



# Red River Resistance Research Document

## 1869 - 1870

 Driving question: *How can an understanding of nationalism of the past, help us make sense of today?*

 **Topic Driving question:** How can the Red River Resistance be connected to the idea of nationalism? / How did nationalism connect to the events in the Red River Resistance?

### Overall Summary:

The Red River Resistance happened in 1869 to 1870. It took place in the Red River Colony in Manitoba. The inhabitants of the colony were the anglophone and francophone Métis. In 1869, the Canadian government took control of Rupert's Land (the Red River Territory). The government did not consult with the Métis when in power. Because of this, the Métis worried that their land and culture could be negatively affected. After the resistance, the province of Manitoba was created around Red River. The leader of the Métis during this time was Louis Riel. He is a very controversial figure due to the fact he executed an Ontarian prisoner by the name of Thomas Scott. In order to get the government's attention, Riel and the Métis held the main trading post of the Hudson's Bay Company until the Canadian Government would allow them to form a provisional government. They were successful and in 1870 it was agreed that a provisional, representative government would be formed. The provisional government organized the territory of Assiniboia in March 1870 and it enacted a law code in April. The Canadian government recognized the "rights" of the Red River settlers in negotiations in Ottawa as well. Even within Manitoba, public lands were controlled by the federal government that did not fulfil their promises so the Métis people still were not satisfied and fled to the west.

### ? Questions:

- **When did the event take place?** — 1869 to 1870
- **What is the Red River Resistance?** — The Red River Resistance(also known as the Red River Rebellion) was an uprising in 1869 to 1870 in the Red River Colony.
- **Who was involved in the Red River Resistance?** — The anglophone and francophone Métis, Hudson's Bay company, and the government of Canada
- **How does this event relate to nationalism?** — this event connects to the idea of nationalism because it represents the value that the Métis have for their culture and land and that they were willing to give up their lives for their biggest values.
- **Where did the event take place?** In the Red River colonies (modern day downtown Winnipeg)
- **What were the consequences of the Red River Resistance?** — The main consequence of the Red River Rebellion was the formation of the province Manitoba.

- **Why were the Métis unhappy before the Rebellion?** — The Métis people were unhappy because of the transfer of the large territory of Rupert's Land (under HBC's rule) to the new Dominion of Canada. They feared loss of their culture and land rights under this new rule.
- **Was the Red River Rebellion successful? Why or why not?** — there is not a definite answer, however, I would say it is objectively successful. It was effective in creating an 'equal' voiced government system in the provisional government in Manitoba, however, the federal government did not follow through with its promises and thus was not technically effective- causing them to move west.
- **What role did Louis Riel play in the rebellion?** — Louis Riel was the Métis spokesman and controversial individual that led the Métis towards a provincial government
- **Why was Louis Riel so controversial?** — from my understanding, he was considered controversial due to the fact he executed Thomas Scott without any legitimate reason which made him a source of conflict to the Ontarians and sparked more turmoil between Ontarians and Métis people
- **What role does the HBC play in the story of the Red River Resistance?** — the HBC managed the Red River territory up until they surrendered their reign to the Government of Canada in 1860 due to attacks from Canada, Britain, and the United States
- **What role does the Government of Canada play in the story of the Red River resistance?** — the government of Canada was a source of conflict to the Métis people since after their conquer of the Red River Territory, they did not factor the Métis people in when in control. This caused the Métis to protest due to their fears of loss of culture and land rights.

