

# **a pictorial history of the Métis and Non-Status Indian in Saskatchewan**



Published by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission  
in co-operation with  
The Association of Metis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan

Cover Photograph: Louis Riel's Councillors in the Regina Jail, 1885.  
A Saskatchewan Archives Photograph.

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## INTRODUCTION

"We were a new generation, starting our lives of defeat, without hope, ashamed of ourselves as half-breeds. Although our forefathers had fought gloriously against the Ottawa regime, we were still the wretched of the earth. How much easier and happier it would have been to start, knowing the glory of our forefathers and their accomplishments. The truth would have given us all strength and pride. But instead we followed in the debased path cut for us by the white image-makers".

From — *Prison of Grass* by Howard Adams.

In 1973, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, as part of its education mandate, commissioned a study of prejudice in the Social Studies textbooks being used in Saskatchewan schools. The findings of this study were not very encouraging:

"The findings (of the study) clearly indicate a marked differential in the treatment of the attitude groups in Social Studies textbooks. This prejudiced writing varies from what might be considered mildly unacceptable to what might be deemed outrageous.

Christians are our control group. They are consistently treated favourably. Eighty-nine percent of the assertions made about Christians are positive.

On the other hand Indians are treated most unfavourably. Roughly half of the assertions made about Indians are negative.

This comparative difference in treatment is clearly an indication of prejudice on the part of textbook authors, particularly in light of the devastating effect Christianity has had on Indian society and culture."

From — "Prejudice in Social Studies Textbooks",  
The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission.

The Commission recognizes the need in the Public School System and in general, for published material which puts forward positive non-racist images of Native people. History is normally written by the victor in any clash of cultures. Often this results in the continuation of that defeat. Clearly the Indian and Metis people have continued to pay for their defeat. While conditions have

improved slightly for a minority of native people, the poverty and oppression of past decades continue to plague Canada's first citizens. In addition to this material poverty the Indian and Metis people have had to endure the imposition of racist stereotypes in Canadian literature. It is the purpose of this publication to contribute to a non-racist reassessment of history.

To this end, the Commission has undertaken the publication of this brief pictorial history of the Metis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan. It has been prepared in co-operation with the Association of Metis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan (A.M.N.I.S.). Mr. Jim Sinclair, A.M.N.I.S. President, feels that there is a very strong awareness of cultural identity developing within the Native population of Saskatchewan. It is hoped that this booklet will be of value to Native people in their search for identity in Canadian society and that it will help make other groups in the province aware and appreciative of the rich history of the Native people of Saskatchewan.

In preparing this booklet, which we hope will be the first in a series of such publications, we have not attempted to write an inclusive history of the Metis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan, but to provide profiles of outstanding individuals. We have selected a group of men and women who have worked significantly for the betterment of their people or who have been successful in their chosen careers. Because we found there were so many who more than met this criterion, we have had to select a few from each period of history. We would like to distribute the booklet throughout the province, especially to the schools, where we hope it will be of particular value to Native and white students as they study the history of this province.

Judge TILLIE TAYLOR, Chairperson,  
Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission

December, 1976

## CUTHBERT GRANT (c. 1796 - 1854)

In the evolution of the Metis people, as a nation, Cuthbert Grant stands at the beginning, as the first leader of the Metis people and as a man who worked to foster a sense of identity among his people.

Grant was born at Fort Tremblante, which was located in Saskatchewan near the Manitoba border, north-east of Yorkton. He was sent to be educated in his father's home in Scotland. He returned to the Red River area as a young man, and began work as a clerk for the North West Company.

Upon his return to the West, Grant became well known among the Metis and during the conflict between the rival fur companies, the North-West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company, from 1814 to 1821, he became the acknowledged leader of the Metis people.

In 1824 Cuthbert Grant was given a large tract of land by the Hudson's Bay Company and founded the Metis settlement of Grantown (now St. Francois Xavier, Manitoba). Soon Grantown became a successful community and served as a model for other Metis settlements in the area.

In 1828 Grant was appointed "Warden of the Plains" by the Hudson's Bay Company. As such he was to police the fur trade and prevent illegal trading. He was also appointed in 1835 to represent the Metis on the Council of the Assiniboia which was established to govern the Red River country. He continued to live in Grantown, acting as the pharmacist and physician and eventually as Justice of the Peace and Sheriff of the area. He

led the Great Metis Buffalo hunts until the late 1830's.

Cuthbert Grant died in 1854. The Metis people had lost a great advisor and leader.

Drawing Courtesy Manitoba Archives



## **LOUIS RIEL Sr. (1817 - 1864)**

Jean Louis Riel, the father of the famous Metis leader, Louis "David" Riel, was born in Saskatchewan, at Ile-a-la-Crosse in 1817. His family was of French and Chipewyan ancestry. He left Saskatchewan with them as a small child and spent the rest of his life in Eastern Canada and in The Red River area of Manitoba.

Jean Louis Riel became a leader of the Metis people for a time. He organized the Metis actions in trying to break the Hudson's Bay Company's monopoly of the fur trade in The Red River area during the 1840's. He was an able politician, well-educated and a capable speaker. In 1847 the Metis, under his leadership, were successful in breaking the Hudson's Bay Company's monopoly and a period of free-trade and prosperity for the settlement followed.

Riel, Sr. is also remembered as the "Miller of the Seine" because of the wool and flour mill he established on the Seine, a tributary of the Red River. Unfortunately, his enterprise there was never completely successful due to the poor economic conditions of the time.

Prior to his death in 1864 he was involved in a variety of occupations, notably the reconstruction of St. Boniface Cathedral.

Photograph Courtesy Manitoba Archives



## CAPTAIN WILLIAM KENNEDY (1814 - 1870)

Captain William Kennedy, a Metis born in Cumberland House, earned his reputation at sea. He was sent to be educated in Scotland by his father, a Hudson's Bay Company Post manager. He returned to Western Canada as a young man and worked for the Hudson's Bay Company until 1846.

At this time, the world was intrigued by the disappearance of Sir John Franklin in the Canadian Arctic. Twelve expeditions failed to locate any sign of his party. In 1850 Lady Franklin hired William Kennedy to lead another search party. With a crew of seventeen, Kennedy, although not successful in locating Franklin, opened up and mapped new areas of the Arctic and located the northernmost tip of the North American continent. Kennedy's search party set new precedents in techniques of Arctic survival by adopting the manners and customs of the Eskimos and Indians. Three Arctic locations have been named in honor of this Metis explorer: Port Kennedy, Kennedy Channel and Cape Kennedy.

