



N is for New Nation

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By the early 1600s, the **First Nations** and Europeans began to trade in what was then New France (Québec, Ontario, the Maritimes, and the US Midwest). Relationships between First Nations and European people led to the birth of **mixed-heritage** children. These children either stayed with their First Nations mother’s **band**, or became French Canadians or **Acadians**. They did not become a distinct people. Therefore, no Métis communities existed in what is now Atlantic Canada, Québec, or the Great Lakes region.

The Métis Nation emerged in the Red River region of what is now Manitoba and North Dakota. A small number of mixed heritage families, such as the Sayers, Nolins, and Laframboises, came from the Great Lakes region and married into French-Métis families living on the Prairies. These French-Métis were known as “**Bois-Brûlé**” and largely had French-Canadian **voyageurs** as their paternal ancestors. English-speaking Métis descended from English, Scots, and **Orcadians** working with the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) in what is now northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan. These two groups—French and English Métis—are the ancestors of today’s Métis Nation.

The birth of the “**New Nation**” occurred between 1812-16. During this time, the French-Métis fought against the HBC and the **Selkirk Settlers** to protect their rights. The **Battle of Seven Oaks** was fought on June 16, 1816 after the HBC tried to prevent the Métis from producing and selling pemmican. For the Métis, the battle was a great victory. It gave them pride in being a new people. They called themselves “la nouvelle nation,” which means the “New Nation.” The Métis had a common identity, a flag (the Infinity Flag), a language (**Michif**), and a national anthem, “**The Battle of Frog Plain**.” Ever since this time, the Métis have protected their rights against those who tried to take them away.

Other Resources:

Chartrand, Paul. *Pierriche Falcon: The Michif Rhymester*. Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2009.

Pelletier, Joanne. *Métis Historical Booklet Series: The Skirmish at Seven Oaks*. Regina: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 1985. (Available online at www.metismuseum.ca).

Racette, Calvin. *The Flags of the Métis*. Regina: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 1987. (Available online at www.metismuseum.ca).

The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture (www.metismuseum.ca).

