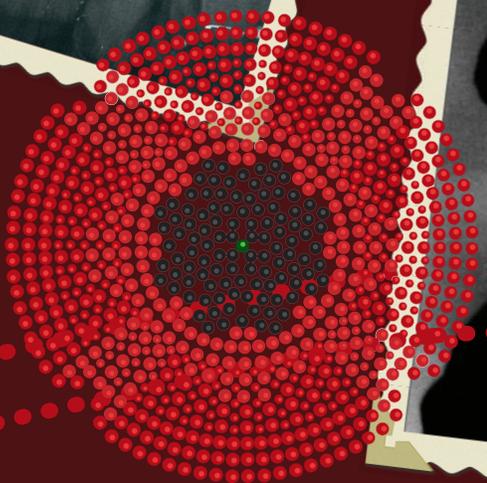
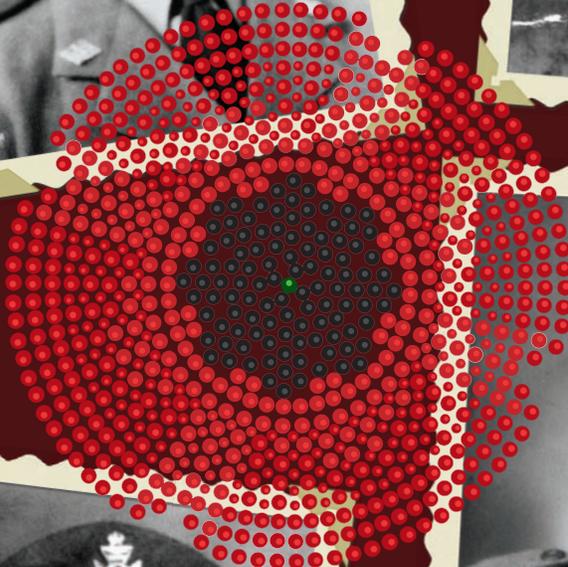


# New Breed

MAGAZINE



Summer Fall 2007

# New Breed

MAGAZINE

is a publication of Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research in partnership with the Métis Nation - Saskatchewan.

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The Gabriel Dumont Institute  
2-604 22nd Street West  
Saskatoon, SK S7M 5W1  
Telephone: 306.657.5716  
Facsimile: 306.244.0252

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**GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE**  
of Native Studies and Applied Research

## Editors:

Darren R. Préfontaine  
darren.prefontaine@gdi.gdins.org  
Karon Shmon  
karon.shmon@gdi.gdins.org  
David Morin  
david.morin@gdi.gdins.org  
Janessa Temple  
janessa.temple@gdi.gdins.org

## Editorial Board:

Geordy McCaffrey, Executive Director  
Karon Shmon, Publishing Coordinator

## Contributing Writers:

Boyer, Mary Rose  
Hudy, Rose  
Moine, Louise  
Morin, David  
Nicholat, Christa  
Préfontaine, Darren  
Temple, Janessa

## Front Cover Pictures:

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# Clementine Longworth (1924-2007)

Article by Rose Hudy

My mother, Clementine Longworth, was the daughter of Alex and Adele Flamand. Originally from Crooked Lake, Saskatchewan, she was born on March 24, 1924. With her husband, George Henry, Clementine farmed at Crescent Lake, Saskatchewan and raised five children: two girls and three boys. She loved her farm and children but was a very strict parent. Mom, or "Clem" as she was affectionately known, was the "boss" while my father George was rather timid.

Clementine was a hardworking, outdoorsy person. She milked ten cows and sold cream, and with George, always had pigs, chickens, horses and cattle. Clementine also had a large garden which enabled her to can a great deal in the fall. Life on the farm changed terribly one day when she lost one of her children in an accident. After this terrible event, she decided to move the family to Yorkton, Saskatchewan. She started work for the CO-OP store in Yorkton—a position that she held for many years. Later, the family moved to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan where Clementine worked as a seamstress and George worked in a laundry. George passed on; however, Clementine worked at this position for twenty-five years.

Clementine was committed to her family and to her people. She had no schooling and spoke barely any English. However, she was very determined to learn English. Clementine was also a strong advocate for Métis rights. She often went to Métis Society organizing meetings held in schools and churches, and was involved in preserving the Michif-Cree language. She was also a very spiritual person who attended church regularly.

Later in life, Clementine married Bill Longworth. However, after a few years of marriage she was widowed once again. It was at this point, at 75-years of age, that Clementine started attending evening school to obtain an education—something that was denied to her as a child. To Clementine, education was very important. After a few years, Clementine eventually received her Grade 4 education. She was finally able to read. For her efforts and dedication, she was awarded a gold medal. At her eulogy one of her grandsons commented on how proud he was that his *Kokum* went to school in her retirement.

During her life, Clementine travelled a great deal: visiting Hawaii and Greece and many other places. Eventually, she took sick and had to discontinue her education, and she had to give up her car, which was hard to do because she enjoyed her independence. Clementine passed away in the spring of 2007 after a long illness.



Clementine Longworth

# June 21<sup>st</sup> National Aboriginal Day Celebration at Batoche!

Article and Photographs by Janessa Temple

National Aboriginal Day is celebrated across North America and in many different ways. The Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) and the Batoche National Historic Site (BNHS) celebrated the day together with many engaging presentations and activities. Crowds gathered as the morning commenced to the pulse of the drum carried out by the One Arrow Smoking Sage Drummers.

The site was alive with visitors and school groups from across the province. The first of many activities was a poster signing and tour of the Caron Home. GDI, in collaboration with Canadian Heritage and the BNHS, worked to restore, revitalize, and bring life to the Caron Home during the course of the spring. It was with great pleasure that the public was able to view, learn the significance of the home, and have their National Aboriginal Day Poster, depicting the Caron home, signed by artist Aleah Anseth. The official unveiling and re-opening of the Caron Home took place on July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

The afternoon picked up with high energy and quick feet from the W.P. Bate School jiggers. The dancers entertained the crowds and gave way to a series of book launches. The first was the launch of *Metis Legacy II*. Lawrence Barkwell and Elder Anne Acco-Carriere shared excerpts from the book and acknowledged the work from the many contributors. Next was the launch of *Fiddle Dancer*. Educators and authors Wilfred Burton and Anne Patton proudly read the story of Nolin and how his Moushoom taught him to jig. Joseph Fauchon was thrilled to show the audience a finished set of the *Métis Alphabet Book Study Prints* which originate from his first publication, the *Métis Alphabet Book*. Last but by no means least, Jeanne Pelletier allowed a sneak peak into her newest publication, *The Story of the Rabbit Dance*, set to debut in the middle of November. To conclude the festivities, a concert was held by a well known Métis Fiddler, John Arcand. John and his wife Vicki had each and every one of the listeners tapping their toes or dancing the jig.



Authors Anne Patton and Wilfred Burton.



# Caron Home Re-opens to the Public

Article and Photographs by David Morin

The Caron Home at the Batoche National Historic Site (BNHS), was re-opened to the public on July 20, 2007. BNHS in partnership with the Gabriel Dumont Institute, restored the interior of the house to two of the home's important time periods. The front of the house, built after the original was burned down in the Northwest Resistance of 1885, reflects approximately 1910, while the addition to the house portrays the 1960s.

When you enter the home, you'll find historical photographs of the Caron family on the wall as well as an extensive family photo album, along with items historically found in homes of that period such as a beautiful hooked rug. Teacher kits were produced to be used in the home as well as to loan for schools, focusing on Métis culture and arts, showcasing finger-weaving, rug-hooking, beadwork, and dance.

After many speeches talking about the importance of the home and Métis culture, Ronald Caron, a descendent of Jean Caron, and the Honourable Carol Skelton, Minister of National Revenue untied a Métis sash to officially re-open the Caron Home to the public. A painting by artist Armand Paquette depicting life at the home was also unveiled and can be viewed at the Caron Home.



*From top to bottom: Ronald Caron and Minister Skelton; crowd outside the Caron Home; Ronald Caron and Minister Skelton.*

# Back to Batoche Festival Celebrates 37 Years of Continued Success

Article and Photographs by David Morin



Hundreds made the journey this year to celebrate Métis history and culture at the Back to Batoche festival site, filling up the grounds with campers and packing the grandstand for another year of great entertainment.



The four-day festival held many competitions including those for jigging, square dancing, fiddling, and bannock baking. Tyler Hoffarth amazed the crowd with his big book of magic tricks, and the Rababoo Puppet Theatre put on a great children's show. Other children's activities included an activity tent where they learned how to finger weave and do silk embroidery (in addition to many other cultural activities). The horseshoe competition was in full swing during the weekend as well. Donny Parenteau performed during the evening dances to the enjoyment of all. Parks Canada offered wagon rides throughout the weekend which brought visitors to the Batoche National Historic Site where they were provided with a great deal of insightful information regarding the 1885 Resistance. Sunday began with Mass and the processional walk to the gravesite at the National Historic site, and ended with the jigging and square-dancing competition finals.



The planners of this year's festival did an excellent job and we all look forward to being a part of the 38<sup>th</sup> annual Back to Batoche festival next year!

*Top Right: Rababoo Puppet Theatre has a captive audience.*

*Middle: Tyler Hoffarth and volunteer.*

*Bottom: A packed house for the Grandstand entertainment!*

# ***Quiet Revolution West: The Rebirth of Métis Nationalism.* John Weinstein, with a forward by the Right Honourable Paul Martin**

**Calgary: Fifth House, 2007, 246 pp., maps and photographs, paper, \$25.95.**

Review by Darren R. Préfontaine

Initially, movements for social, economic, and political change among marginalized peoples come from the grassroots and not from their elites. After 1885, the Métis were perhaps the most marginalized people in Canada. This social, economic, and political marginalization lasted decades and bred a whole host of social problems. Not surprisingly, bread and butter issues were the main focus of the Métis activist movement from the 1960s to '80s. Within Saskatchewan, the Métis grassroots—led by such strong political leaders as James Sinclair, Rod Bishop, and James Durocher and an intelligentsia led by Howard Adams and Maria Campbell—resisted the Canadian state's neo-colonial policies and the overtly and latently racist attitudes held by the larger non-Aboriginal population. The end result of this community-based social activist movement ensured the development and implementation of Métis-specific social justice, economic and education programs such as the Gabriel Dumont Institute.

The shift away from a broadly-based Métis political movement towards a form of executive federalism occurred in the 1980s with the creation of the Métis National Council (MNC). The MNC became a new parallel federal structure that concentrated power in the hands of the presidents of the various provincial Métis organizations rather than individual community members. This move away from grassroots politics towards executive federalism in which political elites determine the Métis' political agenda closely mirrors the evolution of Canadian

federalism in which the Prime Minister and the Premiers guide and direct the national agenda. Nevertheless, despite this concentration of power in the hands of a few leaders, the creation of the MNC made Métis issues national in scope and provided Métis activists and politicians the opportunity to represent the Métis Nation in national and international venues.