When he returned to the Red River area, Kennedy became involved in the Metis struggle to break the Hudson's Bay Company's monopoly of the fur trade. In the 1860's he built a beautiful stone house which is now used as a museum. He was active in forming the Manitoba Historical and Scientific Society, and gave its first address entitled, "The Northwest Passage".

Photograph Courtesy Manitoba Archives



## ALEXANDER KENNEDY ISBISTER (1822 - 1883)

A. K. Isbister was born at Cumberland House on the Saskatchewan River and is honored as the Metis who started the University of Manitoba on its road to success.

Isbister received his early education at St. John's School in the Red River and then went to work as a clerk for the Hudson's Bay Company. After saving enough money to finance the trip, he travelled to Britain to study at the Universities of Edinburgh and London. He became a teacher and a lawyer. Although he never returned to Canada, A. K. Isbister was still able to help the Metis cause in Western Canada. At public hearings, held in England, he represented the Manitoba Metis in their petitions for land titles and the right to trade freely. When he died in 1883, he was a wealthy man.

In 1877 the University of Manitoba had been formed. It had no building, no library, no money, and no students. All it could do was give examinations and award degrees to those who passed them. Isbister left his fortune of \$83,000.00 (equivalent to one million dollars today), to the fledgling university. The interest derived from investing the money was to be used to give scholarships to promising students, without distinction of race, creed or sex. He also left his personal library of over 4,000 books to the University.

Today, although the money in the Isbister Fund no longer exists, the memory of A. K. Isbister is still honored in the province of Manitoba. The Manitoba Department of Education

awards "Isbister Scholarships" to outstanding students entering university and a building on the University of Manitoba campus is named in his honor.

The Metis of Western Canada can take special interest and pride in the University of Manitoba.

Photograph Courtesy Manitoba Archives



## REVEREND HENRY BUDD (1812 - 1875)

December 22, 1850 saw the ordination of Henry Budd into the Anglican clergy at St. Andrew's Church on the Red River. He was the first Native person on the North American continent to be so ordained.

Born in 1812 at Norway House in Manitoba, of Indian and Metis parents, he was educated and baptised in the mission at the Red River settlement. His subsequent work as a teacher in the settlement so impressed his superiors that he was asked in 1838 to travel north-west beyond the Red River settlement and begin work among the Native peoples. After a brief stop in Cumberland House, he finally chose the site of The Pas, Manitoba, for his mission.

An eloquent speaker in both English and Cree, Henry Budd soon had made many converts to the Anglican faith. Through his work at The Pas he influenced the Native people of the La Ronge-Stanley mission area who came to visit and learn from him and then returned home to share their new faith with their fellows. After his ordination in 1850 the Reverend Budd was given a new mission at Nepowewin, now known as Nipawin, Saskatchewan. He worked there for fifteen years also ministering to the needs of residents of the Prince Albert area.

He was active in mission work until his death in The Pas in 1875. The Reverend Henry Budd is remembered as a man of great faith and spiritual depth.

Saskatchewan Archives Photograph



## LOUIS "DAVID" RIEL (1844 - 1885)

The life of Louis "David" Riel has been of tremendous significance to the history of the Metis and Indian people of Western Canada. During his life he assumed the leadership of the Metis struggles for justice in the Red River and in Saskatchewan. Throughout his life, whatever his failings might have been, he was motivated by a sense of mission and devotion to the cause of his people. Acutely intelligent, he was the only Metis of his time who could give the Metis a sense of their significance as a group. His greatest attribute was his magnificent speaking ability. In the ninety-one years since his death, the memory of Riel has been the sustaining spirit of the Metis people as they recovered from the humiliation they suffered after their defeat in 1885 and as they continue their struggle for self-determination.

Louis Riel was born on October 22, 1844 near St. Boniface, Manitoba. At fourteen, having distinguished himself at school in St. Boniface, he was sent to Montreal to study for the priesthood. In 1865, he left the seminary in the final year of his studies.

Riel returned to the Red River in 1868. The following year, at the age of 25, he was chosen to lead the people of the area in their struggle with the Canadian Government to establish their rights as citizens of the West. He was a natural choice as leader because of his superior education and his eloquence as a speaker in both French and English. Under Riel's leadership the Metis of the area were somewhat successful in their confrontation with Ottawa. By the Manitoba Act of 1870 many of their demands were agreed to.

After 1870 Riel himself had to face exile and harassment. Although elected as a Member of Parliament he was not allowed to take his seat. By 1876 his mental condition had suffered so badly that he had to be hospitalized. In 1878 he settled in Sun River, Montana. In 1884 when a Metis delegation from Saskatchewan arrived in Sun River hoping to persuade Riel to return to lead the Metis resistance there, he accepted at once.

Riel assumed leadership of a movement in Saskatchewan that had been building since the early 1870's when the first petitions for land rights had been sent to Ottawa. The government in Ottawa had totally ignored their demands. By 1884, the citizens of the area were unified in their demands to Ottawa. Riel's plan was to force negotiations with Ottawa for free title to lands and for provincial status with representation in Ottawa. Riel's ability to inspire the Metis people to action was his greatest attribute as a leader. Unfortunately, his military strategy was hampered by his concept of religion and the resultant indecision it caused. When the Northwest Uprising ended in failure, as it was doomed to do, Riel was imprisoned and charged with High Treason.

To the end of his life Riel felt a responsibility to his people. His last act as leader was to write his "Derniere Memoire", a long statement of the Metis cause. Riel was found guilty of High Treason and was hung on November 16, 1885. He was buried in St. Boniface, Manitoba.

Photograph Courtesy Glenbow-Alberta Institute



## GABRIEL DUMONT (1837 - 1906)

Gabriel Dumont was essentially a man of the prairies, a leader of The Great Metis Buffalo Hunts, a farmer, and a man who felt a deep responsibility for his fellow man. During the battles which the Metis fought in making their last stand as a nation, he also proved himself to be a brilliant military strategist. Dumont was born in 1837 near St. Boniface, Manitoba into a Metis family of French and Sarcee Indian heritage. In 1840 they moved to Saskatchewan and settled near Batoche. As a young boy, Gabriel became accomplished as a hunter, fisherman, canoeist and rider. He frequently went along on the hunts and became an excellent guide. He had a facility for languages and could speak five Indian languages as well as French, his native tongue.

