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THE RIEL AND LAGIMODIERE FAMILIES IN METIS SOCIETY 1840-1860

RIEL HOUSE, ST. VITAL, MANITOBA

by
ROBERT GOSMAN

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The Riel and Lagimodière Families in Métis Society 1840-1860

by Robert Gosman

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Riel House, St. Vital, Manitoba

Prairie Region

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July, 1975

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Preface

This research paper will provide a history of the Riel and Lagimodière families in Red River society in the 1840 to 1860 period. In order to accomplish this it has been necessary to analyze that society, and more particularly the Métis culture which developed at Red River after the turn of the nineteenth century. In view of the large number of monographs now being written on all aspects of Canadian history, it is surprising that so little of a substantive nature is known about this group. This is not to suggest that such classics as Marcel Giraud's Le Métis Canadien[1] and W.L. Morton's Manitoba: A History[2] and Introduction to Eden Colvile's London Correspondence Inward 1849-1852[3], are not valuable in giving a political and economic overview, merely that little seems to have been done in establishing what the essence of the society was. The Métis' role in the fur trade as provision suppliers (buffalo hunters) is well known, but there was much more to society than this. Present were all the constituent elements of a diversified group: hunters, farmers, merchants, entrepreneurs, and virtually full-time civil servants. Indeed, it must be asked at the outset what the term "Métis" means. It refers to anyone of mixed French-Indian lineage, no matter in what proportions these may be. This includes individuals such as Louis Riel, whose most immediate eight ancestors included only one Indian, as well as the many hunters who spoke neither French nor English and lived in much the same way as did the aborigine.

This paper will attempt only to place two families into the society of St. Boniface. The Métis settlement at

Grantown, on the White Horse Plains, and what will be called the "English Settlement" across the river from St. Boniface will be described to provide comparative information. Extensive use has been made of computer analysis based on the Red River Censuses of 1832, 1838, 1843, 1847, and 1849 in this regard.

One problem, related to the then prevailing illiteracy of the Métis people, is the lack of written documentary sources. This has been something of a mixed blessing as it has forced a reliance upon the more "unbiased" sources such as the census and Hudson's Bay Company and American Fur Company account ledgers. Such written documentation as there is, has of course been utilized, although in many cases it naturally reflects the bias of the original author.

The format of this paper is somewhat arbitrary. Part I will be an overview of Red River society of the period with particular emphasis on the St. Boniface area. Part II will be an analysis of Métis "material culture," i.e. types of consumer goods purchased by various people, housing, furniture, and clothing, etc. Part III will be a history of Jean-Louis Riel and family in this society with regard to social and economic status. As none of the fur trade ledgers examined give any indication of what types of consumer goods the Riel family was using, a "sympathetic" study has been necessary, in effect comparing the purchases of other people who were of a similar standing in the community as Riel. Part IV of the paper will present a similar history of Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière and family.

Several persons and organizations have rendered the researcher valuable assistance. Frits Pannekoek kindly made available a complete set of computer cards for the five Red River Censuses named. Ron Lee saved many hours work by writing the needed computer programs. Father Carrière of the Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, made available his own research notes

and was helpful in every way. Father Louis Pfaller, Assomption Abbey, Richardton, North Dakota, made promptly obtainable at very reasonable cost, the Belleau Collection on microfilm, which now is a very valuable addition to Prairie Region's library. The assistance provided by M. Lionel Dorge of La Société Historique de Saint Boniface is appreciated. The staff at the new Glenbow Alberta Archives, Calgary, took the time to provide valuable assistance notwithstanding the fact that the facility was closed due to a move to new premises. All references to Hudson's Bay Company documents are made with the kind permission of the Company, and those to the Archives of the Archdiocese of St. Boniface with the permission of His Grace, Archbishop Maurice Baudoux.

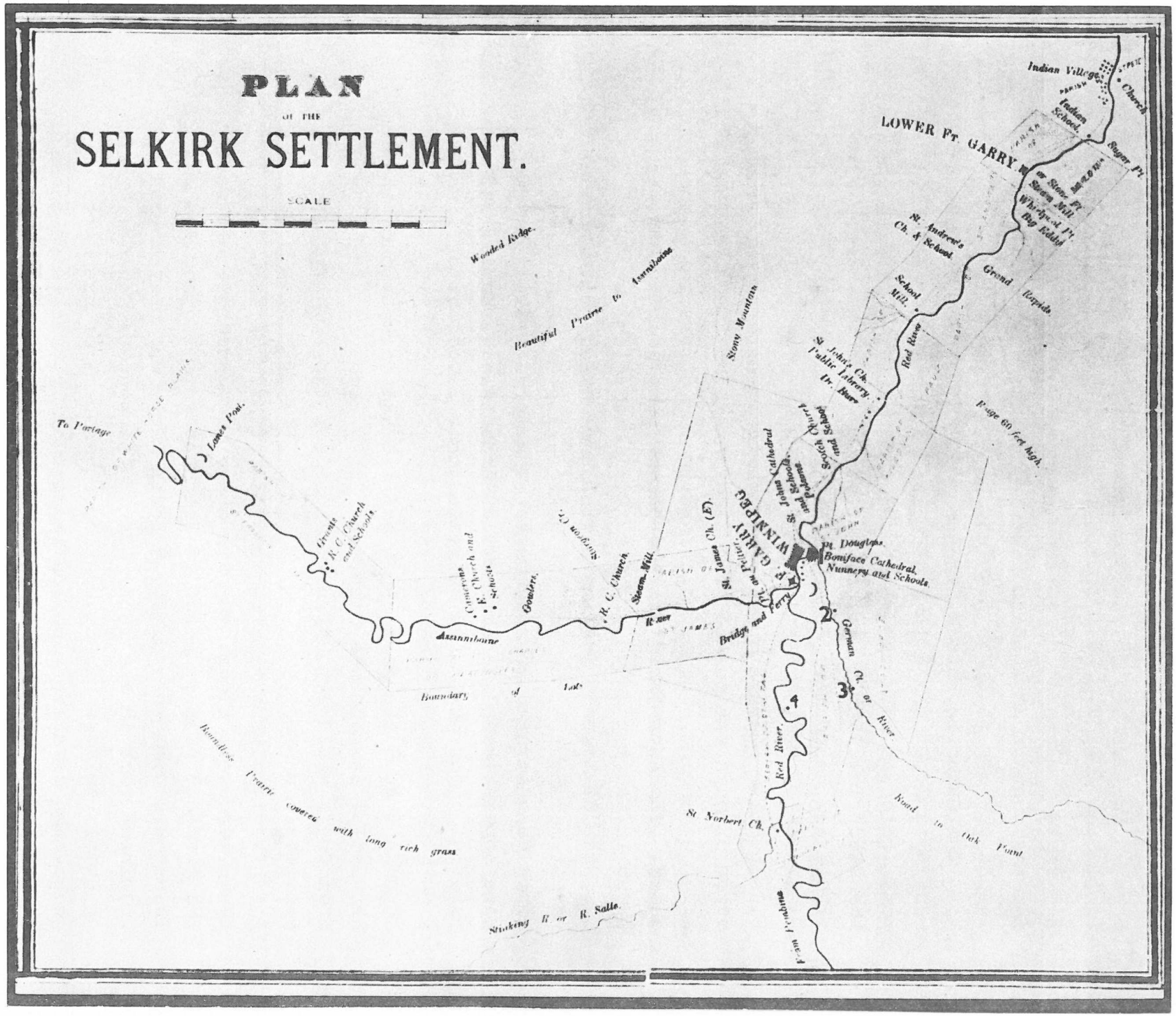
Introduction

The Métis Society which developed at Red River in the decades prior to Confederation was not the monolithic one of hunters and trappers that many writers have portrayed it to be. It was a complex group and had the constituent elements of a mature society - food gatherers, agriculturalists, entrepreneurs, and public servants/politicians. The vast majority gained their livelihood from the hunt, while a relatively small and tightly-knit élite at St. Boniface held the reins of political and economic power. This power group developed through the 1840s and 1850s, and like any conservative entity directed its efforts at maintaining and strengthening its privileged position within its society.

Many of the members of this group gained their initial wealth by engaging in illicit free trade, contrary to the Hudson's Bay Company monopoly. After this issue had come to a head in 1849, the Company moved quickly to co-opt these people, and found them receptive to its offers of position and privilege. Soon all manner of public positions were being filled by members of this bourgeois element, and the largesse of the public purse was showered upon them.

This group never made more than passing attempts to reflect the aspirations and fears of the large group of hunters. It profited and flourished for a few brief years through the 1850s, but by the mid-1860s had lost its credibility with this group. Perhaps nothing could have prevented the disintegration of the hunting way of life, as the herds dwindled in the face of inexorable pressure of western expansion in the United States. The St. Boniface élite, how-

1 Inset on Laurie's map of the North-West Territories. Compiled by D. Dodd, Ottawa. From Artibise and Dahl, Winnipeg in Maps (Ottawa, 1975).


PLAN
OF THE
SELKIRK SETTLEMENT.
SCALE
Wooded Ridge.
Beautiful Prairie to Assiniboine
Stony Mountain
To Portage
Lower Post.
R. C. Church and Schools.
Cemetery
R. C. Church and Schools.
Gooseberry
R. C. Church
Steam Mill
St. James Ch. (E.)
Assiniboine
Boundary of Lot
Boundless Prairie covered with long rich grass
Stinking R. or R. Salle.
WINNIPEG
Fort Garry
Ferry on Priv.
Bridge and Ferry
St. John's Cathedral
St. Paul's Presbyterian
Scotch Church
Public School
St. John's Ch.
Public Library
Dr. Bown
Pt. Douglas
Bonifface Cathedral
Nunnery and Schools
Ridge 60 feet high.
Red River
Grand Rapids
School Mill
St. Andrew's Ch. & School
Steam Mill
Whirlpool Pt.
Big Eddie
Stony Mountain
Indian Village
Church
Indian School
Sugar Pt.
LOWER Pt. GARRY
German Ch. or River
Road to Oak Point
St. Norbert Ch.
Red River
From Pembina
2.
3.
4.

ever,did nothing to prepare the Métis for the dramatic changes in life-styles that would result. It did no bargaining in the councils of state to lessen the trauma caused by the rapidly changing situation, and did nothing to secure for the hunters at least a fighting chance of "making it" in the new age that was dawning.

The Catholic church hierarchy did no better for the hunting group. While it did encourage agricultural settlement, this was less the result of a far-sighted reading of the situation than it was an attempt to make this group more stable and hence more susceptible to church dogma. The conservative outlook of the church meshed nicely with the conservative posture of the St. Boniface élite. Taché and other priests sat on the Council of Assiniboia and various other governing bodies, oblivious to the crisis that loomed ahead. The Archbishop himself became very wealthy and was known in eastern Canada as the "millionaire priest."

The divergence in life styles and outlook between the farmer-merchant group and the hunter-trapper element was amply demonstrated in many ways. The former lived in a more sophisticated manner, their landholdings, homes, and material goods purchased reflected this. The latter lived a more primitive existence, their semi-nomadic life-style dependent upon the numbers of buffalo and markets once the harvest of animals was complete. They received little help from their wealthier brethren in either the economic or political spheres.

Two important families resided at St. Boniface during these turbulent times; the Riels and Lagimodières. It was the marriage of a daughter of Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière and Jean-Louis Riel that produced Louis Riel, who played such a prominent role in the later history of Western Canada. Both of these families can be considered members of the élite group, though neither became leaders of it. It is to these two families and the larger society in which they lived, that the following pages are devoted.

I. Métis Society to 1860

Antecedents

The most informative though certainly not the only description of the antecedents of Métis society is given in Arthur J. Ray's Indians In The Fur Trade[1]. He attributes the growing numbers living at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers to redundancy caused by the streamlining of fur trade operations, especially after the amalgamation of the Hudson's Bay Company and North West Company in 1821. In addition, many of the conclusions that he draws about the Indian tribes of the area can to some extent be applied to the nomadic mixed-blood group that was produced from the marriages of French-speaking North West Company voyageurs and Indian women.

Until about 1821 the Indians' demand for trade goods was relatively inelastic, both as a "consequence of the nomadic life style...and in part a function of his limited transport capabilities, which placed restraints on the quantity of goods he could take back to his home territory."

In fact, any reductions in the price of trade goods sold to Indians as an inducement to bring in furs usually resulted in fewer furs traded. The Indians spent the extra time away from trapping lingering around the trading posts, drinking and smoking, leading what company officials called an "indolent life."[2] This description is very reminiscent of that which traders would later give of the Métis hunters.

After 1800 the ecology of the fur trade West changed. Intensive trapping depleted the abundance of fur-bearing animals, causing the Hudson's Bay and North West Companies to extend their operations further into the interior.[3] This

new expanded system was provisioned by the bison of the park and grasslands.[4] To ensure a steady food supply trading houses were established in the main bison regions. These posts also ended up, because of their strategic locations, as the centres for the canoe brigades, as well as the shallow-draught York boats which carried export furs the six hundred miles to York Factory.[5]

After 1821, Governor George Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company closed many of the fur trade posts, built during the rivalry with the North West Company, reducing staff by about two-thirds.[6] Amongst those let go were the Métis who, along with others, settled in the Red River Valley. These former North West Company employees, employed primarily as manual labourers, formed the basis of the settlements that arose at this time at St. Boniface, Grantown and Pembina. Poor agriculturalists and with little desire to improve their farms, they comprised a growing and increasingly disaffected group at Red River. Most became buffalo hunters, both to ensure their own subsistence as well as to provide a source of income. The market was hardly an expanding one; while in 1813 the Hudson's Bay Company required 644 bags of pemmican, throughout the 1820s and 1830s they never bought more than 500 to 700 bags per year.[7] The Métis sought other sources of livelihood and it was only normal that within a few years increasing numbers of them were themselves engaged in illicit trade in furs.

Space does not permit a more extensive analysis of developments leading to the establishment and growth of the three major Métis centres at St. Boniface, Grantown and Pembina. An attempt has been made, however, to set the scene for the 1840s, when a society increasing in numbers was faced with the prospect of fewer jobs with the Company and a lessened chance to earn a livelihood. The Métis could neither use nor sell all the pemmican or fresh meat that they were

obtaining in ever increasing quantities. In 1840, 1,210 carts were used in the buffalo hunt, over twice the number engaged in 1820.[8] There was virtually no market for agricultural produce, except, ironically, during the brief periods when British troops were stationed at Fort Garry to prevent any disturbance by the Métis. The Company had the need for only six to eight bushels of wheat from each farmer per year, at the rate of three shillings per bushel, prompting one sympathetic observer to remark:

> Where he finds a sure market for the remainder of his produce, Heaven only knows — I do not.[9]

The majority of the Métis, in short, faced the fourth decade of the nineteenth century with a prospect of few jobs, few markets, and no political power.

Free Trade - 1844

The only alternative seemed to be free trade and by 1844 it was a pastime and indeed occupation of a great many Métis at the forks. The activities would, in 1849, lead to a destruction of the Company's monopoly. The major protagonists were two enterprising Red River merchants, James Sinclair[10] and Andrew McDermot;[11] a dissident Roman Catholic priest, the Reverend Georges Antoine Belcourt; and an ambitious and innovative partner in the American Fur Company, Norman W. Kittson.[12]

In July of 1844, Kittson first established contact with Sinclair, and reported that he was "anxious to make arrangements with me for the northern trade — he seems to be very certain of something being made."[13] By December of that year the Hudson's Bay Company had retaliated by insisting that McDermot and Sinclair stop their free trading activities or lose the right to import trade goods via Hudson's Bay.[14] Others, including the Rev. Belcourt, Francois M.

Dease,[15] Narcisse Marion,[16] and Thomas Sinclair,[17] all very prominent members of Métis society, were also under suspicion and given warnings.[18] The situation became more tense in June of 1845 when a petition signed by six people, including Charles Larance,[19] Dominique Ducharme,[20] and Alexis Goulait,[21] was presented to the Council of Assiniboia, a Company appointed body, demanding that a recently imposed import duty on American goods be abolished.[22] This request was turned down.[23]

One of the most effective agitators against the company monopoly was the Rev. Belcourt, a man very influential among the Métis at St. Boniface and Pembina. Belcourt was born in Quebec in 1803 and was ordained a priest in 1827. He came to the North West as a missionary in 1830, and spent the next thirty years working among the Indians and Métis. Until 1840, he was stationed in the Red River area and from 1848 until 1859 he was parish priest at Pembina, just over the American boundary. In 1859, he was ordered out of the North West at the instigation of Archbishop Taché, who was jealous of the influence of the stubborn but popular Belcourt. Taché described him as a "poor, miserable man," who, he hoped, would never return to the area.[24]

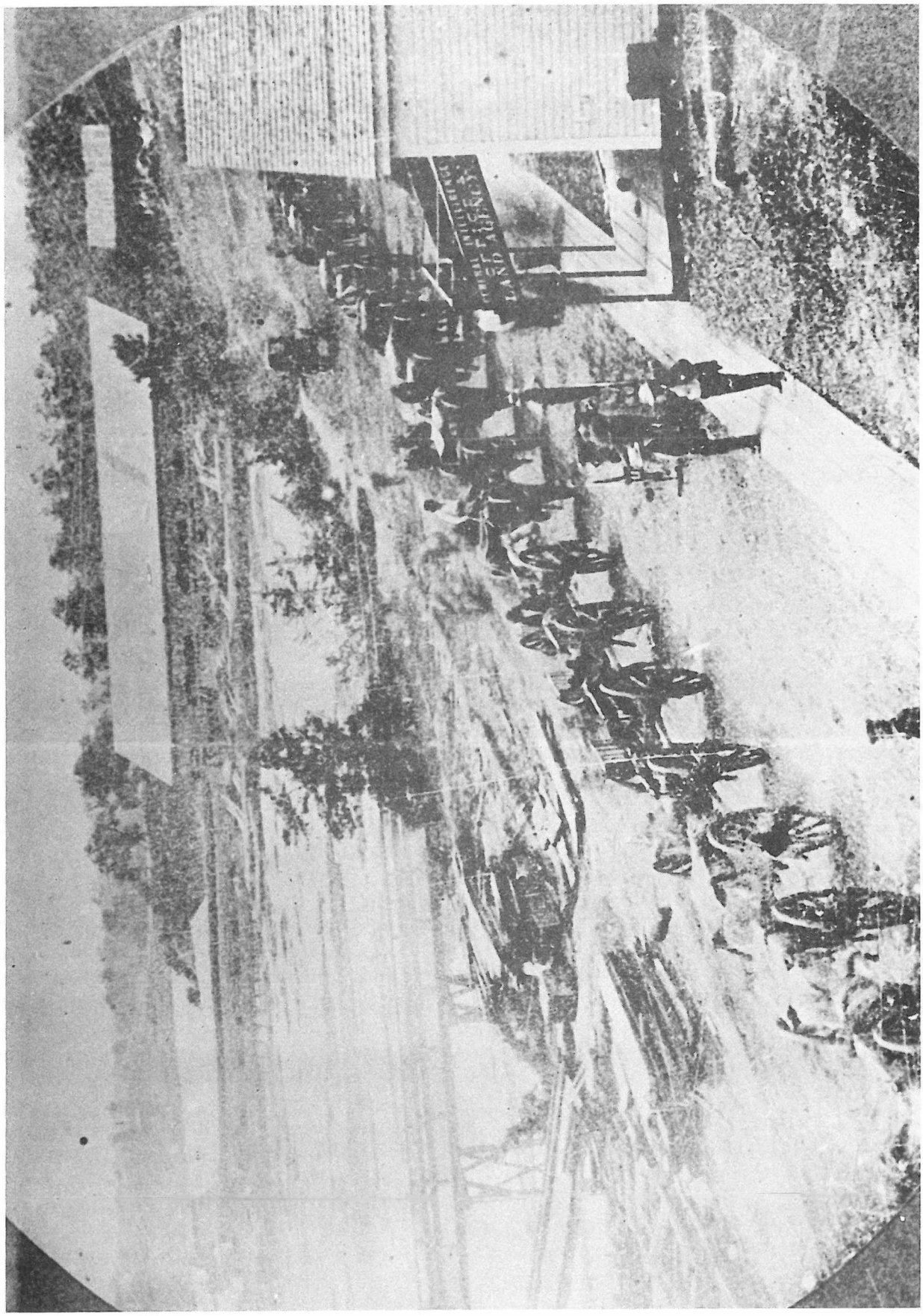
Throughout his tenure in the North West, Belcourt had close connections with officials of the American Fur Company and from his position at Pembina worked actively to undermine the position of the H.B.C. and that of the Roman Catholic hierarchy at St. Boniface. He played a very prominent role in the so-called "Sayer Affair" of 1849, which effectively broke the trade monopoly of the company, and apparently had a close relationship with Jean-Louis Riel, who himself played an important part in that proceeding. A sometimes irrational man, Belcourt was as interested in using others to secure his own ends of power and prestige as he was in his self-declared crusade of helping the Métis

and Indians. He succeeded in making himself indispensable at a very early stage in his missionary career by learning the Indian languages, a feat that very few other priests ever managed, although Belcourt's endeavours met with erratic and questionable success. As early as 1839, Archbishop Provencher complained to his superior in Quebec that Belcourt was being very possessive of a dictionary he was writing and criticized him for not making it available to other missionaries.[25] Eight years later the priest had still not finished the dictionary.[26]

In 1847, the agitation against the H.B.C. monopoly and its attempts to protect it by levying import duties was reaching a breaking point. In June of that year a strategy meeting, chaired by Belcourt, was held at the home of Andrew McDermot, the principal merchant. The result was a petition signed by upwards of one thousand residents of Rupert's Land. Governor Simpson reacted very strongly against these "seditious" proceedings, and tried to have pressure put on the Bishop of Quebec to have Belcourt silenced.[27] In 1847, the priest returned to Quebec, ostensibly forever, much to the delight of Provencher.[28] However, in November of that year, a petition from the Métis residents of the White Horse Plains begged the Archbishop for Belcourt's return, claiming that he was the only person capable of protecting their rights against the company and avoiding bloodshed. This document was signed by 144 White Horse Plains and 89 Forks residents.[29] Hostility toward the Company was reaching a peak, especially among the Métis residents in the two communities.

Belcourt, for his part, was anxious to return to the North West, but not to the close scrutiny of Provencher and the church hierarchy of St. Boniface. He placed himself in American territory at Pembina, out of the control of Provencher and the Company. Simpson, who realized that an alienated Belcourt was dangerous indeed, tried desperately

2 Cart Train in St. Anthony, Minnesota, 1855. (Minnesota Historical Society).


LAND AGENCY

3 Camp on Prairies between Minneapolis and St. Paul 1855 (Provincial Archives of Manitoba).



RED RIVER CARTS AND BOIS BRÛLÉS FROM PEMBINA, 1858

[From a photograph by B. F. Upton in the museum of the Minnesota Historical Society. The train is encamped on the prairie between Minneapolis and St. Paul.]

to placate the priest, admitting his own poor judgement and professing no hostility towards him.[30]

Belcourt, in frequent communication with Norman Kittson at Pembina, informed him that he would be coming there. The priest believed that fully half the settlers at Red River would follow him to the United States and out of H.B.C. territory.[31] Provencher was very distressed that Belcourt would be so close, reasoning that he would be more valuable somewhere on the Missouri, where there were more Indians.[32]

From his vantage point at Pembina, Belcourt directed the agitation against the company. Its officials were fully aware of the situation, with the Governor and Committee lamenting to Simpson that the priest would have "an opportunity of doing more mischief than if he had remained in the settlement."[33] Many of the Métis did follow Belcourt to Pembina, from where they engaged actively in the fur trade at the expense of the Company. Belcourt emerges as an interesting figure in this period as he was the only member of the church hierarchy who had the real interests of the hunters at heart. It was partly because of this that he was so despised by the rest of the clergy and the Company.

In May of 1849, the HBC made one final attempt to enforce its monopoly by arresting and bringing before the General Quarterly Court one Guillaume Sayer,[34] charged with illegally trafficking in furs. Several prominent Métis, including Jean-Louis Riel, consulted with Belcourt at Pembina as to what action was to be taken. The priest despatched a letter with Riel, which he read on the steps of the cathedral on the Sunday before the trial date. In this letter, Belcourt exhorted the Métis to armed insurrection to protect their rights to trade in furs, and "that it was expected every man would come armed, and fully prepared to assert their rights."[35] The result was that a group of 200 armed

Métis stationed themselves outside the court room, and a delegation of eleven, including Riel Sr., entered the building and presented a petition expressing in no uncertain terms the sentiments of the assemblage outside.[36] Although the jury found Sayer guilty as charged, Chief Recorder Adam Thom, recognizing that discretion was the better part of valour, suspended sentence. For all intents and purposes, this confrontation had ended in victory for the Métis traders, and for Belcourt. What Riel personally gained in this campaign for free trade is more questionable, and will be discussed in more detail in Part III.

1849 was then a privotal year for the Métis at Red River. Although the monopoly would continue until 1869, in reality H.B.C. influence in the colony steadily declined after the Sayer trial. The Métis had flexed their collective muscle; the Company had retreated. From then on the political power of the Métis population, or at least of a certain part of it, became a force with which to be contended.

However, with few exceptions, it was not the hunt leaders or those in the mainstream of the society who rose to political power. Rather, it was the membership of a nacent petty bourgeois entrepreneurial class, composed of individuals whom the Company perceived to have interests in common with its own. This group was willingly co-opted and drifted further and further away from the hunter-trapper group. Consequently the impulse for direct action by the hunters arose with renewed vigor.

The Company's astute reaction to the events of 1849 secured for it a postponement of the inevitable collapse of its political power. More significant was the development of this Métis middle class, which enjoyed considerable power during the 1850s, and whose members went on to prominence after Manitoba's entry into Confederation.

The rise and composition of this middle class is dif-

ficult to document. One good indicator of both aspects is Red River cart ownership during the 1830s and 1840s. These unique vehicles were not only indispensable for the buffalo hunt but were used in the huge cart trains that annually wended their way to St. Paul, delivering furs and picking up trade goods. The popularity of these vehicles increased substantially between 1832 and 1838 (See "Appendix A "). Residents of Grantown, both Canadian and native born, were early converts to their use. In 1843, when the free trade movement was beginning in earnest, only two Métis owned more than seven carts, Louis Battosh[37] with fourteen and Martin Lavallee[38] with seven. However, others such as Narcisse Marion, Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière and Salomon Hamelin,[39] had at least four each. Assuming cart ownership meant trade, then they were in all likelihood involved in free trade.

In 1849, in St. Boniface proper, Maxime Dauphiné,[40] Marion, and Louis Thibeault[41] had eleven carts, Amable Eneau and Charles Larance eight each, and Pierre Beauchamp,[42] Baptiste Turcotte, Amable Hogue,[43] Baptiste Lorme, Francois Bruneau,[44] Germain Parisien,[45] Louis Capulette,[46] Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière, Jean-Baptiste Brasconnier,[47] Baptiste Perrault,[48] F.M. Dease, Pierre Parenteau,[49] André Carrière,[50] and Michel Dauphiné,[51] six each. Many of these individuals were prominent in St. Boniface, especially Marion, Dauphiné, Thibeault, Bruneau, and Dease. The increasing concentration of carts at St. Boniface indicates the rise in that community of trading and possibly merchant activity by the 1840s.

The Buffalo Hunt

Relatively few Métis were merchants. The majority, especially of the poorer sort, were hunters. In 1870, Archbishop Taché wrote:

> The greatest social crime of our French half breeds is that they are hunters...I cannot but hope that for the cessation of these hunting excursions, which, by their natural, easy and somewhat remunerative allurements, withdraw a great number of people from their homes.[52]

Taché had a very practical concern, over and above his belief that the hunt was a throwback to an uncivilized time. It was very difficult to keep the "flock" on the straight and narrow at the best of times, and the task became doubly difficult when a large portion of the population of the settlements was absent for several months of the year while on the twice-annual buffalo hunts. In order for the Roman Catholic Church to maintain its influence it was necessary to send priests with the hunters, a task which they found very onerous.

Although the hunt was much maligned by many European writers of the day, there is conclusive proof that it provided Red River with its only source of protein during the frequent years of crop failure. In fact, the Métis skill at collecting meat often saved the inept farmers at the Forks from starvation.[53] Because the Métis were expert hunters, they could subsist even during years of poor harvests and few buffalo, by wintering on the plains and living on small game. J.J. Hargrave, an inhabitant of the settlement, well knew the value of the buffalo:

> His flesh gave him pemmican and meat; his robe had clothed them in default of blankets, and when dressed, has provided skins to make their tents. His dressed skin and sinews have offered material for moccasins or Indian shoes; his tongue or hump or "boss" have ever been the luxury of the Plains; and, along with the nose of the moose and deer, and tongue of the reindeer, constitute the characteristic delicacies of Rupert's Land.[54]

It has been estimated that the buffalo provided subsistence until about the year 1860,[55] and Belcourt estimated in 1845 that fully one-third of the people of the Red River district subsisted by hunting buffalo on the American side of the

boundary.[56]

Belcourt also provided a description of the skill of the hunters in the hunt of 1845. He recounted how some hunters could fire four or five times at a full gallop within a distance of fifty rods.

