

February 2017



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*The articles in this Newsletter are the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of the producers of The Feathers In the Wind Newsletter.*

**Notice of Correction**



*If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?*

*~ Percy Bysshe Shelley*



**Honouring Black History Month**

**Shared Histories: 3 Alliances Between Africans and Natives**

**1600s - Black Voyageurs**

Our apologies our January Newsletter stated Thomas Shoniker had been the author of the article "Lost Opportunities" while the actual author was **Trevor Shoniker**.



#### Member Writes

I recently found out I had Type 2 Diabetics, knowing I would require some guidance I decided to call my community, the Painted Feather Woodland Metis because I have always found their staff to be so helpful in the past. They immediately referred me to the Can Am Friendship Centre in my area and I couldn't be more pleased with the assistance they have provided.

~ Jason



#### Watch 4 Mi'kmaq Legends Come to Life

Mi'kmaq or (L'nu, "the people" in Mi'kmaq) are Aboriginal peoples who are among the original inhabitants of the Atlantic provinces of Canada. Today, Mi'kmaq communities are located mainly in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, but with a significant presence in Quebec (Restigouche/Listuguj), P.E.I., Newfoundland, Maine and the Boston area.

Get a taste of this people's fascinating ancestral mythology with these 4 short films that bring, through ingenious animation and theatre, their legends to life.

[Click Here To View](#)



**Click To Watch**

**Making Pemmican**

Contrary perhaps to the mainstream view of Africans arriving in the "new world," not all of those from that continent came to this as slaves. Katz points out in *Black Indians*, "I also found white people who heard little about the historic relationship between Africans and Native Americans. They knew by the early 19th century, slave ships had brought millions of Africans here. But they did not know Africans who accompanied the earliest European expeditions did not come in chains, but as free people. They were translators for European explorers and merchants and rose to play vital roles as negotiators and diplomats with Native Americans."

So it was during the early period of the fur trade by the Great Lakes. In fact, George and Stephan Bonga, born at the westernmost tip of Lake Superior in the early 1800s, claimed to be both the "first black" and the "first white" children born in the Minnesota territory. They actually were the sons of fur trapper Pierre Bonga, of African descent, and an Ojibwe woman, whose name is apparently lost to history, but who was thought to be of the Leech Lake people. The "first white" designation came because the Ojibwe at the time considered all non-Indians by the same distinction.

[Read The Full Article Here](#)



#### On The Blog: The Trials and Tribulations of DNA Testing

*Written by Kathleen Chan, OMFRC Member. This article also appeared in our Feathers In The Wind Newsletter, February 2009.*

The first DNA test that I had was a DNA Sibship Analysis by Genetrack Biolabs, a Canadian company from Vancouver. It costs \$495 Canadian to test two siblings. I think I paid \$250 four years ago. The test was testing 15 STR's (which are a class of polymorphisms). The average person has no idea what the actual DNA test is measuring and cannot, therefore, understand where the results come from. The STR's vary from population to population, but all populations have them. The average person has no idea what the range is for different populations. The results of the test are based on statistical analysis. The test lists the statistical probability that two people are half and full siblings. That was the only part of the test that made clear sense to me. Furthermore, sibship tests are not 100% accurate, unlike paternity tests.

[Click Here For The Full Article](#)

#### Judge rules in favour of Indigenous survivors of Sixties Scoop

After an eight-year court battle, an Ontario Superior Court judge has found that the federal government failed to prevent on-reserve children from losing their Indigenous identity after they were forcibly taken from their homes as part of what's known as the Sixties Scoop.



Sixties Scoop survivors and supporters gather for a demonstration at a Toronto courthouse in August 2016. (Michelle Siu/Canadian Press)

Thousands of First Nations children were placed in non-Indigenous care between 1965 and 1984, which resulted in psychological harm that has dogged survivors into adulthood, Justice Edward Belobaba wrote in his ruling Tuesday, siding with the plaintiffs.

Belobaba said Canada breached its "duty of care" to the children, and ignored the damaging effects of the Ontario-led program. There are lawsuits in other jurisdictions over similar programs that placed children in foster care or with adoptive parents.

[Click Here To Read The Full Article](#)

#### Much More Than Code Talking - The Role of Native Americans in World War II

Pemmican has been made and used by Indigenous people in North America for as far back as stories go. It was also a staple diet for Voyageurs in the wilderness. This video is a great step-by-step instructional that will teach you how to make your own pemmican at home.

[Click Here For Full Video](#)



### **Wild Bison Roam Banff National Park for 1st time in More Than Century**

The first wild bison to roam Banff National Park in more than a century have been transported to a remote valley in a "historic homecoming" aimed at re-establishing a thriving herd, Parks Canada said Monday.

While many remember what Parks Canada calls a "display herd" of bison housed in a paddock near the Banff townsite until 1997, this new herd represents a return to wild animals, eventually free to wander their surroundings.