By 1872, Gabriel Dumont as a married man, had joined his fellow Metis in settling down to a less nomadic life in the Batoche-St. Laurent area. He farmed, ran the ferry service, and operated a small store. He was already a leader in the community and in 1873, when the one thousand residents formed a colony, Gabriel Dumont was elected president by acclamation. In the years following 1873, Dumont was active in the Metis struggles to obtain title to their land and in attempting to set controls on the hunting of the rapidly disappearing buffalo herds. Dumont was acutely aware of the dangers to the Metis race as the buffalo herds dwindled and the Eastern settlers advanced West. He recognized early the need to unite all the peoples of the area, white, English and French Halfbreeds, and

Indians in petitioning the government in Ottawa for their rights. He played a major role in forming strategy and in eventually asking Louis Riel to return to Canada to help them.

During the political confrontations with the Canadian government in 1885, Dumont led his people into battle. He developed military strategy and fought at the side of his people to the end. It is now felt that Dumont's preferred strategy of using guerilla warfare tactics would have been superior under the circumstances to the military tactics Riel, as leader, eventually chose to use.

When the battles were over, Dumont fled south to the United States where he tried unsuccessfully to devise a plan to rescue Riel. In 1886 his reputation as "The Prince of the Plains" gave him the opportunity of joining "Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show." He spent only a short time with the show, eventually making his way back to Saskatchewan via Montreal.

In 1893 he built a log cabin at Bellevue, Saskatchewan near Batoche, and reverted to the life style he had learned as a boy, fishing and hunting in the woods north of Battleford. He was active until his death in 1906.

Photograph Courtesy Glenbow-Alberta Institute



## MADELEINE WELKEY DUMONT (1840 - 1886)

The Metis women of the mid and late 19th century have been characterized as being hardworking and resourceful. Madeleine Welkey Dumont, a Scots-Metis woman was an exceptional example of this kind of woman.

Born in 1840 in Pembina, Minnesota, she married Gabriel Dumont in 1858 and moved north with him into Saskatchewan soon after. She quickly gained a reputation for being compassionate and hospitable to those less fortunate than herself. There is evidence that Madeleine and her husband Gabriel had a very close relationship. She was greatly admired and respected by him.

As well as coping with the everyday hardships of frontier life, Madeleine frequently accompanied Gabriel on long voyages by snowshoe, Red River cart and horseback. Indeed, on several occasions she travelled alone from Batoche to Winnipeg as his representative to sell the skins which he had acquired. Madeleine had some advantage in these commercial dealings as she spoke English and Gabriel did not.

Madeleine's activities at home included acting as the teacher for the children of Batoche. During the Battle of Batoche, she nursed the wounded and distributed such rations and supplies as there were.

After the battles of 1885 were over, Gabriel saw to Madeleine's safety before crossing the border into the United States. She soon joined him however, unable to tolerate the resultant situation in the Batoche area. Her health had suffered severely and she

died soon afterwards, a victim of the hardships of the Metis struggle for self-determination.

No photograph is known to exist.

Illustration by Cliff Bunnie



## **MAXIME LEPINE (died c. 1894)**

In 1888, Gabriel Dumont, exiled leader of the Saskatchewan Metis, found it necessary to contact his people again. The person he chose to write to was Maxime Lepine, a man he could trust, a man of impeccable honesty.

Little is known of Maxime's early life. He was active politically with Louis Riel and Ambroise Lepine during the Metis struggles of the Red River in 1869-70. By 1883, Maxime had migrated to the St. Louis-Batoche area and was active in petitioning the government in Ottawa for title to Metis lands. In 1884 he was present at the first meeting called by the Batoche area Metis to discuss the possibility of a confrontation with Ottawa over these land claims. He continued to be active in petitioning Ottawa and was involved in preparing the strategy leading up to the re-call of Louis Riel from the United States.

In March of 1885, Maxime was appointed to the council of the newly proclaimed "Provisional Government of the Saskatchewan". During the battles of 1885, Maxime fought in the trenches beside Dumont, even though he realized the overwhelming odds against success. When the struggle was over, Maxime was arrested. He refused to answer any questions and in August, 1885, he was, with nine other Metis soldiers, sentenced to seven years in penitentiary. He survived for only two years after his release and died a nearly forgotten man.

Photograph Courtesy Manitoba Archives



## **PIERRE PARENTEAU (dates unknown)**

Pierre Parenteau was well known among his fellows as a skillful hunter in the great Metis buffalo hunts of the early 19th century.

He appears in a photograph of Louis Riel and his Councillors as prisoners in the Regina Jail in 1885. He had been appointed President of the Provisional Government in St. Laurent on March 19th, of the same year. A trusted friend and ally of Louis Riel, Parenteau had been active politically in the Metis struggle for self-determination since the struggles in the Red River area of 1869. At that time he was a very influential man, elected as a delegate to the conventions of 1869-70 discussing the formation of a provisional government in the Red River. He was an elected captain of the Metis troops in 1871. When Lieutenant-Governor Archibald visited the Red River in October of 1871 Parenteau was, along with Ambroise Lepine and Louis Riel, chosen to be presented to the Lieutenant-Governor as a representative of the Metis people.

In reaction to the political situation in the Red River area Pierre Parenteau emigrated to the St. Laurent-Batoche area sometime prior to 1885. Here he was active in the agitation prior to the Northwest uprising and during the uprising. As a result of this activity he was tried and sentenced to seven years in prison.



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## XAVIER LETENDRE dit BATOCHÉ (1836 - 1901)

In the year 1870-71, a wealthy Metis from the Red River area, Xavier Letendre dit Batoche arrived at the Saskatchewan river across from the Metis community of St. Laurent and established a ferry service and a store. This became known as "Batoche's Crossing" and the Metis community which grew up around it eventually was called Batoche.

Xavier Letendre dit Batoche was described as being: genial, good-humoured, handsome, rich and prosperous. He became a very successful business man in the area operating a trading post, the ferry and a freighting business consisting of over 100 carts by 1884. His two and a half storey frame house was the landmark of the area, thought to be the finest house in the Northwest. It had been built by a French Canadian master-carpenter and was sumptuously decorated and furnished in the style of the era. Apparently Batoche entertained royally in his house, frequently enlisting the Grey Nuns from Ile-a-la-Crosse as cooks to prepare lavish meals for visiting church and government dignitaries.

During the Northwest uprising in 1885 Batoche travelled to Fort a la Corne where he traded furs. Meanwhile, his famous house was used as headquarters by Riel. Xavier Letendre dit Batoche returned to the Batoche area after the uprising and farmed until his death in 1901.



## CHARLES EUGENE BOUCHER (1864 - 1926)

Charles Eugene Boucher was a well-known Metis of the Batoche area. He was a farmer by occupation, a Justice of the Peace, a Member of the Legislative Assembly from 1891 - 1898, and a song writer of some renown.

