

night fortunes for the new owners, the colonization companies. Land received for a dollar an acre could be sold at a profit to the immigrants who, it was hoped, would flock to the West by the thousands. Speculators estimated that each family settling on a colonization company's tract of land would generate \$2000 profit for its owners. But the expected bonanza did not materialize for the majority of these companies in the West. Most of the incoming settlers picked their own homesteads; fewer than 2 per cent settled on lands controlled by colonization companies.

The Prince Albert Colonization Company had more luck than most of its competitors. It did not function like any of the other colonization companies in the West. The Prince Albert Colonization Company did not bring in any settlers for its grant of land. In fact, it did not debit the federal government for the numerous Metis squatters who had lived on this land prior to its being granted to the company. Under the terms of the agreement, the company could have received payment from the government by classifying these Metis as settlers. Instead, the management of the Prince Albert Colonization Company sought ways to drive the Metis off this land.

The directors of the Prince Albert Colonization Company had no intention of bringing in settlers like the other companies. The lands that it had obtained from the federal government were far too valuable for this. They were located at the very centre of the proposed CPR route near the present site of Prince Albert. These lands bordered a future rail centre, and future profits were expected from urban development. Prince Albert was to have been the capital city of the North West Territories. Thus, the Prince Albert Colonization Company's lands were expected to increase exponentially in value once the railway was built. The tract of land granted to this company also contained the Metis communities of St. Laurent, St. Louis and Batoche.

The Prince Albert Colonization Company did not acquire these potentially priceless lands by accident. Its directors represented Conservative insiders with knowledge of the

CPR's proposed route, and with knowledge of the government's plans for development along that route. The list of directors of the Prince Albert Colonization Company, with some of their connections to the Conservative government in Ottawa included:

John White, Conservative Member of Parliament for East Hastings.

Thomas McGreevy, Conservative Member of Parliament for Quebec West, and close friend to the Honourable H .L. Langevin, Minister of Public Works.

Hugh Sutherland, later elected as the Conservative Member of Parliament representing Selkirk.

William Sharples, brother-in-law of the Honourable A. P. Caron, Minister of Militia in the Macdonald government.

Duncan C. Plumb, son of J. P. Plumb, Conservative Member of Parliament for Niagara.

J. A. M. Aikens, son of the Minister of Inland Revenue and son-in-law of the Honourable A. W. McLean, Minister of Marine and Fisheries.

A. T. Galt, brother of M. H. Galt, Conservative Member of Parliament for Montreal West.

J. C. Jamieson, son-in-law of the Honourable MacKenzie Bowell, Minister of Customs.

These were the people who were in a position to influence Sir John A. Macdonald and others in the Department of the Interior. Indeed, through this influence, the Metis people living on this tract of land were later denied title to the lands they occupied.

There were economic reasons for this denial. The directors of the Prince Albert Colonization Company planned to use this land to make a fortune through urban development and land sales once the CPR was completed from coast to coast.

The plans of these politicians and speculators were thwarted in 1881, however, when J. J. Hill convinced the other members of the CPR syndicate that they must abandon the northern route precisely because the best lands along it had been taken



by the Prince Albert Colonization Company. So plans were made for a new route across the southern prairies. Following the wishes of J. J. Hill, new surveys were made; and now rail lines had to be constructed over difficult mountain terrain in virgin territory. The CPR directors knew, they could control future development as they saw fit, unencumbered by crowds of speculators who had acquired all the prime lands.

After the CPR's shift to the south, the owners of the Prince Albert Colonization Company still clung to their lands along the abandoned northern route, although they traded some lands for more promising locations. The directors of the company still intended to use their political influence to bring in branch lines from the main line of the CPR. These lines, crossing their properties on the way to Prince Albert, would increase the value of their holdings dramatically.

The activities of the Prince Albert Colonization Company did much to create tension between the Metis and the federal government prior to the outbreak of war in 1885. There is little doubt that the directors of the Prince Albert Colonization Company, with its blatant conflict of interest, did much to influence the government in its denial of Metis land claims. It was this denial, more than any other single factor, that put the Metis at the forefront of armed resistance to the national policy of the federal government in the West.



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## GRAB THE LION BY THE TAIL

DURING THE MONTHS preceding the battle of Duck Lake, Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont entered into many discussions concerning the best way to handle the federal government. Riel recognized that in the end military resistance to the federal government was impossible. So he prayed to his God, and stubbornly kept his people working towards a diplomatic solution. But when the government granted surveys and land title to all the groups in the North West except the French Metis, Gabriel Dumont's patience ran out.

While Jackson and Riel continued to organize around the Bill of Rights and the accompanying petitions, Dumont began to talk of the impending war. Elders living in St. Louis today recall their fathers' stories of a trip back from a meeting in Prince Albert. Dumont, riding on horseback, warned the men in the buggy that they must prepare for war. "We must get ready to walk in blood," he told them, "for we shall never win our rights any other way."

At Batoche, Dumont argued with Riel that he must send troops east, into the bushlands and the rocky wastelands of the Canadian Shield, to blow up the railway so that troops could not be brought in. Riel at first chided Dumont for his militance, but when this failed to stop him from arguing for a military solution, Riel condemned Dumont in public. Riel told the people in church that Gabriel Dumont had better keep his head and listen to reason. This public condemnation dampened Dumont's rhetoric, but he still wanted to implement



the tactics of guerilla warfare that had been used with some success by Sitting Bull, Red Cloud, and other Sioux chiefs against the American military.

