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Timeline of Métis History

The Métis are a distinct Indigenous nation with their own history, culture, languages, and territories with deep historical roots in the three Prairie Provinces, and parts of northwest Ontario, northeast British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, and northern Montana and North Dakota. The Métis Nation is made up of the descendants of Indigenous women (mainly Cree and Ojibway) and Euro-settler men (mainly French-Canadian, Scots, and Orcadian). Distinct Métis settlements emerged from the 1750s in the Great Lakes region and in the 1780s in what is now Western Canada as an outgrowth of the fur trade.

Year	Event
1600s	1600s: The fur trade begins in what is now Atlantic and Central Canada with the emergence of European settlement.
1670	1670: The Hudson's Bay Company is established with a royal charter. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Métis would become invaluable employees due to their skills as boatmen, bison hunters, labourers, traders, and interpreters.
1700s	1750s: Mixed heritage children in the Great Lakes region, including some in what is now Ontario begin to identify as Métis and begin to intermarry, forming communities. They no longer saw themselves as extensions of their maternal (First Nations) or paternal (Euro-Settler) relations. They are the children of Indigenous women and male employees and former employees without contract (freeman) of fur trade companies.
1759	1759: The Battle of the Plains of Abraham establishes British control over Canada and other parts of New France, ending France's claim to its territory. With the revival of the Montréal-based fur trade in the 1770s, a distinction is made between the Métis, descended from Canadien voyageur fathers, and the "Country Born" (English-Métis) descended from English or Scottish fathers.
1811	1811: The Hudson's Bay Company grants Thomas Douglas (Lord Selkirk), a Scottish peer, a land grant of 116,000 acres centred on the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers in the Red River Valley to bring in Scottish settlers. The Métis who already live in the area refuse to accept Lord Selkirk's control because they fear losing both their lands and their ability to both trade and provide pemmican for the fur trade.

1812	1812-1814: The War of 1812, primarily fought in the Great Lakes region, sets in place what becomes the Canada-United States border. The potential disruption to their culture and economic wellbeing by an American takeover and their close relationship with First Nations, who generally favoured the British, leads most Métis in the region (and some from what is now Western Canada) to fight on the British/Canadian side.
1816	June 19, 1816: The Métis and their North West Company (NWC) allies, led by Cuthbert Grant, defeat Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) officials and Selkirk Settlers at the Battle of la Grenouillère (or Seven Oaks). The battle lasts only 15 minutes and involves fewer than 80 men. Many of the "Selkirk Settlers" leave the colony for good, but others would come back and settle permanently. The HBC tries to curb the Métis's hunting and trading practices, including with the rival NWC (to which the Métis had close family and trading ties). The Métis fly the "Red Infinity" (circle of eight) flag, which was first flown in 1815. It is the oldest patriotic flag created in Canada. The "Métis bard," Pierre Falcon composes "The Battle of Flag Plain" or "la gournouillère" / "la grenouillère"—the first Métis national anthem and the oldest patriotic song created in Canada.
1821	<p>1821: The amalgamation of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and the North West Company results in an influx of Métis and Country Born families to the Red River Settlement.</p> <p>1820s-'50s: Métis self-identity further crystallizes as hundreds of Red River Métis and Scots/Orkney Half-Breeds begin working as free traders, fur trade boatmen, bison hunters, and farmers. During this time, the Métis call themselves "gens de libre," "Otipemisiwak" or the "Free People" because of their desire to be free. They are also known as "Apeetogosan," "Wissakodewinimi," "chicot," and "bois-brûlés" because of their mixed heritage. The two groups begin to intermarry and begin to see that they have common interests against the HBC's trading monopoly and governance.</p> <p>1849: A HBC magistrate releases Métis trader Guillaume Sayer, after convicting him of trafficking in furs, because of the presence of many armed Métis horsemen outside of the courthouse.</p> <p>1851: The Métis win a decisive two-day battle against the Dakota at Grand Coteau, just outside of present-day Bismarck, North Dakota, on July 13 and 14. The Métis and the Dakota soon conclude a peace treaty, ensuring that the two Indigenous nations shared bison stocks.</p>
1857	1857: The English-Métis lawyer Alexander Isbister, while residing in London, lobbies the Imperial Parliament to recognize the Métis' and First Nations' Indigenous rights. After ten years of lobbying, Isbister presents his case before the British Parliamentary Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company which decides that following the precedent of