### People:

- Louis Riel
- Thomas Scott
- Red River Colony -> Métis
- Hudson's Bay Company
- Canadian Government
- McDougall
- Thomas Douglas, 5th Earl of Selkirk

### Key Dates:

- **1812** - Red River Colony established
- **1860** - Arrival of new immigrants to Red River Valley
- **1867** - Transfer of control of Rupert's Land
- **1868 to October 1869** - Louis Riel returns to Red River and forms the National Métis Committee
- **1868** - Government surveyors arrived in the Red River Valley
- **December 1869 to January 1870** - Riel decides to act first

- **May 12 1870** - Manitoba is created

## **Source #1: Red River Rebellion - Britannica**

- In 1850 the Hudson's Bay Company was under attack from Britain, Canada, and the US
- In 1860 the Hudson's Bay Company agreed to surrender Rupert's Land and the North West (including the Red River settlement) to the Canadian Government
- the Red River Rebellion that took place in 1869 - 1870 had two main opposing groups; the Métis (the colony was administered by the HBC and populated by Métis) and the Canadian Government
- The Métis (children of European and indigenous descent) were frustrated because their territory was switching rule from the HBC's land (Rupert's Land) being taken over by the Canadian government
- The Métis were scared that they would lose their culture and rights, and thus began to protest
- Manitoba was formed through a provisional government
- Luis Reil was the spokesman of the Métis and allowed them to form a pro is also government
- Luis Reil continued to start conflicts in order to either prevent the switch of territory rule or gain control over the land once again
- This conflict continued until the government had decided that they could have an equal voice in their new province (Manitoba)
- They agreed to form the province
- The equal voice was not granted to them and later caused them to move farther west



## **Notes:**

### General

- Date: 1869 - 1870, located in Canada
- Participants: Hudson's Bay Company
- Key people: Luis Riel, Garnet Wolseley, 1st Viscount Wolseley
- An uprising between the Red River Colony against the Canadian Government
- Sparked by the transfer of the territory of Ruperts Land from the HBC to the new country of Canada
- Métis - people of mixed First Nation and European Ancestry
- Métis feared they would lose control of their culture and rights if the land was under Canadian control
- Métis declared a provisional government to negotiate terms for entering Confederation.
- Uprising lead to the creation of the province Manitoba + the emergence of Métis leader Louis Riel

### HBC departs

- the RR colony was founded in 1812 by Scottish settlers
- Settlers founded it at the confluence of the Red River of the North and the Assiniboine River (modern-day Winnipeg)

- 1836 the colony was administered by the HBC and populated by Métis
- Métis were mostly descendants of French and English voyageurs and couriers de bois (trappers) who came west for the fur trade who settled with indigenous wives
- RR inhabitants were in conflict with HBC over trading privileges
- 1850 HBC was under attack from Britain, Canada, and the US
- 1860 HBC agreed to surrender Rupert's Land and the North West (including the RR settlement)
- During negotiations settlers from the East moved to the Colony and were aggressive
- It led to the Roman Catholic Métis to fear for the preservation of their religion, land rights, and culture
- Canada government ignored these fears and negotiated as if there were no ppl there at all

#### Louis Riel

- Métis concerns worsened when the government attempted to re-survey the settlement's river-lot farms
- Métis did not have a clear title to their land
- Government of Ottawa wanted to respect Métis
- Métis feared the loss of their farms
- November 1869, LR emerged
- Métis feared English Canadian domination
- LR Métis spokesman + leader of the Red River militants
- RR militants prevented McDougall (a well known Canadian expansionist) and the Canadian land survey party from entering the colony
- LR was a francophone
- LR gained support from the French & English speaking Métis
- Métis opposition caused Canadian government to refuse to assume control on Dec 1, 1869
- Métis held the main HBC trading post until the government agreed to negotiate
- Representatives were called to negotiate which claimed a provisional government lead by LR
- Discuss terms of entry to the Canadian confederation with the anglophones

#### Execution of Thomas Scott

- Thomas Scott was a prisoner and was executed
- Caused more conflict between Métis and Ontario
- Canadian government still refused to negotiate

#### Birth of Manitoba

- the provisional government organized the territory of Assiniboia
- Manitoba was created by the Manitoba act
- In Manitoba the lands were controlled by the government
- Land was reserved for the children of the Métis families (didn't end up going through with it bc the federal government was bad)
- Technically Métis had won by forming Manitoba with a voice but they were unhappy bc they were still disadvantaged that they ended up moving farther west

