

The joining of
two
cultures



The existence of a people
forever

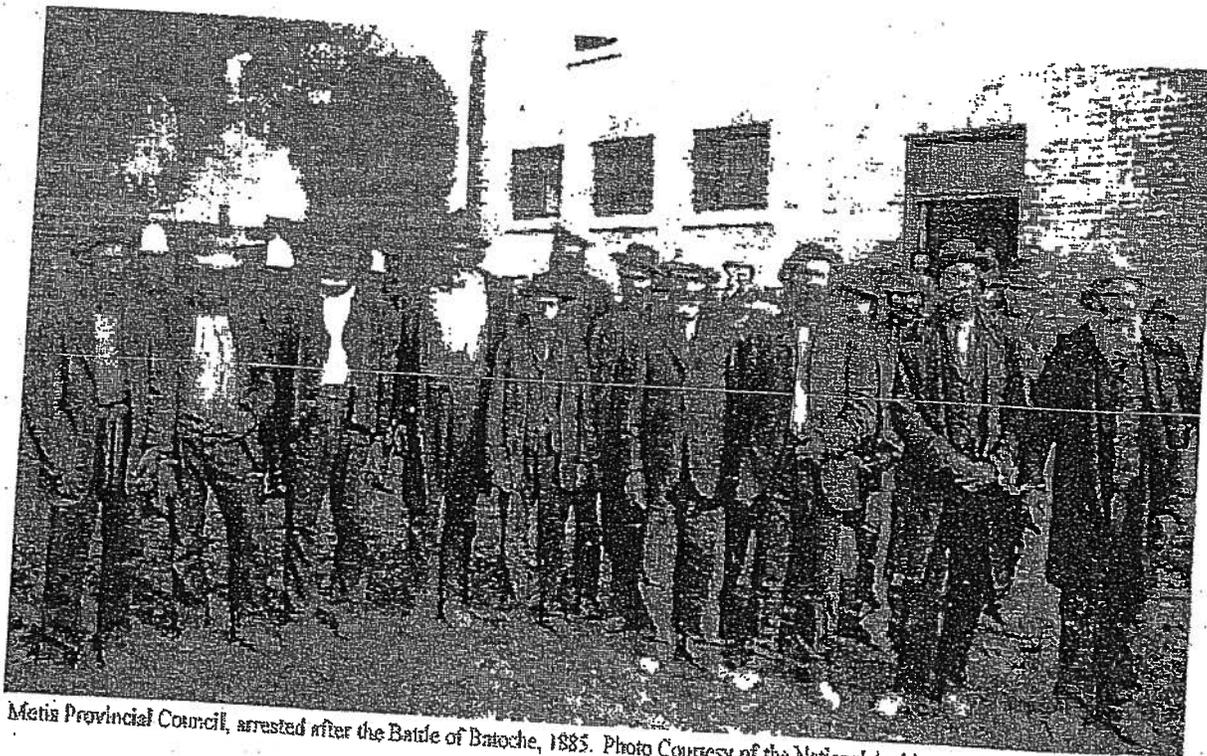
Nationhood

The task of summing up the exact perimeters around the 'state of being Métis' has been a daunting one. However, three vital criteria have emerged as the basis for identification of Métis citizens:

1. Métis ancestry;
2. Acceptance by and into the Métis community;
3. Self-identification as a Métis person.

The Métis culture evolved over hundreds of years, developing a distinct language, a unique economy, a different lifestyle and enduring philosophies.

The struggle of the Métis people for Aboriginal rights continues today in legislatures and courtrooms. Anthropology Professor, Larry Zimmerman, wrote in his book, *Native North America*: "One group, the Métis, a people with an identifiable history and material culture in Canada, was produced by the union of French fur traders and Native women. The Métis are still fighting for status as an aboriginal people."



Métis Provincial Council, arrested after the Battle of Batoche, 1885. Photo Courtesy of the National Archives of Canada

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Métis Nation

The Métis Nation evolved in the historic Northwest in the 18th and 19th centuries. Born of a mixture of French and Scottish fur traders and Cree, Ojibwa, Saulteaux, and Assiniboine women, the Métis in the Northwest developed as a people, distinct from either Indian or European.



THE MÉTIS NATIONAL COUNCIL
RALLIEMENT NATIONAL DES MÉTIS

Following the annexation of the Northwest by Canada in 1869, the political economy of the Métis was destroyed. Both the Manitoba Act (1870) and the Dominion Lands Act (1879) recognized Métis claims to Aboriginal title, but the federal government moved to unilaterally extinguish these claims through individual land and grants scrip. Denied the recognition of their collective rights, the Métis became Canada's "forgotten people".

Who are the Métis?

