



# Métis Nationalist Voice

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Métis Nation Issues and Interests

## Candice Evans-Waite Métis Pride Contest Winner

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Métis people have much to be proud of as a nation. The publishers of this newsletter,

draw from those entries. The winner of the draw was Candice Evans-Waite. Her entry

summer they operate a lake based business The Local Adventure Company with kayak and SUP rentals and adventure opportunities in the area. A great social distance activity to try if you are ever nearby. She reminds everyone to hold on to your loved ones and stay safe in this New Year.



*This photo was taken on top of a mountain after my children's first big climb. July 2020*

*They are the reason I speak too loud, live too hard and follow my dreams, I know they're watching*

*Candice Evans -Waite*

Métis Nationalists thought that it would be fun to have people express their pride in being Métis and share it with us. We gave people the opportunity to submit pictures, videos and anything that showed their Métis pride and then we made a random

was this beautiful photo of her children.

Candice and her family are residents of Buffalo Narrows. They enjoy the endless options of outdoor play around the community and enjoy being close to family. In the

We thank everyone for their entries! Our rich Métis culture remains strong and young people like Candice and her children as well as the young lady featured on the next page ensure that this will be the case for many years to come.

## Métis Enjoy Winter Camping and Continuance of Traditions

By Shayna Burnouf

During our winter camping trip we went to my boyfriend's cabin with his parents across the lake. It is only accessible by boat or skidoo. We had to skidoo across the lake to get to our destination and we made a few trips to the cabin to take our materials. For a couple days we went out on skidoos and pulled a sleigh with the shovels, traps, etc. to set beaver snares on the lake, as well as setting traps in the bush, and making cubbies. This was my first experience with setting traps and I learned many new skills; the first thing we did was go across the lake

to the beaver house, then we chiseled a hole in the ice near the beaver house where we set the two snares. The next day we went to check the snares and found that we had caught one beaver. We also set conibear traps in boxes with bait for marten, fisher and mink. We also made a few cubby set for bigger

animals such as fox, coyote and wolves. The traps sat for a few days and we eventually went to check



Shayna with amisk

them. There was a marten in one of the boxes we set up. The activities I took part in are important to the Métis culture in many ways. Hunting, fishing, and trapping were a way of life for our ancestors and it still is to some people today, though not as many people rely on it as a main source of income anymore. My

great grandfather Melchior Bouvier, who I call Capan, spent a lot of time on the land when he wasn't working, he was a maintenance man for the mission in Ile-a-la-Crosse. My Capan set snares, did trapping and fishing, and went hunting for deer and moose. In the summer they planted gardens to get fresh vegetables such as potatoes, carrots, corn, cucumbers, beets, and tomatoes. He lived across the lake at Birch Island, they called Libaloo and then later on they moved to Ile-a-la-Crosse. My kokum mentioned that a row boat was made for her family to transport across the lake throughout the summer

to get into Ile-a-la-Crosse when needed. The other means of transportation were dogs with a sleigh and horses with a cart.

My other great grandpa Francois Burnouf was a mink rancher until 1968 across the lake at Canoe River. He trapped and commercial fished on the weekends.



I believe young people would benefit from being out on the land because it is a great learning experience, it is a great stress reliever, and the skills learned can be used for the rest of your life and passed on to generations to come. There is a loss of identity and culture, and learning these teachings will allow people to have a better appreciation for the land and animals. Once I am more confident with my skills and learn more about trapping, snaring, and setting nets, I would like to share my skills with others to keep the tradition alive.



Francois Burnouf with mink



Marten in trap



Randell

## Métis Women in The Fur Trade

By Lorna Ledoux

According to Sherry Farrell Racette

"The first generation of Métis women in Saskatchewan were either born to European fur-traders and Indigenous women at posts such as Cumberland House (1775) and Carleton House (1790), or had accompanied their fathers or husbands into the region. Daughters had a variety of experiences depending on the duration of their parent's relationship, the commitment of a father to his family, his social class and affluence, and the cultural traditions that met and mixed in the home. Over time, as the population grew, children of mixed heritage tended to marry each other, blurring and mixing their diverse cultural heritages and creating a new people. Métis girls were expected to be active and helpful, running errands and caring for younger children. Sewing doll dresses and making moccasins from leaves gave way to learning from mothers, aunts and grandmothers in the critical skills of sewing, quillwork, beadwork and embroidery. Women were involved in trapping, harvested wild plants and medicines, fished, hunted birds and small game, tanned hides, processed meat, and made all the clothing and footwear for their families. Their daughters worked beside them."