- In the 1850s, the HBC's rule over Rupert's Land was under attack from Britain, Canada and the United States
- In the 1860s, HBC agreed to surrender its monopoly over Rupert's Land and the North West, including the Red River settlement to the Canadian Government
- This caused resistance for the Métis people of the Red River territory because they feared with the new rulers, they would lose culture and land rights
- Neither the British nor the Canadian government had any appreciation for the Métis people. No efforts were made to ease their fears. The transfer of Rupert's Land was negotiated as if no one was there.
- In August 1869, Métis concerns were made worse and in November 1869, Louis Riel emerged as Métis spokesman
- Métis opposition prevented the Canadian government from assuming control of the territory on 1 December 1869 as planned. Louis Riel resisters who had seized Upper Fort Garry, the main HBC trading post planned to hold it until the Canadian government agreed to negotiate.
- Representatives of the resistance were summoned to an elected convention in December
- In 1870 It was agreed that a provisional, representative government would be formed
- The provisional government organized the territory of Assiniboia in March 1870. It enacted a law code in April.
- The Canadian government recognized the "rights" of the Red River settlers in negotiations in Ottawa that spring
- May 12 1870 a new province called Manitoba was created by the Manitoba Act and the territory was limited compared to the North West, which would soon be acquired by the Canadian government
- Even within Manitoba, public lands were controlled by the federal government that did not fulfil their promises so the Métis people still were not satisfied and fled to the west

## Notes:

### General

- 1869 - 1870 in the Red River Colony
- The resistance was sparked by the transfer of the vast territory of Rupert's Land to the new Dominion of Canada
- The colony of Métis (mainly farmers and hunters) feared their culture and land rights would not be cared for under Canadian control
- The Métis mounted a resistance and declared a provisional government to negotiate terms for entering Confederation
- The uprising led to the creation of the province of Manitoba, and the emergence of Métis leader Louis Riel — a hero to his people and many in Quebec, but an outlaw in the eyes of the Canadian government.

### Red River Colony

- RR colony was founded in 1812 by Thomas Douglas
- Initially populated by Scottish settlers
- It was located at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers (what is now downtown Winnipeg). The area had been a rendezvous location for the fur trade for many years
- The North West Company arrived there to build Fort Gibraltar in 1809

- The Hudson's Bay Company had earlier established a small depot across the river, at what is now St. Boniface
- The Assiniboine (Nakoda) people had previously controlled access to the area
- In 1812, it was also home to Ojibwe, Cree traders and Métis buffalo hunters
- Most Métis were the descendants of French and English voyageurs and coureurs de bois
- After 1836 the colony was managed by the HBC and populated mainly by francophone and anglophone Métis ppl

#### HBC leaves Red River

- The Red River inhabitants were continually in conflict with the HBC
- One of the main issues was trading privileges
- 1850s, the HBC's rule over Rupert's Land was under attack from Britain, Canada and the United States
- 1860s, HBC agreed to surrender its monopoly over Rupert's Land and the North West, including the Red River settlement
- During the lengthy negotiations to transfer sovereignty of the territory to Canada, Protestant settlers from the East moved into the colony
- Their aggressive ways led the Roman Catholic Métis to want to preserve their religion, land rights and culture
- Neither the British nor the Canadian government had any appreciation for the Métis people
- No efforts were made to ease their fears
- The transfer of Rupert's Land was negotiated as if no one was there

#### Louis Riel Steps Forward

- August 1869, Métis concerns were made worse
- The Canadian government attempted to re-survey the settlement's river-lot farms
- Many Métis did not have clear title to their land
- Ottawa intended to respect Métis occupancy rights, but it gave no assurances that this would be the case
- The Métis feared the loss of their farms
- William McDougall, a well-known Canadian expansionist, was appointed as the territory's first  
-> fuelled tensions and fears among the Métis of English Canadian domination
- November 1869, Louis Riel emerged as Métis spokesman
- He led a group from Red River that prevented McDougall and a land-survey party from entering the colony -> gained support from anglophone communities
- Local HBC officials remained neutral
- Métis opposition prevented the Canadian government from assuming control of the territory on 1 December 1869 as planned
- LR resistors who had seized Upper Fort Garry, the main HBC trading post planned to hold it until the Canadian government agreed to negotiate
- Representatives of the resistance were summoned to an elected convention in December
- It proclaimed a provisional government, which was soon headed by Riel
- 1870 It was agreed that a provisional, representative government would be formed
- (-> would discuss terms of entry into Confederation with the Canadian government.)

