

The Nehiyaw Pwat (Iron Alliance) Encounters with the Dakota



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An occasional paper of the Louis Riel Institute
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The *Nehiyaw Pwat*, literally Plains Cree-Nakota, Alliance was also known as the Iron Alliance. This was an historic polyethnic group comprised of Plains Cree, Plains Ojibwa (Chippewa), Metis, and Assiniboine (Nakoda or Stoney) peoples.¹ The men of the Nehiyaw Pwat had fought alongside Cuthbert Grant at *la prairie di la Goornouyayr* (Frog Plain) or the Battle of Seven Oaks in 1816. Later when the Metis of the Cypress Hills hunting brigade petitioned for a reserve in 1878 we find that many members of this hunting brigade were descendants of those who fought at Frog Plain, for example, the Bonno (Bonneau), Grant, Houle, Deschamps, Desmarais, Ducharme, Falcon, Gariepy, Langé (Langer), McKay, Pelletier, Lafontaine, Morin, and Trottier families.

The Iron Alliance was a political and military alliance of what was called the Old Northwest of Canada and the Northwestern United States. This confederacy included various individual bands that allied together against common enemies. The ethnic groups that made up the Confederacy were the branches of the Plains Cree who had entered the area in the mid-1700s, the Assiniboine or Nakoda, plus their Metis relatives who were involved in the fur trade. The Confederacy rose to predominance on the northern Plains during the height of the North American fur trade when they operated as middlemen controlling the flow of armaments and trade goods to other Indigenous groups, and the flow of furs to the North West Company, Hudson's Bay Company and the American Fur Company trading posts. They also controlled the transportation system and much of the horse trade. The peoples also played a major role in the bison hunt and the pemmican trade. The decline of the fur trade and the collapse of the bison herds sapped the power of the Confederacy after the 1860s, and it could no longer act as a barrier to U.S. and Canadian expansion.

For the purposes of this paper emphasis is given to Ojibway and Metis encounters with the Dakota.

1816

Prior to 1816 the Metis of Pembina, White Horse Plains and Red River already had an alliance with the Plains Ojibway. Combined with the Plains Cree and Nakoda, these groups formed the Iron Alliance.

On April 25, 1816 the trader at Brandon House record noted that:

¹ The people in this group were associated with the following bands, most of which were polyethnic in composition: Pembina Band, Little Shell Band, Turtle Mountain Band, St. Francois Xavier (Saulteaux Village) Band, Nakawiniuk (Wilkie's) Band, L'Ous Fou (or Crazy Bear) Band, Canoe Band (Nakoda), Four Claws (Gordon) Band, Nekaneet Band, Carry the Kettle Band, Rocky Boy Band, Montana Band, Muscovequan Band, Beardy's Band, Carlton Stragglers Band, Petaquakey Band (Muskeg Lake), Mistawasis Band, Dumont Band, Big Bear Band, Red Stone Band, Maski Pitonew Band, Bobtail (Piche) Band, the Moose Mountain group of White Bear Band, Striped Blanket Band and Prison Drum Band, and the Crooked Lakes group of Cowessess Band, Ochapowace Band, Kahkewistahow Band and Sakimay Band.

Capt. Grant and Black Duck came here with a quantity of furs Traded part with them & they took notes for 27 skins to be paid them at the Forks where they are going to next month they went away [I gave] them 2 gal mixed rum and a little wheat, Barley and potatoes for seed as they have houses and gardens half way to Portage la Prairie. (HBCA B/22/a/19)²

The Plains Ojibway also resided in villages along the Assiniboine River from White Horse Plains to Brandon House. This group was intermarried with the Metis along Red River and the Assiniboine to Baie St. Paul (Saulteaux Village), St. Francois Xavier and Fort Ellice. These Ojibway were in fact all part of the White Horse Plain Buffalo hunt and entered the high plains to hunt together with the Half-Breeds. Thus, while Cuthbert Grant was using the young men among the Metis for his challenges to the Hudson's Bay Company, he was also drawing in young warriors from among the Portage Bands.

1823

In 1823, Chief Makadeshib (Black Duck) sent tobacco asking all the Ojibway to join him in battle against the Dakota Sioux. He summoned those of Rainy River and north of that country toward Albany, those along the shores of Lakes Winnipeg, Winnipegosis and Manitoba. James Settee remembered the Indians passing through Red River, day after day as they traveled south to meet with Makadeshib. Chief Peguis from Rivière aux Morts also went with a bodyguard of 100 men. The HBC detained him to persuade him not to go; he then promised to go no further than fifty miles south of Pembina.

In 1824, Black Duck told the gathered troops, who included his Metis relatives, that he had a prophecy that they would encounter the Sioux at Gods Lake, called Man-e-to-Sah-gi-e-gun (Spirit Lake) by the Ojibway, called Mni Wakan (Spirit Lake) by the Dakota and Devil's Lake by the English. On the third day they came to the lake but saw no Dakota. On the fourth day Chief Peguis, lacking confidence in Black Duck's prophecy, turned back citing his promise to the HBC. The following evening they found a Sioux camp of about 300 lodges. On the fifth day they attacked this camp almost wiping them out, but some escaped to the larger Sioux camp nearby and the Ojibwa were attacked by a thousand warriors on horseback. At the second attack Black Duck was felled by a bullet to his knee but fought on, killing 20 more, but at 11:00 o'clock he was killed by a bullet to the head.³

Archbishop Langevin of St. Boniface interviewed François Gosselin, a Metis, who spoke about Black Duck on August 1, 1901. – This translation from the French is by Emilie Pigeon:

² The Ojibway and Metis women cultivated gardens including the ones at the Half Way Bank summer village on the Assiniboine River.

³ James Settee cited in Penny Petrone (Ed.), *First People, First Voices*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991: 117-121.

Account from Old Gosselin, born 1818, his father from the Île of Orléans, his mother Assiniboine.⁴

Canard Noir: The Black Duck. [born circa 1790]

He speaks Cree, Saulteux, Assiniboine, Sioux, French. The Black Duck, Chief of the Turtle Mountain, adv. of the Métis. He sent tobacco to Red Lake, Red Cedar Lake, Rainy River, Lake of the Woods, River of the Dead [Peguis's group at Netley Creek]. [This is an account of a battle in 1824 when Black Duck was killed]

He who smokes tobacco must be armed.

They waited somewhere in front of the mountain. Departure towards the land of the Sioux. Fear of allies. Coming to remember [they wanted to] save accumulate] the scalps. Discovery of a small camp. Hesitation of the warriors. Black Duck laughed and made some cries.⁵

Sioux warriors saw them. They were camped near a lake far from the larger camp that waited the agents of the American government. More hesitations. The Sioux left their lodges. We killed two women that were hidden (and we removed their scalps. More hesitations. Enough. No, said Black Duck. Then, the fog lifted, and we could see the large camp. Black Duck ?? (illegible) - No, said his son, too late, if we die, it is your fault. An Assiniboine came to tell them to run away. Black Duck did not respond. I believe they are brethren of the Assiniboine. The Sioux were as numerous as the grass. They will annihilate you. Useless. So they went away. And the Sioux surrounded them like ??.

Three women killed, 37 men killed in one hour. Three Saulteux ran away. One ran away on foot, chased by warriors on horseback – entered a lake- walked on water. The Sioux came forward trampling in and returned. Another, enflamed, one... received an injury to the cheek (spear) to the arm and to the back. He threatened us with his unloaded weapon, accosting a young chief who jumped from his horse, jumped onto this horse, the best, chased by two cavaliers. One trips and falls.

He was threatened with an unloaded weapon. The Sioux escaped, but the Saulteux took his horse. 50 Sioux injured, 10 killed.⁶

1824

⁴ Francois Gosselin was married to Suzanne Lafournaise. He was the son of Michel Gosselin and Marguerite Duroleaux (Assiniboine).

⁵ Source: p. 25 SHSB01_211_p115.

⁶ Source: p. 26 SHSB01_211_116.

Alexander Wilkie or his son Jean-Baptiste Wilkie and the Chippewa reportedly had a palisaded fort on the Souris River near Towner N.D. called “Buffalo Lodge” which was attacked and burnt down by the Dakota in 1824.

The Dakota Winter Count indicates:
An 1824 Pictograph of log or frame structure

Wah·pes·a conkas·ke kii
Corrected to *Wakpe s-a* conkas·ke kii

Red Leaf Fort was taken by force. Becomes: Red River Metis Fort was taken by force.

This year-name and pictograph refer to a battle between the Ojibways and the Dakotas at a locale near present-day Bismarck, North Dakota. The Dakotas discovered an Ojibway fort in their buffalo hunting territory. According to the winter-counts the Yanktonais soundly defeated their enemies and destroyed the fort. During the 1820s and 1830s, the Lakotas (and Yanktonais) and Ojibways were in a fierce and violent competition for the buffalo ranges of central North Dakota. Sporadic fighting continued up to confinement of these groups on reservations. The Dakota text is apparently in error. Rather than *Wah·pes·a* (Red Leaf), the term should be *Wakpe s-a* (Red River), The Yanktonais and Lakotas referred to this group, who were *Métis* rather than Ojibway proper, as the Red River people.⁷

Prior to 1827

A Council of the Nehiyaw Pwat and Cuthbert Grant reported by Little Thunder

On August 11, 1827 the treaty of Butte des Morts was signed on the Fox River in Wisconsin. It completed the system of Indian boundaries, which was commenced by the treaty of Prairie du Chien, on the 19th of August, 1825, and continued by the treaty of Fond du Lac of the 5th of August, 1826.

These three conferences, which may, from their having been concluded in the month of August of the respective years, be called the *Augustie* treaties, embody a new course and policy for keeping the tribes in peace, and are founded on the most enlarged consideration of the Indigenous right of fee simple to the soil.

