

Allan Macdonald. (1832-1901)

Allan was born May 19, 1832 at Fort Langley, British Columbia, the son of a Hudson's Bay Company chief trader Archibald Macdonald and his Metis wife, Jane Klyne. Allan was a noted farmer, rancher and businessman. He was a Lieutenant Colonel in the 11th Battalion of Rifles, also known as the Argenteuil Rangers and a farm instructor and Indian Agent for the Department of Indian Affairs. His advocacy for Indian rights and protection of Indian lands accounted for his lack of promotion, attempted dismissal and then demotion within the Indian Affairs Department.

While his father was on furlough from the Company, his wife and children lived at Red River. Upon father's return, they lived at Fort Colville, Washington. Allan was then sent to Lower Canada for schooling. He inherited the family farm at St. Andrews in 1853. Allan participated in the Caribou gold rush, was active in the militia, part of the Wolseley Expedition, and farmed near St. Agathe. He was an Indian Agent in southeastern Saskatchewan and western Manitoba, based first at Swan River, then at Fort Qu'Appelle. He also negotiated several Indian Treaties. Through his work at the Crooked Lakes Agency, these bands demonstrated the most advanced farming methods. Macdonald experimented with many varieties of fruits, seeds and bushes in the agency garden and was instrumental in acquiring modern threshing equipment and a gristmill for the agency. When Deputy-Superintendent Hayter Reed attempted to abolish the elected offices of chiefs and headmen Macdonald opposed the order on the basis that it was a Treaty right.

Allan's older half-brother Ranald¹ became the first person to teach English to the Japanese. In 1848, Ranald Macdonald was determined to visit Japan, which at the time was a closed country. Foreigners were prohibited from entering the country. He shipped from Hawaii on the whaler *Plymouth* and arranged to be dropped off, appearing to be a shipwrecked sailor, near the west coast of Ezo, Hokkaido. The Japanese authorities took him to Nagasaki as a prisoner. During his confinement in a Temple he met Einosuke Moriyami, an official interpreter of the Japanese shogunate and became the first teacher of English in Japan when he was asked to teach Moriyama and the other government interpreters.



¹ Ranald was born on February 3, 1824 at Fort George (Astoria, Oregon), the eldest son of Hudson's Bay Company fur trader Archibald Macdonald and his first wife Raven (Sunday) the daughter of Chinook Chief Comcomly. His mother died shortly after his birth and Ranald was raised by his stepmother Jane Klyne (also Metis). He and several of his step-siblings were sent to the Red River Academy at Fort Garry for their education. Later he was sent to St. Thomas, Upper Canada to train in banking under the tutelage of his father's friend Edward Ermatinger.

Compiled by Lawrence Barkwell
Coordinator of Metis Heritage and History Research
Louis Riel Institute