



MÉTIS AND THE PATH TO CONFEDERATION Self-Directed Drive & Tour

Welcome to a Routes on the Red self-directed tour of the Red River Valley. These itineraries guide you through the history and the geography of this beautiful and interesting landscape. Several different Routes on the Red, featuring driving, cycling, walking or canoeing/kayaking, lead you on an exploration of four historical and cultural themes: Fur Trading Routes on the Red; Settler Routes on the Red; Natural and First Nations Routes on the Red; and Art and Cultural Routes on the Red.

The purpose of this route description is to provide information on a self-guided drive and walk. The walking described includes public lands and trails. While enjoying yourself, please drive and walk carefully as you are responsible to ensure your own safety and that any activity is within your abilities. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate and up-to-date. However, we are unable to accept responsibility for any inconvenience, loss or injury sustained as a result of anyone relying upon this information.

Woven into the fabric of Winnipeg are the threads and stories that make up the history of the Métis people and their significant contribution to the creation of the Province of Manitoba. Drive this route through Winnipeg, stopping to immerse yourself in the Métis world. Gain a new perspective on familiar place names or discover nooks and crannies that previously were hidden. Begin in the downtown, then head to the western part of the city, before heading just south of the Perimeter Highway to St. Norbert where you begin to learn of the Louis Riel story. As you wind your way back to the centre of the city, you are transported to an era of tension and the successful fight for the recognition of local Manitoban's rights as we entered Confederation with the rest of Canada.

This is a full-day tour of about 80 km with opportunities for numerous stops along the way. The driving route starts at Seven Oaks House and takes you through Winnipeg and St. Norbert visiting important sites associated with the Métis in Manitoba. This tour can be broken up into three sections should you wish: The first part of the tour focuses on the early lives of the Métis, which includes the Battle of Seven Oaks and St. John's cemetery in the northern region of the city.

The second part of the tour focuses on the daily lives of the Métis with visits to Grant's Old Mill and St. James Historical Museum in the western part of the city. The final segment of the tour focuses on the later history of the Métis and the path to Confederation with visits to St. Norbert Heritage Park, Riel House, St. Boniface Cathedral and the Legislative Building in the southern & central part of the city.

On today's trip you will visit the following sites:

Seven Oaks House Museum

115 Rupertsland Boulevard, Winnipeg

phone: (204) 339-7429

open the last weekend in May to Labour Day,
daily 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

St. John's Cathedral and Cemetery

135 Anderson Avenue, Winnipeg

phone: (204) 586-8385

open Monday - Friday, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Grant's Old Mill – 2777 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg

phone: (204) 986-5613

open daily from 10:00 am - 6:00 pm

St. James Historical Museum

3180 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg

phone: (204) 888-8706

open daily 10:00 am - 4:30 pm

Manitoba Legislature

450 Broadway Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba

phone: (204) 945-5813

Tours by appointment from September to June;
from July 1 to the Labour Day long weekend in
September, tours are offered on an hourly basis

St. Norbert Provincial Heritage Park

40 Turnbull Drive, Winnipeg

phone: (204) 945-4236

open 10:30 am - 5:30 pm daily from the
May long weekend until the September
long weekend, with free guided tours

Riel House National Historic Site

330 River Road, Winnipeg

phone: (204) 257-1783

open daily 10:00 am — 6:00 pm from the May
long weekend until the September long weekend

St. Boniface Cathedral

190 Avenue de la Cathédrale, Winnipeg

phone: (204) 233-7304

open daily from 9:00 am - 5:30 pm

Paroisse Catholique St. Norbert Church

70 St. Pierre Street, Winnipeg

phone: (204) 269-3240

open for Mass: 8:00 am - 9:30 am Tuesday to
Saturday, Monday Mass 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm.
Sunday 10:30 am (open for visitors from
9:00 am to 12:00 pm). French services

The Métis are the descendants of French fur traders and voyageurs and local First Nation women. By the 19th century, there was an extensive Métis community at the confluence of the Assiniboine and Red rivers and the Métis constituted the majority of the population of the Red River settlement. At the time the term Métis originally referred only to those of French and First Nation ancestry, while those of British and First Nation ancestry were referred to as the “country-born”. The Métis developed a sense of themselves as a “new nation”, with their own culture that was a combination of First Nation and European cultures and their own language, known as Michif. They inhabited the area before the Hudson’s Bay Company established a colony in 1811, supporting themselves by working at the company’s trading posts in the interior, hunting bison to supply the pemmican that fed the voyageurs on their travels, and also engaging in agriculture. It was their determination to defend their way of life and their rights that ultimately led to the creation of the Province of Manitoba.

