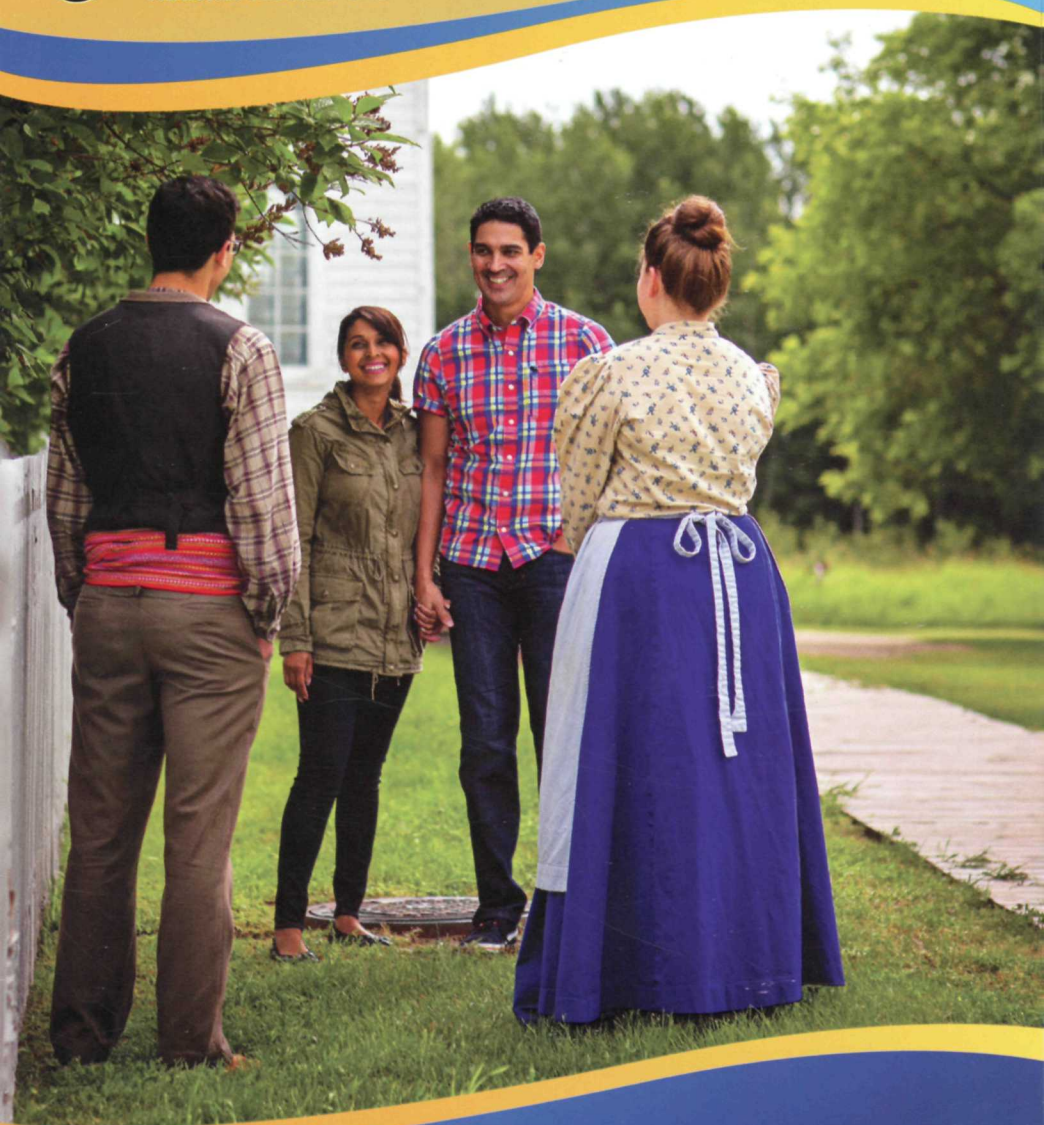




Batoche
National Historic Site



Discovery Booklet



Parks
Canada

Parcs
Canada

Canada



Welcome to Batoche!

Batoche became a national historic site in 1923 and is commemorated for:

- The Métis community of Batoche and their river lot land use patterns.
- The site of the armed conflict between the Métis Provisional Government and the Canadian Government in 1885.

DID YOU KNOW?

The roots of the Métis go back to the first European fur traders who travelled the interior of Canada where Aboriginal peoples lived. When French Canadian and Scottish traders married First Nations women, their offspring became known as Métis or Country-born. The Métis drew upon the skills and traditions of both backgrounds becoming a unique and thriving culture.

