

Thinking and Talking About *Riel On Ice*

The *Oxford Dictionary* defines artistic licence as “a writer’s or artist’s freedom to deviate from fact, or from conventions such as grammar, for effect.”¹ *Riel on Ice*, by artist Liz Pead, takes such licence in a very unique and creative way by combining visual art with a narration component. The work invites us to look at our history with new eyes, to explore art media and expression, and to enjoy creativity. It also calls for us to review the gravity of the subject matter and to learn more about the facts underlying the artist’s expression of such a pivotal point in Métis and Canadian history. The installation itself is a way to experience the former. These panels present the facts, from a Métis perspective, to assist visitors with the latter task. Both are intended to spark learning and enjoyment.

Riel on Ice is a multimedia art installation in which the audio component takes personalities from the two Métis resistances at Red River (1869-1870) and at Batoche (1885) and puts them on two rival hockey teams—the “Rebels” (the Métis) and the “Canadians” (Euro-Canadian government officials, soldiers and settlers with some Métis). Some of the events of both the Red River Resistance and the 1885 Resistance are also included within the game. The teams are playing in the Dominion Hockey League’s Lord Lorne’s Cup championship final, which mirrors the early professional hockey leagues in Canada such as the Amateur Hockey Association of Canada, the National Hockey Association (the National Hockey League’s predecessor), the Eastern Canada Hockey Association, the Pacific Coast Hockey League, and the Western (Canada) Hockey League.

Riel on Ice is a visual and aural expression which engages our sensibilities. The hockey metaphor, complete with its humour and lightheartedness, is juxtaposed with the gravity of war. The history covered in *Riel on Ice*, and described on these informative panels, portrays the wide and complex variety of individuals, circumstances, tragic outcomes, altered lives, and lingering after effects these important conflicts in our history have had on the Métis, on the community of Batoche, and indeed on Canada.

The two teams, the “Rebels” and the “Canadians,” are playing a no-holds barred playoff game at the Carlton Trail Arena, which is named after the famous Red River cart trail that stretched from the Red River Settlement in present-day Winnipeg and southern Manitoba to Fort Edmonton. It crossed the South Saskatchewan River near Batoche. The Carlton Trail Arena is the home arena of the (Batoche/Métis) Rebels.

Hockey is an integral component of Canada’s DNA. Although its popularity has waned somewhat with the growing popularity of other sports, it still retains a central place in Canada’s national mythology. Fans’ passions for their favourite teams run deep, and in that sense can mirror our other sense of belonging to our other loyalties—ethnicities, regions, religions, or countries. Competing sports teams and their respective fan bases can resemble countries and are even sometimes called “nations.” Think of “Rider Nation” for the Canadian Football League’s Saskatchewan Roughriders to understand this concept.



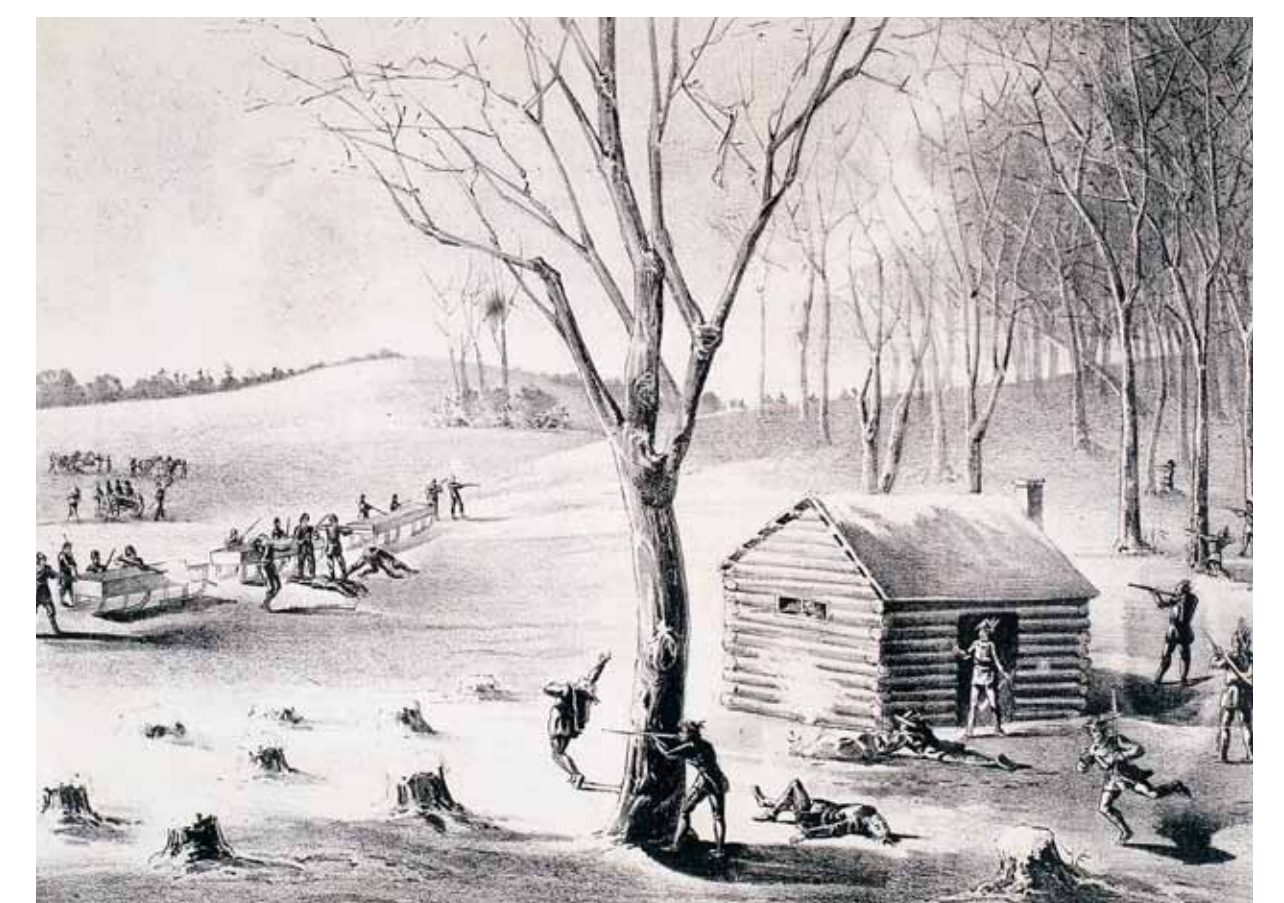
Opening the ball at Batoche, Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-B2043.

*All archival photographs in this document have captions written in 1885 and therefore do not reflect modern terminology or perspectives.

The Stanley Cup, now the championship trophy of the National Hockey League, was commissioned in 1892 by the then Governor General of Canada, **Frederick Arthur Stanley, 16th Earl of Derby, Lord Stanley of Preston (1841-1908)**. Lord Stanley served as Canada’s Governor General from 1888-1893. The original name of the Stanley Cup was the “Dominion Hockey Challenge Cup.” Other trophies in professional sport played in Canada that were donated by British vice-regal parties include the Lady Byng Memorial Trophy donated to the National Hockey League in 1925 by **Evelyn Byng, Viscountess Byng of Vimy (1870-1949)**, the wife of **Julian Byng, 1st Viscount of Byng of Vimy (1862-1935)**, Governor General of Canada from 1921-1926. The Grey Cup, the championship trophy of the Canadian Football League, was donated in 1909 for the “Canadian Dominion Football Championship” by **Albert Henry George Grey, 4th Earl Grey (1851-1917)**, Governor General of Canada from 1904-1911.