> Only the first bullet is rammed home; the others are merely primed. The hunters carry a number of bullets in their mouths and the powder horns hang by their sides. After discharging the rifle, the powder is poured into the barrel and a bullet from the mouth follows. The saliva causes the bullet to adhere to the powder in the breach and the gun is ready for the second shot.[57]

The Métis did not seem to know the meaning of the concept of conservation, even as the numbers of animals dwindled and the need to range further to the west increased. A telling account was provided by one observer:

> The slaughter of fourteen hundred in one afternoon for their tongues alone, the countless thousands taken for their humps only, added to those other thousands, even millions, killed for their robe or skin, give a picture of waste never equalled.[58]

When animals were harder to find the hunters were more careful. In the fall hunt of 1849, one group of 55 hunters killed 1,776 cows, yielding the following: 1,213 bales of dried meat, 166 sacks of fat of 200 pounds each, 556 bladders of marrow of 12 pounds each, for a total value of £1700.[59]

Graphic descriptions of the organization of the hunt are given by Alexander Ross in The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress, and Present State (London 1856), and they cannot be bettered. What must be stressed is that the harvest from the hunt was essential to both the fur trade and the continued existence of the settlements. One writer has suggested that viewed in this light the Métis were more advanced that the "Europeans" at Red River, the hunt being more industrial than agricultural, as it was part of the

only industry in the North West — the fur trade.[60]

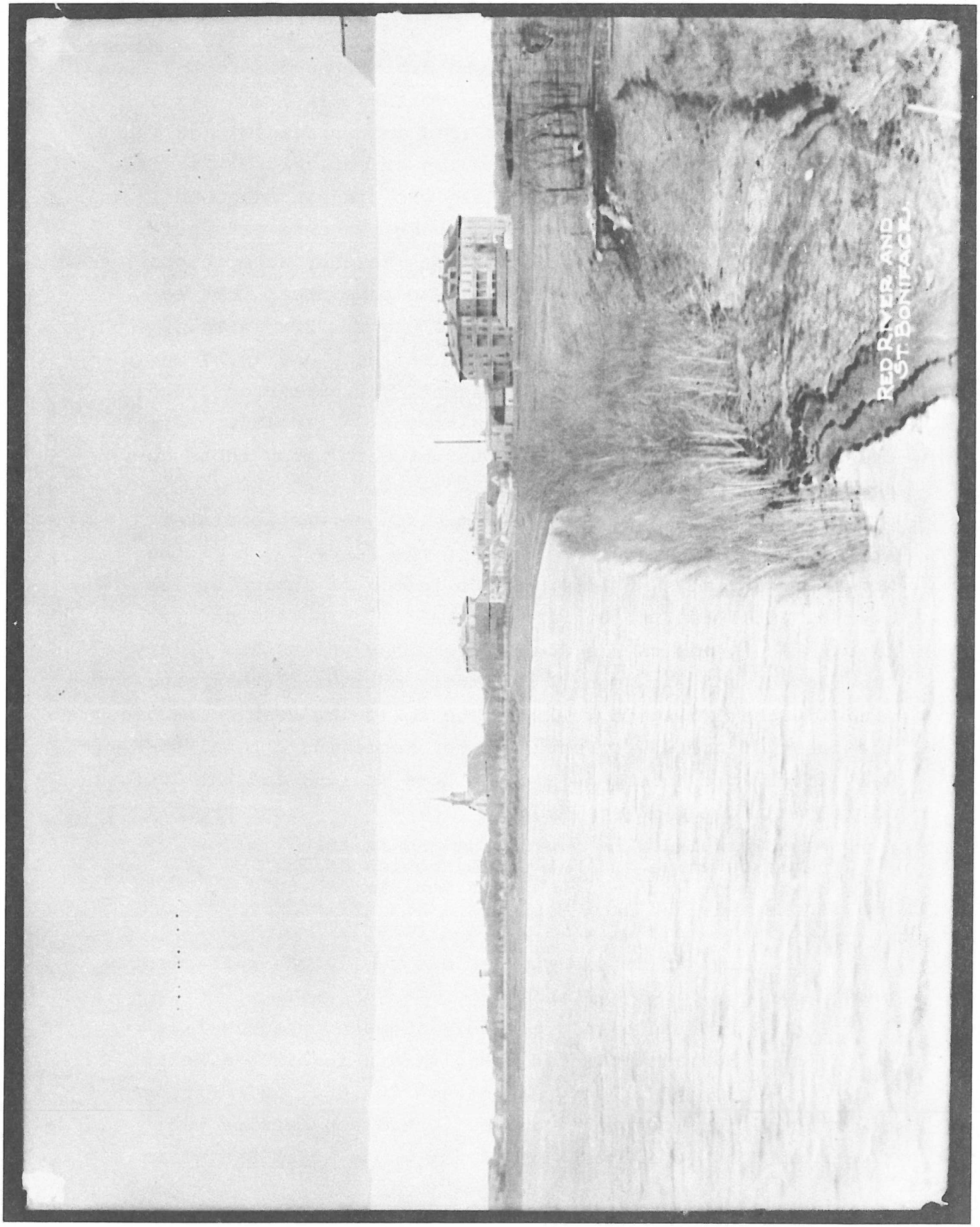
Métis Political Involvement: The Council of Assiniboia

As indicated earlier, not all of the Métis were hunters. Many were farmers and merchants and it was these groups that emerged dominant after the 1849 Sayer trial, which marked a turning point in the affairs of the settlement. The appointed Council could no longer ignore the demands of the Métis, who were by the then the most powerful group. At the first meeting after that incident the Council considered the demands of the dissidents: removal of Recorder Thom from all public offices, which was refused; abolition of the import duty on American goods, which was held over for consideration; the appointment of a bilingual judge, to which there was agreement; free trade in furs, over which the Council said it had no jurisdiction; and the appointment of some Métis to the council, on which that body rightly pointed out that it had no power to act.[61]

However, the realities of the situation were not lost on Simpson, who soon approached Bishop Provencher for suggestions as to who in the French speaking group would be appropriate for the council. Provencher suggested Francois Bruneau and Narcisse Marion as well as Father Louis Lafleche. Simpson had a fairly high opinion of Bruneau but refused to recommend the appointment of Marion.[62] In spite of his reticence, however, it was not long before many public posts were being filled by Métis. Bruneau finally joined the council in 1853, and Henry Fisher,[63] Pascal Bréland,[64] and Salomon Hamelin in 1857. Other Métis joined after 1860, including John Dease,[65] William Dease,[66] and Roger Goulet.[67]

Much of the interest emerges from Métis involvement on the council. With the exception of Cuthbert Grant,[68] the leader of the buffalo hunts, none of them were from the large

4 Red River and St. Boniface (Public Archives, PA31586).


RED RIVER AND
ST. BONIFACE

group of hunters. The only one who did not belong to the commercial life of the colony was Francois Bruneau, who was a farmer. Nearly all were able to read and write, in fact this was almost a prerequisite, which effectively eliminated a great proportion of Métis. Those who did sit on council were more interested in promoting their own ends and enriching themselves through their positions as they were in promoting the Métis cause generally. The same names kept reappearing to fill the various public posts. For example, at the meeting of December 9, 1852, Lafleche and Taché moved that William Dease and Louis Bousquet[69] be appointed Judges of the Petty Court of the Upper District.[70] In 1856, Pascal Bréland, Father Lafleche, and Bousquet were among those appointed to take the census.[71]

Bruneau did very well for himself. He was appointed a Petty Judge in 1851, President of the Petty Court of the White Horse Plains in 1854, and Collector of Import Duties for St. Vital and St. Boniface in 1855.[72] In 1860 he threatened to resign his Court presidency unless his salary was raised, and the Council willingly obliged;[73] they gave him a further raise in 1861.[74] The following year he became President of two other Petty Courts, receiving a total salary of £22 per annum.[75] Bruneau died in 1865 and the Council issued the following statement:

> As a Councillor he was a true and faithful representative of that large section of the Settlement with which he was more immediately connected; and as a Magistrate his efficiency and usefulness were well known to all.

They then resolved to see whether his family was sufficiently provided for.[76]

Pascal Bréland also graciously accepted the benefits of office. He was appointed a Magistrate in 1850; a Petty Judge in 1851; and a Petty Magistrate in 1861, in addition to the positions mentioned above.[77] His son Patrice was appointed Road Superintendent of the White Horse Plains in

1863 at a salary of £12 annually.[78]

Salomon Hamelin, in addition to his Council duties, was appointed a Magistrate in 1861, and a Petty Judge in 1862.[79] William Dease became a Judge in 1852 and again in 1858. Roger Goulet, who became a Councillor in 1866, had already been a Collector of Customs since 1861, and later became Provincial Government Collector of customs.[80]

None of these people were typical members of the Métis group. Most were wealthy and well-educated. They at no time agitated to have public positions opened to the hunter class, and actively engaged in nepotism and favouritism. As such they played into the hands of the H.B.C., because their presence defused Métis agitation while doing nothing substantive to ameliorate the hunters' grievances. Perhaps this was why a man like Jean-Louis Riel was never considered for any public post. He had the education and the ambition, but perhaps could not be depended upon to sacrifice the common good for the sake of his own.

Métis Social Customs and Habits

Métis social customs and habits also reflected a variety based on the emergence of the new merchant-farmer class. Many Anglo-Saxon writers have portrayed the Métis as indolent, drunken, unreliable, immoral, and generally uncivilized. These were usually the same people who believed that hunting was far inferior to farming as a livelihood. The letters of most of the Catholic clergy of the era also contain many references to "improvident" behaviour and the Métis' lack of devotion to the faith. One reported the following:

> The three Métis who had shown us great civility, having been visited in the evening by some comrades, invited them to drink, and drank to excess; there followed shouting and songs, which were

> those of the true Iroquois; but these were soon succeeded by quarrels, and, as a finish to the feast, by sanguinary battles, for one of the combatants received two knife cuts in the orbit of the right eye.

This priest went on to lament the general drunkenness of the men.[81] Father André, in a letter to Taché, spoke of his failure to stamp out the evil polka.

> One cannot take part in such a dance without exposing himself to a direct occasion of immortal sin.[82]

There is no doubt that among the hunting class, and especially in the outlying Métis settlements such as Grantown and Pembina, there was a great deal of drinking and socializing. In St. Boniface, under the influence of Bishop and clergy, these things were not as prevalent. Those devout church-goers of the upper class, the Marions, Hamelins, Bruneaus, and the Riels, etc., would not have been given to such excesses. It has been suggested, for instance, that none of the Riel family members were drinkers.[83] It would have been very difficult for these prominent families to have engaged in the very activities that the Bishop found so reprehensible.[84]

As for the hunters, they had much time to engage in social activities, as the nature of their occupation was seasonal. Most made their livelihood from the twice-annual hunt, and, having few animals or crops to care for, could concentrate on the more convivial pursuits. Visiting back and forth, dancing, and drinking rum were important elements in their social life. As a group, they were content to subsist, raise their families, and not devote undue thought to the material pursuits that occupied the more European elements in the settlement. What the latter group, and many of the writers since, could not appreciate about the hunters was that their social activities were not the cause of their so-called "indolence" and "barbarism," but rather that

these people did not, as in the European tradition, live to work. James J. Hargrave, in his book Red River, gave the account of the problems that the Hudson's Bay Company had in dealing with its Métis boat brigade employees. The final payment for services

> led, as a natural cause, to the investment of a large part of the sum in liquor, and disgraceful scenes often occurred during which those who had not spent all their available cash frequently lost it to know one knew how.[85]

Father Belcourt, who spent much of his life living with and ministering to the hunters, had a rather more positive attitude toward them. He found them "mild, generous, polished in their manners, and ready to do a kindness, of great uprightship, not overanxious of becoming rich, contening themselves with the necessities of life of which they are not all times possessed." He allowed that they were "no friends of labor" and were "generally gay and fond of enjoyment. They affect music, there being but a few, comparatively speaking, who do not play on the violin."[86]

The hunters' affinity for music was described by one of the relatively more charitable of the European observers.

> It is in the winter season...that the social life of the half-breeds may be said to be at its highest. It is then that they marry and are given in marriage; that feasting, dancing and merry-makings of all description do much abound. Every log house then echoes to the violin of some mocassined and straight-haired Pagannini, who after years of sedulous practice, has attained a certain ghastly facility of execution.[87]

The same author gave a description of a song favoured by the voyageurs, saying

> It seems a vocal expression of the voyageurs' thoughts of their native land:
>
> Qui en a compose la chanson?
> C'est Pierre Falcon! le bon garcon!
> Elle a été faite et composé
> Sur le victoire que nous avons gagné!
> Elle a été fait et composé
> Chantons la gloire de tous ce Bois-Brulés.[88]

Exactly the same thought was registered upon an earlier traveller. He described travelling with Antoine Gingras, a prominent Métis trader, who was constantly singing the same song on the way. He learned later that the lyrics were about the victory of the Métis over Semple at Seven Oaks in 1816.[89] It is evident that the largely illiterate hunter society used the vehicle of song and folklore to keep their thoughts of nation alive. How removed this was from the petty bourgeois posture adopted by the upper classes at St. Boniface.

The Roman Catholic Church played a prominent role in Métis society, although its influence was not uniform everywhere. As late as 1862, Father André wrote Taché from St. Joe's (Walhalla) complaining about the complete breakdown of moral authority. He was particularly worried about the spread of the greatest sin of all — marriage outside the church.[90] From Provencher's arrival at Red River in 1818, the clergy had worked tirelessly to ensure that all of the flock were properly married.

At St. Boniface, the level of devotion was higher. In 1853, one Hudson's Bay Company official wrote irritably in his diary that "being one those endless fêtes in the Catholic Church, the Canadian labourers are not working."[91] James J. Hargrave described the observance of Lent.

> At St. Boniface, and by the whole French population, the weeks of Lent are observed with punctuality, and religious services of a nature special to the occasion are usually attended by crowded houses.[92]

Archbishop Taché was particularly close to the wealthier members of the flock, by virtue of their common membership on the council. This was convenient because he was almost always soliciting funds for church renovation or construction. Chief Trader Henry Fisher was among those approached. In 1853, Taché wrote thanking him for his "very generous" contribution to the new church. He allowed that his "modest" re-resources would only allow for the construction of a small

church but Fisher's donation would ensure some extras that would otherwise have been impossible.[93] When the cathedral perished in a fire in 1860, several prominent families including the Marions, the Thibeaults and Riels stepped forward to offer money and other gifts, although the Riels could hardly afford it.[94]

Roman Catholics were in a slight majority in the whole population throughout the period. Within that community, St. Boniface had a far larger percentage of Canadian-born householders than did Grantown, confirming that the White Horse Plains Settlement was the preferred locale of the hunting class. By the same token, the Quebec-born settlers preferred to be closer to the Cathedral and the sophistication of St. Boniface. (See "Appendix B".) The following table illustrates the different origins of the respective populations of St. Boniface and Grantown.

Table 1
Birthplace of Heads of Households
St. Boniface and Grantown

	1832	1838	1843	1847	1849
	%	%	%	%	%
St. Boniface:					
Natives of Quebec	63.9	52.5	41.7	47.8	45.8
Natives of Ruperts Land	36.1	47.8	58.3	52.2	52.2
Grantown:					
Natives of Quebec	-	23.6	18.3	19.0	17.6
Natives of Ruperts Land	-	76.4	81.7	81.0	82.4

(Source: Provincial Archives of Manitoba (hereafter cited as PAM) Red River Census).

As late as 1849, nearly half the householders at St. Boniface were Canadiens as opposed to fewer than one in five at Grantown.

The Catholic Church also took the responsibility in trying to encourage education among the parishioners. Prior to the arrival of the Grey Nuns in 1844, Provencher conducted

his own school for those whose parents saw any need for such learning. As early as 1828, the Nolin sisters had come from Pembina to work at the Catholic mission and to teach school.[95] The continuing problem confronted by the Church was one of convincing the people that book-learning and the catechism were important. These things would have seemed rather irrelevant to the hunters, who had different interests. The semi-nomadic nature of their life-style, characterized by the long absences of nearly half the population, made any attempt at enforcing school attendance futile. As late as 1859, Taché wrote expressing his frustration:

> Considering the sparse character of the Settlements, the schools would need to be increased in number in certain districts, but the absence of any law relative to education, and of zeal in the people themselves, renders it utterly impossible to do more... So far, scarcely one child in ten has paid for his schooling, although the charge does not exceed ten shillings per annum, and I am certain that if we insisted on the payment of even that trifling sum, many of the scholars, would leave the schools; such is the carelessness and indifference of the parents in that respect.[96]

The attitudes of the bourgeoisie of St. Boniface, however, differed markedly from those of the hunting group. Nearly all those Métis who served on the Council of Assiniboia, for instance, were able to read and write, and some, such as Bruneau, had a very good education. They were, overtly, more devout, had closer ties with Taché, and did not engage in the "primitive" pursuit of the hunt. Moreover, their lives were more settled, and as a consequence their children were able to attend school regularly. In 1859, about 60 boys and 20 girls were receiving instruction from the clergy in St. Boniface, a relatively small number.[97] Young Louis Riel, for instance, had been a star pupil at Taché's school. In 1858 he, along with two others, was sent by Taché to receive a full classical education in Quebec.[98] In preparation, Riel and his companions had to be taught Latin, receiving instruction from Father Lefloch.[99] Sara Riel, attended the

school in the Convent of the Sisters of Charity, and in 1866 was admitted to the novitiate.[100] In education, as in many other areas, there was distinct divergence in attitudes between the hunting and farming-merchant class in Métis society.

Education was also the key to achievement in Hudson's Bay Company service. Very few of the Métis employees ever managed to attain any important rank as, among other reasons, the ability to read and write was necessary. The only one ever to become a Chief Trader was Henry Fisher. In his earlier days, his Uncle Alexander implored him to take up books.

> The only thing that I see rather against you is your education, nothing else, therefore I pray you and beseech you, that whenever you have a moment, to take up a book and read, quietly and slowly, looking well at every word, how they are spelled.[101]

Land Tenure and Agricultural Activity

Land tenure and agricultural activity also reflected the unique ways of the St. Boniface merchant farmer group and the hunters elsewhere along the Assiniboine and Red Rivers. A great many of the Métis, especially the hunting group, did not bother with H.B.C. leases and saw no reason to, since they had little interest in agriculture. They were effectively squatters. Henry Youle Hind commented on this, writing that the "majority of the settlers were half-breed squatters, who maintained that the land was theirs by natural law, and that there was no need to bother about the Company's title."[102]

W.L. Morton offers one of the best descriptions of Métis land use:

> The Métis built their cabins in the wooded fringe of the river front for the sake of shelter and fuel. From the river itself they drew water and fish. On the silted river banks and dry plains

> and in openings in the woods, they sowed their patches of potatoes and barley. On the plain behind the women and old men cut the rank prairie hay. But what they chiefly valued in this river-front sight was the access it gave at once to the waterways before and the open plains behind. Like their Indian ancestors what they desired was an extensive and seasonal use of the land, a use not confined to agriculture, and with it the right to move freely where they would. The river-front settlements of the Métis, then, much like those of the Scots and the half-breeds, were an organic part of a complex way of life which varied with the seasons and rested at once at the agriculture of the river side and the use of the plains for haying, grazing and hunting.[103]

Morton's description can be appropriately applied to the hunting class of the Métis (and half-breeds). As a group they were much less taken with the drudgery of agriculture than with the excitement of the hunt. There was, however, a significant minority of Canadiens and Métis who were rather large-scale farmers and who did hold as many rights in their land as they could obtain from the Company. Many of those who "owned" their land were from the more prominent families, and the rather large acreages "purchased" indicate that they viewed their property as something other than a place to erect a shack (see "Appendix C"). Both Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière and Jean Louis Riel possessed land on these terms.

At the White Horse Plains, the situation was somewhat different. Payment for land was unknown, even among such prominent people as the Brélands and the Delormes. It was not until 1861 that the Company attempted to collect the 7s. 6d. per acre for land on which the family houses were situated.[104] Throughout Red River, natives of Rupert's Land had smaller farms than did the Quebecers and Scots, generally about half the size, indicating the relatively greater emphasis they placed on the hunt. Predictably, the Scots (including Orkneymen) had the largest farms, significantly larger that the Quebec-born residents of the Catholic Settlements.

In the English Settlement, there was a consistent increase in per capita cultivation throughout the period, save a small decrease among the Scots between 1847 and 1849. In the Catholic settlements, no such pattern emerges (see "Appendix D").

In 1843, there were only a dozen St. Boniface residents having farms of 20 or more acres, including Maxime Dauphiné André Beauchemin,[105] J-B. Perault, Louis Berrard, Charles Larance, J-B. Lepine, André Carrière, Martin Lavallee, Michel Clyne, Pierre Parenteau, Antoine Dunord, and Narcisse Marion.

By 1849, there were several new faces among the top landowners. In that year the twelve with the largest land-holdings included Marion, J-B. Lagimodière, Dauphiné, Baptiste Larocque, Joseph Savoyard, Emanuel Champaign, Perrault, Larance, Lavallee, Louis Laferte, Francois Marion, and Baptiste Boyer. All of these have to be considered major agriculturalists, including Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière (Lajeumonière), Julie Riel's father.

The use of implements, such as the plough, which was rather an expensive acquisition, is also a good indication of the relative emphasis placed on farming by the various groups.

Table 2
Average Number of Ploughs, owned by Heads of Households, in St. Boniface, Grantown, and the English Settlement.

	1832	1838	1843	1847	1849
St. Boniface:					
Canadian born Métis (usually the merchant farmer group)	.33	.62	.66	.72	.65
Rupert's Land born Métis (usually the hunters)	.16	.31	.39	.35	.43

	1832	1838	1843	1847	1849
Grantown:					
Canadian born Métis (usually the merchant farmer group)	-	.57	.47	.35	.46
Rupert's Land born Métis (usually the hunters)	-	.23	.19	.16	.17
English Settlement:					
Scottish born (usually European)	.66	.74	.83	1.11	1.0
Rupert's Land born (usually English half-breed)	.29	.56	.53	.51	.49

(Source: P.A.M. Red River Census)

Once again, the Scottish settlers emerge as the most serious farmers, and by 1849 there was one plough per farmer in that group. Among St. Boniface Métis born in Canada there were only 84 ploughs for 129 householders in 1849. The hunting Métis of Grantown were less likely to own a plough, there being in that year only twelve in a group of twenty-six. In fact, assuming the census is accurate, a Grantown Métis was less likely to be breaking the soil in 1849 than he was in 1838. Using the first and last census date for each group, it was only among Grantowners that the popularity of the plough declined.

Ownership of livestock, with the consequent year-round care that was needed, is another good indication of the relative emphasis placed on agriculture as opposed to hunting or trading. Natives of Rupert's Land (for the most part hunting Métis) as a group were far less likely to keep animals than were Europeans or Canadiens, (for the most part the merchant group) reflecting once again their lack of interest in agriculture and reliance on the hunt. (See "Appendix E").

The most noticeable innovation during the period was

the introduction of sheep into the area prior to 1838. This animal quickly became popular, especially among the Scots/Orkneymen and the Canadian-born Catholics in St. Boniface. By 1849, however, the numbers kept had declined among all groups.

Among St. Boniface residents born in Canada, cattle possession remained fairly constant throughout the period, although the average farmer kept only approximately half as many as a Scotsman across the river. Pigs were consistently popular though there was a fairly dramatic decline between 1847 and 1849. Sheep production crested in 1843, and by 1849 the numbers had declined by nearly 50%.

Among Rupert's Land natives at St. Boniface, the number of cows was less subject to fluctuation. The average number of pigs by contrast jumped dramatically between 1843 and 1847, though this appears to be because there were a considerable number of residents away from the settlement at the taking of the census of 1847. The same thing did not happen with regard to cattle, as a cow or two would be retained when travelling. Sheep never became popular among this group, as they were not hardy animals and had to be kept in larger numbers than cows in order to be worthwhile.

At Grantown, the average family head kept a cow or two through the period, with the Canadiens more likely to keep a couple of animals rather than one. Among natives of Rupert's Land, there was at no time more than one pig and one sheep on the average per family. As was the case with St. Boniface, an average member of this group kept fewer animals than did the Canadiens, and Grantowners of both groups kept fewer animals than their counterparts at the Forks.

In the English Settlement, Rupert's Land natives kept far fewer animals than did the Scots or Orkneymen, though considerably more than their counterparts in the two Catholic Settlements. The Scots/Orkneymen, among all groups, were

by far the largest stock raisers through the period, reflecting their sedentary lifestyle and greater skill in animal husbandry.

This brief overview of Métis society indicates that there were two major subgroups. Those residents born in Canada, and whose children were Métis, as well as those who identified with the upper class (including Jean-Louis Riel), were more likely to have been involved in the trade, in agriculture, and in small businesses. They tended to concentrate in St. Boniface, although there were some influential Métis living at Grantown. Many could read and write and encouraged their children to attend school. They were more likely to have a vested interest in their farms, rather than be simple squatters. Many were prominent in the church, and avoided the irreligious revelry that so irritated the clergy.

What has been described as the hunting class of the Métis, had considerably different attitudes. Members of this group were most often squatters who lived in simple shacks when not on the hunt, and had little interest in agriculture. Although members of the church, many were married outside of it. Most were illiterate, and saw little reason to put their children in school. Few held any public posts, having to give way to the more accepted members of the much smaller Canadien group. They were content to subsist from the hunt and small-scale trading, raising their families and demonstrating little concern for accruing material wealth.

II. Selected Aspects of Métis Material Culture

Any discussion of Métis "material culture" is restricted by the availability of documentation on this area. Hudson's Bay Company account books are valuable to some extent, although they do not give itemized individual accounts for St. Boniface and the English Settlement. It must be assumed that the Company sold goods at the Forks in an "over-the-counter" fashion, owing to the large-scale trade in the area. John McLean described this retail trade:

> The Company have here (in the 1840s) two shops (or stores) well supplied with every description of goods the inhabitants require,

and also commented on the several private merchants who were scattered through the settlement.[1] In 1857, Henry Youle Hind noted that:

> almost any article of common necessity or ornament can be purchased at the stores.[2]

In 1861, Norman Kittson owned a general goods store in St. Boniface, very near the Cathedral. There were several other dry goods, grocery, and hardware merchants at the settlement, including W.J. Fonseca, Alexander Logan, E.L. Barber, Alexander Ross, Andrew McDermot, and William Coldwell.[3] Among the Métis, Narcisse Marion had a "shop of merchandise" by 1849.[4]

The existence of this private merchant trade, from which no business records are known to have been retained, plus the fact that the Hudson's Bay Company did not itemize accounts at the Forks, makes it virtually impossible to know exactly the types of consumer goods that various individuals of the day purchased. This has necessitated a reliance upon

account books for areas away from the Forks, including the Pembina, "Upper Red River," and Lower Fort Garry Accounts of the Hudson's Bay Company, and the Pembina and Red River accounts of Norman W. Kittson. As much as possible, only those statements which were of individuals having some connection with St. Boniface have been used. A further problem is trying to discern from the order lists of individuals, just which articles were for personal use and which were for trade.

The following analysis is based upon the purchases of sixteen individuals, eleven of whom were born in Rupert's Land. These should be a fair cross-section of St. Boniface society, though not all were residents of the Forks. Little in fact is known about some of the individuals, yet they are included because their purchases are particularly illustrative of the types of goods that could be obtained. There is no way of knowing whether the purchases made by these individuals were the only ones made during the particular time period.

1. Baptiste Larocque was born in Rupert's Land in 1801, and was one of those, along with Jean-Louis Riel, Pascal Bréland, Louis Battosh, Salomon Hamelin, and Urbain Delorme, among others, who in June of 1849 demanded of Simpson that Recorder Thom be removed from all public offices. In the census of that year he was listed as owning one of the largest farms — 45 acres — and also owning five carts, which suggests that he was one of the more affluent Métis.[5] He is recorded as having made these purchases from the Hudson's Bay Company:

1 horse	£ 5.0.0
1 lar. Red Deer Skin	4.6
1 lar Red Deer Skin	4.6
1 Buff Deer Skin	5.0
3 Red Deer Skins	13.6
3 Buff Deer Skins	10.0
1 Moose	6.0
38 lbs. Grease	14.3
	£7.17.9 fol. 8 (1849

(Source: Hudson's Bay Company (hereafter cited as HBCA) B 160/d/4 1848-49. "Pembina District Servants Accounts, 1848")

Larocque also secured the following articles from Norman W. Kittson at Pembina:

1 Halter	$ 1.50	
1 Cotton Handkerchief	.50	fol. 15 (1851)
1 Halter	1.50	
2 Bells	2.50	
1 Handkerchief	.38	fol. 20 (1852)
2 lbs. Tea	1.50	
1 ft. Grey List	2.30	
2 pieces Calico	1.50	
4 lbs. Tea	1.00	
2 lbs. Tobacco	14.80	
1 pr. Stirrup, 1 Strap	2.00	
2 c.s. knives	2.00	
1 pc. Calico	5.60	
6 doz. Flasks	.75	
½ doz. files	1.12	
10 lbs. Tobacco	5.00	
1 ft. Grey List	1.00	
4 lbs. Sugar	1.00	
3 lbs. Tea	2.25	
5 lbs. Tobacco	2.50	
1 Blanket 2½ pt.	3.25	
1 pc. Calico 28 yds.	2.00	
4 yds. Calico	1.00	
2 lbs. Tobacco	1.00	
6 yds. Fastien	3.00	
4 lbs. Tea	3.00	
4 lbs. Tobacco	2.00	fol. 30 (1853)

(Source: Minnesota Historical Society (hereafter cited M.H.S.) Norman W. Kittson Papers, "Pembina, 1851").