	<i>The Royal Proclamation (1763)</i> , once Rupert's Land becomes part of a larger British North-American union, the region's Indigenous residents should have a formal Treaty process with the Crown before Euro-Canadian/European settlement could occur.
1867	July 1, 1867: <i>The British North America Act</i> is passed, creating the Dominion of Canada.
1869	1869: The Red River Settlement, one of the largest settlements on the Plains, consists of 9,800 French and English Métis and 1,600 Euro-Settlers.
1869	1869: The Dominion of Canada purchases Rupert's Land (the expansive land area that makes up the drainage basin of Hudson Bay) from the Hudson's Bay Company. Métis and First Nations living in the territory are not consulted. The French and English Métis at the Red River Settlement establish the National Committee, effectively forming a provisional government. This action forces Canada to negotiate with the Métis to bring the region into Confederation as a province, which would become the "postage-stamp"-sized Province of Manitoba in 1870. This event is known as the Red River Resistance.
March 4, 1870	March 4, 1870: Thomas Scott—a violent Orangeman from Ontario and a surveyor employed by the federal government—is court-martialed by a Métis firing squad upon Louis Riel's approval. This action, the most-noted event of the Red River Resistance, would greatly contribute to Louis Riel's own execution in 1885.
?????, 1870	February 8, 1872: The Ontario government places a \$5,000 bounty on Louis Riel, who was then living in exile in the United States.
July 15, 1870	July 15, 1870: <i>The Manitoba Act</i> creates the province of Manitoba, Canada's fifth province. The Métis, led by Louis Riel, ensure that the new province would protect French-language rights, making the new province bilingual. The act also contains a section (31) in which the "children of the Half-Breed heads of families" are to receive 1.4 million acres of land to be distributed when they reach the age of 21. Upon reaching the age of majority, Scrip certificates are issued to Métis children, indicating that they have to settle in the nearby North-West Territories (which now includes Alberta and Saskatchewan). Provisions to establish a consolidated Métis land base and to affirm Métis Indigenous hunting/harvesting rights are not put in place.
1870-1885	August 1870-March 1873: The "Reign of Terror" is conducted against the Métis by the Red River Expeditionary Force (RREF) under the command of Garnet Wolseley. The RREF was sent west by the federal government to "pacify" the new province. Métis men are murdered and Métis women and girls are raped by the Canadian soldiers. In addition, many settlers begin to arrive from Ontario and are openly hostile to the Métis. Louis Riel, fearing for his life, flees to the United States. The appalling

	<p>social climate in the new province forces many Métis to disperse to the South Branch Métis settlements around Batoche throughout the 1870s. October 1873, February 1874, and September 1874: Louis Riel is elected three times to represent a Manitoba riding: once in a general election and twice in two by-elections. He never takes his seat, again fearing for his life.</p> <p>April 24, 1875: An amnesty is granted to all the participants of the Red River Resistance. However, Louis Riel and Ambroise Lépine are barred from entering Canada for a further five years.</p>
1872	<p>1872: The Saskatchewan valley Métis, under Gabriel Dumont's leadership, petition for an inalienable Métis colony of 1,800,000 acres. This is one of dozens of petitions sent by the Métis, during the 1870s and '80s, in what is now Alberta and Saskatchewan regarding their land tenure.</p>
1875	<p>February 1875: The Canadian government granted an amnesty to all Métis (except Louis Riel) who participated in the 1869-70 Red River Resistance.</p> <p>April 1875: <i>The North-West Territories Act</i> becomes law. There are no provisions for the Métis in this act, impacting Métis living in what are now Alberta, the Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan and northern Manitoba.</p> <p>August 1875: The North-West Mounted Police force the Batoche-area Métis to abandon their form of local self-government, "le conseil de Saint-Laurent" or the "Council of St. Laurent." With Gabriel Dumont as its president, the council's last edict tries to enforce <i>The Law of the Prairie's</i> conservation measures.</p> <p>October 3, 1875: The Métis at Rainy Lake (present-day Fort Frances) successfully negotiate a "Halfbreed" adhesion to Treaty 3, which is originally signed by "Indians" in the Northwest Angle in 1873. This is the only time Métis are dealt with as a collective in one of the historic treaties. After signing, Canada fails to fulfill the adhesion terms by attempting to make Métis in the region identify as "Indians."</p>
1875	<p>June 1875: The federal government's Half-Breed Scrip Commissions begins to issue land and money scrip certificates to honour the land provisioning promises of <i>The Manitoba Act</i> (s. 31). Instead of creating a large contiguous land base, the scrip certificates are issued individually in many different locales. The system is fraudulent and most Métis do not end living on their allotted scrip land.</p>
1879	<p>February 1, 1878: The Métis at St. Laurent (Batoche) prepared a list of grievances. In a letter to the Lieutenant-Governor David Laird, Gabriel Dumont asked for local schools to be subsidized by the territorial government, assistance for Métis farmers, and the appointment of a French-speaking magistrate, a Métis member of the territorial governing</p>

