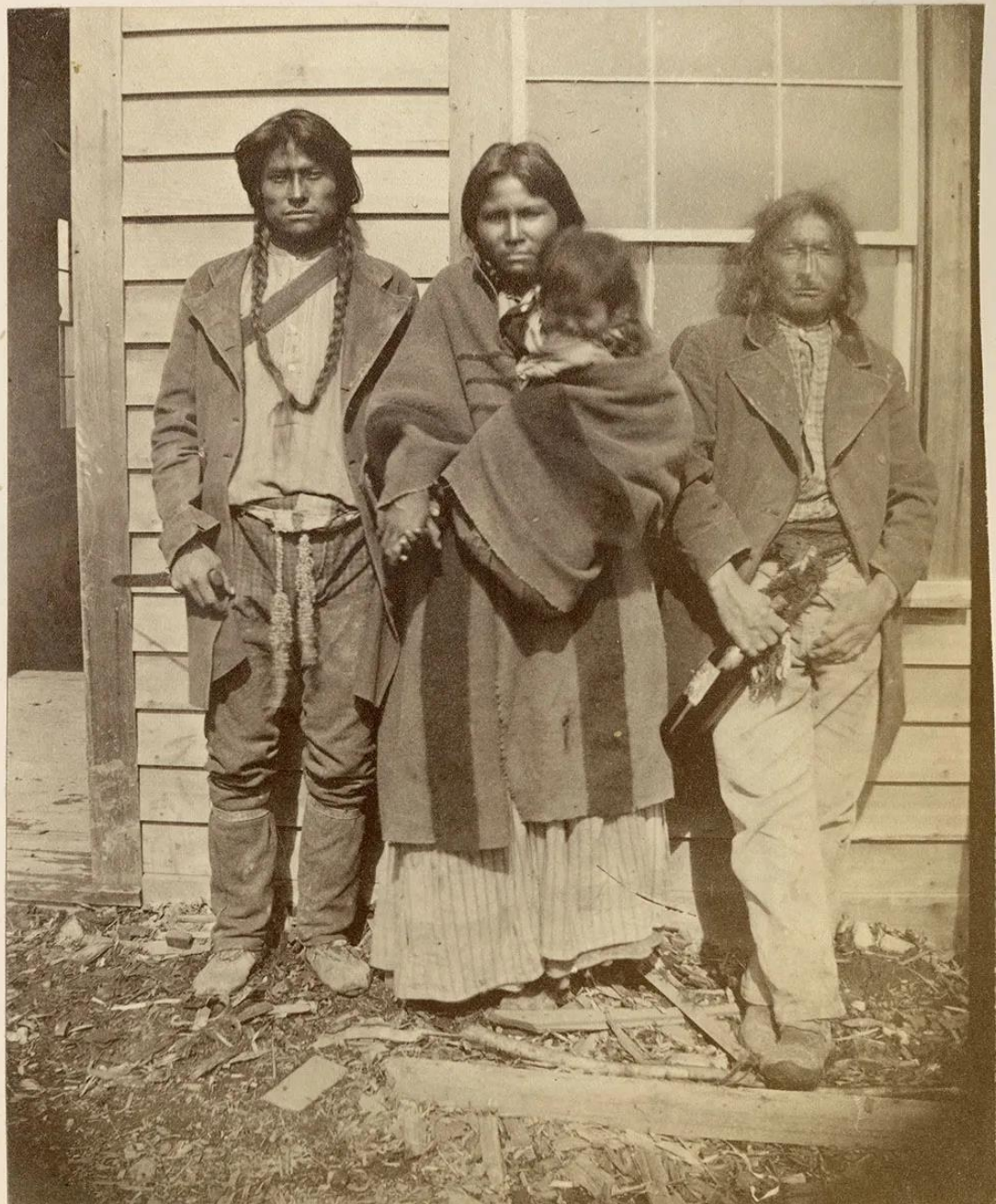




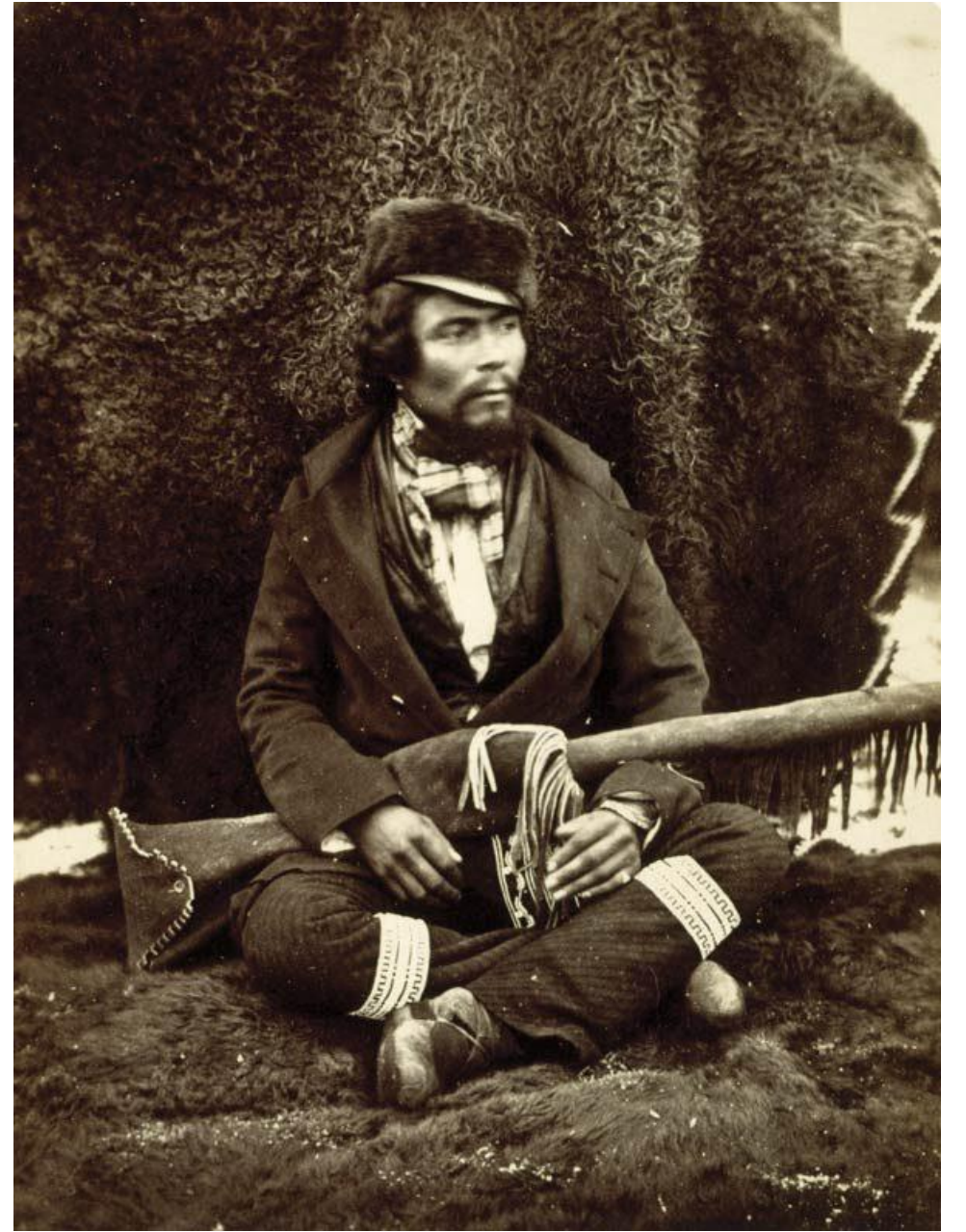
Metis





Terminology

- Métis- in the original French, means ‘a person of mixed parents’
- Halfbreed- a derogatory term used to describe a person with one European parent and one First Nations parent
- Countryborn- another use for a half Cree-half Scottish person
- Metis- the current preferred term is to remove the accent aigu
- *Aphitokosisan* is often used by the Cree to mean half-son
- Michif- generally the language but can also mean a person



