Ste. Anne’s. Subsequently, he was chosen councilor to the 1870 Convention of Forty and the new provisional government from Ste. Anne’s on 28 February 1870. A Red River Rebellion claimant, he was awarded nothing in compensation. George was born on December 11, 1833 at Red River, the son of Donald Gunn and his Métis wife Margaret Swain. George married Eliza Winchild before 1877 and they had four children. After 1870 the family moved to Swift Current.

**Harrison, Thomas Auguste (1837-1907)**

Auguste Harrison, a Métis, was born on March 9, 1836 at St. Boniface. He was the son of Thomas Harrison (Métis) and Pauline Lagimodière (French Canadian). He was thus a cousin of Louis Riel. He married Lucie Champagne the daughter of Emmanuel Champagne dit Beaugrand and Marguerite Larocque on February 3, 1863 at St. Boniface. They had nine children by 1884. Sometime before 1880 he remarried to Madeleine Montagnais and was living at Duck Lake near his father-in-law. His sister Marie Anne was married to Charles Nolin. Auguste was a French delegate to the 1870 Convention of Forty from Oak Point, he voted on 5 February against Louis Riel’s motion that the HBC left out of the transfer arrangements of the territory, which should be negotiated between Canada and the people of Red River. Riel responded by calling Harrison and delegates Nolin and Klyne “traitors.”

**Klyne (Kline), Georges, MLA. (b. 1828)**

Georges was the son of Michel Klyne Sr. and Suzanne La France. He married Marie Ducharme *dite* McKay in 1847. They had one daughter. In 1863, he married for a second time to Monique Berthelet *dite* Savoyard. There were twelve children born to this union.

Georges family was enumerated at Pembina in the 1850 census of the Minnesota Territory. Georges is also listed in the 1854 Treaty List of the Chippewa Indians of Lake Superior and the Mississippi. At that time he was living at Scratching River. In 1859, Georges, along with three other men were selected by James McKay to meet the Earl of Southesk and George Simpson at St. Paul and escort them to the Red River Settlement.

In 1860, he was enumerated in the Dakota Territory census and is shown to be working as a ferryman at Pembina. He was imprisoned by Riel in 1869 but escaped. He was a French-speaking delegate to the Convention of Forty in 1870, representing Pointe à Grouette. Georges was elected to Manitoba’s first legislature in 1870 to represent the riding of Ste. Agathe.

**Lacerte (La Serte), Louis.** (b. 1821)

Louis was a Red River Métis, the son of Louis Lacerte Sr. and Marie Martin. He married to Josephte Vandal (b. 1825) and they had 18 children. He then married Charlotte Lesperance at St. François Xavier in 1879. He was a St. Vital delegate to the council of 1869 and represented Pointe Coupée at the 1870 Convention of Forty.

**Larence, Norbert.** (b. 1821)

Norbert was born on August 27, 1821, the son of Jean Baptiste Larence and Marie Angélique Lafreniere dit Desrosiers (Louise "Indian" or Montagnais on scrip records). This was a Pembina family that moved to St. Norbert. Before 1843 he married Josephte Parenteau the daughter of Pierre Parenteau and Josephte Laurent. They had 13 children. He represented St. Norbert at the 1870 Convention of Forty. After 1870 they moved to St. Laurent on the South Saskatchewan River.

**Lépine, Ambroise-Didyme.** (1840-1923)

This Métis leader was the son of Jean-Baptiste Bérard *dit* Lépine and Julia Henry, a Saskatchewan Métis who was the daughter of the famous Alexander Henry and his Saulteaux wife. He was the brother of Jean-Baptiste Jr. and Maxime Lépine. Ambroise was born in St. Boniface in 1840. He was married to Cecile Marion, the daughter of Métis leader Narcisse Marion. He took his education at St. Boniface College. Lépine represented St. Boniface at the 1870 Convention of Forty.