Dumont wanted to fight the British, using his highly mobile Metis horsemen, who would set up ambushes along the route of the incoming army. According to his plans, the Metis would pick a highly advantageous position, lay in wait until the army approached, then destroy a vulnerable section such as the rear guard or the scouts who ran in advance of the main column. With this achieved, the Metis guerillas would flee, only to reappear again further along the trail, repeating the same demoralizing type of attack.

In vain did Gabriel Dumont plead with Louis Riel to commence such action. "I tried to convince him," Dumont told his supporters. "If we do nothing we will be finished. Now is the time. We must grab the lion by the tail."

It is difficult to guess what might have happened had Riel listened to Dumont. Certainly, these tactics would have cost the Canadians many casualties, and the war might have dragged on for years, becoming more bitter as it progressed. But Riel remained in charge of the Metis for a short period longer. Then, on March 26, 1885, Dumont had his opportunity to "grab the British lion by the tail" at a place known as Duck Lake. The results were to be disastrous – for the British.



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## RIEL THE DIPLOMAT

THROUGHOUT THE HOT, DRY SUMMER OF 1884, Louis Riel travelled from meeting to meeting throughout the North West. His activities were by no means restricted to his own people, the Metis. In fact, much of his time was spent with William Jackson, and Riel's efforts were in accord with the leaders of the Popular Movement, who were, in the main, well-educated Protestant Whites. Nevertheless, Riel's movements were being closely monitored by two groups, the police, under the command of Major L. N. F. Crozier, and the clique of land speculators in Prince Albert, under the control of Lawrence Clarke.

In the weeks following Riel's return, the police reported that he was having a moderating effect on the people of the troubled region. They reported, however, that his moderation and his charisma were attracting both Native and White people to the Popular Movement. Riel was also exercising a moderating influence over the Indians. Riel frequently met with Chief Big Bear of the Cree, who was considered by the police to be a maverick since he had refused to sign Treaty Number Six, and had refused to settle on a reserve.

For the police, any association that united the Metis or the White farmers to the Indians under Big Bear, had to be viewed with suspicion. But the police knew that Riel was having a moderating effect on the Cree Indians because he gave the Cree hope that their rights could be obtained without a violent confrontation with the officials of the Canadian government.



Father André, whose position as the ultimate moral authority over the Metis stood to be eclipsed by Riel, was initially disposed to praise Riel's diplomacy and moderation. André's remaining fears concerning Riel's presence in the country were dispelled by Riel's speech before a large crowd in Prince Albert. This crowd, consisting of both White and Native people, applauded Riel time and again as he spoke about the creation of a new province and the need to acquire responsible government in the West.

Father André, in a lengthy letter to Lieutenant Governor Edgar Dewdney, said that the meeting in Prince Albert proved that Riel was sincere, and was pursuing peaceful means to obtain land title for the Metis. André wrote:

There was a mass meeting, such as Prince Albert has never seen; people came from the country to meet Mr. Riel, from everywhere, and they went back struck with the quiet and gentle way he spoke to them. Governor, as an honest man, I tell you the country is quiet, and as far as I can see, Riel has no other purpose than to help the people in their difficulties. He strongly advocates peace and union among all the several sections of the country. He wants to agitate to have the three districts of Saskatchewan, Alberta and Assiniboia erected into Provinces.

Father André had nothing but praise for Riel, but he was concerned about Lawrence Clarke (whom he referred to as "the Royal Prince") and his clique of speculators who were agitating to promote a war in the North West. André informed Dewdney:

Five or six persons here at Prince Albert who think themselves superior to other men and think they have the right of birth (and you may be sure the Royal Prince is one of them) to lead the people have been greatly offended because a number of citizens at Prince Albert sent to Riel a petition asking him to come down and address them at a public meeting.

André warned Dewdney:

These men . . . will try to represent things under a black cloud, not according to real facts; they will try to distort the simple things and will represent Riel as bound to disturb the peace of the country.

Later, Father André was a bit more specific when he informed Dewdney that a certain clique wanted to use Riel to force the federal government to take military action against the Metis. André wrote:

You will receive alarming reports about the danger in which the country is in consequence of Riel's arrival. Do not believe a word. Those persons will be very glad that you should commit some rash act. They will send and advise you to have Riel arrested. For God's sake, never commit such an act before you have good motives to justify such an act. A good many persons will urge you to send here 200 or 300 policemen. They will be glad to see Government go to expenses, because that will be so much money put in their pockets. Nothing so far requires to send one man more to keep the peace of the country. The [Metis], English as well as French, understand too well the foolishness and the consequences of rising in a rebellion against the Government, and Riel seems really to act by good motives and to have no bad design. A man will not bring his wife and children along with him if he intended to raise a rebellion, and Mr. Riel has brought his wife and two little children with him, and that is the best proof that he has no bad intentions.

