



Report on Métis Nation Archives Outreach

Prepared by the Response to the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation
Commission Taskforce of the Steering Committee on Canada's Archives

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I. Introduction

This report summarizes the efforts of the Steering Committee on Canada's Archives' Response to the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Taskforce to contact, seek feedback from, and collaborate with representatives of the Métis Nation during the outreach phase of this project. Between early summer 2018 and the end of April 2019, interviews were conducted with diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis cultural Memory Keepers, archivists, and researchers to identify and understand existing relationships, issues, challenges, and other matters these people have encountered as clients who use archives, or among colleagues within the archives profession. The feedback received contributed to the creation of the *Reconciliation Framework*, which is intended to guide the Canadian archival community in beginning or continuing to build respectful, reciprocal relationships with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. This review of the timeline, mechanisms, and resources specific to the Métis Nation Archives Outreach Project reflects on lessons learned and proposes actions to ensure continued and expanded Métis participation and representation in future revisions of the framework.

Métis Representation on the Taskforce

The taskforce was formed in June 2016, and member recruitment began in January 2017. All Indigenous partners and non-Indigenous members joined the taskforce as volunteers, sometimes in official capacity on behalf of their organizations and sometimes of their own accord. At its peak, the taskforce had 15 non-Indigenous members and 15 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis partners, for a total of 30 representatives. To ensure Métis representation and participation in the foundation and evolution of the taskforce's mandate, contributions from Métis representatives were solicited through active recruitment, and any departing Métis members were replaced with other Métis individuals. Overall, three Métis individuals and individuals working for Métis Nation organizations served on the taskforce at various times.

Researching and Planning the Métis Nation Archives Outreach Project

Before outreach began, the taskforce identified 185 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities and organizations as potential contacts and had a goal to engage between 100 and 150 participants. In compiling this list, the taskforce identified First Nations, Inuit, and Métis representatives from tribal councils, cultural centres, territorial governments, and other organizations that oversee programs pertaining to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis knowledge and cultural heritage. During this phase, the taskforce identified 11 Métis Nation organizations, primarily provincial governance bodies such as the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan. This initial list was expanded to include Métis colleagues who work in cultural organizations. By the conclusion of the outreach, taskforce members had been able to complete a total of 47 interviews, six of which were with individuals who identify as Métis or represent Métis communities or organizations.

II. Outreach Results and Outcomes

Outreach tasks were delegated to individual taskforce members based on their geographic locations, and an effort was made to distribute these connections evenly across the country. The following Métis organizations and individuals were interviewed:

- the (Métis) Advisor, Internal Indigenous Engagement, Library and Archives Canada
- a representative from the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan
- a taskforce member and member of a Métis local in Saskatchewan
- a representative from the Centre du patrimoine
- a certified genealogist at the Centre du patrimoine
- a representative from the Kespu’Kwitk Métis Council of Yarmouth and District

Taskforce members also reached out to the Métis Nation British Columbia and the Métis Nation Manitoba. While both organizations referred the taskforce to appropriate contacts and expressed interest in participating, the taskforce received no response to its attempts to schedule interviews. Unfortunately, the outreach phase was finalized without input from these two organizations.

III. Recommendations for Future Métis Nation Outreach Initiatives

During the Métis Nation Archives Outreach Project, several challenges were encountered. To address these challenges in future outreach initiatives with Métis Nation communities and organizations, the taskforce proposes the following recommendations.

- ***Recommendation 1***

The completion of outreach interviews was time consuming and resource intensive; taskforce members struggled to schedule interviews and complete the required follow-up while meeting other professional obligations. Future initiatives would benefit from dedicated staff to complete and report on the outreach interviews.

- ***Recommendation 2***

Participation in outreach interviews was entirely voluntary, and taskforce members were often unable to secure interviews with community representatives despite repeated follow-up requests. The taskforce recognizes that this lack of response and participation may be indicative of resource constraints experienced by Métis Nation organizations. It may also be related to the reprioritization of resources in the lead-up to the first Métis self-governance agreements, signed on June 27, 2019, by the federal government and the Métis Nation of Alberta, the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan, and the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario. However, the taskforce also acknowledges the possibility that strategies to initiate contact were misaligned with Métis Nation Protocols. The taskforce recommends that future initiatives include consultation with Métis Nation leaders and representatives to identify barriers to participation and determine the most appropriate approach for soliciting input.