

Thomas Scott **(1841 – 1915)**

Publisher, Militia Officer, Politician

Born at Perth on February 16, 1841, Thomas Scott was the youngest of four children¹ born to Irish immigrants Thomas Scott (c1800-1851) and Margaret Thompson (1814-1900). The Scotts had arrived in Upper Canada from County Antrim and settled on Drummond Township C-10/L-23(E) in 1836.

After the death of Thomas Sr. the family moved to Perth where Thomas Jr. attended public and grammar schools until, at age 14, he was apprenticed to learn the printer's trade². Six years later, in 1861, Scott established the 'Perth Expositor' newspaper in partnership with Thomas Cairns (1828-1896)³. In competition to the 'Perth Courier', established in 1834, the Expositor was politically supportive of the Conservative Party and Thomas Scott would be a Conservative Party stalwart throughout his life.

In the same year he launched the Perth Expositor, war clouds were gathering over Canada and 20-year-old Thomas Scott became a part-time soldier.

In November 1861, during the first months of the American Civil War, an American (Union) Navy ship intercepted and boarded the British mail packet RMS *Trent* and seized two of its passengers; Confederate States diplomats travelling to Europe. The Northern States celebrated this defiance of a European power seen as sympathetic to the South, while the Confederate States hoped to exploit the incident to gain formal recognition or, better still, bring Britain into the conflict on the Southern side. Britain, regarding the incident as an insult to national honor and a breach of neutral rights, demanded an apology and moved to strengthen its military forces in Canada. As war with the United States loomed, Thomas Scott secured an Ensign's Commission in the Perth Volunteer Corps (Militia). In the end, the 'Trent Affair' came to nothing. After a few weeks U.S. President Abraham Lincoln yielded to British demands, disavowed the actions of his navy and released the Confederate diplomats. Thomas Scott, however, had established a connection to the military which he would maintain for a quarter century.

While drilling regularly with the Perth Volunteers, Scott continued to edit the Perth Expositor and, in 1863, married Margaret McPherson Kellock (1842-1908), a daughter of Robert Kellock (1806-1883) and Alicia Dickson McDonnell (1810-1878) of Perth.

¹ Sarah Ann (d.1914), David (1840-1928), Thomas (1841-1915) and an unknown child.

² Probably at the 'British Standard' newspaper in Perth.

³ Thomas Cairns was born in either County Fermanagh or County Tyrone, Ireland. He arrived at Perth from Kingston in 1851 and worked at the 'British Standard' newspaper until establishing the 'Perth Expositor' in 1861.

When, after five years of blood-letting, General Robert E. Lee surrendered the remains of the Confederate Army at Appomattox, Virginia, in April 1865, the rapid demobilization of the Union Army bred a new threat to Canada. In the same year Britain had crushed an independence movement in Ireland prompting about 10,000 former American soldiers of Irish descent to join the cause and call of the Fenian Brotherhood⁴ to help free Ireland from British rule by invading and capturing the British colony of Canada.

The Fenian movement was well-funded by donations from sympathetic Irish-Americans, well-armed with surplus weapons from the Civil War, encouraged (or at least not discouraged) by American officials resentful of British support to the Confederate States during the Civil War, and boosted by the long-held American view that the United States was destined to be a 'Continental Nation'. While avoiding an official declaration of support for an attack on Canada, American officials turned a blind eye to invasion preparations. President Andrew Johnson and Secretary of State William Seward told the Fenian leadership that the United States would "*acknowledge accomplished facts*".

When Colonel Patrick Leonard McDougall (1819-1894), Adjutant General of the Canadian Militia, called out 10,000 volunteers for active service on March 1, 1866 Thomas Scott was serving as a Captain commanding an infantry company of the Perth Volunteers. On March 8th Scott's company, and a Perth Rifle Company, joined infantry and rifle companies from Carleton Place, Almonte, Gananoque and Brockville in forming a Provisional Brigade tasked with defending the border between Brockville and Prescott. Although a Fenian force briefly occupied Campobello Island, New Brunswick⁵, in April, no attempt was made to cross the Saint Lawrence and, on May 16th, the Brockville Brigade was stood down and the Perth men returned home.

