

Rupert's Land



Dr. Louis Paré's Role in the North-West Resistance 1885

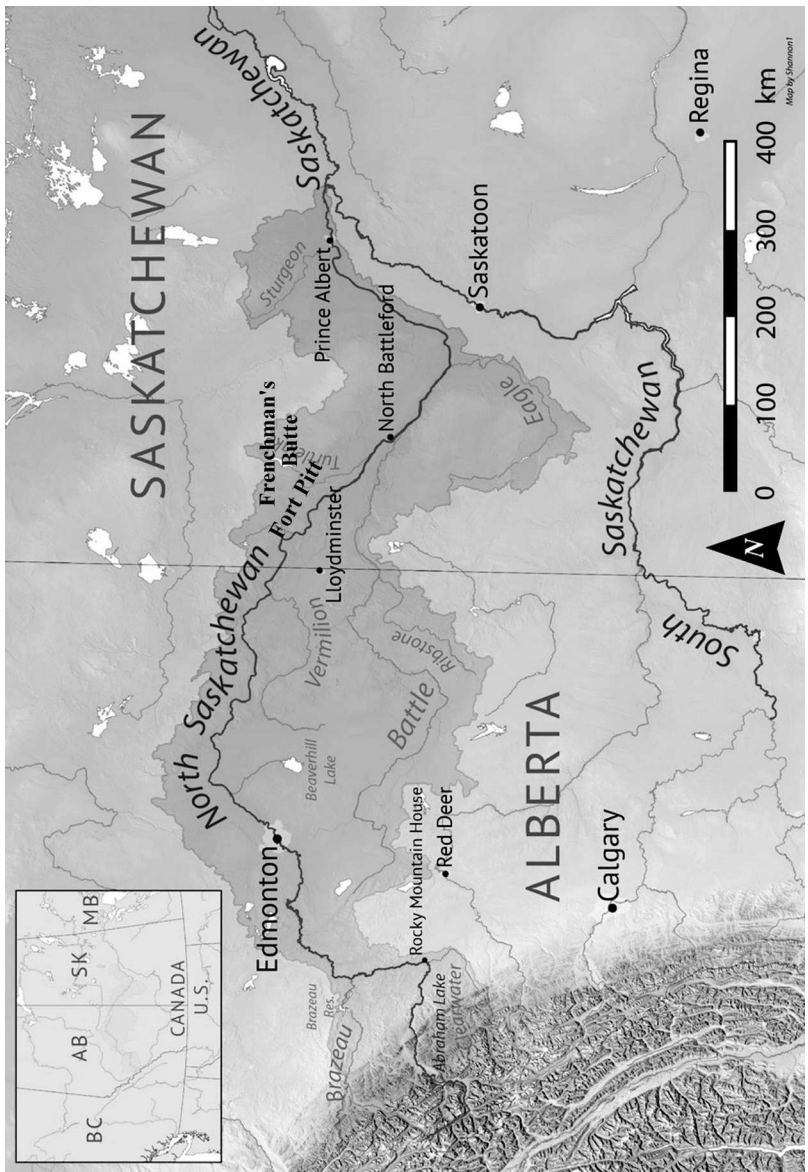
J.W. Graham

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North Saskatchewan River Basin **travelled by the 65th Battalion in 1885**

Source: Wikipedia, North Saskatchewan drainage basin in Alberta and Saskatchewan
 prepared by Shannon1 with Fort Pitt and Frenchman's Butte added

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To Dr. Louis Alphonse Paré's
great-great-great-grandson
Jacob Antonio Miranda Graham
on his 11th birthday

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Introduction

Dear Jacob,

The complexity of your tenth birthday request, to create a record of your family lines back to the various countries your ancestors came from and how they happened to meet, set me on a quest. I think you chose the topic as much for me as to learn about it yourself, and it was lots of fun to do.

One problem, though, was that it left me with a decision to make: Do I dare ask you what task you might choose for me this time, or do I continue to answer the one you asked me last time? I could not resist the temptation to further answer your challenge.

I had been meaning to look more deeply into Dr. Louis Paré, my own great-grandfather, who died a lifetime before I was born. Very little is known about him in the family, yet his life sounded intriguing. Why would a successful doctor from a suburb of Montreal, the Canadian metropolis at the time, who had several children and was part of a close, loving extended family, choose to move to

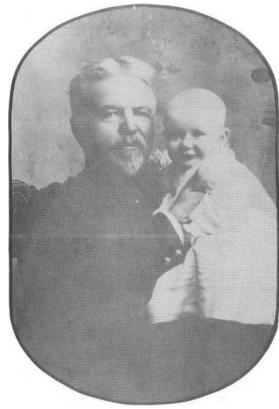
the North-West Territories, an unstable, potentially violent region that was not even a clearly established part of Canada? According to family information, he had joined the North-West Mounted Police some time in the early 1870s, well before the historic events of the North-West Resistance that I describe in this book, and became a surgeon – not just a surgeon, but the Assistant Chief Surgeon. I quote my grandmother (although the voice of her son Tony, who assisted her in her authorship of her life story *The Seeds*, can be heard here): *During the unsettled times of the Riel Rebellion from 1869 to 1884, Dr. Paré's duties as Assistant Chief Surgeon of the Royal North-West Mounted Police took him out into the western provinces of Canada and the entire area seems to have been his bailiwick and his playground.*

