



FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE: CONVERSATION GUIDE

This conversation guide is designed for use by instructional leaders and learning communities or as a self-paced study. It is designed to give each reader parts of “truth” that will lead individuals and groups in the direction of reconciliation. This guide is not a substitute for engaging in meaningful conversations with the Indigenous community.

Métis in Alberta Part 2: Governance and Settlements

REFERENCES

The Métis Nation of Alberta

<http://albertametis.com/culture/>

Métis Nation

<http://www.metisnation.ca/index.php/who-are-the-metis>

Essential Terminology

<https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/For%20Members/ProfessionalDevelopment/Walking%20Together/PD-WT-16a%20-%20Terminology.pdf>

POLICIES

Like First Nations people in Alberta, the Métis were also subjected to government policies. Many government policies that were put into action by the Canadian government attempted to assimilate Indigenous people into Euro-settler society and strip them of their power and identity. For example, one act, passed in 1857, encouraged gradual civilization. The Gradual Civilization Act was an effort to use government policy to assimilate Indigenous peoples to the economic and social customs of European settler society.

The Gradual Civilization Act, the Métis scrip system and other pre- and post-Confederation laws have been labelled as coercive in nature, with inherent racism and a lack of regard for the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples. Such policies worked to create a dependency, for Indigenous groups, on colonial structures. Many have argued that stripping Indigenous people of their rights under these repressive policies represented cultural genocide.

MÉTIS IDENTITY IN ALBERTA

Alberta has the largest Métis population in Canada at 96,865 or 21.4 percent of the total Métis population in Canada. Edmonton has more than 31,000 Métis living in the city, second only to Winnipeg. Although Alberta is home to 8 Métis settlements, approximately half of Métis people in Alberta reside in Edmonton and Calgary (Statistics Canada, 2011).



SCRIP IN ALBERTA

The Métis did not have treaties (collectively negotiated agreements) with the Crown like First Nations people. Because Métis did not sign treaties, they also did not have reserves or lands reserved for them. Scrip was designed to extinguish Métis title to land that was inherent through their First Nation ancestry. Scrip was a certificate that could be exchanged for land (land scrip) or for money to buy land (money scrip). Scrip commissioners traveled to communities in Alberta in the 1880s to the early 1900s. Métis filled out applications for their individual entitlement, were interviewed by the commissioner, proved their identity and signed an affidavit. The entitlement granted a certificate that was worth \$160 or 160 acres or \$240 or 240 acres. Adults and children were eligible. A Métis person surrendered their title to any future land claim when they received scrip.



LAND FOR MÉTIS IN ALBERTA

Since the scrip system extinguished individual title to the land, it was fundamentally different than the treaty process, which maintained the First Nations' collective rights. The Métis were not allowed to create a reserve land holding system or live in family-based block settlements. The Métis also had to compete for land on government-surveyed lands with non-Indigenous settlers. Some Métis, who had no land to live on, settled on land set aside for future roads. These people were referred to as "Road Allowance People." The lack of a land base greatly impaired the development of Métis identity.

THE MOUNTAIN MÉTIS

In 1907, the Canadian Council that set aside the Jasper to remove the mountain Métis in guns and families were forced to the Jasper area. The descendants Hinton, and Grande Cache. The four Moberlys-Ewan, Adolphus, Findlay and Adam Joachim.



*Jasper House Valley, 1872
Picture from Library and Archives Canada*



*Looking North from Jasper House, 1872
Picture from Library and Archives Canada*

MÉTIS NATION OF ALBERTA (MNA)

In the late 1920's, meetings were organized to address challenges facing the Métis in Alberta including poverty, disease, illiteracy, and the lack of a common land base. Leaders of the movement include Joe Dion, Peter Tompkins, Malcolm Norris, Jim Brady and Felix Callihoo. These leaders are commonly known as “The Big Five” or “Métis Famous Five.”

The Métis Association of Alberta was officially formed in 1932 and became the Métis Nation of Alberta in the 1990s.