Fenians however soon began gathering in force at Malone, New York, with the announced intention of attacking Cornwall. At the same time another Fenian force assembled at Ogdensburg, New York, in preparation for an attack on Prescott and Brockville and seizure of the Grand Trunk Railroad. On June 2nd the Canadian Militia was again called out, with Captain Scott's Perth infantry company returning to its posts along the Saint Lawrence River.

The Perth infantrymen under Captain Thomas Scott's command were; Henry Best, John Best, Thomas C. Binks, William J. Binks, Patrick Burns, David Campbell, James Davis, Henry DeWitt, John Dittrich, Thomas Douglas, George McCullough, Christopher McCullough, John McCullough, Neil McLean, James McLenaghan, Simon McVitty, Dan Marks, Arthur J. Matheson, Charles A. Matheson, George Mitchell, Sam Farmer, Thomas Farmer, William Farmer, John Field, William W. Field, John P. Field, Dan Glossop, Francis H. Glossop, James D. Hayhurst, John Hendry, Frank Hetherington, Robert S. Hughes, Archibald Jamieson, Christopher Joynt, Simon Livingston, George Moore, George Oliver, Russel C. Riddell, James C. Smith, William J. Steele, Robert Stewart, George Stone, John T. Thompson, James M. Walker, Robert H. Walker, William Williams and John Wilson.

⁴ 'Finineachas', founded in 1858.

⁵ In Passamaquoddy Bay at the mouth of the St. Croix River.

On the same day as the second Militia call-up the Fenians crossed the border again, but they did so from Buffalo. Met by Canadian Militia they were defeated at the Battle of Ridgeway⁶. A week later another Fenian incursion was turned back at Pigeon Hill (Saint-Armand), Quebec. Discouraged by the outcome at Ridgeway and Pigeon Hill, despite the large number of troops assembled in up-state New York, the Fenians made no move in the Brockville-Prescott sector. In the late summer the Perth Infantry and Rifle Companies were stood down again, but in November Thomas Scott was gazetted at the rank of Major.



Canadian Militia Camp, Fort Wellington, Prescott, 1870'

The Fenian threat seemed to subside and Thomas Scott returned to his newspaper publishing interests at Perth, buying out his partner Thomas Cairns and assuming full ownership of the 'Perth Expositor'.⁸ He might have remained in his publisher's chair had it not been for another man also named Thomas Scott.

Having established the Dominion of Canada in 1867 through confederation of Britain's North American colonies, in 1869 the Canadian government purchased 'Rupert's Land', the huge swath of territory lying between Ontario and British Columbia, from the Hudson Bay Company. When land surveys, preparatory for the arrival of settlers, were undertaken however the Metis, led by Louis Riel, prevented survey work, declared a Provisional Government and began negotiating with Ottawa for recognition of the self-governing Province of Manitoba. A

⁶ East of Fort Erie, Ontario.