My first discovery was that his younger brother Théophile had indeed moved out to Manitoba probably as early as 1872, and Dr. Louis Paré did join the NWMP in 1887. That is a whole different chapter of his life worth telling, but this book describes his earlier role in the North-West Resistance. In order to understand it better, though, I also explored further back, touching way too

little on the great Indigenous history of the Plains and looking back to the beginning of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Jacob, thank you for setting me on this path of discovery. As you read, you will be among the first of the greater family in the 21st century to learn of Dr. Louis Paré's role in the historic North-West Resistance.

Grandpa's Grandfather's Father



Dr. Louis Paré with grandchild

Source: The Seeds, Lucy Griffith Paré

My grandfather was born in 1885 in Lachine, today a part of Montreal. He was the youngest of five children, and Dr. Louis Paré, his father, practiced medicine there at that time. His mother, Josephine Timmins, came from Mattawa, Ontario, and her parents had British, French and German roots. Mattawa had a large French-speaking Catholic community, but for her high school years, Josephine attended a convent school in Lachine. There, among her friends were her future husband's sisters. It was no doubt through them that she met Louis Paré. When they married in 1874, he was already 26 but she was too young to be married without a special dispensation.

Over the next 11 years they had five

children. Louis worked as a doctor, and around 1880 he also joined a militia, a voluntary military force that was paid to train regularly, preparing themselves to be able to respond in an emergency military situation.

Louis was the eldest son of a large family, and he carried the same name as his father and his grandfather. His grandfather worked as the lockkeeper of the Lachine Canal and his father was a baker, but later took over his father's responsibilities for the Lachine locks. They were a prosperous family and very much practicing Catholics who did everything in consultation with their priests. It is impossible to know if Dr. Louis ever really expected that his militia would be called up to go to war. They were disciplined and had become a close group, but their reward was probably just in developing that discipline and learning about rifles and horses. Even so, with his youngest child less than three months old, his militia was called up for service.

Prince Rupert of Bohemia

In the early 1880s there was a lot of talk of an uprising on the Plains, what we now call the Prairie Provinces. That region, touching Rupert's Land, had been administered by the Hudson's Bay company for two hundred years.



Prince Rupert, Count Palatine

Peter Lely-1618-1680

Source: Wikipedia Commons

Prince Rupert, one of the founders of the Hudson's Bay Company, was a Bohemian prince who was also the nephew of King Charles I of England. His own father was known as the Winter King of Bohemia, because he was deposed after only 6 months. The family took



Guy Fawkes

G. Cruikshank, caricaturist
(circa 1840)

Source, Wikipedia Commons

refuge in Holland, but when his father died, his mother sent Rupert to the care of his uncle in England.

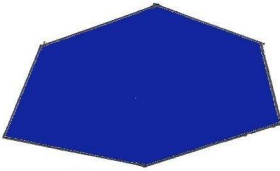
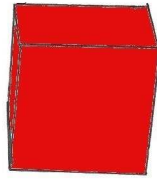
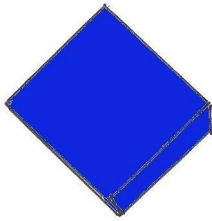
King Charles, Rupert's uncle and guardian, had been only six years old when Guy Fawkes tried to blow up Parliament, and although the two incidents are not connected, almost exactly 40 years later King Charles was executed by that same Parliament. Prince Rupert had grown up to become one of Charles's generals, and so Parliament kicked him out of England. He became a soldier for other kings and even a pirate, trying to take back Britain for his cousin, Charles II.

Prince Rupert moved back to England when the monarchy was restored and Charles II became king. He was an important general and naval advisor to the king. He is remembered as a romantic figure and was considered one of the most rash and daring men of his time. He had a strong tendency to rub people the wrong way, too.

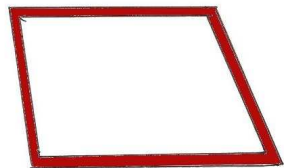
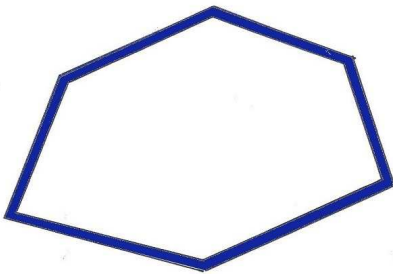
Later in life, he invested in the colonies and was an advocate for the creation of the Hudson's Bay Company, which was given access to all the land around that gigantic bay. They called it Rupert's Land in his honour probably as much because he was related to the king.

