

bec, but the Catholic French refused to trade, so he offered his services to Prince Rupert, cousin to England's King Charles II. Rupert was a patron of the arts, the sciences and adventure. He could, as Stephen Leacock has said, do anything but spell — a disability quite apparent in his preserved manuscripts. Radisson assured Rupert that Canada's prime fur country could be reached by sea, up the St. Lawrence to Hudson Bay. A sea route would save months of time and make everyone rich. Rupert and seventeen associates founded the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England, trading into Hudson Bay. It came to be called The Hudson's Bay Company. It functioned almost as a sovereign state — it had a Governor and a Deputy Governor and a General Court. According to British, though not Indian, law, it owned the land, the fish, the mines and the furs in the Basin of Hudson Bay. The land became known as Rupert's Land and his deeds specified that the Company commanded "all the havens, bays, creeks, rivers, lakes and seas" that joined in any way with the great Bay. The Company's investment, 10,500 pounds, would appreciate ten-fold in fifty years and the pleased associates in London would sign letters to Radisson and his boys, "your loving friends."

*Louis Riel* was Canada's most spectacular rebel. The rebellion was very real — it shook the West and the Dominion twice. In 1869 the new Confederation sent out surveyors to the Red River country to mark the land into square townships. The people there in Assiniboia had long lived a more casual life, with farms along the river and property rights respected, if not recorded. Riel was the leader of the Metis, half French, half Indian buffalo hunters. Riel has been variously described as a mad man, a coward and, by gentler folk, a visionary. He was probably the latter. Riel and his followers seized power and the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, for the moment at least, the best available representative of distant authority. The rebels raised their flag over Fort Garret. It had *Fleurs de Lis*, denoting their loyalties to the French language and culture, and a Shamrock, as a hopeful suggestion to the Fenians across the border. Colonel Dennis, who led the survey party, gathered some volunteers, including a sassy Irishman named Thomas Scott, and attempted to stage a counter-revolution. Riel seized them. The Confederation's new Prime Minister, John Macdonald, sent an emissary, Donald Smith, who'd been the Hudson's Bay Company's man in Montreal, out to the Fort. Smith arranged for the freeing of the prisoners and Riel sent a delegation to Ottawa. Then Colonel Dennis' volunteers, recently freed,

attacked the Metis one more time. They were recaptured. Scott swung at a guard and swore he'd kill Riel at the first opportunity. Riel's Council of Metis condemned Scott to death. He was executed by a firing squad. Ontario took the occasion to be furious. Colonel Garnet Wolseley was dispatched with 400 regulars and 800 militiamen and the rebels dispersed before they arrived. Riel went to Montana and taught school. The Metis fled west, to the Saskatchewan river. Some twenty years later the surveyors returned, this time in advance of the railroad. The destruction of the Metis land seemed imminent. The Metis sent for Riel. He came, speaking of a great new society in the west, and through the winter the Metis and their Indian allies, under Poundmaker and Big Bear, gathered arms. This time the militia came by the thousands, riding West in bitter discomfort on the new railroad and horse sleds. They fought at Fish Creek, Cut Knife and Batoche. In November, 1885, Riel was captured by the Northwest Mounted Police and executed.

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## Tiny Towns

One hundred years ago Canada was a country of tiny towns, sparsely placed, with wonderful names. It still is, but the towns have grown and some of the names have faded away.

Lovell's Gazetteer of British North America listed 6000 cities, towns and villages in 1873, as well as 1500 lakes and rivers.

The descriptions were concise but complete: "Amherstburg. Essex Co. Ont. On the Detroit River. Contains a court house, a lunatic asylum, five places of worship, several saw and grist mills, an iron foundry, about 25 stores, five hotels and a telegraph office. Pop. 1936. Steamers daily to Detroit."

Amherstburg was a big place with a rather commonplace name.

There were many smaller: Admiral's Beach, Pop. 150; Allright Island, 838; Baby's Point, 50; Barachois De Mallare, 150; Dog Bay, 30; East Side Chezzetcook, 400; Emigrant Road, 100; Flurry's Bight, 30; Ha! Ha! Bay!!, 300; Heart's Delight, 320; Ireland's Eye, 95; Joe Batt's Arm, 480; L'Anse Aux Foin, 60; Penetanguishene, 1000; St. Zotique, 1600; Trois Pistoles, 650; Virgin Arm, 10; Red Rocks, 10; Witless Bay, 12 and Zephyr, 300.

Winnipeg had only 3000 people, Toronto 30,775 and Ottawa 7760. Montreal was the metropolis with 107,225 and Quebec City was No. 2 with 59,000, but most Canadians lived in places like Mad River Mills in groups under 500.