2. Baptiste Richotte was employed as a tripman by the Hudson's Bay Company. He purchased these items from Kittson:

½ lb. Tea	£ 0.2.0	
½ lb. Tobacco	0.0.9	
Cash for gun	1.8.0	
1 Tin Kettle	0.5.6	fol. 25

3. Baptiste Parisien was probably descended from Jean-

Baptiste Parisien, Métis, a hunter. His purchases at the Lower Fort Garry store were as follows:[6]

Tea	£0.3.0
1 Bunch Beads	0.1.0
4 yds. (?)	0.2.4
1 lb. sugar	0.1.2
2½ yds. (?)	0.1.11
1 Clay Pipe	0.0.1½
2 yds. Red Ribbon	2.2
Offal of an Animal	0.7.0
2 cups (?)	0.1.8
1 oz. parchment	?

Paid for with 3 loads of hay and cash. fo.137.

4. Joseph Parenteau was born in Canada in 1773. In 1849, he had fifteen acres under cultivation, owned four head of livestock, and had three carts. He was probably the father of Pierre Parenteau, who once owned part of the land upon which the Riel family finally settled. From "Kittson, Pembina, in 1851-53," he purchased the following:

Tar Blankets 3 pt.	$ 3.75	
1 Blanket 2½ pt.	3.25	
4 lbs. Powder	2.00	
3 lbs. Tea	2.25	
5 lbs. sugar	1.25	
12 Flints	.12	
1 pr. Needles	.13	fol. 5 (1851)
1 lb. tea	.75	
1 lb. sugar	.25	
1 Shawl	1.50	fol. 22 (1851)
2 lbs. tea	1.50	
½ lb. Tobacco	.25	fol. 27 (1852)
Gun	10.00	
3 lbs. Powder	1.00	
3 lbs. Balls	.50	
2 lbs. Tobacco	1.00	
2 doz. flints	.25	
2 silk Hkf.	2.00	
4 yds. Flannel	2.00	
1 Cotton Handkerchief	.20	
2 lbs. tea	1.25	
15 lbs. sugar	3.75	
2 pr. pants	6.00	
1 comb	.25	

3 yds. cotton	.60	fol. 48 (1852)

5. Joseph Delorme was probably the son of another Joseph, and was in all likelihood born in 1823. He was related to Urbain Delorme.[7] From "Kittson, Pembina, 1851-1854," he purchased the following:

Sundries	$ 4.50	
Sundries	19.30	
1 pr. Pants	3.50	
1 Flannel Shirt	1.50	
1 Belt	1.50	
2 lbs. powder	1.00	
4 lbs. shot	1.00	
2 lbs. tea	1.50	
8 lbs. sugar	2.00	
3 lbs. Tobacco	1.50	
1 pr. pants	3.50	fol. 9 (1851)
3 lbs. tobacco	1.50	fol. 45 (1852)

6. Narcisse Marion (see above, Chapter I, footnote 16), purchased these goods from Kittson during the same period:

10 lbs. sugar	$ 2.50	
4 lbs. tea	3.00	fol. 10 (1851)
1 keg Tobacco	28.00	
Sundries for "Maxim"	7.50	
1 keg Tobacco	28.00	fol. 47 (1852)

7. Emanuel Champaign was born in Quebec in 1803, and by 1849 had one of the largest farms in St. Boniface, with 30 acres under cultivation, and had 25 head of livestock. In 1853, he was one of those known to the H.B.C. to be actively engaged in illicit fur trading.[8] From Kittson, in the 1851-54 period, he purchased these goods:

1½ yds. Satinet	1.50	
6 Flints	.06	
1 doz. Needles	.12	
1 Knife	1.12	fol. 14 (1851)

8. Francois Boucheir was born in Rupert's Land in 1818. By 1849 he had an averaged-sized farm for a Catholic native of the North-West — 5 acres — though he had no livestock and only two carts, suggesting he was an indifferent farmer, and was probably not involved in the trade. Thereafter, he became a hunter. From "Kittson, Pembina, 1851," he purchased the following:

1 lb. powder	$ .50	
Soap	.12	fol. 19 (1851)
1 Capot (4 ells)	1.00	
2 yds. Cloth	5.00	
7 lbs. tea	5.25	
12 lbs. sugar	3.00	
Thread	.25	
3 Cotton Handkerchiefs	.75	fol. 20 (1851)
1 lb. tea	.75	
1 lb. Tobacco	.50	
2½ yds. (?)	.94	
2 lbs. Tea	3.00	
1 lb. tea	.75	
1 lb. Arsenic	2.50	
2½ lbs. Tobacco	1.25	fol. 33 (1852)
2½ yds. Cotton	.30	
½ lb. tea	.31	
324 lbs. Pemmican	20.25	
43 lbs. Tallow	2.69	fol. 49 (1852)

9. Michel Clyne was born in Holland in 1781, though after long years in St. Boniface he had adopted a French pronunciation of his given name. He was one of several who had been assimilated into the French/Métis population. In 1849, he had a fifteen acre farm with a few head of livestock and in addition had a windmill on his land (Red River Census, 1849).

"Kittson, Pembina, 1851-1854."

3 yds. Flannel	$ 1.50	
1 lb. tea	.75	fol. 23 (1851)

10. Isador Dumont was born in 1810, the son of Jean-Baptiste Dumont and an Indian woman. He was a buffalo hunter and the

father of the legendary Gabriel. From "Kittson, Pembina, 1851-1854," he obtained these articles:

Balance due on Fireaway Steed	$ 50.00	fol. 35 (1853)
2 bars Soap	1.00	
12 Flints	.12	fol. 39 (1852)
1 piece Blue Drill	9.69	
6 yds. fine Cloth	21.00	
2 Blankets	7.50	
3 pairs Satin Pants	18.00	
1 Worsted Braid	1.50	
6 pieces Ribbon	5.00	
6 Scalpers	2.25	
Silk	.38	
1 piece Calico	7.25	
1 Auger	.50	
8 lbs. powder	4.00	
6 Pipes	.25	
1 small Axe	2.00	
1 lb. tea	.87	
2 lbs. sugar	.75	
1 pair stirrups	1.00	
1 Pipe	.03	
1 Gun	10.00	fol. 72 (1853)

11. Charles Grant was the son of Cuthbert Grant and Marie McGillis. He himself married a daughter of Charles Gladu. Grant was a very close confidant of Father Belcourt and because of this was very unpopular with the church hierarchy. It was to his home at Pembina that Louis Riel went in September of 1870 while a fugtive.[9] All of this suggests that Grant was a member of the upper class. His purchases from Kittson, 1851-1854, were:

Tea	$ .38	
Sundries	3.00	
1 doz. knives	3.75	
8 yds. Calico	1.66	
3 lbs. Powder	1.50	
1½ lbs. Tea	.93	
1 lb. Tea	.63	fol. 48 (1852)

12. Louis Batosh (dit Letendre) was born in Rupert's Land in 1791, and by 1849 had a fifteen acre farm under cultiva-

tion with a few head of livestock. He was a well-known hunter.[10] "Kittson, Pembina, 1851-1854," sold him these items:

1 lb. tea	$ .63	
5 yds. cotton	1.25	
1½ lbs. tea	.94	
½ lb. tobacco	.25	
thread	.25	fol66 (1852)

13. Baptiste Batosh was a free-trader at Pembina.

"Kittson, Pembina, 1851-1854"

5 yds. cotton	$ 1.00	
6 in. cloth	.38	
1½ lbs. tea	.94	
1 pint salt	.26	fol.65 (1852)

14. Salomon Hamelin (see Part I, footnote 39)

Amount brought forward	189.19.3	
1 Hand saw	10.0	
1 Angle saw	10.0	
2 Barrels	1.12.0	
1 Barrel	8.0	
100 lbs. sugar	5.0.0	
5 lbs. linen thread	1.50	
1 tea pot	0.5.0	
4 yds. white stroud cloth	1.18.0	
2 boys caps	0.10.0	
1 pr. black pants	0.16.0	
1 spade	6.0	
1 fancy bridle	1.2.0	fol.2 (1865)

(Source: Kittson Papers, "Alexander Paul, Red River Settlement," B.N.A. August 1, 1865.[11])

15. Joseph Hamelin was the son of Salomon. His account indicates a deep involvement in the private fur trade, as there are many sales of skins and bulk purchases of trade goods. As there is a general dearth of material on individual purchases, and as the Riels were of about the same social if not economic standing as the Hamelins, an attempt

has been made to use this list by extrapolating from it what appear to be purchases for this individual's personal use.

"Alexander Paul"

1 pair women's shoes	£0.6.0
1 pair black cord pants	16.0
1 bottle vermifuge	1.6
2 pieces colored print 56 yds.	3.5.4
1 small carpet bag	10.0
1 fancy gausey shirt	10.0
20 yds. black merino	2.10.0
1 - 6 in. belt	6.0
1 box matches	8.0
1 lb. raisins	2.0
1 barrel flour	3.0.0
3 yds. carubric	2.3
4 silk handkerchiefs	1.0.0
1 - 3½ ell fine capot	2.0.0
4 lbs. linen thread	1.0.0
1 - 4 ell fine capot	2.4.0
1 ball twine	2.0
1 black wool hat	8.0
2 pr. drab colored pants	1.14.0
1 spade	0.6.0
1 shovel	0.6.0
6 pr. woolen socks	0.15.0
6 grey flannel shirts	3.0
7 fiddle strings	5.3
6 tin plates	6.0
4 pieces ribbon	16.0
3 bottles ointment	6.0
1 lb. vermillion	10.0
nails	1.0
1 pr. pants	16.0
2 yds. plaid	10.5.0
1 pr. strap hinges	4.0
screws	0.8
1 padlock	2.6
2/3 yds. cloth	0.8.0
½ lb. nails	.4½
6 pieces glass	3.6
1 table cloth	5.0
1 flannel shirt	10.0

fol. 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 77, 78. (1865)

16. Maxime Dauphinais [12]

138 lbs. tea	£17.5.0

12 Blue Edge plates	0.12.0
52 pr. fancy cups & saucers	2.12.0
2 bags Shot	2.10.0
6 bottles Castor Oil	0.9.0
	2.0.0
27 pr. 1 pt. white blankets	17.11.0
6 pr. 2 pt. white blankets	5.8.0
20 pr. 3 pt. white blankets	30.0.0
4 rolls No. 4 col. ribbon	0.16.0
1 roll gartering	0.4.0
2 packages best needles	0.1.0
12 pr. knives and forks	0.10.0
3 lbs. Linen thread	0.13.0
1 doz. black spools thread	0.4.0
4 fancy silk handkerchiefs	0.18.0
12 black silk handkerchiefs	3.0.0
5 black silk scarfs	0.17.6
15 lbs. vermillion	9.0.0
3 doz. 8 in. butcher knives	4.10.0
62 yds. blue stone	31.0.0
31½ yds. scarlet cloth	17.6.6
280 yds. printy cloth	14.0.0
1 doz. 6 in. Red Belts	3.6.0
6 Grey Flannel shirts	3.0.0
3 - 4 Ell Dark Blue Capots	3.18.0
3 - 3½ Ell Dark Blue Capots	3.12.0
1-4 Ell fine cloth capots	2.0.0
1 - 3½ Ell fine cloth capots	2.0.0
2 pr. white drab cuffed Pants	1.12.0
4 pr. mole skin	3.0.0
10 black cloth caps	3.10.0
2 Gun nipples	0.2.0
100 bottles Strychnine	30.0.0
1 pr. scissors	0.2.0
1 Chest lock	1.0.0
1 pr. trunk handles	0.1.2
20 lbs. rice	1.0.0
1 bag "	0.3.0
1 - 1 in. Auger	0.3.0
10 yds. Fig'd Sattinet	1.15.0
11¾ Kegs Beans	1.15.3
2 red flannel shirts	1.0.0
12 doz. agate buttons	0.3.0
2 gimblets	0.1.0
10 buckles	0.2.6
2 doz. fancy soaps	0.8.0
1 doz. Horn nails	0.1.0

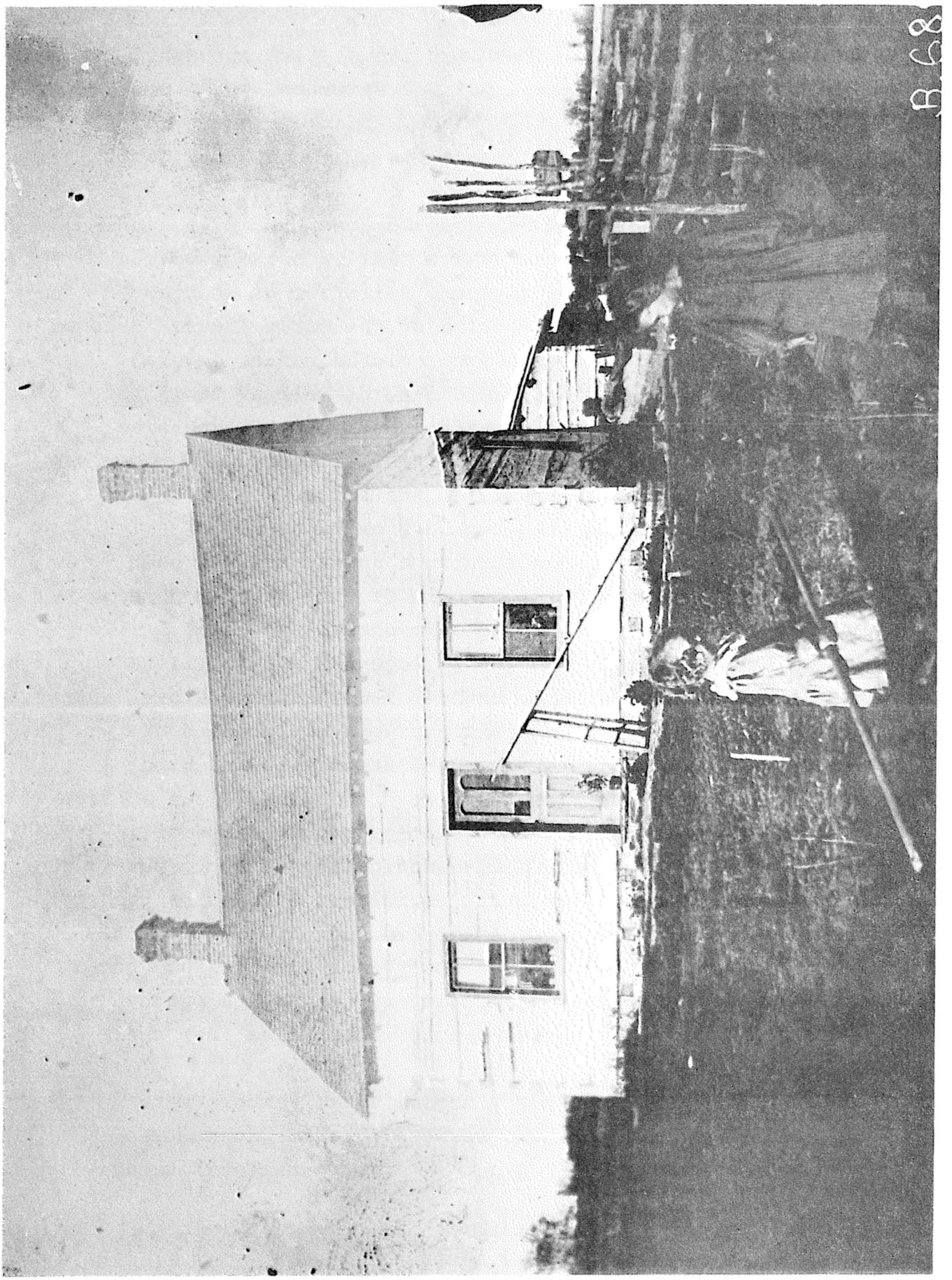
(Source: Kittson Papers)

In order to differentiate these individuals by social and economic class, two, somewhat arbitrary, categories have been created. In the hunting class were six individuals: Baptiste Richotte, Baptiste Parisien, Francois Boucheir, Isador Dumont, Louis Batosh, and Baptiste Batosh. All of them were Métis and born in Rupert's Land. The remaining ten were of the middle class: Baptiste Larocque, Joseph Parenteau, Joseph Delorme, Narcisse Marion, Emanuel Champaign, Michel Clyne, Charles Grant, Salomon and Joseph Hamelin, and Maxime Dauphinais. Of this group, five were Métis, born in the North West, four were Canadiens, and one was a native of Holland.

The purchases of those placed in the hunting class tend to be smaller and to involve basic necessities, which they could not provide for themselves, such as tea, sugar, tobacco (apparently a necessity), salt and in certain instances, basic broadcloth, usually cotton. Guns, powder, tin kettles, and knives were also common purchases. Parisien purchased red ribbons and beads, which were very commonly used for clothing decoration by the hunters. Boucheir's purchases of soap and cotton handkerchiefs indicate an aspect of sophistication that might be atypical. More surprising in this regard are some of the purchases of Isador Dumont, especially the fancy cloth braid, and stirrups, indicating tastes far beyond what could be hand-manufactured. The purchases of these individuals indicate that it was uncommon for them to obtain manufactured furniture of any type, building material beyond basic tools, or consumer goods beyond a few basic and easily transportable necessities.

It would appear that members of the second group were more likely to buy fancy and more sophisticated products. Joseph Delorme, for example, purchased two pairs of expensive pants, a shirt, and a belt — all articles which the hunter class would more commonly produce themselves. Baptiste

5 French-style home near St. Albert, Alberta, n.d. Very similar to Riel House (Ernest E. Brown Collection, Provincial Archives of Alberta, B.68).



Larocque, in addition to many basic items, also purchased two belts, two halters, and a pair of stirrups, which could have been produced from buffalo hide. Blankets and other fabrics, such as calico, were more likely to be acquired by this group.

The 1865 purchases of Salomon and Joseph Hamelin, individuals of approximately the same social if not economic status of Jean-Louis Riel, give an indication of what he might have purchased in the period of the early 1860s. Salomon Hamelin, as indicated, bought manufactured pants, several yards of expensive white stroud cloth, as well as tools for building purposes. Joseph Hamelin acquired many expensive articles of clothing, including shirts, trousers, and women's shoes. Of particular interest are the scissors, the chest lock, trunk handles, and the two bars of fancy soap.

Building materials and furniture appear to have been more frequently purchased by members of this group. Joseph Hamelin purchased hinges, a padlock, screws and nails. Dauphiné bought nails. Though his accounts are not listed, Louis Lavallée had, in 1851, ordered a $26 cooking stove, suggesting that such major acquisitions were not unheard of.

These account ledgers seem consistent with the hypothesis that in St. Boniface there were two groups, one a large hunter class whose members were unable, both because of income limitations and their semi-nomadic lifestyle, to purchase much more than a few basic articles. Such other goods as they required could be produced from the hide of the buffalo and with their own hands. Outside of spices, food purchases were very uncommon; their dietary needs were met by buffalo and small-game meat and a few vegetables from their small gardens.

Among the more stationary group, whose members were presumably prominent in local society, greater quantities of consumer goods were purchased — often ornamental rather

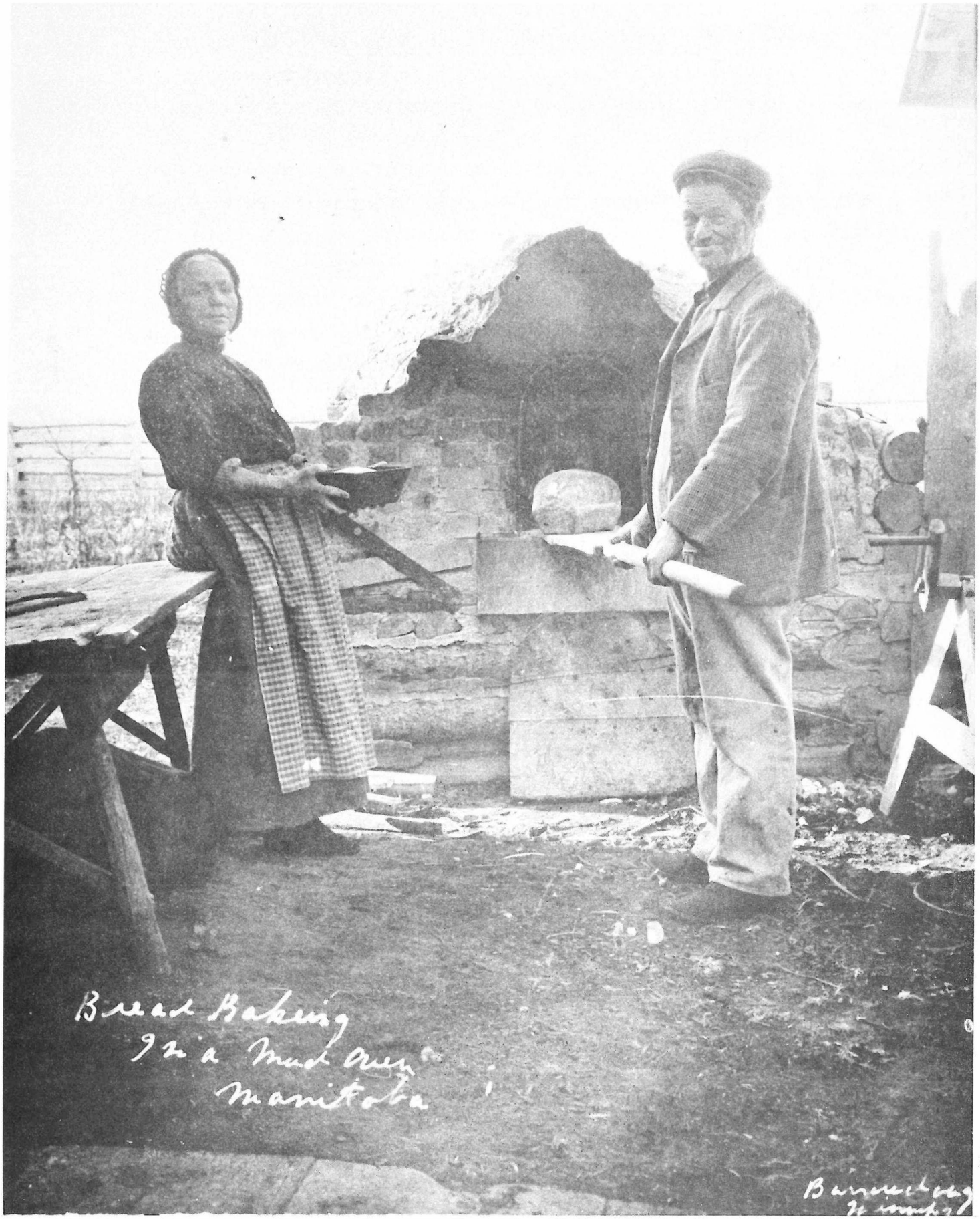
than functional. It would seem that these articles were an indication of refinement and social standing. It was not only those individuals born in Quebec who exhibited this, but Métis natives of Rupert's Land as well, indicating a group consciousness based on outlook rather than birthplace. An Hamelin, a Riel, both Métis natives of the North West, still had a rather Canadien posture.

Housing and Building Materials

Most homes in St. Boniface were built in the same general style and with the same building materials. The most common method was known as poteaux sur sole (posts in the sill). "It consisted of horizontal logs, usually squared, slid in grooves into position between squared uprights, which were planted by means of mortices into heavy squared logs forming a frame or a sill for a foundation."[13] The spaces between the logs were filled with stone, clay or straw.

Finished lumber could not be produced locally until the first sawmills were established in 1870,[14] though it was not unknown for boards and timber to be floated in via the Red River from the United States. This could be done fairly inexpensively.[15] The Red and Assiniboine Rivers Valleys were not heavily wooded — a source of problems for the settlements. Hargrave suggests that as a result, wood for fuel and building purposes tended to be quite costly. The river banks contained narrow strips of elm, oak, maple, and poplar, and as the available timber was used up it became necessary to float logs down to the Forks on rafts.[16] The situation had become so critical by the late 1850s that the council was required to pass a law prohibiting the cutting of timber from unoccupied land on the bank of the Assiniboine. Available supplies were to be used only for general building and firewood use.[17]

6 Outdoor oven belonging to M. Elie Dupuis, ca. 1915 (Provincial Archives of Manitoba).


Bread Baking
92 a Mud Oven
Manitoba

Homes in St. Boniface would generally be built by the owner, although in 1849 there were four carpentry shops, owned by Antoine Bruce, brothers Louis and Pierre Berard, and Narcisse Marion.[18] The accounts of the 16 individuals indicate that purchase of building materials was very rare, although at least Marion must have been involved in construction work as well as the sale of building supplies. In 1849, he purchased 5000 oak shingles from the Company,[19] indicating that thatched roofs were used by only a portion of the population. Homes would usually be built in the summer, as the plaster made of mud, clay, and prairie hay had to be dry before freeze-up.[20]

A wide variety of tools and material was available from the Company, though only the wealthier St. Boniface residents would have been in a position to acquire them. Some of the items included in the 1849 inventory were:

1 dozen whitewash brushes
3 doz. best mortice iron chisels
2 doz. best wood rasp files
10 doz. best pit saws
10 doz. best cross-cut saws
10 doz. best hand saws
4 boxes each 260 squares Window Glass
2 doz. dovetail cassette hinges
91 - 10 fine drawn Ross nails
40 - 14 fine drawn Ross nails
2 pairs 1 in. grooving planes[21]

It is interesting to note that window glass, in rather large quantities, was available even by this time.

Furniture, especially among the hunter class, was sparse and hand-made. The interior of one home was described as follows:

> Of furniture in this house, there is none worth mentioning, furniture in this latitude being

> represented by a few stools, deal tables, and wooden trunks.[22]

Hind rather unkindly commented that the house of the hunters:

> generally show no sign of recent improvement, show no signs of care and attention devoted to gardens or the cultivation of fruit.

He was impressed, however, with the home and farm of Pierre Gladieux,[23] feeling that it exemplified "industry and economy."[24] The Nor'Wester also commented on the interior appearance of a typical hunter's home.

> They are all bare of furniture, and ornament never enters, except occasionally a small picture of the Virgin Mary, or a favorite apostle, hung to the wall in a little round frame. Variety or taste is, of course, out of the question and a multiplied sameness characterizes everything about them. [25]

The homes usually had only one room, although occasionally there were two.[26]

H.M. Robinson gave the following, somewhat jaundiced description of the interior of a Métis hunter's home. It is reproduced, notwithstanding its crashing condescension, because it is the more elaborate account that has been discovered:

> The dwelling itself, except in the mid-winter months, presents an appearance of decay. The plaster placed in the interstices of the logs crumbles under the action of the elements... The thatch or clapboards of the roof are loosened in places...Internally, the house is one single apartment, occasionally in the better class, though rarely, two apartments. The floor is of plank sawed or hewed by hand... In one corner is the only bed, a narrow couch, painted, generally, an ultramarine blue, or a vivid sea-green. An open fire place occupies one end of the apartment, with the chimney within the walls. A table, one or two chairs, a few wooden trunks or boxes...and a dresser constitute the furniture. About the walls somewhere, more especially over the bed, hang colored prints of the Virgin, the sacred heart, etc.,...together with a rosary...It may be clean, but the chances are that it is not.

7 Grey Nuns and Métis Home - 1885 (Provincial Archives of Manitoba Stovel-Advocate Collection 282).



> That peculiar aroma...which pervades all inhabited chambers, here becomes often aggressive.[27]

Robinson also made reference to the more elaborate homes of the "better classes," as did Hind. The Nor'-Wester commented:

> The French Canadian of any standing is tidy in his dwelling; the floor is quite clean; the bed neatly made up, and generally set off with curtains and coverlet; the little cupboard, if there is nothing in it, is still orderly and clean, in short everything else just as it ought to be.[28]

This might well describe the interior of Riel house during the period.

Many of the wealthier residents of St. Boniface owned one or two pieces of furniture from Quebec, or perhaps the United States, although these would have been limited by the costly transportation charges. Chief Trader Henry Fisher, for example, ordered and received a rather large musical box from the United States.[29]

For the sake of comparison with the homes of some of the wealthier residents across the river, here is a description of the John Black home at Kildonan in 1854.[30]

> In coming in from the front door there is a passage, on the right is our dining room, on the left our parlour, a door from the passage in to the kitchen. From the parlour two doors and into the study. The other into the bedroom. Board partitions at present. Our house very well furnished. We have a nice carpet in the parlour, a round table, two other tables, a sofa, trim curtains, and a large stove in the partition between the parlour and study. We are very comfortable and we ought to be thankful.