“Children of the Fur Trade”

- Canada was built on the fur trade, which supplied European demand for pelts from animals such as the beaver (*Castor canadensis*) to make hats.
- At the start of the fur trade, the First Nations did most of the trapping. However, the Métis, who are sometimes considered “children of the fur trade,” became skilled hunters and trappers as well.
- The Métis began making a living as trappers by the end of the 1700s. They sold furs to three fur trade companies: Hudson’s Bay Company, the North-West Company, and the American Fur Company.



Annexation of Rupert's Land

- In 1869-70 the Dominion of Canada purchased Rupert's Land from the Hudson's Bay Company for £300,000 (\$1.5 million) and 1/20th of the land (almost ¼ of the continent of Canada)
- This created the Red River Resistance and the formation of the concept of a Metis Nation
- The Indigenous people (First Nations and Metis) were not consulted
- The Red River Resistance was lead by leaders like Gabriel Dumont and Louis Riel
- The Metis formed a provisional government and a political uprising, blocking surveyors from entering their territory, took control of Fort Garry, and entered into negotiations with Canada



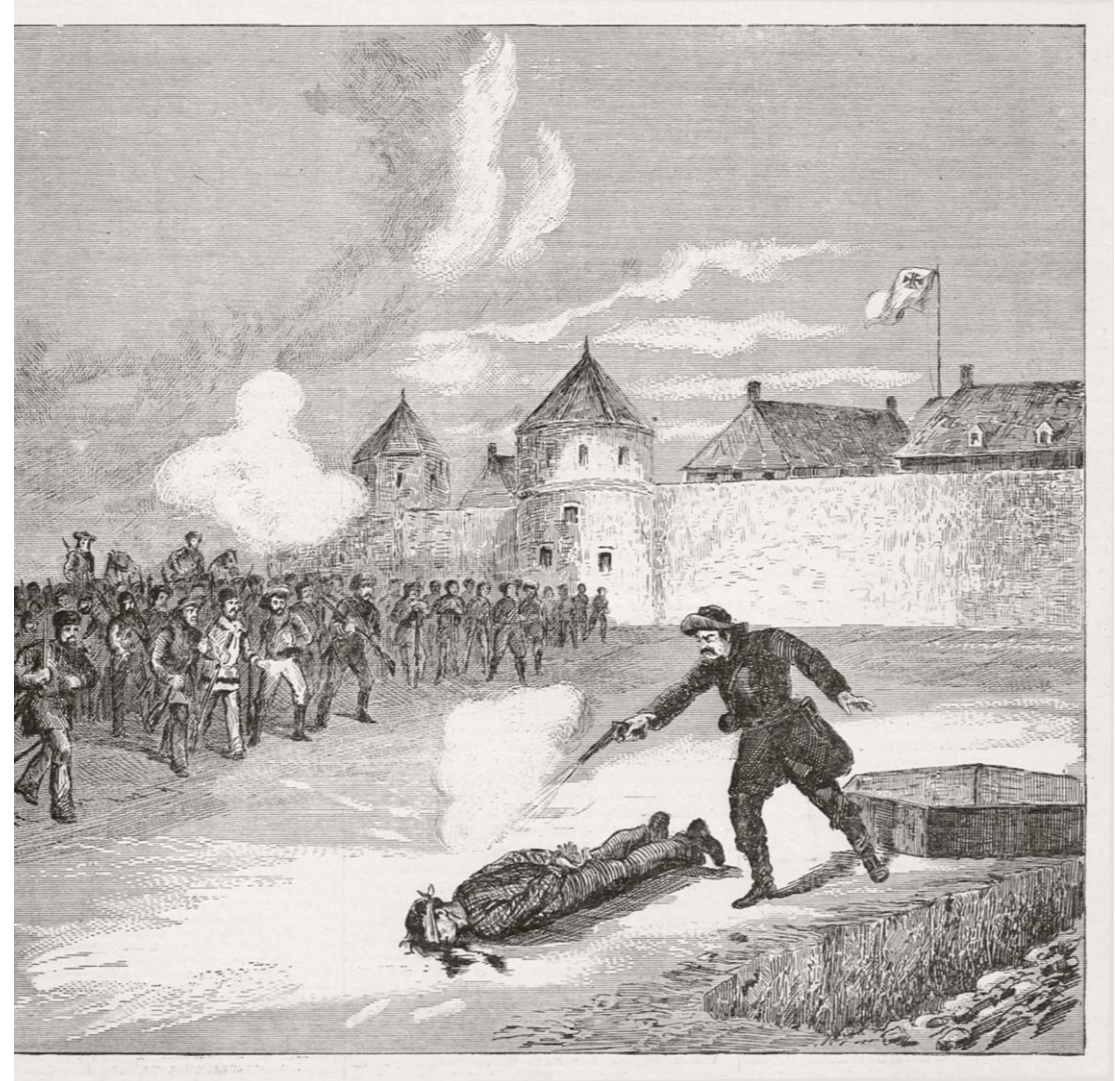
Louis Riel

- Born October 22, 1844, Died November 16, 1885
- Born in St-Boniface to a Franco-Chipewyan Metis father and a French mother, he was 1/8 Indian blood
- We don't use blood quantum in Canada
- Riel was an excellent student, originally training to be a priest, but after the death of his father, went to Montreal and became a clerk
- He worked in the US (Illinois and Minnesota) then returned to the Red River
- He noticed tensions with a huge influx of Anglo Protestants in the region
- Riel gave a speech in August 1869 against the survey for the sale of Rupert's Land, he announced himself as the secretary of the "National Committee of the Metis" (the leader was John Bruce)



Louis Riel

- McDougall was appointed lieutenant-governor of the new settlement but was turned away by the Metis and they seized Fort Garry (Winnipeg) the same day
- Parties formed in opposition (Canadian Party [Anglophones]) and they armed men, however, they were captured and imprisoned in the seized Fort Garry
- Metis National Committee declared a provisional gov't on Dec. 8, and Riel became President Dec. 27
- HBC rep. Donald Smith and Riel negotiated in Ottawa and Riel became the President of the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia in 1870
- The Canadian Party attempted to overthrow Riel but Thomas Scott and Boulton were arrested near Fort Garry
- They were both sentenced to death, but Boulton was pardoned. Scott was executed by a Metis firing squad on March 4
- Macdonald and George-Étienne Cartier continued negotiations into what became the Manitoba Act (entered Confederation)



