

## **Road Allowance Communities Represented by the Northern Halfbreed Association:**



Compiled by Lawrence Barkwell  
Coordinator of Metis Heritage and History Research  
Louis Riel Institute

The Northern Halfbreed Association was formed in Manitoba in the early 1930s to represent the Metis and Non-Status Indians of the Metis settlements near The Pas, Moose Lake and Cedar Lake. The settlements were: The Thomas Settlement, Wooden Tent (Metikewap), Pine Bluff, Moose Lake, Big Eddy, Young Point, Rall's Island<sup>1</sup> and Umphreville.

Talk of a railway to Hudson Bay began in the 1870s with the earliest charter issued in 1881. Political manoeuvring between the federal and provincial governments delayed further activity until the commercial demands of the Finger Lumber Company, and its owner, provided the impetus for a branch line from the Canadian Northern Railway to The Pas in 1908. Herman Finger, an industrialist from Wisconsin, pushed for the development of a townsite at The Pas for his lumber mill as well as for the relocation of the Pas Band's mill to the north side of the river. This had the effect of putting the Band's mill out of business. Finger and his cronies owned considerable land in the townsite and benefited from the subsequent survey of the land into lots.

The treaty with The Pas Band, an adhesion Treaty Number 5, was signed in 1876 registering 599 persons. By 1906, prospects for an economic boom became apparent. The Canadian government purchased land on the south bank of the river for the future town site from the Indians who were then moved across the river to the present site. In 1910 a town site plan was laid out and lots were placed on the market. The Crown declined to survey the nearby Metis communities. The white population consisted of six families. By the time of incorporation in 1912 there were about 500 people, and in a Board of Trade census one year later the total was 1,509.

The first Chief of the Northern Halfbreed Association was Robert Thomas. The Association was active in protesting the leases the government was giving to the HBC and the Lamb family for muskrat ranching at the Summerberry Marsh, on the land they traditionally trapped. They also lobbied to have the Crown land surveyed so they could

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<sup>1</sup> Laura Hyrich, a current Board Member of MMF from The Pas Region, informs us that Rall's Island was founded by her grandfather Charles who homesteaded there in 1915. He was a northern prospector (from Red River) who when passing through the area, felt it would be a good place to build a home. He later returned with his wife Elizabeth (Knight) and did just that.

gain title to their land and homes. When the town of The Pas was incorporated, the nearby Metis road allowance communities of Big Eddy, Young Point, Rall's Island and Umphreville were left outside its boundaries, thus denying the Metis services such as water and sewer.