[Read More Here](#)



### **African and Native Americans Share A Rich History**

Europeans first enslaved Indians, introducing Africans to the Americas shortly after. Nicolas de Ovando, Governor of Hispaniola first mentioned African and Indian interaction in a report, circa 1503. Indians who escaped generally knew the surrounding areas, avoided capture, and returned to help free enslaved Africans. Europeans feared an Indian/African alliance. The first slave rebellion occurred in Hispaniola in 1522, while the first on future United States soil (North Carolina)



Native Americans made an enormous contribution to the World War II effort. Sadly, their involvement in the conflict is widely overlooked. Sometimes, they are portrayed as codebreakers and nothing more. This is not the case. Native Americans played a huge role in the war from its beginning to its end.

From the time the Europeans began settling in the New World, the population of the Native Americans began decreasing at an alarmingly rapid rate. The group's population was seeing a little bit of a rise during the beginning of the 21st century. However, another large chunk of this growing population would fall prey to another harsh time of the Western world - World War II. In fact, 44,000 Native American individuals participated in the war.

This represented more than ten percent of their entire population. While they played a huge role and many won medals for their service and bravery, their stories are quite often forgotten.

[Read The Full Article Here](#)



### **On The Blog: Rich and Complex Beyond the Red River**

*-Written by S. Moen, OMFRC Member. Seen in the May-June 2016 edition of Feathers In The Wind.*

What if I were to tell you that the Métis Nation was much larger than history allows us to perceive and has a much more complicated history than that ordinarily known? As I have discovered, Métis ethno genesis occurred in many places differing circumstances. We're all taught in school that the Métis were comprised of Cree-French fur trading families out of East-Central Canada and that was it, but this is not the whole picture. Other peoples from across the Atlantic have been busy exploring and establishing trades with Indigenous populations and most having the desire to colonize Turtle Island. As they were doing this they brought not only themselves but also slaves. There is also evidence of pre-European Christian contact with the peoples of North Africa and Muslims from the Iberian Peninsula.

[Read The Full Article Here](#)

occurred in 1526. Both rebellions were organized and executed by coalitions of Africans and Indians.

Europeans feared communities of escaped Africans, known as Maroons or quilombos in frontier areas. The largest of these communities, the "Republic of Palmares," originated in the 1600s, and at its peak had a population of approximately 11,000. This community composed primarily of Africans but including Indians, contained three villages, spiritual gather places, shops, and operated under its own legal system. Its army repelled European military attacks until 1694.

[Read More Here](#)



### Research Confirms Native American Use of Sweetgrass as Bug Repellent

The American Chemical Society will host a news conference Tuesday morning to discuss that their experiments revealed how chemicals in sweetgrass oil match the repelling effectiveness of the common ingredient in insect sprays like Off! Deep Woods.

The findings come from studies of traditional therapies in Native American tribes. Sweetgrass is one of the sacred plants traditionally used in Native American culture.

Scholars report that it was also used as incense in ritual purifications. Natives have always known that its fragrance kept biting bugs away, and they often covered themselves and their homes in the plant.

[Click Here For More](#)



[Click To Watch](#)

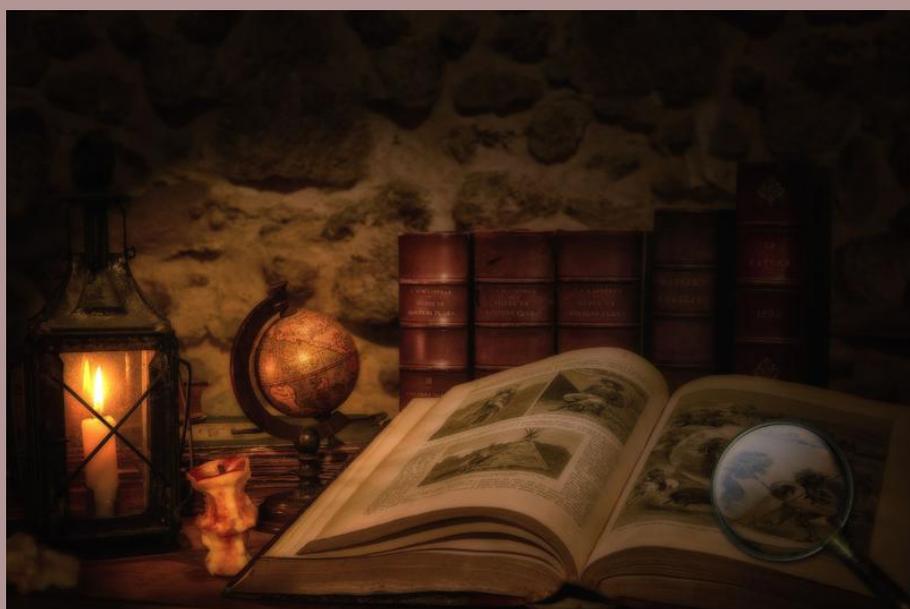
### Northern Cree Perform at 2017 Grammys

The Alberta drum group, the Northern Cree, did an amazing performance at the Grammys. They also performed with alternative artist Carla Morrison.