The new Métis nationalist movement that emerged in the 1980s was frustrated by the Métis' jurisdictional limbo. While the Inuit and Status First Nations were a federal responsibility and received money from the federal government, through the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, for a wide array of social programs, neither the federal nor provincial governments had little desire to assume a fiduciary relationship for the Métis. As a result, tri-partite negotiations between the Métis Nation and the federal and provincial governments almost always led to failure or were plagued by vague promises and inaction. In response to bureaucratic obfuscation, the Métis political agenda focused on the implementation of the Métis' Aboriginal rights across the Métis Homeland through litigation and direct negotiation with First Ministers, which in turn necessitated the growth of a strong national Métis government and lobby.

This book uses a term very familiar in the Canadian historical and political discourse, "the Quiet Revolution." The term was coined in the 1960s when the Québécois shed their docile French-Canadian identity, abandoned Church

control in their lives, and worked towards modernizing the Québec state as the guarantor of their national identity. This "révolution tranquille" meant leaving behind "la grande noirceur" or the "great darkness," embracing modernity and "catching up" (*rattrapage*) to the rest of North America in terms of social mores and social and economic policies. The term "Quiet Revolution" has, in fact, become clichéd in Canadian discourse. Writers have used it to describe the "enlightened paternalism" of the Ross Thatcher regime towards First Nations in Saskatchewan in the 1960s<sup>1</sup> and even the transformation of English-Canadian ethnic nationalism in the 1950s and '60s to the civic non-ethnic nationalism of present-day English-speaking Canada.<sup>2</sup>

Does this subtitle work for the Métis? Did the Métis undergo a "Quiet Revolution" like their Québécois cousins? Did their nationalism become reinvigorated? John Weinstein— a long time advisor to the MNC and a close friend of Clément Chartier, the former MNC president— argues that it did. During the period of study, the late 1970s to the 2005 *Kelowna Accord*, Weinstein argues that the Métis moved away from a focus on local social justice issues and worked towards a nationally-based rights agenda whereby the Métis Nation as a whole and not individual provincial organizations would lobby and litigate to ensure the implementation of the Métis' harvesting rights and the eventual development of self-governing Métis communities and a parallel Métis federal government. With the hard fought inclusion of the Métis in *The 1982 Canada Act*, the Métis now had a national profile that they had not possessed since the 1885 Resistance. This enhanced profile led to a failed attempt to have Métis rights further

entrenched in the constitution, the 1992 *Métis Nation Accord* (1992), which died stillborn with the defeated *Charlottetown Accord* Referendum. It also contributed to the more recent national Aboriginal social justice agreement between the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, *The Kelowna Accord* (2005), which the Harper government scuttled upon its election in 2006.

Nationalism is a mission-based ethos. Every nationalist has a mission: for a Québec nationalist it is the creation of an independent Québec; for a Canadian nationalist, it is for a strong and independent Canada, free of American dominance; and for a Métis nationalist it is the creation of Métis self-government across the Métis Homeland in which the Métis are fully enumerated, have jurisdictional control over specific lands (such as the Alberta Métis Settlements or the land claims for northwestern Saskatchewan or Winnipeg, which are both in the court system), and have full harvesting rights wherever they reside within the Canadian federation.

This book is well written and is an entertaining read. It includes a brief introduction to the history of the Métis nationalist movement from Cuthbert Grant to the present. Weinstein convincingly argues, largely through secondary sources, that Métis activism did not die with the fall of Batoche on May 12, 1885 but continued through the dark days of the Road Allowance period. In the 1930s and '40s, the Métis continued to organize and worked, among other things, to establish the Alberta Métis Settlements in the 1930s—the only legislated Métis land base in Canada. Weinstein really begins to tell his story in the 1970s—a period when provincial Métis organizations started to grow and when the Métis were starting to develop a national profile during the process to repatriate the Canadian Constitution. As a result, the book is

at its strongest when Weinstein focuses on the key events leading to the creation of the modern Métis political identity including the fight to be included in the Canadian Constitution, the tumultuous political split between the Métis and Non-Status Indians, the creation of the MNC and all the various court cases leading to the precedent-setting Powley ruling in 2003, which provided the courts and future Métis litigants with “tests” to determine whether or not Métis harvesting rights can be implemented in a particular locale.

This book fills in a key void in the literature and will be used and appreciated for a very long time. Other authors such as Joe Sawchuck focus on the provincial Métis organizations; however, very few writers focus on the national scene, particularly the role of the MNC in advancing Métis rights and nationhood. Weinstein weaves a rich narrative that brings to life the titanic struggles of James Sinclair, Elmer Ghostkeeper, Harry Daniels, Yvon Chartrand, and Clément Chartier to advance the Métis rights agenda. Weinstein pays special tribute to Clément Chartier (the book reads like a hagiography), who more than anybody else worked to create the MNC and worked to ensure the creation of a Métis rights agenda across the Métis Homeland.

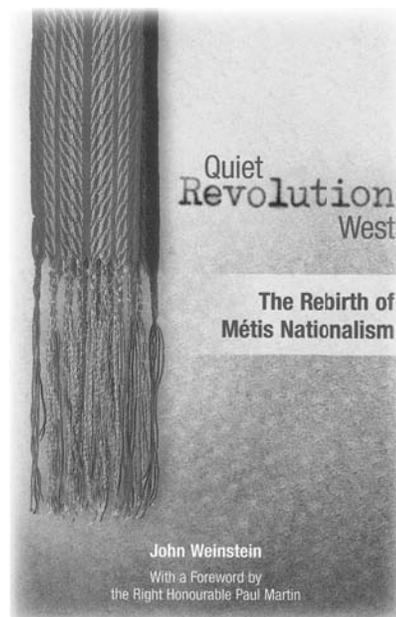
There are few weaknesses with this book. Perhaps Weinstein could have mentioned the role of Paul Chartrand in advancing the cause of the Métis Nation in international venues (he is the Métis Nation’s Ambassador to the United Nations). Furthermore, the discussion on the reemergence of Métis national identity could have benefited with a larger discussion of the Métis’ intellectual and cultural awakening. True, there is brief mention of Maria Campbell and others, and of course the oft-quoted “My people will sleep for a hundred years” statement attributed to Louis Riel is included.

However, Métis sense of self also comes from artistic and intellectual expression and the Métis certainly have provided an eclectic and talented body of artists and intellectuals including: Janice Acoose, Emma LaRocque, Olive Dickason, Maria Campbell, Gregory Scofield, Warren Cariou, Bob Boyer, John Arcand, Andrea Menard, Gill Cardinal, Beatrice Culleton, and Marilyn Dumont. To borrow another term from Québec’s Quiet Revolution, the Métis are undergoing an *épanouissement* or intellectual and cultural flowering after generations of marginalization and societal neglect. Weinstein could have included more about how Métis artists and intellectuals have contributed to a stronger Métis identity—for many their talents resonate more strongly than the lifework of any politician.

#### (Endnotes)

<sup>1</sup>James M. Pitsula, “The Thatcher Government in Saskatchewan and Treaty Indians, 1964-1971: The Quiet Revolution.” *Saskatchewan History* 48, no. 1 (1996): 3-17.

<sup>2</sup>Jose Igartua. *The Other Quiet Revolution: National Identities in English Canada, 1945-71*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007.



# **Nanabosho & Porcupine**

**Joe McLellan and Matrine McLellan, Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications Inc., 2006.**

Review by Christa Nicholat

"You see, in Nature, the porcupine needs to be protected from bigger animals, and the quills do a fine job of that. I'll tell you a story about why porcupines have quills while we work on some quill designs."

While nokomis introduces her granddaughter, Nonie, to the art of quillwork, she also imparts to her knowledge of how the porcupine was given its quills by the Anishinabe trickster hero, Nanabosho.

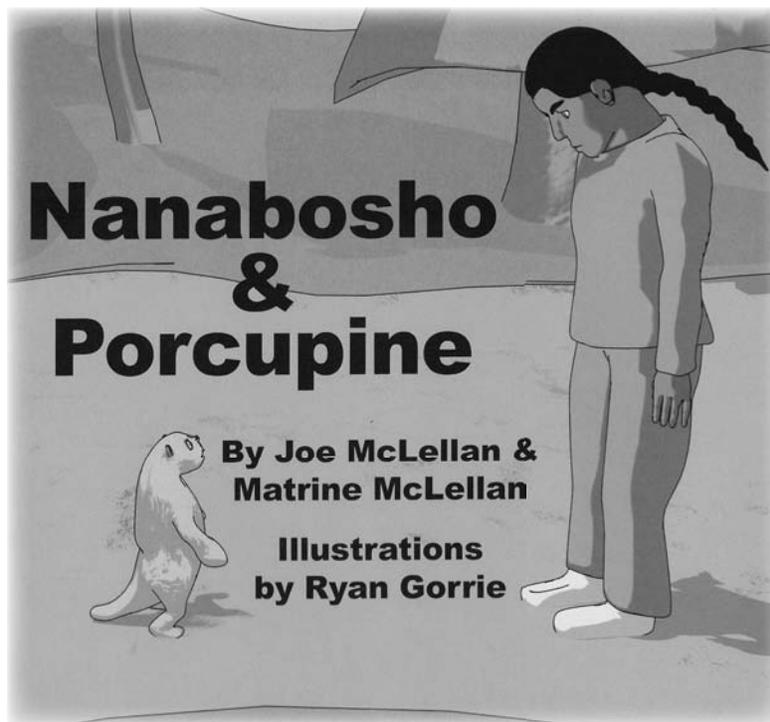
One day, little Porcupine wanted to play with Nanabosho, but Nanabosho laughs at her and tells her she is too small. He walks off into the forest where he comes upon a bear cub. He decides he is going to have some fun with him, and begins poking him and pulling on his ears. Suddenly, Mother Bear appears and

chases Nanabosho, around the trees, through a lake, and over a hill. Just as she is closing in on him, little Porcupine crosses Mother Bear's path, sending her tumbling into a bramble bush. Grateful for her help, Nanabosho decides that little Porcupine needs something to cover and protect her, giving the porcupine the beautiful quills that she has today.

Using oral tradition, McLellan and McLellan present young readers with a lively tale that teaches lessons, entertains, and keeps history alive.

As well, the visual narrative provided by Ryan Gorrie's charming colour illustrations serve to heighten the tension and excitement of the storyline.

This delightful book reminds us that even our smallest of friends can be a big help!



# Clarence Campeau Development Fund Celebrates 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Article and Photographs by David Morin

Hall "D" at Saskatoon's Prairieland Exhibition Centre was packed on the evening of September 20<sup>th</sup> to celebrate the Clarence Campeau Development Fund's (CCDF) 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. John Lagimodiere of Eagle Feather News, along with "Ernestine" Maureen Belanger, performed the Master of Ceremony duties for an evening full of entertainment and speeches celebrating the success of the fund. John Arcand, Master of the Métis Fiddle, performed with Vicki Arcand accompanying on guitar and Lionel Gilberston on piano. He also made the evening a memorable one by jamming with youth fiddlers, Celine Hounjet and Cris Tootosis. The Oskayak Song & Dance Troupe Jiggers from St. Mary's school performed a few different dances to the crowd's enjoyment. Brent Potskin from Alberta made it to the event to perform some expert jigging including the "Red River Jig" and the "Sash Dance."