André's assessment of the conspirators under the leadership of Lawrence Clarke was supported by Major Crozier, who also was aware of their scheme to create a conflict between Riel and the Canadian government. Major Crozier wrote to Dewdney, stating:

Granting that [Riel's] power to make serious trouble may



be but problematical, yet his very presence here causes a feeling of uneasiness among the Metis and Indians, which as you know, is taken advantage of by others who are neither Metis nor Indians, to further their own scheming ends.

It seems certain that many police and government officials were aware that Clarke and his cronies were engaged in some type of scheme to cause trouble between Riel and the Canadian government. Both André's and Crozier's letters to Lieutenant Governor Dewdney make this clear.

If any of the leaders of the Popular Movement were aware of Clarke's machinations, there is no record of it. Neither Riel, nor Jackson, nor Dr. Porter spoke in public about Clarke's conspiracy to provoke a rebellion. The leaders of the Popular Movement were perhaps too idealistic and too naive to understand such devious behaviour.

Throughout the summer and fall of 1884, Riel and Jackson continued to work towards peaceful solutions to the political problems imposed upon the West by the federal government's national policy. Although poverty was widespread and cases of starvation were occurring among the Native population, Riel and Jackson pursued democratic solutions to these tragic social problems. They were going to win the right to self-government by presenting the federal government with a Bill of Rights listing all their grievances. This would be supported with petitions signed by the majority of the Metis and many of their White neighbours, who were asking for provincial status and an issue of scrip for the Metis as had been won in Manitoba in 1870.



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## THE RIEL-JACKSON ALLIANCE

IN 1884 the North West suffered one of its hottest and driest summers ever. The drought and the stifling heat grated on the tempers of the destitute people of the region. When the ascetic and deeply religious Louis Riel returned, he did much to dampen the inflamed passions of his poverty-stricken followers. Despite the problems with the Canadian federal government, Riel believed that the Metis were better off in Canada than their counterparts south of the border. Even though he had been badly abused by Canadian authorities during the 1869-70 resistance, Riel's belief in the ultimate decency of the Canadian government remained unshaken. These sentiments were not shared by his closest White ally, William Henry Jackson of Prince Albert.

Jackson was, in almost every conceivable way, Riel's opposite. Riel was a Catholic; Jackson was a Protestant. Riel's world view was shaped and guided by his religion; Jackson's views were modern, secular, and at times revolutionary. Riel was conservative, both by nature and by political affiliation; Jackson was a liberal. Nevertheless, these two well-educated men became allies at their first meeting, locked into a common struggle for responsible government for the North West Territories.

Despite their obvious differences, one common thread bound them together: they shared a keen sense of spirituality, despite the fact that their personalities created different dynamics and approaches to the political problems facing them. Riel felt that



God had placed him on earth as part of a pre-ordained plan. According to God's plan, Riel was to complete a mission. Jackson, on the other hand, saw himself as a free-thinking individual who, by working for beneficial social change in a wicked society, helped to build the kind of world that a benevolent God required.

Despite Jackson's opposing religious ideology, he eventually fell in behind the plans of Riel. Jackson converted to the Catholic faith, went to live among the Metis, and in the main accepted Riel's messianic role as the undisputed leader of the Metis in the North West.

Jackson's acceptance of Riel as a prophet and God-given leader contradicted his own beliefs. But Jackson knew that Riel was not a mendacious person; quite the opposite, in fact. Riel was as compelling as he was sincere in his belief in his mission. It was Riel's destiny, he felt, to set up a Catholic state in the Canadian West. This would be a sanctuary for all the dispossessed Catholics of the world, including the Irish and Polish peoples who were being cruelly persecuted. However, this state was to be primarily for Riel's people, the Metis.

Riel's unshakable belief in his mission gave him charismatic powers of almost mystical dimensions. Riel's infectious enthusiasm and confidence overwhelmed the young idealist William Henry Jackson, just as it did his illiterate Metis followers. Yet Jackson's support for Riel was neither mindless nor slavish. The two often argued long into the night over tactics and strategies for change. In fact, Jackson was the most effective non-Native ally that Riel ever had. Whereas Riel's deeply religious nature and his asceticism initially tended to pacify rather than motivate his followers, Jackson's speeches fired them up. While Riel contemplated and prayed, Jackson organized and published a radical journal.

Furthermore, Jackson was in a unique position. As a well-educated Anglo-Saxon on the side of Riel and the French Metis, he embodied the possibility of union between the White farmers and the Metis. The police were aware that this union, if it was to be achieved, would create a major power block with



potentially dangerous results. Such a union would transform the local political situation, making it extremely difficult to continue to deny the citizens of the territories the right to form their own provincial government. Major Crozier wrote to his commanding officer in Battleford on August 5, 1884, that "William Henry Jackson has a great deal to say, and I believe he does more harm than any Halfbreed among them."

William Henry Jackson was truly an enigma to the police who were keeping an eye on him. Who was this eccentric young intellectual, and how did he come to be an ally of the Metis chief, Louis Riel? Given his background, it should have been no surprise that he was on the side of the impoverished Metis, the poor, and the dispossessed.

