

THE **BEECHWOOD** WAY
MAGAZINE



North West Resistance at
Beechwood Cemetery

 **BEECHWOOD**
Funeral, Cemetery and Cremation Services
Services funéraires, cimetière et crémation

North West Resistance

The conflict of 1885, commonly known as the North West Resistance (also referred to as the North West Rebellion), was a defining moment in Canadian history. For five months, Métis leaders and allied Cree and Assiniboine nations challenged the Canadian government in what they saw as a necessary stand for their land, culture, and rights. They faced an influx of eastern settlers, the collapse of the bison economy, and systemic neglect from Ottawa, all of which fuelled mounting frustration and despair.

On March 18, 1885, Métis leaders under Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont declared a provisional government at Batoche, asserting a “Revolutionary Bill of Rights” to protect their land tenure and self governance. Skirmishes erupted at Duck Lake, Fish Creek, and Batoche. At the decisive Battle of Batoche (May 9-12), General Frederick Middleton’s field force overwhelmed the Métis, bringing the provisional government to collapse. Cree leaders Big Bear and Poundmaker continued resistance in separate theatres, but by early July most had surrendered.

The conflict ended officially in early June 1885. Its aftermath was brutal: Louis Riel was tried and executed for treason, eight Indigenous men were hanged in Canada’s largest mass execution, and treaty based trust was eroded irrevocably among Métis and First Nations communities.

Today, many historians and Indigenous scholars refer to the event as the North West Resistance, a terminology that centers Indigenous agency and frames the struggle as one for survival and rights, not mere rebellion.

At the heart of these decisions and actions were individuals, officers, policymakers, and militiamen, many of whom now rest at Beechwood Cemetery. The National Cemetery of Canada. Among them are soldiers who volunteered to suppress the resistance, and senior figures whose policies and choices helped shape the government’s course. Their graves provide a tangible link to this complex and painful moment in our shared history.

This eBook does not seek to relitigate the past, but to illuminate it. By profiling those buried at Beechwood who were directly involved, whether on the battlefield or in Ottawa—we acknowledge the human dimension of a national crisis. In doing so, we also recognize that remembrance must include truth, and that reconciliation begins with understanding.

Finally, this story is intimately connected to Beechwood Cemetery in Ottawa. Since 1885, the cemetery has served as a resting place for soldiers and volunteers who fell in the North West Resistance. Among them are William Osgoode and John Rogers, two Ottawa sharpshooters killed in action, whose graves lie within Beechwood Cemetery.

Beechwood stands as both a site of remembrance and a symbol of national unity, reminding us that reconciliation must begin with remembrance.

MAJ THE REVEREND HAROLD IRWIN HORSEY - Section 24, Lot 31 NW

Born in Kingston, Ontario in 1867, Horsey began his military career when he was 18. In 1896, when he graduated from the Montreal College, he was ordained and inducted as minister of Welcome Zion Congregational Church. In 1913, he was elected chairman of the Congregational Union of Canada. He was also a member of the College Senate and of the committee Church Union and since the inception of Zion church, he had been its spiritual leader.

In 1915, he enlisted with the 38th Battalion as honorary captain and their overseas chaplain. In 1916, he served in France and was promoted to honorary major. Major Horsey was decorated with a medal and clasp for his services in the North West Resistance (Northwest Rebellion) of 1885, he also wore the Colonial Auxiliary Forces Long Service Decoration, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. Rev. H. Horsey, beloved Pastor and outstanding Padre of the city with a unique record of serving 36 years in one parish, passed away on August 20, 1932.



JOHN GUNION RUTHERFORD - Section 50, Lots 103 SW, 123 NW



Born in Peeblesshire, Scotland on December 25, 1857, Rutherford came to Canada in 1875 and studied at Guelph's Ontario Agricultural College and Ontario Veterinary College. In 1885, he served as veterinary officer with the northwest field force during the North West Resistance (North-West Rebellion).

From 1892 to 1896, he represented Lakeside in the legislative assembly of Manitoba and from 1897 to 1900 represented MacDonald in the Canadian House of Commons. In 1902, he was appointed veterinary director general for Canada and in 1906 he became livestock commissioner. In 1918, he became a member of the Board of Railway Commissioners and held this post until his death in Ottawa on July 24, 1923.

WILLIAM ST. PIERRE HUGHES - Section 37, Lot 34 NE

William St. Pierre Hughes was born in Durham County, Upper Canada, on June 2, 1863 to a family with a long tradition of military service. He and two of his brothers went on to serve, and his brother Sam eventually became Minister of the Militia during World War I.

Hughes himself was a soldier for over 40 years, starting when he was only nine as a bugler with the 45th militia regiment. He saw service in the North West Resistance (North-West Rebellion) in 1885 and completed the period for the Long Service Decoration in the Canadian Active Militia.



