

## **Métis Fact Sheet**

### **Who are the Métis?**

Prior to Canada's formation as a nation, a new Indigenous people emerged as the mixed-race descendants of First Nation and European peoples. While the initial children of the unions were individuals who were simply mixed race, subsequent unions between these mixed-race children resulted in the genesis of a new Indigenous people.

The Métis emerged with a common identity, language (Michif), culture and way of life along the waterways and lakes of what is now known as Ontario. It is the unique emergence and pre-existence that makes the Métis an Indigenous people – the Métis Nation.

### **What is the Métis story?**

The story of the Métis people is one of resistance against the constant encroachment of Métis lands by Canada as it pushed to 'settle' the country. This push was met with Métis and First Nations resistance.

The realities for Métis people today are very much shaped by the history of colonization and the legacy of Canada's colonialist policy -- residential and day schools; government child welfare policy; health policy; access to education; justice; poverty; and racism. In spite of all of these challenges, Métis people are still here today. In fact, there is a growing sense of pride among Métis people, especially Métis youth.

### **What is Métis culture?**

Family connections and relationships are at the heart of Métis communities, and it is within communities that Métis culture is nurtured and sustained. Métis culture includes music, dance, language, art, food, trapping, fishing, hunting, gathering, medicines, and spirituality. Métis people celebrate culture through community gatherings and in their everyday life through the practice of traditional ways of living on the lands and waters.

### **What is Métis Community?**

Métis communities arose in various regions around the Great Lakes and along the waterways associated with the fur trade network. These communities were interconnected by the highly mobile lifestyle of the Métis, the fur trade, seasonal rounds, extensive kinship connections and a shared collective history and identity. Regional in nature and indivisible from each other, these communities persisted through time to become the vibrant, contemporary communities they are today.



### **Is Toronto a Métis Community?**

Toronto today is an inclusive home to many vibrant Métis people and an active modern-day Métis community. Métis individuals and families have called Toronto home for centuries, however, there is no research to date that indicates a historic Métis community has ever been present in Toronto.

The City of Toronto has a deep history with the Métis, however it was not always a proud history. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, historic newspaper articles document the attitudes and the dominant voices of the time who consistently rallied against the 'half-breeds' in the west as Canada expanded. It was in Toronto that a bounty was placed on Louis Riel's head and that calls for Riel's execution were the loudest.

### **Who is the Métis Nation of Ontario?**

The Métis Nation of Ontario was founded by Métis people and Métis communities coming together throughout Ontario to create a Métis specific governance structure to advance Métis rights and claims in Ontario. The Métis Nation of Ontario is authorized, through democratic governance structures at the local, regional and provincial levels, to represent the collectively-held rights, interests and claims of modern-day Métis communities.

For more information, visit [www.MetisNation.org](http://www.MetisNation.org)

### **Who is the Toronto and York Region Métis Council?**

The Toronto and York Region Métis Council is an Indigenous government within the City of Toronto. Council members are volunteers who are democratically elected to Council to represent the citizens of the Métis Nation of Ontario in the area.

The Council aspires to provide cultural opportunities, education and build healthy and reciprocal relationships in the spirit of reconciliation.

For more information, visit [www.TorontoYorkMetis.com](http://www.TorontoYorkMetis.com)

### **The Toronto and York Region Métis Council Sash**

The Toronto and York Region Métis Council worked with the Métis community to create a modern Métis sash unique to the region.

The colours of the sash are all symbolic and the three blue stripes that run through the sash represent the rivers that connect Toronto and York Region -- the Humber, Don and Rouge.