The Métis people are not just individuals of mixed Aboriginal and European ancestry. The Métis Nation is a distinct Aboriginal people that has existed and continues to exist within west central North America. Within Canada, the Métis Nation Homeland roughly includes Northern Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Northeastern British Columbia and parts of the Northwest Territories.

The genesis of the Métis people was more than just a mixing or adaptation of two divergent cultures. It was a continual evolution that culminated in the birth of a distinct Aboriginal nation within western Canada with its own unique history, language (Michif), music, dance, culture, self-government, dress and way of life, etc.

Throughout our history the Métis Nation has acted collectively to protect and fight for its rights, land and on-going existence as an Aboriginal people within Canada. Today, the Métis Nation continues to exist from Ontario westward. Historic communities throughout the Homeland, like Fort Francis (ON), St. Laurent (MB), Green Lake (SK), Lac St. Anne (AB) and Fort Nelson (BC) continue to keep the Métis Nation's distinct culture, language, values and traditions alive. As well, significant numbers of Métis people are now a part of urban communities within Ontario, the Prairies, and British Columbia; however, even within these larger populations, well-defined Métis communities exist. It is estimated that the Métis Nation's population is approximately 300,000 citizens.

The Métis National Council

The MNC represents the Métis Nation at a national and international level. Métis people and their communities from throughout the Métis Nation provide representative mandates to their provincial governance structures (Governing Members) from Ontario westward. In turn, the MNC is formed by the Governing Members coming together to mandate the national governance structure. Based on this collective mandate, the MNC represents the Métis Nation within Canada at a national and international level.

The MNC, along with the AFN and ITK, represent the three Aboriginal peoples (Métis, Indian and Inuit respectively) recognized within Canada's constitution. Other national Aboriginal groups and organizations represent communities of interests within the Aboriginal population-at-large.

Most Métis live in Western Canada, both in remote and urban communities and in Métis-only and mixed communities. There are over four hundred Métis communities; most speak the English language while some communities are using Cree or Michif. The Métis are distinguished by their unique Michif languages.

The Métis have never received the benefits governments grant to Status Indians and Inuit. In its Final Report the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples stated "it is unjust and unreasonable to withhold from Métis people the services and opportunities available to other Aboriginal peoples".

Addressing Métis Definition, Registry and Enumeration Issues

After many years of discussion and debate, the Métis Nation unanimously adopted a national definition of Métis in the Fall of 2002.

National Definition of Métis

"Métis" means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of Historic Métis Nation ancestry, and is accepted by the Métis Nation.

"Historic Métis Nation" means the Aboriginal people then known as Métis or Half-breeds who resided in the Historic Métis Nation Homeland.

"Historic Métis Nation Homeland" means the area of land in west central North America used and occupied as the traditional territory of the Métis or Half-breeds as they were then known.

"Métis Nation" means the Aboriginal people descended from the Historic Métis Nation which is now comprised of all Métis Nation citizens and is one of the "aboriginal peoples of Canada" within the meaning of s.35 of the Constitution Act 1982.

"Distinct from other Aboriginal peoples" means distinct for cultural and nationhood purposes.

This definition is based on the principle that the Métis Nation of western Canada is a distinct Aboriginal people. The MNC currently estimates that based on this definition there would be 300,000 citizens within Canada, largely living the Prairies as well as parts of Ontario, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories.

For the record, the Métis Nation's definition is non-negotiable. As a people we have exercised our right to determine our own citizenship. The MNC is now looking for federal support to establish a national registry and undertaken an enumeration of the Métis Nation. Within the Red Book I, the Liberal Party committed to undertaking an enumeration of the Métis. "A Liberal government will also provide support to enumerate the Métis." (Creating Opportunity: The Liberal Plan for Canada, p. 98). It is now time to fulfill this promise through supporting the establishment of a Métis Nation registry and properly enumerating our people.

MNC Organizational Structure

The MNC has an organizational structure composed of local, regional and provincial associations and affiliated institutions. The MNC is governed by a Board of Governors made up of Presidents of provincial Métis associations and the President of the Métis National Council. There are provincial associations throughout the Métis Homeland of the historic Northwest: Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario. In turn, each provincial association has a regional structure and a network of community-based locals, the number and size of which vary from region to region and province to province. The President of each provincial association is elected through secret ballot box elections organized throughout the province, in which all Métis persons have a right to vote. The President of the Métis National Council is elected by delegates from each of the provincial member organizations. These elections take place every two to three years at an MNC General Assembly. The MNC national office is located in Ottawa.



