

The Puzzle of the Morrisette-Arcand Clan:
A History Of
Metis Historic and Intergenerational Trauma

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

This thesis explores how members of the Morrissette-Arcand clan, a Metis road allowance family from Saskatchewan, endured intergenerational trauma since being displaced from Red River in the 1870s. It frames Metis history using Maria Campbell's metaphor of a kinship puzzle, one that was intact before colonization and scattered after 1869. Accordingly, it shows how the Metis suffered repeated attacks on their free trade economy, sovereignty, and mobility following the transference of Rupertsland to Canada. These pillars, contends this thesis, formed the basis of nineteenth-century Metis society from its inception during the rise of Metis peoplehood (1780–1821), into a period of increased prosperity of Metis life (1821–1869), and ending with the dispossession period (1869–1980). Oral history interviews, newspaper articles, census material, scrip records, Hudson's Bay Company and Northwest Company fur trade journals as well as genealogical research, secondary monographs, journal articles, and online web resources are used to tell the two-hundred-year history of the Morrissette-Arcand clan. Based on this research, I conclude that the loss of Red River as a homeland, the destruction of the bison, the 1885 Northwest Resistance, and the Metis's subsequent displacement onto road allowances in the twentieth century was traumatic for the Morrissette-Arcand clan.

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The process of writing my master's thesis has been a journey of self-discovery, as I am sure all master's theses are. So to all those who were there along the way, I thank you. You are the reason I had the courage to continue. Specifically, however, there were certain kind souls and institutions that helped make it all possible. To start, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Susan Roy, who, upon meeting me in a downtown Toronto coffee shop in February 2015, agreed to take me on as a master's student at the University of Waterloo. Since then, she has offered me numerous new perspectives on history I had not considered and which I greatly value and employ now. She taught me the importance of the arts—singing, dancing, painting, poetry, and just letting go and writing freely through these creative avenues. Her instruction has irreversibly changed the way I approach history.

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My mom, Blanche Morrisette, was also with me as I travelled and researched all over Saskatchewan and rediscovered the part of my soul I thought I had lost. Mom, I love you. Thank you for reaching out to me that day in rehab in 2008. I plan to come out soon and have some Indian tacos at my soonest chance. And just to be clear, I was the one in rehab, not my mom. I would also like to extend a huge thank you to my cousin Maria Campbell, who approached me at that Metis conference in 2013 after she heard I was a Morrisette from Park Valley. Maria, you took me under your wing and have given me vast knowledge—historical and traditional—about our people and family. I would never have had the strength to investigate Metis trauma without you. I'll be out soon to plant your garden. Get your list of to-dos ready, perhaps this year I can fix the roof when I come out.

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Morrisette-Arcand Clan

Genealogical Map

Please refer to this navigation chart throughout the thesis

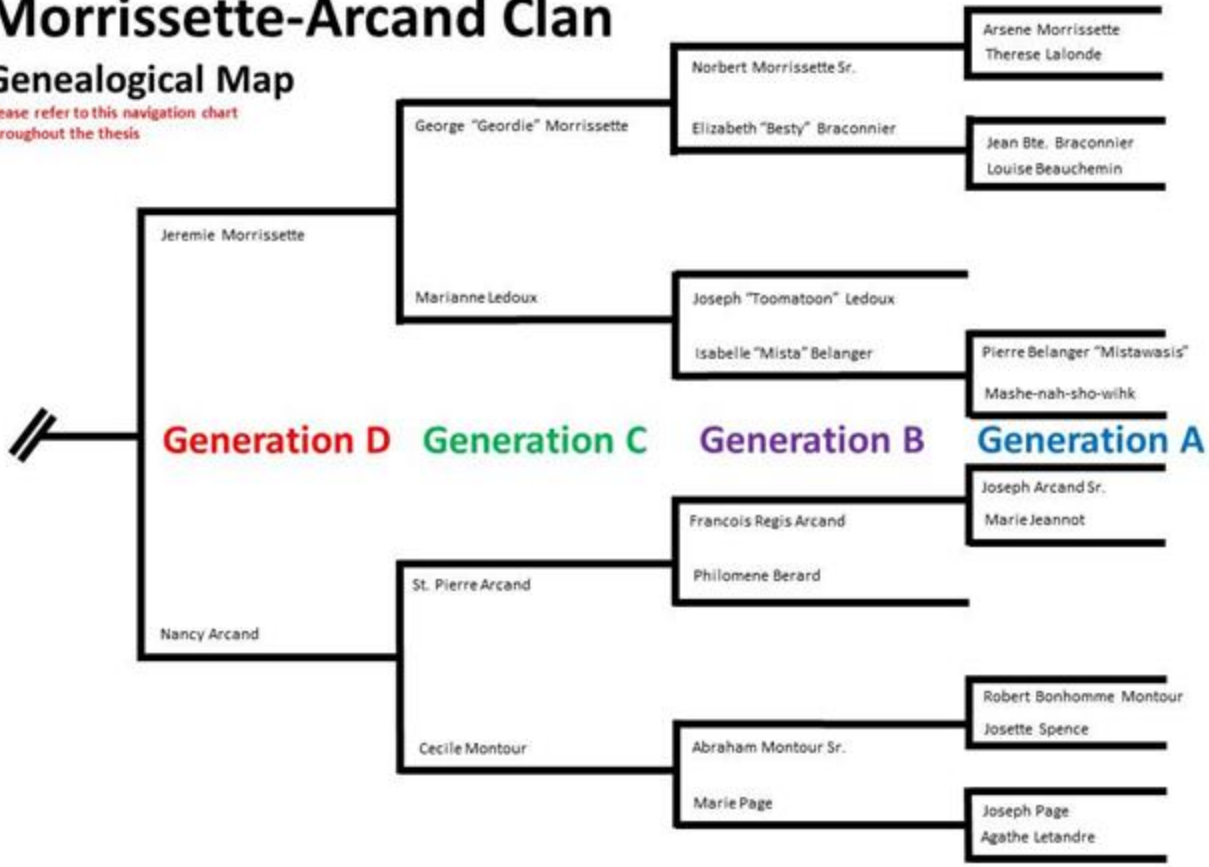


Figure 1: Genealogical Map

What is the Puzzle?

Understanding the Intergenerational Trauma of the Morrisette-Arcand Clan, a Road Allowance Metis family from Northern Saskatchewan

The following transcript is from an interview I conducted with my cousin Metis author and cultural knowledge keeper Maria Campbell on June 25, 2015.

Maria Campbell: I see the trauma manifested in us Metis. In my own work I have really observed that and found that to be true. And even in my own life, you never really lose it and in spite of the personal work I have done on myself and all the healing, I still see how my children have inherited some of that. So I really understand the trauma and intergenerational stuff. And I see it with people I work with.

When I think about it, looking at our family dispossessed and displaced in Manitoba, and then coming here [SK] and having that happen again in 1885 and then it happening again with the loss of their lands afterwards. They went to those places because that's where their families were, that was the traditional homeland of our grandmothers. When I say homeland, it was the winter hunting territories. That was where they went and settled and they thought they'd be okay after Batoche.

And they didn't leave Batoche in a good way. They fled that, always believing that if the police came they'd be going to prison or even hanged. Some of them believed they'd be hanged. And coming all through the early 1900s, no money, no work, just nothing, just surviving barely, hanging on by their fingernails and being so hated. We were so despised, but even worse than that, we were so invisible. That was the most traumatizing. And then the last big trauma I think was when they lost their lands, their homesteads, first with scrip, and then later they lost their homesteads, and then in the end they lost their children.

Jesse Thistle: You talked earlier about the analogy of the puzzle as it relates to *wahkootawin*, about us Metis—can you talk about that a little bit?

Maria Campbell: Yeah. I had an old man who was my mentor because I follow traditional ways, and he was my teacher, and he was also a spiritual leader. Anyways, he liked the way I'd make my kids sit down and do a puzzle, to take five, to calm them down if they're arguing or getting too crazy. And I did that because when I was a young girl, my granny used to make us go sit in front of an anthill and tell us to watch it, and she told us she'd be back in a little while and that she'd ask us what we saw the ants doing, because she had to know. Well, I wanted to go play with the kids but I had to do this first because I never dared say no to my granny. So what the activity would do is it would help us focus, it'd calm us down and we'd focus and pretty soon we'd be paying attention, and she was mentally grounding us without us knowing. And then she'd come back and she'd say, "Well, what happened? What were they doing?" Well, I don't know if you've ever watched ants, but they're the most industrious things in the world. If they can't carry something up to the top of the anthill, then three or four will come, and if they can't

carry it together, then a whole bunch more would come, and they'll figure out ways to carry it. So by observing them, you're learning about how ants cooperate, and how they do things together, and how something that seems impossible can be done if you all do it together. I mean, there were all kinds of things that I learned from that anthill, so she'd come and ask me. And I'd tell her what I saw, and she'd say, "Isn't that interesting? Did they get the leaf up the hill?" "Yes they did," I said. "How many did it take?" "Might've been ten ants." So I would tell her all this stuff in great detail and then she'd say, "Well, they're trying to teach you that if you can't do it yourself, then you get help and that's what relatives are for, that's what you got cousins for." That's what *wahkootawin* is. And of course that was fine, and then I'd go back to playing, but in the meantime I wasn't fighting with my siblings or being crazy. I was calmed down. I was grounded. And I'd had this teaching about how...how we Metis need each other. And I didn't know this was happening. You know, I can stand back now and see what she was doing.

So I told the old man all this and I said that's why I make my kids work on the puzzle. I mean, I don't give the teachings like I got from my granny but at least it makes them focus and all of us work on the puzzle, so in the end we've made this beautiful picture working together like the ants. It's the closest thing I can get to cultural teachings in the city. But he thought it was so wonderful. So anyway, pretty soon all my grandkids would be sitting together, working together on that puzzle. And so one day he was talking to me about *wahkootawin*, about our foundational philosophy, the foundation of our culture and our governance structure, and I was having a hard time wrapping my head around all this, and he said it's like this puzzle, this thing that you do with your kids. He said, "If I picked this up," and he picked it up—because we had it all finished and were ready to hang it on the wall—and he picked it up and he lifted it up, a way up, and then he tossed it in the air and it flew into one million pieces. I don't remember how many pieces were in that puzzle but it looked like one million, and pieces flew all over there, bouncing all over the place and bouncing off the wall and the ceiling. EVERYWHERE! My kids were all shocked. And he said, "That's what happened to us Metis, to our history, to our kin"—talk about understanding it. He said it was like somebody came and they just threw us all up in the air and all these pieces flew all over, and he said we had nothing left: they took our land, our livelihoods, put our kids in foster homes, residential schools, and everyone was all over. But he said people like you, you might have two or three pieces, and your friend over there might have one and that one over there has got six, and he said you come together and you start to rebuild the puzzle and pretty soon you have it all done and it'll be all there. And he said that's what happened with *wahkootawin*—it all broke up—but, he said, don't give up because we can put it all back together, and he said, "You know something? We'll be the ones that have a strong community and strong culture because we keep rebuilding. The people who did this to us just keep going further and further away from their stuff," and he said that they don't have anything, one day they're going to see what we've got.

Jesse Thistle: So in terms of survival strategy for people in my generation who are dealing with the trauma, really trying to figure ourselves out, that gives me an offer of hope to look for family, both historically and today, to figure out what happened to our kin.

Maria Campbell: Yes. Exactly. I all of a sudden understood what he was telling me. My job was to go out, to just keep doing the work because as long as I did the work I was helping, and he said, "You, Maria, always bring your people with you." He said, "You don't leave your people

behind.” And I didn’t know what that meant. And I never really thought about it until I heard Andrea Minard say what I told you tonight. You know, she was talking about me, and that’s what really struck me—after someone asked her about me, she said: “She brings her people with her.”

You know, everything that I do is about community—I don’t work alone. People laugh at me because I always got a bunch of people around the house, but the people who’ve lost family or they’re trying to find something, and they know I have a fairly big piece of the puzzle. I speak the language. And they also come with something I don’t have. You came to me with something you had—a whole bunch of stuff I didn’t have. I had done one batch of Metis history, but I hadn’t done any of the Morrissette-Arcand stuff. There was just so much to do I couldn’t do it all. And then all of a sudden there’s people coming, and you showed me what you had on our family. Pretty soon we had a corner piece, and now we’ve got a big piece, and now we’ve got all the family involved, and we’ll bring all the family together and have a reunion and that’s going to put even more puzzle pieces in. And then it changes and people start to feel good about who they are, and they start to remember that they are responsible for each other: I’m responsible for you and I’m responsible for Paul [Morrissette], and were all responsible for each other. Maybe we don’t go out hunting buffalos anymore and we don’t share the meat anymore, but there is modern ways that we do that now. And how we do that is by sharing stories with each other or photographs or history or working and sharing. And you really see how people change and what happens to them because it’s so empowering—it’s empowering—and it’s all about reciprocity, because it means you give me something and I give you something. We’re always exchanging, we are figuring it all out. That’s how we fight the trauma.¹



Figure 2: My cousin Maria and I after planting her garden in June 2013.

¹ Maria Campbell, interview by the author, Saskatoon, June 25, 2015.

Introduction

The Importance of a Genealogical Metis History and the Road Map/Cart Trail

As the opening interview with Maria Campbell illustrates, the Morrissette-Arcand clan, a Metis road allowance family from Saskatchewan, have suffered from intergenerational trauma since being displaced from Red River, Manitoba, in 1869. Reconstructing and understanding Campbell's analogy of the kinship "puzzle," and then showing its destruction and its traumatic effects afterwards are the thrust of this thesis. Campbell herself is an extended family member of the Morrissette-Arcand clan, as her grandmother Philomene was a Morrissette. When I refer to the Morrissette-Arcand clan throughout this work, I am not referring to all contemporary living Metis members of all branches of the Morrissette or Arcand Metis family that hail from Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba, or Montana—that would represent thousands upon thousands of people. Rather, the Morrissette-Arcand clan refers specifically to the direct ancestors and descendants of Jeremie Morrissette (b. 1906, d. 1979) and his wife, Nancy Arcand (b. 1910, d. 1987), and their extended families, who, by the 1910s, lived along the road allowances of northern Saskatchewan near Prince Albert (see chart, generation D).

Maria Campbell is as an example of such Morrissette-Arcand kinship: Jeremie Morrissette's father, George Morrissette (b. 1869, d. 1951), is Maria's great uncle through her maternal ancestral line—Philomene Morrissette was George's niece. Thus, Maria is included in the extended Morrissette family tree—she is Jeremie's first cousin once removed. As a side note, Maria, while growing up in Park Valley, Saskatchewan, lived beside Jeremie, and Nancy and Maria's father, Dan Campbell, was Jeremie's best friend. Maria and her siblings referred to Jeremie as "uncle." Jeremie and Nancy are the parents of my mother, Blanche Morrissette; they are my Mushoom and Kokum—grandparents. This makes Maria and I first cousins three times

removed. It is important to recognize Maria's and my kin relationship—our *wahkootawin* bond—because it makes me accountable to my family and people in telling our history. As well, it gives my thesis a measure of strength, as Maria is well known in academic and community circles.



Figure 3: Jeremie Morrisette and Nancy Arcand on the road allowance in the 1970s. Family photograph courtesy of Yvonne Richer-Morrisette.

The genealogical history of the Morrisette-Arcand clan is an epic two-hundred-year odyssey that is rooted in the very heart of Metis nationhood, the time of prosperity, the Red River dispossessions, the Northwest Resistances, and twentieth-century road allowance life. This two-part thesis is centred on the genealogical and contextual history of one family: the Morrisette-Arcand clan from Park Valley and, later, Dumbolt road allowances in Saskatchewan.

Genealogy is a standard methodology for recounting history and storytelling in Metis tradition and cultures. It is used by Metis Elders, knowledge keepers, and academics to “root” one’s narrative and give it authority, as well as to connect the history described, and the person telling it, to the core nineteenth-century historic Metis Nation.¹ An example of genealogy-based Metis history is Metis historian Brenda Macdougall’s *One of the Family: Metis Culture in Nineteenth-Century Northwestern Saskatchewan*. Macdougall constructs complex yet broad genealogies of four generations of the historic Metis community of Île-à-la-Crosse, Saskatchewan, from the late 1790s to 1910. She centres her argument on the Metis-Cree way of life and philosophy called *wahkootawin* (Cree-Michif for “helping each other in a good way,” or “kinship”), which, she shows, knit Metis communities in northern Saskatchewan in a vast web of kinship relationships that stretched across the prairies.² Metis historian Heather Devine’s *The People Who Own Themselves: Aboriginal Ethnogenesis in a Canadian Family, 1600–1900* likewise employs genealogy to root its narrative and history and to imbue Metis communities and histories with authority. It tracks in great detail the Desjarlais family, from New France in the 1660s to the late 1900s when they lived in Saskatchewan, all while placing genealogy at the centre of a metanarrative of Red River Metis history. Devine’s work acts as a chronological road

¹ “The Metis Nation,” *Metis National Council Website*, (Winnipeg, 2016) Web. (Date Accessed: August 9, 2016). <http://www.metisnation.ca/index.php/who-are-the-metis>.

² Brenda Macdougall, *One of the Family: Metis culture in nineteenth-century Northwestern Saskatchewan* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 18 and 1-22.

map of Metis history, and she discusses some ancestral connections to the Morrissette-Arcand clan—the Belanger family, particularly.³

The work of economic historian Diane Payment also uses genealogy intertwined with economic and social history in her groundbreaking book, *The Free People—Otipemisiwak*. Payment concentrates on the family history of Batoche Metis to show that, despite the late nineteenth-century Saskatchewan hardships, the economy of the Metis of Batoche endured until the 1930s, eventually integrating with the surrounding settler economy.⁴ Historian Jennifer S. H. Brown’s 1980 book, *Strangers in Blood*, on the other hand, uses genealogy to examine the lives of Hudson’s Bay Company and Northwest Company traders, their Indigenous wives, and their Metis and mixed-blood children to show that “blood” was not the only kinship tie that linked eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fur trade families together over vast distances. Brown’s work constructed in finite detail dozens of Metis family trees to show how they were linked through bonds of marriage, kin, trade, law, and social structures, among other kinds of connections.⁵ Her work can best be described as an integrated socio-economic genealogy-based history of the fur trade. Another groundbreaking example of genealogy-based Metis history is historian Sylvia Van Kirk’s 1980 monograph, *Many Tender Ties*. Van Kirk constructs the family histories of nineteenth-century fur traders to show that their wives—Indigenous women—wielded considerable agency in the fur trade.⁶ She demonstrates that Indigenous women, Metis women among them, controlled economies of subsistence, established and maintained solid trade connection with First Nations kin, and served as the chief diplomats between First Nations and

³ Heather Devine, *The People Who Own Themselves: Aboriginal Ethnogenesis in a Canadian Family, 1660-1900* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004), 4-17.

⁴ Dianne Payment, “*The Free People—Otipemisiwak*”: *Batoche, Saskatchewan, 1870 – 1930* (Ottawa: Environment Canada Parks Services, 1990).

⁵ Jennifer S. H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1980).

⁶ Silvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Winnipeg: J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing, 1980).

Europeans in the Northwest fur trade. Van Kirk's and Brown's works are probably the two most significant books on Metis genealogical history published to date. Their scholarship shifted the focus of Indigenous studies in the late 1970s, showing the centrality of Indigenous women in the fur trade.

Lastly, Maria Campbell's 1974 memoir, *Half-breed*, although not an explicit academic history like the abovementioned publications, remains a well-known and influential history of road allowance families in Saskatchewan in the twentieth century. Campbell's work anchors her Park Valley, Saskatchewan, family as having a solid connection to Red River, Batoche, and other surrounding road allowances. *Half-breed* is unique because it offers personal insight into historic and living Metis people, which academic history often misses or cannot adequately capture, and Campbell does so with direct prose and searing honesty and emotion.⁷ All of the aforementioned literature will be employed to tell the genealogical history of the Morrissette-Arcand clan, which, I hope, will contribute to this rich literature and history writing by Metis academics and community members.

The Metis National Council (MNC) and all of its recognized arms (Métis Nation of British Columbia, Métis Nation of Alberta, Métis Nation Saskatchewan, Manitoba Métis Federation, and the Métis Nation of Ontario) and Metis individuals and families, themselves, draw on genealogy and historical research to identify and qualify Metis members as Metis citizens.⁸ Accordingly, the MNC asks that all prospective Metis applicants seeking citizenship construct a solid, linear, genealogical history that connects directly to the historic nineteenth-century Metis community in the Northwest. This is not to say that the MNC holds ultimate authority over recognizing Metis in-group members—this is held by Metis Elders and

⁷ Maria Campbell, *Half-Breed* (Halifax: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1973), 1-16.

⁸ "Part 4: Identifying Metis Rights Holders," *Metis Nation of Ontario*, (Ottawa, 2016) Web. (Date accessed: August 9, 2016). <http://www.metisnation.org/harvesting/the-powley-story/identifying-m%C3%A9tis-rights-holders/>

community members. The MNC is, however, the official arbiter of Metis citizenship in the eyes of the broader national Metis community.⁹ The MNC is the overarching governing body and the genealogies it asks its applicants to construct, it can be argued, define who is a Metis person connected to the historic—and contemporary—Metis polis.¹⁰ Metis identity, as this thesis and the MNC defines it, is a corporate political identity, not an identity centred on mixed-race-ness alone. The historic Metis community have engaged in specific political struggles stretching from the activism of the founding fathers and mothers of the Metis Nation in the late eighteenth century, to leaders Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont in the late nineteenth century, to the more contemporary assertions of writer Maria Campbell and of Steve and Roddy Powley, who took an important Metis rights case to the Supreme Court of Canada in 2003.

The Metis National Council uses three qualifying criteria for determining who is Metis and who is not, which were set forth in the 2003 Supreme Court of Canada Powley case. They are as follows: (1) The said person must self-identify as a member of a Metis community. It is not enough to self-identify as Metis; that identification must have an ongoing connection to an MNC-recognized historic Metis community; (2) Metis rights holders must have some evidence, drawn from extensive genealogical and historic records, of an ancestral connection to the historic nineteenth-century Metis community whose collective rights they are exercising; and (3) The said person must be accepted by the modern MNC-recognized Metis community, and that

⁹ The MNC grants the recognized provincial Metis institutions to decide who they include as Metis citizens, but the MNC is the overarching political body of the Metis Nation in Canada. Thus it is overarching authority nationwide.

¹⁰ “The Metis Nation,” *Metis National Council Website*, (Winnipeg, 2016) Web. (Date Accessed: August 9, 2016). <http://www.metisnation.ca/index.php/who-are-the-metis> and “Part 4: Identifying Metis Rights Holders,” *Metis Nation of Ontario*, (Ottawa, 2016) Web. (Date accessed: August 9, 2016). <http://www.metisnation.org/harvesting/the-powley-story/identifying-m%C3%A9tis-rights-holders/> and Chris Andersen, “*Metis*”: *Race, Recognition, and the Struggle for Indigenous Peoplehood*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), 3-25.

community must be recognized by the MNC alone.¹¹ I lay out these rigid and bounded borders of who is Metis and who is not, as does the MNC, to protect Metis identity and history, as I have been entrusted by my community and Elders to tell our Metis history. Throughout history, our Metis-ness and political identity as Metis people made us the target of repeated injustices and oppressions by the Canadian state, from 1869 up until the present day—as this thesis demonstrates. As a result of our persecutions, we carry the heavy trauma of our ancestors, which still greatly impacts our lives today. Stories I have heard from close nuclear relatives, of not being able to weather trauma, function, secure employment, rent apartments, hail taxis, or shop without security guards following them because they were physically identified, or coded, as Metis road allowance people on the prairie, attest to the lived reality as Metis people who could not hide. Because of these factors, both professionally and personally, I must limit and protect the history I am about to impart. This thesis stresses that intergenerational violence is an important part of Metis history, but I am not exploring or disclosing the personal histories of my family. I do this because I am a mere steward or knowledge keeper of this history, I do not own it—my family, community, and people do.

The Road Map/Cart Trail

In terms of structure, Section One will set the stage upon which Metis life in the Northwest—in particular, the ancestors in the Morrissette-Arcand family tree (generations A, B, and C)—revolves around mobility, economic freedom, and independence. This thesis sketches out these foundations of late eighteenth- to mid-nineteenth-century Metis society, drawing on Maria Campbell’s analogy of the “puzzle before it was tossed in the air” to understand how

¹¹ R. v. Powley, and “Part 4: Identifying Metis Rights Holders,” *Metis Nation of Ontario*, (Ottawa, 2016) Web. (Date accessed: August 9, 2016). <http://www.metisnation.org/harvesting/the-powley-story/identifying-m%C3%A9tis-rights-holders/>

losing movement, freedom, and prosperity after 1869 traumatized one kin group of Metis peoples—the Morrissette-Arcand clan. Chapter One, set between the years 1740 and 1821, is a detailed sketch of Metis ethnogenesis in and around the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers in what is today the City of Winnipeg. Chapter One shows that through the intermixing of European fur traders and First Nations women in the Northwest, there arose across the Plains a new people, the Metis, whose culture and society was founded upon three foundational features: free trade, political independence, and movement. Red River, in this part of the narrative, straddled the intersection of the north-south and east-west trade and provisioning routes of the Northwest Company (NWC) and the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC). In 1811, the HBC settled a group of displaced Scots at the juncture of these routes on the banks of the Red River, in what would become known as the Red River Settlement. The aim was to slow down and impede NWC trade in the fur rich Athabasca. Worried that their trade was being compromised, in 1816 the NWC and the Metis attacked the Red River Settlement and the HBC in the Battle of Seven Oaks. Chapter One illustrates that the battle erupted for mainly economic reasons, not nationalistic ones, but it was still an important site of Metis ethnogenesis.

Chapter Two weaves the ancestral line of the Morrissette-Arcand clan into the Metis ethnogenesis history of the first chapter. Yet it delves deeper into the ethnogenesis time frame—1740 to 1821—by following the lives of the early generations of the Morrissette-Arcand clan, members Nicholas Montour Sr. and his son Robert Bonhomme Montour (generation A). Nicholas Sr.’s role in this thesis’s narrative is as the progenitor of the Montour branch of the Morrissette-Arcand clan. Bonhomme, on the other hand, was directly involved in the events leading up to the Battle of Seven Oaks, and he was one of the “Four Metis Chiefs” who signed an 1815 peace treaty between the Metis and the HBC, a negotiation that was arguably more

important to Metis ethnogenesis than the 1816 battle. Together, Chapters One and Two show how the Morrissette-Arcand clan, through the Montour line, flourished within the very heart of Metis peoplehood between the years 1740 to 1821.

Chapter Three focuses on the years I am calling the time of Metis prosperity. Metis life between 1821 and 1869 witnessed the fluorescence of the three pillars of Metis culture at Red River and across the Northwest: liberty, free trade, and mobility. This chapter begins with the 1821 amalgamation of the NWC and HBC, following which Metis labourers were let go in an effort to save HBC profits. Many of these unemployed Metis gravitated to Red River and became semi-settled agrarian farmers who joined the now blossoming biannual bison hunts. Others participated in the Red River bison hunts while living at on-the-prairie wintering sites governed by the regimented laws of bison brigades. The period from 1821 to 1869 also witnessed gender parity, with Metis women controlling the production of the biannual bison hunts. These women were the economic heart of life in this age of prosperity.

Chapter Four locates members of the Morrissette-Arcand clan from generations A, B, and C within the timespan between 1821 and 1869. The chapter begins by locating the lives of Bonhomme Montour and his wife, Josette Spence, (generation A). The couple are depicted as life-long bison hunters who use Pembina, North Dakota, and Red River to launch the Montour bison brigade into hunting grounds in Alberta and Montana. Ever the freedom fighter and independent trader, Bonhomme interceded in an important assertion of Metis rights: the 1849 trial of Guillaume Sayer, a hard-won Metis victory against the HBC trade monopoly that emerged after 1821. This chapter illustrates how in the 1840s Bonhomme petitioned the HBC for Metis free trade before the Sayer trial. His actions established him as a mid-nineteenth-century political champion of the Metis, a role he would perform again in 1850 when he signed the

Pembina Treaty in North Dakota. Thus, the life of Bonhomme solidifies the Morrissette-Arcand family, through the Montour branch, as a family that was continually fighting during the time of prosperity for sovereignty, free trade, and unrestricted movement. This chapter also examines the lives of other members of this family to show how marriage and family relationships expanded their economic base and political power. Chapter Four is the final chapter in Section One's rebuilding of the Morrissette-Arcand historical clan and represents a reassembled snapshot of Campbell's kinship "puzzle," thereby setting the stage for the dispossession of the Red River Metis after 1869.

The second half of this thesis—Section Two (Chapters 5–7)—focuses on Metis life after the transference of Rupertsland to the Dominion of Canada, that is, from 1869 onwards. This was a time of great strife among the Red River and Northwest Metis that sees the three pillars of Metis life challenged by Canadian policy and settlement. It is the part of the thesis in which I metaphorically "toss" Maria Campbell's puzzle in the air and see its fragmentation. I then track the trauma it caused to the Metis. Because Section Two is the part of the thesis where I begin examining how losing liberty, freedom of trade, and movement traumatized the Metis, this section includes an introduction to trauma theory. Here, I present a toolkit, or set of templates, that my thesis deploys to classify the Red River dispossessions after 1869, the destruction of the bison, the end of the free trade economy, the end of independence after 1885, and so on, as sites of historic trauma that worked to instil intergenerational trauma within the Morrissette-Arcand clan. Much of the theory has been developed by psychologists and social workers Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, Peter Menzies, Amy Bombay, Kimberly Matheson, Hymie Anisman, Theresa Evans-Campbell, Terry Mitchell, and Dawn Maracle, who all provide templates for identifying sites of historic trauma and intergenerational trauma.

Chapter Five begins the historical documentation of the dispossession of the Red River Metis after the transference of Rupertsland in 1869. This chapter focuses on the 1869 Riel Resistance that erupted after Canada purchased from the HBC all lands draining into Hudson Bay without consulting any of the Indigenous people who lived there—a real estate deal that caused much anxiety among the Metis and Indigenous peoples who called this territory home. When surveyors first showed up to divide up Metis Red River property, the Metis, led by Louis Riel and his provisional government, rose up to defend their homes. Riel's government outmanoeuvred the Canadian prime minister, John A. Macdonald, and forced Canada to enter into talks with the Metis. Thus, the 1870 Manitoba Act was signed by the Metis and Canada, and the province of Manitoba was created to protect both Metis and French language, culture, and property. The dispossessions throughout the 1870s saw Metis lose their Red River homelands, their free economy there, and their mobility in the Winnipeg Basin. Chapter Five shows how these massive changes threatened the Metis way of life in Winnipeg, forcing many Metis westward, and how these disturbances became the source of Metis historic trauma.

Chapter Six tracks what happened to Metis families after they fled their ancestral home of Red River. Among the exiled Metis were dozens of the Morrissette-Arcand clan members—the Montours, Arcands, Morrissettes, and Ledouxes from generation B and C—who moved to the banks of the South Saskatchewan River and parts of Montana and continued bison hunting. From 1871 to 1876 the Metis founded a government based on the laws of the bison hunt, they prospered from the bison robe economy, and they moved unrestricted along the prairie. The Montours again figure prominently in politics at this time, as do the Ledouxes under the leadership of Mistawasis. By 1876, however, Mistawasis and the Cree have signed into Treaty Six with the Crown, which subsequently limits Cree agency, and portions of the Metis Ledoux

and Morrissette families are found living on Indian reserves. Also at this time, the U.S. military systematically destroys the bison, and this destruction, along with large scale settlement, overhunting, the rise of American industry, and the NWMP—implodes both Metis and First Nations societies. As had happened in Winnipeg in the late 1860s, surveyors come to Saskatchewan in the early 1880s to carve up the prairie into square lots for homesteads—a reformation of land use that would forever alter Metis life. Settler encroachment, Canada’s failure to listen to Metis petitions, and the loss of the bison, caused the eruption of the 1885 Northwest Resistance.

Many members of the collective Morrissette-Arcand clan from generation B and C fought in the 1885 Resistance, and Chapter Six depicts it honestly as a crushing defeat. Chapter Six illustrates how members of the Montour branch helped organize the Northwest Resistance, only to live in poverty on the road allowance after the battle ended. Large numbers of the Arcand family also rose up during the Northwest Resistance to defend their homes and land from Canadian imperialism. They took scrip after Batoche, where they became road allowance Metis near Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. Many Ledoux ancestors, like the Montours and Arcands, fought at Batoche and after the crushing 1885 defeat were scattered and suffered extreme hardship.

The events outlined in Section Two more than meet all the criteria laid down by psychologists and social workers in identifying and describing intergenerational trauma in a population. The absolute marginalization of the Metis onto the road allowance after 1885 muted Metis grieving processes and blotted out their voices in Canadian society for some one hundred years. When the collective chapters of this thesis are read—from Metis ethnogenesis, to the era of prosperity, to the century-long dispossession after 1869, and then onto the road allowance—

one can see that losing sovereignty, freedom of economy, and the ability to move unrestrictedly caused intergenerational trauma within the Morrissette-Arcand clan, and likely other Metis clans who have likewise experienced this collective history. Section Two also sheds light on what Maria Campbell means when she says that colonialism “tossed” her people’s puzzle in the air and scattered them.

Section One—The Puzzle Assembled

Chapter One

The Origins of the Red River Metis: A People Founded on Mobility, Trade, and Independence

To fully contextualize Metis intergenerational trauma after 1869, I must begin with Metis ethnogenesis in the Northwest and show how Metis society itself was founded on mobility, free trade, and sovereignty. I build on Maria Campbell's "puzzle" of Metis peoplehood by tracking one line of ancestors of the Morrissette-Arcand clan—the Montours—who have roots in the mid-eighteenth-century Northwest. To start, the Red River community, located at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers in what is present-day Winnipeg, Manitoba, served as the hub of Metis trade, life, and culture from the 1780s to 1869.

Red River Settlement existed as an official colony from 1811 to 1869, after the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) granted the Earl of Selkirk—Thomas Douglas—300,000 square kilometres of land in the Winnipeg Basin to establish an agricultural colony for impoverished Scottish settlers. These settlers were landless Scots who had been displaced by the Scottish enclosures, also known as the Highland Clearances. The Highland Clearances was a period of time—1790s to 1830s—when Lowland Scottish landlords "cleared" the Highlands to make room for sheep and wool production used to clothe industrial Great Britain. Lord Selkirk founded the Red River Settlement as a home for some of these displaced Scots, yet three-quarters of the Scots died within the first couple of years there due to starvation and exposure. The rest only survived because the Peguis Band—the Anishinaabe/Cree Band that lived in Red River—saw the tragedy unfolding and aided these newcomers.

The Red River Settlement, it was hoped, would provide provisions for northern HBC forts. The arrival of hundreds of immigrants in the Winnipeg Basin, however, agitated the local Northwest Company (NWC) Metis who lived, traded, and hunted bison in the Red River area for some fifty years prior to Selkirk's abrupt arrival. Furthermore, to feed the starving colony, in 1814 the HBC issued the Pemmican Proclamation—a set of laws that restricted the bison hunt and pemmican provision trade in and around the colony. The Proclamation was introduced so the colony could divert pemmican to the starving settlers and feed them, or at least that was the official reason given by the HBC. Enraged that the Proclamation slowed down NWC trade, the Metis repeatedly confronted the HBC and settlers at Red River in 1815 and 1816. The HBC, led by Governor Robert Semple, did not heed NWC warnings to leave the Red River or stop interfering with NWC trade. Tensions came to a head on June 19, 1816, when a force of Metis freeman and NWC wintering partners (*hivernants*) attacked Red River and destroyed the settlement there. The Battle of Seven Oaks, as the conflict is known, left twenty-one HBC settlers dead—Semple included.¹ Over time, aggressions cooled between the HBC and NWC, and the Red River Settlement became a heterogeneous, but mainly Metis society, centred on the seasonal bison hunt and small-scale agriculture, including vegetable and tuber gardens.² Ancestral members of the Morrissette-Arcand clan—the Montours—were directly involved in the Battle of Seven Oaks and the events leading up to it. I will detail their involvement (Chapter 2), but first I will provide a sketch of who the Metis are and where they come from, to help orient this family in the larger historical context of the conflict between the HBC and the Metis.