During the game, **John A. Macdonald (1815-1891)**, Canada’s first Prime Minister, is the Dominion Hockey League’s Commissioner. Perhaps, Macdonald should not be considered an “impartial” commissioner because he was the Prime Minister of Canada during both Métis uprisings. In the game’s play-by-play, Cassie Campbell-Pascall (named after the real former hockey player and current broadcaster) says: “That’s one thing that Commissioner Sir John A. Macdonald truly dislikes. He really wants the players to play this game. Not stand up there and squabble like children.” Tongue-in-cheek and in a nod to historical reality, Joe, the other sportscaster says, “I guess that depends on the team. The hit on Isadore Dumont in the first period barely saw a whistle. Dumont left on a stretcher and Joe McKay the third-line winger barely got four minutes.”

During the game, the name of the second hockey team, the Métis team, is the “Rebels.” This choice by the artist is no accident. Indeed, the two Métis uprisings in 1869-70 in Red River (Manitoba) and in 1885 at Batoche (Saskatchewan) were known historically as “rebellions.” The terminology was popular because during the US Civil War, the Confederate States and its supporters and soldiers were called “Rebels” by the Union and its supporters and soldiers. Prior to Confederation, in 1837-38, there were popular uprisings in Upper Canada (Ontario) and Lower Canada (Quebec) against undemocratic governments that were called “rebellions.” When the events at Red River occurred in 1869-70, the US Civil War and the memory of the Canadian “Rebellions” were fresh in peoples’ minds, and thus the “Red River” or “Louis Riel” “Rebellion,” after the Métis leader were coined. The term rebellion was used in 1885 as well and the event was called the “North West Rebellion” and the “Saskatchewan Rebellion.”



The Fight at Duck Lake, Gabriel Dumont Institute Archives.

And the two Métis uprisings were called collectively the “Louis Riel Rebellions.”

At present, depending on who you ask, the Métis uprisings in 1869-70 and 1885 are known as the “1885 Resistance,” the “Resistance of 1885,” and the “Northwest Resistance,” the “Red River Resistance,” the “Riel Rebellions,” the “Red River Rebellion,” the “1885 Rebellion,” the “Northwest Rebellion,” the “Manitoba Rebellion,” the “Saskatchewan Rebellion,” and the “Red River Insurgency.” To make matters more confusing, “rebellion,” “resistance,” “revolution” and “insurgency” are synonyms and are used interchangeably. However, each word has slightly different connotations.

Rebellion is defined as “An act of armed resistance to an established government or leader.”² Rebellions are always put down and the insurgents—usually peasants and working people—are depicted as pawns exploited by others, such as members of the nobility or the middle class. In fact, Canadian historians traditionally called the Métis uprisings in 1869-70 and 1885 “rebellions” because they felt that Louis Riel and other Métis leaders used Métis’ grievances to further their own ends rather than those of their people. The word “rebellion” generally has negative connotations.

Resistance is defined as “the refusal to accept or comply with something. The use of force or violence to oppose someone or something.”³ Resistance is a term which has positive connotations. Resistances, such as the French resistance movement during the Second World War, also have a romantic connotation because the insurgents fight in a just struggle against tyranny, and are known as “resistance fighters” or “freedom fighters” rather than “rebels.” The Third World Liberation, the American Civil Rights (African Americans), the Red Power (Native-Americans) and the Feminist movements of the 1960s all used the term resistance to describe their struggles for equality/independence. Sometimes, these resistances were violent; other times they were peaceful struggles to liberate people from rigid thinking. The recent protest “Idle No More” is such an example.

Since the 1960s, ethno-historians and Aboriginal Studies scholars have used the term “resistance” to describe Indigenous uprisings. Aboriginal resistances are reactions against colonization imposed on Indigenous populations by “Settlers” (Europeans and Euro-Canadians) who use church/state policies to eradicate Indigenous languages, cultures, economies, spiritual systems, and lifeways. From this point of view, the Métis uprising in 1885 was a resistance because, after much peaceful protest, the federal government forced the Métis to take up arms after it failed to address the Métis’ many long-standing grievances, including land tenure.

Many historians now consider the Métis uprising in Red River as a resistance as well and this is certainly the preferred term among most Métis. Historians argue that the Métis Provisional Government served as a temporary government for the Red River Settlement prior to Manitoba’s entry into Confederation in 1870. Since there was no governing authority in Red River prior to the transfer of Rupert’s Land to the Dominion of Canada, the Métis had every right to set up a Provisional Government and ask for terms of entry into Confederation. By contrast, most historians see the 1885 Resistance as a rebellion because they believe that an established government was in place at the time and that the Métis’ grievances were being dealt with, albeit slowly. This is a much different way of thinking than that of past historians who held Eurocentric⁴ views and believed that the Métis uprisings in 1869-70 and 1885 were the last gasp of a primitive people who rebelled against modernization.

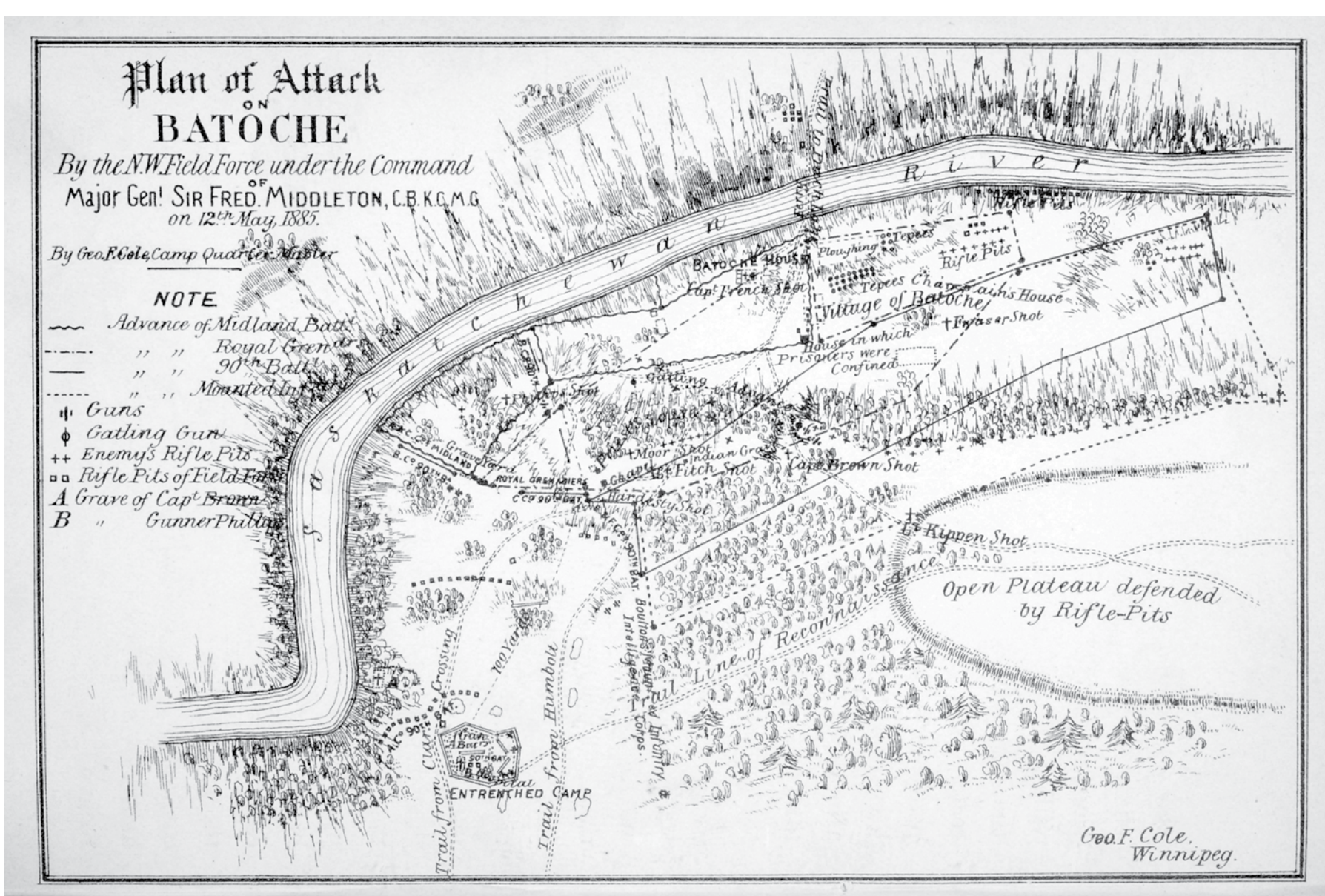
The events of the Red River Resistance are included in the game’s first period. Hockey broadcaster, Cassie Campbell-



² Ibid. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/rebellion>. (accessed May 29, 2015).