Photo Courtesy of Honorine Peltier



Louis Riel

Born in St. Boniface in 1844, the French-speaking Metis boy was sent to Montreal to be educated and subsequently became an apprentice to a Quebec based lawyer. Shortly after, Louis left the city to return to the Red River settlement and his destiny. After the Hudson's Bay Company surrendered Rupert's Land to the Government of Canada, the Metis were left without representation. Louis Riel stepped in and co-founded the Provisional Government of Red River, which was used as a guiding body to usher the west into the Dominion peacefully and to assure that the concerns of the Metis were heard. Through his leadership, the province of Manitoba was founded. In 1884, answering a desperate call sent out from his people, Riel returned to Canada and, once again, demanded equal treatment for the Metis. His plea was answered with a military response and the Battle of Batoche ensued. Still trying to guarantee recognition and understanding of his people, Riel was condemned to death and hung for High Treason by the very country he helped to build. He died November 16, 1885.

and their culture, he surrendered on May 15, 1885, continuing the battle in court. Riel was condemned to death and hung for High Treason by the very country he helped to build. He died November 16, 1885.



Gabriel Dumont

Often heralded as a brilliant strategist, Gabriel Dumont spent much of his life as a Metis traditionalist. He spoke 6 First Nations languages and survived through his skill in trapping, hunting, fishing and farming. He was known as 'the prince of the prairie'. Dumont orchestrated many of the battles of the Rebellions and was Riel's 'right hand man'. Dumont was a skilled hunter, a trait that carried over into military maneuvers and won him a victory at Fish Creek. Dumont fled Canada after the Battle of Batoche and received asylum in the United States, where he furthered the Metis cause by organizing the southern communities.



Ambroise Lepine

Adjutant-General of the first Provisional Government in Manitoba, Lepine was instrumental in the sentencing of Orangeman Thomas Scott. Lepine was a staunch follower of Riel and a strong Metis activist. In 1874, he was tried and convicted for the murder of Scott, but after the Governor General intervened, his sentence was lessened. Lepine was convicted to 2 years imprisonment and lost his civil rights. It wasn't until 1915 that those rights were restored.



Marguerite Riel

While exiled and teaching school in Montana Riel met and married Marguerite Bellehumeur, an American metisse. When Riel returned to Saskatchewan in 1885 to help the Metis, Marguerite accompanied him. Marguerite died just a few months after Riel's execution.

Riel and Marguerite had two children together both of whom died in young adulthood.



Louis Schmidt

Louis Schmidt was born in the Red River settlement and was schooled in Montreal with Riel. There, the two forged a friendship that would carry through their lives until Riel broke from the church. Schmidt was a member of the 1869 Provisional Government and helped to draft the List of Rights, a bill that helped form the basis of the Manitoba Act. Schmidt later testified to Riel's insanity at his treason trial after the 1885 rebellion.

Fast Facts

Did You Know...

- ∞ Red River residents resorted to kidnapping to retain a favoured resident. When in April 1859, it came time for a popular nun, Sister Ste. Therese, a sister of charity, to return to her order in Bytown, several individuals sprang into action. They swept down upon her traveling party near Scratching River (Morris), scooped her from the oxcart, and returned her to St. Boniface. She stayed on permanently.
- ∞ From Manitoba 125 - A History Volume 1 - Rupert's Land to Riel
- ∞ List of Metis rights was officially published on December 1, 1869
- ∞ The Ontario government offered a \$5000.00 reward for the capture of Riel.
- ∞ In 1863, the Hudson Bay Company wrote that the old time HBC fur bales weighed 90 lbs. About 1866, the weight was reduced by general order to 80 lbs
- ∞ VOYAGEUR CUPS - These cups, skillfully carved from wood were approximately 5 inches long and 3 inches wide with an ornamental button at the end of a 6 inch thong. It was hung from the voyageur's sash. With this cup it was not necessary for the voyageur to kneel or lie in the mud or water while getting a drink.
- ∞ S. Margaret Connolly was the first Metis Grey Nun. She was brought to the Grey Nuns by her Mother Suzanne McGillivray, wife of a Hudson Bay Company Manager
- ∞ Sara Riel was also a missionary with the Grey Nuns. She left the Red River Settlement to do missionary work at Isle-a-la-Crosse, then into Inuit country. She later worked in the most remote territories of the Arctic Circle.
- ∞ A man by the name of Jack Henderson was Louis Riel's executioner. He was paid an \$80.00 honorarium.
- ∞ Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald in an interview in Ottawa said of Riel, "He shall hang, though every dog in Quebec bark in his favour."
- ∞ McCorry - Stainthorp - Natras were the three Millbrook Orangemen who stole the bell-of-Batoche in 1885.
- ∞ During the Battle of Batoche Metis women were melting their lead tea chests for bullets, which they poured into molds.
- ∞ Provincial Archives has recently purchased a letter Riel wrote from his Regina jail cell in 1885. The letter was written on Mexican paper. It reads Molino Mexicano/Papel De Hilo.
- ∞ Mr. Regnier Sr. sold red-river-carts to men in the spring for \$15.00. When they returned in the fall he would buy them back for \$10.00. The carts could hold up to 1000 lbs.
- ∞ Baie St. Paul was first a Saulteaux Indian Mission established by Father G.A. Belcourt located west of St. Francois Xavier on the Assiniboine.
- ∞ A Red River Hunt was made up of three parties: Pembina - Forks - White Horse Plain.
- ∞ Cuthbert Grant received medical training in Europe and acted as the doctor for Grantown. His Medical chest is being held by The Museum of Man and Nature
- ∞ According to the census of 1849 there were 3096 sheep at the Red River Settlement.
- ∞ Legend has it that Falcon Lake is named after the Metis bard Pierre Falcon.
- ∞ The "Burning Glass" was used as a early trade item, one and a half inches in diameter it used the sun as its source of power to light fires as well as the pipes of the Hudson's Bay Co. workers.
- ∞ The Hudson's Bay posts had burning glasses on invoices as early as the 1750's.

