

Are keys from Riel's cell?

Regarded as the Father of Manitoba, Riel was, and still is, one of the most controversial figures in Canadian history. The eldest of 11 children born to Louis Riel Senior and Julie Lagimodiere, Louis Junior stood up for the Metis (Metisse) people against the Hudson's Bay Company selling Rupertsland to Canada. The elder Riel operated a grist mill on the Seine River just north of John Bruce Road in St Vital.

In 1869, four years after the death of his father, Riel returned to the Red River Settlement from Montreal. In 1869, he left his St. Vital home to stop surveyors from staking Metis property. Following the 1870 Red River Rebellion, Riel fled to Montana before leading the Saskatchewan Metis fight against Canada.

Following a four-day battle at Batoche, Riel surrendered to Major General Frederick Middleton on May 15, 1885. Keys purported to be for the cell used at Batoche prior are on display at the St. Vital Museum.

Convicted of high treason, Riel was hanged at the Regina Gaol on 16 November 1885. Many people believe the execution was revenge for the March 1870 execution of Thomas Scott at Upper Fort Garry and not the Saskatchewan uprising.

His body is interred at the St. Boniface Cathedral.



Recognized as the Father of Manitoba, Louis Riel is St. Vital's most famous son.