Henry Schoolcraft was at this treaty and then returned to Sault Ste. Marie where he encountered a number of Pembina and Red River Chippewa and Michif who were doing summer visiting and trading.

The following story is recounted by Annamikens, or Little Thunder, a Red River Chippewa Michif, also called Joseph, whose face had been terribly lacerated in a contest on the plains west of Pembina, with grizzly bears. The wounds were now closed, but the

⁷ Linea Sundstrom, *The Chandler-Pohrt Winter-Count*, Detroit Institute of Arts, Day Star Research, 1998.

disfiguration was permanent. He told the following story of a Treaty process which occurred sometime before this interview:

The Sioux, Chippewas, Assiniboines, Crees, and Mandans, called by him in general Miggaudiwag, which means fighters, were at variance. About 400 half-breeds and 100 Chippewas went out from Pembina to make peace, and hunt the buffalo.

On the fourth day's march they reached the open plains, and met a large body of Assiniboines and Crees encamped. Their camp was fixed on eligible ground, and the lodges extended across the plain. Annamikens and his followers encamped with them. After they had encamped, they observed every hour during the night that fresh arrivals of Assiniboines and Crees took place. On the third day of their encampment he was sent for to Cuthbert Grant's tent, where he found a large circle of Indians formed, and all things in readiness for a council of the three nations, Assiniboines, Chippewas, and Crees. Grant was the trader of Pembina Metifs, and had followed them out. In the centre of the ring, buffalo robes were spread, and he with others was given a seat there. The object of this council was to decide upon a plan to attack a body of 200 Sioux lodges, which had been discovered at half a day's ride on horseback distant. The principal chiefs, and warriors were agreed as to the propriety of an attack. He was asked to unite with them. He said he felt not only for the chiefs and young men, but also for the women and children, hereby expressing his dissent. Two of the principal chiefs stood up, each holding a pipe. He was then asked to take one of the pipes and hand it to the bravest man, giving him the power to elect the war chief. He gave it to one he knew to be brave.

This chief had no sooner received it than presented it to Francis, his brother, to hand it round, thereby hoping that he would not refuse to smoke the war-pipe when handed by his brother. He took the pipe in both hands and smoke, then handed it to his brother, who also smoked it, and handed it to a chief who stood next to him, and it went round. He said, however, after smoking, "I do not consent to go to war, I am against it." After some talk the council broke up, it was beginning to be late. At night he heard that some movement was on foot. He went to the quarter of the camp indicated, and used his influence against the plan. He had scarcely reached his tent when other reports of a like nature were brought from various parts of the camp, and he was most of the night busied in controverting the war spirit.

In the morning he made a descent through the camp, speaking openly against the meditated attack on the Sioux, and concluded by saying that for himself and the Metifs, he had one thing to say, that they wished to preserve peace with all, and they should join and fight for the nation first attacked, and against whoever might raise a war-club. About 100 Crees, however, were determined to go, and in about four hours the whole camp was broken up and dispersed. He broke up his camp rather in anger, mounted his horse, put his family in the cart, and set out for home.

Many followed him. Francis, not seeing his brother go, also set out, and many followed him, a greater number in fact than had followed Joseph. At night the hunters from each party met, and they found the two parties had travelled the same distance. On hearing this Francis sent a dispatch in the morning to his brother, but they found he had departed, and, the country being a grassy plain, they could not exactly tell their course.⁸

1842: The Lavallee Massacre

In 1842, a party of 600 Metis hunters were at the headwaters of the Sheyenne River and while out on the chase the Sioux came and killed 150 women and children.

1842 Indian Agents take note of Metis conflict with Yanktons/Sissetons

During late summer 1842, Amos J. Bruce from the St. Peter's Indian Agency at Fort Snelling in Iowa Territory reported that the "half-breeds" (the Métis) who lived on the Red River of the North in Canada were arming themselves "with three small cannon" to fight any Yanktons, Sissetons, or other Sioux encountered during their "annual incursions" to hunt buffalo south of the international boundary each spring and fall. Bruce accused these "British Red River half-breeds" of trespassing on U.S. soil and Sioux hunting grounds. Their massive slaughter threatened the bison herds, and their intrusions triggered warfare with the Sioux, the Sissetons in particular.⁹

In 1842 the Sissetons had lost several hunters to an attack by the Métis, who mistook them for Plains Sioux with whom they had skirmished during buffalo hunts.

1843-44:

In the fall of 1843 Norman W. Kittson made a trip to the Red River settlement and was favorably impressed with the possibilities. A year later he prepared to begin business there but found an unexpected obstacle in his path. Some half-breeds from the Red River settlement, having gone toward the Missouri to hunt buffalo, as was their wont, had fallen upon a party of Sisseton from Kittson's vicinity at Big Stone Lake and had slain several of them.¹⁰ and laid before them the project of his northern trading venture. At first they absolutely refused to let him proceed northward with his supplies. But finally, as the result of much discussion and doubtless the giving of many presents, he gained their reluctant consent. For several years thereafter when he was taking his supplies north he

⁸ Henry Schoolcraft. *Personal Memoires of a Residence of Thirty Years with the Indian Tribes on the American Frontiers*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo and Co., 1851: 169-70.

⁹ Ball, Durwood. "Beyond Traverse des Sioux: Captain Edwin V. Sumner's Expedition to Devil's Lake in 1845." *The Annals of Iowa*, Vol. 74, 2015:

¹⁰ McLeod to Sibley, July 30, 1844; Kittson to Sibley, August 22, 1844, Sibley Papers. The Half-Breeds mistook the Sisseton for a band of Missouri Indians to whom they attributed the murder of one of their party.

apprehended trouble from Sioux marauders, but though threats were made and his friends sometimes trembled for his safety he never suffered any injury.¹¹

If Kittson now paid the Bois Brûlés of Red River the compliment of establishing a trading post at the point on American soil nearest to their community he would be likely to incur the inveterate enmity of the aggrieved redskins [sic]. He invited the Indians of his district to a feast and laid before them the project of his northern trading venture. At first they absolutely refused to let him proceed northward with his supplies. But finally, as the result of much discussion and doubtless the giving of many presents, he gained their reluctant consent. For several years thereafter when he was taking his supplies north he apprehended trouble from Sioux marauders, but though threats were made and his friends sometimes trembled for his safety he never suffered any injury.¹²

1844 Metis Treaty with the Sioux¹³

At the peak of his career, in 1844, Cuthbert Grant had successfully negotiated a peace settlement with the Sioux, traditional enemies of the Cree and Saulteaux and consequently of the Metis. The peace lasted for seven years, until the battle of Grand Coteau.

In 1844, after a skirmish with the Dakota, the Métis retaliated and killed several members of a Dakota band. After the confrontation, many of the Dakota leaders met to discuss what should be done about the situation. Winter was almost upon them and it was essential that they be prepared for it. The necessary preparations could not be made if they continued to engage in skirmishes with the Métis. The years of fighting had not been productive. Many men from both sides had been killed and patrols of scouts were constantly needed. The fighting and the need for scouts reduced the number of hunters who were available to supply the needs of their people. Seeing the wisdom of putting an end to the fighting, the Dakota took the initiative and began to negotiate for peace. They drafted a letter which they sent to the Métis by an interpreter named Lang. (From Alexander Ross, *The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress, and Present State*. Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1972 reprint, pp.324-330.)

Sioux letter to the Metis

¹¹ Kittson to Sibley, August 22, 1844; August 7, 1846; February 1, 1848; James Sinclair to W. H. Forbes, September 8, 1852; Kittson to Frederick B. Sibley, October 11, 1852, Sibley Papers. In the fall of 1847 the Half-Breed hunters told Kittson of threats made by the Sisseton to plunder his train of carts the next summer on the way to St. Peter's. Kittson considered this an empty boast but advised Sibley, nevertheless, to warn the Indians at Lake Traverse of the grave consequences of so rash a venture.

¹² Kittson to Sibley, August 22, 1844; August 7, 1846; February 1, 1848; James Sinclair to W. H. Forbes, September 8, 1852; Kittson to Frederick B. Sibley, October 11, 1852, Sibley Papers. In the fall of 1847 the Half-Breed hunters told Kittson of threats made by the Sisseton to plunder his train of carts the next summer on the way to St. Peter's. Kittson considered this an empty boast but advised Sibley, nevertheless, to warn the Indians at Lake Traverse of the grave consequences of so rash a venture.

¹³ It has been reported that American Fur Company trader Norman Kittson had a hand in these negotiations.

White Bear's (Matoska's) Lodge, 14th November, 1844

Friends, - We hang down our heads; our wives mourn, and our children cry.

Friends, - The pipe of peace has not been on our council for the last six days.

Friends, - We are now strangers. The whites are our enemies.

Friends, - The whites have often been in our power; but we always conveyed them on their journey with glad hearts, and something to eat.

Friends, - Our young men have been killed. They were good warriors: their friends cry.

Friends, - Our hearts are no longer glad. Our faces are not painted.

Friends, - You owe the Sissetons four loaded carts, they were our relations; the half-breeds are white men: the whites always pay well.

Friends, - the four Yanktons did not belong to us: but they are dead also.

Friends, - Tell us if we are to be friends or enemies? It is to be peace or war? Till now our hands have always been white, and our hearts good.

Friends, - We are not frightened; we are yet many and strong. Our bows are good; but we love peace: we are fond of our families.

Friends, - Our hearts were not glad when we left you last; our shot pouches were light, our pipes cold; but we love peace. Let your answer make our wives happy, our children smile.

Friends, - Send Lang, with your message, his ears are open; he is wise.

Friends, - We smoke the pipe of peace, and send our hearts to you.

Friends, - Tell Lang, to run, he will eat and rest here. He will be safe, and we will not send him off hungry, or bare-footed.