- ∞ The "Hudson's Bay Point Blankets" were first manufactured in 1779, by Thomas Empson of Oxfordshire. Other manufactures were also in the communities of Leeds and Manchester. "Points" are the short dark lines about 4 1/2 inches long. The points were originally intended to make known the price in "made beaver" (a unit price of one good size beaver pelt, ie: 3 points = 3 good size beaver pelts). These marks also stated size and weight. By 1929, the standard blanket was white with single broad stripes at each end, other colours were red and green. The American Fur Trade Company was importing colours of indigo, blue, bright green, and scarlet. Chief Blankets had multi-coloured at each end.

Holiday Facts:

- ∞ In 1869 Riel's Provisional Government had imprisoned the Canadian Party supporters. On Christmas Eve, the Metis allowed the prisoners to send out for a fiddle so they could have a "stag dance" in which their Metis guards joined in. On Christmas Day they danced again and ate roast beef, plum pudding and cakes.
- ∞ New Years Blessing: Father Fourmond wrote this about paternal blessing in 1878: These good people have a very touching custom: as soon as they come in, they kneel down before their priest and ask him for his blessing. Similarly, when they get up on the morning of that day, children customarily ask their father to bless them.

Historical Anecdote

- ∞ (...)Monseigneur named me Vicar of M. the Grand Vicar Thibault, at White Horse Plains, about six leagues from St. Boniface. White Horse Plains is the second parish in his Glory. There is a small wooden chapel. Inside, there are pews on both sides. Here it is the men who occupy the pews the divine office. All the women and girls, enveloped in their blankets, are squatting in the aisles. That is the way it is done here. There is a superb thatched convent. There is also a small house for Mr. le Cure. That is the whole Village.

"Quotes"

"If I had been on the banks of the Saskatchewan, I, too, would of shouldered my musket."

Sir Wilfred Laurier, 1885

"We left Manitoba because we were not free and we came here to what was still a wild country in order to be free. And still they do not leave us alone."

Gabriel Dumont, 1903

"Deeds are not accomplished in a few days, or in a few hours. A century is only a spoke in the wheel of everlasting time."

Louis Riel (Montreal Star), 1885

The Métis Resource Centre Inc., Winnipeg, MB – www.metisresourcecentre.mb.ca

"I will never forget the year I spent in prison. That I, who upheld justice, right, and the British flag should have been imprisoned by the servants of that same great flag."

Andre Nault (Reprinted Free Press), 1924

"I am glad the Crown has proved that I am the leader of the half-breeds in the Northwest. I will perhaps be one day acknowledged as more than a leader of the half-breeds, and if I am, I will have the opportunity of being acknowledged as a leader of good in this great country."

by Louis Riel, 1885

"When the sun sets over Batoche we will watch mounted horsemen following a ghostly cross across a stormy red sky and we know all is not lost we will raise our heads up high as the sun sets over Batoche".

by Rocky Woodward in Metis Song

"Yes, I have done my duty. During my life I have aimed at practical results. I hope that after my death my spirit will bring practical results. All that I have done and risked....rested certainly on the conviction that I was called upon to do something for my country....I know that through the Grace of God I am the founder of Manitoba".

by Louis Riel

"We must cherish our inheritance. We must preserve our nationality for the youth of our future. The story should be written down to pass on."