Homes in St. Boniface, whether of the hunter or farmer-merchant class, were small and often housed very large families. Within a one or two room dwelling might reside ten to fifteen people. Parents slept in the single bed, if there was one, and the children in buffalo robes on the floor.

This living in close quarters contributed to the rapid spread of disease and the almost unbelievable toll that it took. In 1846 over three hundred people, fully one-sixteenth of the settlement, died from smallpox.[31] In 1865 there was a typhoid epidemic and many died, including Francois Bruneau, his wife, and ten members of his family.[32] Hargrave wrote:

> The densely crowded manner in which the poorer class in the colony live in their single chambered unventilated huts, doubtless assisted largely in the spreading of the contagion.[33]

Clothing

The clothing styles favoured by the Métis further demonstrated the division between the two major subgroups. The semi-nomadic hunter group favoured a decorative style that can be traced to a floral art tradition originated by the Métis in the 1800-1820 period. T.J. Brasser has written that this "reflected their emergence as a distinct ethnic group." After 1820 painting on skin rapidly disappeared, and the floral patterns were adopted to quill embroidery which in turn gave away to silk and beads in the 1850s.[34]

An observer of the time was struck by the decorative skill of the women, describing:

> The most beautiful garnished work of beads, porcupine quills, and silk, with which they adorn leather coats, mocassins, pouches, saddles, etc.[35]

The hunting class also used this type of decoration on their most prized possession — their buffalo runner.

> His housing and trapping are garnished with beads and porcupine quills, exhibiting all the skill which the hunter's wife or belle can exercise, while head and tail exhibit all the colours of the rainbow in the variety of the ribbons attached to them.[36]

The hunting class was very fond of bright coloration

in all their clothing. Bishop Grace of St. Paul, while on a trip through the Red River country, described being met at St. Joe's (Walhalla) by 200 red-sashed villagers in full hunting costume.[37] The purchases of the hunters itemized earlier indicate a penchant for beads and ribbons with which to decorate their attire. Lord Southesk, during his journey through Hudson's Bay Territory in 1859, gave the following description of James McKay, a mixed-blood guide:

> He was dressed in blue cloth capote (hooded frock-coat) with brass buttons, red and black flannel shirt, which served also for waistcoat, buff-leather mocassins on his feet, black belt around his waist, trousers of brown and white striped home-made woolen stuff.[38]

They were also given to wearing leggings:

> Of dark blue cloth, extending to the knee, tied at the top with a gaudy garter of worsted work, and having a broad stripe of heavy bead or silk-work running down to the outer seam.[39]

Those of the hunters who engaged in trading activities also took the opportunity to demonstrate their sartorial splendor, wearing:

> Brass-buttoned dark-blue capots, with moleskins, or corduroy trousers and calico shirts. Wide-awake hats, or cloth caps with peaks, are the favorite head covering. Gayly embroidered saddle-cloths and variegated sashes are preferred to those of less showy appearance; red, white, and blue beading on black ground is common.[40]

The farmer-merchant class at St. Boniface, as the purchase accounts indicate, were more likely to acquire manufactured clothing than were the hunters. The broadcloths with which they made some of their clothing were more expensive. These orders, as well as photographs which follow, indicate that they dressed more conservatively, and were not likely to adorn their clothing with beads and ribbons. Nearly all, regardless of status or occupation, seemed to favour wearing a long sash around the waist. The women of this upper class, as the photos indicate, tended to dress in staid,

colours, probably to distinguish themselves from the hunters' and voyageurs' wives, and to please the critical eye of the Catholic clergy.

This analysis of selected aspects of Métis material culture confirms the divergence between the two principal groups in the society. In all areas the farmer-merchant group exhibited a more sophisticated, or at least "European" posture than did the hunter group. This division in Métis society had significant implications for the future. Increasingly, the hunter-trapper group found itself politically isolated, and this factor contributed to the troubles of 1869-70.

8 Fred Taribault, voyageur, ca. 1851 by Frank B. Mayer (Minnesota Historical Society).



9 Wigwam, an Ojibway half-breed, Lake Superior, September/October, 1858 (Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Hime Collection, No. 30).



10 John McKay, Cree half-breed, 1858. (Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Hime Collection No. 27).



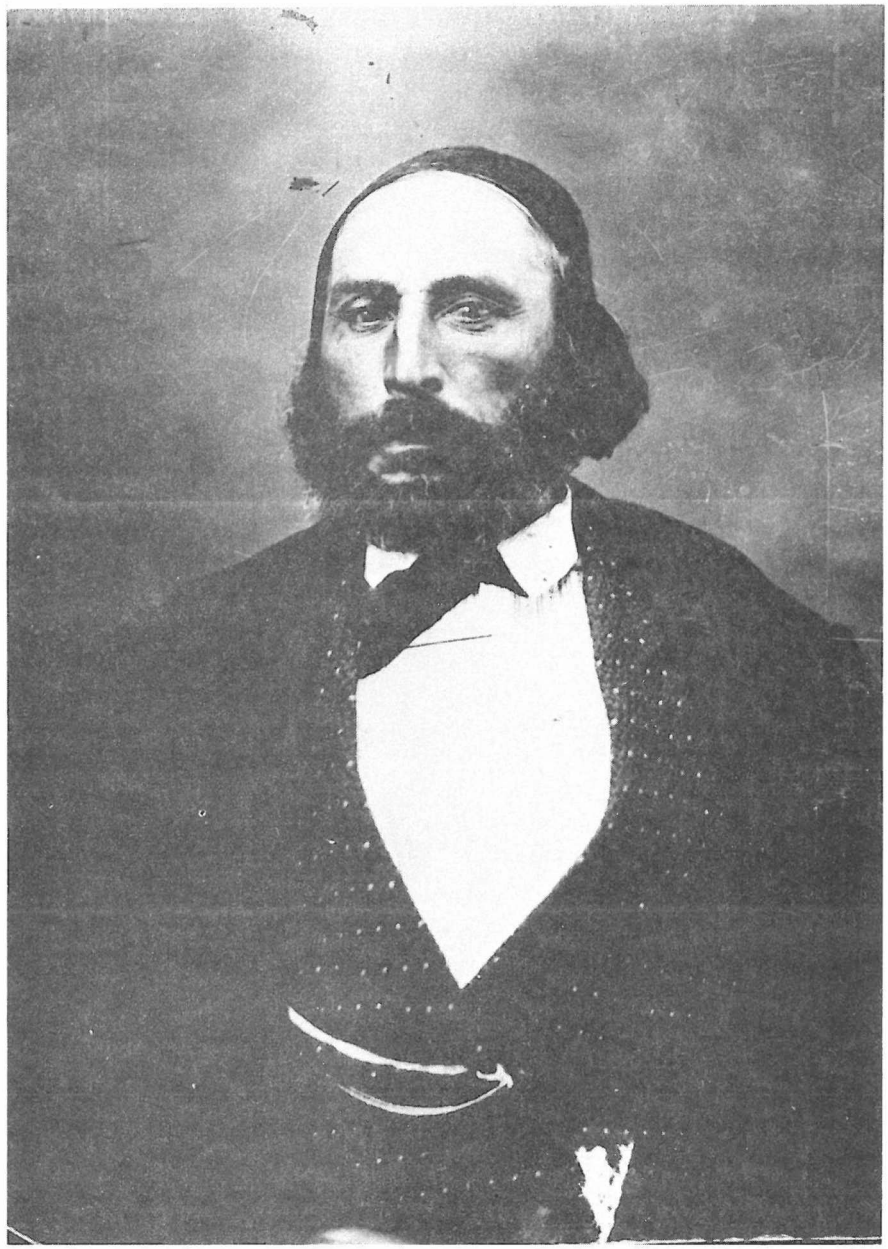
11 Ambroise Lépine, n.d. (Glenbow-Alberta Institute, NA-2631-6).



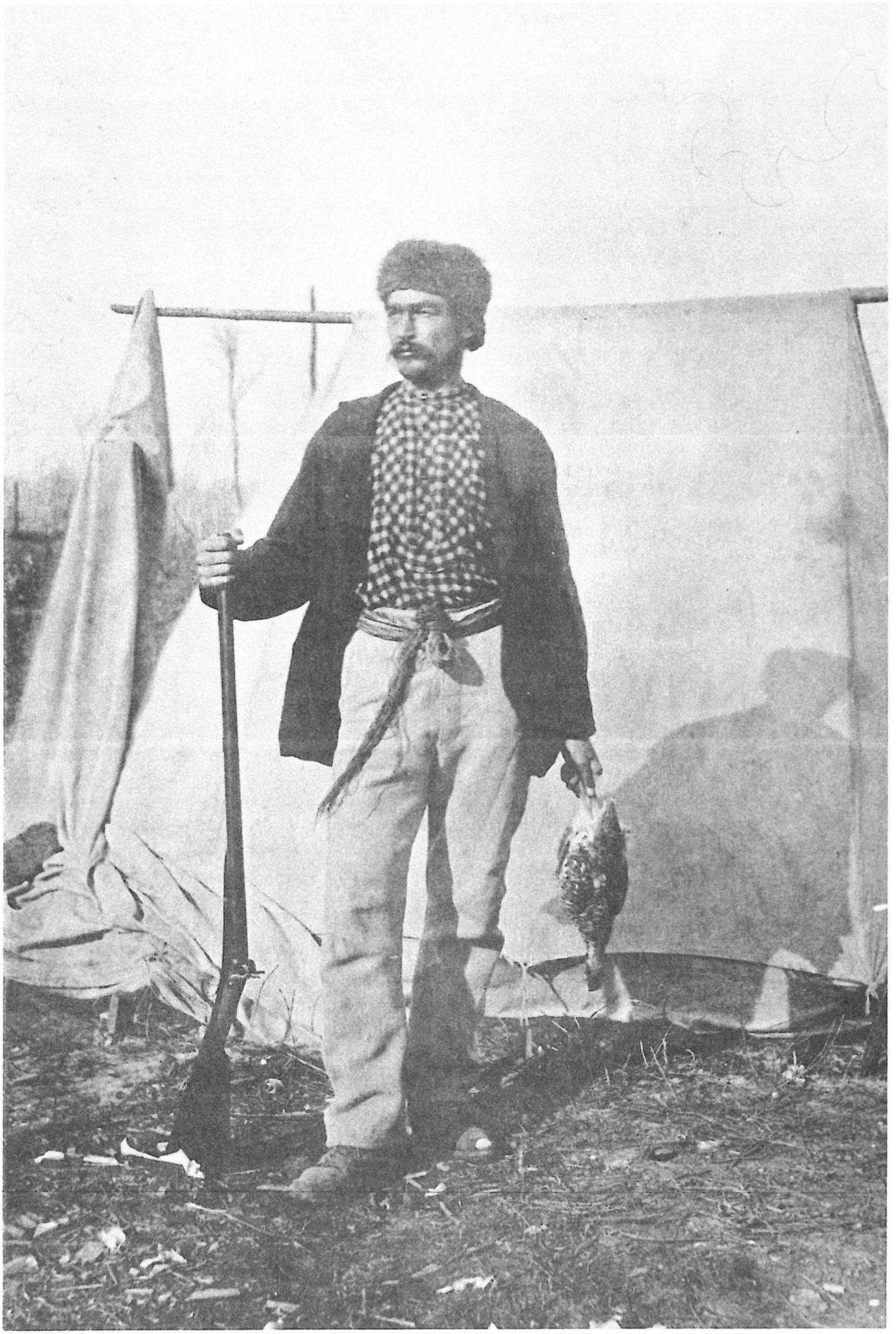
12 Ambroise Lépine, 1884. Married the daughter of Narcisse Marion, Adjutant-General in Riel's 1869-1870 government. (Glenbow-Alberta Institute, NA-2631-3).



13 François Dauphiné, who in 1870 became Vice-President of Riel's provisional government (Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Bréland Family Collection).



14 Maxim Marion, Métis guide, October 1872 (Public Archives Canada, C-79543).



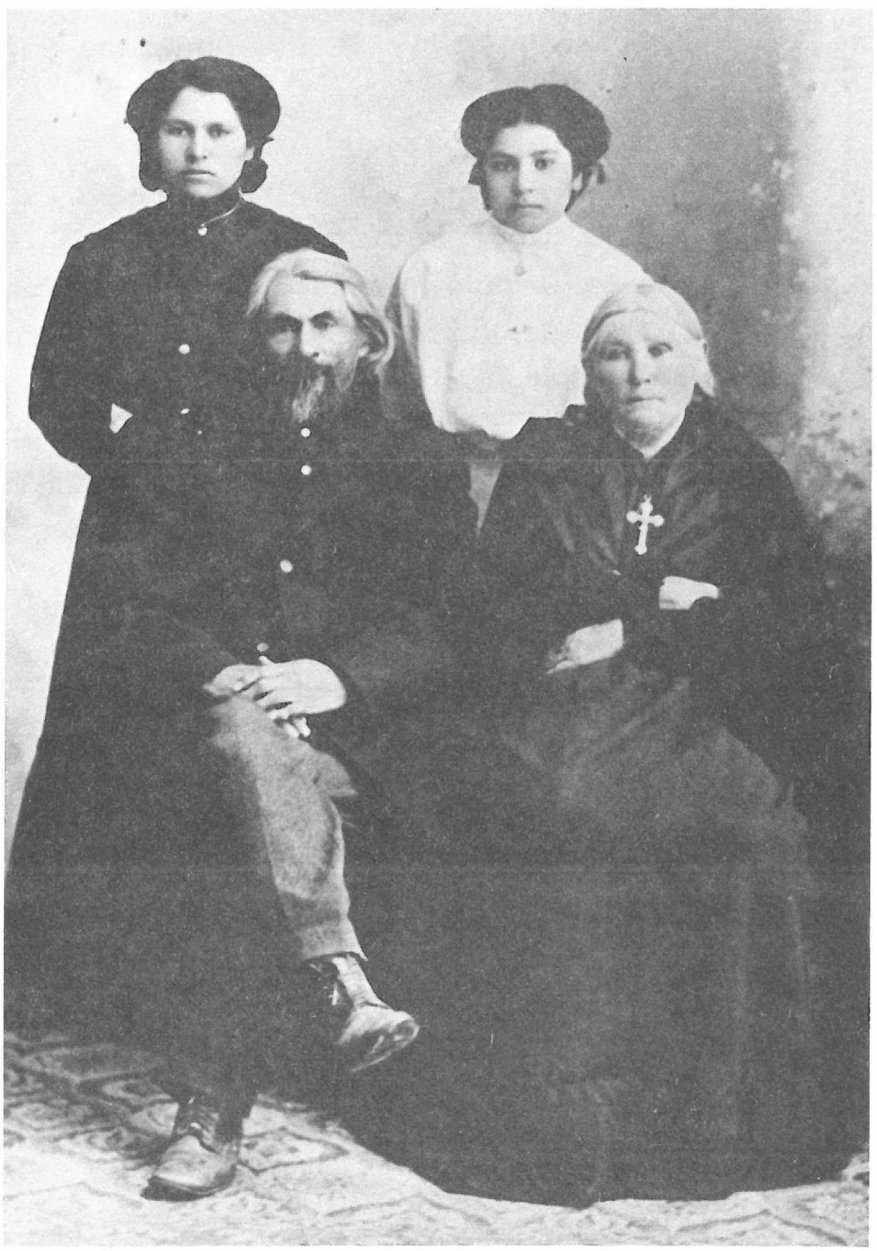
15 Marguerite Belhumeur, wife of Louis Riel, ca. 1885. (Public Archives Canada, C-15468).



16 Louis Riel Jr., ca. 1870, by C.A. Zimmerman, St. Paul (Provincial Archives of Manitoba).



17 Delorme Family, Turtle Mountain, with wife and daughters, ca. 1880 (Provincial Archives of Manitoba).



III. The Jean-Louis Riel Family in St. Boniface Society

Jean-Louis Riel, or as he is better known, Louis Riel père, was born at L'Ile-à-la-Crosse, Saskatchewan on 7 June 1817. He was the son of Jean-Baptiste Riel, a Canadien from Berthier, Quebec, and Marguerite Boucher, daughter of Louis Boucher, of Berthier, and an Indian woman. Jean-Baptiste's ancestors were as follows:

i. Jean-Baptiste Riel, married Louise Lafontaine, of Limerick, Ireland.[1]

ii. Jean-Baptiste Riel, married Louise Cottu, Saint Sulpice, Quebec, 24 April 1704.

iii. Jacques Riel, married Elizabeth De Game, Saint Sulpice, May 5, 1730.

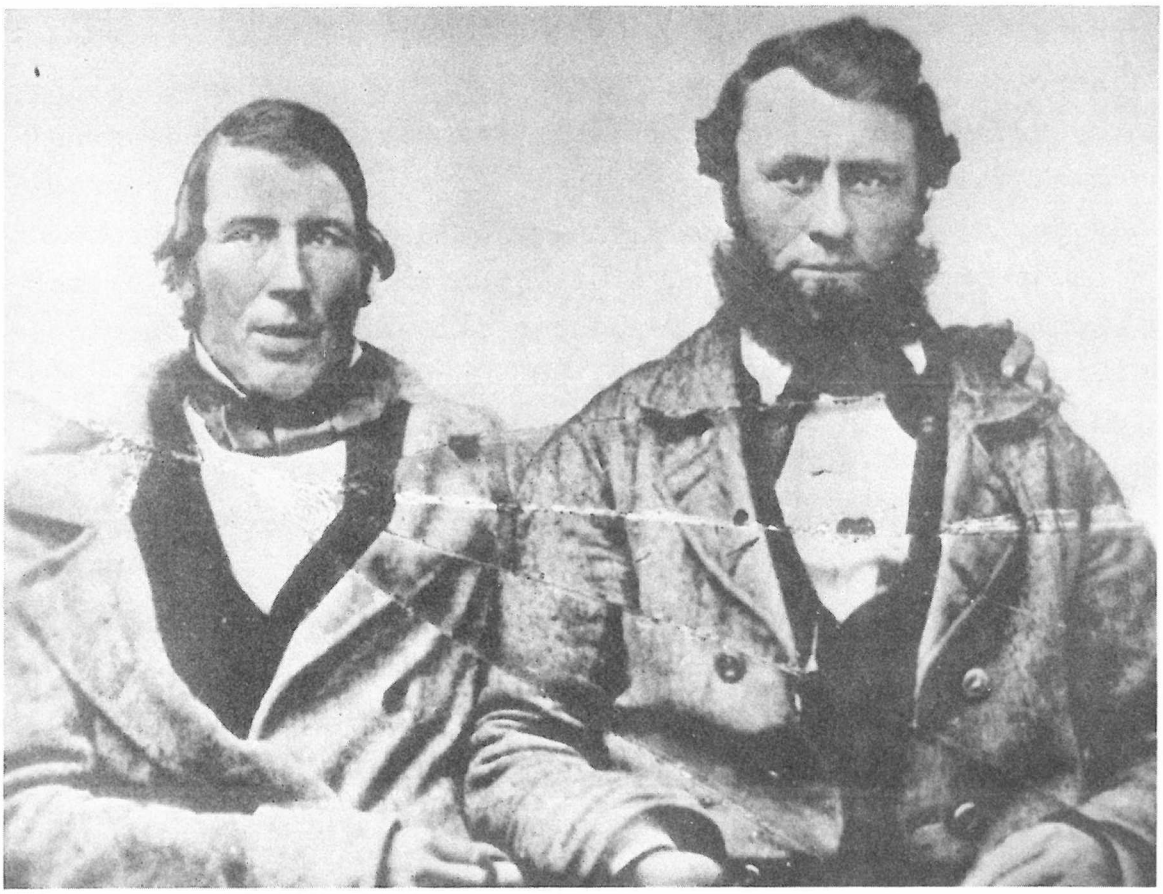
iv. Jean-Baptiste Riel, married Marie-Charlotte Sylvestre, Lavaltrie, Quebec, 27 January 1755.

v. Jean-Baptiste Riel, married Marie-Antoinette Henault, Berthier, Quebec, 20 January 1783.

Jean-Baptiste V and Marguerite were married at L'Ile-à-la-Crosse, probably in 1812. They moved to Berthier in 1822, and it was there that Jean-Louis was baptized, on the 23rd of September of that year. They were in the region of St. Hilaire until about 1834, after which they seemed to have abandoned it.[2] In addition to Jean-Louis, who was the eldest child, there were six others, the youngest of whom, François, born 1834, also established himself in the North-West.[3]

Jean-Louis Riel was in the North West as a young man, and in the period 1838-40 he lived with a Métis woman, and

18 Jean-Louis Riel (on right) ca. 1860 (Provincial Archives of Manitoba).



fathered at least one daughter, who married one Jean-Baptiste Zastre in 1859.[4] He returned to St. Hilaire, Quebec, in the fall of 1840, and for a time studied for the priesthood with the Oblates. However, by the spring of 1843, he was anxious to return to the North West, with the intention of offering his services as a school master to the mission classes being run by Provencher.[5] He arrived at Red River with a personal recommendation from Bishop Bourget, from whom he had borrowed money for his journey, funds he was able to repay to Provencher.[6]

Soon after his arrival at St. Boniface, Jean-Louis took up with Julie Lagimodière, daughter of Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière and Marie-Anne Gaboury, two Canadiens who had long lived in the North West. Julie and Louis were married on 21 January 1844.[7]

Riel's father-in-law was a prosperous farmer and trader. He had been given a rather large grant of land at the junction of the Red and Seine rivers, and it was upon his land that Jean-Louis and Julie built their first home.[8] (Site 1, accompanying map) Between 1844 and 1847, Riel apparently engaged in farming and perhaps tried his hand at the hunt.[9] The census of 1847 lists Riel (using the surname L'Ireland) as owning a house, stable, five cows, five pigs, eight sheep, a horse, a mare, one ox, one calf, and having three acres under cultivation.[10] Reference to Appendix D, indicates that Riel was considerably behind the average Canadien in terms of farm size. He should nevertheless be placed among this group because, though he was born in the North West, he had spent much of his life in Quebec and had received a good education there.

Reference to Table 2 illustrates that possession of a plough was not universal among Canadiens. Appendix E indicates that Riel's ownership of five cows and eight sheep was considerably greater than the average, while the number of pigs was about the norm.

It is quite likely that during this period Jean-Louis was being helped by his father-in-law. Doubtless, this was somewhat humbling for the well-educated Riel, and may help to explain his later, unsuccessful attempts to become an important businessman, trying to escape the shadow of the Lagimodières.

By 1847, the Riels had produced three children. Only one, Louis, born 22 October 1844, survived. It was during this period that agitation against the trade monopoly of the H.B.C. was reaching its crest, and Jean-Louis was frequently coming into contact with some of the leading dissidents. Though he owned no Red River carts himself, indicating he was probably not a leading figure in the trade, his in-laws owned a total of eight, which might explain his interest. He undoubtedly came into contact with Father Belcourt, who spent the winter of 1846-47 at St. Boniface working as a carpenter and language teacher.[11] Riel was literate and relatively sophisticated and was capable of appreciating the political realities of the free-trade movement.

It was in the year 1847 that he first became involved in the milling industry. The Council of Assiniboia had been very anxious to promote some industrialization in the settlement, and in June of that year one of its members, Provencher, announced that he had ordered a carding machine of simple construction from Canada. This facility was placed on Riel's land under an arrangement whereby he would operate the mill and take the proceeds, while ownership remained in the hands of the Company.[12] Apparently this mill was not a successful enterprise, and by 1851 Riel had turned back to farming.[13] In November of that year, he appeared before the council demanding some compensation in the form of rent for the mill which the Company had placed on his land. The council unanimously rejected the notion that there had been any contrac-

tual agreement to guarantee Riel a certain return for his labours. His request had come very soon after the Sayer trial, in which Riel had played a leading role, and it is likely that he felt that his influence and high profile politically would sway the council to granting his request.

As mentioned in Part I, Riel had been Belcourt's conduit for the inflammatory letter which was read on the steps of the cathedral, exhorting the population to take up arms against the Company. In June of 1849, two months after the confrontation, Riel and other prominent citizens, including Pascal Bréland, Salomon Hamelin, and Urbain Delorme, presented a petition to the council, demanding that the tactless and anti-French Recorder, Adam Thom, be removed from "any charge of affairs in this colony," and containing the ominous warning that though "we are all of us in opposition to anything like violence...we cannot say what would be done should you refuse this paper of the people."[14]

There seems little question that Riel was the most visible if not the most influential leader of the anti-Company campaign. As the council had refused the request to remove Thom, he took further action. On 21 November 1850, he called upon the new Governor of Assiniboia, Eden Colvile,[15] and informed him that Thom would be physically prevented from presiding at the General Quarterly Court. Permission from Riel had previously been sought by Chief Factor John Ballenden to allow Thom to preside at a particular trial,[16] a measure of respect which Riel found quite flattering. He informed Colvile that his acquiescence in that matter was not to be considered a precedent.[17]

Riel's favour was also courted by Major Caldwell, angry at having been replaced as Governor of Assiniboia by Colvile.[18] Caldwell several times had consultation with Riel at his quarters, trying to convince him of the conflict of interest that resulted from Colvile holding the office of Governor

and company chief officer. Riel, William Dease, and Francois Bruneau then initiated a petition to have Caldwell installed in his former position.[19] A disgusted Andrew Bannatyne wrote Henry Fisher:

> This the Major got done by Ireland himself, for he had L'Ireland over here every day, stuffing him with all kinds of nonsense which he believes..."the Company would make slaves of the half-breeds and do with them as they liked."[20]

Caldwell was apparently successful in his machinations, for he was reinstalled as governor of the colony.

Turmoil in the settlement continued for some time. In 1851 yet another petition was circulated and signed by a total of 540 residents asking for British liberty, a governor appointed by the Crown rather than the Company, a bilingual judge appointed in the same manner, and once again for the removal of Thom. Riel, along with Pascal Bréland, Roger Goulet, Benjamin Lagimodière, and Charles Montigny, attested to the authenticity of the signatures.[21]

Gradually, however, stability returned. After an initial reticence, Simpson finally agreed to open up membership in the council and public posts to some of the more "respectable" Métis. Riel, however, notwithstanding his position of influence and relatively good education, never held office. It would seem inconceivable that he was not interested, given his natural tendency to become involved in political action. Many of his closest associates in the free-trade campaign went on to public service and wealth. Perhaps he was too much the idealist, the company not being able to co-opt him. Whatever the reason, by 1853 the colony was peaceful,[22] and Riel had turned once again to entrepreneurial activity. It is of note that his young son Louis had passed through his formative years in this highly political atmosphere.

Riel père had turned back to farming after his first

unsuccessful attempt to establish a milling operation in 1847. The 1849 census lists him as owning a horse, three oxen, three cows, two pigs, eight sheep, a plough, harrow, two carts, a canoe, and with ten acres under cultivation.[23] His farm was of average size for a Canadien as was the number of cows and pigs that he kept. He had continued to keep a larger-than-average number of sheep, providing wool for his fulling mill. By contrast, his father-in-law farmed one of the two largest tracts in St. Boniface — 50 acres — (Appendix C), and kept nearly 100 head of stock. His brothers-in-law, Romain and Baptiste, were also farmers of some consequence.[24]

In the Spring of 1852, Jean-Louis's farm was inundated in the serious flooding that occurred. His family and many others had to seek refuge in the Bishop's house and the cathedral, and it was several months before they could return to their homes.[25] The following year Riel once again tried to resurrect his milling operation. He appeared before the council and inquired on what terms they would sell him their fulling mill, as he was establishing his own mill on the Seine River. He was short of capital and could not afford the iron fuller, which was the most expensive part of the machine. As a result of Riel's overtures, a committee was struck to handle the negotiations, composed of the Bishop, Father Lafleche, and Thomas Bunn.[26]

In March of 1853 they reported back to the council. Riel had offered £15 "for everything but the mill (iron fuller) itself on condition of getting credit till December on his own personal security." Apparently Riel was not considered a good risk, even by the Catholic clergy, for Father Lafleche told Riel that he would be allowed £1 for removing the unsold part of the mill from his land but would have to provide sureties for the remaining £14. At the very time when many Métis were becoming the beneficiaries of the prevailing patronage

system, Riel, who only a few years previously had been one of the most prominent citizens of St. Boniface, could not be trusted with a £14 loan.[27]

He succeeded in raising the money elsewhere, and between September, 1852 and March of 1854 was also able to borrow £100 from the Company itself. By the provisions of a contract, Riel received the £100 on condition:

> That he shall have constructed...across the Rivière la Seine or "German Creek" a mill dam, and, erected at the same time, a grist mill at the same place?.

The contract was apparently negotiated between A.N. Buchanon, Chief Trader of the Company, and Riel. Jean Louis gave the company a mortgage on the property and land to be redeemed within three years, by payment of cash or the equivalent in wheat or flour.[28] Riel could be trusted by the Company for £100 but not by the council for £14. It must be presumed that the Catholic members of that body, for either vindictive or judgemental reasons, were unprepared to back him.

This second mill was constructed on Lot No. 756. (Site 2 on map). Hudson's Bay Company ("Register B") states that the land was:

> Transferred by the Hudson's Bay Company to Louis Rielle dit Irelande to be paid in flour in the Spring of 1855 - permission given to Louis Rielle to form a canal going to his mill amongst certain lots mentioned below.