“The Big Five” - Malcolm Norris, Jim Brady, Peter Tompkins, Joseph Dion, Felix Callihoo



MÉTIS SETTLEMENTS

The Ewing Commission report made recommendations that resulted in the Métis Betterment Act of 1938. Through the efforts of the Ewing Commission and the Métis Nation of Alberta, twelve Métis settlements were established under the Act. In the late 1950s, four of the settlements (Touchwood, Marlboro, Cold Lake, and Wolf Lake) were closed. Alberta is the only jurisdiction in Canada that has provided the Métis with a self-governing land base.

There are currently eight Métis settlements in Alberta. In all, Métis settlements are home to the minority of Alberta Métis. Approximately 4800 members live on the eight Métis Settlements, which cover a land base of 1.25 million acres. These communities have played an important role in Alberta's history, society and economy. Students who live on settlements go to schools that are under the Alberta Education Act, just like students who live in other municipalities. The Northland School Division oversees and controls education on six of the Métis settlements. Buffalo Lake and Kikino are serviced by Northern Lights School Division. Schools on settlements are provincially funded schools that are different than the federally funded reserve schools, which are controlled by their education authorities.

Métis Settlements	Population	Area (Hectares)
Buffalo Lake	712	33697
East Prairie	446	33444
Elizabeth	653	25244
Fishing Lake	658	35551
Gift Lake	734	81273
Kikino	544	44357
Paddle Prairie	607	173882
Peavine	304	81638
TOTAL	4858	509086



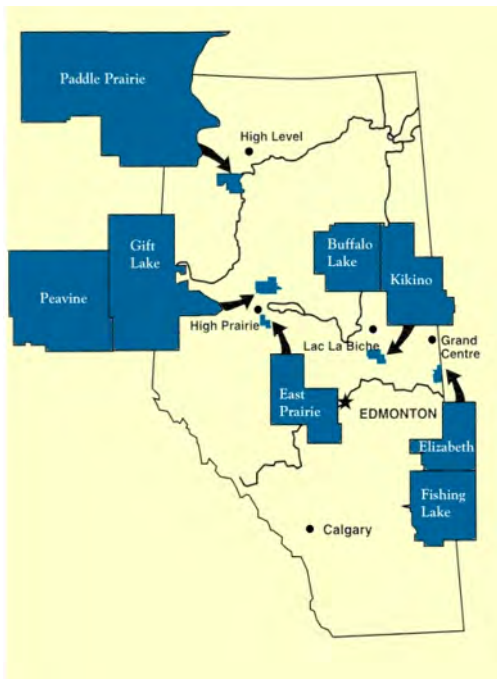
SETTLEMENT MEMBERSHIP

Métis Settlements Act stipulates that a Métis settlement member must be of Indigenous ancestry, identify with Métis history and culture, be at least 18 years of age, has lived in Alberta for the previous 5 years and has been approved for membership by the Settlement Council. A settlement member must live on the settlement (or have an approved leave of absence) and must not be in debt to the settlement.

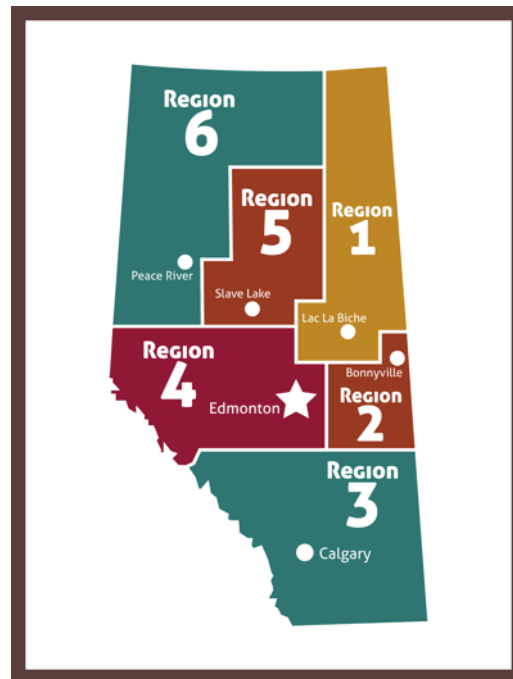
SETTLEMENT GOVERNANCE

A five-person elected council, which has statutory authority similar to municipal governments, governs each Métis settlement. The Metis Settlements General Council (MSGC) has 44 members, including all of the settlement council members and four elected Executive members.