Aside from being a pirate, a soldier and a businessman, he became an inventor and a mathematician, and he challenged people to solve a riddle called Prince Rupert's Cube. He bet that if you take two cubes that are the same size, one should be able to fit through the other if approached at the proper angle.

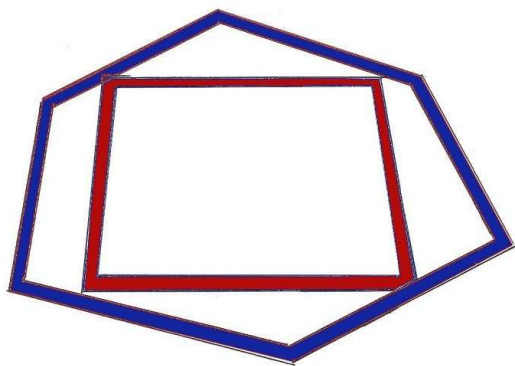
Prince Rupert's Cube



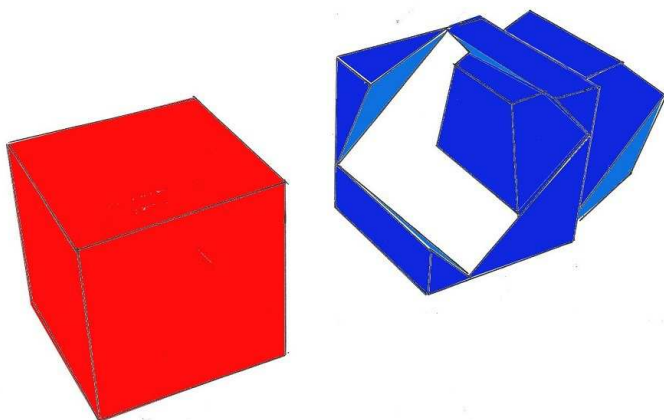
Two identical cubes casting different shadows because of the angle the light hits them.



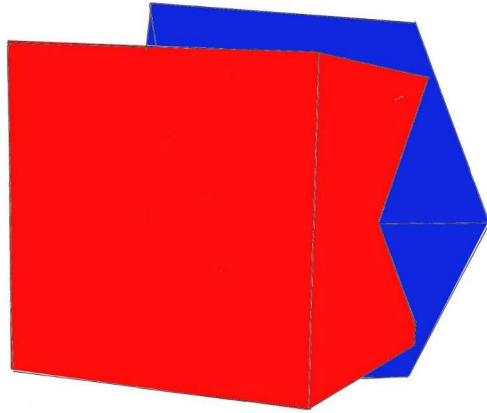
Outlines of the two shadows



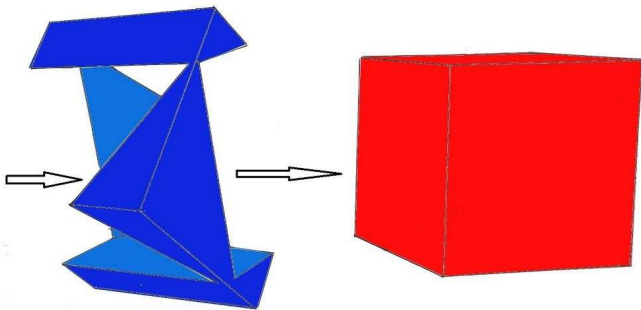
One outline fits inside the other



From the correct angle, a passage can be created.



You can go to the link below and watch an animated version of the two cubes passing through each other. In 1693, English mathematician John Wallis proved it was possible, and Prince Rupert won his bet. It was a popular riddle in its time and Dutch mathematician Peter Nieuwland described a better proof a hundred years later.



Grandma drew these from an animation at www.youtube.com/watch?v=ua4LadxA6K8

Radisson and Groseilliers

Prince Rupert's name can be found in other places in Canada besides Rupert's Land, but the two people who saw the *business potential* in Rupert's Land were Canadians who lived in Trois Rivières.



Arrivée de Pierre-Ésprit Radisson dans un camp Amérindien en 1660.

Charles W. Jeffreys, 1869-1951

Source: Wikipedia Commons & DCB

These two explorers arrived in London in 1666 with a story about how many beavers there were around Hudson's Bay. One of them, Pierre Ésprit Radisson, is well known in Canadian history and had a fascinating life. He had an older sister named Marguerite Hayet who was like a second mother to him, and he came from France to Trois Rivières, probably with her, when he was six. The records show that she married that year and may have come for that reason.

Trois Rivières was a dangerous place to live because it was in territory of the Mohawk Nation, and the French were trying to ignore them, in part because the Mohawk were trading with the Dutch. In 1651, when Pierre was eleven, the Mohawk attacked and Marguerite's husband was killed. After the battle they left, and Marguerite discovered that her little brother was gone, one of their prisoners.

Pierre lived with the Mohawk in a village near present-day Schenectady in New York where he was adopted and treated kindly. He learned their language and way of life, but he tried to escape to see his sister and was captured and tortured. His Mohawk family intervened, though, and he was forgiven.