This tour begins at Seven Oaks House, named for what is referred to as the Battle of Seven Oaks that took place June 19, 1816. For the Métis this confrontation marked a step in the development of their identity as a distinctive people and nation. The house itself had nothing to do with the battle. John Inkster, an Orkneyman who joined the Hudson’s Bay Company in 1819 as a stonemason, built the house in the years 1851 to 1853. There is an indirect link between Inkster and the events of 1816 as he was elected to the council convened in November of 1869 by Louis Riel, the great Métis leader who was instrumental in the creation of the Province of Manitoba.

To get to Seven Oaks House travel north from The Forks on Main Street. You can reach Seven Oaks House by turning left onto Rupertsland Boulevard. At the stop sign, turn right and then make an immediate left onto what appears to be a lane (this is Colleen Road.).

km to next location	DIRECTIONS	Total km
0.0	Start at Seven Oaks House – 115 Rupertsland Blvd.	0.0

The Battle of Seven Oaks was really only a short skirmish that occurred June 19, 1816 at the height of the rivalry between the Hudson’s Bay Company and the North West Company. This competition had become increasingly violent over the last few years and the North West Company viewed the establishment of the Red River Settlement as a serious provocation on the part of the HBC. Not only did the colony’s links with the HBC arouse suspicion, but it was located right in the centre of the food supply system upon which the North West Company depended. From the beginning, the North West Company was determined to eliminate the settlement. In 1815, it almost succeeded in driving the settlers away by burning their houses and trampling their crops, but Colin Robertson, an agent of the HBC, persuaded them to return to their settlement. The situation deteriorated when Miles Macdonnell, the colony’s governor, prohibited the export of provisions from the district, which of course interfered with the North West Company’s reliance on pemmican and also constituted a claim that the North West posts were on land that belonged to the colony. He also forbade hunting bison from horseback, which was the Métis method of hunting, and seized some of the North West Company’s

stored pemmican. It was not difficult for the Nor’westers to persuade the local Métis to harass the colony, since the Métis hunted bison and made pemmican for the North West Company and Macdonnell’s Pemmican Proclamation would restrict them as well. Nevertheless, by the spring of 1816 the situation appeared to have stabilized.

In fact, of course, the North West Company was still determined to destroy the colony and the Battle of Seven Oaks was the result of the increasing tension. It was not really a battle but a skirmish between a group of Métis and a group of men from the settlement and their governor, Robert Semple. Semple and 21 of his men were killed and the settlers left the colony. However, reinforcements were on their way and the colony was quickly re-established.

There is a monument that commemorates the battle at Seven Oaks at this site and a mural at 1812 Main Street illustrating it. This battle and the troubles that led up to it are remembered in a famous local song written by Pierre Falcon (1793-1876) – Chanson de la Grenouillère. (As an aside – Falcon Lake in the Whiteshell is named after Pierre Falcon.)

0.0	Head east to Mac Street, turning left at the stop sign.	0.0
0.1	Turn right immediately onto Rupertsland Boulevard.	0.1
0.2	Turn right onto Scotia Street.	0.3
0.4	At the T-intersection turn left onto Matheson Avenue and follow the road as it turns back onto Scotia Street.	0.7
0.7	Turn right onto Cathedral Avenue.	1.4
0.2	Turn left at stop sign onto St. Cross Street following curves of road.	1.6
0.2	St. John’s Anglican Cathedral Cemetery is on your right.	1.8
	To visit the Cathedral and Cemetery – park on this street, as there is no parking on Anderson Street or in the cemetery itself.	

