

Adrian Hope. (1903-1986)

Adrian Hope was born at Morinville, Alberta on November 19, in 1903. He spent his preschool years on the Alexander Indian Reservation near Onaway, Alberta. Over his lifetime he was a rancher, rodeo cowboy, movie extra, poet, fisherman, educator and political leader. Together with Joseph Dion, Jim Brady, Malcolm Norris and Peter Tomkins he formed L'Association des Métis de l'Alberta et les Territoires du Nord Ouest in December of 1932.

Harry Hope, Adrian's father, worked as an Indian Agent on the reserve. Harry had come to Canada from Scotland. He served in the North West Mounted Police for a time, before marrying Marie Cecil, an Indian lady. Thus, Adrian learned to speak both the Cree and English languages at an early age.

Adrian received his education at the St. Albert residential school. His dad passed away when he was fifteen years old. Later, his mother married Adam Thomas, a treaty Indian from Enoch Reserve, this became Adrian's home for a number of years.

On October 21, 1929, Adrian married Julia DePagie from Clymont. They had three daughters. Julia passed away shortly after the birth of their last child. Julia's mother was a half sister to Malcolm Norris. It was at the time of his remarriage that Adrian became interested in the plight of the Metis people. He was well acquainted with Malcolm Norris, Joseph Dion, Charlie Delorme, Jim Brady and Pete Tomkins, early leaders of the Metis people. Adrian himself was later to serve on the Executive Council of the Federation of Métis Settlements and as President of the Métis Nation of Alberta.

In the late 1920s, Charles Delorme and Deudomne Collins were concerned about having land set aside for the Metis. These men were not politicians and were unfamiliar with the procedures for lobbying the government for land. They knew Joe Dion, who was teaching school on the Kehewin reserve not far from Fishing Lake where Charley lived. They turned to him for assistance and advice.

On May 24, 1930, at one of the early Metis meetings, Joseph Dion agreed to be the president and represent the Metis to the government authorities in Edmonton. Field workers were sent throughout the province to gather membership signatures. At that time, membership cards sold for eight cents, times were hard and money was very scarce.

Adrian went out as one of the field workers. After the May meeting he went south. He was able to collect 80 cents for travelling expenses before leaving. It was said that he brought back change! He caught a ride to Edmonton and that night slept under the High Level Bridge before catching a freight train to Calgary. By August 31, 1930, they had collected over 500 memberships for the Association.

It was not until November 22, 1938 that the Metis Population Betterment Act was passed by legislation. Charley Delorme's dreams had become a reality. The Metis had land to call a home and none too soon. The Great Depression, the "Dirty Thirties," as

they were called, were well entrenched across the land. Jobs and money were scarce, poverty was everywhere. Metis earned money from commercial fishing, trap lines, working as farm labourers or whatever other work they could find. They canned wild berries, grew gardens, some raised chickens, some had a milk cow or so. Kikino Settlement later was to have a sawmill. People worked for 25¢ to 30¢ an hour. The Metis Association activities came to a lull through the depression and war years. When the Metis Betterment Act was approved, only Dion and Tompkins remained to negotiate with the government

Adrian Hope moved to Kikino around 1959. He became the principal organizer for the revival of the Association. He built himself a log house on the shore of White Fish Lake. He sawed pulpwood by hand to pay for the necessities of life.

Not many people knew that Adrian had a wooden leg, having lost his leg in a rodeo accident when a horse rolled over on him. In any event, when he first moved to the Kikino Settlement he was too poor to buy a boat and thus tells the following fishing story:

[To set my nets and retrieve them] I had this net... so I take the box and walked out into the water and when I got up to my knees, my wooden leg kept coming up so I went back to the shore. I tied a couple of rocks on it. On the wooden leg, and I walked into the water up to my chest, and I started getting my net. That night was pretty cold. My God, there was a clump of ice about the thickness of a windowpane, and I had to go and get my nets. Well I started walking into this water, after I tied the stones over the legging. Talk about [trying to] stretch the family allowance. Anyway, I had some fish and I had some snares, and I ate fish and rabbits.