#### Execution of Thomas Scott

- prisoner Thomas Scott was one of a group of English-speaking Ontario settlers who opposed the provisional government
- Scott + some fellow Ontarians had been captured and imprisoned at Upper Fort Garry

- Scott's death inflamed passions among Protestants in Ontario

#### Birth of Manitoba

- The provisional government organized the territory of Assiniboia in March 1870
- It enacted a law code in April
- The Canadian government recognized the "rights" of the Red River settlers in negotiations in Ottawa that spring
- May 12 1870 a new province called Manitoba was created by the Manitoba Act
- The territory was limited compared to the North West, which would soon be acquired by the Canadian government
- Even within Manitoba, public lands were controlled by the federal government
- Métis land titles were guaranteed, and 607,000 hectares were reserved for the children of Métis families. However, these arrangements were mismanaged by later federal governments

#### After Founding Manitoba

- the Métis did not flourish
- Ottawa granted no amnesty for Louis Riel and his lieutenants
- They fled into exile just before the arrival of British and Canadian troops in August 1870
- The Red River resistance had won its major objectives. The colony became a distinct province with land and cultural rights guaranteed. But the Métis soon found themselves so disadvantaged in Manitoba that they moved farther west. They made another, more violent and tragic attempt to assert their nationality under Riel in the North-West Resistance of 1885.

### **Source #3: Red River Colony - Canadian Encyclopedia**

#### **Notes:**

- The Red River Colony, a key part of Manitoba's rich history
- It was a settlement on the Red and Assiniboine rivers whose boundaries crossed parts of what are now Manitoba and North Dakota
- Founded in 1812 by Thomas Douglas, 5th Earl of Selkirk
- the colony grew through times of extreme hardship into a multiracial society
- It was the site of the Red River Resistance before reluctantly joining Canada as the province of Manitoba

### **Source #4: Red River Resistance (Plain-Language Summary) - Canadian Encyclopedia**

#### **Summary Notes -> Copied from article:**

## General

- The Red River Resistance happened in 1869–70. It took place in the Red River Colony in Manitoba. The leaders were Métis. In 1869, the Canadian government took control of Rupert's Land. They did not consult with the Métis. The Métis worried that their land and culture could be threatened by this. After the resistance, the province of Manitoba was created around Red River. One well known leader of the Métis during this time was Louis Riel. He is a very controversial figure in history. Some think he is a hero. Others think he is a villain

## Red River Colony

- The Red River Colony was located where the Assiniboine River and the Red River meet. (The city of Winnipeg was later built there.) It was founded in 1812 by Thomas Douglas. He was the 5th Earl of Selkirk. The early settlers in Red River were from Scotland. The Red River was an important location for the fur trade. Two of Canada's most important fur trading companies had outposts there: the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company. This area was previously controlled by the Assiniboine people. They are also known as the Nakoda. In the early 1800s, Ojibwe, Cree and Métis people also lived in the Red River area. The Métis were not only fur traders. They were also farmers and buffalo hunters as well. After 1836, the population was mostly Métis.

## Seeds of the Resistance

- The federal government did not negotiate with the Métis before the government took control of Rupert's Land. This is one of the main causes of the Red River resistance. It seemed very unfair to the Métis because they considered this area to be their home. Another cause of the resistance was that Protestant settlers had begun to move to the Red River Colony. This was very concerning to the Métis because they were Catholic. The new settlements and the lack of concern of the federal government, made the Métis to fear that they could lose their land, their religion and their culture.