William Henry Jackson was born in Toronto on May 13, 1861, to Thomas and Elizabeth Jackson, both offspring of Wesleyan Methodist ministers. His parents had recently immigrated from England. They moved to Wingham, Ontario, when William was three years old. William was an exceptionally bright student throughout his school years, and after completing high school he went on to university in Toronto. His brother and sister, Thomas Eastwood and Cicely Jackson, also attended institutions of higher learning. Thomas received a degree in pharmacy while Cicely became a school teacher, but it was "Will" who excelled in university, finishing near the top of his class.

During his years at university William Jackson became a great admirer of William Lyon Mackenzie, who had led the struggle for responsible government in Upper Canada. But this was simply a natural progression for a young man whose father had taught that "the citizen had a God-given right to rise up in the face of oppression." Will, accompanying his father, had attended his first political meeting at the tender age of eleven.

In the late 1870s a fire ruined his father's business in Wingham, and in 1879 the family moved to Prince Albert, leaving Will to complete his degree at the University of Toronto. His brother, Thomas Eastwood Jackson, opened a



drug store in Prince Albert and the family settled down permanently. Unable to support himself further in university, Will left Toronto to join the family in Prince Albert in 1880. He was then 19 years old. Jackson quickly became involved in the push for responsible government in the West. This, in turn, led him to the side of Louis Riel, and into the annals of history.



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## THE BILL OF RIGHTS

DURING THE SUMMER OF 1884, and on to the early winter of 1885, William Henry Jackson worked on the production and political justification of a document that laid out demands for responsible government in the North West Territories. This document was accepted by Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont as the political platform of the Metis in the West. Known as the Bill of Rights, it became the basis of Metis political agitation under the leadership of Louis Riel.

The Metis in 1884 and 1885 were not seeking a separate state. They were simply attempting to create a province in the North West with all the rights of Canadian citizenship for its residents. This is made clear in the Bill of Rights, which listed sixteen grievances and made some demands:

### THE 1885 BILL OF RIGHTS

To His excellency the Governor General of Canada,  
in Council

We, the undersigned, your humble petitioners, would respectfully submit to Your Excellency in Council, the following as our grievances:

1. that the Indians are so reduced that the settlers in many localities are compelled to furnish them with food, partly to prevent them from dying at their door, partly to preserve the peace of the Territory;
2. that the [Metis] of the Territory have not received 240 acres of land, each, as did the Manitoba Half-breeds;



3. that the [Metis] who are in possession of tracts of land have not received patents therefore;
4. that the old settlers of the N.W.T. have not received the same treatment as the old settlers of Manitoba;
5. that the claims of settlers on odd numbers, prior to survey, and on reserves, prior to the proclamation of such reserves, are not recognized;
6. that settlers on cancelled claims are limited to eighty acres Homestead and eighty acres of pre-emption;
7. that settlers are charged more than one dollar per acre for their pre-emptions;
8. that settlers are charged dues on timber, rails and firewood required for home use;
9. that customs duties are levied on the necessaries of life;
10. that settlers are not allowed to perform the required amount of breaking and cropping on their pre-emption, in lieu of their Homestead, when, as frequently happens in the vicinity of wooded streams, it is convenient to have farm buildings and grain fields on separate quarter sections;
11. that purchasers of claims from bona fide settlers who have not completed the required time of actual residence, do not get credit for the term of actual residence, by sellers;
12. that contracts for public works and supplies are not let in such a manner as to confer upon North West producers as large a benefit as they might derive therefrom, consistent with efficiency;
13. that the public buildings are often erected on sites little conducive to the economical transaction of public business;
14. that no effective measures have yet been taken to put the people of the North West in direct communication with the European Markets, via Hudson Bay;

15. that settlers are exposed to coercion at elections, owing to the fact that votes are not taken by ballot;
16. that while your petitioners wish to give the eastern government every credit for the excellent liquor regulations which obtain in the N.W.T. yet they must express their anxiety, lest those beneficial restrictions should be loosed, more especially as the country is sparsely settled and the Indians numerous and dissatisfied;
17. that they may humbly state their case, without intending to intermeddle with the affairs of Manitoba and other parts of the N.W. your petitioners respectfully submit:
  - (a) that in 1870, when, on invitation of the Dominion, the Delegates of the N.W.T. arrived in Ottawa, claiming the control of its resources as one of the conditions of the entry of the Territory into Confederation, they were arrested;
  - (b) that after releasing those Delegates, at the interposition of the Imperial authorities, after explicitly acknowledging and receiving them, "as the Delegates of the North West" the Dominion treated with them amid preparations for war; and dispatched to the Northwest an expedition of federal troops while the negotiations were pending;
  - (c) that a Commissioner of the then Governor General and of His Government having averted the conflict which he saw would be the consequence of these hostilities, by giving his word of honor as commissioner that however threatening the outlook of the situation might appear, Canada would act in good faith, the response to that peace preserving act was repudiation;
  - (d) that an understanding having thus arrived at with the Delegates, subject to the consent of the North West, the order-in-council by which



the Queen annexed the North West Territory and Rupert's Land to the Dominion of Canada bears date 23d June 1870, at which time that consent had not been obtained;