In addition to his military service, in 1893 Hughes was appointed secretary to the warden of the Kingston penitentiary. He continued to work in the penitentiary system for many years: in 1913, he was made inspector of penitentiaries, and in 1918 became superintendent.

Before the First World War, then-Lieutenant Colonel Hughes was associated with the 14th Regiment of Kingston, Ontario. At the outbreak of the War, Hughes was appointed to mobilize and commanded the 21st Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. He commanded that battalion until July 14, 1916, when he took over the 10th Canadian Infantry Brigade in France, with the rank of Brigadier General.

Hughes was Mentioned in Despatches several times, and at the close of the war became heavily involved in setting up the 21st Battalion Association, as a meeting place for veterans of the 21st and served as the first honorary president. He remained involved with the association until his death in Ottawa on June 1, 1940.

PLUNKETT BOURCHIER TAYLOR - Section 37, Lot 77

Born in Kingston, Canada West on August 11, 1863, Taylor worked in the savings bank branch of the post office for 19 years. Later, for five years, he worked for the Bank of Ottawa. In 1904, he became manager of the Northern Crown Bank in Ottawa.

He served as secretary-treasurer of the Ottawa Amateur Athletic Club during the first 10 years of its existence from 1889 to 1899. The club was an umbrella organization serving all the major sports clubs in the city, including those for snowshoeing, baseball, football, hockey and cycling. From 1896 to 1897, he was president of the Canadian Club.

He was a major of the Governor General's Foot Guards and served in the North West Resistance (North-West Rebellion) in 1885. Taylor died on January 10, 1944.

SIR DONALD ALEXANDER MACDONALD - Section 37, Lot 63 E

Born in Cornwall, Upper Canada, on October 31, 1845, Donald Alexander Macdonald received his education in Cornwall before joining the Cornwall Rifle Company, Volunteer Militia, in 1863 as an ensign.

He was commissioned as a Lieutenant with the 59th Regiment in 1865 and promoted to Captain the following year, when he was also called out with his unit to defend the province against a possible Fenian invasion. In 1870, he volunteered with the 1st Battalion, Ontario Rifles, and served with the Red River Expeditionary Force which was dispatched to Manitoba to put down the North West Resistance (North-West Rebellion) led by Louis Riel. He continued to rise through the ranks, becoming a major in 1871 and a Lieutenant-Colonel in 1877.

In November 1873, Macdonald was appointed to a position in the Stores Division of the Department of Militia and Defence in Ottawa, thus launching an administrative career that would span the next 44 years. During the 1885 Northwest Rebellion, Macdonald served as a staff officer in Toronto, responsible in part for supplying the North West Field Force. In 1904, he was appointed Quarter-Master General, and received a further spate of promotions: Colonel in 1900, Brigadier-General in 1907 and Major-General in 1912.



As Quarter-Master General, he was responsible for outfitting the Canadian Expeditionary Force in the First World War. This was no small feat, as it involved purchasing, stockpiling and shipping huge amounts of ammunition, numerous uniforms, weapons and other sundries required by military personnel. Even then, the first contingent of troops sent needed to be re-equipped in the UK.

Macdonald retired on October 31, 1917, and was knighted the following year in recognition of his services to the country. For over fifty years, Sir Donald was closely associated with Canada's military operations at home and abroad.

Macdonald died at his residence, the Chateau Laurier hotel, on May 4, 1920.

WILLIAM OSGOODE - Section 24, Grave 1 W

William Osgoode was born in Buckingham, Quebec on January 17, 1861, the only son of Jeremiah and Ann Osgoode. The Osgoodes relocated to New Edinburgh in the 1870s and just prior to the outbreak of the 1885 North West Resistance (North-West Rebellion), William Osgoode was employed as a machinist at Paterson and Law, an iron foundry.

Like so many others of his generation, William was attracted to the militia and became a member of the 43rd Regiment. When the call went out for volunteers for the Ottawa Sharpshooters, William was anxious to serve and was accepted over the protests of the commanding officer of his militia unit.

Osgoode, along with his comrade John Rogers, was killed at the Battle of Cut Knife Hill on May 2, 1885, the only fatal casualties suffered by the Sharpshooters in the North West Resistance (North-West Rebellion).

They were initially buried at Battleford, but were subsequently exhumed and returned to Ottawa where they were re-buried at Beechwood with full military honours.

Osgoode was commemorated in a church window in 1886 at St. Bartholomew's Church, New Edinburgh.

JOHN ROGERS - Section 24, Grave 1 W

John Rogers was born in Barbados on May 6, 1855, the son of James Rogers and Mary Kidney. In 1882, Rogers followed his brother, Christopher, to Ottawa and took up a position in the civil service. Christopher was one of the original members of the Governor General's Foot Guards and soon after his arrival in the capital, Rogers followed suit and joined the Guards. When the Sharpshooters were organized in March 1885, he was one of the first to volunteer.

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Rogers was commemorated in a church window in 1886 at Holy Trinity in Ottawa South.