Walk to the entrance to the cemetery, which is on Anderson Street (walk to the corner, keeping the cemetery on your right, then turn right and follow the sidewalk to the driveway entrance).

The current building dates from 1926, however the first church on this site was built in 1820. A stroll through the cemetery takes you past headstones and monuments bearing famous names from the early history of Manitoba, many of them associated with the fur trade and the early days of the Red River settlement. Look for Flett, Tait and Inkster, all of which are Orkney names and still common in Manitoba today. Until 1821, most of the men who worked for the Hudson's Bay Company came from the Orkney Islands and once the Red River settlement was established, those who wanted to remain here after their time with the HBC was up could settle in the colony. Many took advantage of the opportunity because they, like their French-speaking counterparts, had married local women and had families with whom they wished to remain.

One of the most prominent people to be buried here is John Norquay, the premier of Manitoba from 1878 to 1887. Enter the gate and turn left toward the tall monument. Norquay was Manitoba's only premier of mixed Aboriginal and European ancestry. His life illustrates the tremendous changes that occurred in Manitoba during the 19th century. Norquay was born near St. Andrew's in 1841. His great grandmother was Aboriginal and his great grandfather had come from the Orkneys to North America as an employee for the Hudson's Bay Company. John was educated in the Red River settlement, worked as a teacher, a farmer, and a fur trader and, in 1870, he was elected to Manitoba's first legislature. He served two terms as a cabinet minister and became premier in 1878.

	Following your visit - return to your vehicle.	
0.2	Turn right onto Anderson Avenue.	2.0
0.1	Drive past entrance to St. John's Cathedral and Cemetery.	2.1
0.2	Turn right onto Main Street. You will soon be making a left hand turn.	2.3
0.7	Turn left onto Inkster Boulevard.	3.0
11.5	Turn left onto Sturgeon Road.	14.5

There are nice views of the city on your left.

4.9	Pass a display of old wagons and carts on your right.	19.4
2.1	Turn left onto Booth Drive. This will put the Grace Hospital on your right.	21.5
0.7	Park along the street just before Portage Avenue. Walk west over the hill to reach Grant's Old Mill.	22.2

Cuthbert Grant, who led the Métis at the Battle of Seven Oaks, was born in 1793, the son of a North West Company trader and an Aboriginal woman. After being educated in Scotland, he returned to North America and became a clerk at a North West Company's post on the Qu'Appelle River. As the conflict between the HBC and NWC heated up, Grant was appointed one of the "Captains of the Métis" and in 1816 the Métis appointed him Captain-General of all the Métis. Nevertheless, despite his involvement in this skirmish, he received land from the HBC after it had merged with the NWC in 1821, so that he could establish a Métis settlement. The company hoped that this community would allow it to exert more control over the Métis. The result was the community of Grantown (now called St. Francois Xavier) located at White Horse Plains, 19 km west of Fort Garry. Grant built a house and a flour mill. He also worked as a freighter and became a prominent and well-to-do member of the community. In 1824, Grant was appointed "Warden of the Plains" by the HBC, in which capacity he was supposed to assist the company in stopping illicit fur trading. For this he was paid a salary of £250. George Simpson, governor of the HBC, also presented him with a ceremonial sword that can be seen at the Manitoba Museum. Also on display at the Museum is Grant's medicine chest. It was said

that he had received some medical training in Scotland and he travelled with his chest treating the sick and wounded. Grant died in 1854 after falling from his horse and was buried under the altar of the church of Grantown that later burnt down.

By the time of Grant's death, the Métis communities of the Red River were well established and Métis people were involved in a variety of economic activities. Although bison hunting and farming were the most important, the Métis also worked for the HBC as tripmen on the brigades that took trade goods inland and brought furs out and later on the carts that replaced the boats. As the settlement grew, they also traded bison robes. Since the HBC's charter had granted the company a monopoly of trade in fur and anything made from fur, it considered the Métis' activities illegal. The Métis objected to the monopoly and continued to defy it. The trial of Guillaume Sayer and three others in 1849 for engaging in trade proved to be a victory for the Métis. Although Sayer was found guilty, he could not be punished because he was so popular and his supporters were ready to use violence to gain their ends. Thus the jury recommended demency and the judge discharged him. Thereafter, this free ranging trade expanded, allowing some traders to become quite wealthy and encouraging the development of other businesses such as cart building.

