

GABRIEL DUMONT - METIS LEGEND

1. Picture of Dumont in action. This is the story of Gabriel Dumont, Metis leader, buffalo hunter, diplomat, general and the most generous man in the Canadian West.
2. farm on a riverlot with red river cart. Gabriel was born in December, 1837 on a Metis farm in St. Boniface. His father, like the other Metis, was a farmer, buffalo hunter and Red River Cart freighter.
3. Baby Dumont. Legend has it that young Gabriel was an ugly child. The women all comforted his mother for having so ugly a child but Gabriel showed them the true meaning of beauty.
4. Baby hugging (2 years) knees of old woman in circle of women. Ignoring the insults of the women Gabriel would hug them and show his inner self through his affection. Soon he was known as a beautiful child because of his love for others.
5. Red River Carts with buffalo in background. In 1840 Gabriel's father decided to move the family back to his Native homeland, Saskatchewan. On the way they took part in the largest buffalo hunt ever held by the Red River Metis.
6. A buffalo hunt scene. The captain of the hunt was Jean Baptiste Wilkie. He was an American halfbreed and his daughter, Madelaine, was the future wife of the young Gabriel.
7. On the Carlton trail to Fort Pitt. After the 1840 hunt the Dumonts followed the Carlton Trail to Fort Pitt, ^{the} site of modern day ~~Battleford~~ ^{Estevan}. It was here that Gabriel grew up and learnt the frontier skills that earned him his reputation.

8. Teepees with Dumont on Prairies

During the hunting season the Dumonts followed the buffalo herds, and Gabriel received his education. He learnt the ways of the animals, and the skills of the prairie hunters. He trapped, traded and freighted on the prairies.
9. Log cabins with Gabe setting a snare.

During the winters the hunters would live in their log houses. Gabriel hunted and played with ^{the children of} the Cree, Sioux, Assiniboine, Blackfoot and Metis of the Saskatchewan river.
10. Gabe on pony talking to Cree Indian

By the age of 10 Gabriel could speak six Indian languages and French, ride a pony, shoot a bow and arrow as well as the best hunters, call the buffalo, use a canoe, fish and swim. Gabriel learnt all of this the Metis way. He was taught by the adults and elders of the community in the traditional way. He learned by seeing and doing.
11. Herd of buffalo near dark camp.

One night on the trail he reported that the camp was about to be attacked. Rather than acting in fear Gabriel helped put out the fires and asked for a gun to defend the camp. The attack turned out to be nothing more than a herd of buffalo. After some laughter and teasing the fires were relit.
12. Gabriel getting gun from Uncle Alexis Fisher around a campfire.

During this same year Gabriel passed into manhood and received his first gun. Gabriel's uncle, Alexis Fisher, presented Gabriel with his first gun for his bravery. Gabriel named the gun 'Le Petit'.
13. Gabriel with skunk in bush.

The Dumonts moved east and set up their home on the Whitehorse Plains. This was the open prairie west of the Red River settlements. Here Gabriel continued his education with nature as his classroom. He learnt about the animals so well that it was said that he could talk to them without fear.

14. Grand Coteau hunting party with carts and Gabe on horseback.

In 1851 Gabriel took part in the Whitehorse Plains buffalo hunt. The hunting party went into the U.S. and ran into trouble at the Grand Coteau.
15. Gabe in rifle pit with carts and Sioux in background.

The 300 Metis hunters were surrounded by 2500 Sioux soldiers. Using the famous Metis system of fighting from rifle pits the Sioux were driven off and Gabriel had his first taste of prairie warfare, at the tender age of 13.
16. Gabriel the Hunter.

Gabriel continued to grow and learn. His skills as a hunter were so great that he was known across the prairie. In 1858 Gabriel's mother died.
17. Gabriel and Madelaine.

This same year saw the marriage of Gabriel to Madelaine Wilkie. Their union was so strong that an insult to one was a challenge to the other.
18. Gabe trapping and Madelaine trading.

Gabriel continued to hunt buffalo and trap and trade furs. These furs and the pemmican were taken by Madelaine to the Red River and sold to the Hudson Bay Company.
19. Gabe at council with Sioux and Blackfoot.

Gabriel became a diplomat in 1862. He organized a peace and treaty between the Metis and Cree with their old enemy—the Sioux. A few years later he repeated this feat with the Blackfoot.
20. Gabe at work for others

An old prairie Indian tradition was kept alive by Gabriel Dumont. He became a member of the Society of the Generous Ones.
21. Gabe helping out by giving food.

This meant that in times of need people could count on Gabe to work for them, provide them with food or do anything within his power for them.

