

## Margaret Arnett MacLeod

Margaret Arnett MacLeod, one of Canada's foremost historians, is recognized by serious students of Canadian history as a meticulous researcher and dedicated writer. Perhaps best known for her work on editing the *Letters of Letitia Hargrave*, her earlier writings such as *The Bells of Red River* and *Lower Fort Garry*, are still in steady demand. She is a generous contributor to *The Beaver* magazine and to numerous historical and scientific papers.

In 1947 Mrs. MacLeod received the distinguished honour of being elected to the Council of The Champlain Society of Canada. She was the first and only woman invited by this august body to edit one of their publications.

Born in Ontario and educated in Brandon and Winnipeg, Mrs. MacLeod is the mother of two daughters married and living in Eastern Canada. Her only son, the late Lt. Alan A. MacLeod, V.C., R.A.F., was at the time of his award for valorous action in 1918, the youngest winner of the Victoria Cross in the British Empire.



# SONGS of OLD MANITOBA

## The Buffalo Hunt

Words by Angus Laith

Adapted from a melody by Jean Klumok, R.C.M.P.



1 Now list to the song of the buff-fa - lo hunt, Which I, Pierre, the



rhymes - ter - chant of "The brave! We gave *Bons-Bus - les*, Free-men of the



plains. We chase our "shoo!" We gave no man's sheep



BY MARGARET ARNETT MACLEOD  
Introduction by W. L. MORRIS, Ph.D., LL.D., F.R.S.C.

The collection of songs here presented is the fruit of more than seven years research in the field of early Manitoba music. The author has preserved the tone and temper, the fleeting and intangible spirit of the life of a vanished past, and presents a remarkable addition to the history of the Red River and Manitoba. Each song is complete with music, and most of them are in both English and French.

These Metis songs and dance tunes are based on original compositions by early exponents of native folk-songs. Few Western writers have surpassed Mrs. MacLeod's zeal and devotion in her efforts to preserve, for all time, something of the true and dramatic history of Canada's early West.

"In bringing these rough but picturesque pieces together," says Dr. Morton, "the author has compiled a rare piece of Canadiana and placed all lovers of Canadian history and folklore in her debt."

COVER DRAWING BY G. W. JEFFERY'S  
From The Imperial Oil Collection

Margaret Arnett MacLeod

Ryerson

# **SONGS of OLD MANITOBA**

*With Airs, French and English Words,  
and Introductions*

Chosen and edited by  
**MARGARET ARNETT MACLEOD**  
Author of *The Letters of Letitia Hargrave* etc.

Foreword by W. L. MORTON, PH.D., LL.D., F.R.S.C.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The collection of songs here presented is the fruit of my research in the field of early Manitoba music. My purpose in publishing the songs is to preserve something of the tone and temper, the fleeting and intangible spirit, of the life of a vanished past.

I wish to thank W. L. Morton, Professor of History, University of Manitoba; Henry L. Caron, Choirmaster of St. Mary's Cathedral, Winnipeg; Luc Lacourciere, Director of Folklore, Archives, Laval University, Quebec; Lorne Pierce, Editor-in-Chief, The Ryerson Press, Toronto; Sir Ernest MacMillan, Toronto; James Reaney, Department of English, University of Manitoba; Dr. Herbert Wiseman, Edinburgh; R. L. Walters, French Department, University of Manitoba; Chester Duncan, Associate Professor of English, University of Manitoba; Clifford P. Wilson, Director Canadiana, Glenbow Foundation, Calgary; L. Verrault, Winnipeg; Jean Klinck and Dr. George Klinck, Toronto; Hartwell Bowsfield, Provincial Archivist, Manitoba; and Pierre Falcon's descendants, of whom only Mrs. Emil Daneault and Mrs. M. Pelland of Winnipeg are now living; all of whom have given me generous assistance and encouragement in the preparation of this book.

I would also like to thank the Director of the Department of Musicology, La Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France, for his help in locating the original air of the song, "Lord Selkirk at Fort William," since the song had lost its air for one hundred and forty years.

MARGARET ARNETT MACLEOD.