Signed by the chiefs

Wa Nen De No Ko Ton Money,
La Terre qui Brule (Makaideya, Burnt Earth),
In Yag Money (Inyangmani or Running Walker),
The Thunder that Rings,
Etaï Wake Yon (Etewakinyan, Thunder Face a Sisituan Chief),
The Black Bull,
Pin E Hon Tane,
The Sun

The letter proposing peace was received by Cuthbert Grant, in his capacity as leader of the Métis. He replied with a letter of his own. He agreed with the need for peace and outlined the concerns which still needed to be addressed by the Dakota:

Grantown, 8th December, 1844.

Friends, - The messenger which you sent to us, found us all sad as yourselves, and from a similar cause: a cause which may give a

momentary interruption to the pipe of peace; but should not, we hope, wholly extinguish it.

Friends - you know that for half a century or more, you and we have smoked the pipe of peace together; that during all that time, no individual in your nation could say that the half-breeds of Red River lifted up their hands in anger against him, until the late fatal occurrence compelled them in self-defence to do so; although you well know, that year after year, your young men have killed, and, what we regard worse than death, scalped many belonging to us. Not that we were afraid to retaliate; but because we are Christians, and never indulge in revenge. And this declaration, which may not be denied, brings us more immediately to notice and to answer the several points in your message to us.

Friends, - You say your people have been killed: we believe what you say, and sincerely regret it; but at the same time, you forget to express your regret that our people were killed also: the one fact is as well known to you as the other; and they were killed first. You forget to notice, that whilst La Terre qui Brule and party were in the midst of our friendly camp, smoking the calumet of peace in all confidence and security, your people at that moment were treacherously murdering our friends within sight of that very camp! You forget to mention that our dead were brought into the camp, the bodies yet warm, and laid before your eyes! Till then, never did it enter the head or the heart of a Red River half-breed to seek in revenge the blood of a Sioux.

Friends, - You state that our people have often been in your power: we acknowledge what you say; but you must likewise acknowledge, that your people have often been in our power, and we sent them off with glad heart also. Even on the late fatal occurrence, when our dead were before your eyes, and when a hundred guns pointed with deadly aim threatened La Terre qui Brule and party with instant death, yet more were for you than against you; so you were safe; La Terre qui Brule and party were safe in the camp of the half-breeds. The brave are always generous.

Friends, - You state that when you last left us, "your shot pouches were light and your pipes cold." There is a time for everything; was it a time to show you special kindness when murdering our relations? You demanded from us four loaded carts for the four Sissetons: we never refuse paying a just debt, never consent to pay an unjust one. Let us see how far we are liable. In the first place, then, you know your people were the first aggressors. You, La Terre qui Brule, saw with your own eyes our dead, and you knew that none of your people were then killed, and we gave up all thoughts of retaliation, still clinging with fond hopes to that peace and friendship which had so long cheered our intercourse together; but the very next day after you left our camp, a party of your people were

discovered rushing upon one of our hunters who happened to be a little on one side and alone; the alarm was given, when the first at hand scampered off at full speed to the rescue of their brother, and in the onset your people were killed. Four, you say, were Yanktons. The demand you make we cannot comply with, either for Sisitons or Yanktons, be the consequences what they may; because we consider it unjust. We may give a pipe of tobacco, or a load of ammunition voluntarily; but we will submit to no unjust demand.

Friends, - You put the question, "Shall we be friends or enemies, or shall their be peace or war?" We leave yourselves to answer the question. They who would have friends must show themselves friendly. We have violated no faith, we have broken no peace. We will break none. We will ot go to find you to do you harm. We will always respect the laws of humanity. But we will never forget the first law of nature: we will defend ourselves, should you be numerous as the stars, and powerful as the sun. You say you are not frightened: we know you are a brave and generous people; but their are bad people among you.

Friends, - We are fond of you because you have often shown yourselves generous and kind to the whites: we are fond of you from a long and friendly intercourse, and from habits of intimacy. To sum up all in a few words, we are for peace, peace is our motto; but on the contrary, if you are for war, and you raise the tomahawk in anger, we warn you not to approach our camp either by day or night, or you will be answerable for the consequences.

Friends, - You have now our answer; we hope you will take the same view of things, and come to the same conclusion we have done. Langé will lay this before the great chiefs; may your answer be the sacred pipe of peace. Put your decision on white man's paper. And may that peace and friendship, which has so long knit our hearts together heretofore, still continue to do so hereafter.

Signed *Cuthbert Grant*,

To Wa Nen De Ne Ko Ton Money,
 In Yag Money,
 Etaï Wake Yon,
 Pin E Hon Tane,

Upon receiving the letter from Grant, the Dakota leaders assembled to discuss their response to it. A consensus was reached and a final proposal for peace was drafted. The nature of the peace was clearly defined in their letter to the Métis:

To Cuthbert Grant, Chief of all the Half-breeds, and Warden of the Plains
White Bear's Lodge, 12th Feb, 1845

Friends - Langé is here, and your message is now spread before us in council. Ne-tai-ope called for the pipe; but Wa-nen-de-ne-ko-ton-money said no: all the men were then silent; but the women set up a noisy howl out-doors. Nothing was done till they got quiet. The council then broke up. Next day it was the same. The third day the council received your message as one of peace. We now send you our answer. Langé promises to run.

Friends - I, the afflicted father of one of the young men killed by you, wish that he who killed my son should be my son in his stead. He had two feathers in his head.
Ne-Tai Ope.

Friends - Among the young men killed by you, I have a nephew. He who killed him, I wish to be my nephew. He was the smallest of all the unfortunates.

Friends - You killed my son, he was brave, San-be-ge-ai-too tan. He who pointed a gun at him, I wish to be my son. He had a feathered wand in his hand. I send it by Lang, to my adapted son.
Tah Wah Chan Can.

Friends - I wish the brave who killed my brother, should be my brother. He had a gun and many feathers in his head. He was young.
Hai To Ke Yan

Friends - I am old and bowed down with sorrow. You killed my brother-in-law. He was braver than the bear. Had three wounds, and a scar on the face. Whoever killed him, I wish him to be my brother-in-law for ever. He was bareheaded. Hair painted red. Many bells and beads on his leggings. He was tall and strong.
Tah Tan Yon Wah Ma De Yon

Friends - My cousin never returned. He is dead. Whoever deprived me of his friendship, I wish him to be my friend and cousin. He had been wounded before, and had a crooked hand. His feathers were red. He had garnished shoes.
Wah Ma De Oke Yon

Friends - You killed my father last summer. I wish him who made me fatherless, should be my father. He was a chief, a Sissiton warrior, had a gun and a bow, had been scalped young. His feathers reached the ground. Whoever will wear those proud feathers, I will give him a horse. I will be proud of him.

Friends - You killed my uncle, Thon-gan-en-de-na-ge. I am sad. The man who was so brave, I wish to be my uncle. He was a Yankton. My face is always painted black. He had on cloth and leather leggings, and one feather.
Kan Tan Kee.

Signed by the Chiefs.

Wa Nen De Ne Ko Ton Money,
In Yag Money (Inyangmani, or Running Walker a Wahpeton Chief)
Etaï Wake Yon (Ite Wakinyan, Thunder Face a Sîsituwan Chief)
Pin E Hon Tane,
La Terre qui Brule (Burnt Earth),
The Thunder That Rings,
The Black Bull,
The Sun

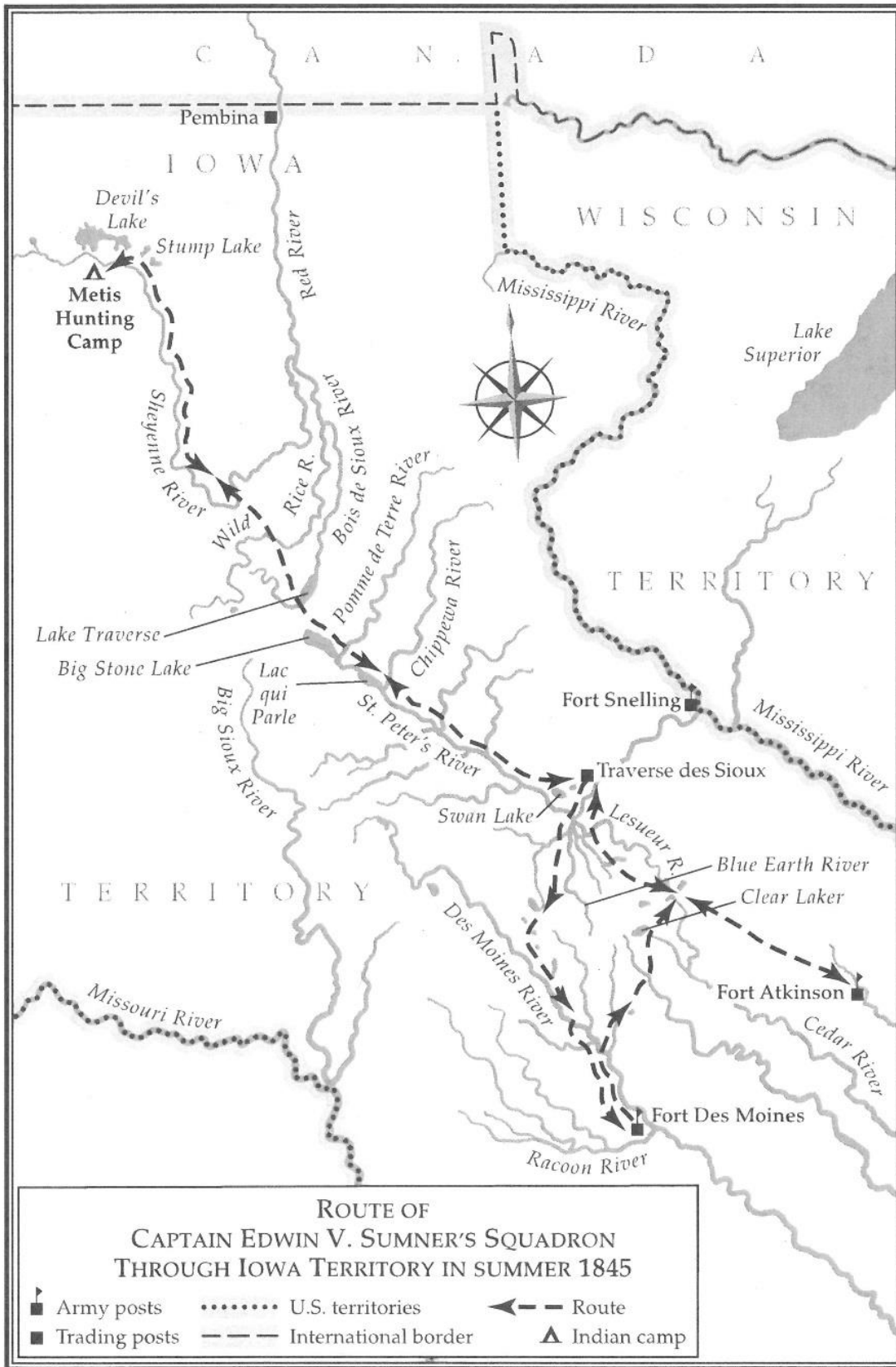
1845 Captain Edwin V. Sumner's Expedition.