Lépine was Louis Riel's Adjutant General during the Red River Resistance of 1869-70. His military leadership amongst the Métis was attributed to his cool demeanor and prodigious physical strength. He served in the provisional government as military commander and presided at the war council, which condemned Thomas Scott, though he was opposed to the execution.

In St. Vital, he was arrested for the murder of Scott. During October of 1875, he was tried and found guilty. He was sentenced to be hung but Lord Dufferin, Governor General of Canada, commuted his sentence to two years in jail and his civil rights were revoked indefinitely.

A long awaited amnesty was offered to both Riel and Lépine on condition that they both leave the country for five years. Lépine decided to serve out his sentence, contrary to Riel. On February 11, 1875, the Prime Minister moved that:

...full amnesty should be granted to all persons concerned in the North-West troubles for all acts committed by them during the said troubles, saving only L. Riel, A. D. Lépine, and W.B. O' Donoghue, that in the opinion of this house it would be proper...that a like amnesty should be granted to L. Riel and A.D. Lépine conditional on five years banishment from Her Majesty's Dominions.

Ambroise Lépine was permitted to settle near Batoche, Saskatchewan and then near Forget. It was only a few years before his death in 1923 that his civil rights were restored. (Contributed by Lorraine Freeman.)

**Lonsdale, William Thomas** (b.1838)

Lonsdale was born in England, he lived in Headingly and was a Justice of the Peace in the County of Selkirk. He was married to Annie Cameron the daughter of Ewen Cameron an original white settler from Scotland who settled in Red River Country in 1813 and died there in 1864; her mother was Mary McLean, born at Kildonan and resided there until May 26, 1874. They had five children.

**McKenzie, Alexander Black.** (1828-1873)

Alexander was a Protestant Half-Breed who was a delegate representing St. Clements at the 1870 Convention of Forty. He was born at Fort William, on August 30, 1828 the son of Captain Roderick McKenzie (b. 1772, Scottish) and Angélique Mallette (Métis). Shortly after Alex was born, the family moved to Ile a la Crosse.

Roderick was a Chief Trader with the Hudson's Bay Company. Like his father Alexander was employed in the fur trade. He married Christina Bell, the daughter of John Bell and Ann Dease. Christina was born on November 7, 1829 at Fort Good Hope. She too was a descendant of famous explorers and early fur traders. She was the daughter of Ann Dease and John Bell (1796-1868) from Scotland, a famous Arctic explorer. Her maternal grandfather was Peter Warren Dease (1788-1863), also a famous Arctic explorer.

In 1846, Alex, 18 years old, began his career with the HBC as an Apprentice Clerk in the McKenzie River District. From 1856 to 1859 Alex was at Fort Liard working under John Bell. It was during this posting that Alex began a life-long relationship with the 'boss's daughter', widow Christina Bell-Peers. Between 1860 and 1864 Alex was posted to Fort Resolution along the south side of Great Slave Lake not far from the mouth of the Athabasca River. It was here that Christina gave birth to their first two children together, daughters Christina (Aug 3, 1860) and Alice (May 12, 1862). In 1864, Alex was moved to Green Lake in the English River District where he would remain until his retirement four years later. The rest of Alex's children were born here; Peter Lawrence (around 1864), Annabella Catherine (circa 1866) and Alex George (circa 1867). Alexander McKenzie died on December 6, 1873 at 45 years of age at St. Clements.

#### **MacKenzie, Kenneth, M.L.A. (1822-1911)**

Kenneth Mackenzie was born on 5 January 1822, at Essich in Invernesshire, Scotland. He married Jane Condy of Bartonville, Ontario in 1884 and they had eight children. He came to Manitoba and settled at Burnside near Portage la Prairie about 1867. He represented St. Mary's parish at the 1870 Convention of Forty. A Liberal in politics, he represented Portage la Prairie in the Manitoba Legislature from 1874 to 1878. In 1886 he was elected for the new division of Lakeside. He was president of the Marquette St. Andrew's Society and the Marquette Agricultural Society. He was the first postmaster at Burnside. In 1874, two reserves were allotted the Sioux, one on the Assiniboine River, at Oak River, and another still further west, at Bird Tail Creek. Indian Affairs records note: "Kenneth Mackenzie, Esq., M.P.P., a very successful farmer from Ontario, who had largely employed Sioux laborers, kindly agreed to visit the Assiniboine reserve and direct them from time to time as to the agricultural operations."

