



West Kootenay Metis Society – Touchstones Museum and Gallery

November – 2020 thru Feb. 2021

OTIPEMISIWAK

“The People that Own Themselves”

Tansi – Bon Matayn

We would like to acknowledge the generous and gracious acceptance of Touchstones Museum’s Executive Director, Curator and Aboriginal Liaison in providing the West Kootenay Metis Society the opportunity to showcase our Metis Culture and history.

The Metis are a recognized Aboriginal People in Canada, identified in our Canadian Charter of 1982, along with First Nations and Inuit peoples.

We acknowledge and respect the traditional lands and territories of the First Nations peoples of the Kootenays, who share these lands with the Metis and other Aboriginal peoples.

This exhibit features some well-known National Metis Artisans and cultural artifacts and items provided by local community members with specific connection to our Metis Culture.

We have a long history in Canada dating back to the late 1600’s and into British Columbia in the late 1700’s. Our ethnogenesis is derived from the earliest fur traders and explorers of European descent and our Aboriginal families throughout Western Canada. These relationships were mutually recognized and created kinships that have evolved into our modern Metis communities.

There has been a Metis presence documented in the Kootenays since the late 1700’s by explorers David Thompson and Jesuit father de Smet.

Our West Kootenay Metis Community has evolved in the past 30 years from Metis members of Kootenay Region Metis Association to Nelson and Area Metis Society to present day. Our community is one of 38 in the Province of BC with a local membership of 180 members and growing. Provincially 90 thousand people identify as Metis, with 23 thousand currently registered on our MNBC and National registry.

Kishchee tey mo’yawn aen li Michif wi’yawn - Prowd to be Metis in our Language – Michif.

Our hope is to develop a dialogue between the Metis and all community members with aspirations on acceptance, acknowledgement understanding with recognition for the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the principles of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Thank you, Touchstones Museum, for this opportunity and engagement in creating a space and dialogue moving forward.

We have a 400-year history and will be here for our next seven generations, enjoy the exhibit.

Maarsi, migweetch.

Don Courson

Pres. WKMS