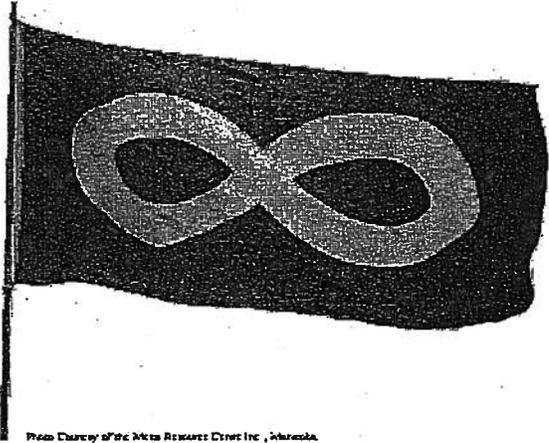
by Louis Riel

The good Lord did not want me to see my poor Riel again. I wanted to tell him not to give himself up, but he might very easily have converted me to his point of view.

by: Gabriel Dumont, 1885

The Métis Resource Centre Inc., Winnipeg, MB – www.metisresourcecentre.mb.ca

The Métis Flag



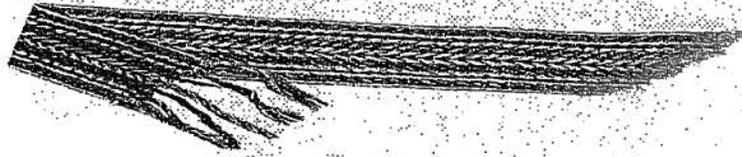
The Métis flag is the first flag to be born in this land. All other flags used before this time originated in Europe. The Métis flag was unfurled in March 1816 at the Battle of Seven Oaks. The Northwest Company trading company gave it to the Métis to attempt to keep the Métis on their side in their on-going battles over territory with the Hudson's Bay Company. This was the first flag that was adopted by the people. The flag is solid blue with a white infinity. The meaning of the Métis flag is "the joining of two cultures into a distinct nation of people forever." It is one of the distinct and unique symbols which easily identify the Métis.

Blue and White: is the colour of the National Métis Flag. It has white infinity symbol with a blue background. This flag was flown on June 19, 1816 at the "Battle of Seven Oaks" under the leadership of Cuthbert Grant. He led a Métis brigade on the Assiniboine River and seized the Company post at Brandon House. They then set off to the Red River Fough, the skirmish of Seven Oaks, in which Governor Semple and twenty-one of his men were killed for the cost of one Métis life.

Red and White: is the colour of the Métis hunting Flag. IT has a white infinity symbol with a red background. During a hunting expedition the camp flag belongs to the guide of the day. He was therefore standard-bearer by virtue of his office. IN some of the se hunting expeditions great battles occurred like "The Battle of Grand Coteau".

Black: symbolizes the dark period after 1870 in which the Métis people had to endure dispossession, and suppression, at the hands of Canadians. In the years that followed the Métis were shot and beaten on the streets of Winnipeg. Bounties were issued on those who had collaborated with Louis Riel. Many left their land and headed west, those that stayed behind moved north. Those that remained were forced off their land and became squatters living mostly on road allowances.

Green: Signifies fertility, growth and prosperity for the Métis Nation. Green also means we must move forward and reclaim our rightful place in Canadian History.



The Métis Sash

The Sash has meant something different to the many who have shared its history. But none have celebrated the adopted the L'Assumption Sash (centure Flechéé) to their proud heritage as did the Métis.

L'assumption sash was named after a town in Quebec where it was produced. It was a colourful as well as distinguishable Métis apparel that had many more functional uses. It had fringed ends that served as an n emergency sewing kit when the Métis were out on a Buffalo Hunt. The sash also served as a key holder, First Aid Kit, washcloth, towel, scarf, and as an emergency bridle and saddle blanket.