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## INTRODUCTION

This little volume is a remarkable addition to the history of Red River and Manitoba. In it much of the history of the Province is commemorated in song. In bringing these rough but picturesque pieces together, the author has compiled a rare piece of Canadiana and placed all lovers of Canadian history and folklore in her debt.

These Manitoba "folk songs" are a by-product, it is not disparaging to say, of Margaret MacLeod's work on the life of the Red River colony, and in particular of her work on Cuthbert Grant and his settlement of Grantown. In her general work, the author's intent and her peculiar talent has been to reveal how the people of Red River actually lived their daily lives. In coming to know these people in their very lives, Margaret MacLeod found, with many other things, the songs through which they gave voice to joy or sorrow.

As that work went on, the collecting of the songs came to assume a purpose of its own. The author's object came to be to show what songs a society, which almost to the end lived side by side with savagery, could produce and to reveal each phase of Manitoba's history by a song with a commentary as setting.

It is to be noted in this volume that the songs are local to Red River and Manitoba, but that the music is not. There was much music in Red River. But researchers in Red River music, whom Mrs. MacLeod consulted, have stated that they found no music composed in Red River. The music was the music of Quebec, or Ontario, or Scotland, or the American frontier.

It is not such music or such songs which are in this book. Not even the famous "Remember the Red River Valley" is here, for that is merely a local adaptation of an old frontier song which

honoured many valleys before that of Red River. But there were songs locally composed in Red River and on Red River occasions and themes. They are indigenous songs. All were composed by known individuals, several of them indeed by the famous Pierre Falcon, the poet of the Métis. All were songs which became popular among the people of Red River and Manitoba, and were sung at dances, neighbourhood concerts and family gatherings. It is this popular usage which makes one think of them as folk songs, although strictly speaking they are not. But they are an authentic and revealing relic of our past, its events, its humour and its tragedies.

That there should have been so much popular verse in Manitoba's past will, I think, be surprising to many. That so much has survived is gratifying. To have the songs made available now, each with its historical commentary, is a matter for congratulation for all Manitobans. For Manitoba heretofore has been seen, by contrast with central Canada, the Atlantic Provinces and the ranch country of Alberta, a region devoid of folk song and popular verse. This volume will do much to correct that impression and to ensure that in future collections of Canadian folk song Manitoba need not go unrepresented.

This, the latest of Margaret MacLeod's publications, is, then, one more fruit of her devoted research on Red River history. It is a fitting companion piece to her *Bells of Red River* and *The Letters of Letitia Hargrave*, those vivid pictures of the social history of Red River. And the volume will serve to confirm the validity of the public recognition given Mrs. MacLeod's work by special resolution of the last session of the twenty-fourth Legislature of Manitoba.

Margaret MacLeod has put Manitobans in her debt by making these songs available, and especially as they were made ready for the press in the face of great personal difficulties. And a similar debt of gratitude is owing to The Ryerson Press, which has shown its usual courageous discrimination in publishing what is authentically Canadian.

W. L. MORTON

*University of Manitoba,  
July 1, 1959.*



## 1. RÉGIME OF THE FUR TRADERS

### 1. *The Battle of Seven Oaks,* *or The Frog Plain Song*

*Introduction* / Manitoba has seemed to have no heritage of folk songs from Red River days. After a search of some years, however, I have discovered a number which are presented here.

The earlier ones were composed by the French element in the community and, as far as can be learned, Pierre Falcon was the only person who to any extent put the life of the country into verse. Since four, and possibly five, of the songs given here were his work, perhaps we might take a look at this man.

Pierre was a wiry, fiery little man, agile and quick of movement. He had the deeply tanned skin of the settlers on the prairies and a sparse black beard, from under which, on occasion, streamed a flowing black tie. He wore his hair long to the base of his neck; not to conform with the style of the poets of his day, but in Red

River fashion. He had a feeling for words, a sense of rhythm, and a love of a rollicking tune. He was strongly dramatic, and his idea of the importance of the Métis nation may have been more right than his English contemporaries were ready to concede, or even we today to acknowledge. Everything in the world he knew, even the slightest event, went into verse and song, yet his work was not trivial. He mirrored the life about him, and his songs were eagerly caught up by the voyageurs on their journeys to and from Montreal.