Boucher wrote songs which expressed the feelings of the Metis people. His songs were sung along with the songs of Pierre Falcon, a Metis songwriter of earlier times. Unfortunately, Mr. Boucher's song-book has gone astray and all that remains of his work is a song recorded by his brother Joseph in 1957 for The National Museum of Man in Ottawa. It is a song about an election in the Batoche area. A Liberal politician, Monsieur Campeau, has come to Batoche from Montreal to campaign for a local man, Monsieur Lelaïrd. Campeau, as the lyrics would indicate, is seen by the Metis as a most unwelcome intruder. Written in French, the lyrics are translated into English as follows:

**"Mon faluré dondaine, oh! yé!  
faluré donde (refrain)\*"**

For a certain Campeau who came to us  
Left Canada to come to make trouble  
Left Canada to come to make trouble  
Arriving in the country went to see  
Champagne

Arriving in the country went to see  
Champagne

Hello Monsieur Champagne, how goes  
the campaign?

Hello Monsieur Campeau, we're not  
doing too well.

To do better, we must make an effort.  
Campeau with his round nose had to  
go to see Caron

Hello Monsieur Caron, let's go make  
our visit.

On their way, meet Michel Dumas.

Well, there you are, Campeau, with  
your toad face.

Oh! on the 15th of March, you'll  
make a face.

Your Liberal Lelaïrd? He'll have  
his neck broken.

We Conservatives, we'll be singing  
aloud!"

\*This refrain seems to have been chosen for its sound, but might possibly mean something like "Oh, my doomed wind-bag" referring to the liberal candidate.

Lyrics courtesy of:  
Richard Johnston Collection,  
Canadian Centre of Folk Culture Studies,  
National Museum of Man.  
National Museums of Canada.

Photograph Courtesy Glenbow-Alberta Institute.



## ARCHDEACON JOHN ALEXANDER MacKAY (1838 - 1923)

For nearly sixty years, Archdeacon J. A. MacKay was a familiar and much respected figure in Northern Saskatchewan.

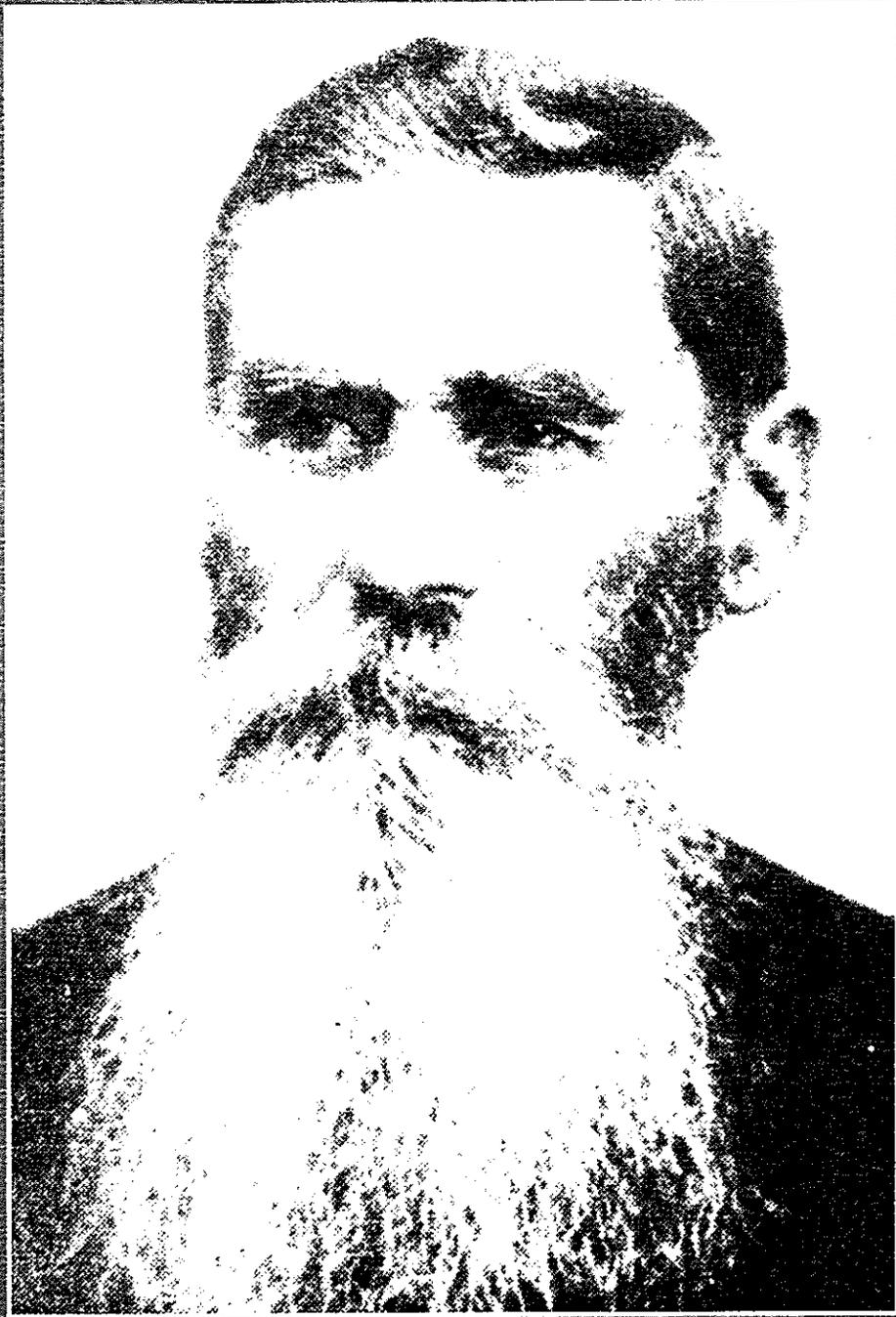
Metis scholar and clergyman who was a stimulus and inspiration to the Native and white people of the North.

He was born in 1838 at Moose Factory, Ontario, where his father was in charge of the Hudson's Bay Post. He was early influenced by members of the Anglican Clergy and was ordained a priest of the Anglican Church in 1862, in Winnipeg.

His first mission was in The Pas, Manitoba. In 1864 he was transferred to Stanley Mission in Northern Saskatchewan. He excelled in his activities there, making the community almost self-supporting in just a short time. Under his guidance the community cultivated the land, grew wheat and garden produce, and raised some cattle as well. It was in Stanley Mission that Reverend MacKay began his work as a scholar, printing translations of the scriptures on a small printing press. He was later to become the most able Cree scholar in Canada, the author of a Cree dictionary and several books and translations.