A few years later he left them, going to their trading partners, the Dutch at Fort Orange, now Albany, New York. He subsequently travelled to Holland with a Jesuit priest, and some time in 1654 he arrived back in Trois Rivières. His sister had married again, and her husband was a

soldier with his own children.

Her new husband's name was Médard Chouart des Groseilliers and he had served for the Jesuits among the Huron-Wendat at Lake Simcoe and had learned of a land rich with beavers where some Ottawa and Huron-Wendat had fled after a war with the Mohawk. The French rejection of the Mohawk had contributed to a terrible war during which the Mohawk, armed with Dutch guns, attacked and destroyed the villages of allies of the French. The French colonists would starve and have to return to France if they could not re-establish the trade the Mohawk had cut off.

The French were forced to make peace with the Mohawk and their four sister nations, called the 'Five Nations of the Haudenosaunee,' (as well as the 'Five Nations of the Iroquois'). The Jesuits, who had suffered losses during the war, were determined to set up missions among the victors and slowly convert them to the Catholic Church.

The young Radisson, now 18, was engaged

to be an interpreter for the Jesuits. Some of this story may be more legend than truth, but Radisson's life was legendary, so it is worth sharing. They traveled to a Jesuit mission not far from Syracuse, New York, in Onondaga country. The Onondaga were one of the Mohawk sister nations, and he could understand their dialect, but he soon realized that the Jesuits had pushed the Onondaga too far and were no longer welcome or safe. Their lives were at risk. He convinced the priests that they had to escape, and they trusted him to figure out how.

The Iroquoian people, the group that these nations belonged to, had a strong tradition of honouring dreams. It was not abused, but if you were to tell your Onondaga sister that you had a dream that she would make your bed every day for a week, she would be honour-bound to do so. Be careful what you dream, though, because she can also dream.

Radisson went to the Onondaga elders and said that he had had a dream in which he was obliged to prepare a huge feast for everyone and

that everyone was obliged to eat and finish all the food. Radisson had learned, probably from his Mohawk family, of a drug he could mix into the food that would make everyone happy and sleepy. Everyone came to the feast, obeying the dream that had been shared with the elders. While a Jesuit priest entertained them with a guitar, they slept, and the mission made its escape.

Radisson and his brother-in-law became a team and explored the north country together. The French were desperate for furs, the only export they could offer to justify the existence of their tiny colony. They asked for authorization to travel to the Ottawa and Huron-Wendat that Groseilliers had visited north of Lake Superior. The governor gave permission but wanted them to take one of his men with them. They saw, probably rightly, that such a passenger would be a dangerous burden, so they slipped away on their own one day in August of 1659. They would be travelling through Five Nations war

parties who were trapping, and protecting the territories they had conquered, but they were both highly experienced and travelled almost invisibly. Even so, they met one war party and would not have escaped except that they got help from other allies who were also evading the conquerors.

When they arrived at what today is commemorated as Gooseberry River, or Rivière des Groseilliers, north of Lake Superior, they met a Cree community and hunted and traded with them. They also learned of the huge population of people and beavers to the northeast, in the drainage basin of Hudson's Bay. During the summer of 1660, together with their new Cree allies they returned to the struggling French colony with enough furs to save its economic life. Travelling through the Ottawa River route they came upon the site of a recent massacre where they learned that Adam Dollard des Ormeaux (the person for whom Uncle David and Aunt Mishiel's street is named) and 17

Frenchmen without the same experience as Radisson and Groseilliers had perished. They had been authorized to go with some Algonquin allies and capture some furs from the Five Nation warriors, hoping to save the colony. Dollard was a capable French soldier in European warfare, but it shows how desperate the colony was that Paul de Maisonneuve had authorized their doomed mission.

When Radisson and Groseilliers arrived in the colony, the governor confiscated their furs and threw Groseilliers in prison for having disobeyed his order to bring one of the governor's men. When Groseilliers got out of prison, the two men abandoned the colony and travelled to London where they should have been safer than at home. But the year they were there, 1666, was the second year of the last great Bubonic Plague and the year of the Great Fire of London.

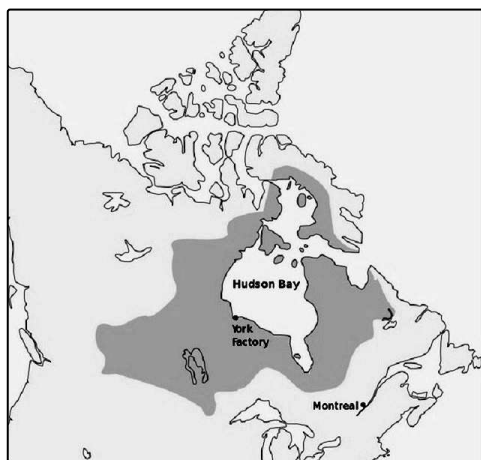
The Hudson's Bay Company

Radisson and Groseilliers talked to businessmen and nobles about the wealth of the land surrounding Hudson's Bay. That was how they became co-founders of the Hudson's Bay Company. With their help, Prince Rupert and his partners set up small trading posts on the shores of Hudson's Bay, exchanging their British manufactured products for furs with people who came to them. Initially these furs were likely the clothing that the Turtle Islanders wore.