SAMUEL MAYNARD ROGERS - Section 48, Lot 14 NE

Samuel Maynard Rogers was born in Plymouth, England on April 14, 1862, to Samuel Rogers and Elizabeth Maynard. He came to Canada with his parents in the late 1860s, and like many young men of his generation he was attracted to military life.

He joined the militia with the 43rd Regiment in the early 1880s and served as Staff Sergeant with the Ottawa Sharpshooters in the 1885 North West Resistance (North-West Rebellion). In 1895, he was called upon to lead a small contingent of militia to Low, Quebec to put down a tax revolt.

Duty called again at the outbreak of the South African War in 1899. Rogers commanded "D" Company, 2nd Special Service Battalion, 1889-1900.

From 1905 to 1907, he was chief staff officer in charge of the Rockcliffe military camp and from 1904 to 1910 he was Lieutenant-Colonel commanding the 43rd Regiment.

During the First World War, Rogers offered his services again and was appointed officer commanding the Ottawa Garrison and in this capacity, he was responsible for the celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of Confederation in 1917.

In addition to his military interests, Rogers had several careers over the course of his long life. For many years, he was involved in the family undertaking business, and when asked about this, he would invariably answer that "he followed the medical profession."

Prior to the First World War, Rogers was appointed the first permanent superintendent of Jasper Forest, later Jasper National Park, and when not involved in military matters, he sold insurance.



Rogers, long associated with Canada's military history, lived to see the outbreak of another world war; he died at Ottawa on June 30, 1940.

CHARLES FRANCIS WINTER - Section 25, Lot 22 NW

Charles Francis Winter was born in Montreal on February 3, 1863 to William Winter and Jane McFarlane. As a young man, he departed for England, enlisted with the British Army and accompanied the 7th Fusiliers to Egypt in 1882 where he took part in the battle at Tel el Kebir and in the occupation of Cairo. Winter purchased his discharge and returned to Canada in 1883 where he joined the civil service at Ottawa and held positions in several departments, including Marine and Fisheries, Interior, Inland Revenue, and Militia and Defence.

Still interested in matters military, Winter joined the Governor General's Foot Guards. With his British Army experience, he made was a valuable addition to the Ottawa Sharpshooters when volunteers were called for in the spring of 1885. Winter served with distinction in the North West Resistance (North-West Rebellion) and was severely wounded at the Battle of Cut Knife Hill.

Following the North West Resistance (North-West Rebellion), Winter pursued his career in the civil service while devoting considerable time to his militia duties. He was commissioned with the Foot Guards and served as Adjutant from 1896 to 1906. The South African War, 1899-1902, provided him with another opportunity to serve his country and he did so with the 2nd Special Service Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment.

He took part in the capture of Pretoria and in guerrilla operations in the Transvaal and Orange Free State. Following the war, Winter served as secretary of the Dominion Rifle Association, 1904-1909, and President of the South African War Veterans Association in Ottawa, 1905-1909.

Winter transferred to the Department of Militia and Defence in 1907.

In 1910, he was appointed Deputy Assistant Adjutant General at Montreal and three years later, he returned to Ottawa as Military Secretary to the Minister of Militia and Defence, Sam Hughes.

Winter, now a Brigadier-General, retired in 1922. In 1931, he wrote a biography of Sir Sam Hughes, Lieutenant General the Hon. Sir Sam Hughes, Canada's War Minister, and maintained a lively interest in military matters for the remainder of his life.

He died at Ottawa on October 20, 1946.



William McDougall, Corridor A, Section 30, Crypt E - Father of Confederation

Born in Toronto on January 5, 1822, McDougall attended Victoria College in Cobourg, Upper Canada. He began practising law in 1847, and in 1862 was called to the Upper Canada Bar.

He was elected as a member of the legislative assembly in 1858, and served as Commissioner of Crown Lands and Provincial Secretary. He attended all three Confederation Conferences, and then served as Minister of Public Works in the Macdonald government. During his time as Minister of Public Works, McDougall introduced the resolution that led to the purchase of Rupert's Land.

McDougall was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory in 1869. The only travel route at the time was through the United States with the permission of U.S. President Grant. However, when he tried to enter that jurisdiction from North Dakota up the Red River, he was turned back near the border by Louis Riel's Group before he could establish his authority at Fort Garry (now Winnipeg, Manitoba). Dispatches to Queen Victoria were issued, requesting 1,000 British troops be sent on her authority. Unfortunately for McDougall, the Queen responded indicating that she would prefer a more amicable settlement of the jurisdiction issue.

McDougall returned to Ottawa, where he campaigned against Manitoba becoming a province because of its very few inhabitants at that time. He also continued to serve as an interim leader of the Northwest Territories provisional government from Ottawa until Adams George Archibald took over on May 10, 1870.

McDougall continued as an active politician, serving as a member of the Parliament of the Province of Ontario from 1872 until his defeat in 1887. He passed away on May 28, 1905, at the age of 83.