***We are the chosen. In each family, there is one who seems called to find the ancestors. To put flesh on their bones and make them live again, to tell the family story and to feel that somehow they know and approve. Doing genealogy is not a cold gathering of facts, but instead, breathing life into all who have gone before. We are the storytellers of the tribe.***

*-by Della M. Cummings Wright;*

*Rewritten by her granddaughter Dell Jo Ann McGinnis Johnson*



### On The Blog: Finding a Fur Trader is NOT Enough

~ Marie Louise - OMFRC Member and Researcher for over a decade

In the search for definitive proof of our Métis roots, we are often frustrated. There is a lot of confusion about what is considered absolute proof. Many of us know, from the stories passed down to us, that we have a Métis background- but we aren't sure from where it stems.

In some cases, research will guide us to a link that will surprise us. While we might have been certain that our connection with the Aboriginal community is on one particular side of the family, a researcher may find someone in an entirely different branch of the family. This doesn't mean it is the only person in your family tree that will link you to a Métis heritage.

One has to be careful when connecting the dots, especially when it comes to voyageurs. It isn't necessarily sufficient to find a fur trader or voyageur to be assured you have found your Métis connection. Some early fur traders did not have "Country Wives", some did not live with the native community and some did not adopt First Nations customs. It can be very confusing.

[Read The Full Post Here](#)

### Kent Monkman Walks Canada Back Through Time With 'Shame And Prejudice: A Story Of Resilience'

For at least 116 years of Canada's 150-year history, indigenous children were taken from their parents.

[Watch Video Here](#)

## Ontario Métis Family Records Center



We're on the web!  
See us at:

[www.omfrc.org](http://www.omfrc.org)

### New Submissions

Our editors are always looking for original submissions that would be of interest to our community. Do you know of any upcoming events that you would like to share through the Newsletter, Facebook, or our new website?

If you have something you would like to add to future issues we would be happy to consider it; please call or email us with the title "Submission" on the email. Thank you!

[omfrcinfo@gmail.com](mailto:omfrcinfo@gmail.com)

613-332-4789

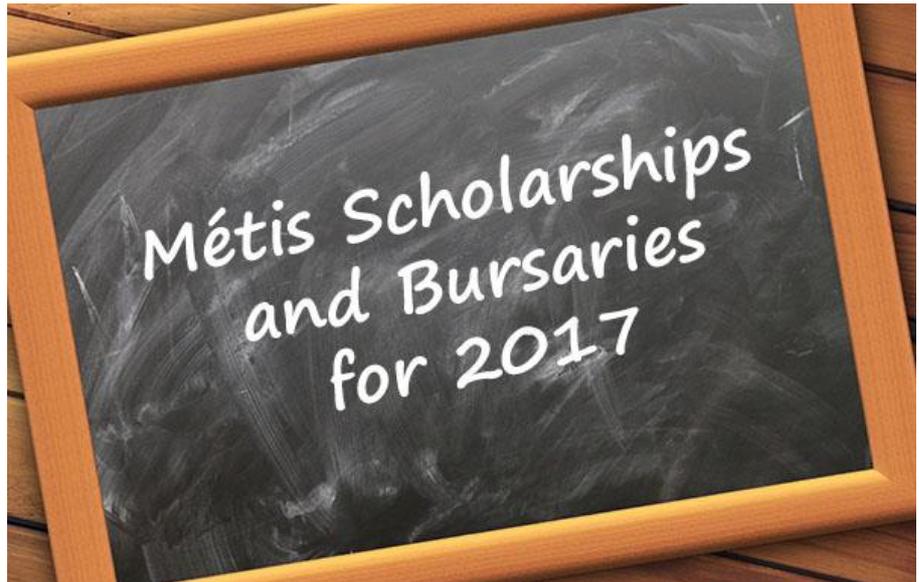
"When the school is on the reserve, the child lives with its parents, who are savages, and though he may learn to read and write, his habits and training mode of thought are Indian," Canada's first prime minister said in 1879. "He is simply a savage who can read and write."

"Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence," Sir John A. Macdonald told the House of Commons, "and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men."



Cree artist Kent Monkman poses for a photograph at his new exhibition "Shame and Prejudice-A Story of Resilience" in Toronto on Jan. 18, 2017. (Photo: Nathan Denette/Canadian Press)

[Read The Full Article Here](#)



### Métis Scholarships and Bursaries for 2017

It's that time of the year again, when students are planning their educational path for the next year. As we do every year, we have compiled a list of the Scholarships and Bursaries available for Metis Students for 2017. We've created a new page on our website with the full list, as well as a downloadable PDF version. We plan to update this list throughout the year. If you are aware of any Scholarships or Bursaries we might have missed, please let us know!

[SEE THE FULL LIST HERE](#)

## Is your Membership up for renewal?



Call 1-613-332-4789 and you can renew over the phone in minutes!



**The OMFRC would like to thank everyone that is standing with us to support the Ontario Metis Family Records Center Community Facebook Page.....your response is nothing short of incredible!**

**Stay connected and celebrate your heritage! Share that you're a member of the OMFRC Community with your family members on Facebook. It has never been more important to stand up and be counted!**

**Have you visited our Facebook page? We welcome you to join our OMFRC Community - we want to hear from you.**