It is difficult for us to realize how ready they would be for some diversion after the monotony of their cross-country journeys—days, weeks, and months of paddling relieved only by their songs, and at night by their dances around the campfire. How they would hail a new song from Falcon when they reached the eastern edge of the prairies!

Through his many songs Falcon was known as “The Bard of the Prairie Métis.” In fact, he became such a noted figure that his contemporaries gave his name to a lake in a region where he had served, Manitoba’s beautiful Falcon Lake near the Ontario border.

Tassé, the historian, predicted that, as long as the Canadian folksong was sung, the echoes of Falcon’s ballads would be heard from the St. Lawrence to the Mackenzie.

Pierre was born on June 4, 1793, at Elbow Fort, one of a cluster of North West Company posts in the Swan and Assiniboine River valleys. He was the son of a North West Company clerk, also named Pierre, and his mother was a woman of the prairies. In 1799 his father took him to La Prairie, in present-day Quebec, for his education, and he did not return home until 1808, when he was fifteen. He then entered the North West Company as a clerk.

In 1812 Pierre Falcon married Mary Grant, daughter of Cuthbert Grant, Sr., master of neighbouring Fort Tremblant. Her brother was Cuthbert Grant, Jr. During the early years of young Falcon’s marriage, he continued in the area around Fort Tremblant. But in 1816 an historic event, which occurred at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, brought him to that

place for a short period. There, through his song, "The Battle of Seven Oaks," which he composed at that time, he gained wide recognition.

The following events led up to the situation at the Forks and form the background of the song. In 1811, the Hudson's Bay Company launched a scheme for settlement at its posts, which began with the founding of a colony at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers. The enterprise was given over into the hands of Lord Selkirk. He was the logical person, since some years before he had applied to the British Government without success for help in a similar venture at this location. The Company had chosen an inauspicious period to send out settlers. They landed at the forks of the two rivers in the midst of a fur trade war between the North West and Hudson's Bay companies.

Soon, thereafter, the enmity of the Nor'westers was directed not only against the Company itself but against the settlers. They could see no room for settlement in a fur trade country and were determined to get rid of the intruders. In 1815 they burned the new little settlement to the ground. Grim reprisals followed, to which the Nor'westers replied in June, 1816. A party of about one hundred men under Cuthbert Grant was sent from Qu'Appelle to block the Red River at Frog Plain and starve the colonists out. In addition, Grant's party carried supplies for Montreal partners expected at Lake Winnipeg.

One band of the party made its way unseen to Frog Plain (La Grenouillère, later Kildonan). But a second band of some thirty men was seen by Semple, Governor of the colony, and overtaken by him and his men at Seven Oaks. There was an altercation—a shot—the colony men tried to form an extended line—then broke and huddled together. The half-breeds fired steadily from behind their horses into the mass. A swirl of horsemen came from behind the oaks, as the first band under Grant rode up from Frog Plain. The engagement grew more fierce, and at its end one member of the North West party, and twenty of Semple's men lay dead, while the Governor himself was mortally wounded. Thus

ended the Battle of Seven Oaks, the site of which is marked today by a monument on Winnipeg's Main Street.

Falcon's name does not appear on the list of Grant's followers, but he was there. He had been assigned to escort provisions, and had reached the Souris post when Grant sent for him to come and take on to Lake Winnipeg the supplies he, himself, had brought. Falcon evidently arrived in the middle of the battle, for he said he saw the shooting and the death of Governor Semple. He also stated that he composed the song, "The Battle of Seven Oaks," that same evening.

As for the sentiments expressed in the song, the historian, Hargrave, considered that Falcon no doubt presented the opinion of the Nor'westers with regard to the intention of Semple and his men.

