

Wîpinâhwasowin: Metis Methodologies and Spirituals Protocols for Honouring Metis Ancestors

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“They’re ready and are happy for our visits”
–Ancestral Guidance

Introduction

Metis research¹ has often been overlooked for its application and incorporation of spiritual protocols and distinctive dimensions of Indigenous knowledge. Metis spiritual protocols, except in limited cases, have rarely been applied to preliminary research projects on the Prairies.² We embarked on a project, *Wîpinâhwasowin: English-Métis & the HBC - Following the Tracks, Trails, and Resting Spots of our Ancestors*,³ to explore English Metis (also known as Halfbreeds or Scots-Cree) cemetery sites and historical trails in the northwest Saskatchewan River Valley and near the city of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

The present study details our research debrief visit in which we came together in summer 2022 to visit and reflect on research that we had undertaken in 2021–2022. Our debrief visit was audio- and video-recorded by a local young Metis freelance photographer and was later transcribed. We use the transcripts to share our debrief visiting conversation with the community. Throughout this research journey, we prioritized intergenerational continuity by focusing on Metis youth and Elder involvement. This is our story of what it looks like to conduct preliminary Metis research in central Saskatchewan and the process engaged to enact Metis spiritual protocols, including ceremonies. A hand-drawn map, crafted by Leah Marie Dorion, in the spirit of Metis mapping traditions, appears below. The map was used to take us to the territory of our Metis cemetery sites and was a vital part of planning our journey along the old river highways and overland trails that connect us to the whole Saskatchewan River Valley.

¹ We appreciate all the Metis scholars who reviewed this article, their helpful suggestions to improve it, and the assistance of the *Pawaatamihk* team. We acknowledge all the Metis grandmothers who assisted in this project and appreciate the research assistance of Grace Nelson-Gunness, a graduate student in Criminology and Social Justice at Toronto Metropolitan University.

² The authors have been involved in community projects in the Saskatchewan River area that involve Indigenous rites such as pipe ceremonies and have incorporated ceremonial practices into their graduate and post-doctoral research. We acknowledge Janice Cindy Gaudet, who prioritized Metis ceremonies in her Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR) research (see below). We also recognize Chantal Fiola, who lifted up Métis spiritualities in Manitoba; see Chantal Fiola, *Returning to Ceremony: Spirituality in Manitoba Métis Communities* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2021).

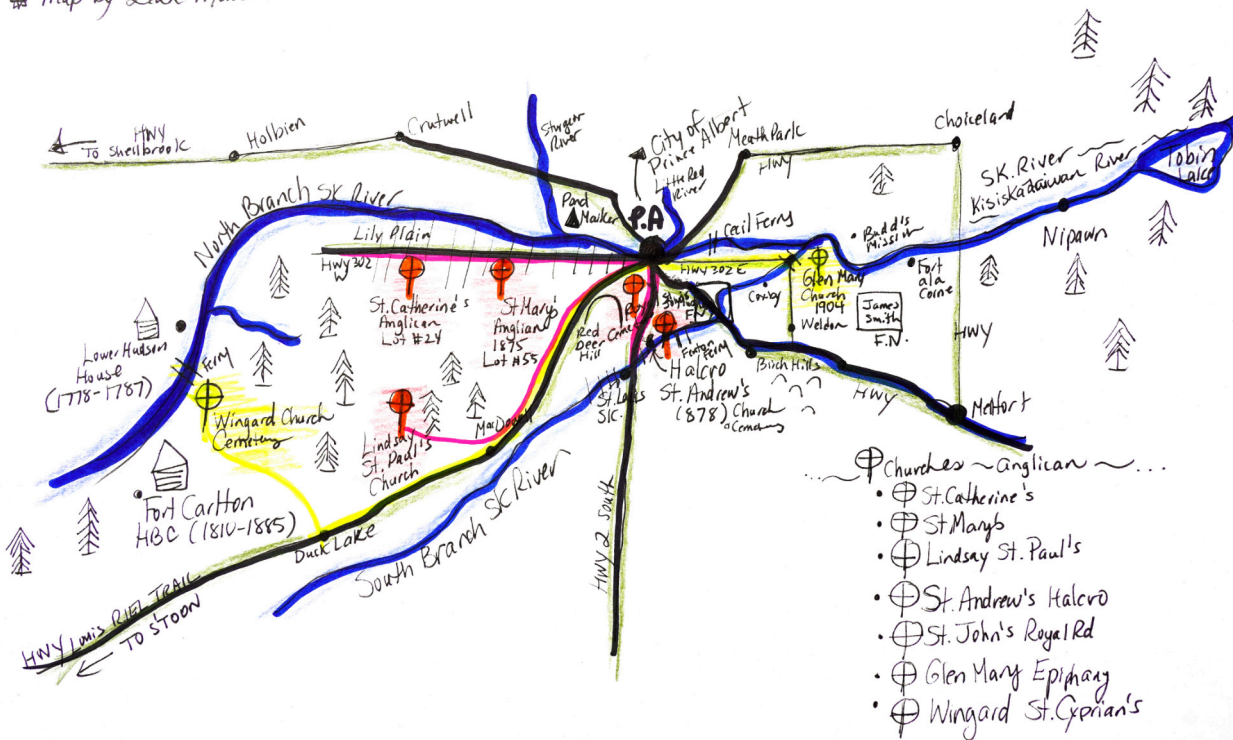
³ In the nehiyaw language, *wîpinâhwasowin* refers to making a peace offering.

