

How the Battle of Duck Lake Began: Two Perspectives

The following is a paraphrase of "Gentleman" Joseph McKay's account of the Battle of Duck Lake (March 26, 1885) as told to W.B. Cameron.

McKay said that he and Superintendent Leif Crozier went to talk to the Métis, and that two Indians came towards them. One was Assiwiyin and the other was unknown to him. [It was Gabriel Dumont's brother, Isidore.] He said he couldn't understand them and felt they were just stalling so that the Métis could gain better position. McKay said that Assiwiyin kept snatching at his wrist and repeating the word, "tesqua", which meant "hold on". Crozier told McKay that they couldn't do anything here and to come back. As McKay turned, Assiwiyin tried to get his revolver but it was buttoned on. McKay grabbed his hand to loosen his grip on the revolver and was going to hit him on the head with his carbine, but Assiwiyin grabbed the carbine with both hands and ripped it out of his grip. He said that the other Indian [Isidore], had his gun ready to shoot him, so he grabbed Assiwiyin and put him in front of him. He then stated that he waited for Crozier to give him the order to fire, and when he did get the order, he gave Assiwiyin one more chance. He said Assiwiyin rushed him, so he shot him and the other Indian [Isidore], then ran back and joined the troops. On the way, he said he saw Jean-Baptiste Parenteau and shot him. [Parenteau was not killed, but both Assiwiyin and Isidore Dumont were.]

The following is a paraphrase of Patrice Fleury's and Charles Laviolette's account of the Battle of Duck Lake as told to W.B. Cameron.

They said that McKay had a rifle in his hand and a revolver in his belt and that Assiwiyin was unarmed. They claimed that Assiwiyin said, "Where are you going grandchild? You've got too many guns. Better give me one." Assiwiyin put his hand on the revolver and McKay shot him in the stomach with his rifle. They said that McKay turned and ran back to the troops after that.

Reference:

University of Saskatchewan Special Collections. *M55 C550/1/28.1, I-XVIII.*