The following year he bought a boat from Jim Cardinal for \$6.00 and was able to set nets for white fish or jacks and tulabies. Fish and rabbits were the staples of their diet. The first local meetings of the Association were held in this house. Later, Adrian moved to Kikino's old abandoned schoolhouse. People came to meetings on horseback, by horse and wagon and in winter by horse and cutter. When the few chairs were taken up, people sat on blocks of wood or on the floor while Anne Collins, by light of a coal oil lamp recorded the minutes in a 5¢ scribbler. People donated whatever they could so that the Association could send representatives to other settlements and hire a layer. A Catholic Priest from the Pea Vine Settlement in Northern Alberta was able to collect \$35 by putting on a picture show. This was donated to Adrian for the work of the Association. Later, he moved to Edmonton to work at the Friendship Centre but frequently returned to Kikino. His nickname was Pete and because he was in the city so much, around Kikino he was known as "Pete Never Home."

Few people had phones at this time, thus there were difficulties in communicating with the population of the settlements. This led Adrian Hope, Eugene Steinhauer and other members of the Settlements to start a Native radio program and found what became The Alberta Native Communications Society. Radio station C.K.U.A. aired the first program in September of 1966. Over time many more stations were added and programs

were aired in the Cree, Slavey, Beaver, Chipewyan and Blackfoot languages and eventually the Society was reaching most of the Native communities in Alberta. Senator Ed Head of the Manitoba Metis Federation recalls that he and Yvon Dumont consulted with Adrian Hope when they were planning to set up NCI Radio in Manitoba. Ed fondly recalls that he and Adrian conversed in Cree.

In the late 1960s oil was discovered on one of the Métis Settlements. The Métis Association felt that they should receive royalties and the money from the oil wells should have been put into the Métis Betterment Trust Fund. It was decided to launch a lawsuit against the provincial government. However, when Adrian Hope went to Edmonton, he was informed that the Métis Association was not registered under the Societies Act thus he was in no position to protest. Adrian registered the Métis Association of Alberta on November 20, 1961 and Premier Lougheed agreed to abide by the decision of the courts. They went to court under the leadership of Stan Daniels. The court felt that there was not enough representation from the Settlements and the case was adjourned.

At a subsequent meeting they changed the name and legally registered as The Federation of Métis Settlements. Adrian served as the first president with Richard Poitras and Maurice L'Hirondelle as first and second vice-presidents. They then changed tactics, and by vote taken by all the residents of the eight Settlements it was agreed that they would settle with the government out of court. The government did agree to this and several million dollars were paid to the Settlements, to be divided among all eight Settlements. At a meeting held at Kikino in August of 1977, an agreement was signed between the Metis and BP Oil Company for compensation. It was the first time the Metis were to receive direct compensation for oil and gas exploration on their lands.

The major political event of Adrian Hope's lifetime was the constitutional discussions of 1981, when Prime Minister Trudeau tried to change Section 34 of the Constitution, thereby deleting Native Rights. The biggest crowds in the history of Alberta gathered on the legislative grounds. Elmer Ghostkeeper from Paddle Prairie was President of the Metis Federation at that time. He sent a car to Kikino to pick Adrian up and bring him to the protest rally. Adrian and Maurice L'Hirondelle burnt sweet grass over the centennial flame in the legislative park. Both Elders prayed to the Great Spirit for protection of Metis rights. In a surprise turnaround, Premier Lougheed changed his position and agreed to affirm Native rights in the constitution.

No one knows how many Metis meetings Adrian Hope attended in his lifetime. Even in his retirement years he retained his interest in Metis activities. He made many friends all over the province. He was to say; "I count my riches in friends." He will be remembered as the person who was to revive the Alberta Metis Association and as a founding member of Alberta Native Communications, and his long dedication for the betterment of Metis people. (Contributed by Margaret Gross, Adrian Hope's daughter and Senator Edward Head.)



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