The CCDF was established by the Métis Society of Saskatchewan Inc. and the Government of Saskatchewan in 1997 to improve the economic circumstances of Saskatchewan's Métis by providing funding for business development, community economic development, development of management skills, and assistance to new and existing Métis owned businesses.

After 10 years, the CCDF has posted some incredible numbers. They have helped to directly and indirectly create over 4000 of jobs in over 100 Saskatchewan communities. They have approved over \$18,000,000 in repayable and non-repayable contributions for the creation of new Métis businesses and the expansion and renovation of existing Métis businesses in the province. Congratulations CCDF, the Métis community will be looking forward to many more years of success!



*Left: Back Row—Christine McGowan, Steve Danners.  
Middle Row—Ryan Patterson, Monica Brunet, Georgette Nicolas.*

*Front Row—Rebecca Krahn, Roland Duplessis.  
Left: Cris Tootosis, Celine Hounjet, John Arcand.*



# First Nations Involvement at the Battle of Batoche

Article by Darren R. Préfontaine

Recently, there has been a spirited debate about First Nations involvement in the Battle of Batoche (May 9-12, 1885), particularly in the Aboriginal monthly newspaper, *Eagle Feather News*, as well as the *Saskatoon StarPhoenix* and CBC Radio Saskatchewan. Some argue that the First Nations didn't fight at Batoche, while others maintain that they fought alongside the Métis. In all fact, approximately 60 First Nations men took part in this battle, out of a total Métis-First Nations force of 300. That means that 20% of the soldiers on the Métis side were actually First Nations men. It is also important to note that these First Nations men were not all coerced by the Métis to fight (as is argued by some academics). Many Métis had close family ties with the local Cree and Dakota including Gabriel Dumont whose cousin, Vital Cayol, from the One Arrow Reserve, took part in fighting. Some local Dakota fought with the Métis out of respect of their alliance which dated from the 1850s.

The First Nations and Métis, however, were not involved in a formal military alliance during the 1885 Resistance. The myth of a full scale First Nations and Métis uprising against their common colonizer was wrongly propagated by generations of Canadian historians including George F. Stanley and Donald Creighton. The First Nations had their own grievances regarding the recently negotiated treaties and the federal government's callous abandonment of its fiduciary obligation to ensure that their terms were honoured. When Pitikwahanapiwiyn (Poundmaker)'s warriors fought against the Canadian militia at the Battle of Cutknife Hill (May

2, 1885), they did so out of frustration with the federal government's failure to honour the Treaties as well as a general feeling of helplessness, but not out of solidarity for the Métis cause.

Government officials such as Lieutenant-Governor Edgar Dewdney and the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Hayter Reed, used the sporadic involvement of First Nations men at Frog Lake, Cut Knife Hill, Battleford, and Batoche to brutally suppress all First Nations following the resistance's conclusion. For instance, in the short-term, eight First Nations men were executed in Battleford, and First Nations leaders such as Mistahimaskwa (Big Bear) and Pitikwahanapiwiyn (even though they didn't want war) were imprisoned and became broken men and died before their time. In the long run, the repression included the introduction of the infamous Pass System, the growth of the residential school system, and a full-scale assault on First Nations' languages, cultures, spiritual systems, and lifeways.

For more information about First Nations involvement in 1885, please consult: [http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/~batoche/docs/proof\\_en\\_first\\_nations\\_1885.pdf](http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/~batoche/docs/proof_en_first_nations_1885.pdf)





# The Battle of Batoche



PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF BATOCHÉ, May 1885.



The Battle of Batoche was fought over three days from May 9 to May 12, 1885. Led by Louis Riel and General Dumont, the Métis and First Nations people led by Louis Riel and General Dumont defeated the Canadian forces led by Major General Pasqua's Militia numbered over 800.

On the first day of fighting, Middleton had planned to attack the Métis and retreat on the night. The steamship *Northwest*, fortified by artillery, was to proceed along the river while Middleton would attack overland with the remainder of his men. The strategy failed when the Métis learned a ferry came which disabled the *Northwest*.

The best tactical move was to retreat from the Métis who effectively held their positions. The Métis and Indians held their own the first three days of fighting. The British-Saskatoon force continued to bombard the Métis positions with their four six-pounder cannons and tried to take the Métis positions with their Gatling gun borrowed from the U.S. military. In achieving their position through the first three days, the Métis and Indians were forced to surrender of their stores of ammunition.

May 12 was the decisive day of the battle. It began when Middleton, equipped with one nine-pounder, the Gatling gun and 150 men, advanced on the Métis (the jets). The action was meant to draw the Métis out of their pits around the church to the north, where the Gatling gun was positioned. Following this tactic failed, Middleton withdrew to his camp. Unwilling to lose, the Canadian had to halt around the purpose. The Métis had been driven to the north accepting a major offensive there.

Shortly later the Métis, under Lieutenant Colonel Withers, broke through the Canadian lines from near the church. Due to the overwhelming numbers and the fact that the Métis were ordered to fight north and retreat from their guns the battle ended in retreat. The Métis and Indians escaped. The gun remained in the hands of the Canadian. When the battle ended, there were more than 30 dead from both sides. Those who had not died were captured and sent to the west.

## The Death of Marcile Gratton (1875-1885)

The tragedy and the heroism of Marcile's death is recounted in the diary of William F. Stewart, one of General Middleton's soldiers at Batoche. He is described in Marcile's writings as a brave white girl. The entry for May 12, 1885 reads:

There were many incidents of heroism during this first charge of the 12th day of May 1885. One was when little Marcile Gratton, a French-Canadian girl aged ten, ran across our line of fire and was shot dead on the doorway of one of the houses. She wanted to be with her mother. Our boys gathered round the little dead thing as she lay by her French mother's arms, who kneeling on the dirt looked for as she had when a baby, trying to get her to speak. She couldn't believe that her child was dead.

Suddenly a figure ran over to break away from among the group of prisoners, then under guard, 'barbed' up the street. Barbed and as if determined to proceed like a panther through the crowd, pointing our rifle right and left but to come to the mother and the little dead girl. He stood for a moment looking down at them. His long hair had half covering his face. Then dropping to his knees he embraced the little daughter's fair curls, reverently. 'Oh your true nation - oh mine'.

He passed his other arm about his wife's shoulder and the tears falling to his eyes dropped on the little girl's dead hand. The group of soldiers looking on were deeply moved to the name that was being passed at their feet. 'It's never let them keep Batoche then to have lost one half of that poor little girl,' one soldier was heard to say.

The father ran over to his feet, wanting his father with to him. He took his little Marcile in his arms and they slowly made their way towards the setting sun and the night, where a few hours ago we were fighting our way toward the finish of the campaign. Back to the back to death.



# Duck Lake



The Battle of Duck Lake is the name given to the conflict between Métis warriors and the forces of the Canadian government. This event signaled the beginning of the resistance movement in the North West. The battle occurred March 26, 1885.

Led by North-West Mounted Police superintendent Lenr Crozier, a mixed force of policemen and Prince Albert Volunteers equipped with a seven-pounder cannon marched from Fort Carlton on March 25.

After meeting both sides sent representatives to negotiate a settlement, but a brawl erupted and the Métis representatives, among them Gale and Dumont's brother, were killed when Crozier's men were ordered to attack.

The Canadians elected to charge, wading into the deep snow, they were met by heavy fire from Métis snipers. The attack failed and Crozier ordered his men to retreat. The Prince Albert Volunteers suffered the most casualties as they had most caught by the Métis snipers in open country. Despite Dumont's urging to finish off the retreating Canadians, Riel intervened and prevented more blood from being shed.

## The Battle of Fish Creek



The Battle of Fish Creek, fought April 24, 1885 at Fish Creek, in what is now Saskatchewan, was a major Métis victory over the Canadian forces attempting to put down the Métis resistance in the North West.

General Frederick Middleton, leading a considerable Canadian Field Force from Fort Qu'Appelle on April 19, Middleton was advancing upstream from Clarke's Crossing along the South Saskatchewan River when he fell into an ambush by Métis warriors commanded by Gabriel Dumont. The Métis assaulted Middleton's men with a devastating blast of gunfire before withdrawing into cover and restricting themselves to sniper fire in order to conserve ammunition.

With his force divided on opposite banks of the river, Middleton was unable to bring his superior numbers to bear. The two artillery batteries opened fire on the Métis having little effect; however the Canadians did succeed in driving away the Métis snipers from the trees before their numbers could be added to the battle.

The Métis warriors inflicted heavy casualties upon the enemy, and Middleton, discouraged by those casualties opted for retreat. Weeks later, after news reached Middleton of the Cree victory over Colonel Crozier who had been issued the borrowed Gatling gun at Cuthbert Hill, Middleton embarked once more on what would be the decisive action against Batoche.



If you have any information relating to the list of families, please contact Lawrie Barkwell at [lbarkwell@mmf.mb.ca](mailto:lbarkwell@mmf.mb.ca).

# Symposium 2007 – Preserving Aboriginal Heritage: Technical and Traditional Approaches

Article by Janessa Temple Photograph by Aylssa Becker

The Canadian Conservation Institute was host to the 2007 Symposium in Ottawa, Ontario during the last week of September. Library and Archives Canada shared their facility to conduct a conference that provided Aboriginal people and conservation specialists an opportunity to learn from one another. The themes and sessions focused on mutual learning, respect, collaboration, technical and traditional approaches, and enhancing capacity. Participants were also given the opportunity to attend practical training workshops that would aid in the care of Aboriginal collections and objects.

Out of respect for the Algonquin territory and to honour the land, each day began with an opening prayer and smudge from Local Elders. There were different themes applied to each day and the presentations were conducted accordingly. The themes included: mutual learning, respect and ethics, collaboration and best practices, and enhancing capacity.

There was an important balance

between preserving culture and developing methods to accomplish the preservation of culture. This dual emphasis was demonstrated by academic presentations including research and personal interest. Moreover by the Elders were able to incorporate the importance of traditional approaches and share with the audience knowledge of their culture. The combination of the two spectrums enabled the crowd to experience a holistic approach to preserving Aboriginal Heritage.

Aside from the oral presentations there were also poster sessions, workshops, a tradeshow, discussion groups, a Native Fusion Dinner, and tours available for the participants. David Morin and Janessa Temple represented the Gabriel Dumont Institute and the Métis Community by conducting a poster session and workshop on the *Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture* website ([www.metismuseum.ca](http://www.metismuseum.ca)).

Symposiums such as these provide a positive atmosphere for many cultures to unite, learn, and discuss important issues in regards to preserving Aboriginal Heritage.



# Back to Batoche in the Style of 1973

Story by Louise Moine (Posthumous)

Ever since I can remember, I wanted to see Batoche, the famous last-stand site of the Riel Rebellion. So when I was nominated as one of the delegates to represent our local Métis Society at the "Back to Batoche Days," I willingly accepted. The day before the grand opening, my husband, Vic, our granddaughter, Chantal, and I headed north in our Biscayne Chevrolet. We had been told that everything would be supplied in the line of lodging and food; therefore, we didn't take as much as we should have.

