

Pierre Léveillé II. (1829-1884)

Pierre Léveillé was born on January 14, 1829 at St. Francois Xavier. He was the son of Pierre Léveillé, born June 1783 at La Bois-St.Paul, Comte Charlevois, Quebec and Julie McKenzie, the Metis daughter of Alexander McKenzie and his wife Marie. He married Genevieve Fagnant (Faillant) the daughter of Jean Baptiste Fagnant and Josephte Monet dit Belhumeur on September 15, 1856 at St. Francois Xavier.

Pierre Léveillé Sr. and Julie McKenzie¹ had nine children:

- Marie Louise Leveille; born circa 1826; married Pierre “Tche-mar-nay” Falcon, son of Pierre Falcon dit Divertissant and Marie Grant, on 3 February 1845 at St. François Xavier.
- Louis Léveillé; born circa 1828, married Maguerite Gervais the daughter of Jean Baptiste Gervais and Madeleine Bonneau, on 31 May 1854 at St. Francois Xavier.
- Pierre Léveillé; born 14 January 1829 St. Francois Xavier; married Genevieve Fagnant, daughter of Jean Baptiste Fagnant and Josephte Monet dit Belhumeur on 15 September 1856 St. Francois Xavier. He died on 16 February 1884 at St. Francois Xavier, at age 55.
- Jean Baptiste Léveillé; born circa 1838 SFX; died 4 January 1844 St. Francois Xavier.
- Francois Léveillé; born circa 1839 (SFX; died at age 22 10 May 1861 at St. Francois Xavier, buried 11 May 1861.
- Anonyme Léveillé; born 1 December 1841 St. Francois Xavier; buried 3 December 1841 St. Francois Xavier.
- Gabriel Léveillé; born 1 December 1841 St. Francois Xavier; married Eliza Poitras, daughter of Pierre Poitras and Marie Bruyere on 3 November 1864 at St. Francois Xavier. He died 8 April 1883 on the prairie at age 41. Gabriel was accidentally killed by his nephew, Paul Caplette.
- Joseph Léveillé; born circa 1843 at St. Boniface; married Sophie Grandbois, daughter of Michel Grandbois and Marguerite Landry on 11 January 1858 Assumption, Pembina, Dakota Territory. He and Sophie Grandbois were enumerated in the census on 1 July 1886 Turtle Mountain, Dakota Territory. Also in the family: Joseph Léveillé and Julie McKenzie.
- Nancy Léveillé; born 4 March 1844 St. Francois Xavier; married Jean Baptiste

¹ Julie McKenzie was born circa 1806. She was buried on 12 April 1846 at St. Francois Xavier, Manitoba. All that is known of her is that she was born out west.

Beaudry, son of Joseph Beaudry and Louise Ladouceur on 14 April 1863; died April 1869 at St. Albert, at age 25.

Pierre II, became a fur trader in the west. He had his own train of Red River carts. He thus became familiar with the routes across the prairies prior to 1873. By all accounts Pierre was an influential Metis of Red River. He temporarily opposed Riel in 1869-70 and kept Riel from obtaining the credentials of Donald A. Smith. He helped negotiate the treaty with the Metis and Saulteaux Indians at the Lake of the Woods in 1873. Pierre was apparently renowned for his size and strength. He was an “influential colonist” of the Red River, according to historian Alexander Begg. At the provisional government’s November 16, 1869 Convention of 24, Pierre Léveillé was a delegate, chosen to represent St. Francois Xavier.

After Lieutenant Governor designate William McDougall was stopped at Pembina by the Metis, led by Ambroise Lepine and Toussaint Lucier, McDougall sent his 350 rifles and 10,000 rounds of ammunition to Georgetown (now Grand Forks, N.D.). On the 25th of November 1869, McDougall wrote to Joseph Howe, the Secretary of State noting that he had received information from his spies that the Metis intended to send horsemen to burn the HBC warehouse at Georgetown and destroy these arms. He then took immediate action to send the rifles and ammunition to Major Hunt (U.S. Army) at Fort Abercrombie, about 40 miles from Georgetown.

McDougall’s next move was to have Col. Dennis and Major Wallace enlist the Indians in a military move against the Metis. Pierre Léveillé was instrumental in thwarting these plans as reported by the local newspapers.

THE SIOUX!

WINNIPEG IN ARMS!

THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE CANADIAN ALLIES

On Friday last, news reached the town that a large band of Sioux, well armed and equipped, were on their way from Portage la Prairie for the purpose of attacking the French [Metis] soldiers at Fort Garry, and subsequently making a descent upon the town. A meeting of all citizens was at once called, and a company formed to act in unison with the military under President Riel. The following officers were appointed: Capt., H. S. Donaldson; 1st. Lieut., H. F. Olone; 2nd. Lieut., H. M. Robinson. The company were at once armed, and supplied with ammunition from the Fort, scouts sent out, sentinels

posted and every precaution taken to guard against night attack. On Friday morning the Sioux had reached the residence of James McKay, where they were met by the French guard, and a council called. During their deliberations the Sioux exhibited new English silver medals, with the British coat of arms upon the one side, and a medallion of the Queen upon the other. To account for their coming in, they stated that Fox, chief of the Crees at Lake Manitobah, had urged them repeatedly to join in the war against the Half Breeds—that they had received presents from the English and Canadians to do this—and that they had been armed and supplied with ammunition and clothing on condition of aiding in the establishment of Canadian rule. A lengthened parley took place, when having learned that our people were well-armed and determined to clean them out, they consented to return.

We learn from Mr. Cowley that they threaten to revisit soon, and remain longer. Mr Pierre L'Eveille [Léveillé]², one of the French scouts—a gentleman of undoubted veracity, and perfectly acquainted with their language, reports having met the party on this side of Mr. House's place, and having endeavored to induce them to return. The chief received a present of tobacco, and expressed his readiness to go back, but the braves contended that, after the payment they had received, they were in duty bound to proceed, and refused to return. Mr. L'Eveille informs us that they are better supplied with arms than any Indians he had ever seen—some of the squaws carrying guns. All their powder-horns were filled, and their clothing and blankets perfectly new.

Advices from the Portage area to the effect that there are encamped in that neighborhood about 500 Sioux—some of them belonging to the party that came here after the Minnesota massacre, and the remainder being late arrivals from Mouse River, Dacotah Territory. All the statements concerning them, go to show that these Indians have been brought over by Canadian agents. The officers upon the staff of Gov. McDougall do not pretend to deny it, but even go so far as to justify the action, on the ground that if they did not receive this allegiance, the Half Breeds would.

Major Wallace, one of the Governor's party, mentioned in the course of conversation, that there had been expended upon the Sioux, at the Portage and its vicinity, some £200 worth of provisions, clothing, arms, and ammunition; and the expenses of the Stone Fort Indians, enlisted by Col. Dennis, are reported at £700³. That governor McDougall kept two Chippewas in his residence at Pembina is publicly known⁴; and that he made every

² Pierre Léveillé from St. Francois Xavier was the guide who led the advance party of the newly-formed NWMP on their westward trek in 1874. He and his brother Gabriel were sons of Pierre Sr. and Julie McKenzie the illegitimate daughter of Sir Alexander Mackenzie.

³ On December 2, 1869, Col. Dennis raised a force of 70 to 120 Indians from Chief Prince's Band at the Lower Fort. Major Boulton, his second in command met with the Sioux at Portage, later on his way to Pembina Dennis also met with them. (SP, 1870, Vol. III No. 12, "Correspondence and Papers Connected with Recent Occurrences in the North-West Territories." Memorandum of Facts and Circumstances. J.S. Dennis to Wm. McDougall, Stone Fort, Lower Settlement, Dec. 2, 1869.)

⁴ Enos Stutsman, a lawyer and member of the Territorial Legislature from Pembina, swore before a clerk of the U.S. district Court in Pembina that "I saw within the stockade surrounding said post, one F.D. Bradley, Deputy collector of Customs under the government of the Dominion of Canada at North Pembina in the act of enrolling, and arming a number of Chippewa Indians belonging north of the International boundary

attempt to procure the services of that tribe, in addition to his attempt to enlist Americans, can be proved beyond a doubt.