#### **Nolin, Charles, M.L.A. (1823-1907)**

Charles Nolin, a Métis, was born May 2, 1838 at St. Boniface. He was the son of Augustin Nolin and Helen Ann Cameron (Métis). Charles married Marie-Anne Harrison, a cousin of Louis Riel. She died and he remarried to Rosalie Lépine the niece of Ambroise and Maxime Lépine. Charles Nolin was the leader of the anti-Riel Métis. This group included the Léveillé, Charette, Dease and Hamelin families. In the Convention of Forty Georges Klyne and Thomas Harrison were aligned with Nolin.

Charles was educated by Bishop Provencher and worked as a fur trader and merchant. He was a member of the Convention of Forty under Riel and elected to the Provincial Legislature as member from Ste. Anne des Chênes in 1874 and 1878. In 1874, he took part in the agitation that preceded the 1885 Resistance, and acted as a member of Riel's 16 man Council (Exovedate) at Batoche during the 1885 Resistance. However, he parted from Riel and Dumont when it came to the use of arms. The council of the Provisional government set up on March 19, 1885 tried Charles Nolin and William Boyer for acting against the cause but after defending themselves and pledging allegiance they were acquitted. Nolin then deserted at Duck Lake and fled to Prince Albert where he was locked up after surrendering.

Although Nolin was Louis Riel's cousin, he testified against Riel. The Métis at Batoche

viewed him as a “*vendus*” or sell-out. He was elected to the North West Territories Legislative Council in 1891 but was disqualified because of vote fraud. He died at Battleford on January 28, 1907.

#### *Reference*

Payment, Diane. “Charles Nolin.” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Vol. XIII (1901-1910). Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994: 770-772.

#### **O’Donoghue, William Bernard.** (1843-1878)

William was born in Sligo, Ireland and went to the United States as a boy. He was always an Irish patriot and hostile to Great Britain. In 1868 he was living in Port Huron, Michigan when he met Bishop Grandin and volunteered for mission service in Red River. He became a teacher of mathematics at the Saint Boniface College and also began studying theology. In 1869 he became involved in the Red River Resistance and was chosen to represent St. Boniface at the first council of residents in November of that year. He served as a delegate from St. Boniface to the Convention of Forty and he became treasurer of the provisional government. He accompanied Riel when the Métis leader fled in the face of the Red River Expeditionary Force. O’Donoghue subsequently broke with Riel, regarding the Métis as having sold out to the British. He petitioned the United States president U. S. Grant for intervention in Red River, and then turned to the Fenians for assistance in liberating the “Republic of Rupert’s Land”, of which he claimed to be president. The Fenian “invasion” of October 1871 was a disaster, thanks partly to opposition from Louis Riel, and O’Donoghue remained in Minnesota, where he sought employment as a teacher. He was exempted by name from the amnesty to Riel and Ambroise Lépine in 1875, although finally granted clemency in 1877. He died of tuberculosis at St. Paul, Minnesota, on 26 March 1878.

#### **Pagé, Alexandre.** (b. 1831)

Alexandre was born on August 4, 1831 at St. Boniface, the son of Joseph Pagé Sr. (French Canadian b. 1783) and his second wife Agathe Letendré (Métis b. 1790). Some time before 1850 he married Adelaide Lepine (sister of Ambroise Dydime Lepine) the daughter of Jean Baptiste Lepine and Julie Henry. They had eleven children. He was a representative to the Convention of Forty representing his home district of Baie St. Paul.