¹ “Red River Colony,” *Historica Canada*, (Ottawa, 2016) Web. (Date accessed: July 6, 2016). <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/red-river-colony/>

² Michel Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line: Creating a Border and Dividing a People* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2015), 28-31.

Demographically speaking, Red River Metis came about after generations of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century mixed-raced peoples (the offspring of Cree, Salteaux, and Anishinaabee women and French and Scottish male fur traders, from both the HBC and the NWC) intermarried and raised children with one another in the Northwest. These Metis were culturally distinguishable from both of their maternal First Nations and paternal European kin, as through a process of ethnogenesis over generations they came to speak their own Indigenous languages, Michif and Bungee, and had their own customs, practices, and economies.³ Metis ethnogenesis, as described by historian Brenda Macdougall, refers to the rise of Metis culture that occurred in western Canada after two or three generations of endogamy between Indigenous women and European traders produced descendants who “demonstrate qualities of socio-cultural development distinct from either of their parents” which then “matured” into its own culture.⁴ French intermixing with First Nations women, known as *metissage*, produced culturally distinct Metis offspring, *Lii Michif*, who would speak an in-group language comprised of Cree verbs and French nouns, called Michif.⁵ Lii Michif ethnogenesis began in the south around the Great Lakes and would further develop in the Red River Valley and across the Northwest by the 1780s and 1790s.⁶ Bison hunting and pemmican provisioning was the main economy practised by the Michif at the turn of the nineteenth century.⁷ What is more, most Michif peoples practised a hybrid of Catholicism and Native spirituality, given that their fathers were French Catholic males

³ Marcel Giraud, *The Metis in the Canadian West: Vol I*, George Woodcock, trns. (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1986), 252-270 and 283.

⁴ Brenda Macdougall, *One of the Family: Metis Culture in Nineteenth-Century Northwestern Saskatchewan* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 18-19.

⁵ Peter Bakker, “Ethnogenesis, Language, and Identity,” in *Contours of a People: Metis Family, Mobility, and History*, Brenda Macdougall, Nicole St-Onge, and Carolyn Podruchny eds. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 182.

⁶ Macdougall, *One of the Family*, 18-19 and Heather Devine, *The People Who Own Themselves: Aboriginal Ethnogenesis in a Canadian Family 1660-1900* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004), 5.

⁷ Bakker, “Ethnogenesis, Language, and Identity,” 182.

and their mothers were First Nations.⁸ Lii Michif have been termed by scholars as big “M” Metis, and they are the Metis people, as represented by the Morrissette-Arcand clan, this thesis speaks about.⁹ A similar ethnogenesis, began farther north when King Charles II, of England, issued a fur trading monopoly in 1670 to the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson Bay (HBC). The monopoly proclaimed that all lands draining into Hudson Bay were now Rupertsland, open to the company’s exclusive enterprise. Rupertsland was a huge swath of land, 1.5 million square miles in area, that covered most of northwestern continental North America. The children from the northern Orkney Scot/English and Cree/Innu/Anishinaabee intermarriages were called “half-breeds” or “Country Born” Metis. They spoke Bungee, a pidgin derived from English, Gaelic, and Algonquian languages.¹⁰ Country Born were nominally Anglican Protestants, but, again, fused their Christian beliefs with some form of their maternal Indigenous beliefs. Both Michif and half-breeds lived at Red River side by side and maintained separate but similar cultures throughout the nineteenth century. Historians Heather Devine and John E. Foster further add that Metis ethnogenesis—for both Michif and Country Born—came about through a three-step process that occurred in Northwest wintering camps: (1) Country marriages (unofficial marriages without church ceremony) took place between Indigenous woman and outsider males, usually European. (2) These marriages forged trade alliances between the male and female kin and saw groups of men “turn away” from direct employment in the fur trade. These independent male and female traders were called “freemen.” (3) The freemen who turned away from direct work with the fur trade maintained close friendships with one another which bound them in long-term trade alliances and saw them

⁸ Macdougall, *One of the Family*, 18-19.

⁹ Chris Andersen, *“Metis”: Race, Recognition, and the Struggle for Indigenous Peoplehood* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), 47.

¹⁰ Bakker, “Ethnogenesis, Language, and Identity,” 182.

form their own communities separate from either their First Nations or their European kin. Metis ethnogenesis at Red River certainly fits Macdougall's, Devine's, and Foster's criteria, as Metis there formed their own culturally distinct and separate communities based on the pillars of sovereignty, economic freedom, and mobility. Furthermore, Red River was not an isolated site of Metis ethnogenesis; similar genesis sites arose across the Northwest at the end of the eighteenth century. Other sites include Île-à-la-Crosse in northern Saskatchewan, parts of Alberta (particularly in the area around Fort Edmonton), southern Saskatchewan, sections of north and central Montana, and segments of Athabasca. Red River, however, remained the hub of the Metis world throughout the 1800s.¹¹

As already noted, Devine and Foster contend that Metis ethnogenesis began after freemen and women turned away from direct employment in the fur trade and formed their own communities. Turning away, Devine asserts, instilled a spirit of independence that came to dominate the Metis economy at Red River and beyond. Free trading at Red River was, it can be argued, facilitated by three main characteristics: (1) Red River straddled continental north-south and east-west trade routes that carried goods in all direction across the heartland of North America, thus making it the natural geographic centre of trade. (2) The mixed-race unions that gave rise to Metis ethnogenesis also made Metis traders the perfect middlemen and women, because they were not beholden to anyone but themselves—hence their name: “The People Who Own Themselves.” (3) Bison hunting and provisioning—the main economy of the Metis—provided economic freedom from direct employment in the HBC or NWC fur trade. It should also be noted that Metis who were not bison hunters but trapped and traded independently also

¹¹ Devine, *The People Who Own Themselves*, 5.

experienced economic freedom.¹² I do not wish to say that bison hunting, exclusively, gave economic freedom to the Metis, just that it was a major motor for freedom for some groups of Metis, particularly at Red River. Accordingly, Metis middlemen could buy low from their maternal First Nations relatives who harvested furs and bison meat, and then sell high to their paternal family in the HBC or NWC.¹³ Likewise, Metis middlemen could buy manufactured goods at low prices from their European fathers and then sell them off high to their mothers' First Nations kin. Thus, Metis middlemen and women made significant profits in both directions and accrued great wealth and freedom.¹⁴ Devine underscores the agency enjoyed by Metis freemen and women, stating that in time they formed a new upper-class of wealthy merchants who made their living supplying pemmican and robes to wintering canoe brigades in the Athabasca district.¹⁵ Red River was the centre of freeman trade by 1800.

Historians Nicole St-Onge and Carolyn Podruchny have described the Red River Metis economy—dominated by freemen, pemmican, and bison robes—as the “hub” of a vast “spider web of trade” that stretched clear across North America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Accounting for the breadth of Metis mobility and trade from the rise of Metis peoplehood in the 1790s is important to understanding Metis trauma in the twentieth century, because it was the loss of their political independence, mobility, and economy that traumatized

¹² Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870* (Winnipeg: J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing, 1980), 19-21 and Devine, *The People Who Own Themselves*, 5-10. “Middlemen” in Chapter One and Two of this thesis denotes both male and female Metis traders. Female traders had considerable economic agency.

¹³ Gerhard J. Ens and Joe Sawchuk, *From New People to New Nations: Aspects of Metis History and Identity from the Eighteenth to Twenty-First Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 52-52.

¹⁴ Pemmican was the main food staple of the fur trade throughout the 19th century—it was made from bison meat pounded into lard, grease, or fat combined with Saskatoon berries, cranberries, currants, choke cherries, or blue berries, which was then packaged in portable ninety pound sacks of bison skins called “parfleches.”¹⁴ Under good conditions, a parflech could last anywhere from five months to two years and could sustain a man over a six month period.¹⁴ Pemmican is also an excellent source of nutrition; which, when combined with its long shelf life, made it the perfect provision for the northern fur trade. See “Pemmican.” *Historica Canada* (Ottawa, 2016) Web. (Date accessed: July 6, 2016). <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/pemmican/> and Ens and Sawchuk, *From New People to New Nations*, 52-52.

¹⁵ Devine, *The People Who Own Themselves*, 5.

some Red River Metis families after they were dispossessed in the late nineteenth century. Mobility across thousands of kilometres, according to St-Onge and Podruchny, became the defining feature of Metis life and culture in the nineteenth century. It knit together Metis families over vast stretches of prairie, parkland, woodland, foothill, and mountain terrain, but Red River always remained the axle of free trade commerce. Red River's economic "web" spread in all directions: west along the Assiniboine River to the fur-rich Saskatchewan and Columbia districts; north through Lake Winnipeg, onto the Pas and Methy Portage, and into the Athabasca region; northeast along the Nelson River and its tributaries, issuing into Hudson Bay proper; south down the Red River to Pembina, Grand Forks, and over the cities of St. Paul and St. Louis, eventually connecting to the wider American markets along the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers; and east through the Lake of the Woods region, into Lake Superior and the Upper Great Lakes, through the French River system, and ending at Montreal. The area covered by these trades routes comprised more than two-thirds of continental North America.¹⁶

Furthermore, prior to the 1821 amalgamation of the HBC and NWC, which created the mono-conglomerate HBC, the trade routes that emanated from Red River can be thought of in the simplest terms as running along east-west and north-south axes.¹⁷ The east-west axis went from the Athabasca and Saskatchewan districts, to Fort William, and then onto Montreal, and was travelled primarily by the NWC. The north-south axis went from the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, up through the Red River Valley, and north to Hudson Bay, and was traversed mainly the HBC.¹⁸ Moreover, the northern route split in two directions. It went northwest to the Athabasca or northeast to Hudson Bay and was a shared trade corridor that the NWC and HBC

¹⁶ Carolyn Podruchny and Nicole St-Onge, "Scuttling along a Spider's Webb: Mobility and Kinship in Metis Ethnogenesis," in *Contours of a People*, McDougall, Podruchny, St-Onge, eds., 63-70.

¹⁷ Alvin C. Gluek, Jr. "The Riel Rebellion and Canadian-American Relations," *Canadian Historical Review* 36, 3 (1955): 199.

¹⁸ Giraud, *The Metis in the Canadian West*, 213-217 and 283.

fought over bitterly because by 1790 the Athabasca—the El Dorado of fur—was where the bulk of North American furs came from.¹⁹

Over time the NWC and the HBC came to travel on both axes, but initially mobility was restricted to an NWC east-west or HBC north-south binary. After 1821, of course, the HBC, exclusively, travelled in all directions, as they had gained a fur trade monopoly in the Northwest by that date.²⁰ Originally, however, the east-west trade axis was broadly split into two regions worked by generally two kinds of NWC employees: (1) Western region employees—those senior NWC wintering partners (*hivernants*) who lived in the field all year west and north of Lake Superior and took their furs to Fort William in the springtime to exchange them for Montreal goods; (2) Eastern region employees—those NWC employees who lived and worked east and south of Fort William, who transported goods between Lake Superior and Montreal.²¹ Podruchny has stated that the whole NWC system acted like a giant accordion of trade, with Fort William being the central bellows and the Athabasca district and Montreal being the handles that seasonally contracted and expanded at both ends.²²

The NWC between 1788 and 1821 encouraged its *hivernant* partners to marry First Nations women in the Northwest to gain trade advantage in the field. Marriage with Indigenous women was spurred on by the logic that the closer one's kin ties were to the Indigenous landscape and social networks, the farther one's fur trade networks extended and the more secure

¹⁹ D. Wayne Moodie, Victor P. Lytwyn, Barry Kaye, and Arthur Ray, "Competition and Consolidation, 1760-1825," in *Historical Atlas of Canada: From the Beginning to 1800*, R. Cole Harris and Geoffrey J. Matthews eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), plate 61.

²⁰ Moodie, Lytwyn, Kaye, and Ray, *Historical Atlas of Canada*, plate 61.

²¹ "Fort William," *Historica Canada*, (Ottawa, 2016) Web. (Date accessed: July 6, 2016).

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/fort-william/>

²² Moodie, Lytwyn, Kaye, and Ray, *Historical Atlas of Canada*, plate 61, Carolyn Podruchny, personal communication. This thesis has greatly simplified the classes of employment within the NWC to highlight the geographic movement of goods over the east-west trade axis to and from Fort William. I am aware that there were a myriad of NWC classes and jobs not mentioned, and that the "accordion system" was also much more complex than depicted here. Again, this idea is Carolyn Podruchny's.

one's profits margins were. Thousands of First Nation-NWC French unions existed, which produced hundreds of annual wintering sites and an abundance of Metis children who served as lower-level fur trade labourers, canoers, and provisioners, among other jobs.²³ Moreover, since the NWC rarely promoted "half-castes" to higher positions within the fur trade, many Metis offspring found that provisioning the Montreal trade was more lucrative than working for the NWC directly as fur traders. What is more, once *hivernant* contracts expired, it was common for NWC men to abandon their First Nations wives and Metis children and return to Quebec or Great Britain. Many *hivernants* also simply left the NWC service and became freemen, staying with their families in the Northwest but trading independently. All of these scenarios left *hivernant* Metis children with no direct connection or loyalty to the NWC.²⁴ These combined factors—free trade profits, limited fur trade opportunity, and a severing of loyalty to the NWC—saw Metis "turn away" to form their own communities in the late eighteenth century upon the older wintering grounds of their parents.²⁵ These were communities centred on a maternal Indigenous connection to territory, bison hunting, and an ethos of freedom of trade and sovereignty.²⁶ A point of geographic interest: the furthest east the bison herds came along the old east-west axis in the late eighteenth century was Red River, which explains why by 1800 the largest congregation of Michif were found there.²⁷ What is more, the east-west trade axis that ran to and from Fort William between the years 1780 and 1821 followed roughly the same pattern of mobility the Metis bison brigades would rely on throughout the nineteenth as they set out biannually from Red River onto the plains. Historian Michel Hogue supports this observation

²³ Jennifer S. H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1980), 96.

²⁴ Devine, *The People Who Own Themselves*, 5 and Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 150.

²⁵ D. Wayne Moodie, Victor P. Lytwyn, and Barry Kaye, "Trading Posts, 1774-1821," *Historical Atlas of Canada*, plate 62.

²⁶ Devine, *The People Who Own Themselves*, 5.

²⁷ Giraud, *The Metis in the Canadian West*, 270-71.

and states that Red River became the main launching point for biannual bison hunts in the nineteenth century because of the tenure of French trade in the Winnipeg Basin. Hogue explains: “In the 1730s, Pierre Gaultier de Narenes, Sieur de la Verendrye, had established posts in the Red River valley, along the shores of Lake Winnipeg, and in the Lower Saskatchewan[;] the [long-time] French trading presence here [gave birth to] a vast commercial network” with Red River as its centre.²⁸ Indeed, it was these freedom-loving Red River-focused, highly mobile seasonal bison hunters and independent trappers who became the big “M” Metis—or *Lii Michif*.²⁹ And it was these Metis, led by “half-breed” Cuthbert Grant, who confronted the HBC and challenged the trade restrictions of the Pemmican Proclamation at the Battle of Seven Oaks in 1816.³⁰ But before examining what the Battle of Seven Oaks meant to Metis nationalism and how the Morrissette-Arcand clan were involved (Chapter Two), I will look at the north-south trade axis that ran through Red River to see how it further helped make the Metis a people founded on mobility, free commerce, and sovereignty.

The north-south trade axis that ran along Red River was a primary bison robe and pemmican provisions artery for the HBC prior to and after the 1821 amalgamation.³¹ It was a route that moved goods over vast distances that, again, helped make the Metis of Red River a people founded on the principles of trade, movement, and liberty. As mentioned above, the north-south axis was a shared trade route that gave both the HBC and NWC access to the fur-bearing region of Athabasca. At the height of the Fur Trade Wars (1790–1821), it can be argued, the HBC wanted control of the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, which lay in the middle

²⁸ Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line*, 17.

²⁹ Andersen, “*Metis*,” 47.

³⁰ Gerhard J. Ens, “The Battle of Seven Oaks and the Articulation of a Metis National Tradition, 1811-1849,” in *Contours of a People*, Macdougall, Podruchny, and St-Onge, eds., 94.

³¹ Gerhard J. Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1996), 9.

of the north-south axis, for two reasons: (1) Seizing Red River meant the HBC could interfere and slow down NWC travel to and from Fort William.³² These were yearly NWC canoe rides from the Athabasca country to Fort William that took at minimum three or four months to conclude and went across thousands of kilometres of dangerous river and portage routes. Their success depended on speed and thrift.³³ Slowing down NWC winter brigades meant failed voyages and lost revenue for the HBC rival. (2) By gaining control of the Winnipeg Basin, the HBC could intercept, control, and restrict the flow of pemmican to the Athabasca, thereby diverting provisions northward toward HBC forts. Historian Gerhard Ens explains:

The Battle of Seven Oaks [happened because]... Lord Selkirk and the London Committee of the HBC... establish[ed] a settler colony in the heart of Rupert's Land at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers [the junction of the east-west and north-south trade axes]... The Nor'Westers [employees of the NWC and Metis freemen] believed that it would disrupt their supply and communication routes between the Athabasca and Fort William.³⁴

When one looks at the Pemmican Proclamation, which forbade, even blockaded, the export of NWC pemmican from Red River Settlement, it is hard to refute Ens's claim of economic interference by the HBC.³⁵ The Proclamation reads,

Whereas the Governor and Company of Hudson's Bay, have ceded to the Right Honourable Thomas Earl of Selkirk, his heirs and successors, for ever, all that tract of land or territory bounded by... line[s] running as follows [the Proclamation describes at length the east-west and north-south supply lines running through Red River already described in this thesis]... [w]hich territory is called Ossiniboia, and of which I, the undersigned [Miles MacDonell] have been duly appointed Governor [by the HBC]... [T]he ordinary resources derived from the buffalo and other wild animals hunted within the Territory, are... ordered that no persons trading in furs or provisions within the Territory, for the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company, or the North-West Company, or any individual, or any unconnected traders or persons whatever, shall take out any provisions, either of flesh, fish, grain, or vegetable... save except what may be judged necessary... And it be further made

³² Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line*, 17.

³³ D. Wayne Moodie, Victor P. Lytwyn, Barry Kaye, and Arthur Ray, *Historical Atlas of Canada*, plate 61.

³⁴ Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 94.

³⁵ "The Pemmican Proclamation," *Historica Canada*, (Ottawa, 2016) Web. (Date accessed: July 6, 2016). <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/pemmican-proclamation/>

known, that whosoever shall be detected in attempting to convey out, or shall aid and assist in carrying out, or attempting to carry out, shall be taken into custody, and prosecuted.³⁶

HBC trade interference aside, many of Selkirk's Red River settlers starved to death in the winter of 1814 because they had been hit by repeated droughts, crop failures, and infestations. The HBC's decision to feed the Red River Settlement, then, by way of the Pemmican Proclamation, may have been guided primarily by an effort to prevent further privations and not by economic interference as the NWC believed. However benevolent the HBC's intentions were, the NWC and Metis did not interpret the Proclamation's restrictive trade measures kindly. Firstly, in 1814 the HBC had repeatedly seized large stores of NWC pemmican—some of it bound for Fort William—and made their rival pay release fines, which the NWC understood to be a direct attack on their profit margins. Secondly, HBC pemmican was not levied or seized; it was simply distributed to Red River settlers and then allowed to continue northward unabated and unlevied.³⁷ The clause in the Pemmican Proclamation “save except what may be judged necessary,” it seems, gave Miles MacDonell, the HBC governor of Assiniboia, the legal teeth to stop and seize NWC pemmican at will while letting HBC pemmican go freely to its northern fort destinations. Thirdly, and most egregiously, in July 1814 MacDonell issued a sister proclamation restricting the hunting of bison on horseback. Prohibiting the running of bison, by consequence, meant that Metis freeman in and around Red River could not hunt because the bison rarely visited the Winnipeg Basin after 1810. Resentful that the HBC had imposed itself on the pemmican trade and restricted bison hunting mobility, and that the HBC now dominated the east-west and north-south trade axes of Red River, the Metis freemen (sons and grandsons of NWC

³⁶ Peel 113: Andrew Amos eds., “Proclamation - Report of trials in the courts of Canada, relative to the destruction of the Earl of Selkirk's settlement on the Red River: With observations. London: John Murray, 1820.” *Peel's Prairie Provinces: University of Alberta Libraries, A Division of Learning Services*, (Edmonton, 2016) Web. (Date accessed: July 7, 2016). <http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/bibliography/113/92.html>

³⁷ Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 95-96.

hivernants) revolted against the colony of Red River Settlement, and so erupted the 1816 Battle of Seven Oaks.

Gerhard Ens stresses that the Battle of Seven Oaks and the destruction of the Red River colony must not be understood only as a “romantic” Metis effort to assert peoplehood in the face of HBC tyranny. That interpretation, he writes, is only partially true and has been used to bolster Metis nationalism since the 1840s. A more nuanced, pragmatic, and calculating understanding of the battle’s cause is that Metis freemen aided the NWC for their own economic advantage. By this Ens means that the Metis dislodged the HBC from Red River to give control of the Athabasca trade to the NWC. In other words, the Metis destroyed Red River Settlement to open a northern free trade channel where they could sell their pemmican with no restrictions or levies. The main thrust of Metis aggression in 1816, asserts Ens, was not nationalistic; it was economic. Had it been the NWC who created a helpless colony in the middle of major North American trade routes and then placed crippling strictures on Metis trade to feed it, it might very well have been the NWC that were routed and dislodged from Red River by the Metis and not the HBC. Indeed, when one looks at where the HBC built Red River Settlement (directly on top of the main northern cart trail in and out of Red River), it is hard to argue that the Metis were simply trying to free up a northern supply chain to create a free market for pemmican.³⁸ As shrewd as it may be, by looking at the origins of Metis society at Red River and at the economic motivations behind the Battle of Seven Oaks, we can see that the Metis were a society founded on three things: (1) a web of mobility that was centred on the geography of Red River, (2) freedom of economy, and (3) a fierce spirit of independence. Understanding these foundational blocks of Metis culture allows us to see how Red River Metis would become traumatized after losing their

³⁸ Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 98-101.

ancestral homeland, their free trade economy, and their sovereignty in the late nineteenth century.

Chapter Two

Fitting the Morrissette-Arcand Clan into the rise of Metis Nationhood in the Northwest

The Montours of the Morrissette-Arcand clan can be traced back to Metis ethnogenesis in the Northwest. The Montours are an ancestral branch of the Morrissette-Arcands who trace their ancestry and identity to Robert Bonhomme Montour (see genealogical chart, generation A). Bonhomme was instrumental in two events that are crucial to Metis peoplehood—the Metis Treaty of 1815 and the 1816 Battle of Seven Oaks. These events occurred during the Fur Trade Wars between the NWC and HBC during which the Metis first expressed their collective political identity and sovereignty in the Northwest. By looking at Bonhomme’s life, we can see that the dramatic loss of free trade, unimpeded mobility, and sovereignty following the 1869 resistance traumatized many Red River Metis.

To start, Bonhomme was born in Red River in 1787. His father, Nicholas Montour Sr. (1756–1808) was an *hivernant* and founding partner of the Northwest Company (NWC). Bonhomme’s mother was an unknown “Indian woman” from somewhere in the Northwest (records of the fur trade are biased and male-centric, recording only male heads of families or male Indigenous traders, and thus, unfortunately, rarely record the names of Indigenous women).¹ Nicholas Sr. was a mixed-blood English-Haudenosaunee trapper from Fort Albany, New York, and it is known that a male relative of his, Antoine Montour (perhaps an uncle), “was with La Verendrye on his search for the Western Sea [in] 1743.”² According to historian Michel

¹ Lawrence Barkwell, “Robert ‘Bonhomme’ Montour (b. 1787),” *Metis Heritage and History Research: Louis Riel Institute: Knowledge, Culture, Heritage* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Metis Federation Inc., 2016) Web. (Date accessed: July 7, 2016) <https://www.scribd.com/document/55631040/Robert-Bonhomme-Montour-b-1787>

² Simone Vincens, trans. Ruth Bernstein, *Madame Montour and the Fur Trade 1667-1752* (Quebec: Xlibre Corporation, 1979), 228.

Hogue, Frenchman La Verendrye's western explorations at least in part laid the foundations of French trade east of Lake Superior and later Metis ethnogenesis at Red River.³ Given the Montour family's long-time knowledge of the western fur trade, it only makes sense that a generation later, in the 1770s and 1780s, Nicholas Sr. worked extensively on the Churchill and Saskatchewan Rivers with NWC *bourgeois* Joseph and Benjamin Frobisher.⁴ In fact, Nicholas Sr. is described in NWC records as a "[field] clerk to Messr. Frobisher," meaning, it was Nicholas who lived and traded as an *hivernant* within First Nations camps.⁵ In 1777 Nicholas Sr., along with NWC *bourgeois* Peter Pond, Peter Pangman, Bartelemi Blondeau, and William Holmes, planned the very first NWC push into what was then "unknown" Athabasca country.⁶ Historian David Chapin describes Nicholas Sr. as a wintering "specialist ...when it came to exploring and deciding where to conduct...backcountry trade."⁷ It was Montour's knowledge of the Athabasca that first alerted the Frobishers to the region. The Frobishers then sent Pond to investigate and open it up for the NWC.⁸ Montour's knowledge of the region implies that he was either the first NWC employee unofficially in the Athabasca or that he was the first NWC personnel to have First Nations trade connections with the region. Either way, Pond has been wrongly credited with "discovering" the Athabasca. As indicated by his NWC work record, Nicholas Sr. had a long and prosperous *hivernant* career that traversed almost exclusively on the east-west trade axis to and from Fort William and the Saskatchewan district.⁹

³ Michel Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line: Creating a Border and Dividing a People* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2015), 17.

⁴ Lawrence Barkwell, "Robert 'Bonhomme' Montour (b. 1787)."

⁵ W. Stewart Wallace eds., *Documents Relating to the Northwest Company*, (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1934), 487.

⁶ David Chapin, *Freshwater Passages: The Trade and Travels of Peter Pond*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 160.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Lawrence Barkwell, "Robert 'Bonhomme' Montour (b. 1787)."

Nicholas Sr. also worked in the Saskatchewan district with two of the fathers of the leaders of the Battle of Seven Oaks: Cuthbert Grant Sr. and Peter Pangman Sr.¹⁰ A Cumberland House Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) journal entry dated June 26, 1785, records Montour as an aggressive but fair trader. Apparently, William Walker (the HBC master of Cumberland House) tried to keep Montour from retrieving goods he had stored at the fort the season before. Montour pushed Walker aside, broke into the company store, and took back what was his. Walker's journal entry reads, "[Montour] immediately took a Hatchet and drewed the staple of the Door and went in and handed their Furs out, bid me good by and went away."¹¹ Nicholas Sr. may have been an assertive trader, but he was not a dedicated father. In 1793 Nicholas Sr. abandoned his Metis children (Bonhomme, Nicholas Jr., and Elizabeth) and his country wife, retiring to Montreal, where he gained notoriety as a leading member of the Beaver Club, the city's most powerful eighteenth-century social club.¹² Nicholas Sr. was a fixture there until his death around 1810.¹³

Left behind in the Northwest by his father, Nicolas Sr., Robert Bonhomme Montour began work in the employ of the NWC under Alexandre the Younger at Pembina in 1808.¹⁴ Pembina and White Horse Plain, both west of the Forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, were the main departure points for the biannual Red River bison hunts throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁵ These launch points had also comprised the dual nucleus of Metis life

¹⁰ Wallace eds., *Documents Relating to the Northwest Company*, 89 and Chapin, *Freshwater Passages*, 206.

¹¹ William Walker, "Cumberland House Post Journal, 1785-1786," June 26, 1785, B.49/a/16. HBCA.

¹² Wallace eds., *Documents Relating to the Northwest Company*, 16; 487-88.

¹³ Barkwell, "Robert 'Bonhomme' Montour (b. 1787)." (footnotes: Elizabeth is known to have later married HBC Chief Factor James Curtis Bird) and Jennifer S. H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1980), 157.

¹⁴ "June 1, 1808 – Landings at the Pambian River," in Barry M. Gough, eds., *The Journal of Alexander Henry the Younger: 1799-1814*, (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1988), 304.

¹⁵ Gerhard J. Ens and Joe Sawchuk, *From New People to New Nations: Aspects of Metis History and Identity from the Eighteenth to Twenty-First Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 55 and Gerhard Ens

at Red River since about 1780. Every year, in late spring and mid-fall, trains of Red River carts would departure westward from Pembina and White Horse Plain following the wide seasonal oscillations of bison herds. Metis cart trains set out to procure meat, pemmican, and robes and returned laden with provisions to make it through the harsh prairie winter in Red River.¹⁶

Bonhomme's role at Pembina was initially as a lower level NWC clerk, in line with his "outside schooling" and education, but later his vocation as a freeman bison hunter and pemmican supplier is evident in the historical record.¹⁷ The Manitoba Metis Federation describes Bonhomme as "one of the first leaders of the Metis Nation," pointing to his early involvement in a treaty signed between the Metis and the HBC in 1815.¹⁸ The 1815 treaty and the 1816 Battle of Seven Oaks were the first true expression of Metis corporate political identity—Metis nationalism, known among the Metis themselves as *La Nation*.¹⁹

In 1814 Bonhomme's brother Nicholas Jr., a *bourgeois* (NWC elite) and two other NWC *bourgeois*, Duncan Cameron and Alexandre MacDonnell, were angered at the HBC's interference with the pemmican trade at Red River through the restrictive Pemmican Proclamation and set to dislodge the London firm from the Winnipeg Basin. The NWC entered into long talks with independent *bois-brûlés* across the Northwest and appointed "Four Metis Chiefs" to lead the charge against the HBC colony at Red River. These four men were Cuthbert Grant, William Fraser, Angus Shaw, and Robert Bonhomme Montour.²⁰

Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2015), 19.

¹⁶ Ens and Sawchuk, *From New People to New Nation*, 55 and Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 19.

¹⁷ Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 19 and John C. Jackson, *Jemmy Jock Bird: Marginal Man on the Blackfoot Frontier* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2003), 14. Jackson is not clear what "outside schooling" refers to, but perhaps Bonhomme was schooled in Montreal, where many NWC sent their sons for education. He began working for the NWC at Pembina in 1808.

¹⁸ Barkwell, "Robert 'Bonhomme' Montour (b. 1787)."

¹⁹ Ens and Sawchuk, *From New People to New Nations*, 15 and 55.

²⁰ Margaret MacLeod and W. L. Morton, *Cuthbert Grant of Grant Town* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974),

Whether independent of the NWC or directly employed by the company, by early June 1815 the “Four Chiefs” accompanied by large contingents of Metis freemen began harassing the Red River Settlement. They burnt homes and crops, stole horses and livestock, dragged off ploughs and harrows left in the fields, and ruined stores and provisions.²¹ Throughout the June 1815, the Metis issued repeated warnings to the settlers and the HBC. Ens and Sawchuk claim that Cuthbert Grant and the Four Metis Chiefs verbally presented the settlers with an ultimatum: “Evacuate the colony or face annihilation.”²² Undeterred, and with nowhere else to go, the settlers and the HBC refused to heed the warnings or leave Red River. On June 22, 1815, a large Metis force led by Pangman, Shaw, Grant, and Montour surrounded Red River and torched the remainder of the settlers’ buildings. This final act of aggression forced HBC Chief Trader Peter Fidler, the man now in charge of Assiniboia (the colonial name for Winnipeg Basin lands), to capitulate to Metis demands.²³ On June 25, 1815, the first Metis Treaty, a peace and friendship treaty, was signed between the HBC and the “Four Half-breed Chiefs,” thus affirming the authority and sovereignty of the Metis at the Forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. The treaty was meant to bring peace to the trade conflict that raged in the Winnipeg Basin and to re-establish uninterrupted commerce through Red River:

In the year of our Lord 1815 this 25th Day June & of His Majesty’s Reign the Fifty Sixth 1st. It is hereby promised that peace & amity shall hereafter ever exist between the people of this Settlement and the Half Breeds & that all that has been done on both sides shall be forgiven

- 1 All settlers to retire immediately from this river, and no appearance of a colony to remain.

23. (bois brules: burnt wood people—the Metis were known as burnt wood people because of the bronze colour of their skin).

²¹ McLeod and Morton, *Cuthbert Grant*, 28-29.

²² Ens and Sawchuk, *From New People to New Nations*, 15.

²³ McLeod and Morton, *Cuthbert Grant*, 28-29.

- 2 Peace and amity to subsist between all parties, traders, Indians, and freeman, in future, throughout these two rivers, and on no account any person to be molested in his lawful pursuits.
- 3 The honourable Hudson's Bay Company will, as customary enter this river with, if they think proper, from three to four of their former trading boats, and from four to five men per boat as usual.
- 4 Whatever former disturbance has taken place between both parties, that is to say, the honourable Hudson's Bay Company and the Halfbreeds of the Indian Territory, to be totally forgot and not be recalled by either party.
- 5 Every person retiring peaceable from this river immediately shall not be molested in their passage out.
- 6 No person passing the summer for the Hudson's Bay Company, shall remain in the buildings of the company but shall retire to some other spot, where they will establish for the purpose of trade.

Cuthbert Grant,
Bostonais Pangman
Wm. Shaw,
Bonhomme Montour

The four chiefs of the Half-breeds²⁴

After the treaty was signed, the Metis proceeded to destroy what was left of the Red River Settlement, and the Scottish settlers and the HBC were immediately made to vacate the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers.²⁵ Some settlers were escorted by the NWC to Upper and Lower Canada; others went to Fort William or north to Hudson Bay and eventually home to Britain. But a portion of the settlers went north past Lake Winnipeg, to Jake Lake, where they waited out the storm of 1815. Once the "Half-breed" threat at Red River was deemed to have abated, the settlers made the trek back to Red River and reinhabited the area. In doing so, they disregarded the 1815 treaty altogether and encroached upon Metis free trade and sovereignty once more.

An 1817 publication lionizes the efforts of the returning Selkirk settlers who would not yield to the "demands" of the "lawless banditti" hordes, who were also described as "*Metifs*,

²⁴ "Peter Fidler's Journal," June 25, 1815, Selkirk Papers, Provincial Archives of Manitoba.

²⁵ McLeod and Morton, *Grant Town*, 30.

Bois-Brûlés, or *Half-breeds*...[the] illegitimate progeny” of the Northwest Company.²⁶ The publication also commends the efforts of Lord Selkirk; who, in March and April 1816 through a series of letters to Sir Gordon Drummond, governor-general and administrator of Canada, made every effort to arm the returning Red River settlers so they could martially challenge the Metis in the summer of 1816.²⁷ What is more, historian Dale Gibson states that the settlers “rallied [and] struck back at their opponents, and then they re-established the colony under a new [HBC] governor, Robert Semple.”²⁸ Clearly, neither Lord Selkirk nor the HBC, nor even the Scotch settlers, had any intention of honouring the treaty they had signed with the four Metis chiefs a year earlier.²⁹ It is little wonder that the Metis, again led by Cuthbert Grant and his Metis chieftains, took up arms to repel HBC encroachment in May and June of 1816, the culmination of which was the Battle of Seven Oaks.³⁰

Many historians have located the emergence of Metis nationalism with the Battle of Seven Oaks, citing the conflict as the first time the Metis asserted a cohesive political identity (e.g., this was the first time the Metis used the blue infinity flag³¹). However, an examination of the 1815 peace treaty between the HBC, representing Lord Selkirk, and the Metis chiefs reveals that this event was also important for a number of reasons: (1) The 1815 treaty affirmed for the first time in legal writing that the HBC, and by extension Britain and Upper and Lower Canada, recognized the Metis as a distinct people separate from their European or First Nations parents.

