

## **THE MÉTIS: TWO WORLDS MEET Teachers' Guide**

**Adapted and Transcribed by Joseph Fauchon**

**THE MÉTIS: TWO WORLDS MEET** originated from a curriculum project done for the Saskatchewan Training for Employment Program.

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### **NOTES TO THE TEACHER**

**THE MÉTIS: TWO WORLDS MEET** is a set of 36 study prints describing various aspects of Métis lifestyle. The series is intended as resource material to be used in conjunction with relevant units of study. While the series describes the many aspects of Métis culture, it is not a chronological account of events. The study prints are arranged topically and the teacher should determine the appropriate grade level and particular conceptual framework within which each study print or set of study prints could best be used.

The prints have been divided into seven different subject groupings for ease of reference. The text contained on each print has been reproduced in the teacher's guide. The guide also contains discussion questions and suggested activities. These discussion questions and learning activities provided in this manual are not intended to be the basis for an in depth study but are there only to serve as an example from which the teacher and student can build a unit of study and generate more questions and activities.

### **PURPOSE:**

The intent of **THE MÉTIS: TWO WORLDS MEET** study print series is to provide:

2. support materials for the instruction of the history of the Métis people;
3. archival research materials for students.

## **GENERAL OBJECTIVES:**

### **Skill**

Students will:

1. practice basic research skills;
2. practice reading for information;
3. develop photographic analysis skills;
4. improve their ability to discuss what they have seen and read.

### **Knowledge**

Students will:

1. gain knowledge of key events in the history of the Métis people;
2. obtain information about significant people in Saskatchewan Native history;
3. synthesize the information gained through discussion and written assignments.

### **Awareness**

Students will:

1. develop an appreciation of the material culture and lifestyles of Métis people;
2. gain an appreciation of current issues through the study of the past;
3. gain greater understanding of their identity as Indian or Métis individuals.

## **OVERVIEW OF STUDY PRINT SERIES**

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### **THE MÉTIS: TWO WORLDS MEET**

#### **1. Homes and Lifestyles**

##### **1.1 Log Dwelling (Wood Mountain, Saskatchewan)**

**date: 1872-1874**

**credit: Manitoba Archives**

**(Boundary Commission Collection)**

The Red River style of log construction was one of the original methods used in Canada. The logs were left rounded, with notched ends. This differed from other styles in which the logs were squared, with the corners dove tailed. The Red River style of log construction has spread across North America and is currently enjoying new popularity.

Log dwellings varied greatly in both size and finish. Those used in camps tended to be less carefully finished than those of the permanent settlements. Log homes were frequently built in a circle, with a large building in the centre for meetings and dances.

Red River log construction is yet another Métis contribution to development of Canada.

##### **1.2 Hand made Violin, Mandolin and Grain Shovel**

**date: 1985**

**credit: Sherry Farrell Racette**

Most Métis families did not have the money or opportunity to buy musical instruments, household or farm implements. Ingenuity prevailed and this photograph illustrates the Métis ability to make, by hand, what they could not purchase.

These artifacts are part of the collection in the Saint Boniface Museum, St. Boniface, Manitoba.

### **1.3 Baby in Moss Bag**

**date: 1979**

**credit: Lloyd Pinay**

The infant in this photo is sleeping in a beaded moss bag similar to those used more than one hundred years ago. The flower beadwork done on a black cloth background is a style made popular by Métis women during the nineteenth century.

The moss bag and cradleboard were child-rearing devices which were common to virtually all North American Indian societies. Consisting of a protective framework and a leather or cloth moss bag, the cradleboard provided the infant with a warm, secure and portable resting place. The restrictive function that it served was believed to develop a disciplined and secure character. Lovingly wrapped and bound to the lavishly decorated cradleboards, Indian and Métis children were initiated into the cultural life of their families and communities.

### **1.4 Tipi and Red River Cart**

**date: 1889**

**credit: Hudson Bay House Collection**

This temporary campsite was located north of Regina. The presence of the two Red River Carts and absence of signs of permanence indicate that this was the kind of camp used when travelling. Most Métis travelled extensively. For a certain portion of the population this was their chosen lifestyle. Groups of Métis followed the buffalo herds across the Canadian plains and into the United States, living off the land. The Métis tipi differed from those of their Indian cousins only in its lack of decoration. The man in the photograph is wearing a capote made from a Hudson's Bay blanket. Another Métis innovation, this style of woollen coat remains popular today in more tailored versions.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. How did the Red River style of log house construction differ from other styles of log house construction used elsewhere in Canada?
2. What are some possible advantages and disadvantages of having log houses in contemporary society?

3. What were some of the types of homes that a typical Métis family living in the Red River Settlement might have had? Why would a Métis family require different kinds of homes?
4. What materials were used in making dwellings? Why would these materials be chosen to make homes rather than other materials?
5. What would be some of the household utensils and farm implements that the Métis made themselves?
6. Why would the Métis have to make most of their household utensils and farm implements?
7. The majority of tools and musical instruments are no longer handmade. Give possible reasons for this. What are some exceptions?
8. What developmental skill did the restrictive function of a moss bag and cradleboard enhance?

## **2. Clothing**

### **2.1 The Sash**

**date: 1981**

**credit: Cliff Bunnie**

**Gabriel Dumont Institute Collection**

The origins of the sash reflect the diversity of the Métis experience.

