

Native Studies Picture File

STEP I Curriculum Development Project

Purpose:

The intent of the Native Studies Picture File is to provide:

1. support materials for the instruction of Native Studies.
2. archival research materials for students in isolated STEP centres.
3. relevant material for English update programs.

Specific Objectives:

Skill:

Students will:

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

Knowledge:

Students will:

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

Awareness:

Students will:

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

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Homes and Lifestyles

1.1 Log Dwelling (Wood Mountain, Saskatchewan)

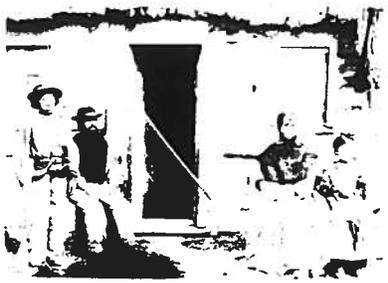
date: 1872-1874

credit: Manitoba Archives (Boundary Commission Collection)

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

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

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



Homes and Lifestyles

1.2 Family Outside Log House

no date

credit: Manitoba Public Archives

This log home is typical of those found in permanent camps and communities. The fishing net stretched across the door indicates that the photo may have been taken either in the Interlake region of Manitoba or the Fishing Lakes of the Qu'Appelle Valley. The young boy illustrates the early age at which young people assumed adult responsibilities. The nun's visit would have been a special occasion for the family, as most Metis were devout Catholics.



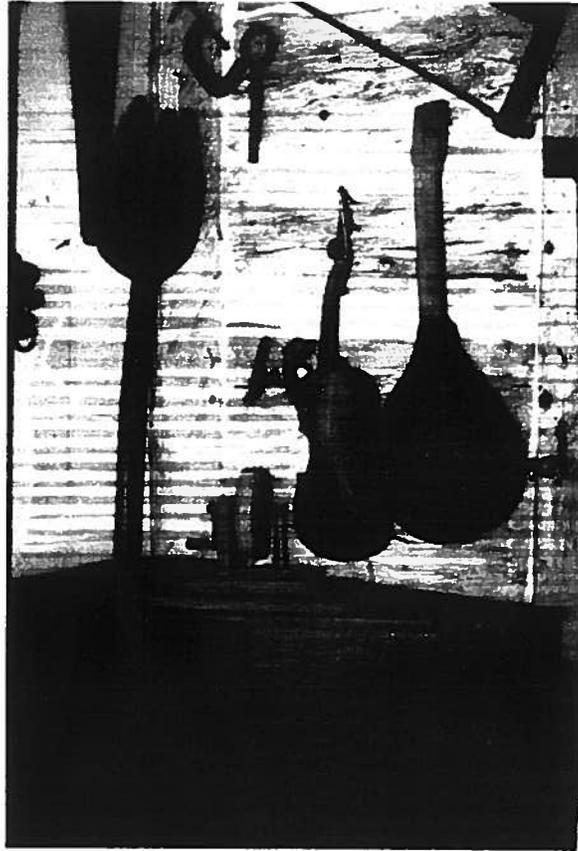
Homes and Lifestyles

1.3 Interior of Log House

date: 1985

credit: Sherry Farrell Racette

This room is a reconstruction in the St. Boniface Museum, St. Boniface, Manitoba. Typical of the mid-nineteenth century home in the Red River Settlement, virtually everything has been made by hand.



Homes and Lifestyles

1.4 Hand-made Violin, Mandolin and Grain Shovel

date: 1985

credit: Sherry Farrell Racette

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

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



Homes and Lifestyles

1.5 Baby in Moss-bag

date: 1979

credit: Cliff Bunnie

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

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



Homes and Lifestyles

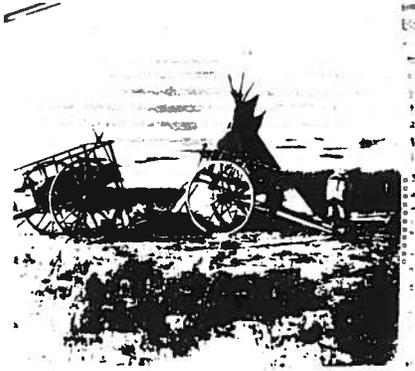
1.6 Metis Camp

no date

credit: Saskatchewan Archives Board

The family in this photograph is the Napoleon LaVallee family. They are shown camped at the treaty encampment at Crooked Lake, near Broadview.

Camps such as this were common to the Metis lifestyle on the prairie. The camps were established at seasonal campsites on trading expeditions and during lengthy visits with friends and relatives.



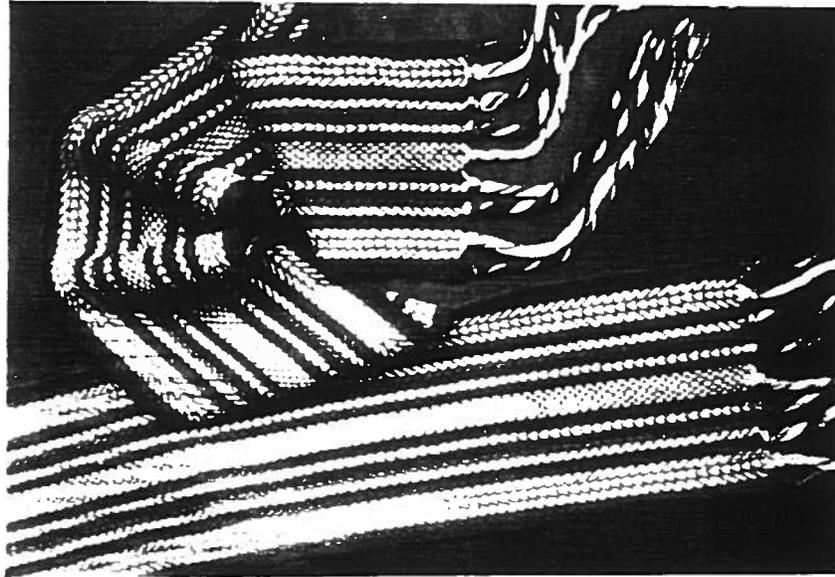
Homes and Lifestyles

1.7 Tipi and Red River Cart

date: 1889

credit: Hudson Bay House Collection

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



Clothing

2.1 The Sash

date: 1981

credit: Cliff Bunnie, Gabriel Dumont Institute Collection

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

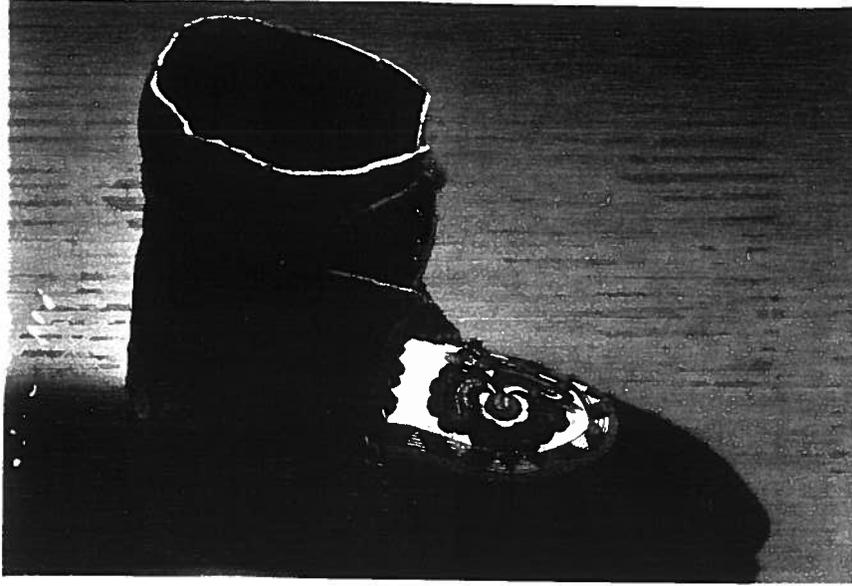
The finger-weaving technique used to make the sash was firmly established in Eastern Woodland Indian traditions. The technique created tumplines, garters and other useful household articles and items of clothing. Plant fibres were used prior to the introduction of wool. Wool and the sash, as an article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

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

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

The Metis share the sash with two other groups who also claim it as a symbol of nationhood and cultural distinction. It was worn by Eastern Woodland Indians as a sign of office in the 19th century. It was worn by French Canadians during the Lower Canada Rebellion in 1837. It is still considered to be an important part of traditional dress for both these groups.