²⁶ John Halkett, *Statement Respecting the Earl of Selkirk's Settlement Upon the Red River, in North America: Its Destruction in 1815 and 1816; and the Massacre of Governor Semple and His Party. With Observations Upon A Recent Publication, Entitled "A Narrative of Occurrences in the Indian Countries"* (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1817), 39 and 41 and Dale Gibson, *Law, Life, and Government at Red River: Volume I: Settlement and Governance, 1812-1872* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 2015), 6.

²⁷ Halkett, *Statement Respecting the Earl of Selkirk's Settlement Upon the Red River*, 43-48.

²⁸ Gibson, *Law, Life, and Government at Red River: Volume I*: 6.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ens and Sawchuk, *From New People to New Nations*, 15.

³¹ “History of the Metis Flag,” *Manitoba Metis Federation* (Winnipeg, 2016) Web. (Date Accessed: August 22, 2016) http://www.mmf.mb.ca/history_of_the_metis_flag.php

Therefore, the treaty affirmed Metis sovereignty in the Northwest, or at least that was what the Metis believed. (2) The Metis, through martial force, defended their sovereignty, allowing them to set rules of trade based on the free market principle of non-interference. (3) The 1815 treaty granted amnesty to the HBC and settlers or anyone connected to the Battle of Seven Oaks—the Metis as well—as long as all sides respected the peace enshrined within it. The Metis in 1815 had asserted their collective political will as a corporate people and then agreed to enter into a peace and friendship treaty from their more powerful position. Historians Gerhard Ens and Joe Sawchuk agree that the 1815 treaty confirms a distinct Metis identity: “The HBC regarded the Métis as distinct from both European and Indian. As well, these documents [from the 1815 treaty] show that the Plains Métis identified themselves with a unique lifestyle and with values emphasizing the freedom to claim the benefits and privileges of their maternal or paternal heritage.”³² The Battle of Seven Oaks, then, was an enforcement and reaffirmation of ongoing Metis identity and rights. In a March 1816 letter to NWC partner J. D. Cameron, Metis leader Cuthbert Grant warns of potential “flying colours,” or violence if the HBC continued to disregard the “arrangements” or the terms of the 1815 treaty and not leave Red River:

I hope he [Colin Robertson, who was in charge of HBC forces at RRS in 1816] shall swallow in the spring [leave Red River], he shall see it is neither fifteen, thirty, nor fifty, of his best horsemen that can make the Bois-brules bow down to him. The Half-breeds of Fort des Prairie [Alberta] and English River [Saskatchewan], are all to be here in the spring, it is hoped we shall come off with flying colours, and never to see any of them in the colonizing way in Red River, in fact the traders shall pack off with themselves also, for having disobeyed our orders last spring, according to our arrangements. We are all to remain at the Forks to pass the summer.³³

With Grant’s words in mind, Ens and Sawchuk further detail the significance of this period in terms of Metis peoplehood:

³² Ens and Sawchuk, *From New People to New Nations*, 15.

³³ *Report of the Proceedings Connected with the Disputes between the Earl of Selkirk and the North-West Company: At the Assizes, Held at York, in Upper Canada, October, 1818* (Montreal: Printed by James Lane and Nahum Mower, 1819), 168-69.

Although these Métis bands were found across the northern plains from the Missouri to the Athabasca, Metis political identity in the early nineteenth century was focused on the Red River Settlement. It was here that the Metis became conspicuous as a socio-political entity. Their assertion of rights arose first in relation to the fur trade wars between the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company following the establishment of the Red Settlement in 1811.³⁴

At the heart of the Metis nation's rise were Robert Bonhomme Montour and Cuthbert Grant. The Metis Manitoba Federation's biographer observes that Montour and Grant "produced the first treaty ever signed by the Metis. The first treaty to assert the rights of the Metis as a free Aboriginal people."³⁵ By looking at one ancestral branch of the Morrissette-Arcand clan—the Montours—we can trace the rise of Metis Nation. Moreover, from Bonhomme's involvement in the 1815 treaty, we know that *La Nation* was built upon three pillars: mobility, free trade, and political independence. Knowing that the Metis were a people founded on economic freedom, mobility, and liberty contextualizes how losing these foundational blocks after 1869 caused intergenerational trauma in the Morrissette-Arcand family. The next chapter of this thesis will focus on what I have called the "time of prosperity" in Metis history: 1821 to 1869. This was an epoch when Metis economic freedom, movement, and liberty thrived, and it points, again, to how losing these foundational blocks caused the Metis historic trauma in the late nineteenth century.

³⁴ Ens and Sawchuk, *From New People to New Nations*, 55.

³⁵ Barkwell, "Robert 'Bonhomme' Montour (b. 1787)."

Chapter Three

The Time of Metis Prosperity, 1821 to 1869

The age of Metis prosperity occurred between the years 1821 and 1869. It was a time of florescence of Metis life at Red River and across the Northwest. When I say “time of prosperity” or the “florescence” of Metis society, I do not mean that between 1821 and 1869, Metis culture was without problems; there was warfare, disease, suffering, social strife, and hardships. Nor am I viewing this historic Metis society with nostalgia or as the apex of an authentic Metis culture: culture is always fluid, and Metis culture then, as it is now, kept reinventing itself. The “time of prosperity” refers to a period, prior to colonial control, when Metis society expanded and the Metis became economic and political powerhouses. The 1869 transfer of Rupertsland to Canada presented great challenges to the Metis and resulted in the loss of their mobility, free trade, and political sovereignty, which led to experiences of trauma.

To start, the Battle of Seven Oaks affirmed Metis political power and economic freedom in the Northwest, but it also forced the British Colonial Office to put pressure on the HBC and NWC to end their decades-long conflict.¹ Fuelling the violence, the Fur Trade Wars that had raged since the 1780s saw both companies flood the Northwest with far more forts, posts, winter sites, and trading stations than the fur trade could possibly sustain.² Moreover, manning these operations were thousands of contracted French, Scottish, and English men, who, by 1820, had large mixed-blood and Metis families dependent upon or employed by the fur trade.³ Something had to give. By 1821 the costs of war had become so burdensome for the HBC and NWC that

¹ Michel Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line: Creating a Border and Dividing a People* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2015), 25.

² D. Wayne Moodie, Victor P. Lytwyn, and Barry Kaye, “Trading Posts, 1774-1821,” in *Historical Atlas of Canada: From the Beginning to 1800*, eds. R. Cole Harris and Geoffrey J. Matthews (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), plate 62.

³ Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line*, 25.

both companies decided to merge under the banner of the mono-conglomerate HBC.⁴ Geographer Cole Harris states that right before amalgamation “125 posts were in [official] operation, 68 of them belonging to the HBC. Following the [1821] union, the reorganized HBC reduced the total to 52, thereby eliminating unprofitable posts spawned by competition.”⁵ These numbers do not speak to the hundreds of undocumented, unofficial posts or small in-the-field trade sites the HBC also closed after 1821. Leading the great fur trade reduction was Sir George Simpson, governor of the HBC from 1820 to 1860, who immediately set to slash company employment rolls and wages. The loss of 73 official posts overnight left hundreds, if not thousands, of Metis and European men without contracted employment all across the Northwest.⁶ Historian Arthur Ray estimates that one-third of all HBC workers were unceremoniously released after 1821, the majority Metis or mixed-race people.⁷ Simpson’s massive reduction also had the effect of severing Metis loyalties to the HBC, much as the abandonment of children, or “turning away” of NWC traders, had done a generation before. And despite the loss of employment for many, the merging of the two companies resulted in new opportunities for the Metis. Many of these Metis, further infused with an ethos of freedom and open trade, emerged on the prairie and parklands of the Northwest (what later became Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba) to control the pemmican provisions market as well as the commerce at various forts and posts.⁸ A large portion of the unemployed Metis and their families moved to the newly established Red River Settlement in the 1820s and 1830s. Yet, despite the relocation, the Metis emigrants remained strongly connected to their maternal kin in the western

⁴ R. Cole Harris, “The Northwest,” in *Historical Atlas of Canada: From the Beginning to 1800*, eds. R. Cole Harris and Geoffrey J. Matthews (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 145.

⁵ R. Cole Harris in D. Wayne Moodie, Victor P. Lytwyn, and Barry Kaye, “Trading Posts, 1774-1821,” eds. Harris and Geoffrey, *Historical Atlas of Canada*, plate 62.

⁶ Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line*, 25.

⁷ Arthur Ray, “The Northern Great Plains: Pantry of the Northwest Fur Trade, 1774-1885 (1984),” *Prairie Forum* 9 (1984): 61.

⁸ Ray, “The Northern Great Plains,” 61.

bison country and around northern forts. The wholesale turning away of HBC employees, and their children, created an explosion of independent Metis settlements clear across the Northwest.⁹ These Metis communities were knit together by reciprocal kinship ties—what historian Brenda Macdougall has identified as *wahkootawin*. Macdougall defines *wahkootawin* as a Cree life philosophy, a world view and way of life of interconnectedness that binds Metis families in a web of shared cultural identity and responsibilities based on the pursuit of economic, political, social, and cultural activities and interests. Families were the foundational relationship for pursuing these activities. *Wahkootawin* was inherited from the Metis maternal First Nations connection, and it acted like a kind of social glue that held, and still holds, Metis society together across great distances and time.¹⁰ Metis identity was linked primarily to families and clans. And then, as the Metis engaged in political battles with the Colony in 1816 and the Lakota in the 1840s and 1850s (the 1851 Battle of the Grand Coteau among them) a corporate political identity also developed and operated alongside family ties. But family continued to be the prime organizer of Metis life and responsibilities. The family ties of *wahkootawin*, combined with a strengthened independence after the reductions of 1821, shaped a Metis society that valued and protected its sovereignty and placed even greater emphasis on mobility and free trade.

During the 1820s and 1830s, Metis life at Red River took on some of the characteristics of an agricultural settlement.¹¹ Historian Arthur Ray describes the fusion of bison and agrarian lifestyles the Metis practised at Red River after 1821: “These [Metis] men and their families combined older Indian ways with the newer ones of the settlers. They established small farms,

⁹ Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line*, 25-26.

¹⁰ Brenda Macdougall, “Wahkootawin: Family and Cultural Identity in Northwestern Saskatchewan Metis Communities,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 87, 3 (Sept, 2006): 433.

¹¹ Gerhard Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 22.

but between sowing and harvest they hunted buffalo for dried provisions and hides.”¹² Indeed, tilling and planting at Red River occurred in the early spring, bison brigades would organize and leave in late June and then the brigades would return in late August or September for the fall harvest. Bison brigades would also depart in late October and then come back before winter set in.¹³ The bison hunts provided meat and robes, which the Metis sold, traded or used to endure the cold prairie winters. The farms at Red River provided food staples, such as root vegetables, for winter storage.¹⁴ Between the years 1827 and 1835 the number of settled semi-agricultural Metis families at Red River jumped from 19 to 102. Not surprisingly, the acreage under cultivation during this time also went from 58 to 594.¹⁵ By 1840, the old “accordion bellows” of trade that went to and from Fort William had been replaced by the semi-agrarian biannual oscillations of bison brigades to and from the Red River Valley.¹⁶ The newer biannual expansions and contractions established a pattern of land mobility, it seems, that went along the old east-west trade axis of the NWC, and it was no doubt held together by *wahkootawin*.¹⁷ Moreover, as the nineteenth century wore on, Metis cart trails expanded to points further and further away from Red River as the bison herds diminished and retreated westward to the north-central prairie of what would later become Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Montana.¹⁸

From the Red River parishes of St. Boniface, White Horse Plain (St. François Xavier), and Grant Town, and the settlements of Pembina and the Turtle Mountains (both in what would

¹² Ray, “The Northern Great Plains,” 61.

¹³ Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 22.

¹⁴ Ray, “The Northern Great Plains,” 61.

¹⁵ *Statistical Statement of the Red River Settlement*, May 31, 1827, E5/1 HBCA and *Census of Red River, 1832, 1835*, Provincial Archives of Manitoba.

¹⁶ Alexander Ross, *The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress, and Present State: With Some Account of the Native Races and Its General History, to the Present Day* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1856), 246.

¹⁷ Macdougall, “Wahkootawin: Family and Cultural Identity,” 433.

¹⁸ Patrick Young and Darren R. Prefontaine, “The Bison Hunt,” *Gabriel Dumont Institute of Applied Research*. (Saskatchewan, 2016) Web. (Date accessed: July 12, 2016). http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/expositions-exhibitions/batoche/docs/proof_en_buffalo_hunt.pdf and Ray, 263.

become North Dakota), the cart trails cut west across the Great Plains, eventually reaching the western face of the Rockies in what would become British Columbia, Alberta, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. Some trails went northwest into the parklands of what would become Saskatchewan and Alberta, and into what is now the Northwest Territories. The longest and most important overland cart trail was the Carleton Trail.¹⁹ It ran approximately 1,320 kilometres from Fort Garry, over to Fort Carlton and Fort Pitt in the Saskatchewan district, and ended at Edmonton House, in what would become Alberta.²⁰ The Carleton Trail and all its thousands of tributaries, it should be stressed, travelled along the old east-west trade axis, a pattern of land mobility that the Metis had used for over a century. The Red River Trails, on the other hand, travelled the old north-south axis, heading south from Red River Settlement through to the Metis communities of Ste. Agathe, Morris, Pembina, the Turtle Mountains, and then onto St. Paul Minnesota.²¹ There were thousands of bison cart trails that connected Red River Settlement to this huge overland web of trade and commerce. These trails highlight the breadth of Metis mobility after 1821.

The journal of Alexander Ross, an inhabitant of Red River through most of the nineteenth century, captures a vivid account of Metis bison hunters departing the Winnipeg Basin in 1840:

¹⁹ Harry Baker Brehaut "The Red River Cart and Trails: The Fur Trade," *The Manitoba Historical Society: Keeping history alive for over 137 years*, (Winnipeg, 2016) Web. (Date accessed: July 9, 2016)

<http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/transactions/3/redrivercart.shtml>

²⁰ R. C. Russell, *The Carlton Trail: The Broad Highway into the Saskatchewan Country From the Red River Settlement: 1840-1880* (Saskatoon: The Western Producer, 1971), 1 and Brehaut. A limited list of the lesser cart trails are as follows: The Pelly Trail that linked Red River Settlement to the Qu'Appelle Valley; The Swan Lake trail that linked Swan Lake to Lake Winnipeg; The Yellow Quill Trail that trailed off into smaller tributaries in northern Saskatchewan from the Carlton Trail; Fort Ellice-Qu'Appelle Trail that connected the Touchwood Hills to Fort Qu'Appelle—both in Saskatchewan; The Montana-Elbow-Fort-A-La-Corne Trail that went from Fort a-la-Corne (Prince Albert) to Montana; The Swift Current Trail that crossed from Swift Current to Fort Pitt and Battleford (Saskatchewan); The Fort Macleod-Fort Watch Qu'Appelle Trail which went from Regina to the Cypress Hills (Saskatchewan); The Wood Mountain-Fort Ellice Trail that went from Wood Mountain Post to the Montana Foothills; The Battleford-Red Deer Forks Trail that skirted what is now the western border of Saskatchewan; The Green Lake-Carleton Trail that connected Green Lake in northern Saskatchewan to Carlton House; The Prince Albert-Montreal Lake Trail that went from Lake Waskesiu to Montreal Lake (Saskatchewan); and The Fort Macleod-Fort Edmonton Trail (Alberta), connecting its namesakes.

The [travelling bison] camp occupied as much ground as a modern city, and was formed in a circle; all the carts were placed side by side, the trams out... Within this line of circumvallation, the tents were placed in double, treble rows, at one end; the animals at the other in front of the tents. This is the order in all dangerous places; but kept on the outside. Thus carts formed a strong barrier, not only for securing the people and their animals within, but as a place of shelter and defence against attack of the enemy without.

In 1820, the number of carts assembled here for the first trip was.....	540
In 1825.....	680
In 1830.....	820
In 1835.....	970
In 1840.....	1,210

From this statement it is evident that the plain-hunters are rapidly increasing.²²

A pamphlet produced by the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Applied Research confirms Ross’s estimate and states that “roughly 1630 Metis men, women, and children,” with more than “400 horses, and 500 dogs,” were on one of the Red River bison hunts in 1840.²³ That means close to 3,200 people in total sojourned to and from Red River in the two bison hunts of 1840, accompanied by nearly 800 horses and 1,000 dogs! The number is all the more impressive when one considers that the entire population of Red River in 1835 was 3,646; meaning, roughly fifty percent of the Red River settlement participated biannually in the bison hunts that year.²⁴ Ross certainly is not exaggerating when he said that the bison train “occupied as much ground as a modern city.”

At the peak of bison hunting—the 1840s and 1850s—a train of back-to-back Metis Red River carts, could measure up to eight to ten kilometres in length and would travel up to 1,200 kilometers to and from Red River.²⁵ To calculate the volume of pemmican transported by the

²² Alexander Ross, *The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress, and Present State: With Some Account of the Native Races and Its General History, to the Present Day* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1856), 246.

²³ Young and Prefontaine, “The Bison Hunt.”

²⁴ Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 36.

²⁵ Teyana Neufeld, “Metis Bison Hunts,” *Turtle Mountain – Souris Plains Heritage Association, Southwest Manitoba Canada* (Turtle Mountain, 2016) Web. (Date Accessed: July 13, 2016) <http://vantagepoints.ca/stories/metis-bison-hunts/> and Emilie Pigeon and Carolyn Podruchny, “Challenging Patriarchal Myopia: Women’s Roles in Governance and Diplomacy among Nineteenth-Century Plains Metis Bison Hunters,” *Paper in circulation* (Toronto): 1.

longest of these trains, we must look at three factors: (1) an adult wild American bison weighs roughly one 1,700 to 2,200 pounds and yields around 1,400 to 1,800 pounds of meat.²⁶ (2) One 90-pound parflech of dried pemmican was made from roughly 900 pounds of wet meat. (3) The average Red River cart carried around 1,000 pounds.²⁷ If we plug these numbers into a formula, we find that each cart—potentially—carried the pemmican of roughly two to five bison.²⁸

Historian Arthur Ray estimates that the total weight of pemmican gathered by Red River Metis was between 4.4 million pounds in 1831, and a yearly high of anywhere from 7.5 million to 15 million pounds by 1870. Taking Ray and my estimations together, we find that possibly 90,000 to 160,000 bison were hunted per year during the height of Metis bison hunting. What is more, the total estimation of bison hunted per year includes only bison used for pemmican that was made and sold. The number of bison the Metis of Red River hunted for personal consumption could be just as high, if not higher, making the grand total around 180,000 to 300,000 bison per year.²⁹ Moreover, since each cart carried the meat of two or three bison, each cart also had—at minimum—three or four quality skins that were processed into numerous salable goods, such as rawhide containers, shields, buckets, gauntlets, gloves, moccasins, boots, ropes, robes, saddles, blankets, snowshoes, buckskins, cradles, shirts, leggings, bags, hats, children's toys, tipis and other forms of house coverings, medicines, tallow, arrow shafts, and so on.³⁰ These bison products, along with provisions and robes, created a huge independent market for the Metis of

²⁶ Gerald Hauer, "Expected Meat Yield from a Bison Bull Carcass," *Canadianbison.ca* (Regina, 2016) Web. (Date accessed: July 13, 2016).

<http://canadianbison.ca/producer/resources/documents/ExpectedMeatYieldfromaBisonBullCarcass.pdf>

²⁷ Brehaut, "The Red River Cart and Trails: The Fur Trade."

²⁸ According to my calculations: (weight of bison 4,200 or 1,800) divided by 900 (weight of wet meat dried to make a parflech) = number of bison on one cart.

²⁹ Ray, "The Northern Great Plains," 64 and my own calculations.

³⁰ Morgan Balliargeon, Lawrence Barkwell, Leah Dorion, George Oberst and Nicholas Vrooman, "Pictorial Collection: Clothing and Accessories," *Metis Legacy: A Metis Historiography and Annotated Bibliography* (Saskatoon: The Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2001), 203-246.

the Northwest by 1869, which in turn made them wealthy merchants, freighters, traders, and freemen.³¹

The work of bison hunting and production of goods was, for the most part, gender-divided work. Metis men scouted, ran, and killed the bison (men also helped in a secondary capacity slaughtering bison), while women primarily processed the carcasses, dried the pemmican, and manufactured items from bison skins.³² As well, women treated and prepared valuable bison robes for sale in eastern and American markets, which with the industrialization of North America (bison skins were used to make industrial leather belts for machinery) became the focus of the Metis economy by 1870.³³ Gerhard Ens describes the importance of the robe economy after 1840: “By the 1860s, the buffalo robe trade was a large commercial operation, involving substantial number of Metis, and it had significantly altered their family economy and social structure.”³⁴ Women in Metis society, because of their roles as processors and manufacturers, it can be argued, controlled production on Metis bison brigades during the time of prosperity and were thus the real economic power in Metis society.³⁵ As well, the land where the bison runs took place was gendered, meaning, Metis bison brigades moved over and hunted on the territories of their ancestral First Nations mothers and grandmothers.³⁶ Historian Nichole St-Onge has noted that as the bison retreated westward, away from the Winnipeg Basin, more and more Metis families, because of the distance and time it took to find and hunt bison, instead

³¹ Ray, “The Northern Great Plains,” 64 and Balliargeon, Barkwell, Dorion, Oberst and Vrooman, *Metis Legacy*, 203-246.

³² Pigeon and Podruchny, “Challenging Patriarchal Myopia,” 1-2.

³³ Nicole St-Onge, *Saint-Laurent, Manitoba: Evolving Metis Identities, 1850-1914* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2004), 8.

³⁴ A. A. Den Otter quoting Gerhard Ens in *Civilizing the Wilderness: Culture and Nature in Pre-Confederation Canada and Rupert's Land* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2012), 293.

³⁵ Pigeon and Podruchny, “Challenging Patriarchal Myopia,” 1.

³⁶ Macdougall, *One of the Family*, 89-90 and Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 73-90. Van Kirk demonstrated that “Indian” and Metis women held considerable power within the fur trade that they allowed their husbands, European men, access to trade resources in their territories. Van Kirk’s thesis certainly extends to the bison hunt of the Metis on the open plains.

“cho[se] to return to the old *hivernant* lifestyle of wintering on the plains [in their maternal homelands where] [t]hey hunted herds to supply the American bison robe market.”³⁷

Furthermore, the old water routes that linked the Red River Valley to the Île-à-la-Crosse region of Saskatchewan, and into the northern Athabasca interior, as well as to Hudson Bay proper, remained a major facet of Metis economy and mobility in the mid-nineteenth century.³⁸ Lastly, St-Onge argues that by 1869 some Metis had turned away from bison hunting altogether (some had never hunted bison in the first place) and focused their energy on fishing, trapping, and salt mining, congregating around forts, lakes, and rivers.³⁹

The combined work of Brenda Macdougall and Silvia Van Kirk show that clusters of Metis kin in the fur trade—and certainly in the bison economy as well—revolved around sisterhoods, or maternal kinship networks that were matrilocal.⁴⁰ Macdougall has allegorized the matrifocal and matrilocal structure of Metis kinship between 1821 and 1869 as a “giant strawberry plant, which spread out from its centre [in Red River],” drawing in Metis people to access “abundant resources” in “Alberta, Northwest Territories, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, and even Montana, North Dakota, and other American states.”⁴¹ Up until recently, scholarship and research on the structure of bison brigades suffered from, as noted by Pigeon and Podruchny, “patriarchal myopia,” because nineteenth-century church, census, and government records focused almost exclusively on Metis males. By looking at men as heads of Metis households, property owners, and traders, data sources have created “myopic” historians who have “missed” the true economic heart of Metis life during the time of prosperity: Metis

³⁷ St-Onge, *Saint-Laurent, Manitoba*, 8-9.

³⁸ Macdougall, *One of the Family*, 86-94.

³⁹ St-Onge, *Saint-Laurent, Manitoba*, 9.

⁴⁰ Macdougall, *One of the Family*, 89-90 and Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 73-90.

⁴¹ Macdougall, *One of the Family*, 89-90.

women and their means of production.⁴² Furthermore, St-Onge and Macdougall have confirmed, at least in one instance in the mid-nineteenth century, three Metis LaFramboise sisters were the central players in the Trottier bison brigade: Ursule LaFramboise married brigade leader Charles Trottier, Angelique married Antoine Trottier, and Philomene married Moise Landry. By marrying the brothers, the LaFramboise sisters thus drew the Trottier males into *their* maternal kin group and created the matrifocal nucleus of the prosperous Trottier brigade.⁴³ It is also likely that the grounds in which the Trottier brigade hunted were the maternal hunting grounds—matrilocal—of the LaFramboise sisters’ First Nations grandmothers, or at the very least the ancestral wintering camps of the Trottier mothers and/or First Nations grandmothers. Therefore, the Trottier brigade’s marriage and hunting patterns suggest that Northwest bison brigades more generally placed high value on Metis women’s political, economic, and social agency during the florescence of Metis life.

Women also played a major role in diplomacy and trade, as revealed by Pigeon and Podruchny. This thesis does not wish to minimize the crucial role women played in smoothing relations, but to add that men shared in diplomatic and trade pursuits equally with women. Men in Metis bison hunting society were responsible for defence, freighting and transporting goods, diplomacy, trade at forts and posts, and bartering in the field.⁴⁴ Governance of bison brigades was framed around elected male leads, called “Captains of the Hunt,” who led by consensus.⁴⁵ Governing by consensus further underscores the political agency Metis women possessed, as they, along with children, had an equal say in matters concerning the whole bison brigade.⁴⁶ The

⁴² Pigeon and Podruchny, “Challenging Patriarchal Myopia,” 1-2

⁴³ Brenda Macdougall and Nicole St-Onge, “Rooted in Mobility: Metis Buffalo-Hunting Brigades,” *Manitoba History* 71 (Winter 2013): 24.

⁴⁴ Nicholas C. P. Vrooman, “*The Whole Country was... ‘One Robe’*”: *The Little Shell Tribe’s America* (Little Shell: The Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana and Drumlummon Institute, 2012), 62.

⁴⁵ Pigeon and Podruchny, “Challenging Patriarchal Myopia,” 1-2.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, and Vrooman, “*The Whole Country was... ‘One Robe,’*” 61-62.

majority—women, men, and children—could veto or support the decisions of the Captain of the Hunt; thus, Metis democracy had a built-in system of “checks and balances” and universal suffrage decades before Canada would.⁴⁷ Scholars have noted the military-like precision and organization of the bison hunts under the command of the Captains of the Hunt.⁴⁸ An extended first-hand observation by Alexander Ross in the 1840s confirms the Captain of the Hunt’s authority and the regimented military-style operation of the bison brigade:

The first step was to hold a council for the nomination of chiefs or officers, for conducting the [bison] expedition...Besides being captain, in common with the others, [the lead captain] was styled the great war chief or head of the camp; and on all public occasions he occupied the place of president. All articles of property that were found, without an owner, were carried to him, and he disposed of them [fairly] by a crier...Each captain had ten soldiers under his orders; in much the same way that policemen are subject to the magistrate. Ten guides were likewise appointed...Their duties were to guide the camp, each in his turn—that is a day about—during the expedition. The camp flag belongs to the guide of the day...

The hoisting of the flag every morning is the signal for raising camp. Half an hour is the full time allowed to prepare for the march; but if any one is sick, or their animals have strayed, notice is sent to the guide, who halts till all is made right. From the time the flag is hoisted, however, till the hour of camping arrives, it is never taken down. While it is up[,] the guide is the chief of the expedition. Captains are subject to him, and the soldiers of the day are his messengers; he commands all.⁴⁹

Along with a strict and clear hierarchal command, bison brigades also held court, delivered justice, set down laws, and controlled the logistics of the hunt on a vast scale.⁵⁰ Indeed, movement of upwards of 1,000 carts and fleets of gun-toting freemen on horseback chasing bison herds (some herds were 1,000,000 strong) demanded rigorous and exact discipline.

Metis lives depended on it. The governing laws to manage the bison brigades were as follows:

1. No buffalo to be run on the Sabbath-day.
2. No party to fork off, lag behind, or go before, without permission.
3. No person or party to run buffalo before the general order.
4. Every captain with his men, in turn, patrol the camp, and keep guard.

⁴⁷ Pigeon and Podruchny, “Challenging Patriarchal Myopia,” 1-2.

⁴⁸ Vrooman, “*The Whole Country was... ‘One Robe,’*” 68-69.

⁴⁹ Ross, *The Red River Settlement*, 249.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

5. For the first trespass against these laws, the offender to have his saddle and bridle cut up.
6. For the second offence, the coat to be taken off the offender's back, and be cut up.
7. For the third offence, the offender to be flogged.
8. Any person convicted of theft, even the value of a sinew [next to nothing], to be brought to the middle of the camp, and the crier to call out his or her name three times, adding the word "Thief," at each instance.⁵¹

Historian Nicholas Vrooman states that the rules set down by the Captain of the Hunts were rarely broken and that at the end of each day the lead captains would meet to discuss the day's events. As a council, they would decide who needed reprimanding, direct where the brigade would hunt, and plan when and where "the mobile city" would camp next.⁵² The foundation of Metis governance, according to Pigeon and Podruchny, was a "social order established and maintained primarily through non-violent means. The principle of *freedom* is widely recognized as a central Metis social and political value, and informed and enabled social governance."⁵³ The freedom that underscored the independent values of governance and economy in bison hunts, and more broadly Metis life in the time of prosperity, echoed—even amplified—the freedom won by Bonhomme and the "Four Metis Chiefs" in 1815 and 1816. Moreover, Metis sovereignty was made possible by mobility over vast distances of maternal lands, strong kinship ties knit together by *wahkootawin*, and free economy. By looking at Metis life in the nineteenth century, we have set the stage for understanding how losing these three foundations of Metis society may have inflicted trauma on the Morrissette-Arcand clan after 1869. But first I must locate members of the family within this time of prosperity, to illustrate how the tremendous change that followed affected the Metis of Red River.

⁵¹ Ross, *The Red River Settlement*, 249.

⁵² Vrooman, "The Whole Country was... 'One Robe,'" 69.

⁵³ Pigeon and Podruchny, "Challenging Patriarchal Myopia," 1 (My emphasis added).

Chapter Four

Locating the Arcand-Morrisette Clan in the Metis Time of Prosperity

The years 1821 to 1869 were a time when Metis families continued to travel great distances, exercise freedom of commerce, and practise sovereignty, all while retaining control of their Northwestern maternal homelands. Locating members of the Morrisette-Arcand clan in this period of prosperity and independence highlights how the Metis experienced and shaped these three foundational blocks of society. By examining the history of the Morrisette-Arcand family, we can also see the intensity of the impact of dispossession and the rapid loss of such central features of Metis society following the 1869 and 1885 resistances and how it was traumatic on many levels. Picking up where Chapter Two left off, I will walk through the lives of eight generation B ancestors of the Morrisette-Arcand clan, starting with Bonhomme Montour (generation A) and his son Abraham Montour (generation B), and then moving to the other ancestors in generation B whose lives spanned this period.

Robert Bonhomme Montour and Josette Spence (Generation A)

To start, it is known from Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and census records that Bonhomme Montour worked as a freeman bison hunter and independent fort supplier for most of his life.¹ In 1818, Bonhomme married Josette Spence (generation A), the Metis daughter of

¹ Lawrence Barkwell, "Robert 'Bonhomme' Montour. (1787-1857)," *Metis Heritage and History Research: Louis Riel Institute*, (Winnipeg) Web. (Date accessed: August 17, 2016) <https://www.scribd.com/document/55631040/Montour-Robert-Bonhomme-b-1787> and 1850 Ci-MN. *Minnesota Territorial Census*: "Pembina Census of 1850," Dwelling 64, family #64, pp. 24 and enumerated at Red River 1831 to 1840 and Lawrence Barkwell, Leah Dorion, and Darren Prefontaine, "The Metis Homeland: Its Settlements and Communities," *Gabriel Dumont Institute of Applied Research*. (Saskatchewan, 2016) Web. (Date accessed: July 9, 2016) <http://www.metismuseum.ca/media/db/11956> and "June 1, 1808 – Landings at the Pambian River," in *The*

HBC-employee-turned-freeman Magnus Spence.² Magnus Spence was known to work as a steersman, canoeman, and labourer primarily along the North and South Saskatchewan Rivers and the Qu'Appelle Valley, suggesting that after he retired in 1821, he became a freeman living with the Montour brigade.³ Together, Bonhomme and Josette had five children: Pascal Sr., Marie, Marguerite, Sophie, and Abraham Sr.⁴ From 1818 to 1867, the family lived as freemen bison hunters and fort provisioners, moving between Red River, Grant Town, and Pembina. All the children of Bonhomme and Josette would also become bison hunters in adulthood.⁵ Bonhomme, it seems, continued to fight for free trade and Metis sovereignty long after the Metis Treaty of 1815 and until his death on April 1, 1857, in Pembina, North Dakota.⁶ Accordingly, Bonhomme would have participated in the politics leading up to the trial, in 1849, of Guillaume Sayer, an important event that illustrates the centrality of free commerce and sovereignty to the Metis.

The Sayer trial united the Metis struggle against the HBC's trade monopoly that took root after the NWC-HBC amalgamation of 1821. At stake in the trial were Metis free trade and liberty, rights the Metis felt had been recognized in 1815 under the direction of the four "Half-breed Chiefs" Robert Bonhomme Montour, Cuthbert Grant, William Shaw, and Peter Pangman. A series of petitions leading up to the Sayer trial illustrates the frustration the Metis felt over the

Journal of Alexander Henry the Younger: 1799-1814, eds. Barry M. Gough, (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1988), 304.

² Magnus Spence, "HBCA Biographical Sheets: HBC Employee Archives," A.16/43,fo.241. HBCA. https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/biographical/s/spence_magnus1783-1822.pdf

³ Ibid., A.16/33,fo.107; A.30/3; A.32/2,fo.14; A.16/33,fo.107; A30/4; A30/5,6; A.16/34,p.146.146; A.30/7-10; B.60/a/1-4; A.16/15; A.30/15; A.16/39,fo.124d-125; A.16/41; A.16/43,fo.241.

⁴ Barkwell, "Robert 'Bonhomme' Montour (b. 1787)."

⁵ 1850 Ci-MN. *Minnesota Territorial Census*: "Pembina Census of 1850," Dwelling 64, family #64, pp. 24 and enumerated at Red River 1831 to 1840 in Barkwell, "Robert 'Bonhomme' Montour (b. 1787)" and Lawrence Barkwell, Leah Dorion, and Darren Prefontaine, "The Metis Homeland: Its Settlements and Communities," *Gabriel Dumont Institute of Applied Research*. (Saskatchewan, 2016) Web. (Date accessed: July 9, 2016) <http://www.metismuseum.ca/media/db/11956>

⁶ "Robert Montour," *Pembina Cemetery - Assumption Church Burial Records: Pembina, ND, 1849-1892*, witnesses: Michel Granbois and J. B. Garipey and Father G. A. Belcourt in Gail Morin, *Metis Families: A Genealogical Compendium Volume 4* (Orange Park: Quinton Publications, 1996), 164.

HBC monopoly in Rupertsland.⁷ In petitioning the Governor of Assiniboia, Alexander Christie, the Metis of Rupertsland demanded equal representation and a fair voice in the government of the colony, which, before 1849, was ruled autocratically by the Council of Assiniboia and the HBC, both headed by Scottish or English men.⁸ In 1670, King Charles II of England granted Rupertsland, comprising the lands draining into Hudson Bay, to the Hudson's Bay Company without the consent of the Indigenous people who lived there.⁹ The HBC believed the Royal Charter gave them exclusive trading rights and governing powers over the entire Hudson Bay drainage basin (see map below). And they especially believed this after the union of 1821, when the HBC stood as the only legal fur trading company recognized by the British Crown in the Northwest. The Metis, however, did not acknowledge the HBC's jurisdiction in the Northwest. And throughout the 1840s, *La Nation* expressed their dissatisfaction with the HBC through repeated petitions to Governor Christie.