When Canada selected a governor for this Territory, she chose Mr. McDougall, as having been connected with the Administration in various capacities for over twenty years, and as one who, having conducted the negotiations for the purchase of the country between the Dominion and the Hudson's Bay Company, understood perfectly the policy the government intended pursuing towards us. The Press of Canada openly asserts that the instructions of the Governor left at his own option the measures he should employ to establish his authority. It is safe therefore, to conclude that his act of calling upon the savages to aid in his filibustering raid, and his persistent efforts to create civil war in our midst, was not only countenanced by Canada, but that he was supplied with money to accomplish, and official orders to guarantee, his purpose. That in this enlightened age, any Power should use such means for the accomplishment of its designs, is criminal enough, but it is only a hellish insanity which could induce the use of such means against a people whom they should have sought to conciliate.

The New Nation
January 7, 1870, pg. 2.

During a memorable episode in the troubles of 1870, Léveillé played a role as leader of the opposition to the authority of President Louis Riel. Mr. Donald A. Smith had arrived as the senior officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, when in reality he was the representative of the Canadian government. Riel would have liked to see Smith's letter of credentials and other official papers before their contents were divulged, in order to be able to know what course to take, based on the instructions contained in them. However, Smith had deliberately left these papers at Pembina, outside the territory of Assiniboia. In an effort to discover if Smith indeed had the power to negotiate, Riel sent one of his men to accompany Smith's messenger to get the papers. But William MacTavish, governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, feared that Riel's man would seize the papers for his leader, so he sent Léveillé and an Englishman to prevent such a thing from happening.

Returning from Pembina, MacTavish and Riel's representatives arrived at Saint-Norbert with the precious papers, accompanied by fifty or so Metis whom Léveillé and his companion had enlisted en route. Riel, who had just joined up with them, wanted to take the lead, in order to arrive first at Fort Garry and intercept the dispatches. But Léveillé threatened him with a pistol and the president had to keep to the second rank of the procession formed by the sleds. He succeeded, however, in being the first one to enter the fort and had the doors immediately closed behind him. After some negotiation, Riel ended up allowing the messengers to enter with Smith's documents, and Léveillé wanted to remain there with his friends to assure their security until they were read before the population that had assembled to hear them on 19 and 20 January 1870.

Léveillé later became one of Riel's most ardent partisans, and to erase the memory of the

line..."

above-mentioned episode, he even gave Riel a rifle that cost \$300. When W. B. O'Donoghue, General John O'Neill, General Thomas Curley and Colonel J.J. Donnelly launched the so-called Fenian Raid into Manitoba in October of 1871 Léveillé was present at October 5th and 6th meetings at Riel's house in St. Vital to decide whether the Metis were going to support the government against O'Donoghue. Ambroise Lépine, Pierre Léveillé, Elzéar de la Gimodière, l'honorable Dauphinois and Angus McKay sided with Louis Riel in deciding to convince the Metis people to support the government.⁵

When it was time to conclude the treaties with the Indian tribes of Manitoba and the Northwest, he assisted Joseph-Alfred-Norbert Provencher in his negotiations with these tribes in 1873, and according to Alexander Begg, "He rendered great services and helped assure [the treaties] final success." (Father A. G. Morice (1908) *French Canadians of the West*, Peter Gagne's translation 323-324.)

When it became necessary to maintain law and order in the West due to troubles caused by the American whiskey traders on the south side of the newly set 49th parallel, the North West Mounted Police Force was organized in 1873-74 in the East. Three groups came West to Fort Garry. The 1873 force, after leaving Fort Garry had a trek of some 600 miles in order to reach their overland destination. Commissioner George A. French was in charge, and Pierre Léveillé was his guide and interpreter. As ox carts loaded with supplies formed a portion of the party, their progress was slow. After several weeks of traveling they arrived at Old Wives Lake (now named Johnson Lake, Saskatchewan). There they met Pierre's brother Louis, family. Louis Léveillé took Pierre's place and Pierre returned to Fort Garry.

Louis Léveillé was a hunter in the Old Wives Lake area, he and his family had wintered at Fort Benton, Montana. They were heading east towards Fort Garry, when they met his weary, sun scorched cavalcade of N.W.M.P. near the above mentioned lake. Louis as guide took them to the Cypress Hills and to the spot where Fort Walsh was established in 1875. Louis acted as guide until his death May 29, 1888. Louis led Commissioner Irvin and Major Walsh on all their trips connected with the arrival and stay in Canada of the Lakota Sioux under Four Horns and Sitting Bull.



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⁵ A.G. Morice, *Aux Sources de L'Histoire Manitobaine*. Québec: L'Événement, 1907 : 107-109.