



SHADOW OF
DUMONT

EDUCATORS GUIDE



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO EDUCATORS	2
The Film	2
The Filmmaker	2
The Journey	3
Learning Outcomes	4
Use of the term “Half Breed”	5
TRAILS OF 1885: BATOCHÉ & THE MÉTIS UPRISING	7
Who are the Métis?	7
Gabriel Dumont	10
Louis Riel	13
Batoché	15
1885 Métis Uprising	17
ACTIVITY	20
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	21
OUTTAKES FROM THE ROAD	22
Norman Fleury	22
Madeleine Dumont	23
St. Peter’s Mission, MT	24
Teachable moment: You Say Métis/ I Say Michif: Métis people in Canada AND The United States	25
ACTIVITY	26
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	27
MAPPING THE HERO’S JOURNEY	28
The Hero’s Journey	28
One Man, Many Faces	29
Teachable moment: The Legacy of Dumont	31
ACTIVITY	32
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:	33
IDENTITY/POLITICS: THE MANY FACES OF “UNCLE GABÉ”	34
ACTIVITY	36
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	37
CULMINATING ACTIVITIES	38
RESOURCES	39
SOURCES	40



INTRODUCTION TO EDUCATORS

USING THIS GUIDE

This guide has been written to be appropriate for a grade 6 level and above and is recommended for use in high schools.

The film is also likely to be very popular with Métis community organizations and will offer an added historical layer to those who want to use it as a supplement to using for their membership.

THE FILM

Detached from his Métis roots, and living in Toronto, Trevor pilots a campervan across North America to track the life and legacy of his childhood hero and great-great-great uncle, Métis leader Gabriel Dumont. Trevor follows the life path of Dumont, from his birth in what would become Manitoba, to his life further south and west as a buffalo hunter, husband, trader, hunter, negotiator, and businessman. We follow the events of the 1885 uprising and his escape from Canadian authorities to his life in the United States, working with Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show. Dumont's later return to Canada is seen as a symbol against Canadian Imperialism, and now recognized as an important chapter in the history of Canada as the country was challenged to define its identity.

THE FILMMAKER

Trevor Cameron was born in Edmonton. His family is mixed race, Scottish and Métis (Cree and French), and he is a writer, director and performer who also works within Indigenous groups as a speaker and teacher. He attended the En'owkin Centre, an Indigenous creative writing school in Penticton BC, and the Vancouver Film School. Trevor began his career as an improviser and comedian before entering production full time.



At the beginning of the film, Trevor describes his connection to Dumont, who was brought to life for Trevor through stories shared with him by many family members that sparked his childhood imagination:

“Why me?’ you ask. Who am I to go looking for Gabriel Dumont stories? My mother raised me to know where my roots came from. My grandfather is Lawrence Dumont and his grandfather is Isidore Dumont, the first Métis killed in the uprising of 1885. He was Gabriel Dumont’s older brother. That makes Gabriel Dumont my great, great, great uncle.”

THE JOURNEY

In some ways Gabriel Dumont’s journey, as well as those of Trevor and his family members, resonate with the family stories of many Métis people: we can see some of our own 20th century family migrations reflected in the journey of Trevor’s family as they spread out from the Prairies into other parts of Canada, and we can connect our 19th century ancestors to some of the places and events visited by Uncle Gabe.

Trevor’s journey is a huge one to undertake: in total, he travels to more than thirty locations! What would it take for someone to complete a goal like this? Such an epic journey has at its roots a deep motivation fuelled by an adventurous spirit as well as a collection of incredibly captivating stories that came to Trevor through both history and family. At the beginning of the film, Trevor describes his goals and how he plans to achieve them:

“After all of these years, I hope to understand Gabriel Dumont I want to get on the road and learn more about his travels, his adventures and what his legacy is today.... I want to look at Gabriel Dumont’s whole life and not just the uprising that pushed him onto the international stage.... The plan is to get my butt to Saskatchewan and retrace Gabriel Dumont’s steps and look for the stories and things of Gabriel Dumont and listen to whoever wants to speak with us.”



LEARNING OUTCOMES

Viewers will learn about:

- The history and legacy of Gabriel Dumont, beginning with his role in the 1885 Métis uprising, then extending beyond his military career to gain a fuller understanding of Gabriel Dumont;
- The history and culture of the Métis, with a focus on the places they lived and travelled;
- The complexity of Métis identity through both the story of Dumont as well as Trevor's own journey and personal reflections.



USE OF THE TERM “HALF BREED”

Over the past several generations, Métis folks have called themselves many different names:

- **Métis**, which was used by the French, and comes from the Latin words meaning “to mix” and “mixed race”;
- **Otipemisiwak**, a Cree word meaning “the people who rule themselves”;
- **Michif** or **Bungee**, which are also Métis languages;
- the list goes on ...