In March of 1845 Captain Sumner was sent out to talk to the Métis the previous complaints from Agent Bruce and the conflict noted above. Sumner's squadron pushed across the plains along the Sheyenne River toward Devil's Lake. The troopers saw eaten grass and buffalo trails in all directions. In two days, the dragoons "struck the half breeds trail" and bivouacked next to Devil's Lake, in Sumner's words, "at the 48[th] degree of N latitude." Sumner immediately dispatched "Mr. Bird" [a Michif] to contact the Métis. After dark, Bird returned with "ten of the principal men." The surgeon's assistant described them as "fine large fellows and . . . the best Buffalo chasers in the country." That night a "dreadful storm" blasted the camp, flattened tents, and rained "all wrath" on Sumner's dragoons and his Métis guests.¹⁴

No storm, even of biblical ferocity, would delay Captain Sumner. On July 17, he sat in council with the Métis leaders.

After this initial council, Captain Sumner relocated his bivouac to the "half breed camp" on the west bank of the Sheyenne River. Some "six hundred carts," parked in a huge square, formed an impressive and imposing stockade, and Sumner estimated the band at 600 men [and] the same number of Métis women.

¹⁴ Op. cit. p. 18.



Deborah Rende

Sumner explained to the Metis that their “incursions” were “violations” of U.S. “territory” and thus must end. Responding to Bruce’s and Chamber’s accusations, the Métis protested that “they had no idea of resisting the authority of the American government.” These savvy diplomats, while acknowledging their British status, argued that “they were only hunting on the lands of their Indian parents.” They asked that Sumner “overlook” their hunting activity. He replied that he did not have the authority to do this.

The Métis then offered another proposal: What if their people relocated “across the line”? The surprised captain instantly quashed the idea; offering the Métis any “inducement . . . to secede as a body” would be “an improper interference with the rights of their government.” Would the U.S. government grant a reprieve during which their people “could change their habits,” the Métis asked? This suggestion struck a chord. The captain later reported, “After due reflection, I advised them to address a letter to our government, asking *as a favor* that a year or two might be granted to them in order to give them a little time to commence some other course of life.”

On July 20, Sumner held another council with the Métis and probably received their petition. Afterward, wasting no time, he ordered his men to break camp and march south. The dragoons and Métis traded “in great style” as the column moved out.¹⁵

1848 Battle of O’Brien’s Coulée

In mid-summer 1848 a large Chippewa-Metis and Dakota battle took place at O’Brien’s Coulée¹⁶ near present day Olga, North Dakota in 1848. The Chippewa-Metis hunting camp was made up of 800 Metis men and 200 Chippewa Indian men. They had their families, horses and over 1,000 Red River carts. The Chippewa were led by Old Red Bear and Little Shell II. The Metis were led by Jean Baptiste Wilkie whose mother was a full-blood Chippewa.

François Corvin Gosselin who along with William Gaddy who would later be a sub-leader of the 49th Rangers attached to the British Boundary Commission were also at this battle.¹⁷

1850:

Antoine Morin¹⁸ was killed by the Sioux on the east side of Devil’s Lake at the Springs, at the beginning of August 1852 [sic]. (William Davis, SHSB01_212_ANGp035.)

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 20.

¹⁶ So called because O’Brien lived at this location some 35 years after the event. It is a short distance west of Olga, N.D. Olga is between one branch of the Pembina River to the north and the Tongue River to the south.

¹⁷ Libby Papers, A85, Box 36, Notebook #14. August 4, 1910 interview with Little Duck, Dominion City, MB, interpreter Roger St. Pierre. This paper was given to me by Louis Garcia, historian for the Mni Wakan Oyate.

¹⁸ Antoine Morin was born circa 1809, the son of Etienne Morin and Marguerite (Sarcee). He married Therese Larocque a Nakoda Michif. He was buried on September 1, 1850, Assumption, Pembina.

1851: Battle of the Grand Coteau

This battle took place between a Metis 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 13 to 16, 1851.

The Metis battle against the Dakota Sioux which began on the Grand Coteau south of present day Velva, North Dakota and north-west of "Maison du Chien," (Dog Den Butte) in the Dakota Territory was a defining moment in Metis history. This landmark was a gathering place for the Arikara and Dakota Sioux and was of great spiritual significance to them. Jean Baptiste Falcon, Pierre Falcon's youngest son, was captain of the hunting party from St. Francois Xavier which clashed with the Sioux at the Battle of the Grand Coteau on July 13 and 14, 1851.¹⁹

The Sioux initially attacked the smaller St. Francois Xavier Brigade, which then joined the next day with the larger Red River/Pembina Brigade led by Jean Baptiste Wilkie. The Sioux subsequently withdrew.

1852:

In September of 1852 there was a big battle between the Metis and the Sioux at a place called The Battle Field. Baptiste Davis²⁰ had his leg broken by a ball from the Sioux. Pierre Ducept, TeTete,²¹ saved the life of Old Lucas Laferte. Old Lucas used to swear, but now he was so scared that he prayed to God. Baptiste Wilkie and Augustin Wilkie²² saved the life of Old Antoine Houle Kiticamise.²³ (Ibid.)

¹⁹ It is possible that this was a confrontation between the Cut Head (Pabaksa) Yanktonai (Ihanktonwanna), Dakota because the Metis were on their traditional territory. The Yanktonai, Dakota traditional territory extended from the Red River on the east, to the Missouri River on the west. From the Pembina River on the north to Lake Kampeska - Moccasin River area in the south. In 1872-73, the Sisseton – Wahpeton tribes, of the eastern Dakota sold the Yanktonai land to the United States Government. The Yanktonai, Nakota are the only tribe not to sell their homeland. To this day they are scattered on several reservations, principally Ft. Peck, Montana, Standing Rock, North Dakota, and Ft. Thompson, South Dakota. See Louis Garcia, *Message from Garcia, Brave Bear, the Cuthead Yanktonai*. Tokio, N.D., August 16, 2008.

²⁰ Jean Baptiste Davis (b. 1777) married Josephte (Saulteaux/Chippewa). Josephte was Josephte Mijakammikijikok (Mezhekamakuikok) who was first married to fur trader Alexandre Wilkie.

²¹ Pierre Ducept of St. Joseph was one of the Metis who applied for scrip when the Chippewa of Lake Superior applied for treaty. He was then issued scrip under the Red Lake and Pembina Treaty. Ducept, Pierre [R.L. Scrip #17]

National Archives, RG 75, Entry 363, "List of Persons to Whom Scrip was Issued under Red Lake & Pembina Treaties...." Halfbreed Scrip No. 17 issued November 18, 1872, under the authority of Secretarial Decision, June 12, 1872, delivered February 12, 1873 National Archives, RG 75, Entry 364, "Treaty of April 12, 1864, Red Lake and Pembina Half-Breeds," Scrip Stubs, Number 17, dated November 18, 1872, 160 Acres, delivered February 12th, 1873, issued to Pierre Ducept, delivered to Agent Smith.

²² Augustin Wilkie born circa 1829 was the son of Jean Baptiste Wilkie. He was married to Marie Wissackam Paquin.

²³ Antoine Houle was one of the principal Metis who took part in the battle of Seven Oaks on June 19, 1816. He and Michel Bourassa were the two Captains of Grant's party. Antoine was born between 1781

1852:

In 1852 two Sioux were killed in a reedy lake on the Grand Coteau. (Ibid.)

1854:

The Metis had their train pillaged by the Sioux at Burnt Hill (or Burnt wood Islets) [Hill Brûlés, Iles Brûlé or Hills Brûlé] in 1854. Twenty-three Metis, of whom four had no gun against 300 Sioux. Charles Gladu²⁴ killed one Sioux it is believed. (Ibid.)

1854, March:

Four Sioux were killed at Sioux Creek, now Langdon. (Ibid.)