## Resistance and Louis Riel

- The uprising started after the federal government surveyed land in the Red River Settlement. This made many Métis think that Ottawa would take their land. Louis Riel became the leader of the Métis. He and his followers stopped the land-survey group from entering the colony. So, Ottawa could not take control of the colony. It had planned to in December 1869. After stopping the survey team, the Métis took control of Upper Fort Garry by force. This was an important HBC trading post. Then, under the leadership of Riel, the Métis formed a provisional government in December. The goal was to make Ottawa negotiate with the Métis.
- Riel's plan seemed to be working. Ottawa decided to negotiate with him. Many Protestants in Ontario disagreed with Ottawa. They were enraged when Riel executed Thomas Scott, one of the prisoners at Fort Garry. This did not stop Ottawa, which sent soldiers to Red River. Ottawa did not give amnesty to Riel and the Métis leaders. Louis Riel left Canada to live in Montana for many years. In the spring of 1870 Ottawa recognized the rights of the Métis. Then on May 12 it created Manitoba. The Métis were given ownership of their land. And other land was given for Métis children. Eventually, a large percentage of Métis lost the title to their land. This ultimately contributed to another Métis uprising called the North-West Resistance in 1885. (See North-West Resistance (Plain-Language Summary).)

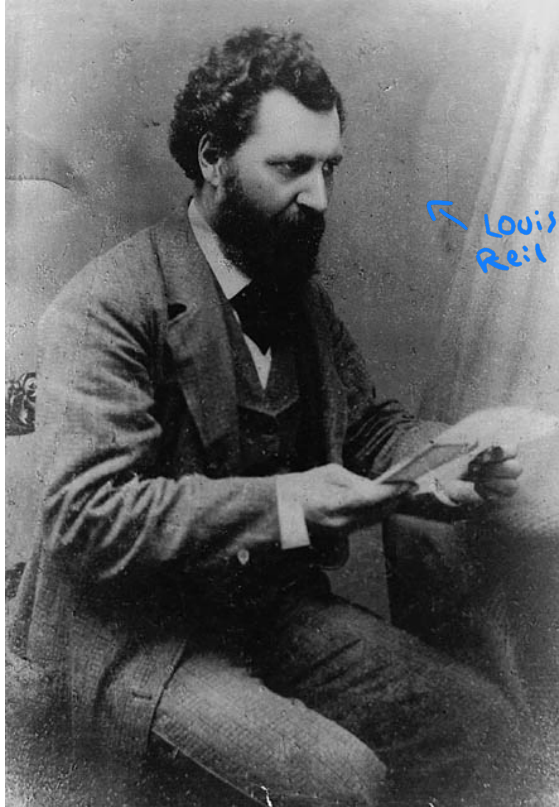
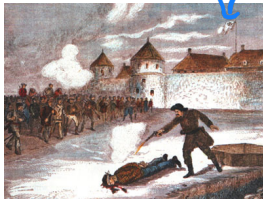