³ Ibid. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/resistance>. (accessed May 29, 2015).

⁴ Eurocentric: The Eurocentric worldview emphasizes that everything of value and virtue has come from Christian and capitalist-based Western-European and North-American society. This viewpoint devalues other cultures as being inferior.



Plan of Attack on Batoche, Gabriel Dumont Institute Archives.

Hockey is a good metaphor for war—particularly during its gruelling playoff periods when it is the most arduous of any team sport. Players battle through injuries, fatigue, aches and pains, and mental anguish to help their teammates achieve their common goal, a championship trophy. Players are “lost” along the way through injuries in much the same way as soldiers and other combatants and non-combatants are lost in war through injury or death. Passions for the “home” team or “country” and hatred for the opposing team or “enemy” country also run deep in both sport and war. The two are often intertwined in a form of muscular patriotism. For instance, the US and Canadian militaries always have a presence during championship games.

Hockey, however, is not war. It is merely a game. If your team loses a playoff game, there’s always next year or the next. War, by contrast, takes lives and scars people for a long time. The 1885 Resistance was a war, albeit a low-scale one. People were killed, both combatants and non-combatants, and the after effects, such as the creation of widows, orphans, people dying from disease and hunger, and the physiological and physical wounds on Métis individuals, families and communities, continued as a form of post-traumatic stress disorder, and scarred people for generations.

The aftermath of the 1885 Resistance on the Métis was profound. The Métis merely didn’t lose a “hockey game,” they lost their formal sense of place in Canada. Many, if not most, Métis were socially, economically, and politically marginalized in the new Prairie West that was built in the aftermath of the 1885 Resistance. The new Prairie West would be dominated by Anglo-Protestants and the dominant mode of life would be agrarian. Marginalized Métis, who lost their lands through the fraudulent scrip system and other means, lived on the margins squatting along “road allowances.” Many of these “Road Allowance People,” as the Métis were sometimes called, encountered racism, discrimination, grinding poverty, and a lack of educational opportunities as most Métis children likely were not able to go to school because their parents did not own land and thus did not pay property taxes—a prerequisite of children attending schools. Collective shame at being labelled as “rebels” and societal racism led many Métis to deny their heritage, claiming instead to be “French” or “French Canadian,” or “Scottish.”

Although it is not stated in the narration, it is implied that the championship trophy, “Lord Lorne’s Cup” was donated to the Dominion Hockey League by Governor General Lord Lorne and his wife, Princess Louise, Lorne. These actual historical figures are **John Campbell, 9th Duke of Argyll (1845-1914)**, **Marquess of Lorne**, Governor General of Canada, 1878-1883 and **Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll (1848-1939)**, the fourth daughter of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. The actual Governor General of Canada at the time of the 1885 Resistance was **Henry Charles Keith Petty-Fitzmaurice (1845-1927)**, **5th Marquess of Landsdown**, who served in the vice-regal role from 1883-1888. Both the Marquess of Lorne and Princess Louise loved Canada’s winter sports and the Governor General was particularly enamoured with hockey.

¹ Oxford Dictionaries. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/licence>. (accessed May 22, 2015).

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Pascall says: “Norbert Parisien was in the offensive zone and Thomas Scott of the Canadians just nailed him. They had to carry that poor kid off on a stretcher. It was just awful.” Joe, the play-by-play announcer states: “I wish I could say that it was a clean hit.” Campbell-Pascall concludes by saying: “Not at all. Scott got a five-minute major for un-sportsman-like conduct. Riel made his presence known and then he took out Scott. Knocked him flat. The stretcher crew is at it again peeling bodies off the ice.”

During the Red River Resistance, **Norbert Parisien (1814?-1870)** was indeed a fatality. On February 15-16, 1870, Parisien was mortally wounded by members of the “Portage Gang,” “Canadian Party” loyalists to Canada, who did not support the Louis Riel-led Red River Provisional Government. In one of his escape attempts, Parisien shot one of his captors, Hugh John Sutherland who later died of his wounds. Parisien would also die of his wounds in early March.



General Meeting Priests, Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-B2077.

The Canadian Party, led by Charles Boulton, thought Parisien was a “Métis spy.” However, Louis Riel, the leader of the “Rebels” in the game and of the Métis during the two resistances did not trust Parisien. In some of the Métis’ accounts of Parisien’s capture and mortal wounding, Thomas Scott is present, and in one account, Scott tied Parisien’s sash around his neck and had tried to lynch him by dragging him with a horse. Charles Boulton prevented him from succeeding.

In the game, Thomas Scott is mentioned as being a member of the “Canadians” who “nailed” the “Rebels” player, Norbert Parisien. According to “Joe,” the play-by-play man, there is “no sign of Thomas Scott from the Canadians, though. He must’ve been really laid out by that firing squad in the first [period].” During the Red River Resistance, **Thomas Scott (1842-1870)**, federal government surveyor, Orangeman and member of the Canadian Party, was executed by the Métis Provisional Government led by Louis Riel on March 4, 1870. Allegedly, a violent, quarrelsome man, Scott threatened his Métis captors and Louis Riel while imprisoned in Upper Fort Garry. He was tried before a tribunal for defying the Provisional Government’s authority, threatening his guards and Louis Riel, head of the Provisional Government.

Thomas Scott’s death was the impetus of the Wolseley Expedition of the Red River Expeditionary Force led by **Colonel Garnet Wolseley (1833-1913)** following the conclusion of the Red River Resistance. Although no battles were fought, the expeditionary force, made up of members of the Canadian militia and volunteers, sought vengeance on the Métis community and engaged in a “Reign of Terror.” Métis property was destroyed, some Métis and First Nations women and girls were raped, and **Elzéar Goulet (1836-1870)**, the man believed to have fatally shot Thomas Scott was killed by members of the Red River Expeditionary Force. Louis Riel’s execution in 1885 was also influenced by Scott’s 1870 execution, as Riel was held responsible for the actions of his men.

During the commentary, Joe, the play-by-play man, notes that “Riel gets a five-minute exile” into the penalty box. This occurs late in the first or early in the second period. In real life, **Louis Riel (1844-1885)** was “exiled” for his role during the Red River Resistance, particularly for the execution of Thomas Scott. From 1870-1884, which corresponds to the game’s second period, Louis Riel led a perilous existence, which included defending Manitoba against a Fenian attack (1871); exile in the USA after a bounty was put on his head for Scott’s execution (1871-76, 78-82); being elected several times to Parliament for the riding of Provencher, despite never being able to take-up his seat (1873-74); incarceration in Québec insane asylums (1876-78); and in the Montana Territory, marriage to **Marguerite Monet dite Bellehumeur (1861-1866)** (1882), fatherhood—Jean and Angélique were born in 1882 and 1883 respectively, working with the Republican Party, serving as a special deputy, teaching school, and becoming an American citizen



The Battle of Fish Creek, Gabriel Dumont Institute Archives.

(1883). Then on June 5, 1884, at the urging of Gabriel Dumont, James Isbister, and Michel Dumas, who came on behalf of the people of the Batoche area, Riel came back to Batoche to once again fight for his peoples’ rights. His time at Batoche represents the game’s second and third period.