1854, July:

The William Davis diaries record an encounter that happened in July of 1854, noting the Sioux looted 201 horses and 33 cattle on the Goose River, Riviere aux Outardes. (William Davis SHSB01_212_ANGp036 File A2)

The Sioux record indicates:

In the late summer of 1855 [sic] a clash occurred between the Metis and Matowakan's Hunkpati Ihanktuwana. Matowakan's warriors succeeded in running off over 200 head of horses, as well as thirty head of cattle, the total value of which amounted to about \$30,000. This gained Matowakan the reputation as a great warrior.²⁵

1854, July:

Kimowanipinesse was killed in camp in his lodge on July 1854 by the Sioux, on Turtle River (Salted Wing). (Davis, op. cit. and at SHSB01_212_ANG p53)

1854, October:

Ticanai Antoine Larocque²⁶ was killed by the Sioux at Oak Creek (Coulee des Chenes) in October 1854, a place now called Bottineau. (Ibid.)

and 1787, the son of Antoine Houle Sr. and Elise an Indian. Antoine was a NWC interpreter. Antoine married Josephite Lauzon, they lived at Grantown. He died on March 27, 1867 at St. François Xavier. He is reputed to have killed Mr. James Moore during the battle.

²⁴ Charles Gladu was born circa 1810, the son of Charles Gladu and Marguerite Ross. He married Madeleine Poitras. He died in 1873 at Pembina.

²⁵ Mark Diedrich, *Mni Wakan Oyate: Spirit Lake Nation*, Fort Totten, N.D.: Candeska Cikana Community College Publishing, 2007: 31.

²⁶ Antoine Larocque was born circa 1806 and was married to Francoise Laliberte. He was also known as Tiskune and Rocbrune or La Rock. In the 1850 Census at Pembina they are recorded as Family # 114.

1854:

The Sioux called for peace and Father Belcourt enlisted a number of Sioux Michifs, Rainville²⁷, Lafrenière²⁸ and Larocque among others to mediate negotiations. This soon broke down and Ticanai Antoine Larocque was killed in October of 1854 and a series of confrontations occurred thereafter.²⁹

1854: Battle of Old Mound, Mepawaquomoshin, also called Calf Mountain and Little Dance Hill

Calf Mountain, called Tete de Bouef, Buffalo Head, and Pilot Mound, is just south of Darlingford, Manitoba. It has an elevation of 1550 feet.

Pilot Mound was in the heart of Indian country in the days of the Hudson's Bay Company. The Plains Indians called the Mound "Little Dance Hill" Mepawaquomoshin). They came great distances to hold their ceremonial dances on its summit.

During the first half of the 19th century the area was well known to the buffalo hunters of the old Red River Settlement. Various clashes resulted between the buffalo hunters and the Sioux with a fierce battle being fought on the northern slopes of the Old Mound in the mid 1850s.

A local legend, recorded by settlers about 1878, states that in the 1850s the Sioux were defeated by Red River buffalo hunters in a skirmish near the hill.

The buffalo hunters were camped at Barbour's Lake preparing to hunt a large herd of Buffalo, which was located in the area and had driven them northward to the edge of the bush. Finding two of their members missing and their horses and rifles gone, it was later learned the Sioux had killed them. As night was falling the hunters returned to camp.

The next day, the hunters advanced in strength toward the Mound. The Sioux were assembled a little over a half-mile north of the Mound. Here the battle took place, a running fight, on horseback in Indian style, which resulted in the complete defeat of the Sioux.

Ledgend has it that five hundred and ninety-seven were killed and buried on the western slope of the Old Mound. Two survivors were allowed to carry the story of the massacre back to their people. When the fight was over there were 1500 buffalo hunters on the Mound.

²⁷ Francois Ranville, born 1815, was the son of Joseph Ranville born in 1779 at Lac Qui Parle, Dakota Territory and Marie "Tokanne" Little Crow, born 1889 near Fort Snelling. Joseph Ranville (Renville) II. (1779-1846) was the son of a Dakota woman, Miniyehe, and a French Canadian fur trader, Joseph Renville Sr. Francois married Marguerite Belgarde the daughter of Alexis Belegarde and Marguerite Dufort.

²⁸ Antoine Lafreniere, born circa 1810 the son of Antoine Lafreniere and Marguerite Houle. He married Marguerite Gonville then Marie Wells, Marie Bouvier and Ursule Moran (Morin).

²⁹ Belcourt cited in David McCrady, *Living with Strangers*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, `2006: 13.

A party of Sioux came up from the south during the early days of white settlement and carefully examined the burial place of their people on the slope of the hill. In recent years, descendants of the slain warriors drive from Belcourt, North Dakota, to hold a memorial ceremony on the Mound each fall. They welcome local people to come with them as they walk over the Mound, hold a smudging ceremony, scatter tobacco and offer food for their ancestors.

In 1909, Henry Montgomery, an Anthropologist from the University of Toronto dug into the mound and to the consternation of Aboriginal people removed many artefacts.

The *Turtle Mountain Star* reported on October 22, 2012, a number of Turtle Mountain Chippewa led by Clark Peletier, Jolean Keplin, Zoie Belgarde, Amber Giron and Annette Charette (all of Belcourt N.D.), the Dakota “Many Sitting Eagles Unity Riders” led by Gus High Eagle from Canupawakpa Dakota first Nation (Pipestone), Chippewa from Rosseau River First Nation led by Elder Charley Daniel. and Metis from Canada gathered to honor the memory of this battle, an annual event since 1992 when they “feed the spirits.” They note that the Metis had buried the Sioux bodies on the west side of the sacred mound. They also note that in the early 1900s, the University of Toronto curator dug up the graves and transported many of bones of the Dakota warriors to museums across Canada.

Joseph Godon was the son of Louis Godon II (b. 1808)³⁰ and his Nakota (Assiniboine) wife, and the grandson of Louis Godon I, a voyageur with Alexandre Henry at Pembina in 1801. He received Metis Scrip under the “Old Crossing Treaty.” His mother was Isabella Isaac (b. 1825). She was sister-in-law to Little Shell Band Counselor Louis Lenoir. Joseph married Caroline Larocque, the daughter of Joseph Larocque and Sophie Marchand on January 9, 1860 at Pembina. They had thirteen children:

Joseph Godon was a fur trader with the Hudson Bay Co., and farmer in the Floral District of Manitoba near Pilot Mound. He was a boy of 15 years when he participated in the last Sioux battle which took place at the "Old Mound", on or about 1855. Prior to settling in the Floral District west of the Floral School on the east side of the Pembina River in 1887, he resided in the area of the junction of the Red and Pembina Rivers, just south of the International Boundary. Joseph had travelled extensively in the North West Territories and had taken part in buffalo hunts and many other events.

Additional information was found concerning Joseph Godon at the Provincial Archives of the Hudson’s Bay Company in Winnipeg. Joseph Godon, Metis, was born in 1839 at St. Boniface, in the old Assiniboia. Joseph was employed by the HBC, at the trading post Pembina, and would have done much traveling as a fur trader and been involved in many of the significant events in the 1860’s, 70’s, and 80’s that surrounded the Metis people.

There were 2 villages centered in Pembina (ND) in the 1790’s. These fur trade posts were established around the forks of the Pembina and Red Rivers. That area was prone to

³⁰ This family was enumerated in the 1850 census at Pembina as household # 42.

flooding (1826, 1851, and 1860). Father Dumoulin established his mission on a ridge north of the Forks about ½ mile south of the 49th parallel in 1818. The community was moved to St Francois-Xavier in 1823. I

It has been reported that Joseph was from near Pembina, prior to his homestead in the Floral area. Therefore, in all probability, he was living in the US near the forks of the Red and Pembina.

The next report available about Joseph is his involvement with the Buffalo Hunters when he participated in the final battle against the Sioux at the “Old Mound”, on 20-4-11W, north of Pilot Mound. Joseph was reportedly 15 years old at the time, so therefore the dispute at the Old Mound took place in 1854.

Joseph was a resident of Pembina for sure by 1867. He was designated as a witness to the death of Joseph Sakin in 1867, he was 28 years old.

The National census taken in 1870 indicates Joseph was living near Pembina and in 1859 or 1860, he had married Caroline Larocque (1843 -), daughter of Joseph Larocque. The census shows the following children born to Joseph and Caroline, Elisa, (1860-), William, (1863 -), Jerome, (1865 -), Marie, (1867 -), and Joseph, (1869 -).

Joseph received Halfbreed Scrip under the 1863-64 Red Lake and Pembina Chippewa Treaty:

Gadon, Joseph (1838) [1850 U.S.]

Godon, Joseph [R.L. Scrip #391]

Minnesota Territorial Census, Pembina, 1850, family 42/42, born Red River Br. National Archives, RG 75, Entry 363, "List of Persons to Whom Scrip was Issued under Red Lake & Pembina Treaties...." Halfbreed Scrip No. 391 issued May 8, 1874, under the authority of Secretarial Decision, May 6th, 1874, delivered May 8, 1874 National Archives, RG 75, Entry 364, "Treaty of April 12, 1864, Red Lake and Pembina Half-Breeds," Scrip Stubs, Number 391, dated May 8th, 1874, 160 Acres, delivered May 8th, 1874, issued to Joseph Godon, delivered to Agent Douglass son of: Gadon [Godoin], Louis (1820) and, Isabella (1820).

1855:

Matowakan (Holy Bear), the leading chief of the Yanktonai, attacked the Metis, taking 20 horses, however about 80 Yanktonai were killed in the fight.

1855:

Two Sioux were pursued by Metis, 30 miles south-west of Tanner [he means Towner]. Henri Poitras father killed one, another was killed by the Crow. (Ibid.)

1856:

The Sioux fired on a small Metis camp. The only dog the Metis had was killed and an ox was wounded in the hind quarters. David Saint Matte³¹, in the morning, found a ball under his head. The ball had gone through a 10 gallon keg full of water. There was David Saint Matte, Francois Gosselin and Pierre Nadeau³²; all sleeping in the same bed. (William Davis, SHSB01_212_Angp54)

1856:

Three Sioux were killed by the Metis at St. Joe, 3 miles north-west of the village.(Ibid.)