I remember that women like my Aunties as well as my Mom and my Grandma Marjorie were skilled at all manner of traditional activities as I was growing up. They could hunt and fish and trap with the men and still manage to provide tasty meals for their families. At university I learned that Métis women played a huge role in the fur trade.

The Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada illustrates the role of Métis women in the fur trade:

"Métis women were integral to the fur trade. They were sought after as marriage partners for fur trade managers because of their kinship ties to local First Nations and Métis. Some English Métis women, known as "Country Born," married high-ranking officials and became members of the "Red River aristocracy."

French Métis women were likely to marry fur trade labourers such as French-Canadian voyageurs. Their work was vitally important, as they provided food such as garden produce, berries, fish and game to the fur trade posts. They also made and sold hand-worked items such as sashes and quilts."

Racette states that girls often married young, usually by their mid-teens, and marriages were usually arranged. "If a young man accepted a pair of moccasins made by his future bride, a marriage contract existed. He might also be required to pay a bride's price of trade goods or horses. Winter was the wedding season, and weddings were community celebrations that could last several days. On the prairies, women were wrapped in buffalo robes and carried to elaborately decorated dog sleds, which transported them to a mission where a marriage ceremony could be conducted and later took them on a "wedding trip" to their new home."

Racette explains that Métis families were essential socio-economic units. Men and women played equally important roles in supporting and sustaining community economies. "Men obtained raw materials through the hunt, bringing home meat and hides, which women's skill and labour transformed into pemmican, dry meat, tanned hide and garments for family use or sale. During the fur trade, pemmican, which was often the only food available to workers and travelers, sustained an industry. From 1850 to 1870 there was a considerable market for Métis-style coats, jackets, saddles, and smaller items such as quirts, fire bags, watch pockets, and pouches. Red River cart trains loaded with these goods traveled to consumers, and male traders often moved beyond their family circle for suppliers. Women's production continued to be critical to Métis economies, particularly as men found it increasingly difficult to make a living. In the first half of the 20th century, Métis women in Saskatchewan produced a huge volume of hooked and braided rugs, marketing them from door to door with berries, fish, or garden produce."



Métis women in the fur trade days exerted significant influence on husbands, brothers, and particularly sons by refusing to work, making verbal appeals, and publicly admonishing or encouraging men. Racette states that “Many had engaged in battle, loading and repairing guns, making bullets, often standing just behind the men. Women could also be passionate advocates for peace, speaking as

I am proud to stem from many generations of Métis women who helped build this country we live in through their role in the fur trade. Our women today participate in all levels of Métis family, economic and political activity through skills learned from these strong women of the past.

**A Métis family with Red River carts in North Dakota, 1883. (Photo: State Historical Society of North Dakota, A4365)**



mothers and on behalf of the children. Their spiritual lives blended elements of traditional beliefs with Christianity: many worked tirelessly to support mission work, and devotion intensified after the 1885 resistance and collapse of traditional economies. Older women took particular comfort in religion during a time of profound loss and change. Large crosses became an important part of women’s dress, and colours became darker and almost nun-like.” I was talking to a Métis elder recently about how, in pictures of my family in the late 19th and early 20th century the women were always in dark dresses with a bit of dark ribbon and lace, so this makes sense to me.



# Métis at Primrose Lake

By Lorna Ledoux

My Mom told me a story of how the conservation officers came to visit her family one night in 1954 and their lives would change forever. The Myette family was living at Northern Pine amongst other Métis families in what would become a provincial park. While nobody was wealthy, everyone got by and there

in the corral, but did not remember any compensation being given. The very next day, the family was on a train for British Columbia from Grande Center to join relatives over there. Life was hard in BC and the healthy traditional life they had lived was gone.

had within the new Primrose Lake Air Weapons Range and was never compensated for them.

*According to Joe Daigneault "This trust fund was set up through funding from the federal Western Economic Diversification Funds (WED) to assist the Métis communities of Beauval, Ile a la Crosse, Jans Bay and Cole Bay identified as impacted communities with the loss of access by means of illegal appropriation of the bombing range land" and "this was simply the quickest and easiest way to for governments to appease impacted Métis communities by setting aside funds to support economic development for the region in lieu of loss of access to the land that the bombing range occupies."*

was none of the grinding poverty people experienced in the cities and the south during times of drought or other calamities. My grandpa, Jumbo Myette trapped in what is now the Primrose Lake Air Weapons Range. He and extended family members all had their own traplines. His was right beside the Martineau River, as I was shown by Joe Blyan in the 1990s.