Our first obstacle was Saskatoon. Greenhorns that we were, we missed the bypass and managed to get completely lost in the city. Vic wanted to stop every pedestrian for directions but I reminded him that we would eventually come to a sign which would lead us back to the main road. By the time we reached the highway, a steady downpour set in. We decided to get a motel room rather than bunk in a tent.

Next morning, we were up bright and early only to find that the skies were still overcast. I breathed a silent prayer for the rain to stay away. We started off in an optimistic mood. Once again, it was a hit and miss affair. We were back on the highway heading for Duck Lake and missed the sign indicating Batoche's whereabouts. Consequently, we missed the bridge crossing the Saskatchewan River. Eventually, however, we came to the sign. We followed the gravel road leading to the river and, much to the delight of our granddaughter, we crossed on the ferry.

Our first view of Batoche was the national historic site. Within the fenced grounds is a well-kept lawn and picnic facilities. A large sign alongside a two-story structure reads, "Canada-Batoche Rectory." As I gazed at the building, I thought, "At last, I get to see the famous 'original rectory' I had heard and read so much about." Somehow it had withstood the elements of strife and time, but then it has been renovated and preserved throughout the years. Now it stands as a monument, dedicated to those who gave their lives in the last stronghold of the Riel uprising. The bottom floor is used as a museum, while the upstairs is exactly as it was then. There are two rooms: one a classroom and the other a post office. On glancing over the history of the building, we learned that, due to the ravages of time, desks and furniture have been replaced but were constructed as replicas of the old design. Like all historic sites, the public is welcome. I noticed the registration book lists names from all parts of the world.

It was only a short distance to the clearing of Batoche where the gathering would take place. We saw army tents pitched all over the grounds. When we signed our names at the registration booth and paid for our rations, which amounted to \$50.00 per person for the week, we were told that these would be delivered at 6:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. at a designated spot. The rations consisted of fresh meat, sometimes stew, hamburger, canned meats, and other food in general. By that time, there were cars, trucks, trailers, and

people milling about. We drove around to see if any of our relatives had arrived but we recognized no one.

Everything appeared to be in readiness. Even the sun was shining brightly. The assembly hall and another building, set up for bingo games, were built as temporary shelters. Their sides were open to let in the fresh air. The concession booths were under the management of different locals of the Métis Society from all over the province. I noticed a stand where Indian crafts were displayed and sold. We bought tickets for a little tent completely equipped with all essentials required for camping.

At the hall, where I registered as a delegate, I was given a tag displaying my name and the number of the Local I represented. I was handed a red folder containing a copy of the agenda of the last annual meeting and also material pertaining to the Métis Society. Besides the executive on the platform, there was a tape recorder and, off to the side, a TV camera. Later in the week, the chairman informed us that, since we were now a recognized Society, a BBC reporter had arrived and would be taking pictures and writing reports. The microphones on the floor were there for the delegates to voice their opinions on any of the topics discussed. At times, the meeting would take on a bit of humour and, then again, some would get carried away in their criticism of the administration. Invariably, the debates would take on a political edge. The only time I wanted to voice my opinion was when the question of the adoption of Native children came up for discussion. Not being aggressive enough, I didn't get the chance. Anyway, I would probably have sounded like the "voice crying in the wilderness."

That first day, as the meeting progressed, we noticed some of our relatives coming into the hall. Later, we all got together and managed to find an empty tent close by. With an extra mattress and a couple of borrowed quilts, we managed to fix up our sleeping quarters for the week. Our relatives had a three-burner propane stove and all the utensils required for camping out. Pooling resources, we cooked and ate together. With the hamburger, we would like to have made "bullets," which is Métis for meatballs (a traditional half-breed dish), but none of us thought to bring flour or onions.

Each camp had a stack of firewood so we all had campfires going, but mostly after dark. We had also looked forward to the bannock-baking contest but it didn't take place for some reason.

Bright and early each morning, a car equipped with a loudspeaker would drive around the camp repeating the words "*wanesh kack*," Cree for "wake up." That was okay for some of us who didn't keep late hours, but what about the ones who did?

Sadness pervaded the gathering when a young man, while saving a teenager who had wandered into deep water, accidentally lost his life in the river. When we noticed the RCMP around, we knew there was something wrong.

A structure, mostly a roof with all sides open, had been put up purposely for the Indians who would be holding a Pow Wow. When we noticed tipis springing up here and there, we knew they were arriving. Rumours were that they were being paid to perform their dancing and that they would be coming from all parts of the country. When we heard the beat of the drums, we hastened over. Our little Chantal was so excited when she saw young Indian dancers in the group

that she joined in with them. Each dancer was introduced via a loudspeaker as he or she entered the dance. Two beautiful Indian maidens, introduced as princesses, also took part. As I sat there and watched, I felt a sense of pride. My mind wandered back to the past, trying to visualize the time when our ancestors, theirs and mine, roamed and ruled the country and were a proud and aristocratic race in the whole of North America.

Only the first three days were taken up with the business of the annual meeting. For the rest of the week there were sports of every description for young and old, bingo going on continually, and in the evening, dancing to modern and old-time, exceptionally good, lively music. Contestants who took part in the jigging and fiddling contests were both talented and entertaining. The "Miss Batoche Contest" drew many pretty contestants.

It was worth waiting for. Another of my life-long dreams had materialized. Although I never again attended the celebrations, I hear the gathering gets bigger and better every year. I go in spirit if not in body, but now I go alone, without my life-partner, because my husband, Vic, passed away ending a marriage which took place a long time ago—in 1932.

### **Louise Delina Trottier-Moine (1904-2006)**

Louise, the eighth child in a family of ten, was born one evening at a camp, while her family was on the road travelling to northern Saskatchewan. Her father, Patrice Edward Trottier, and her mother, Tillie Rose Whitford, were both Métis. Most of the children were born at Lac Pelletier where the family resided for a number of years.

In 1911, Louise entered the Lebret Indian Residential School where she remained for six years. After leaving in 1917, she attended high school in Ponteix, Saskatchewan where she obtained her Grade IX which was then equivalent to Grade XII. Later, when the family settled in Val Marie, Saskatchewan she met Victor Moine. They were married in 1932 and had three children: two daughters (Jacquie and Gloria) and one son (Gail). The Moine family spent all their lives in Val Marie.

While Louise was writing bits and pieces of her life story, she never took writing too seriously. In 1975, she entered the First Native Writer's contest sponsored by the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire. Her story, "My Life in a Residential School," won first prize in the autobiography category and was published by the Provincial Library. Her second story, "Remembering Will Have to Do," described her childhood experiences and dealt with her people's lifestyles.

Louise enjoyed writing. It was a good way to express herself and it provided her with many worthwhile hours as she described the changing lifestyles of Aboriginal people over half a century. Louise passed away on September 2, 2006, just a few weeks short of her 102<sup>nd</sup> birthday. She was the oldest residential school survivor in Canada.

## Feature Article

# A Métis Family Legacy: Five Men Who Went to War

A Tribute by Mary Rose Boyer

Five men: young, handsome, proud, Métis. Each had a gift and each performed a duty in countries far away from their home near Estevan's Souris Valley. One spent years in a prisoner of war camp. One became a career soldier and one never came home. Connected by family ties of blood and marriage, two lived long lives and rest side by side, like the neighbours they were, in our hometown veterans' plot. All five were good men and became my role models, teaching me, mostly by example, many life lessons. They were not perfect, but because they were not, I learned how to deal with the many challenges which I faced in life.

### "One bullet, one kill"

The first of these men was my grandfather, Private Reuben (Israel Urban or "Ben"), Blondeau. During WW I, along with three of his brothers, he enlisted, at twenty-three years of age, in the Canadian Expeditionary Force on February 2, 1918. Reuben is listed as serving in Canada, England, and France until June 2, 1919. According to his training record notes he was a "good shot." This gift, along with his inherent fearlessness and hunting skills, meant that he was able to serve as a sniper where training demands "one shot, one kill." Reuben's sniper number, 214, is part of a metal rifle uniform insignia passed on to me.

Reuben returned home to marry Suzanne Gosselin and, together, they had three sons, Walter, Edward, and



Reuben Blondeau 1918

Louis, and one daughter, my mother, Cora. Suzanne died of tuberculosis at Fort San in 1935 and left him with four young children to raise which he did all alone until he married Albertine Klyne a few years later. Reuben worked for the City of Estevan installing sewer and water lines, fighting fires, and distributing relief during the 1930s depression. Later, he worked for the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) building dams and working on other agricultural conservation projects in the Weyburn-Estevan area. Reuben supplemented the family income by hunting, trapping, fishing, and selling furs. He taught most of his children many of these skills. He saw three of his children and a brother leave for WW II along with many of his nieces and nephews, some never to return.

In the community, Reuben was a member of the Estevan branch of the Royal



*Reuben, son Edward, second wife Albertine (Klyne), daughter Cora, son Walter (photo on wall is a grandson, Rodney Fedyk). Early 1960s.*

Canadian Legion, and was present at most Remembrance Day services and Vimy Nights, either there or in Red Deer where he later lived. He was called on a few times to help the City of Estevan trace water main leaks in the lines he had helped set so many years before. Grandfather was only too glad to help out when people would come to the Midale PFRA dam (now of the part of Rafferty Dam) to fish. He would help folks launch their boats and dig fishing holes for them in the winter or just visit with them while their children would play with me.

As his oldest grandchild, I felt I could do no wrong in his eyes and that there was not much he would not do for my benefit. Close to my grade 12 graduation, I heard him tell grandmother that there was nothing that I could not do. What a send-off for a young Métis girl leaving the warmth of a caring home and heading off to a city to be one of thousands in what some describe as the frightening cultural environment in the 1960s!

As a Catholic, he saw clearly his duty to his faith not only as my grandfather but also as my godfather. He also did not let Nature defeat him. When I was two or three weeks old in mid-March, he loaded me up in a boat and sat on its prow to kick Souris River ice clear in order to get me to the north bank. From there, I was

taken to Church where I was baptized. Later, in much the same fashion, this time without the ice, he saw to it that I underwent the proper preparation and received my First Communion. It was not surprising that later I would attend Church on my own from the age of 10 years and became involved as a Catechism teacher.

Grandfather was unable to read but he helped to ensure that I would. We lived two to three miles from the school bus stop and, in the winter, he would have to get up about 5:30 or 6:00 AM to get the horses and sleigh ready for the trip. Grandmother would get me dressed and would make me breakfast and lunch; this of course, without the benefit of electricity, running water or any of the conveniences. After breakfast, grandpa and I would set out about 7:00 AM or so to make it to the bus stop in time. At night, it would be the same routine to get me home. I knew how much of a struggle it was for them to do this for me and, later, could not fathom disappointing either of them by not doing well at school.

Reuben left us on June 19, 1989 at the age of ninety-five, still optimistic and interested in activities going on around him in my mother's home. And still a "good shot" mum says with a



*Reuben Blondeau (white suit) still hunting in his 70s and his brother Alex near Kisbey, SK.*

laugh, if there was something he could toss through the air to get someone's attention.