# La Bataille des Sept Chênes

Words and music by Pierre Falcon



1. Vou-lez vous é - cou - ter chan-ter U - ne chan - son de  
1. Would you like to hear me sing Of - a true and

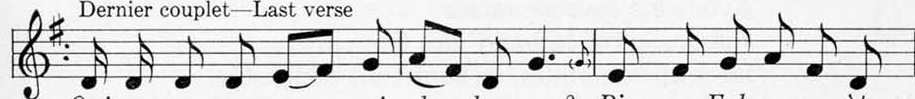


vé - ri - té? Le dix - neuf de juin, la bande des Bois-Brû-  
re - cent thing? It was June nine-teen, the band of Bois-Brû-



lés Sont ar - ri - vés comme des bra - ves guer-riers.  
lés Ar-rived that day, Oh the brave war-riors they!

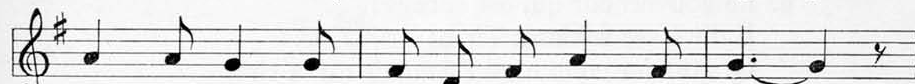
Dernier couplet—Last verse



Qui en a com - po - sé la chan-son? Pier - re Fal-con, po - ète  
Tell, oh tell me who made up this song? Why it's our own po - et,



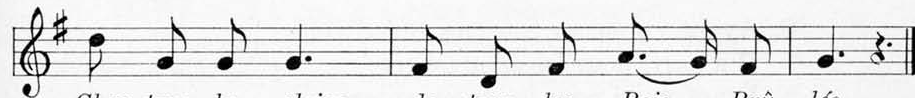
du can-ton. Elle a é - té fai - te et com - po - sée Sur  
Pierre Fal-con. Yes, she — was writ-ten this song of praise



la vic - toi - re que nous a - vons ga - gnée. —  
For the vic - to - ry — We won this day. —



Elle a é - té fai - te et com - po - sée  
Yes, she — was writ - ten, this song of praise —



Chan-tons la gloire de tous les Bois - Brû - lés.  
Come sing the glo - ry Of the Bois - Brû - lés.

1. Voulez-vous écouter chanter } *bis*  
 Une chanson de vérité?  
 Le dix-neuf de juin, la band' des Bois-Brûlés  
 Sont arrivés comm' des braves guerriers.
2. En arrivant à la Grenouillère } *bis*  
 Nous avons fait trois prisonniers;  
 Trois prisonniers des Arkanys  
 Qui sont ici pour piller not' pays.
3. Étant sur le point de débarquer } *bis*  
 Deux de nos gens se sont écriés }  
 Deux de nos gens se sont écriés  
 Voilà l'Anglais qui vient nous attaquer.
4. Tout aussitôt nous avons déviré } *bis*  
 Avons été les rencontrer  
 J'avons cerné la band' des Grenadiers  
 Ils sont immobiles, ils sont tout démontés.
5. J'avons agi comme des gens d'honneur, } *bis*  
 J'avons envoyé un ambassadeur,  
 Le gouverneur, voulez-vous arrêter  
 Un p'tit moment, nous voulons vous parler?
6. Le gouverneur qui est enragé } *bis*  
 Il dit à ses soldats: Tirez!  
 Le premier coup c'est l'Anglais qu' a tiré,  
 L'ambassadeur ils ont manqué tuer.
7. Le gouverneur qui se croit empereur } *bis*  
 Il veut agir avec rigueur;  
 Le gouverneur qui se croit empereur  
 A son malheur, agit trop de rigueur.
8. Ayant vu passer tous ces Bois-Brûlés } *bis*  
 Il a parti pour les épouvanter;  
 Étant parti pour les épouvanter;  
 Il s'est trompé, il s'est bien fait tuer.

9. Il s'est bien fait tuer }  
 Quantité de grenadiers } *bis*  
 J'avons tué presque tout son armée,  
 Sur la band' quatre ou cinq s'sont sauvés.
10. Si vous aviez vu tous ces Anglais }  
 Et tous ces Bois-Brûlés après } *bis*  
 De butte en butte les Anglais culbutaient.  
 Les Bois-Brûlés jetaient des cris de joie.
11. Qui en a composé la chanson }  
 Pierre Falcon, poète du canton. } *bis*  
 Elle a été faite et composée  
 Sur la victoire que nous avons gagnée.  
 Elle a été faite et composée  
 Chantons la gloire de tous les Bois-Brûlés.

PIERRE FALCON.