The family was simply told that they had to give up their home to make way for the new Meadow

Lake Provincial Park and their 2 trapper's cabins with traps and provisions in them to make room for the bombing range. My Mom thought they may have been paid for their cow that was

I heard many such stories during my time working for the MN-S. I was familiar with the Métis of Pierceland being displaced and learned that Indigenous people from Canoe Lake, Cole Bay, Jans Bay, Beauval, Ile a la Crosse, Buffalo Narrows and other locations had been deprived of their traplines. I was interested to read in the Northwest Chronicle this past July, that Joe Daigneault was told a similar story by his father.

Joe explains how the Department of National Defence needed land to make the Air Weapons Range to conduct fighter pilot training and for war games exercises, so 1.5 million acres was set aside for this purpose without the consent of the Métis people living on and using the land for subsistence purposes. His father was one of these people. He owned 3 cabins and barns for his horses in the area as he, like his father before him had commercial fished the area and carried on other traditional activities. Mr. Daigneault was in fact on a commercial fishing trip when he was abruptly turned away by a conservation officer. He lost the sizable amount of assets he

Some of my family members from Canoe Lake First Nation did receive some compensation for their displacement from these lands as did the Cold Lake First Nation. There was a small settlement for Métis in the form of a trust fund for economic development that is available to residents of four Métis communities: Cole Bay, Jans Bay, Beauval and Ile a la Crosse.

My family from Pierceland was allowed to enter the bombing range once a year to commercial fish for as long as I can remember. Apparently that was their compensation in lieu of being able to live traditional lifestyles and practice sustainable harvesting in their home territory? I am not sure that the numbers add up regarding what was lost in financial terms, and I am absolutely sure that it is woefully inadequate in terms of loss of lifestyle and perhaps even culture, because for Indigenous people(s) culture is intrinsically intertwined with the land.

This is an issue for Métis living in a large geographic region of northwestern Saskatchewan and sadly for many who were displaced and no longer living in the area at all. My hopes are that the issue will be resolved and those people will feel some satisfaction in the resolution.

## The Inherent Right of Self-Government and the Métis Nation

By Clément (Clem) Chartier QC

As we all know the Métis people and nation came into being in the 1700 and 1800s with our own language (Michif), music, dance, flower beadwork, food, culture, flag, governance institutions and the political will to defend our nation militarily in what is now western Canada when required. We also know that our historic homeland is now covered by the three prairie provinces, northwestern Ontario, northeast BC and part of the NWT and USA. Our traditional territory was affirmed by the General Assembly of the Métis National Council (MNC), our national government, in November 2018.

While we have always possessed the right of self-determination as a people, including the inherent right of self-government, this was recognized and affirmed in section 35 of the Constitution Act 1982 confirming that Indigenous governments (including the Métis Nation) are one of the three orders of government in Canada: Indigenous, federal and provincial.

In the Saskatchewan portion of the Métis Nation, over 900 delegates convened in December 1993 at Saskatoon for the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan Annual General Assembly and adopted our current Constitution 1993 (Constitution of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan). This newly adopted Constitution 1993 was based on our inherent right of self-government which by conscious decision has never been registered under either of the other two levels of government (provincial or federal).

However, in order to do business with the other two orders of government it was decided to incorporate a Secretariat under the Saskatchewan Non-Profits Corporations Act, and since 2002 under the provincial government's Métis Act. The MNS inherent right Constitution 1993 has been recognized in the Saskatchewan courts ever since its adoption.

The Constitution 1993 established the Mé-

tis Nation Legislative Assembly (MNLA) as the governing authority of the MNS, with the power to enact legislation and to determine all budgets of the MNS. At the first sitting of the MNLA at Batoche in 1994 hunting and fishing legislation and regulations were adopted, and after the 1998 MNS election several pieces of legislation were adopted, including an MNLA Act, Citizenship Act and Elections Act. However, the Constitution 1993 is the superior law and takes precedence over legislation if there is a conflict between the two.

The Preamble of the Constitution 1993 clearly states that every Métis in Saskatchewan enjoys political rights, including the right of self-determination and the right to vote and access all public services offered by the MNS. By ARTICLE 7, section 7, "Any Métis" who is sixteen (16) years of age or over and a member of a Local is entitled to vote or seek office.

By ARTICLE 10, section 2, "Any Métis" who is a member of a duly registered Local is a member of the MNS. By ARTICLE 7, section 7, all Métis who are part of a Local have the right to vote in MNS elections, which must be held every four (4) years.