Explore Batoche!

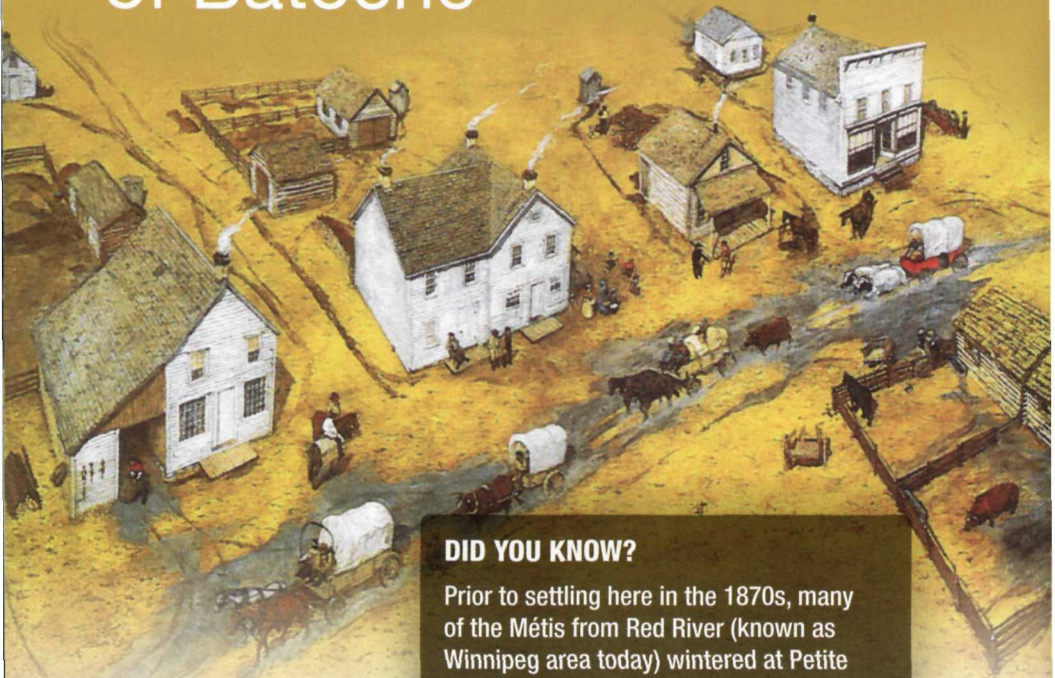
There are plenty of ways to experience the site:

- **Looking for an overview of Batoche's history?** Watch the 40 minute movie and visit the museum.
- **Ready to tour?** Step back into the year 1885 and take a *Journey Through Time!* Tours begin in front of the church.
- **Want to see the entire site?** Hop on the Batoche Shuttle for a fun ride.
- **Travelling with children?** Ask for the Xplorers program and complete the challenges together.
- **Searching for great scenery?** Walk the picturesque trails along the riverbank of the beautiful South Saskatchewan River.
- **Hungry? Thirsty?** Enjoy refreshments at the Batoche concession in the visitor centre or purchase a picnic basket from the gift shop.

The stops in this booklet correspond to points of interest featured on the map (page 8). **Questions onsite? Please ask a Parks Canada staff person.**

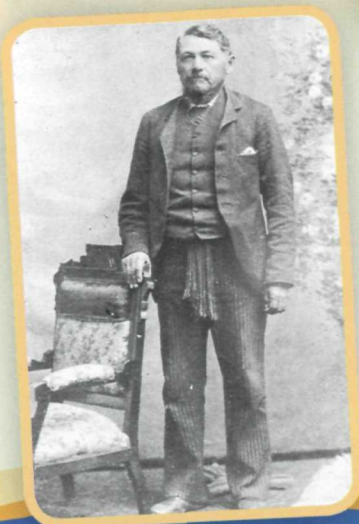


The community of Batoche



DID YOU KNOW?

Prior to settling here in the 1870s, many of the Métis from Red River (known as Winnipeg area today) wintered at Petite Ville. This community was approximately 20 kms south of Batoche along the South Saskatchewan River.



The Batoche and St. Laurent areas were home to approximately 1,200 settlers, the majority of which were Métis. In 1872 the Village of Batoche was established when Xavier Letendre opened a ferry crossing and built a store. By 1884 the Batoche area grew to approximately fifty family river lots.