## Source Tracker:

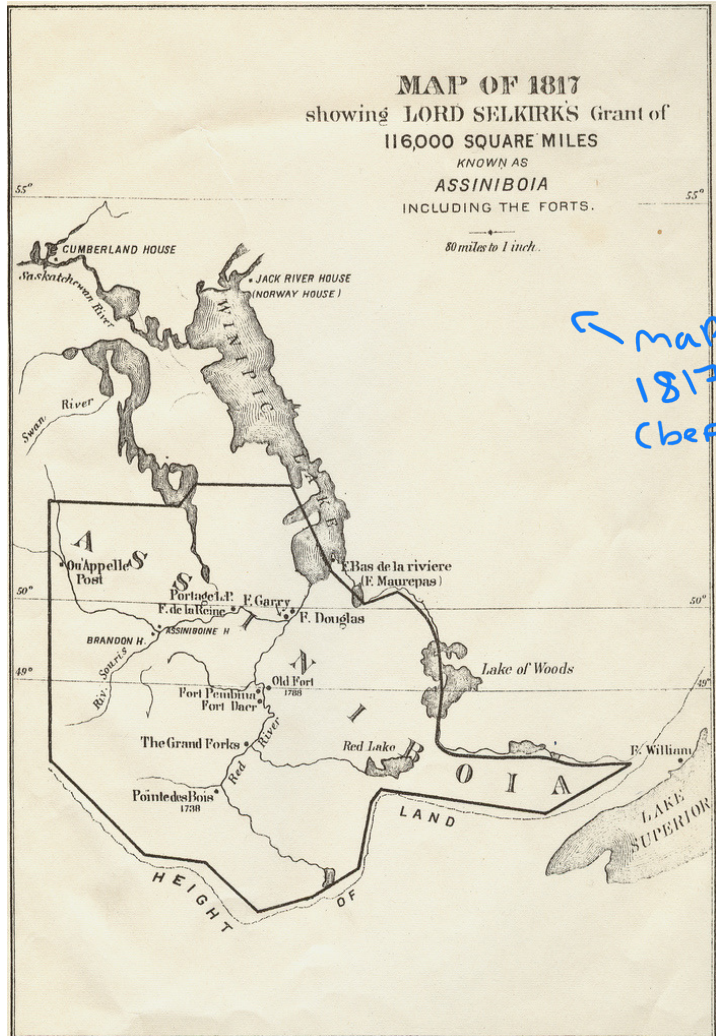
- [Red River Rebellion - Brittanica](#) 
- [Red River Resistance - Canadian Encyclopedia](#) 
- [Red River Colony - Canadian Encyclopedia](#) 
- [Red River Resistance \(Plain-Language Summary\) - Canadian Encyclopedia](#) 
- [Red River Colony - Canadian Encyclopedia](#)
- [Red River Rebellion - Wikipedia](#)
- [Red River Resistance - gov.mb](#)
- [Perceptions of the Red River Resistance - Canada History](#)

Images:

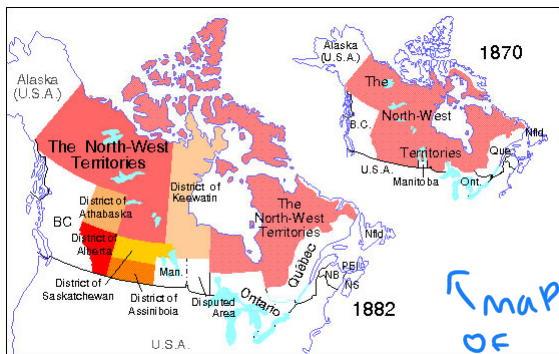
Execution of Thomas Scott  
Red River



Louis Riel



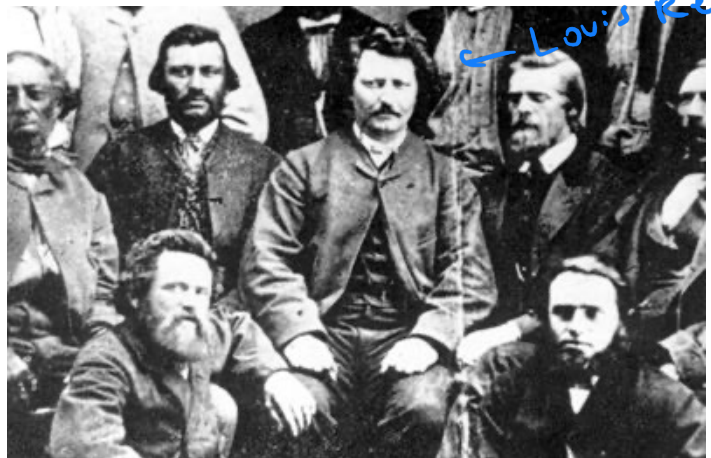
map of 1817 (before)



map of 1882 (after)



Red River Colony



Louis Riel