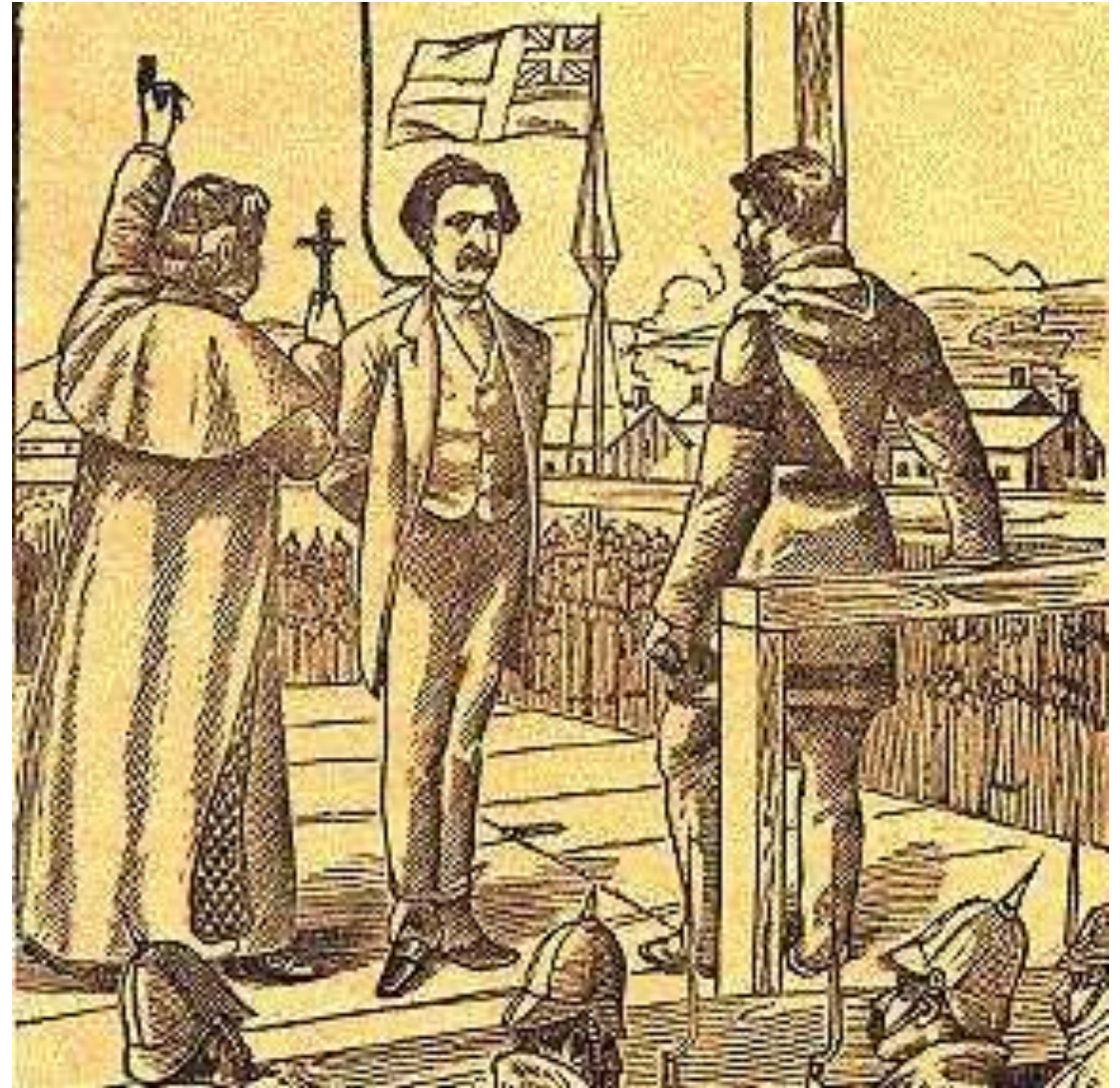
Louis Riel

- Riel feared for his life when the new Lieutenant-Governor Archibald arrived in 1870
- Riel fled into Dakota territory and didn't return until May 1871
- Archibald and Riel shook hands, which then caused Canada First members in Ontario to create anti-Riel sentiments
- Macdonald offered a bribe to keep the peace between Quebec (French Riel sympathizers) and Ontario (Anglophone anti-Riel) after so much fighting. He offered \$1000 for Riel to remain in voluntary exile
- Riel refused and was voted as MP Manitoba despite a warrant being issued for his arrest
- He feared assassination but went to Montreal, there was a \$5000 bounty on his capture by Blake, the Premier of Ontario
- Riel signed the register book in a disguise in January but was later stricken from the rolls
- Despite winning again, he was expelled from the House of Commons



Louis Riel

- Lépine and Riel were sentenced to death for Scott's execution but both sentences were commuted if Riel went into a five-year exile
- The commuted sentences were to prevent an Ontario-Quebec rift
- Riel's mental health deteriorated in exile and he turned to religion. He was committed to an asylum after several outbursts under the name Louis Larochele
- He recovered and moved to Montana, where he married. While visiting home, he noticed the bison scarcity and influx of settlers. His kin asked him to return and represent them
- Gabriel Dumont, leader of the Saint-Laurent Metis, lead a delegation asking Riel to return in 1884
- He agreed, but his mental health issues and religious fervor returned



Gabriel Dumont

- December 1837 (pre-Winnipeg)-May 19 1906 (Batoche) to Ekapow (Isidore Dumont [Crow]-French) and Louise Laframboise [Nakoda-French])
- He was a highly-skilled Buffalo hunter
- Dumont helped negotiate a treaty with the Blackfoot and Metis (they were traditional enemies)
- He was not involved in the Red River Resistance, but was involved in the North-West Rebellion
- Dumont was injured but he continued leading his soldiers, locating traitors within the Metis, and even jumped in front of a revolver when Albert Monkman tried to assassinate Riel
- Dumont was a highly skilled military leader and went to the US after the Metis rebellions failed and he was a wanted man
- He is a folk-hero in Saskatchewan to this day and a highly respected Metis icon. He returned to Batoche in 1886 after he was offered amnesty
- The Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research in Saskatchewan was founded in 1980



North-West Rebellion/Resistance

- The provisional government of Saskatchewan was declared at Batoche on March 19, 1885
- Riel was the political and spiritual leader and Dumont was military
- The Battle of Duck Lake happened on March 26, when the Metis chanced upon a party from Fort Carlton, this began the North-West Rebellion
- The Canadian Pacific Railway brought troops quickly from Eastern Canada and engaged with the Metis' guerilla warfare, they won the Battle of Fish Creek on April 24, 1885
- The Battle of Batoche was from May 9-12 with Big Bear (Treaty 6 holdout) lead the Battle of Loon Lake, the rebellion ultimately failed
- Trials were held in July 1885 in Regina, the jury were six Anglophone Protestants
- He was found guilty and sentenced to death August 1 1885, he was ultimately hanged November 16, 1885 in Regina
- His execution caused a prolonged reaction and remained an element of Canadian politics for decades
- He remains an icon for Metis and French-Canadians