⁷ Irene M. Spry, "The Metis and Mixed-bloods of Rupert's Land before 1870," *New Peoples: Being and Becoming Metis in North America* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1985), 108-110.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁹ "The Royal Charter of the Hudson's Bay Company," *HBC Website*. (Winnipeg, 2016) Web. (Date accessed: July 16, 2016). <http://www.hbcheritage.ca/hbcheritage/collections/archival/charter/home>



Figure 4: “1818 Rupert’s Land Map,” *Rupertsland Institute: Metis Centre of Excellence Website*.¹⁰

Attached to one of these protestations was the signature of Robert “Bonhomme” Montour.¹¹

Specifically, Montour’s name appears on a letter addressed to Governor Christie dated August 29, 1845, in which he and the Metis demand their rights as Natives to trade. Christie’s response was a refusal to acknowledge the Metis’s inherent Aboriginal right to hunt and fish in a climate of unimpeded commerce. Furthermore, Christie wrote that the Metis were British subjects like everyone else and thus had to obey the Crown’s charter and trade exclusively through the HBC monopoly.¹² Undeterred, the Metis continued to hunt and trade freely without HBC permission and in defiance of Governor Christie and the 1670 charter. Chief among the “offenders” was Lii Michif free trader Pierre Guilleaum Sayer.

¹⁰ “1818 Rupert’s Land Map,” *Rupertsland Institute: Metis Centre of Excellence Website*, (Edmonton, 2015) Web (Date accessed: August 12, 2015) <http://www.rupertsland.org/images/uploads/Rupertsland-Map-Web.jpg>

¹¹ Spry, “The Metis and Mixed-bloods of Rupert’s Land,” 109.

¹² Irene M. Spry, “SINCLAIR, JAMES,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 8, (Montreal, 2003), Web. (Date accessed: July 15, 2016). http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/sinclair_james_8E.html.

By May 1849, the chief factor of Red River, John Ballenden, had had enough of the insolent Metis free traders, and the HBC brought Case 68, [A] 151 before the General Court of Assiniboia, in Red River. The charge against Guillaume Sayer and three other Metis *Gen Libres* of whom the HBC hoped they could make an example, was “Free Trading in Furs.”¹³ Sayer’s arrest and trial, along with Governor Christie’s responses to Metis petitions since 1845, greatly agitated the Metis of Red River and the Northwest.¹⁴ When the verdict of guilty was handed down, an angry group of 300 armed Metis, who had posted themselves on the steps of the courthouse, refused to surrender Sayer and his accomplices.¹⁵ Intimidated by the large crowd of Metis, no punishment was rendered to Sayer or his co-accused; they simply walked out of the courthouse as free men.¹⁶ Shouts of “*le commerce est libre!*” (free trade!) filled the streets of Red River, as the Metis show of arms had smashed—once and for all—the HBC monopoly on trade in the Northwest.¹⁷ Historian A. A. Den Otter illustrates the impact of the Metis economy at the time of the trial:

[I]n the 1840s, the Metis, spurred on by young aggressive entrepreneurs, successfully challenged the Hudson’s Bay Company monopoly. The new free trade regime opened up the lucrative bison robe trade and provided a whole range of new economic opportunities, including processing the robes, freighting, and wage labour.¹⁸

Indeed, Bonhomme participated in the Metis cause by petitioning Governor Christie throughout the 1840s. Bonhomme’s position as a “Chief” of the Metis would express itself again a few kilometres to the south of Red River, in Dakota country in Minnesota.

¹³ Dale Gibson eds., “May 17, 1849 – General Quarterly Court of Assiniboia Records, 1848-54,” *Law, Life, and Government at Red River: Volume 2* (Kingston: Queens University Press, 2015), 113-116. *Gen Libres* is the Michif or French way to say “Free trader.”

¹⁴ Spry, “The Metis and Mixed-bloods of Rupert’s Land,” 109.

¹⁵ Gibson, *Law, Life, and Government at Red River: volume 2*, 116.

¹⁶ “Sayer Trial,” *Historica Canada*, (Ottawa, 2016), Web. (Date Accessed: July 15, 2016).

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/sayer-trial/>

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ A. A. Den, Otter, *Civilizing the Wilderness: Culture and Nature in Pre-Confederation Canada and Rupert’s Land* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2012), 293.

An 1850 report by U.S. Major Samuel Woods describes a meeting of Chippewa Metis in advance of a treaty signing during which Bonhomme again emerged as a “Metis Chief” fighting for the sovereignty of Lii Michif:

I urged them to organize themselves into a band, and appoint their chiefs that they might have some order and government amongst themselves with chiefs...On the 24th of August these people had returned from their spring [bison] hunt, and 200 of the hunters came to see me. They had appointed four men as their speakers. I told them that in virtue of their Indian extraction, those living on our side of the line were regarded as being in possession of Indians' right upon our soil...and that they formed [an independent tribe] for themselves. I urged them to organize themselves into a band under a council of chiefs, invested with ample authority to act in their name, in all matters which might arise to affect their interests.¹⁹

The Metis chose Robert “Bonhomme” Montour as one of nine Metis chiefs to be on a council headed by Jean Baptiste Wilke, lead signatory of the Pembina Treaty of 1850.²⁰ With the Pembina Treaty, the U.S. government acknowledged the existence of a Pembina Band of Chippewa Indians. By the 1850s, members of the Montour family could be found across the central United States and in the Canadian Northwest.²¹ They appear in records from Pembina, North Dakota, to Fort Owen, Hell Gate, and Frenchtown, in Montana, and into the Saskatchewan district. Judging by the family’s residency in many western locations, as indicated in census records and Major Wood’s observations, the Montours were a bison hunting family who travelled widely and whose economy, freedom, and governance revolved around pemmican provisioning, the bison government, free trade, and the sale of robes. Today, oral histories in the Morrissette-Arcand family tell that Bonhomme was an ancestral grandfather who helped found the Metis people and that he is important to remember, but not much else is known of Bonhomme’s experiences after 1850 other than the details of his death. However, his son

¹⁹ Major Samuel Woods, *Pembina Settlement*, Executive Document No. 51, House of Representatives, 31st Congress, 1st Session in Nicholas C. P. Vrooman, “*The Whole Country was... ‘One Robe’*”: *The Little Shell Tribe’s America* (Little Shell: The Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana and Drumlummon Institute, 2012), 98

²⁰ Barkwell, “Robert ‘Bonhomme’ Montour (b. 1787),” and Vrooman, “*The Whole Country was... ‘One Robe,’*” 98.

²¹ Vrooman, “*The Whole Country was... ‘One Robe,’*” 68.

Abraham Sr. (generation B) does show up extensively in historical records from the 1820s and onwards.

Abraham Montour Sr. and Marie Page (Generation B)



Figure 5: The Montour family. Marie Page (x over her head) in old age. Abraham does not appear in the photograph. Family photograph courtesy of Yvonne Richer-Morrisette.

Abraham Montour Sr. is the first Morrisette-Arcand ancestor from what I am calling generation B to be profiled in this thesis. Fitting his life into Metis society between the years 1821 and 1868 provides context to the loss of sovereignty, movement, and free trade endured by the Morrisette-Arcand clan after 1869. To begin, Abraham Sr. was born in Pembina, North Dakota, on March 18, 1832. The 1860 census lists Abraham as a seasonal “voyageur,” twenty-

five years of age, “Mulatto” (an American term for mixed ancestry) and married to Marie Page.²² Marie Page was the Roman Catholic Metis daughter of French voyageur Joseph Page (b. 1782, d. 1838) and “Indian” Agathe Letandre (b. 1789, d. 1846).²³ Records show that Marie was born in 1835 in Red Deer, Northwest Territories (NWT), and, given her father’s profession, she was likely born in her mother’s homeland in Alberta while her parents were delivering provisions northward from the Bow River near what is today Calgary to Fort Edmonton.²⁴ Abraham Sr. and Marie benefited from the political freedom and independent trade secured by Abraham Sr.’s father, Bonhomme, as the younger was issued Scrip #274 (160 acres) in the 1870s under the Red Lake and Pembina Treaty.²⁵ Scrip was used to extinguish Metis land title by awarding a certificate redeemable for a 160- or 240-acre allotment of land or for money. It was a way for the U.S. and Canadian governments to extinguish Metis Aboriginal title to land rather than negotiate collective treaty rights, as these governments would do with some First Nations peoples.²⁶ Prior to taking scrip, Marie and Abraham Sr. spent many years on the Plains as independent bison hunters. Abraham’s absence from HBC employee records suggests the couple were freemen

²² Abraham Montour, *1860; Census: Pembina, Unorganized, Dakota Territory*. Roll: M653_94; Page: 50; Image: 53. Washington D.C., U.S.: National Archives and Records Administration. In the US today, the term “mullatos” refers to bi-racial peoples and is often used to refer to people of biracial African and European parentage or people of European and First Nations heritage. The term “Chippewa” also refers to people of Indigenous and European heritage, and should not be confused with the Canadian use of Chippewa to denote an Anishinaabee person.

²³ D. N. Sprague and R. P. Frye, “Genealogy of Red River Households, 1818-1870,” *The Genealogy of the First Metis Nation* (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications Inc., 1983), table 1.

²⁴ “Marie Page,” National Archives Scrip Record, RG15, volume 1362, claim no. 1150, Library and Archives of Canada (LAC). The files includes the following details: Page, Marie; address: Batoche; born: 1835 at Red Deer; father: Joseph Page (French Canadian); mother: Agathe Letendre (Metis); married: 1853 at Pembina to Abraham Montour Sr; children living: 9; children deceased: 2; scrip for \$160.00. See also Jesse Thistle, “The 1885 Northwest Resistance: Causes to the Conflict,” *History and Political Science Journal* 3 (2014), 5. <http://hpsj.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/hpsj/article/view/39584/35870>

²⁵ Gail Morin, “Abraham Montour,” *Turtle Mountain Chippewa, Pembina Band; Annuity Payments and Census* (Orange Park: Quinton Publications, 2000), 65.

²⁶ Frank Tough and Erin McGregor, “The Rights to the Land May be Transferred: Archives Records as Colonial Text—A Narrative of Metis Scrip,” *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Literature Comparee* 34, 1 (2011): 34-36.

provisioners and robe suppliers who hunted in Alberta near her homelands.²⁷ More specifically, Abraham and Marie's brigade may have supplied his *Gens Libre* (free Trading Metis) uncle, Nicholas Montour Jr., who worked directly, but periodically, for fur trader Alexander Ross of the HBC in the Snake River region of Jasper, Alberta.²⁸ A journal entry by Ross in February 1824 names Nicholas Jr. as the "head of Fort des Prairies half-breeds [old name of Fort Edmonton]" an observation that suggests Nicholas Jr. was the head of, or connected to, the Montour bison brigade in Alberta in the 1820s and 1830s.²⁹ An 1843 journal entry by HBC Chief Trader Archibald McDonald records himself and Nicholas Jr. taking "an assortment of trading goods...to Henry's Forks, Great Salt Lake, Green River or any other part of the Snake Country," goods McDonald reports they got from local Alberta "Freemen or Indians."³⁰ Perhaps the freemen and Indians McDonald refers to were relatives of Nicholas Jr. Perhaps they were Marie's maternal kin and the rest of the Montour brigade who had travelled west thousands of kilometres, all the way from Pembina, North Dakota, or Red River, to hunt. These suggestions, however, remain uncertain, as historical records relating to Abraham's and Marie's lives and their Montour kin prior to 1874 are lacking, given their mobile bison hunting lifestyle, thus making it difficult to pin point their activities. Four things, however, are certain about the Montours' lives during this period: (1) Abraham Sr. and Marie enjoyed economic prosperity as freeman bison hunters who traded independently with the HBC in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Montana, Pembina, and Red River. (2) The Montour brigade enjoyed political sovereignty won

²⁷ Lawrence Barkwell, *Veterans and Families of the 1885 Northwest Resistance* (Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2011), 184-85 and Sprague and Frye, *The Genealogy of the First Metis Nation*, table 3. Over his lifetime, Abraham held no contracted employment with the HBC.

²⁸ Nicholas Montour Jr., "HBCA Biographical Sheets: HBC Employee Archives," file B.239/g/62/fo.57; A.34/1/fo.56. HBCA.

https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/biographical/m/montour_nicholas.pdf

²⁹ HBRS, vol. IV, pp/#8; 297-298; 350. HBCA (Date accessed: July 15, 2015).

³⁰ "Chief Trader Archibald McDonald's Letter Book - 1834," A/B/20/72M, HBCA, on *Royal BC Museum*, (Vancouver, 2015), Web (Date Accessed: July 16, 2016). <http://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/staffprofiles/2013/07/23/who-knew/>

by the efforts of Bonhomme and the four Metis chiefs in 1815 and during the Sayer trial. (3) Abraham and Marie and their extended family lived by and were politically organized around the independent-yet-regimented governance system of the bison brigades. (4) The Montour bison brigade travelled freely across vast distances as they followed the bison from Red River and Pembina to Alberta and vice versa. Still, Abraham Sr. and Marie appear extensively in the historical record after 1870, during the years when the Metis were dispossessed of their lands and economy. The root of Morrissette-Arcand intergenerational trauma will become clearer by examining this loss of mobility, economy, and sovereignty in Section Two of this thesis.

Pierre Belanger (Generation A)

The next person I will investigate to uncover the source of the Morrissette-Arcand intergenerational trauma is my three times great-grandfather, Pierre Belanger. Pierre's great-grandson, Jeremie Morrissette, married Nancy Arcand, the granddaughter of Abraham Sr. and Marie. Pierre's life spans the 1821-to-1869 time period of prosperity and contextualizing it will help us comprehend Metis historic trauma after 1870. Pierre Belanger, known as Chief Mistawasis, "Big Child," or "Iron Buffalo" to the Cree, was a Metis born in 1796 at Slave Lake, in what is now Alberta.³¹ Today, because of his political activism, he is perhaps the most well-known and celebrated figure in the Morrissette-Arcand family tree. The origins of Mistawasis's birth remain shrouded, but historian Heather Devine believes he was half-French and half-Cree.³² Furthermore, Macdougall possibly describes Mistawasis' father when she notes that a French

³¹ Lawrence Barkwell, "Mistawasis, Pierre Belanger (1796-1875)," *Gabriel Dumont Institute of Applied Research*, (Saskatchewan, 2016) Web. (Date accessed: July 16, 2016)

<http://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/13514.Pierre%20Belanger%20Mistawasis2.pdf>

³² Devine, *The People Who Own Themselves*, 232.

trader named Belanger left behind many children in the Île-à-la-Crosse region.³³ Oblate Father Le Chevalier stated in 1934 that the two great chiefs of the Carleton district, Ahtahkakoop and Mistawasis, were “‘half-breeds,’ Mistawasis was also called Pierre Belanger.”³⁴



Figure 6: Ahtahkakoop (Chief Starblanket) bottom left and Pierre Belanger (Chief Mistawasis) bottom right Saskatchewan Archive Board, R-B2837.

³³ Macdougall, *One of the Family*, 44.

³⁴ Father Le Chevalier, interview by Dr. D. G. Mandelbaum, Duck lake Agency/Carlton Agency, Saskatchewan, July 18, 1934, IH-DM.23, Transcript Disc #135 on *oURspace* (Regina, 2016) Web. (Date Accessed: July 16, 2016) <http://ourspace.uregina.ca/bitstream/handle/10294/1734/IH-DM.23.pdf?sequence=1>

A 1934 interview with Cree Joe Wolf, an interpreter for Mistawasis, describes the Chief's diplomacy, his marital status, and his profession as a bison hunter and freighter:

Mistawasis himself was a Half-breed [and] a freighter for the Hudson's Bay Company...He had two wives at the same time. They were sisters. He once said to me, "I didn't kill many Blackfeet. I hate to kill a man. Any place I go, I try to do my best and everybody likes me then and I get a bunch of young fellows to follow me."³⁵

Mistawasis's official HBC work record confirms Wolf's observations, as in 1852/53 the Chief is listed as a "Hunter" at Carlton House, Saskatchewan, and the following June he is again recorded as a "freeman" at Carlton.³⁶ Earlier, in 1833, Mistawasis appears for the first time in the HBC journals, where he is recorded to be moving horses between Carlton House and Battleford along the Carlton Trail.³⁷ Carlton House, it should be remembered, sat astride the east-west Carlton Trail that connected Red River to Fort Edmonton and was the major overland Metis cart trail in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.³⁸ Understanding where Fort Carlton was located is important because Mistawasis's father—the unknown Belanger—would have used an arm of the trail and travelled through the Île-à-la-Crosse region of Saskatchewan to Fort Edmonton, right alongside Mistawasis's birthplace in Slave Lake. What is more, a grandson of Mistawasis, Isadore Ledoux, reconfirmed Belanger family mobility along the Carlton Trail when he said in a 1973 interview that his grandfather was "a Frenchman, from Fort Gary. And he had settled at Batoche...And it so happened he was not an Indian. He was my grandfather, he was a Boulanger...And he had two brothers, there were two brothers that came from Fort Garry to Batoche [Carlton Agency]...He married an Indian woman and he followed her ways...Well he

³⁵ Joe Wolf, interview by Dr. D. G. Mandelbaum, Saskatchewan, July 21, 1934, IH-MD.28, Transcript Disc # 133 on *oURspace* (Regina, 2016) Web. (Date Accessed: July 16, 2016)

<http://ourspace.uregina.ca/bitstream/handle/10294/1738/IH-DM.28.pdf?sequence=1>

³⁶ Pierre Belanger, "HBCA Biographical Sheets: HBC Employee Archives," B.239/u/2, fo. 12. HBCA.

³⁷ Deanna Christensen, *Ahtahkakoop: The Epic Account of a Plains Cree Head Chief, His People, and Their Struggle for Survival* (Ahtahkakoop First Nation: Ahtahkakoop Publishing, 2000), 76.

³⁸ Brehaut, "The Red River Cart and Trails: The Fur Trade."

turned Native.”³⁹ According to his grandson Peter Dreever, Mistawasis earned his position as chief because of his strong free trade connections with the HBC. Dreever explains that Mistawasis provided Fort Carlton, the HBC’s main fort in Saskatchewan, with bison meat, robes, and hides year-round:

[Pierre] was a great help for the Hudson’s Bay Co. In those days the Co. was the boss of the country for they controlled the goods. The Indian headman ‘Kitciyinu’ helped them keep order and were duly rewarded [with Chieftainships]. Mistawasis was such an H.B. Co. man.⁴⁰

An 1835 journal entry records when Mistawasis began officially supplying Carlton House with bison meat and robes. On May 23, 1835, he was hired by a trader named “Prudel” to “hunt buffalo for the [Carlton] post.”⁴¹ In his interview Dreever recalled his childhood in the 1860s, highlighting his family’s prosperity and healthy living, the abundance of bison, as well as the doting of his politically powerful grandfather:

In those days we ate meat only and were healthy....I was Mistawasis’s first grandchild and I lived as much in his tipi as I did in my own...[We] lived in tipis which were always clean, more healthful than the houses we now have...I was very much spoiled; they gave me anything I wanted.⁴²

Exactly when Mistawasis became Chief of the House Cree—*Waskahigauinisuk*— is not clear, but a January 1863 account records him as “Chief ‘Child’” in charge of many Cree lodges.⁴³

Dreever describes the political power Mistawasis held by outlining that his grandfather’s territory “extended from Ft. Pitt to Green Lake to The Pas,” an area of some 67,878.508 square

³⁹ Isadore Ledoux, interview by Carol Pearlstone, Leask, Saskatchewan, July 21, 1973, Tape Number IH-133, Transcript Disc #23 on *oURspace* (Regina, 2016) Web. (Date Accessed: July 16, 2016) <http://ourspace.uregina.ca/bitstream/handle/10294/2216/IH-133.pdf?sequence=1>

⁴⁰ Kakiceniupimuxteu “Walks Like An Old Man” or Napetcos, Peter Dreever, interview by Dr. D. G. Mandelbaum, Saskatchewan, July 18, 1934, IH-DM.24, Transcript Disc #135 on *oURspace* (Regina, 2016) Web. (Date accessed: July 16, 2016)

<http://ourspace.uregina.ca/bitstream/handle/10294/1734/IH-DM.23.pdf?sequence=1>

⁴¹ “Carlton House Journal,” May 23, 1835, B.27/a/21, folio 30, HBCA, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, cited in Christensen, *Ahtahkakoop*, 76.

⁴² Kakiceniupimuxteu “Walks Like An Old Man” or Napetcos, Peter Dreever, interview by Dr. D. G. Mandelbaum.

⁴³ Devine, *The People Who Own Themselves*, 128 and Interview, Dr. D. G. Mandelbaum with Kakiceniupimuxteu “Walks Like An Old Man” or Napetcos - Peter Dreever. Peter says *Waskahigauinisuk* means “a settlement of houses [tipis]” because Mistawasis’ people live near or at least met a [Fort Carlton seasonally].”

kilometres that includes most of what is today central Saskatchewan.⁴⁴ Cree oral histories describe the bravery and endurance that, no doubt, helped Mistawasis move into the position of “Grand Chief of the Plains Cree”:

It was said once, when Mistawasis was chasing a herd of buffalo, his horse “stumbled and threw himself onto the horns of a buffalo bull, which proceeded to throw him up into the air, but he eventually escaped without having sustained any great injury, and when his friends discovered that he was alive and unhurt they gave him the name of ‘Iron Buffalo’”⁴⁵

Mistawasis was one of two Grand Chiefs of the Plains Cree. The other was Mistawasis’s close friend and relative Ahtahkakoop (the other “half-breed” who lived as an appointed Cree Chief). Mistawasis practised polygamy and had four wives: Ann Awasis Iskwehis (b. 1806, d. 1903), Julie Mashe-nah-sho-wishk (no dates recorded), Iskwehis Sitipinatowe (no dates recorded), and Mary Jane Sikipinatowe (b. 1807, d. 1901).⁴⁶ Having four wives was not uncommon among Cree chiefs of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as polygamy and large families were a mark of status and prestige in First Nations plains societies.⁴⁷ One of Mistawasis’s daughters, Jane Belanger, married Plains Cree Chief Ermineskin, who was a brother-in-law to Chief Poundmaker.⁴⁸ Through this kinship link Poundmaker would respect “Uncle” Mistawasis throughout his life, a *wahkootawin* bond that afforded Mistawasis both authority and esteem among the Plains Cree. The twelve children born to Mistawasis and his four wives are too numerous to profile individually here, but it is important to note that many of them married into leading Cree families, as well as into local Metis bison hunting, suppling, and freighting kin

⁴⁴ Kakiceniupimuxteu “Walks Like An Old Man” or Napetcos, Peter Dreever, interview by Dr. D. G. Mandelbaum.

⁴⁵ Christensen, *Ahtahkakoop*, 76.

⁴⁶ Research of Cree Elder from Mistawasis First Nation, Ed Ledoux. Ledoux is also descended from the Dreaver line of Chiefs at Mistawasis and is held to be the community oral historian; and Sarah Carter, *Unsettling Past: Reconceiving the West through Women’s History* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2005), 175.

⁴⁷ Egerton Ryerson Young, *By Canoe and Dog-Train among the Cree and Salteaux Indians* (New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1890), 122.

⁴⁸ Heather Devine, “Aboriginal Naming Practices,” *The People Who Own Themselves: University of Calgary Press Website*, (2016) Web. (Date Accessed: July 20, 2016). <http://people.ucalgary.ca/~hdevine/naming.htm>

groups. Historian Heather Devine writes that Mistawasis's sons and daughters married into the politically elite Metis families of Piche, Cardinal, Boucher, Howse, Ledoux, and Morrissette, among others, and all were in some way connected to the bison trade around Fort Carlton.⁴⁹ Marriage, to judge from the pattern of union-making employed by Mistawasis's children, was a way to increase the Belanger family's political domain in Saskatchewan, a powerbase that had its roots in the bison trade.⁵⁰

Isabelle "Mista" Belanger (Generation B)

To continue my investigation of the Morrissette-Arcand family, I now turn to one child of Mistawasis and his wife Ann Awasis Iskwehis: Isabelle "Mista" Belanger (generation B). Her life is important because it straddles the period when Plains Metis went from prosperous and independent to marginalized and dispossessed. Isabelle "Mista" Belanger is my two times great-grandmother. Isabelle endured the traumatic events that followed 1869 and 1885, along with her father, mother, husband, and all their children and extended kin. A 1901 census of Mistawasis First Nations band in Saskatchewan lists Isabelle as "fifty-nine," "Cree f b" (i.e., French Blood Cree, which is to say, a Metis person), Catholic, and born in Red River, Manitoba, in 1842.⁵¹ Given Isabelle's place of birth, Mistawasis's wife Ann Awasis Iskwehis must have travelled down the Carlton Trail with Mistawasis "the freighter Chief" to be near his kin in Red River, which, again, underscores the mobility of the Belanger-Ledoux family prior to 1869. What is more, the sojourn shows Ann Awasis's commitment to her role as a bison goods manufacturer,

⁴⁹ Devine, "Aboriginal Naming Practices" and Ryerson, *By Canoe and Dog-Train*, 122.

⁵⁰ Devine, "Aboriginal Naming Practices."

⁵¹ Census Place: Mistawasis Reservation, Carlton Agency, Saskatchewan, the Territories. *Census of Canada, 1901*. Canada. RG31, Library and Archives Canada. "Cree f b" was how Metis were recorded by the census in 1901 if the person in question was of mixed-race ancestry but spoke French.

free trader, and diplomat.⁵² This commitment becomes all the more clear when we consider that Anne travelled 821 kilometres overland from the Carlton District to Fort Garry while pregnant. In the 1901 federal census records, Isabelle’s husband is listed as Joseph “Toomatoon” Ledoux Sr. (see generation B), 61, Metis, Catholic, and born in 1840 in the United States.⁵³ Oblate missionary accounts record Joseph Sr. and Isabelle as having fourteen children: Louis (b. 1867), Marianne (b. 1869 and profiled later), Joseph (b. 1870), Alexandre (no birthdate recorded), Johnnie (no birthdate recorded), Isadore (no birthdate recorded), Josie (b. 1875), Joe (b. 1877), Napoleon (no birthdate recorded), Julie (no birthdate recorded), Isabelle (b. 1884), Marie-Rose (b. 1885), Josephine (b. 1888), and Melasuppe (b. 1889).⁵⁴ Joseph Sr. was probably born in the Montana wintering grounds of the Ledoux bison brigade, which hunted bison around the Missouri and Milk Rivers in Montana, near Fort Assiniboine.⁵⁵ The research of Cree Elder Ed Ledoux, a descendant of Joseph Sr. and Isabelle, however, places Joseph Sr.’s birth in Red River in 1835 in the Parish of St. Francois Xavier, where his parents lived seasonally.⁵⁶ Confirming where Joseph Sr. was born—Red River or Montana—will require further investigation.

The location of the Ledoux bison winter grounds can be determined by looking at two streams of historical data: (1) South of the border, the Ledoux name changes to “Ladue” and by 1901 shows up extensively in the Rocky Boy Indian-Metis reservation enrolment lists in north-

⁵² Emilie Pigeon and Carolyn Podruchny. “Challenging Patriarchal Myopia: Women’s Roles in Governance and Diplomacy among Nineteenth-Century Plains Metis Bison Hunters,” *Paper in circulation* (Toronto): 1.

⁵³ Census Place: Devil Lake, Saskatchewan, the Territories, Canada. *Census of Canada, 1901*. RG31, T-6428 to T-6556.

⁵⁴ “Ledoux, (John) Toomatoon,” *The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate Records on Metis family Genealogy: L Families (Ledoux)*, L-63c, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

⁵⁵ Isadore Ledoux, interview by Carol Pearlstone, Leask, Saskatchewan, July 21, 1973, Tape Number IH-133, Transcript Disc #23 on *oURspace* (Regina, 2016) Web. (Date Accessed: July 16, 2016) <http://ourspace.uregina.ca/bitstream/handle/10294/2216/IH-133.pdf?sequence=1>

⁵⁶ Blanche Morrisette with Ed Ledoux, interview by the author, Mistawasis Reservation, Saskatchewan, July 2, 2014.

central Montana.⁵⁷ (2) Contemporary oral history from the accounts of Cree on Mistawasis First Nations reserve remember the Ledouxes as a bison hunting family that travelled regularly to Harve, Montana, near Rocky Boy Reserve and the Missouri River.⁵⁸ Indeed, the Ledoux bison brigade went even farther afield and moved between Red River, Saskatchewan, and Montana for generations prior to 1869 and 1880, according to Isabelle's and Toomatoon's son Isadore.⁵⁹ Given their connection to Metis-Cree headman Mistawasis and their marriages into elite families, Joseph Sr. and Isabelle and the rest of the Ledouxes were likely wealthy free traders operating in Saskatchewan and beyond. Accordingly, one can assume that the clan supplied and traded bison robes and pemmican with the *Waskahigauinisuk* (House Cree) at Fort Carlton and Fort Assiniboine up until the disappearance of the bison in the 1880s. The Ledoux family—Mistawasis, Joseph Sr., Isabelle, and the rest of their kin—figure prominently in the next chapter of this thesis, the Metis dispossessions after 1869. Specifically, the Ledouxes play major roles in the negotiation of Treaty Six in 1876 and the 1885 Battle of Batoche. The most important thing to note about the Ledouxes during the time period prior to 1869 is that they were successful bison hunters who traded freely as middlemen and they enjoyed political sovereignty given their marriages into elite Plains Cree and Metis families in the Saskatchewan district.

Norbert Morrisette Sr. and Elizabeth “Betsy” Braconnier (Generation B)

The next family in this generation (generation B) I will examine is the direct Morrisette line, beginning with Norbert Morrisette Sr. Placing the Morrisettes within the 1821-to-1869 time frame will highlight the mobility, free trade, and sovereignty the Metis enjoyed until the

⁵⁷ Nicholas C. P. Vrooman, “*The Whole Country was... ‘One Robe’*”: *The Little Shell Tribe’s America* (Little Shell: The Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana and Drumlummon Institute, 2012), 303.

⁵⁸ Blanche Morrisette with Ed Ledoux, interview by the author.

⁵⁹ Isadore Ledoux, interview by the author.

Riel Resistances of 1869 and 1885. Examining the loss of these three foundations will illuminate the source of the Morrissette-Arcand intergenerational trauma in Section Two. To start, Norbert Morrissette Sr. was a Metis born in St. Vital Parish, Red River Settlement, in 1829.⁶⁰ Norbert's father was Frenchman Arsene Morrissette (b. 1795, d. 1885), who came to Red River from Montreal, Quebec.⁶¹ Arsene farmed four acres at St. Norbert's Parish, Red River, on lot 123 in 1835.⁶² Arsene's wife was Therese Lalonde (probably Anishinabek), and together the couple raised three boys: Arsene Jr. (b. 1825), Jean Baptiste (b. 1828), and Norbert Sr. (b. 1838). On lot 123 Arsene and Therese husbanded seven head of cattle, owned two farm implements (harrows and ploughs), and drove one Red River cart.⁶³ Given his lack of HBC employment, Arsene was likely a seasonal agriculturalist who taught his three sons how to farm (the Morrissette sons all went on to practise farming in some form after 1840).⁶⁴ Arsene may have also periodically freighted with Therese, as suggested by his single cart, a common practice among Metis semi-agriculturalists at Red River after 1821.

Arsene and Therese's son, Norbert Sr., seems to have carried on his father's profession as a seasonal farmer at Red River.⁶⁵ The Oblates compendium on Metis families states that Norbert Sr.'s wife was Elizabeth "Betsy" Braconnier (generation B), a Metis woman born at Red River in

⁶⁰ Lawrence Barkwell, "Maria Campbell, O.C., S. O. M. (b. 1940)," *Gabriel Dumont Institute of Applied Research*. (Saskatchewan, 2016) Web. (Date accessed: July 16, 2016) http://www.metismuseum.ca/media/db/11900_and Census Place: Prince Albert, Territories, Northwest Territories. *Census of Canada*, 1881. Roll: C_13285; Page 16; Family No: 72. Library and Archive Canada and "Jean Baptiste Morrissette - Scrip affidavit," *Metis and Original White Settlers Affidavits*. R190-43-X-E, Microfilm reel C-14931. Library and Archives Canada.

⁶¹ Census Place: Prince Albert, Territories, Northwest Territories. *Census of Canada*, 1881.

⁶² D. N. Sprague and R. P. Frye, "Family Size, Personal Property, and Geographical Location of Landowners, 1835," *The Genealogy of the First Metis Nation* (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications Inc., 1983), table 2.

⁶³ Gail Morin, *Metis Families: A Genealogical Compendium – Volume 4, Mainville to Pruden* (Pawtucket: Quintin Publications, 2001), 211.

⁶⁴ "Jean Baptiste Morrissette - Scrip affidavit," *Metis and Original White Settlers Affidavits*. R190-43-X-E. Library and Archives Canada.

⁶⁵ D. N. Sprague and R. P. Frye, "Contract Employees of the HBC Recruited from or retired to the Red River Colony, 1821-1870," *The Genealogy of the First Metis Nation* (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications Inc., 1983), table 3.

1838.⁶⁶ Together, Norbert Sr. and Betsy had thirteen children: Betsy Jr. (b. 1861), Norbert-Jean (b. 1863), Emery (b. 1865), Geordie (b. 1867 and profiled later in this thesis), Lorette (b. 1869), Jacques-Alexandre (b. 1871), Agnes (b. 1873), Vital (b. 1875), Elizar (b. 1877), Judith (b. 1879), Joseph (b. 1882), Adelaide (b. 1885), and Jean-Riel (b. 1888).⁶⁷ In between farming, from 1859 to 1862 Norbert Sr. was also a temporary labourer for the HBC. However, the nature of his work remains unclear, as his name only appears under the generic label of “labourer” in HBC employee sheets.⁶⁸ Case 255, held in the Quarterly Court at Red River on May 17, 1864, helps clarify the nature of Norbert Sr.’s seasonal employment, as his brother, Jean-Baptiste Morrissette, is recorded as being in the employ of HBC trader Andrew McDermot, at Red River Settlement, as a cattle farmer. As the case indicates, the Morrissette boys raised beef and hay for the HBC at Red River, supplying Fort Garry and the northern trade.⁶⁹ Norbert Sr. retired from intermittent employment with the HBC in 1862.⁷⁰

Cree oral history remembers the Morrissette line as Red River freighters who travelled biannually along the Carlton Trail from Red River—a recollection that is supported by four things in the historical written record: (1) Case 121 of the General Court of Assiniboia held on May 18, 1854, places the Morrissettes—the person in the case is Francois Morrissette—on a biannual bison journey returning from the plains before winter. The biannual pattern of seasonal travel suggests that the Morrissettes were out on the late fall bison cart train and returned to Red

⁶⁶ “Morrissette, Jean-Norbert,” *The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate Records on Metis family Genealogy: M Families (Morrissette)*, file M-33a. The Provincial Archives of Alberta and Census Place: Saskatchewan, Territories, Northwest Territories, *Census of Canada*, 1881. RG31, T-6290 to T-6427. Library and Archives Canada.

⁶⁷ “Morrissette, Jean-Norbert,” *The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate Records on Metis family Genealogy: M Families (Morrissette)*, file M33a, the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

⁶⁸ Sprague and Frye, *The Genealogy of the First Metis Nation*, table 3.

⁶⁹ Dale Gibson eds., “May 17, 1864 - General Quarterly Court of Assiniboia Records, 1848-54,” *Law, Life, and Government at Red River: volume 2* (Kingston: Queens University Press, 2015), 444.

⁷⁰ Sprague and Frye, *The Genealogy of the First Metis Nation*, table 3.