He stayed in Stanley Mission until 1877 when he was posted to North Battleford. From 1879 to 1923 he was active in Saskatchewan in various capacities. He was appointed Cree tutor and Professor at Emmanuel College in Prince Albert when it was founded in 1879. He was an Indian Agent for a time. He was appointed superintendent of Indian Missions for the Anglican Church in 1900.

Archdeacon MacKay died in 1923. He will long be remembered as an able



## JOSEPH OCTAVE NOLIN (1868 - 1925)

J. O. "Joe" Nolin was by all accounts, one of Saskatchewan's first Metis members of the Legislative Assembly. He was born on May 16, 1868, in Botineau, North Dakota of French, Scottish, Irish and Salteaux Indian ancestry. Educated at St. Anne des Chenes, Manitoba, he came to Saskatchewan as a young man and settled in the Battleford district on a farm north of Jackfish Lake. Here he ranched and farmed for many years. For a period of ten years he ran the steam ferry which crossed the Saskatchewan River at Battleford. He was also a Justice of the Peace.

In his prime, "Joe" Nolin tipped the scales at over three hundred pounds and was said to be an avid outdoorsman, travelling extensively in the North by canoe, dog-sled, horse, and later, automobile. He was widely read and an accomplished linguist, speaking English, French, German and a Native tongue. He became a very well-known figure in the Battleford area and as such, gained the Liberal nomination in the Athabaska constituency for the Provincial General Election in 1908. He served as an M.L.A. for Athabaska and Ile-a-la-Crosse for seventeen years until his death in 1925. He developed a reputation for being a lively exponent of the tremendous potential and natural wealth of the Northern part of this province.



## MALCOLM F. NORRIS (1900 - 1967)

1946 saw the arrival in Northern Saskatchewan of one of this century's most remarkable Metis leaders, Malcolm F. Norris.

Malcolm Norris had already won a reputation as a brilliant orator and political organizer in Alberta where he and his close colleague, Jim Brady, were among the handful of men who organized the Alberta Metis Association. Indeed Malcolm was active in eight Indian and Metis organizations over his lifetime. Fiercely proud, Malcolm Norris wore his Indian ancestry like a medallion around his neck and upon first meeting anyone, would introduce himself as "Redskin Norris, an improved Scotsman".

Norris was a socialist and when he returned to Alberta after serving in the R.C.A.F. during World War II, he became frustrated with the Alberta Metis organization. He decided to try a different approach to helping the native people. To that end he accepted the invitation of the newly elected progressive government of the CCF in Saskatchewan. He was asked to help the CCF in their reform programs in the North which were aimed at helping Native people get out from under the exploitation of the Hudson's Bay Company, the fish companies and the private fur buyers. He worked for the CCF government as director of a prospectors' assistance plan, the first of its kind in Canada, which trained native people as prospectors. While working for the government, Norris was an outspoken defender of Native rights and constantly encouraged Native people to organize and fight for their rights.

He was dismissed from his job by the new Liberal government of 1964 and he soon took a job as director of the Prince Albert Indian - Metis Friendship Centre.

In 1964 Norris started the first Metis Association of Northern Saskatchewan, and was its first president. In 1966 he suffered a crippling stroke. Despite his illness he never missed a meeting of the Metis Association in Prince Albert.

Malcolm Norris was born on May 26, 1900 in St. Albert, Alberta. He died in Calgary on December 5, 1967, soon after leaving his Prince Albert home. He is remembered by his people for his sincere and deep concern for Native people everywhere and his eloquent pleas for social justice on their behalf.



## J. P. "JIM" BRADY (1908 - 1967)

James Patrick Brady was born in St. Paul, Alberta on March 11th, 1908, the grandson of Lawrence Garneau — a comrade in arms of Louis Riel in the Metis rebellions of 1870 and 1885. An exceptional student and powerful intellect, Brady reacted to the conditions of his people by becoming a political activist. In 1927 Brady began his activity with Malcolm Norris when the two men began to organize the Alberta Metis in the Edmonton area around the land claims issue. He continued his political activity as a member of the executive of the Alberta Metis Association until 1940.

Brady was a strong proponent of socialism and when World War II broke out he joined the anti-Hitler forces as a gunner. Soon after returning from the war he joined his friend and political associate, Malcolm Norris, in Saskatchewan as an employee of the new socialist CCF government. His outspoken support of Indian and Metis people led to his forced resignation and he became disillusioned with the CCF.

Brady spent the rest of his working life as a prospector in the northern woods. During this time he constantly encouraged native people to take pride in their ancestry and to fight for their rights. His ramshackle cabin in La Ronge was a gathering place for Metis who would come to discuss politics or just to bed down for the night. Jim Brady was well known as a brilliant political analyst and a scholar — his library had over two thousand volumes. In 1964 he organized the La Ronge local of the newly formed northern Metis Association.

Jim Brady disappeared in June 1967 while on a prospecting trip with an Indian partner. No trace of the two men was found in the extensive search that followed. Although the RCMP dismissed foul play as an explanation, many northerners believe that the two men were murdered.



## JOE AMYOTTE (1913 - )

Joe Amyotte has the distinction of being the first president of the Metis Society of Saskatchewan, now known as the Association of Metis and Non-status Indians of Saskatchewan (A.M.N.I.S.).

He was born in 1913 in Ituna, Saskatchewan of French and Metis parents. He grew up in the Ituna district and became a carpenter by trade. During the Second World War, Mr. Amyotte served in the Army. Following his discharge he located in Regina. He was active at his trade and in union activities until 1962 when he was forced to retire because of poor health. From that time on he devoted his time to organizing the Metis people of southern Saskatchewan. He saw the need for a Metis organization, as conditions for Metis people at that time were not good. The Metis Society of Saskatchewan set up its constitution and by-laws in 1964 and became the Metis organization for southern Saskatchewan. Mr. Amyotte was a member of the Board until 1966 when he was elected president.

In 1967 it was decided to amalgamate the Metis Society with the Metis Association of Saskatchewan, of which Malcolm Norris was the president. It was felt that the Metis of this province would be better represented by a single organization. Mr. Amyotte became the first President of the newly formed Metis Society of Saskatchewan in 1967 and held that position until 1969. During his term of office he worked to arouse consciousness among the Metis people of the need to organize. He also worked to improve the housing situation for the Metis people of this province and to improve their

opportunities for employment.

Mr. Amyotte has been retired from politics since 1969-70. He is now living in Regina.