	<p>council, and a land grant to extinguish the Métis' Indigenous title to the land.</p> <p>May 15, 1879: Parliament amends <i>The Dominion Lands Act</i> to allow for the granting of land to the Métis in the then North-West Territories as well as to parents who were not granted land in the original land grant allotted in <i>The Manitoba Act</i>. However, a commission to settle the Métis land grievances in the Northwest is only established on January 28, 1885 and only begins to meet as the Battle of Duck Lake breaks out on March 26, 1885, almost sixteen years later.</p>
1881 - 1885	1881-1885: The Canadian government builds the Canadian Pacific Railway from Ontario to British Columbia, leading to an influx of new settlers to western Canada and dramatically changing the economy and way of life of the Métis.
1884	1884: Without a secured land base or title to their individual lands, Prairie Métis experience ever-increasing encroachment on their lands by new settlers.
May 6, 1884	May 6, 1884: The French and English Métis of the Northwest pass a resolution to obtain Louis Riel's assistance to negotiate their outstanding land tenure grievances with the federal government.
June 4-5, 1884	June 4, 1884: James Isbister, Gabriel Dumont, Moïse Ouellette, and Michel Dumas arrive at St. Peter's Mission in Montana where they ask Louis Riel to return to Canada to help them.
December 16, 1884	December 4, 1884: Louis Riel and Henry Jackson (secretary to Riel) draft a petition listing the grievances of the Northwest's inhabitants. The government responds by appointing a committee to investigate Métis claims and to make a list of those who did not take Scrip in Manitoba.
March 8, 1885	March 8, 1885: Louis Riel puts forth a motion for the formation of a Provisional Government and the drafting of a <i>Bill of Rights</i> .
March 19, 1885	March 19, 1885: Louis Riel is informed that the Métis petitions would be met with bullets. Thus, the Métis immediately form a Provisional Government. Pierre Parenteau was chosen as president, Charles Nolin was commissioner, Gabriel Dumont was general, French-Canadian Philippe Garnot was secretary, and twelve other Métis men were elected as members of the council. The non-Indigenous settlers and English Métis withdraw their support of the Provisional Government. The Provisional Government establishes its headquarters at the Batoche Church.
March 26 – May 12, 1885	March 26, 1885: The first battle of the 1885 Resistance occurs at Duck Lake. The Métis, under the leadership of Gabriel Dumont, defeat a party of North-West Mounted Police officers and settler volunteers.

	<p>April 24, 1885: Métis forces, under Gabriel Dumont, clash with General Middleton's army at Toround's Coulee (Fish Creek). The Battle of Tourond's Coulee is a Métis victory.</p> <p>May 9-12, 1885: The Métis fight the Canadian Army at Batoche. On May 12, the Métis, tired and out of ammunition, valiantly succumb to a hasty charge by the Canadian Army. Many Métis homes are pillaged and burned, and many Métis women and children hide in caves along the riverbank to avoid capture. Gabriel Dumont escapes to the United States. Louis Riel surrenders three days after the battle.</p>
March 26, 1885	<p>The 1885 Resistance begins with the Battle of Duck Lake. Gabriel Dumont led the Metis. Superintendent Leif Crozier of the North-West Mounted Police led the government troops. Only Crozier's account indicates that the Métis fired the battle's first shots.</p>
July 20, 1885	<p>July 20, 1885: Louis Riel's trial for treason begins. During the trial, Riel outlines the undemocratic treatment of the Métis, defends his sanity, and explains his vision for the country.</p>
August 1, 1885	<p>August 1, 1885: Louis Riel is found guilty of high treason, although the jury recommends mercy. The judge ignores the jury's recommendation of clemency and sentences Riel to death.</p>
November 16, 1885	<p>November 16, 1885: Louis Riel is executed. Riel's trial and execution causes great conflict within the new country. Ontarians demand his execution and French Canadians in Québec argue for clemency. For French Canadians, Riel's execution was an attack on the French fact in Canada. For English Canadians in Ontario and elsewhere, Riel's execution was a message that Western Canada would be run by, and for, Anglo-Protestants.</p>
1905	<p>1885-1960: The Road Allowance Period of Métis history begins. The Métis are socially, economically, and politically marginalized by the dominant society within the Prairie West, with many squatting in makeshift homes along road allowances (the land on either side of rural roads). Many Métis are dispersed to Montana, North Dakota, and the Peace River district of what is now Alberta following the 1885 Resistance.</p> <p>July 17, 1887: The Union Nationale Métisse Saint-Joseph is founded in St. Boniface, Manitoba.</p> <p>1896: St. Paul des Métis (Alberta) is founded as a Métis agriculture colony. However, by 1909 the community is dissolved and the land is given to French Canadians.</p>
1930s	<p>1930: <i>The Natural Resources Transfer Agreement</i> returns control of public lands and natural resources to the three Prairie Provinces. The Métis are impacted by paragraph 12. It argues that the Indians have the right to harvest food on unused Crown land. The federal government absolves itself of any further responsibility for the Métis.</p>