#### **Pagé, François Xavier.** (1833-1912)

François Xavier was born at St. François Xavier. He was the son of Joseph Pagé Sr. (b. 1783) and his second wife Agathe Letendré (b. 1790). François Xavier married Philomène Lavallée (b. 1843). He was a representative to the Convention of Forty and served on Riel’s Red River Council in 1870 representing his home district of St. François Xavier. During the Reign of Terror by the Red River Expeditionary Force following Manitoba’s entry into confederation Pagé was arrested and imprisoned by Wolseley’s troops along with François Xavier Dauphinais and Pierre Poitras.

#### **Parenteau, Pierre.** (1817-1894)

Pierre Parenteau was the son of Joseph Parenteau Sr. and his Cree wife Susanne. Pierre was well known among his contemporaries as a skillful hunter in the great Métis buffalo hunts. He first married Josephite Delorme (b. 1823) and they had two children. He then married Marie McMillan in 1845 and in 1850 married Marie Anne Caron. One of his daughters was married to François Xavier Letendré *dit* Batoche. Pierre once owned part of the land upon which the Riel family finally settled in St. Vital.

Pierre was a member, and the Chairman of Riel’s 16 man Council (Exovedate) at Batoche during the 1885 Resistance. A trusted friend and political ally of Louis Riel, Parenteau had been

active in the struggle for Métis self-determination since the days of the 1869 Resistance in Manitoba. At that time he was an influential man, he was a Justice of the Peace at St. Norbert and was elected as a delegate to the Convention of 1869 and the Convention of Forty in 1870, which discussed the formation of a provisional government at Red River. He was elected a Captain of the Métis troops in 1871 and worked to repel the Fenian invasion. When Lieutenant-governor Archibald visited Red River in October of 1871, Parenteau, along with Ambroise Lépine and Louis Riel, were chosen to be presented to Archibald as representatives of the Métis people.

**Poitras, Pierre.** (b. 1836)

Pierre was born on November 11, 1836 at St. François Xavier, the son of Pierre Poitras and Marie Bruyer. He was the grandson of André Poitras, the founder of St. François Xavier. Pierre married Isabelle Bremner, the daughter of William Bremner and Marguerite Allard on February 14, 1860 at St. François Xavier. They had eleven children. On January 8, 1870 he was named a member of the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia. He was a representative to the Convention of Forty representing his home district of St. François Xavier. He was also a delegate to the previous Convention of November 16, 1869. He officially seconded the motion of Louis Schmidt to adopt the Manitoba Act.

During the Reign of Terror of Wolseley's troops Pierre was arrested on August 24, 1870 while scouting with François Xavier Dauphinais and François Xavier Pagé. He was abused and severely beaten and wounded by the Red River Expeditionary Force. Pierre was found wintering at Wood Mountain NWT in 1873. In 1874, he sold his land at St. François Xavier and later applied for Scrip in 1877.

**Ross, James.** (1835-1871)

James Ross returned to Red River on the eve of the Red River Resistance, and quickly became the spokesman and leader of the English mixed-bloods in the November council meeting with the Métis, to which he was a delegate from Kildonan. His advocacy of cooperation with the Métis at this council, although falling far short of an advocacy of rebellion, separated him from the Canadian Party in the settlement. Ross served as a delegate from St. John's to the Convention of Forty, and was chosen as the convention's interpreter and a member of the influential Bill of Rights committee. He opposed provincial status for Red River but supported the general aims of the resistance, and was appointed chief justice in the Provisional Government.

The grandson of an Okanagan Indian Chief, James Ross graduated with honours from the University of Toronto, earning the university's gold medal in 1857. He then returned to Red River settlement, joining *The Nor'Wester* in 1861 where he worked as editor and proprietor until 1863. In the spring of 1864 he left for Toronto to study law. He clerked for John McNab, and in the summer, he wrote and passed his exams for admission to the Law Society of Upper Canada. He also received his MA from U of T in 1865. He later served on the editorial staffs of *The Hamilton Spectator* and *The Toronto Globe* before returning to the West again, this time in the capacity of a lawyer. In 1870, he was appointed chief justice under the provisional government of Louis Riel. In 1871, he became the third man to be admitted to the bar of Manitoba

James Ross was part of a family that played an important role in the Red River Settlement. His father, Alexander Ross (1783-1856), upon retirement from the fur trade, brought Sarah (née Timentwa), his Indian wife, and their children from British Columbia to Red River just after the amalgamation of the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company. He was a historian and administrative functionary in the settlement. He held the position of Sheriff of Red River and was a member of the Council of Assiniboia. His son James took over many of his roles. This family, prominent in the settlement for over fifty years, can be considered to be representative of the English-Protestant mixed-blood elite of Red River.

