**Key Themes Addressed in Class:**

Curriculum Focus: Canadian History 12.2.

Building Historical Narratives – Key Questions:

What stories are told in Canadian History? Who tells them?

What about the stories that are left out? Who tells them?

What makes a source trust worthy? What stories do we tell?

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| **Lesson Plan** | |
| **Grade Level:** | **Canadian History 12.2.** |
| **Unit:** | Unit I: MacDonald Era: Expansion and Consolidation: 1867-1896 |
| **Topic:** | Louis Riel and the Northwest Rebellion: Historical Legacy – A Perspective & Source Investigation: |
| **Themes:** | What stories do we tell in Canadian History? Who tells them?  What about the stories that are left out? Who tells them? |
| **Unit Outcome:** | Learning Outcome 2: Students will demonstrate and understanding of the policies of Canadian western expansion.  Learning Outcome 3: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the causes and consequences of National Policy. |
| **Lesson Objective:** | In this lesson students will be introduced to the notion that interpretation is an essential ingredient of history. This lesson will engage to consider the validity of sources, the element of perspective in the construction of historical knowledge and help develop students’ critical lens when reading history. |
| **Required Materials:**   * A visual, or any sort of prompt to get the students thinking about perspective   + For example, a coffee cup with an image on one side in the middle of the table and asked students what they saw. * PowerPoint explaining the concept of historical perspective * PowerPoint introducing the topic of Louis Riel and the Northwest Rebellion * The three latest versions of the Canada History Textbook * Articles on Louis Riel * Video on Louis Riel * A Perspective & Source Investigation Graphic Organizer | |
| **Warm-Up** | Begin class with a visual prompt to get the students thinking about perspective.  For example, I placed a coffee cup with an image on one side in the middle of a table and asked students what they saw. Depending on where they are seated some students will see a cup with nothing on it, others will see a partial image, and some will see the full image. |
| **Introduction** | Contextualize the relevance of the perspective warm-up by way of the PowerPoint that explains the concept of historical perspective and introduce the topic of Louis Riel and the Northwest Rebellion. Be sure to introduce the topics broadly as too not give too much information away or sway student’s perspective.  Once students have been introduced to the topics of today’s lesson, inform the students that they are to look through the latest three versions of the Canada History Textbook for information on Louis Riel and the Northwest Rebellion. In addition to analyzing the text, instruct the students that they are to consider the following while reading:   * **Origin:** What kind and type of source is it? Who created it? * **Perspective:** From what point of view is the source created? * **Context:** When was the source created? What historical events happened at this time that are important to the creation of this source? * **Motive:** Who was the intended audience of the source? For what purpose was this source made?   Once students have completed their readings, which should be relatively quickly, bring everyone back together for discussion.  Ask the students what they have learned about the relevance of Louis Riel and the Northwest Rebellion in Canadian history. Ask them what they thought about their sources. Are they satisfied? |
| **Process:** | Connect the discussion back to the warm-up activity on perspective. Inform the students that they will now be analyzing articles and videos related to Louis Riel and the Northwest Rebellion from different sources outside of their textbooks.  **Note**: When assigning the new sources, pay attention to who may benefit from text, video, visual sources.  Again, inform the students that in addition to analyzing the text, they are to consider the following while reading:   * **Origin:** What kind and type of source is it? Who created it? * **Perspective:** From what point of view is the source created? * **Context:** When was the source created? What historical events happened at this time that are important to the creation of this source? * **Motive:** Who was the intended audience of the source? For what purpose was this source made? * **Reliability:** How does this source corroborate or conflict with information from another source? How trustworthy is the source?   Once the students have finished analyzing their sources, bring everyone back together for discussion. Each student should present their understanding of the following:   * Who was Louis Riel and what was the Northwest Rebellion? * Why does Riel's memory continue to arouse controversy to this day, over a century after he was hanged? * Is Riel a hero, a traitor, a freedom fighter, or a domestic terrorist? |
| **Closure:** | After each student has presented, the class will conference. During this time, today’s learning will be summarized, consolidated, and reflected upon. |
| **Assessment:** | To what degree students have met the learning objectives articulated for this lesson?   * **Planning & Execution:** was the student able to plan, coordinate and communicate/express themselves clearly? * **Creation & Exploration**:was the student engaged? Did they demonstrate knowledge of the related techniques and vocabulary? * **Connection & Reflection**: was the student able to establish and communicate a personal connection with their work? * **Effort & Participation**: was the student engaged? Did they try? Were they respectful and appreciative of others? |
| **Extension:** | This activity could easily be made or revised into a debate or research project on the trial of Louis Riel. |