⁷ Courtesy of Library & Archives Canada C-040161

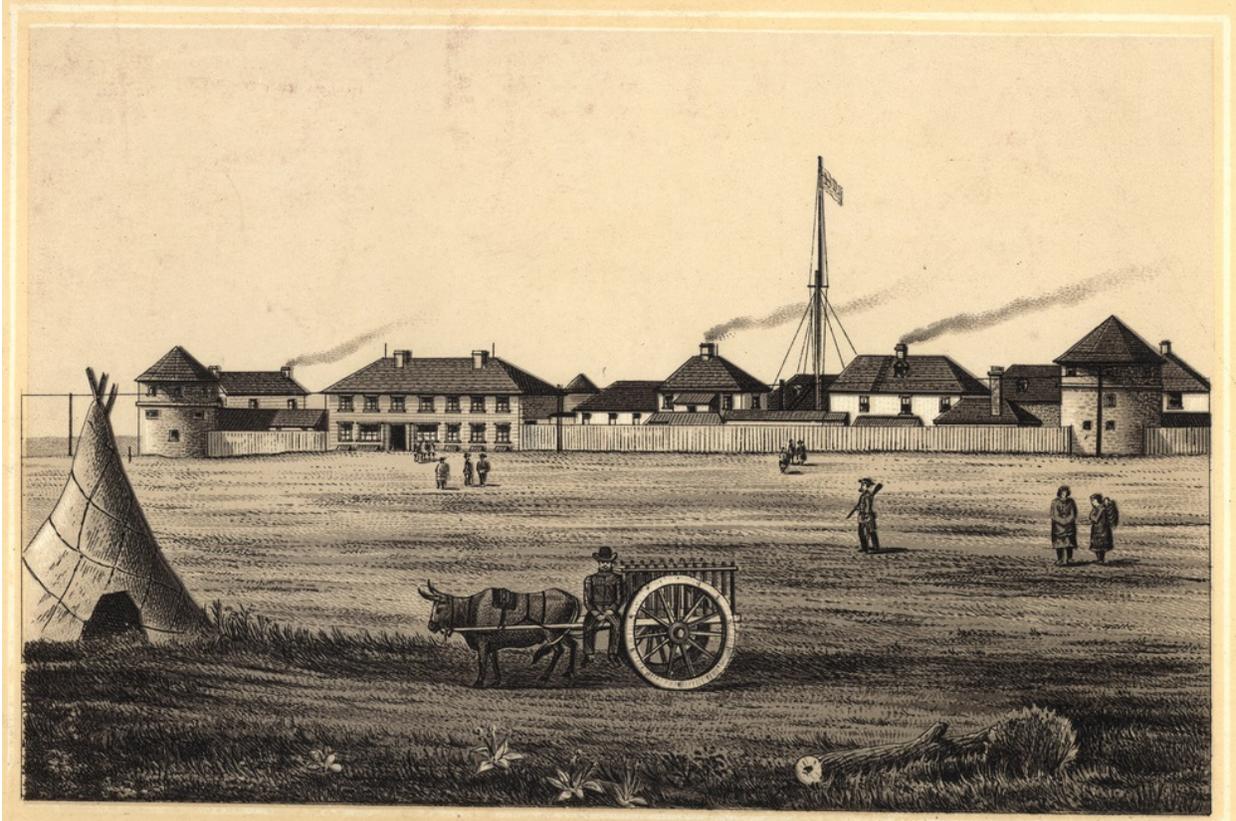
⁸ Thomas Cairns had been appointed Perth Postmaster on January 1, 1866.

'Canada Party', opposed to any government led by Metis and Catholic Riel, emerged and among its most militant members was an Irish Protestant and fanatic Orangeman, also named Thomas Scott.

Thomas Scott of the 'Canada Party' had been born at Clandeboye, County Down, Ireland, on January 1, 1842. He emigrated to Ontario in 1863 and by 1868 was working on the Dawson Road; a project undertaken to link the Red River Settlement to Lake Superior. In 1869 he was involved in a labor strike which led to his firing and conviction for aggravated assault. He made his way to Winnipeg where he secured a job as a land surveyor and became active in the 'Canada Party'.

Surveyor Scott was first arrested by the Provisional Government when he and 34 others staged an attack on Metis occupied Upper Fort Garry in December 1869. He escaped custody in January 1870 and organized another attempt on the fort, intended to free the remaining prisoners held by Riel and his men. The Metis released their prisoners before the raid could take place but, in marching a small 'Canada Party' band in the environs of Upper Fort Garry, Surveyor Scott was re-captured. Two leaders of the 'Canada Party', Charles Mair⁹ and John Christian Schultz, then set out for eastern Canada, by way of the United States, to urge military intervention by the Canadian Government.

⁹ 'Canada Party' leader Charles Mair (1838-1927) was born in the village of Lanark. He had been a clerk in his father's store at Lanark until he secured a position as paymaster on the Dawson Road project in 1868. Shortly after he was married at Fort Garry in 1869 he and his wife (Eliza McKenney) were arrested by the Metis and Mair was sentenced to death. He and Christian Schultz escaped at the same time as Thomas Scott and then set out for Ontario to agitate against the Metis. After Louis Riel was captured in 1885 Mair worked hard to have the Metis leader executed, and succeeded.