James Ross was a master's degree graduate of the University of Toronto and taught briefly at Upper Canada College. He worked for two Upper-Canadian papers, the *Toronto Globe* and the

*Hamilton Spectator* and was co-publisher of the first western newspaper, *The Nor'Wester*. Upon his return to Red River, he was appointed sheriff, postmaster and governor of the gaol. Ross was a supporter of Riel's Provisional Government, but declined the nomination to be delegate from St. John's Parish. He then left politics, studied law and was admitted to practice by the Law Society of Manitoba. He later accepted appointment as the Chief Justice of Assiniboia.

Alexander and Sarah Ross raised their children to be adults who were proud of their ancestry. All of the children became prominent citizens, but James was the best known. Upon the death of his father, James wrote home to his Half-Breed sisters urging them not to lose pride because of the loss of their father. James took great pride in his heritage and challenged anyone who thought him inferior for being a Half-Breed.

During the Red River Resistance James Ross' allegiance was torn between the Old Settlers of Red River and his sympathies, which lay with the Indians and Half-Breeds. He died of tuberculosis on September 20, 1871. His death and the exile of Riel deprived Red River of its two most dynamic political leaders.

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### **Schmidt, Louis, M.L.A.** (1844-1935)

Schmidt was born on December 4, 1844 at Old Fort Chipewyan. His father, Alfred "Rabasca" Smith, was a HBC fisherman and freighter and his mother, Marguerite Lespérance, was the daughter of a Red River Métis guide. Schmidt indicated that his paternal grandfather was Nicholas Andrews a HBC employee at Athabasca who was married to Marie-Anne Gagnéux, a Métis from Great Slave Lake. Andrews deserted Marie-Anne and she then married Pierre Laferté and then married Schmidt. Louis said that he went by the name Laferté until Bishop Taché changed it in 1858, believing Schmidt to be his true name.

In 1854, Schmidt joined his mother at Red River where she had travelled for medical attention. He enrolled in the Brothers of Christian School and was one of four Métis boys (along with Louis Riel) selected by Taché to do advanced studies in Quebec colleges. He attended Collège St. Hyacinthe until 1861. He went to live with his mother and grandfather, Alexis Lespérance. He obtained work with the Oblates preparing Cree grammars and dictionaries then in 1863 went to Pembina to work for Joseph Lemay a customs collector. Due to problems with Lemay's wife (namely, his drinking), he was forced to move to St. Joseph where Father Alexis André took him in. In December of 1863, he accompanied Father André as the American government's peace envoy to the Sioux Indians. Schmidt then returned to Red River in the summer 1864. Bishop Taché then placed him in charge of the churches cart trains going to St. Paul, Minnesota for supplies. He was also employed as a teacher at Collège St. Boniface. In the spring of 1866, he was assigned to accompany Father Ritchot to the mission at Qu'Appelle. When his uncle, Louis Lespérance fell ill at Fort Ellice, Schmidt went there to take him back to Red River. Later that year he took charge of his grandfather's carting business and went on the fall buffalo hunt down to the Grand Coteau.

The following year Schmidt worked for a mail contractor on the Abercrombie, Devil's Lake, Helena, Montana mail route. He was badly frozen during this venture and lost some toes so he returned home with very little money. However, he received his compensation from the United States government for the Sioux negotiations completed four years earlier and used this money to outfit himself as a freighter on the route to Sauk Rapids, Minnesota. In 1869, he apparently

promised bishop Taché that he would stop drinking. It was at this time that he went to live with Louis Riel.

