



Le Métis

President's Message



"We must seek to preserve the existence of our own people. We must not by our own act allow ourselves to be swamped. If the day comes when that is done, it must be by no act of ours."

"Pray that God may preserve the little Métis Nation and cause it to grow . . . and remain faithful to its mission. During the five years that I must pass in exile, I have only this to say to the Métis: Remain Métis, become more Métis than ever."

– Louis Riel

From the days of Cuthbert Grant and Louis Riel to today, the Red River Métis have fought vigorously to preserve and protect our identity and independence, earning the name Otipemisiwak – the people who own themselves. It's who we are and what we stand for. We have always known we can accomplish anything, as long as we remain united.

When Louis Riel and John Bruce informed MacDougall that he could not enter the Northwest – our Homeland – without permission in October of 1869, they made the declaration as the national government of the Red River Métis.

Today, the Manitoba Métis Federation is the democratic government and national voice of the Red River Métis, also known as the Manitoba Métis, which is the origin, root, and core of the Métis Nation. Our ancestors negotiated Canada's entry into the Northwest, and Manitoba's entry into Confederation. We remain committed to advancing our work to meet the needs of your family and your community while we advance our Nation.

Indigenous Veterans Day

November 8 is the day Canada honours Aboriginal – or Indigenous – veterans, for their legacy and the sacrifices they made for the rights we have today.

I'm not just talking about World War I and II, or the Korean War, or the many peacekeeping missions Canadian and Red River Métis soldiers have participated in.

It's a fact that the Red River Métis of the Northwest have been fighting for Canada – for our ideals and values – before there was even a Canada.

Let me take you all the way back to 1816 and the Battle of Seven Oaks, or what we call the Victory of Frog Plain. This was a fight for free trade – for the rights of our Nation to trade our goods and services with whomever we chose. It was part of what was often called the Pemmican Wars.

This was a significant battle – one that demonstrated the fierce devotion of the Red River Métis to the defence of democratic values, including the right of free trade.

In 1869 our leaders – including Louis Riel – seized Upper Fort Garry, laid down a roadblock, and established itself as the government of the Red River Settlement, and the national government of the Red River Métis, to defend the right to have representation that reflected the needs of the people.

In 1885, again, our people went to war in the Northwest Resistance, where we were outnumbered and outgunned, but still we fought to defend our values, our families, and our way of life. From Duck Lake to Fish Creek to Batoche, we used every scrap of metal we could find to make bullets to keep our fight going. We lost many great heroes. This loss, and this remembrance, still echoes across our Nation.

Those who gave their lives during these early battles deserve recognition as war veterans, and as champions of democracy.

So, on Indigenous Veterans Day, we not only honour our veterans who went to foreign soil to defend the democratic rights and freedoms of others, we also honour our veterans who gave their lives to protect our rights and freedoms.

It is in their name that we continue to fight to this day. Of course, we've moved on from bullets and now have most of our battles in the courts. But through this work, we honour what our ancestors fought for and represented: Our rights in the new Canada, our identity as the Métis Nation of the Red River and the Northwest, and our passion to defend all against tyranny and evil, no matter where in the world this fight took place.

These are our heroes – today, tomorrow, and forever.

Remembrance Day

November 11 is the day where Canada and the Red River Métis honour all war veterans of all conflicts for their sacrifices and their legacy.

On November 11, I hope all Citizens take a moment to reflect on the incredible decades we've experienced without global conflict, without sending our loved ones to fight and possibly lose their lives on foreign soil. I hope people reflect on why we have the privilege of peace today.

We know this privilege is due to the sacrifices made by many, many Canadians and the Métis of the Red River and the Northwest in global conflicts over the years. What we have today – the freedoms and rights we enjoy – we owe to these heroes.

We honour all war veterans, and those who made the ultimate sacrifice, along with the families who experienced these painful losses. Those who survived often came home broken, continuing to suffer the aftermath of their time spent in service.

For the Métis Veterans of World War II, when they came home, Canada simply forgot them. I made it my mission decades ago to ensure that these veterans – their heroism, their suffering, and their resilience – were recognized and supported after they were abandoned.

In 2019, Canada issued a formal apology to our WWII Métis Veterans. The apology was followed by an agreement and a commitment to support us as we launched the Métis Veterans Legacy Program in 2020, to commemorate our heroes and provide them with the head start they did not receive when they came home.

As of today, Recognition Payments have been given to 30 living Métis Veterans, along with 37 spouses and 19 children of deceased Métis Veterans. We continue to search for Métis Veterans and their families so we can honour our heroes.