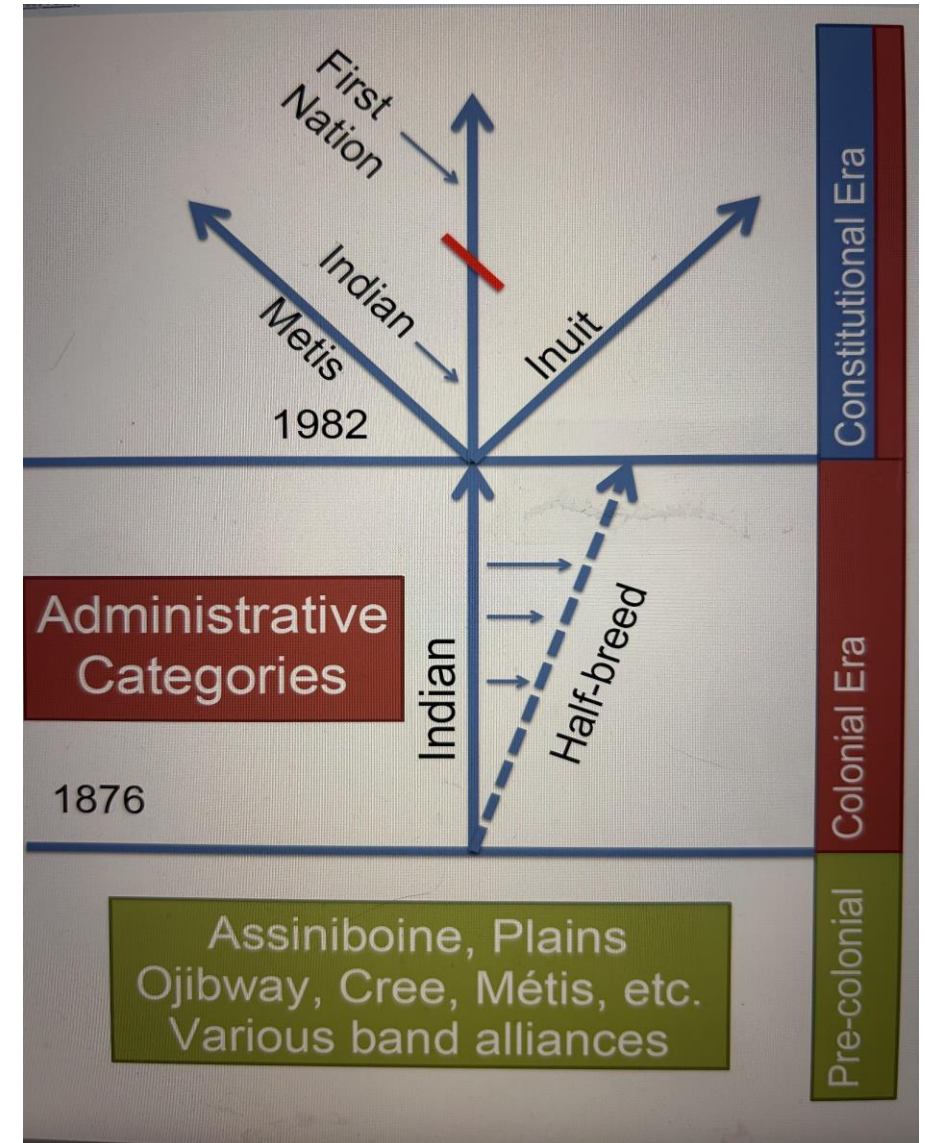
Dispute over métis/Métis/Metis

- métis- French word that was used during the early days of colonization in records to note a person having an Indigenous parent or relative, a mixed person
- Métis- a distinct people-hood that emerged in the 18th century in the Red River region of what was Rupert's Land (specifically Red River Settlement [Winnipeg]), also known as the Métis Nation, which originally organized in response to annexation by the Canadian government
- Metis- newer form of rebellion by Red River Métis to distance themselves from the modern confusion around the term



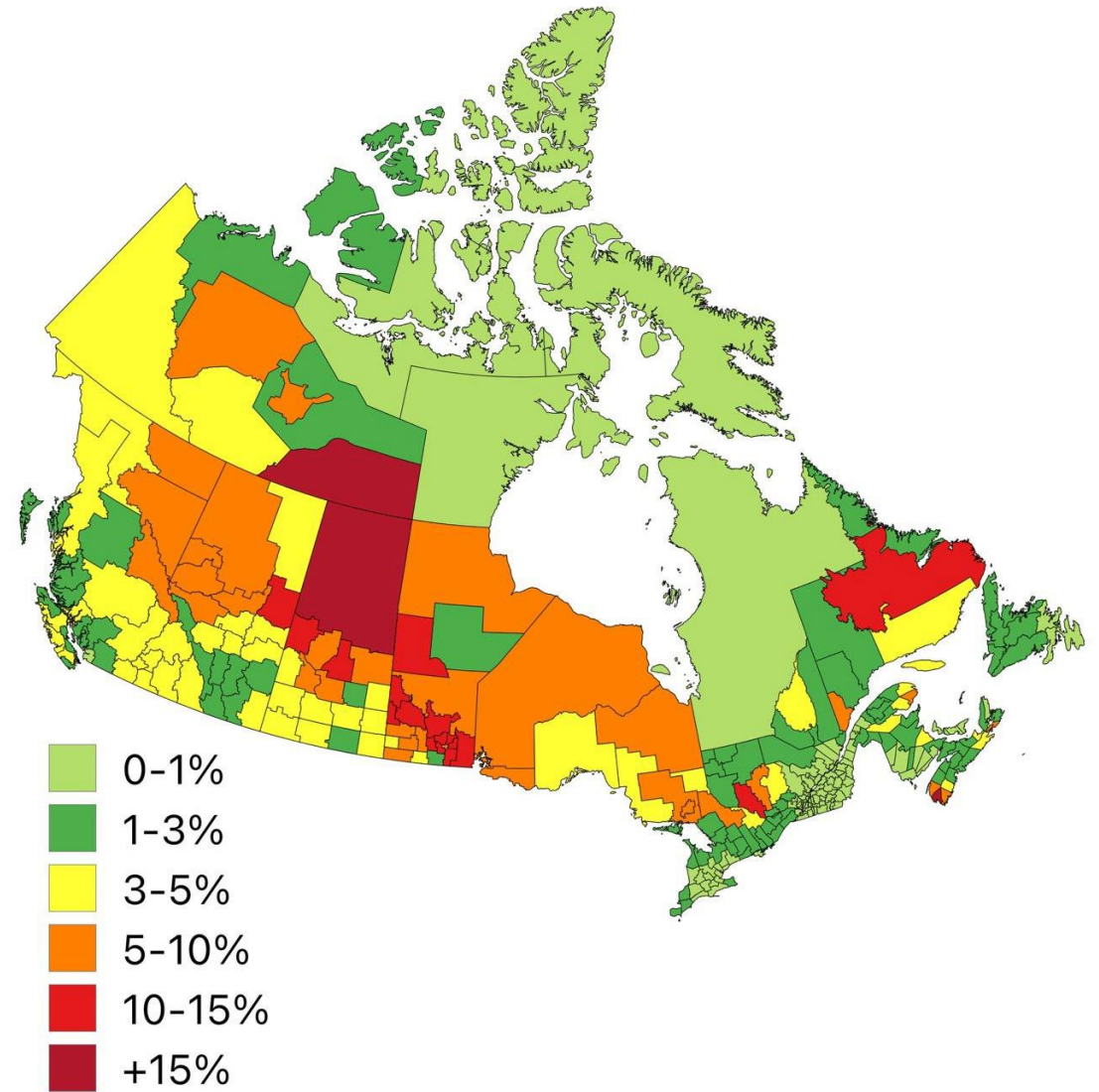
Chris Anderson's Explanation

- Metis are not mixed, they are a people that exist from intricate relationships and interconnectedness to their cousins
- Their nation-hood can't be applied to Eastern Canada as their history does not apply there
- The Metis are not simply “mixed race people” they are a nation that arose from a very specific history



Metis

- One of the three Aboriginal groups outlined in Section 35 of Canada's 1982 Constitution Act, with Indian and Inuit
- Canada's 2006 Census showed 389 780 Metis people in Canada (self-id)
- Canada's 2021 Census showed 624, 220 Metis people in Canada (self-id)
- Only 1/3 of the 2021 census indicated a membership in a Metis organization or settlement



Powley Decision

R. v. Powley was a legal case concerning Métis hunting rights in Canada. In 1993, the province of Ontario charged Steve and Roddy Powley with illegal hunting. The Powleys disputed their conviction, arguing that the Aboriginal rights enshrined in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 protected their hunting rights as Métis people. The case concluded in 2003, when the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the Powleys were, in fact, exercising lawful Métis hunting rights. The Powley case established criteria on who can legally qualify for Métis rights. It outlined 10 specific criteria, known as the Powley Test, which applies to Métis communities across Canada. The case also clarified that the Métis are a distinct people, separate from First Nations and Inuit peoples in Canada. Some legal experts believe the Powley case might lead to expanded Métis rights, including harvesting and fishing rights and possibly self-government.