Others opened shops or took up occupations such as carpentry or blacksmithing.

Want to know more about the fur trade? Try Routes on the Red's People of the Fur Trade: self-directed drive & stroll tour.

If you would like to take a little stroll, follow the trails that run along Sturgeon Creek for as long as you would like.

After your visit, return to your car and continue on.

	Turn right onto Portage Avenue from Booth Drive.	
1.0	Turn left at lights across from Supervalu store onto Banting Drive to reach the St. James Historical Museum, on the corner of Banting and Portage.	23.2

In order to visit the museum, park on the street or in the lot behind the museum.

The museum is made up of three buildings and has exhibits, dioramas, and archival material that tell the history of the parishes of St. Francis-Xavier (originally known as Grantown after Cuthbert Grant), Headingley, St. Charles, and St. James. One of the structures is a log house built in 1856 by William Brown, a retired Hudson's Bay Company employee. The house has been furnished to look as it would have in the period 1880-1890. It is a good example of Red River frame construction that was the predominant method used

in the Red River settlement and characteristic of the houses built by the Métis.

This construction method involves a frame of squared timbers grooved and fixed into sills at the base. Horizontal squared timbers are fixed between them with tenons fitted into the vertical grooves. This building technique was favoured because of its flexibility, since quite large buildings could be built with short logs and easily dismantled and reassembled in a new location.

	After your visit, turn left onto Portage Avenue and continue west.	
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The fact that Portage Avenue is so wide can be attributed to the Red River Cart that at one time travelled extensively along this route. Both Portage Avenue and Main Street were very wide in order to allow the carts to travel side by side and avoid the ruts.

The advent of the red River Cart marked a new era in land freighting. Cart trails developed, making the great inland country accessible. The longest of these trails was the Carlton Trail, which ran approximately 1450 km (900 miles) from Fort Garry (Winnipeg) to Upper Fort des Prairies (Edmonton). At various times, this trail was also known as The Saskatchewan,

The Company and Edmonton Trail. The trail started at Fort Garry and followed what is now Portage Avenue, along the north bank of the Assiniboine River and continued to Portage la Prairie and beyond.

The hardy two-wheeled, wooden cart had a reputation for being able to go anywhere, over anything. Ten carts normally made up a brigade, although it was not unusual for upwards of eight or nine brigades to join in one train when setting out west. In 1876 alone, it was estimated that between four and five thousand carts were loaded at Winnipeg to cross the plains.

3.0	Approaching the Perimeter Highway, take the exit to following Perimeter Highway (100) South.	26.2
1.7	Cross the Assiniboine River.	27.9

The Manitoba Lowlands is the flattest part of the province, with the relief being generally less than eight metres. This is strongly apparent in the surrounding countryside as we pass by the open prairie. The area is drained by the Saskatchewan, Red and lower Assiniboine rivers. The lowlands are located southwest of the Precambrian shield and east of the Manitoba escarpment. It also includes lakes Winnipeg, Manitoba and Winnipegosis, all of which are remnants of glacial Lake Agassiz. Lake Agassiz, the largest glacial lake in North America,

was formed 11,500 years ago as the Laurentide Ice Sheet retreated. The lake covered much of Manitoba, northwestern Ontario, parts of eastern Saskatchewan and North Dakota, and northwestern Minnesota. At its largest, Lake Agassiz was about 1500 km long, over 1100 km wide and about 210 m deep. The former lake basin and sediments have provided valuable agricultural land as is evidenced in the immediate landscape. One can imagine the herds of bison that once used to roam freely and graze on this open plain.