François-Xavier Letendre dit Batoche, Founder of Batoche (Parks Canada, Louis Venne Collection)

Settlement

After Confederation, Canada continued to undergo tremendous change. The government was looking to open the west for European settlement and connect the country with a railway from coast to coast.

The lifestyle of the Métis people was also changing: the bison were nearly extinct, the fur trade was becoming less profitable, and farming was encouraged. As families began to settle in the area, they selected land that had access to water and divided it into long, thin strips called river lots.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1878, the Government of Canada sent surveyors west to resurvey the river lots in preparation for more settlement. This caused tension and the Métis began petitioning for rights to their land and a voice in the affairs of the North-West Territories.

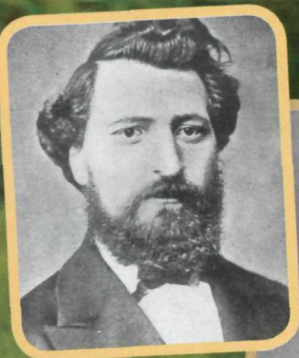


Resistance

The Métis were concerned about their future and felt they had the right to live where their homesteads were already established. They wanted land title like other settlers.

When it became apparent that their concerns were not being addressed and traditional constitutional means failed them, Gabriel Dumont, Michel Dumas, James Isbister and Moise Ouellette brought Louis Riel back from exile in Montana to help them. Riel arrived at Batoche in 1884 and proclaimed a provisional government. This declaration was viewed by the Canadian government as a revolt.

Frustrated by the lack of communication, the Métis armed themselves and prepared to protect their land at all costs. An altercation at Duck Lake on March 26, 1885 spurred the government to action. The North West Field Force (NWFF) was dispatched west by the Canadian government, and on April 24, the first major military engagement between General Middleton's troops and the Métis occurred at Tourond's Coulee.



Métis leader, Louis Riel
(Archives of Manitoba, N5738)



Canadian Prime Minister,
Sir John A. Macdonald
(Library and Archives
Canada, C-22673)

The Battle of Tourond's Coulee/Fish Creek: April 24, 1885

On April 24, Métis led by Gabriel Dumont, along with members of the Cree and Dakota First Nations, held back the advancing NWFF.

The events of April 24 delayed Middleton's advance on Batoche for two weeks. For Dumont and the Métis people, *la bataille de la Coulée des Tourond* was a victory that gave them time to rally further Métis and First Nations support and prepare for the defence of Batoche.



Artillery practice after the battle
at Fish Creek (Library and
Archives Canada, C-3461)

The Battle of Batoche: May 9–12, 1885

As the NWFF prepared to take Batoche, the Métis mobilized in rifle pits along the river and near the village to wait for the attack.

May 9

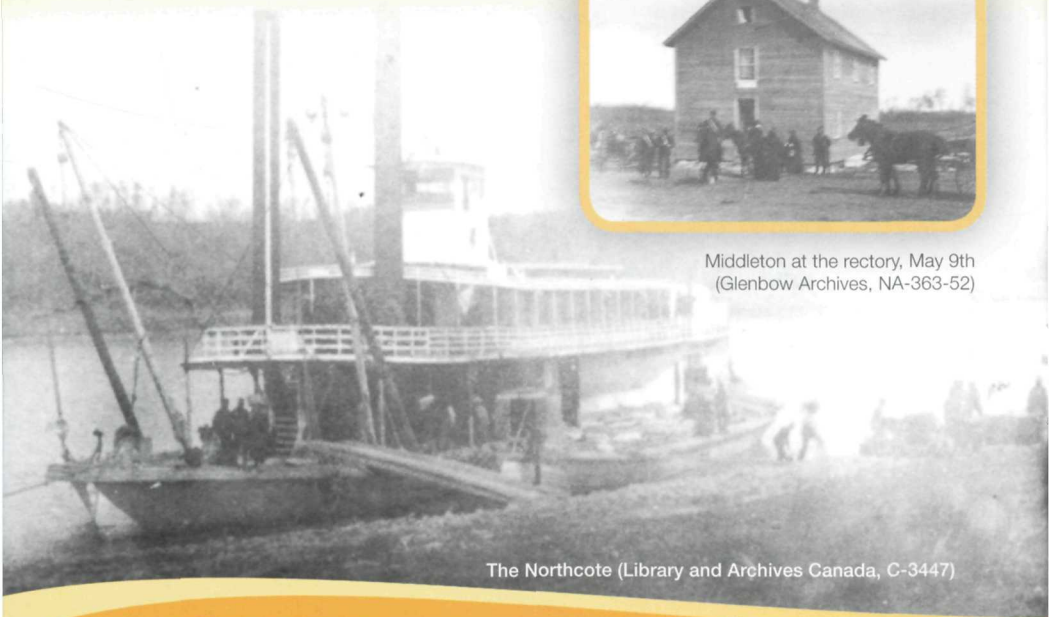
- The advance on Batoche began.
- Métis lowered the ferry cable and disabled the smoke stacks and wheelhouse of the Northcote, a steamship loaded with government soldiers and supplies.
- The Caron home is burned and a military encampment is constructed on the Caron farmland.