- (e) that having thus dispensed with one of the most important conditions of the "Union" the imperial government seems to have followed, ever since, a policy calculated, in the opinion of your humble petitioners, to make of the Northwest a mere appendage to Canada;
- (f) that through the existence of the above-mentioned word of honor an extraordinary treaty has been established, four years after, by special inquest of the House of Commons of Canada, supported, another year later, by the government and recorded in the most conclusive official documents, there are nevertheless, today, in that part of the N.W. called Manitoba extant proof of their continual violation;
- (g) that although, by the last clause of the "Manitoba Act" Rupert's Land and the North West Territories were to have been under temporary government until the 1st of January 1871 and until the end of the session then next succeeding, those Territories are nevertheless, today, under a government, which has remained temporary for fifteen years and which, by the nature of its constitution is destined to remain temporary for an indefinite period;
- (h) that the N.W.T. although having a population of 60,000, are not yet granted responsible government, as was Manitoba, when she had less than 12,000 of a population;
- (i) that the N.W.T. and its Premier Province [the District of Saskatchewan] are not yet represented in the Cabinet, as are the Eastern Provinces;

- (j) that the North West is not allowed the administration of its resources as are the eastern Provinces and British Columbia.

In submitting this as a fundamental grievance, your petitioners would disclaim any intention of defrauding the Federal Government of the Monies which they may have contributed to the improvement of the N.W.

In Conclusion, your petitioners would respectfully state that they are treated neither according to their privileges as British subjects nor according to the rights of people and that consequently as long as they are retained in those circumstances, they can be neither prosperous nor happy;

Your humble petitioners are of the opinion that the shortest and most effectual methods of remedying these grievances would be to grant the N.W.T. responsible government with control of its own resources and just representation in the Federal Parliament and Cabinet.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your excellency in Council would be pleased to cause the introduction, at the coming session of Parliament, for a measure providing for the complete organization of the District of Saskatchewan as a province, and that they be allowed as in 1870, to send Delegates to Ottawa with their Bill of Rights; whereby an understanding may be arrived at as to their entry into confederation, with the constitution of a free province, And your humble Petitioners will not cease to pray.

This document offers proof that Riel and Jackson were not wild-eyed rebels; they were only asking for the ordinary rights of citizenship enjoyed by other Canadians in 1885. The document contained a reasonable set of demands that, had they been accepted by the federal government, would have forestalled any armed uprising in the West.

The Bill of Rights was sent to the Secretary of State in Ottawa in December 1884. On January 5, 1885, it was acknowl-



edged, when Henry J. Morgan sent this letter to William Henry Jackson:

Department of State  
Ottawa, Jan. 5th, 1885

To  
W. H. Jackson, Esq.,  
Secretary General Committee,  
Inhabitants District of Lorne,  
Grandin P.O., N.W.T  
Sir:

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 16th ulto. transmitting a petition to His Excellency the Governor General in Council, from the inhabitants of the District of Lorne, in the North West Territories, praying for the introduction, at the coming Session of Parliament, of a measure for the complete organization of the District of Saskatchewan as a Province, and to be allowed to send Delegates to Ottawa with a bill of rights with a view to the District being admitted into the Confederation as a Province of the Dominion, and to state that the matter will receive due consideration,

I have the honor to be, etc.

Henry J. Morgan.

Acting Under Secretary of State

Referred to the Hon. the Privy Council by Command

sgd. J.A. Chapleau

Referred to the Minister of the Interior

sgd. J.A.J.D. Jan 9/85

However, for reasons that Sir John A. Macdonald never made public, the 1885 Bill of Rights was never discussed in the House of Commons. Instead, Prime Minister Macdonald stood up in Parliament on Monday, March 23, 1885, and solemnly announced:

The Bill of Rights has never been officially, or indeed in any way promulgated so far as we know, and transmitted to the Government.

This statement was false. Clearly, the federal government had no intention of granting responsible government to the people of the West. This intransigence led directly to the tragic series of events that created bloodshed and racial turmoil in the West.





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## ROSE OULLETTE AND WILLIAM JACKSON: AN UNSUNG LOVE STORY

LOVE, SEX AND MARRIAGE are forces that have shaped human history throughout the ages. Among the ancient aristocracies, marriage was too important to be left to mere chance. In medieval Europe, important political and military alliances were often forged among the royalty through arranged marriages. This was also the case among the tribal societies of pre-contact America. Political and trade alliances were made when chiefs offered their daughters in marriage to powerful members of other tribes.

Sometimes illicit love affairs played an important role in shaping history. Indeed, among the aristocracy of feudal Europe, illicit sexual liaisons and secret love affairs proliferated, and the informal alliances thus created were often as important as the formal, recognized alliances made through marriage. But these were affairs of the giants of history, members of elite groups whose affairs made history because they belonged to families who controlled the institutions of their respective societies.

Rarely has a love affair between two ordinary people had an effect on history. Yet there was such a love affair, and it had an effect on the history of the Canadian prairie West. This was not an illicit sexual liaison so much as it was a flowering of romantic love which was most likely never consummated. It was an affair between a beautiful young Metis woman named Rose Oullette and a youthful White intellectual named William Henry Jackson.

Jackson was not known as a ladies' man. An idealist and a romantic, he fought to create a better world, and he lived for a perfect love. Rose, the daughter of Riel's ally, Moise Oullette, met Jackson when he and Riel were holding a political meeting at her family's home. The two were immediately attracted to each other. To Rose, young William Jackson represented all that was sophisticated and worldly. To Jackson, Rose personified the innocence, the honour and the beauty of all the Metis people. It was an honourable love – the kind that would have led to marriage and a family in more gentle times.

