

The Métis

- Competition grew intense between the HBC & NWC as furs became scarce.
- French Canadian fur traders pushed deeper inland, they spent winters in their trading areas living with the Native peoples. Several fur traders married Native women.
- These marriages built closer social connections & secured economic ties between traders & the First Nations they worked with.
- The NWC encouraged this while the HBC was against these marriages.
- Wives of fur traders enjoyed a better standard of living, but many had to move away from family to live at trading posts.
- A new culture, entirely unique to Canada was emerging from the children of the First Nation women & fur traders. By 1810 they were beginning to refer to themselves as the Métis.
- The Métis were usually Roman Catholic & spoke French, others had Scottish or English heritage.

Red River

- By 1810 many Métis had settled in the Red River Valley between the Assiniboine & Red Rivers in Southern Manitoba.
- This area was very fertile & they developed French style long rectangular farms along the rivers.
- People used the Red River cart as a means of transportation in the Northwest. Made entirely from wood they were very noisy but reliable.

Bison Hunt

- The Métis hunted bison in early summer & autumn, they became experts at riding, firing & reloading while on horseback. There were many dangers, death & serious injury were common.
- These hunts increased pride, discipline & a strong sense of community along with the fresh meat & hides.
- Meat mixed with fat & berries was used to make **pemmican**, a way to preserve food high in calories for a long time. They would also sell extra to the NWC.
- The Métis developed the **Laws of the Bison Hunt**. These were designed to organize the hunt & elected a **Captain of the Hunt**, who had absolute authority during the hunt.
- Violators of the law would be punished.
- The Métis sometimes came into conflict with First Nations from the Plains.