Fighting at Batoche (Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-A 7518)



Middleton at the rectory, May 9th (Glenbow Archives, NA-363-52)



The Northcote (Library and Archives Canada, C-3447)

May 10

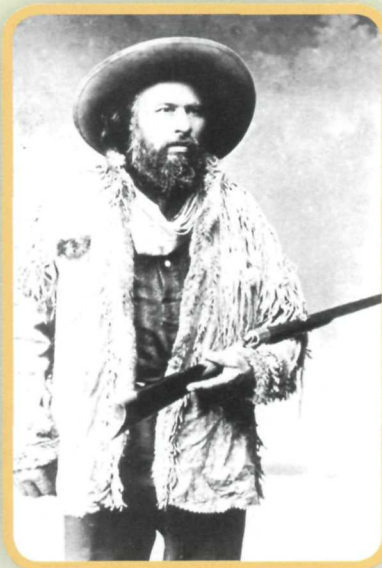
- The NWFF advanced out of their encampment halfway to the cemetery, but could not gain ground as the Métis held their positions.
- The Métis kept a sturdy defence, and gained the area around the cemetery for their efforts.

May 11

- In the morning, half of the NWFF were sent north of the church in an attempt to split up the Métis forces.
- The remaining Métis met the NWFF at the church and cemetery and held ground.

May 12

- The NWFF again split forces in an attempt to divide the Métis.
- Heavy winds prevented a coordinated attack by the NWFF.
- The NWFF regrouped. General Middleton was aggravated with the failure of the manoeuvre and retired to his tent. The NWFF were frustrated with their commanding officer and decided to charge the village of Batoche.
- The Métis briefly resisted, but were short on both ammunition and fighting forces. The NWFF ultimately captured the village.



Gabriel Dumont, Métis Military Leader
(Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-A 6227)



Major General Frederick Middleton,
leader of the NWFF (Library and
Archives Canada, PA-26733)



LEGEND

- Highway 225
- Road
- Entrances
- Shuttle & Walking Path
- Walking Path
- Hiking Trails

Back to Batoche Grounds



Journey Through Time Tour



Seek and Scamper Geocache Program

225

Old Ferry Site/
Dock

10

East Village

Carlton Trail

9

Métis Rifle Pits

SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER



Shuttle Ride

Visitor Centre

P

Mission Ridge

3

Church Rectory

2

1

Replica Rifle Pit

4

Cemetery

5

Caron Home

6

Gunner Phillips Grave

8

Zareba

7



Kids Xplorers

Stop 1: St. Antoine de Padoue Church



Batoche, 1897 (Saskatchewan Archives Board S-B6756)

Roman Catholicism was the dominant religious belief of the Métis in this area. The church was the hub of the community, a place to gather, socialize and worship.

St. Antoine de Padoue Church was built in 1884 by Ludger Gareau using the Red River style of construction. It was from the steps of this church that the Métis declared their provisional government.

DID YOU KNOW?

On May 9th, the first day of the Battle of Batoche, the church was captured by the NWFF and used as a field hospital for wounded soldiers.



Find the small stacked structures behind the church that demonstrate the Red River style of construction.





Captain A. L. Howard of the Connecticut National Guard (Library and Archives Canada C-1882)

Stop 2: Rectory

The Rectory was built in 1883 and served many roles throughout its lifetime including a church, house, school, post office and museum.

Originally, school was taught in the Rectory under the direction of Father Moulin. However, in 1896 Mlle. Onesime Dorval began teaching in the school house which stood next door. She was the first certified school teacher in Saskatchewan, and was known for her dedication to her students and her community.

During the battle a number of people took refuge inside the rectory and Father Moulin was even hit by a stray bullet.

DID YOU KNOW?

The “Gatling Gun” was first used in the American Civil war. On loan from the US Army, Canadian forces used the gun to fire 600 rounds a minute.

ACTION



Look for the bullet holes from the Gatling Gun on the front of the rectory.