The finger-weaving technique used to make the sash was firmly established in Eastern Woodland Indian traditions. The technique created tumplines, garters and other useful household articles and items of clothing. Plant fibers were used prior to the introduction of wool. Wool and the sash, as an article of clothing, were introduced to the Eastern Woodland peoples by Europeans. The Six Nations Confederacy, Potawatami and other Indian nations of the area blended the two traditions into the finger-woven sash.

The French settlers of Quebec created the Assomption variation of the woven sash. Sashes, such as the one illustrated, were a popular trade item manufactured in a cottage industry in the village of L'Assomption, Quebec. The Quebecois and the Métis of Western Canada were their biggest customers. Sashes were also made by local Métis artisans. Sashes of Indian or Métis manufacture tended to be of a softer and looser weave, frequently incorporating beads in the design.

The sash was used by the Métis as a practical item of clothing. It was decorative, warm and could be used to replace a rope or tumpline if none were available. The sash has been the most persistent element of traditional Métis dress, worn long after the capote and Red River coat were replaced by European styles.

The Métis share the sash with two other groups who also claim it as a symbol of nationhood and cultural distinction. It was worn by Eastern Woodland Indians as a sign of office in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was worn by

French Canadians during the Lower Canada Rebellion in 1837. It is still considered to be an important part of traditional dress for both these groups.

The sash has acquired new significance in the twentieth century, now symbolizing pride and identification for Métis people. Manitoba and Saskatchewan have both created "The Order of the Sash" which is bestowed upon members of the Métis community who have made cultural, political or social contributions to their people.

## **2.2 Silk Embroidered Moccasins**

**date: 1985 (photo)**

**19<sup>th</sup> century (artifact)**

**credit: Lower Fort Garry Collection, Lower Fort Garry Historical Park, Manitoba**

Métis artist (sic) produced floral motifs using silk thread on soft leather. This form of art is noted for its symmetry, subtle ranges of colour and fine execution. Silk embroidery virtually disappeared when fine silk became unavailable to craftswomen. Cotton thread and wool did not produce as satisfying results and floral beadwork became more predominant.

Silk embroidered moccasins were typical of Métis footwear of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Cree style wrap-around was adapted by the Métis. The lavish silk embroidery indicates that these moccasins were created for a special occasion. The ribbed border along the vamp was made by wrapping horsehair with silk thread. This was a variation of the Indian style of moccasin in which horsehair was wrapped with porcupine quills.

## **2.3 Red River Coat**

**date: 1840 (?)**

**credit: Glenbow Museum, Calgary**

The Indian and Métis women of the Red River Settlement were inspired by the floral silk embroidery of the Grey nuns. They soon incorporated these floral designs into the traditional porcupine quillwork. In this art form, fine quills were dyed with natural and later commercial pigments, folded in a flat "braid" and stitched with sinew.

The elegant, stylized quillwork predated floral beadwork by some twenty years and has survived into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Red River coat shown here has been decorated with porcupine quillwork.

By 1800, the long, painted hide coats of the Northern Ojibway and Cree had re-emerged in Red River with a distinctive new flavour. The new Red River style of hide coat worn by the Métis of the area featured a European cut, epaulets and lavish decoration. The traditional Cree and Ojibway geometric designs were gradually replaced by highly stylized floral patterns. Frequently, geometric and floral designs were used on the same coat. Three techniques were used in decorating Red River coats: quillwork, natural paints and beadwork.

Red River coats were very striking and the Métis men who wore them made a fashionable impression, as recorded in numerous journals kept by explorers and travellers of the day.

#### **2.4 Quilled Velvet Cap**

**date: 1985 (photo)**

**19<sup>th</sup> century (artifact)**

**credit: Lower Fort Garry Collection, Lower Fort Garry Historical Park, Manitoba**

Métis men were noted for their imaginative headgear. They wore fur turbans, variations of the felt hat, blue bannock caps and military style caps, such as the one illustrated here.

The shape of the cap would appear to be all that the Métis borrowed from the military. All similarities cease beyond that point. Caps such as this were richly decorated with quillwork, beads and silk tassels. The band around the cap is quillwork, which has been woven on a loom in a traditional geometrical design. Large glass beads trim the edge of the cap. The rich black velvet has been chosen to set off the colours used in the decoration.

#### **2.5 Beaded Leggings**

**date: 1985 (photo)**

**19<sup>th</sup> century (artifact)**

**credit: Sherry Farrell Racette (photo)**

**St. Boniface Museum Collection (artifact)**

Small glass beads and stroud became available as trade goods at approximately the same time as silk thread. Flower beadwork on black or dark blue cloth trimmed with silk ribbon was popular for jackets, leggings, bags and other articles of clothing. The Dakota called the Métis the Flower Beadwork People, a testimony to the visual impression created by this art form.

These leggings, from the St. Boniface Museum in St. Boniface, Manitoba, are exactly like those described in journal descriptions of Métis dress in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The dark blue wool stroud was the cloth most typically used by the Métis for beadwork. The leggings feature beaded bands of floral design, silk tassels and two rows of brass buttons. A fine pair of leggings was one of a man's most prized possessions. The ones shown here were only worn to church and on special occasions.