Louis Schmidt was a boyhood friend and schoolmate of Riel and became extensively involved during both Resistances. Schmidt was a delegate from St. Boniface to the Convention of Forty and was appointed Assistant Secretary of State. He was elected to the Manitoba legislature from the riding of St. Boniface West in 1870. He was married to Justine Laviolette in 1872. After the annexation of his riding to that of St. Charles he ran in St. Charles in 1874 and was defeated. In 1878 he ran and was elected in St. François Xavier. He was also very active in the St. Jean Baptiste Society and l'Union St. Alexandre, the Métis association.

In June of 1880, in response to his ongoing drinking problem, Schmidt left St. Boniface and went to Duck Lake where he met with Father André. The priest suggested that he establish himself on the South Saskatchewan River at the site of present day St. Louis. While there, he soon became involved in the Métis grievances against the federal land surveys. In the winter of 1881 he drafted a petition to the Minister of the Interior for the residents of St. Louis and in the fall of 1882 sent a similar petition on behalf of the residents at Batoche. In the summer of 1883, Schmidt acted as secretary for the first of the large public meetings at St. Laurent regarding the resident's grievances with the federal government. In the meantime, he had gained employment in the office of a Prince Albert barrister. On May 6, 1884 Schmidt was at a meeting of English mixed-bloods and settlers in Prince Albert (again he was secretary) and he suggested that they send a delegation to Riel in Montana to obtain his assistance. Schmidt was to accompany them but on May 12<sup>th</sup> he received his long sought appointment to the Land Office and Father André persuaded him to stay behind. Nevertheless, he continued to assist the Métis by publishing their grievances in *Le Manitoba*. When Riel arrived, Schmidt went to St. Laurent to volunteer his services but Riel declined, believing he could be most useful to them in the Land Office. Over the next few months, Schmidt became concerned over Riel's behaviour, he communicated this to Bishop Taché and implored him to make the Métis grievances better known and thus head off violence and what he viewed as Riel's heretical preaching. By becoming vocal with these criticisms many Métis became convinced that Schmidt had not only abandoned the Métis cause but had betrayed the cause. Nonetheless, when conflict broke out in March of 1885, the government arrested Schmidt.

Louis Schmidt, *dit* Laferté, is fondly remembered in the Fransaskois community for defending francophone language rights in Saskatchewan. The Fransaskois historian Raymond Huel, for instance, has written three articles about Louis Schmidt "Living in the Shadow of Greatness: Louis Schmidt, Riel's Secretary," *Native Studies Review*, Vol. 1, 1984, pp. 16-27; "Louis Schmidt: Patriarch of St. Louis," *Saskatchewan History*, Vol. 40, No. 1, 1987, pp. 1-21 and "Louis Schmidt: A Forgotten Métis," in A.S. Lussier, Editor, *Riel and the Métis: Riel Mini-Conference Papers*. Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications; 1979; 1983, pp. 93-107).

### **Scott, Alfred Henry** (c1840-1872)

The first we know of Alfred Scott is in 1869, when he began work as a barkeeper in the saloon of Bob O'Lone, later working as a clerk in the store of Henry McKenney. Both employers were American. Scott was considered to be an American but claimed to be born in Britain. He was elected a delegate from Winnipeg to the 1870 Convention of Forty with the aid of the American vote. He was later a delegate from the Provisional Government to Ottawa, and was arrested as a party to the murder of Thomas Scott. He appears to have supported Father Ritchot in the negotiations, but left before they were completed. He returned to Red River via the United States, and converted to Roman Catholicism in 1871-2 during a long illness. He died as the first patient of the Saint Boniface Hospital.

### **Spence, David.** (1824-1885)

David Spence was a Scottish Half Breed born on September 5, 1824, in St. John's parish, the son of James Spence<sup>1</sup> and his second wife Jane Morwick, both Métis. His mother was grandmother to Manitoba's first Premier John Norquay.