### **"Second in His Class"**

The second man is Private Walter Raymond Blondeau, Reuben's oldest son. Walter enlisted in the South Saskatchewan Regiment in Regina on January 30, 1941 at the age of eighteen. Along with many of his friends and relatives from the Estevan/Weyburn area, Walter trained and waited in England for assignment. During this time, he met a young Manchester lady, Dorothy, who seems, by her letters, to have thought a great deal of this handsome young Canadian. His assignment came and on August 19, 1942, the Regiment, including Walter, and 5,000 other Canadians landed on the beach at Dieppe, France. Walter was wounded, taken prisoner and spent the rest of the war as Prisoner 42901 at M-Stammlager IX C, Arbeitskommando NR 1249, Germany. Walter returned to Estevan to a family who thought he had been killed at Dieppe. My mother says he just came over the hill one day soon after his discharge date of



*Private Walter Raymond Blondeau*

August 24, 1945, extremely thin but alive. Walter never married Dorothy (she had married another, thinking too that Walter had died) nor did he marry any one else. He worked for the Estevan Brick Plant until he retired in 1987 after forty-one years.

Walter, following the family tradition, was a skilled hunter and fisherman who took every opportunity to use

those skills. He was always careful to respect the environment and the creatures he hunted. He worked hard for his employer, cared about his fellow workers, and was a dedicated member of the Estevan Legion, serving as president when it came his turn. He, of all the uncles, was the socializer and no where was it more evident than on the dance floor or by the comments from many people in the community who knew and cared about him.



*Dorothy Walters  
wartime friend,  
Manchester,  
England.*

Walter was the oldest in his family and followed through on what that meant in our family. He looked out for his younger sister, my mother, who became a wife and mother soon after he returned. He took on the responsibility of providing, for a time, a home for his father and stepmother when they could no longer live alone.

Walter took a strong interest in the activities in which I and my siblings were involved, encouraging me to get a good education, to face challenges, to overcome them, and always to be humble and respectful of others. A joke he would tell me when I would respond regarding some school question he had asked was "You know I was second in my class for marks." Then he would chuckle and say, "There were only two of us in the class!"

Walter was proud of all of us and wanted us to experience the best life had to

offer, a life of advantages for which he had sacrificed his youth, three years of his freedom, his health, and a possible marriage and children. It was Walter who started my interest in preserving family stories and history by giving me, at the age of twelve, his photo album of life in the prison camp.



*A friend & Walter, POW 42901, M-Stammlager IX C, Germany.*

Walter battled heart disease and cancer, succumbing on January 19, 1992 with my mother and a close friend at his side. I inherited the remainder of his photos and memorabilia (including his hunting truck!)

### **“Don’t Tell Your Mom!”**

Sapper Edward Gilbert Blondeau was the second oldest in Reuben’s family and the uncle who did the most to inspire me to travel, to learn about other cultures, and to try to practice some of the Métis/ French traditions. Edward was seventeen when he enlisted in the Army on June 11, 1942.



*Edward Gilbert Blondeau*

Again, like his brothers and father, his hunting skills, physical fitness and fearlessness were put to use for his country. Edward volunteered for and became a member of a paratroop unit, a new force in the Canadian/ British military used mainly in advance of the invading army. He survived a 30% screening rejection rate and a 35% training cut to become one of a group recognized by the Canadian Military Headquarters of the day as “occupy(ing) the top of the list” in terms of performance.

A veteran once told me, upon seeing the paratrooper uniform insignia on Edward’s service photo, that these men were trained to kill quickly and quietly while working behind enemy lines. I learned from his brother, Walter, my uncle, that Edward certainly had spent anxious hours in enemy territory. Walter stated that Edward had told him of doing some task behind enemy lines and then trying to get back to his unit on friendly ground, expecting any moment to be his last over a two to three-day period.

Edward returned home after the war physically unscathed and returned to the Army to serve in Korea and in Egypt in 1956 with the first United Nations Emergency Force. It was during this time that his influence shaped another important part of my life. Once I was old enough to read, Uncle Edward would write to me, sending me gifts, tourist post cards, and artist prints from wherever he was stationed. I soon wanted to learn about these countries and visit them someday. I too wanted to serve my country in some way, so in university, I double-majored in History and, later, became involved in constituency politics and community initiatives wherever I have lived.

Children should have one adult in their life who is fun and, for me that was Uncle Edward. On his furloughs, he would take me with him to the local Fair and accompany me on thrilling rides such as the "Bullet" (if I didn't tell my mum!) He bought me a springer spaniel and a tricycle before I could walk. Furlough time was just as much fun for me, I am sure, as it was for him.



*About 1953, Estevan, SK. Home on leave: Edward, his aunt Julia Klyne, sister Cora Boyer & niece Mary Rose Boyer.*

Uncle Edward did his part in passing on some of our Métis/French traditions practiced in our little community. A memorable event was the time he took me (while mum worked the hospital nightshift) on a traditional New Year's Eve journey (walking, no less) to visit the "Old Ones" in Estevan. The New Year's Eve visitations were always rewarded with tasty refreshments and warm receptions. It is a tradition I like to keep today.

On this particular New Year's Eve, our breath droplets froze in front of our faces and snow squeaked under our feet in the frigid Saskatchewan winter night. Uncle Edward strode along like the soldier he was and my little six or seven year-old feet tried to keep up. I was heartened though to know I was doing better than my Uncle Walter who

was also accompanying us. Edward kept teasing his brother about not being able to keep up because he had let himself get out of shape

Another tradition I learned about through my uncle Edward was being generous. Edward, in addition to being quite a handsome young man, wore well-tailored, expensive clothes, which he would bring home. Relatives and friends would admire them and then would often receive them as a gift on the spot. Several times, at the end of his furlough, his only dresswear would be his uniform.

Edward shared my family's resolve to give me the best education possible and so shared the task of getting me to the school bus stop with his father Reuben on one winter furlough. It was another bitterly cold morning and my cheeks began to look like they had frozen. I remember his concern and how he gradually warmed my face to prevent any further damage to my skin.

In later years, Edward was stationed at Camp Shilo (Manitoba), in Fort Osborne at Chilliwack (British Columbia), and in Churchill (Manitoba). He was part of the Royal Canadian Engineering Corps. Churchill became his most favourite posting.

In 1966 at the end of my first teaching year, I was called, along with my grandparents and Uncle Walter, to my Uncle Edward's bedside in a Winnipeg hospital where he was battling a brain tumour. I arrived only moments after he died. Edward Gilbert Blondeau was no longer a physical presence for me after July 3, 1966 but even in death, he taught me about one more tradition—the wake. I did not appreciate it at first of course since I could not fathom actually celebrating someone's death when my heart was breaking. However, I have since learned

that a wake is a celebration not of death but of someone's life and of their irreplaceable and wonderful place in your life. I think of that time now and of his place in my spirit certainly with fondness but also with gratefulness.

### **Mischief Mixed with Determination**

Reuben's third son, ACI Louis Blondeau, was, from family recollections, a whirlwind of energy and mischief but was fondly remembered as a gentleman even for his young age. Grandfather and Louis' school principal tried to keep him in school but he would continually find ways to walk out even when his father would escort him to the door. It seemed the way to get him to do something was to tell him not to do it. Mother tells the story of the skis grandfather made to use when he checked his trap line. They were set away in the house with orders to the children to not touch or use them until they were seasoned and strong. On a day when his parents went to town to get supplies, Louis decided to take the skis and try them out on the hill. The inevitable happened, the skis broke, and Louis had to deal with the consequences.

My oldest cousin tells the story of collecting bones and selling them to a local businessman who would then store them in a huge yard. During the night, he and Louis would sneak back into the bone yard and refill their truck with bones that they would sell again the next day.

Even Louis' enlistment in the Air Force is a story of mischief mixed with determination. He was the last brother, and according to family stories, the Army would probably not accept him since his other brothers were already enlisted and besides, he was underage

at sixteen. He chose the Air Force where his brothers' enlistments would probably not be detected as easily, or so he is said to have thought. Louis became a member of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) on October 13, 1943. He was assigned to 436 RCAF Squadron and was posted to India and Burma where he died on March 14, 1945 at the age of seventeen years, six months. Family had visited with him at least once before he left for Burma and it was at that time that a cousin recalls how much of a gentleman he was.



*ACI Louis Blondeau*

Even though I never knew Louis (I was born almost a year after his death), his influence on me was no less powerful. While I grew up hearing stories of his adventures and risky behaviour, I was also witness to the tears in my grandfather's eyes at Christmas when Louis was greatly missed. I saw a sorrowful sadness in my mother's eyes and heard softness in a cousin's voice when I would ask about him or would ask them to tell me what he was like. At times like these, I learned of the real cost of war at home within families who lost loved ones forever. I would find it difficult to support a war for any reason but, for those who participate in armed conflict at their country's request, I reserve the utmost respect and honour their contribution. Louis and my family's sorrow were reasons I could never join the anti-Vietnam demonstrators of my time. I agreed that involvement in the

Vietnam War should be discontinued, as the protestors believed, but many of the demonstrators did not show respect to the returning service men in their country. To join the anti-war crowd in that aspect would have been like striking my grandparents and parents and dishonouring Louis's memory, an act I could never justify.



The causes of armed conflict and examining alternative solutions guided my studies in school and university. Faced with conflict on a smaller scale in my life, I usually choose to deal with it with calmness, trying to discover the other person's perspective, respecting it, and developing solutions from there. I may not be able to lead a country using that strategy but I support people who do and in my own life where I can make an impact, that is the strategy I hope to always use. The alternative, someone possibly losing his/her life over an issue, is not one I wish to contemplate.

Louis Blondeau rests far from his Saskatchewan home in Maynamati Cemetery, Bangladesh with several Commonwealth comrades. It is a beautiful spot, well maintained, surrounded by flowering trees and other exotic plants, certainly a contrast to the bone yard and the dry, dusty prairies of his youth. A book in his effects, *Canucks Unlimited*, written and published by his squadron, was given to me. Between its pages I found a large pressed flower. Was it a

flower Louis had placed there to bring home to show his family or was it a flower placed there by his friends after his death? I will never know, of course, but it is a poignant reminder of a young man whose dreams were just beginning to bloom.

### **"Unflappable"**

Then, there is the last of these young men, my father, Trooper Joseph Ernest (Ernie) Boyer. Ernest, a Native American, a member of the Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota and raised from an early age on his father's farm in the Macoun district, enlisted in the Canadian Army on June 10, 1942 at thirty-three years of age. A bright farm boy with special skills in fixing machinery and speaking French, he was soon assigned to the Royal Canadian Dragoons, a unit responsible for vehicles and drivers.



*Trooper Joseph Ernest (Ernie) Boyer*

Once in a while, and only if I asked, Dad would tell me of some of the duties he had during the war. In the United Kingdom theatre, he trained other soldiers (for which he was temporarily promoted to Corporal) to drive gun carriers to locations in London, which was stripped of street signs, during blackouts. In Belgium, he remembered

repairing vehicles damaged at the Front, lying under them on Belgium's cold, damp ground, which would shake with the force of bombs going off near by "at the Front."