	<p>1935: The <i>Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act</i> becomes legislation. The act creates common community pastures, which eventually lead to the forced removal of many Métis living along unused Crown land, the most notorious example is Ste. Madeleine, Manitoba.</p>
1938	<p>1938: L'Association des Métis de l'Alberta et des Territoires du Nord-ouest lobbies Alberta's government to set aside a land base for the Métis. Alberta's government passes <i>The Métis Betterment Act</i>, which identifies the lands for Métis settlement. This land base will ultimately become known as the Alberta Métis Settlements—the only land base in Canada set aside for the Métis.</p>
1940 - 1960	<p>1940-1960: Twelve Métis settlements are originally set aside in Alberta, but four of these are rescinded in 1940s and 1950s when they proved unsuitable for farming, hunting, and fishing. These lands return to the Alberta government. Today, there are eight Métis settlements in Alberta comprising 1.28 million acres. Compared to Canada's land mass of 2467 million acres, this is 0.05 percent, or 1/20th of one percent.</p> <p>1945: The Saskatchewan government buys the Oblate-run Métis farm in Leuret and later establishes other Métis Farms in Baljennie, Crescent Lake, Crooked Lake, Duck Lake, Glen Mary, Green Lake, Lestock, and Willow Bunch in order to "rehabilitate" southern Métis. Many Métis are forced on to the farms against their will, and some witness government authorities burn down their homes when they board trains to go to the Métis Farms. The farms prove to be paternalistic and the Métis preferring wage labour positions in cities, abandon the farms in the mid-1950s.</p> <p>1973: Maria Campbell's <i>Halfbreed</i> is published. Campbell's book brings public attention to the Métis' marginalization by the dominant society.</p>
1981	<p>April 15, 1981: The Manitoba Métis Federation and the Native Council of Canada file a claim against the federal government and the Manitoba government for breach of fiduciary duty and for failing to fulfill land-related promises to the Métis following events of 1869/70. Despite its recognition of Métis land rights in the original province of Manitoba and then, by <i>The Dominion Lands Act</i>, in the rest of the Prairies, northeastern British Columbia, and the Northwest Territories, the federal government maintains that Métis land rights have been extinguished by law and that any future interventions on their behalf have to come from the provinces.</p>
1982	<p>1982: The Métis are recognized as one of Canada's three Aboriginal peoples in s 35.2 of <i>The Constitution Act, 1982</i>. Harry Daniels was most responsible for putting the Métis in the Constitution.</p>
1983	<p>1983: The Métis National Council was founded by the Alberta Métis Society, the Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan, and the Manitoba Métis Federation. The Métis Nation of</p>

	Ontario and the Métis Nation of British Columbia would join the council in the 1990s.
1990	November 1, 1990: The Federation of Métis Settlements and the Province of Alberta sign the Alberta-Métis Settlements Accord. It involves agreements to establish the Métis Settlements as a permanent land base with the Métis people managing their own government and affairs.
September 19, 2003	September 19, 2003: In <i>R. v. Powley</i> , the Supreme Court of Canada declares that the Métis appellants, Steve and Rod Powley, have an Indigenous right to hunt through s. 32 of the Constitution. Through ancestry and community "tests" this right can apply to any Métis living in the Métis Homeland if the Métis appellant can demonstrate a connection to a historic Métis community. The case will impact Métis case law across Canada. The case has its origins in 1993 when Steve and Roddy Powley killed a bull moose just outside Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, and tagged their catch with a Métis card and a note that read "harvesting my meat for winter." One week later, the Powleys were charged by conservation officers for hunting moose without a license and unlawful possession of moose contrary to Ontario's <i>Game and Fish Act</i> .
January, 2013	January 2013: In <i>Daniels et al. v. Canada</i> , the Federal Court of Canada rule that Métis and Non-Status Indians are "Indians" for the purposes of s. 91(24) of the Constitution, and are thus under federal jurisdiction. March 8, 2013: The Supreme Court of Canada rule in <i>Manitoba Métis Federation v. Canada</i> that the Crown failed to live up to the obligations in implementing the land grant provisions of <i>The Manitoba Act</i> . The case began in 1981.
April, 2016	April 14, 2016: The Supreme Court of Canada upholds the earlier federal court ruling that established that the Métis are "Indians" for the purposes of 91 (24) and are therefore a federal responsibility. The court rule that Non-Status Indians are no longer considered Indians for the purposes of 91 (24). April 13, 2017: Canada-Métis Nation Accord, signed by the Métis National Council and the Government of Canada, comes into effect. The accord outlines how the two levels of government will work together to ensure that the federal crown deals honourably with the concerns of the Métis Nation.