1858:

Antoine “Tuniche” Pepin³³ was killed at St. Joe at four and one-half miles north of the village [on July 13, 1858]. (Op. cit, p.37)

1858:

Louison Bousquet [b. 1825]³⁴ and John Begg [actually John Beads³⁵] were killed at Hawthorne Creek (Riviere Ceneliers, Snelliers, on August 20, 1858. (Ibid)

1859:

Year of the Grand Peace at the Small Dead Island (Ile aux Mort), Metis and Sioux. (Davis, Ibid.)

Sioux, Chippewa/Metis Treaty of 1859

William Davis (born RR 1845) was present at this meeting as a 14 year-old. He tells the following story:³⁶ There had been a conference at St. Joseph in 1858 where it was agreed

³¹ David St. Matte dit Jerome was born circa 1837, the son of Martin Jerome and Angelique Letendre. He was married to Angelique Boyer.

³² Pierre Nadeau was born circa 1833, the son of Joseph Nadeau and Suzanne Bourdon. He married Josephthe Cardinal. In the 1850 Pembina Census they were recorded as Family # 14.

³³ Antoine Pepin was born circa 1820 the son of Antoine Pepin Sr. He married Marguerite Davis, the daughter of Jean Baptiste Davis and Josephthe (Chippewa). He was buried on July 14, 1858 at Assumption, Pembina.

³⁴ Louis Bousquet was married to Elizabeth Fisher, the daughter of Henry Munro fisher and Marguerite Laframboise. In August of 1858 he was killed by the Sioux and buried on August 21 at Assumption, Pembina.

³⁵ John Beads was an HBC employee serving as a guide to two Arctic Expeditions. He was a freeman in 1854 and living at Red River. He married Catherine Robclair [Robillard] b. 1830 at Grand Rapids on 6 February 1845, she died 27 February 1853. He married Mary Bird on 17 January 1855.

³⁶ Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation. *St. Ann's Centennial: 100 Years of Faith*. Belcourt, N.D.: 1985, pp. 314-315.

that a meeting should take place the next year at Les Isles aux Mort, near Leeds N.D. (north-west of Devil's Lake) to set the boundary lines for the hunting grounds of the Sioux, Metis and Chippewa. There was water everywhere in the vicinity of the treaty site. This created islands, leading to the name of the site.

On the first day of the conference the bands rode out and met halfway between the camps. They were on horseback and fully armed, ready for battle, if necessary. They rode in parallel lines until they were about 100 feet apart. They then turned to face each other. After a few moments of silence a Sioux Chief slowly dismounted, accepted a huge peace pipe of catlinite (pipestone) from a warrior, stepped into the lane between the lines and invited the Metis leader to join him.

The pipe was first presented to Chief John Baptiste Wilkie, leader of the mixed-bloods and after him the sub chiefs and headmen of the Sioux and the captains of the Metis puffed the pipe. When the serious matters were finished the two groups mingled freely to indulge in sports and trade, the latter consisting chiefly of barter for guns and buffalo robes and horse trading.

The next day the conference began. It was agreed that the unpleasant relations between the Chippewa (the relatives), the Metis and the Sioux were unnecessary and dangerous. The Sioux were accused of raiding the Chippewa country, stealing horses and sometimes scalping Chippewa people. The Metis were most concerned because the Sioux "made fun" with the "meat" (other portions of the body).

The Sioux charged that the Metis encouraged the coming of whites and the killing of too many buffaloes. But the line was fixed. It was to follow the Goose River from the mouth to the timber of the Goose where the river has three branches. From the source of the branches the boundary followed the stream to its mouth and continued to Dog Den Buttes, from there it ran south to the Missouri river opposite the mouth of the Knife River.

Gray Owl, Wanata II³⁷, Tete la Brule (Makaideya, or Burnt Earth) and Mato Wakan (Medicine Bear) were the Sioux leaders. Grey Owl was described as a fine appearing man and very eloquent by Mr. Davis. "He had fine limbs, thick and strong and was straight and tall. He spoke well and was not afraid."

!858/59 The *St. Peter Free Press* of May 4, 1859 reports that the Yanktonai, Pabaska, Northern Sisseton, and Metis met in council at Mni Wakan and agreed that all previous

³⁷ Wa-na-ta (Dakota: Wánataŋ which translates as *One who charges*, or *Charger*) was a chief of the Yanktonai, a tribe of the Sioux. He was born around 1795. The Yanktonai were located near the St. Peter River, which is today known as the Minnesota River. The Yanktonai were said to have a population between five and six thousand individuals with 1,300 warriors. Wanata was a very influential chief, as evidenced by his ability to lead his tribes' 1,300 warriors into battle. At age 18, Wanata was accustomed to the ways of war and fought under his father Red Thunder (then the chief of the Yanktonai) against the Americans in the War of 1812. Wanata was recruited by British, Colonel Dixon whom convinced him to join him in battle at Sandusky. During this battle, Wanata charged Fort Sandusky and was wounded, but earned himself the nickname "Charger."

hostilities would be forgiven. They also promised to meet again on the Sheyenne River during the summer to hunt buffalo.

Treaty of 1860

On the annual buffalo hunt of 1860, the White Horse Plains Metis visited the Dakota Sioux village of 1,500 warriors to make peace. The Dakota Sioux had sent a peace party to the Metis camp requesting a conference. Following peace, the Dakota Sioux performed the Buffalo Head Dance. In the evening the young single girls, in white deer skin, profusely ornamented with porcupine quills and beads, danced and sung much to the enjoyment of the young Metis hunters, who made many presents, to the evident pleasure of the young girls. The final day of the peace conference is devoted to horse racing and exchange of horses.

1861:

The Saulteaux perform a Sun Dance at Yellow Cliff, (Ecorre Jaune), actually Towner, North Dakota. (William Davis, SHSB01_212_ANGp54)

The Dakota Metis Treaty of 1861

In subsequent years the hunting parties of the Dakota and the Metis continued to fight over the same hunting grounds. The Dakota (the people of the “Ten Nations,” some 400 lodges) would typically gather at what was called “Sioux Coulee” near present day Langdon, North Dakota. The gathering place for the Chippewa and Metis was between Cando and Devil’s Lake. Tired of this stand-off, Chief Wilkie as leader of the Metis and Chippewa hunting parties decided to bring some resolution to the situation in the early 1860s. Gregoire Monette³⁸ of Langdon, North Dakota tells the following story in 1917:

In order to put an end to the suspense, fear and worry of watching the enemy, the Half-Breed hunters and Chippewa Indians under Chief Wilkie decided to send a commission to Washington to interview the president and find out how to obtain peace between these tribes. Chief Wilkie and Peter Grant were the men chosen. So well did they impress the authorities at Washington that President Lincoln told them they could have all the ammunition they needed for their protection. He asked them at the same time not to induce trouble but to go to them as brothers taking with them the bravest and best to make parley for peace. This was done and Chief Wilkie, Peter Grant, Gabriel Dumont, Joseph LaFramboise, Antoine Fleury, and seven others were chosen. They went direct to the village of the Dakota’s or Nadouissieux and direct to the lodge of the chief. This they found surrounded by soldiers. They reported to the chief, and he asked for them to be brought in. The rabble had gathered about the lodge and threatened to kill them, but the soldiers would not allow them to do so saying that their chief was a brave man who would dare to come alone to a hostile camp. The crowd was so envious and angry that with their knives they slashed the tent cloth in the lodges. Although

³⁸ Gregoire was married to Philomene Wilkie (b. 1863) the grand-daughter of Chief Wilkie.

they were admitted to his presence the chief was very austere. They told him their mission, and being very tired and thirsty, Gabriel asked for a drink of water. This was refused which was known to be an indication of trouble. Chief Wilkie became alarmed and sadly dropped his fine bearing. Gabriel, his son-in-law asked him "What is wrong with you?" When the old gentleman told him his fears, he became very angry. He began at once to load his gun, saying "I won't die before I kill my full share," and again demanded water which was brought immediately and due respect was shown their high commission from that time forth.

When asked to fully explain their mission, as spokesman, Chief Wilkie said, "We are enemies wasting the good gift that has been bestowed upon us through nature. We are preventing each other from trapping and killing the animals. There is plenty of room and much provisions. Let us help each other as brothers, let us have peace together." When the council was concluded, the pipe of peace was ordered to be brought. This was a very long pipe, ornamented with human hair so long as to reach the floor, bear claws and porcupine quills were also part of its decoration. The tobacco was cut by his first lieutenant; this was mixed with several herbs, and kinnikinnick. This mixing of the tobacco was to indicate the fusion of their interest and harmony of the whole people. The pipe was then handed to the Sioux chief, who took three draws and passed it to chief Wilkie. In this way it went around the lodge. Three times the pipe was filled and solemnly smoked and peace thereby established.

Chief Wilkie then distributed to them gifts of tobacco, tea and sugar. They were then given a great feast at which they told how sad they were and afraid when they thought they were going to regret their friendship, and asked how they should get safely home. The chief said with great dignity, "I will give you safe conduct; I will send my soldiers with you to your lodge and nothing will harm you. You have seen here some of my bad children and you may meet them on the way, but if they attempt to harm you, kill them and I will protect you." The above took place on Grand Coteau, fourty miles west of Devil's Lake. Before leaving, Chief Wilkie invited the Sioux to send a delegation to visit his people, setting the day and hour for their arrival. When the time came near chief Wilkie bearing in front of him a white flag, went a mile out to meet them. About one hundred came, the chief and his staff were quartered in Chief Wilkie's lodge, the common people were scattered so as to get better acquainted. When the time came for them to go, they, as a sign of their friendship and brotherly feeling traded all their horses taking back none they had brought with them. Much good was accomplished, although there were still bad children (perhaps on both sides). (Cited in *St. Ann's Centennial*, 1985: 231-232.)