During the summer of 1884 Jackson, at Riel's invitation, left Prince Albert to live with the Metis of St. Antoine-de-Padoue (Batoche). Riel feared that Jackson was in danger, as he was being kept under surveillance by the police because of his affiliations with the Farmers' Union and the Metis. As well, no one knew for sure just how far the political intrigues of the Prince Albert land speculators might go. These people, it was feared, might resort to violence against Riel's White allies.

While living with the Metis, Jackson worked around the clock, drawing up documents and writing articles to advance the claims of the Metis and to ensure their rights as citizens of Canada. Jackson did not have much time to spend with his beloved Rose. On occasion, they went for walks along the bank of the Saskatchewan River. They were often seen together during the late summer evenings, walking and holding hands. Rose, dressed in a plain blue dress, was a slim and stately woman. She often returned from their walks along the river bank with her long dark hair adorned with the sweet smelling wild roses of the prairie.

William, though not a tall man, had the lithe appearance of an athletic outdoorsman. With black hair and flashing dark eyes, his appearance differed little from the Metis youths of the North West. After he fell in love with Rose, Jackson wore the Metis headband, and on dress occasions he wore the brilliant Metis sash around his waist.



Jackson adopted the Metis life so completely that few people in the community saw him as an outsider. Jackson had become a Metis. In March, 1885, as the clouds of war gathered in the North West, William Jackson became a Catholic so as to complete his transition from White to Metis. Much to the shock of his parents, he gave up his own religion to embrace that of his love, Rose.

It is likely that he intended to marry her, but the worsening political situation soon made such a marriage impossible. Rumours abounded that the police were about to invade the Metis communities. Indeed, three hundred police reinforcements arrived in the region, and Riel was becoming flustered and confused by the government's militant actions.

These rumours did much to destabilize the Metis, who were forced to mobilize several hundred armed men for Riel's protection, since no one could be sure the rumours were false. Then a group of police appeared in the village. They were simply on a routine assignment, but the Metis became alarmed. William Jackson was arrested as a spy. Someone, jealous of his close relationship with Riel, was creating mischief by fanning the flames of suspicion that the rumours had initiated. Jackson was imprisoned and threatened with execution.

The rumours that had triggered the reaction of panic among the Metis continued to grow. Then, on the fateful morning of March 26, Lawrence Clarke, the Hudson's Bay Company factor and land speculator, goaded Major L. N. F. Crozier into taking action against the Metis at Duck Lake. War broke out between the Canadian government and the Metis of the North West. Several other prisoners were brought in and incarcerated with Jackson.

During the evening of March 26, Gabriel Dumont, the usually gentle and tolerant elder, broke into the prison and threatened to kill all the prisoners, including Jackson. Dumont had been wounded in the head and was half mad with pain and fatigue. However, he relented, and was taken away by his compatriots to be treated for his wound and put to bed. After a night's rest, Dumont was no longer a threat to the prisoners.



Rose watched helplessly as her love languished in the rough and uncomfortable makeshift prison. She could not get permission to see him. Moise Oullette was actively involved with Riel's militia, which was by now constantly on the move. Although Rose was refused permission to see Jackson, his brother, Thomas Eastwood Jackson, a known ally of Riel, was allowed to visit him. He asked to take William back with him, but the Metis refused to let William return to Prince Albert with his brother. When Thomas returned to Prince Albert, he informed the family that William was becoming mentally unbalanced under the strain.

During the battle of Batoche, which took place from May 9 to May 12, Jackson and the other prisoners were kept in a small, dark earthen cellar under a house in the village. Riel used the prisoners as hostages. He sent a message to General Fred Middleton, the commanding officer of the Canadian force, that the hostages would be killed if Canadian troops fired upon Metis women and children.

Jackson, locked in the crowded dark cellar during the battle, was sick with concern for Rose, and for his friends who were engaged in combat outside. Then on the third day of the battle, the sound of the cannon bombardment suddenly ceased. The short interval of silence was broken by the sound of rifle fire, and then there was silence. The prisoners sensed that the battle outside was over. They heard the stones being rolled off the cellar door that had imprisoned them. As the door was lifted, the silhouette of a Canadian soldier appeared against the light above, and the prisoners were finally free – all except William Henry Jackson.

The soldiers, upon recognizing Jackson as the infamous "White rebel," insulted him and roughed him up. He was immediately imprisoned, this time by the Whites. Under strict military guard, Jackson suffered constant abuse and insults, until he was sent with the Metis prisoners to stand trial in Winnipeg.