Stop 3: Mission Ridge

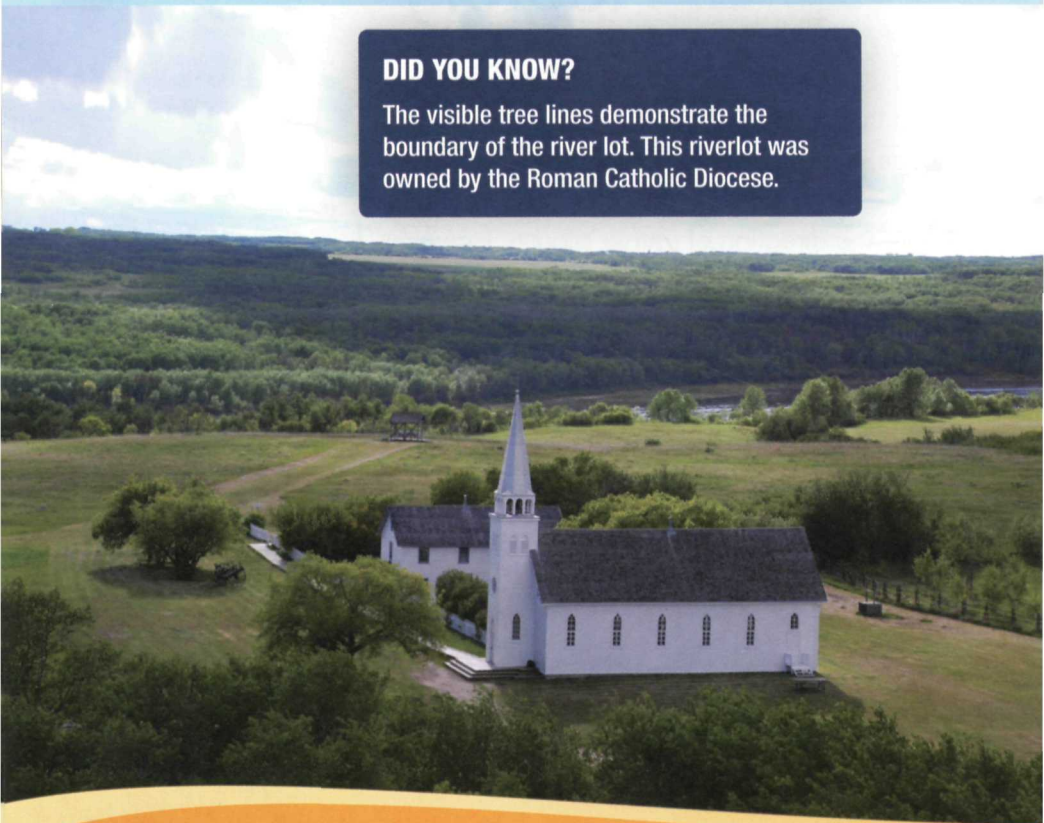
Much of the action during the Battle of Batoche happened here at Mission Ridge. On May 9, the NWFF retreated after the Métis lit grass fires to stop their advance on the village. During the final day, May 12, the NWFF took the ridge and captured the Village of Batoche.



How many chains (unit measurement commonly used in the 1800s) is this river lot? Find a measuring chain by the gazebo and measure it.

DID YOU KNOW?

The visible tree lines demonstrate the boundary of the river lot. This riverlot was owned by the Roman Catholic Diocese.





Stop 4: Rifle Pit

This replica Métis rifle pit is a good example of the numerous trenches which the Metis constructed to defend their village. The pits lined both sides of the river and surrounded the village in a wide interconnected semi-circle. Similar pits would have offered its occupants a chest high firing wall and a rear exit to escape or reach other pits.

DID YOU KNOW?

When the Métis began running low on ammunition they continued shooting with stones and nails.



**Scout for the silhouettes in the trees —
there are three to find!**



Stop 5: Cemetery

Saint Antoine-de-Padoue Cemetery is owned by the Diocese of Prince Albert. It is the final resting place for many of the Métis who fell during the 1885 Resistance, including nine Métis fighters killed at the Battle of Batoche.

Following the events of 1885 the community suffered through difficult living conditions, with many families enduring extreme poverty. Some 191 deaths occurred from 1894–1904 in the community, primarily caused by influenza and the tuberculosis epidemic.



Locate the grave of Métis leader, Gabriel Dumont, in plot 14.

DID YOU KNOW?

This is an active cemetery; burials occur here every year. A cemetery map is posted in the small building near the fence.