Although the mill was completed in 1854 it is quite possible that the formal transfer of land did not take place until a year later.

The Riel family, at this time, was in all likelihood living somewhere near the mill at Lot 756, possibly with Prospere Ducharme, who owned Lots 745 to 748 inclusive.[29] Father Amt. Champagne has suggested that the home was situated on Lot 793 (Site No. 3) from at least 1853,[30] although this would have placed Jean Louis a considerable distance from

his work. It can be documented that part of Lot 793 was transferred to his brother-in-law, Benjamin Lagimodière, in 1864 (Register "B"). Outside of Riel family tradition, and the vagaries of memory that must necessarily accompany it nothing concrete has been discovered to confirm that there was ever a family home on the Seine frontage of Lot 793.

Riel was unable to live up to his commitment to repay the £100 to the company within three years. His family and aspirations were growing but his business acumen was not. By 1854, five more children had been born: Sara[31] in October of 1848, Marie[32] in October of 1850, Octavie[33] in 1851 or 1852, Eulalie[34] in September of 1853, and Charles[35] in November of 1854. By the spring of 1857, Riel was making arrangements for his most elaborate milling operation to date. It had been impossible for him to make any headway in paying off the debt with his modest mill on the Seine, and in that year the total stood at £138.18.4.[36]

Riel had taken the original £100 in cash and goods. In that year (1854) approximately two dozen French-Métis had accounts with the company, out of total of one hundred fifty. Some were relatively small, although Francois Bouvet with £140, Jean-Baptiste Bouvier £106, William Dease £110, Urbain Delorme £450, Cuthbert Grant £188, Narcisse Marion £224, Thomas Sinclair £262, and Louis Thibeault with £317, all had larger accounts than Riel. The mean account among this group was about £106, therefore Riel was average in fairly select company.[37]

In August of 1854 he borrowed a further £150 from the Company and in May, 1855 owed a total of £151.[38] A year later he managed to get his total indebtedness down to £138.15.4, by making six cash payments. His mill was apparently showing some small returns. In that year he purchased a home which had been formerly occupied by one "Shepherd" for the price of £5. No other details were given.[39]

By the end of May 1858, his total indebtedness to the Company was £123.15.4, as during the year he had received a £15 credit for grinding 450 bushels of wheat for the company. In that year, 37 of the 205 accounts were held by St. Boniface residents. Those having larger totals than Riel were Urbain Delorme - £500, Antoine Gingras[40] - £200; and Louis Thibeault with £166. Others had kept their obligations down while Riel had not been as successful. The average among this group was about £42. Bouvet's total had been reduced to £75, William Dease's to less than £2, Grant's to just under £50, Marion's to less than £5.[41]

In the summer of 1857, Riel, heavily in debt and with a milling operation that would not turn a profit, entered into a partnership with Henry Fisher, Francois Bruneau, Charles Larance, and Pierre Gladieux, for the purpose of yet a third milling operation.[42] This company had capital of £300 and in the fall Riel was delegated to proceed to Montreal to purchase the necessary equipment. He succeeded in finding a mill owned by the Masson family of Terrebonne. He proudly wrote back to Fisher, company president, that he had managed to buy the mill for only £200, but that it was worth at least £1000, surely the "most beautiful machine in all of Canada." The machinery was so heavy and bulky that at least eighteen carts would be needed to ship it from St. Paul to St. Boniface. Riel requested that Fisher acquire the necessary wood to erect a building to house the operation.

> Please try to get good wood for the building, because we have really beautiful machines to put inside.

It was to be a two storey edifice, 50 feet by 40 feet, the first storey seven feet high and the second nine. The very best material was to be used, his thought being that:

> It would be very prudent to order some stone for a good chimney as well as an oven for the clay.

Riel also offered to purchase in St. Paul the necessary glass, nails, and hinges. The tone of the letter indicates

that he could barely contain his enthusiasm at being a part of such an elaborate undertaking.

> I've often told myself: "It's for the love of my country that I'm in so much difficulty."[43]

In a second letter to Fisher, Riel stated that the building would not have to be so large after all, apparently in response to alarm that the former had expressed as to the large cost.

> I was mistaken about the width - it must only be 30 feet by 35. Don't worry... It is a considerable expense, but it will be once and for all.

He also stated that he was bringing home an experienced milling engineer, "well recommended by all the clergy of Montreal."[44]

Riel had met Archbishop Taché while there and the cleric had willingly given him a letter of introduction to an old friend, who would introduce him to the Masson family. He was therefore at least partially responsible for the transaction. However, upon hearing about the scope of the project he expressed dismay.

> The good Riel has really done it now. For 200 Louis he has accepted a magnificent cloth-making machine that's worth £1000 and that Mrs. Masson pretty well gave to him, but it takes 30 carts to get this machine and a building worth more than £200 to house it. Consequently the Company's small capital of £300 is by far insufficient.

Tache went on to say that the church had advanced the group a further £300, a fact which caused him some irritation, since he had another use for the money.[45]

The priests's remarks indicate a somewhat condescending attitude toward Riel. It confirms that the miller was given to pretentious undertakings beyond his financial resources. At the very time that he was involved with this elaborate water-powered mill, other, more visionary, entrepreneurs were turning their attention to steam power. As early as 1856 such a mill had been established in the settlement, and in 1859 the council was asked for a £100 loan by

the "Red River Stamp Mill Company" to purchase a new boiler for this machine. In their application the principals stated that wind and water mills were totally inadequate to meet the needs of the community.[46]

Construction of the new carding mill went ahead during the summer of 1858,[47] on the east side of the Seine River on Lot 793 (Site 3 on map).[48] Riel continued to operate his grist mill on Lot 756 and made several deliveries of flour to the company. He sent a boat-load in May, a cart-load in July and a third load in November.[49] In August, 1858, William McTavish of the company sent him a tally of the grinding he had done for them to date. It showed that Riel had, in the Spring of that year, been sent 629 bushels of wheat weighing 39,627 pounds and had returned 37,368 pounds of flour and bran. For his services he was duly credited on his account, £19.15.4.[50]

The grist mill operation was maintained through 1859 and 1860. In January of 1860 he was credited the amount of £16.13.4 for having ground 500 bushels of wheat the previous year. He had by this time managed to reduce his indebtedness to the company, dating back to the Spring of 1854, to only £92.18.2.[51]

In the Spring of 1861 he purchased "bolting cloth" from J.C. Burbank[52] and charged the £7.15.11½ cost to his company account. His debt at the end of the year was back up over £100, as he had made no flour deliveries. Fifteen French-Métis had accounts that year, and only three of them were larger than Riel's — Pascal Bréland, £922, Antoine Gingras, £440, and Louis Thibeault, £372.[53]

The year 1862 was a good one for Riel financially. He managed to pay off almost half of his debt to the company. In January of that year he paid £22.17.2[54] in cash and in November, £25.0.0, bringing his outstanding balance down to £53.[55] Presumably his new milling operation was turning a profit. Until his death in the Spring of 1864, however,

he made no further payments on his account, and the debt was still being charged against his estate in 1868.[56]

Riel's business activities were notably unsuccessful. He was an ambitious man and a tireless worker but he never attained the financial security enjoyed by many of his friends and associates among the St. Boniface bourgeoisie. His family had grown by three since 1857, Joseph having been born in February 1857,[57] Henrietta in July 1861,[58] and Alexandre in February 1863,[59] and now totalled nine; all but Louis were living at home and attending school. It must have been frustrating for him to be raising this talented family in an atmosphere of financial instability.

Riel was to suffer one more humiliation before his death. In 1861 he became embroiled in a dispute involving Taché, the Reverend Griffiths Owen Corbett, and James Ross, the publisher of the Nor'Wester. Beginning in April of that year, Corbett wrote several letters to the paper, protesting that the Council of Assiniboia in its Official Report of Proceedings was referring to Taché as "The Lord Bishop," a title Corbett felt could only be accorded on permission of the Queen.[60] Several more letters followed, the hysterical tone of which began to resemble an anti-Catholic crusade. He raged about the "Catholic Ascendancy" and criticized Governor McTavish for being married and having his children baptized in the Romish church.[61]

Finally, a priest, Father William T. Oram, came to Taché's defence, and criticized Ross for allowing Corbett to conduct his campaign through the press. Oram had intended that his letter be confidential but Ross printed it out of context, then criticized him for his "not very clerical stance."[62]

At this point Riel jumped into the fray, coming to Oram's defence. The paper published Riel's letter in English, using a literal translation that was barely understandable.

Ross entitled the column a "Cure for the Blues." He wrote that:

> If our translation shocks the grammar of our readers, we assure them that it is at all events, a great improvement on the original - which for spelling, construction, syntax, punctuation, would be considered a rare curiosity in any museum.

He went on:

> How is it that such a one comes forward as Mr. Oram's champion? Is he head man among the French people? We regard as leading men the Bruneaus, the Amlins (Hamelin), the Marions, the Gentons (Dauphiné), the Ducharmes, the Fishers, the Deases, the Brélands, and Delormes and many others too numerous to mention; these are the principle men and they are a credit to the Settlement; but as for L. Riel; pray who or what, is he?

All of this about a man who a dozen years before had been one of the more influential and respected men in the community.

Jean-Louis Riel died at his home in St. Boniface on 21 January 1864, at the age of 46.[64] He left his family without means of support and heavily in debt. He had definitely been a Canadien in outlook and temperament. His children had received good educations and had married into prominent and wealthy families. His friends and associates were among the leading members of the community. Yet in the last decade of his life, Riel had seen many go on to political and economic importance, men that he had led during the Sayer affair. Ironically, it had been that incident that had allowed many of these "arrivistes" to attain the status that they did.

Riel's political and business involvement had never obtained for him the status that he wanted and perhaps deserved. Toward the end of his life he had become the object of scorn and derision, as witnessed by the attack in the Nor' Wester and Taché's patronizing comments about his third milling

operation. Jean-Louis was an honest and hard working man who did not seem to understand that these virtues were not enough to ensure his success. Those in St. Boniface who went on to prominence knew that there was a third requirement, the need to sacrifice the interests of their people to the pursuit of personal reward.

IV. The Lagimodière Family in St. Boniface Society

Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière was born in St. Antoine de Richelieu, Quebec, in December of 1778.[1] The first of his ancestors to come to Canada was Samuel, son of Noel Lecompte and Francoise Letellier, born at Saint-Lo France in 1667, who came to Quebec in 1693 with the title of "surgeon." By 1695, Samuel was signing his name "Lecompte, sieur de la Vimaudière." He married twice, the second time to Mari-Jean Jérémie, daughter of a prominent family. By 1714, he was signing his name "Lecompte de la Gimodière."[2] Joseph, son of Samuel, was born at Chateau-Richer, Quebec, in May, 1707. He was married in 1730 to Madeleine Jacques, daughter of Louis Jacques and Antoinette Lerous. A son Pierre, was born in June 1740 at Charlesbourg, and in May, 1764 married Marie Chevdevergue of Chambly, daughter of Louis and Elizabeth. Through his life Pierre signed his name "Lavimodière." It was of this marriage that Jean-Baptiste, future father-in-law of Jean-Louis Riel, was born.[3]

Jean-Baptiste came to the North West in 1800, to the Red River country, though he was apparently not connected with either of the major fur companies.[4] He spent about five years there and evidently lived with a Chipewyan Indian woman, who may have borne him three children.[5] He returned to Lower Canada in about 1805 and on April 21, 1806, at Maskinogé married Marie-Anne Gaboury. Marie-Anne had been born in August 1780, the daughter of Charles Gaboury and was the first white woman to inhabit the western plains.[6]

Jean-Baptiste and Marie-Anne had a family of four boys

and four girls.[7]

Jean-Baptiste and Marie-Anne spent the first years of their marriage in a nomadic style, and ranged as far to the west as the present location of Edmonton, where "Laprairie" was born. It would seem an almost unbelievable hardship for Marie, being from a genteel Quebec family, to have to follow her hunter-adventurer husband on his travels. In spite of the hard life that the Lagimodières led in the first years of their marriage, all of their children lived into adulthood. This was rare as there was a high infant mortality rate.

In 1812 Jean-Baptiste installed his wife and four children in a rude dwelling at the newly-established Selkirk Settlement at Red River. He apparently continued his wandering ways for several more years.[8]

It was in connection with events leading to the Seven Oaks massacre that Lagimodière gained his fame. In December, 1815 he was despatched by Hudson's Bay official, Colin Robertson, to Montreal to inform Lord Selkirk of the worsening situation in the colony. He travelled the 1800 miles on foot and alone, running the constant risk of capture by North West Company employees. This journey was a testimonial to his skill as a woodsman and hunter.[9]

To show his gratitude, Selkirk granted Jean-Baptiste a tract of land at the junction of the Red and Seine Rivers in May, 1818.[10] It was a triangular shaped property intersected by the two rivers. (Map, Site No. 1). It was on this site that he built his first permanent home, probably in the fall of the same year. The family was driven out in the serious flooding of 1826, but he returned and rebuilt his home.[11]

Provencher had arrived in the colony in 1818 and in all likelihood the family soon came under the influence of the church. Lagimodière was on good terms with the Bishop,

and when the former made a trip to Montreal in 1828 the priest entrusted him with a bank-draft in the amount of 30 Louis.[12] It is doubtful whether any of Jean-Baptiste's children ever learned to read and write, as a church school was not established for some years. Julie never learned to do so.[13]

By the year 1832, Jean-Baptiste and his eldest son, Laprairie, were farmers of some means. Between the two of them they had a total of 27.5 acres planted, which was considerably more than the average. (See "Appendix D.") They also owned 3 cows and 6 pigs, about average for a single operation. (See "Appendix.") No implements of any kind are indicated, but their ownership of four draught animals and the large acreage indicate this may be due to sloppy census-taking. In addition, they possessed four horses, suggesting an involvement with the hunt and perhaps small-scale trading.[14]

In 1838 these two and a second son, Benjamin, had a total of 17 acres planted. This was still considerably above the average, which had fallen since 1832. They now owned sixteen cows and eighteen pigs, much above the average for Canadiens. In that six-year period they had also acquired three ploughs, three harrows, and fifteen carts, twelve more oxen and five more horses.[15] The numbers of carts is especially significant. (See "Appendix A.") Since cart trains to St. Paul were a thing of the future, the family appears to have been involved in buffalo hunting in a major way, in addition to their farming operation.

By 1843, the farm comprised 27 acres under seed, with five harrows and three ploughs. There were 128 head of livestock, including 21 cows, 13 pigs, and 75 sheep. Even though there were now four individuals farming on the land (Romain had joined the operation), the acreage was still above average. Their livestock ownership placed them among the leading animal raisers of the settlement. They owned among them fourteen carts and fourteen oxen, and it was likely that

they were among the first to institute the cart trains to St. Paul. An involvement in the illicit trade seems an obvious conclusion.[16]

In 1847, the father and three sons had a total of 28 acres planted and 130 head of stock, including 26 cows, 40 pigs, and 49 sheep. Their acreage was below average at this time, while their stock ownership continued to be impressively large. They now owned only eight carts, a net drop of six, but twenty-one oxen, a gain of seven. It is possible that the Lagimodières and others were refusing to divulge the number of carts they owned as it would indicate to the company a connection with the trade. There was an unexplained net drop in the number of carts in the settlement between 1843 and 1847.[17]

In 1849, Jean-Baptiste and his sons Laprairie, Benjamin, Romain and Joseph, had 75 acres seeded, using six ploughs and five harrows. They had 168 head of stock, including 27 cows, 30 pigs, and 70 sheep. They reported ownership of 18 carts and 18 oxen. Since the census was taken in the summer and the Sayer trial was over, the company in effect having lost, there was probably no longer any need to conceal cart ownership.[18] In that same year, Benjamin was a member of Jean-Louis Riel's committee to protest the company's autocratic rule and to try and break the monopoly, indicating that the Lagimodières had more than a passing interest in trade matters.[19] Riel's own activities might be explained by the Lagimodière involvement in the illicit trade.

Hudson's Bay account books contain little information on the business dealings and purchases of the Lagimodière family. Jean-Baptiste's name appeared for the first time in 1853 and for that year he had an account payable of £31.1.11.[20] It also appears every year thereafter until at least 1864, and in that period no payments were made and no further liabilities incurred. The balance charged against

his estate on May 31, 1864, was exactly £31.1.11.[21]

The names which appear in this series of volumes are apparently those who purchased land from the company. The totals of the individuals which are found on the list on "Appendix C " are very similar to the totals for these people which appear throughout these volumes. Therefore, many of those who wanted a declaration of land ownership never paid off the money owing on the purchases. They acquired the leases to their land in 1849 or shortly thereafter, the very time that the company was making its major effort to preserve its monopoly using every device, including revoking the right to property. In all probability, Lagimodière and many others came forward to make their purchases under duress. Although Jean-Baptiste acquired his original tract by grant, over the years it was expanded and eventually he and his sons owned Lots 682, 683, 684, 681, and 743.[22] After the settlement returned to tranquility, few who had made these "purchases" saw any need to pay them off, though many could have afforded to do so.

Little is documented about the Lagimodières during the period of the 1850s. It is known that during the latter part of that decade one of the brothers was operating a grist mill, either alone or in partnership with Riel.[23]

Based on their agricultural operations and their apparent involvement in the free trade, the Lagimodière family would have been one of the most affluent among the Canadien population. Jean-Louis's brothers-in-law did not possess his schooling and none of their children were considered for a Quebec education, as was young Louis. Other than Benjamin's involvement with the 1849 movement, there is no record of political involvement. It is doubtful that the brothers were as sophisticated as was Jean-Louis; they had not seen as much of the world, yet were wealthier. It is likely that Riel's abortive efforts to become a successful businessman were an

attempt to get out from under the shadow of his in-laws.

One month after Jean Louis died, Benjamin, Julie's brother, acquired 24 acres of land at the back of Lot 793.[24] (Site 4 on map). The date of acquisition, February 29, 1864, might have been only coincidentally close to the January 21 date of Riel's death. However, it would seem more plausible that the land was obtained for Julie, so that she and her children could move on to the Red River from the mill on the Seine. If this were so, the family would have moved during the summer of that year to the structure at 330 River Road or perhaps, as has been suggested, to a smaller, temporary structure.

Conclusion

An attempt has been made throughout this essay to substantiate the thesis that the Métis society of Red River, during the period, developed in two distinct directions. It is contended here that the catalyst for this phenomenon was the free-trade issue which culminated with the Sayer trial in 1849. Those Métis who were the most prominent of the free-traders, were able to accumulate a sufficient amount of capital to move out of the hunter-trapper milieu. Their better-than-average financial resources facilitated a more sophisticated and genteel life-style than that of their hunter brethren.

This being the reality, this wealthier group identified much more strongly with two pillars of the establishment present at Red River — the Roman Catholic church and the Hudson's Bay Company. Not needing the hunt to sustain their life-style, the wealthy turned their attentions to pursuits which would both separate them from their more "uncivilized" countrymen and meet with the discriminating approval of the church. Most became large-scale farmers and merchants, and many combined these careers with highly-paid public posts. In most aspects of their life-styles, members of this group were easily distinguishable from the hunters and trappers.

For several years through the period, this St. Boniface society was able to enjoy some power and position while portraying itself as the watchdog of Métis rights. As the years passed, this group increasingly lost whatever sense of

common purpose that it had once had with the hunters. By the mid-1860s, its credibility and claims to have provided adequate representation for Métis rights were seriously tarnished.

It must be said that few members of the hunting group were capable of understanding the ramifications of the quickly-changing situation at Red River. Theirs was a society based on the hunt and small-scale farming. Politically unsophisticated, the hunters' immediate and natural reaction to perceived threats was a resort to arms. This was to be their reaction in 1869-70 and again in 1885. Theirs was a declining culture and economy, disintegrating in the path of advancing agricultural settlement. The area which only they and the Indians had chosen to inhabit had, within the space of a few short years, begun to receive the covetous glances of American and Canadian entrepreneurs. The hunters, receiving scant assistance from the St. Boniface élite, could only perceive that the herds were dwindling and that the reasonably well-ordered society of the Company, the hunt, and the church, was no longer functioning smoothly.

It is stated here that both the Riel family and the Lagimodière family were of the St. Boniface élite, although not among its most prominent members. The Lagimodières emerge as being relatively wealthy but not politically sophisticated. Census figures indicate large-scale farming and trading activities. There is, however, no evidence that any of them served on the various deliberative bodies and their names do not appear in the journals and reports of company and church officials. They remain enigmatic; the indications are that the family had an economic but not a social identification with St. Boniface high society. Perhaps this resulted from a lack of education, or perhaps simply that family could not be bothered with the political machinations and pretensions that so occupied their wealthy confrères.

If the Lagimodières were of the select few, as a result of economic circumstance rather than sophistication, the reverse must be said of Jean-Louis Riel. It is difficult to know why Riel was unable to obtain the wealth he sought. At the very least, he should have been able to capitalize on the apparent economic power that his wife's family possessed. Yet he never managed to pull himself and his family out of the poor circumstance in which they lived. This life-style would have been more tolerable for a member of the hunting group, but was not for one who believed himself the equal of any among the Métis.

Perhaps the key is there. Riel had a substantial opinion of himself — undoubtedly grounded in his very vocal leadership during the Sayer affair — but the gnawing feeling persists, based on the patronizing attitude that many others had toward him, and his obvious business bumbling, that Riel was either a dreamer or was, perhaps, slow-witted. He appeared not to lose his appreciation of the problem of the hunters, yet by the end of his life had become an ineffective spokesman for their grievances.

Endnotes

Preface

1 Paris, 1945.
2 Toronto, 1951.
3 London, 1962.

I. Métis Society to 1860

1 Toronto, 1974.
2 Ibid., p. 68.
3 Ibid., pp. 125-126.
4 Ibid., p. 126. Peter Fidler indicated the following in his 1819 report Brandon House. "The allowance of fresh meat for one man exclusive of bone is 5 lbs., a woman half that, for every child 1 to 1½ lbs. per day of any provisions, 2 lbs., and ¾ lbs. respectively the same allowance for any other kind of provisions." (PAC), Hudson's Bay Company Archives (hereafter cited as HBCA), B.22/3/1, p. 4. Brandon House District Report.
5 Walter Traill: In Rupert's Land: The Memoirs of Walter Traill, Ed., Mac Atwood, Toronto, 1970, p. 77.
6 Harold A. Innis, The Fur Trade in Canada, Toronto, 1956, p. 228. (first published 1930).
7 Ray, Op. cit., p. 207.
8 Alexander Ross, The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress, and Present State, London, 1856, p. 246.
9 John McLean, John McLean's Notes of a Twenty-Five Years Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory, ed. W.S. Wallace New York, 1968, pp. 381-382.

10 In 1849 Sinclair sold off all of his assets for £4500- a very tidy sum, and moved to Oregon. He was killed on the Columbia River about three years later. Source: (HBCA) D5/20, "George Simpson Inward Correspondence, John Ballenden to Simpson; 29 August 1849; The Nor'Wester, 30 August 1862.

11 Born at Roscommon, Ireland 1789. Became Councillor of Assiniboia, 1835, by sitting as a settler and a merchant. In 1857, the Reverend G.O. Corbett described him "as perhaps the greatest merchant on the banks of the Red River." Source: E.H. Oliver; The Canadian North West, (Ottawa, 1914), p. 62.

12 Grandson of John Kittson, who came to Canada with Wolfe in 1759. The second of his three wives was Elize Marion, daughter of Narcisse Marion; she bearing him nine of his nineteen children. Kittson later became one of the major wholesale and retail merchants at Red River. He had one of the largest accounts with the HBC, totalling over £5000 for the year 1860. He was also hired as an agent for the Company at a salary over three times that of the next highest paid employee at Red River. (£350 p.a.). Politically active in Minnesota politics, Kittson served a term as Mayor of St. Paul. Sources: The Nor'Wester, 14 August 1860; HBCA, B.235/d/218, "Red River District Settlers' Accounts OUtfit 1861-62," fol. 109, "Accounts 1864-65," fol. 48-49; Clarence W. Rife, "Norman W. Kittson: A Fur Trader at Pembina," Minnesota History, (1925), p. 225.

13 Minnesota Historical Society, (hereafter cited as MHS), Henry Hastings Sibley Papers. Norman Kittson to Henry Sibley, Mendota, 16 July 1844.

14 HBCA, A11/95, 1829-53. "London Inward Correspondence from Winnipeg," Alexander Christie, Red River to Secretary of the HBC, London, 31 December, 1844. fol. 43.

15 Born in Quebec in 1793.

16 Born in Quebec about 1809, the son of Francois Marion, blacksmith, and Louise Martel. Became a blacksmith at Red River upon his arrival in 1834. Married Marie Bouchard and raised 11 children. Later began trading in direct competition to the HBC. Had one of the largest accounts with the HBC through the period, totalling nearly £500 in 1850. Source: La Société Historique de Saint-Boniface, (hereafter cited as LSHSB) Picton Genealogical Files; HBCA, B.235/d/114, Winnipeg, 1850, "Settlers Accounts," fol. 56.

17 Became a Councillor of Assiniboia, 1853.

18 HBCA, A11/95, 1829-53, "London Inward Correspondence from Winnipeg," Christie to the Secretary, 31 December 1844, fol. 56.

19 Born in Quebec, 1798.

20 Born in Quebec, 1805.

21 Born in Rupert's Land, 1812.

22 HBCA, E16/2, 1832-50, "Council of Assiniboine Minute Book," Fort Garry, 16 June, 1845, fol. 49.

23 Ibid., June 19, 1845.

24 Archives of the Archdiocese of St. Boniface (hereafter cited as AASB) Archbishop Taché to his "friend" (probably Father Louis Lafleche) Quebec, 28 March 1859. Copy in Belleau Collection.

25 Bishop Provencher to Bishop Signay, Quebec, 13 August 1839. Copy in Belleau Collection.

26 Signay to Provencher, St. Boniface, 26 April 1847. Copy in Belleau Collection.

27 HBCA, D4/69, "George Simpson Correspondence Book," George Simpson, "In the Canoe," to Alexander Christie, Governor of Assiniboia, 7 July 1847, fol. 130.

28 Provencher - Bishop Turgeon, Quebec, 10 June 1847. Copy in Belleau Collection.

29 "Petition of the Inhabitants of the White Horse Plains to the Archbishop of Quebec," 15 November 1847. Copy in Belleau Collection. Belcourt had spent the winter of 1846-47 working as a carpenter at the St. Boniface Mission. He went to Quebec in 1847, returning briefly to the Forks in October of that year, just long enough to arrange the protest of his leaving. Provencher to Turgeon, 4 December 1847. Copy in Belleau Collection.

30 HBCA, D4/69, "George Simpson Correspondence Book," Simpson to Belcourt, 10 January 1848, 31 January 1848.

31 MHS, Sibley Papers. Kittson, Pembina to Sibley, St. Peter's, 6 April 1848.

32 Provencher to Turgeon, Quebec, 14 June 1848. Copy in Belleau Collection.

33 HBCA, D5/21. Governor and Committee to Simpson, 4 April 1849.

34 Son of John Sayer and a Saulteaux. Married in 1835 to Josephte Frobisher. Sayer had purchased merchandise for trade and was to return to Lac Manitobah when he was arrested. Source: LSHSB Picton.

35 HBCA, D6/25, Governor Christie to Simpson, 29 May 1849, fol. 225.

36 Ibid., fol. 225.

37 Born in Rupert's Land 1801. Was appointed a sergeant of the police in 1843. He was definitely involved later in the trade, and was blacklisted by the HBC, causing him to turn to Kittson. Source: Oliver, op. cit., pp. 307-309; HBCA, A11/95, "Inward Correspondence" etc., W.J. Christie to John Black, "Official," 17 October 1853, fol. 601.

38 Born in Quebec in 1794. Married Marie Robert and had possibly nine children. He was one of those who purchased his land from the HBC in 1848-50. Source: HBCA B.235/d/113, 1848-50, "Ledger - Winnipeg," fol. 38. Picton.

39 Born in 1815 in Red River, where his father had settled in 1792. Married Isabelle Vandalle, daughter of a Saulteaux. One son married a daughter of Pascal Bréland. Later became a member of the Manitoba Assembly. See Lionel Dorge: "The Métis and the Canadian Councillors of Assiniboia." The Beaver, Summer 1974, p. 40.

40 Born in Quebec in 1791 and came to Red River in 1821. Married Marie Louise, daughter of Martin Jérome and an Indian. His daughter Marguerite married Councillor William Dease, (Dorge, op. cit., p. 71).

41 Born in Quebec in 1822. Was definitely involved in the illicit trade and assisted those who had import privileges cut off by the HBC for illegal trade, including Pascal Bréland. Had one of the largest accounts among the French-Métis with the HBC throughout the period, totalling £242 in 1853 and £356 in 1863. Source: HBCA, A11/95, "London Inward Correspondence" etc., John Ballenden to Barclay (Sec. of HBC), 24 August 1849; B.235 /d/122, 1852-53, "Settlers Accounts," fol. 49, 1863-64, fol. 100.