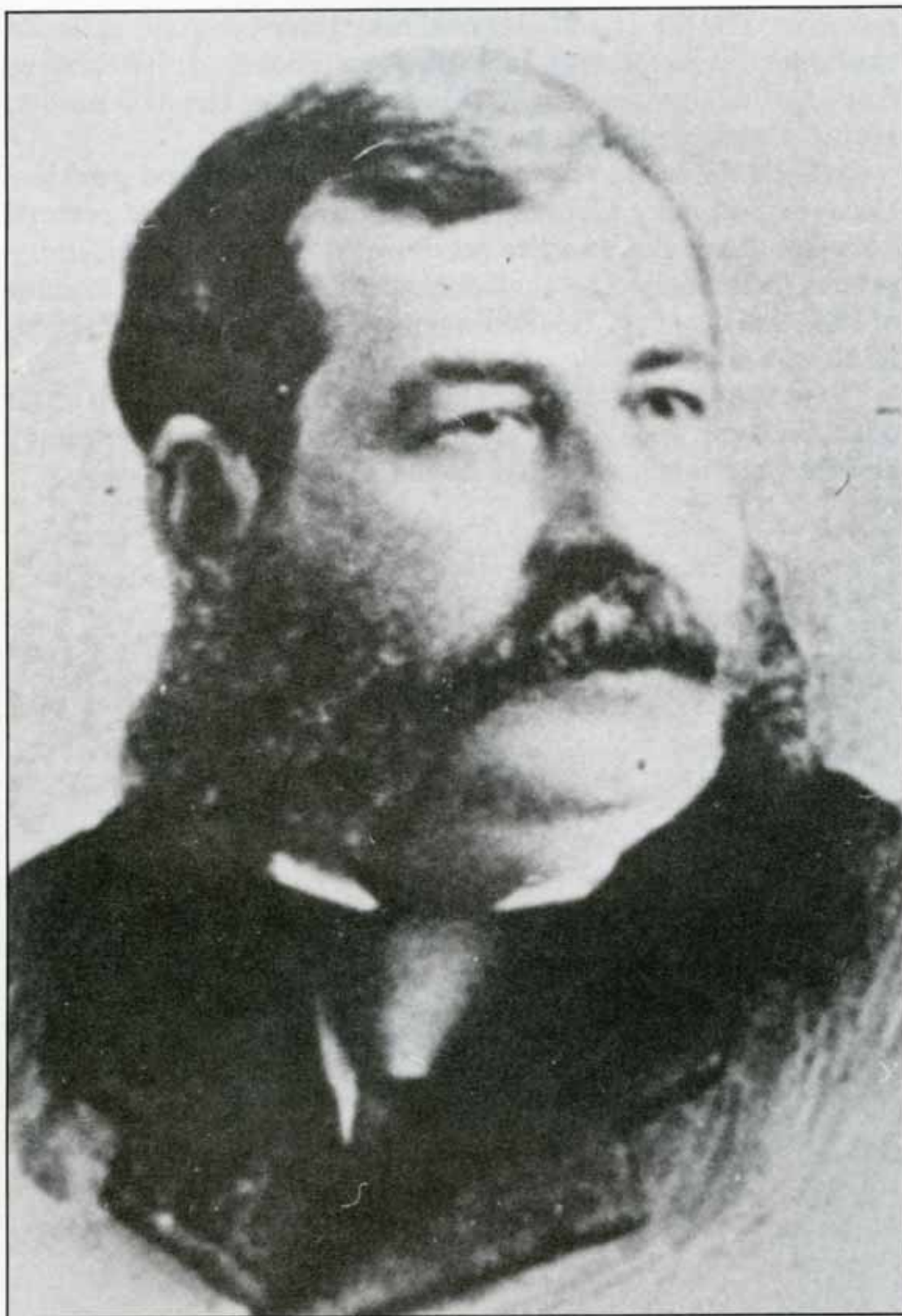
During the trial Jackson was adjudged insane, and was incarcerated in a mental institute. Jackson was not insane,



however. The strain of his ordeal may have been the basis for the court's decision, but Jackson soon recovered. He escaped from the asylum and made his way across the US border. Hungry and penniless, he arrived in Chicago.

Jackson went on to become a labour organizer and working-class revolutionary involved in the confrontations that occurred between the police and the hordes of poverty-stricken immigrants that flocked to that city throughout the last decade of the 19th century. He died a pauper on December 27, 1951, in New York City.

There is no record of Rose Oullette after her brief love affair with Jackson. It is likely that she married, and raised many children and grandchildren in the tradition of her people.



*Lawrence Clark.*

*Photo credit: Saskatchewan Archives Board.*





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## LAWRENCE CLARKE *AGENT PROVOCATEUR*

LAWRENCE CLARKE was the man who started the war of 1885.

In many ways, Lawrence Clarke remains a mysterious person. His actions, which led to the armed confrontation between Major L. N. F. Crozier's small corps of police and Gabriel Dumont's force at Duck Lake, have never been properly explained by historians. In fact, as the event recedes further into the past, his role as the *agent provocateur* who brought on the battle at Duck Lake has been almost completely forgotten. Although his reasons for provoking a war against the Metis may never be fully known, a glimpse into his past provides some valuable clues.

Lawrence Clarke was born in Ireland on June 26, 1832. He acquired a good education, and was placed in charge of his fellow Irishmen who were indentured labourers working the cotton plantations of the West Indies side-by-side with the Blacks whose fathers had been taken from the coasts of Africa.

Lawrence Clarke did not stay long in the West Indies. While still a youth he accompanied his parents to Canada, arriving in Montreal in 1851. He liked the country so much that he slipped away from his parents, who did not want him to stay, and joined the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC). He was sent to Fort McPherson in the North West Territories (NWT) and was soon promoted to clerk. He was transferred to Fort Rae, NWT, where he improved his chances for promotion by marrying Jane Bell, the daughter of the post's chief factor. Jane bore him five children.