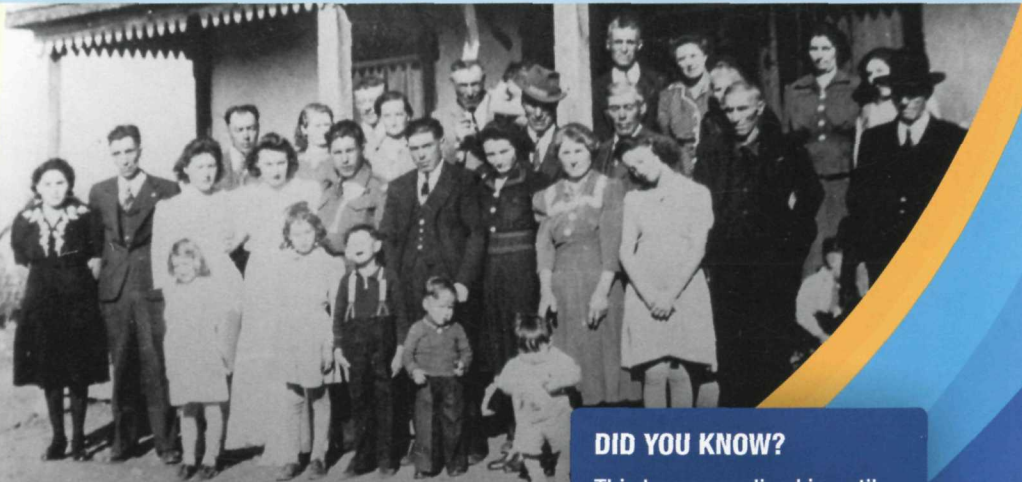
Thanks to the Gabriel Dumont Institute and local residents who worked with Parks Canada to reopen this family farmhouse.

Stop 6: Caron Home

Four generations of Carons lived in this home. After having been destroyed during the battle, it took ten years to rebuild. The family was not eligible for compensation from the Lost Claims Commission because Jean Caron Sr. and his sons fought in the Resistance.



Explore the home, pump water for the garden and play a game of horseshoes.



Caron family at the wedding of Eveline Caron and Joe Boyer, 1944 (Parks Canada, Derek Bodington Collection, courtesy of Annette Boyer)

DID YOU KNOW?

This home was lived in until 1971 when it was sold to Parks Canada.