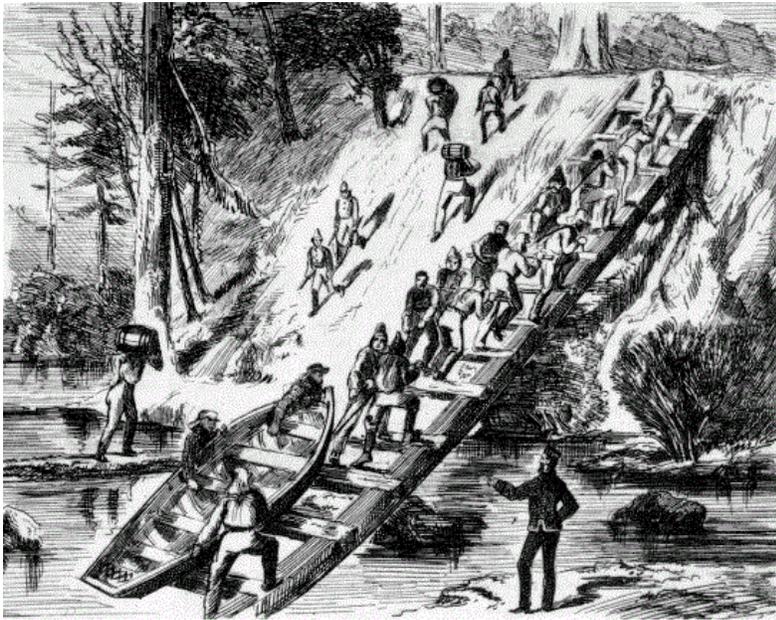
Fort Garry (Winnipeg) Manitoba¹⁰

While Mair and Schultz were en route, prisoner Scott became a major thorn in the side of the Metis garrison at Fort Garry. He refused to accept the legitimacy of his arrest, was verbally and physically abusive to his captors and others, generally obnoxious and simply would not shut up. Even his fellow prisoners asked that he be removed from their company. Eventually, when Scott tried to escape, he was tried and convicted of insubordination, fighting with guards, defying the authority of the Provisional Government, and slandering the name of Louis Riel. On March 4, 1870 'Canada Party' Scott was taken from his cell, stood up against the east gate of Upper Fort Garry and shot by a firing squad.

When word of the execution reached Ontario, lending urgency to the pleas of Mair and Schultz, the Canadian Government dispatched the 'Red River Expeditionary Force'; a mixed force of British regulars and Canadian Militia. Perth's Thomas Scott was re-called to active duty and named Senior Captain of the 1st Ontario Rifles which joined the expedition under command of Colonel (later Viscount) Garnet Wolseley (1833-1914). In all the force numbered about 1,450 men. The regular army provide 350 men of the 60th (Royal Rifles) Regiment, 373 Royal Engineers, about 20 Royal Artillery Gunners (to man four 7-pound brass mountain guns) and another 675 men of the Army Service Corps and Army Hospital Corps. The Canadian Militia contributed 382 men embodied as the 1st Ontario Rifles and 389 men to form the 2nd Quebec Rifles.

¹⁰ Anonymous

Ordering a military force to Manitoba was one thing. Getting it there was quite another. The U.S. Government refused to allow a Canadian army to cross its territory, the Dawson Road was incomplete, and the Canadian Pacific Railroad was still little more than a political promise.



Expeditionary Force Portaging Boats
(*Canadian Illustrated News*, August 26, 1871)

Captain Thomas Scott and the Wolseley expedition left Toronto on May 20, 1870 and travelled to Collingwood on Georgian Bay. The army crossed Lake Huron by steamer but when it reached the Sault Canal, which passed through American territory, both men and equipment had to be disembarked and moved overland on the Canadian side of the border. Once re-embarked they were shipped across Lake Superior and landed at the Thunder Bay Department of Public Works station. From there the troops moved in small boats to Lake Shebandowan. Pushing westward they travelled by land, lake and river to Fort