The Constitution 1993, and the past practice since the first election in February 1989 of the newly formed MNS, as a Métis-only organization based on the 1988 Referendum, Declarations by "any Métis" meeting the required criteria were able to exercise their inherent right to vote. This practice continued up to and included the MN-S election in May 2017.

The Constitution 1993, by ARTICLE 15, section 1 also provides for an amending formula demanding a minimum made up of at least a quorum of the MNLA being 75 Members with seventy-five (75) percent of those participants needed to make amendments, coupled with a ratification by seventy-five (75) percent of those Local members attending the General Assembly.

While the Constitution 1993 calls for two (2) sittings of the MNLA each year, by ARTICLE 11, section 1, it only calls for one (1) General Assembly per year, which is "composed of members from the Locals" and is convened by the MNLA.

The convening of the MNLA provided for in ARTICLE 3, section 10, is by the PMC which must give no less than thirty (30) days written notice to the President of each Local. On the other hand, while the General Assembly is convened by the MNLA it does not provide a process nor a notice provision. It is difficult to see how the MNLA can call a sitting of the General Assembly of Local members to be held on the same or next day, as common sense would dictate that a sufficient period of time should be provided to the "members" of the Locals who may wish to attend.

In any event, unless the Constitution 1993 is amended and the right of all, or any, Métis in Saskatchewan meeting the election criteria is taken away, a simple amendment to the Elections Act will not be valid or legal as the constitutional provisions/ protections prevail.

The most common-sense approach to the MNS May 2021 election is for the MNLA to delay abandoning the Declaration process by proceeding with compiling a voters' list from those Métis sixteen (16) years of age and over who have registered to date and supplementing it with a Declaration by those Métis who have not yet become registered with the MNS registry.

Following the May 2021 MNS election, a process of consultation with our Locals/ Métis citizens should be immediately implemented and if it is the will of the people to totally abandon the Declaration process and limit voting to MNS registered Métis only, the necessary constitutional and legislative amendments could then be put in place for the 2025 MNS election.

## Métis Nationalist Voice Editorial

While 2020 was not the year we thought it would be, as we ease into 2021 we are now entering a new phase in the life of the Métis Nation, Canada and the world generally. While 2020 presented many challenges, socially and politically, there are many Métis Nation citizens left wondering what it is going to take for the federal government to set aside its long-standing hands-off approach to the Métis Nation in the areas of health and social wellbeing.

They certainly were not hands-off when they came west in the latter part of the 1880s and the early 1900s when they imposed a scrip system on our people for the purpose of supposedly extinguishing our rights as an Aboriginal people to our lands and resources. By taking that approach, making our lands open for sale to the general public and institutions and throwing us to the mercy of speculators we became a landless people, refugees in our homeland.

In depriving us of our lands and resources, unlike First Nations who were at least provided the benefit of Treaty

rights and Reserves, thereby having a land base upon which to live, coupled with an identifiable citizenship through the Indian Act registry and related services, the government has used that displacement to deny our peoples' right to federal services. This was also their position with respect to the Inuit, which however needed to be changed when the Supreme Court of Canada in 1939 in the *Re Eskimos* case ruled that the Inuit (Eskimos) fell under s.91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867. While the federal government amended the Indian Act to say that those Aborigines known as Eskimos (Inuit) were not entitled to be registered under the Indian Act as Indians, they nevertheless started providing services to them.

Prior to that amendment, the Indian Act specifically stated that those persons who received lands under s.31 of the Manitoba Act, 1870 or scrip under the Dominion Lands Act and their descendants were not entitled to be registered under the Indian Act. Therefore, the federal government for the past century (100 years) has basically only provided

services to First Nations and Inuit, as seen in the health services provided to them through the "First Nations and Inuit Health Branch" of Indigenous Services Canada, formerly under the federal Health Department.

This was especially so with respect to the Indian residential school system, which finally was resolved for First Nations people through the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement in 2006, the Prime Minister's apology in 2008 and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its resulting Calls to Action. None of this applied to Métis residential schools, the federal government washing its hands of these residential schools on the basis that they did not provide payments to the Church (es) to run them. In this way, the Métis are doubly penalized, first by having our lands taken away and rights denied, and then because of that, that the federal government is cleared of any responsibility for what happened in Métis residential schools.

*We are on the web at:*

[www.MetisNationalists.ca](http://www.MetisNationalists.ca)

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### Reminder

**You may need a Métis card to vote in the next Métis Nation - Saskatchewan election.**

**Declarations may not be used.**

**If you plan to participate in choosing who will represent you as a Métis, you need to get a card. To apply, go online to:**

**<https://metisnationsk.com/citizenship/>**