**Surveying the Land (Page 43)**

The seeds of the Red River Rebellion were sewn in the negotiations between the

Canadian government and the Hudson’s Bay Company over the transfer of ownership of

Rupert’s Land to Canada. With negotiations nearing completion in 1869 the Métis had

became suspicious of what was taking place because, as inhabitants of the land that was

being negotiated, they were not being consulted on the terms of the arrangement. These

concerns were heightened with the arrival of land surveyors from Ontario sent by

William MacDougall to the Red River Settlement in July 1869. The survey was being

done in anticipation of a flood of new settlers from Canada, particularly English-speaking Ontarians, once the negotiations for the transfer of Rupert’s Land were completed.

Two major issues troubled the Métis about this development. First, since their families

had lived in the Red River valley since the arrival of French explorers in the 1600s they

believed that they had a unique claim to the land. Plus they had developed a culture,

institutions and a way of life that was uniquely their own. With the anticipated arrival of

the new settlers they had no guarantees that their culture and their French-language

rights would be guaranteed when Rupert’s Land became part of Canada.

Second, the Métis feared that their land rights would not be respected since many of their families had arrived before official records were kept about who owned which piece of

property. As a result, most of the families did not have written deeds to the land they

lived on even though many of the families had lived there for generations. Also, since

the early Métis were of partial French heritage they had adopted the seigneurial or river

lot system used in Québec for dividing up the land. This system involved having long

narrow lots of land extending back from the edge of a river for about a kilometer or two.

The advantage of this was that it allowed many settlers to have access to water that they

needed for farming, livestock and daily use.

The surveyors who had arrived to survey the Red River Settlement were going to apply

the range and town survey system used in Ontario when surveying the land. This system

involved dividing up the land into large square lots which provided a larger area for

farming and raising livestock but it also meant settlers did not have equal or easy access

to water for their needs. Although the Métis had been given assurances that their lands

would be respected in the surveying they were uneasy about these assurances given that

the other perceived threats to their political and language rights were not being

addressed. It was these three elements in the face of the surveying and the inaction by the

Canadian government on the other issues that spurred the Métis to take stand. Now all

they needed was a leader to organize them.

Source: https://www.learnalberta.ca/content/aeChapter/pdf/Alberta\_Louis\_Riel%20\_Teacher\_Guide.pdf

**The Métis Take a Stand (44-45)**

While the Canadian government seemed to be the most likely to take control of Rupert’s Land and the Red River Settlement in the late 1860s this was by no means a certainty.

Interest in the territory was also being expressed in the United States and with a large

American army having just finished fighting a civil war it was now free to turn its

attention northwards. The Canadian government in Ottawa took this threat seriously.

Since the Hudson’s Bay Company owned the territory Canadian Prime Minister John A.

Macdonald decided quick action needed to be taken to ensure Canada’s legal right to the

territory. Anxious for access to the territory’s resources which would be needed if the

country was to grow, and not wanting to be completely surrounded by the United States,

Prime Minister Macdonald entered into negotiations with the Hudson’s Bay Company to

transfer rights to the land to Canada.

Having lived under the rule of the Hudson’s Bay Company where their way of life had been respected, the Métis were wary of what a new political arrangement would mean for them since they were not involved in the negotiations. The Métis weren’t against the idea of joining Confederation, but they were determined to have a say in the negotiating process to ensure they were treated equally and fairly. In an attempt to gain the attention of the Canadian government the Métis, under the leadership of Louis Riel, began to take action.

The first thing Riel did was to declare the surveying a menace and the Métis stopped the

surveyors sent by Ottawa from conducting their survey. While there was general support

for the Métis in the settlement and Québec because of language, religious and historical

ties there was opposition to their actions. Canadians living in the settlement who were

anxious for Canada to assume control of Rupert’s Land were the first to voice their

concerns. Soon their supporters in Ontario were the loudest in condemning the actions of

the Métis in general and Riel as their leader in particular. Canada’s English-speaking

majority, particularly Protestant Orangemen in Ontario, were anxious for westward

expansion as soon as possible. This vocal opposition in Canada began creating tensions

in the settlement between the French-speaking, mostly Roman Catholic Métis and the

more newly-arrived English-speaking Protestants from Canada.