The Battle of Duck Lake (March 26, 1885), the first battle of the 1885 Resistance, is alluded to in the game’s play-by-play. The commentators focus their attention on two of the battle’s key casualties: Isadore Dumont and his younger more famous brother, Gabriel Dumont. “With Joe McKay of the Canadians rubbing Isadore Dumont along the boards face first on a nasty hit and Gabriel taking a shot to the forehead,” “The stretcher squad was at it again. Taking the Dumont brothers to the doc[tor];” “We have word on Gabriel Dumont. That puck to the head drew blood and lots of it;” “Yes, Gabriel will play in the third. I notice a bandage under his helmet. They seem to have stitched him up. Even the zamboni couldn’t get all the blood off the ice.”

Gabriel Dumont (1837-1906), the Métis military leader during the 1885 Resistance, had a bullet graze off his head during the Battle of Duck Lake. It took him temporarily out of battle and left a deep scar for the rest of his life. When he was a boy, future Prime Minister **John Diefenbaker (1895-1979)** told audiences that Dumont showed people his old war wound and that the hair over the wound had a “perfect part.” After his injury, Gabriel Dumont fought and led the Métis and their First Nations allies during the Battle of Tourond’s Coulee/Fish Creek (April 24, 1885) and the Battle of Batoche (May 9-12, 1885).

During the Battle of Duck Lake, **Isadore Dumont (1833-1885)** was shot and killed by “Gentleman” **Joe McKay (1856-1938)**, an English Métis scout/interpreter working for the North-West Mounted Police. Earlier, along the Carlton Road, McKay shot and mortally wounded **Assiyiwin (?-1885)**, a partially blind headman with Beardy’s Band, who was returning from the Duck Lake store during the Métis’ munitions/supply raid.

During the game’s second and third periods, Assiyiwin and Isadore Dumont, both fatalities from the Battle of Duck Lake, are still playing hockey: “On the faceoff, we have the Riel line with Poundmaker and Assiyiwin with Patrice Fleury and Crowfoot on the defence;” “Even [Charles] Nolin from the Canadians, who was ejected from the second with that hit on Isadore Dumont, is back on the ice;” and “the Canadians will feel the loss of Charles Nolin for the hit on Isadore after the whistle. Nolin got ten minutes and a game misconduct.” Charles Nolin had nothing to do with Isadore Dumont’s death during the Battle of Duck Lake.

During the game, the play-by-play announcer exclaims, “In the second period, the “Canadians try a new formation.” The coach calls it a ‘zareba.’ Like circling the wagons.” Later, during the play, it’s said that the “Zareba tactic is wearing on the rebels” and “the rebels have to come up with some way to beat this new zareba play the Canadians came up with.” During the 1885 Resistance, General Frederick Middleton, the commander of the North-West Field Force, had his troops construct a zareba, a fortified structure made from circled wagons, hay bales, boxes, and rifle pits. Knowing the skill of Métis marksmen, Middleton kept his men in this defensive structure and largely out of harm’s way during the Battle of Batoche until the Métis ran out of ammunition and faced exhaustion. Then his troops rushed the Métis rifle pits, overwhelming the Métis defenders.

During the 1885 Resistance, the Métis’ knowledge of the local terrain gave them a clear advantage, which they exploited. The Métis’ guerrilla-style tactics against the North-West Field Force and the North-West Mounted Police gave them the upper-hand in the first two battles of the 1885 Resistance: the Battle of Duck Lake (March 26, 1885) and the Battle of Tourond’s Coulee/Fish Creek (April 24, 1885). The Métis strategically used rifle pits during the 1885 Resistance, as a protective refuge and as a vantage point for their superior marksmanship. The colour commentator honours the Métis’ knowledge and use of their homeland during the “game”: “The rebels’ use of the passing lanes is legendary. They know the ice like the back of their hands.”

Three times during the play, the play-by-play announcers mention “Al Howard, the Gatling Gun” as a player on the “Canadians” who scores key goals: “Al Howard—go ahead goal was a “real zinger;” “Middleton wins the draw and snaps it to Al Howard, the Gatling Gun who shoots on [André] Nault from the blue line;” “And scores...The Canadians have tied it up in the third;” “Middleton’s pass to Howard, the Gatling Gun goes in the five-hole past Nault;” “They call Al Howard the Gatling Gun because his shots blast like a canon;” and “He’s a third-round draft pick from the Connecticut Screaming Eagles.”

Arthur L. Howard (1846-1901) was an American from Connecticut (and later a naturalized Canadian) who used a Gatling gun for the North-West Field Force during the 1885 Resistance. Howard and two Gatling guns were loaned to the Canadian government by the gun’s manufacturer in the United States. Howard used only one of these Gatling guns, which could fire 1,200 rounds per minute, against the Métis; the other gun was used during the Battle of Cut Knife Hill on May 2, 1885 and was operated by Canadian gunners. At the start of the Battle of Batoche on May 9, 1885, Howard used the Gatling gun to spray bullets at the rectory. Later during the battle, his actions prevented the Métis from capturing some of the North-West Field Force’s field guns. He also used this early machine gun during the battle’s final push on May 12, 1885, which defeated the Métis resisters on May 12, 1885. In the Métis oral history, the gun made lots of noise, but did little damage, and was called “*le rababou*” by the Métis which means noisemaker. Nonetheless, thousands of rounds from the Gatling gun were fired on Métis homes and into nearby fields during the Battle of Batoche while many Métis women and children hid in caves on the riverbank.



How They Left Their Pits, Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-B2048.

In several instances, the hockey game’s narration also alludes to Louis Riel’s execution on November 16, 1885. For instance, “Oh no, the two captains are at it. Riel clocks Middleton with a left-hook to his flank. A right jab to the head;” “Middleton has sucker-punched Riel right in the neck, the throat. Riel goes down holding his neck;” “The coaches, Louis Letendre and Big Bear come rushing out despite the melee to assist Riel. Middleton has skated away. Even Father André has come out of the timekeeper’s box at centre ice. I sure hope Last Rites aren’t required here tonight. Father André is on the ice with Riel. He’s saying something. Father André is distraught;” “I think Riel said ‘Courage Father’ but I can’t tell;” and “Riel has ceased moving.” And during the overtime intermission, Cassie Campbell-Pascall asks Rebel’s player, Albert Monkman: “Any word on Louis Riel?” To which he replies: “He seemed to be okay when I saw him last.” Cassie then asks: “Do you think he’ll be out for the overtime period?” Albert Monkman concludes: “Well, I don’t know. I tink it’s a bit of a trial for him to be dere, but maybe he’ll try his best.” Using gallows humour, this dialogue refers to both Riel’s execution by hanging and his trial for high treason.

In the hockey game, Father André was the game’s timekeeper. In real life, Father **Alexis André (1832-1893)** was a Breton missionary priest who administered the gospel to the Métis and First Nations of the Canadian Prairies and was the Oblate’s superior of the Carlton district. He worked closely with the Métis and advocated for their rights, but broke with the Métis cause during the 1885 Resistance. The Métis thought that Father André worked for the government and Father André communicated to the government that Riel should be “removed” from leadership before the resistance broke out. Later, he testified during Louis Riel’s treason trial and admitted that he was dismayed with Riel’s views on Catholicism, which he thought was heretical. However, André was assigned as Louis Riel’s confessor and prepared him for his execution, and the two men reconciled. The evening before his execution, Riel told Father André: “Be at ease, Father André, I will die happy and brave. With God’s Grace I will go bravely to my death.”

Louis “David” Riel (1844-1885) was at the centre of both the Red River and 1885 Resistances. In the “game” and in history, he was the captain of the “Rebels.” During the Red River Resistance (October 1869-May 1870), Louis Riel led the Métis’ resistance against Canada’s annexation of Rupert’s Land. Eventually, becoming president of the Métis-led Provisional Government, Riel formed partnerships with many French Métis, and used Métis boatmen and bison hunters to enforce the governing council’s will, particularly against the “Canadian Party,” a collection of Euro-Canadian annexationists, and “loyal” French and English Métis. Riel eventually won the backing of most of the Provisional Government’s delegates by advancing a Francophone-Catholic rights agenda. With *The Manitoba Act*, Riel and his followers provided Manitoba with bilingual public and educational institutions (Section 22) and Sections 31-32 dealt with the Métis’ Aboriginal rights through the individual extinguishment of their “Indian” title to the land.

