



Press Release

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New report suggests MNO research lacks scholarly rigour

Robinson Huron Treaty Territory – Robinson Huron Waawiindamaagewin (RHW) has released a report titled, *“The Sault Ste. Marie ‘Metis’ Community and ‘Halfbreed Petition’”*. This report examines the legitimacy of the Metis Nation of Ontario’s (MNO) political claims within RHW territory by taking a critical lens to key historical reports and academic literature available on the Sault Ste. Marie (SSM) Metis. Specifically, the report assesses to what extent the historical reports and literature apply a consistent definition of “Métis” (specifically one that reflects more than just the presence of “mixed-blood” individuals) and whether or not these reports align with well-established research on Anishinabek history and governance.

The findings of the report confirm that the research reports and academic literature that are often cited to legitimize the existence of a distinct Métis community in the SSM region lack scholarly rigour in their use and understanding of the term “Métis.” Despite being used by the MNO as evidence for its current claims, Joan Holmes & Associates’ 1996 report for the Government of Ontario argues against the presence of a Metis community in the region prior to 1850.

The review of existing material on the SSM “Halfbreed Petition” provides ample evidence that considerations of Anishinabek’s history and governance are virtually absent from this literature. The few authors who consider Anishinabek understanding of events in the 1700s and 1800s (and beyond) in their work provide fulsome analyses that deny the existence of a distinct Métis community in the SSM region. The evidence supports that the “halfbreeds” identified in the petition were Anishinabek, a point echoed by the Holmes report, which notes that even though the Chiefs failed to enter their halfbreed relations into the treaty, it made little difference as subsequent years of intermarriage meant that families including Bell, Biron, Perreault, Sayers, Boissonneault, Larose, Nolan and Cadotte simply ended up as citizens of the Garden River or Batchewana Indian bands.

This latest report supports the RHW’s position that there were no historic Metis communities within its treaty territory. The [report](#) and other information can be found on the RHW [website](#).

More Information:

Robinson Huron Waawiindamaagewin (RHW) is an initiative undertaken by the 21 First Nations of the Robinson Huron Treaty of 1850 as they assert their sovereignty, jurisdiction and chosen expression of nationhood. RHW also conducts treaty-based research, facilitates community engagement in Robinson Huron Treaty communities on treaty-related matters, and develops treaty education tools, including detailed use and occupancy research of the treaty area.

For more information on RHW, please visit waawiindamaagewin.com.

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