



SCOTIA-ST. CROSS HERITAGE WALK



Cuthbert James Grant (1793-1854), was the acknowledged military leader of the Métis in the Red River region in the second decade of the 19th century. In opposition to perceived anti-Métis policies of the Hudson's Bay Company, Grant led his forces against Governor Semple in the Battle of Seven Oaks. He subsequently was arrested and sent to Montreal to stand trial. The trial never took place and Grant returned home to discover that his wife, Elizabeth McKay, and their son had disappeared in the interim, never to be found.

In the early 1820s, a Métis settlement called Grantown was established in the vicinity of Sturgeon Creek, some miles west of the Selkirk Settlement. Until his death in 1854, Grant remained a prominent member of the local Métis community, serving as councillor, magistrate and medical practitioner, while continuing to operate a flourmill in Grantown.

(Courtesy of the Archives of Manitoba, John Kerr Collection #5, Negative #N12762)



Robert Semple was born in 1777 in Boston, Massachusetts and was appointed in 1815 as the Governor of Assiniboia for the Hudson's Bay Company and Governor of the Colony for Lord Selkirk. It was Semple in 1815 who led a large party of new colonists on foot from York Factory on Hudson Bay to the Red River, a trip that took almost three months to complete.

Semple arrived at the Colony where it is said that he worsened the already strained relationship between the Hudson's Bay Company and its colonists on one side and the Montreal fur traders and their Métis employees on the other. The situation grew more dangerous by the day and many in the Colony were of the opinion that Semple lacked the necessary experience to defuse the situation. Semple's decision to organize settlers and ride out to confront a group of Métis at Seven Oaks on June 19, 1816 led to his death and those of 20 of his men.

(Courtesy of the Archives of Manitoba, Semple, Robert-1, Negative #N23277)

The Battle of Seven Oaks and the Seven Oaks Monument

The Battle of Seven Oaks, June 19, 1816, was a defining moment in the pre-Confederation history of Canada. It was the climax of several years of escalating disputes over the control of pemmican sales; an important food crucial to the livelihood of the Métis. Ultimately, Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) Governor Robert Semple led a group of 31 armed men onto the prairies to confront an undetermined number of local Métis, under the command of Cuthbert Grant. In the ensuing battle, Semple and 20 of his men were killed, along with one of Grant's group. The incident was pivotal to the community in that it forced the HBC to address indigenous land claims and formal land surveying. The battle further served to increase the Métis sense of nationhood, contributing substantially to their participation in the negotiations leading to the creation of the Province of Manitoba in 1869.

The Seven Oaks Monument was erected by the Manitoba Historical Society in 1891 to commemorate this event. It is Western Canada's oldest historic marker and may be seen today at the northeast corner of Main Street and Seven Oaks Boulevard.



Unveiling ceremony for the Seven Oaks Monument, June 19, 1891.

(Courtesy of the Archives of Manitoba, Historic Events-Seven Oaks-8, Negative #N13315)

sign size:
609 X 711 mm
(24" X 28")

SCOTIA ST.
INTERPRETIVE SIGN
INSTALLATION

Project Title

PANEL 6
ARTWORK

Drawing Title

HILDERMAN
THOMAS
FRANK
CRAM

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Drawn

Approved

NOT TO SCALE

SEPT. 25/07

Scale

Date

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SA-6

Job

Drawing