River before December.⁷¹ (2) The Morrisette family sojourned west after 1869 with their kin, and were bound to the region through kinship ties of *wahkootawin*. The 1881 census records Norbert Sr. as “farming” in the Prince Albert district of Saskatchewan with Betsy and six of their children and their extended Cree family.⁷² (3) The 1901 census shows that the son of Norbert Sr. and Betsy, Norbert-Jean, married into the politically powerful Starblanket and Belanger-Ledoux Metis-Cree families of the Saskatchewan country. These families were known bison hunters, free traders, and provisioners who ventured from Saskatchewan to and from Red River along the Carlton Trail.⁷³ Furthermore, Norbert-Jean Jr. married Judith Starblanket Jr. who was the daughter of the Grand Chief of the Plains Cree, Antoine Ahtahkakoop Starblanket and Judith Belanger Sr. Further integrating the Morrisettes into the Cree’s *wahkootawin* kinship web was the fact that Judith Sr. was the daughter of the other Grand Chief of the Plains Cree, Mistawasis, and his wife Anne Awasis.⁷⁴ Lastly (4), Norbert Sr.’s and Betsy’s son George “Geordie” Morrisette (generation C), the brother of Norbert-Jean Jr., married Marianne Ledoux (generation C), granddaughter of Chief Mistawasis and Anne Awasis.⁷⁵ Admittedly, the relationships outlined here are dizzying to comprehend, yet they are important to remember because they show that the Morrisette family had extensive trade and kinship connections to the Saskatchewan district before 1869. The family were seasonal Red River farmers who travelled the old east-west trade axis along the Carleton Trail. Thus, the Morrisette clan were a highly

⁷¹ Gibson eds., *Law, Life, and Government at Red River: volume 2*, 234.

⁷² Census Place: Prince Albert, Territories, Northwest Territories. *Census of Canada, 1881*. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Roll: C_13285; Page:16; Family No:72. Library and Archives Canada.

⁷³ Census Place: Devil Lake, Saskatchewan, the Territories. *Census of Canada, 1901*. RG31, T-6428 to T-6556. Library Archives Canada.

⁷⁴ Lawrence Barkwell, “Maria Campbell, O.C., S. O. M. (b. 1940).”

⁷⁵ Lawrence Barkwell, “Ledoux, Marianne (Morrisette),” *Veterans and Families of the 1885 Northwest Resistance*, (Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2011), 166.

mobile people who enjoyed a degree of free trade and independence through their marriage connections to Mistawasis and Ahtahkakoop.⁷⁶

Francois Regis Arcand and Philomene Berard (generation B)

Finally, I will present the history of the Arcand family, especially Francois Regis Arcand and his wife Philomene Berard (generation B), who lived between the years 1821 and 1869, as an example of Metis mobility and independence. Francois Regis Arcand was born at St. Francois Xavier, Red River Settlement, on December 20, 1840.⁷⁷ Francois's wife was Metis Philomene Berard, born at Red River Settlement in 1843.⁷⁸ The couple married on August 14, 1865, at St. Francois Xavier, Red River, in a Roman Catholic ceremony—the family would remain Catholic well into the twentieth century.⁷⁹ According to the Oblate and 1881 census records, Francois and Philomene had seven children: Marie (b. 1864), Genevieve (b. 1869), Jean-Baptiste (b. 1870), Victoire (b. 1874), St. Pierre (b. 1876), Jonas (b. 1878), Hyacinthe (b. 1880), and Nancy (b. 1883).⁸⁰ Francois's parents were Frenchman Joseph Arcand Sr. (b. 1793) and Metis Marie Vestreau dite Jeannot (b. 1805) (both generation A).⁸¹ Joseph Sr. and Marie were farmers at St. Francois Xavier Parish, in Red River Settlement, in 1835. Together, they farmed five acres on lot 154, owned one cart, and husbanded two cattle. Joseph Sr. and Marie were likely seasonal farmers, who, like the Morrissette clan, set out biannually in the spring or fall bison hunts from

⁷⁶ A 1908 ethnological report by John Ewars further underscores the mobility of the Morrissette clan as he extends their travel range to Montana, placing them on Rocky Boy reservation alongside the Metis families of the Ledouxes, Belcourts, Bushies, and Wells in Vrooman, "*The Whole Country was... 'One Robe,'*" 303.

⁷⁷ Census Place: Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, the Territories, Canada. *Census of Canada, 1881*. Series RG31-C-1. Family No.: 109 Page 12. Library and Archives Canada.

⁷⁸ Sprague and Frye, *The Genealogy of the First Metis Nation*, Table 1.

⁷⁹ Lawrence Barkwell, *Veterans and Families*, 51.

⁸⁰ Census Place: Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, Territories, Canada. *Census of Canada, 1891*, RG31, T-6290 to T-6427. Library and Archives Canada.

⁸¹ Lawrence Barkwell, *Veterans and Families*, 45.

Red River, as was common among Metis after 1821.⁸² It is probable that the Morrissettes and Arcands in generation A knew each other and hunted together, given the small population of Red River in the 1830s and the fact that the clans stayed together for some eighty years after 1869.⁸³ Joseph Sr., according to his fur trade work record, was a NWC employee—no profession listed, but it is assumed he was a voyageur from 1818 to 1821.⁸⁴ Later HBC journals place Joseph Sr. as working on the Lower Red River district from Pembina settlement south towards St. Paul Minnesota between the years 1821 and 1824.⁸⁵ During the years 1824 to 1831, Joseph Sr. is explicitly cited as a “labourer” in his HBC work sheet, a role he performed at the posts of York Factory, Swan River, and Island Lake.⁸⁶ These waterway locations lay along the old north-south HBC trade axis and would have given the Arcand family strong commercial and kin connections with the Metis bison hunting families at Pembina and Turtle Mountain, as well as Metis free traders around HBC forts on Hudson Bay, Île-à-la-Crosse, and further north in the Athabasca.⁸⁷ In 1831 Joseph Sr. and Marie retired to the Red River Settlement, where they raised their family.⁸⁸ Sources are unclear as to exactly how many children Joseph and Marie had, but for the purposes of this thesis I will focus on the direct ancestors of the Morrissette-Arcand clan: Francois Arcand and his wife, Philomene Berard (generation B).

Three of Francois’s brothers—Joseph Jr. (b. 1833) Alexandre (b. 1838), and Baptiste (b. 1844)—were middlemen for the HBC at this time, meaning that each was “a labourer in the middle of a boat bending his back to the work of rowing, towing, and portaging” without formal

⁸² Sprague and Frye, *The Genealogy of the First Metis Nation*, Table 2.

⁸³ Maria Campbell, *Half-Breed* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited Inc., 1973), 23.

⁸⁴ Arcan[d], Joseph, “HBCA Biographical Sheets: HBC Employee Archives,” file 4/32a & b, fo. 977. HBCA.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, file b.239/g/61-63.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, A.32/20, fo. 339; B.239/g/65-67; B.239/g/68-69.

⁸⁷ D. Wayne Moodie, Victor P. Lytwyn, and Barry Kaye, “Trading Posts, 1774-1821,” *Historical Atlas of Canada: From the Beginning to 1800*, eds. R. Cole Harris and Geoffrey J. Matthews (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), plate 62.

⁸⁸ Arcan[d], Joseph, “HBCA Biographical Sheets: HBC Employee Archives,” file b.239/g/71; B.239/u/1, HBCA.

contract.⁸⁹ The brothers benefited directly from and contributed to the freedom of commerce affirmed during the 1849 Sayer trial as they transitioned from “middlemen” to “freemen.”⁹⁰ Accordingly, by 1850 Joseph Jr.’s free trade connections were well established and went from Fort Lac la Pluie, near Lake Superior, to the western Saskatchewan Rivers and beyond.⁹¹ Alexandre, another of Francois’s brothers, became a freeman shortly after 1850.⁹² Lastly, Baptiste, the youngest of Francois’s brothers, worked as an HBC middleman beginning in 1864 in Saskatchewan, moved to the Athabasca in 1865, and retired a freeman to Red River in the 1860s.⁹³ The Arcand brothers maintained east-west trade connections that extended from Lake Superior, to the Red River, up through the Île-à-la-Crosse region, and into the Athabasca via the Methy portage.⁹⁴ Their brother Francois and his wife, Philomene, while seasonal farmers at St. Francois Xavier, resided in the centre of a vast web of waterway-trade that spread out in every direction from Red River. Francois and Philomene have no HBC work record, but it can be assumed that they were free traders, like Francois’ brothers, and together they enjoyed a measure of political sovereignty and economic freedom. Most of the Arcands introduced in this section will be discussed in Section Two—the dispossession of the Metis after 1869—as the Arcands were active in the Resistances of 1869 and 1885.

⁸⁹ Historians Sprague and Frye caution readers to be aware that “middlemen” during the Age of Prosperity should not be confused with a “go-between” or middleman retailer of the early fur trade.⁸⁹ The duo notes that the vocation “middleman” after 1821 meant a lower level spring-through-fall position that was almost always performed by Metis without formal contract. In Sprague and Frye, *The Genealogy of the First Metis Nation*, 33-34.

⁹⁰ Lawrence Barkwell, *Veterans and Families*, 45.

⁹¹ Arcan[d], Joseph, “HBCA Biographical Sheets: HBC Employee Archives,” B.239/g/95-96, B.239/g/97-98. HBCA.

⁹² Lawrence Barkwell, *Veterans and Families*, 45.

⁹³ Arcan[d] Baptiste, “HBCA Biographical Sheets: HBC Employee Archives,” B.239/g/104; B.239/g/105; B.239/g/107-108. HBCA.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, B.239/g/104; B.239/g/105; B.239/g/107-108 and D. Wayne Moodie, Victor P. Lytwyn, and Barry Kaye, “Trading Posts, 1774-1821,” *Historical Atlas of Canada: From the Beginning to 1800*, eds. R. Cole Harris and Geoffrey J. Matthews (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), plate 62.

This chapter has placed the ancestral generation B lines of the Montours, Belangers, Ledouxes, Arcands, and Morrissettes into the 1821-to-1869 time frame and emphasizes their free trade, movement over vast distances, and political sovereignty. I began by contextualizing the lives of Bonhomme Montour and his wife, Josette Spence, who were identified as mobile freemen bison hunters in the early nineteenth century. The couple and their family set out biannually on the bison hunts from Pembina and Red River to Alberta. Bonhomme also featured prominently in Chapters One and Two—the Metis ethnogenesis—as he was one of the four half-breed chiefs who affirmed the rights to free-trade and political sovereignty for the Lii Michif in the Metis Treaty of 1815. Bonhomme fought for Metis freedom, trade, and political autonomy his whole life. He helped smash the HBC monopoly during the Sayer trial of 1849, and he secured treaty rights for North Dakota Metis in 1850. After Bonhomme, I introduced his son, Abraham Sr., and his wife, Marie Page (generation B), and illustrated how this family moved over vast distances as part of the Montour bison brigade, primarily in Montana and Alberta. Abraham Sr. and Marie enjoyed economic freedom and political sovereignty, afforded in large part by the prestige of Abraham’s father, as well as the regimented governance structure of the bison brigade. The next generation B family covered was the Belanger-Ledoux clan, beginning with the “Half-breed-turned-Indian” Pierre Belanger, also known as “Big Child,” “Iron Buffalo,” or “Chief Mistawasis.” Mistawasis’s political power as one of two Grand Chiefs of the House Cree was rooted in his “freeman” trade connections at Fort Carlton, made possible by his mobile and prosperous lifestyle as a bison hunter in Saskatchewan. Mistawasis’s children furthered his political power by marrying into the elite Cree families of Poundmaker and Ahtahkakoop, as well as into the Metis bison hunting families of Piche, Cardinal, Boucher, Howse, and Ledoux. I then looked at Mistawasis’s daughter Isabelle “Mista” and her husband, Joseph Sr. “Toomatoon”

Ledoux (generation B), and described how their family hunted bison and traded freely in Montana and Saskatchewan. Again, as bison hunters and freemen they benefited from the Treaty of 1815 and the Sayer trial of 1849, as well as from Mistawasis's extensive political connections. The direct line of the Morrissettes, on the other hand, began with Arsene and Therese, seasonal Red River farmers and part-time free traders. Like them, their son Norbert Sr. and his wife, Elizabeth (generation B), were seasonal farmers, as was Norbert's brother Jean-Baptiste. The couple were also freighters who travelled the Carlton Trail because their children had married into the Starblanket and Belanger-Ledoux families and therefore had access to that region through kin connections. The Morrissettes married into the Belanger-Ledoux *wahkootawin* kinship web, which was centred in Saskatchewan around Fort Carlton. Lastly, turning attention to the Arcands, I have focused on the lives of Francois Regis Arcand and Philomene Berard (generation B). Unlike the other Metis families profiled thus far, the Arcands' trade connections relied mainly on water travel. The Arcand web of trade was superimposed on the old north-south and east-west riverine trade axes that ran through Red River. The Arcand brothers—Joseph Jr., Alexandre, and Baptiste and their wives, whose labour is largely undocumented in the historical record—secured and maintained economic relations that ran across huge stretches of territory. Given that the Arcand brothers all became freemen shortly after the Sayer trial, I concluded that they benefited directly from the free trade won by this case, a freedom that was formally expressed in the Metis Treaty of 1815. By tracking the lives of the Montours, Belangers, Ledouxes, Arcands, and Morrissettes between the years 1821 and 1869, we see that freedom of economy, mobility, and sovereignty were pillars of their lives prior to 1869. In reconstructing the lives of the ancestral Morrissette-Arcand clan in generation B, I have reassembled Maria Campbell's "puzzle," which introduced this thesis: the Metis kin groups before they were

“thrown in the air” after 1869. The Metis dispossession that began in the 1870s restricted Metis mobility, usurped their independence and sovereignty, and circumscribed the traditional livelihoods of Metis in the Northwest. Together, these are at the root of Morrissette-Arcand intergenerational trauma.

Section Two—The Puzzle Destroyed

The Template: What is Intergenerational Trauma?

“[They] lifted it up, a way up, and then [they] tossed the puzzle in the air and it flew into 1,000,000 pieces.”

Maria Campbell, 2015.

In Section Two I begin tracking and evaluating how losing liberty, and freedom of trade and movement, traumatized the Metis after 1869. The second half of this thesis—Section Two (Chapters Five and Six)—will detail how the collapse of free trade, the disappearance of the bison, and the loss of their homelands and sovereignty impacted the Metis after 1870, causing intergenerational trauma in my Metis family—the Morrissette-Arcand clan (members of generations B and C). Chapter Five breaks down the tremendous impacts the transference of Rupertsland from Britain to the Dominion of Canada had on Metis life at Red River. Chapter Six tracks the lives of the Morrissette-Arcand family as they flee Red River and go west, only to have the bison disappear and their freedom taken away after the 1885 Northwest Resistance.

The following is an introduction to trauma theory, essentially a tool kit or set of templates I have employed to classify the Red River disposessions from 1869 to 1980, including the loss of Red River as a Metis homeland, the destruction of the bison, the end of the free trade economy and sovereignty after 1885, and the marginalization along the road allowances of northern Saskatchewan in the twentieth century as sites of historic trauma. These events and processes formed a constellation of historic trauma that instilled intergenerational trauma in the Morrissette-Arcand clan. Intergenerational trauma is defined by Lakota social worker and scholar Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart as cumulative trauma that is experienced by a

collective of people who have endured emotional and psychic [psychological] wounding over life times and across generations. It is inherited Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and it is a natural reaction to massive group trauma.¹ Anishinaabe scholar Peter Menzies states that intergenerational trauma expresses itself over generations “as anxiety disorders, mental health issues, alcohol and substance abuse, depression, suicide, low self-esteem, criminal activity, sexual abuse, loss of identity, child abandonment, misogyny, and many other serious social maladies that are significantly higher in Aboriginal communities than that of the general population of Canada.”² Brave Heart’s work chronicles transgenerational trauma among the Lakota whose ancestors fought in the American Indian Wars of the 1860s and were subsequently dispossessed of their lands and moved onto reservations. Central to Brave Heart’s argument is the directed attack on Lakota by the U.S. government, which used violence and official policy to steal their tribal territories. What is more, the Lakota, she asserts, were never allowed to publically grieve, as waves of invading settlers pushed them aside, discounting their suffering, and then made them invisible aliens in their own homeland.³ Menzies, on the other hand, focuses his scholarship on homeless Indigenous men who are impacted by intergenerational trauma. Specifically, he notes the “severing effect” intergenerational trauma has had on “[kin] ties” and how it has created a “nation of homeless” Indigenous people in Canada today.⁴ Scholars Amy Bombay, Kimberly Matheson, and Hymie Anisman agree with Brave Heart’s and Menzies’ analyses of intergenerational trauma but broaden the definition to include the historic and

¹ Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, “The Return to the Sacred Path: Healing the Historical Trauma and Historical Unresolved Grief Response among the Lakota through a Psychoeducational Group Intervention,” *Smith College Studies in Social Work* 68, 3 (1998): 288.

² Peter Menzies, “Understanding Intergenerational Trauma from a Social Work Perspective,” *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 27, 2 (2007): 371.

³ Brave Heart, “The Return to the Sacred Path,” 288-89.

⁴ Peter Menzies, “Homeless Aboriginal Men: Effects of Intergenerational Trauma,” *Finding Home: Policy Options for Addressing Homelessness in Canada (e-book)*, eds. David J. Hulchanski, Phillipa Campsie, Shirley Chua, Stephen Hwang and Emily Paradis (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2009) www.homelesshub.ca/FindingHome.ca

ongoing “accumulation of collective stressors” on a specific group of people, noting that this is “particularly germane to Aboriginal peoples who have endured continuous assaults.”⁵ The work of these scholars describes the intergenerational effects of Indian Residential Schools in Canada, but their insights are equally applicable to this thesis, as the Metis certainly endured sustained and directed colonial assaults following the Resistance of 1869. Scholars Terry Mitchell and Dawn Maracle underscore the impact of such colonial assaults, stating that intergenerational trauma among Indigenous peoples is a direct result of colonization and land theft, and a product of “systemic racism, policies of assimilation, and cultural genocide.”⁶

To better articulate the phenomenon of intergenerational trauma, social work professor Teresa Evans-Campbell offers a set of tools to identify the root causes of historic trauma, as well as its transgenerational expressions, better known as intergenerational trauma. Evans-Campbell states that the genesis sites of intergenerational trauma can be determined by deploying a three-part evaluation of a historical event that was and remains traumatic to specific groups of people: (1) The event was widespread among a specific group or population, with many group members being affected. (2) The event was perpetrated by outsiders with purposeful and often destructive intent. For Evans-Campbell, outsider perpetration is crucial to understanding intergenerational trauma, as sites of historic trauma are always inflicted by an external party upon a specific collective of people. (3) The traumatic events generated high levels of collective distress in the victimized group. Evans-Campbell then details the characteristics or responses to intergenerational or historic trauma over time, again using a three-tiered approach: (1) Historical traumatic events continue to undermine the well-being of contemporary group members. (2)

⁵ Amy Bombay, Kimberly Matheson and Hymie Anisman, “The intergenerational effects of Indian Residential Schools: Implications for the concept of historical trauma,” *Transcultural Psychiatry* 51, 3 (2014): 321-322.

⁶ Terry L. Mitchell and Dawn T. Maracle, “Healing the Generations: Post-Traumatic Stress and the Health Status of Aboriginal Populations in Canada,” *Journal of Aboriginal Health* (March, 2005): 14.

Responses to historically traumatic events interact with contemporary stressors and compound over time to compromise psychological and physical well-being. (3) The risk associated with historically traumatic events accumulates across generations, and unless addressed, rarely decreases.⁷ Lastly, Carolyn Podruchny's and my piece, "A Geography of Blood: Uncovering the Hidden Histories of Metis People in Canada," identified intergenerational trauma within the Metis. We rooted our argument in the traumatic "witnessing" of the 1885 Battle of Batoche among descendants from the Morrissette-Arcand clan whose ancestors fought there. Our investigation showed that Batoche was one genesis site of Metis intergenerational trauma, and then recorded in oral testimony its subsequent effects across generations.⁸ My contemporary Metis family members remember and continue to be impacted by the tragic events of 1885. Accordingly, I will use portions of this research but will more fully describe how the macro factors of the loss of economy, sovereignty, and land also traumatized the Morrissette-Arcand clan from 1869 onwards. In essence, this thesis will use the first half of Evans-Campbell's template to identify the sites of historic trauma and the second half to track and record the effects of intergenerational trauma. To do so, I will rely on Metis oral history, as Podruchny and I did in our paper. Using the abovementioned literature, I now turn to the historical sketch of the collective dispossession of the Metis, which will help me demonstrate that the Metis sustained massive group trauma in the late nineteenth century.

⁷ Teresa Evans-Campbell "Historical trauma in American Indian/Native Alaska communities: A multilevel framework for exploring impacts on individuals, families, and communities," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 23, 3 (2008): 321-322.

⁸ Carolyn Podruchny and Jesse Thistle, "A Geography of Blood: Uncovering the Hidden Histories of Metis Peoples in Canada," *Spaces of Difference: Conflicts and Cohabitation*, eds. Ursula Lehmkuhl, Hans-Jurgen Lusebrink, and Laurence McFalls (New York: Waxman, 2016): 68-69.

Chapter Five

The Dispossession of the Metis from 1869 onwards

The dispersal of the Metis happened following the transference of Rupertsland in 1869. It is a period of time when Metis mobility, economy, and political sovereignty were greatly challenged by Canadian settlement in the Northwest. Prior to 1869, between the years 1821 and 1869 (Section One), Metis life had gained a measure of wealth, autonomy, and movement. After 1869, however, these three pillars of nineteenth-century Metis life were undermined: (1) Metis were forcefully alienated from Red River through the scrip process, and again after Batoche in 1885. (2) The destruction of the bison and drastic reduction of the fur trade at the end of the nineteenth century severely upset traditional Metis economies and governance. (3) Canadian settler land use and large-scale infrastructure in the Northwest greatly limited Metis mobility and further destroyed their economy. The abovementioned factors eroded and eventually transformed Metis life, or as Maria Campbell has articulated so clearly, “tossed” her people’s “puzzle in the air.” The collective shock, violence, and poverty these violent transformations caused, I argue in Section Two, is the source of Metis intergenerational trauma. Specifically, I examine the transgenerational trauma of the Morrissette-Arcand clan of Park Valley, Saskatchewan, who lived and established communities on road allowances, the narrow strips of Crown land reserved for road and railway building.

The Dispossession of the Metis at Red River: Land Betrayal, Starvation, and Violence

One major facet of the dispossession of the Red River Metis was the land betrayal that occurred in Winnipeg after 1870. Increasing settlement in Manitoba brought great challenges to Metis mobility, economy, and sovereignty. Displacement by Canadian settlers forced large

numbers of Metis to take scrip and move further west in the 1870s. Understanding their dispossession helps to identify Red River post-1869 as a site of historic trauma that caused intergenerational trauma within the Morrissette-Arcand clan.

To start, in March 1869 the Dominion of Canada purchased Rupertsland from the HBC without consulting the Indigenous peoples who lived in the Northwest.¹ This unconsented real estate deal created anxiety among the Metis and First Nations of Rupertsland, whose lands and culture were now threatened by Canada and settler encroachment.² First Nations lawyer Sharon Venne describes the arbitrary and underhanded nature of the Rupertsland transfer:

The Indigenous peoples heard that the Hudson's Bay Company had sold their lands to the British Crown. The Chiefs could not believe that the trading company could have acquired their lands. In present circumstances, it would be tantamount to Pepsi Cola or another such company gaining title to the lands of another country merely by engaging in trading. The Indigenous peoples never recognized that the company had any jurisdiction over them.³

Outraged that their lands were now the "property of Canada," the Metis rose up under the leadership of Louis Riel and declared a provisional government in November 1869 and negotiated terms for entering Confederation.⁴ Riel and the Red River Resistance were successful; their efforts forced Sir John A. Macdonald and Canada to create the province of Manitoba in 1870.⁵ The new-found province of Manitoba was established to guarantee a homeland for "half-

¹ "Red River Rebellion," *Historica Canada*, (Ottawa, 2016) Web. (Date accessed: July 25, 2016).

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/red-river-rebellion/>

² Olive Patricia Dickason and William Newbigging, *A Concise History of Canada's First Nations: Second Edition*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2010), 180-82 and Arthur Ray, *An Illustrated History of Canada's Native People: I have Lived Here since the World Began, Revised and Expanded, 3rd edition* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011), 197.

³ Sharon Venne, "Understanding Treaty 6: An Indigenous Perspective," in *Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in Canada: Essays on Law, Equality, and Respect for Difference*, eds. Michael Asch (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 184.

⁴ Dickason and Newbigging, *A Concise History of Canada's First Nations*, 180-82 and Ray, *An Illustrated History of Canada's Native People*, 197.

⁵ Admitting Manitoba into Confederation early, it is important to stress, greatly embarrassed John A. Macdonald and he would hold a political grudge against the Metis through his terms as prime minister in *QUEEN'S BENCH: WINNIPEG CENTRE*. No. C. 81-01-01010. *Manitoba Métis Federation Inc. and others suing in their own behalf of all other descendants of Métis Person entitled to land and other rights Section 21 and 32 of the MANITOBA ACT, 1870. & Congress of Aboriginal Peoples vs. Attorney General of Canada and the Attorney General of Manitoba: Plaintiffs' Written Argument*. Rosenbloom and Aldridge. 2011.

breeds” and their children, as well as to protect Catholic rights and the French language—all very important to Metis culture at the time. Section 31 of the Manitoba Act recognized Metis land rights:

And whereas, it is expedient, towards the extinguishment of the Indian Title to the lands in the Province [of Manitoba], to appropriate a portion of such ungranted lands, to the extent of one million four hundred thousand acres thereof, for the benefit of the families of the half-breed residents.⁶

What is more, Section 32 (4) of the Manitoba Act promised to recognize any person’s claim—half-breed or white—to land before the transfer of Rupertsland occurred. However, the section also stated, rather underhandedly, that the Crown reserved the right to “determine” what landholdings it “chose” to recognize as the owners had to “possess it peaceably...at the time of transfer to Canada.”⁷ This meant that Metis land claims—because of the Metis “rebellion” against Canada—were not recognized outright as the pre-transfer land claims of the “peaceable” white settlers were.⁸ Furthermore, by the terms of Section 32 (4) of the Manitoba Act, Metis land claims had to be evaluated individually through the extremely slow and cumbersome scrip claims process.⁹ Incoming settlers, on the other hand, were granted land as soon as they entered the Northwest.¹⁰ Land scrip, as noted earlier in this thesis, extinguished Metis Aboriginal title to land on an individual basis by granting a certificate redeemable for a 160- or 240-acre allotment of land or for money. Cash was granted immediately, but land confirmation often took years. Granting of scrip was a way for Canada to extinguish Metis Aboriginal land title without signing

⁶ Manitoba Act (1-36 Victoria, c. 3 (Canada) – assented to on May 12, 1870).

⁷ Ibid., my emphasis added.

⁸ Ibid., and Gerhard J. Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century*, 140.

⁹ Manitoba Act.

¹⁰ Jennifer Reid, *Louis Riel and the Creation of Modern Canada: Mythic Discourse and the Postcolonial State* (Winnipeg: University of Winnipeg Press, 2012), 16.

treaty as it had done collectively with First Nations peoples of the region.¹¹ What is more, scrip land claims in Winnipeg (formerly Red River) could not be processed until 1872, when the administration of Sir John A. MacDondald finally got around to setting up the Dominion Lands Office.¹² In hindsight, Macdonald's purposeful stalling of Metis land scrip, no doubt motivated by his Metis grudge, was immoral, as Canada knew the Red River "half-breeds" had been suffering repeated grasshopper infestations and crop failures since at least 1867.¹³ Denying the Metis farmlands through scrip stalling meant they either starved to death waiting or they sold their holdings to speculators to survive.¹⁴ Some Metis, it seems, found the resolve to wait—even when their crops were destroyed—but they then had to endure the scarcity of bison, which by 1870 rarely visited the Winnipeg basin.¹⁵ Still other Metis, in the face of starvation and the slow pace of confirming scrip land allotments, chose to go out on the biannual bison hunt to find food.¹⁶ This was most unfortunate, because when they returned to their river lots, many found them occupied by Ontario squatters who forcibly took their lands—houses and all.¹⁷ What is more, the government then processed these invaders' claims immediately, even though these were the exact same lots for which the Metis had waited months, even years, to get confirmation.¹⁸ Knowing full well that Metis were starving and settlers were squatting on their lands, Macdonald still did nothing to confirm Metis land claims or offer relief in Winnipeg until

¹¹ Frank Tough and Erin McGregor, "The Rights to the Land May be Transferred: Archives Records as Colonial Text—A Narrative of Metis Scrip," *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Litterature Comparee* 34, 1 (2011): 34-36.

¹² "Dominion Lands Policy," *Historica Canada*, (Ottawa, 2016) Web. (Date accessed: July 25, 2016). <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/dominion-lands-policy/> and Tough and McGregor, "The Rights to the Land May be Transferred," 34-36.

¹³ "FROM FORT GARRY: Chief Justice Morris' Arrival—The Grass hopper Plague," *Manitoban*, Aug 16, 1872, 1.

¹⁴ J. M. Bumsted, *Louis Riel vs. Canada: The Making of a Rebel* (Winnipeg: Great Plains Publications, 2001), 246.

¹⁵ "The Grass hopper Plague," *Manitoban*, Aug 16, 1872 - 1 and Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 155.

¹⁶ Rita Shilling, *Gabriel's Children* (Saskatoon: The Saskatchewan Metis Society - Local 11, 1983), 22.

¹⁷ D. N. Sprague, *Canada and the Metis, 1869-1886* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1988), 102.

¹⁸ Shilling, *Gabriel's Children*, 22 and Sprague, *Canada and the Metis*, 102.

1874.¹⁹ A newspaper article from the *Manitoban* dated November 5, 1870, captures the intense hunger that devoured Metis hopes:

A [Metis] woman named Lapiere, living on the main river, ran away to the woods some ten days ago in a fit of madness. She carried her two children and some of her little crockery with her. For a week or so, they had not, it appears, any food to eat, and when the poor children cried for it, she whipped them unmercifully. When that failed, she got furious and actually had recourse to biting.²⁰

While this report emphasized the mother's bad parenting skills and "madness," starvation in Winnipeg was a considerable threat. It reached its peak in 1873, when "it was reported that grasshoppers had destroyed all the grain crops in the colony...[N]ot one ear of grain was harvested in the parish [of St. Andrews] that year."²¹ The spectres of disease and death crept through the fields in the wake of the extreme hunger and Macdonald's indifference.

Macdonald's indifference to Metis suffering at Red River was tied to his resentment of Riel and the "impulsive half-breeds" who had forced him to prematurely admit Manitoba into Confederation.²² The 2016 Daniels decision of the Supreme Court of Canada states that Prime Minister Macdonald and Canada purposefully set out to dispossess Metis of their Red River lands.²³ In retrospect it appears that Canada negotiated the Manitoba Act to placate the Metis and end the 1869–70 resistance while at the same time sent an army—the Wolseley Expedition—into Winnipeg to martially control the Metis population and impose Canada's will. It also seems that Canada had no intention of honouring the terms of the Manitoba Act: language protection, land assurances for the Metis, proper representation for the Metis in the Manitoba Legislature and schools. These were terms, I believe, the Dominion signed to quiet the rebellion and buy

¹⁹ Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 155-56 and Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 200-201.

²⁰ "A Mad Woman," *Manitoban*, November 5, 1870, 2.

²¹ Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 155.

²² Ian Getty, *As Long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1983), 282.

²³ Daniels v. Canada (Indian Affairs and Northern Development), 2016 SCC 12. April 14 2016. <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/15858/index.do>

themselves time to get an army into Winnipeg. As well, Canada stalled Metis land claims through a bogged-down labyrinthine scrip process while actively promoting Protestant Ontarian settlement; “white” settler land claims, as noted already, were granted more expediently.²⁴ Macdonald’s administration granted incoming Protestant Ontarian settlers lands immediately to tip the balance of power and stop Winnipeg from becoming another French-speaking “problem” like the one English Canada perceived Quebec to be at the time.²⁵ Canada offered no protection to the Metis, who, because of the stalling and starvation, were obliged to sell their lands at a fraction of their value to predatory speculators who then sold them at premiums to incoming settlers.²⁶ Many in Winnipeg and across the world witnessed the injustice, and in 1873 *The Half Breed Land Protections Act*—a piece of legislature designed to stop speculators from cheating Metis out of their land scrip, was brought before the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.²⁷ Ottawa, however, squashed the bill before it passed.²⁸ The reasoning offered by Canada was that that the Act was “damaging to the commercial interests of the province,” and therefore “unconstitutional.”²⁹ Clearly, the “damage” that was deemed unconstitutional did not, in the eyes of the government, extend to the damages cause by Macdonald’s indifference towards Metis poverty, or Canada’s cheating innocent people out of private property through the scrip process, or leaving Metis exposed to predatory land speculators and squatters who forcibly occupied the formers’ homes, farms, and private property.

²⁴ J. M. Bumsted, *Louis Riel vs. Canada: The Making of a Rebel* (Winnipeg: Great Plains Publications, 2001): 243.

²⁵ A. I. Silver, “Ontario’s Alleged Fanaticism in the Riel Affair,” *Canadian Historical Review* LXIX, 1 (1988): 22.

²⁶ Jennifer Reid, *Louis Riel and the Creation of Modern Canada: Mythic Discourse and the Postcolonial State* (Winnipeg: University of Winnipeg Press, 2012): 16 and Ens, 144.

²⁷ Gerhard Ens, “Manitoba History: Metis Lands in Manitoba,” *The Manitoba Historical Society* 5 (Winnipeg, 2016) Web. (Date Accessed: July 28, 2016) http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/05/metislands.shtml and Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 144.

²⁸ Ens, “Manitoba History: Metis Lands in Manitoba,” and Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 144

²⁹ Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 145.

Another factor that dispossessed Metis of their lands at Red River was the sectarian violence that dominated Winnipeg after 1870. Red River between the years 1830 and 1869 had populations of French-speaking Catholic Metis, English-speaking Protestant half-breeds, and “white” settlers who lived side by side in mutual dependence within the mercantile fur trade economy.³⁰ The Riel Resistance of 1869, however, changed the racial and religious balance at Red River. Particularly, the 1870 execution of Thomas Scott—a Protestant Ontarian—by Riel’s provisional government kicked off a firestorm of hostility towards the French Metis at Red River.³¹ Thomas Scott was an unruly prisoner of the Metis during the Red River Resistance and was court-martialled and executed by Riel’s forces on March 4, 1870. However, Riel’s French Catholic Metis government and Scott’s execution were seen as illegal by Protestant English Canadians (Orangemen), and those in Winnipeg who supported the Dominion’s annexation of Rupertsland. These supporters were known as Canada Firsters and they believed Riel had illegally challenged Canada after it “legally” purchased Rupertsland from Britain in March 1869. Canada Firsters and the hordes of English Protestants who invaded the Northwest after 1870 demanded revenge for Scott’s “lawless murder.”³² Also, according to witness Louis Goulet, who lived through the Red River Resistance, the newly arrived Orangemen came to Red River to intentionally “make war” on the Metis and steal their rich farmlands. Goulet recalls that they attacked the Catholic Church, priests, and “anyone who spoke French,” and the Orangemen acted as though they were “masters of everything, everywhere.”³³ What is more, the armed forces—the Wolseley Expedition, also known as the Red River Expeditionary Force (RREF)—that Macdonald sent to control the Metis, was comprised largely of Protestant Ontarians who also

³⁰ Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 57-71.

³¹ J. E. Rea, “SCOTT, THOMAS (d. 1870),” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 9 (Laval, 2003) Web. (Date accessed, July 26, 2016). http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/scott_thomas_1870_9E.html.

³² Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 124-125.