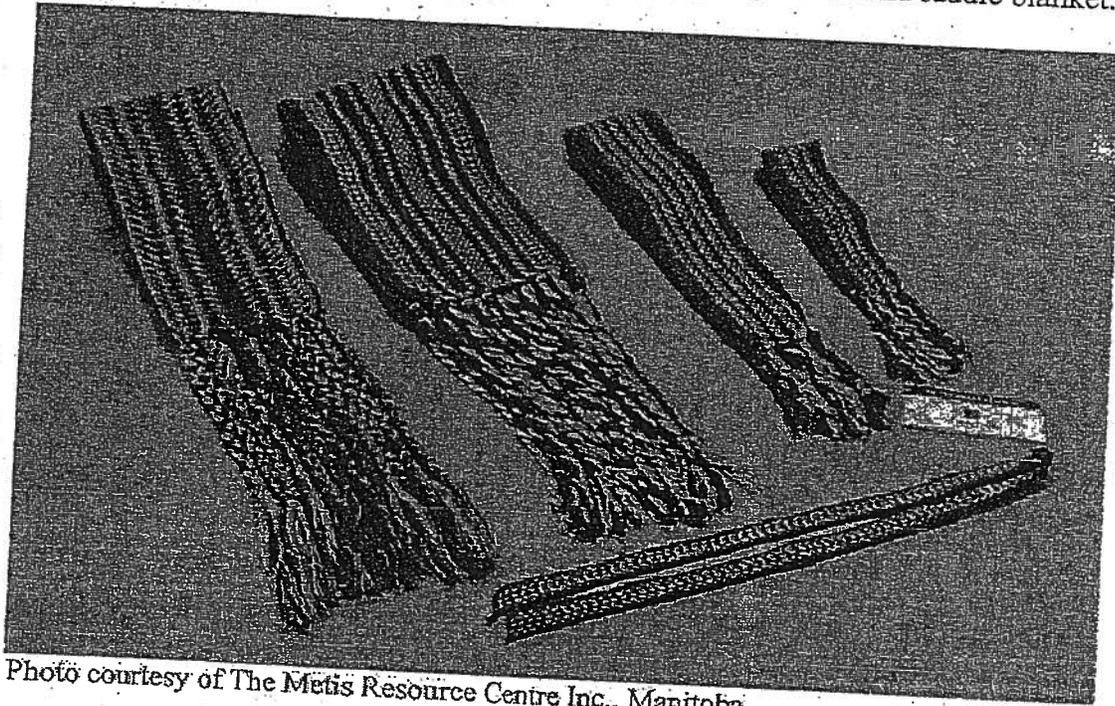


Photo courtesy of The Métis Resource Centre Inc., Manitoba

In the west, the name "L'assumption Sash" gave way to today's term the Métis Sash. It has been said that this has likely occurred because many of the sash wearing Voyageurs were of mixed-blood, and the sash was most populate among the Métis of the Red River.

Today the Métis Sash continues to be an integral part of Métis culture celebrations. At any gathering you can quickly identify a Métis by the colourful sash wrapped around their waist or worn draped across the shoulder.

Recently, the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) has adopted a new colour variation for the Métis Sash. The new chosen colour variation is of the original L'Assumption coloured pattern with the only exception of the yellow that has been replaced with black.

The new sash as described below has a rich chapter of the Métis History woven into each coloured strand.

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- Red and White:** *is the colour of the Métis hunting flag. It has a white infinity symbol with a red background. During a hunting expedition the camp flag belongs to the guide of the day. He was therefore standard-bearer by virtue of his office. In some of these hunting expeditions great battle occurred like the "Battle of Grand Coteau."*
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- Green:** *signifies fertility, growth and prosperity for the Métis Nation. green also means we must move forward and reclaim our rightful place in Canadian history.*
- Yellow:** *which has been removed from the MMF's provincial sash and replaced with the colour black would only be added to the sash in very exceptional occasions. The colour yellow symbolizes gold strips. These strips would identify the bearer of this exceptional sash as a highly honoured individual by the Métis community. Such an honour system is currently being contemplated by the Métis National Council and would be titled the "National Order of the Métis Sash."*

The Fiddle

The fiddle has figured prominently in the lifestyle of the Métis people for hundreds of years. It is the main instrument used in the Métis jigs. The famous 'Red River Jig' has become the centerpiece of Métis music. Since this European instrument was exceedingly expensive in early Canada, especially for the grassroots Métis communities, many craftsmen learned how to make their own.

Today, the fiddle is still used in celebrations and is a symbol of our early beginnings and the joyful spirit in which we lived and grew. Communities hold fiddle and jigging contests and give the instrument as a symbolic gesture of nationhood and pride

Jigging

The Red River Jig, the unique dance developed by the Métis people, combines the intricate footwork of Native dancing with the instruments and form of European music. Often the Métis made their own fiddles out of available materials because they could seldom afford the steep price of European imports.

Traditionally, dancing started early in the evening and could last until dawn. Witnesses were dumbfounded by the energy and vitality spent on celebration, equaled only by the long, arduous day's work necessary to keep Métis communities running.

Today, the Métis people still enjoy jigging, and have local, provincial and national dance teams who attend conferences, exhibitions and powwows.