42 Born Rupert's Land 1811, son of Jean-Baptiste Beauchamp and Josephte Dazé. Married Marie Comtois.

43 Born in Quebec, 1794. Married Margaret Taylor, daughter of Thomas Taylor, and had a family of at least eight children.

44 Born in Rupert's Land 1810, son of Antoine, cousin of Julie, wife of Louis-Joseph Papineau. Went to Montreal as a young boy but returned to St. Boniface where he attended Provencher's school. Taught at the school briefly, then became a farmer and cattle breeder. By 1849 he was one of the wealthier Métis at St. Boniface. (Source: Dorge, p. 19.)

45 Born in Rupert's Land, 1811, probably the son of Joseph Parisien and an Indian. (Picton; Red River Census, 1849) hereafter cited as RRC)

46 Born in Rupert's Land, 1813, son of Joseph and Angelique. Guiboche. Married Isabelle Rochon in 1850 (Picton).

47 Born in Quebec in 1799, son of Pierre and Josephte Leduc. In 1833, married Helene McMillan, daughter of James McMillan and Marie Letendre. (Picton).

48 Born in Quebec in 1826. (RRC 1849).

49 Born in Quebec in 1797. (RRC 1849).

50 Born in 1799 in Boucherville, Quebec. Married a Métis and owned a blacksmith's shop in St. Boniface. (RRC 1849; Picton).

51 Born in Quebec 1781. Brother of Councillor Maximilien Dauphiné. Was one of several who petitioned the Council in 1843 to have the import duty on liquor ended. (RRC; Oliver, op. cit., p. 307-309).

52 Mgr. Taché, Sketch of Life in the North West of America. Montreal, 1870, p. 106.

53 George H. Sprenger, "An Analysis of Selected Aspects of Métis Society, 1810-1870," M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1972.

54 James J. Hargrave, Red River, Montreal 1871, p. 467.

55 Irene Spry, "The Transition From a Nomadic to a Settled Economy in Western Canada, 1856-96," Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Vol. VI, Series IV, (1968), p. 187.

56 Annals of the Propogation of the Faith, Vol. XII, No. 73, London, July 1851, in James M. Reardon: G.A. Belcourt: Pioneer Catholic Missionary of the North West, (St. Paul, 1955), p. 72.

57 Ibid., p. 69.

58 M.G. Burlingame, "Buffalo in Trade and Commerce," North Dakota Historical Quarterly, Vol. 3, No. 4, July 1929, p. 280.

59 Belcourt, Pembina, to Cazeault, Quebec, 10 February 1850. Copy in Belleau Collection.

60 Dorge, op. cit., p. 12.

61 Oliver, op. cit., from which all council minutes are taken.

Meeting at Fort Garry, 31 May 1849; pp. 352-353.

62 HBCA, D4/71 "George Simpson Correspondence Book Outward," 5 July 1850, fol. 333.

63 Born in 1800 in the North West. Joined HBC and attained the rank of Chief Trader in 1847. Retired under pressure from Simpson in 1855. Related by marriage to both Joseph Rolette and Hercules Dousman, two of the principals of the American Fur Co., a fact that Simpson could not countenance. Source: Picton; AASB Fisher-D'Eschambault Collection. (Fisher later became involved in partnership with Jean-Louis Riel).

64 Son of Pierre and Louise Bellay. Married in 1836 to Maria Grant, daughter of Councillor and hunt leader Cuthbert Grant. Was definitely involved in illicit trade (see footnote 41). Seemed to inherit the vast influence enjoyed by Cuthbert. Source: Picton; Dorge, op. cit., p. 40.

65 Son of Chief Factor John Warren Dease and Genevieve Beignet. Married Nellie McMullen in 1823. Became Councillor in 1861 and for four meetings thereafter. Left for North Dakota in 1863. (Picton; Dorge, p. 44; Oliver, p. 70.)

66 Born in Red River in 1823, son of John (above). Married Marguerite Dauphiné. Served as Councillor beginning in 1866 and for 9 meetings thereafter. (RRC, 1849; Oliver p. 72.)

67 Grandson of Métis and a Canadian and the son of a hunter and Josephte Severet, daughter of Chief Factor John Severet of Edinburgh. Received his education at St. Boniface College. Became Councillor in 1866 and sat for ten meetings. Was deeply involved in agitation against the Company in 1849. (Oliver p. 70; HBCA, A5/31, Peel to Pelly, 30 December 1851, in Eden Colvile: London Correspondence Inward, 1849-1852, Ed., E.E. Rich and A. M. Johnson, intro. W.L. Morton, London , 1962. (hereafter cited as Eden Colvile's Correspondence).

68 Born in 1793 in N.W. Married Marie McGillis. His sister

Marie married Pierre Falcon, the famous bard of the Métis who originated over Semple at Seven Oaks in 1816. The Grant family was one of several which, though of Scottish-Indian background, became assimilated with the Métis. Cuthbert himself was educated in Scotland. (Picton, and Dorge, p. 13).

69 Born in N.W. in 1823, son of Charles Bousquet, voyageur. Orphaned at age four and taken in by Provencher, who gave him personal teaching. Became a teacher at the Bishop's school prior to the arrival of the Grey Nuns in 1844. Married Betsey Fisher, daughter of Chief Trader Henry Fisher. Murdered by the Sioux in 1859. (Picton; RRC, 1849).

70 Oliver, op. cit., p. 388.

71 Ibid., p. 418.

72 Ibid., pp. 66-67.

73 Ibid., p. 461.

74 Ibid., p. 479.

75 Ibid., p. 500.

76 Ibid., p. 556.

77 Ibid., p. 69.

78 Ibid., p. 57.

79 Ibid., p. 69.

80 Ibid., p. 70.

81 Father Charles Mestre-Bishop Mazenode, General Superior of the Oblates, probably 1854. Copy in Belleau collection.

82 Fr. André, St. Joe's to Taché, St. Boniface, 11 October 1862. Copy in Belleau Collection.

83 M. Lionel Dorge of La Société Historique de St. Boniface says that it is generally known among Métis community that the Riels did not drink very heavily.

84 Taché during his tenure on council presented several notions calling for the banning of importation of cheap American liquor. Oliver: passim.

85 Montreal, 1871, p. 167.

86 MHS, Sibley Papers: Belcourt, Pembina, to Major Woods, (U.S. Cavalry), 20 August 1849.

87 H.M. Robinson, The Great Fur Land or Sketches of Life in the Hudson's Bay Territory, New York, 1879, p. 48.

88 Ibid., p. 32.

89 J.A. Giligan, "A Trip Through the Red River Country in 1864," North Dakota Historical Selections. Copy in Belleau Collection.

90 AASB, André to Taché,11 October 1862. Copy in Belleau Collection.

91 HBCA, B.235/a/15, 1851-54, "Extracts from William Black's Private Journal," 6 January 1853. fol. 23.

92 Hargrave, op. cit., p. 172.

93 AASB, Fisher-D'Eschambault Collection: Taché, St. Jean-Baptiste to Fisher, 2 December 1853.

94 AASB, Fr. Mestre's Account of the fire of December 14, 1860. Copy in Belleau Collection.

95 Lettres de Monseignior Joseph-Norbert Provencher - Eveque de Saint Boniface, (Bulletin de la Société Historique de Saint Boniface, 1913) Provencher to Mgr. B.C. Panet, Archbishop of Quebec, 8 June 1845, p. 113.

96 Henry Youle Hind, Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857. New York 1969, first published 1860, p. 220. "Letter from the Bishop of St. Boniface, Red River Settlement, published in Mr. Dawson's Report."

97 Hind, p. 220.

98 Dom Benoit: Vie de Mgr. Taché (Montreal, 1964) pp. 375-76.

99 PAM., "Les Memoires de Louis Schmidt," Typescript, p. 12. Schmidt and Daniel McDougall were chosen along with Riel to be educated in Quebec. They both returned to the Forks in 1861, leaving Riel as the sole Catholic son of

Red River to receive an advanced education. Schmidt later served as Secretary in Riel's Provisional Government.

100 Fr. Lestanc to Taché, "en route," 4 September 1866. Copy in Belleau Collection.

101 Fisher-D'Eschambault Collection. Alexander Fisher to Henry Fisher, 15 March 1837. The Fishers were another family which, while not having French surnames, were considered to be Métis. (see above, footnote 68).

102 Hind, p. 14.

103 Eden Colvile's Correspondence, pp. xxv-xxvi.

104 The Nor'Wester, 1 June 1866.

105 Born Rupert's Land 1824, son of André, Canadien and Charlotte Peltier. Married Genevieve Delorme and later became the first M.L.A. for St. Vital.

II. Selected Aspects of Métis Material Culture

1 McLean, op. cit., p. 381.

2 Hind, op. cit., p. 188.

3 The Nor'Wester, 1 April 1861; 28 May 1862; 21 June 1862; 23 July 1862.

4 RRC, 1849.

5 HBCA, D 5/25 1849, "George Simpson Inward Correspondence," Larocque to George Simpson, 2 June 1849; RRC, 1849.

6 HBCA, B. 303/d/4, 1862, Lower Fort Garry.

7 LSHSB, Picton.

8 RRC, 1849; HBCA, B.235/d/15, "Black's Journal," 17 October 1853, fol. 607.

9 Father Lestanc to Taché, 18 April 1862; Lefloch to Taché, 14 September 1870. Copies in Belleau Collection.

10 RRC, 1849; A.G. Morice. Dictionnaire des Canadiens de l'Ouest, Kamloops, 1908.

11 Only two volumes of the Kittson Accounts are known to exist, "Pembina - 1851-1854" and this volume. There is no way of knowing what is involved in the "amount

brought forward." This document was the only one discovered containing itemized accounts for purchases at St. Boniface.

12 Maxime Dauphinais (Dauphiné) was born in Quebec in 1791. By 1849 he had one of the largest farming operations in St. Boniface with 45 acres under cultivation and nearly 60 head of livestock. He held several public posts and was at one time a Councillor of Assiniboia. He married Marie-Louise, daughter of Martin Jerome and an Indian. A daughter married Councillor William Dease. (Source: RRC, 1849, Dorge, op. cit., p. 71).

13 Marius Barbeau, "The House That Mac Built," The Beaver, (December, 1945), p. 10.

14 Jill Wade, "Red River Architecture, 1812-1870," Fine Arts Thesis, U.B.C., 1967, p. 14.

15 F.M. McCauley, McCauleyville, Minnesota to Taché, St. Boniface, 23 March 1871; 20 May 1871. Copies in Belleau Collection.

16 Hargrave, op. cit., p. 178.

17 E.H. Oliver, op. cit., p. 440. Meeting of 20 May 1859.

18 RRC, 1849.

19 HBCA, B.235/d/114, 1849-50, "Settlers' Accounts Winnipeg."

20 Walter Traill, op. cit., pp. 102-103.

21 HBCA, B.235/d/113, "Invoice Book - Lower Red River 1851," fols. 1-5.

22 Robinson, op. cit., p. 319.

23 Born Rupert's Land 1818, grandson of Joseph and Marie-Anne Rondeau. Married Nancy Dease, daughter of Chief Trader John Warren Dease and Genevieve Beignet. By 1849, Gladieux had a farm of 20 acres and over 20 head of livestock.

24 Hind, op. cit., pp. 182-183.

25 Nor'Wester, 15 July 1861.

26 Ibid., Robinson, op. cit., p. 45.
27 Robinson, pp. 45-46.
28 15th July 1861.
29 AASB, Fisher-D'Eschambault Collection. Hercules Dousman, Prairie du Chien, to Fisher, 24 September, 1850.
30 PAM, Ross Family Collection #69. Henrietta Black, Kildonan to her brother James Ross, Toronto, 1854.
31 Ross, op. cit., p. 363. For further comparison of homes and furniture of the period, see Canadian Antiques Collector, Vol. 6, No. 8, December 1971, and Vol. 9, No. 3, May/June 1974.
32 Hargrave, op. cit., p. 349. The disease had been carried to York Factory by the ship "Prince of Wales" in 1863.
33 It is possible that this outbreak had taken Jean-Louis Riel's life, as he died the year before at the age of 46.
34 T.J. Brasser, "Métis Artisans," The Beaver (Autumn, 1976), pp. 55-56.
35 Mayer and the Treaties of 1851, Minnesota History, Vol. 22, 1941, p. 149 in Reardon: Belcourt, etc., p. 102.
36 John McLean, Notes on Twenty-Five Years Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory (London 1849), Vol. II, p. 298.
37 Diary of Bishop Grace of St. Paul, "A Trip to Red River," August to September 1861. Copy in Belleau Collection.
38 In Robinson, op. cit., pp. 40-41.
39 Ibid., p. 267.
40 Ibid., pp. 277-278.

III The Jean-Louis Riel Family in St. Boniface Society

1 France and Ireland, both Catholic countries, during the 17th century became very friendly in their common struggle against Protestant England. Many Irish soldiers

fought in the armies of Louis XIV. There was a significant interchange of people between the two countries in the 17th and 18th centuries, especially fishermen around the port areas. The parents of Jean-Baptiste Riel were of this group.

2 All references to the early history of the Riel family are from Ant. Champagne: La Famille de Louis Riel: Notes Généalogiques et Historiques, (Winnipeg, 1969), passim.

3 Provincial Library of Manitoba. "Louis Riel - Relatives of his Father's side," typescript.

4 Champagne, op. cit., p. 14; LSHSB Collection Louis Riel Famille. Mgr.Bourget to Father Jacques Ovelin, Montreal 21 March 1841, Rapport de l'Arch. de Quebec. 1846-47, p. 139.

5 He never became a teacher. The Grey Nuns arrived at St. Boniface to take over the teaching duties.

6 LSHSB, Collection Louis Riel Famille. Correspondance de Mgr. Bourget, Rapport de l'Arch. de Quebec, p. 423. Bourget to Provencher, 25 April 1843.

7 Champagne, op. cit., enclosure.

8 Jean-Baptiste owned lot 684, and two of his sons later owned lots 682 and 683. (Source: Martin; op. cit., p. 148.)

9 Winnipeg Tribune, 6 April 1930, states that he hunted for a time before establishing his first carding mill.

10 PAM, RRC, 1847. This census is probably not reliable. For example, it indicates that Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière had no acres under cultivation, a fact which could not have been true as two years later he had one of the largest farming operations in St. Boniface.

11 Provencher to Signay, 24 November 1846. Copy in Belleau collection.

12 Oliver, op. cit., meeting of 10 June 1847; Dorge, op. cit., p. 17.

13 W.J. Healey, Women of Red River, (Winnipeg 1923), p. 58. Reminiscences of Mrs. W.R. Black, "He started a mill for carding wool but gave it up and took to farming,"

14 HBCA, D.5/25, 1849. "George Simpson Inward Correspondence," James Sinclair to Simpson, 14 June 1849.

15 Colvile was a trouble-shooter who was sent out by the Company after the Sayer affair in order to defuse the agitation.

16 Foss v. Pelly.

17 HBCA, A.11/95 1829-1853. "London Inward Correspondence from Winnipeg," Major Caldwell (former Governor of Assiniboia) to Sir John Pelly Bart, London, 22 November, 1850, fol. 372.

18 It had not been intended that Colvile should assume the Governorship, since he was already the chief company officer at Fort Garry. He accepted the duties as a result of a petition presented, signed by, among others, Alexander Ross and Andrew McDermot.

19 HBCA, A. 11/95 1829-1853, Caldwell to Sir John Pelly, London, 6 August 1850, fol. 331.

20 AASB, Fisher-D'Eschambault Collection. Bannatyne to Fisher, 24 September 1850.

21 F. Peel to Sir John Pelly, Colonial Office, 30 December 1851, in Morton: Colvile, op. cit., p. cvii.

22 HBCA, A. 11/95, 1829-1853, "London Inward Correspondence," etc. John Black, Chief Factor, Fort Garry, to Barclay, London, 8 August 1853. "I am happy to say that nothing has happened to interrupt the peaceable state of things in the settlement..." fol. 526.

23 PAM, RRC, 1849.

24 Ibid.

25 Taché to Bishop Mazenode, Marseilles, 1852. Copy in Belleau Collection.

26 HBCA, E.16/4 1839-1876. "Councils of Assiniboia

Miscellaneous Papers," Meeting of 9 December 1852. fol. 13.

27 Oliver, op. cit., p. 389. Meeting of 29 March 1853.

28 Evidently the contract was negotiated in September of 1852. Riel finished construction and received payment in March of 1854. (Picton Genealogical Files;) Copy of contract found in the papers of Hay Strafford Stead, artist, on his death, in 1923; HBCA, B.235/a/15, 1851-54. "Extracts from William Black's Private Journal," entry for 27 March 1854. "On the 25th completed the arrangement with Riel for the sum of £100 promised him by Mr. Buchanon on the security of his watermill across the Rivière la Seine," fol. 52.

29 See Martin, op. cit., p. 142.

30 LSHSB, "La Maison Riel à St. Vital,"

31 Entered novitiate 1866 (see footnote 100), became nun March 6, 1868. Died at Ile-a-la-Cross, 27 December 1883. Known as Sister Marguerite Marie. (Champagne, op. cit., enclosure).

32 Died at St. Boniface, January 1873. (Ibid.)

33 Married September, 1875 to Louis Lavallée, probably the grandson of Martin (footnote 38) and son of Pierre Martin Lavallee and Marie Plante. Died at St. Boniface in September 1890. (Picton; PAM, Catholic Parish of St. Boniface M-Film; Champagne; enclosure).

34 Married in February of 1879 to William Gladu, son of Pierre (see above, Part II, footnote 24, H.Y. Hind, Vol. 1, p. 165), and Nancy Dease possibly daughter of John Warren Dease (see footnote 65.) Died in Transcona February 1931. (Picton: Champagne; St. Boniface Parish Records).

35 Died Ste Agathe, Manitoba, September 1875. (Parish Records; Champagne).

36 HBCA, B.235/b/158 1856-57, "Lower Red River District

Settlers' Accounts," fol. 60.

37 HBCA, B.235/d/140 1853-54, "Red River Settlers' Accounts," fol. 97, passim.

38 HBCA, B.235/d/148, "Red River Settlers' Accounts," fol. 54.

39 Ibid., 151, fol. 43.

40 Part I, footnote 89.

41 HBCA, B.235/d/158 1865-57, "Lower Red River District Settlers' Accounts," fol. 60; passim.

42 See above, Part I, footnotes 44, 63, 19). Charles Larance was born in Quebec in 1798. He was apparently involved in illicit trade and by 1849 had a large farming operation, including 66 animals. (RRC, 1849).

43 AASB, Fisher-D'Eschambault Collection, p. 1347. Jean-Louis Riel, Montreal to Harry Fisher, St. Boniface, 7 December 1857. (translation).

44 Ibid., p. 1363. Riel to Fisher, 8 February 1858. (translation).

45 AASB, Taché to the Grand Vicar, 1 May 1858, Copy in Picton Collection.

46 Oliver, op. cit., pp. 448-449. Meeting of December 1859.

47 HBCA, B.235/a/16 1858-60. "Fort Garry Journal," A Hudson's Bay Company employee, Louis Carrière, did the ironwork for Riel. Entries for 5 July 1858, fol. 9; 27 September 1858, fol. 16.

48 Riel's second mill had been built "across the Rivière la Seine," (Black's Journal 27 March 1854). In his first letter to Fisher from Montreal, Riel had told him to place the buildings "in the same direction as my mill."

49 HBCA, B.235/a/16 1858-60. "Fort Garry Journal." 27 September, fol. 16, 8 November fol. 19.

50 Wm. McTavish to Louis Rielle, RRS, 16 August 1858. Copy in Picton Collection; HBCA, B.235/d/168 1858-59, "Settlers' Accounts" fol. 73.

51 HBCA, B.235/b/176 1859-60. "Settlers' Accounts," fol. 73.

52 Owner of the steamboat Anson Northrup (Nor'Wester) 15 March 1861.

53 HBCA, B.235/d/184 1860-61, "Red River District Settlers' Accounts," fol. 62; passim.

54 Ibid., p. 191, fol. 65.

55 Ibid., p. 199, fol. 66.

56 Ibid., p. 227, "Winnipeg 1867-88," fol. 70.

57 Married April 1884 to Eleanore Poitras, daughter of Francois Poitras and Magdeleine Fisher. Died at St. Boniface in May 1921. (St. Vital Catholic Parish Records; Champagne - hereafter Parish Records).

58 Married July 1883, to Jean-Marie Poitras, son of Francois and Eleanore. (It was this wedding that some have stated that Louis Riel attended, but he is not listed among the guests in the Parish Records.) Died at St. Boniface in August 1898. (Parish Records; Champagne).

59 Married in June 1881 to Elise Poitras, daughter of Francois and Magdeleine Fisher. Married a second time in April 1894, to Bibiane Poitras, daughter of the same couple. (Therefore four of the Poitras children married into the Riel family). Died at St. Boniface, September 1938. (Picton; Parish Records; Champagne).

60 15th April 1861, p. 3.

61 Nor'Wester, 15 June 1861; 15 July 1861; 1 August 1861.

62 Ibid., 15 August 1861.

63 Ibid., 14 September 1861.

64 Champagne. (enclosure).

IV. The Lagimodière Family in St. Boniface Society

1 LSHSB. Genealogical notes on Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière; Morice, op. cit., p. 149, says that he was born at

Maskinogé. He was definitely baptized at St. Ours, Quebec on Christmas day, 1778.

2 Soon after the "Lecompte" was dropped and the name eventually became known as "Lajeumonière." It was spelled in this manner until at least 1865.

3 J.C. Saint-Amant, "La famille Lagimodière," La Liberté, 19 January 1927, p. 5.

4 Abbé Dugast: "The First Canadian Woman in the North-West," Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba. Transactions #65, December 12, 1901.

5 LSHSB. Notes of first marriages to Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière IV.

6 There is great confusion as to these dates. Abbé Dugast, Father Saint-Amant, and A.G. Morice say that the marriage took place in April, 1807, and the first child was born in January 1808. The correct information is assumed to be in LSHSB genealogical files, which are taken from church records.

7 (1) Reine, born 26 January 1807, at Pembina. Married in 1822 to Joseph Lamere and moved to America in 1826. She returned to St. Boniface in 1870 and died there in 1893. (2) Jean-Baptiste, nicknamed "Laprairie" born 1808 on the Alberta prairie. Married in June 1827, to Marie Harrison, and died at Lorette, Manitoba in 1886; (3) Josephte, born 1809, or 1810 near the Cypress Hills. She married Amable Nault, Canadien from Berthier, Quebec. She died at St. Pierre, Manitoba, in April 1887; (4) Benjamin, born December 1811, at Pembina. Married Angelique, daughter of André Carrière, in January 1834; (5) Pauline, born 1813. Married Thomas Harrison in 1835 and died at St. Boniface in August 1865; (6) Romain, born 1819. Married twice, the first time in 1841 to Marie Vaudry, and the second time to Julie Ranger, a Sioux; (7) Julie, born 26 July 1820, at St. Boniface. Married Jean-Louis Riel on 21 January 1844, and died at

her son Alexandre's home in St. Vital on 22 May, 1906; (8) Joseph, born 20 December 1825, at St. Boniface. Married Josephte Lussier in about 1845, and died at St. Boniface in February, 1864. Statistics from LSHSB Geneaological Records and from Picton files.

8 Dugast, op. cit., p. 19.

9 Morice, op. cit., p. 149; Dugast, op. cit., p. 23; E.E. Rich, The Fur Trade and the NorthWest to 1857, (Toronto 1967), pp. 221-226.

10 Legal description of land grant from Selkirk to Lagimodière, dated 18 May 1818. Copy in Provincial Library of Manitoba.

11 Dugast, op. cit., pp. 27, 31, 32.

12 Lettres de Monseigneur Joseph-Norbert Provencher, Bulletin de la Société Historique de Saint-Boniface, Vol. III, 1913, Provencher to Monseigneur Panet, Quebec, 10 August, 1828.

13 The Louis Riel Collection, PAM, contain references to the fact that letters had to be read to Mme. Riel.

14 PAM, RRC, 1832.

15 RRC, 1838.

16 RRC, 1843. The sons are being compared against the "Canadien" category because, though they were born in Rupert's Land, their parents were natives of Quebec.

17 RRC, 1847.

18 RRC, 1849.

19 F. Peel to Pelly, 12 December 1851. In Morton, Colvile P. cvii; Morice op. cit., p. 148.

20 HBCA, B.235/d/143, 1853-54, "Red River Colonists Accounts with Hudson's Bay Company," fol. 7.

21 Ibid., p. 211, fol. 9. He had died on September 7, 1855.

22 Martin, op. cit., p. 148.

23 HBCA, B.235/a/16 1858-60. "Fort Garry Journal," Entries, of 19 October; 25 October; 26 October, 1858, fol. 18.

On these days grain was sent out or flour received from "Lagermonier's mill."

24 HBCA, "Register B," "24 Ac. at the back of this lot to Benjamin Lajeumonière - the rest transferred to Joseph Landrie - February 29, 1864."

Appendix A. Average number of Red River carts owned by heads of households, according to religious affiliation and birthplace, in St. Boniface, Grantown, and the English Settlement.

	1832	1838	1842	1847	1849
St. Boniface					
Roman Catholics Born in:					
Canada	138	138	120	107	129
Mean	.73	2.02	2.08	1.99	2.23
Rupert's Land	79	126	168	117	159
Mean	.48	1.5	2.13	1.70	1.86
Grantown					
Roman Catholics Born in:					
Canada	-	21	30	37	26
Mean	-	2.71	2.43	2.08	1.96
Rupert's Land	-	66	134	128	122
Mean	-	2.44	2.15	2.16	2.37
English Settlement:					
Protestants Born in:					
Orkneys	50	66	59	(a)	(a)
Mean	.94	1.61	2.48		
Scotland	50	66	59	102	121
Mean	1.02	1.61	2.46	3.26	3.31
Rupert's Land	92	134	155	199	226
Mean	.29	1.28	1.34	1.25	1.35

Source: PAM Red River Census.

(a) For these two censuses Orkneymen were combined with the Scots.

Appendix B. Religious affiliation at three major settlements, broken down by place of birth.

	1832	1838	1843	1847	1849
Total Number of Householders	448	708	884	848	831
St. Boniface:					
R.C. Born in Canada	140	138	120	107	125
R.C. Born in Rupert's Land	79	126	168	117	148
English Settlement:					
Prot. Born in Scotland	50	46	48	102	121
Prot. Born in Rupert's Land	92	134	155	199	226
Prot. Born in Orkneys	50	66	59	(a)	(a)
Grantown:					
R.C. Born in Canada	-	21	30	30	26
R.C. Born in Rupert's Land	-	66	134	128	122

Source: PAM Red River Census.

(a) For these two census Orkneymen were combined with the Scots.

Appendix C. Hudson's Bay Company "Ledger" for land purchases in the period 1848-50. Those listed also appear in the 1849 Red River Census of St. Boniface.

Name	Acreage Purchased	Price	Lot No.
Louis Bousquet	50	£18.15	802
Louis Berrard	50	18.15	258
Benjamin Beauchemin	30	11.15	810
Joseph Capulette[a]	37	9.15	935
Elie Carrière[b]	37	13.7.6	319
Moise Carrière	31	11.12.6	307
Michel Dauphiné	83	20.15	857
John Dease	65	24.7.6	332
Baptiste Desmarais	73	27.7.6	541
Baptiste Desjardins	50	18.15	331
Michel Dumas	25	9.7.6	318
Baptiste Dupuis	25	6.5	272
Salomon Hamelin	50	18.15	789
Antoine Hoole	42 1/3	10.11.8	781, 782
Philbert Laderoute	50	18.15	273
Amable Lafond	84	31.10	380, 309
Joseph Lafournaise	50	12.10	766
Joseph Lagimodière	34	12.15	673
Alexis Laliberte	25	9.7.6	829
Baptiste Lepine[c]	90	22.10	1488
Charles Larocque	28	10.10	305
Martin Lavallee	25	9.7.6	257
Baptiste Moreau	83	31.2.6	860
Arsen Morrisette	15	5.12.6	316
Joseph Parenteau	35	8.15	768

Name	Acreage Purchased	Price	Lot No.
Pierre Parenteau	50	12.10	783
Baptiste Parisien	4	1.0	304
Norbert Perrault	14	5.5	315
Joseph Robillard	50	18.15	1212
Vital Turcotte	45	11.5.0	930
Antoine Vandalle	65	16.5	859

Source: HBCA, B.235/d/113, 1848-50, "Ledger, Winnipeg." A complete list of those who held land is given in Archer Martin; The Hudson's Bay Company Land Tenures, (London, 1898).

[a]Born 1769 in Quebec. Voyageur for N.W. Co. Married Angelique Guiboche, 1833. (Picton).

[b]Born Rupert's Land 1822, sone of André. Married in 1844 to Elmire Landry. Died St. Pierre, 1910. (Picton)

[c]Born in Quebec in 1793. Father of the Honorable Ambroise Dydime Lepine.

Appendix D. Average acreage cultivated by heads of households, according to religious affiliations and birthplace, in St. Boniface, Grantown, and the English Settlement.