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



Clothing

2.2 Silk Embroidered Moccasins

date: 1985 (photo) 19th century (artifact)

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

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



Clothing

2.3 Red River Coat

date: 1840 (?)

credit: from the Collection of Alexander Acevedo, published in *Akicita*, 1983.

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

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



Clothing

2.4 Buckskin Jacket

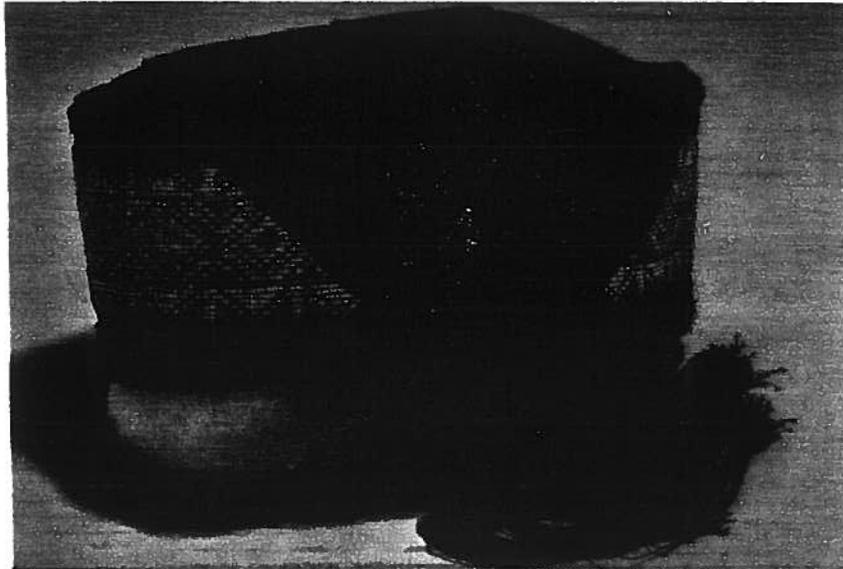
date: 1985 (photo) 19th century (artifact)

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

Another style of clothing which emerged from the Metis blending of cultural experiences was the northern style hide jacket. These jackets were very popular among the Metis in the Northern fur posts and were also evident in later years in every Metis community.

They consisted of basic European jacket shapes edged with fringes and trimmed with beadwork, quillwork or silkwork. There were a number of variations of these jackets. Some featured narrow plackets of beadwork along the front, cuffs and at the shoulder. Other jackets, such as the one illustrated, had a full yoke of heavy embroidery or beadwork on each shoulder and across the back.

This northern style Metis jacket has replaced the traditional clothing worn by the Indian peoples of the area and is commonly assumed to be Indian in origin. It has enjoyed a healthy survival into the twentieth century.



Clothing

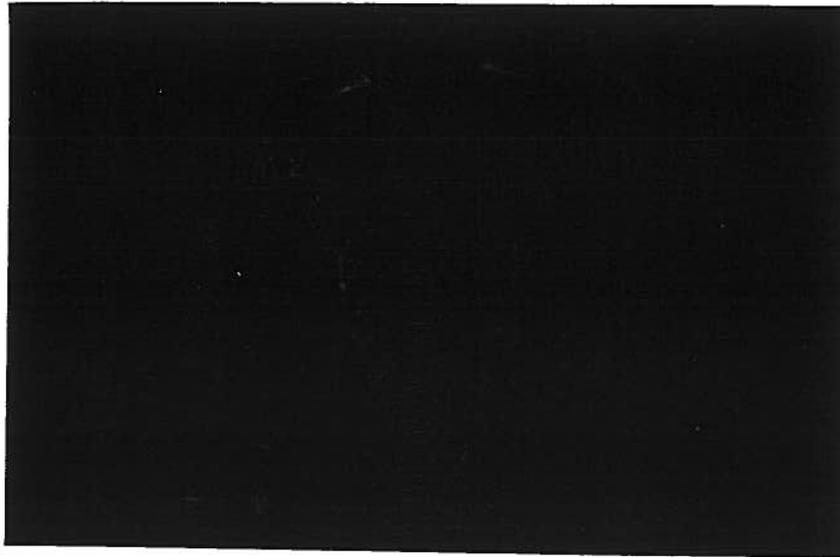
2.5 Quilled Velvet Cap

date: 1985 (photo) 19th century (artifact)

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

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

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



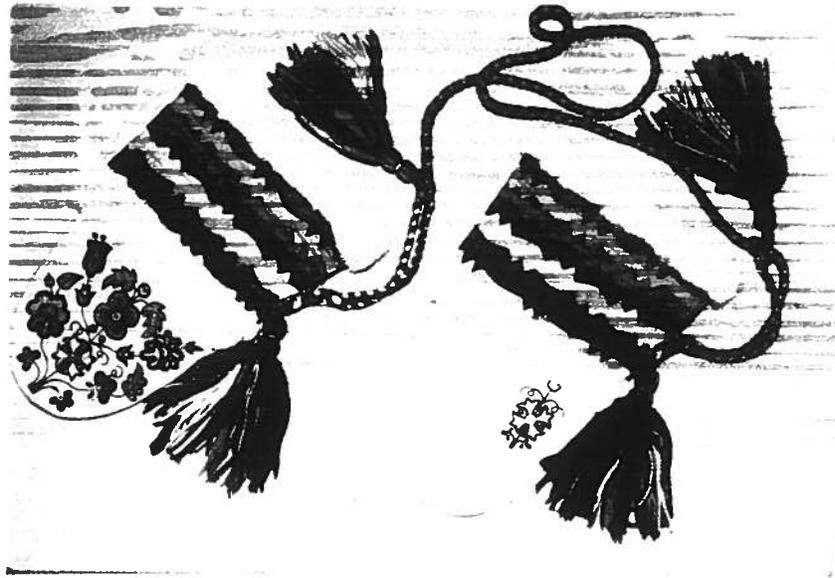
Clothing

2.6 Beaded Leggings

date: 1985 (photo) 19th century (artifact)

credit: Sherry Farrell Racette (photo), St. Boniface Museum Collection (artifact)

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



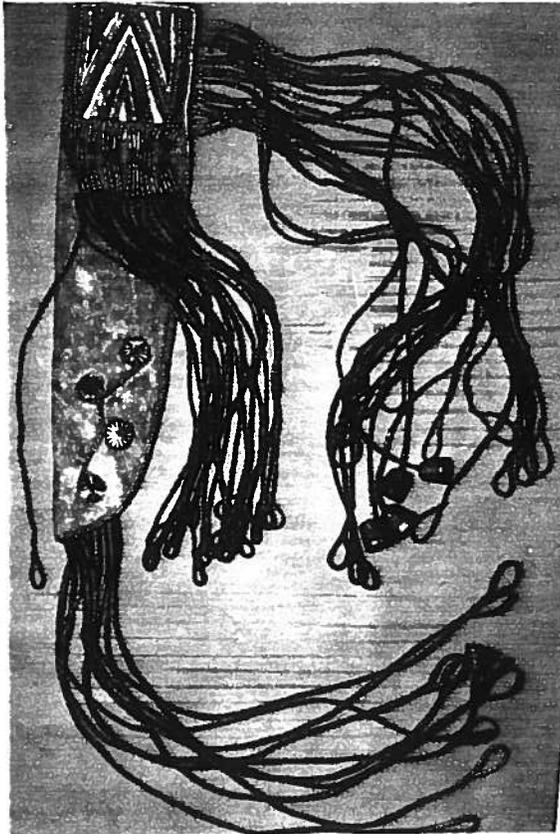
Clothing

2.7 Silk Embroidered Mittens

date: 1985 (photo) 19th century (artifact)

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

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



Clothing

2.8 Knife Sheath

date: 1985 (photo) 19th century (artifact)

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

During the 18th and 19th centuries, a hunting knife was an essential item. The "buffalo knife" was either handmade or purchased through trade. Commercial sheaths were either unavailable or did not meet the Metis' standards for decoration. This particular sheath is simply decorated with quilled rosettes, quill-wrapped fringe and thimbles.