21.6	After crossing Waverley Street, follow PTH 75 South Emerson sign.	49.5
1.1	Take the exit to the right to head south toward Emerson.	50.6
1.2	Pass the site of the St. Norbert Farmers Market on your left.	51.8
0.1	To visit Place St. Norbert, turn left onto a small gravel road at turn-off. Continue straight if you do not wish to visit.	51.9

The cross at this site commemorates the place where in 1869 a group of Métis barred the road to the envoys of the Canadian government on their way to Fort Garry as they attempted to establish a new government in the soon to be Province of Manitoba. The Hudson's Bay Company had sold its land to Canada and the government prepared for the transfer by sending surveyors to divide the territory into townships. It was not that the Métis actually objected to the transfer of the west to Canada, but they wanted to ensure that their rights would not be trampled in the process. They were led to believe that they would lose their land and they were determined to stop the surveyors.

At this site there is a replica of the Red River cart that the Métis used to transport furs and trade goods across the prairies because the meandering rivers were not the fastest way to travel. One of the routes the carts followed is the Crow Wing Trail, which is just south of the city, and followed some of St. Mary's Road past St. Adolphe, before it swung east toward present day PTH 59.

Want to know more about the Crow Wing Trail and the natural history of the Red River Valley? Try Routes on the Red's Glaciers to Grasslands: self-directed drive & stroll tour.

0.3	Continuing along PTH 75, turn left onto Avenue Lemay just before the lights.	52.2
1.0	Turn right onto Avenue Lord.	53.2
0.2	Veer right and follow along road.	53.4
0.2	Turn left onto Rue St. Pierre.	53.6
0.1	Turn left to visit Paroisse Catholique St. Norbert Church.	53.7

Walk around and visit. Ritchot and his parishioners built La Chappelle de Notre Dame-du-Bon-Secours in 1875. Not far away is the Riel-Ritchot monument.

Father Noël Ritchot came to St. Norbert in 1862. He developed a very close relationship with the people, even accompanying them on the bison hunt. He was a supporter of Riel and was a member of the delegation that travelled to Ottawa to meet

with representatives of the Canadian government regarding the 1870 transfer of land in the Red River settlement from the Hudson's Bay Company to the Dominion of Canada. It has been said that his steadfastness in the negotiations ensured that the rights of the new province's people were protected. Ritchot was St. Norbert's parish priest until 1905.

	Return to your car and turn left to get back to Rue St. Pierre.	
0.2	Turn right onto Avenue Ste. Therese.	53.9
0.1	Note St. Norbert Cemetery on left.	54.0
0.3	Turn right at Rue Campeau.	54.3
0.1	Turn left at Avenue de L'Eglise.	54.4
0.3	Turn left at lights and cross the La Salle River.	54.7

Note Louis Riel on the mural of the building to the right.

Want to know more about St Norbert and its history as a Métis settlement? Try Routes on the Red's Sacred Heart of St. Norbert: self-directed winter walking tour.

1.2	Turn left onto Turnbull Drive.	55.9
0.2	Enter St. Norbert Provincial Heritage Park.	56.1

After the two fur trading companies merged in 1821, Métis who had worked for them settled in the colony. The colony was divided into a series of parishes along the Red and Assiniboine rivers. The English-speaking members of the colony tended to settle in the northern part, while the French-speaking people

settled the south. Métis families settled in the St. Norbert area as early as 1822. There was no actual parish here, however, until 1857, when the parish of St. Norbert was created. It was named after Joseph Norbert Provencher, the first bishop of St. Boniface.

The St. Norbert Heritage Park provides a glimpse into the community's past. Visit the restored residences of Benjamin Bohémier and Joseph Turenne, perhaps take a free guided interpretive tour (stop in at the visitor centre or join an

existing tour). There is a lovely one km self-guided trail along the shores of the La Salle River that gives you a sense of the landscape a hundred years ago. Additionally, this park has a pretty picnic area.

	After visit turn left to continue on Turnbull Drive.	
0.8	Turn left to cross over the Red River on the floodgates (not signed).	56.9
0.2	Cross Courchaine Bridge.	57.1
1.1	Turn left onto St. Mary's Road at stop sign (not signed).	58.2

Red River carts were the main method used by the Métis to transport goods and people over long distances. This road is the beginning of the Crow Wing Trail, a historical Métis trade

route used during the Pemmican Wars of the 1700 and 1800s. This route was also utilized by the Hudson's Bay Company as a major supply and trade route south to St. Paul, Minnesota.