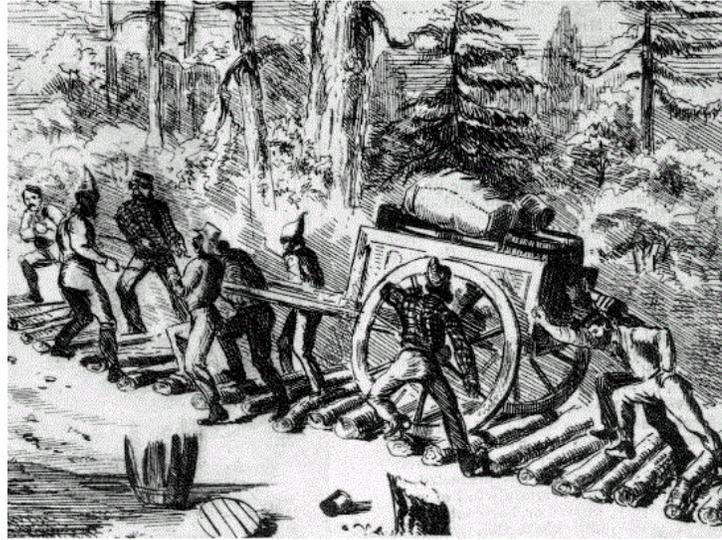
Frances, across Lake of the Woods, down the Winnipeg River, across southern Lake Winnipeg to the Red River and up the Red River to Fort Garry (Winnipeg). They arrived at Fort Garry on August 24th only to find that Louis Riel and his followers had fled to the United States. It was a bloodless victory but the expedition was one of the most arduous such military ventures in history. The army of 1,450 men, transporting all of their provisions and weapons, including cannon, had crossed 600 hundred wilderness miles¹¹, cutting 42 portages and building miles of corduroy roads, tormented by sweltering summer heat, blackflies and mosquitoes.

As they hacked their way west from Lake Superior, infantryman Johnson E. Cooper of Scott's 1st Ontario Rifles, carried with him a warrant for establishment of the first Orange Lodge west of the Great Lakes. On September 19, 1870, in the cabin of the small schooner *Jesse McKinley* anchored in the Assiniboine River, Thomas Scott, Thomas Hickey and Cooper were elected the first officers of L.O.L. No. 1307. The other (late) Thomas Scott had come to be regarded in Ontario as an Anglophone, Protestant and Orange martyr, cruelly victimized by Francophone, Metis and Catholic Louis Riel. The little gathering in the cabin of *Jesse McKinley* may have been particularly pleased with themselves in that another Thomas Scott (of Perth), also Irish, Protestant and Orange (and of almost the same age), had been instrumental in avenging his namesake by not only chasing Riel off to the United States, but by officially establishing the Orange Lodge in Manitoba. When the Grand Lodge of Manitoba built its

¹¹ From Thunder Bay to Fort Garry, 600 miles (965 Km.). From their departure point at Toronto the expedition travelled over a total distance of 1,200 miles (1,930 Km.).

meeting hall in 1902 it was named for Thomas Scott (but for the man executed at Upper Fort Garry, not the Perth, Ontario, Militia Officer).¹²

In December 1870 Thomas Scott returned to Perth, travelling by way of St. Paul, Minnesota¹³. The trip from Fort Garry to St. Paul alone took seventeen days. Scott spent the remainder of the winter of 1870-1871 back in Perth but in the autumn of 1871 the specter of the Fenian Brotherhood raised its head again. On October 5th a small Fenian force operating from St. Paul captured a Hudson Bay post and Canadian Customs House near the Manitoba frontier. It was their hope that Louis Riel and his Metis would join them in their attempt to invade Manitoba and annex it to the United States. Riel opposed the plan and it turned out that the trading post and customs house were actually located in American territory. The Fenians were arrested by the U.S. Army.



*Expeditionary Force Portage on Corduroy Road
(Canadian Illustrated news, August 26, 1871)*

Nevertheless, the Canadian Militia Department raised a picked force of 200 Ontario militiamen to reinforce those left in Manitoba the previous year. Thomas Scott was placed in command at the rank of Brevet Lieutenant Colonel. Scott led his men to Collingwood, and set sail aboard the Steamer *Chicora* for Thunder Bay. Once again Scott led an armed force, overland through the wilds northwest of Lake Superior, but this time in the dead of winter. The 'Second Red River Expedition' suffered greatly from cold and exposure, but reached Fort Garry on November 18, 1871. The last Fenian attempt on Canada was, however, already history.