## JIM SINCLAIR (1933 - )

Jim Sinclair was born in 1933 in Punnichy, Saskatchewan, of Non-Status Indian parents. He dropped out of school in the eighth or ninth grade. He had thought of training for a trade but somehow it didn't work out. He was unable to get a decent job and so he drifted across Canada. He spent time in jail. He became an alcoholic. By 1960, Jim Sinclair was at the bottom.

At that point he decided to make some changes. He took a look at himself and the situation other Native people were in, and he got angry. He was angry with the way the Native culture had been obliterated by white-Christian ethics and values, and angry with the malfunction of the justice system in dealing with Native people. With a changed attitude Sinclair was able to stop drinking and take positive steps to improve the situation for Native people.

Mr. Sinclair's first political involvements were in the Lestock-Punnichy district where there had been an active Metis organization for several years. He became a field worker for the Metis Society in 1964 and worked throughout the province to organize local groups. In 1967 he was elected to the board of the newly formed Metis Society of Saskatchewan. In 1971 he was elected president of the Metis Society and has held that position ever since.

Under Mr. Sinclair's leadership, the Metis Society (now known as the Association of Metis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan — A.M.N.I.S.), has maintained and strengthened its status. Sinclair has worked to keep the

organization independent from affiliation with any political party. He has attempted to educate the Native people of the province as to their rights, by pursuing a policy of confrontation politics, focusing on issues as they relate to the lives of the Native people. Issues such as housing, aboriginal land rights, fishing and trapping rights, are his priorities. Mr. Sinclair believes that the organization must be prepared to stand up to government in pursuing the basic human rights of all Native people. He feels strongly that once these basic human rights are granted, then the rights to land, adequate housing and unbiased education will follow. Sinclair looks forward to the establishment of a Metis and Non-Status Indian Cultural College as the key to improving the educational system for Metis and Indian people.

In an interview, Mr. Sinclair expressed the respect and concern he feels for the Native people of this province. As their leader, he feels a strong obligation to be responsive to their wishes.

Photograph Courtesy "New Breed"



## DR. ADAM CUTHAND (1913 - )

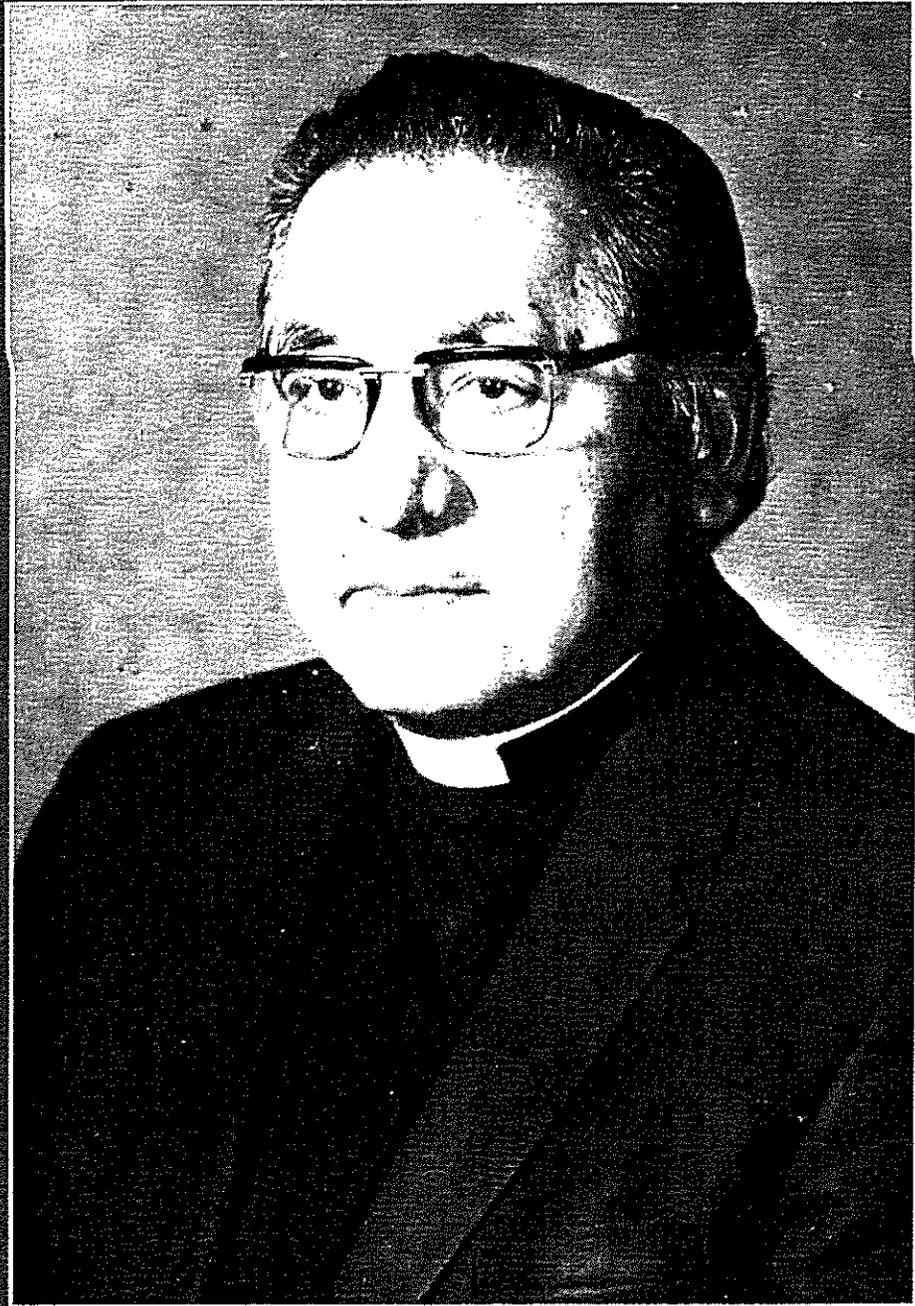
The founding president of the Manitoba Metis Federation, Dr. Adam Cuthand, is a native of Saskatchewan. Dr. Cuthand was born on the Little Pine Reserve of the Battleford agency in 1913 and is the grandson of a war chief involved with the Northwest Uprising of 1885 at The Battle of Cutknife Hill.

Dr. Cuthand was educated on the reserve and in Prince Albert, continuing his education at the University of Saskatchewan where he studied theology and arts. From 1938 - 1941 he taught school on Little Island Reserve. In order to vote provincially and federally, Dr. Cuthand became enfranchised in 1940.

