

Louison Sayer Jr. (b. 1851): Resistance Activist

Louison was the son of Louison Sayer Sr. and Suzanne Fleury. He was born at St. François-Xavier. He married Caroline Boucher. Prior to the Resistance, he was a scout and interpreter for the N.W.M.P. at Battleford. On June 10, 1885 he was arrested for possession of property stolen during the Resistance.

His brother Jean-Baptiste Sayer (b. 1853) was the Resistance leader of an Indian and Métis group that captured a wagon train from Swift Current taking army supplies to Battleford on May 14, 1885. Louison was suspected of instigating the discontent among the Peace Hills Indian groups. Hayter Reed gave the following report to Lieutenant Governor Dewdney from Battleford on August 29, 1885:

Louis Sayers—a brother of Baptiste now in prison at Regina—was at Cut Knife fighting and is now at the head of a party at the “Nose” or thereabouts. He was for a long time on Poundmaker’s in an ..?.. when I first came to this place. From what I can gather he and the other Half Breeds & Indians of this marauding party are endeavoring to influence the Peace Hills Indians — this fact is known to those here and—no doubt has a more or less disturbing effect in their minds—Sayers boasted when he ran for it that he would return shortly with another Riel to lead them— Do you not think it would be well to send Lucas word to have a spy or two through his Indians and down the Battle River among the Half Breeds settled there?¹

Louis was convicted and served a two-month sentence. Upon release he moved to St. Peter’s Mission then Fort Assiniboine, Montana where he worked on the railway section and as an interpreter for the U.S. Army. On May 5, 1888, Corporal G.H.L. Bossange reported on the Sayer brothers activities:

Here I have come across two Breeds from Battleford, named Joseph Sears (sic.) and Louis Sears; they are brothers; Louis is about thirty years old; the other one about twenty-three. They came over after the Rebellion because they were in most of the fights and were afraid to get caught – I sleep here at the section house on the railroad; in the same room as them; so I expect to be able to get some information. They are at present working on the track.²

Louis later moved back to the Bresaylor Settlement.³

¹ Glenbow Institute, Dewdney fonds, pp.1234-1235.

² g.H.L. Bossange to the Commissioner of the N.W.M. Police, May 5, 1888, Dewdney fonds pp. 1345-1347.

³ Douglas W. Light, *Footprints in the Dust*. North Battleford: Turner-Warwick Publications Inc., 1987: 495. On December 16, 1885, James Anderson wrote to Lieut. Governor Dewdney and indicated that there were 225 Half Breeds living at St. Peters Mission near the Sun River and noted that 25 of these families were Resistance participants from the South Saskatchewan. He names Charles Trottier and sons, Louis Sayer, Robert Jackson, John Ross Jr. and Modeste Rocheleau. Anderson reported that they were surviving by cutting wood to sell at Fort Shaw.



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