

Cold Lake: Métis Road Allowance Community

Cold Lake, or Kississing in Cree, was a Métis road allowance community located south of Sherridon, Manitoba (then a mining town) on Kississing Lake, 800 km. northwest of Winnipeg. Senator Ed Head of the Manitoba Métis Federation recalled: “My parents were married in The Pas. They went to Cranberry Portage and from there walked to Cold Lake, Manitoba (just south of Sherridon).” “The place we lived was nicknamed ‘Moccasin Flats.’ That’s where the Métis lived, and it was always the way the Métis lived. They called us ‘Road Allowance Indians’,” Ed explains. They had settled there because Ed’s grandfather had moved there. His father did odd jobs for Sherritt-Gordon then was hired as a miner. Ed’s grandfather had a guiding business and guided the Sherridon Mine Manager into the mine, overland from Cumberland House. “Cumberland House was the main juncture going into the North in the late 1800s,” says Ed. “Eldon Brown, the prospector who discovered the ore body at Sherridon came through Cumberland House and needed a guide. My great-grandfather was busy, so my grandfather, James Sayese, met up with Brown and became his guide. He worked for Brown as a personal guide for a long time. Later he went to work for Sherritt-Gordon.” Ed recalled that often they would be asked to move from the road allowance but would just move further down the road and cut more logs to rebuild their homes.



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