Louis Riel’s role in the 1885 cataclysm would have profound consequences, including the socioeconomic and political marginalization of the Métis, the subjugation of the Plains’ First Nations, the preparation of the region for agrarian settlement and English and French Canada’s first rift in Confederation. Through the summer of 1884, Riel tried to build consensus among the English and French Métis, Euro-Canadian settlers and First Nations in order to address their many grievances against the federal government. These included Ottawa’s failure to recognize the Métis’ land tenure, to honour First Nations’ treaties and prevent starvation on the reserves, and the failure to provide Euro-Canadians with proper political representation, agricultural markets, and transportation infrastructure. However, this new born coalition dissolved due to the federal government’s divide-and-conquer strategy and with the First Nations’, Euro-Canadians’ and English Métis’ reluctance to take-up arms. Thus, Riel and his military leader, Gabriel Dumont, could rely on less than 250 Métis in their struggle with the Canadian state. After two brief guerilla skirmishes at Duck Lake (March 26) and Tourond’s Coulee (April 24), and a final entrenched battle at Batoche (May 9-12), the Métis resistance ended. Riel was captured and was prepared to defend himself and the Métis cause. However, the trial was unfair: the venue and the jurors were all Anglophone and Protestant and the judge had close ties to the ruling Conservatives. Riel would hang despite the jury’s plea for mercy. Lucid and articulate in the defence of his sanity, Louis Riel went to the gallows knowing that posterity would rehabilitate him and his beloved *métis canadien* (French-Canadian Métis).



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Riel on Ice combines the Red River and 1885 Resistances into a single game with personalities used from both events on the same teams. For instance, Norbert Parisien, André Nault, Thomas Scott, and Father Noël-Joseph Ritchot took part in the Red River Resistance and are included with personalities who took part in the 1885 Resistance. The roster for the “Rebels” includes: Louis Riel, Maxime Lépine, Norbert Parisien, Isadore Dumont, Gabriel Dumont, Poundmaker, Assiyiwin, Patrice Fleury, Crowfoot, André Nault, Jean Caron, Joachim Parenteau, Joseph Trottier, Albert Monkman, Kent Monkman, Louis Letendre, and Big Bear. The “Canadians” hockey team includes George Stephen, Edgar Dewdney, Haig, Lawrence Clarke, “Al” Howard, “Major-General” Middleton, Joe McKay, Colonel Otter, “Major-General” Strange, Honoré Jaxon, Charles Nolin, and James Isbister.

Some of the hockey players do not belong on their assigned teams. For instance, a few individuals were more “free agents” who, in the historical record, were neither fully on the “rebel” or “Canadian” side. These would include Norbert Parisien, Charles Nolin, and Albert Monkman.

Norbert Parisien (1814?-1870) was murdered by members of the Canadian Party, loyalists to Canada, during the Red River Resistance. However, Louis Riel, the leader of the “Rebels” in the game and of the Métis during the two resistances, didn’t trust Parisien and was planning on imprisoning him.

Charles Nolin (1838-1907) is described in the play-by-play as being on the “Canadians.” Until fighting broke out in 1885, Nolin was attached to the Métis cause. Although, he disagreed with Louis Riel on almost every issue, he was also part of the Convention of Forty that worked to bring Red River into Confederation during the Red Resistance and he took part in the Métis rights’ movement leading to the 1885 Resistance, but broke with Louis Riel and the other Métis resisters after fleeing during the Battle of Duck Lake. Later, he would testify against Louis Riel during the Métis leader’s trial for treason. Charles Nolin, therefore, played both sides, and was never solidly in one camp or the other.

In the hockey game, the play-by-play announcer lists the cousins, Albert and Kent Monkman as key call-ups to the Rebels. **Albert Monkman (b. 1854)** was a member of the Métis governing council at Batoche and took part in the Battle of Duck Lake before Louis Riel had him imprisoned for suspected disloyalty. Later, Monkman was arrested by government authorities on May 19, 1885 and was charged with treason-felony, and was later sentenced to seven years imprisonment for his part in the resistance. Contemporary Canadian artist **Kent Monkman**, a friend of Liz Pead, certainly did not take part in the 1885 Resistance, but is present for a sense of whimsy.

In addition, two of the “Canadian” players (James Isbister and Honoré Jaxon) were actually imprisoned by the government during the 1885 Resistance. They are therefore curious additions to the Canadian team, and were added intentionally by the artist.

James Isbister (1833-1915), the founder of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, was, in 1884, the English Métis representative that accompanied Gabriel Dumont and Michel Dumas to the Montana Territory to ask for Louis Riel’s assistance for the Métis cause. Opposed to violence, Isbister broke with Louis Riel and Dumont and tried to remain neutral during the fighting. For his troubles, he was imprisoned for five weeks at Prince Albert as a “suspected rebel” until the resistance was crushed.

William Henry Jackson (Honoré Jaxon) (1861-1952) was a non-Aboriginal Ontarian who supported the Métis cause and even changed his name to the more French-sounding “Honoré Jaxon,” and converted to Catholicism in support of the Métis cause. Jaxon was imprisoned and then released by Louis Riel before being arrested in Batoche on May 19, 1885. He was charged with treason-felony, tried, and acquitted on grounds of insanity.

During the “game,” the announcers indicate that a number of First Nations men are on the “Rebels” hockey team, including the Cree “coach” Big Bear, Cree wingers, Poundmaker, Assiyiwin, and Blackfoot defenceman Crowfoot. Having both Métis and First Nations players on the “Rebels” hockey team is based on a decades-old misconception that the Cree and the Métis formed an alliance during the 1885 Resistance. By the outbreak of the 1885 Resistance, the Cree and the Métis had two different strategies to deal with the federal government’s indifferent Aboriginal policy. Cree leaders consistently rebuffed any overtures from the Métis to make a formal alliance, and any First Nations-led involvement that occurred during the 1885 Resistance focused on self-defence—the Battle of Cut Knife Hill (May 2, 1885), the Battle of Frenchman’s Butte (May 28, 1885), and the Battle of Loon Lake (June 3, 1885). After two “victories” in the first two battles, the Cree avoided attacking the retreating soldiers and mounted police members. However, some First Nations men, approximately 60—mainly Cree from the Beardy’s and One Arrow Reserves and some Dakota from Whitecap’s Reserve—fought directly with their Métis kinfolk while their home reserves and chiefs remained neutral.

Big Bear or Mistahimaskwa (1825-1888) was a Cree chief during the 1885 Resistance. Mistahimaskwa was not involved in any way with the Métis uprising. An activist chief, he refused to sign Treaty 6 until 1882 hoping to get better terms for his people. By this time, his people were starving and disease was taking its toll. When the 1885 Resistance broke out, Mistahimaskwa was unable to control the young warriors in his band, who on April 2, 1885, took it upon themselves to take food and rations at the Frog Lake Mission. The situation worsened and several Euro-Canadians were killed by Big Bear’s warriors led by the war chief **Kapapamahchakwew (Wandering Spirit) (1845-1885)**, but not before Mistahimaskwa tried to prevent bloodshed. Kapapamahchakwew and his warriors also took Métis and Euro-Canadian hostages. Later, on May 28, 1885, at the Battle of Frenchman’s Butte, Big Bear’s band held off the Canadian militia and mounted police under Major-General Strange. However, they were eventually defeated at the Battle of Loon Lake on June 3, 1885 by Major **Sam Steele (1848-1919)** and a force of mounted police, Alberta militia, and Steele’s volunteer force. Big Bear surrendered on July 2, 1885. He was later charged with Treason-Felony, and died on the Poundmaker Reserve after being incarcerated in Stony Mountain Penitentiary in Manitoba.