\*Pierre Falcon composed both words and music of this song. This version was sung by his grandchildren as Falcon taught it to them, and taken down by Henry L. Caron, Winnipeg.

### *The Battle of Seven Oaks*

1. Would you like to hear me sing  
 Of a true and recent thing?  
 It was June nineteen, the band of Bois-Brûlés  
 Arrived that day,  
 Oh the brave warriors they!
2. We took three foreigners prisoners when  
 We came to the place called Frog, Frog Plain.  
 They were men who'd come from Orkney,  
 Who'd come, you see,  
 To rob our country.

3. Well we were just about to unhorse  
When we heard two of us give, give voice.  
Two of our men cried, "Hey! Look back, look back!  
The Anglo-Sack  
Coming for to attack."
4. Right away smartly we veered about  
Gallop at them with a shout!  
You know we did trap all, all those Grenadiers!  
They could not move  
Those horseless cavaliers.
5. Now we like honourable men did act,  
Sent an ambassador—yes, in fact!  
"Monsieur Governor! Would you like to stay?  
A moment spare—  
There's something we'd like to say."
6. Governor, Governor, full of ire.  
"Soldiers!" he cries, "Fire! Fire."  
So they fire the first and their muskets roar!  
They almost kill  
Our ambassador!
7. Governor thought himself a king.  
He wished an iron rod to swing.  
Like a lofty lord he tries to act.  
Bad luck, old chap!  
A bit too hard you whacked!
8. When we went galloping, galloping by  
Governor thought that he would try  
For to chase and frighten us Bois-Brûlés.  
Catastrophe!  
Dead on the ground he lay.



9. Dead on the ground lots of grenadiers too.  
Plenty of grenadiers, a whole slew.  
We've almost stamped out his whole army.  
Of so many  
Five or four left there be.
10. You should have seen those Englishmen—  
Bois-Brûlés chasing them, chasing them.  
From bluff to bluff they stumbled that day  
While the Bois-Brûlés  
Shouted "Hurray!"
11. Tell, oh tell me who made up this song?  
Why it's our own poet, Pierre Falcon.  
Yes, she was written this song of praise  
For the victory  
We won this day.  
Yes, she was written, this song of praise—  
Come sing the glory  
Of the Bois-Brûlés.

PIERRE FALCON.

*Translated by James Reaney*

NOTE: This translation can be sung to Pierre Falcon's original tune with some stretching, but no more than to sing his own words requires. In making this translation I have followed Ezra Pound's practice. Since there can be no translation so inaccurate as that which sticks closely and literally to the surface of a song, I have attempted to make only an English equivalent of Falcon's ballad and so translate the really important thing—its high spirits.

## 2. *Lord Selkirk at Fort William*

*Introduction* / After the Battle of Seven Oaks, Cuthbert Grant seized Fort Douglas and banished the colonists from the Forks. Word sped to Lord Selkirk that again the Red River Settlement was wiped out. Falcon's song, "The Battle of Seven Oaks," composed that evening, was spread throughout the country by the Nor'-westers, and a copy found its way to Lord Selkirk.

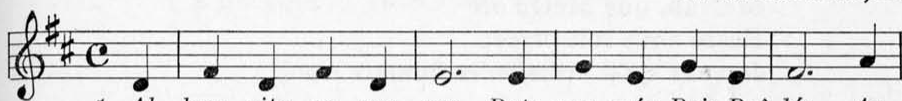
He was already on his way to Red River. At Montreal he had rallied to his aid some members of a disbanded Swiss regiment, De Meurons, and others. News of the catastrophe reached him at Sault Ste. Marie. He immediately proceeded to Fort William where, in reprisal, he seized the Nor'-westers' fort. Grant knew of Selkirk's coming and no doubt this reprisal was expected. Falcon, with his intimate knowledge of Fort William, having served there and as Grant's right-hand man in secret missions, was probably on the spot when Selkirk arrived. However, Falcon has not been completely identified as the composer of this song, "Lord Selkirk at Fort William." M. Martial Allard, who has made an extensive study of Pierre Falcon and his work, considers that the song bears marks of Falcon's composition.