#### **2.6 Silk Embroidered Mittens**

**date: 1985(photo)**

**19<sup>th</sup> century (artifact)**

**credit: Lower Fort Garry Collection, Lower Fort Garry Historical Park, Manitoba**

Mittens of this sort were an important item of the traditional dress of northern Cree and other northern Indian peoples. The Métis borrowed these items and embellished them with their own style of decoration. These mittens are decorated with silk embroidery, silk ribbon work and yarn pom-poms.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. What is believed to be the origin of the Métis sash?
2. The Métis sash has been called the “tool box of the prairies.” What are some of its possible uses?
3. What other two groups do the Métis share the sash with as a symbol of nationhood and cultural distinction?
4. Why would the sash be chosen by the Métis people today as a symbol of their enduring culture?
5. Why was silk embroidery largely replaced by floral beadwork in decorating moccasins and other articles of apparel?
6. The Red River coat worn by the Métis in the 1800’s combined European and traditional Cree or Ojibway styles. What are the elements taken from the European styles? What are the elements taken from the Cree or Ojibway styles?
7. The quilled velvet cap shown in picture 2.4 is another example where the Métis combined European and Indian styles. What are some of the elements taken from both cultures in designing this cap?
8. Why would the Dakota Sioux have called the Métis the “Flower Beadwork People”?
9. What purpose would “leggings” serve in Métis dress?
10. What are some of the materials from the environment that the Métis used in their clothing?
11. What are some of the materials the Métis used in their clothing that would have to be purchased?
12. What are some examples where Métis combined European and Indian styles in their clothing? Specify which materials were borrowed from European styles and which were borrowed from Indian cultures.
13. Functional art is art, which is not only decorative but also serves a purpose in day-to-day life. What are some examples of functional art in Métis life?

## **3. Transportation**

### **3.1 The Red River Cart**

**date: 1890**

**credit: Manitoba Public Archives**

The Red River cart is the mode of transportation most frequently associated with the Métis. In fact, the Cree name for Métis was wagon-men or half wagon, half man.

The cart was simply constructed with a small box which rested between two large wheels. One ox or horse could pull a cart loaded with 300 – 400 kilos of freight.

The ungreased wooden axles of the cart made a horrible screeching noise. During prosperous times in the mid-nineteenth century, thousands of carts formed trains which transported whole communities to buffalo hunts and

freighted goods over long distances. Until the advent of the railroad, these Red River cart trains provided the only overland freight system.

### **3.2 York Boats**

**date: 1910**

**credit: Manitoba Public Archives**

This form of transportation rose to prominence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The York Boat was invented by a Métis named Sinclair. These boats played a major role in the fur trade industry as they replaced the freight canoes on the main water systems of Canada. They had a larger carrying capacity and required fewer men to operate them. This enabled furs to be transported faster and much more economically than by canoe.

The York Boat required eighteen men to operate it: a helmsman to give the orders for rowing, a man to steer and sixteen middlemen to pull the oars. The men were also required to portage the large boats around waterfalls and other obstacles. Sails were used to catch favourable winds.

The men who operated the York Boats were predominantly Métis employees of the fur trading companies. These boats became outdated with the advent of the steamboat and the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

### **3.3 Pad Saddle**

**date: 1985 (photo)**

**19<sup>th</sup> century (artifact)**

**credit: Lower Fort Garry Collection, Lower Fort Garry Historical Park, Manitoba**

The origins of the pad saddle are vague. Records indicate that it was used extensively by the Métis, Blackfoot, Assiniboine, Cree and Dakota. Métis women made lavishly decorated pad saddles for the Hudson's Bay Company trade during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. They were indigenous to the northern plains, being decidedly different from the high Spanish frames used by other Indian groups.

The pad saddle was a soft leather cushion stuffed with buffalo hair, grass or horsehair. It was quilled or beaded and had wooden stirrups. It was practical as well as beautiful. Horses were not burdened by the lightweight saddles and the rider was not bruised by heavy frames when jostled during buffalo hunts.

### **3.4 Dog Team**

**no date**

**credit: Provincial Archives of Alberta**

The dog team shown was the mail train between Fort McMurray and Fort Chipewyan. Dog teams such as these provided an important mode of transportation until replaced by the railroad, airplane and skidoo. They are still used by trappers and are a popular hobby for northerners.

The dogs in the picture are wearing highly decorative outfits, which were made for them by their owners. A well turned out dog team was as

important, in its time, as a fine car today. Such dog teams were a common sight in Métis and Indian communities all over Western and Northern Canada.

### **3.5 Dog Blanket**

**date: 1985 (photo)**

**19<sup>th</sup> century (artifact)**

**credit: Lower Fort Garry Collection, Lower Fort Garry Historical Park, Manitoba**

This dog blanket is a striking example of the fine work that went into the manufacture of a dog outfit. Each dog had its own little jacket, harness and other trimmings. The most common design had brightly coloured beadwork on a dark wool background. The blanket was trimmed with bells, bright wool Pom-poms and fringe.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. How was the Red River cart used by the Métis constructed?
1. Why was the Red River cart made completely from wood and rawhide? What would be some advantages of this? What would be some disadvantages?
2. What would the Métis have used the Red River cart for?
3. Why would the Métis have used the Red River cart on their buffalo hunts rather than some other kind of vehicle?
4. Why did York Boats largely replace canoes as a means of hauling freight on the waterways?
5. What effect might the York Boats have had on the use of the Red River cart?
6. What is meant by portage?
7. Why was the pad saddle used by the Métis more practical than other types of saddle?
8. Dog teams played an important role in transportation. What were some things a dog team might be used for? Why would this form of transportation be especially important during long winter months?
9. Skidoos have largely replaced dog teams, especially in northern Canada. What are advantages and disadvantages of both?
10. What are some examples of functional art in transportation?

