

# All Ages Online Learning Activities

## Newmarket Connections

*"Like Uncle, like Nephew"*

**Wm. Benjamin Robinson and Christopher Robinson**

Through Newmarket's history we know that:

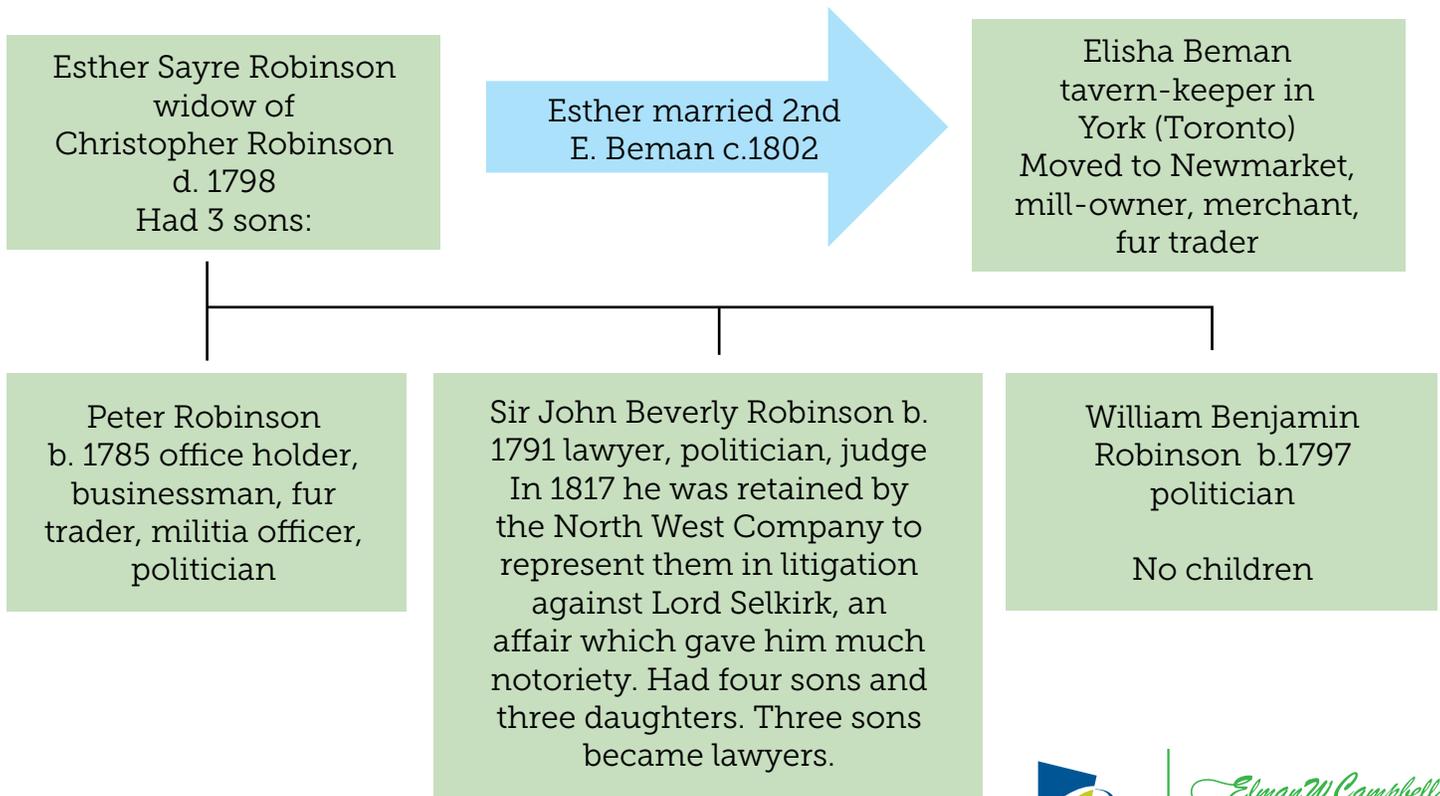
- Elisha Beman and two of his three stepsons resided in Newmarket and were part of Newmarket's elite

They were:

- Members of the Family Compact
- Involved in the Rebellion of 1837
- Involved in the fur trade

The Robinson family actually played a big part in Canada's Indigenous history. Let's learn more.

### Background & Genealogy Information:

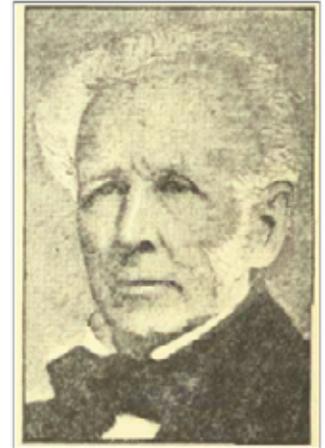


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## The Uncle:

William Benjamin Robinson grew up in Newmarket during the early 1800s.

- 1820** William took over running the mills and stores built by his stepfather, Elisha Beman.
- 1822** Married Elizabeth Ann Jarvis. *BTW, the Jarvis family of Toronto were slave-owners and fiercely opposed to the idea of abolishing slaves in Upper Canada.*
- 1830** Won election to the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada for Simcoe. Re-elected in 1834 and 1836.
- 1833** William and Elizabeth moved to Holland Landing and took over Peter Robinson's house.

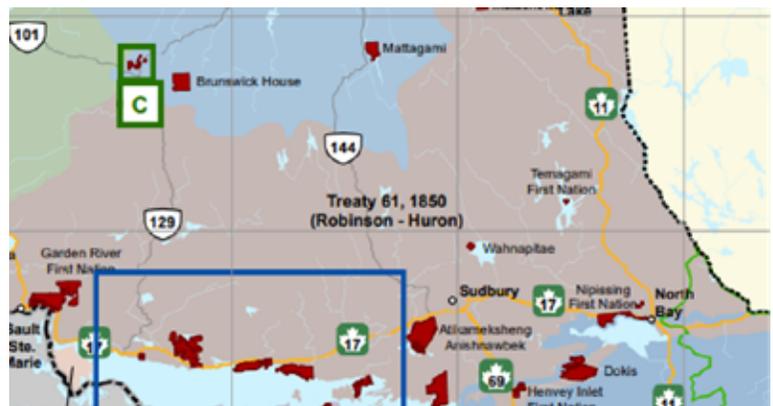


William followed his eldest brother Peter into the fur trading business, setting up trading posts mainly in the Muskoka district. He became knowledgeable in the trade, the Indigenous language and customs, and described as being "one of the chief Indian traders throughout northern Ontario".

- 1843** William negotiated the first of the "Robinson Treaties". Over 700 acres of the District of Simcoe were "set aside to be held in trust for the use of the Chippewa Tribe of Lake Simcoe."
- 1850** In January 1850 Wm. Robinson was commissioned to negotiate "for the adjustment on [the Indians'] claims to the lands in the vicinity of Lakes Superior and Huron, or of such portions of them as may be required for mining purposes." *BTW, middle brother Peter Beverley Robinson, Chief Justice in Upper Canada, played a role here. Reminder, only the Crown could make treaties with Indigenous peoples.*
- 1850** Final negotiations took place at Sault Ste Marie and two treaties were signed; on 7 September the Indigenous peoples of Lake Superior surrendered the land from Batchawana Bay to Pigeon River, and on 9 September the Indigenous Peoples of Lake Huron gave up the area between Batchawana Bay and Penetanguishene. Almost all of Northwest Ontario.

The Robinson Treaties would lay the groundwork for Western Canada's numbered treaties.

- [Click here to see images of the Robinson-Huron Treaty](#)
- [Click here to read the Robinson-Huron Treaty](#)



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## Now it's time to meet The Nephew.

Christopher Robinson, b. 21 Jan. 1828 in York (Toronto)

Christopher Robinson, named after his grandfather, was born into Toronto's elite class. He was the third son of Sir John Beverly Robinson.

**1850** C. Robinson called to the Bar.

**1867** The study of the British North America Act and its distribution of powers had, since 1867, created a new area of concern for the legal profession. Through a series of highly publicized cases, Robinson emerged as a trusted supporter for none other than, Sir John A. Macdonald. (A reminder that Canada's first Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald was quoted in 1887 as saying "The great aim of our legislation has been to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the other inhabitants of the Dominion as speedily as they are fit to change.")

**1884** Macdonald hired Christopher Robinson to represent Ottawa before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the Ontario-Manitoba boundary dispute.

**1885** Christopher Robinson hired as senior counsel at the trial in Regina of Louis Riel on a charge of high treason. Riel was convicted and hanged on November 16, 1885.

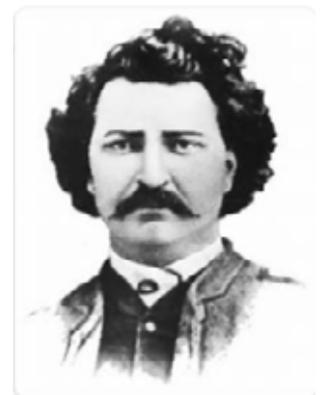
**1870s** C. Robinson took part in cases before the newly formed Supreme Court of Canada. Died in 1905.



Christopher Robinson



Sir John A. McDonald



Louis Riel

## Sources:

- [Biography – ROBINSON, WILLIAM BENJAMIN – Volume X \(1871-1880\) – Dictionary of Canadian Biography \(biographi.ca\)](#)
- [Biography – ROBINSON, CHRISTOPHER \(1828-1905\) – Volume XIII \(1901-1910\) – Dictionary of Canadian Biography \(biographi.ca\)](#)
- [Land deal with Ontario's Ojibway still in contention after 164 years | The Star](#)
- [Louis Riel - Wikipedia, who-was-louis-riel.pdf \(metisnation.org\)](#)
- [John A. Macdonald - Wikipedia](#)