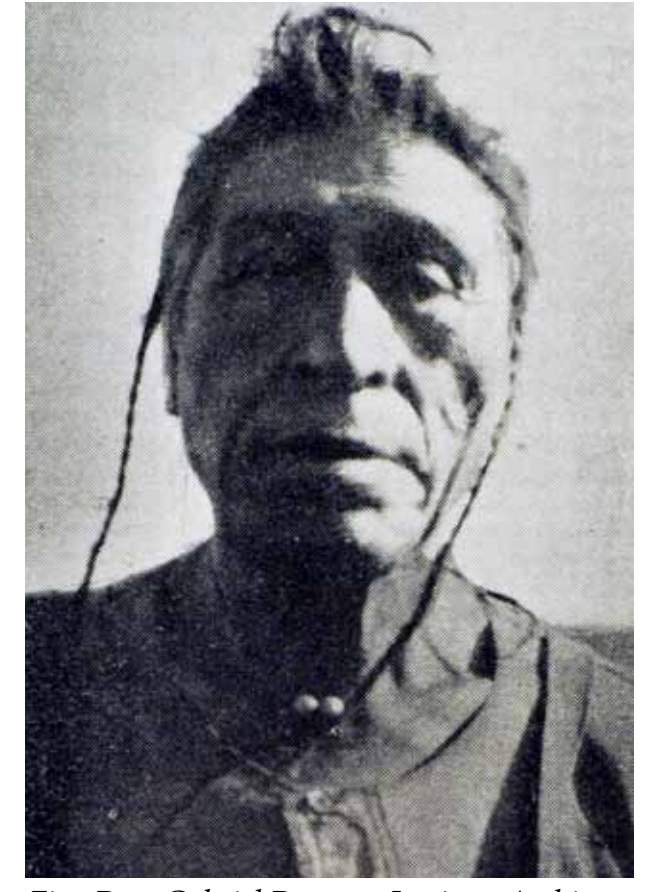
Crowfoot, or Isapo-Muxika (1830-1890) was a Blackfoot chief and leader of his nation. Isapo-Muxika was Poundmaker’s, or Pihtokahanapiwiyn’s, adopted father. During the 1885 Resistance, Isapo-Muxika proclaimed his loyalty to the Crown and forbade his warriors to take part. He later took Cree refugees from the fighting to Blackfoot lands and he tried to have his adopted son, Pihtokahanapiwiyn, acquitted of his treason charge.

Poundmaker, or Pihtokahanapiwiyn (1842-1886) was a Plains Cree chief who was opposed to taking arms against the Queen during the 1885 Resistance. He did his best to prevent bloodshed once members of his band took up arms. After signing Treaty 6 in 1876, Pihtokahanapiwiyn tried to have the government honour its treaty terms and prevent the parceling of his reserve.



Poundmaker, Gabriel Dumont Institute Archives.

By the time of the 1885 Resistance, Pihtokahanapiwiyn’s band like many other First Nations people were starving, and on March 30, 1885, the abandoned town of Battleford was looted by a variety of groups, but Poundmaker’s band was blamed. In reprisal and in fear of a full-blown Métis-First Nations “rebellion,” a detachment of the North-West Field Force under Lieutenant-Colonel William Dillon Otter attacked Poundmaker’s band at Cut Knife Hill on May 2, 1885. Under the Cree war chief **Fine Day, or Kamiokisihkwew (1852-1935?)** Poundmaker’s band defeated the army, and Pihtokahanapiwiyn prevented bloodshed by stopping his warriors from attacking the retreating Canadians. With news of the Métis defeat during the Battle of Batoche, Pihtokahanapiwiyn went there to surrender. He was arrested, tried for treason-felony, and was imprisoned at Stony Mountain Penitentiary where he died in 1886.



Fine Day, Gabriel Dumont Institute Archives.

Here are some brief biographies of some of the other members of the “Rebels” hockey team:

André Nault (1829-1924) was Louis Riel’s cousin, and, although actually a French Canadian, was a leader of the Métis community. The Red River Resistance started on or near his land in 1869 as Nault confronted government surveyors. Nault was a member of the Métis Provisional Government, and was involved in the firing squad that executed Thomas Scott, and was beat nearly to death by members of Red River Expeditionary Force in 1870.

Noël-Joseph Ritchot (1825-1905) was a French-Canadian priest who worked with Louis Riel and the other members of the Provisional Government, during the Red River Resistance, to bring the Red River colony into Confederation. He helped draft many of the “List of Rights” which he later took to Ottawa with two other delegates to negotiate the Red River colony entry into Confederation.

Maxime Lépine (1836-1897) was a member of the Métis Provisional Government during the Red River Resistance, and he was a member of the Métis governing council at Batoche during the 1885 Resistance. Along with his two sons, he fought at Tourond’s Coulee/Fish Creek and at Batoche. Lépine was arrested on May 19, 1885, and sentenced to seven years in prison on August 14, 1885 at Regina, but was released on March 16, 1886.

Patrice Joseph Fleury (1848-1943) was Gabriel Dumont’s brother-in-law. He took part in fighting during the 1885 Resistance.

Joachim Parenteau (b. 1854) fought in the 1885 Resistance and is mentioned as trying to prevent Middleton’s troops from advancing on houses at Batoche on May 12, 1885.

Louis-Eugène Letendré (1832-1911), Joseph Trottier Sr (1828-1885), and Joseph Trottier Jr. (?) all fought on the Métis side during the 1885 Resistance.

Here are some brief biographies of members of the “Canadians” hockey team:

Frederick Dobson Middleton (1825-1898) was the British general and commander of the Canadian militia that put down the 1885 Resistance. His



Half Breed Ladies, Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-B2081.

approach to fighting the Métis was cautious because he respected the Métis’ sharpshooting ability and their knowledge of their terrain, and he mistrusted the fighting ability of his green Canadian troops. During the resistance, he stole furs from Charles Bremner, a Métis. This event would force him to resign his position as the head of the Canadian militia in 1890.

William Dillon Otter (1843-1929) was a Lieutenant Colonel in the Canadian Militia during the 1885 Resistance. On May 2, 1885, his force of 300 engaged Poundmaker’s Cree at the Battle of Cut Knife Hill. His tactics were ineffective and he retreated.

Thomas Bland Strange (1831-1925) was a retired British Major-General who was brought out of retirement during the 1885 Resistance. He organized a field force for the District of Alberta, North West Territories, which included militiamen and mounted police members. Strange’s troops unsuccessfully engaged Big Bear’s Cree at the Battle of Frenchman Butte on May 28, 1885.

George Stephen, 1st Baron Mont Stephen (1829-1921), was the first president of the Canadian Pacific Railway and was its main impetus. The 1885 Resistance was the event which led to the final completion of his railway. Government troops from Central Canada used his rail line to come west to put down the resistance.

Edgar Dewdney (1835-1916) was the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Territories (which included all of present-day Alberta and Saskatchewan and most of Manitoba) and Indian Commissioner during the 1885 Resistance. In history, Dewdney was certainly on the “Canadian” team and he had little or no sympathy for the plight of Métis and First Nations people during his tenure.

Lawrence Clarke (1832-1890) was the chief factor of the Hudson’s Bay Company during the 1885 Resistance. Métis oral history sees Clarke as an agitator who played a key role in the outbreak of violence. For instance, James Isbister said that Lawrence Clarke incited the Batoche Métis to declare a provisional government by stating that 500 police were on their way to arrest their leaders, and that their petitions would be met with bullets.

Leif Newry Fitzroy Crozier (1846-1901) was a superintendent of the North-West Police during the 1885 Resistance. Crozier tried to negotiate with the Métis to prevent fighting, but his mounted police force was defeated by the Métis during the Battle of Duck Lake (March 26, 1885). During the game, Crozier’s reluctance to engage the Métis at the Battle of Duck Lake is lampooned: “Centre Major Crozier, he fell back a bit. Lawrence Clarke got right up in Crozier’s face and called him a coward for not going to fight for that puck.”