Transportation

3.1 The Red River Cart

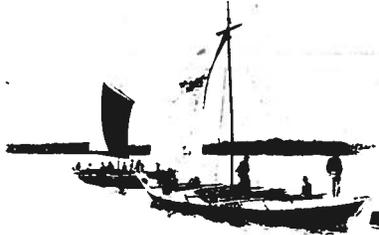
date: 1890

credit: Manitoba Public Archives

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

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

The ungreased wooden axles of the cart made a horrible screeching noise. During prosperous times in the mid-nineteenth century, thousands of carts formed trains which transported whole communities to buffalo hunts and freighted goods over long distances. Until the advent of the railroad, these Red River cart trains provided the only overland freight system.



Transportation

3.2 York Boats

date: 1910

credit: Manitoba Public Archives

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

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

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



Transportation

3.3 Man on Horseback

no date

credit: Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature

This scene is a museum reconstruction of a primary mode of transportation on the prairies during the 18th and 19th centuries — the horse. The horse had as great significance to the Metis as it did to the Plains Indian culture. The Metis rode sturdy “buffalo runner” ponies. These horses, which were essential to the buffalo hunts, were used for scouting and travelling. Horses also provided a major form of recreation, as they were used for racing and betting. The Metis hunters demonstrated their regard for their horses by dressing them in beautiful saddles, saddle blankets and other paraphernalia.



Transportation

3.4 Pad Saddle

date: 1985 (photo) 19th century (artifact)

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

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

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



Transportation

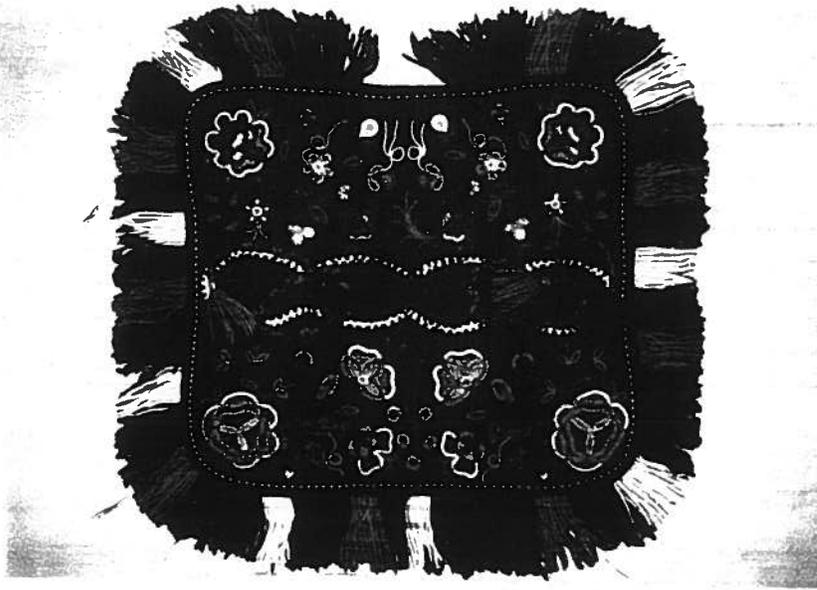
3.5 Dog Team

no date

credit: Provincial Archives of Alberta

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

The dogs in the picture are wearing highly decorated outfits, which were made for them by their owners. A well turned out dog team was as important, in its time, as a fine car is today. Such dog teams were a common sight in Metis and Indian communities all over Western and Northern Canada.



Transportation

3.6 Dog Blanket

date: 1985 (photo) 19th century (artifact)

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

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



Transportation

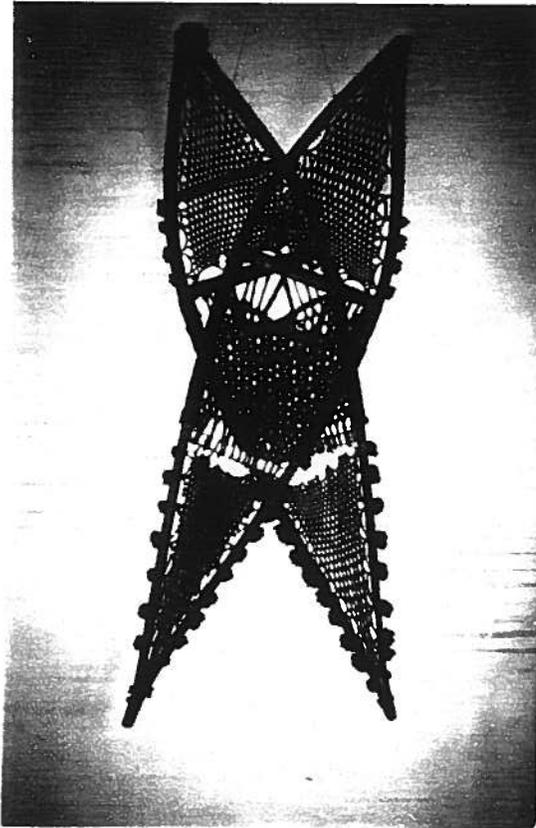
3.7 Man on Snowshoes

no date

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

This painting depicts a man in typical winter garb. Dressed warmly and equipped with gun and snowshoes, this man could be ready to begin a long journey or to travel to his trapline.

The snowshoe is another item of Indian culture which became firmly a part of Metis culture, as well. Snowshoes were extremely practical in those regions of Canada which had long winters and deep snow.



Transportation

3.8 Snowshoes

date: 1985 (photo) early twentieth century (artifact)

credit: Sherry Farrell Racette (photo) St. Boniface Museum Collection (artifact)

This close-up of a typical pair of snowshoes shows the main points of construction: the bent wood frame, the babiche (rawhide) net and the woolen trim applied for decorative purposes. Snowshoe making by hand is seldom done any more. Most snowshoes are now manufactured commercially. The quality of the handmade snowshoe is far superior to that of the commercially made snowshoe.



Work

4.1 Buffalo Hunt

no date

credit: Saskatchewan Archives Board

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

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

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

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



Work

4.2 Portage with a York Boat

date: 1880

credit: Manitoba Public Archives

The portage was an accepted part of water transportation in early Canadian history. Before the fur trade, a portage involved simply carrying light birch bark canoes and possessions overland to the nearest water route. During the fur trade and especially after the introduction of the wooden York Boat, the portage became an extremely labour-intensive operation.

The water routes and portages used during the fur trade were the ancient water and trades routes which Indian people had used centuries before European contact.



