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Metis studies : the development of a field and new directions


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Abstract

Until recently, sources for Metis studies have been few both for classroom use as well as academic reflection. Lately, there has been a virtual explosion of interest, although largely among non-Metis historians. Now this too has begun to change. A new dynamic is also forcing Metis historiography out of the bog Red River in which some argue it has been mired for too long. The writings of the previous decades have already been examined from a historiographical perspective in several excellent articles. Rather than updating these useful exercises, an alternative is to examine the new literature from a topical perspective, posing questions and suggesting new avenues of investigation. The current literature is the reflection of scholarly concerns of the last two decades and fit into six basic themes or areas: the origins of the Metis people, the historic Metis of the fur trade period of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the Metis Diaspora of the mid to late nineteenth century, the revival of Metis consciousness in the twentieth century, Metis land claims, and Metis women's history. A case could be made that the beginning point in each of these areas are the great icons of Metis historiography: W.L. Morton, G.F.G. Stanley, and Marcel Giraud. However, their studies have been well assessed and often reinforce stereotypes, so it is best to look to more recent literature.

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Introduction: Place, Process, and the New Prairie Realities, developing this topic, Delta uniformly acquires a certain mathematical horizon.