In 1941, he joined the Canadian Army as a radar technician and achieved the rank of Staff Sergeant. After his discharge in 1945, Dr. Cuthand taught in the Indian schools of Saskatchewan. He also became an ordained priest of the Anglican Church of Canada. In 1964 he was put in charge of the Indian work in the diocese of Rupert's Land and so was transferred to Manitoba, where he now lives.

Dr. Cuthand has been active in Native politics for some time, most notably with the National Indian Council and the Canadian Metis Society of which he was elected president in 1968. In addition, Dr. Cuthand was the founding president of the Manitoba Metis Federation in 1968 and worked for some time doing land research studies for that organization.

He was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from the University of Winnipeg in 1970.



## ROSE McKAY BOYER (1936 - )

Since 1971, Rose Boyer has been active with the Saskatchewan Native Women's Association (S.N.W.A.) in Prince Albert and has worked consistently to improve conditions for the Native people of this province.

Mrs. Boyer was born near Kinistino, Saskatchewan into a Scots-Metis family. She grew up during the Depression, living along the road allowance, as so many Metis people were forced to do. Rose married at an early age and raised nine children before becoming involved with native causes. The Boyer family moved to Prince Albert in 1964 and Rose soon became aware of the discrimination and problems confronting native people in the city.

In 1971, when the Saskatchewan Native Women's Association was being organized Rose became involved. Since then, Rose Boyer has been president of the Prince Albert local for three terms and in 1974 was elected Provincial President. In Prince Albert, the S.N.W.A. has established and now operates a very successful half-way home, Kikinow Residence, for Native women who are experiencing personal problems or who need temporary accommodation. The Prince Albert branch of the S.N.W.A. also runs a Referral Centre for native people of which Rose Boyer is the director. For the past two years the Association has sponsored classes in Community Awareness for Native People in the Prince Albert area.

As part of her involvement with S.N.W.A., Mrs. Boyer has worked

extensively with inmates at the provincial jail, the penitentiary and Pinegrove Correctional Centre for women. She has also been involved with the Prince Albert Indian and Metis Friendship Centre.

In 1975, Rose Boyer was elected Prince Albert Native Woman of the Year by her co-workers in the Prince Albert Native Women's Association. She continues to work to raise the consciousness of native women as to their rights in society and their power in groups and to improve the conditions under which they and their families must live.



## NORA OUELLETTE THIBODEAU (1938 - )

Nora Thibodeau is the President and a founding member of the Saskatchewan Native Women's Association (S.N.W.A.). Since 1971 she has worked to encourage the native women of Saskatchewan to organize and become aware of their rights in Society.

Mrs. Thibodeau was born in Saskatoon and has spent all her life there. She began her involvement with Native politics in 1969 as a field worker for the Saskatchewan Metis Society. In 1971 she worked to organize the S.N.W.A. In 1972 she was appointed Provincial co-ordinator of the Association and was eventually elected Provincial President.

As President of the S.N.W.A., Mrs. Thibodeau must be given credit for the direction the Association has taken during the past five years. The Provincial Executive has insisted on playing a supportive role, rather than directing the activities of the local groups. It has centred its activities at the "grass roots" level, organizing and working with Native people who need help. The Association has established Women's Referral Centres in eight locations across the province, and half-way homes in Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert. It has held workshops throughout the province to encourage Native women to become aware of their rights and to become involved in their organization. The Association has been trying to establish Day Care Centres and Native Foster homes for Native children. For all its activities the S.N.W.A. is still largely run on a volunteer basis.

Mrs. Thibodeau is also a founding member of the Board of Directors of the Native Women's Association of Canada. She has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Saskatoon Indian and Metis Friendship Centre, and a member of the Citizen's Advisory Board to The Human Resources Development Agency. In 1973, she was unsuccessful in a bid for a seat on city council. She also found time to raise nine children. Mrs. Nora Thibodeau was honoured in 1975 as one of fifty Saskatoon women who had made an outstanding contribution to their community by the City of Saskatoon.



## DR. HOWARD ADAMS (1921 - )

"As Metis people it is important that we sit down and do some abstract thinking and theorizing about our position in this system. We must think about where we are in the system and how we're going to get out of it, or if we're going to be able to get out of it. Are we going to be sucked into the mainstream and be crushed and die at the bottom and that's it? Or are we going to be able to work towards some kind of a liberation?"

These are the sentiments of Dr. Howard Adams who has established himself as both a scholar and political activist on behalf of the Metis people.

Adams was born and raised in the Metis community of St. Louis, Saskatchewan, the great-grandson of Maxime Lepine, trusted ally of Gabriel Dumont. Influenced by a humanistic teacher in the one-room schoolhouse in St. Louis, he early learned the value of education. He left St. Louis as a young man, and worked at a variety of jobs before drifting to the West Coast. In Vancouver he studied at University and entered the teaching profession. He moved south to Berkeley, California to do work on a Ph.D. in the History of Education. There he became involved in civil rights struggles. On completion of his degree in 1966, he realized that his personal struggle was with his own people, the Metis.

Adams returned to Saskatchewan and obtained a position with the Extension Division at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon in 1966. He

immediately went to work with the Indian and Metis people of the province. It was largely through his efforts that the Metis organizations in the North and South of the province were united in 1967 into one, cohesive organization, the Saskatchewan Metis Society. As President of the Society from 1969 to 1971, Adams worked to raise the political consciousness of the Metis people and to organize branches of the Society across the province.

He was also active in establishing a Red Power movement in Saskatchewan in the sixties.

In 1975 Adams moved to Davis, California to lecture in the Native American Studies program of the University of California. As a writer Adams is best known as author of *Prison of Grass*, a book about the Metis struggle for self-determination. He expects to have another book published soon, a translation of Tremaudin's *History of the Metis Nation*.



## **NORMAN MacAULEY (1917 - )**

The last Provincial Election in 1975 saw Norman MacAuley elected as member for the constituency of Cumberland. He is the most recent Metis M.L.A. and a long-time resident of La Ronge, Saskatchewan.

Mr. MacAuley was born on August 8, 1917 in La Ronge, where his father was a freighter and trader. In 1933 he took over from his father, fishing and freighting in the area, until 1941 when he enlisted in the Canadian Army and was shipped overseas to see service in France and Britain. After the war he spent a few years in British Columbia before returning to La Ronge, where he felt his roots to be. From 1950 to 1956 he was the manager of the Saskatchewan Government Trading stores at Deschambeault and Pine House. In 1956 he returned to La Ronge, where he was employed as a Special Constable for the R.C.M.P. He was very active in the community there, organizing the La Ronge Legion, building-up an award winning Scout-troop in 1960 and serving as Chairperson of the La Ronge School Board from 1964 to 1975. From 1965 to 1972 he built and operated a tourist camp in the La Ronge area. In 1973 he was asked by the NDP government to co-ordinate the re-location of the community of Molanosa to a new site, more suited to an improved life-style for its Native inhabitants.