³³ Charette and Ellenwood, *Vanishing Spaces*, 59.

demanded justice for Scott's killing.³⁴ Historian Fred Shore and Lawrence Barkwell have called the sectarian violence the RREF and Protestants inflicted upon the Metis shortly after 1870 a "reign of terror." Shore elaborates:

Once Confederation occurred, the Métis in Manitoba found themselves in the presence of over 1,000 Canadian militiamen. The Red River Expeditionary Force of 1870 (RREF), the Canadian Party's answer for being outmanoeuvred by the Métis, was nothing less than armed settlers invading what they perceived to be "their" colony to wrest control over land and politics from the Métis. The actions of the RREF represented a will to violence that had not been seen before in the Canadian West.³⁵

An article entitled "Death of James Tanner!" in the December 10, 1870, issue of the *Manitoban*, captures one incident of the violence that swept through Manitoba after its entry into Confederacy:

Mr. James Tanner, a venerable Half-breed of about 60 years of age—a couple of men lay in wait for him along the public road...and as he was driving home these two men suddenly jumped up and frightened the horse. The animal at once started at full race...Mr. Tanner...was jerked out; and the result was a broken skull...He was apparently killed on the spot.³⁶

Another article in the *Manitoban*, dated November 15, 1870, reports a home invasion, vividly describing the acts of racial hatred Ontarians committed against Metis at Winnipeg. It also outlines the general support in Protestant English Canada for this sectarian violence:

Dr. Shultz and Lynch and their friends [Canada Firsters] call for a sacrifice of blood upon the outraged altar of their country [Canada]...It is these men,...who by their flogging of Spence [Metis], by their petition for the body of the "murdered" Scott, [who are] avenging angels...[They] entered the house of...Mr. Spence, the ex-president of the first Manitoba Republic [Riel's government], going into his bed-room and actually attacking the naked man with a [gun and] horse whip! ...Ontario papers have spoken approvingly of this lawless conduct.³⁷

³⁴ Shore, "Pamphlet #9 - The Metis: Losing the Land" and "reprint from Ottawa Citizen – no title given," *Manitoban*, November 15, 1870, 2.

³⁵ Shore, "Pamphlet #9" and "reprint from Ottawa Citizen – no title given," *Manitoban*, November 15, 1870, 2.

³⁶ "Death of James Tanner!," *Manitoban*, December 10, 1870, 1.

³⁷ "From the Ottawa Citizen," *Manitoban*, November 12, 1870, 2.

Aggravated sexual assaults were also commonly perpetrated on Metis women as a tool of Canadian subjugation. Metis Lorette Goulet, seventeen, was gang raped by a band of RREF soldiers outside her home. The men responsible were reported to RREF commander Colonel Jarvis, who dismissively replied, “It was none of his business.”³⁸ No charges were ever issued, and the men are thought to have assaulted other Metis women.³⁹ Shouts of “Death to the Pope! Death to Catholics! Death to the Half Breeds!” commonly echoed through Winnipeg streets after 1870, from both RREF soldiers and incoming Protestant settlers.⁴⁰ What is more, Shore notes that Metis faced the most extreme violence whenever they attempted to process their land scrip at Fort Garry:

Since the militia was stationed in Fort Garry along with the Dominion Lands Office, the first Provincial Legislature and other government offices, Métis attempts at being part of the new power system were fraught with danger. Assaults, rapes, murder, arson and assorted acts of mayhem were practiced on the Métis anytime they came near Fort Garry, while the situation in the rest of the Settlement Belt was not much better.⁴¹

The extreme violence at Winnipeg between 1870 and 1872 saw Metis men drowned or beaten to death as warnings; their farms razed to the ground and property and crops destroyed; pro-Metis newspapers sabotaged; Metis leaders flogged, incarcerated, or made to flee; and French Priests shot at and assaulted. Metis women were also violated with impunity; some were murdered. Orangemen were seen assaulting, intimidating, and crippling Metis all across the Winnipeg Basin.⁴² Other Metis and French were beaten so badly they were “left blinded for life” after

³⁸ “St. Paul’s,” *Daily Pioneer*, June 9 1871 in Barkwell, “The Reign of Terror against the Metis of Red River.”

³⁹ Bruce Cherney, “Election riot of 1872 — polling station attacked and newspaper offices ransacked (part 1).” *Winnipeg Realtors: Real Estate News*, August 14, 2009.

<http://www.winnipegrealtors.ca/Resources/Article/?sysid=894>

⁴⁰ Cherney and *Le Nouveau Monde*, January 23, 1871, (no title given), *the Globe*, February 18, 1871. About 100 Red River Expeditionary Force Volunteers participated in this riot.

⁴¹ Shore, “Pamphlet #9.”

⁴² Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, “Report of the Select Committee on the Causes of the Difficulties in the North-West Territory in 1869–70,” *Journals of the House of Commons* 8 (Appendix 6), (Ottawa: I.B. Taylor, 1874) and Allen Ronaghan, “James Farquharson – Agent and Agitator,” *Manitoba History* 17 (Spring 1989), http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/17/farquharson_j.shtml and “Death of James Tanner!,” *Manitoban*,

repeated blows to the head.⁴³ A letter dated October 9, 1871, from the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, George Archibald, to Sir John A. Macdonald, speaks of the traumatizing and brutal treatment the Metis experienced at the hands of Orangemen:

I believe by the dread about their land allotment... Many of them [Metis] actually have been so beaten and outraged that they feel as if they were living in a state of slavery. They say that the bitter hatred of these people is a yoke so intolerable that they would gladly escape it by any sacrifice.⁴⁴

Protestant settler acts of violence at Red River are just now being unearthed by scholars; their findings underscore the extreme hostility Metis faced in Winnipeg in the 1870s. Historian Gerald Friesen sums up the systemic violence perpetrated against the Metis by English Canadians: “The violence was not just a brief outburst, but plagued the province for years... The new [Canadian] order must have seemed violent and even disgusting to many of the old [Metis] settlers.”⁴⁵

Friesen goes on to say that violence was a tool in a process of dispossession “that ended in [Metis] exile... silence, and shame.” It was mostly this “poisonous atmosphere” that drove the Metis out of Red River. Metis, it seems, were fleeing for their lives.⁴⁶ Surely, the settler-on-Metis violence of this time is a site of historic trauma. Acknowledging the unjust and brutal events at Red River is crucial to understanding how the Metis dispossession after 1869 became “ground zero” for Metis intergenerational trauma.

December 10, 1870, 1. and “Narrow Escape,” *New Nation*, September 3, 1870 and Gerald Friesen, *A History: The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 196 and Bruce Cherney, “Manitoba’s first legislative building — December 3 fire destroyed A.G.B. Bannatyne’s home,” <http://www.winnipegrealstatenews.com/Resources/Article/?sysid=906> and “The International,” *New Nation* August 13, 1870, 2 and “John C. Schultz,” *Manitoba News-Letter*, October 8, 1870, 2 and “Mob Law,” *Manitoban and North-West Herald*, November 12, 1870 and Lawrence Barkwell, “The Reign of Terror Against the Metis of Red River,” *Gabriel Dumont Institute of Applied Research*, (Saskatchewan, 2016) Web. (Date accessed: July 26, 2016) <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/07260>

⁴³ Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History*, 196.

⁴⁴ A. G. Archibald to John A. Macdonald, 9 October 1871, reprinted in *Journals of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada*, 37 Vic. (1874), vol. VIII. “Report of the Select Committee on the Causes of the Difficulties in the North-West Territories in 1869-70,” Appendix (No. 6).

⁴⁵ Friesen, *A History: The Canadian Prairies*, 196 and 200.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

The third tool Canada used to dispossess the Metis of Red River was to limit their political power and sovereignty in Manitoba. The Manitoba Act called for and created a Legislative Assembly to govern the newly founded province of Manitoba, just as Riel and his provisional government had negotiated.⁴⁷ The Legislative Assembly was to be comprised of locally elected officials that represented the population—both French Catholic and English Protestant—from ridings all over Manitoba.⁴⁸ The “democratic” system, unfortunately for the Metis, was rigged from the beginning. Gerald Ens details the political disadvantage the Metis faced by highlighting that voting privileges—enfranchisement—was effectively withheld from the Metis. To vote in 1870 in Manitoba, one had to be male, over the age of 21, own property, and be a British subject. The Metis population in 1870, however, had a young demographic: 62 percent was under 21. Further, the Metis population was equally male and female—unlike the incoming settler population, which was made up mostly of males over 21 years old. And, lastly, and most importantly, Metis males who were of age could not vote because the scrip system prevented them from owning land until 1872 to 1875.⁴⁹ Scholar Jennifer Reid describes the flood of Protestant landowning English males who came to dominate the voter base, and thus Manitoba politics, by 1872:

Macdonald’s administration did nothing to confirm land claims of existing [Métis males]. Rather...new immigration was actively promoted and the claims of new [Canadian male] settlers recognized rapidly...A policy for [Métis land] distribution took more than two years to be put into effect, during which time land speculators were accumulating land around Winnipeg at a rapid pace—by 1872, forty thousand acres had been purchased.⁵⁰

Gerhard Ens also emphasizes this uneven political playing field: “It is worth emphasizing how quickly immigration...affect[ed] Manitoba politics. The immigration and settlement of even a

⁴⁷ Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 140.

⁴⁸ Friesen, *A History: The Canadian Prairies*, 200.

⁴⁹ Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 140.

⁵⁰ Reid, *Louis Riel and the Creation of Modern Canada*, 16.

small number of adult males...significantly influence[d] elections.”⁵¹ Between the years 1870 and 1874 there were 12 elected Metis members of Manitoba’s parliament out of 24 provincial seats—this, despite the fact that there were 9,840 Metis living in Winnipeg in 1870, compared to only 1,565 white inhabitants.⁵² The flood of English male landowning voters, indeed, drowned the Metis out of Manitoba politics by 1880. Metis representation in Manitoba politics went from 50 percent in 1870, to 16 percent by 1879.⁵³ Clearly, the voting restrictions brought in by Macdonald’s administration had found their mark, thus creating a political imbalance in Manitoba which aided in the dispossession of the Metis. Alas, with the passing of the *Manitoba Official Language Act* in 1890, English became the official language of the Manitoba Legislature, the courts, and province-wide school instruction, thereby undoing the protection of language and cultural rights won by the Metis in 1870.⁵⁴ It took Canada little more than a two decades—beginning with the transfer of Rupertsland in 1869, and ending with *Language Act* of 1890—to undo the political sovereignty of the Metis in Manitoba, an independence that had been asserted by Bonhomme and the “Four Metis Chiefs” in 1815, and reaffirmed by Guillaume Sayer in 1849.

The sustained colonial assault on the Metis can also be seen in the way the land itself was surveyed and used, first in Winnipeg and later all across the Northwest. Prior to the handover of Rupertsland, the Metis at Red River and elsewhere lived in lots that were situated along the banks of the river.⁵⁵ Homes faced the river on lots which stretched back into ribbons of land that

⁵¹ Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 140.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., 149.

⁵⁴ W. L. Morton, “Manitoba Schools and Canadian Nationality 1890-1923,” *Reports of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association* 30, 1 (1951), 51-52 and “Manitoba Schools Question,” *Historica Canada, Historica Canada*, (Ottawa, 2016) Web. (Date accessed: July 25, 2016).

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/manitoba-schools-question/>

⁵⁵ Shilling, *Gabriel’s Children*, 15.

held vegetable gardens, livestock grounds, and hay and timber fields.⁵⁶ Metis river lots were modelled after the old French-Canadian seigneurial system and reflected Metis mobility and community—traditions that went back to the earliest days of the French fur trade. Riverside living was convenient for Metis because they used rivers as modes of transport, avenues for trade and commerce, and lines of communication to receive news and visit kin.⁵⁷ When Canada acquired Rupertsland in 1869, however, the state immediately began carving up northwest land for Euro-Canadian agricultural settlement, completely ignoring the older Metis river-lot system already in place.⁵⁸ The new Canadian land tenure system was modelled after the American block system, which reordered and repurposed Northwest lands away from the river, towards large-scale agricultural settlement.⁵⁹ The block system, with its vast stretches of private property and fences, would severely restrict Metis's and First Nations' mobility by 1900. The Dominion Land Survey (DLS), as the Canadian block system would come to be known, was officially implemented in Manitoba on July 10, 1871, in Red River, the heart of the Metis trade and transport web.⁶⁰ The initial implementation of the DLS in Winnipeg speaks volumes about Canada's directed dispersal of the Red River Metis during the 1870s. Metis researcher Rita Shilling describes Canada's imposed reordering of Red River and the ensuing confusion among the Metis:

The Department of Public Works chose to use (with certain modifications) the American block system of dividing land. The system divided the country into square townships of 64 sections of 800 acres each, running across the long narrow strips of Metis farms along the [Red and Assiniboine] rivers. The result [was] chaotic—cutting through houses, barns, hay rights and crops.⁶¹

⁵⁶ D. N. Sprague, *Canada and the Metis, 1869-1886*, (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1988), 38.

⁵⁷ Nicole St-Onge, Carolyn Podruchny and Brenda Macdougall, *Contours of a People: Metis Family, Mobility, and History*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013), 9.

⁵⁸ "Legal Land Survey," *The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan Website*. (Saskatoon, 2016) Web. (Date Accessed: July 27, 2016). http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/legal_land_survey.html

⁵⁹ Shilling, *Gabriel's Children*, 15.

⁶⁰ "Legal Land Survey," *The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan Website*.

⁶¹ Shilling, *Gabriel's Children*, 15-16.

Furthermore, the DLS carved town blocks into smaller quarter sections of land of 160 acres called “homesteads,” which Canada then gave to incoming Protestant Ontario settlers.⁶² These were lands, as has already been pointed out, that were purposefully withheld from Metis through scrip stalling.⁶³ Another sign of Canada’s reordering of Metis land at Winnipeg is that the state more or less banned Metis block settlements in Red River by instituting a land lottery.⁶⁴ The lottery distributed land to Metis children (Manitoba Act Section 31) at random, and laid no restrictions on land sales after lottery ballots were issued. Most of the allotments, however, ended up on bald prairie, tens of kilometres inland from traditional Metis river lots. Scattering the Metis children’s lands away from family supports, and over the open prairie where farming was nearly impossible, again, led many Metis to sell their land holdings to predatory speculators.⁶⁵ Conversely, no such restrictions on block settlement ever existed for incoming settlers in the Northwest after 1869. In fact, throughout the rest of the nineteenth century, the state actively promoted ethnic block settlement among Icelandic, Ukrainian, Russian, French, British, Austro-Hungarian, Jewish, and many other eastern European immigrant homesteaders. The promise Canada gave these immigrants was that they could live together, speak their languages, practise their cultures, and live peaceably as long as they put improvements on the land and opened the Canadian west to big agribusiness.⁶⁶ Canada, then, did its best to prevent Metis block settlement at Red River by changing mobility there, and by scattering half-breed lands through a lottery, and then promoting block settlement among other more “suitable” candidates. These were methods, in the words of John A. Macdonald himself, that prevented

⁶² Ibid., 21-22.

⁶³ “Legal Land Survey,” *The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan Website*.

⁶⁴ Sprague, *Canada and the Metis, 1869-1886*, 90.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ R. Douglas Francis, Richard Jones, and Donald B. Smith, *Destinies: Canadian History since Confederation – sixth edition*, (Toronto: Nelson, 2008), 71-74.

Winnipeg from becoming “a half-breed reserve.”⁶⁷ The DLS served the interests of the settlers, and not of the Metis. The Euro-Canadians who arrived at Red River had “an insatiable demand for land” and the federal government carved up the prairies into neat uniform squares of property which settlers then “ploughed into submission.”⁶⁸ What is more, Canada started dividing up Metis lands months before they were to take control of Rupertsland in December 1869: Canadian surveyors set to work in Winnipeg as early as September of that year. Riel, rather prophetically, sensed the coming land dispossession and on October 11, 1869, at St. Norbert’s Parish, Winnipeg, he famously stepped on the surveyor’s chains and demanded that the foreign intruders stop preying on Metis lands in Red River and the Northwest. Riel then made his prohibition clear by announcing to his Metis comrades, “[The Canadian government] has no right to make surveys on [our] territory without the express permission of the [Metis] people of the [Red River] Settlement.”⁶⁹ The fact that Canada continued to trespass in Winnipeg, against Riel’s warning, is the primary reason why the Metis rose up against Canada in 1869—the Metis and Riel were simply protecting their homes from settler encroachment. Metis Louis Goulet, all but seventeen years old during the Red River Resistance, explains that the Metis rose up because Canada ignored and ran roughshod over the Metis and tried to “take over Red River” without Metis permission. Goulet writes:

Riel and the Metis took possession of Fort Garry [Winnipeg], forming the Provisional Government, to save the country from anarchy and to safeguard [Metis] life and property. People had no idea what might happen [after the surveyors carved up the land].⁷⁰

⁶⁷ PAC, Macdonald Papers, Letter Books, vol. 14, pp. 4220425, Macdonald to Archibald, 1 November 1870.

⁶⁸ Carolyn Podruchny and Jesse Thistle, “A Geography of Blood: Uncovering the Hidden Histories of Metis Peoples in Canada,” *Spaces of Difference: Conflicts and Cohabitation*, eds. Ursula Lehmkuhl, Hans-Jurgen Lusebrink, and Laurence McFalls (New York: Waxman, 2016), 67.

⁶⁹ D. N. Sprague, *Canada and the Metis, 1869-1886*, 39.

⁷⁰ Charette and Ellenwood, *Vanishing Spaces*, 69.

In hindsight, Riel was right: the surveyor's chains were the first instrument of dispossession, a tool (when combined with the scrip process and overt violence) Canada used to divide up and distribute Red River lands to incoming settlers. The reordering of Winnipeg property through the DLS, and the random lottery that saw Metis homes and farms taken and given away, impeded Metis water mobility on the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. And it retarded the future growth of Winnipeg as a collective Metis community by scattering their children's lands to bald and exposed prairie. The dramatic change in land use at Winnipeg after 1869—from mobile Metis heartland to agrarian settler stronghold—can be identified as another genesis site of Metis intergenerational trauma.

The last major way the Metis were dispossessed at Winnipeg pertains to the rapid shift of the free trade economy at Red River after 1869. To start, Metis had enjoyed free trade in Red River and the Northwest since the Sayer trial of 1849 (Chapters Three and Four). Bison meat and robes, fur, fish, and manufactured goods flowed in all directions to and from Red River, making Metis wealthy merchants, traders, and provisioners (Section One). By the 1860s, however, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) had conceded that Rupertsland was far too costly to run. The fur trade simply did not turn the profits of yesteryear.⁷¹ Moreover, both Canada and the United States wanted Rupertsland for themselves in order to expand their borders and create territorial empires that went from coast to coast, a continental breadth that was linked by miles upon miles of railway.⁷² The British, who "owned" Rupertsland, were wary of U.S. imperialism, so in an effort to stop American expansion they sold the territory to the Dominion of Canada.⁷³

Opportunistic Canada had no scruples in benefiting from British insecurities, and on March 20,

⁷¹ "Rupert's Land," *Historica Canada*, (Ottawa, 2016) Web. (Date Accessed: July 29, 2016) <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/ruperts-land/>

⁷² Geoff Read and Todd Webb, "The Catholic Mahdi of the North West": Louis Riel and the Metis Resistance in Transatlantic and Imperial Context 93, 2, (2012): 172.

⁷³ "Rupert's Land," *Historica Canada*.

1869, Ottawa “purchased” Rupertsland for the bargain basement price of 300,000 pound sterling.⁷⁴ Not bad considering the United States paid Russia 7.2 million dollars for Alaska in 1867, a region that is one fifth the size of Rupertsland.⁷⁵

The purchase of Rupertsland had major repercussions on the Metis economy at Red River, as it essentially atrophied the fur trade at Winnipeg by 1880. After Manitoba’s entrance into Confederation, the U.S.-Canada border became well-guarded, and tariffs were imposed on goods going into and out of the United States. The U.S. Army was vigilant in stopping free trade Metis smugglers and had troops posted at Pembina from 1870 onwards, thus making the voyage difficult and unprofitable. Also, all goods that traversed the U.S.-Canada border northward had to be carried by legally bonded transport. This harsh control of cross-border goods killed both the St. Paul-to-Red River Cart trails and the north-south water routes of Metis free traders. Goods after 1870 had to travel by “legal” means: on bonded ships and carts, which were owned by rich industrialists. Men such as HBC fur trade mogul Norman Kittison, railway magnet J. J. Hill, and HBC elite Donald Smith stand among others who “monopolized...traffic [and] absorbed or drove out all [Metis] competition.”⁷⁶ Furthermore, bison robe markets in Montana in the 1870s were far more lucrative than Winnipeg’s market. By the mid-1870s Red River Metis had to travel thousands of kilometres to Montana, Saskatchewan, or Alberta to hunt bison. It was a biannual trip that cost time and money. It was cheaper, less time consuming, and much more profitable for Metis free traders to stay out west with the bison along the unrestricted U.S.-Canada border in Saskatchewan and Montana where goods could get to U.S. markets without

⁷⁴ “Canada Buys Rupert’s Land,” *Canada a People’s History – Une Historie Populaire*. (Ottawa, 2016) Web. (Date Accessed: July 27, 2016). <http://www.cbc.ca/history/EPCONTENTSE1EP9CH1PA3LE.html>

⁷⁵ “Purchase of Alaska, 1867,” *Department of the State, United States of America: Office of the Historian*, (Washington, 2016) Web. (Date Accessed: August 4, 2016) <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1866-1898/alaska-purchase>

⁷⁶ Ens, *Homelands to Hinterland*, 149 to 151.

harsh levies, tariffs, or army interference. Those Metis who tried to stay and trade in Winnipeg noticed very quickly that Canada was now in charge of trade, more so than the HBC had ever been.⁷⁷

Overnight, Ottawa squashed free trade at Red River by controlling the flow of goods and the profits and by setting transportation and freighting fees in Manitoba. Within one or two seasons, the once prosperous Metis free traders at Red River had been left impoverished and struggling. The financial strain that began in 1869 made many Metis despondent, and some resorted to suicide, as was the case of bison hunter William Hallet. Hallet's bison brigade was based out of Red River and it took massive financial hits after 1870.⁷⁸ By December 1873, the pressures of Canadian and U.S. interference with trade left Hallet in mounting debt, depressed, and never to financially recover. He shot himself with his fowling piece, unable to cope with his considerable losses.⁷⁹ Metis freighter Louis Goulet in 1903 describes the flat trading environment that existed at Red River in 1870: "There was no more commerce and no more trade."⁸⁰ The dramatic end of the free trade economy at Winnipeg after the Dominion of Canada took possession of Rupertsland caused suffering to the Metis, who were accustomed to employment in cart brigades and boats, as these vocations quickly disappeared with the fall of the local fur trade and the rise of the bonded steamboat after 1869. What is more, the Red River bison-based economy also was on its last legs by 1870, as the herds were simply too far away to continue the buffalo-robe trade. Furthermore, the agricultural economy in the Winnipeg Basin had taken massive hits by grasshopper infestations between the years 1873 and 1875.⁸¹ To cope

⁷⁷ Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line*, 64.

⁷⁸ Ens, *Homelands to Hinterland*, 150-53 and 157.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁸⁰ Charette and Ellenwood, *Vanishing Spaces*, 69.

⁸¹ Gerhard Ens, "Migration and Persistence of the Red River Metis, 1835-1890," *Historical Papers/Communications historiques* 23, 1 (1988): 133.

with the plagues, many of the more settled Metis agriculturalists took expensive seed loans from the federal government. Unfortunately, 1875 was a disastrous year for crops, leaving Metis farmers at Winnipeg without yields and drowning in debt, which forced them to foreclose or sell their lots. Finally, it is also worth noting that the Dawson Road—the overland Canadian link to the Northwest—was completed shortly after 1870 and major U.S. railways in Minnesota State, south of Manitoba, had eaten into the Metis freighting business.⁸² The expanse of infrastructure that brought “progress” replaced Metis cart and water freighting at Red River by 1880.

The telltale sign that the Metis economy at Winnipeg had crashed, according to Gerhard Ens, is that by 1873 deaths among the Metis “equalled or outnumbered births in both St. Francois Xavier and St. Andrews.”⁸³ These two parishes held the highest concentrations of Metis people in Winnipeg. Mortalities were by far the highest among Metis children: in St. Andrews 50 percent of the dead were Metis children five years of age and younger; whereas in St. Francois Xavier, 67 percent of the dead were Metis children aged five and under. Another grim statistic that reveals the collapse of the Metis economy is that infant mortality rates tripled in St. Francois Xavier between the years 1870 and 1875; likewise, but less severe, the rate in St. Andrews doubled between those same years. The Metis at Red River appear to have been almost helpless to feed themselves and protect their most valuable resource—their children.⁸⁴ Tuberculosis is thought to be the main cause of these deaths—a disease that is infamous for culling populations suffering from long periods of malnutrition and starvation. Scholar James Daschuk explains:

The annexation of the northwest by the Dominion of Canada in 1870 changed the political, economic, and medical history of the region forever. Although acute contagious disease continued to strike the indigenous population, an endemic transition took place within a

⁸² Friesen, *A History: The Canadian Prairies*, 200-203 and James Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2013), 80.

⁸³ Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 156.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 158-59.

decade of the transfer...[After stark malnutrition] a new pathogen emerged...as the primary cause of sickness and death— tuberculosis.⁸⁵

The loss of their economic independence, their children, and their hope for a future would most certainly have traumatized large segments of the Metis population at Winnipeg in the early 1870s. It is hard to imagine how truly traumatizing it would be to lose one's land, home, job, family, and children all in two or three years, and all under the threat of extreme violence, sanctioned and even supported by the government that was supposed to have honoured the terms of the Manitoba Act. It is little wonder that after 1870, Metis families moved westward seeking the prosperity of the bison hunt, a freedom of trade they had enjoyed at Red River for a century before Canada's abrupt invasion.

To summarize, this chapter has shown that the dispossession of the Metis at Winnipeg happened after the three pillars of mobility, freedom of economy, and sovereignty were undermined after the 1869 "purchase" of Rupertsland. Now, returning to the thrust of Section Two of this thesis, we can use Theresa Evans-Campbell's three-part tool kit to determine whether post-1869 Winnipeg qualifies as a site of historic trauma. Evans-Campbell first asks whether the events were widespread among a specific group or population, with many in-group members being affected.⁸⁶ This certainly rings true for the thousands of Red River Metis families who lost their lands, livelihoods, sovereignty, mobility, and economic freedom because of the 1870 transfer of Rupertsland. The Red River dispossession also fits Evans-Campbell's second criteria for identifying sites of historic trauma: that events must be perpetrated by outsiders with purposeful, often destructive intent.⁸⁷ The transfer of Rupertsland, the scrip process, the DLS, the

⁸⁵ Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains*, xix.

⁸⁶ Teresa Evans-Campbell "Historical trauma in American Indian/Native Alaska communities: A multilevel framework for exploring impacts on individuals, families, and communities," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 23, 3 (2008): 321-322.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

new U.S.-Canada border, infrastructure, tariffs and much more were the work of outgroup members—the Macdonald administration, Britain, Canada, the U.S. government, border officials, the U.S. Army, the RREF, invading settlers, and land speculators—who interfered with Metis life at Red River. Never, at any time, did the Metis approve of or agree with the transference of Rupertsland, nor did they direct any of the massive changes it brought. Thus, the abovementioned hardships collectively fulfill the first half of Evans-Campbell’s second criteria. What is more, it has been shown—at least in the case of the Macdonald administration, the RREF, and the Orangemen and Protestant settlers—that the intent of these outgroup members was destructive. They wanted to subjugate “half-breeds” and would use official policy, fraud, and violence to achieve their goals of land usurpation at Winnipeg. Knowing that outgroup members purposefully inflicted these injuries with malicious intent helps us fulfill the second half of Evans-Campbell’s second criteria for identifying genesis sites of historic trauma. Finally, to identify sites of historic trauma, Evans-Campbell asks whether the Red River dispossession was composed of a series of events that generated high levels of trauma and distress in the victimized group. We certainly witnessed “high levels of distress in the victimized group” when we saw a starving Metis woman biting her hungry children for punishment. Or when Metis women were beaten and raped by RREF soldiers and no punishment was rendered by authorities. Or when Metis men were humiliated and murdered with impunity by RREF soldiers, Orangemen, and settlers alike. Or when Metis families lost their homes, farms, and hope through scrip-stalling underhandedness—homes, which in many cases, their families had occupied for three or four generations. We also saw extreme distress when demoralized bison hunters and free traders committed suicide because of the rapidly changing economy post-1870. Or when St. Francois Xavier and St. Andrew Metis lost a generation of children to starvation and disease as

infant mortality rates skyrocketed. These incidences most definitely show us that the events at Red River following the transference of Rupertsland were “traumatic” to the Metis and that they experienced high levels of distress.

In sum, deploying Evans-Campbell’s three-part template for identifying sites of historic trauma has shown that Red River post-1870 was the site of a collection of events that constitute historical trauma. What makes the Red River site of historic trauma most egregious, perhaps, is that it was officially sanctioned and armed by the Canadian state. Gerald Friesen has called the Red River dispossession “the most tragic evidence of Canadian misrule” in history.⁸⁸ Friesen’s claim holds weight when one considers that the Metis—one of Canada’s three constitutional recognized Indigenous peoples—have never had their Red River homelands recognized the way First Nations or Inuit have through treaty or reserve processes or the Nunavut Land Claims Act. Some Metis settlements in Alberta, it should be noted, have been recognized and exist as a home for a handful Metis, but Winnipeg to date remains unrecognized. The Red River dispossession essentially banished Metis from their homeland and cast them to wander in a grey bureaucratic limbo for over one hundred and fifty years. Metis today are still in court trying to get justice for what happened in Winnipeg in 1870.

By looking at a fraction of the factors that displaced the Metis from Red River we come to understand, at least in part, what Maria Campbell means when she says, “[They] lifted it up, a way up, and then [they] tossed [our] puzzle in the air and it flew into one million pieces.” Placing the ancestral members of the Morrissette-Arcand clan from generation B and C within the Metis dispossession in the next and final chapter will give us some idea of where those pieces landed and will offer further understanding of Metis intergenerational trauma.

⁸⁸ Friesen, *A History: The Canadian Prairies*, 197.

Chapter Six

The Westward Metis Exodus: The Disappearance of the Bison, Treaty 6, Batoche, and the Road Allowances

Winnipeg is a site of historic trauma that caused many Metis families to scatter west after having their mobility circumscribed, their free economy limited, and their sovereignty challenged after the transfer of Rupertsland to Canada in 1869. Among the exiled Metis were dozens of the ancestral Morrissette-Arcand clan members. Showing where these family members relocated to across the Northwest will offer some understanding of the extensive turmoil and trauma that followed 1870. Together, the destruction of the bison and the Battle of Batoche were the final and arguably most traumatic blow to Metis movement, liberty, and governance in the late nineteenth century. Picking up where Chapter Four ended, I will track the lives of generation B, C, and D ancestors of the Morrissette-Arcand clan and show how the dispossession, especially the Battle of Batoche in 1885 and the subsequent move to road allowances in the twentieth century, impacted their lives. Or as Maria Campbell's so eloquently puts it, I will reveal where our kin's "puzzle pieces" fell after being cast asunder by colonialism. To begin, generation B members of the Morrissette-Arcand clan Abraham Sr. and Marie Montour were successful mobile bison hunters who had solid free trade connections in Red River, North Dakota, Montana, Alberta, and Saskatchewan (Chapter Four). Moreover, the Montour couple were from a long line of politically active Metis leaders who had fought for Metis free trade and sovereignty over the course of the nineteenth century. Abraham's father was Bonhomme, one of the Four Metis Chiefs of 1815 and a petitioner in the Sayer case in 1849—two important instances when Metis asserted their independence and freedom of trade. Records show that Abraham and Marie took

scrip in the early 1870s in Pembina and then left the Red River area amid the economic, political, and social turmoil caused by the transference of Rupertsland and the inundation of settlers that followed.¹

Like other dispossessed Metis, the Montours ended up along the banks of the South Saskatchewan River in a settlement called St. Laurent de Grandin, Saskatchewan.² Historian Diane Payment states that between the years 1872 and 1882 the Montours were among a group of hundreds of dispossessed Metis traders, freighters, hunters, and mixed farmers who moved to St. Laurent, Batoche, Round Prairie, Wood Mountain, Carlton, Fort Pitt, Thickwood Hills, Montreal Lake, and the Cypress Hills, among other places in Saskatchewan. These Metis were seeking “a new life unencumbered by settlers” and free from the violence and racial and religious intolerance at Winnipeg.³ There were many more settlements of exiled Metis in Montana as well. These U.S. Metis settlements were mainly along the Milk and Missouri Rivers, and as in Saskatchewan, these places were superimposed upon the older wintering grounds of maternal First Nations kin, where they continued to hunt bison.⁴

The Arcands also joined the exodus from Red River: no less than twelve Arcand heads of household took flight during the dispossession 1870–80.⁵ The Arcands relocated to Duck Lake, Aldina, and Carlton, all in Saskatchewan—Francois and Philomene (generation B) and their children (generation C) had relocated to St. Laurent by 1875, on Section 44, River Lot 12.⁶ Some Arcands, however, proceeded to Montana, as was the case of Francois and Philomene’s daughter

¹ Gail Morin, “Abraham Montour,” *Turtle Mountain Chippewa, Pembina Band; Annuity Payments and Census* (Orange Park: Quinton Publications, 2000), 65.

² G. F. G. Stanley, “Half-Breed ‘Rising’ of 1875,” *Canadian Historical Review* 17, 4 (1936), 404.

³ Dianne P. Payment, *The Free People: Li Gens Libres* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2009), 28.

⁴ Rita Shilling, *Gabriel’s Children* (Saskatoon: The Saskatchewan Metis Society - Local 11, 1983), 25.

⁵ Sprague and Frye, “Dispersal and Relocation of the Manitoba Metis,” *The genealogy of the first Metis nation: The development and dispersal of the Red River Settlement, 1820-1900* (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications Inc., 1983), Table 6.

⁶ Diane Payment, “*The Free People—Otipemisiwak: Batoche, Saskatchewan, 1870-1930*” (Ottawa, National Historic Parks and Sites Canada, 1990), 302.

Genevieve Arcand, who lived alongside the exiled Louis Riel in the 1880s. Genevieve's family and the southern U.S. Arcands are believed to have been seasonal farmers and bison hunters in Montana.⁷

Six Ledoux families from generation B also fled westward to Saskatchewan after 1870 and settled in Fort Carlton, Fort Ellice, and Duck Lake—all in the heart of Mistawasis's bison hunting grounds.⁸ As Chapter Four detailed, the Ledouxes had married into the politically powerful Belanger family—Cree Chief Mistawasis was a Belanger—and enjoyed independence and economic freedom in the Saskatchewan country as mobile bison hunters and provisioners under his sway. After 1870, Joseph “Toomatoon” Ledoux Sr. and his wife Isabelle “Mistaw” Belanger (generation B), direct descendants of the Morrissette-Arcand line, vacated Red River permanently and took refuge among her father's Cree nation around Fort Carlton.⁹ Joseph Sr. and Isabelle were signed into Treaty Six as “impoverished half-breeds” in 1876.¹⁰ Treaty Six was negotiated by Chiefs Mistawasis and Ahtahkakoop—the two “half-breed Chiefs”—with the Dominion of Canada after the Plains Cree suffered multiple hardships in the face of dwindling bison hunts over the years 1870 to 1876. Treaty Six was meant to protect the Cree from starvation, disease, and settler encroachment, and to help them integrate into Canadian society by way of agriculture.¹¹ However, the Dominion government did not honour Treaty Six's terms and used it, along with policies that caused starvation, to limit Cree mobility, power, and

⁷ Giles Martel trns. “Powers of Attorney. St. Peter's Mission, June 1883,” *The Collected Writings of Louis Riel/Les Ecrits complets de Louis Riel: Volume 2 – 8 December – 4 June 1884* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1985), 277-78.