If anyone has questions about the military contributions of the Red River Métis, knows a World War II Métis Veteran, or has a vision for commemorating our World War II veterans, reach out to us:

Telephone: 1-800-532-1993

Email: veteran.info@Metisveterans.ca

Website: www.Metisveterans.ca

It's so important that our younger generations – those who have grown up only knowing a world without global conflict – learn about those who gave so much for our security. I encourage all Elders in our communities to take some time in the next few

weeks to speak to our Youth about their memories of war times, or of family members who went to war. It is only by passing this important knowledge to our Youth that we can hope they'll carry on the tradition of honouring our war veterans.

I offer my prayers to all our Citizens, friends, and neighbours, and my deepest condolences to those who have been caused to grieve – especially those who have lost loved ones due to military conflict, who will find this time of year particularly hard.

Meeqwetch,

President David Chartrand. LL.D. hon. D.M. ∞

Dr. Chantal Fiola tackles stereotypes about Métis spirituality in her second book



Red River Métis author and scholar Dr. Chantal Fiola
Photo credit: Madix Photography

“All Métis people are Catholic.”

“Métis people do not go to ceremonies.”

These are stereotypes about Métis spirituality that Dr. Chantal Fiola, Red River Métis author and scholar, is here to debunk in her latest book, *Returning to Ceremony: Spirituality in Manitoba Métis Communities*. A follow-up to her first book, the award-winning *Rekindling the Sacred Fire: Métis Ancestry and Anishinaabe Spirituality*, *Returning to Ceremony* continues the conversation on Métis spirituality while focusing on six historic Red River Métis communities: Duck Bay, Camperville, St. Laurent, St. François Xavier, Ste. Anne, and Lorette.

“It’s part two in what I’m hoping will be a three-part research journey,” Fiola said. “The larger topic is Métis relationships with traditional Indigenous

spirituality. My first book began this conversation, and I spoke with 18 Métis people mostly from Winnipeg who have found their way back to ceremonies.”

With funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, she was able to hire six Métis community researchers to help her speak with and listen to people from those six Métis communities for her second book.

“We spoke with 32 Métis people who have found their way back to ceremonies, and they shared with us stories and experiences from their family history, their family’s relationship with Métis culture, First Nations cultures, settler cultures, of course also with religion and spirituality,” Fiola said. “They also shared their personal journey in terms of reconnecting with ceremonies.”

She applied a Métis-specific and community-centred approach to archives, priests’ letters, oral history, storytelling, and literature.

It was important to Fiola for her research to follow the national definition of Métis as stated in the 2002 Métis National Council (MNC) resolution.

“We’ve seen this explosion in the phenomenon of race shifting, and it worries me, and I don’t want race shifters to use my work to fuel their agenda, so in an effort to promote Métis sovereignty, I felt it was important to uphold the MNC definition of Métis as criteria for participating in the study,” she said.

The Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) helped Fiola conduct research in Manitoba Métis Communities in an ethical way. She met with vice-presidents in each of the Regions that would be impacted by her study.

“We were able to meet face to face, and they had an opportunity to ask me questions, and I had an opportunity to share who I am and what my communities are and what I was hoping to do with

this project, and they asked if I could tweak some things, which I did, and that ended up strengthening the study,” she said.

“They were also really helpful in suggesting potential research participants, and also they recommended one of the six community researchers, who was a great asset to the study,” Fiola added. “They were also helpful in terms of helping get the word out in Manitoba Métis Communities, and invited people to the talks that I gave about the findings in each of the six communities.”

An associate professor in the University of Winnipeg’s Urban and Inner City Studies Department, Fiola said the research process took several years to complete, with a couple of years each for both the research portion and the writing and publishing process.

Through her research, she was excited to learn about Gabriel Dumont’s relationship with traditional Indigenous spirituality and familiarity with traditional medicines.

“I think a lot of Métis folks and families – mine included – have become disconnected from these stories as a result of the legacy of colonization, and I think a lot of Métis folks would be interested in hearing about these stories, because there’s this stereotype that all Métis people are Christian or Roman Catholic in particular, but our collective history is more complex than that and includes ceremonies,” she said.

“I’m hoping that once (people) read this pair of books that we can replace that false stereotype with a deeper understanding that Métis spirituality exists on a continuum with Christianity on one end, and traditional Indigenous spirituality on the other. And beautiful syncretic blends of both along the centre, and I hope that people will remember that historically, some Métis people went to church, and went to ceremonies, and that’s increasingly true for an ever-greater number of us today.”



CITIZEN SPOTLIGHT
STORIES HIGHLIGHTING RED RIVER MÉTIS CITIZENS

TO READ MORE, VISIT:
MMF.MB.CA

Spear connects with Métis culture through beadwork



Métis beader Terri Spear of Sisters Leather and Fur

Terri Spear has always admired beadwork.