Ernie was medically discharged in September 1945. He returned home to marry a neighbour's daughter, my mother, Cora Blondeau, and to farm with his father, Thomas. Father, as did many returning soldiers of the day, including three of the other four in this article, struggled with serious alcohol addictions. In addition, Dad had an addiction to gambling. However, by the time I was six years old, he quit both addictions "cold turkey" and lived to be eighty years old. None of my siblings can remember our father as anything other than a solid positive influence, sober and only playing the odd game of whist or rummy.

Dad and I did not really get to become the "soul mates" we were until I was probably in my thirties. He became the kind of father one goes to for advice about cars, to talk about politics and to just be around to "recharge your batteries" before you headed back into the world. He was my connection to his family's past, to our place in the community, and to values and strengths that would outlast lifetimes: values like doing what you say you will do; not judging others in their misfortune; paying attention to the spiritual part of your life; carrying out your role in the family according to what you are able to do not whether you are a man or a woman; and being true to your values.

At no time did I feel this influence more sharply than when he died and funeral arrangements had to be made. His only direction to my stepmother was that I was to handle it all as I was the oldest of his children.

The normal procedure would have been to call the priest and let things fall into place from there. However, for some reason in spite of the support dad gave me to fulfill my obligations as a Catholic (First Communion, Confirmation, Catechism teacher), he had never attended a service in my recollection since he and my mother had separated when I was quite young. I did a little family research and discovered that the reason was that he felt he would be a hypocrite to attend a service when he had violated the Church's rule about marriage. With this revelation, how could I go against one of his lifelong beliefs at his death? I felt I would be haunted forever!

Remembering his wartime service, I approached the Legion and asked them what funeral arrangements would take place if a soldier had died on the battlefield. The legionnaire told me there would be a chaplain who would perform a military service attended by his comrades in a suitable location. I felt my father, a Legion member, would rest comfortable with that arrangement and so it was done. And my greatest relief was that his principle was not compromised. I learned how much he had taught me about being true to what you believe in and that it is not easy to accommodate those beliefs nor is it easy to ignore them.



*Joseph Ernest  
(Ernie) Boyer*

Ernest loved to discuss politics, especially the best way to run the country. He had lived through traumatic times: a depression and drought on the farm, a long bloody war when he was in his prime, and illnesses that took away his mother and several of his relatives and neighbours. He was often angry and frustrated that governments did not seem to know or care about reasonable solutions to some of these issues, until Tommy Douglas came along. Tommy was his "Greatest Canadian" long before the contest came along and remained the greatest probably until he died. I listened and learned and saw how important it was to be informed about issues of the day, at first only to act half-intelligent in a discussion with my dad and later, to do my duty as a citizen. We did not always agree on what were the best solutions but our discussions brought politics to life for me, enough life to encourage me to be seriously involved in constituency politics. It was an interest that all but eliminated my shyness and continues to be a strong interest that I have to this day and an interest I encourage in my son.

One other influence I harbour to this day from Trooper Boyer was his unflappability in threatening and/or chaotic situations. I would come home in a tirade about something that had upset me or someone would be yelling their displeasure, one time in public, and Dad would not blink an eye. He would ride the disruption through and would then ask one question or make one calm statement and it was over. I used to say the world could be crashing down around him and he would go on reading his paper like nothing was happening. Focusing on a task in that fashion was probably something he learned for survival as he lay on the shaking ground in Belgium repairing one more vehicle to carry another group of soldiers back to the front to kill or be killed.

Father, like my other family members, wanted all his children to have a good life. To do that, he did what he could to support us—provided stability to benefit from school, passed on a good work ethic and gave us freedom to make our own decisions, and he always there to support us when we made mistakes. For me, one of the greatest gifts he gave me was due to his service during wartime and to his ability to speak French. As the daughter of a veteran, I was eligible for and became a recipient of several scholarships which led to a career in teaching. Also, because he had inspired me to learn to speak French, I taught French for over twenty-five years.

### **The Legacy**

My father once said to my stepmother that he wished he could have helped me more with the costs of going to school to get a better start in my life's work. I would respond by saying that he and the four other men in this story gave me that and much more. A man who could not read showed me you could still contribute and raise a family and be worthy in the eyes of the community; another showed me that despite three years in an enemy prison camp, you could still forgive and get on with your life; another showed me that hands trained to kill in war time can be gentle enough to warm a child's face and that bravery could be fun. Another showed me that in war, young men and women and their contributions are lost forever and it is our duty to see that wars do not happen. They showed me that substances could be abused to cover the pain of dead buddies and that the terrors of fierce battles could be erased with determination and focus. I learned that I could live a good life and meet any challenge because they had good lives after facing far more serious challenges of death, terror, and destruction in

foreign lands without family and at an age when most people are just completing high school or starting a family.

All of these men, because of their contributions and examples made me proud to be a member of their family and proud to be a Métis girl from the Souris River Valley. That was quite possibly the best legacy.

## Dedication

2005 was designated as the Year of the Veteran. In honour of that occasion, I wrote this article which describes how the veterans in my family influenced me to allow me to live out my dreams. For that, I will be forever grateful to them. I also want to pass on their stories to the next generation of Métis children in my family in the hope that they can be influenced as well. Therefore, besides dedicating this article to the memories of the "Five Men Who Went to War," I dedicate this to our children and grandchildren.

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# Fiddler on a Roof – For a Roof!

Article by Christa Nicholat

“Up on the rooftop to great applause” aptly described John Arcand, Master of the Métis fiddle, perched high above the streets of Saskatoon on a warm and sunny autumn day. This was the scene at the main branch of FirstSask Credit Union on October 15 where Arcand, and fellow musician and rooftop mate Freddie Pelletier, performed tunes and planned to stay up on the roof until a minimum of \$10,000 was raised to get them down! The event was organized in order to raise awareness and money for the John Arcand Fiddle Fest R.O.O.F (Roof Over Our Festival) Fund. The capital campaign was launched about a year ago with an overall goal of raising

\$300,000 to construct a permanent roof over the festival’s main stage venue. The John Arcand Fiddle Fest is an annual event held every August on Arcand’s acreage southwest of Saskatoon. It focuses on preserving and promoting fiddle music and jigging, both integral components of Métis culture, with special emphasis on transferring these skills and traditions from elders to younger generations. “Fiddler on a Roof” was a success, raising just over \$5,000. Onlookers, passersby, and supporters all enjoyed an afternoon of sunshine, warm coffee, delicious donuts, and the sweet, sweet sound of fiddle music!

To help keep Métis fiddle music, dance, and culture alive, you can contribute to the campaign by mailing your donation to:

**The John Arcand Fiddle Fest R.O.O.F Fund**  
**Box 3, Site 302, RR #3**  
**Saskatoon, SK S7K 3J6**

You can also use your credit card and donate online at [www.picatic](http://www.picatic) or call 306-220-1570 or 306-382-0111.

Please visit [www.johnarcandfiddlefest.com](http://www.johnarcandfiddlefest.com) for full details.



*Freddie Pelletier and John Arcand on the roof of the FirstSask Credit Union, downtown Saskatoon.*

# Gabriel Dumont Institute Program Evaluation Underway

The Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) and Saskatchewan Advanced Education and Employment have hired EKOS Research Associates Inc. to conduct an evaluation of Institute programs—Dumont Technical Institute (DTI), the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) and the Publishing Department. The purpose of the study is to examine how well GDI programs are working, what its graduates are doing now, and suggestions for changes. Part of the study includes surveys and interviews with former students, GDI staff, and partners. Your cooperation and participation would be greatly appreciated.

GDI has provided names of students, staff, and partners to EKOS to be used only for this evaluation. A representative from the EKOS Research team may be contacting you within the next few weeks to ask you to participate in the study. The decision to participate is entirely up to you. All of your responses will be kept confidential by EKOS and your name and your views will never be provided to GDI or reported individually.

If you were a student at GDI between Sept. 2004 and June 2007 and your telephone number has changed since you attended GDI, please phone EKOS Research at 1-866-755-3567 to update your information.

If you have any questions or concerns about the evaluation, please do not hesitate to contact GDI Program Coordinator Lisa Wilson by telephone at 306-657-2249 or by email at: [lisa.wilson@gdi.gdins.org](mailto:lisa.wilson@gdi.gdins.org)

Thank you,

The GDI Evaluation Team

## Youth Story Corner Call for Submissions

*New Breed Magazine* is currently accepting submissions for the Youth Story Corner. Métis youth of any age are encouraged to submit a creative writing story—preference will be given to those stories with Métis content. Please submit a short biography with your story. Submissions can be sent to:

*New Breed Magazine*  
Gabriel Dumont Institute  
2-604, 22<sup>nd</sup> Street West  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
S7M 5W1

Or emailed to: [Janessa.temple@gdi.gdins.org](mailto:Janessa.temple@gdi.gdins.org)

Deadline for submissions is February 28, 2008.

## ***We Know Who We Are: Métis Identity in a Montana Métis Community***

Martha Harroun Foster. Norman, Oklahoma: Oklahoma University Press, 2006, 306 pages, map & illustrations. Bound, \$38.45.

## ***The Long Journey of a Forgotten People: Métis Identities & Family Histories***

Ute Lische and David T. McNab, Editors. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2007, 386 pages. Paper, \$34.95.

## ***From the Straights of Mackinac to Georgian Bay: 300 Years of Métis History***

Micheline Marchand and Daniel Marchildon. Penetanguishene, Ontario: Moon River Métis Council, Métis Nation of Ontario, 2006, 148 pages. Paper.

Reviews by Darren R. Préfontaine

These are very interesting times in Métis Studies, which has become a burgeoning discipline. Scholars, Elders and community people are contributing a great deal to our knowledge of Métis history, literature, lifeways, languages, and cultures. In particular, Métis communities in Ontario, British Columbia, and the Northwest Territories are adding their voice to a growing narrative of Métis/mixed heritage communities outside the Prairie Provinces including those in the US Midwest, Great Plains, and the Pacific Northwest.

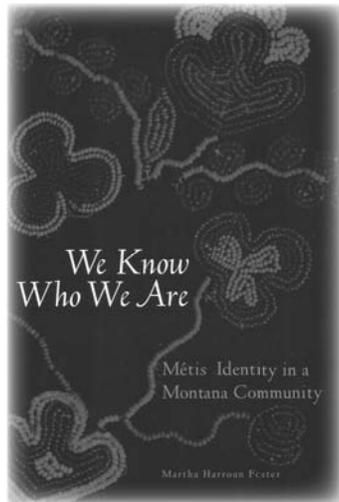
Recent contributions to Métis historiography have been considerable. This new discourse builds upon earlier work, which maintains that there was more than "one road" to Red River. This scholarly trend looks beyond the Red River/"one" Métis Nation paradigm, espoused mainly by the Métis National Council, and recognizes that several distinct Métis communities have existed in time and place, sometimes with and sometimes without family

and cultural ties to the Red River Métis. These Métis/Half-breed/mixed heritage communities exist (or have existed) throughout the continent's interior, and share many commonalities such as having mixed Indigenous/Euro-Canadian/Euro-American/European ancestry, lifeways, and cultures. However, this increasingly large body of work also demonstrates that these communities have many distinct experiences and cultural traditions. Therefore, to recognize only one Métis identity while discounting others as less authentically Métis is erroneous.