Turtle Island is what many North American Indigenous people think of as home. They tell a story in which Mother Earth was born to Sky Woman, who fell through a hole in her garden in the sky and was saved by geese, who saw her falling, and cushioned her landing. They asked Grandmother Turtle if they could place her on the turtle's back and then all the creatures worked with her to build a home

there, and so together they built North America. This is not simply a story, but an allegory, a story that guided the people and the creatures to care for each other and to build their home together.

In our time, these people's descendants from different nations and places, many of whom grew up learning this story, are beginning to refer to themselves as Turtle Islanders. They lived right across North America and had a system of sharing through celebrations that has come to be called a Gift



Rupert's Land

Source: Wikipedia Commons

Map created by Decumanus (Matthew Trump)

Economy. They would celebrate their surpluses by offering to share them, combining the sharing events with feasts and ceremony. The Turtle Islanders that were around James Bay were from many different nations, many being Cree, but there were also Assiniboiné, Ojibwe and others on the plains that stretch west towards the faraway Rocky Mountains.

Since hygiene was more highly developed among the Turtle Islanders than among the British, their furs were not received as used clothing so much as a product that could be turned into hats and felts. Over time they trapped and hunted in order to trade for those mostly metal products that the British traders offered. For well over a century the Hudson's Bay Company did a consistent job of supplying the Ojibwe, Cree and others with products. The company had rules that its lonely post occupants were obliged to follow, and the system worked. Some of the men took Turtle Island wives.

There were also Frenchmen coming out from Quebec, trading for furs, and these men, called Coureurs des bois (runners of the woods), also connected through marriage and learned and obeyed the laws of the Turtle Islanders. Over time the children came from the combining of these two different sources became numerous enough that they saw themselves as sister clans of the Assiniboine, Ojibwe, Cree and others. They came to call themselves Métis.

Years later, the British captured the French colony of New France and things began to change. The Northwest Company set itself up in Montreal and engaged the Coureurs des bois as Voyageurs, paid by the company to transport the furs, but many who travelled west of Lake Superior married into local communities, obeying their laws and customs.

When Canada was formed, the new government wanted to acquire all of Rupert's Land. The Hudson's Bay Company had supported the Selkirk settlement, bringing out Scots to settle the land around Lake Winnipeg,

but to do so they had to deal with the fact that there were already people living there. Soon, also, they were at war with the Northwest Company and the real losers in this fight were the Turtle Islanders.

The new settlers brought diseases and also strained the limited food supply. The Métis and other nations hunted and trapped buffalo, as they had done for a long, long time, but they were obliged to go further west to satisfy the increasing demand for food. They made pemmican, a dried meat mixed with dried berries, but the colonists tried to control it by not letting them export it, and the Americans pushed more Turtle Islanders out of the United States onto the Plains. The buffalo numbers began to diminish.

Great Britain finally forced the Hudson's Bay and the Northwest companies to unite, but the problems continued because ruthless people kept coming. Some traded in liquor laced with laudanum, an addictive drug, and tried to steal the property of the Métis and other Turtle

Islanders.

As 1870 approached, the Métis and other Nations watched as Canada negotiated to buy their land from the Hudson's Bay Company in order to set up a province. They had a large military force, a part of it led by Louis Riel, a Métis who had lived and learned in eastern Canada. They were strong enough in 1870 to push Canada out and form their own country, but what they wanted to do was become the province of Manitoba, to be a part of Canada and have their laws and property rights respected inside Canada.

Canada, under Prime Minister John A. Macdonald, made promises to respect their demands, but he didn't keep those promises. Instead, the new province was flooded with European immigrants and the property rights of the people already living there were ignored. Particularly, their best farmland was stolen, and then even the new people went after the remaining buffalo.

The Americans went after the buffalo too, because the Turtle Islanders who were trying to protect their land from Americans in the American west depended upon the buffalo to eat. The Americans paid expert hunters to kill as many as possible. Soon the countryside was starving.

Prime Minister Macdonald wanted to get rid of all of these people, force them to live on tiny reserves, so he promised them food if they went to these tiny containment areas, but when they did, they were underfed. European diseases combined with this starvation seriously reduced the Turtle Island population. The Canadian government did not want to share the countryside. The North-West Mounted Police, with their bright red uniforms, had been acting as goodwill agents for Canada since 1873, and protecting people against the American liquor and drug dealers, but their reports of the hardships on the reserves went unheeded in Ottawa.