“I remember having in our home a display of leather beaded gauntlets, and would always admire them at a young age,” she said.

In 2015, Spear and her sister, Jennifer, came up with the idea of crafting items to sell together. While their pieces have included beadwork over the years, their main focus in the beginning was working with leather and fur – and thus Sisters Leather and Fur was born.

“We utilized a mix of Canadian tanned fur in addition to pre-owned fur, wool, and leather coats, and upcycled them to make our creations. We also used other traditional materials such as deer antler, tanned deer, and moose hides, and incorporated these into our products as well,” Spear said.

In 2017, Spear found a renewed interest in beadwork, and decided to take an introductory beading class.

“(I) found it very relaxing and enjoyable,” she said.

Around this time, a local Métis woman taught Spear mitten-making. Sisters Leather and Fur subsequently offered wool and sheepskin mittens with fox fur trim, and started incorporating beaded flowers on the back.

Since her first introductory class, Spear has been self-taught, trying out various techniques of beading.

“(I) feel I now have a method that I am comfortable with. I learn so much each and every time I start a new project,” she said.

Spear’s sister has now moved on to other endeavours, selling her own items locally in Alberta. Early this year, Spear decided to take Sisters Leather and Fur in a new direction, with a primary focus on Métis beadwork.

Through Sisters Leather and Fur, Spear currently sells framed beaded art, as well as deer antler jewelry and keychains.

“Since this endeavour began, it has really enhanced my appreciation and allowed me to gain better insight and a greater understanding of the Métis culture, especially the art of beading, which gives me a connection to my Métis roots and heritage,” she said.

Her mother told her at a young age that her family had Métis ancestry, but Spear didn’t start to appreciate her culture until she was older.

“I wanted to learn more about my Métis background, so in 2014, I started researching our lineage, and found a rich history of my direct descendants right here in the Winnipeg Red River Valley area. This is when I truly felt a connection to my Métis roots,” she said.

Upon completing her official genealogy, she became a Manitoba Métis Federation Citizen.

“(I) feel very humbled to be able to partake in a skill that has been part of the Métis tradition for generations,” she said.

Spear’s beadwork process involves starting with a simple sketch, which she works at for a while before it is ready for beading.

“I then proceed to attach the design to my background, which is usually velveteen with a stabilizer as backing for added support,” she said.

Spear said she often doesn’t choose the bead colours until she actually begins beading.

“I will quite often rework the design during the beading process, and change some of the details along the way. The end result usually turns out differently than the original design, but in the end, I am happy with how each piece looks when completed,” she said.

Spear also creates her own beading patterns, which can be quite challenging.

“I like to work with simple designs for that very reason. I am always trying to find my ‘own style’ along the way,” she said.

“I find most people connect with beadwork visually, but also on a tactile level as well. So that is why you will find many pieces of my work without glass in the frame.”

Spear said there is a lot to learn, as beading can be quite complex, with important aspects such as technique, design, and colour balancing.

“All of these elements take a long time to master, so it is always a work in progress for me, but no matter what level of skill I eventually reach, I will be satisfied regardless. I consider myself someone who simply enjoys creating and sharing my work with others.”

Visit Sisters Leather and Fur at on Etsy at <https://www.etsy.com/shop/sistersleatherandfur/> or Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/pg/SistersLeatherandFur/posts/>.

Community Photo

Le Metis’ new Community Photo section invites Métis Citizens to send in photos to be featured in our newsletter. If you have a photo that celebrates the Métis Nation, send it to communications@mmf.mb.ca and you may see it in print!

The Christmas Season is fast approaching and we want to highlight Métis Traditions and family gatherings.

Submit your photos to communications@mmf.mb.ca to be featured in upcoming *Le Metis* publications as well as the MMF Social Media pages.



Sunny with a chance of fetching balls

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TRAINING

Are you interested in a career in Early Learning? We are seeking interested Metis individuals to participate in in-person 18-month Early Learning & Child Care programs in Thompson, Brandon, and Winnipeg. We are also seeking current certified Metis Early Childhood Educator II's to participate in a remote learning Early Childhood Education III training program.

II & III

For more information, visit
mmf.mb.ca



**Metis
Employment
& Training**

CITIZEN SPOTLIGHT

STORIES HIGHLIGHTING RED RIVER MÉTIS
CITIZENS IN THE COMMUNITY, ALONG
WITH MMF PROGRAMS, INITIATIVES,
PROJECTS, AND EVENTS.

**VISIT MMF.MB.CA
FOR MORE INFORMATION**