Powley Test

- Characterization of the right claimed: in the context of harvesting, it must be determined whether the [hunting](#) is for food, exchange or commercial purposes. It is not species-specific, but a general right to hunt for food in the traditional hunting grounds of the Métis community as a whole;
- Identification of the historic, rights-bearing Métis community that existed in the same geographic area;
- Identification of the contemporary Métis community;
- Whether the claimant is a member of the contemporary Métis community;
- Historical time frame of the practice, to determine if it was integral to the community;
- Whether the practice is integral to the culture of the claimant;
- Whether today's Métis community continues the practice;
- Whether the right was extinguished (e.g., by the [Crown](#));
- Whether the right was infringed upon (e.g., by the Crown);
- If the right was infringed, whether that infringement can be justified (e.g., if the Crown claims its infringement is due to [health](#), safety and [conservation](#) concerns, it must prove that a real threat exists).

Powley Controversy

- **Ancestry:** Research into Powley family lineage suggests that Steve Powley had Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) ancestry, with some records indicating he had 1/64th Anishinaabe blood quantum, which means they are Anishnaabe-Descendants, NOT Metis
- Powley had a great-grandmother (Lucy Belleau) that was a member of Garden River First Nation and lost her status in 1920 after marrying an Englishman, making him a non-status Anishnaabe descendent
- **Legal/Self-Identity:** Steve and Roddy Powley did not identify as Anishinaabe (First Nation/Status Indian) but rather as Métis, but they are a distinct Indigenous people. They successfully argued they were part of a distinct, self-identifying Métis community in Sault Ste. Marie, but the Metis Nation disagrees
- **The Powley Decision:** The Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the Métis in that area, including the Powleys, had a distinct right to hunt, independent of First Nations/Anishinaabe rights.
- **Controversy:** In recent years, Anishinaabe (First Nations) groups have questioned the legitimacy of the Métis Nation of Ontario's (MNO) claims, arguing that individuals in the *Powley* case and modern MNO members with distant ancestry are not part of a distinct, historical Métis community, but rather individuals with Anishinaabe ancestry who do not hold status.

In summary, while Steve Powley possessed Anishinaabe ancestry, he identified as Métis and the court case solidified that he and his community held distinct, constitutionally protected Métis rights.

Question: is it the place of Canada to decide who is Metis, or the Metis Nation?



Daniels Decision

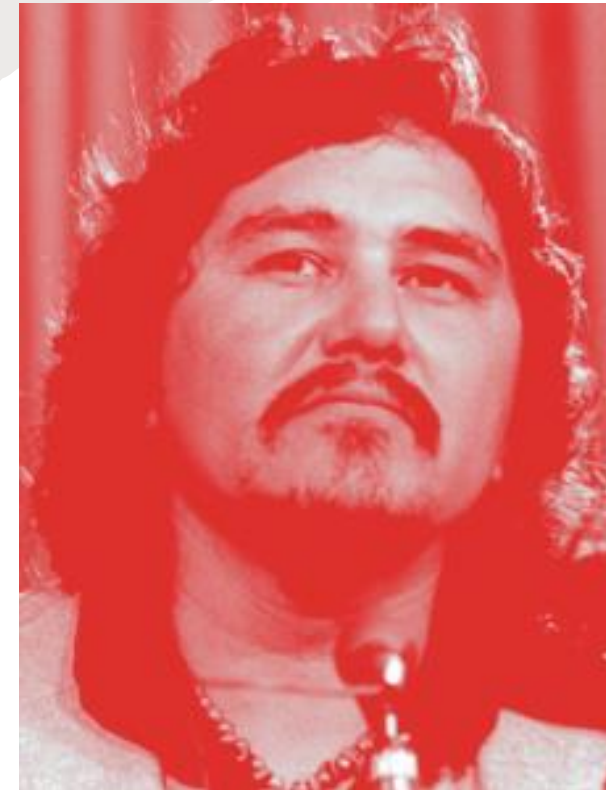
On 14 April 2016, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in *Daniels v. Canada* that the federal government, rather than provincial governments, holds the legal responsibility to legislate on issues related to Métis and Non-Status Indians.

In a unanimous decision, the court found that Métis and Non-Status peoples are considered Indians under section 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867 — a section that concerns the federal government's exclusive legislative powers.

Recognition as Indians under this section of law is not the same as Indian Status, which is defined by the Indian Act. Therefore, the Daniels decision does not grant Indian Status to Métis or Non-Status peoples. However, the ruling could result in new discussions, negotiations and possible litigation with the federal government over land claims and access to education, health programs and other government services.



The three original plaintiffs in *Daniels v. Canada* (1999) were the [Congress of Aboriginal Peoples](#) (CAP); [Harry Daniels](#), then-president of CAP; and Leah Gardner, a Non-Status Anishinaabe woman from [Ontario](#). They went to court seeking the following three declarations: that [Métis](#) and Non-Status [Indians](#) are Indians under section 91(24) of the [Constitution Act, 1867](#); that the [federal government](#) has a [fiduciary duty](#) or responsibility to the Métis and Non-Status Indians; and that Métis and Non-Status peoples collectively have a right to be consulted and negotiated with in good faith by the federal government through representatives of their choice.



The Creation of a Metis National Council

- Founded March 1983, following the 1982 Constitution Act
- Founding provincial affiliates; Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta (Manitoba Metis Federation) (Metis Nation-Saskatchewan) (Metis Nation of Alberta)
- Later 'bookend' affiliates of British Columbia (1996) and Ontario (1993) were created to service the diaspora of Red River Metis into other provinces