The North West Resistance

All peaceful offers to establish a fair settlement area were rejected by the Canadian government. Some, such as the nations led by a Cree named Mistahi Maskwa (also called Big Bear), refused to move onto the lands unless they received adequate area to actually remain autonomous. He promised that, once a proper homeland was established for Turtle Islanders in the northern half of the Saskatchewan territory, they would choose a leader to represent them in Ottawa every four years. This offer was also refused. Macdonald was satisfied that his offer of



**Mistahi-Maskwa,
(Big Bear) 1885**

photo: Otto Bell
Lib. & Archives Canada
MIKAN 3629644



**Louis Riel
1870 or 1884**

photo: I. Bennetto
U. of Manitoba Archives
Ref: PC 107



**Pihtokahanapiwiyin
(Poundmaker) 1885**

photo: Otto Buell
Lib. & Archives Canada
MIKAN 3613736

the small containment reserves had cleared the southern regions enough to build a railroad. The route was clear to build it all the way to British Columbia, and to profit hugely from the contracts and the colonial expansion as people moved west onto the vacated Turtle Islanders' land. Big Bear met with another important Cree peace-chief named Pitikwahan-apiwīyin, or Poundmaker.

Poundmaker told his people in 1881 "... the whites will fill the country and they will dictate to us as they please. It is useless to dream that we can frighten them, that time has passed. Our only resource is our work, our industry, our farms." Yet, in his negotiations with Lieutenant-Governor Alexander Morris for a proper reserve, he was refused help to learn how to farm or any guarantee of ongoing assistance so that his people could learn to live in this new way. Two years later, even the transition rations that had been promised were reduced to respect government austerity measures. By 1885 the tensions had risen. Louis

Riel, who had become a teacher in the United States, was asked to come back and help the Métis negotiate with Canada as he had tried to do in 1870 when Canada's promises were not respected.

Riel, Big Bear and Poundmaker were men of peace who were trying to find a solution and trying to keep their younger warriors from exploding with anger, but Macdonald's agents wanted to force them to violence so that Canada could send in a military force to break them up. In 1885, the year my grandfather was born, the tensions broke. Canada raised armies to attack Big Bear, Poundmaker and the Métis under Louis Riel.

Dr. Louis Paré and his militia members were ordered to Calgary by the new train that was spanning the country. As the militia was being organised, a smallpox epidemic was spreading through Montreal. Dr. Emanuel Lachapelle of the 65th Battalion had organized an ambulance brigade for the coming battle but finally ceded charge of it to Dr. Paré. Lachapelle

stayed to organise a response to the large number of smallpox cases on the island of Montreal, and he was obliged to postpone his work with the militia.

There are stories of the tears and heartbreak among the families in Montreal who saw the soldiers off. Joining new recruits, these militiamen formed the 65th Battalion whose leader, Major Hughes, would join Major-General T. Bland Strange's Alberta Field Force.

Major-General Strange had received a telegram on March 29 asking if he would come out of retirement to lead a military column east from his ranch in Alberta. He was spending his retirement raising horses for the cavalry. On April 12, the battalion arrived. In his memoirs, he describes them: "*The first troops to reach Calgary were the 65th French-Canadian Voltigeurs—2,000 miles by rail—from Montreal, 248 rank-and-file, Major Hughes in command... The majority were recruits who had never fired a rifle.*" Five days later, they were joined by 326 troops in the newly created Winnipeg Battalion,

a unit of North-West Mounted Police, a gang of ranchers, a Methodist minister and what Strange called some *"faithful Indians."* Their first task was an overland march to Fort Edmonton, and from there they were to follow the North Saskatchewan River east towards Big Bear's warriors at Frog Lake while the main army under General Middleton advanced from the east against Riel at Batoche, Saskatchewan, near Battleford.

During the march to Edmonton, these new soldiers had little means of understanding the countryside they were in. The Turtle Islanders were starving and frustrated. Their appeals were not heard and some were beginning to raid food stores to feed their families. This was interpreted as a rebellion, and when they saw a column of soldiers snaking its way across the countryside, the news spread fast. The soldiers of the 65th saw puffs of smoke drifting across the hills and even at night there was a way to send signals by placing softwood branches on the fire, and

placing a blanket on it and moving it off. Older hands told them that the Turtle Island system of communication was similar to Morse Code. Sometimes, during the day flashes of light sparked from the hills and the old hands explained that the Turtle Islanders carried small mirrors or other reflectors to send signals ahead long distances. With their carts bogged down in the spring mud at different times, spread over kilometres, the marching army was not attacked or harassed. Still, among the soldiers, mostly ignorant young recruits, tensions ran high.

There were hostilities, but a lot of the problems were caused by the ruthless way the Canadian government was dealing with the residents. In their long march, while the troops had hardships, the Turtle Islanders were suffering from weakness caused by starvation and in their weakened state, disease was running rampant, often killing the elders, the over-extended mothers and the children. This was not a rebellion but a resistance to harsh

treatment, a desperate cry for help.

The soldiers were unaware of the desperate state of the people they had been sent to fight. They had been told they were dealing with irrational rebels and sensed only danger. As they marched through territory that had been the sole domain of the Turtle Islanders for thousands of years, they could not understand that they were an invading army. The mandate Macdonald gave the military was to secure an unconditional surrender, an eviction of people from their homes and homeland. On April 29, at Battle River, almost at Edmonton, a priest came with two chiefs. They wanted to apologize, no doubt for the actions of their starving people who had stolen food, and they offered their hand in friendship, but General Strange refused to take it. He said, threateningly, he would shake their hands upon his return if the reports were good.