4.1	Continue straight to cross Perimeter Highway.	62.3
3.2	Turn left at lights onto River Road (Vista Road is on the right) and follow signs to Riel House.	65.5
1.8	Turn into parking lot.	67.3

Visit Riel House, a Canadian National Historic Site. Picnic tables can be found here. This National Historic Site was Louis Riel's family home, and where his descendants continued to live until 1969. Following his death in December 1885, in the living room of this house, Riel's body lay in state for two days. The house itself, a Red River Frame building (similar to the houses at the St. James Museum and the St. Norbert Heritage Park), has been restored to the spring of 1886.

Louis Riel is recognized as a father of Manitoba. He was born in the Red River settlement in 1844. His grandfather, Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière, actually Lagimonière, was one of the first French Canadians to settle permanently in the west, arriving in 1806 with his wife Marie-Anne Gaboury, the first white woman to settle permanently in the west. Lagimodière was well known for his epic journey to Montreal in 1815 carrying a message to ask Lord Selkirk for help for the colony.

Louis was the eldest of 11 children and his father, Jean Louis Riel, was influential in the Métis community (having defied the Hudson's Bay Company's trade monopoly and led the Métis delegation that helped convince the judge to recommend clemency at the trial of Guillaume Sayer).

In 1858, with the assistance of Bishop Taché, Louis Riel left the Red River settlement to attend school in Montreal. In 1864, he became a clerk in a Montreal law firm, then spent time doing odd jobs in Chicago and St. Paul, Minnesota, before arriving back in St. Boniface in July 1868. Upon his return he found a community that was in turmoil about its political future and he became involved in the opposition to the unilateral annexation of the Red River settlement to Canada.

Take the time to explore this modest home and to learn more about the family of Louis Riel before continuing on your tour.

	To continue return to your vehicle and to River Road.	
0.4	Continue straight on River Road to cross second set of lights at Bishop Grandin Boulevard.	67.7
1.0	Pass entrance to St. Vital Park.	68.7

The trails in the park offer a good opportunity to take a nice walk along the river.

1.0	Turn right onto St. Vital Road at the 2nd stop sign.	69.7
0.9	At lights continue straight and cross Dunkirk Drive.	70.6
0.4	Turn left onto St. Mary's Road.	71.0
4.3	Turn right onto Taché Avenue (look for hospital sign). Coronation Park will now be to your left.	75.3
1.1	Pass La Verendrye Park.	76.4
0.2	Entrance to parking area for St. Boniface Cathedral and Cemetery.	76.6

This is a nice spot to stop for a short while. Explore the ruins of the Cathedral where a number of the early bishops of St. Boniface are entombed, including Provencher and Taché. You can find Louis Riel's grave in the centre on the north end of the graveyard surrounded by cairns.

The St. Boniface Museum, in the large white building immediately south of the cemetery, houses the largest collection of artifacts associated with Louis Riel.

Want to know more about the history of St. Boniface? Try Routes on the Red's In the Footsteps of the Voyageurs: self-directed walking tour.

	After visit to the Cemetery and Cathedral, exit the parking lot and turn right onto Taché Avenue.	
0.1	Turn right onto Avenue de la Cathedrale. On your left is the bishop's residence for St. Boniface Cathedral.	76.7
0.3	Pass St. Boniface College on your right.	77.0
0.1	Turn left on Rue Aulneau.	77.1

A quick detour to the right, at the side entrance of St. Boniface College, will take you to the original statue of Louis Riel that stood behind Manitoba's Legislative building.

0.3	Turn left onto Boulevard Provencher.	77.4
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In front of you is the St. Boniface Town Hall.