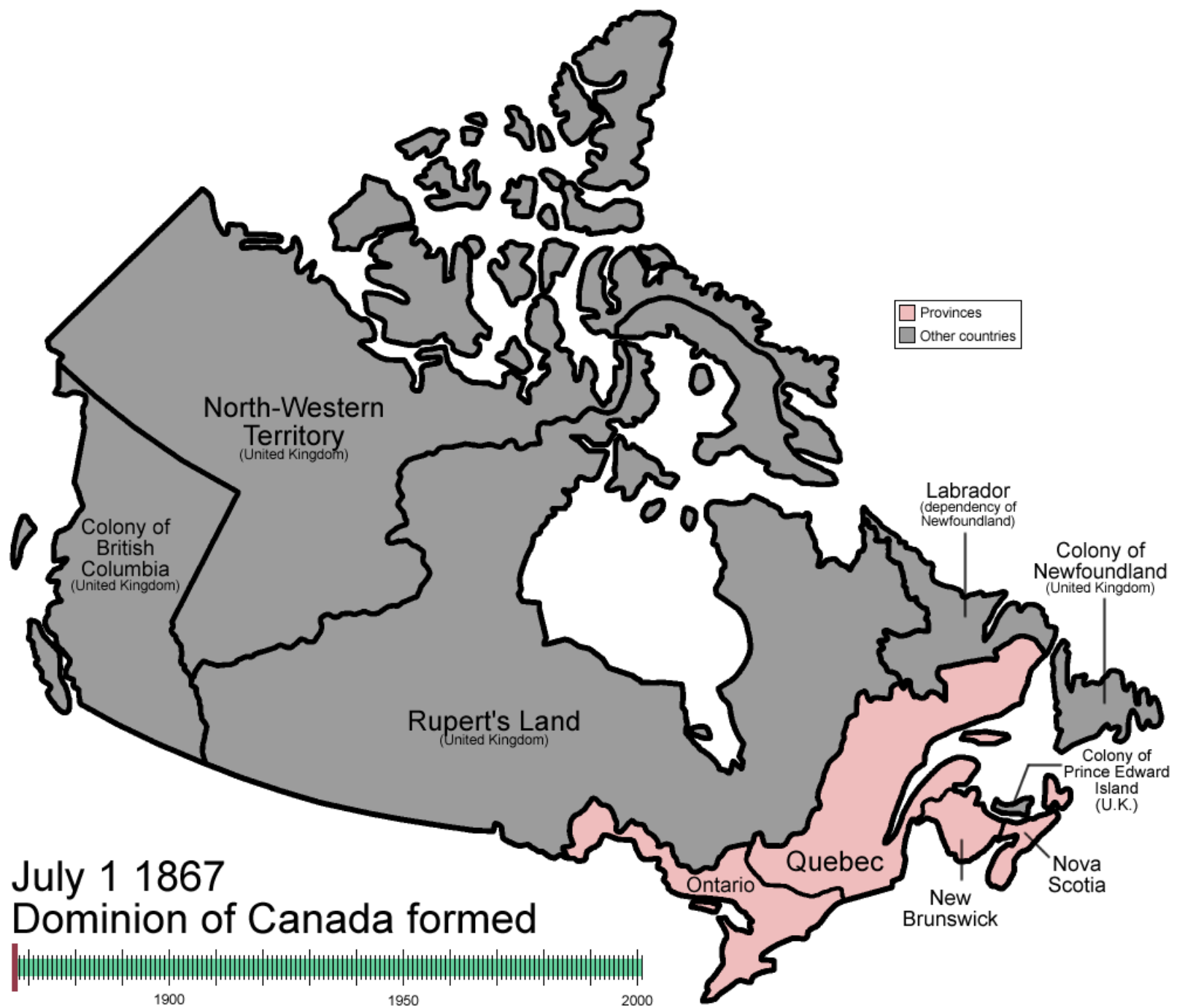
In-fighting in the MNC

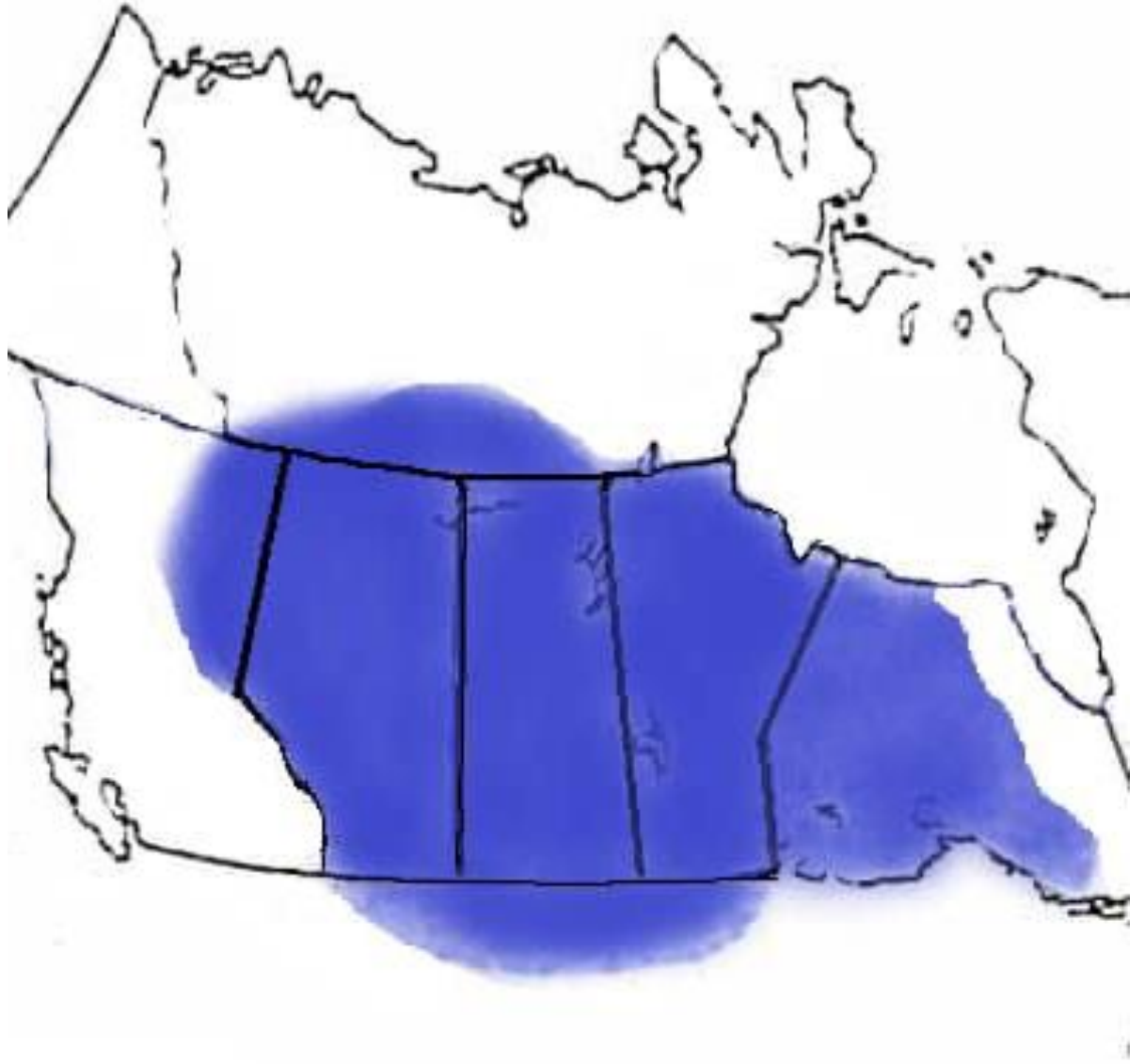
- In 2002, it was alleged that 90% of the MNO do NOT meet the requirements of the MNC, specifically links to the Red River
- The MNC put the MNO on a year probation in 2018 and suspended its membership and forced a review in 2020
- In 2019, the MMF adopted a resolution condemning the MNO for recognizing Metis communities outside of the Metis homeland and advocated for withdrawal from the council if they didn't comply, and that they "have endangered our Métis Nation's identity including our political, social, and economic integrity and the future of our Nation's existence"