Thomas Scott decided to stay in Manitoba. In 1872 he founded the Scott Furniture Company at Winnipeg, although he placed day-to-day operations in the hands of his brother David Scott (1840-1928). The company sold high-end furniture to the public, but specialized in commercial and institutional customers; offering to outfit an entire hotel, schoolhouse or other large establishment with a single order. Business boomed as new towns sprung up almost overnight across the West thanks to railway development. Making his final break with his

¹² Also serving under Scott's command in the Ontario Rifles was Charles Napier Bell (1854-1936), grandson of Perth's first Presbyterian pastor, Reverend William Bell. In 1866, at age 12, Charles Bell had joined the Perth Rifles as a bugler during the Fenian raids and then served, again as bugler, with the Ontario Rifles in the Red River Expedition. Bell remained in Manitoba, first working as a Customs Officer at Winnipeg, and later became Secretary of the Grain Exchange, the Winnipeg Board of Trade and the Winnipeg Industrial Bureau. He also founded the Manitoba Historical and Scientific Society. An athlete with a particular talent for skating, Bell coached Jack McCullough to the World Speed Skating Championship in 1897.

¹³ The following spring the British Regulars returned to their garrison at Quebec City over the same route by which they had come. The Militia troops remained in garrison in Manitoba, and each man was subsequently granted a warrant for one section (160 acres) of Manitoba Land for their services. Many remained as settlers, others sold their warrants.

hometown, in 1873 Thomas Scott sold the Perth Expositor to William Welland Berford (1846-1891) and Edward Elliott (1843-c1915).¹⁴



Requested by Sir Adolphe-Philippe Caron (1843-1908), Minister of the Militia, to raise a
Thomas Scott (1841-1915)

In November 1874 Thomas Scott turned to politics but was defeated by just 13 votes in his effort to be elected for the Federal constituency of Selkirk. In the same year, however, he was elected as a member of the first Winnipeg City Council, representing the South Ward. In 1877 he was elected Mayor of Winnipeg. The following year he was elected a member of the Manitoba Legislature and re-elected in 1879.

In 1880 Scott resigned his Provincial seat to again contest the Selkirk Federal seat. This time he defeated Donald A. Smith (1820-1914)¹⁵ by a margin of 169 votes. Scott was re-elected to the Federal Parliament in 1882.

When the second Riel Rebellion broke out in 1885 Thomas Scott made his final contribution to military affairs. Requested by Sir Adolphe-Philippe Caron (1843-1908), Minister of the Militia, to raise a regiment for service to quell the unrest, in 13 days he mustered and fully equipped a 440 man regiment known as the 95th Manitoba Grenadiers¹⁶. The Grenadiers served at Fort Qu'Appelle until Riel was defeated and captured.

Also in 1885 Thomas Scott sold the Scott Furniture Company to his son Frederick W. Scott (1868-1940). Frederick Scott built a new six-storey building next door to the existing premises which opened in 1904. On June 13, 1905, however, a lightning strike set the building ablaze causing extensive damage and destroying \$150,000 in stock. The Scott Furniture Block reopened on November 15, 1905 but in January 1909 the Furniture Company closed and the Scott Block became an office building, still owned by Frederick Scott. It burned for a second time in 1914, but was again reconstructed. The Scott building, designated a 'Historic Building' by Winnipeg City Council, still stands a 272 Main Street.



Scott Furniture Building after 1905 fire

Thomas Scott retired from politics in 1887 and was appointed Collector of Customs for the Port

¹⁴ Berford and Elliott were law partners at Perth. Elliott served on Perth Town Council for over a decade and one term as Mayor (1879-1880), and was later appointed a Middlesex County Judge. Berford served as Lanark County Clerk and then County Treasurer.

¹⁵ Smith was later made Lord Strathcona.

¹⁶ Raised at Winnipeg

of Winnipeg. He served as Collector until 1910.

Thomas Scott and his wife Margaret Kellock were the parents of eight children; Thomas H. (c1865-1895), Robert (1866-1866), Frederick W. (1868-1940), William D. (d.1870), Robert Kellock (1871-1942), Alicia May (1877-1932), John Clarence (b.1879), Mabel Margaret (1881-1949).

Robert Scott died at Winnipeg, February 12, 1915. His wife Margaret Kellock died at Winnipeg in 1938.

- *Ron W, Shaw (2016)*