Work

4.3 Packing Freight at Cumberland House

no date

credit: Public Archives of Alberta

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

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



Work

4.4 Man Packing Freight

no date

credit: Saskatchewan Archives Board

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

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



Work

4.5 Farming

no date

credit: Manitoba Public Archives

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

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



Work

4.6 Fishing

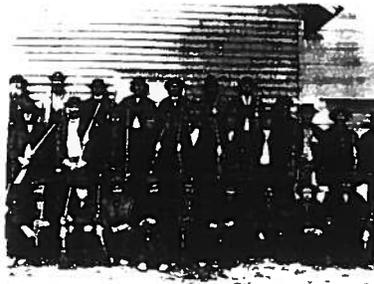
no date

credit: Saskatchewan Archives Board

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

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

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



Work

4.7 Scouting and Guiding

date: 1874

credit: Saskatchewan Archives Board

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

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



Work

4.8 Traders

date: 1872-74

credit: Manitoba Public Archives

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

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



Metis Art

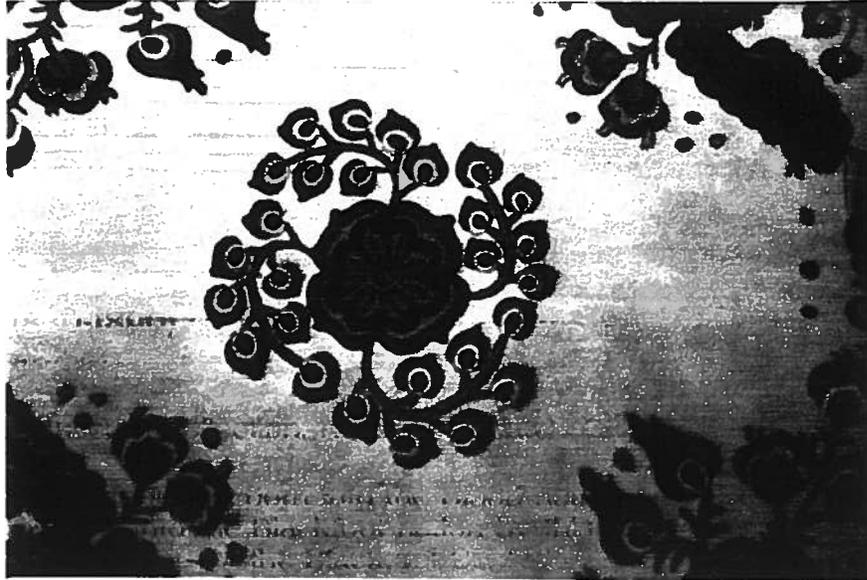
5.1 Quillwork on Leather

date: 1985 (photo) 19th century (artifact)

credit: Sherry Farrell Racette (photo), St. Boniface Museum Collection (artifact)

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

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



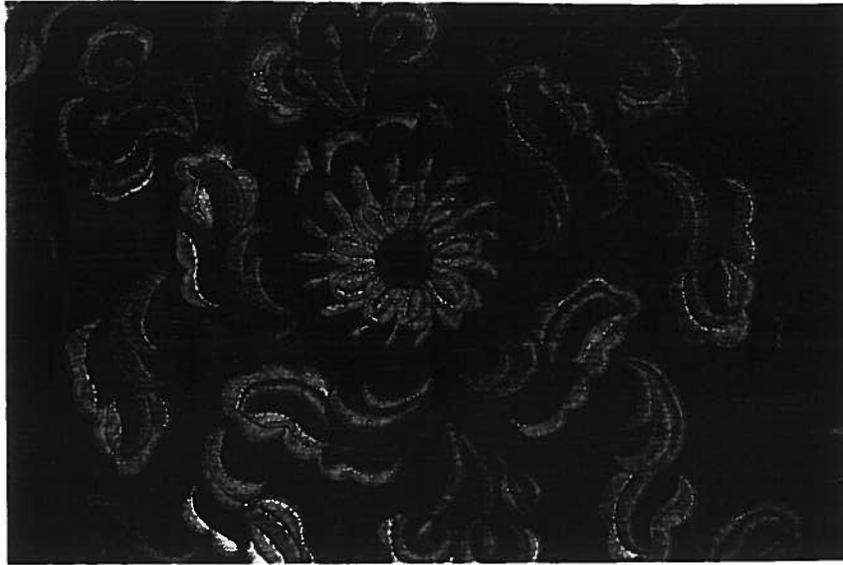
Metis Art

5.2 Silk Embroidery

date: 1985 (photo) 19th century (artifact)

credit: Sherry Farrell Racette (photo) St. Boniface Museum Collection (artifact)

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



Metis Art

5.3 Silk Embroidery Detail

date: 1985 (photo) 19th century (artifact)

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

This enlarged detail shows the fine work and subtle colour range for which silk embroidery is noted. This piece uses only one embroidery stitch: the humble buttonhole stitch elevated to an artform. This stitch was the most widely used, although the chain stitch also appears on certain pieces.



Metis Art

5.4 Beadwork

date: 1985 (photo) 19th century (artifact)

credit: Lower Fort Garry Collection

artifact: octopus bag of red stroud with floral beadwork

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

The bag illustrated is a traditional Metis 'octopus' bag. It is unique because of its use of red stroud instead of the more commonly used black or blue background cloth.



People: Indians

6.1 Plains Indians

no date

credit: Edward Curtis, Bureau of Ethnology, Smithsonian Institute

In the late 18th century and early 19th century, the Indian nations living along the edge of the great Western plains and in the fertile river valleys encountered the horse. The horse had a tremendous impact upon the culture of these diverse nations. Mobility, speed and greater hunting ability became possible. A culture which embraced the horse appeared on the plains and flourished for just over a century.

It was the Plains Indian lifestyle which strongly influenced the Metis cultural heritage of Red River and across the western prairie. The buffalo hunt, the horse, the tipi, the council and consensual forms of government were aspects of Plains Indian life which became an integral part of Metis culture in the 19th century.

The Metis, Plains Cree, Sioux, Mandan and Blackfoot were relatives, allies and combatants at various times during the short, but dramatic, lifespan of the plains horse culture.



People: Indians

6.2 Lone Bear (Sioux)

date: 1898

credit: Manitoba Public Archives

Lone Bear, the individual in this photograph, is representative of the proud Sioux nation with its respected military strength.

Although many Metis were of Sioux ancestry, the two groups frequently met in battle. The Sioux had traditionally hunted on the northern plains. The growing Metis population emerged in their midst.

Conflict over hunting territory intensified as the Sioux were pushed north by American settlement and the Metis moved south into North Dakota and Montana. The Battle of Grand Coteau in 1851, saw 400 Metis defeat 2,500 Sioux in a victory which firmly established the Metis as a nation with a distinct territory.



People: Indians

6.3 Crowfoot (1830-1890)

no date

credit: RCMP Museum Collection, Regina, Saskatchewan

Isapo-muxika or Crowfoot was born into the Blood nation in 1830 in present day Alberta. He was adopted into the Blackfoot nation by this step-father and became one of the most prominent leaders of the Blackfoot Confederacy during the traumatic last half of the 19th century.

Crowfoot participated in some of the most difficult decisions in Blackfoot history as his people fell from their original prominence to destitution brought on by starvation, disease and alcohol. It was an extremely difficult time to have the responsibilities of government and Crowfoot is noted for his wisdom and good judgement. However, a nagging question remains in regard to his status and portrayal in Canadian history. Is he revered because of his leadership abilities or his "loyal" stance during the conflicts of 1885?

Crowfoot brought peace to the prairies when he adopted a young Cree who bore a striking resemblance to a son who had died. Poundmaker and Crowfoot remained close during those difficult years and greatly reduced the warfare between the Plains Cree and the Blackfoot Confederacy.

