



Artwork by George Gingras

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Aboriginal peoples have a special place in Canada. They are called “**Aboriginal**” or “**Indigenous**” because they have been here much longer than anybody else. Canada’s Aboriginal peoples are honoured every June 21 on **National Indigenous Peoples Day**.

Canada’s Indigenous peoples received their **Indigenous rights** at different times. In 1867, the **federal government** only recognized that the **First Nations** had Aboriginal rights. **The British North America Act** made the federal government responsible for the First Nations or “**Indians**” as they were once called. This form of responsibility is known as **jurisdiction**. In 1939, the **Supreme Court of Canada** ruled that the **Inuit** were also an Aboriginal people. The Inuit then fell under federal jurisdiction. The Métis were not recognized as an Aboriginal people even though **Scrip** was used to take away their Aboriginal **title** to the land. Their status changed in 1982 when **Harry Daniels** successfully had the Métis included as an Aboriginal people in **The Constitution Act**.

Despite this recognition, the Métis still struggle to receive their full rights as an Indigenous people. The Métis’ right to hunt and fish as an Aboriginal people has been challenged in the courts since the 1990s. The most famous of these court cases is the very important Supreme Court ruling in 2003 known as the “**Powley Case**.” The Métis are starting to receive their Aboriginal rights to fish and hunt. The Métis in northern Saskatchewan were given the right to fish year-round in July 2005. The Métis still do not have the right to hunt animals out of season.

Other Resources:

Barkwell, Lawrence J., L. Dorion, and D. R. Préfontaine, eds. *Metis Legacy: A Metis Historiography and Annotated Bibliography*. Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2001.

Campbell, Maria. *Riel’s People: How the Métis Lived*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1992.

Gabriel Dumont Institute. *New Breed Magazine*. (Available online at www.metismuseum.ca).

The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture (www.metismuseum.ca).