Louis Paré must have been on a steep learning curve. Records show that he was considered to be impartial, treating people

based on their needs and not based on their relations or connections. His later career would more than bear that out.

The troops were well received at Fort Edmonton on May 1st as they planned for the next leg of their advance. After fortifying Fort Edmonton against the starving people in the plains around it, they moved down the North Saskatchewan River with barges to carry much of their equipment. Again they were not harassed, except for an attack, probably by unorganized young men who shot at their train of supplies and disappeared. At one point they accosted a Métis who had information about a battle in which the Métis had easily routed the main military column led by Major-General Frederick D. Middleton. Strange sought to confirm the story and learned that the news travelled much faster through the Indigenous networks than through the Canadian military one, in spite of some access to telegraphs along the railroad line.

Learning of all these details, it becomes

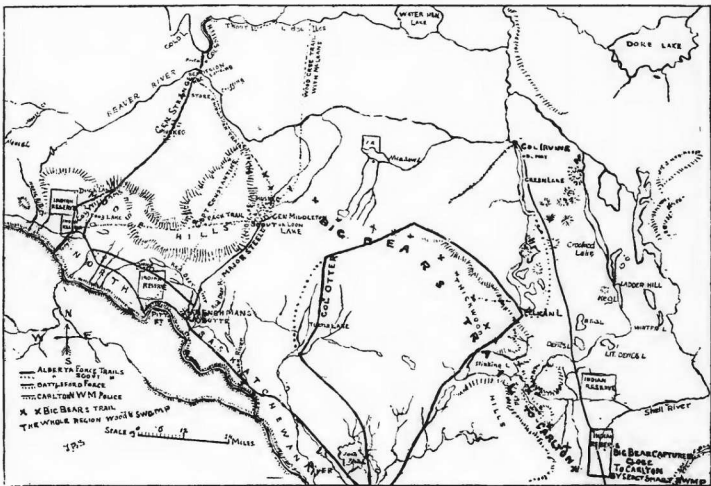
clear that the armies were advancing against an almost non-existent enemy. All three enemy groups were led by strong peace-chiefs, Big Bear, Poundmaker and Louis Riel, who were losing control of their warriors as starvation and disease, clearly abetted by Canadian government actions, ravaged their families and communities. As the Canadians goaded, the chiefs lost control. They could see the game Canada was playing but they couldn't stop it. Big Bear's son, Little Bad Man, and the war chief called Wandering Spirit led warriors into the Frog Lake settlement, bursting into the church during services. They ordered the men outside, and when Big Bear arrived, Wandering Spirit was on the point of killing the Indian agent, the government representative. Big Bear pleaded for him to stop, but to no avail. They killed nine men, including two priests, but the Cree wife of trader James Simpson managed to stop them, saving one man. When Simpson returned to the demolished settlement, he talked with Big Bear who was still there, telling the old chief that he

would be blamed. Big Bear answered that it was not his doing. He said the young men refused to listen to him. The young chiefs treated him with contempt.

Next, 250 warriors led by the young chiefs moved on to Fort Pitt. There was a small garrison of North-West Mounted Police and 28 civilians. Big Bear did his best, encouraging the warriors to let the police go and leave the civilians, led by the trader William McLean and his family. These were all people who knew each other, who had lived alongside each other. The police departed, leaving the prisoners in the care of Big Bear, while the warriors sacked and destroyed the fort, taking wagons of supplies and leaving.

The Battle at Frenchman's Butte

This was the scene that the Alberta Field Force soldiers found when they arrived at Fort Pitt. General Strange organized his troops to follow the Cree and the prisoners and they soon found them at Frenchman's Butte. The general quickly assessed the situation, sending scouting parties out and setting up their equipment. His soldiers were not professionals, and some had found pretexts to leave, afraid of the fighting. Included in the ones who had abandoned him



Frenchman's Butte

Source: Major General T. Bland Strange, Gunner Jingo's Jubilee 1893 page 489

were the crew responsible for their largest gun. It risked being a useless, heavy burden, but Strange turned it over to his son to figure out and it was soon ready for use.

Strange assessed the Cree warriors. He had already identified what kinds of weapons they had and knew how effective they were with them. They had also prepared the whole place hoping to entice Strange and his men into a trap, and some of Strange's scouts got close enough to draw fire. The Major-General's son tried the big gun, firing where they could see the that warriors were dug in to ditches. Stretched over hundreds of feet across the top of the hill, they had full advantage. In the meantime, the 65th Battalion was still on the river with the main supplies but dropped everything and came quickly when they heard the guns.