	1832	1838	1843	1847	1849
St. Boniface					
Roman Catholics Born in:					
Canada	138	138	120	107	129
Average Acreage	5.44	3.89	7.67	8.76	9.87
Rupert's Land	79	126	168	117	159
Average Acreage	2.73	1.97	4.02	3.47	5.19
Grantown					
Roman Catholics Born in:					
Canada	-	21	30	37	26
Average Acreage	-	-	1.23	2.62	5.07
Rupert's Land	-	66	134	128	122
Average Acreage	-	-	2.55	1.98	2.40
English Settlement:					
Protestants Born in:					
Orkneys	50	66	59	(a)	-
Average Acreage	7.5	10.07	12.78	-	-
Scotland	50	46	48	102	121
Average Acreage	6.97	9.67	11.04	13.31	13.15
Rupert's Land	92	134	155	199	226
Average Acreage	3.36	4.65	5.07	5.52	5.9

(a) For these two censuses Orkneymen were combined with the Scots.

Appendix E. Average number of cows, pigs, and sheep owned by heads of households, according to religious affiliation and birthplace, in St. Boniface, Grantown, and the English Settlement.

	1832			1838		
	Cows	Pigs	Sheep	Cows	Pigs	Sheep
St. Boniface						
Roman Catholics						
Born in:						
Canada	138	-	-	138	-	-
Number	324	719	-	346	465	8
Average	2.35	5.21	-	2.51	3.37	.06
Rupert's Land	79	-	-	126	-	-
Number	118	217	-	159	192	3
Average	1.49	2.75	-	1.27	1.52	.02
Grantown						
Roman Catholics						
Born in:						
Canada	-	-	-	21	-	-
Number	-	-	-	64	75	-
Average	-	-	-	3.05	3.57	-
Rupert's Land	-	-	-	66	-	-
Number	-	-	-	93	39	-
Average	-	-	-	1.41	.59	-
English Settlement						
Protestants Born						
Born in:						

	1832			1838		
	Cows	Pigs	Sheep	Cows	Pigs	Sheep
Orkneys	51	-	-	66	-	-
Number	205	394	-	306	354	146
Average	4.02	7.88	-	4.63	5.36	2.21
Scotland	50	-	-	46	-	-
Number	213	180	-	229	109	140
Average	4.26	3.6	-	4.98	2.37	3.04
Rupert's Land	92	-	-	134	-	-
Number	188	-	-	287	299	67
Average	2.04	-	-	2.14	2.23	.5

Sources: PAM, Red River Census

1843			1847			1849		
Cows	Pigs	Sheep	Cows	Pigs	Sheep	Cows	Pigs	Sheep
120	-	-	107	-	-	129	-	-
344	508	731	288	611	407	313	382	341
2.87	4.23	6.09	2.7	5.71	3.81	2.42	2.96	2.64
168	-	-	117	-	-	159	-	-
256	308	159	195	455	130	221	157	89
1.52	1.83	.95	1.66	3.89	1.11	1.39	.99	.56
30	-	-	37	-	-	26	-	-
37	55	41	52	96	17	42	55	38
1.23	1.83	1.37	1.4	2.6	.46	1.61	2.12	1.46
134	-	-	128	-	-	122	-	-
138	100	108	126	157	90	129	56	91
1.03	.75	.81	.98	1.22	.71	1.06	.46	.75

1843			1847			1849		
Cows	Pigs	Sheep	Cows	Pigs	Sheep	Cows	Pigs	Sheep
59	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
314	292	651	-	-	-	-	-	-
5.32	4.94	11.03	-	-	-	-	-	-
48	-	-	102	-	-	121	-	-
276	129	839	736	830	1858	749	322	1852
5.75	2.69	17.48	7.21	8.13	18.22	6.2	2.66	15.31
155	-	-	199	-	-	226	-	-
387	380	473	554	879	636	450	283	404
2.5	2.45	3.01	2.79	4.41	3.12	1.99	1.25	1.79

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Riel House, St. Vital, Manitoba
Prairie Region
by Robert Gosman
July, 1975

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1 Introduction
20 Endnotes
25 Appendix A. Louis Goulet, born 1859 along the Red River, Talks of Métis Home Construction.
28 Appendix B. A Note on the Use of Clay Plaster Construction in the Earliest Years of the Red River Settlement.
31 Appendix C. Louis Schmidt Talks of the Customs and Habits of the Early Métis.

Illustrations

41 1 Louis Riel Sr. (on right). The other gentleman is believed to be William Sayer.
43 2 Louis Riel Jr.
45 3 Riel House 1886.
47 4 Riel House 1958.

Introduction

The Riel home, located at 330 River Road, St. Vital, Manitoba, has been in the possession of the Government of Canada since the 15th of April 1970. The property was originally purchased for restoration purposes by the Manitoba Historical Society in April of 1968. The president of that organization, Steward Martin, stated at that time, "The offer to purchase was made on the understanding the federal government would maintain the house and grounds as a national historic site museum."[1]

The purpose of this report is basically threefold: to collate the salient points of the various historical and architectural investigations that have been done on Riel house; to expand upon this research where possible, and finally to suggest future directions for departmental endeavours. This document in no way lays claim to being the definitive study upon which a comprehensive planning proposal can be based; hopefully it will provide an up-to-date perspective of the possibilities that exist for this historic resource.

The overriding issue is the vexatious question of "historical significance." What effect did this house (or for that matter can any house) have on the life of an important individual, in this case Louis Riel, now viewed by many as the "founder" of Manitoba? A further question is how much importance did the Métis attach to homes, property, possessions generally? One of the major causes of both the Red River Rebellion of 1869-70 and the Northwest Rebellion of 1885 was the relentless march of Ontario settlers to the western plains, those whose religion and traditional concepts of land tenure presented a major threat to the Métis' nomadic way of life. The Métis society developed as an adjunct to

the buffalo hunt and the hunt remained the principle dynamic in that society. Although they did plant a few acres the Métis were not proficient agriculturalists and did not have strong ties to the soil. Without lapsing into a philosophical dissertation on the importance of cultural differences, it should nevertheless be borne in mind that what might be important to our own acquisitive society may not be to one which places less emphasis on locational stability and ownership of land and houses. Dalnavert, for example, with its Victorian elegance (if such a thing is possible) and ornate furnishings was almost a declaration of social status by Hugh John Macdonald and says much about the man and the elite of Winnipeg society of the day. Can the same types of things be said about Riel house, the primary function of which, at least during the pre-1880 period, was to provide protection from the elements? In one case it is obvious that the home can play an important role in interpreting the individual and his relationship to his society; in the other such a conclusion is not so apparent. Perhaps the greatest danger, at least in the context of historical accuracy and balance, is placing a great deal of emphasis upon something, in this case the Riel home, which may have played a relatively small part in this important individual's life.

Leaving aside the broader aspects of what constitutes "significance", a necessarily narrower "site-oriented" approach has been adopted, both in summarizing previous reports and dealing with any new evidence that has been discovered.

A 1967 Historic Sites and Monuments Board Staff Report on Riel house stated that "the house itself has not been dated with any certainty but it seems likely that it may have been standing at the time when Louis Riel lived at St. Vital." The report goes on to hypothesize that the

home may have been the scene for meetings of the Métis National Committee and reports that Mrs. Yvonne Riel, the owner in 1967, had known both Alexandre and Joseph Riel, brothers of Louis, and said that they had always referred to the house as the one that the rebel chieftain had lived in. The report concludes by stating that "it cannot be said conclusively that it (the Riel house) was occupied by Louis Riel during this period...but that family and local tradition confirm that it might well have been." Appended to the report is the record of a telephone call to the Manitoba Provincial Archivist, Hartwell Bowsfield, from Mrs. Yvonne Riel, in which the latter stated that she had visited Mrs. Josephine Carrière, daughter of Joseph Riel and niece of Louis and that she (Mrs. Carrière) had stated that Louis' mother had moved to the house on River Road after the death of her husband (1864) and was there until the end of her life. This is at best only partially accurate and points to the danger of relying on such family legend. In actual fact by the time of her death in 1906 Julie Riel had moved from the River Road home to that of her son, Alexandre, located on St. Anne's Road. A Winnipeg Free Press article of that year portrayed the deathbed scene of Julie Riel with some description of Alexandre's home.[2] Further corroborative evidence that Julie did indeed move at least once after Louis' death in 1885 is contained in a letter from Mrs. Lucie Lee to Julie. Though undated, it mentions commemorating the anniversary of Louis' death and bids Mme Riel well in her new home.[3]

Proceeding chronologically, the next report on Riel house was a Restoration Progress Report submitted by John Chivers in May 1969. It described some of the artifacts uncovered in the process of investigation, including "a small bottle of gun powder, and a small bottle of gun shot. The powder is still good." Also found was a promissory note

issued on the Union Bank of Canada in the amount of $216.92 in the name of S.A.D. Bertrand and dated April 13, 1899. At this time the stripping down of the building was in full progress under the direction of Mr. Chivers. Scheduled for the first week of June 1969, was the removal of a shed on the west side of the house, being "very obviously not original." The report contained assurances that "photographs are being taken as the stripping progresses, and a team of three draftsmen has started to set up grids and take field notes." Nowhere in this brief report is an opinion ventured on the original construction date.

The first detailed historical investigation of Riel house was conducted by department historian Jean-Pierre Proulx in the summer of 1972. In it he states that "apparently this house has been built after 1864 and before 1870. There is sufficient documentary evidence to prove that Louis lived in this house during the 1869-70 rebellion." (I am extrapolating from this report only references to 330 River Road, not other Riel homes which are also mentioned.) The report cites evidence leading to two possible dates for original construction: 1865 or 1867-68, but qualifies this by making mention of the fact that Julie may have first lived in a little house at the back rather than in the main house which still stands. The difficulty which Mr. Proulx encountered, and which was also experienced in the research found for this report, was that of associating the Riel family with the still-extant structure during the critical period from 1869 to 1873. While it can be shown beyond any reasonable doubt that the Riel family was living on the Red River frontage of river lot 51 well before the dramatic events of the uprising, it is only through circumstantial evidence that the present structure can be inferred as being in existence during all or part of this critical period. Family correspondence, for example, while it does occasionally

describe repairs and renovations, never details the exact location, dimensions, and architectural characteristics being discussed.

In 1973 an Architectural Investigation Report was completed for the department by Restoration Architect Ken Elder. This lengthy and somewhat technical document noted that no archaeological investigation had been carried out up until that time (and has not been to the present--July 1975). It is rather critical of the stripping-down process undertaken by Mr. Chivers, stating that what were considered "later" elements of the house were removed. "Evidence for the interior appearance comes from a single roll of film taken by R. Huggins, NHPS Branch." Later (p. 82) it is noted that "a number of notches cut in the horizontal infill...do not relate to their use as infill," suggesting that the house may be constructed of material used in a previous structure. Re-emphasized is the need for an excavation. "Until an archaeological investigation of the basement and crawl space is carried out any conclusions about earlier root cellars or other cellars cannot be made." (p. 103) It notes the discovery of some interesting artifacts on the stripped north wall of the house, including an advertisement relating to the Boer War (ca. 1902), a newspaper remnant dated 1891, "and a quarto printed page of unknown origin containing Canadian Government, Finance Department, reports of Dec. 10, 1874, p. 760."

The above-described reports contain nearly all of the information concerning Riel house in the possession of Parks Canada as of May 1975. None of them positively date the house nor yield any conclusive finding as to what (if any) association can be drawn between this structure and the individual, Louis Riel.

The evidence collected from this report will hopefully not duplicate that already gathered. However, at times this

is unavoidable for the purposes of continuity and contextual understanding. As much as possible the research is "site-oriented" rather than thematic, although once again such digressions were sometimes unavoidable.

River lot 51 in St. Vital comprises lots 793 and 794 of the Hudson's Bay Co. land registry system . The 1542 lots extending from the junction of the Red and Assiniboine were originally surveyed by George Taylor in the years 1836-38.[4] Lot 793, upon which Riel house stands, was first occupied by Pierre Parenteau and was acquired by him from the H.B.C. on March 20, 1835, 50 acres as a grant and 50 acres at 5 shillings each.[5] The Red River Census of 1838 lists a Pierre Parenteau as being 40 years old with a wife and 5 children, owning a house and stable and cultivating 5 acres.[6] In 1849 one François Gendron acquired the land from Parenteau.[7] The census of that year lists a François Gendron as being a 40-year-old native of Rupert's Land with a wife and four children. He owned a house, a stable, and a barn, had a variety of livestock and was cultivating 8 acres.[8] On Feb. 29, 1864 lot 793 was broken up, with 24 acres at the "back" (Red River frontage?) being transferred to Benjamin Lajeumonière (Julie Riel's brother) and the rest. to Joseph Landrie.[9]

Lot 794, comprising 50 acres, was acquired from the H.B.C. by Charles Beauchamp on April 13, 1835, half being free and half at 7 shillings per acre.[10] In the census of 1838 Beauchamp is listed as being married with one son, owning a house and stable, some livestock and implements, with 3 acres under cultivation.[11] The property eventually came into the hands of Antoine Desjardins, probably in 1844, for the census entries for Beauchamp cease after 1843.[12] In the 1849 census Desjardins is listed as being a 49-year-old native of Rupert's Land married with a wife and 7 children, the owner of a house, 2 stables and a barn plus

a substantial amount of livestock, and with 6 acres under cultivation.[13] Such was the history of the two lots prior to the Riel family's move to the River Road property in 1864-65.

Julie Lagimodière and Jean- Louis Riel, parents of the rebel leader, were married on Jan. 21, 1843 and according to George Stanley, "went to live in a log cabin not far from the house of her parents."[14] Julie's parents had moved to land near the junction of the Seine and the Red after the flood of 1826. In 1847 Jean-Louis erected on his farm the first of 3 unsuccessful mills.[15] Mrs. W.R. Black, granddaughter of pioneer Catherine McPherson, recounts this from personal recollection:

> The house my grandfather and grandmother lived in at Point Douglas near where the Louise Bridge is now was across the river from the house of the father of Louis Riel...he started a mill for carding wool near the Seine River, but gave it up and took to farming. I can shut my eyes now and see the white washed log cabin of the Riel's.[16]

The 1849 census listed Louis Rielle* as being married with a son and daughter, owning a house and stable, 17 livestock, a plough, harrow, two carts, a canoe, and with 10 acres under cultivation.[17]

In 1853 Louis Sr. bought milling equipment from the H.B.C. and erected another mill on the Seine, this one water-powered.[18] This must have been on the Seine frontage of lot 756, south of the junction and near what is now Carrière Avenue. Hudson's Bay Company Register "B" records that lot 756 was "transferred by the H.B.C. to Louis Rielle dit Irelande to be paid in flour in the spring of 1855 - permission[?]given to Louis Rielle to form a canal going[?]

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*Many names had more than one spelling version.

to his mill amongst certain lots mentioned below. For the yearly amount of 51/.[19] Though the writing in Register "B" is very difficult to read it is clear that Louis Sr. purchased lot 756 some time before the year 1855, most probably in 1853 or 1854. George Stanley says that when Louis Jr. was about seven years old, which would have been in 1851 or 1852, the family was in the process of moving,[20] but in this as well as many other instances, he provides no documentation for his claim.

Lot 756 is the only lot which is listed as being owned by Jean-Louis Riel in Register "B". Nevertheless, it has been well documented that he built another mill on the Seine River frontage of what is now lot 51. This would have been near rue de la Giclais or what is now rue Sterling. Stanley says the machinery for this new mill was purchased in Montreal in 1857.[21] This was Jean-Louis' most ambitious undertaking but following the pattern of his previous business ventures, it was not particularly successful. All that remains of this structure are the millstones which were discovered buried on Bruce Road, St. Vital, in 1949, and are now displayed on the grounds of the St. Boniface Museum.[22] There is some doubt as to the exact year of construction of this third mill. Marius Benoist, curator of the Museum, places it about 1853. He states: "Eulalie, Mme Gladu, (soeur de Louis) dit être née, dans une maison de la rue Sterling, maison qui existe peut-être encore en 1853."[23] Although the construction date is not worth belabouring, it would seem that Register "B" which was a contemporary document, and which places the Riel family at lot 756 at least until the mid-1850s, should take precedence here.

Jean-Louis Riel died on Jan. 21, 1864 and soon after his widow and seven children remaining at home (Louis was in Montreal) moved to another dwelling on the Red River

frontage of the present lot 51. The date for this move would be 1864 or 1865. A document on file at the Manitoba Archives, written in 1906 by Louis' younger brother Joseph, states the following: "It was he (Louis Jr.) who worked the land on which I now live - on lot 51, St. Vital. The whole family came to live in St. Vital in the fall of 1864, after my father's death."[24] Joseph does not say that the family moved originally into the home in which he was living in 1906, which is definitely the structure which still stands at 330 River Road, only that the family moved onto the property. In 1906 Joseph would have been 49 years of age, and presumably would have had fairly accurate recollection. Had there been an earlier dwelling than that still standing, a claim that has been made and which will be discussed later, then would Joseph not have mentioned this fact? Unfortunately the above-cited document, which was left unfinished, does not clarify this ambiguity. Fifteen years later, a newspaper report on the critical illness of Joseph stated: "The house in which Joseph Riel lives is the same building in which Louis Riel lived during the stirring events surrounding the earlier days of the province. In 1865 the family moved to the present home of Joseph."[25]

The earlier-described information from Mrs. Carrière, though at least partially inaccurate, nevertheless dates the house to 1864. Mr. Proulx in his report mentions visiting another Mrs. Carrière of the Métis Historical Society, who believes that when Julie Riel moved to the present property, she first lived not in the still-extant structure but in a little house at the back.[26] This is the only reference discovered relating to an earlier home on the present site. The definitive answer to this question awaits a thorough archaeological investigation since the written sources do not shed any light on this matter. Further, given that occupancy of the property dates to at least 1832 and that

early censuses describe the existence of other structures on the present property, it would not be surprising if evidence confirmed the existence of another building.

More confusion as to the presence of an earlier home is added by an article in Winnipeg Homes in which Honoré Riel, nephew of Louis and the occupant of the present home until his death in 1947 stated: "My father (Joseph) told me the house was built in 1867 or 1868 and Louis Riel lived in it before the trouble of '68."[27] We therefore have Joseph Riel writing that the family moved to the present property in 1864 and telling his son that the house was built in 1867 or 1868. This would substantiate the possibility that there was in fact an earlier home. The definitive date as to the exact year of construction of the present structure is either not discoverable or will have to await future research. The Louis Riel Collection at the Manitoba Archives contains no material pertaining to the period between April 19, 1864, which was before the move to the present property and Jan. 25, 1868, a date by which the home was in all likelihood constructed.

Later correspondence in both this collection and in the Riel Family Papers, does describe various improvements to a home, while making no mention of an actual complete home construction. Given that all of the letters, etc., of the post-1868 period have not been retained, it would still seem illogical that various renovations would be mentioned while a complete construction was ignored. The only conclusion that the writer can draw is that the present house does in fact date from prior to 1868, and that it was definitely occupied by the Riel family. Even if one assumes that the family occupied a smaller, temporary home for a short period of time after their move, this does not detract

from the importance of the present structure which almost certainly predated the dramatic events of 1869-70.

What association did Louis Riel personally have with this home? Riel had left the Red River settlement as a youth of 13 in 1858 to study under the Roman Catholic clergy in Montreal and did not return until July 26, 1868.[28] That he immediately moved into his mother's home (the present structure) seems indisputable. Major Boulton in his Reminiscences reproduced a clipping attributing the following to Archbishop Taché: "He went to the United States and remained there until he returned to *his mother's* [italics mine] in the Red River Settlement in the Fall of 1868."[29] An 1885 newspaper account of Riel's life said that in 1868 he "returns home and becomes a farmer in St. Vital."[30] Joseph Kinsey Howard wrote, but did not document, the following: "He moved in with his mother in Julie's comfortable little cottage in St. Vital, on the Assiniboine [sic] near the St. Boniface cathedral and school."[31]

Louis Schmidt, an old friend of Riel's, described their first meeting after his return: "J'allai le voir peu après, et il me demande de demeurer avec lui pendant quelques temps, ce que je fis bien voluntiers."[32] Schmidt and Riel spent many hours discussing the darkening situation of the Métis and with great foreboding awaited the impending transfer of the territory to Canada. In January of 1869 Riel purchased river lot 796 from François LaRivière, which was a short distance to the south of his mother's property.[33] This proximity would have allowed him to live in her home while farming his own land.

On Oct. 11, 1869, Riel at the head of a group of Métis horsemen, stopped a Canadian Government survey team which was running its lines on land belonging to André Nault.[34] During the ensuing week the executive of the newly formed Métis "National Committee" met frequently at St. Norbert and

St. Vital.[35] At this time Riel was the Secretary and John Bruce the President. It is reasonable to assume that some of these deliberations took place in the 330 River Road home, as Riel was one of the leaders and it would have been a place of relative security.

On Nov. 3, 1869, the Métis took possession of Fort Garry[36] and on Dec. 27 of that year Riel became President of the "Republic" of Manitoba.[37] During the interval between the capture of the Fort and the arrival of Garnet Wolseley's troops in Aug. of 1870, Riel made only infrequent visits to his mother's home. When not staying at the Fort he spent his time at the home of Henri Coutu. Alexander Begg, a resident of Winnipeg during the turbulent period, kept a meticulous diary which includes some references to Riel and his movements. For example, the entry for Feb. 15, 1870 states:

> There was a rumor today that between 80 and 100 men from Headingly passed through the town this morning about 4 o'clock on their way down the settlement in the direction of the Stone Fort - as they passed they surrounded Henri Coutu's house (where Riel has been in the habit of staying at night) and asked if he was there - no doubt for the purpose of taking him prisoner."[38]

For Feb. 24, 1870 it reads: "Riel was taken very ill this morning at Henri Coutu's being threatened with an attack of brain fever."[39] The memoirs of Louis Schmidt, Secretary of the first Provisional Government, confirm that Riel also lived in Fort Garry at times. "Some days later (after Schmidt's arrival back at the settlement) when I had put a little order into things at home, I went myself to live in the fort *with Riel*."[40] [Italics mine.]

Wolseley arrived on Aug. 24, 1870, Riel remaining there

until virtually the last possible minute before beginning his fugitive's trek to the U.S. Almost from the time of his arrival there he began to make plans to return to St. Vital, which he ultimately did on June 10, 1871.[41] Although he was technically an outlaw, he lived a rather open existence and his presence soon became widely known. Archbishop Taché, in his deposition to the Select House of Commons Committee investigating the disturbances, stated: "....Within several days (of his return to St. Vital) even some of his former adversaries were calling to see him at St. Vital 'in crowds.'"[42]

In Sept. of 1871 Riel became the Secretary of a committee established to investigate the promises the Canadian government had made to the Métis as well as to discuss armed support of the government against the threat of Fenian raids from the U.S. The first meeting of the committee, which was composed of a dozen leading Métis, took place in the home of Riel's mother on Sept. 28, 1871. Further meetings of the group were held there on Oct. 5, 6, and 8 of that year.[43] This verifies that serious deliberations definitely took place in the present structure.

Riel's open presence in St. Vital invoked an increasing hostility among the Canadian contingent at Winnipeg. On Dec. 8, 1871 a group of them attempted to seize him at his mother's home, prompting a letter of protest to Lieutenant-Governor A.G. Archibald. "Last night men entered the home of Louis Riel in St. Vital saying they had a warrant for his arrest; Riel being absent they threatened the ladies with firearms..."[44] With his safety in question Riel was finally forced to leave St. Vital in Feb. of 1872.[45] He went to St. Paul but felt threatened there as well and by July of that year he was back living in the family home in St. Vital. From Ile-à-la-Crosse his sister Sara wrote: "Your return from exile is a great joy for me: you are for the children and mother a good father."[46]

Riel remained very involved in political issues and in July of 1873 decided to run for Parliament, receiving the support of some of the most prominent Métis and francophone citizens.[47] However, in late Sept. of that year he was once again forced to return to the U.S. and only learned of his election in a letter from Joseph Dubuc.[48] Twice more he was elected to represent Provencher constituency, in Feb. and Sept. of 1874, but he never returned to the Red River settlement.[49] Therefore his association with St. Vital and the present home lasted from July of 1868 until Sept. of 1873, excepting his residence at Ft. Garry and his sojourns in the U.S.

The uncatalogued Louis Riel Family Papers at the Public Archives of Manitoba contain several references to activities around the farmstead--descriptions of home and yard improvements, crops planted, visitors, etc. These provide a quite valuable insight into how Riel family members reacted to one another and to their environment. This correspondence would have been even more valuable save for the fact that Mme Riel, who would have been the logical person to be passing on family news, was unable to write.[50] Consequently most of the letters are directed <u>to</u> the family home from individuals relating their own news--this being of little value in finding information on the Riel home specifically. In addition there is the obvious problem that letters which did emanate from the Riel home and which went in all directions are less likely to be traceable for archival acquisition than letters going to the home. A final important qualifying consideration is that correspondence collected by the P.A.M. does not begin until 1870 and is sparse for the first few years.

In April of 1872 Marie Riel writes the following to her brother Louis from St. Vital:

> Now I will tell you that we are thinking of sowing 10 kegs (barrels) of wheat and barley, 8 of peas, 12 barrels of potatoes, cabbages of (?), lots of them, to make the garden as large as we can. We are preparing to have the house covered and to get a shed built.[51]

A few days later she wrote: "The sowing has not been started yet...The [fence?] is almost finished."[52] A later letter informs Louis of the following: "My dear brother, the sowing is almost finished. There are 26 barrels of grain in the ground and also 10 barrels of potatoes....Half the garden is sown with onions."[53] With regard to Marie's first letter referring to getting the house covered, it would appear that an existing home is being covered with some material, whitewash or weatherproofing perhaps, rather than to an actual construction.

In an 1873 letter from St. Vital, Louis tells his sister Sara: "The grasshoppers have cleaned out practically everything, even the (violet grass?). Several fields of peas remained fairly untouched."[54] References to crops appear again a few years later in this letter from Mme Riel to Louis: "We have had a fairly good harvest: 113 barrels of oats, 70 of wheat, the barley hasn't been harvested yet."[55]

Later that same year she writes to Louis about selling the land he had purchased in 1869. "He (Louison) wanted to buy the land you bought from François LaRivière, but I didn't sell it because it is yours." In the same letter she refers to another property which Louis owns: "We had intended on selling Boder's land for $300...we do not want to do anything until we have your opinion on the matter."[56] In early 1878 Louis writes her back: "Dearest mother, you asked me last spring if you could sell Boder's land. I answered you twice that not only could you sell his land, but also all the other lands I have."[57]

Louis' land holdings at this time should have been the following: "Boder's" land although it is not listed in any H.B.C. material or in the various censuses; lot 756, the site of his father's mill (referred to earlier) and which on a map of Red River drawn in 1871 is indicated as belonging to "Louis Riel;" and land at Pointe-à-Grouette which he had purchased from Cyril Dumas.[59]

In February of 1878 Mme Riel received from Louis full authorization to dispose of all property he owned. In a return letter she mentions a house on the property referred to as having once belonged to Boder. "I don't know whether I should sell it and for what price, leave it as is, or have it transported here and repair it."[60] Writing later to his younger brother Joseph (who lived with Mme Riel) Louis says: "Do what you want with it (Boder's house). Have it transported if you think it will be more useful to you near the big river. I guess the house must be in need of repairs."[61]

Although there are no further references to "Boder's" house, it is possible that it was transported to the "big river"--the Red River. However, at no time was it mentioned as a replacement for the family home. When Louis refers to it being "useful," he might well have meant as a storage area, as material for another structure, or even as firewood. The fact that it was in poor repair further detracts from the possibility it was used as a family dwelling.

There are no further references to the family home until the spring of 1880 when Joseph writes to Louis: "I haven't been able to do any work on the house. The money is scarce and lumber expensive."[62] Later in the summer he writes: "I had repairs done on the house and there it is still....I sold two cows to get the bit of lumber needed and at this hour I am pondering the course to take."[63] The following year he writes: "I had someone working on the house and it is almost completed."[64]

The foregoing are the extent of the references to the house contained in the Family Papers. They are not extensive and do not itemize exactly what changes were made over the time period. Since the period of major interest is 1869-73, the further into the future one goes from that point, the less relevant are the details (or lack thereof) of architectural changes. However, description of typical house construction of the period (and most homes were very similar) can be found in the appendices to this paper, notably the reminiscences of Louis Goulet.

There are some newspaper references to the Riel home dating from the mid-1880s period, although it should be pointed out that there were many changes in the Métis culture, and therefore life-styles, in the years between 1870 and 1885, at least in Manitoba. One report on the family just after Riel was hanged contained the following description of the home: "The walls of their house was [sic] hung with devotional pictures and other emblems of their faith."[65] Another report followed the arrival of Riel's body:

> The coffin was placed in a vehicle and conveyed to the residence of the deceased's mother, at St. Vital....The wife of Riel lay on a bed on one side of the room...while Madame Riel... swung a hammock in which lay the other child.[66]

There were some references uncovered relating to the later history of the dwelling. In May of 1898 Joseph Riel, who lived in the house from the time of its construction, applied for a Post Office franchise, which was eventually granted in August of the following year.[67] This dates the non-original lean-to addition on the north side of the house, which was erected to contain the Post Office. The postal station was originally known as "St. Vital East,"[68] but the name was changed to "Riel Post Office" in about 1909.