22. Gabe/Madelaine with kids. Gabriel's marriage to Madelaine never resulted in the birth of any children. But this didn't stop them from raising a large family. Their love and generosity made them the foster and adoptive parents of dozens of children.
23. Gabe with Joe McKay and Big Bear. By the mid-1860s a group of Metis chose to establish their winter camp on the banks of the Saskatchewan River, near Fort Carlton. It was here that Gabriel was able to renew his childhood friendship with Chief Big Bear of the Cree and Gentleman Joe McKay, a halfbreed scout for the Hudson Bay Company.
24. Gabe at head of Hunt The generosity, skills and prowess of Gabriel Dumont made him a natural leader of the Metis. He was the chosen leader of the buffalo hunts organized by the Saskatchewan River Metis.
25. Gabe on a cart with pemmican. With his leadership of the Saskatchewan Metis accepted by all, Gabriel settled down to a life of hunting and trading. This was all changed in 1870 when news of the Red River Resistance, lead by Louis Riel, was made known to the Saskatchewan Metis.
26. Gabe and Riel. Gabriel went to see Riel and offer his help but Canada and the Red River Metis had already agreed on a solution. Thus the province of Manitoba was born.
27. Metis meeting chaired by Lawrence Clarke. The times were changing and nobody knew this better than Gabriel. The days of buffalo hunting, fur trading and trapping and Red River carting were drawing to a close. On the last day of 1871 the Metis held a meeting to choose a site for a permanent farm community. The chairperson of the meeting was Lawrence Clarke, a Hudson Bay Company man from Fort Carlton.

28. Map showing St. Laurent, Batoche, St. Louis and Duck Lake with strip farms. Thus the town of St. Laurent was founded. This community with its river lot farms grew until there wasn't enough room for all the people. Batoche, Duck Lake and St. Louis were soon founded to make room for the growing population.
29. Dumont leading or presiding over an assembly. The people of St. Laurent knew they needed laws and government. They elected Gabriel Dumont to be their president in 1873. This was followed by his re-election in the following years.
30. Dumont under arrest. In 1875 Gabriel was arrested for enforcing the laws of the buffalo hunt. These laws were meant to help save the few remaining herds of buffalo on the prairies. Lawrence Clarke had Gabriel arrested because the Hudson Bay Company needed all of the buffalo meat it could get.
31. Petitions. Gabriel, knowing that farming was the only answer to the disappearing buffalo herds, helped organize a campaign of petitions to get Canada to recognize the Metis right to own the land they had homesteaded in Saskatchewan. Canada didn't recognize the Metis claim to their land, until it was too late.
32. River crossing with Gabe's "Notice of Service" in upper corner. In 1880 Gabriel entered into business. He owned and operated the ferry service at Gabriel crossing on the Saskatchewan River.
33. Meeting of Metis. By 1884 Gabriel and the Metis knew that their years of petitioning for land rights weren't getting results. It was decided by the people that Louis Riel, the Metis father of the province of Manitoba, should be asked to come and help his people in Saskatchewan.

34. Gabe meeting Riel
(Gabe on horseback
with Riel on foot). Gabriel was chosen as one of the people to go to Montana and ask Riel to return to Canada. Riel accepted the invitation and came back to organize one last petition.
35. Riel and Gabe at meeting—speaking to people. Riel returned and spoke to the people. A list of Rights for all of the people in Saskatchewan was drawn up and a petition was sent around to be signed by all.
36. Gabe and Indians. The government was busy after Riel returned. Spies were watching Riel and Dumont. The government was preparing for trouble even though the Metis wanted to settle things peacefully.
37. Clarke and Dumont. Clarke in mail wagon and Dumont on horseback. In February of 1885, the Metis sent Lawrence Clarke to Ottawa with their petition. He returned on March 18. He was met by Gabriel and it was at this time that the Metis people were told that their petition was going to be answered with an attack on the Metis.
38. Dumont and Metis in rifle pits at Batoche. The battles of the Metis Resistance of 1885 are history. The handful of Metis, lead by the military genius of Gabriel Dumont, were able to win the battles at Duck Lake and Fish Creek. They held off the thousands of government soldiers for four days at the final battle in Batoche. The first battle, at Duck Lake, was started by Gentleman Joe McKay, Gabriel's childhood playmate.
39. Riel's Trial. Riel gave himself up, was tried and and hanged by the neck in Regina on November 16, 1885.

40. Gabe fleeing on horseback.

Gabriel went to the U.S. There were no soldiers in Canada able to capture the elusive Dumont. On arriving in the U.S. Gabriel was arrested and finally released to live the life of an exile.
41. Gabe in wild west show.

For a time Gabriel worked as a performer in Buffalo Bill Cody's wild west show. The audiences would watch with awe when Gabriel demonstrated his riding and shooting abilities.
42. Gabriel saving child.

During his time in the U.S. Gabriel waited for an amnesty that would allow him to return to Canada. In 1888 he returned to Canada and during the next five years he spent some time in Quebec. While there he rescued a child from a fire, once again demonstrating his Metis bravery and concern for others.
43. Old Gabe.

In 1893, Gabriel returned to his home in Batoche. He settled down and spent his time hunting and fishing. Most important he passed on the tales and stories of buffalo hunting and the Metis Resistance to those who would listen.
44. Funeral.

Gabriel died on May 19, 1906. He was buried in Batoche at the same graveyard as the victims who had died in the Resistance of 1885. The world had forgotten who he was but the Metis and Cree Indians hadn't. They came riding in to witness the burial of a Metis legend.