The map on the left illustrates where each settlement is located in Alberta. The map on the right illustrates the six Métis regions in Alberta. Operating in each region is a Métis local. Each local has an elected president and vice president and elected individuals who bring local issues to Provincial council.



www.metisarchitect.com



www.abertametis.com



MÉTIS AND THE LAW

The Daniels decision (Daniels vs. Canada, April 2016) is likely one of the most misunderstood decisions ever released by the Supreme Court of Canada. As a result of the Daniels decision the Supreme Court was asked to make three declarations. These declarations state:

- That the Métis and non-status Indians are ‘Indians’ under the Constitution.
- The federal government owes a fiduciary duty to Métis and non-status Indians.
- The Métis and non-status Indians have a right to be consulted and negotiated with in good faith.

The result of the Daniels decision meant that the Métis and non-status Indians could look to the federal government to negotiate improved programs and services. Unfortunately, the federal government has no obligation to do anything.

The Powley case outlined a set of criteria known today as the “Powley test” that determines whether a Métis person can exercise their hunting rights in given situations. Although Powley was a hunting case, legal experts believe it has the potential to expand into larger conversations about rights – for example, the Métis rights to self-government and self-determination. It is also significant as it finally established who can legally qualify for Métis rights. Although the Powley test can be problematic, like any type of identity criteria, it has shaped recent discourse on Métis issues. It has also expanded popular thought from the idea that all Métis are Red River Métis to understanding that Métis communities exist elsewhere.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

Reflect on and discuss the following questions after reading this conversation guide.

- What new information did you learn from this conversation guide? What resonated with you?
- What important lessons can we draw from learning about Métis People?
- What messages should be conveyed about Métis People?

Take turns sharing your thoughts and building upon your ideas.

Métis Youth in Education

As stated in this Conversation Guide, in total, approximately half of Métis in Alberta reside in larger urban centres.

Taking these statistics into consideration, what does this mean for Indigenous education and educators in cities? How can we foster a healthy Métis identity in students in schools?

Defining Métis Identity

In 2002, the Métis National Council adopted a national definition of “Métis.” The definition was brought to the Métis Nation of Alberta General Assembly in 2003, accepted, passed and incorporated into the MNA bylaws under Article 3.1. According to the Métis Nation Council, a Métis is defined as a “person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry and who is accepted by the Métis Nation.”

How is this definition different from what you originally may have perceived it to be? How might the process of becoming “accepted” create issues of identity in Métis individuals?

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Musée Heritage Museum (St. Albert)

<http://museeheritage.ca/>

Gabriel Dumont Institute Virtual Museum

<http://www.metismuseum.ca/>

The Powley Case

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/powley-case>

Learn Michif

<http://www.learnmichif.com/>

Kikino: Our History

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CLo7V7va5RE>

Métis Cards in Alberta: Registry & Genealogy

<http://albertametis.com/registry/>

Rupertsland Institute for Métis Excellence

www.rupertsland.org

The Mountain Métis

<http://mountainmetis.com/>

The Forgotten Métis

<http://forgottenmetis.ca/en>

Metis Settlements & Communities

<http://www.metismuseum.ca/browse/index.php/194>

Walking Together: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Perspectives in Curriculum

<http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/aswt/>

Our Words, Our Ways: Teaching First Nations, Métis and Inuit Learners

<https://education.alberta.ca/media/563982/our-words-our-ways.pdf>

Our Way is a Valid Way

<https://education.alberta.ca/media/563981/our-way-is-a-valid-way.pdf>

ATA Stepping Stone on Metis

<https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/For%20Members/ProfessionalDevelopment/Walking%20Together/PD-WT-16b%20-%20Metis.pdf>

Education is Our Buffalo

[https://www.teachers.ab.ca/sitecollectiondocuments/ata/publications/human-rights-issues/education%20is%20our%20buffalo%20\(pd-80-7\).pdf](https://www.teachers.ab.ca/sitecollectiondocuments/ata/publications/human-rights-issues/education%20is%20our%20buffalo%20(pd-80-7).pdf)

The Daniels Decision

<https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/15858/index.do>



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