David married Catherine Hallett on February 15, 1844 at St. John's. She was the daughter of Henry Hallett and Catherine Parenteau. David represented the parish of St. Anne's at the Convention of Forty. In 1877, the family moved to lot # 62 at Poplar Point. He was elected as the first MLA from Poplar Point on December 27, 1870. He represented Poplar Point from 1870 to 1874 in the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. He was also a Justice of the Peace for Poplar Point and Marquette. Métis scrip was issued to David and Catherine on October 2, 1876. She died in 1880 at age 55. David was accidentally shot in his own home by a neighbour who thought that the rifle was unloaded. He subsequently died of his wound on September 16, 1885.

Children of David Spence and Catherine Hallett:

- John "Jake" Spence, born August 14, 1848, he married Ellen McNab.
- Ellen Anderson Spence, born January 1, 1853, she married George Brown.
- Charles David Spence, born February 9, 1857, he married "Eliza" Foulds.
- Jane Spence, born May 26, 1859, she married William Folster.
- Mary Ann Spence, born August 8, 1861, she married Ernest Riggs.
- Harriet Spence, born June 17, 1863, she married Peter Henry Wishart.
- William Spence, born July 13, 1866, he married Martha McNab.

### **Spence, Thomas.** (1832-1900)

Thomas was born in Edinburgh, Scotland on 3 June 1832, the son of a solicitor of the Supreme Court of Scotland, he came to Canada in 1852 with a party of engineers sent out to erect forts at Port Levis, Quebec. In 1866 he came west to the Red River where he practiced law and conveyancing. There he married Charlotte Cook. On behalf of the Indians of the settlement, he was instrumental in sending to the Prince of Wales an invitation, written in Cree on birch bark, asking him to visit Red River in 1867. In that year he opened a retail store in Portage la Prairie. He persuaded the Council of settlers there to petition the British Government for a legally constituted administration. He was elected president of the reorganized Council, which was set up as New Caledonia, but later became known as the Republic of Manitobah. The boundaries of the republic extended south from Lake Manitoba to the American border and from the western boundary of the district of Assiniboia to the 100<sup>th</sup> meridian. When the government undertook to raise taxes the HBC, as well as some of the traders, refused to pay. A shoemaker named MacPherson was arrested for libel, declaring that the taxes were purchasing liquor for the president and council. The British authorities never recognized the Republic. Public sympathy was on the side of MacPherson and the Republic of Manitobah collapsed in 1868.

According to his parliamentary testimony in 1874, he "had organized a Provisional Government in 1867 over a part of the territory which was occupied by about four hundred people," and "had communicated this organization to the Imperial Government, and upon hearing from the Imperial authorities that our proceedings were illegal, the organization was broken up. This matter had nothing whatever to do with the outbreak or disturbances in 1869 or 1870. This organization was made simply as a matter of protection for ourselves, as we were outside the Government of the Council of Assiniboia, as Governor McTavish informed me himself." He was arrested briefly by Riel on 25 January 1870, and was an English delegate to the Convention of Forty from St. Peter's. In 1870 he was the editor of the *New Nation*, the Riel government paper. Initially residing in St. Boniface, by 1872 he had moved to Point Douglas. He was a Roman

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<sup>1</sup> James Spence , Métis, was born circa 1777, the son of Nestichio Batt and Orkneyman James Spence Sr. (1754-1824)

Catholic and friendly with Bishop Taché. He later served as clerk of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba (1878 to 1885) and as an immigration pamphleteer, producing such items as *Manitoba and North-West of the Dominion* (1876) and *The Prairie Lands of Canada* (1879). He was census commissioner for the North-West Territories in 1881 and 1885. For a time he was Canadian immigration agent in California. In 1895 he moved to Edmonton where he was assistant registrar in the land offices there. Spence died in Edmonton in March 1900.