... and from time to time, we still might see or hear the word “**Half-Breed**” in recognition of their English/Scottish heritage.

In the words of Allan Benoit, chief of staff for the Manitoba Métis Federation, in response to the term appearing in a 2018 Facebook translation for “Métis”, “It was intended as a racial slur – dehumanizing language. It’s from an era of intolerance.” Although this name was used until the 1930s, it’s now considered offensive by most Métis.

DID YOU KNOW

Métis / Michif: *in pre-Confederation Canada, “Métis” referred to children of mixed ancestry from First Nation and European unions; Michif was their language which combines Cree verbs and syntax with French nouns. In some areas, Michif is also used to refer to a Métis person.*



Louis Riel had this to say about the Métis and the word itself:

“The French word, ‘Métis’, is derived from the Latin participle mixtus, which means ‘mele’; it expresses well the idea that is sought to be conveyed. However appropriate the corresponding English expression ‘Halfbreed’ might have been for the first generation of the mixture of blood, now that European blood and Indian blood are mixed in every degree, it is no longer generally applicable.” (Goulet & Goulet, 2008, p.14, quoted in “Land Agreements”)

Métis writer and lawyer Chelsea Vowel, who writes as *âpihtawikosisân*, meaning “half-son” in Cree, sums things up well in a [tweet](#) about author Maria Campbell’s and other Post-War generation Métis self-identification as “Halfbreed”:

“Are you going to call Maria Campbell [b. 1940] colonized for identifying as Halfbreed? It’s not the only way she identifies, but a lot of the folks of that generation use the term still. ... Most of the Métis who use this term aren’t half something, half Métis. They’re Métis, all the way. It’s a reclamation of sorts, and it’s rarely okay to call a Métis person this, even if they use the term for themselves.”



TRAILS OF 1885: BATOCHÉ & THE MÉTIS UPRISING

“Before I get into Gabriel Dumont’s legacy,
I have to first visit his history.”

– Trevor Cameron

WHO ARE THE MÉTIS?



On their website, the Métis Nation of Alberta defines citizenship as “a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry and who is accepted by the Métis Nation.” This definition comes from a decision written by the Supreme Court of Canada in 2003 for the Powley Case, which focused on Métis of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. It locates Métis rights within local histories of Métis communities and was the first major Aboriginal rights case concerning Métis people.

In pre-Confederation Canada, “Métis” referred to children of mixed ancestry from First Nation and European unions. When these two branches converged, a distinct culture emerged connected by Michif language, and as Chelsea Vowel adds, a “history...and culture that arose in the Red River and spread out as Métis founded other communities.”

Although there's been a lot of focus on Red River by historians, just like not all Métis are related to Riel or Dumont (even though the star of this film Trevor, happens to be!), not all families are from the Red River in southern Manitoba.

One of the many people Trevor visits along his journey is historian and educator **Lawrie Barkwell**, a Canadian Scotsman who became an honorary member of the Manitoba Métis Federation due to his dedication to the research and publication of Métis history. Barkwell reminds us of the significance of legal decisions such as Powley:



“The Métis have truly been the forgotten people. ... [Either] they’re not in the history books or they’re misportrayed ... The story of the Métis in Canada is one of the last huge human rights issues in North America. And of all the indigenous people, the Métis were denied their rights for far longer: it was only in 2013 the Supreme Court decision on the Métis land claim.”

Métis settlements could be found throughout various territories in Canada and United States.



A golden age for Métis culture through the first half of the 19th century ended with the 1867 Confederation of Canada. The Hudson's Bay Company, which was sanctioned to operate and also acted as the de facto government in the territory called Rupert's Land for 200 years, surrendered its charter to the British Crown in 1869. Ottawa sent survey crews to Red River before the United States could lay claim, which caused a lot of worry for the Métis as they were never consulted. The Canadian government's scrip system rather than treaty agreements, followed from 1870's to 1908.

DID YOU KNOW

Rupert's Land was the name given to the territory operated by the Hudson's Bay Company prior to Confederation. It included: all of Manitoba, most of Saskatchewan, southern Alberta, southern Nunavut, and northern parts of Ontario and Quebec, as well as parts of Minnesota, North Dakota, Montana and South Dakota

DID YOU KNOW

Scrip is a certificate that could be exchanged for land or money, and was a tool used by the Canadian government to extinguish the Métis' Indigenous title by transferring land to Métis people in three phases over the turn of the 20th century.

Scrip was promoted as a way to transfer land to Métis people, but was often corrupt. As this process unfolded, waves of settlers arrived, pushing many Métis west and south, eventually into urban centres where they found themselves disconnected from the culture that had flourished only half a century before.