Herbert de Haga Haig was a captain and Royal Engineer who served under General Middleton during the 1885 Resistance. He took part in the Battle of Tourond’s Coulee/Fish Creek (April 24, 1885) and the Battle of Batoche (May 9-12, 1885). He sent “despatches” to the *London Gazette* on August 7, 1885 in which he illustrated maps of the two battles.

First Nations Involvement in the 1885 Resistance

For decades, it was once assumed—in the popular imagination, and in history books and textbooks—that the Cree and the Métis had formed an alliance during the 1885 Resistance. This was the dominant view until the early 1980s when scholars such as John Tobias, Hugh Dempsey and Blair Stonechild, using oral history as recounted to them by First Nations Elders, argued that the Cree and the Métis had two different strategies to deal with the federal government’s indifferent Aboriginal policy. They also argued that the Cree leadership consistently rebuffed any overtures from the Métis to make a formal alliance, and that any First Nations involvement that occurred during the 1885 Resistance was isolated and sporadic.



Thinking and Talking About *Riel On Ice*

In 1885, many Euro-Canadians were fearful that all of Western Canada's Aboriginal peoples were in a state of armed insurrection. Sensational newspaper accounts played upon these fears and offered harsh remedies to quell future discontent. For instance, on April 23, 1885, the editor of *The Saskatchewan Herald*, P.G. Laurie wrote:

Untamed and untamable, they [the First Nations] turn on the hand that fed them. Providence has decreed their disappearance and that they should give place to another race. They have, in the wildest and most unprovoked manner, and with the basest treachery, begun a war of desolation such as has never been equaled in the history of Canada.

Events from overseas coloured Canadians' opinion of First Nations' participation during the 1885 Resistance. At this time in history, Canada was part of the British Empire. In order to maintain its vast empire, Great Britain was in conflict with Indigenous peoples throughout the nineteenth century. In one such conflict, Sudanese Muslims under the guidance of a prophetic imam (holy man) named Mahdi first besieged and then decimated an entire British column under the command of General George Gordon on January 26, 1885. Fear of "Native" resistance to British rule was therefore a reality among Euro-Canadians and other British subjects. Thus, during the 1885 Resistance, Euro-Canadians transferred this fear to the North-West Territories' First Nations population.

By contrast, the Cree's oral tradition maintains that they had no vested interest in joining the Métis or engaging in violent resistance in 1885. However, this was a trying period for the Plains Cree as many of them were starving, and therefore, many felt that the terms of their treaties (Treaty 4-1874 and Treaty 6-1876) were not being honoured. By the mid 1870s, the bison had effectively disappeared and the Plains First Nations were in the process of being instructed on how to become agriculturalists. Moreover, many First Nations were dying from diseases such as tuberculosis. The Crown said that it would provide for First Nations during times of famine and pestilence.

During the 1880s, the strategy of many Cree chiefs was to either have the previous treaty terms honoured, or to receive more favourable terms. Cree chief Pitikwahanapiwiin (Poundmaker) tried to maintain an open dialogue with the federal government to improve his people's plight. In 1876, when Treaty 6 was signed, Pitikwahanapiwiin protested measures to parcel his people's land, but nevertheless accepted the treaty because most of his band had signed it. From this time until the outbreak of the resistance, he led those

Cree who felt that Ottawa was not doing enough to ensure the First Nations' successful transformation from semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers to sedentary agriculturalists. Ottawa considered the activist chief as a troublemaker. In addition, chief Mistahimaskwa (Big Bear) had not yet signed onto a treaty and was seeking a treaty with better terms for his people.

Both chiefs used a passive form of resistance in order to achieve their objectives. They realized that the government's and Euro-Canadian society's retribution would be exceedingly severe if the Cree resorted to armed resistance. Furthermore, they were concerned for the welfare of future generations. The Woods Cree, living in what is now central Saskatchewan, therefore were not looking to



Gabriel Dumont, Gabriel Dumont Institute Archives.

support an armed resistance. It was only when news reached the Cree of the Métis victory over the North-West Mounted Police and the Prince Albert Volunteers at Duck Lake (March 26, 1885) that some warriors in Mistahimaskwa's band took it upon themselves to feed their hungry people. Warriors in Pitikwahanapiwiin's band in turn only fought against the Canadian Army when they themselves were attacked at the Battle of Cut Knife Hill, May 2, 1885.

During the winter of 1885, Mistahimaskwa's band was located at Frog Lake (in present-day Alberta near the Saskatchewan border). Trouble had been brewing for some time with the local Indian Agent, Thomas Quinn. On April 2, Quinn had refused the whole band rations. Some warriors under the leadership of Kapapamahchakwew (Wandering Spirit) then took it upon themselves to get food. Kapapamahchakwew shot Quinn dead after giving him four warnings to leave Frog Lake. Following that, more killings took place. Mistahimaskwa heard the gunfire and shouted to his warriors to stop shooting, but in minutes, nine Euro-Canadians were killed. Traumatized by the killings and fearful of the retribution that would follow, Mistahimaskwa prevented further bloodshed at Fort Pitt by peacefully taking it over on April 15, 1885.

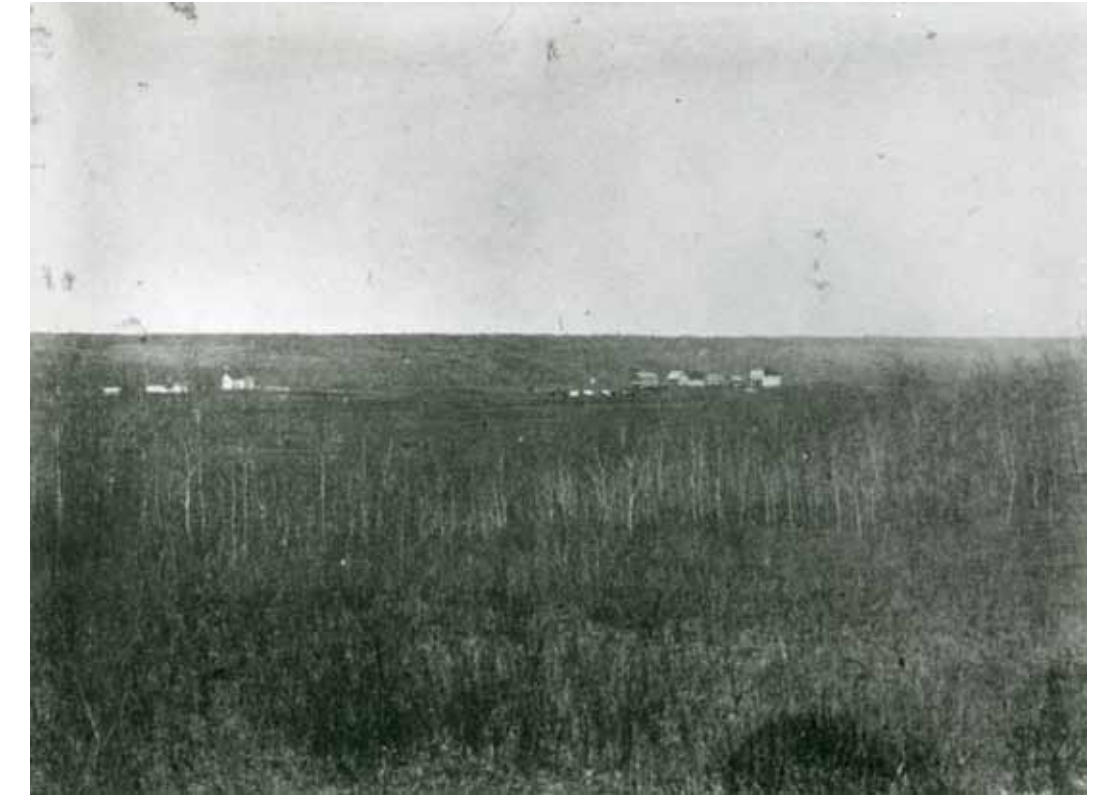
The Battle of Cut Knife Hill on May 2, 1885 was fought on what is now the Poundmaker First Nation northwest of North Battleford, Saskatchewan. The battle was fought by approximately 500 Cree led by war chief Kah-Me-Yo-Ki-Sick-Way (Fine Day) against a force of 325 undisciplined militiamen under Lieutenant-Colonel Otter. A few days prior, Otter abandoned Fort Battleford in order to attack Pitikwahanapiwiin's band. The local townspeople wanted retribution for the earlier sacking of their town by Métis and First Nations on March 30, 1885. In an attempt to catch Pitikwahanapiwiin's band, which was asleep on an elevated bluff of trees, by surprise, Otter decided to attack with two small cannons and a Gatling gun. However, the inexperienced troops made so much noise through the swampy ground and underbrush that they alerted the Cree. The Cree then attacked from all sides as the soldiers were trapped in a clump of trees. By stealth, the Cree snuck up upon the soldiers and shot them. They also threw blankets in the air in order to dodge enemy fire. By late morning, Otter realized that his force was trapped. He retreated southwards across Cut Knife Creek. Pitikwahanapiwiin persuaded his warriors not to pursue the fleeing soldiers. Battle casualties included six dead and three wounded Cree, and eight dead and fourteen wounded soldiers.