Crowfoot had discussions with Sitting Bull, Louis Riel and other leaders of the time. He maintained a neutral stance throughout. He was greatly appreciative of the expulsion of the whiskey trade by the North West Mounted Police and remained loyal to them. This loyalty was sorely tried during the 1884-1885 period when Poundmaker became involved in the conflicts on the prairie. Many Metis and Cree sought refuge and support in Crowfoot's camp and he grew angry when his guests were harrassed by the police. He requested arms and ammunition, for the defence of his people should the conflict draw near. This was denied and Crowfoot and his men were not allowed to purchase arms, a situation which greatly encouraged their "loyalty". Dewdney, the lieutenant-governor of the North West Territories, further encouraged Crowfoot's neutral stance by doubling the food rations to his starving people soon after the Battle of Duck Lake.

Although he did not become involved in Poundmaker's fight, Crowfoot actively lobbied for his fair treatment during imprisonment and for his early release. It is said that Poundmaker's knee-length hair was not cut because of Crowfoot's efforts to see that his son's dignity was preserved.



People: Indians

6.4 Sitting Bull

date: 1878

credit: RCMP Museum Collection, Regina, Saskatchewan

In 1876, General George Armstrong Custer met and was soundly defeated by three thousand Sioux at the Little Big Horn. The aftermath of that Indian victory was a ruthless quest for revenge. The Sioux found themselves relentlessly pursued and harrassed by the American cavalry. In 1877, Sitting Bull and five thousand people under his leadership entered Canada. They were destined for Wood Mountain, Sitting Bull's birthplace.

The four years that the Sioux resided in Canada were stressful years. The Metis, long-time inhabitants of Wood Mountain did not welcome new residents. The Sioux placed additional demands on an already diminishing food supply. The violence that they had left behind them in the United States was very much on the minds of the Metis and other settlers. The newspapers made much of Sitting Bull's arrival, although the Sioux protested that they simply wished to rest and live in peace. Sitting Bull spent most of his time in the Wood Mountain area, but also travelled to Fort Walsh and spent some time in the Qu'Appelle Valley near the Fishing Lakes. While in the Qu'Appelle area, they were in a destitute condition. The Sioux of Standing Buffalo, earlier arrivals in Canada, assisted them, as did the Metis and the priest at Lebret, providing provisions in exchange for whatever the Sioux could trade. Sitting Bull always maintained that he would not beg.

While in Canada, Sitting Bull developed an unusual friendship with Major James Walsh, the man representing the North West Mounted Police in the area. The relationship between the two men did much to keep events of the day in perspective. In 1881, Sitting Bull and his people were escorted to the American border.

Sitting Bull spent some time with Buffalo Bill's Wild West show before returning home where, in 1890, he was shot by an Indian policeman who had come to arrest him for refusing to send his son to residential school.



People: Indians

6.5 Poundmaker

date: 1885

credit: Manitoba Public Archives

Poundmaker was born near Battleford in 1842. His father was a prominent spiritual leader of the Stonies and his mother was a Cree Metis. It is said that she was a Belanger. Poundmaker's mother returned to Saskatchewan following her husband's death. She went to live with her brother Mistawasis and his people. When his mother died, Poundmaker was left an orphan. He was treated kindly, but became independent and self-reliant at an early age. In 1873, Poundmaker was captured by a group of Blackfoot men when he wandered into Blackfoot territory. He was brought before Crowfoot. Poundmaker's uncanny resemblance to Crowfoot's son, who had recently died, created quite a stir in the Blackfoot camp. He was adopted by Crowfoot and spent a great deal of time with his new father's people. Together, Poundmaker and Crowfoot brought about greater peace between their two nations.

Poundmaker selected a reserve at the junction of the Battle River and Cut Knife Creek in 1879. Under his leadership, his band struggled valiantly with their new lifestyle. Between 1880 and 1884, four crops failed on the new reserve. Discouraged with their failure as farmers and dismayed by the lack of game, Poundmaker's people faced a new difficulty: starvation. The winter of 1883-84 was severe. Poundmaker decided to unite with other leaders to speak to the government about honouring the promises made during the signing of the treaties. A great meeting was held the following summer and over 2,000 met in council. Tensions grew as living conditions worsened and the government did not fulfill their obligations. Finally, hungry, frustrated and angry, Poundmaker's men looted the town of Battleford when they were refused rations. An unwilling Poundmaker found himself at war with the Canadian government. His camp was attacked by Colonel Otter at Cut Knife Hill. Quick thinking and guerilla tactics saved the day for Poundmaker and Cut Knife Hill was a victory for the Cree.

Poundmaker and his men were on their way to Batoche to join the Metis when they heard of the defeat. Poundmaker searched out General Middleton to ask for terms of peace. He surrendered, was tried for treason and spent less than a year in Stony Mountain penitentiary. His early release was largely due to the strong lobbying, on his behalf, by Crowfoot. After his release, he went to Blackfoot Crossing to be with his father. He died, four months after his release, while speaking to a large gathering about the events of 1885.



People: Indians

6.6 Mandan Survivors

date: 1872

credit: Manitoba Public Archives

The haunted faces of these Mandan men reflect the memories of the smallpox epidemic from which only they survived.

The Mandan lived in permanent farming communities along the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. They lived in large, mud-plastered lodges and cultivated corn, beans, squash and sunflowers. They hunted as far west as the Rockies.

The town of Indian Head and the surrounding hills received their names from the Mandans who fled to their summer hunting grounds during a smallpox epidemic. They climbed to the top of the hills to be closer to God and died by the hundreds. Smallpox virtually exterminated the Mandan population.



People: Indians

6.7 Almighty Voice

date: 1894

credit: Duck Lake Museum

Almighty Voice was born in 1876. He was the son of Sounding Sky, chief of the One Arrow Reserve south of Prince Albert. His story is truly a sad page in Saskatchewan history. Immediately after the Resistance in 1885, Indians were confined to reserve lands. It was this policy which created difficulty for Almighty Voice when he chased a government steer off reserve land and killed it. He was arrested and jailed at Duck Lake by the North West Mounted Police.

As a crude joke, he was told by a Metis interpreter that he was going to hang for the offence. Almighty Voice escaped during the night and went to consult his father. Upon his arrival, he discovered that his father had been jailed for security reasons.

For two years, Almighty Voice and his wife lived as fugitives. An encounter with the law left one officer dead and a scout wounded. The search intensified, so he returned to his parent's home to leave his wife and infant son in their care. His father informed him that he had been outlawed because of a bad joke, but now was wanted for murder.

Almighty Voice left the reserve, intent on dying a warrior's death. He was joined by his sixteen year old cousin and fifteen year old brother-in-law. They encountered ten police officers, wounded two and retreated to a poplar bluff. Twenty-five more officers arrived with a cannon. For four days they shelled the bluff. Over a thousand spectators, both white and Indian, watched.

Almighty Voice and his brother-in-law were killed. His cousin was wounded. A Metis friend had promised his mother to bring him home if he could. As he was lifting the boy from a trench where he was hidden, a friend of a dead policeman shot and killed the boy. Carved on a tree, not far from the trench, was a simple epitaph, "Here have died three braves".



People: Metis Nationalists

7.1 Cuthbert Grant (1793-1854)

no date

credit: Manitoba Public Archives

Born in 1793 at Fort Tremblante near the present day site of Yorkton, Saskatchewan, Cuthbert Grant was the son of a North West Trading Company partner and a Cree woman. At the age of eight, Cuthbert was sent to Scotland for an education. He arrived at the Red River Settlement at age sixteen to begin apprenticeship as a clerk in the North West Company. By the age of nineteen he operated his own post.

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

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

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



People: Metis Nationalists

7.2 Louis Riel

no date

credit: RCMP Museum Collection, Regina, Saskatchewan

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

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

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

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



People: Metis Nationalists

7.3 Gabriel Dumont

no date

credit: Saskatchewan Archives Board

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

During the 1860's and the early 70's, Dumont hunted, trapped and fished. He also set up a ferry and did some farming. In 1873 he was instrumental in establishing the laws of St. Laurent. He was elected president of the Council for a one year term. The laws were broken in 1875, Dumont was arrested and the buffalo were all but exterminated.

