

Gabriel Dumont Institute: Interview Questions

Basic Family History

Where and when were you born?

[On a map can you show us where your community was located]

What are the names of your father and mother? When and where were they born and raised?

What do you remember most about your parents?

How large was your family?

What were the various roles of your family members?

What was/is the importance of your extended family? Can you discuss the role of cousins, uncles, aunts and grandparents in the family?

When were you married and to who?

How many children did you have?

Who were the significant people in your life who helped you to develop your attitudes, ideas, and beliefs?

Did you and your family always identify as Métis? Are you aware of any terms or phrases used to identify Métis people in other languages such as Cree or Saulteaux?

Social Life

What are some of your favourite hobbies or activities?

Did you participate in social functions such as feasts, playing games, and cards? Can you explain some of these events? How were they organized?

What were some of the traditional Métis holidays known as in Michif? (New Years, Easter and Christmas, All Kings Day, Le Jour dis Roi, Shaking Hand Day-shakishchenoisi). Can you describe one of these holidays? What did your family do to celebrate these events?

What types of music or songs were popular in your community?

What were Métis weddings, social events, and funerals like and how were they organized?

Did your family or community celebrate New Year's? If so, how?

Did you do any of the Métis dances such as the duck dance, reel light, reel four, drops of brandy, square dancing? What are your memories of these dances?

Did your community have any well-recognized musicians, dancers, fiddlers, storytellers, elders and spiritual advisors? What was their role in the community?

Did people in your community race horses? Were horses important in your community?

What was your main form of transportation in your community?

What type of foods did your family eat day to day? What types of food were made for special events?

Did any of your parents/grandparents ever tell stories about Métis history? What do you recall about those stories?

Were there any legends or tall tales told in your family or community? What was one of your favorite stories that you heard growing up?

Do you remember what animals were highly respected by your family or community? (eg. horses, dogs.) Were there any stories told about these animals?

Land and Resources Use

What communities did you reside in? Were there any other distinctly Métis settlements nearby? If so, what were their names?

Did your family ever own land? Did anyone in your family ever mention Half-breed land and money scrip?

What was the Métis way of life like in your community? Were there certain responsibilities or duties that the family members had to do during each season. For instance, what work did you have to do in winter, summer, spring and fall?

What were your occupations or how did you make a living such as, hunting, trapping, farming, fishing, seasonal work?

When you were hunting did you have any routines or traditions?

Were there game law restrictions on Métis trappers and hunters in your community?

Did you go through any rights of passage when you became a provider for your family or community?

Do you remember building your own log home? How were these homes built at the time?

What does the term "road allowance" mean to you? Did you or your family ever reside on a road allowance or Métis farm colony? (eg. Lebret, Lestock)

War Experiences

Did you or any of your family members participate in any wars such as WWI or WWII?

What effect did the war have on your family?

Women's Issues and Child-Rearing

Were you ever involved in or did you ever observe the preparation of hides, leggings, quilts, moccasins? If so, how were they made?

What types of clothes were common in your community? Who was responsible for making the clothing? How did the men, women and children dress?

Did women in your family or community do beadwork or silk embroidery? If so, what type of patterns and designs did they make?

Have you been involved in or observed the preparation and collection of traditional medicines?

What were the roles of midwives in your community?

How were children raised in the community? What were they taught and by whom?

What were the jobs of women and children in the community and family?

Did you have a garden or work on a farm? If so what was it like?

Did you ever go berry or seneca root picking, if so where did you go to pick these items? (Can you show us on a map)

Language

Where did you learn to speak Michif?

Who else in your family and community spoke Michif? Do you know other people who can speak Michif? If so could you please tell me their names and which community they reside in.

Was your Michif language different from other families that spoke Michif? If so, what was different about it?

Did other people in your community, who were not Métis, speak Michif?

Can you name other communities that spoke Michif?

Did you remember listening to any tall-tales, lying contests, or stories about local spots in your community in the Michif language?

Were there special stories only told in Michif?

Were there any Rougaroo stories told in your community?

Was your home community known by different names, in Michif? Were there other places such as rivers and gathering spots that had Michif names?

What nicknames or other terms of affection did you give to your parents or to other family members? Were these in Michif?

Did you ever feel any shame about speaking the Michif language?

Were you punished for speaking Michif at your school? Did Cree speakers or French-Canadians ridicule you for speaking Michif? Did local priests and nuns speak Michif?

Can you speak and understand other Indigenous languages such as Cree and Saulteaux? Can you speak and understand French?

What did your family and community call the Métis language? Was it always known as "Michif" or was it called other names such as "Cree" or "Métis-French?"

Do you refer to yourself as a "Michif?" Did any of the old people in your community tell you where this term came from?

Were there any specific occasions when Michif was spoken by your family and community?

Why is the Michif language important to the Métis people? Do you know of any young people interested in speaking the language? Do you think Michif is in danger of going into extinction?

Are there special ceremonies and prayers where you speak in Michif?

Education and Religion

What role did religion play in your life or your parents' lives?

Did the church play a major role in the community?

Was there open discrimination or hostility towards Métis people in your community or school?

Did you ever attend school? When and where did you attend school? What were your school days like?

What subjects and skills did you learn in school?

As a speaker of an Aboriginal language did you find it hard to learn to read and write in English?