Beading

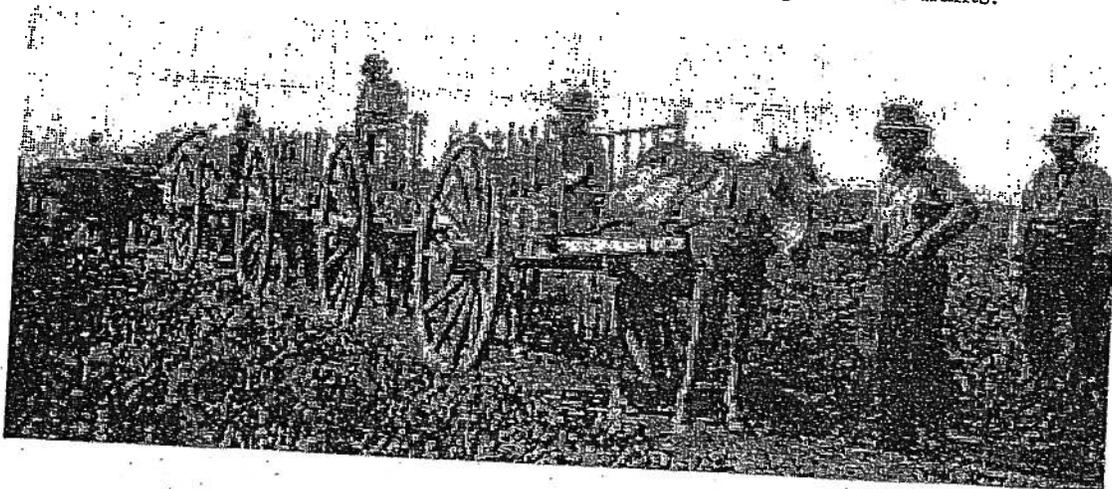


Beading is one of the Aboriginal community's most distinctive important art forms. For centuries, First Nation women created beautiful intricate designs using porcupine quills and moose or caribou hair tufting to decorate clothing and other objects.

When European traders arrive, and the Métis population grew, European women in silk embroidery and created their own moccasins, jackets, bags & leggings.

The Métis incorporated floral patterns that they saw being done by European women in silk embroidery and created their own art form using patterns in beadwork. The Métis became so known for this that at one point other First Nations referred to them as the "Flower Beadwork People".

One of the best-known symbols of Métis culture is the Red River cart which was used for carrying belongings, or meat and hides back from the huge buffalo hunts.



The

Red River Cart



In appearance the carts were similar to those used in the Scottish highlands and the French areas of Quebec. Made completely from wood, with a light box frame on an axle with two large wheels, the carts were fairly light, strong, and easy to repair. The wheels, with six to eight spokes, were five to six feet high and wrapped tightly with rawhide to prevent the wood from splitting. The screeching of this dry hubbed cart could be heard for miles. Grease was not used because it picked up mud and tiny pebbles that clogged up the hubs. When this happened the cart was forced to stop.

Although the carts were usually pulled by oxen, when speed was important the Métis used horses instead. The wheels on these versatile carts were cone-shaped out from the hub so that the wheels would not sink too deeply when they traveled over soft ground with a

full load, and when the Métis wanted to cross water they simply removed the wheels which were kept in place with a wooden peg, thus creating a raft to cross-rivers with ease without having to unload the cargo.

Metis Voyageur Games

The Métis people have gained a reputation for their competitiveness in all activities of work and play. As children of the fur-trade, the Métis developed their own culture and heritage. The challenge of the Métis Voyageur Games is one aspect of the many other competitions that involve the Métis.

Over the years, competitive sport had faded from many Métis communities until Nelson Sanderson, President of the Manitoba Métis Cultural Club, in Winnipeg, recently revived it.

The competition categories that have been reintroduced are:

- ∞ 540 pound sack carry
- ∞ 180 pound sack carry
- ∞ cream-can carry
- ∞ 300lb+ pole carry
- ∞ sling-shot; and
- ∞ hatchet throw.

A waiver must be signed by all competitors.

Object of the Sport the 540 Pound Sack Carry- one category

This carry consists of four, 100 pound sacks with a tumpline, and two, 70 pound sacks saddled over the top sack. This category is open to any challenger.

- ∞ Departing the loading platform, the competitor must carry this weight to the farthest distance they possibly can.
- ∞ The competitor is given two chances for a lift to insure the weight is balanced before starting.
- ∞ For this competition, the competitor has a man on each side to insure that the carry is done with safety.

- ∞ The carry is measured from the loading platform to the forward foot of the stopped competitor where the carry is dropped.
- ∞ This event can be classed with a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place category.

The 180 Pound Sack Carry - two categories

This event consists of two, 90 pound sacks and a tumpline. There are two categories in this event based on:

1. distance
2. speed.

1) Distance

This event is separated into a male and female carry, with the difference being the distance the competitor must carry the load. Gold, Silver, and Bronze Medals are awarded and winners sign an official Voyageur Registry.

Male Carry

- ∞ To carry a weight of 180 pounds using a tumpline for 200, 400, or 600 yards.
- ∞ The competitor must reach one of the three marked distances completely to qualify for a medal.
- ∞ The distances are measured from the loading platform and are officially marked.