In 1863, the Clarke family was moved to Fort a-La-Corne, near the present site of Prince Albert. In 1867, Clarke was promoted to the status of Chief Trader and sent to Fort Carlton. Clarke became known in the district as a gregarious but hard-nosed wheeler-dealer who worked his Metis employees hard, but could always be counted on to contribute generously to their religious and social events.

As the Chief Trader – later Chief Factor – of the HBC's operations at Fort Carlton, Clarke became a very powerful man in the North West, employing hundreds of Metis as seasonal labourers. He and his Company exercised almost complete control over the people of the region in both economic and legal terms. As the Chief Factor of Fort Carlton, Clarke automatically became the Justice of the Peace (J.P.). As the J. P. Clarke worked on behalf of the Canadian government, who pressured to exercise legal control over the people, despite the fact that no police force was in place to enforce Canadian law in the NWT.

In 1870, Clarke's wife died, leaving him with five children to care for. Four years later, Clarke married Catherine McKay, a Scots Metis from the powerful McKay clan – a clan with important connections throughout the N.W.T. The McKays were respected by the Metis as strong people who were both good hunters and wise businessmen. The McKays also had important family connections with the elite of the Conservative Party in the West.

Clarke became active in politics after his marriage to Catherine. Gifted with a silver tongue, Clarke was a compelling speaker who could make an impression on audiences of either educated or illiterate people. Clarke so loved public speaking that he frequently made the 80 kilometre overland trip from Fort Carlton to Prince Albert to participate in debates and lectures with the Prince Albert Learned Society.

Clarke aligned himself with powerful leaders of the French Metis who made up the majority of the population in the communities along the South Saskatchewan River. By 1872, he had ingratiated himself with Father André, the priest who



exercised immense political control over the Metis of the North West.

By 1881, Clarke had become a very influential person in the Fort Carlton-Prince Albert region. Through Father André, he obtained the political allegiance of the French Metis. Through his marriage to Catherine, he had powerful connection among the English-speaking Metis, and through his company, the HBC, he exercised enormous economic power in the district.

In 1881, Lawrence Clarke, as a member of the Conservative Party, became the first elected member of the North West Council. This was largely due to the influence of Father André, whose adherence to the ultramontane doctrine aligned him with successive Conservative candidates in the District of Lorne.

By 1881, Lawrence Clarke was heavily involved in land speculation along with other high-ranking members of the Conservative Party such as Colonel Sproat and D. H. Macdowall of Prince Albert. By 1883, Clarke and others of this group were openly agitating for war between the Metis and the Canadian government in order to create an economic boom in the depressed region.

Lieutenant Governor Edgar Dewdney was aware of the mischief being created by Clarke and his cohorts. Dewdney wrote to Prime Minister Macdonald, stating,

At Prince Albert there is a certain clique which would like nothing better than to see a row so that money might be brought among them. . . . I hear Clarke became alarmed and he wrote a very sensational letter to Mr. Graham, at the same time asking Colonel Sproat to write you.

The sensational letter referred to by Dewdney was passed on by Andrew Graham, the Chief Factor of the HBC, to Prime Minister Macdonald. The letter claimed that the Metis were about to rebel and asked the government to send troops to the West. This letter was later used by Prime Minister Macdonald to justify to Parliament the use of troops against the Metis during the war of 1885.



By the summer of 1884, Clarke was desperate. He and many other speculators faced financial ruin because of the depression brought on by the change in the location of the Canadian Pacific Railway. With the main line now far to the south of Prince Albert, there was no hope of attracting settlers onto their lands in the Prince Albert region, since there would be no way to get the grain they produced to the marketplace. Clarke felt that a rebellion in the district would bring prosperity back.

When William Henry Jackson's Bill of Rights was sent to Ottawa, a petition containing hundreds of names was collected in support of it. This petition was to be delivered to Ottawa by a courier from the NWT. The Metis, on the advice of Father André, asked Lawrence Clarke to take the petition to Ottawa and bargain with the federal government for their rights. Clarke accepted, and in February 1885, he made a trip to Ottawa ostensibly on their behalf.

When Clarke returned from Ottawa on March 18, 1885, he was met by a delegation of Metis near the village of St. Laurent. They anxiously enquired about the Bill of Rights and their petition. What was the government's response to their demands? Clarke's statement to this Metis delegation triggered the war that followed. He told them that the only answer they would get would be bullets, and that on his way northward from Regina he passed a camp of five hundred policemen who were coming up to capture the Metis agitators. The Metis delegation passed this false message on to Louis Riel, who immediately formed a provisional government, and mobilized a military force to defend against the anticipated attack of Clarke's mythical police.

When Riel's force seized goods from local stores and took hostages to be used to bargain with the police, Major Crozier assumed this was the beginning of a rebellion. Crozier recruited 43 civilian volunteers from Prince Albert, and moved them out to Fort Carlton to reinforce his regular police. Crozier did not intend to attack the Metis, however. He knew that his superior officer was sending police reinforcements from Fort Qu'Appelle.