Wanting to protect Métis rights while at the same time reduce the growing tensions in

the settlement Louis Riel organized a series of conferences. These conferences were

designed to address the concerns of the main language groups in the settlement with the

goal of developing a united set of proposals that would serve as the basis for allowing

them to negotiate with Ottawa over the entry of the territory around the Red River. The

result was a “List of Rights” which included language and land guarantees which the

Métis wanted Ottawa to agree to before they would agree to join Canada. In particular

the Métis demanded that the French and English languages be treated equally under the

**The Métis Take a Stand (44-45)**

law in the settlement and that the settlement enter Canada as a new province not a territory.

While even the English-speaking Canadians in the settlement eventually agreed that the

demands of the Métis were reasonable, the Canadian government ignored the Red River

settlers and the government continued to negotiate only with the Hudson’s Bay

Company.

In an effort to contain the growing tensions in the settlement between the English-speaking Canadians and the Métis Louis Riel declared that a Provisional Government to

maintain law and order would be set up that would replace the Council of Assiniboia. He

located it at Upper Fort Garry which effectively put him in charge of the entire territory

of Rupert’s Land. Riel also used the authority of the Provisional Government to send

armed troops to prevent William MacDougall, the new lieutenant-governor sent by

Ottawa to take charge of the settlement, from entering the territory.

Opposition to Riel’s actions came from some Canadian settlers around the Red River

Settlement who believed that what he was doing was illegal. A group of them armed

themselves and marched on Upper Fort Garry in an attempt to arrest Riel and overthrow

his provisional government so that William MacDougall could take charge. Their plans

failed and instead they were taken prisoner by the Métis who had been warned of the

attack. Several of the Canadians managed to escape and mounted a second attack on

Upper Fort Garry in January 1870 in order to free the ones who had been captured. On

the way to the fort they found out that the other prisoners had already been set free by

Riel. Instead of returning directly home as they had been ordered to do by Riel they

marched close to the fort and were arrested by the Métis soldiers.

Most of the Canadians were soon set free with the exception of a few including Thomas

Scott, an Orangeman from Ontario, who did little to hide his feelings of hatred for the

Métis. In prison he repeatedly abused his guards and, after having been warned several

times to stop, he was tried by a court set up by the Provisional Government. Having been

involved in two attempts to overthrow the Provisional Government by force Scott was

found guilty of treason and was executed by a firing squad. Riel’s actions effectively

eliminated the threat to the Provisional Government from the nearby settlers but they

inflamed anger in Ontario towards the Métis even further.

Recognizing that things were getting out of hand Prime Minister Macdonald agreed to

negotiate the entry of Rupert’s Land into Canada with the Métis and agreed to their “List

of Rights”. As part of the arrangement Louis Riel agreed to go into exile for five years

and on July 1st 1870 Manitoba was admitted into Canada as a province.

Source: <https://www.learnalberta.ca/content/aeChapter/pdf/Alberta_Louis_Riel%20_Teacher_Guide.pdf>

**Louis Riel: A Man with a Mission (Page 79-80)**

After Manitoba entered Confederation Louis Riel left for his five years of exile in the United States arriving at the St. Joseph Mission about 10 miles across the border in the Dakota territory in the summer of 1870. In 1871 he became seriously ill from the emotional and mental burden of the previous year as well as continued threats on his life by Orangemen who believed Thomas Scott had been unjustly executed by Riel. When he returned to Manitoba to recover his health he was well received by the government officials there. It was a hopeful sign that that there was little interest in persecuting him any further.

Riel was soon convinced by friends run for a seat in Parliament in the upcoming byelection in the Manitoba riding of Provencher. Riel easily won the seat and attempted to make his way to Ottawa through the United States in order to sign the Book of Oaths and take his seat as an MP. He went as far as Hull, Québec on the other side of the river from Ottawa but lost his nerve when he was told by friends that he was very likely to be assassinated or arrested for the death of Thomas Scott if he was seen in the capital. Riel crossed back over the border and stayed at a Catholic mission in Plattsburgh, New York.

During this time Louis Riel’s behaviour noticeably changed and he became more preoccupied with religious matters than political ones. He was often uncontrollably shouting and crying, a sign to those at the mission that Riel’s mental health had suffered under the strain of the responsibility he had undertaken to lead the Métis during. It was decided in 1876 to send him to a sanatorium in Montréal and then another one outside Québec City for treatment and convalescence.