Some First Nations individuals, however, fought alongside the Métis during the 1885 Resistance. In fact, the opening shot of the 1885 Resistance resulted in the death of an elderly First Nations man, Assiwiin. This occurred during the Battle of Duck Lake, March 26, 1885. Before the battle occurred, Assiwiin, a local Cree, was on his way home with Gabriel Dumont's brother, Isadore when the two men encountered an agitated Joseph McKay, an English-Métis interpreter and scout with the North-West Mounted Police. A scuffle ensued whereby Assiwiin told McKay that the police could not battle the Métis on reserve land (Beardy's Reserve). However, McKay told the elderly Assiwiin to go back to Duck Lake. At this point, Assiwiin said "No" and then grabbed McKay's rifle, which resulted in McKay fatally shooting the old man in the stomach. The aftermath of the Battle of Duck Lake was swift. The press throughout Canada automatically concluded that—because of Assiwiin's death, the presence of a handful of Willow Crees at the battle scene, and the battle itself being fought on Beardy's Reserve—a First Nations-Métis alliance had crystallized.



Mass Grave at Batoche, Gabriel Dumont Institute Archives.

Other First Nations individuals who fought with the Métis included members of One Arrow's Band such as Gabriel Dumont's first cousin Vital (Cayol) and his two oldest sons and those influenced to participate by Michel Dumas, the reserve's Métis farm instructor. However, most residents of One Arrow's Reserve did not take part because their reserve had recently been relocated to marginal land in order to preserve the Batoche Métis' river lot farms. During the fighting, most band members hid along the river or fled eastward to take refuge around Lake Lenore. Another local chief, Chief Beardy, chose to remain neutral, but some men from his band joined the Métis, such as Chicicum (Boss Bull), and Charles Trotter Jr. Some Dakota and Cree also fought with the Métis during the Battle of Fish Creek, April 25, 1885. Two of those who died were Dakota, one being the son of Little Crow, who was shot at the start of the battle. After the Battle of Fish Creek, General Middleton had Lieutenant Governor Edgar Dewdney issue a proclamation to keep all First Nations on their reserves:



Batoche..., Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-B2053.

...all good and loyal Indians should remain quietly on their Reserves where they will be perfectly safe and receive the protection of the soldiers; and that any Indian being off his Reserve without special permission in writing from some authorized person, is liable to be arrested on suspicion of being a rebel, and punished as such.

During the Battle of Batoche on May 9-12, 1885, fewer than 60 First Nations from Beardy's, One Arrow and White Cap participated. The Cree occupied trenches around the west side of the village and the Dakota were on the opposite side of the river near the church and rectory. Many of the First Nations participants were older and were more poorly armed than the Métis. During the battle, General Middleton sent in Whitecap's captured son to distribute copies of a proclamation saying that any First Nations who returned to their reserves would be protected and pardoned. Two Dakota died during this battle. One was Whitecap's son and the other was a twelve year-old girl who was accidentally killed. With the conclusion of the battle, Chiefs Whitecap and One Arrow were taken prisoner, even though they abstained from fighting and pleaded for their band members to remain neutral.

With the Métis defeated at Batoche, General Middleton's forces could then concentrate its efforts on crushing any remaining First Nations resistance. At this point, the General ordered Chief Pitikwahanapiwiin to surrender. The Chief agreed. On May 26, 1885, Pitikwahanapiwiin told Middleton the following:

I am not guilty (of waging war). I am glad of my works in the Queen's country this spring. ... When my brothers and the pale faces met in the fight at Cut Knife Hill I saved the Queen's men. Everything I could do was done to prevent bloodshed. Had I wanted war, I would not be here now. I would be on the prairie. You did not catch me. I gave myself up. You got me because I wanted peace.

Pitikwahanapiwiin concluded by stating that he had always wanted peace. However, the young men in his band wanted to fight and he had little control over them. He further stated that he never promised to help the Métis and that his warriors were only defending themselves during the Battle of Cut Knife Hill when Lieutenant-Colonel Otter attacked them. Furthermore, after the Cree defeated Otter's forces, he restrained his warriors from killing the fleeing soldiers. General Middleton did not believe him. He then took him into custody, and requested that any warriors who had committed murder give themselves up. After that, Itka and Waywahnitch surrendered. Father Cochin was surprised at Pitikwahanapiwiin's treatment because he felt that the chief had done everything he could to counsel restraint.

On May 28, 1885, at the Battle of Frenchman's Butte, Big Bear's band held off the Canadian militia and mounted police under Major-General Strange, but was eventually defeated at the Battle of Loon Lake on June 3, 1885 by Major Sam Steele and a force of mounted police, Alberta militia, and Steele's volunteer force. Finally, after a long pursuit, Mistahimaskwa surrendered to General Strange on July 2, 1885. The 1885 Resistance had concluded.



Riel a Prisoner, 1885, Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-B2060.

Despite limited First Nations participation during the 1885 Resistance, the government's retribution was severe. 28 reserves were deemed "disloyal" and over 50 individual First Nations individuals were charged with various offences. This number was nearly double the number of Métis who were convicted. Pitikwahanapiwiin and Mistahimaskwa were both convicted of Treason-Felony and were sentenced to three years in the Stony Mountain Penitentiary in Manitoba. They would both die within a few years. Seven First Nations warriors were executed for their role in the Frog Lake killings. Itka was also executed for having earlier killed a non-Aboriginal farm instructor (March 29, 1885) on the Mosquito Reserve. The eight First Nations warriors who were hanged on November 27, 1885 at Fort Battleford were: Kapapamahchakwew, Itka, Wawanitch (Man Without Blood), Napase (Iron Body), Manetchus (Bad Arrow), Pa-pa-mek-sick (Round the Sky), Kitiemakyin (Miserable Man) and Apistaskous (Little Bear). First Nations individuals who fled to the United States included Kah-Me-Yo-Ki-Sick-Way, Little Poplar, Ayimâsis (Little Bear), and Lucky Man and their extended families.

With the resistance crushed, all forms of First Nations' dissent—even peaceful ones—would be severely punished. All aspects of the First Nations life on the Plains would be severely regulated. The goal of government policy was to assimilate First Nations into the non-Aboriginal mainstream. These policies included residential schools, a restrictive pass system to monitor movement on and off reserves, and measures to curb First Nations' languages and spiritual systems. These policies had already been planned; however, the 1885 Resistance and the limited amount of First Nations involvement in it provided the federal government with the rationale to fully and uncritically implement its assimilative policies.