-
- In 2021, the MMF withdrew from the MNC (they are the founder province) saying that the MNC had “abandoned the MMF and the true Metis Nation”
 - They withdrew saying that “should the MNO continue to be allowed a seat at the governance table while they- by their own admission- have nearly 80% non-Metis Citizens in their registry”
 - The MNO cut 5,400 members to avoid further embargoes
 - In 2023, Minister Marc Miller tabled Bill C-53, to ‘advance the recognition of the rights to self-determination’ and a framework for treaties. This was strongly opposed by MMF and First Nations, later joined by the MN-S
 - In 2024 Metis Nation Saskatchewan passed a resolution to withdraw from the MNC, “the MNS needs to have control over our identities and culture, while making decisions that align with our values”
 - The MNC is now essentially defunct, as the rules outline that meetings must be attended by two representatives of founding members, but only Alberta is left
 - The MNC has cancelled a presidential election and delayed its annual general meeting pending a report on the MNO issue
 - In 2024, the MNBC withdrew from the MNC due to imbalance following MNS no longer participating

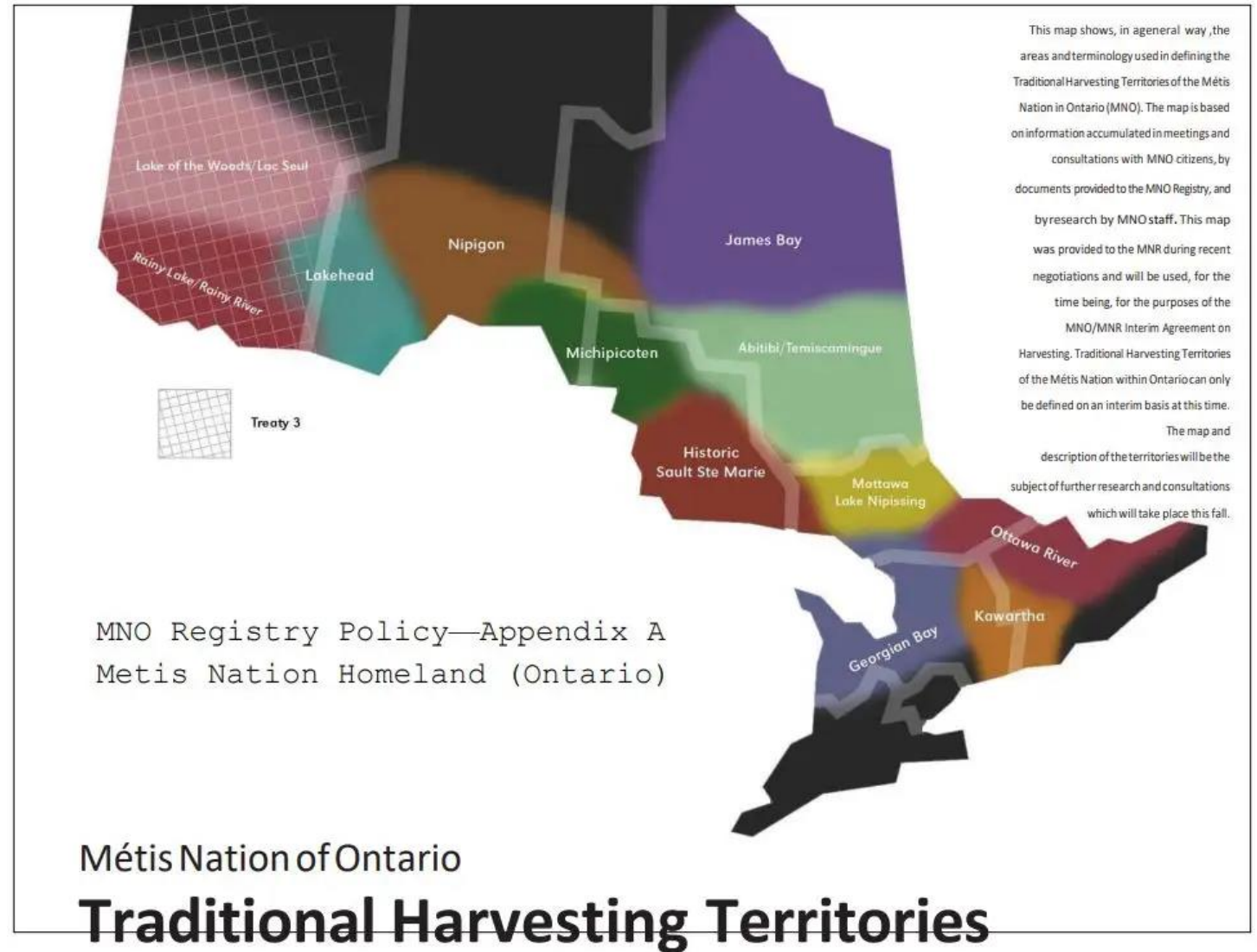






First Nations and the Metis Nation of Ontario

- Huge issues are happening between the MNO and First Nation in Ontario
- MNO claims 'historic metis communities' in Ontario, which are on Anishnaabe treaty lands
- Mattawa, Georgian Bay, Killarney and Temiskaming



“Un-Making the Claims of the Metis Claims in Ontario”

- This conference was held December 2025 in Sault Ste Marie by the Robinson-Huron Waawiindamaagewin
- This was an academic and community conference held to challenge the legitimacy of the MNO’s claims that Anishnaabe ancestors are “root Metis” in order to claim territory
- The MNO are re-writing history to label First Nations and their descendants as Metis, which is a form of colonial appropriation. The RHW say that having mixed ancestry does NOT make a “new metis nation”



Chiefs of Ontario



Ontario Regional Chief Abram Benedict commended the RHW conference by releasing this statement:

The Chiefs of Ontario affirm our support for *the (Un)Making of Metis Claims in Ontario* conference held in Baawaating (Sault Ste. Marie). This landmark gathering brought together First Nations, Metis and non-Indigenous scholars, historians, knowledge holders and community members to critically examine historical claims of Metis communities in Ontario, an issue the Chiefs of Ontario have long emphasized requires careful, evidence-based research and meaningful engagement with First Nations.

“First Nations have an inherent right and responsibility to protect our territories, cultures, oral histories and legal traditions,” said Ontario Regional Chief Abram Benedict. “Conferences such as this create space for First Nation-led research, respectful dialogue, and the reaffirmation of our sovereignty and rights. Accurate history is essential to justice, and discussions about Indigenous identity, rights and territorial claims must be grounded in evidence and Indigenous knowledge systems.”