The situation with which the song deals was a common procedure in the fur trade war. On seizing an enemy fort, each company's first consideration was to retain as many of the opposition's servants as possible. A dance, to which they were all invited, was held immediately. The hosts counted upon the loosened tongues of their riotous guests to reveal the secrets of the opposition.

The Nor'-westers' great hall at Fort William, with its oil paintings and statuary, was probably the scene of Lord Selkirk's ball, and he must have been pleased to find in the fur trade wilderness such a fine setting for it. Even some Wedgwood Queen's Ware was listed by "Milord" among the contents of the fort when he took it over. From the words of the song, one is left to surmise the success of "Milord's" ball.

# La danse des Bois Brûlés

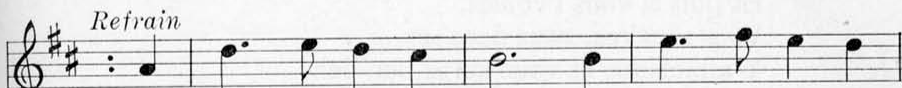
Air des Frâncs Maçons



1. *Al - lons, vite ac - cou - rez Rats mus - qués, Bois Brû - lés, Au*  
1. Come quick - ly, come to - day, Rats mus - qués, Bois Brû - lés, At



*Fort Wil - liam un Mi - lord fait re - gal.*  
*Fort Wil - liam Lord Sel - kirk gives a Ball.*



*Al - lons donc, dé - pê - chez, Vous saut' - rez, vous dans' -*  
Now hur - ry, don't de - lay, You'll sing and dance and



*rez, Y a mu - sique, et vous au - rez beau bal!*  
play, The band strikes up; there's food and fun for all.

## UN HÉRAUT

Allons, vite accourez  
Rats-musqués, Bois-Brûlés,  
Au Fort William un Milord fait régal.

Allons donc, dépêchez,  
Vous saut'rez, vous dans'rez,  
Y a musique, et vous aurez beau bal!

L'ORDONNATEUR

McNab, que McGil'oré  
Entre nous soit placé;  
Je veux qu'il brille en ce fameux régal:

Avec lui, retenez  
Vous saut'rez, vous dans'rez  
Y a musique; et vous aurez beau bal!

Allons gai, McKenzé,  
Venez de ce côté,  
Vous prendrez part à ce petit régal:

Et puis si vous l'voulez,  
Vous saut'rez, vous dans'rez,  
Y a musique et vous aurez bon bal.

Ah çà! Docteur, entrez,  
Ici vous assiérez,  
Point d'humeur sombre en ce joyeux régal.

Docteur, vous chanterez,  
Vous saut'rez, vous dans'rez,  
Y a musique, et vous aurez beau bal!

Belle Troque! avancez  
Ah! Fraser, un tel nez  
Est bien celui d'un courrier de régal!

Çà, morbleu, vous boirez,  
Puis après vous dans'rez;  
Y a musique et vous aurez beau bal!

Ca, Meurons, accordez,  
Préludez, commencez,  
Et jouez-nous quelque air un peu jovial!

Messieurs les Bois-Brûlés,  
Vous saut'rez, vous chant'rez,  
Y a musique et vous aurez beau bal.

LES BOIS-BRÛLÉS

Que vous avez de bonté,  
Milord! d'honnêteté!  
Quand pourrons-nous vous rendre un tel régal?

MILORD

Allons, vous vous moquez,  
Dansez, Matchicotés,  
Y a musique, et vous aurez bon bal!

LES BOIS-BRÛLÉS

Allons! point tant d'façon,  
Sautons donc, dansons donc;  
Que l'diable emport' Milord et son régal!  
Qu'avec tous ses Meurons  
Sur leurs maudits violons  
Cent ans durant il danse un pareil bal!

PIERRE FALCON.

*Lord Selkirk at Fort William*

A HERALD

Come quickly, come today,  
Rats-musqués, Bois-Brûlés,  
At Fort William Lord Selkirk gives a Ball.

Now hurry, don't delay,  
You'll sing and dance and play,  
The band strikes up; there's food and fun for all.

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES

McNab, now all should see,  
Our friend McGillivray.<sup>1</sup>  
He'll add distinction to our famous ball.