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

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



People: Metis Nationalists

7.4 Ambroise Lepine

no date

credit: Saskatchewan Archives Board

Ambroise Lepine was born in the Red River Settlement. He rose to prominence as Louis Riel's Adjutant-General during the formation of the provisional government in Manitoba (1869-70).

Lepine led a party of Metis who halted the survey party led by William McDougall. The survey party intended to survey the Red River area without consulting the Metis provisional government. On March 3, 1870, Thomas Scott was placed before a court martial for opposing the provisional government. Lepine presided over the court martial. Scott was found guilty and sentenced to death by firing squad. This act was carried out under Lepine's direction. Lepine also led a Metis force that turned back a Fenian invasion of Canada in 1871.

After the provisional government stepped down, a reward of \$5,000 was placed on Lepine, for his arrest and conviction. This was done by the province of Ontario. He was arrested in the fall of 1873 but was not brought to trial until October 13, 1874. He was found guilty, with a recommendation for mercy. The chief justice imposed the death sentence to be carried out in January, 1875.

Political pressure was applied and Lepine's case was reviewed. His sentence was commuted to a jail term of two years and a permanent loss of civil rights was imposed. Lepine's civil rights were restored to him a few years before his death in 1923.



People: Metis Nationalists

7.5 Malcolm Norris

date: 1956

credit: Saskatchewan Archives Board

Malcolm Norris was born at Edmonton in 1900. His father, John Norris, was a wealthy Scottish settler. His mother was Euphrosine Plante, a Metis of St. Albert. Children from his father's previous marriage were antagonistic to their Metis step-mother and her children. As a result, the family lived in two separate homes. Malcolm grew up and received his education in St. Albert. Metis heritage and the Resistance of 1885 were familiar topics of discussion in the Norris home.

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

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

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

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

Norris is remembered as a brilliant orator and political organizer.



People: Metis Nationalists

7.6 Jim Brady

date: 1957

credit: Saskatchewan Archives Board

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

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

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

After the war, Brady moved to Northern Saskatchewan. He lived in a simple log cabin lined with scholarly books. He worked as a prospector to support himself. He was reunited with Norris and together they worked to organize the Northern Metis Association. Brady was viewed as the strategist.

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



People: Metis Loyalists

8.1 James McKay

no date

credit: Manitoba Public Archives

James McKay was born in Fort Edmonton in 1828. Claiming Orkney, Cree and French Canadian ancestry, he was fluent in English, Cree, Ojibwe, Sioux and French. He worked for the Hudson's Bay Company as a trader, guide, freighter and interpreter. He was also Post Master at several posts across the prairie. James McKay married Margaret Rowand in 1859. Margaret was the Metis daughter of Hudson's Bay Company factor, John Rowand. Rowand was a very wealthy man and, upon his death, Margaret became a wealthy woman. James and Margaret built a large and elegant home called Deer Lodge along the banks of the Assiniboine River. Although McKay was now wealthy, he did not forget his beginnings and always dressed and entertained in "Red River style". McKay's list of political accomplishments are lengthy. He was appointed to the Council of Assiniboia in 1868, was President of the White Horse Plains District Court in 1869, President of the Executive Council for the province of Manitoba in 1871 and Speaker for the upper chamber. McKay's political appointments survived three changes of government. James McKay was also appointed to the North West Council and sat on special committees concerned with the hunting of the buffalo and with Indian and Metis affairs.

During the 1860's and 1870's, James McKay was an influential mediator between the Indian peoples and the Canadian government. In 1875 he was named an Indian Commissioner.

McKay's political life had some financial benefit for his business life as well. His transport business was contracted to distribute goods to destitute Indian refugees. He supplied the surveyors in the Boundary Commission. McKay also secured the contract for distributing the food and implements promised to the Indian peoples through the treaties. Later, McKay supplied immigrants travelling west and contracted for the first mail service in Saskatchewan.

McKay was an unusual man in that, although he remained loyal to the Canadian government throughout all the events of the late 19th century, he was held in high regard by Indians, Metis and settlers.



People: Metis Loyalists

8.2 Thomas Hourie

no date

credit: Saskatchewan Archives Board

In 1885, General Middleton required the services of an interpreter and contracted Peter Hourie, a local English-speaking Metis. When an urgent message needed to be sent, the older Hourie contacted his son, Thomas. Thomas was very tall and strong. He carried messages at great risk to his own life. The Houries were apparently well regarded in the Indian, Metis and settler communities and were committed to restoring peace in the area. It was to Thomas Hourie that Louis Riel surrendered.

After 1885, Thomas Hourie was refused scrip and encountered numerous difficulties in claiming his land entitlement. This caused bitterness among those Metis who had stayed out of the conflict. It was felt that Thomas Hourie had been used.



People: Metis Characters

9.1 Jerry Potts

no date

credit: RCMP Museum, Regina, Saskatchewan

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

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

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



People: Metis Characters

9.2 George "Shaman" Racette

date: 1869

credit: Manitoba Public Archives

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

- 1873- Shaman Racette and others established a council in the Qu'Appelle valley with the intent of establishing a government. They awaited the arrival of Louis Riel to assist them, as they were uneducated men.
- 1873- Shaman Racette was reported to be instigating discontent among the Indian people of the area by telling them that the government was going to take away the land which rightfully belonged to them.
- 1873- At James McKay's request, the Shaman spent the winter travelling among the American Metis and Indians who planned to enter Canada to join forces with Canadian Metis and Indians in an effort to push white settlement from the plains. Shaman advised them that they could find themselves unwelcome in both countries and obtained their signature and their promise to remain in the U.S.A.
- 1874- Shaman represented the Assiniboine Indians at the negotiations of Treaty No. 4. His display of military strength and his strong position during the negotiations led to his being overpowered, handcuffed and kept under guard in a tent during the proceedings. He was released only when he promised to leave the area.



People: Women

10.1 Indian Mother

date: 1878

credit: Manitoba Public Archives

Indian women, such as the woman shown here, were the mothers of the Metis nation. These women provided their knowledge, skills and companionship to European men who were involved in exploration and trade.

Women frequently left their own people far behind to accompany their men as they travelled across Canada. Mrs. Alexander Ross, an Okanagan Indian from British Columbia became a resident of the Red River Settlement in what is now Manitoba. Although most European men did not consider these common-law marriages binding, many were deeply committed to their wives and children.

Indian women were the critical factor in the establishment of the fur trade. Through them, fur trade connections were made and maintained. Under their guidance, their European husbands adjusted to the new land and survived.



People: Women

10.2 Metis Women

date: 1858

credit: Manitoba Public Archives

Letitia, a Cree Metis woman, was photographed by W.M. Hime at Fort Edmonton in 1858. She can be considered representative of the Metis women of her time. These women grew up in the midst of the fur trade and lived during the golden age of the Metis. These were the wives and mothers of the New Nation.



People: Women

10.3 The Middle Class Woman (Henrietta Ross)

date: approximately 1880-1890
credit: Manitoba Public Archives

Henrietta Ross was the daughter of James Ross and the granddaughter of Alexander Ross, Hudson's Bay factor of the Red River Settlement.

She is representative of the small but prosperous Metis middle class. Certain Metis individuals were able to make the transition from a traditional Metis lifestyle to Victorian Canada with relative ease. The Norquays, the McKays, the Isbisters and the Rosses were prominent citizens in the new province of Manitoba.