**Sutherland, John.** (1821-1899)

Born at Point Douglas on 21 August 1821, the only son of Alexander Sutherland and Catherine McPherson. In 1847 he married Janet Mac Beth. They had thirteen children, among whom was lawyer and politician Alexander Sutherland and daughter Catherine who married William Black. Alexander Sutherland was a Selkirk Settler who came to Canada at age 24 on the "Prince of Wales" in 1813. In 1817 Lord Selkirk assigned him Lot 10 of the 24 lots surveyed by Peter Fidler.

He was educated at St. John's College. Following the flood of 1852 he moved to Lot 86, East Kildonan, where he farmed and operated a general store. He entered public life in 1866 as a member of the Council of Assiniboia and attended twelve meetings before the Council was dissolved. During the Red River disturbance of 1869-70 he became one of the leading representatives of the Loyalist party and served as delegate from Kildonan at the Council of Forty meeting in 1870. Norbert Parisien killed his son Hugh Sutherland in February 1870. That same month, the Provisional Government chose him Collector of Customs, and when the Province entered Confederation (15 July 1870) he was appointed the first High Sheriff of Manitoba. He held this office until 13 December 1871, when he was appointed to the Canadian Senate, a position he held until his death. He helped found Manitoba College. He died at his residence "Bellevue House," Kildonan, on 27 April 1899.

**Tait, Robert.** (1830-1912)

Robert was the third son of William Tait and Mary Auld. He was married to Jane Inkster the daughter of John Inkster. They had five children. After some years in Minnesota they returned to Red River in 1850 and Robert became one of the leading Half-Breeds of the area. He farmed at St. James parish and represented that parish in the convention of 1869 and the Convention of Forty in 1870. He was noted for introducing the first reaping and threshing machines to Red River. In 1869, he built the first steam gristmill in St. James. By 1878, he owned and operated a steam ferry between Winnipeg and St. Boniface.

**Taylor, John, M.L.A.** (1834-1925)

This Scottish Half-Breed was born at Middlechurch, educated at St. Paul's School and was chosen by Bishop David Anderson to be trained to teach on the Indian settlements. He was the son of James Taylor and Mary Inkster. He married Flora Campbell. He was the first schoolteacher at Headingly and represented that area in the convention of 1870. John was an English-speaking delegate to the 1870 Convention of Forty, then he was part of the armed party from Portage la Prairie that was imprisoned by Riel. Later, he was a magistrate and was elected to the Manitoba legislature as MLA from Assiniboia in 1871. He was Minister of Agriculture during 1878-79.

**Thibert, Pierre.** (1812-1894)

Pierre was one of three delegates from Baie St. Paul at the Convention of Forty. He seconded the motion of François -Xavier Pagé to adopt the Provisional Government with Louis Riel as the President.

Pierre was born on May 10, 1812 at St. Joachim. He was first married to Julie Belcourt the daughter of Joseph Belcourt and Catherine L'Hirondelle by custom of the country before 1837.

They were formally married at Carlton House on October 28, 1841. He was then married to Louise Racette the daughter of Augustin Racette and Suzanne Groulx on May 29, 1865 at St. Boniface. He died at St. François Xavier on July 29, 1894. He had nine children with Julie Belcourt and two children with Louise Racette.

**Tourond, Jean Baptiste.** (b. 1838)

Baptiste was born June 1, 1838 at St. Boniface, the son of Joseph Tourond and Rosalie Laderoute (b. 1816). He married Angélique Delorme, the daughter of Joseph Delorme and Brigitte Plouf dit Villebrun in 1861. They lived at St. Norbert and had 12 children. On October 11, 1869, Baptiste was part of Riel's group who stopped Colonel Dennis and crew from surveying on Métis land. Baptiste represented St. Norbert at the Convention of November 1869, and the Convention of Forty January 26, 1870; he then served on Riel's Red River Council in 1870. Baptiste voted in favor of an armed force to repulse the Fenian invasion and was elected second captain of troops from La Pointe Coupée on October 7, 1871. On October 21, 1889 he married for a second time to Regina Allard, the daughter of Joseph Allard and Julie Langevin.

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