

The culinary traditions of our society are an important part of its history and the sources which describe them remain virtually untapped. *Out of Old Ontario Kitchens* was my contribution to understanding some of these traditions, using some of the archival resources. I feel fortunate not only to have delved into such material but also to have participated in the recreation of domestic activity which, in the words of Catherine Traill, is a part of "the active drama of life".<sup>6</sup>

Christina Bates

Author, *Out of Old Ontario Kitchens*

<sup>6</sup> Catherine Parr Traill, *The Canadian Settler's Guide, 1855* (Toronto, 1969) p. 4.

## Metis Archive Project

In 1972 the Metis Association of the Northwest Territories (N.W.T.), headquartered in Yellowknife and at that time called the Metis and Non-Status Native Association of the N.W.T., hired a researcher to comb through the holdings of the Public Archives of Canada looking for documentation as a basis for land claims preparation on behalf of half-breed scrip holders. While searching for scrip details in various government records, copies of material were obtained that also included other subjects involving Metis people of the N.W.T. Facts about the fur trade, trading post life, transportation, the economy, religion, education and agriculture all involved the Metis and their development as a distinctive people in the north. It was recognised that young Metis could gain much pride and strength from learning about their elders' past. In fact, all Canadians might gain by learning about the Metis of the north.



*Harriet Gladue and Alice (Gaudet) Hardy hunting for birds during an NWT Spring time, c. 1930s. (Metis Association of the Northwest Territories)*

Accordingly, in 1976, the Metis Association published a pictorial volume *Our Metis Heritage ... A Portrayal*. Work done while researching this, and a second volume providing a written history of the Metis people, provided an extensive accumulation of photographs, articles, excerpts and notes from various archives and libraries in addition to taped interviews with Metis elders. Unfortunately over the years, after various office moves and staff changes, much of the material was relegated to binders, folders and boxes and stored in corners. Since the original researchers were not available no one really knew what exact material existed. The following years, the Metis Association of the N.W.T. established the Metis Archive Project through funding from the Department of Education of the Territorial Government. The writer was hired to gain control, organize, catalogue and card index each unit. After spending time learning the necessary details about archival management with members of the Manuscript Division of the Public Archives of Canada, a system was established involving a mixture of techniques that best suited the needs of the Metis Association.

The immediate objective of the Archive Project was to present the material in a form usable for the History Project to complete the second volume of Metis history, but a further goal was to determine where the collection was weak, acquire new material and thereby establish a Metis Archives for all northern researchers. To date, the holdings have been organised into three media groups:

*Textual:* This section contains five metres of shelf space including copies of government records, correspondence, manuscripts, journals from missions and fur trading posts, notes from Treaty parties, and genealogies. It also includes press clippings, magazine articles, journal papers, researchers notes, magazines, books and excerpts from books. The genealogies are of special importance to members of the Association as most family details go back to the early 1800s and a few even to the 1700s.



*Rene Mercredi, Bill Roy and Jean Marie LeMouel — part of the crew of the "S.S. Distributor", a shallow-draught sternwheeler steamboat, 1934. The vessel belonged to the Hudson's Bay Company and was the largest on the Mackenzie River. (Metis Association of the Northwest Territories)*



*Louis Mercredi on a hay rake, Hay Island, Slave River, c. 1926. RCMP officers had to swim their horses across the Slave River to obtain the hay. (Metis Association of the Northwest Territories)*

*Photographic:* Over one thousand photographs, many with negatives, are included in the collection. A small number of copies obtained from other archives. A special aspect of the collection is that most of the photographs were taken by amateur northern photographers—family album type. While it can be said that they are not often at the quality level of those taken by a professional, they are extremely valuable in that they provide a record of lifestyle, dress, and day-to-day activities in the early north. In some cases they date back to the 1800s. The History Project has a micro lens, flood light kit and pentax camera and is able to go to the settlements and obtain good copies of the old photographs in the homes of the owners. It is because the owners do not have to worry about parting with their cherished family photographs, to have them copied in the south and run the risk of them being damaged or lost, that everyone is so cooperative in allowing the project to use them.

*Audio-visual:* cassette-recorded interviews with over one hundred Metis elders of the Mackenzie District settlements provide a vocal record of their recollections and impressions of the early days. Most of these have been transcribed. Cassette and video tapes of meetings, general assemblies, press conferences and workshops of the Metis Association of the N.W.T. since they started in 1972 have been included in the collection.

While the Metis Archive Project has not until now announced its existence within archives and research circles, its operations have become known locally and a limited number of researchers have come for material. At present the first priority of the Archive Project is to assist the History Project in the production of the second volume of *Our Metis Heritage*. For that reason we are in most cases unable to provide material for others because of the time involved in each request. With this in mind it is hoped that researchers will postpone their visits to the collection until the summer of 1979 when more control will have been gained over the material. When the collection is fully operational the Metis

Archive Project will be able to accommodate personal visits from government departments, film makers, private researchers, school projects, and individuals doing genealogical research. Request for copies of *Our Metis Heritage . . . A Portrayal*, priced at \$10 including postage, should be directed to Bunny Yanik, History Co-ordinator, P.O. Box 1463, Yellowknife, N.W.T., X0E 1H0.

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## Canadian Inventory of Historic Building

In the 1960s, as Canadian conservationist became increasingly concerned with the preservation of their architectural heritage, the need for a systematic survey of surviving structures became apparent. The findings of pilot projects such as those carried out in the Rideau Corridor and in Nova Scotia, during which thousands of eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings were recorded, emphasized the fact that relatively little was known about the patterns and extent of early Canadian building. The result was the introduction of a national survey of early structures called the *Canadian Inventory of Historic Building* (CIHB).



*A small court house erected in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, 1853, is one of many included in a major CIHB study of court houses in Canada. (CIHB)*

Sampling historic building resources in every part of the country, *Inventory* teams examined and photographed pre-1880 buildings in the east and pre-1914 in the west. Between 1970 and 1976, the external characteristics of 169,000 buildings were recorded and computerized, making the *Inventory* an incomparable source of information on Canada's built environment for conservationists, restoration architects, planners and historians of Canadian architecture and building technology. The visual record (now consisting of over a million photographs) is rapidly becoming an historical source in itself, depicting almost daily demolition of the heritage.