Even within the Prairies, scholars such as Brenda McDougall<sup>1</sup> and community people are working to show that communities like Île-à-la-Crosse, Saskatchewan have their own unique Métis heritages, which do not easily fit into the bison-hunting, Michif-speaking norm of the Red River/Plains Métis.

Many of these new community and family histories have been "reconstructed" using oral history, printed documents, historical photographs, paintings and sketches, and

archaeology. As a result, these new historical narratives contain invaluable family genealogies and unambiguous records of long-term presence in specific communities and harvesting areas over time and place. Not surprisingly, these works will be very useful in present and pending litigation for Métis harvesting rights and land claims. For instance, one of the tests that emerged from the Powley Ruling in 2003 was that in order to have its Aboriginal harvesting rights restored, a contemporary Métis community must prove its familial and community connection to a specific landscape including its uninterrupted harvesting of local flora and fauna.



*We Know Who We Are* builds upon Martha Foster's PhD dissertation.<sup>2</sup> This important book provides readers with a better understanding of Métis heritage in Montana. The Montana Métis are Red River Métis who, after the consolidation of American and Canadian control of the West, remained in the United States where they faced intolerant government policy and societal racism. Washington did not recognize the Métis as being a distinct Aboriginal nation, and Euro-Americans streaming into Montana saw the local Métis as "British" or "Canadian" interlopers. This argument was faulty because most Montana Métis were

born in the United States. Perhaps more importantly, before the Dominion and American governments asserted control of the "West," the Métis saw the international boundary as a white man's concept which had little relevance in their lives. Nonetheless, popular American culture at the time was painting the Métis as sneaky and deceitful. They were called "Breeds" and even the strange pejorative "Coyote French." It is little wonder that this intolerant social climate led many Métis to downplay their heritage. In fact, many entered the Treaty rolls as "Rocky Boy Cree," "Little Shell Cree," and "Turtle Mountain Chippewa" (while quietly remaining Métis among themselves).

From the 1870s until the 1920s, Métis identity in Montana evolved, often becoming clandestine. Foster demonstrates that government policy not only had a detrimental impact upon Métis lifeways, it almost decimated Métis identity. Since the US Government did not recognize the Métis as a distinct Aboriginal nation, the Montana Métis had little choice but to become "Indians" if they wanted their Aboriginal rights legally recognized. Many Montana Métis gave up their public identity to suit government policy and societal pressure, which maintained that they could be either White or Indian but not Métis. Others resisted by moving to the Bad Lands where they eked out a marginal living. Others still crossed the "line" to live with relatives in Canada. Still others migrated around Spring Creek (Lewistown) in shanty towns not unlike Road Allowance communities in Canada, and proudly used the term "Breed" among themselves. Some transformed into "French Canadians" and merged into the growing Euro-American society in Montana.

Foster's narrative concludes by arguing

that—despite more than a century of official American policy which has consistently failed to recognize Métis identity—the Montana Métis are still around. Furthermore, since Lewistown's centenary celebrations in 1979, they have been advocating for the recognition of their Métis heritage and their indigenous right to live off the land and harvest its resources.

This book is well researched and well argued. It contains many tables which list Métis family names common in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, thus making the book useful for those interested in knowing more about their family history. For Canadian readers, this book is particularly useful because it shows how government policy and social pressure in the United States greatly differed from equally racist Canadian policies, which at least in the public discourse recognized the Métis as a distinct group, while not fully respecting their Indigenous rights.

There are some minor problems with this book. While it has many useful insights regarding the American Métis experience, the introduction, which features an overview of Métis history, is somewhat redundant for Canadian readers who have a greater historic knowledge about the Métis than American readers. Parts of the book are also dryly written. Nevertheless, despite these issues, this book, by constructing a little-known and interesting narrative, will be the most important book to explain the Montana Métis to the larger world.

*The Long Journey of a Forgotten People* contains thirteen contributions by both scholars and community people. It is broken down into the following sections: Reflections on Métis Identities, Historical Perspectives, and

Métis Families and Communities. This volume is a welcome contribution to Métis Studies because it focuses on those issues which are at the core of the Métis experience: identity politics and connecting or sometimes reconnecting (in both time and place) with relatives and communities. The geographic range of the territory covered in this book—the Great Lakes to North Dakota to northern Alberta and Saskatchewan—is quite large, and is indicative of an ongoing trend to outline distinct Métis communities across the breadth of the continent.



The section on Métis identity politics was perhaps the most interesting because it looks at the essence of being Métis. As all the authors maintain, being Métis is a personal choice and is strongly impacted by socioeconomic circumstances and familial and community background. Métis historians Olive Dickason and David McNabb provide readers with interesting recollections about how they “recovered” their Métis identities after their families buried them to escape societal racism (a popular theme in Métis family histories and a well-travelled literary theme). One essay focuses on how Louise Erdrich has woven her complicated Métis, Anishanaabe, and German-Jewish heritage into her novels. This is another example of how complex some Métis identities can become when trying to negotiate with other cultures and extended family members with various

ethnic backgrounds. Métis lawyer Jean Teillet also provides readers with a very useful paper explaining how current court rulings such as Powley will have a long-term impact upon Métis identity.

The section on historical perspectives centres on the creation of distinct Métis communities in what are now Alberta and Ontario. In fact, this book offers many insights into Ontario's Métis heritage, which until recently, has largely been ignored. Peter McNabb, a Native Studies Professor/Historian working at York University, has been one of the few scholars to write about the Ontario Métis experience. This section contains articles by Nicole St. Onge on the Canadien and Iroquois voyageurs (the Métis' ancestors) and Heather Devine on the Pembina (North Dakota) Métis bison hunters. Devine's article includes a *Da Vinci Code*-like quest to see if a certain "Robideau" who appears in a British traveller's diary was Louis Riel living incognito.

The third section on family and community histories is very different from the scholarly focus in the preceding chapters. The contributors in this section write about their personal experiences about being Métis. Some of the chapters in this section are very visceral. For instance, Jamie Koebel writes about her experience growing up as a young Métis woman in Lac La Biche, Alberta. The story centres on some universal Métis themes, and includes a great deal about the author's attempts to overcome her own self-loathing, which enabled her to proudly embrace her Métis heritage and become a committed social justice advocate. This autobiographical story reads much like Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed* or Breatrice Culleton's *In Search of April Raintree*.

Well-edited and broken down into easily

discernable sections, this book is a very important addition to Métis Studies. It is not often that a book manages to successfully balance community and academic perspectives in one tome. I certainly hope that this trend of juggling Métis community and academic perspectives will continue because this is the only way to fully understand the dynamic, complicated and sometimes mystical nature of Métis identity.

*From the Straights of Mackinac to Georgian Bay: 300 Years of Métis History* provided readers with a great deal about Métis identity in a long-neglected part of Ontario: the eastern shores of Georgian Bay. Scholarly and community work on Métis identity in Ontario has almost entirely concentrated on the formulation of Métis identity in such northern Ontario communities as Sault Ste. Marie or those along the western shore of James Bay. This book, a research paper compiled for the Moon River Métis Council, discusses Métis identity in Penetanguishene. The authors trace the origins of this community which emerged from the dissolution of Métis/Canadien communities, such as Mackinac and Drummond Island, on the American side of the border following the War of 1812. Extensive primary and secondary research, including the



use of genealogies, fur trade records, oral histories, and a thorough literature review, was needed to elucidate this community's history.

The Métis and French Canadians, or "Voyageurs" as both groups are also described in the narrative, were refugees from the war. They sided with the British Crown and fought against the American invaders. After the war, they and their First Nations allies went to live in British territory, eventually settling in the environs of Penetanguishene, Upper Canada. Once in their new setting, this community actively took part in the fur, fishing, and timber trades – staples important to the growth of early nineteenth century Canada. Eventually a flood of incoming settlers – French Canadians from Lower Canada and Orange Lodge members from what is now southern Ontario and Britain – adversely impacted Métis identity in the region. The aftermath of the two Métis resistances in Western Canada in 1869-70 and 1885 also contributed to the erosion of Métis identity in this community. In local Orange Lodge circles to be "French" and "Papist" was a serious offence, but to be a "Half-breed" at a time when Thomas Scott (who was executed by a Métis military tribunal in 1870 at Red River) was a martyr for Anglo-Protestant Canada was anathema. As a result of this hostile social climate, many Métis assimilated into the larger Euro-Canadian society, while some resisted and held onto their Métis identities.

One of the problems with the book, and this is certainly no fault of the authors, is that they repeatedly lump Métis and Canadiens together in their narrative. In most communities in the Great Lakes, Red River, and in the Athabasca country, the Métis and the Canadien voyageurs (and their First

Nations and Métis wives and their Métis children) formed the same community. However, while the Canadien voyageurs practiced a culture and lifestyle which mixed Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian components, they were not Métis. In most instances, the authors do not make this distinction. "Métis," "French Canadian," and "voyageur" are used interchangeably throughout the book. In these circumstances, with such poor records, it is often impossible to discern Métis from Canadien. Nonetheless, this book is still an important contribution to Métis Studies and helps destroy the myth that Ontario does not have its own distinct Métis identity.

#### **(Endnotes)**

<sup>1</sup> Brenda Macdougall, "Wahkootowin: Family and Cultural Identity in Northwestern Saskatchewan Métis Communities," *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 87, no. 3 (September 2006): 431-462.

<sup>2</sup> She also wrote about this topic in *Metis Legacy*. Martha Harroun Foster, "The Spring Creek (Lewistown) Métis: Métis Identity in Montana," Lawrence Barkwell et al, Editors, *Metis Legacy*. Winnipeg: Louis Riel Institute and Pemmican Publications, 2001: 99-104.

# ***Pepere Played the Fiddle***

**Linda Ducharme. Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications Inc., 2006.**

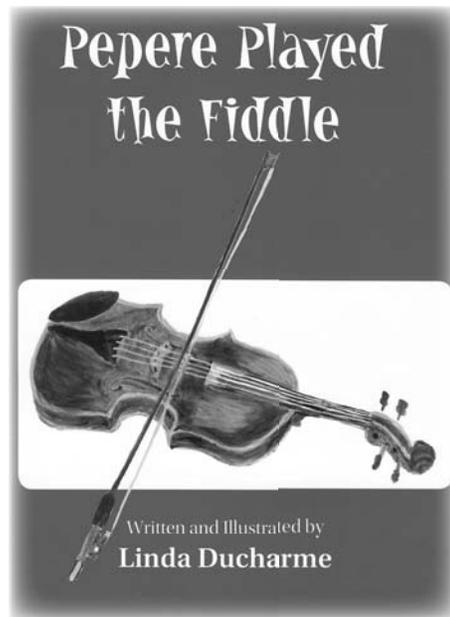
Review By Christa Nicholat

"The music got inside us. It spun around our heads." Linda Ducharme's *Pepere Played the Fiddle* is a celebration of Métis music, dance, and culture. The story follows a Métis family living in the late 1940s. After all the work and chores are done, it is time for everyone to gather together for a house party. Pepere plays the fiddle, Memere dances the jig, Mon Nook keeps time with spoons, and everyone bounces and dances across the floor to reels, the Waltz Quadrille, and the Red River Jig!