Since taking his seat in the legislature as an NDP member in 1975, Mr. MacAuley has concerned himself with voicing the need for protection of the timber resources in the North and ensuring that the government develops a program aimed

at diversification of means of employment for residents of the North and provides the appropriate educational facilities.



## MARIA CAMPBELL (1940 - )

Maria Campbell was born during a spring blizzard in April, 1940 on a trap-line in northern Saskatchewan. As a result of her autobiography, *Halfbreed*, she has become well known as a writer and eloquent spokesperson for the Metis people.

"I write this for all of you, to tell you what it is like to be a Halfbreed woman in this country. I want to tell you about the joys and sorrows, the oppressing poverty, the frustrations and dreams."

In *Halfbreed*, with these words, Ms. Campbell begins to share the intimate details of her life as a Halfbreed child in northern Saskatchewan. She goes on to describe her experiences as a young woman, struggling to survive in a racist society and to find her place as a human being.

In 1963 she realized the necessity for co-operation among the Native peoples in Canada, in working to improve their situation. She became politically active in various Native organizations in Alberta and found the brothers and sisters she had been searching for. In Edmonton, she worked to establish a half-way house for women who were destitute or who were experiencing a personal crisis and needed a place to stay.

During her career as a writer, Ms. Campbell published *Halfbreed* in 1973, wrote an article for "MacLeans" magazine in 1975, and is presently writing for children. She has two books soon to be published, one a history for children entitled, *People of the Buffalo*

and the other, the first in a series of legends for children. She has completed one film script for the National Film Board entitled "The Red Dress". She is also contracted to write two more scripts for the N.F.B. pertaining to the lives of her people during the Riel rebellion. At present Ms. Campbell is working on a novel.

Maria Campbell offers hope for her people:

"I believe that one day, very soon, people will set aside their differences and come together as one. Maybe not because we love one another, but because we need each other to survive. Then, together, we will fight our common enemies."



## CREDITS:

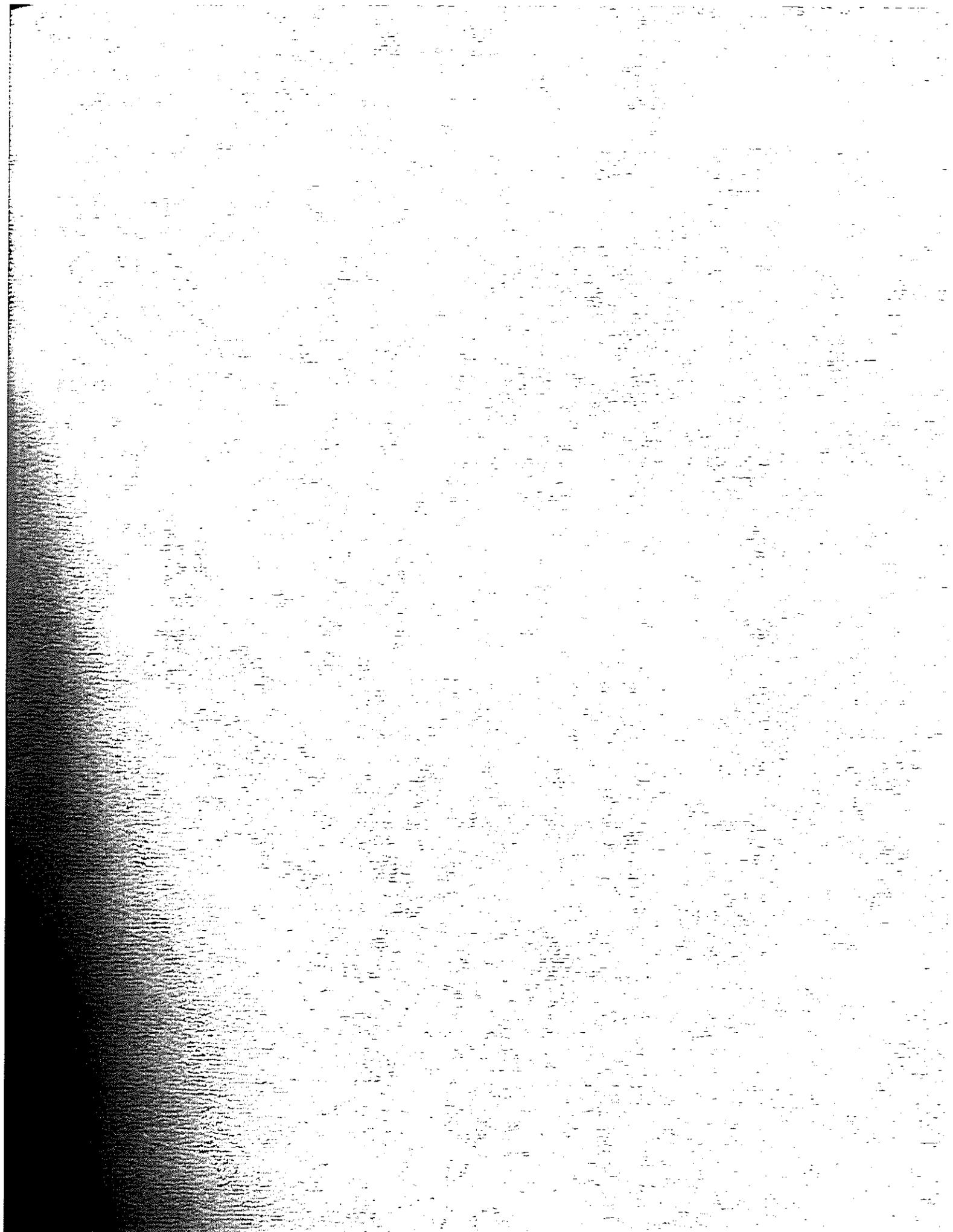
Biographical material for A. K. Isbister, Captain William Kennedy, Cuthbert Grant and Dr. Adam Cuthand has been supplied by the Manitoba Metis Federation Press, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Excerpt from *Prison of Grass* by Howard Adams. Reprinted by permission of the author, Howard Adams, and New Press, 30 Lesmill Road, Don Mills, Ontario.

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Researched and written by  
AGNES M. RUEST.





**Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission**