



Gabriel Dumont Institute Michif Languages Resource List

The Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) works with Michif speakers to preserve and promote the three Michif languages spoken in Saskatchewan: Michif, Michif-French, and Northern Michif. GDI employs sociological conventions when classifying a Michif language: if a Michif person living in Saskatchewan calls their language “Michif,” then the Institute respects their wishes and calls that language “Michif.” As part of our cultural mandate, most of GDI’s publications include Michif components.

Spoken mainly in southern and central Saskatchewan and Manitoba and ranging into North Dakota (the area in and around the Turtle Mountain Reservation) and some parts of Montana, Michif is considered by linguists to be the true mixed Métis language. It mixes Plains Cree verbs and verb phrases and French nouns and noun phrases along with some Nahkawē (Saulteaux) and English, depending on the locale and family. Michif-French, spoken in various places in all three Prairie Provinces, is a dialect of Canadian French that sometimes employs an Algonquian syntax. Northern Michif, spoken in northwest Saskatchewan, is a dialect of Plains Cree with a tiny number of French loan words.

According to Norman Fleury, Michif language specialist, speaker, and traditional storyteller, “Michif” was the “nationality” (ethnicity) and the languages now known as Michif were Métis versions of “Cree” and “French,” despite their differences with standard Cree or French-Canadian French. The old people referred to the language we now call Michif as the “Cree spoken by the Michif.” Michif-French was referred to as the “French spoken by the Michif.”

Michif-language resources, including dictionaries and children’s books, can be obtained through the Gabriel Dumont Institute at shopmetis.ca.

GDI’s resources which contain varying degrees of Michif include:

- *The Alfred Reading Series* (1992): a five-part children’s series written for primary school-aged children.
- *Métis Songs: Visiting was the Métis Way* (1993): a songbook including over 80 Métis songs, many of which are in Michif-Cree and Michif-French.
- *Come Read With Us* (1998): the narration component for *The Alfred Reading Series*.
- *The Metis: Our People, Our Story* (1999): CD-ROM – information about all forms of Michif.
- *Metis Legacy* (2002): Information on all forms of Michif, including an annotated bibliography.
- *Resources for Métis Researchers* (1999): Information on all forms of Michif, including a bibliography.
- *The Turtle’s Teachings* (2000): a narration for Penny Condon’s children’s book *Changes*.
- *Li Michif: Kakee-Payshee-Peekishkwaywuk-Oma* (2000): a video documentary, which includes an overview of the Michif-Cree language and interviews with Michif-Cree speakers.
- *The Story of the Crescent Lake Métis: Our Life on The Road Allowance* (2002): a video documentary featuring the Michif-Cree-speaking community of Crescent Lake in southern Saskatchewan.
- *Kitaskinaw i pi Kishkisnamakoya: The Land Gives Us Our Knowledge* (2002): a video documentary featuring the Métis community of Ile-a-la-Crosse in northern Saskatchewan.

- *Expressing Our Heritage: Métis Artistic Designs Resource Manual* (2003): an accompanying manual and exhibition book for a set of fifty prints highlighting traditional Métis material culture. Includes Michif-Cree and Ile-à-la Crosse Michif terms and activities for teachers.
- *Aen Kroshay aen tapee avec mi gineeey: Métis Hooked Rugs* (2003): provides viewers with step-by-step instructions on how to make a hooked rug.
- *Mashnikwawchikun avec la sway di fil: Métis Silk Embroidery* (2003): provides viewers have the opportunity to learn basic embroidery stitches and to receive direction in working with patterns, designs, needles and fabrics.
- *En saencheur flechey: Métis Fingerweaving* (2003): Penny Condon provides fingerweaving lessons to grade seven and eight students from St. Frances School in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.
- *The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture* (www.metismuseum.ca) (2003): this website has extensive Michif content in its “Michif Collection” section.
- *The Beavers’ Big House* (2004): an English-Michif-Cree children’s book and narrated CD by Joanne Panas, Olive Whitford and Norman Fleury. Currently available as a motion-DVD.
- *The Back to Batoche Interactive Website* (www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Batoche/index.html) (2006): in this website, Norman Fleury provides users with a great deal of Michif-Cree narration.
- *Metis Legacy II: Michif Culture, Heritage and Folkways* (2006): delineates Michif culture including folklore, storytelling, medicines and healing traditions, spirituality, transportation systems, housing, clothing, and family structures.
- *The Michif Resource Guide* (2007): this unique resource contains biographies and photographs of Michif speakers as well a comprehensive list of words and phrases in Michif-Cree, Ile-à-la Crosse Michif and Michif-French.
- *Fiddle Dancer* (2006): tells the story of a young Métis boy who is taught how to dance by his “Moushoom”, or grandfather. Norman Fleury provides translations in Michif-Cree. The book has an accompanying CD in English and Michif-Cree.
- *The Story of the Rabbit Dance* (2007): in this charming story for young children, Métis trapper Jacques witnesses the creation of the “Rabbit Dance”. Translated in Michif-Cree by Rita Flamand, this book also contains an accompanying narration CD in English and Michif-Cree. Currently available as a motion-DVD.
- *Medicines to Help Us* (2008): Métis artist and author Christi Belcourt provides readers with a comprehensive resource that discusses traditional Métis medicines and includes artwork, photographs and Michif-Cree and Cree translations.
- *The Métis Alphabet Book, Study Prints* (2006): Provides young readers with further contextual information to *The Métis Alphabet Book*. This resource contains background information about each topic listed, Michif-Cree words and terms and a bibliography.
- *Better That Way* (2008): captures the essence of growing up in this wonderful poem, beautifully illustrated by Sherry Farrell Racette and translated into Michif by Margaret Hodgson. A narration CD in English and Michif is included. Currently available as a motion-DVD.
- *New Breed Magazine*: Each issue contains varying amounts of Michif content. The Winter 2008 issue was a special feature on Michif.
- *Stories of Our People/Lii zistwayr di la naasyoon di Michif: A Métis Graphic Anthology*: includes stories about the three Métis tricksters (*Wiisakaychak*, *Nanabush*, and *Chi-Jean*), werewolves (*Roogaroos*), cannibal spirits (*Whiitigos*), flying skeletons (*Paakuks*), and of course, the Devil (*li Jiyaab*). Steeped in Michif language and culture, this graphic novel anthology includes the storytellers’ original transcripts, prose renditions of the transcripts, and five illustrated stories.
- *Dancing in My Bones* (2009): the sequel to the highly successful book *Fiddle Dancer*, returns us to the story of a young Métis boy named Nolin as he continues to discover his Métis heritage. Norman Fleury provides translations in Michif-Cree and the accompanying CD has a narration track in Michif-Cree.

- *The Flower Beadwork People* (2009): A vibrantly illustrated social history of the Métis by artist Sherry Farrell Racette. This book has been reprinted to include a Michif-Cree translation by Norman Fleury.
- *The Métis Alphabet Book* (2009): is a unique addition to the creative genre of children's alphabet books, highlighting historical figures, significant events, places of interest, and other aspects of Métis identity. This book has been reprinted to include a Michif-Cree translation by Norman Fleury. Currently available as a study prints set.
- *Nehiyawewin Masinahikan* (2009): is a comprehensive dictionary featuring thousands of words in the "Northern" or "Île-a-la-Crosse" Michif language.
- *Nehiyawewin Mitataht* (2009): is a useful introduction to the grammar of the "Northern" or "Île-a-la-Crosse" Michif language.
- *Pierriche Falcon: The Michif Rhymester* (2009): is a comprehensive cultural resource which includes English and Michif-French renditions of Pierre Falcon's songs by Krystle Pederson and Guy Dumont with music by John Arcand, the Master of the Métis Fiddle," and Desmond Legace. Paul Chartrand, a distinguished Métis academic and former Chair of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, also provides a thoughtful essay on the importance of Falcon's songs, Métis nationalism and the Michif languages. For the first time, several Pierre Falcon songs have been included in a musical compilation. Perhaps more importantly, these songs have been restored back to their original Michif voice.
- *The Giving Tree: A Retelling of a Traditional Métis Story* (2009): is a charming story that focuses on the boyhood reminisces of Moushoom as he describes finding the "Great Giving Tree" with his mother and father. Norman Fleury provides translations in Michif-Cree and the accompanying CD has a narration track in Michif-Cree.
- *The New Nation: La Noovell Naasyoon* (2010-Present): features Michif in its title and contains articles on Métis culture, people and events, as well as highlights on various Michif activities.
- *Call of the Fiddle* (2011): completes the trilogy of a young boy as he embraces his Métis heritage and carries on his family's traditions. Wilfred Burton and Anne Patton capture Batoche's history and significance with their words, while Sherry Farrell Racette brings the land and Métis culture to life with her vibrant illustrations. Norman Fleury provides translations in Michif-Cree and the accompanying CD has a narration track in Michif-Cree.
- *Relatives with Roots* (2011): *Relatives With Roots: A Story About Métis Women's Connection to the Land* is a heartfelt story about a Métis grandmother who takes her granddaughter out into the bush to teach her how to pick traditional medicines. Rita Flamand provides translations in Michif-Cree and the accompanying CD has a narration track in Michif-Cree.
- *The Diamond Willow Walking Stick* (2012): focuses on a Métis Elder's remembrances of traditional teachings about generosity that were taught to him by his grandparents during his childhood. Norman Fleury provides translations in Michif-Cree and the accompanying CD has a narration track in Michif-Cree.
- *Remembering My Métis Past: Reminisces of Edwin St. Pierre* (2012): Edwin provides vignettes of life growing up around Crescent lake. Some of the vignettes have Michif translations by Harriet Oaks St. Pierre.
- *Roogaroo Mickey* (2013): In *Roogaroo Mickey*, Mamayr tells Louis and Charlie a Roogaroo story from when she was a little girl. But Roogaroos aren't real ..., right? Norman Fleury provides translations in Michif-Cree and the accompanying CD has a narration track in Michif-Cree.
- *Michif Dictionary 2013* (2013): Using Vince Ahenakew's dictionary, *Néhiyawêwin Masinahikan: Michif*/Cree Dictionary*, as a starting point, Norman Fleury undertook the enormous task of translating nearly 11,500 words into Michif-Cree, perhaps the oldest and first Michif language. Michif-Cree is differentiated from Île-à-la-Crosse Michif because it uses a great deal more French (nouns and noun phrases) and has a Plains Cree base (verb and verb phrases) rather than a Woods Cree base. Once that was completed, each word was then narrated so each word's pronunciation could be heard on the website created to host the dictionary, http://www.metismuseum.ca/michif_dictionary.php. The dictionary is also available for Android-enabled devices through the Google Play Store at: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.emap.michif&hl=en>.

The dictionary was created to bank individual words and is useful for looking up specific Michif-Cree words. The phrases section has been created to demonstrate how the language is used and how its syntax is structured. Audio for this section was also recorded and is available online. The majority of the phrases are useful for every-day communication. Other sentences were banked to show Michif-Cree's structure.

- *Manny's Memories* (2014): *Manny's Memories*, by author Ken Caron with his daughter Angela Caron, introduces us to the Métis community of Round Prairie, Saskatchewan through the eyes of a young boy growing up in the 1940s. Manny shares his boyhood memories of the once vibrant community not too far from Saskatoon's city limits. Though rural life at the time called for hard work, self-sufficiency, and generosity, there was always time to have fun and to enjoy being a young Métis boy. Artist Donna Lee Dumont's visual expression of *Manny's Memories* helps us see the world as Ken, called "Manny" in his youth, remembers it. Norman Fleury's accompanying Michif translation and narration returns to the language which Manny so often heard as a boy. *Manny's Memories* leaves us with a rare and satisfying glimpse of life not so long ago.
- *My First Métis Lobstick* (2014): Leah Marie Dorion's *My First Métis Lobstick* takes young readers back to Canada's fur trade era by focusing on a Métis family's preparations for a lobstick celebration and feast in the boreal forest. Through the eyes of a young boy, we see how important lobstick making and ceremony was to the Métis community. From the Great Lakes to the present-day Northwest Territories, lobstick poles—important cultural and geographical markers, which merged Cree, Ojibway, and French-Canadian traditions—dotted the landscape of our great northern boreal forest. This little known aspect of Métis history vividly comes to life through Leah Marie Dorion's crisp prose and stunning gallery-quality artwork. This story is translated by Norman Fleury and contains a CD with narration in English and Michif.
- *Road Allowance Kitten* (2015): They say, "Home is where the heart is." For Rosie and Madeline, home also included their pet kitten. Imagine being told you have to leave your home ... without your pet. Based on a true story, *Road Allowance Kitten* gives readers a glimpse into the history of the Road Allowance Métis and their forced removal from their humble, but beloved, homes on the road allowance. Award-winning children's author Wilfred Burton skillfully shares this story through the eyes of the children involved. The vibrant illustrations by Christina Johns are the perfect accompaniment to this authentic vignette of a little-known part of Prairie history. This story is translated by Norman Fleury and contains a CD with narration in English and Michif.
- *Métis Christmas Mittens* (2017): The holiday season has always been a very special time for Métis families. A family-oriented people, the Métis often didn't have money to buy expensive presents, but instead made practical items with much love. In this spirit, award-winning author and illustrator, Leah Marie Dorion takes readers back to the Métis tradition of making mittens for loved ones. *Métis Christmas Mittens* is a touching ode to Métis family life is accompanied by Leah's distinctive and evocative art. This story is translated by Norman Fleury and contains a CD with narration in English and Michif.
- *The Voyageurs: Forefathers of the Metis Nation* (2019) tells an old story—integral to both the birth of the Metis Nation and to the development of Canada—in a new and engaging format. Zoey Roy has eloquently transformed the history of the voyageurs into a spoken-word performance poem which she has shared live at numerous events over the last several years. In this innovative resource, Zoey masterfully informs the reader and listener of the voyageurs' history, background, and lifeways in a format popular with today's youth. To fully appreciate Zoey's masterful delivery, a DVD to accompany this book was essential. Combined with Jerry Thistle's evocative illustrations and Norman Fleury's Michif narration, this resource becomes a teaching tool, a work of art, and the impetus for further research all in one. Many thanks, kishchi maarsii to this team of cultural interpreters.
- *Virtual Museum Initiatives* (www.metismuseum.ca)
 - o Digitization of Michif workshop from 2006
 - o Digitization of Michif Storytellers workshop from 2008
 - o Digitization of Ile-a-la Crosse Michif interviews
 - o Michif learning games by Heather Souter

- Digitization of approximately 100 Michif-French interviews performed by Father Guy Lavallee
 - The Alfred Reading series was recorded in Michif by Bruce Flamont and uploaded as interactive flash books with Michif narration
- Community visits took place by Norman Fleury to record interviews in Michif by 22 Elders in Winnipeg, Binscarth, Brandon, Gerald, Russell, and Yorkton.
 - Recordings were made in Michif-Cree by Norman Fleury of each word and phrase in the *Michif Resource Guide* for input on the Nintendo DS Language Pal software created by Thornton Media Inc. Work will continue on the software to create quizzes and input new words and phrases.
 - Presentations of Michif have occurred at all GDI partnership events with the Batoche National Historic site as well as GDI's 30th Anniversary Culture Conference.
 - GDI has created the first English-to-Michif Dictionary available for Android enabled devices. Featuring over 11,500 translations and audio pronunciations by Michif-language expert Norman Fleury, the application also contains a search tool that allows users to look up the English word to find the Michif-Cree translations, favourite options, social media sharing, and recently viewed words. A list of approximately 500 common phrases and sentences are included in a variety of categories. It can be downloaded through the Google Play Store. This dictionary is also available online at www.metismuseum.ca/michif_tools.php.
 - GDI's second mobile app is *Michif Lessons*. Featuring over 1000 words and phrases to learn over 60 exercises, with audio pronunciations by Michif-language expert Norman Fleury. This app is available for both Android and Apple devices. *Michif Lessons* is also available online at www.metismuseum.ca/michif_tools.php.
 - *Taanishi Books (Michif/English Editions)* (2015): This leveled reader set contains 27 books under 9 different themes, all relating to Métis culture written in Michif and English. The Michif/English versions are accompanied by Michif Audio CDs. Levelling and lesson plans included in the books apply only to the English text. Michif translations and narrations by Norman Fleury. There are 9 different themes in each of the following: 8-page Stories (Levels A-C), 12-page Stories (Levels D-G), 16-page Stories (Levels F-I). Themes range from identity, clothing, music, food, and more!
 - GDI held a language banking gathering in 2017 as part of a SaskCulture Canada 150 project. We invited Michif speakers from Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta to spend two days in an outdoor setting to talk about various topics in Michif. The conversations were captured using video and audio recordings and will serve as the basis of Michif resource development and be a valuable archive in their own right.
 - GDI has created an English-to-Northern Michif Dictionary available soon for Android and Apple enabled devices. Featuring over 18,000 translations and audio pronunciations by Michif-language expert Vince Ahenakew, the application also contains a search tool that allows users to look up the English word to find the Northern Michif translations, favourite options, social media sharing, and recently viewed words. A list of approximately 850 common phrases and sentences are included in a variety of categories. It can be downloaded through the Google Play Store. This dictionary will be available online at www.metismuseum.ca/michif_tools.php.