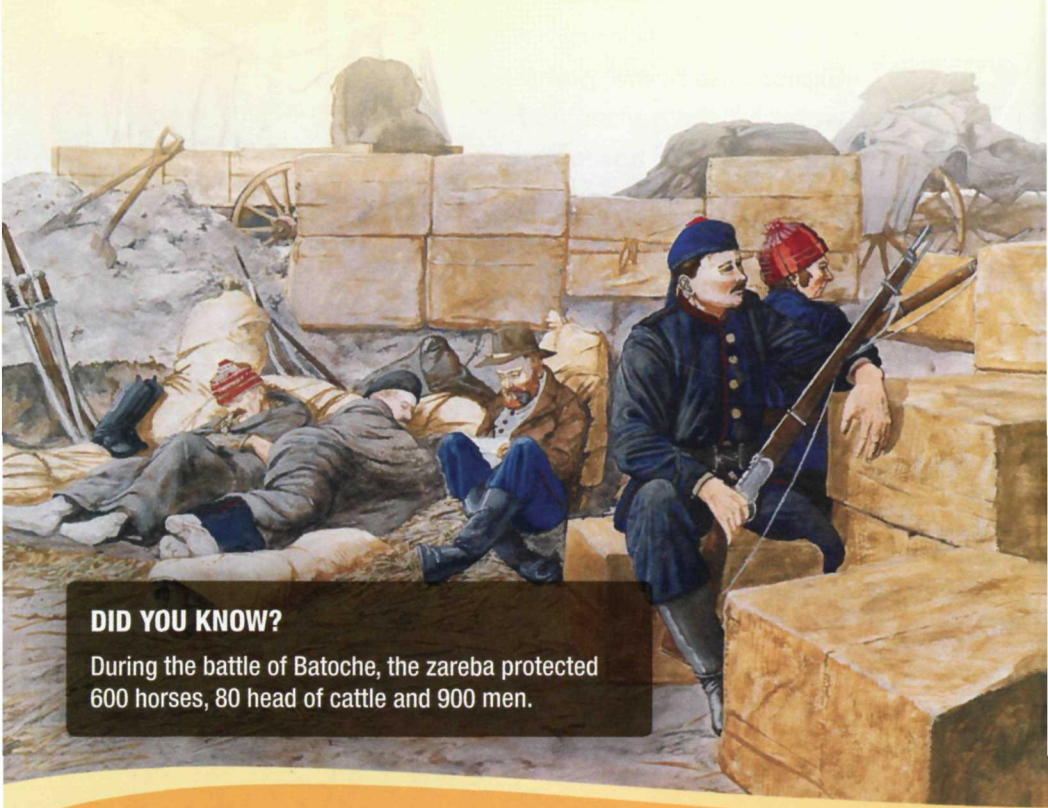
Stop 7: Zareba

ACTION



Walk along the boardwalk to see the remains of the Zareba wall. When constructed, it was up to 6 feet tall and 3 feet wide.

On the first day of the battle at Batoche, General Middleton and his NWFF retreated south to construct a zareba (Arabic word for military encampment). The strategic location has the South Saskatchewan River on one side and a good view of the landscape from all angles.



DID YOU KNOW?

During the battle of Batoche, the zareba protected 600 horses, 80 head of cattle and 900 men.

Stop 8: Military Grave

Killed on the first day of action at Batoche, this soldier was buried while the NWFF was digging the zareba and rifle pits. This grave was tended to for many years by the Caron family.

DID YOU KNOW?

This soldier is buried here because he did not have any family in Canada. The bodies of other soldiers killed in action were sent home to their families for burial.



Take a moment of reflection and walk the path behind the grave.



Stop 9: East Village and Carlton Trail



The Letendre house (University of Saskatchewan Library)

The Village of Batoche included several stores, a pool hall and blacksmith shop. The village was located along the Carlton Trail which was a main road used to travel west by fur traders and settlers. The trail began in Upper Fort Garry near Winnipeg, passed through Fort Carlton and continued on to Fort Edmonton.

DID YOU KNOW?

This area was used as a gathering place for thousands of years by First Nations.

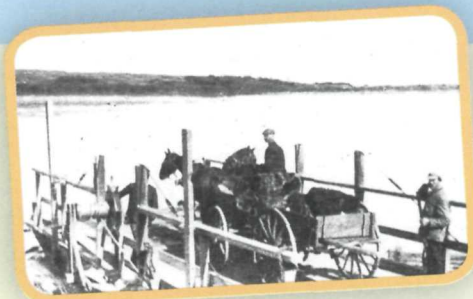


Along the Carlton Trail to the ferry crossing search for plants used for traditional medicine including rose hips, sarsaparilla, horsetail, chokecherries and willow. They are marked with a sign.



Take a moment to step onto the dock to watch and listen for the sights and sounds of nature.