Along with fiddling and jigging, the Michif language is also an integral part of Métis heritage. Ducharme includes Michif terms throughout the text such as Pepere (Grandfather) and Memere (Grandmother), Mon Nook (Uncle), and Mawmaw (Mother).

Beautifully written and richly illustrated, Ducharme used acrylic paints and undertook painstaking research in order to ensure the authenticity of the fashions and furnishings of the time, providing a true portrait of Métis *joie de vivre*.

Set in the 1940s, this story serves as a testament to the persistence of Métis traditions that endure from generation to generation. *Pepere Played the Fiddle* honours not only the importance of music, dance, and family, but also the central role of the fiddle, an indelible symbol of Métis history, lifeways, and culture.



## **Upcoming Events...**

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Nov. 17, 2007     | Louis Riel Day — Honouring Our Métis Veterans<br>Batoche National Historic Park                                  |
| Nov. 24, 2007     | Saskatchewan Book Awards Gala<br>GDI Publications: <i>Fiddle Dancer</i> and <i>Metis Legacy II</i> , Regina, SK. |
| March 13-16, 2008 | 7 <sup>th</sup> Annual National Michif Conference<br>Saskatoon, SK.  |

The Gabriel Dumont Institute, the Friends of Batoche and Parks Canada invite you to a celebration to honour Louis Riel, Gabriel Dumont and all Métis veterans at

**Batoche National Historical Site of Canada  
Saturday November 17, 2007**

**Free Admission**

Special Guest Appearance by John Arcand

Entertainment throughout the day provided by:

Dallas Fiddler-Boyer and Phil Boyer  
Len Dumont

Ceremony starts at **11:00 AM** with a procession to the graveyard and the laying of a Wreath of Remembrance at the 1885 Memorial

**1:00 PM** Tourond's Coulee Update  
Entertainment to follow

Other events include:

Children's Activities  
Fingerweaving and Jigging Demonstration by Scott Duffee  
An ongoing video presentation by the Gabriel Dumont Institute honouring Louis Riel will be playing in the theatre

Relax and enjoy a **free** bannock and a hot apple cider or coffee (while quantities last)

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Enter the draw for door prizes

Gift Shop, Restaurant open at 9:30 AM

Program and events occur from 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

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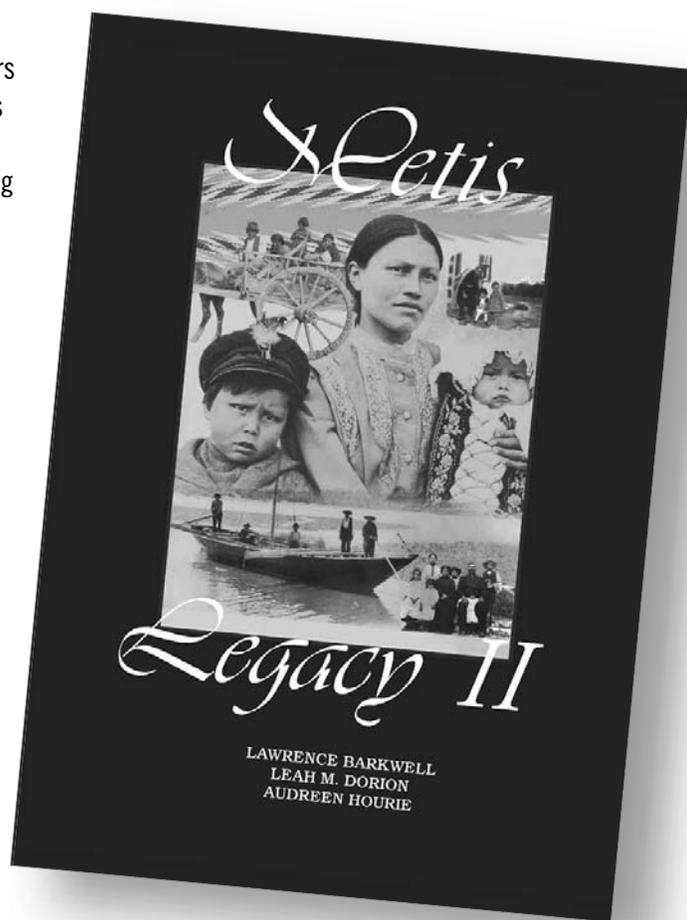
Lawrence J. Barkwell, Leah Dorion and Audreen Hourie, Editors

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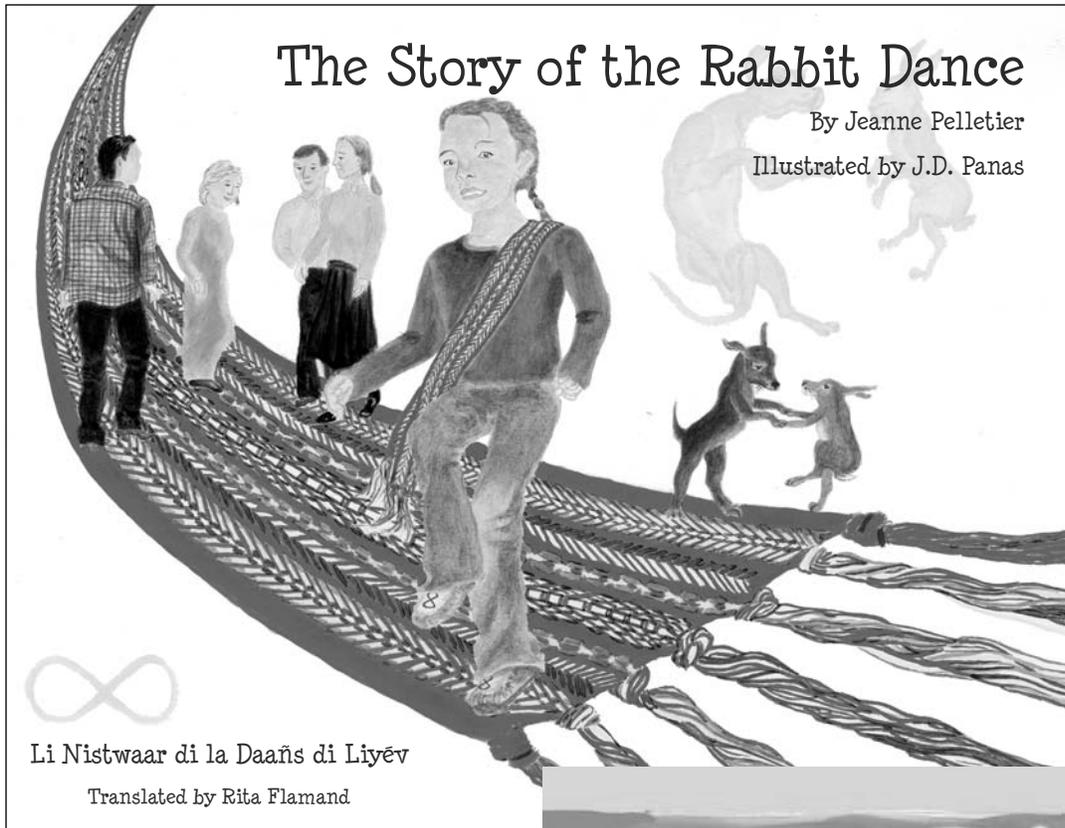
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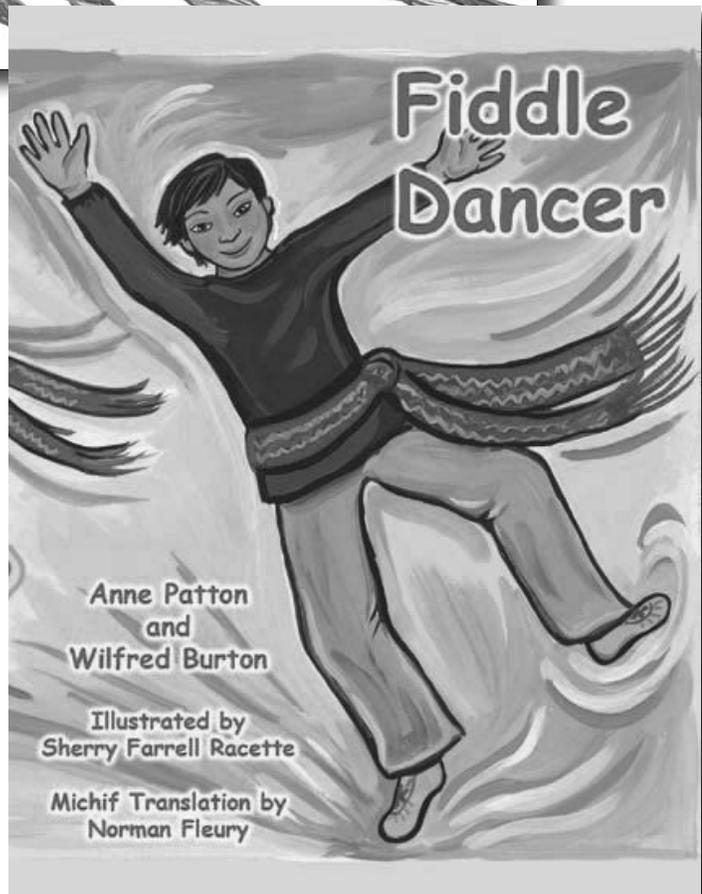


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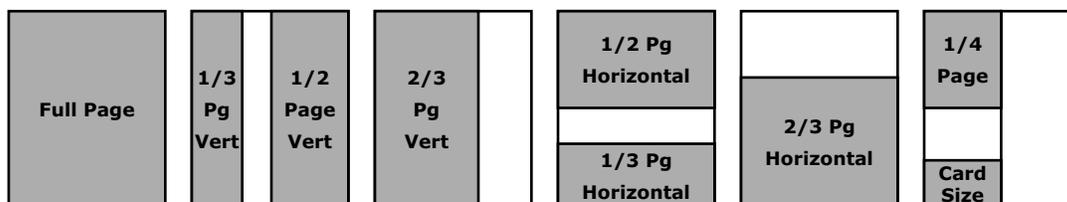
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Since first being published in the early 1970s, *New Breed* has been the "voice of the Métis in Saskatchewan". We take pride in knowing that we have become an important media source for Métis and other Aboriginal people throughout Saskatchewan. Through feature articles, editorials and submissions, we bring forth a strong sense of identity, history and pride among Métis people. Our magazine also serves as an important communication outlet to highlight important information, current events and issues within our communities relating to economic, social and political development, employment, training, education, and cultural preservation, etc. We also focus on many of our accomplishments, future endeavours and include profiles of successful Métis individuals, programs and businesses. We welcome your organization's participation and thank you for your support. A *New Breed Magazine* inquiry can be made by telephone (306 657.5714), by fax (306 244.0252) or by email (david.morin@gdi.gdins.org).

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1/3 Page Horizontal	7 1/4 inches	3 1/4 inches	\$790	\$1,343	\$2,015
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