## **4. Work**

### **4.1 Buffalo Hunt**

**date: 1850's**

**credit: Royal Ontario Museum**

With the advent of the horse onto the prairie, buffalo hunting progressed from a means of securing food into a profitable business for the Métis. By the 1820s, the majority of the Métis living in the Red River area had adopted this lifestyle. They became the suppliers of food (pemmican) to the fur trade companies.

By 1840, the hunts had become highly organized. In the spring and fall of the year, the entire Métis population would assemble. A senior captain was chosen, along with ten junior captains. They in turn commanded scouts, guards and hunters. As many as twelve hundred men, women and children would set out across the prairie on horseback and in Red River carts pulled by oxen.

Upon sighting the buffalo, the senior captain would give the order and the hunt would begin. The hunters would ride up beside the buffalo, shoot and reload at a gallop. Pursuit would last for about half an hour. Dotting the prairie would be hundreds of dead animals. The women and children were responsible for skinning the animals and preparing the meat. The hunt would continue until enough meat was taken to fill the carts, then the party would return to the settlement.

This lifestyle continued until about 1875, when the life of the buffalo hunters came to an abrupt end. The establishment of British law overrode the Laws of St. Laurent which had afforded some protection to the buffalo herds. Free hunters infiltrated the area and the buffalo were all but exterminated. Elsewhere, in an effort to starve the Indians into submission, the American army burned the prairie from Missouri to Qu'Appelle and from Minnesota to the Rockies. Hunters were placed in key escape routes and scarcely a single buffalo escaped to the North.

#### **4.2 Farming**

**no date**

**credit: Manitoba Public Archives**

The Métis farming tradition has its roots in the Red River settlement of Manitoba. Following the massive exodus into Saskatchewan, the Métis again established farms and homesteads. The difficulties encountered by the Métis in gaining clear entitlement to their land and the intervention of land speculators when scrip was issued caused most Métis to lose possession of their farms.

The twentieth century saw the Métis provide a major source of farm labour in Saskatchewan, until displaced by modern machinery.

#### **4.3 Fishing**

**no date**

**credit: Saskatchewan Archives Board**

Fishing has been a way of life for Métis people in western Canada for well over a hundred years. After the demise of the buffalo, fish became the major food staple in many areas. Fish were caught in nets, dried and smoked. This way of life is still practised by many Métis in northern regions.

To escape the monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company, fishing co-operatives were established in the 1950s and 1960s.

In recent years, pollution has affected this way of life and many lakes in Northern Saskatchewan have been ruined. The people near these lakes have been forced either to move to another area or to give up fishing as a livelihood. A few Métis find employment as guides to tourists who fly in on fishing excursions.

#### **4.4 Scouting and Guiding**

**date: 1874**

**credit: Saskatchewan Archives Board**

The knowledge and skills of Métis men were frequently sought by individuals and groups requiring scouts and guides. The Métis had an international reputation as marksmen and interpreters.

These men were the scouts who served with the Canadian Boundary Commission in 1874. They also supplied food, provided interpretative services and protection to the survey crew.

#### **4.5 Traders**

**date: 1872-74**

**credit: Manitoba Public Archives**

The Métis had always been involved as middlemen in the trade between Indians and Europeans, but when the trial of William Sayer broke the monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1849, their involvement in trade increased. The free-trade between the United States and Canada was almost exclusively the domain of Métis such as those shown here.

The Métis traded across the northern states of Minnesota, North Dakota and Montana. They provided the trade link between the Lake of the Woods and the Rockies.

#### **4.6 Man Packing Freight**

**no date**

**credit: Saskatchewan Archives Board**

Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Indian and Métis people were employed as packers by the fur trading companies. The packs consisted of two forty kilogram bundles of fur or trade goods which were hoisted onto the shoulders of the men and then carried to and from canoes and York Boats. The goods were also unloaded from the boats and carried over the many portages which had to be made when travelling the Canadian waterways.

A major blow to the packing industry occurred in 1821, with the merger of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company. Half the work force became redundant and wages fell due to lack of competition. Prior to the merger, the companies were required to outfit and supply their own outfits, food and clothing.

The packing industry, which was for many years a way of life for many Indians and Métis, is now virtually nonexistent. The man shown here is Solomon McCauley, a Métis. He is packing freight near Sturgeon Portage. The load that he is carrying weighs 170 kilograms or 375 pounds.

With the use of bush planes, snowmobiles and the railroad, the packing industry has been outdated. Packing has become a very popular competitive sport during northern festivals. Loads of up to 545 kilograms or 1200 pounds are not uncommon during these competitive events.

#### **4.7 Buffalo Bones**

**no date**

**credit: Public Archives of Canada**

With the abolition of the Laws of St. Laurent which afforded the buffalo some protection, a mass slaughter occurred. Free hunters killed approximately five million buffalo for their hides. Buffalo bones littered the prairie for many years.

It was discovered that these bones could be used for fertilizer and in the process of the refining of sugar. A brief industry was established in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and bones were collected and sold. The people who collected these bones received eight to twelve dollars a ton for them. This grisly job provided a form of employment for many Métis and white settlers for approximately twenty years.

The demise of the great buffalo herds that had once supported a way of life, and the starvation that followed, were major factors in the armed resistance of 1885.

