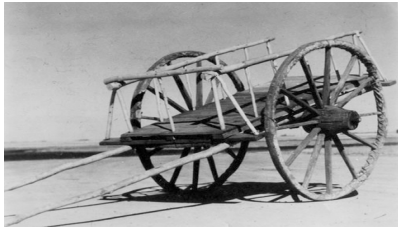


The Red River Cart



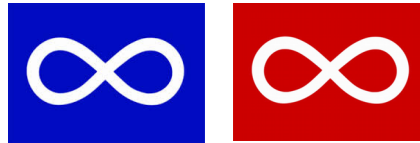
The **Red River cart** was a large two-wheeled cart that was simple to build, easy to repair anywhere, and virtually indestructible. Because [nails](#) were unavailable or very expensive in the early West, these carts contained no iron at all, being entirely constructed of wood and animal hide. Often drawn by [oxen](#), these carts were used throughout most of the 19th century in the [fur trade](#) in the area of the [Red River](#) and on the plains west of the [Red River Colony](#). The cart was developed by [Métis](#) for use in their settlement on the [Red River](#), for Buffalo hunts, farming and hauling goods.

Metis Food

Métis food included dried meat, pemmican, bannock, berries, wild game and buffalo. The Métis carried and stored berries in skin containers, wild turnip was dried and powdered and used in soups, and they used various herbs for food seasonings.

The Métis made bannock, which was introduced by the 18th century fur traders. Bannock is traditionally made from lard, water and flour and was cooked over an open fire. Many Métis people today still enjoy this hardy snack.

Métis Flag



The Métis flag represents the merging of two cultures, and symbolizes the creation of a new society with roots in both First Nations and European traditions.

The Métis actually have two flags. Both flags have the same design, an infinity symbol, but are either red or blue. Red was the colour of the Hudson's Bay Company, while blue was the colour of the North West Company.



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WHO ARE THE METIS?



Who are the Métis?

(pronounced “May-tee”)

The Métis are one of the recognized distinct [Aboriginal peoples in Canada](#). During the height of the [fur trade](#) in the 18th and 19th centuries, many European fur traders married First Nations women. The Métis evolved out of the relationships between First Nations peoples and Europeans. They are able to trace their descent to mixed [First Nations](#) and European heritage.

The eventual establishment of Métis communities outside of these cultures and settlements, as well as the intermarriage between Métis men and Métis women, resulted in a new Aboriginal people—the Métis. The Métis people helped to shape the Canada of today, mainly in terms of the expansion of the west.

The Métis are a distinct Aboriginal nation and share a history, culture (song, dance, dress, national symbols, etc), a unique language (Michif), distinct way of life, and a collective consciousness. The Métis homeland includes regions scattered across Canada, as well as parts of the northern United States. As of 2006, almost 400,000 people self-identify as Métis in Canada.

Metis Jigging

Music and dance are very important aspects of Métis culture. They are famous for their fiddle music and dancing. The fiddle is the most common instrument used by the Métis.

The origins of Métis jigging lie in the traditional dances of their Irish and Scottish ancestors and was also influenced by tradition First Nations dance, however it is important to know that Métis Jigging is different.

The traditional music of the Métis was up-tempo and lively, which made it perfect for dancing. Extra and irregular beats were added to give bounce to the music, making the dance a lot faster.



The traditions of Métis song and dance have survived over the centuries, and still maintain an important role in their culture.

Arts and Crafts

Both European and First Nations cultures influenced Métis art; however, Métis art also had an influence on First Nations groups. Métis art often was mislabelled and credit was given to other groups, even when the Métis were the first to bead. The Métis were famous for their floral beadwork, and were often called the ‘Flower Beadwork People’.

The symmetrical floral beadwork was often set against a dark background, was inspired by European floral designs. The needle workers used materials from both cultures: quills, beads, and silk embroidery thread.



The Métis used geometric patterns, and floral motifs to create unique and distinct style.

Sash

The Sash is a finger woven belt made of wool approximately three meters long. Traditionally it was tied at the waist to hold a coat closed. The sash was used for both decorative and practical purposes. It could be used as a rope, the fringes could be used as tread to repair items, a first aid kit, and a washcloth just to name a few.



Today it is a symbol of nationhood and cultural distinction and it is still an important part of traditional Métis dress.