⁸ Sprague and Frye, *The genealogy of the first Metis nation*, table 6.

⁹ “Treaties No 4 and No 6 – Paylists; Carlton, Mistawasis Band,” July 26, 1880, RG10, General Accounts Series, Vol. 1676, Library and Archives of Canada. and Interview, Blanche Morrissette and Ed Ledoux by the author, Mistawasis Reservation, Saskatchewan, July 2, 2014.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Arthur Ray, Jim Miller, and Frank Tough, *Bounty and Benevolence: A History of Saskatchewan Treaties* (Kingston: Queen's University Press, 2002), 130 to 147 and Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers* (Kingston: Queen's University Press, 1990), 130 to 132 and 237-38 also see James Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2013), 96-98 and 113-14 and 123.

independence.¹² The signing, it can be argued, greatly lessened Mistawasis and the Belanger-Ledoux family's political power, prestige, and mobility on the plains. Joseph Sr. and Isabelle, their ten children, and their daughter Marianne Ledoux (generation C), a direct descendent of the Morrissette-Arcand clan, suffered through the extreme starvation and broken treaty promises that followed 1876. Many Ledouxes would rise up to fight against Canada in the 1885 Northwest Resistance.¹³

Some members of the Morrissettes would also sojourn west following the chaos of Red River in the 1870s, and, like the Ledouxes, a handful tried to find refuge among Mistawasis's House Cree Nation and were signed into Treaty Six as "half-breeds" living as "Indians."¹⁴ The Morrissettes, too, would endure the bitter betrayal of Red River following the broken promises of Treaty Six. Subsequently, one of Norbert Sr. and Betsy's son, George or "Geordie" (generation C), a direct descendant of the Morrissette-Arcand clan, would fight at Batoche in May 1885.¹⁵ Geordie Morrissette (17 years old) and Marianne Ledoux (16 years old), were young lovers in Batoche, and after the battle they would marry—their son Jeremie (b. 1906) is the deceased patriarch of the contemporary Morrissette-Arcand clan.¹⁶

The Montours, Arcands, Ledouxes, and Morrissettes and the other exiled Metis were cognizant of the fact that Canada had betrayed the terms of the Manitoba Act and that Prime Minister Macdonald had run roughshod over their lands and rights because Riel had embarrassed him politically. What is more, these Metis knew that Canada had sanctioned, even encouraged,

¹² John L. Tobias, "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree, 1879–1885," *Canadian Historical Review* 64, 4 (1983), 519–548 also see Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains*, 96–98 and 113–14 and 123.

¹³ "Ledoux, (John) Toomatoon," *The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate Records on Metis family Genealogy: L Families (Ledoux)*, file L-63c, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

¹⁴ "Treaties No 4 and No 6 – Paylists; Carlton, Mistawasis Band," July 26, 1880, RG10, General Accounts Series, Vol. 1676, Library and Archives of Canada.

¹⁵ John Cuthand, "A descendant of Riel," *New Breed Magazine* (January 1976), 5

¹⁶ *Ibid.* and Census Place: Muskeg Lake, Saskatchewan, the Territories, Canada. *Census of Canada, 1901*. RG31, T-6428 to T-6556. No. 54. Pg. 2. Library and Archives Canada.

the extreme racism of the Orangemen that forced them westward in search of peace and the freedom of the bison hunt.¹⁷ By the mid-1870s the bison robe trade had surpassed provisioning to become the main source of Metis wealth on the Prairies.¹⁸ The bison roamed mainly in South Saskatchewan or Montana after 1870—hence the Metis move to these regions where they could trade unencumbered as in Red River a decade earlier.¹⁹ An insatiable American demand for robes fuelled a free trade market in the late 1870s based on bison robes. It was an industrial demand that would, sadly, completely destroy the great bison herds by 1883.²⁰

It appears that the Montours arrived in St. Laurent sometime before December 10, 1872, as Father Andre records Abraham Sr. as being part of the Metis government on that date. In a letter to his superiors, he states that the Metis, under Captain of the Hunt Gabriel Dumont, had formed their own government based upon the laws of the bison hunt. The St. Laurent government afforded the Metis exiles protection, organization, and untrammelled liberty. Moreover, the bison government was adaptable and supported the needs of incoming traumatized Red River Metis by offering structure, employment, fairness, and food.²¹ It managed cases of theft, the logistics of the bison hunt, contracts, prairie fire burns, and property rights disputes, and it intervened in cases requiring mediation. The government also protected and upheld the rights of women.²² Gabriel Dumont was the first president of the St. Laurent bison government. Abraham Montour Sr., along with Alexandre Hamilin, Baptiste Garriepy, Isadore Dumont, Jean Dumont, Moise Ouellette, and Baptiste Hamelin, were its first elected councillors.²³

¹⁷ Payment, *The Free People: Li Gens Libres*, 28.

¹⁸ Gerhard Ens, "Dispossession or Adaptation? Migration and Persistence of the Red River Metis, 1835-1890," *Historical Papers/Communications historiques* 23, 1 (1998): 130-34.

¹⁹ Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line*, 80-90.

²⁰ Peter Erasmus, *Buffalo Days and Nights* (Calgary: Glenbow Institute, 1999), 226-27.

²¹ G. F. G. Stanley, "Half-Breed 'Rising' of 1875," *Canadian Historical Review* 17, 4 (1936): 404.

²² Payment, *The Free People: Li Gens Libres*, 125.

²³ Stanley, "Half-Breed 'Rising' of 1875," 404.

The 1871 census shows that there were 322 Metis inhabitants of St. Laurent, a figure that grew to 450 by 1877, and still more after successive waves of Red River exiles came to Saskatchewan. The Ledouxes, Morrissettes, and Arcands were among these immigrants. The Montours, however, according to Diane Payment, were among the first families from the Metis exodus to relocate west. Again the Montours prospered under the free trade and independence that existed at St. Laurent in the early 1880s, placing them among the elite bison hunting and seasonal agricultural families there. Among their peers were the Bouchers, Letendres, Vennes, Champagnes, Fishers, Nolins, Lepiens, Gariépys, Dumonts, and Garnots.²⁴ Abraham Sr. had a homestead in St. Laurent at Township 44, Range 2, West 3, and traded out of a store on section 19 between the years 1874 and 1879.²⁵ He was a successful freighter, moving goods along the Carlton Trail to and from Fort Pitt with his sons and Xavier Letendre.²⁶ The Morrissette men, like the Montours, were also successful freighters and seasonal farmers, moving to and from Fort Pitt from the Batoche area, and returning periodically to Red River. The Morrissettes, according to oral histories, are the only exodus family in the ancestral Morrissette-Arcand clan that kept a trade connection with Red River after 1870.²⁷ Abraham Sr.'s wife, Marie Page, was well read and wrote in Latin and French, an indispensable set of skills that would give her extensive political power among the Metis, who in the 1880s were still largely illiterate.²⁸ By all accounts the Metis of the exodus recaptured a measure of success and sovereignty after they moved to Saskatchewan in the 1870s. They formed a working government, participated in free trade again,

²⁴ Payment, *The Free People: Li Gens Libres*, 34; 41-42.

²⁵ Lawrence Barkwell, "Montour, Abraham Sr. (b. 1832)," *Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native and Applied Research: Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture*, (Saskatoon, 2016) Web. (Date Accessed: July 29, 2016). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/14127.Abraham%20MontourSr.%20doc.pdf>

²⁶ Payment, *The Free People: Li Gens Libres*, 171.

²⁷ Blanche Morrissette and Ed Ledoux, interview by the author, Mistawasis Reservation, Saskatchewan, July 2, 2014 and Alexina Newman, interview by Connie Regnier, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, July 20, 1982, *Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native studies and Applied Research*, (Saskatoon, 2016) Web. (Date Accessed: August 5, 2016). [http://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/00990.Newman,Alexina%20\(Connie%20Regnier\).pdf](http://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/00990.Newman,Alexina%20(Connie%20Regnier).pdf)

²⁸ Dianne Payment, *The Free People: Li Gens Libres*, 75.

and moved without interference across vast stretches of the Northwest, albeit with very limited connection to their ancestral homeland Red River.

The prosperity the Montours, Ledouxes, Morrissettes, and Arcands enjoyed in the Saskatchewan district, however, came to an abrupt halt after 1880. The causes for this end to Metis affluence are numerous, but can be narrowed down to four major factors. Firstly, Canada by the early 1880s had constructed large portions of the continental railway and settlers were again flooding into the West and threatening Metis life in the areas now occupied by the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and parts of British Columbia.²⁹ As in Winnipeg, ahead of them were surveyors that carved the land into square lots for agricultural settlement, which Canada then distributed to immigrants.³⁰ The surveyors, however, did not cede to Metis demands as they had in Winnipeg in 1869, nor did they try to reason with the Metis of Saskatchewan.³¹ Frightened and traumatized by what had just happened fifteen years earlier in Red River, the panicked Metis began a series of petitions to have their lands recognized.³² Ottawa, in the face of Metis desperation and anxieties, did not attempt to rectify the grievances of the petitioners between the years 1880 and 1885.³³ Moreover, the partitioning of the plains into square lots further changed Metis land use all across the Northwest, and restricted Metis movement and economy as it had done in Winnipeg. The large infrastructure—railways and steamboats—that

²⁹ R. Douglas Francis, Richard Jones and Donald B. Smith, *Destines: Canadian History since Confederation – sixth edition* (Toronto: Nelson Education, 2008), 59-66.

³⁰ J. M. Bumsted, *Louis Riel vs. Canada: The Making of a Rebel* (Winnipeg: Great Plains Publications, 2001), 243-44.

³¹ Jesse Thistle, “The 1885 Northwest Resistance: Causes to the Conflict,” *HPS - History and Political Science Journal* 3 (2014): 7 <http://hpsj.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/hpsj/article/view/39584/35870>

³² Francis, Jones and Smith, *Destines: Canadian History since Confederation*, 88.

³³ D. N. Sprague. *Canada and the Metis, 1869-1885* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1988), 162 and Lawrence J. Barkwell, *Veterans and Families of the Northwest Resistance* (Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2011), 27-29.

straddled North America by 1884 effectively destroyed Metis freighting and river transport employment and trade networks.³⁴

The second major thing that ended Metis prosperity at Batoche and St. Laurent around 1880 was the impoverishment and political and military disempowerment of the cousins of the Metis of Batoche, the Plains Cree led by Mistawasis and Ahtahkakoop, following the signing of Treaty Six.³⁵ In these times of strife the Metis of Saskatchewan could not rely on their kinship bonds with neighbouring First Nations for food or military support. The early 1880s were a time of great drought and crop failure in the Saskatchewan country that left the exiled Metis starving, again, as had happened in Winnipeg from 1867 to 1874.³⁶ The Cree, however, were too preoccupied with their own dispossession, starvation, and subjugation at the hands of the Macdonald administration to be able to lend aid to or feed their “half-breed” relatives. The Cree’s displacement onto Indian reserves also kept them from fully participating in the Northwest Resistance.³⁷

The third thing that interrupted Metis prosperity was the hardening of the U.S.-Canada border after 1870. By 1880 it formed an invisible barrier that stretched from west of Lake Superior, clear across the continent to Vancouver Harbour. As had happened in Winnipeg, U.S. army and border agents patrolled the border. And Canadian tariffs and laws were enforced that choked or greatly impeded Metis free trade traffic.³⁸ One only has to look at Macdonald’s “National Policy” to see the effects restrictive tariffs had on the western settler economy; its effects were even more devastating to Metis commerce.³⁹ In some cases, the border cut through

³⁴ Sprague, *Canada and the Metis, 1869-1885*, 162.

³⁵ Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains*, 96-98; 113-14; 123.

³⁶ (no title given) *Winnipeg Sun*, July 25, 1884. Cited in the House of Commons Debates, CSP, 1885. Pp. 3087.

³⁷ Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains*, 96-98; 113-14; 123.

³⁸ Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line*, 112 to 124.

³⁹ Francis, Jones, and Smith, *Destines: Canadian History since Confederation*, 59-60.

Metis kinship networks (this “halving” happened to branches of the Ledouxes, Morrissettes, and Arcands clans) and created a series of borderland Metis settlements that existed in a quasilimbo where Metis families were neither American nor Canadian.⁴⁰ Both countries denied them; in their view, these borderland Metis were unwanted “vagrants and squatters.”⁴¹

The final event that ended Metis prosperity in Saskatchewan around 1880 was the destruction of the bison. By 1875 the bison were teetering on extinction, and by 1879 the massive herds that had once dominated the Canadian prairies disappeared altogether.⁴² The obliteration of the bison happened because the 1860s and 1870s saw a massive demand for bison hides in U.S. manufacturing—millions were killed to make heavy-gauge leather belts for industrial machinery and tanned goods. Moreover, the bison’s natural habitat had been slowly encroached upon by the square lot land surveys that created thousands of large ranches, and tens of thousands settler farms. Ranchers and settlers also slaughtered many bison to make room for cattle grazing and homesteads plots.⁴³ Hundreds of thousands more were killed by the U.S. military in a directed effort to subjugate the Plains First Nations in the 1860s and 1870s.⁴⁴ What is less known, contends Metis activist and writer Howard Adams, is that Canada and the “Mounted Police herd[ed] buffalo across the international boundary-line where they knew [they] would be slaughtered.”⁴⁵ U.S. Secretary of the Interior, Columbus Delano, exposes how these governments used the disappearance of the bison to subjugate Metis and First Nations peoples on the Plains. In 1870, he wrote, “The rapid disappearance of game from the former hunting-

⁴⁰ Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line*, 141-45 and Interview of Blanche Morrissette and Ed Ledoux by the author, Mistawasis Reservation, Saskatchewan, July 2, 2014.

⁴¹ Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line*, 141-45.

⁴² Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 149-50.

⁴³ Howard Adams, *Prison of Grass: Canada from the Native Point of View* (Toronto: New Press, 1970), 65.

⁴⁴ Adrian Jawort, “Genocide by Other Means: U.S. Army Slaughtered Buffalo in Plains Indian Wars – May 9, 2011,” *Indian Country*, (New York, 2016) Web. (Date accessed: August 5, 2016)

<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2011/05/09/genocide-other-means-us-army-slaughtered-buffalo-plains-indian-wars-30798>

⁴⁵ Adams, *Prison of Grass*, 65.

grounds must operate largely in favour of our efforts to continue to confine Indians to smaller areas, and compel them to abandon their nomadic customs.”⁴⁶ Prime Minister Macdonald was among the nineteenth-century bureaucrats who subscribed to this kind of limit-their-mobility-and-starve-them-into-submission thinking. Macdonald did not offer relief to starving Indigenous Plains peoples after 1876; rather, he saw extreme malnutrition as an “opportunity for Canada” to corral desperate First Nations and Metis peoples onto smaller and smaller spaces to make room for immigrant block settlement.⁴⁷

It is still debated whether the destruction of the bison was an intentional strategy or a consequence of the rise of industrial America and large-scaled prairie settlement. What is clear is that outside factors—not the Metis themselves—led to the depletion of the bison and that Canada then used starvation as a tool of subjugation.⁴⁸ Throughout their history, Metis and First Nations peoples had lived symbiotically with the bison, hunting only those animals needed to sustain their livelihoods and societies. With this in mind, the loss of the bison must have seemed cataclysmic, even incomprehensible, to the Metis, as it completely destroyed their main food source, their governance structure, their free movement and their economy *overnight* (1879–82).⁴⁹

The massive destruction of the bison left thousands of Plains Metis and First Nations people starving and literally homeless and with nowhere to go. It took away many life essentials, such as clothing, footwear, blankets, robes, fuel to burn (bison patties), rope, lashings, sinew to sew, tipis and house coverings, horse saddles and bridles, cooking utensils, buckets, medicines,

⁴⁶ Jawort, “Genocide by Other Means.”

⁴⁷ Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains*, xix and Tobias, “Canada’s Subjugation of the Plains Cree, 1879–1885,” 519-548.

⁴⁸ Tobias, “Canada’s Subjugation of the Plains Cree,” 519-548.

⁴⁹ Adams, *Prison of Grass*, 65. The destruction of the bison affected Plains First Nations bison-centred societies equally as bad, if not worse, and this thesis does not wish to diminish their suffering. I only focus on the impacts of the slaughter of the bison on Metis life because it supports the argument of this thesis.

grease to preserve food, but most importantly, meat and nutritious bone marrow.⁵⁰ Metis Peter Erasmus, a man who witnessed the extreme hardships that followed in the wake of the disappearance of the bison, captures the utter shock Indigenous Plains people felt when they witnessed the animal's purposeful slaughter by outsiders:

The...extinction of the buffalo was caused by their slaughter in the thousands just for their hides in our neighbouring country. To Indian people this was an unbelievable thing to do. Destruction of food [livelihood, and their way of life] was in their minds worse than the murder of a man's own family.⁵¹

Indeed, taking away such a central component of their culture and economy threatened the very existence of Metis and Indigenous Plains societies. As in Winnipeg a decade earlier, the spectres of starvation, disease, and death stalked the Metis of Saskatchewan following the disappearance of the bison. Diane Payment states that after the bison vanished diseases such as influenza, diphtheria, appendicitis, cancer, and tuberculosis winnowed the Metis.⁵² There remain within Metis communities stories of depredation and misery which are too traumatic for me to impart in this thesis, as my ancestors were among those afflicted. Yet, the loss of the bison represents the most traumatic blow to the Metis life and most egregious form of violence endured by Plains cultures and societies.⁵³ The aforementioned stressors—large-scale infrastructure and settler encroachment, square lots blindly carving up the prairie and forever changing the way Metis moved over the land, the incarceration of Cree cousins on reserves after 1876, the U.S.-Canadian border's severing of Metis free trade and mobility, and the massive slaughter of the bison that destroyed Metis governance, economy, and their way of life—all converged at Batoche in 1885 to force the Metis, anxious about a Canada that since 1869 had repeatedly betrayed them, to defend their lives, land, and liberty.

⁵⁰ Adams, *Prison of Grass*, 65.

⁵¹ Erasmus, *Bison Days and Nights*, 226.

⁵² Payment, *The Free People—Otipemisiwak*, 68.

⁵³ Personal communication with Carolyn Podruchny, July 20, 2016.

Batoche: The Fighting Montour, Ledoux, Arcand, and Morrissette Families

Batoche represents the final scene in the drama of the dispossession of the Red River Metis. It is a struggle that, when combined with the Red River land betrayal and the disappearance of the bison, put an end to the Metis pillars of mobility, free trade, and independence. By placing ancestral members of the Morrissette-Arcand clan from generation B and C into this tragic history we will better understand how intergenerational trauma afflicted exiled Metis after 1885. These hardships and the inaction of the Canadian government in recognizing Metis title to their Saskatchewan lands had pushed the Metis beyond the breaking point. Author Maggie Siggins recounts an incident involving Abraham Montour Sr. that drove the Metis to take up arms in the 1885 Northwest Resistance:

All along the Métis had been concerned that the land they occupied would be sold from under them to white settlers. In summer 1883, their worst fears were confirmed. An entire section on the west side of the river at Batoche was purchased from the dominion government by W.J. Johnston of Prince Albert on behalf of an Ontario real estate firm. Abraham Montour, who had farmed a quarter section of this land since 1873, was told nothing of this transaction until Johnston showed up at his door. The government...tried to silence Montour so as not to create panic among other Métis by offering him a special grant in an adjoining section. When Montour finally understood what was going on, he spread the word very quickly. The community was enraged.⁵⁴

Metis Louis Goulet, who was present when the west bank of Batoche was sold to Ontario speculators, explains that the exodus families, whose property had been liquidated from under their feet, were settled in Saskatchewan for some ten or fifteen years before the surveyor chains arrived. Moreover, Goulet states that although the Batoche Metis had broken the land, put improvements on it, and made it agriculturally productive, Canada still refused to grant them

⁵⁴ Maggie Siggins, *Riel: A Life of Revolution* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1994), 339-340.

land title or even listen to their cases.⁵⁵ Breaking the land and making it productive, it must be remembered, were very same criteria settlers were obliged to meet to legally own their homestead plots.⁵⁶ It appears Prime Minister Macdonald was again—as he had done in Winnipeg—trying to prevent another half-breed reserve. There would be, by Macdonald’s own words, “no fresh handouts” at Batoche to the now starving and fearful Metis.⁵⁷

In his memoir, Louis Goulet says that the Metis had had enough of Canada’s indifference, so they called a secret meeting at the house of Abraham Montour Sr. on March 24, 1884, at which they solidified their will to fight against Canada to defend their lands and livelihoods. Gabriel Dumont led the meeting attended by 31 notable Metis men and women; Andre Nault Jr., Michel Dumas, and Abraham Sr. were Dumont’s lead councillors that night. Dumont’s closing speech captures the Metis call to arms:

And let me tell you, my friends, that’s not the end of it. The government will never give us anything! They stole our lands with promises and now when they’ve got control, they’re laughing at us. They don’t intend to grant us the slightest thing in return for soil where generations of our ancestors sleep. No. We’ll never get anything from them, until we take matters into our own hands and force the government to give us justice.⁵⁸

Listening in the background was the daughter of Abraham Sr. and Marie, ten-year-old Cecile Montour (generation C), a direct descendant of the Morrissette-Arcand clan.⁵⁹ Cecile, as Carolyn Podruchny and I have shown, would be traumatized for life by the violent events of the Northwest Resistance.⁶⁰ By the end of the meeting, Dumont and his councillors had decided that

⁵⁵ Charette, Guillaume. Ray Ellenwood trns., *Vanishing Spaces: Memories of Louis Goulet* (Winnipeg: Editions Bois Brules, 1976), 110.

⁵⁶ Francis, Jones, and Smith, *Destines: Canadian History since Confederation*, 68.

⁵⁷ Ged Martin, *John A. Macdonald: Canada’s First Prime Minister* (Ottawa: Library and Archives Canada, 2013), 167.

⁵⁸ Charette and Ellenwood, *Vanishing Spaces*, 109-12.

⁵⁹ Jesse Thistle, “Boots on the Ground,” *Homeless Hub* (Toronto, 2016) Web. (Date Accessed: August 6, 2016), 14. <http://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/Boots-on-the-Ground-Transcript.pdf>

⁶⁰ Podruchny and Thistle, “Geography of Blood,” 69.

the Metis would send for Louis Riel in Montana and begin preparing for war the following spring.⁶¹ Four months later, Riel was in Saskatchewan defending and pleading the Metis cause.

John A. Macdonald, as had been his political strategy thus far, remained indifferent to the plight of Metis suffering, starvation, and fear; and the Metis—goaded into combat—began the Northwest Resistance on March 26, 1885.⁶² The Resistance was a series of battles from March 26 to June 3, 1885, wherein Canada sent a mechanized army into Saskatchewan to crush the “rebellious” Metis once and for all. The large army Canada sent to “subdue” the Northwest would not face a similar professional army but a force of well-trained, but frightened Metis families—fathers and mothers, children, grandmothers and grandfathers, uncles and aunts—who wanted to defend their homes and way of life. Many members of the Morrissette-Arcand clan from generation B and C were among the Metis families who stood up to face the combined Canadian forces of RCMP, foot soldiers, naval craft, heavy artillery, and a Gatling gun.⁶³

⁶¹ Charette and Ellenwood, *Vanishing Spaces*, 110-14.

⁶² Francis, Jones, and Smith, *Destines: Canadian History since Confederation*, 86-87.

⁶³ “Northwest Rebellion,” *Historica Canada* (Ottawa, 2016) Web. (Date Accessed: August 7, 2016) <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/north-west-rebellion/>

The Arcands



Figure 7: The Arcand brothers in the 1910s (I do not know who is who).
Family photograph courtesy of Yvonne Richer-Morrisette

The Arcand family had eleven members who fought in the Northwest Resistance. Among them were patriarch Francois (generation B), who is listed as a member of Phillip Garnot's squadron, number 233.⁶⁴ Philomene's (Francois's wife) role in the battles remains obscured by time, but she most likely aided her family by making munitions from melted buttons, kettles, or any other metal items, as many Metis women did during the struggle.⁶⁵ The Arcand family is known to have trained their young sons, many still children, to be munitions envoys and scouts as was the case with Francois and Philomene's son St. Pierre Arcand (generation C). St. Pierre is

⁶⁴ Lawrence Barkwell, *Veterans and Families of the Northwest Resistance*, 45.

⁶⁵ Yvonne Richer-Morrisette & Blanche Morrisette, interview by Jesse Thistle & Carolyn Podruchny, Poundmaker Reserve, Saskatchewan, June 21, 2013.

a direct descendant of the Morrissette-Arcand clan, and he was but nine years old when the fighting broke out. He is my great-grandfather.⁶⁶



Figure 8: Michif Elder and Knowledge Keeper Alcide Morrissette in June 2014.

A grandson of St. Pierre's, Alcide Morrissette (Figure 8), explained in a June 2013 interview that his grandfather was indeed an envoy, but envoy was just one of his jobs at Batoche. St. Pierre had also participated in targeted nocturnal attacks against the RCMP:

St. Pierre delivered bullets to each rifle pit and he had a .44 rifle of his own. I know he did because he still had it when I knew him [in the 1930s and 40s]...I saw that rifle and it was still working good...He had that since he was a young boy in that battle...He had a .44 with a long barrel on it...It had six shots in it. [It was good] for close range, from here to

⁶⁶ Jesse Thistle, "Boots on the Ground," and Podruchny and Thistle, "Geography of Blood," 69 and Barkwell, *Veterans and Families*, 44-46.

that house [40 feet]...[H]e hid by himself in the bush, and once in a while when he'd see a Red Coat [RCMP] he'd take a shot and he would miss...He was shooting at them [at night] and then he would run away.⁶⁷

Alcide goes on to give a vivid account of how St. Pierre was able to participate in these nightly raids on account of his reconnaissance expertise:

St. Pierre was a tracker. [He knew] where to go, and he knew how to track when people walked in the grass or whatever it was—that's how he got involved with the Rebellion...Yes he was a tracker and knew how to hide, all of a sudden you'd see him and then there was nothing there—that's how he was...like a transformer. [H]e was fast and he reported what he saw to the headman [Metis fighters]. He told them how many [R.C.M.P and Canadian soldiers] there were, where they were, and they knew right away—he would crawl through the tall grass, he was just like a cat...and he would tell the Metis by sneaking ahead of them and waving them on if it was safe.⁶⁸

It is also known through Morrissette oral history that St. Pierre and his younger brother Jonas, six years of age, were almost killed by an exploding Canadian artillery shell during the Battle of Batoche. Louis Arcand, St. Pierre's son, recounts the family memory:

[H]e used to tell about when that Rebellion was on, him and his brother Jonas were sitting around a watering hole—quite the good-sized one—they had their feet hanging down and they had the cow tied behind by the wagon. And then one of these big shots from the canon came right through where they were sitting—him and Jonas—and it just passed over the cow and knocked the cow down [with the percussion of the explosion]...But that was so close to them, a big shell coming right through between the two of them.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Blanche Morrissette & Yvonne Richer-Morrissette with Alcide Morrissette & Paulette Morrissette, interview by the author, Beardy's Reservation, Saskatchewan, June 23, 2014.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Interview, Yvonne Morrissette & Blanche Morrissette with Louis Arcand, interview by the author, Saskatchewan, June 23, 2014.



Figure 9: Michif Elder and Knowledge Keeper Louis Arcand in June 2014.

St. Pierre would suffer battle trauma his whole life; however, his historic trauma was no doubt further impacted by the older dispossession trauma that already existed in the Arcand line since 1869, as this thesis argues.

St. Pierre's uncle, Francois-Regis Arcand Jr., would fight alongside his nephew and father, Francois Sr., in the Northwest Resistance. He is listed as number 223 in Phillippe Garnot's squadron. Details on Francois-Regis Jr.'s exact involvement in the battles, however, do not exist in the oral history or paper archives. Many other members of St. Pierre's family would fight in 1885, among them Alexandre Arcand (b. 1838), Jean-Baptiste Arcand Jr. (b. 1870), Jean-

Baptiste Arcand Sr. (1840), Jean-Napoleon Arcand (b. 1867), Joseph Arcand (b. 1833), Marie Arcand-Laviolette (b. 1861), Marie Arcand-Parenteau (no dates recorded), Marie Arcand-Swain (b. 1834), Marie-Josephete Arcand (b. 1867), and Therese Arcand (b. 1834).⁷⁰ The Arcands, clearly, were a family fighting against the injustices that began in Red River in 1869 and followed them westward to Saskatchewan, limiting their trade, freedom, and mobility. Louis Arcand captures the fighting spirit of his father St. Pierre and the rest of his ancestral Arcand family: “[St. Pierre] was a rebel fighter...Oh he fought against the government and he fought everything...They were just a bunch of fighting people, they fought [the government] all the time.”⁷¹ The Arcands were not the only ancestral line of the Morrissette-Arcand clan to “rebel” against Canada in 1885.

The Montours

The Montours also rose up and fought side by side with their Arcand kin. Abraham Sr., as has been shown, helped as early as March 1884 to orchestrate the spring 1885 Metis struggle for freedom and independence. Abraham Sr. also played an active part in organizing the battles of Frog Lake, on April 2, and Frenchmen’s Butte, on May 28, 1885. For his involvement in the Northwest Resistance, Abraham Sr. and Metis leader Andre Nault Jr. were later charged with felony treason for “intent to levy war against our said Lady the Queen.”⁷² Abraham’s daughter Cecile, unfortunately, witnessed her father’s arrest and then watched as he was dragged to Regina for prosecution after the Battle of Batoche, an experience that surely traumatized the

⁷⁰ Barkwell, *Veterans and Families*, 45-46.

⁷¹ Thistle, “Boots on the Ground,” and Podruchny and Thistle, “Geography of Blood,” 70.

⁷² Canada – Department of the Secretary of State, “The Queen vs. Abraham Montour and Andre Nault,” *Trials in Connection with the Northwest Rebellion, 1885* (Ottawa: Maclean, Roger & Co, 1886), 339-40.

young girl for life.⁷³ The case against Abraham Sr. and Andre Nault Jr., however, would not be prosecuted, as no one would step forward to bear witness against two of the Metis's political champions.⁷⁴

The losses of Abraham Sr. and Marie's family were substantial during the Battle of Batoche. In 1886 the Montours claimed \$508.00 for their destroyed home but received nothing from Canada, likely because Abraham Sr. was suspected of organizing the struggle with Dumont and Riel.⁷⁵ Eleven members of the Montour family are known to have fought for their freedom in 1885; they were Alexander Montour (no dates recorded), Bernard Montour (b. 1855), Jean-Baptiste Montour I (1857), Jean-Baptiste Montour II (b. 1860), Joseph Montour (b. 1867), Joseph Montour (b. 1865), Julie-Sansregret Montour (no date recorded), Marie-Madeleine Montour (b. 1845), Marie Montour-Falcon (no date recorded), Pascal Montour Jr. (b. 1852), and Pascal Montour Sr. (b. 1822). Two Montour men, Jean-Baptiste I and Joseph—Abraham Sr. and Marie's nephews—were killed at the Battle of Duck Lake on March 26, 1885.

⁷³ For a more detailed examination of this traumatic experience and its impacts of Cecile's life, see Podruchny and Thistle, "Geography of Blood," 69.

⁷⁴ Lawrence Barkwell, "Montour, Abraham Sr. (b. 1832)," *Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research* (Saskatoon, 2016) Web. (Date Accessed: August 6, 2016)
<http://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/14127.Abraham%20MontourSr.%20doc.pdf>

⁷⁵ Payment, *The Free People—Otipemisiwak: Batoche*, Appendix F and *Trials in Connection with the Northwest Rebellion, 1885*, 39-40.



Figure 10: Grave of the Montour men killed in the Northwest Resistance, Batoche.

Young Cecile’s older brother, Jean-Baptiste II, and older sister, Marie Falcon-Montour, actively fought at Duck Lake and Batoche. Jean Baptiste II may have stayed in Batoche with his father after the conflict ended—it remains unclear at this point. Marie, on the other hand, fled to Montana and joined the Spring Creek Metis Band.⁷⁶ The Montour extended family were among the group of Metis hit hardest and were thrice exiled: first from Red River, then from Saskatchewan , and then from Hill, Montana, after 1885.⁷⁷ Reeling from the defeat, the long line of political freedom fighters and bison hunters in the Montour line abruptly ended in 1885. Cecile, a direct descendant of the Morrissette-Arcand clan, my great-grandmother, would suffer

⁷⁶ Barkwell, *Veterans and Families*, 184 to 186 and Census Place: Mistawasis Reservation, Carlton Agency, Saskatchewan, the Territories. *Census of Canada, 1901*. RG31 Microfilm reels: T-6428 to 6556. Library and Archives Canada.

⁷⁷ Payment, *The Free People—Gens Libres*, 200.

in poverty on the road allowance the rest of her life alongside her husband, St. Pierre Arcand.⁷⁸ According to Morrissette-Arcand descendants, she was worked to death by 1906. The trauma that losing their liberty, freedom of movement, and prosperity caused the Montour family is self-evident. The Montours, after all, had fought for Metis political freedom and free trade since the time of Metis ethnogenesis itself through the efforts of Bonhomme in 1815 and the Sayer trial of 1849.

The Ledouxes

The Ledoux branch of the ancestral Morrissette-Arcand clan, like their Montour and Arcand kin, entered the fray against Canada during the Northwest Resistance in the early spring of 1885. As already noted, many of the Ledouxes had taken treaty when the patriarch of the Ledoux-Belanger clan, Cree Chief Mistawasis, signed Treaty Six in 1876. Treaty Six from the outset had bound the Plains Cree Nation, limiting their martial power, mobility, and even their ability to procure food. However, there were many Ledouxes that did not take treaty and who instead chose to live among their exiled kin in the Batoche region. An interview with Isadore Ledoux on July 21, 1873, confirms that the Ledoux family lived in both Cree and Metis worlds in the 1880s, residing in Mistawasis reserve and Batoche. Ledoux recalls: “My grandfather and grandmother [Ledoux] lived in there—and uncles. They were living at Batoche... When the Rebellion started I was here [Leask, SK, near Mistawasis reserve]. [But] I remember... [us] Indians moving to Batoche to join the Metis in the Rebellion.”⁷⁹ In 1885 Members of the Ledoux family lived in Gabriel’s Crossing on Section 42, Lot 7, adjacent to Batoche.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Census Place: Humbolt, Saskatchewan, Sub district 21, the Territories. *Census of Canada. 1906.* RG31, T-18353 to 18363, pp. 20. Library and Archives Canada.

⁷⁹ Isadore Ledoux, interview by Carol Pearlstone, Leask, Saskatchewan, July 21, 1973 (External transcription number disc 23) *The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture: Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and*

The parents of Isadore Ledoux were Joseph “Toomatoon” Ledoux and Isabelle “Mistaw” Belanger (generation B), and both would fight in the Battle of Batoche, May 9 to 12, 1885.⁸¹ Toomatoon appears on lists of “Rebel Indians” that Canada kept from 1886 to 1888 and used to exclude “subversives” from receiving treaty payment, an exclusion that confirms Toomatoon’s involvement in the Northwest struggle.⁸² After the battle, Toomatoon is known to have fled Batoche to the “Labacan settlement,” where he again took flight after RCMP entered the camp looking for him and other “rebel” fighters.⁸³ Isabelle “Mistaw” also participated in the Battle of Batoche by making munitions out of scraps of metal as early as 1883.⁸⁴ Alcide Morrisette confirms his great-grandmother Isabelle’s preparatory efforts:

That’s when [Isabelle would] go make...bullets, bags of it. Probably was only 24s or, I don’t know if there was 22s in those days. But there were some 12-gauge duck rifles...And those bullets were only about the size of your finger, they were about that long [Alcide shows us the size with the tip of his finger]...They would shoot [those] while hiding at close range to where the Mounties were, and that’s where the sharpshooters would come in with the single shot 12-gauge. They melted down any lead they could find...buttons, kettles...That was in 1885! And melting the bullets was two to three years before that!...It was in 1880 that they started, way before 1885...They knew that the government was coming and they knew they would eventually send the policemen to take it over.⁸⁵

Applied Research. (Saskatoon, 2014) Web. (Date accessed: July 19, 2014)

[http://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/01119.Ledoux%20,%20Isadore%20\(C.Pearlstone\).pdf](http://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/01119.Ledoux%20,%20Isadore%20(C.Pearlstone).pdf)

⁸⁰ Payment, *The Free People—Otipemisiwak*, 306-07.