Father Belcourt (March 1861) also reports on a meeting and says that the Northern Sisseton planted their corn and returned to the hunt. The again arranged to meet with the Metis. Waanatan (Charger II) spoke of his father's good relationship with the Metis, and how he, like his father, favoured peace. Tatankanajin (Standing Buffalo) also wanted to keep the peace intact, saying, "We can no longer hold back, we must make peace, and it

is agreeable to eat from the same dish, to carve the same animal each on his side, to make the same peace pipe.” Makaideya (Burning Earth) was also present with Wasukiye (Causes Hail) and Little Fish (Hogan Cikana).

Yankton Sioux Steal Charles Grant’s Horses and Attack the Chippewa 1861

An Indian Fight; Battle Between the Sioux and Chippewas.
From the *St. Paul Pioneer*, July 3. Published: July 12, 1861

We are indebted to James McFetridge, Esq. late United States Collector at Pembina, for the particulars of the bloody fight between the Sioux and Chippewas, of which he was an eye-witness, at St. Joseph, on the Pembina River, on the 10th June last.

Last summer while the Hon. Charles Grant was encamped with a party of hunters on Mouse River, twelve horses were stolen from him by a party of Yankton Sioux. Nothing was heard of the horses until the 10th of June last, when a party of thirty-six Sioux warriors, accompanied by two squaws, arrived at St. Joseph with the stolen property, for the purpose of returning it, in pursuance of a recent treaty made between the Pembina half-breed hunters and the Yankton Sioux. The delegation with the stolen horses arrived, opposite St. Joseph about two o'clock in the afternoon; they immediately crossed the river and proceeded to the residence of Gov. Wilkie (a member of the last Territorial Legislature.) Unfortunately a large party of Chippewas fired on the Sioux while they were in the act of entering Gov. Wilkie’s house. The Sioux took possession of the house, and, removing the "chinking" from between the logs, returned the fire with effect. From this time until midnight, a constant fire was kept up between the Indians. Six Chippewas, three Sioux, and two Assiniboines were killed during the struggle Governor. Wilkie’s daughter, in passing within range of the combatants, was severely wounded in the thigh by an arrow. Mr. McFetridge describes the scene at terribly exciting, and relates instances of great individual bravery. One Chippewa, a son of the chief, Red Bear, was shot three times in an endeavor to enter the house; at each shot he fell to the ground, but raised himself and pushed forward; his progress was stopped at the threshold by one of the Sioux cleaving his head through to the chin with an axe.

The house occupied by the Sioux is about two hundred feet from the river. The Chippewas surrounded it, and, to make their escape, the Sioux were compelled to run that distance and wade the river to the south bank, in the face of a constant fire from their enemies. This they did, aided by the darkness of the night, with the loss of one warrior, who was found dead by the Chippewas in the morning, on the south bank of the stream. The Sioux left behind them thirty-two horses, (in addition to the twelve stolen ones,) and the dead bodies of three of their warriors.

Mr. McFetridge states that the residence of Gov. Wilkie resembled a slaughter-house on the morning after the conflict. Five Chippewas and two Sioux were lying dead on the floor, which was covered with their blood. The Sioux did not scalp the dead Chippewas in the house, nor mutilate their bodies. The Chippewas were more brutal; they cut up the bodies of their foes and burned them.

Although the half-breeds at St. Joseph refrained from taking any part in the light, they are apprehensive of an attack from a body of Sioux, now encamped at Devil's Lake. The Sioux promised to return and settle accounts with the Chippewas in numbers like the mosquitoes -- a very forcible simile in that locality.

Congress appropriated a year or more ago, \$50,000 for the erection of a fort on Pembina River, to prevent such outrages as this. We submit that the occurrence here related indicates the necessity of immediate action on the part of the National Government. There should be a permanent military post located at St. Joseph, or in that vicinity, immediately.

Account in William Davis Journals³⁹

Davis reports that the Sioux killed five Saukteaux and one Assiniboine by the name of La lange de biche. The Saukteaux warriors were:

1. Le mulai, fils de l'eau rouge. [Son of Red Water]
2. Chakane
3. Ok-kandépinse
4. Kak-we-kioitou
5. Le peti verleule

Machekokepines et Augustin blessé, Watitiakonse a pris un cheval.
[Machekokepines and Augustin wounded, Watitiakonse took a horse.]

Peace Conference of September 1861

During this hunt Metis leader William Hallett held a peace conference with the Yanktonais under Chief Mah-to-wah-kan (Medicine Bear).⁴⁰

See below

³⁹ SHSB_212_p039 C2.

⁴⁰ The Fall Hunt, *The Nor'Wester*, Nov. 15, 1861: 2.

THE FALL HUNT.

A gentleman, joining in the late hunt has kindly furnished us with some particulars respecting it. From the Pembina Mountain the usual rendezvous, the hunters set off, about the middle of Sept.—105 riders and some 600 carts under the leadership of Mr. Wm. Hallett. The holding of a grand peace Conference with Mettonaka (The Medicine Bear) a Sioux chief, was one of their first performances. He was attended by a dozen warriors, who all came to lend a hand to the pacification. There was plenty of smoke and palaver, and many were the pledges of amity exchanged. Buffalo were not found in any numbers till the hunters came near the Little Souris, where they had six races, in which 500 buffalo were killed. Here they stopped a week making pemican, in full view of great numbers of wolves, who were prowling about in large numbers and with such audacity, that dozens were seen at a time, not half a mile from the camp. About 400 of these gently were caught on the trip. Two days subsequently the hunters divided into two bands. One section of about 40 riders and 300 carts, went towards the Devil's Lake, in the neighborhood of which they ran several herds of buffalo. Six hundred fine cows were killed, whereupon the bull's meat with which they had previously loaded up, was thrown away to the wolves. Scratched faces, sprains, contusions of all kinds, and dislocated shoulders fell to the lot of numbers of the hunters. He was a bold rider and had an extra fine horse, who escaped performing a somerset in these wild, reckless races over ground, honeycombed with ladder and fox holes and grannies of all sorts and sizes. Lord Milton, J. D. Gemmill, M. La Grange and other gentlemen-riders were among the hunters; and although novices at this sport, acquitted themselves well, and carry home with them some fine trophies of the chase. A noticeable feature in this expedition is, that the signal flag carried was a Union Jack—a very pretty piece of hunting—which floated over the Bonsecours Market, Montreal, on the occasion of the Prince of Wales visit to that city. It was presented to the hunters by Mr. Gemmill.

Friendship Treaty of 1862

In the summer of 1862, William McKay, a Metis, and the Chief Trader of Fort Ellice, was on his way to join a hunting party from Fort Ellice. The Fort Ellice group was camped close to a party of Metis and Cree (about 500 tents), also hunting on the prairie. On the way he was met by a band of Sioux and one of them, Tumma, offered to lead McKay to the Fort Ellice camp if he would promise to arrange a Friendship Treaty between the Sioux and the Metis and Cree camped nearby. The Cree and Sioux had been traditional enemies for centuries, but when the Sioux were forced to migrate from their home in the United States into the Canadian Northwest, the necessity for coexistence between the groups became apparent. McKay, realizing the importance of such an arrangement, set up the meeting and witnessed the Sioux/Cree/Metis Friendship Treaty. Shortly thereafter, Jean Baptiste Wilkie, the Chief of the Pembina/St. Joseph Metis was to negotiate a similar treaty with the Sioux in North Dakota.



1863: The Negotiation between Saulteaux/Michif Pecheto Tanner and the Sioux at Pembina Mountain.

Nor'Wester, October 28, 1863

A SIOUX RETREAT.

From the hunters who have returned, we learn that an interview between some of the Sioux and Pecheto and his band, took place at Pembina Mountain this fall. The Sioux employed all their eloquence to induce Pecheto to give them the Turtle Mountain and a portion of the adjoining country, as a hunting-ground and retreat from the Americans ; but Pecheto and his followers were unanimous in their refusal. That land had, they said, belonged to their forefathers, and they would not part with it.

1864:

Francois Desmarais⁴¹ was shot at by the Sioux. He fought back. He killed four Sioux, his brother and his son-in-law were killed and he himself had a leg broken by a shot.

Battle of Red River Metis and the Yanktonai Cut Head, 1867:

In 1867, Father Jean Baptiste Genin⁴² meets 600 Red River buffalo hunters at Fort Totten. They were seeking help after an encounter with the Cut Head Sioux along the Sheyenne River. There were dead and dying men on their carts. The battle had been so intense that the women were burning the Sioux arrows to melt lead to make into balls to

⁴¹ Francois Desmarais was born circa 1807, he was the son of Francois Desmarais and Marie Suzette (Saulteaux). His country wife was Polly Anderson.

⁴² Father Genin had already visited Fort Totten, North Dakota, beginning in 1865 and he went back there in 1867 and 1868. Father Jean Baptiste Marie Genin is credited with establishing a mission at St. Michael's, Fort Totten, in 1865. He exercised his ministry at Fort Ransom in 1867 and, in that same year he took up residence in McCauleyville, Minnesota, where he stayed until 1873, visiting Fort Abercrombie and Butte-du-Cœur in North Dakota. Father Genin was a member of the Teton tribe of the Sioux nation, having been legally adopted into the family of Black Moon, the principal chief of the nation, as a nephew, and by Sitting Bull, the head warrior of the Sioux nation, as his brother.

be used in the double-barrelled shotguns their men were using. He reports that some Metis continued to fight even after having lost an eye, as they had to protect the retreat. Genin attended to the dying then buried the dead. The Cut Head group was lead by Chief Omahakatte (Omaha Killer) and his first warrior Canta Wakan. Later Genin went to the large Sioux camp at Traverse Lake and Big Stone where there were 1,100 Sioux warriors and he met the Cut Head leaders.⁴³

Later in 1867, Father Genin met Chief Ironheart (Sioux) at a conference with the Plains Ojibwa/Métis to make peace between them.