Evidence on the Riel house specifically has proven very difficult to obtain with substantive results quite limited when related to time input. The question arises as to whether substantial information exists from any sources. It is quite probable, however, that a study of comparative Métis architecture could provide many answers, especially in view of the fact that Métis river lot homes were very similar to one another. Further research will be necessary to provide details on landscape, furniture styles, and construction method, for instance. As pointed out earlier, an archaeological investigation would probably prove quite valuable.

On the question of the land between the house and the river, the writer believes that any future plans involving this structure must take into consideration the importance of the river frontage and the proximity of the house to it. Here are the words of W.L. Morton, probably the most eminent historian of Western Canada: "Water, shelter, ease of travel, drainage, the desire for neighbourhood, the fixed belief that it was impossible to cultivate the plains, all these kept agriculture joined to the rivers."[69] It is very fortunate that in an area of rapid urban development that the land in question, which incidentally comprises only a small part of the original Riel river lot, should still be unsullied.

In conclusion, the writer believes that the Riel house is an extremely valuable historical resource (given the qualifications expressed at the beginning of this report). This is a structure that can be related to a nationally significant individual, when his influence was at its peak. That it should still be standing is a piece of extraordinary good fortune. A restoration programme concentrating on the period 1869-73 would be a worthwhile undertaking from the standpoint of recognizing a nationally important man, of

fulfilling a heritage preservation objective, and of increasing cultural understanding.

Endnotes

[1]Quoted in the Winnipeg Free Press, April 12, 1968.

[2]Winnipeg Free Press, Jan. 27, 1906, p. 24. This article speaks of Alexander's home being on the Red River, not the Seine. This would appear to be a mistake, since Alexander's obituary in the Free Press, Aug. 22, 1938, says he died on the homestead in St. Vital "which had been acquired by his father, Louis Riel (Sr.) known in his day as the miller of the Seine." Jean-Louis Riel had never lived on the Red River, having built three mills on the Seine.

[3]P.A.M., Louis Riel Collection 1860-1926, Lucie Lee to Julie Riel, n.d.

[4]Archer Martin, The Hudson's Bay Company's Land Tenures (London, 1898), p. 115.

[5]Hudson's Bay Company Archives "List of Grantees of Lands in Assiniboia Under the Earl of the Selkirk and the Hudson's Bay Company, From 1812 to July 14, 1870," usually referred to as "Register 'B'." "Memo Respecting Grants of Land in Red River Colony, No. 2."

[6]P.A.M., Red River Census - 1838.

[7]H.B.C. Archives, Register "B".

[8]P.A.M., Red River Census - 1849.

[9]H.B.C. Archives, Register "B".

[10]H.B.C. Archives, "Memo Respecting Grants" etc.

[11]P.A.M., Red River Census - 1842.

[12]H.B.C. Archives, Register "B".

[13]P.A.M., Red River Census - 1849.

[14]George Stanley, Louis Riel (Toronto, 1963), p. 2.

[15]Ibid., p. 16.

[16]W.J. Healey, Women of Red River (Winnipeg, 1923) p. 58.

[17]P.A.M., Red River Census - 1849.

[18]Stanley, op. cit., p. 16, from E.H. Oliver, The Canadian North-West, its Early Development and Legislative Records (Ottawa, 1914), p. 267 note.

[19]H.B.C. Archives, Register "B".

[20]Stanley, op. cit., p. 20.

[21]Ibid., p. 17.

[22]The Winnipeg Tribune, Feb. 26, 1971, clipping from the Riel file, P.A.M.

[23]Marius Benoist, "Maisons Riel," Archives de la Société Historique de Saint Boniface.

[24]P.A.M., Louis Riel Family Papers, Joseph Riel Family Record, 1906.

[25]Manitoba Free Press, May 27, 1921.

[26]J.P. Proulx, "The House of Louis Riel" report prepared for Parks Canada, Summer, 1972, p. 5.

[27]A.Y.F., Winnipeg Homes.? (I have not been able to locate the year of publication.)

[28]Riel quoted in the Toronto Globe of Nov. 17, 1885: "I left St. Anthony in July, 1868 and came to St. Joseph, Dakota, and St. Boniface on the 26th of July of the same year. It was early in the morning when I saw again my birthplace on the Sunday before service. It was a beautiful day."

[29]In A.G. Morice, A Critical History of the Red River Insurrection (Winnipeg, 1935), p. 79.

[30]Winnipeg Daily Free Press, Nov. 17, 1885.

[31]Joseph Kinsey Howard, Strange Empire: A Narrative of the Northwest (New York, 1952), p. 103. (It should be noted that this book was published posthumously and, while

listing an extensive bibliography, contains no footnotes or references.)

[32]P.A.M., "Les Memoires de Louis Schmidt" (1912), p. 68.

[33]P.A.M., Louis Riel Family Papers 1870-96, Agreement signed on Jan. 23, 1869 between Riel and LaRivière; Martin, op. cit., p. 149.

[34]Stanley, op. cit., p. 59. Winnipeg Free Press Magazine, July 13, 1935. The latter article recounts the events, the facts of which were furnished by longtime M.L.A. Martin Jerome. "André Nault, a cousin of Louis Riel, found his fence broken through one afternoon, and the Surveyors at work on his land...He went home, then down the river bank to his dug-out canoe, and across the river to consult with his cousin Louis...The place is northwest of the University buildings on the Ft. Garry site, across the Pembina Highway."

[35]Stanley, op. cit., p. 61

[36]Winnipeg Daily Free Press, Nov. 17, 1885.

[37]Ibid.,

[38]Alexander Begg's Red River Journal and other Papers Relating to the Red River Resistance of 1869-70. The Publications of the Champlain Society (Toronto, 1956), edited with an introduction by W.L. Morton, p. 307.

[39]Ibid., p. 321.

[40]"Memoirs of Louis Schmidt, Secretary of the First Provisional Government," Chapter 5 , 1868-70 in Begg, p. 458.

[41]P.A.M., Louis Riel Collection 1860-96. Sara Riel to Louis, Jan. 29, 1871; Louis Riel to Joseph Dubuc, April 27 and June 6, 1871; Dubuc to Louis Riel, June 6, 1871.

[42]Stanley, op. cit., p. 169.

[43]P.A.M., Louis Riel Collection, "Minutes in Riel's hand of meetings held in St. Vital to discuss the question of the Canadian Government's promises." A.H. de Tremaudan, "Louis Riel and the Fenian Raids of 1871," Canadian Historical Review (June, 1923), pp. 32-44.

[44]P.A.M., Louis Riel Collection 1860-1926. Louis Riel to A.G. Archibald, Dec. 9, 1871. Written by either Riel or Pierre Parenteau; P.A.M., Louis Riel Collections, copy of

Affidavit taken by Marie Riel before Justice of the Peace Respecting Threats to Mme Riel and Marie Riel at her home, St. Vital, Dec. 8, 1871.

[45]Ibid., Ambroise Lepine and Louis Riel to Joseph Dubuc, March 3, 1872.

[46]Ibid., Sara Riel to Louis Riel, Aug. 1, 1872.

[47]Ibid., Joseph Royal, Joseph Dubuc, Marc Girard, A.A.C. LaRivière to Louis Riel, July 19, 1873.

[48]Ibid., Dubuc to Riel, Oct. 13, 1873.

[49]W.M. Davidson in The Life and Times of Louis Riel (Calgary, 1951) claims that Riel returned in July of 1883 for the wedding of his sister Henriette but there is no evidence to corroborate this.

[50]P.A.M., Louis Riel Family Papers 1870-96, Lucie Lee to Mme Riel, April 16, 1872: "I know, dear mother, that you cannot write yourself."

[51]Ibid., Marie Riel to Louis Riel, April 30, 1872.

[52]Ibid., Marie to Louis, May 9, 1872.

[53]Ibid., Marie to Louis, June 9, 1872.

[54]Ibid., Louis to Sara, n.d., 1873.

[55]Ibid., Mme Riel to Louis, Jan. 21, 1877.

[56]Ibid., Mme Riel to Louis, June 27, 1877.

[57]Ibid., Louis to Mme Riel, Feb. 1, 1878.

[58]Public Archives of Canada, National Map Collection, copy of map of Red River by Baudry , 1871.

[59]P.A.M., Family Papers , Louis to Mme Riel, Feb. 26, 1878.

[60]Ibid., Mme Riel to Louis, March 29, 1878.

[61]Ibid., Louis to Joseph Riel, June 27, 1878.

[62]Ibid., Joseph to Louis, April 27, 1880.

[63]Ibid., Joseph to Louis, Aug. 28, 1880.

[64]Ibid., Joseph to Louis, May 22, 1881.

[65]"The Riel Family," Winnipeg Free Press, Nov. 19, 1885.

[66]"Riel's Remains," Winnipeg Free Press, Dec. 11, 1885.

[67]P.A.M., Louis Riel Family Papers, File on Joseph Riel and Municipality Business , J.A. Macdonnell to Joseph Riel, May 26, 1898.

[68]Ibid., Joseph Riel to "Monsieur," April 30, 1898.

[69]W.L. Morton, Manitoba: A History (Toronto, 1957), p. 85.

Appendix A. Louis Goulet, Born 1859 Along the Red River, Talks of Métis Home Construction. (excerpt-translation)

There were eight boys in the family: Moise, Roger, myself, Louis, Alexandre, Joseph, Napoléon, Charles and Maxime. One girl, Justine between Napoléon and Charles. The family lived on a stretch of land located on the west bank of the Red River, a little ways from the mouth of the Sale River. Our house, like all the others at that time in St-Norbert, was built from logs well squared-off with a large axe and held superimposed by tenon and mortise joints and what we called in those days a "dovetail". It was one and half stories high, two times longer than wide and covered with earth and straw. The chimney was made from long poles which we called "wood-shoots" ranging from 10 to 12 feet high. These poles were straight and planted side by side, and were covered, from the inside and outside, with thick clay mortar. It was used to heat and light up the room. The windows were squares of dried rawhides which tried hard to let the sun rays and moon rays penetrate into the room; if there were none, then the chimney would have two roles: light up and heat up the room.

The woodwork: the frames, the chassis, the doors, the floors, and furniture were home-made and fashioned with a "crooked" knife, either alone at home in the evening or in a workparty. Ordinarily, only the parents slept together in one bed; the children slept each night rolled up in buffalo hide robes laid on the bare ground or on a floor if there was one. It was during the golden age when buffalo hides were numerous.

No one would think perhaps that home-made products were rustic or crude. Maybe they weren't finished artistically but were far from being crude. The average person, used to providing his own needs, showed a surprising dexterity in such a way that most could be compared to today's tradesmen. In short, the interior furnishings in the Red River region satisfied the needs and comfort known to us in those days. Manual labour performed by "bees" was undertaken when the more important structures had to be assembled. It was a past tradition that when a man, not able to build something alone, was helped by a group of men willing to "pitch in". It was a way by which various "experts" would exchange their abilities. We saw houses of all kinds raised in a day, thanks to the neighbours' efforts and without even having to ask them to help, they would come.

The building of a house was done generally by steps. We would first build the house for the family or person in need, and to give them shelter immediately. Once this was fulfilled, the rest would be fabricated during the free hours; the head of the family would decide according to the need. However, the chimney was built with the rest of the domicile. After, came the building of furniture, the floor laying, the frame finishings and other woodwork. The first part of the building was a moderately-sized structure, built according to the needs of the family at that time. Later, when the house was too small to accommodate an increasing family, a wing was added and if later, the house was still too small, another wing was added and so on. That is why it was frequent to see often, long houses during pioneer days.

The main floor was the main room and often the only one. The attic not being used, was completely closed by a simple ceiling made from joists, or wooden planks cut by axe. This

crude ceiling was called the upper floor. The usual furnishings in the house consisted of a table, seats, a cupboard or two. The latter was only simple shelves placed one on top of the other and fixed at each end to a plank or thick wooden piece fashioned by hand and by axe. The whole assembly was hidden by a piece of canvas or deer skin.

Appendix B. A Note on the Use of Clay Plaster Construction in the Earliest Years of the Red River Settlement. Dictated by Angus Matheson Henderson, born April 7, 1861. (P.A.M., M.G.2 - C30)

There were very few stone fireplaces, except perhaps in the homes of Hudson's Bay officials, most were built of "cats", on a willow frame woven on upright logs. To make the "cats", a smooth, white clay was used with fine, tough hay as a binder. The clay was found in certain places on the river- or creek-banks, in a layer below the deep black soil, and there must be no sand in it.

An old dugout, this being the primitive boat made from a hollowed log, was often used for the first mixing with water to the consistency of mortar, of an old byre door, which had first been spread with hay, not the "quelk" hay, which was the tall coarse swamp hay used for thatching, but the short and tough upland hay. (No, I don't know whether "quelk" is Cree of Gaelic, but I suspect it is Gaelic.) The clay and the hay were then mixed thoroughly by hand, the hay being left in its natural length, then formed into a cake and finally into a roll abour four inches in diameter and foot and a half or two feet long, this being the "cat". These were then laid in place against the framework for the chimney, course after course like bricks, until the fireplace was finished and the chimney carried right through the roof. The willow framework was then burned out, and the whole finished with a smooth coat of clay or, later, "lime plaster". The very old people always spoke of "lime plaster", it being taken for granted that plaster without an

adjective meant clay.

All cooking was done in these fireplaces in the very earliest years except what was done outside in the clay ovens, and even after stoves were in use for heating and cooking many people continued to use the outdoor oven for baking. They were made in much the same way as the fireplaces. First a platform of logs was built and plastered, and before the plaster had hardened upright posts put in and a willow frame woven like a bowl turned upside down, with about an eighth of its circumference flattened to make a place for the door. "Cats" were again made and laid, and when all was finished the willow frame was burned out and the inside and outside of the oven, including the baking floor, finished with smooth clay, or plaster if available. The finish was renewed from time to time, in fact, it was a regular part of the spring cleaning for particular housekeepers.

It took quite a while to heat these ovens, the fire being laid directly on the floor and the smoke escaping through a hole left for it opposite the door. When it was hot enough, as tested by a bare hand and arm thrust into it, the fire was raked out and a wet cloth on a stick used to clean the floor, a little flour was then scattered to retest the heat, and the loaves laid in, the door put on, and the smoke-hole closed by its wooden "bung". When the bread was done the bannocks were put in, and once, I remember, we cooked thirteen mince pies at one time. The size of the oven depended entirely upon one's taste and the size of one's family in those happy days before thermal units or kilowatts were known. These clay ovens were in quite common use even after the settlers began to come from the East in the 70's and 80's, and more than one "Canadian" has said that no bread ever tasted so good as what came out of them.

"Cats" were also used for building partitions in some of the oldest houses, the first home I can remember in Kildonan, for I was born in Saint James, near where the Misericordia Hospital now stands, had its inside walls built so. Slender poles were used for the uprights, like the framework in modern buildings, then thin sticks run cross-wise through auger holes bored in them, and the willow framework woven back and forth to hold the "cats", and this made a wall as warm and as cool and as soundproof as any architect could ask. It is possible that some of these partitions may still be in existence although I could not say where one might be found. I would not be surprised if the old McIvor house in East Kildonan has them.

Our first history used to tell about the early Britons who built with "wattle-and-daub" and wore furs in the winter and blue paint in the summer. Such is the adaptability of the human race that in a time of need in a strange environment these later Britons went back to "wattle-and-daub", as we have seen, and also to furs in winter. And I shouldn't wonder if on a hot summer's day they would have liked to revert to blue paint too - which reminds me of a recent arrival from Scotland who complained, "Everyone told me it was cold in Canada, but no one ever told me it was hot!"

Anne M.G. Henderson
514 Tylehurst Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba.

May 3/46

Appendix C. Louis Schmidt Talks of the Customs and Habits of the Early Métis. (excerpt-translation)

Le Patriote, #17, June 27, 1912.
Customs and Habits of the Early Métis - Travel, Hunting, and Dress.

First of all, we must say that the Métis were fervently religious. The neophytic character and sense of devotion which they inherited from their ancestors led them to faithfully observe all the laws set down by their religious leaders.

They would, for example, travel great distances to attend Sunday mass as if it were perfectly natural to do so. Even bad weather would not stop them.

(To be continued)

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Women were seen coming on foot from the River Sale, nine miles away. On rainy days, they would carry their shoes under their shawls and slip them on when they got to the church.

Nobody would have dared criticize, much less ridicule, as they do nowadays, the teachings of the pastors; on the contrary, people considered their words to be the word of God, as in fact they are, and would do their best to put them into practice.

Respect for the priest was the natural consequence

of this exemplary submissiveness.

Wherever he was expected to visit, people would put on their Sunday best and tidy up their house with the utmost care.

When he travelled, the greatest attention and willingness to please would be shown him. When they hunted, men would bring him the best cuts. Similarly, the well-to-do trader, in unpacking his goods, considered it a duty and a privilege to put his best roll of fabrics aside for the missionary. The women, too, would eagerly compete with each other in making moccasins and mitts for the priest.

The Métis never held dances, for these were forbidden by their religious leaders. But they certainly made up for this at weddings. On such occasions, they could not dance enough. The celebrations generally lasted two days, but I have seen weddings given by Martin Lavallée, the number one merry-maker, start Tuesday and go on till Saturday night, with the Friday left out as a day of rest.

Because of endless travelling during the summer, weddings almost always took place between the Twelfth Day and Lent. Tuesday was the day most often selected for the wedding, Monday probably being reserved for the preparations.

Although there was no shortage of fiddlers at Red River, some were better known and more sought after than others. Among these were the Larondes, the Saint-Maltes, Joseph Hupé, Louis L'Espérance and a few others. These were sure never to miss a wedding. So it was with the famous dancers that often came from far off places, upon invitation.

Yet, it must be said, that this type of entertainment would not last all night as it does today. Consideration was shown for older people and they were given sufficient rest.

Another type of entertainment of which the Métis were very fond was horse-racing: harness racing in winter and

flat racing in summer. And when the races included well-known horses, large crowds would attend the event and some came from distant places to participate in the festivities. At times, large bets were made; and there was even some excessive betting.

Métis Hospitality

Métis hospitality became proverbial (well-known) and though the Métis did not wash the strangers' feet as some ancient peoples did, they showed every respect and consideration towards strangers. However, since perfection is not of this world, some strangers would now and then take advantage of this patriarchal hospitality and become somewhat parasitic. An old friend of mine who lives in the southern part of the province knows exactly what I mean.

Travel

Most Métis spent the summer travelling, either on the prairies hunting buffalo or on the rivers and lakes carrying goods or furs for the Hudson's Bay Company.

It is difficult to imagine a harder job than transporting goods by water. As soon as the ice was off Lake Winnipeg, that is, very early in June, the men would leave from Fort Garry to return only in the second half of September.

They would form two groups of five or six barges, each group having its own leader. They would leave one week apart to avoid congestion at portages.

As long as they sailed quiet lakes or rivers with a favorable wind, it was a pleasure to be driven forward by the sail, although occasionally furious waves would give some novices the shivers. But when they had to face a head wind or sail upstream, they were forced to use the oars, heavy oars, and row all day long with only the occasional short break when the helmsman cried "Light up, light up". Then they took time to get their wind back, to quench their

thirst and to smoke their pipes.

When approaching forts, it was common practice to increase the speed and to encourage this effort by singing ad hoc songs, rowing songs as they were called. Often, too, when the guide or the rudder man noticed that his men were tired or their spirits were low, he would invite one of his singers to strike up a song to cheer them up and this had an immediate and surprising effect. A few of these very well-known singers were Old Blodin, Alexis Lamirande, Michel and Charlette Dumas.

After long, hard periods of rowing, they had to carry the goods on their backs or drag the baggage over portages.

(To be continued)

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The weight of the bundles of goods ranged from 80 to 100 pounds and one man would carry two of them at a time.

He would attach a strap called a collar to both ends of the first bundle, place the wide part of the collar across his forehead and put the other bundle on top of the first so that it rested against his head.

There was competition among the porters to see, who would cover the distance in the shortest time. Most would be seen trotting while a few would almost run.

Once the barge had been emptied, it had to be carried overland whenever large falls obstructed its passage or sailed upstream with the help of a cable or line. This task was often made difficult by the obstacles blocking the way along the bank or by numerous reefs lying in the rapids.

Moderate showers would not stop the voyageurs. It took a downpour to make them put up the awning and take shelter. To position the awning, the ends of the mast were secured to crates at either end of the barge, and the canvas thrown over it to protect the goods from the rain.

Another cause of suffering for these poor men, between

the Rivière aux Brochets and Portage La Loche, were mosquitoes and flies and lack of sleep. During the long days of June and July as well as during the shorter days of August and September, the working hours would be regulated by the sun rather than the clock; only darkness dictated rest.

Upon reaching York, on the Hudson's Bay, after stopping at Portage La Loche, each man would receive a "régal"* in the form of a pint of rum. Then, as you might guess, it was time to celebrate and all problems were forgotten.

In such instances, small quarrels would often be settled with the fist and the bullies would crow about their victory.

Curiously enough, let it be said in passing, the word "régal" has now also become part of the language of the English voyageurs. I heard one of them use it recently.

The company knew exactly how to go about finding men for these hard and long trips. It would not wait until the last moment to hire them, otherwise none would have been found.

It was between Christmas and New Year's Day, during the holidays, that the company would hire the men, giving them a small advance. Then, in March when the sheds were getting empty, they were given another advance. And finally, when it was time to go, they would receive some more money to dress for the trip, and to leave something with the family.

So that upon their return - they also received a small sum at York - not much was left of their meager salary.

The pay was sixteen louis for the rudder man, fourteen louis for the men at the fore and twelve for the men in between, that is $80, $70 and $60 of our present-day currency, for all that suffering.

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*a treat

Dress of the Métis

I used the words "to dress" in one of the last paragraphs. The time has come to describe briefly the dress of the early Métis. It was not very much as you will see.

The traveller, craftsman or any other person would wear only pants, a shirt, soft shoes, and some kind of cap or a hat or a tuque on his head. Stockings or socks were unknown as yet.

In winter, they would put a rabbit skin or a piece of woollen fabric in their shoes and wear an unlined cloth capote to protect themselves from the cold. In general, they would fasten a belt over this hooded capote but most young men would use their belt, hanging loose in front, only to hold up their pants. Except for young children, nobody wore suspenders.

Women's garments were as simple as men's, but they dressed with a little more care. They wore small shawls or large kerchiefs over their chests, and, when they went out, kerchiefs over their heads and shawls. In winter, the well-to-do women wore blankets of fine cloth over their shawls. For stockings, they wore mitasses, a type of cloth gaiter usually decorated with coloured beads. They wore the same type of shoes as men.

Winter Travel

The way the Métis travelled by dog sled in winter gives an idea of their agility and endurance. On smooth tracks, they ran in groups behind the dogs, and when the snow was too deep, they travelled on snowshoes in front of them.

I once travelled with another Métis. On the night of the first day, I was so tired that I could not eat and I suffered cramps in all of my limbs, whereas my companion was as spry as on the morning we left. We had covered over 50 miles.

On several occasions, I heard stories about sixty-mile

runs in a single day, from Pembina to Winnipeg, for instance.

Buffalo Hunting - Additional Details

Since I have dealt with buffalo hunting on a previous occasion, I will restrict myself to a few additional details.

They would go to the prairie - this was the stock phrase - twice each summer. Although the supplies they brought back sold very cheaply, hunters made a good living. In addition to buffalo meat, dried meat and the good courjour* of fat, they also sold hides: prepared hides (softened through hand treatment) for making shoes and unprepared hides for making harnesses or protecting carloads of goods from the rain.

On the second trip, dresses were made from the hides of the last animals killed.

Before repeating rifles were made available to hunters, it was rather difficult to kill several animals on a single hunt. After the first shot had been fired, the weapon had to be reloaded and the chase kept up at the same time. The hunters did not take the trouble to stuff a wad against the powder or the bullet and this frequently caused accidents. The bullet no longer being held in place, would slide along the barrel and cause it to explode. This explains why many early hunters had mutilated hands.

But with repeaters it didn't take long to decimate a herd. In a single chase, one hunder, Baptiste Parenteau, killed sixteen cows with as many shots.

Removing and cutting up the animal skins was another job some hunters performed exceedingly well, completing the entire operation in a very short time.

Big Baptiste Morin, from La Fourche, and Isidore Ouellette, from the West, were known as the best in this area of the trade.

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*balls of melted fat

But what I find remarkable is the ability to pinpoint the animals shot by each hunter after a chase in which a hundred riders participated at one time.

When I expressed my surprise in this regard, a hunter once told me: "You know very well that no two animals look so much alike that it is impossible to find some slight difference between them."

However, some conflicts in this regard would occasionally, though rarely, arise.

This will be all for now, my beloved compatriots. If my notes have been of some interest to you, I would be grateful if you would repay me by subscribing to the Patriote de l'Ouest and perhaps I will write for you again.

Louis Schmidt

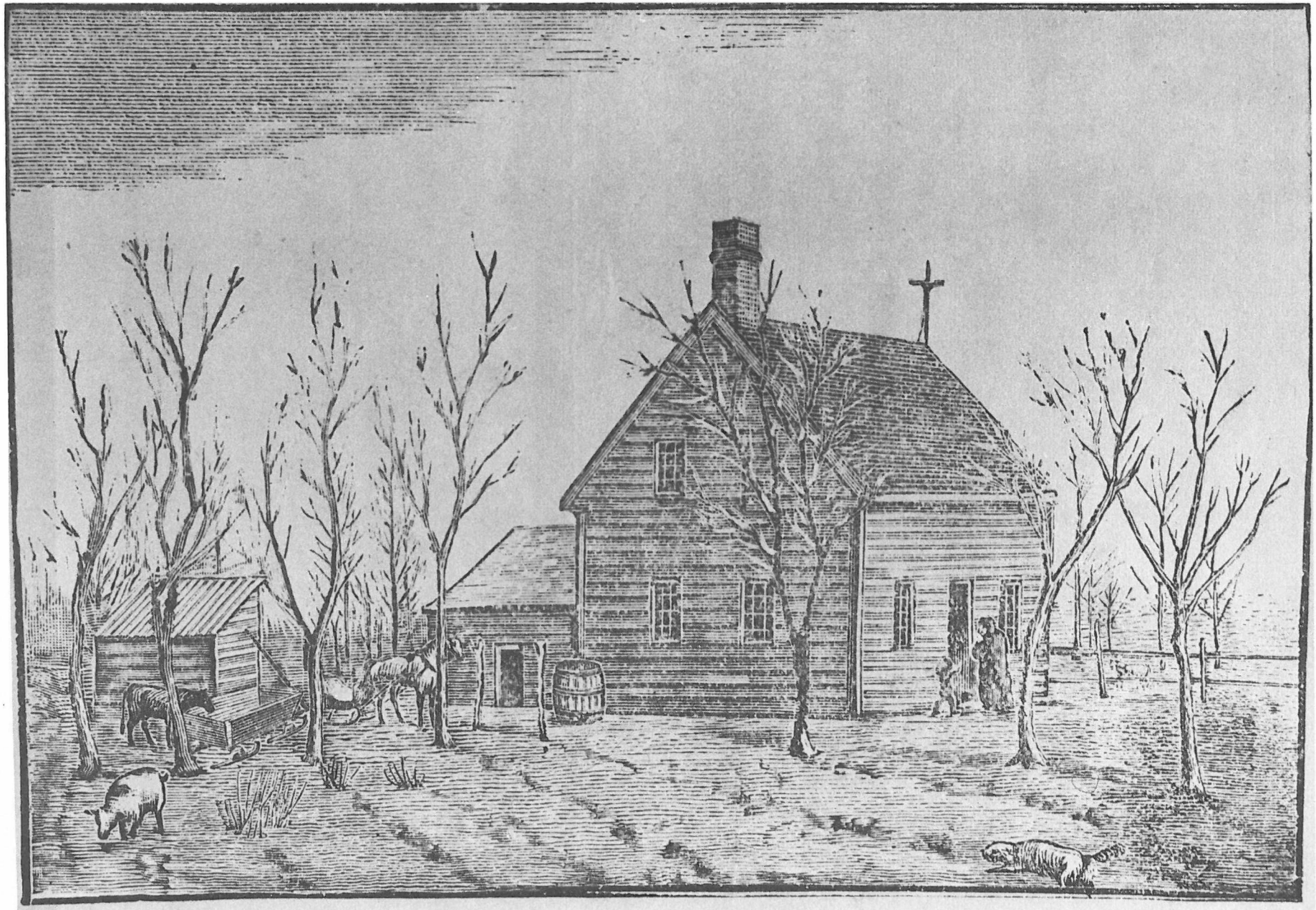
1 Louis Riel Sr. (on right), Provincial Archives of Manitoba. The other gentleman is believed to be William Sayer.



2 Louis Riel Jr. (Provincial Archives of Manitoba)



3 Riel House 1886. (Provincial Archives of Manitoba)



RESIDENCE DE LA FAMILLE RIEL, A ST-VITAL.

4 Riel House 1958. (Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