Stop 10: Ferry Crossing

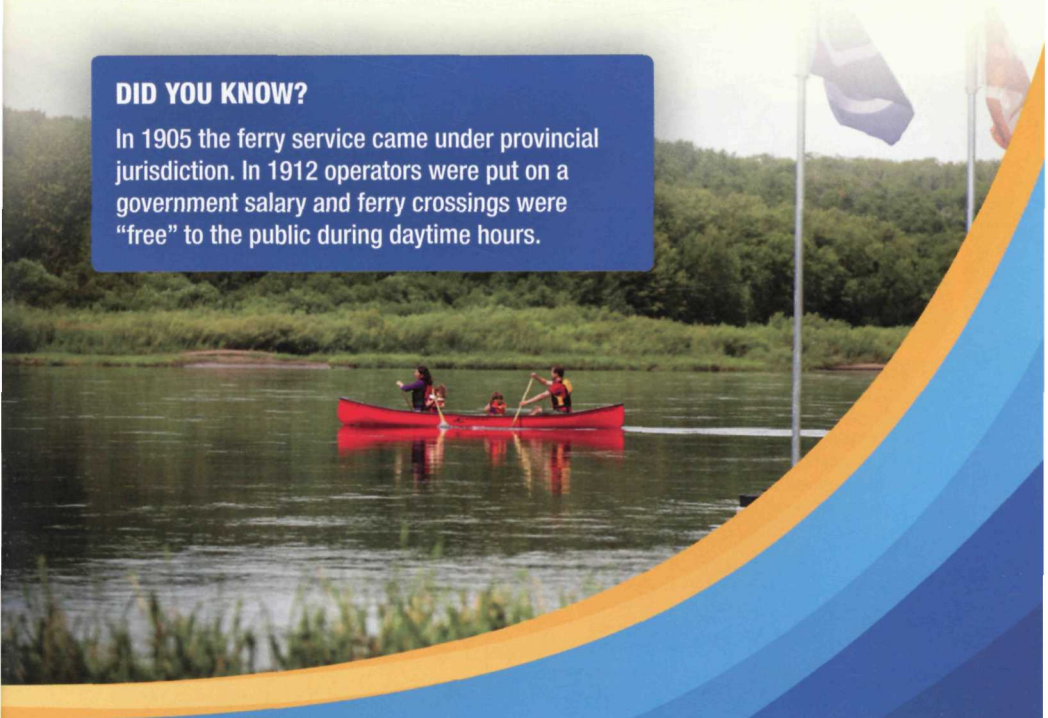


Batoche Ferry, 1910
(courtesy of Ms. Marguerite Perilla)

The Batoche ferry began operations in 1872 and closed in 1968 with the opening of “Gabriel Bridge” on Highway #312. This original crossing connected the East and West Villages of Batoche and was a vital link for travellers on the Carlton Trail.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1905 the ferry service came under provincial jurisdiction. In 1912 operators were put on a government salary and ferry crossings were “free” to the public during daytime hours.



After the Battle

The events of 1885 altered countless lives. At Batoche many people lost relatives during the battle or afterwards due to illness, homes were burnt and families had their livestock and possessions taken. Members of the Batoche Provisional Government were imprisoned or forced into exile. Louis Riel was tried for treason and sentenced to hang and Gabriel Dumont had to flee to the United States.

Some families were unable to obtain legal title to their land and others received a scrip grant but sold the land to move elsewhere. Those who chose to stay eventually rebuilt their homes, farms were restored and the economy once again began to grow.



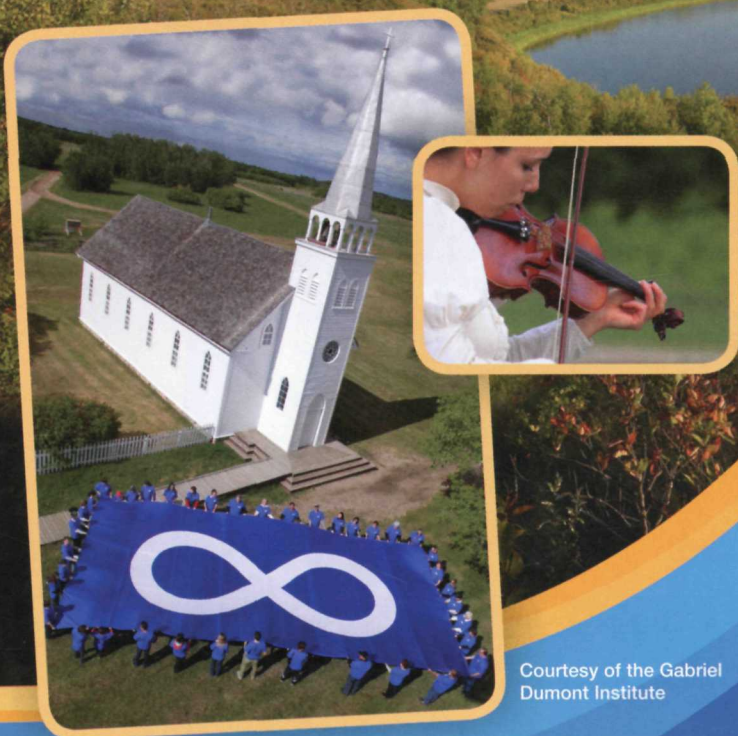
Métis in front of the Regina prison, 1885. L-R Ignace Poitras, Johnny Sansregret, Pierre Parenteau, Pierre Gariépy, Philippe Garnot, Albert Monkman, Pierre Vandal, Baptiste Vandal, Toussaint Lussier, Maxime Dubois, James "Timous" Short, Patrice Tourond and Emmanuel Champagne (Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-B714)

Life continues...

By the 1890s, the community had recovered but the placement of the railway at Duck Lake signaled the end of prosperity. One store remained in the village by 1915. Although Batoche lost its economic base, the location remains significant for its role in the story of Canada and for those who personally connect with the historic events.

The village was declared a national historic site in 1923, and for many is symbolic of Métis resilience. Métis pride, language and cultural traditions are celebrated by Elders, Community and Parks Canada programming here at Batoche.

Thank you for visiting. We hope to see you again!



Courtesy of the Gabriel
Dumont Institute

Follow this symbol to more great Parks Canada Locations in Saskatchewan!