People: Women

10.4 The Women of 1885 (Marguerite Riel and Madeleine Dumont)

no date

credit: Saskatchewan Archives Board

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

Marguerite and her two small children were among the women and children hidden in the caves along the Saskatchewan River during the fighting at Batoche. They were rescued by Gabriel Dumont and his wife, Madeleine. Following Riel's arrest and Dumont's escape, the two women shared a similar fate.

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

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

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

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

Louis Riel
Regina, 1885



People: Women

10.5 Woman Making a Basket

date: 1935

credit: Saskatchewan Archives Board

Indian and Metis women's special relationship with the land provided their families with food, medicine and household articles. Craftwork, such as illustrated in this photograph, has provided a small but steady source of income for generations.



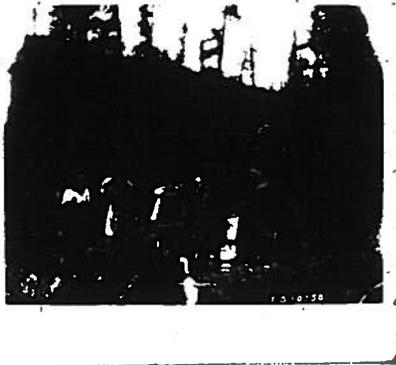
People: Women

10.6 Women Making a Canoe

no date

credit: Public Archives of Canada

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



People: Women

10.7 Women Packers

no date

credit: Public Archives of Canada

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



People: Metis Opposition

11.1 Lawrence Clarke

date: approximately 1870
credit: Manitoba Public Archives

Lawrence Clarke came to prominence in western Canada in the early 1870's. He was the Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay post at Fort Carlton. With the help of Father Andre, Clarke convinced the Metis to establish the community of St. Laurent. He used both his friendship with the Metis and his position as Chief Factor to control prices and make large profits for the Company and himself.

If Metis history has a place for a villain, Lawrence Clarke has earned it. Clarke provided the governor of the North West Territories with false information, which caused the dissolution of the traditional Metis laws governing St. Laurent. Clarke was elected member of parliament for the District of Lorne and subsequently became active in land speculation in and around the Prince Albert area.

In 1884, Clarke took the List of Rights from the Riel Council to Ottawa. On his return, he told the Metis that five hundred soldiers were on their way with chains for Riel, and bullets to answer the petition. He actually raised the tensions on both sides, which eventually led to conflict.

Clarke made tremendous profits from the events of 1885. He supplied the soldiers from the store he owned, at prices he controlled. He acquired land for next to nothing from the dispossessed Metis. Clarke died in 1890, having amassed a great fortune.



People: Metis Opposition

11.2 Thomas Scott

no date

credit: Saskatchewan Archives Board

Born in Middlesex county, Ontario, Thomas Scott played a key role in Manitoba and Saskatchewan history. He was an Orangeman, a supporter of the the Canadian party and the British crown.

Attempts were made by Scott and others to overthrow the Riel Provisional Government of 1869-70. He was arrested, escaped and arrested again by the Riel government. When offered amnesty for promising not to oppose the Council, he refused. He was taken before a court-martial, found guilty and sentenced to death by firing squad. This act was carried out on March 4, 1870. Scott's body was never found.

In 1885, Louis Riel was tried for treason. He was found guilty and hanged. One of the jurors who found Riel guilty stated that they tried Riel for treason, but he was hung for the murder of Scott.



Political Events

12.1 Provisional Government of 1870

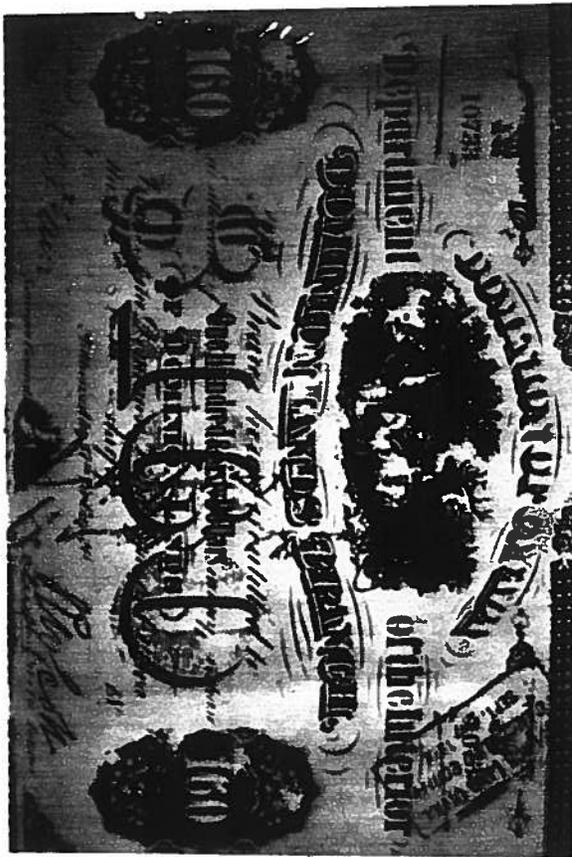
date: 1870

credit: Manitoba Public Archives

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

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

This scene of Riel and his Council was taken in a local hotel. On the far right is the owner of the hotel, who assembled the council in order to celebrate their success.



Political Events

12.2 Scrip

no date
credit: Glenbow Museum

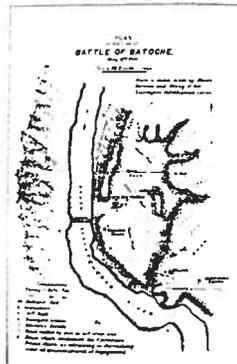
The term scrip was extracted from the word 'description'. Scrip is a certificate which grants the person named on the scrip the right to receive something described on the scrip. The corporation granting the scrip must have the resources available to pay the bearer of the certificate.

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

As a clause in the Manitoba Act of 1870, Metis people received 1.4 million acres of land. The method chosen by the government to distribute the land was scrip. The original agreement was that every Metis born prior to 1870 was entitled to scrip or promise of land. Land scrip and money scrip were issued. Land scrip entitled the person named on the certificate to the amount of land on the certificate (photo shot, 80 acres). Money scrip entitled the bearer of the note to receive the cash value of the amount named (photo shot, \$160). Both types of scrip were issued to the Metis.

Land speculators, lawyers, bankers and syndicates moved in and proceeded to obtain scrip from the Metis. They purchased it outright, used forgery or fraud, delayed settlement and even hired people to impersonate Metis applicants. It is believed that the delay tactics used in issuing were primary causes of the 1885 Resistance.

The majority of Metis who received scrip were, in one way or another, convinced to part with their land holdings. Very few descendants of the the original scrip holders still own and operate the holding. The position taken by the Metis of Saskatchewan is that the issuance of scrip did not extinguish Metis aboriginal rights and was unfair because very few Metis actually benefitted.



Political Events

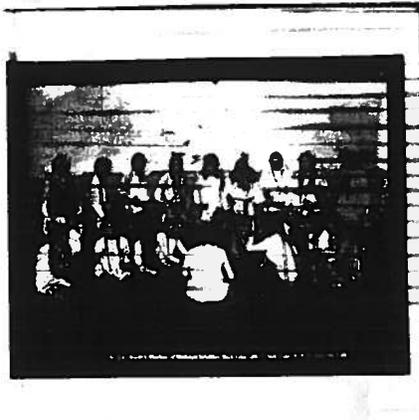
12.3 Battle of Batoche

date: May 12, 1885

credit: Manitoba Public Archives

The last and largest encounter of the North West Resistance occurred at Batoche. It was here that three hundred Metis fought a much larger force to a standstill for three days. The Metis finally ran out of ammunition and were forced to surrender.