⁸¹ Blanche Morrisette and Ed Ledoux, interview by the author, Mistawasis Reservation, Saskatchewan, July 2, 2014 and “Geordie Morrisette and Jean-Norbert Morrisette,” *The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate Records, Metis Families Oblate Missionary Records: M Families (Morrisettes)*, file M-33a and b and “Ledoux, (John) Toomatoon,” *The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate Records on Metis family Genealogy: L Families (Ledoux)*, file L-63c, Provincial Archives of Alberta and genealogical work done by Dr. Alexander Dietz for Blanche Morrisette in 1998 constructed from Marianne Morrisette’s Mistawasis band number FN 133 and Ed Ledoux’s family recollection passed to him from his father and former Chief of Mistawasis First Nation reservation.

⁸² “Indian Affairs Treaty Annuity Paylists, Treaties 4, 6, and 7, 1878-1909,” RG10, General Accounts Series, Library and Archives Canada. Canada. <http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_mikan_133552 >

⁸³ I cannot locate the Labacan settlement in Interview, Carol Pearlstone and Isadore Ledoux, Leask, Saskatchewan, July 21, 1973 (External transcription number disc 23) *The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture: Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research.* (Saskatoon, 2014) Web. (Date accessed: July 19, 2014) [http://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/01119.Ledoux%20,%20Isadore%20\(C.Pearlstone\).pdf](http://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/01119.Ledoux%20,%20Isadore%20(C.Pearlstone).pdf)

⁸⁴ Podruchny and Thistle, “Geography of Blood,” 70.

⁸⁵ Alcide Morrisette & Paulette Morrisette, interview by the author, June 23, 2014.

What is more, Isabelle is thought to have melted bullets for the Metis troops with her teenaged daughter Marianne Ledoux (generation C), sixteen years old in 1885, who herself would fight in the Metis struggle for independent sovereignty.⁸⁶



RIEL'S COUSIN: Mrs. George Morcette, 100, is a cousin of Louis Riel. She cooked for him and fellow rebels at Batoche during the Riel rebellion. Her husband died nine years ago at the age of 96 and only three of her 16 children are alive today. Still enjoying an active life, she is wearing a dress which she made herself. Mrs. Morcette will be 101 on Christmas Day.

Cousin of Riel near 101 mark

Figure 11: Marianne Ledoux in the *Leader Post*, October 27, 1960, 3.

⁸⁶ Podruchny and Thistle, "Geography of Blood," 70.

Marianne was Louis Riel's cousin, personal friend, cook, and member of his inner circle."⁸⁷ Marianne is my great-grandmother. A 1960 article in Regina's newspaper *Leader Post*, entitled "Cousin of Riel near the 101 mark," seems to confirm Marianne's blood connection with Riel and also states, "Mrs. George Morrissette is probably one of the last survivors of those who were close to Riel. The spry centenarian, predeceased by her husband nine years ago, cooked for Riel...during the Riel rebellion."⁸⁸ Marianne, according to living Morrissette-Arcand descendants, was cooking for Riel on May 10, 1885, the day Canadian General Middleton started shelling the town of Batoche. Yvonne Morrissette-Richer, Marianne's granddaughter, tells a story wherein Riel saved her grandmother's life. In her testimony, Yvonne explains how Middleton had not allowed sufficient time for families to evacuate the settlement, yet he still went ahead and shelled Metis homes:

From the stories she would tell she said that they just starting advancing and they were firing on the houses and she said a lot of the people had already started to evacuate but they weren't prepared yet. They hadn't all left... They [just] started firing [and] the first bullets were firing in upon the houses, and she said that Louis picked her up and threw her through the window to save her and she crawled out into the bushes. She used to tell us if it wasn't for him she wouldn't be alive.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ John Cuthand, "A Descendant of Riel," *New Breed*, January 1976, 5 and "Morcette, Mrs. George cousin of Riel near 101 mark," *Leader Post*, October 27, 1960, 3 and Podruchny and Thistle, "Geography of Blood," 70.

⁸⁸ "Morcette, Mrs. George cousin of Riel near 101 mark," *Leader Post*, 3. Marianne always said throughout her life that Louis Riel was her cousin and she is known to have personal effects of his that have been passed down in the Morrissette family since 1885.

⁸⁹ Yvonne Richer-Morrissette & Blanche Morrissette, interview by Jesse Thistle & Carolyn Podruchny, Wanuskewin, Saskatchewan, June 22, 2013 and Interview, Jesse Thistle & Carolyn Podruchny with Yvonne Richer-Morrissette & Blanche Morrissette, Poundmaker Reserve, Saskatchewan, June 21, 2013.



Figure 12: Yvonne Richer-Morrisette researching with me at the Provincial Archives of Alberta, in June 2014.

After being thrown out the window by Riel, Marianne is believed to have fled into the bush with a group of hungry Metis children, northward towards St. Louis, in an effort to find safety and food. Alcide states that Marianne, with her ten-year-old brother-in-law Vital Morrisette in tow, crossed the South Saskatchewan River at St. Louis, and then proceeded west to Muskeg Lake reserve. Alcide tells of Marianne and Vital's harrowing flight following Batoche:

But I know how she fled from Batoche. She was making tea, that's where the first shot came, she was only sixteen years old then. And the first shot came and they fled towards St. Louis. And they crossed from there to Muskeg Lake. From Muskeg Lake they went to White Fish Lake and that's where they built their shacks. Like this... And La Police [Vital's nickname] was back down there in the bush. Where you couldn't drive in there, all you could do is ride a horse, and that's where they made a little road there with his buggy. That's where he lived. Oh, he lived there for quite a while. As long as I knew him.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Blanche Morrisette & Yvonne Richer-Morrisette with Alcide Morrisette & Paulette Morrisette, interview by the author, Beardy's Reservation, Saskatchewan, June 23, 2014.

Marianne's role as a cook for Riel and the Metis troops is well documented in the historical record, and it has been shown elsewhere that she suffered from battle trauma until she died at the age of 101.⁹¹



Figure 13: US Confederate money Louis Riel gave to Marianne at Batoche. The bills have been passed down through the Morrissette line to Marianne's granddaughter Martha Smith.

Marianne and ten other Ledoux nuclear and extended family members would fight in the Northwest Resistance. The other family members are Joseph "Toomatoon" Ledoux, Isabelle "Mistaw" Belanger-Ledoux, Catherine Ledoux (b. 1856), Euphrosine Ledoux (b. 1852), Flavie Ledoux (b. 1871), Francoise Ledoux (b. 1827), Helene Ledoux (b. 1850), Jerome Ledoux (b. 1845), Louise Ledoux (b. 1844), and Pierre Ledoux (b. 1861).⁹² Blanche Morrissette and Yvonne

⁹¹ Podruchny and Thistle, "Geography of Blood," 70.

⁹² Barkwell, *Veteran Families*, 164-166.

Richer-Morrisette, Marianne's granddaughters, remember the deep sorrow that overcame their grandmother whenever she spoke of her cousin Riel's hanging or how her Cree relatives were hunted down and hung after Batoche.⁹³

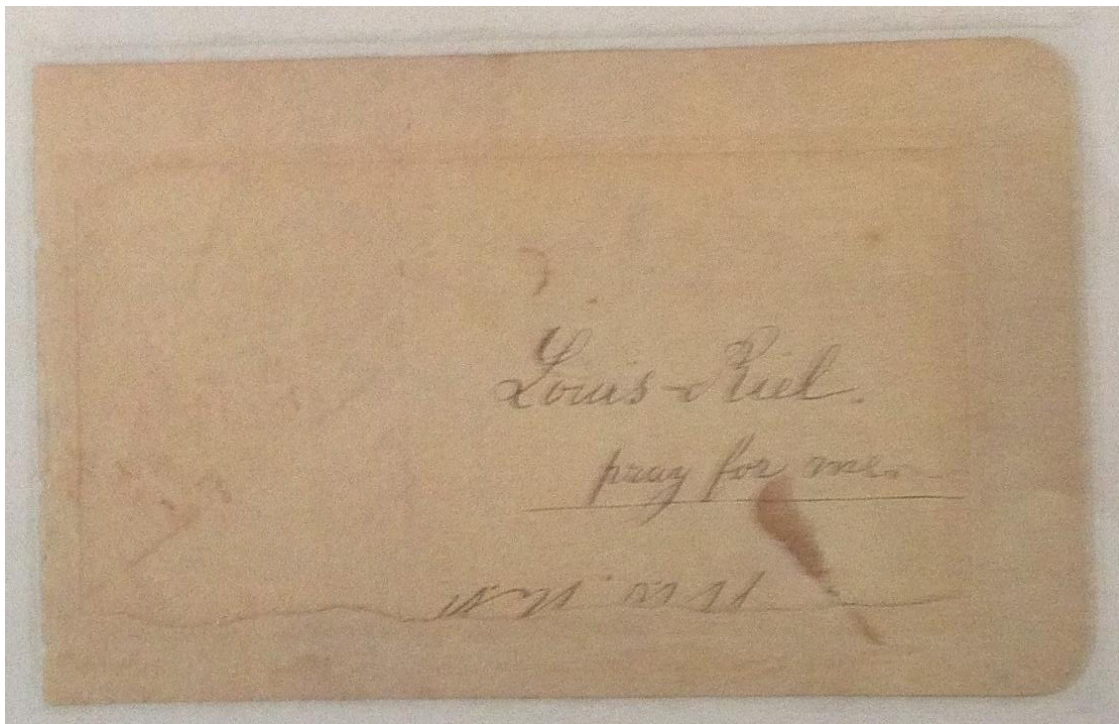


Figure 14: Document in possession of Martha Smith, granddaughter of Marianne Ledoux, June 2014. Blood is thought to be Riel's.

The Ledouxes suffered extreme depredations after 1885, with many fleeing south to where portions of them found respite on the Rocky Boy Indian reservation in the Missouri River area of Montana.⁹⁴ Some stayed in the Batoche region and again took treaty, but many were denied treaty by Canada; because, as noted by Lawrence Barkwell, the Ledouxes were

⁹³ Blanche Morrisette, interview by Jesse Thistle & Carolyn Podruchny, Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, June 20, 2013 and Yvonne Richer-Morrisette, interview by Jesse Thistle & Carolyn Podruchny, Wanuskewin, Saskatchewan, June 22, 2013.

⁹⁴ Nicholas C. P. Vrooman, *"The Whole Country was... 'One robe,'"* (Little Shell: Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana, 2012), 303.

“resistance fighters and had relatives in Mistawasis, Starblanket, One Arrow, and Muskeg Lake Bands.”⁹⁵ Canada, it seems, did not pay “subversives” after 1885 and further stripped them of their rights, freedoms, and lives well into the twentieth century.⁹⁶ Three things are certain about the Ledoux clan post-1885: they would not be as mobile, prosperous, or politically powerful as they once were, during the period under Mistawasis’s leadership. These were devastating strictures that transformed the Ledoux family from influential chiefs and traders into penniless wards of the state, hemmed in on reserves—all in less than one generation. The most unfortunate of the Ledoux family became road allowance Metis, Marianne among them. Marianne’s son, Jeremie, would never know the wealth his mother’s family had enjoyed prior to 1885. Instead, Jeremie and his wife, Nancy Arcand (generation D), the daughter of St. Pierre Arcand and Cecile Montour, chose to leave federally funded reserve life with Marianne, moving by 1915 to the sides of roads and railways in the road allowance communities of Park Valley and Dumbolt, Saskatchewan.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Barkwell, *Veteran Families*, 166.

⁹⁶ Payment, *The Free People—Otipemisiwak*, 64-71.

⁹⁷ Maria Campbell, *Half-Breed* (Halifax: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1973), 7 and 23.

The Morrissettes



Figure 15: George Morrissette, in middle with cane, along with other Morrissettes and Arcands in late 1920s. Photograph courtesy of Martha Smith.

The last ancestral line of “rebel fighters” from the Morrissette-Arcand clan in generation B and C are the Morrissettes. Although not as extensively present in Batoche battle records and archives as the abovementioned families, they still participated in the Northwest Resistance. Norbert Sr. and Elizabeth (generation B), according to the historical record, were in Winnipeg and did not fight in the Battle of Batoche or any of the Northwest Resistance conflicts.⁹⁸ Their

⁹⁸ Alexina Newman, interview by Connie Regnier, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, July 20, 1982, *Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native studies and Applied Research*, (Saskatoon, 2016) Web. (Date Accessed: August 5, 2016). [http://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/00990.Newman,Alexina%20\(Connie%20Regnier\).pdf](http://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/00990.Newman,Alexina%20(Connie%20Regnier).pdf)

son Norbert Jr., did not fight either, according to his testimony in a scrip claim filed at Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, on July 22, 1885:

I will take scrip. I took no part whatever either directly or indirectly in the northwest rebellion against the Government. I kept hidden to avoid being compelled to take up arms. I kept along with Mistawasis and his band North of the River.⁹⁹



Figure 16: Cree Elder Ed Ledoux and I in June 2014, visiting the grave of Chief Mistawasis.

Cree Elder Ed Ledoux, however, thinks otherwise. He believes Norbert Jr. probably fought, as most of his Morrissette ancestors did, but that he and the others simply denied their participation in 1885 to avoid further government reprisals after Batoche: “[My Métis family] denied any relationship to Louis Riel because they were scared of being hung...after the Rebellion...They

⁹⁹ “Morrissette Jr., Norbert - Concerning his scrip claim as a child - Scrip for \$240,” Claim 1408, 19uu, RG15-D-II-8-b, vol. 1330, Library and Archives Canada.

split [scattered].”¹⁰⁰ Diane Payment explains how denial became the strategy of many Metis for avoiding further persecution: “The loss of life, the arbitrary arrests and the denunciation provoked a hardening of the positions or a run-for-your-life attitude. In order to avoid further persecution, several Metis now denied any affiliation to or participation in the insurrectionary movement.”¹⁰¹ The fact that Norbert Jr.’s brother, George “Geordie” Morrissette, is recorded as fighting at Batoche supports the observation that the Morrissettes were resistance fighters.¹⁰² In a 1982 interview, George’s daughter Alexina Newman (née Morrissette), reveals her father’s, and indirectly the Morrissettes’, participation in the Battle of Batoche: “Yeah, my dad was involved in Batoche...He was fighting...my daddy was there.”¹⁰³ Alexina’s son George Arcand (b. 1941 and still -living) also recalls that his grandfather “Geordie” was at Batoche just before the fighting erupted:

I know [my grandmother] was in that area. She must have lived there [Batoche] because she was working in that building there where she mentioned that the bullets came through...Them three spots there where the shells hit it and she was inside sweeping cause she used to be cleaning the place [and cooking for Riel] and that’s how she met Grandpa [Geordie]. That’s where Grandpa was from that area.¹⁰⁴

Another account by Alcide, Geordie’s grandson, recalls how his grandfather and grandmother fell in love at Batoche: “Yes. That’s where she [Marianne] shacked up with George Morrissette; that was my grandfather. That’s where they shacked up—Batoche...Yeah, he was there before it started.”¹⁰⁵ Not much else is known of George’s involvement in Batoche, as he never spoke

¹⁰⁰ Blanche Morrissette and Ed Ledoux, interview by the author, Mistawasis Reservation, Saskatchewan, July 2, 2014

¹⁰¹ Payment, *The Free People—Otipemisiwak*, 159.

¹⁰² Cuthand, “A Descendant of Riel,” 5.

¹⁰³ Alexina Newman, interview by Connie Regnier, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, July 20, 1982. (External Transcript Disc 191) *The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture: Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research*, (Saskatoon, 2014) Web. (Date accessed: September 5, 2014) <http://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/00990.pdf>

¹⁰⁴ Blanche Morrissette & Yvonne Richer-Morrissette, interview by the author, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, June 25, 2014.

¹⁰⁵ Alcide Morrissette & Paulette Morrissette, interview by the author, June 23, 2014.

openly with his son Jeremie or with his descendants about his role in the conflict or where he went afterwards. However, records show that he did meet Marianne sometime after 1885, as the couple are married—perhaps on the run—in a Catholic ceremony on Muskeg Lake reserve on January 3, 1888.¹⁰⁶ The Morrissettes, like the Ledouxes, would lose all the political influence and prosperity that should have been afforded by their marriage connections to Mistawasis and Ahtahkakoop.

Geordie and his wife, Marianne, like many members of the Ledoux, Arcand, and Montour lines, would all take scrip after they lost their sovereignty, land, and economy following the Battle of Batoche.¹⁰⁷ And as in Winnipeg, most would be cheated out of their holdings by predatory land speculators. Never again would the Metis live as independently, or trade as freely, or move as expansively as they had during the time of prosperity. Canada, large-scale immigrant settlement, the border, the defeat of 1885, and the square lot system would see to that by 1900. Maria Campbell states that following the crushing defeat at Batoche, the collective Morrissette-Arcand clan fled northwards to the area around Prince Albert, where many members of her family again took scrip and tried to homestead, with many becoming dispossessed and forced onto road allowance Metis by the 1910s.¹⁰⁸ With Carolyn Podruchny, I have also described these Metis displacements onto road allowances:

Various levels of government actively scattered [“rebel” Metis] families [after 1885] so they could not rely on kin networks. These directed dispersal efforts forced some Metis to change their names; others fled south to Montana, north to the Mackenzie River area, and even as far east as Abitibi, Ontario; and a few hid among relatives in nearby reserves. Some of them were able to return to the area after a generation or two, take homesteads, or live along road allowances.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ “Morrissette (Geordie), 1867,” *The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate Records on Metis Family Genealogy: M Families (Morrissette)*, file M-33b, the Provincial Archives of Alberta and Census Place: Muskeg Lake, Saskatchewan, the Territories, *Census of Canada, 1901*. RG31, T-6428 to T-6556. No. 54. Pg.2. Library and Archives Canada.

¹⁰⁷ Payment, *The Free People—Otipemisiwak*, Appendix G and Appendix H.

¹⁰⁸ Campbell, *Half-Breed*, 7; 23.

¹⁰⁹ Podruchny and Thistle, “Geography of Blood,” 74.

Over time, the road allowance Metis were forgotten by mainstream Canada. They retreated further and further into the back roads of northern Saskatchewan, wishing nothing more than to be left alone so they could return to the lifestyle they had had before Canada intruded upon their rights, property, and way of life.¹¹⁰ Blanche Morrisette, a cousin of Campbell's, tells a childhood story she heard from her mother, Nancy Arcand, that perhaps best describes how "forgotten" the road allowance Metis had become by the 1930s:

She said although her family was poor, their Metis neighbours were worse off. She used to sneak up to one of the neighbour's houses to watch what they were doing. There were five girls in that household. She said they were really skinny because they were starving. Apparently there was a boy who was handicapped and couldn't walk. He would drag himself around on the floor. One day she was peeking in the window and the girls were tearing strips of cloth from his shirt to do the dishes. She said it wasn't funny but she laughed because she found it so ridiculous. Everyone from that family died. They starved to death.¹¹¹

According to Arcand, the Metis family mentioned above, and the Metis in general, were forgotten as if they had never existed at all.

¹¹⁰ Campbell, *Half-Breed*, 7; 23.

¹¹¹ Personal written correspondence by Blanche Morrisette entitled "Nancy a Short Biography." Blanche wrote the story in 1998 while attending the Dumont Technical Institute in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. It was given to me on June 23rd, 2014.



Figure 17: St. Pierre Arcand and family along the road allowances in 1940s.
Family photograph courtesy of Roxanne Reich.

From this comprehensive sketch of what happened to the Red River Metis after 1869, we have gained a clearer understanding of what Maria Campbell means when she says, “[They] lifted it up, a way up, and then [they] tossed [our] puzzle in the air and it flew into one million pieces.”¹¹² Moreover, we also fully comprehend what Campbell means when she states,

When I think about it, looking at our family dispossessed and displaced in Manitoba, and then coming here [SK] and having that happen again in 1885 and then it happening again with the loss of their lands afterwards. They went to those places because that’s where their families were, that was the traditional homeland of our grandmothers. When I say homeland it was the winter hunting territories, that was where they went and settled and they thought they’d be okay after Batoche. And they didn’t leave Batoche in a good way, they fled that always believing that if the police came they’d be going to prison or even hanged. Some of them believed they’d be hanged.¹¹³

Some hundred years after Batoche, Marianne, Geordie, Jeremie, and Nancy, along with many of their Morrissette-Arcand relatives, still believed that they could be hung for their family’s

¹¹² Maria Campbell, interview by the author, Saskatoon, June 25, 2015.

¹¹³ Ibid.

participation in Batoche.¹¹⁴ Jeremie Morrissette captures the intergenerational trauma that dominated the Morrissette-Arcand family along the road allowance well into the modern era: “Don’t tell them you’re Metis or they’ll hang you.”¹¹⁵ These were words Jeremie spoke to his grandsons, myself among them, before we were let go into adoption in Ontario in 1979.¹¹⁶



Figure 18. My two brothers and I in 1979, the year we were let go. Jerry on the left, Josh in the middle, and me on the right.

Batoche, along with the tragedy of 1869, the disappearance of the bison, and the marginalization on the road allowance, had made sure Metis trauma would be passed down through the generations to many of Jeremie and Nancy’s descendants.

In sum, this chapter has examined in detail what happened to the Red River Metis after the 1869 disposessions. It showed how Maria Campbell’s kinship puzzle was scattered by

¹¹⁴ Ibid., and Campbell, *Half-Breed*, 7-8 and 23 and Podruchny and Thistle, “Geography of Blood,” 68.

¹¹⁵ Podruchny and Thistle, “Geography of Blood,” 68. Jeremie said this to his three grandsons, Josh, Jerry, and Jesse Thistle in 1979 before they were sent east and eventually given up for adoption in Toronto.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

Canadian colonization. The Montours, Arcands, Ledouxes, and Morrissettes fled west after 1869 to the safety and abundance of the Saskatchewan bison hunt, only to have the bison disappear in 1879. The families, along with the rest of the Metis from the Red River exodus, suffered extreme hardship after the bison were destroyed, losing everything from shelter and food, to livelihood and governance structures. Metis land claims in Saskatchewan were refused outright by Canada after 1880. These refusals were preceded by surveyors who wantonly carved the prairie into square lots for settlement, completely ignoring Metis river lot habitation and mobility along the banks of the South Saskatchewan River. The Metis at this point, already fearful because of the Winnipeg land betrayal, proceeded to arm themselves, eventually challenging Canada in the 1885 Northwest Resistance. The Battle of Batoche was disastrous for the Metis and saw the Morrissette-Arcand clan become displaced and forced onto road allowances around Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, by 1910. All of these events constitute sites of historic trauma.

Conclusion

So What Does It All Mean? Understanding the Implications of Morrissette-Arcand and Metis Intergenerational Trauma

This thesis has argued that members of the Morrissette-Arcand clan, a Metis road allowance family from Saskatchewan, have suffered from intergenerational trauma since being displaced from Red River in the 1870s. Central to my argument is that the Metis had suffered repeated attacks on their free trade economy, sovereignty, and mobility since the transference of Rupertsland to Canada in 1869. These directed attacks involved the loss of Red River as a homeland, the destruction of the bison, the trauma of the 1885 Northwest Resistance and its fallout, and the subsequent dispossession of the Metis that forced them onto road allowances in the twentieth century. In illustrating these tragic events, this thesis has shown how losing liberty, movement, and their independent economy was traumatic to the Metis, with the marginalization and silence of the road allowances perhaps the most traumatic.

The forgotten road allowance communities of Saskatchewan that existed from 1900 to 1980 speak volumes to this kind of traumatic colonial erasure.¹ Most Canadians still do not know, nor have they ever even heard, of a road allowance community or of a road allowance Metis person. Because of their absolute erasure, the road allowance “rebel” Metis would not be able to publicly grieve their losses or their heroes: Riel, Dumont, Sayer, Montour, or Grant.² Proof of this inability to grieve is that for nearly a century after Batoche, Riel, Dumont, and the

¹ Campbell, *Half-Breed*, 1-20 and Howard Adams, *Prison of Grass: Canada from the Native Point of View* (Toronto: New Press, 1970), 66-67.

² Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, “The Return to the Sacred Path: Healing the Historical Trauma and Historical Unresolved Grief Response among the Lakota through a Psychoeducational Group Intervention,” in *Smith College Studies in Social Work* 68, 3 (1998): 288.

rest of the Metis are painted as rebels, subversives, insane, misguided, or criminals by orthodox Canadian culture.³ One only has to look at the *Canadian Historical Review*, Canada's leading historical journal, between the years 1920 and 1980 to see how this country has remembered and demonized the Metis and their champions since 1869.⁴ Riel, in some conservative circles, is still considered a mad man and a demagogue.⁵ Only recently have the Metis been allowed to grieve their losses publicly and to write their own histories and memorials. It is a process that is very much in its infancy and ongoing. This thesis stands among that group.

The way the Metis struggle has been remembered by Canadians and the extreme hardship from 1869 onwards constitute a collection of stressors on a specific group of people who have endured continuous assaults.⁶ Moreover, the violent treatment of the Red River Metis after 1869, and their subsequent banishment onto road allowances after 1885, can be seen as a directed effort to clear the plains for Canadian settlement and colonization. The racism of Orangemen at Red River, the denial of lands by Macdonald, the destruction of the bison, and the erasure of Metis road allowance culture from Canadian society after 1885, all constitute a sustained colonial assault.⁷

The work of social worker Peter Menzies brought to our attention the way intergenerational trauma expresses itself in serious social maladies such as addiction, loss of

³ Douglas Owrn, "The Myth of Louis Riel," *Canadian Historical Review* 63, 3 (September 1, 1982): 318 and A. H. de Tremaudan. "Louis Riel and the Fenian Raid of 1871," *Canadian Historical Review* 4, 2 (1923): 132.

⁴ G. F. G. Stanley, "The Half-Breed 'Rising' of 1875," *Canadian Historical Review* 17 (1936): 399 and Alvin C. Gluek, Jr. "The Riel Rebellion and Canadian-American Relations," *Canadian Historical Review* 36, 3 (1955): 199 and G. F. G. Stanley. "A Footnote to History: Was Louis Riel an American Citizen?," *Canadian Historical Review* 29, 1 (March, 1948): 40-43 and J. R. Miller, "From Riel to the Métis," *Canadian Historical Review* 69, 1 (1988), 2.

⁵ Thomas Flanagan, "Louis Riel: Insanity and Prophecy," in *The Settlement of the West*, eds. Howard Palmer (Calgary: Comprint Publishing Co., 1977): 15-36.

⁶ Amy Bombay, Kimberly Matheson and Hymie Anisman, "The intergenerational effects of Indian Residential Schools: Implications for the concept of historical trauma," *Transcultural Psychiatry* 51, 3 (2014), 321.

⁷ Ibid.

identity, child abandonment, and misogyny, among other social issues.⁸ To be clear, I am not at liberty to divulge the private and personal details of living descendants of the Morrissette-Arcand clan, but historian Diane Payment notes the effects of intergenerational trauma in historic Batoche survivors starting in the 1890s. “The humiliation and constraints of defeat,” she writes, “also led to a kind of psychological withdrawal within the population.”⁹ According to Menzies, a telltale sign that intergenerational trauma is present in a population is a rise in addictive behaviour, something Payment confirms in Metis alcohol consumption following the defeat at Batoche:

It seems that alcohol abuse was connected with the steadily deteriorating situation of the Metis. After 1885, more and more cases of drunkenness were reported in the Batoche vicinity...Drink provided an escape from the sad reality of a conquered people, a dislocated economy, and a society forced to withdraw from itself.¹⁰

To be clear, this thesis is not saying that Metis people are genetically prone to alcoholism—that would be racist and wrong. I am simply stating that after Batoche, rates of alcoholism among the Metis increased due to massive stress. Metis people are not physically hardwired to drink or become alcoholics, but people who have suffered external trauma do exhibit an increased tendency towards addictive behavior. Payment, without knowing it, then goes on to describe the transgenerational effects of intergenerational trauma within the Metis:

The [social] problem[s] w[ere] even worse for the first generation born in Saskatchewan during the 1870s and 1880s, who reached adulthood during the first decade following the rebellion: they were even more disoriented [traumatized] and reacted more strongly than the preceding generation...There were cases of fathers deserting their families, cases of drunkenness, irresponsibility, vagrancy, assault, theft, fraud, perjury and even madness.¹¹

⁸ Peter Menzies, “Understanding Intergenerational Trauma from a Social Work Perspective,” in *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 27, 2 (2007): 371.

⁹ Payment, *The Free People—Otipemisiwak*, 159.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 66 and Menzies, “Understanding Intergenerational Trauma,” 371.

¹¹ Payment, *The Free People—Otipemisiwak*, 66 and 69.

Admittedly, Payment's work on the Metis of Batoche was published in the early 1990s when trauma theory had not yet been applied to Indigenous studies or history. But her stories of alcoholism, despondence, lack of empathy, misogyny, and violence among the Metis post-Batoche do fit Menzies's criteria for social expressions of intergenerational trauma among a cohort of traumatized people.¹² What is more, the visceral acts of gendered violence perpetrated in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s by Metis men against Metis women and described in Campbell's *Half-breed* also speak to Menzies's expressions of intergenerational trauma— keep in mind, these things happened some eighty years after Batoche, and nearly one hundred years after the Red River dispossession.¹³ These gendered acts of violence were a complete reversal of the respect and gender parity of the age of prosperity (1821–1869), where women were the respected heart of Metis economy and diplomacy.

The social disintegration, child abandonment, and neglect described in the final chapter of Campbell's book about life in the road allowance communities also conform to Menzies's characteristics of intergenerational trauma.¹⁴ The work I did with Carolyn Podruchny in 2014 describes the effects intergenerational trauma had on the very fabric of road allowance Metis life in the 1970s:

This was the highly stratified and fearful world that Jeremie Morrissette and Nancy Arcand had inherited from their carrier parents, and which they bequeathed to their children, and this was the world that Jesse was born into in 1976. Within three years of his birth the bonds of *wahkootawin*, helping each other in a good way, that had woven the Morrissette Sash together for over 250 years finally unravelled and Jesse and his brothers, along with many other cousins, were placed into adoption. The Morrissette family was crushed under the weight of so many unresolved traumatic years.¹⁵

¹² Ibid., 66 and Menzies, "Understanding Intergenerational Trauma," 371.

¹³ Campbell, *Half-Breed*, 37-38 and Menzies, "Understanding Intergenerational Trauma," 371.

¹⁴ Ibid., 177-184 and Ibid.

¹⁵ Podruchny and Thistle, "Geography of Blood," 75.

The loss of children due to the ramifications of intergenerational trauma is no doubt what Campbell means when she said the following in the opening interview of this thesis:

And coming all through the early 1900s, no money, no work, just nothing, just surviving barely, hanging on by their fingernails and being so hated. We were so despised, but even worse than that we were so invisible. That was the most traumatizing. And then the last big trauma I think was when they lost their lands, their homesteads, first with scrip, and then later they lost their homesteads, and then in the end they lost their children.¹⁶

Campbell's testimony, when combined with my own life experiences, do fit psychologist

Theresa Evans-Campbell's third criteria for identifying the *nature* of intergenerational trauma: that trauma accumulates across generations, and unless addressed, it rarely if ever decreases.¹⁷

Indeed, it can be said that intergenerational trauma went unaddressed for nearly a century in my family, and by 1960 it had worked to dissolve the social cohesiveness of our road allowance communities. Consequently, generations of our children were stolen by the state or let go into adoption.¹⁸ Perhaps we, the lost children of Park Valley in the 1960s, '70s, and '80s, are the "nation of homeless Indigenous peoples" Menzies speaks of, those who have been "severed completely" from their kin groups. Perhaps we are the final expressions of unaddressed intergenerational trauma among the Metis.

By revisiting the theoretical templates provided by Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, Peter Menzies, Amy Bombay, Kimberly Matheson, Hymie Anisman, and Theresa Evans-Campbell, I have that the dispossession of the Metis in the late nineteenth and twentieth century was a multi-faceted site of historic and intergenerational trauma. These events and traumas worked together over time to erode the prosperity and well-being of the Metis. And it was a traumatization that was bequeathed down through the generations into the modern era.

¹⁶ Maria Campbell, interview by the author, Saskatoon, June 25, 2015.

¹⁷ Evans-Campbell, 321-322.

¹⁸ Ibid.

So what does it all mean? And why even track this traumatic history? And why try to prove intergenerational trauma among the Metis?

The answers to these questions are simple: I am one of the lost puzzle pieces Campbell speaks of. So are all of my kin.

The way I can best describe being born into a world that is dominated by unresolved intergenerational trauma is that it is like walking in on the last scene of a movie. Everything is chaotic, nothing makes sense, and things happen that have no apparent explanation. People all around in your community are suffering from deep addiction issues. Many have serious mental health concerns. Parents go missing and abandon their children. Cousins, brothers, and sisters are let go into adoption or taken by the state. Grandparents say crazy stuff about being hung and hunted by authorities, and are extremely fearful of the RCMP. Fathers are robbing stores to feed their addictions and then disappear without a trace. Your family is living on the side of the road, on the road allowance, in a cabin with no electricity or running water. People are constantly moving across the country always trying to make things better or find work. And the community itself falls apart completely by the time you are three years old. It is not until you rewind that movie to its beginning do you see that the last scene in that movie actually makes perfect sense, and so does all that unexplained chaos.

Now imagine that your life is the last scene in that movie, and the complete movie is the long history of your people. An epic two-hundred-year saga that stretches back to the Fur Trade Wars, the Battle of Seven Oaks, the time of prosperity, the Red River dispossessions, the slaughter of the bison, the tragic Northwest Resistance, the formation of road allowance communities, and finally, at the end of it all, you. Well, that is how it is to be a lost Metis-puzzle-piece from my generation, and that is how the chaos of colonialism that saw a whole generation of us let go into adoption makes sense. That is the only logical explanation.

The problem has never been with our communities. The problem has been with the way Canada has persecuted us and pushed us aside, stolen our lands, and then discounted our suffering and made us invisible afterwards. Through this lens, of course we are suffering from intergenerational trauma, just as any population that has endured such systematic violence, marginalization, and erasure would. And just as many of my kin were lost to the system, I am sure there are other Metis communities who have similarly lost a generation of their children and kin. So, even though this thesis is a detailed study of my family's experience in the context of Metis history, it is much more. It is also a tool for our Metis communities to find our lost puzzle pieces. It is a contribution to the narrative in which our lost puzzle pieces will find a home and a guide to help us make sense of the trauma that has scattered our families with no explanation, as my cousin Maria Campbell so eloquently describes it.

It is a history that will help us make sense of the last scenes in our movies. Ultimately, beyond all that, this thesis is also a part of the tool kit to help my people recover their identity and family histories, and to help us find each other, so we can be proud to be Metis people. You see, none of the trauma is our fault—the whole body of this thesis attests to that—and I want my Metis young people to know this. They did this to us—and we survived. I have put my family's puzzle pieces together as best I could. I have fulfilled one aspect of my *wahkootawin* responsibility by telling our story—my work is ongoing. This thesis is one contribution to making sense of our historical traumas, so that one day all of our puzzle pieces come together and we do as cousin Maria Campbell hopes: we share our histories, our photographs, our smiles, our jigs, and ourselves, and we realize that—despite the trauma—*we are still responsible for each other*. Because, really, that is the only way we can fight the trauma—we must fight it together.

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