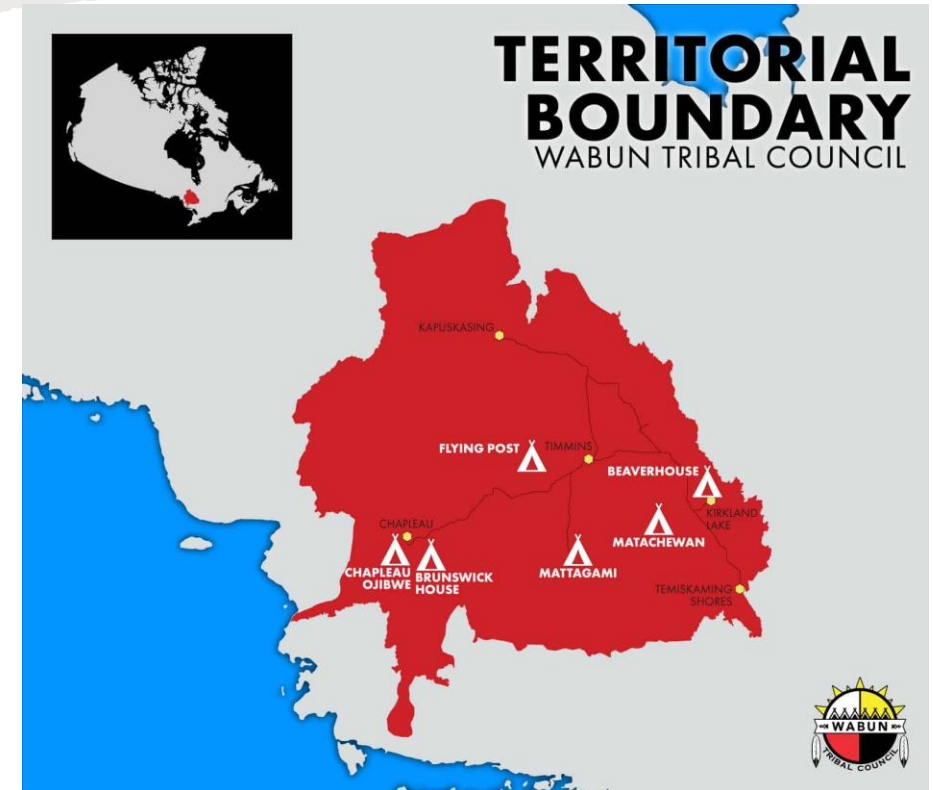
The Chiefs of Ontario acknowledge complexities of identity and culture, and support Indigenous peoples’ right to investigate, learn from, and teach their own histories. This conference contributes meaningfully to this work, and we commend the organizers and participants for fostering a respectful forum for dialogue on these critical issues.

“I stand with First Nations who are engaging in rigorous scholarship, guided by community oral histories and academic research, to clarify and protect the historical record of Indigenous presence and governance on the lands now known as the Ontario region,” said Ontario Regional Chief Benedict. “It is deeply concerning and unacceptable that First Nations Ancestors and relatives, including leaders within our traditional governance systems, are being appropriated and re-cast as “Metis” for the purpose of constructing so-called “Metis family lines”.”

The Chiefs of Ontario continue to call on governments and institutions to closely examine the extensive research and evidence presented by First Nations, in order to address false Metis claims in First Nations ancestral and Treaty territories.

Enquiry into the Existence of a Mixed-Ancestry Community on the Territories of Wabun First Nations

- Report completed May 2025 found NO evidence of a distinct historic mixed-ancestry (metis) community within northern Ontario territory prior to 1906 signing of Treaty 9
- Historian Leila Inksetter concluded, after analyzing 120 primary documents from 1794-1906, that people of mixed heritage either integrated into First Nations or Euro-Canadian communities, rather than forming a separate self-identifying community (as occurred in the Red River)
- The MNO claims historic communities, but no documentation supports their claim
- The only claim is to the mention of ‘half-breeds’ referring to half-Anishnaabe and half-other individuals, but not a community
- This affirms that the First Nations are the sole rights-holders in their traditional territories
- This report definitively rejects the MNO’s claims
- [Link to the report](#)



Wading Through the Controversy

This notice is regarding an important and ongoing conflict between First Nations and the so-called Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) which has been making headlines and sparking conversation across our region for the last few years.

As you may know, Leadership across our region, through the Ontario Chiefs-in-Assembly, are standing in solidarity against the MNO – a corporation without any s. 35 rights that is claiming lands and resources that belong to First Nations across Ontario. The MNO corporation is actively working to undermine First Nations rights in many ways. Our fight is not against individuals or against legitimate Métis peoples. This is an issue against a corporation that is trying to steal our identities, and in turn, our Ancestral and Treaty territories, by claiming to be something it is not and trying to rewrite both our histories and those of actual Métis peoples.

Actual Métis people originated in the Prairies as a result of mixed-race people living in separate communities and intermarrying with each other over many generations prior to the Crown asserting control of an area, and developing their own distinct culture, language, and systems for self-government. [In contrast](#), the MNO is a corporation that was only formed in the 1990s to represent Prairie Métis that moved to Ontario (outside their homeland). Today, there is much evidence that the MNO recognizes non-Indigenous people as Métis and wrongly claims First Nations' Ancestors as "Métis".

Actual Métis scholars have noted in a [recent report](#) that "simply living in a place does not make a Métis community...there is a critical difference between being in a place and being Indigenous from a place."

While we work together as a region to combat yet another attack against our First Nation identity, we encourage all our citizens to stay informed, ask questions, and engage in respectful conversations.

Chief and Council are available to provide further information and to address any concerns you may have.

Together, we remain committed to protecting our inherent and Treaty rights.

Chief and Council

FACT:

Groups that make false claims to hold Indigenous rights often resort to claims of "lateral violence" to silence critics and attempt to avoid any scrutiny.

The real violence is being done to First Nations by MNO's opportunistic attempts to use First Nation Ancestors to justify support its false claims.

For more information, please visit:
<https://chiefs-of-ontario.org/priorities/justice/rights-assertions/>



MYTH:

The size of the "Métis Nation Homeland" can be determined by looking at MNO's modern-day assertions without reference to historical facts or pre-existing First Nation's occupation of territory.



MYTH:

It is unethical to conduct research about the Métis Nation of Ontario's new "historic communities" without talking to them first



MYTH:

The MNO "historic communities" have a kinship connection to the Red River region and rights-bearing communities in the Prairies.



FACT:

First Nations have governed for thousands of years.

First Nations would have known if there were Métis communities in our territories and they would have been recognized in our traditional governance systems.

You can't forget something that never existed. The fact that MNO "communities" claim to exist today does not in any way prove that such communities existed historically.

For more information, please visit:
<https://chiefs-of-ontario.org/priorities/justice/rights-assertions/>



MYTH:

It's "lateral violence" and "hate speech" for First Nations and legitimate Métis to question or critique the Métis Nation of Ontario's claims.



MYTH:

The Métis Nation of Ontario's new "historic communities" meet the criteria set out in the Powley test to be recognized as historic, section 35 rights-bearing communities.



Metis Claim

- to register as an MNC (older doc) citizen, applicants must have a document, generational 'historic Metis ancestor'
- The ancestor must be recognized in primary historical documents as Metis (Red River census, scip records, church records) and lived during the 18th century- specifically 1800s-1900s
- Terms can include half-breed, metis, French breed
- There is no strict record on how many generations back your ancestor can be
- A claim of the 1800s means 64 ancestors, with only ONE needing to be listed as metis (less than half) or half breed (1/2)
- Many Metis are less than 1/64 removed but still members of the Metis Nation
- This does NOT apply to First Nations with a 1/4 cut off



Conclusion

- The Metis are defined in the creation of Canada as an historic community
- The drama and confusion created by legislation is real and is continuing to be unraveled
- Their history is very important but since they were included in the 1982 Constitution, many 'descendants' seek recognition
- Is it fair that due to their ability to organize and create a nation excludes mixed people who didn't? or is it exactly what occurred?
- First Nations recognize their descendants, but the Indian Act second generation cut off excludes many
- The Metis require a root ancestor, even if their last Indian ancestor was in the 1800s
- This is why many are drawn to claim Metis identity, but their root ancestor **MUST** be Red River

