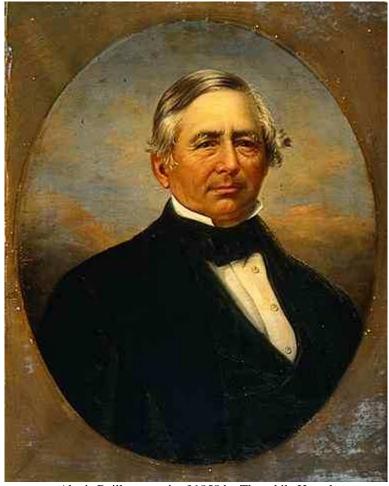## Alexis C. Bailly (1798-1861):
The First Cattle Drive in the Red River Valley

Alexis was born on, 14 Dec 1798 in Littlefort, Grand Haven, Northwest Territory (on Lake Huron) the son of Joseph Bailly (Bailly de Messien) and Angelique McGulpin his Metis wife.[1] He was educated at George Schindler's School for Boys Education from 1808 to 1812 at Michillimackinac, NWT. Later he was at school in Montreal and at age 19 assisted Lady Selkirk in taking a message from Montreal to her husband at Fort William. Billy entered the fur trade working for Joseph Rolette at Prairie du Chien in 1821. His first job was to drive a herd of cattle to the Red River Settlement.

Alexis Bailly, portrait of 1858 by Theophile Hamel

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[1] *Father:* Joseph Bailly b: 7 Apr 1774 in Vercheres, Quebec, (Lower Canada) c: 1774 in St. Anne de Varennes, Vercheres, Quebec (Lower Canada).
Mother: Angelique McGulpin b: ABT 1780 in Chig-au-mish-kene village on Grand River, Michigan, Upper Canada.

His grandfather, Michel Bailly de Messein, was in the campaign against the Fox and in 1754 at the defeat of George Washington at Fort Necessity. Early in the War of 1812, Alexis' father Joseph Bailly, acting under the orders of Captain Charles Roberts, transported goods from St Joseph Island to Michilimackinac. In March 1813 he was asked by Robert Dickson, superintendent for the Indians of the western nations, to recruit Indian warriors for the British, a work he later claimed that he had accomplished with success, notably among the Miamis, Potawatomis, Ottawas, and Kickapoos. Before the close of the war he commanded a party of Indians in three engagements against the Americans. Alexis also served in the War of 1812 under the British flag and in 1812 was part of the NWC group that captured Mackinac.

Late in the year of 1821 Alexis was at Fort Snelling as a part of a cattle drive from the south. They drove the cattle up the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers over to the Red River then north to the Selkirk Colony on the Red River. It is said that this cattle drive cost $100.00 per head for the cattle.

By 1823 Alexis was trading at Mendota (mouth of the Minnesota River) and in October of 1824 he was appointed, Register of Probate for Crawford County, by Territorial Governor Cass. From 1825 to 1831 he was in partnership with Joseph Rolette and employed Alexander and Jean Baptiste Faribault as his clerks with posts at Traverse des Sioux and at the mouth of the St. Peters (Minnesota River).

From 1832 to 1833 Bailly's business relationship with Rolette was affected by a dispute over business accounts. In 1834 Henry Sibley arrived at Mendota and replaced Alexis as the American Fur Company agent.

From 1835 to 1842 Alexis was residing at Prairie du Chien. In September of 1837 Alexis was part of a delegation of traders that accompanied twenty Chiefs to Washington D.C. and it has been said that he gave his hospitality at Wabasha to both Jefferson C. Davis and Ulysses S. Grant while they served in the U.S. Army early in their military careers.

In 1842 he moved to Wabasha where he lived the remainder of his life. He went on to be Wabasha County Commisioner and Justice of the Peace for Wabasha County from 1854 to 1857 His children were: Alexis Philip (1826-1898); Henry George (1828-1865); Frederick Edward (1831-1833); Isabella Antoinette (1833-1849); Lucy Anne (1835-?); Charles Edward (1838-1839); Daniel Barthelmy (1841-1921); Marie Louise (1845-1934) and Esther Clothilde (1848-1850). From his second marriage he had Charles Prince (b. 1859) and Francis Cary (b. 1860). Alexis was a Factor for the American Fur Company - Western Outfit from 1834 to 1842 at Prairie du Chien Wisconsin and a Factor for the American Fur Company - Western Outfit at Wabasha, Minnesota from 1842 to 1848.

Bailly was a member of the first Minnesota Territorial Legislature representing the 7th District from 1849 to 1850. He died at home at Wabasha on June 3, 1861.

Compiled by Lawrence Barkwell
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