And you beside him stay,  
You'll sing and dance and play.  
The band strikes up, there's fun and food for all.

McKenzie,<sup>2</sup> now take care,  
Your place is over there.  
Come join us all in our gay little ball.

And if you think you dare,  
You'll dance at our affair.  
The band strikes up; there's fun and food for all.

Oh, Doctor,<sup>3</sup> come draw near.  
Your chair is over here,  
Bring no gloom here, we want none at our ball.

So, Doctor, here this day  
We'll see you skip and play.  
The band strikes up; there's fun and food for all.

Good Trader, join our dance.  
There's Fraser's<sup>4</sup> nose; one glance  
Tells us that he will like our little ball.

There see the drink flow free,  
You'll dance abandonedly.  
The band strikes up; there's food and fun for all.

Meurons, without delay,  
Please play us something gay.  
A lively tune to start our happy ball.

Respected Bois-Brûlés  
Just hop and jump and play.  
The band strikes up; there's fun and food for all.

THE BOIS-BRÛLÉS

My Lord, we now express  
Our thanks for your kindness.  
When can we traders give you such a ball?

LORD SELKIRK

Now men, your joking stop.  
Just dance and slide and hop  
The band strikes up; there's fun and food for all.

THE BOIS-BRÛLÉS

Formalities away!  
We'll join the dance today.  
Milord, his feast—the devil take it all!

And let *him* dance, we say.  
While all his fiddles play,  
A hundred years or more at such a ball!<sup>5</sup>

PIERRE FALCON.

*Translated by Robert L. Walters*

<sup>1</sup>Hon. William, who was arrested at Fort William by John McNab on Selkirk's orders.

<sup>2</sup>Either Kenneth or Alexander or Daniel.

<sup>3</sup>John McLoughlin.

<sup>4</sup>Simon, the explorer.

<sup>5</sup>The words of this song were obtained from the Viger-Verreau Collection in the archives of the Folklore Department, Laval University, Quebec. It was sung to the tune of "Air des Francs-maçons," a tune well known in early Quebec, though it does not seem to have survived in this western country. The air first appeared in France in 1761 under the name "Carillon de Dunkerque." Later the lively tune was used by French Freemasons for one of their lodge songs, when it took the name, "Air des Francs-maçons." As such, it was printed in two different volumes of Freemason songs, in 1737 and 1787. It is to be found in these volumes at La Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France.

### 3. *The Buffalo Hunt*

*Introduction* / The buffalo hunt, so vividly described in this song, gains significance through the addition of its background and setting.

With the amalgamation of the Hudson's Bay and North West fur companies, in 1821, Pierre Falcon continued at his post in the Swan River district under the new Hudson's Bay Company.

By 1824 Governor George Simpson realized the Colony's need for protection against the Sioux Indians, and also for a more settled food supply. Since buffalo meat was the staple food of the country, he met the needs of both protection and food supply by settling the brave Métis warriors—the buffalo hunters—on the White Horse Plain along the Assiniboine River, eighteen miles west of its junction with the Red. In selecting this site for the Métis settlement, Simpson knew that in protecting themselves from the Sioux they would also be protecting the mother colony at the Forks.

Cuthbert Grant, as leader of the Métis, was chosen by Simpson to found the settlement. Grant gathered around him some scores of these Métis hunters and fighters, giving each man a strip farm, and placing the most skilled warriors nearest himself. Among these was his brother-in-law, Pierre Falcon. Grant named his settlement Grantown, no doubt with long thoughts of Grantown-on-the-Spey which he knew in faraway Scotland. The village today is called St. François Xavier, and it has changed little in size or pattern.

It is believed that Falcon composed his song of "The Buffalo Hunt" during his earlier years at Grantown.

Grant was elected president of the hunt, a position which he held until his later years. He began by organizing his Métis into a most efficient body of men. Better armed and mounted than the Indians, skilled in tactics of defence, they were masters of every craft and cunning pertaining to the hunt. The Indian buffalo hunt stands on record as the first form of government on the western plains, and under Grant the Red River buffalo hunt became known as "the most highly organized hunting expedition in the world."