Significant points of interest shown on the map are the church and the cemetery. The church has been restored and is used as a museum. The cemetery holds the Metis and Indian soldiers killed in battle. They are buried in a mass grave. Also buried in the cemetery is Gabriel Dumont, military leader of the Metis soldiers during the Resistance. Immediately below the cemetery, on the banks of the Saskatchewan River, are caves where Metis women and children hid from the Canadian troops during and after the fighting.



Political Events

12.4 Beardy's Soldiers

date: 1885

credit: RCMP Museum Collection, Regina, Saskatchewan

In the spring of 1885, a troop of North West Mounted Police under Superintendent Crozier were marching toward Duck Lake for what turned out to be an unplanned confrontation with a party of Metis. Their march took them in a direction which crossed Beardy's Reserve. Seeing that something was afoot, a party of Cree Indians from the reserve went to investigate.

One of the Cree, named Assywin joined Isidore Dumont and went forward to meet with Crozier and Joe McKay. Assywin was unarmed and carrying a white flag. On an order from Crozier, McKay shot and killed both Assywin and Dumont. This turn of events caused many of the young Cree men to join Riel and Dumont in the 1885 Resistance battles.



Political Events

12.5 Metis Prisoners of 1885

date: 1885

credit: RCMP Museum, Regina, Saskatchewan

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

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

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



Political Events

12.6 Big Bear and Poundmaker as Prisoners

date: 1885

credit: Manitoba Public Archives

Poundmaker and Big Bear were the recognized leaders of the two major Indian forces involved in the events of 1885. The two men participated in two different chains of events but never fought together.

Big Bear had been the leader of a small band in the Frog Lake area in the years that preceded Treaty No. 6. He refused to sign the treaty and, for years, avoided settling on reserve lands. By 1885, Big Bear led a community of two hundred families and was considered to be a major force in the North West. Adding to the situation was the fact that those who had swelled the numbers of Big Bear's small band did so in protest to life on the reserve and disappointment in the terms of the treaty. Although Riel met with Big Bear, Big Bear was not an avid supporter of the Resistance. When he lost control of his young men at Frog Lake, he found himself involved. His Cree forces were victorious at Fort Pitt and Frenchman's Butte. Big Bear and his people were pursued across northern Saskatchewan and Alberta during the month of July. Finally, Big Bear left his family with Metis friends and surrendered at Fort Carlton. His youngest son, Horsechild, ran away and insisted on accompanying his father. Horsechild stayed at Big Bear's side throughout the trials and went with him to prison. He was later removed and sent to residential school. Big Bear was not as kindly treated as Poundmaker in prison. His hair was cut and this, combined with his age, left him a very frail man. He became so ill that he was released after serving two years of his three year sentence. He died on Poundmaker Reserve during the winter of 1887-88. Horsechild was adopted by a Metis family. He returned to the reserve as an adult and is buried beside his father.

Poundmaker became a celebrity of sorts while in prison. His appearance and dignified bearing attracted the attention of the media. At Crowfoot's urging, the priests in the area ensured that Poundmaker was treated fairly and that he not suffer the indignity of having his hair cut. Although Poundmaker was a younger man, his health also suffered. He died while addressing Crowfoot and his people four months after his release from prison.

It is interesting to note that while Poundmaker's and Big Bear's names were frequently mentioned by Riel's prosecution, they were never requested to provide testimony by either the defense or the prosecution. They were only a few yards away.



Political Events

12.7 Riel as Prisoner

date: 1885

credit: Public Archives of Canada

On May 15, three days after the Battle of Batoche, Louis Riel surrendered to Thomas Hourie, an English-speaking Metis employed by General Middleton as a scout. He was taken to Middleton and placed under guard in a tent next to the General's.

This photograph was taken by Captain Peters, one of Middleton's force, as Riel stepped from the tent shortly after his arrival. He was kept under guard for two days then escorted to a jail cell in Regina.



Political Events

12.8 Trial of Louis Riel

date: 1885

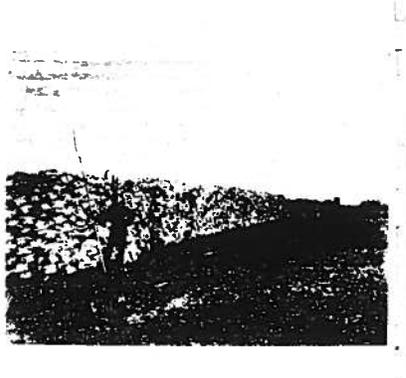
credit: Public Archives of Canada

After Louis Riel's surrender at Batoche, he was taken to Regina for trial. The charge brought against him was high treason. If found guilty, the penalty was death. His council was also arrested. They were convinced to plead guilty to treason-felony which was punishable by a jail term. This enabled the government to separate Riel's case from the rest of the Metis who were arrested.

The case came to trial, but the trial took on aspects of a kangaroo court. According to the law, Riel should have been transported to Manitoba for trial because crimes of this nature could only be tried in a recognized area of the Dominion of Canada. Saskatchewan had not yet attained this status. He also was entitled to be tried by a jury consisting of twelve men, six French-speaking and six English-speaking.

Instead, Riel was tried in Regina. The jury consisted of six English-speaking men. The judge, Hugh Richards, was a political appointee placed in the position. Arguments that Riel was an American citizen were disallowed. His lawyers pleaded for innocence by reason of insanity. Riel would have none of it. He was found guilty by the jury who recommended mercy. He was sentenced to hang on September 18, 1885. Appeals were sent out and he was given a stay of execution to October 16 and then to November 16. The execution was conducted on November 16, 1885 in Regina.

Later, one of the jurors was interviewed. He remarked that Riel was tried for treason, but hung for the death of Thomas Scott, an act carried out by the provisional government of 1870. A letter to Macdonald from Edgar Dewdney reveals that Riel had to be hung to prevent further conflict with the Cree. This reference alludes to the fact that eight Indians were hung in Battleford for crimes committed at Frog Lake.



Political Events

12.9 Buffalo Bones

no date

credit: Public Archives of Canada

With the abolition of the Laws of St. Laurent which afforded the buffalo some protection, a mass slaughter occurred. Many white free hunters, with some Indian and Metis, killed approximately five million buffalo for their hides. Buffalo bones littered the prairies for many years.

It was discovered that these bones could be used for fertilizer and, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, bones were collected and sold. The people who collected these bones received eight to twelve dollars a ton for them. This grisly job provided a form of employment for many Metis and white settlers for approximately twenty years.

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



Political Events

12.10 The Canadian Pacific Railway

date: 1884

credit: Manitoba Public Archives

The idea of a transcontinental railroad was first conceived in the 1850's. It was rejected initially because of the phenomenal amount of time, labour and money that would be required. The idea was not completely lost and, after Canadian confederation, Prime Minister John A. Macdonald set out to make it a reality. He had three major reasons: the expansion of colonialism, the need for a new trade route to the Far East and fear of American annexation of the Canadian west.

The first step was to populate and colonize the West. Surveys were conducted and the route was planned. Private funds from companies who were speculating in land began the construction. The CPR board of directors influenced the government and were granted the charter to build the railway. They also received twenty-five million acres of land, millions of dollars and all construction that had taken place, as a gift from the federal government.

British Columbia joined Canada in 1871, with the promise that the railway would be completed in ten years. The company ran out of capital on several occasions. The federal government provided funds to continue on each occasion. Finally, in 1885, the federal cabinet was split over the issue of continuous funding of the railway. The CPR seemed destined to collapse. Salvation occurred in the form of Metis unrest. Through political manipulations, John A. Macdonald, Lawrence Clarke and others were able to incite the Metis and Indians of Saskatchewan into armed conflict. As troops were organized to go west, parliament quickly ordered the funds to complete the railroad.

Upon receiving the necessary funds, John A. Macdonald contracted William Van Horne to complete the construction. The last spike was driven on November 9, 1885, just seven days before Louis Riel was hung for treason.