Female Carry

- ∞ To carry a weight of 180 pounds using a tumpline for 100, 200, or 300 yards.
- ∞ The competitor must reach one of the three marked distances completely to qualify for a medal.
- ∞ The distances are measured from the loading platform and are officially marked.
- ∞ There are no run-off events in this category, as each competitor will receive a medal for completing the following categories:
 - 100 yards - Silver Medal;
 - 200 yards - Bronze Medal;
 - 300 yards - Gold Medal.
- ∞ Two point men will walk along each side of the competitor to protect from injury and insure safety.

2) Speed

In this event the competitor carries two 90 pound sacks with a tumpline for a distance of 100 yards and is timed. This event is open to any challenger.

- ∞ The competitor is timed from the loading platform to the 100 -yard marker.
- ∞ During this competition, the competitor may stop to shift the weight without assistance.
- ∞ Two point men will run along each side of the competitor to protect from injury and insure safety.
- ∞ This event can be classified with a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place category.

Cream-Can Carry



This event consists of carrying two, 75 pound cream cans. There are two categories:

1. distance;
2. speed. This category is open to any challenger.

1) Distance

This event challenges the competitor to carry both cream cans as far as possible.

- ∞ The distance is measured from the official starting point and officially marked where they stop.
- ∞ Two point men will walk along each side of the competitor to protect from injury and insure safety.
- ∞ This event can be classified with a 1st , 2nd , and 3rd place category.

2) Speed

- ∞ The competitor is timed from the official starting point to the 100-yard marker.
- ∞ Two point men will run along each side of the competitor to protect from injury and insure safety.
- ∞ This event can be classified with a 1st , 2nd , and 3rd place category.

300lb+ Pole Carry

The 300lb+ pole must be picked-up, and balanced on the shoulder. The competitor who carries it the greatest distance is the winner. This category is open to any challenger.

- ∞ The distance is measured from the official starting point to the point where the front of the pole first touches the ground.
- ∞ This event can be classified with a 1st , 2nd , and 3rd place category.

Sling-Shot

The sling-shot event has taken over the rifle target shoot due to the new gun regulations. Each contestant gets three tries and gets five marbles to shoot. Pop-cans are used for targets and the points are tallied-up from a tip to a knock down and the highest score wins.

This event can be classified with a 1st , 2nd , and 3rd place category.

Hatchet Throw

A wooden target with a bulls-eye is set-up for this event. The contestant throws three hatchets and gets three chances. The points scored are tallied-up and the highest score wins.

This event can be classified with a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place categories.

To do this, they had to maintain a killing pace. Each morning they would rise at four or earlier and set out, maintaining a rhythm of forty-five paddle strokes a minute, which could drive a canoe at about six knots. Every hour they rested, usually long enough to smoke a single pipe of tobacco. To pass the time and keep the rhythm, the voyageurs sang as they paddled. Their unofficial anthem was "A la claire fontaine," a tale of lost love. As darkness fell, the canoes were pulled ashore and the day's damage repaired a difficult job by firelight. The voyageurs then settled in for a meal of pemmican or dried peas or cornmeal mixed with water and some lard or suet stirred in. Shelter for the night was the overturned canoe. Too soon, the sun would be starting to appear through the trees.

To paddle, day in and day out, required stamina enough, but it was on the portages that men were truly put to the test. The first leg of the route from Montreal, up the Ottawa River and across to Georgian Bay, required thirty-six portages, ranging from a few hundred yards to several miles. The standard load per man was 180 pounds - two ninety-pound bags of goods. But voyageurs could earn a Spanish silver dollar by carrying more, and there are stories of men carrying up to five hundred pounds. Not surprisingly, most voyageurs preferred to avoid portaging, choosing instead to run rapids if at all possible.

The spring brigades arrived at Fort William in July. Most of the men in the freight canoes then loaded up with furs and headed back to Montreal. But some, those that planned to spend their three-year enlistment in the north country, stayed behind. They joined the crews of five man canots du nord, making their way into the Fur Country. Again, time was short - they had to be at their winter homes before the rivers froze. Pushing off inland, they worked west to Lake Winnipeg, and from there fanned out across the Fur Country as far away as Great Slave Lake.

To winter in the hinterland was to be part of the true elite. Any voyageur entering the north country for the first time was "baptised" in an informal ceremony after which he could proudly claim, "Je suis un homme du nord." For those voyageurs, though, winter was a boring affair, consisting mainly of gathering firewood and running goods and messages from fort to fort by dogsled. Only with spring break-up, and the prospect of a dash to Fort William in the fur-laden canoe, did their lives take on meaning once again."