**Discussion Questions**

1. What effect did the introduction of the horse have on the lifestyle of the Plains Indians and ultimately the Métis?
2. Why was it necessary that the Métis buffalo hunt be a highly organized operation?
4. What were the roles of women and children on the buffalo hunt?
5. What was the role of the men on the buffalo hunt?
6. Why, beginning in the 1870's, could the Métis no longer earn a living as buffalo hunters?
7. What are some reasons for the rapid and sudden disappearance of the large buffalo herds from the western prairies?
8. What are some ways in which a Métis family living in the Red River Settlement might have earned a living?
9. Why would the Métis be chosen as scouts and guides by the Canadian Boundary Commission?
10. Why would the Métis be valued as middlemen between the Indian peoples and the Europeans in the fur trade industry?
11. Why was the merger between the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company in 1821 a major blow to the Métis packing industry?
12. What were some uses for the millions of buffalo bones which littered the prairie in the later 1800s?

**5. People: Men**

**5.1 Cuthbert Grant (1793-1854)**

**no date**

**credit: Manitoba Public Archives**

Born in 1793 at Fort Tremblante near the present-day site of Yorkton, Saskatchewan, Cuthbert Grant was the son of a North West Trading Company partner and a Cree woman. At the age of eight, Cuthbert was sent to Scotland for an education. He arrived at the Red River Settlement at age

nineteen to serve as a clerk in the North West Company. Within one year Grant was placed in charge of his own post on the Qu'Appelle River.

He was readily accepted by all the inhabitants of the area and soon became an acknowledged leader of the Métis. He rose to prominence when he led a party of Métis and Indians in a conflict with Governor Semple's militia at Seven Oaks in 1816. He was arrested for his part in the deaths of the twenty-one men, but was later acquitted.

With the merger of the fur trade companies in 1821, Cuthbert's services were no longer required. He established a Métis community which he named Grantown (present day St. Francois Xavier) near Winnipeg. In 1828, he accepted the position of "Warden of the Plains" in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company. This entailed policing the fur trade, organizing buffalo hunts and protecting the settlement. He was appointed to the Council of Assiniboia as the Métis representative in 1835. Under Grant's leadership, the Métis became recognized as a nation and a respected military force on the plains. They achieved a degree of organization that they had previously not known. It was "the golden age." Grant was also personally responsible for negotiating treaties with the Dakota, thereby enabling the peaceful settlement of Manitoba.

During the 1840s, Métis traders became involved in illegal trade with the United States. Grant attempted to enforce the law under Hudson's Bay Company monopoly and, in the process, lost his position of leadership in the Métis community. The trial of a free trader in 1849 broke the company rule and Cuthbert became unemployed. He returned to the prairies as a hunter and died in 1854 at the age of 61.

## **5.2 George "Shaman" Racette**

**date: 1869**

**credit: Manitoba Public Archives**

George Racette, known as the Shaman, was born in the Red River Settlement in 1819. He was a big man, well over six feet tall, a skilled hunter, fighter, horseman and trader. He was known as a rogue and a troublemaker. However, on at least four occasions, the Shaman played a key role in the significant events of his time:

1873 – Shaman Racette and others established a council in the Qu'Appelle Valley with the intent of establishing a government. They awaited the arrival of Louis Riel to assist them, as they were uneducated men.

1873 – Shaman Racette was reported to be instigating discontent among the Indian people of the area by telling them that the government was going to take away the land which rightfully belonged to them.

1873 – At James McKay's request, the Shaman spent the winter travelling among the American Métis and Indians who planned to enter Canada to join forces with the Canadian Métis and Indians in an effort to push white settlement from the plains. Shaman advised them that they could find themselves unwelcome in both countries and obtained their signature and their promise to remain in the U.S.A.

1874 – Shaman represented the Assiniboine Indians at the negotiations of Treaty No. 4. His display of military strength and his strong position during

the negotiations led to his being overpowered, handcuffed and kept under guard in a tent during the proceedings. He was released only when he promised to leave the area.

### **5.3 Jerry Potts**

**no date**

**credit: RCMP Museum, Regina, Saskatchewan**

Potts was born about 1840 to a Scottish employee of the American Fur Trading Company and Wamopisi, a Blood Indian of the Blackfoot Confederacy in the northern United States. While still a baby, Jerry's father was murdered and his mother returned to her people, leaving her baby behind with a trader. Badly neglected by the trader, Potts was forced to fend for himself and as a result grew up quiet and independent. Malnutrition and neglect were factors in his personal appearance. He had bowed legs and a stunted stature.

After his foster father's death, Jerry was adopted by a kinder trader who taught the five year old boy to read and write. He was taken along on trading excursions to help him learn the business. In his teens, Potts sought out his mother and lived in a traditional manner. He was readily accepted and eventually became a war leader. Smallpox and the illicit whiskey trade were devastating his people. He left Canada after his mother and brother were killed by a group of drunken men.

Potts rose to prominence when he joined the North West Mounted Police some years later as a scout. He became known as a man who loved danger, excitement and whiskey. His manner of dress also set him apart from others. During his twenty-two years as a scout, Potts played a major role in breaking up the illicit whiskey trade. He was an integral part of the negotiations for Treaty No. 7. As a scout and guide, he was literally indispensable during the early years of the North West Mounted Police. During his career, Potts is credited with saving many lives through peaceful negotiations and also through his expertise and knowledge of the country. He died in the North West Mounted Police hospital at Fort MacLeod of tuberculosis on July 14, 1896.

### **5.4 Louis Riel**

**no date**

**credit: RCMP Museum Collection, Regina, Saskatchewan**

Louis Riel was born at St. Boniface, Manitoba, October 22, 1844. While a young man, he attended the college of Montreal, intent on joining the priesthood. After the death of his father in 1864, he left the seminary and journeyed westward. He spent some time in Chicago and Minnesota.

Riel returned to Red River in 1868 and became active in politics. He helped organize a provisional government in 1869-70 and assumed leadership. He stepped down when the province of Manitoba was created. Forced to flee, he went to the United States, married and lived quietly as a school teacher in Montana. During his absence, he was elected three times to sit in the House of Commons, but was never allowed to fulfil his duty.

The Métis of Saskatchewan invited Riel to return to Canada and help them organize a government. He returned in 1884 and attempted to set up another provisional government. He organized a List of Rights and sent it to the federal government. The answer, carried back by Lawrence Clarke, was that the List of Rights would be answered with bullets and chains for Riel.

Three battles occurred in 1885: Duck Lake, Fish Creek and Batoche. After the defeat at Batoche, Riel surrendered. He was tried, found guilty of high treason and sentenced to hang on October 18, 1885. Appeals were made, but the sentence was carried out in Regina on November 16, 1885.

### **5.5 Gabriel Dumont**

**date: c. 1887**

**credit: U.S.J.B. Bibliotheque Mallet, Woonsocket, R.I.**

Gabriel Dumont was born in the Red River area in 1837. When he was two, the family moved to Fort Pitt where his father worked as a trader. Gabriel's education consisted of learning the ways of the prairie and by age 10 he was fluent in six Indian languages, as well as French. The Dumont family returned to Red River in 1848. During this trip Gabriel received his first gun, in honour of an act of bravery, which he named "le Petit." Dumont took part in the battle of Grand Coteau against the Dakota at age 14. At 21, he married Madeleine Wilke.

During the 1860s and the early 70s, to earn a living, Dumont hunted, trapped and fished. He also set up a ferry and did some farming. In 1873 he was instrumental in establishing the laws of St. Laurent and was elected president of the Council for a one year term. In 1875, when attempting to enforce the laws of St. Laurent, Dumont was accused of taking the law into his own hands. The North West Mounted Police came to St. Laurent and Gabriel was arrested, tried and given a fine.

In 1884, it was decided that Louis Riel should be asked to come and form a provisional government in the Batoche area. Gabriel Dumont and three others went to Montana to ask him to return. Riel accepted and they formed a government upon his arrival in Saskatchewan. Trouble broke out in 1885 and Dumont became the general in charge of the Métis army. They were defeated at Batoche on May 12, 1885.

Gabriel fled to Montana. When his wife died shortly after her arrival in the United States, Dumont joined the Wild West Show for three months. While in the show he was informed that amnesty would be granted to him. He returned to Canada in 1890 and settled down at Gabriel's Crossing in Saskatchewan, where he went back to a life of hunting and fishing. He lived in this manner until his death on May 19, 1906.

### **5.6 Malcolm Norris**

**date: 1956**

**credit: Saskatchewan Archives Board**

Malcolm Norris was born at Edmonton in 1900. His father, John Norris, was a wealthy Scottish settler. His mother was Euphrosine Plante, a Métis of St. Albert. Children from his father's previous marriage were antagonistic to

their Métis step-mother and her children. As a result, the family lived in two separate homes. Malcolm grew up and received his education in St. Albert. Métis heritage and the Resistance of 1885 were familiar topics of discussion in the Norris home.

In his twenties, Norris married, became an avid socialist and began to fight against bigotry and racism. He often introduced himself as "Redskin Norris." He spent five years working for the Hudson's Bay Company until he grew disenchanted with the trading methods of the company. He left the company and spent his next five years trapping and trading.

Political turmoil in the 1930s caused Malcolm to become a strong activist, lobbying for Métis rights and social equality. He joined Jim Brady, Pete Tomkins and Joseph Dion. Together they organized the Alberta Métis Association. When World War II broke out, the organization disbanded and Norris joined the RCAF.

After the war, he went to work for the CCF party in Saskatchewan. He became a strong defender of Métis rights and began to organize another Métis Association. With the ousting of the CCF party in 1964, Norris was dismissed from his job. He worked in Prince Albert as the director of the Indian-Métis Friendship Centre. He continued to fight for Métis rights and, in 1964, started the Métis Association of Northern Saskatchewan.

In 1966, Norris suffered a stroke, but he continued his political career from a wheelchair. Later, a political controversy caused him to withdraw from politics. He moved back to Alberta where, in 1967, he suffered another stroke and died.

Norris is remembered as a brilliant orator and political organizer.

## **5.6 Jim Brady**

**date: 1957**

**credit: Saskatchewan Archives Board**

Jim Brady was born in 1908 at Lake St. Vincent near St. Paul, Alberta. His father was a wealthy storekeeper of Scottish ancestry. His mother, a registered nurse, was Philomena Archange, a Métis. Brady grew up in St. Paul which was the largest Métis community in Alberta. The militant ideologies of the community were to have a tremendous influence on Brady's life.

While he was growing up, the Brady family were strong advocates of Métis identity and social equality. As a young man, Brady was tutored by various politicians, radicals and union supporters. During the 1920s he worked as a labourer and became knowledgeable about the politics of work and the prairies.

In 1930, Brady became a Marxist. Intent on social equality, he joined Malcolm Norris, Pete Tomkins and Joseph Dion in the thirties. Together they formed the Métis Association of Alberta. When war broke out, he was refused entrance into the army because of his Communist affiliations. He continued his political struggles until he was finally accepted into the army in 1943.

After the war, Brady moved to Northern Saskatchewan. He lived in a simple log cabin lined with scholarly books and he worked as a prospector to

support himself. He was reunited with Norris and together they worked to organize the Northern Métis Association. Brady was viewed as the strategist.

In 1967, while on a prospecting expedition with a Cree friend, Brady and his partner disappeared. An extensive RCMP search ensued, but they were never found. Many Northerners believed that the two men were murdered for political reasons.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Why was Cuthbert Grant readily accepted by the inhabitants of the North West and able to become a leader of the Métis so quickly?
2. What were the advantages of the Hudson's Bay Company in appointing Grant "Warden of the Plains" in 1821? What would be some of the disadvantages for the Métis?
3. Why did Grant lose his leadership role in the Métis community when he attempted to enforce the monopolistic trade laws of the Hudson's Bay Company in the 1840's?
4. What are some of the reasons why George Racette, a Métis, would negotiate treaties with the Canadian government on behalf of the Assiniboine?
5. What roles did Jerry Potts fulfil while working as a scout for the North West Mounted Police?
6. Riel became a leader in the Red River Settlement shortly after his return from the east in 1869. Why would Riel be chosen as a leader by the Métis community?
7. Riel was requested to come to Saskatchewan from Montana in 1884 by the Métis and settlers. What were some possible reasons why his services would be needed?
8. The manner in which Gabriel Dumont was raised made him a natural choice for general of the Métis army of 1885. What are some examples which support this statement?
9. How were Malcolm Norris and Jim Brady instrumental in establishing the Métis Association in Saskatchewan?

## **6. People: Women**

### **6.1 The Women of 1885 (Marguerite Riel and Madeleine Dumont)**

**date: 1880s**

**credit: Public Archives of Canada**

The woman in the picture is Marguerite Riel. An American Métis, Marguerite Bellehumeur married Louis Riel in 1882 at St. Peter's Mission, Montana following an earlier prairie marriage. She travelled with Louis to Batoche and, with other women of the area, was drawn into the events of 1885.

Marguerite and her two small children were among the women and children hidden in the caves along the Saskatchewan River during the fighting at Batoche. They were rescued by Gabriel Dumont and his wife

Madeleine. Following Riel's arrest and Dumont's escape, the two women shared a similar fate.

Madeleine Dumont stayed with her father-in-law after the fall of Batoche. Isidore Dumont died shortly after his son's departure. Madeleine was constantly harassed and threatened by soldiers. Weak and ill, she left for the United States to be with her husband. She died in Louistown, Minnesota six months after the Battle of Batoche.

Marguerite Riel lost her third child in a premature birth during Riel's imprisonment. She was taken to the Red River Settlement where she resided with her mother-in-law. Weakened by her experiences and grieving for her husband, Marguerite died six months after Riel's hanging. She was twenty-five years old.

The starvation, illness and exhaustion experienced by the women, children and elderly claimed more lives in 1885 than the actual fighting. The numbers have never been calculated.

"O my God, if it be Thy will, please help us to raise our little children ...  
O my God, save my dear wife."

Louis Riel

Regina, 1885

## **6.2 Women Making a Canoe**

**no date**

**credit: Public Archives of Canada**

This photograph illustrates the importance of women's work in the economy of the community. These women are using spruce roots to sew birchbark sheets to the wooden frame of a canoe. Large tasks, such as the building of canoes, were frequently divided, with men doing one portion of the job and the women doing another.

## **6.3 Women Packers**

**no date**

**credit: Public Archives of Canada**

This photograph shows that women were also involved in labour-intensive jobs such as the packing of freight. Indian and Métis families frequently worked side by side in various occupations.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. What role would Madeleine Dumont and Marguerite Riel have played in the North West Resistance of 1885?
2. Why is it possible that more lives were lost in the aftermath of 1885 than were lost in the actual battles?
3. What are some of the occupations in the economy of the fur trade which involved women?
4. It has been said that women were vital to the success of the fur trade. What are possible reasons which would make them vital?

## **7. Political Events**

## **7.1 Provisional Government of 1870**

**date: 1870**

**credit: Manitoba Public Archives**

In 1869-1870, Louis Riel established a provisional government at Red River. The provisional government was to act as a temporary measure until a more permanent governing body could be established. While in power, the council presented a List of Rights to the federal government of Canada.

The List of Rights led to the creation of Manitoba as a province in the Dominion of Canada. Louis Riel and his council stepped down, but Riel was exiled for ordering the death of Thomas Scott by firing squad, an act committed while he was in power.

This scene of Riel and his Council was taken in a local hotel. The owner of the hotel, Robert O'Lone, assembled the council in order to celebrate their success.

### **Provisional Government of 1870:**

Back row: (L to R) Bonnet Tromage, Pierre de Lorme, Thomas Bunn, Xavier Page, Baptiste Beauchemin, Baptiste Tourond, Thomas Spence.

Middle row: (L to R) Pierre Poitras, John Bruce, Louis Riel, W. B. O'Donoghue, Francois Dauphenais

Front row: (L to R) Robert O'Lone, Paul Proux

## **7.2 Scrip**

**no date**

**credit: Glenbow Museum**

The term scrip was extracted from the word 'description.' Scrip is a certificate which grants the person named on the scrip the right to receive that which is described on the scrip. The corporation granting the scrip must have the resources available to pay the bearer of the certificate.

Scrip was first used in North America by the United States government. They used it as a means of distributing land to settlers. By choosing unclaimed parcels of unoccupied land, it was felt that these settlers would promote rapid settlement. Scrip has been issued to different groups for various reasons. An example is the land scrip received by the volunteers of Wolseley's expedition in the Red River.

As a clause in the *Manitoba Act* of 1870, Métis people received 1.4 million acres of land. The method chosen by the government to distribute the land was scrip. The original agreement was that every Métis born prior to 1870 was entitled to scrip or promise of land. Land scrip and money scrip were issued. Land scrip entitled the person named on the certificate to the amount of land on the certificate (photo shot, 240 acres). Money scrip entitled the bearer of the note to receive the cash value of the amount named (photo shot, \$240). Both types of scrip were issued to the Métis.

Land speculators, lawyers, bankers and syndicates moved in and proceeded to obtain scrip from the Métis. They purchased it outright, used forgery or fraud, delayed settlement and even hired people to impersonate

Métis applicants. It is believed that the delay tactics used in issuing scrip were primary causes of the 1885 Resistance.

The majority of Métis who received scrip were, in one way or another, convinced to part with their land holding. The position taken by the Métis of Saskatchewan is that the issuance of scrip did not extinguish Métis Aboriginal rights and was unfair because very few Métis actually benefited.

### **7.3 Metis Prisoners of 1885**

**date: 1885**

**credit: RCMP Museum, Regina, Saskatchewan**

After the fall of Batoche, Métis and Indians who took part in the Resistance were arrested. Eleven Indians were tried for murder: three received prison terms and eight were hanged at Battleford.

Of the Métis who participated in the Battle of Batoche, eighteen were arrested, tried and found guilty of treason. They received prison terms up to seven years. This photograph, taken at the Regina Courthouse, shows them handcuffed together.

L – R: Johnny Sansregret, Pierriche Parranteau (sic) (famous buffalo hunter), Pierre Gariepy, Phillipe Garnot (secretary), Albert Monkman, Pierre Vandale, Baptiste Vandale, Touissaint Lucier (reputed to be the strongest man in the North West), Maxime Dubois, Jimus Short, Tourond, Emanuel Champagne.

### **7.4 Trial of Louis Riel**

**date: 1885**

**credit: Public Archives of Canada**

After Louis Riel's surrender at Batoche, he was taken to Regina for trial and charged with high treason, the penalty for which was death. His council, who were also arrested, were convinced to plead guilty to treason-felony, which was punishable by a jail term. This enabled the government to separate Riel's case from the rest of the Métis who were arrested.

Riel was originally ordered to stand trial in Winnipeg, but this location was subsequently changed to Regina. If Riel had been tried in Winnipeg, because Manitoba had achieved provincial status, he would have been entitled to a jury consisting of twelve men, six French-speaking and six English-speaking. Instead, when Riel was tried in Regina, which was still part of the North West Territories, the jury consisted of six English-speaking men only. Arguments that Riel was an American citizen were disallowed. His lawyers pleaded for innocence by reason of insanity, but Riel would have none of it. He was found guilty by the jury, who recommended mercy. However, Riel was sentenced to hang. After two unsuccessful appeals, Riel was executed on November 16, 1885 in Regina.

Later, when one of the jurors was interviewed, he remarked that Riel was tried for treason, but was hanged for the murder of Thomas Scott, an execution carried out by the provisional government of 1870.

### Discussion Questions

1. What does the term "provisional government" mean?
2. Why did Riel and the people of the Red River Settlement set up a Provisional Government in 1869/70?
3. Why did Riel and the people of the Saskatchewan district set up a Provisional Government in 1885?
4. What do you think the juror meant when he said "Riel was tried for treason, but was hanged for the murder of Thomas Scott?"
5. What is the origin of the term "scrip?" What is the meaning?
6. Why was scrip not a successful method of settling Métis land claims?
7. List some forms of scrip used in contemporary society.

### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. The environment influences the type of homes that people live in. Research how the environment influences the kinds of homes people use.
2. Study the waterway systems of Canada. What would be the most practical route from Montreal to Western Canada? From Hudson's Bay to Western Canada?
3. Research how the original Red River cart trails became the routes used by our present highway systems.
4. Using the diagram as a guide, explain how cultural integration occurred in the following areas: dance, clothing, farming, hunting, politics.
5. Take a field trip and visit some of the historical sites in Saskatchewan.
  - Regina: The RCMP Museum  
The Trial of Louis Riel (a play that is put on every year at Government house in Regina during the months of July and August)
  - Fort Carlton: Reconstructed Hudson's Bay Company Post
  - Duck Lake: Duck Lake Regional Historic Museum
  - Prince Albert: Prince Albert Historical Museum

St. Laurent:	Log Church and other historical sites
Fish Creek:	National historic Site
Batoche:	Batoche National Historic Site
Battleford:	Battleford National Historic Site
Fort Pitt:	Provincial Historic Site

For more information on these and other historic sites in Saskatchewan, contact:

Tourism Saskatchewan  
2103 – 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Regina, Sask.  
S4P 3V7

6. Produce your own music video or slide tape show. Select a piece of music or appropriate visuals to portray some aspects of Métis lifestyle.
7. Do a simulation interview with a famous Métis person (Riel, Dumont, Lepine). The class could work in groups to outline possible questions and answers.
8. Make a Métis sash. An audio-visual kit on how to finger weave is available from the Gabriel Dumont Institute.
9. As a class project, research various areas of Métis lifestyle and create murals depicting the scenarios.
10. Many communities in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta were established by the Métis. Research to find out which communities were established by the Métis and show their location on a map.
11. Take a field trip to gather natural materials which could be incorporated into functional art.

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