As night fell, the general received a report on the injured and discovered that they had been removed and were safe, all except for one man, named Lemay. When he asked why

Lemay had not been rescued, the officer in charge said that he wasn't going to brave the firing to get him, and even the stretcher party had refused—it was too dangerous, and Lemay was going to die anyway. General Strange went to Dr. Paré for help. His notes make special mention of Dr. Paré who, under fire, did not hesitate at the Battle of Frenchman's Butte on May 28 in 1885. This is the description of the event in Strange's own hand.

"Ordering my son to open a sharp fire of case-shot to cover the advance of my stretcher-party, I went to Dr. Pare (65th), who came with alacrity, as well as the stretcher-party. Father Prevost, Chaplain to the 65th, also followed me, crucifix in hand, to administer the last rites of his Church. We found the man well to the front, lying in an exposed position, and I must admit some impatience, which the good priest did not seem to share, during the confession of sin, and suggested to the brave Padre the desirability of lumping the lot, which he did; and putting the

dying man into the stretcher, under Dr. Pare's direction, the party moved up the hill, and I brought up the rear with the man's rifle. The fire grew hotter as we ascended the hill; the rear man dropped his end of the stretcher, and I took his place."

Strange quietly withdrew his men who had no food and had eaten almost nothing since they left Fort Pitt a day and a half earlier. Big Bear's people had the upper hand, but really had nowhere better to go, so it was time to withdraw and reorganize for a better-planned assault. In the meantime, the Métis had been crushed, and Chief Poundmaker had surrendered at Battleford. The resistance was over, and it was just a matter of time before they wore Big Bear's people down. When they did, the prisoners reported that Big Bear had protected them but that the young chiefs were the real leaders, that Big Bear was ridiculed by them. The prisoners confirmed that Big Bear had done what he could to keep them from

harm. Once the prisoners were accounted for though, they discovered that Big Bear was missing.

Both Big Bear and Louis Riel had escaped after their separate defeats, but both men surrendered themselves later, of their own will.

All three men, Big Bear, Poundmaker and Riel, had done what they could to protect the interests and rights of their people. All three had expressed a willingness to be a part of Canada and work with the government, and all three had presented themselves to the military authority on their own, still looking for justice for their people. All three were rebuffed. In court in late July, Poundmaker stated: "Everything I could do was done to stop bloodshed. Had I wanted war, I would not be here now. I should be on the prairie. You did not catch me. I gave myself up. You have got me because I wanted justice." Prime Minister Macdonald did not wish for mercy to be shown, and even the acting judge reminded the jury that, because the three leaders had not abandoned their people, they had to be found

guilty. All three were found guilty with recommendations for mercy.

After the judgement of guilt, Big Bear addressed the court, saying, "Many of my band are hiding in the woods, paralyzed with terror... I plead again to you, the chiefs of the white men's laws, for pity and help to the outcasts of my band!"

Big Bear and Poundmaker were sentenced to prison where both fell ill and were released a few years later, only in time to die. But the courts chose to make an example of Louis Riel. Despite the great wrong that was being done and protests for mercy that came from even beyond Canada's borders, he was hung on November 16.

My uncle Donald told me that one day when his dad Alphonse was visiting him, Donald saw a big, round scar in the middle of his chest. He asked his dad how he had acquired such an injury. He was told it was from a spider bite he received while

prospecting in South America, then he added, "... but I am very proud of this scar because it is in the same place as one my father had from a wound when the NWMP were ambushed in 1885 at Batoche." Dr. Paré and his son shared similar scars, but, while a detachment of the NWMP was ambushed early in the uprising, Dr. Paré was not among them and in fact was not yet a member of that force.

As a member of the 65th Battalion, he could have sustained an injury, even the wound that was described to Alphonse, but if it had been disabling, Major-General Strange likely would have mentioned it in his memoir of the march and battle at Frenchman's Butte. Wherever he received the injury, a much more serious health issue was about to change the course of his and his family's lives.

Further Reading

The first place I found information about Louis Paré's role in the 65th Battalion was in the records of the NWMP at Library and Archives Canada. The link is very long.

A good source is the Dictionary of Canadian Biography, (<http://www.biographi.ca>) although Louis Paré does not appear there. Big Bear, Poundmaker, Riel and many others do.

William Beahen and Stan Horral, *Redcoats on the Prairies*, Centax Books, Saskatchewan, 1998 ISBN 1-894022-01-7

Wikipedia has images and quick facts that can lead to other studies.

Gunner Jingo's Jubilee is T. Bland Strange's autobiography and you can read it at <http://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.14741/6?r=0&s=1>

Louis Paré's daughter-in-law, Lucy Griffith Paré, wrote her life story as *The Seeds*. You may have a copy, but if you don't, or if you want to search in it online, you can download it at

<https://www.ballyhoo.ca/lucy-pareacute-the-seeds.html>

There are many other background sources—some long reads—that we would be happy to share.

Love,
Grandpa and Grandma

An introduction to the turmoil on the Plains
that Dr. Louis Paré discovered through his
service in the militia in the spring of 1885.



"Gunner Jingo"
Major-General T. Bland Strange
Alberta Field Force, 1885