Battle of Rosebud River (1873):

This battle in the spring of 1873 was one of the most famous encounters between Metis and Dakota hunting parties. The Dakota encountered a large party of about 500 Metis bison hunters at the mouth of Fat Horse Creek on the Rosebud River (present day Montana), near where it enters the Yellowstone River. The Metis upon being confronted drew their carts into a large circle in a depression on the south bank of the river. They placed the horses (over 200) in the centre of this circle. Trenches were dug beneath the Red River carts and log barricades were placed in front of these. The Metis were well armed with long-range rifles and had a small cannon in addition. They drove back the first Dakota attack. The Dakota then placed themselves on the surrounding hilltops and a long range rifle battle ensued. Many were killed on both sides, but the Dakota eventually disengaged because they could not stand up to the deadly aim of the Metis marksmen. One of the tragedies of this battle concerns a Metis woman. After the fight as the women were cooking supper for the men, one was carrying her baby on her back on a cradleboard. She went about her work cooking supper, unaware of the Dakota arrow that was sticking through the heart of the child on her back, pinning it to the cradleboard, which had saved the mother's life.

Accounts of the battle appear in Robert M. Utley, *The Lance and the Shield: The Life and Times of Sitting Bull* (Henry Holt: New York 1993):

- Only a few months later, in April 1873, the Hunkpapas had another encounter with Slotas (Red River Métis), this one even more violent. Some two to three hundred Slotas had crossed the Yellowstone and moved south up the Rosebud. They had thus penetrated deep into Sioux hunting grounds, and the Sioux looked on them as interlopers, far from their rightful territory and probably prospecting for gold. His people had never fought the Slotas before, observed Old Bull, but they were trespassing.
- At least eight Hunkpapas died in the futile assault on the Slota position. ... the Slota fight again highlighted the flaws in the Sioux style of combat against a well-armed and disciplined foe. ... pp 102-4.

⁴³ *Collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota*, vol. I. Bismark, N.D.: Tribune State Printers and Binders, 1906: 225-226.) William Davis also recalls this battle in his journals. (William Davis, SBHS02_212_037 File C2)

- By April 16 [1877] Sitting Bull had reached a Slota trading camp on the Big Bend of Milk River, clearly headed for the international boundary. p 181.
- [May 1877, moving up the White Mud River] Sitting Bull had occasionally been in this country in the past, following the buffalo or seeking Slotas to trade with. He would later say that he had been reared among the Slotas, who taught him to shoot. They may have, although the relationship doubtless occurred less in the Queen's country than in Dakota and Montana, where the Slotas also ranged much as did the Sioux. (p. 184)

July 5, 1874, Delorme Massacre, St. Joseph's, North Dakota:

(Copybook Letter No 459, Page 821.)

Below:

U.S. Ind. Agt.

*Copybook Letter No. 459, page 821 (STORY OF DELORME MASSACRE AND THAT
'BRAVE BEAR' the murderer IS IN THIS AGENCY)*

Devils Lake Agency D.T.
February 18th 1878

Hon. Thomas VanEtten
U.S. Court Commissioner
Bismarck, D.T.

Dear Sir,

Yours of the 7th inst. is received and in reply will state that as far as I have ascertained, the facts are substantially as follows. On or about the 28th of June 1874 "Wapepa" with four other Indians arrived at this Agency from Standing Rock. They were mounted on ponies and remained here about five days, and then left as they stated to return home. One of the Party failing to induce the other four to return home left for Standing Rock alone, and on the following day an Indian of this reservation named "Towacihay" who lives 19 miles east of the Agency, reported that four strange Indians were at his place, and that he did not like their appearance and that he suspected that they were on a horse stealing raid. They left his place and started southward, but he was surprised when looking for his oxen the same evening to strike their trail about two miles north of his house on the old road leading to Saint Joe, which settlement is about ninety miles distant from his place. This was on July 3rd 1874.

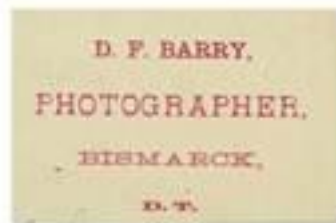
On the morning of July 5th 1874 four Indians visited the house of Joseph Delorme, near St. Joe, talked some time with the family and wanted to trade horses. Joseph Delorme started to the stable to show them his horses when they at once killed him, and his son Louie Delorme, also his son-in-law Baptise Moran. They scalped one of the men. Nancy Delorme, wife of Baptise Moran, and her mother, wife of Joseph Delorme, whose maiden name was Isabella Gurneau, were both wounded. The Indians all supposed that all five were dead but the women were only stunned and shortly afterwards recovered their senses. In the meantime the Indians had taken all the horses they could find around the farm (some seven or eight head I believe) and started for home. They passed the Indian "Towacihay's" place on their return on the morning of July 6th 1874, and camped near Lake Belland in the early part of that night. They were seen there by several freighters who were camped near them and with whom they wanted to trade horses. They arrived in Jamestown early in the morning of July 7th 1874, while there they boasted that they had killed some Chippewas up north, and showed on fresh scalp. Henry Belland, Sioux Interpreter and guide at the military post of Fort Totten, saw them there and caroused with them.

Mrs. Isabella Delorme and Nancy Moran are yet living and reside at St. Joe, Pembina County, D.T.

I was acting Agent here at the time and saw them every day for the four or five days that they remained here before going to St. Joe. I could identify "Wapepa" any where. The Indian "Towacihay" saw them going to and returning from St. Joe. Edward Lohnes of Fort Totten met them leading the extra stock.

"Wapepa" better known along the Missouri as "Brave Bear" was arrested for this offense and confined in the Guard House at Fort Lincoln for some time. I have never learned for what reason he was released but have heard it rumoured that he escaped from the Hospital there and was never recaptured. He is now here along with another one of his accomplices in the Delorme Murder whose name is "Isha Kiyape". It is my opinion that they intend leaving here and going north early in the Spring and if it is deemed best to arrest them, there is no time to be lost.

Yours very respectfully,
James McLaughlin
U.S. Ind. Agt.



Joseph Delorme dit Akkway: Joseph was born in 1815, the son of Amable Fafard *dit* Delorme (b. 1788) and Josephite Belly, the daughter of Antoine Belly and his Cree wife. He married Isabelle Gourneau (1818-1904), the daughter of Joseph "Little Thunder" Grenon and Angélique Kwayzanchewin sometime after 1836. Joseph had been a counselor to Chiefs Little Shell II and III and his son Joseph Kar-yence Delorme in turn

was a counselor to Chief Little Shell III.⁴⁴ Joseph and Isabelle and their family were enumerated in the 1850 census at Pembina as family # 96. The census shows Joseph age 35, hunter, Isabella age 32, Isabella age 14, Joseph age 13, Ann age 9, Elizabeth age 7, Sarah age 5, William age 3, and Louis age 3. Joseph Auguhk-quay Delorme Sr. received annuities and scrip (Half Breed Scrip # 218) under the 1863 Red Lake and Pembina Treaties of 1863. In 1868 he took annuities for himself, two women and six children under Little Shell's Band and in 1867 took annuities for himself, one woman and six children under Way-ke-ge-ke-zhick's Band.

Children:

- Isabelle Delorme, born circa 1836 Red River; married Jean Baptiste Trottier, son of Joseph Trottier and Marie Sauteuse, 20 Aug 1855 Assumption, Pembina; married James Campbell, son of William Campbell and Elisabeth Ross, 17 Sep 1877 St. Joseph.
- Joseph Kar-yence Delorme, born Mar 1838; married Angelique Gingras.
- Nancy Delorme, born circa 1841 Red River; married Jean Baptiste Morin.
- Elizabeth Delorme, born 1843; married George Baker.
- Marie Sarah Delorme, born circa 1845; married Joseph Frederick.
- William Delorme, born circa 1847; married Angelique Herman.
- Louis Delorme; born circa June 1850; died July 5, 1874 St. Joseph.
- Jean Delorme; baptized 30 Aug 1852 Assumption, Pembina; died May 26, 1883 at age 30 Olga; buried May, 27, 1883 Olga.
- Bernard Delorme, born 20 Dec 1855; married Jossett (--?--).
- Patrice Delorme dit Akkway; born March 24, 1858, baptized April 25, 1858 Assumption, Pembina (ibid).

1876:

After the Battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876, Sitting Bull and the Hunkpapa Sioux fled across the border, near where the Willow Bunch Metis settled. When Inspectors Walsh and McLeod of the North West Mounted Police met Sitting Bull, Metis men acted as translators. When food ran low and the Canadian government tried to starve the Sioux people into going back to the U.S., Jean-Louis Legare, who owned the general store in Willow Bunch, provided Sitting Bull's people with supplies. But it was the Metis people who stocked Legare.

⁴⁴ Counselors for Little Shell III in the 1890s [These men also served as counselors for Little Shell II: Ayse-sense]. Sas Swaine Poitras (67); Kug-kay-dway-wash-kung, William Davis (70), Paydway-walsh-kum, Louis Lenoir; Boin-ence Davis (73); Kar-yence Delorme (50), a son of Auguhk-quay; Sharlo Bottineau (68); Ossaotit, Francois Desmarais (55); Tchee-kee-tarn Parisien (68); Batees-shish Valley (58), son of Norbace Valley; Ahkee-win-nini, Alex Jannott (58); Tcheer-kuhk, Joseph Desmarais (56); Bayriss, Corbet Grant (55); Karn-nar-dah, Antoine Heneult (59); and Jean Batees Gorin (Champagne, 57).



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