0.4	Cross Red River.	77.8
0.5	Continue straight at lights. Pass under railway bridge. Keep in left hand lane following signs for Main Street (Metro Route 52 South).	78.3
0.5	Turn left onto Main Street at lights.	78.8
0.7	Turn right onto Broadway.	79.4
1.0	Turn left to enter the grounds of Manitoba's Legislative Buildings. Veer right to follow the direction of traffic flow.	80.4

Visitor parking is found along the sides of this driveway. Park and take the time to visit the grounds and building.

After you have visited the building, be sure to walk around the back toward the Assiniboine River, passing the water fountain. Continue straight to come to the statue of Louis Riel.

Prior to 1870 the title to all of the land drained by waters flowing into Hudson Bay (including the Red River valley) was held by the Hudson's Bay Company. As the HBC was becoming interested in other ventures and wanted to relinquish the burden of government over this territory, they entered into negotiations with the Government of Canada to purchase the land in the late 1860s. No consideration was given to the wishes or rights of the long time residents of this land. The Métis were suspicious that the Canadian government intended to force them off the land that they had occupied for generations.

Between 1869 and 1870 a number of small skirmishes and acts of defiance occurred in the Red River settlements. The Métis were led by Louis Riel who, with his supporters, captured Upper Fort Garry and formed a Provisional Government which led the struggle for a negotiated entry of the Red River Settlement into Confederation, as a province rather than a territory. While Riel's militia kept the Canadian representatives from occupying the Settlement, it was Father Noel-Joseph Ritchot, parish priest of St. Nobert, who travelled to Ottawa with two other residents of Red River to negotiate the terms of the Manitoba Act of 1870. This Act, which conceded provincial status to Manitoba, also confirmed political rights, existing land ownership, use of the French language, and separate state supported Catholic and Protestant schools.

Not everyone at Red River supported Riel and Ritchot. Opposition was centred around the Canadian Party, which was prepared to sacrifice the existing way of life in Red River in favour of the economic rewards to be reaped from filling the West with settlers from Ontario.

It was due to the struggle for the recognition of their rights that the Métis, along with other settlers in the Red River valley, participated in the creation of the Province of Manitoba on July 15, 1870. However, there was continued bitterness within the community. Canada had sent a military expedition under the command of Colonel Garnet Wolseley, to oversee the transfer of power from the Provisional Government. With the arrival of the Wolseley Expedition at Red River in August, Riel and some of his followers were forced to leave the country. Because the Canadian Government repeatedly denied him amnesty for his role in the Resistance, Riel was unable to represent his people officially, even though they elected him to the House of Commons three times. He remained in exile in the United States until 1884, when he returned to present-day Saskatchewan to lead the Métis in the Northwest Rebellion. For this action, Riel was found guilty of treason and hanged in Regina on November 16, 1885. A controversial figure, Riel was denied his place in Canadian history until 1992 when he was formally accorded status as a founding father of Manitoba.

Thank you for joining Routes on the Red's self-directed excursion exploring the heritage of the Métis in the Winnipeg area. We hope that you had an enjoyable trip. We would love to have you discover more of the Red River valley on our other self-directed itineraries.

We greatly value your input and comments. If something was not clear, a road sign changed, or if you found a delightful picnic site or visit that you would like to share with future travellers, please let us know. The best way to communicate is to write the changes or new information directly onto the appropriate route description page, and mail or fax it to the Rivers West office. Thank you in advance for your contributions!

Rivers West, officially known as Red River Corridor Inc./L'Association du Corridor Rivière Rouge, is a not-for-profit organization, with the overall objective to develop the Red River Corridor as a destination. Our mandate is to create and implement a long-term tourism and conservation strategy focusing on the development, promotion and management of the natural, tourism, cultural and heritage, and recreational resources of the Red River from Emerson to Lake Winnipeg.

We are pleased to receive financial support from the federal and provincial governments and the participation of rural municipalities, towns and cities along the length of the river. A variety of projects are underway in the Red River region. These include the preservation of special lands for conservation, designation of the Red River as a heritage river, increasing opportunities for public access to the River, and the development and promotion of the river valley's natural, cultural, recreational and tourism resources.

Contact us for more information at:

www.riverswest.ca or www.routesonthered.ca

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