

## **Pierre Poitras Sr. (1810-1889)**

Pierre fought at the Battle of the Grand Coteau. This battle took place between a Métis buffalo hunting party from St. François Xavier, led by Jean Baptiste Falcon and the Cut Head (Pabaksa) Yanktonai (Ihanktonwanna), Dakota, led by Chief Medicine (Sacred) Bear, on July 15 to 16, 1851.

Pierre Poitras was a representative to the Convention of Forty representing his home district of St. François Xavier. He was also a delegate to the previous Convention of 24, November 16, 1869. Pierre became one of the 24 members of the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia led by Louis Riel. On June 24, 1870, Hon. Mr. Pierre Poitras seconded Hon. Mr. Louis Schmidt's motion "That the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia accepts, in the name of the people, the Manitoba Act," thus entering the Dominion of Canada on the terms proposed in the Confederation Act. He was seized and mistreated by Wolseley's troops when they came to Red River in August of 1870 (along with François Xavier Dauphinais and François Xavier Pagée).

Pierre Poitras was born in 1810, at Fort Esperance, Qu'Appelle Valley, Northwest Territories. His mother was Marguerite Grant, sister to Cuthbert Grant and his father was Andre Henri Poitras from St. Foye, Quebec. At the time of Pierre Poitras' birth, his father was an engagé at Fort Esperance in the Qu'Appelle valley. Andre Poitras was one of the founders of St. François Xavier. This was a buffalo hunting family always active on the plains. The family was quite large with relations on both sides of the border. Andre, sometimes known as Henri died circa 1831 at St. Joseph, Dakota Territory. Pierre Poitras married Marie Bruyere, the daughter of Jean Baptiste Bruyere and Françoise (Serpente) on November 27, 1832 at St. Boniface. They had eleven children together. Pierre farmed approximately 181 acres at lot 205 of St. François-Xavier parish.

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For his participation in the 1870 movement in Manitoba his life was endangered, and he would have to leave along with many others. During the Reign of Terror of Wolseley's troops Pierre was arrested on August 24, 1870 while scouting with François Xavier Dauphinais and François Xavier Page. He was abused and severely beaten and wounded by the Red River Expeditionary Force. At the age of sixty, he left Manitoba because of the hostilities and returned to the Qu'Appelle Valley for a while and then moved to Duhamel, Alberta where he died on July 31, 1889.

His brother François was a captain and served under Ambroise Lepine, Riel's adjutant general in Manitoba. His other brother Ignace would also become involved at Batoche during the 1885 Resistance and be tried for felony treason. His older half brother Andre Henri Jr. Poitras lived and hunted on both sides of the border but would eventually settle in the US. The descendents of his family would become involved with the Little Shell Tribe in its struggle for recognition in Montana.<sup>1</sup>

Reference: See also Norma Hall:

<https://hallnjean.wordpress.com/sailors-worlds/the-red-river-resistance-and-the-creation-of-manitoba/legislative-assembly-of-assiniboia/hon-pierre-poitras-baie-st-paul-and-prairie-du-cheval-blanc/>



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<sup>1</sup> Reference: Joseph-Isidore Poitras at <http://www.mendel.ca/quappelle/edwardpoitras/resident.html>