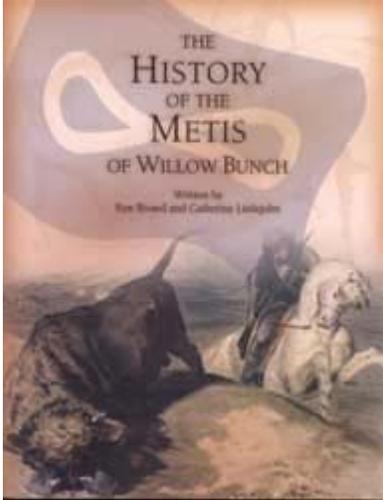


The History of the Métis of Willow Bunch



The History of the Métis of Willow Bunch is a new book just released by Saskatchewan authors Ron Rivard and Catherine Littlejohn. Ron Rivard is a Métis from the community of Willow Bunch and has co-authored this book to tell the story of the Métis of Willow Bunch. Numerous accounts of the events of history have been recorded throughout the years. Most always, it is written by the Non-Métis literate people that participated in the events, or the literate ones that followed the events. This has proved to be one of the problems of getting the true Métis history straight for the Willow Bunch Métis. Our purpose in this book is to tell the Métis side of the story. This has never been done before. The other history books of the West and this area have been written by Non-Métis writers, or priests that have not seriously taken the Métis's contribution to the area into account. Or they have trivialized our contributions, or have slanted our ancestor's input by describing our role in Willow Bunch's development through

racial innuendo or vulgar stereotypes.

The book details the earliest settlement of the Willow Bunch region that was inhabited by the Métis while on their buffalo hunts. We also make the link between this region and the life in the Red River. We outline how the Métis lived in those early days and describe in detail life on the prairies. Métis traders played a big role in the life of the Métis settlements and this lifestyle is described. We discuss our role in the Red River Resistance and life in South Western Saskatchewan. The great Indian Chief, Sitting Bull and his people camped around Willow Bunch for a time, and we tell the Sitting Bull story. We also tell of the involvement of the Métis with this world famous Indian. The Giant of Willow Bunch is featured in one of our chapters. The Giant was an 8 foot 3 inch Métis Person who was the first person born in Willow Bunch. We talk about his life and strange circumstances surrounding his death and eventual burial.

Willow Bunch is a Métis community and in our book we describe how it was developed. Long before any white settlers moved into the area, the Métis were here. We had permanent structures, we had organized civil order to deal with local issues, we had our own institutions, we had local government, we had our own traditions, we had our own culture, and we had a community. The original maps of the first settlements to this area clearly show that our Métis homesteads were firmly established. We were real people with real homes. The memory of the Willow Bunch Métis before the newcomers came has been virtually erased from the memories of all in Willow Bunch, including the Métis. However, there were those who would not forget and who insisted that the history of Willow Bunch started long before those who now said they were here first. This book is the result of the stubborn insistence of the Métis of Willow Bunch that their story must be told. This book is about The History of the Métis of Willow Bunch.

-Ron Rivard