When he was released in 1877 he was told that for the sake of his mental health he should lead a quiet and relaxed life and for several years that is exactly what Louis Riel did. He returned to the United States with one year left in his exile and lived with other Métis as they roamed through the Montana territory to hunt buffalo which had been mostly hunted to extinction when the west was being settled.

Riel eventually settled in Montana and became an American citizen and worked as a teacher at a Catholic mission. In 1881 Riel married Marguerite Monet and they had three children. However his restless nature soon got the better of him and he became involved in politics arguing for the rights of the Métis in Montana. This was not the relaxed life that was suggested he lead and soon Riel’s mental illness showed signs of re-appearing. He was once again talking about the plan God had for him to lead the Métis people and begin a new religion centred around the Métis whom he believed were God’s chosen people.

For Riel the opportunity to fulfill this mission soon presented itself when Gabriel Dumont and other Métis leaders from Saskatchewan visited Riel in Montana and requested his assistance in addressing their grievances with the Canadian government. Riel agreed and he helped justify his involvement because of his belief in the Métis cause, his mission as well as personally since he was still owed land, or the equivalent in money, by the Canadian government as part of agreement the Manitoba Act of 1870.

The concerns of the Saskatchewan Métis were essentially the same as those that the Métis in the Red River Settlement had fifteen years earlier. Just as before Riel petitioned the Canadian government to acknowledge the language rights and land claims of the Métis in Saskatchewan but these petitions, as well as a list of rights that had been drawn up, were ignored. Finally, Riel established a Provisional Government at Batoche which he stated would be the spiritual capital of the new religion he believed he was being asked by God to create. To his supporters Louis Riel was giving them hope that their rights would be taken care of but to his opponents, and particularly the Canadian government, he was a dangerous man who was out of control.

The Métis were supported in part by followers of Big Bear and Poundmaker who had similar land and rights grievances as the Métis which the Canadian government was also ignoring. By March 1885 frustration with the Canadian government led to talk of resort to arms. On rumours that 500 North-West Mounted Police were advancing towards them Riel and the Métis seized weapons and ransacked stores in Batoche to get supplies. Soon afterwards there were attacks on settlers at Battleford and on April 2nd nine settlers were killed at Frog Lake by Big Bear’s band.

In Canada there was outrage over the attacks despite the fact that the Métis and First Nations people had legitimate complaints against the government. Wanting to stop the violence before it spread Prime Minister Macdonald ordered the Canadian militia under General Middleton to the North-West to put down the rebellion. After two weeks of fighting the Canadian militia defeated the Métis at Batoche on May 12th. On May 15th 1885 Louis Riel surrendered to scouts belonging to General Middleton’s forces and the North-West Rebellion was over.

Source: https://www.learnalberta.ca/content/aeChapter/pdf/Alberta\_Louis\_Riel%20\_Teacher\_Guide.pdf

THE MÉTIS BILL OF RIGHTS

(December 1, 1869, Canadian Northwest)

1. The right to elect our Legislature.

2. The Legislature to have power to pass all laws, local to the Territory, over the

veto of the Executive, by a two-third vote.

3. No act of the Dominion Parliament (local to this Territory) to be binding on the

people until sanctioned by their representatives.

4. All sheriffs, magistrates, constables, etc., etc., to be elected by the people -- a free

homestead pre-emption law.

5. A portion of the public lands to be appropriated to the benefit of schools, the

building of roads, bridges and parish buildings.

6. A guarantee to connect Winnipeg by rail with the nearest line of railroad -- the

land grant for such road or roads to be subject to the Legislature of the Territory.

7. For 4 years the public expenses of the Territory, civil, military and municipal, to

be paid out of the Dominion treasury.

8. The military to be composed of the people now existing in the Territory.

9. The French and English language to be common in the Legislature and Council,

and all public documents and acts of Legislature to be published in both

languages.

10. That the Judge of the Superior Court speak French and English.

11. Treaties to be concluded and ratified between the Government and several tribes

of Indians of this Territory, calculated to insure peace in the future.

12. That all privileges, customs and usages existing at the time of the transfer to be

respected.

13. That these rights be guaranteed by Mr. McDougall before he be admitted into this

Territory.

14. If he have not the power himself to grant them, he must get an act of Parliament

passed expressly securing us these rights; and until such act be obtained, he must

stay outside of the Territory.

15. That we have a full and fair representation in the Dominion Parliament.

Source: Alexander Begg, (Toronto: 1971), p.110.