Historically, Metis went visiting to connect with ancestors and gather strength at Metis cemeteries. We decided to visit these special places where the bones of our Metis ancestors rest. This article is a sharing, through a Metis visiting methodology, of our oral debrief findings. Visiting and diplomacy are our laws, and good diplomatic relationships are our Metis way. From this perspective, it is important for academics to ground their work in community-centred diplomacy and place-based practices, which for us include spiritual protocols that honour the lands, waters, and ancestors of this place.

Wipinâhwasowin Project (2021-2022)

English-Metis & the HBC, Following the tracks, resting spots, & trails of our ancestors...

Map by Leah Maui Dornon



Our preliminary research resulted in a published commemorative photo-journal booklet¹ that documented our Metis cemetery visiting journey and was created to create accountability with community participants. We have begun to share the booklet with Metis communities in central Saskatchewan. Our vision is to support prairie Metis community folks to continue journeying to these gathering places to visit their ancestors. Through our experience, we learned that tea diplomacy² is an important symbolic offering to our ancestors, that visiting protocols such as introducing ourselves directly to the ancestors are important, and that spiritual gifts and intentions need to be shared respectfully. These broad Metis visiting and spiritual protocols were upheld and grounded throughout the entire research project.

¹ The Wipinâhwasowin photo newsletter booklet can be found online: <https://www.torontomu.ca/content/dam/criminology/tank/faculty/Wipinâhwasowin%20Project-AnnaC.pdf>

² Metis men working with the HBC, along with Metis women throughout the fur trade, had access to tin canisters of black tea; future research could further explore tea diplomacy and how it was part of Metis ways of life.

We went visiting, as prairie Metis say. Nowadays, visiting involves getting in a car and following the highways to visit Metis family, ancestors, and special places. Our preliminary research visits encompassed the importance of *kiyokewin*:¹ visiting the resting places of our Metis ancestors in a spirit of peace. In some ways, we were inviting the visit, along with the tobacco and tea, to show us the way. As Gaudet reminds us, *keeoukaywin* is a ceremony in and of itself.² The visiting protocols, along with spiritual gifting, meant that we had to be humble with our ears and hearts and remain open to ancestral guidance on the next steps of the project. The research allowed us to enact our own prairie-based Metis interpretive lens by going to visit the places that our prairie Metis ancestors rest and explore how our research can help ensure that all Indigenous relations rest in peace.

Grounding ourselves and our work

The Metis co-researchers had several things in common: 1) both grew up in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan; 2) both have Metis relational connections to the Saskatchewan River Valley; 3) both conduct Metis-specific scholarly research, including projects with Janice Cindy Gaudet, in the geographic area of focus in the present study; 4) both have spent years learning from and helping prairie Metis, Cree, and Saulteaux knowledge holders; and 5) both have kin in the Metis McKay clan. As we acknowledge our connections and interrelations, we ground our research visits in Anglican Metis cemetery spaces and ancestral Metis women buried at these places.

Our relations are built on generations of kinship connections with the Saskatchewan River Delta, including the North Saskatchewan and South Saskatchewan Rivers. Both authors grew up in Prince Albert, near the Forks of those rivers. Leah has relations in and around Cumberland House on the North Saskatchewan, and Anna has relations in and around St. Louis on the South Saskatchewan. While we knew each other in high school, we were adults when we worked together at the Gabriel Dumont Institute in Saskatoon. As young people and through today, we have both learned from local Metis, Cree, and Saulteaux Elders and have participated in pipe ceremonies, feasts, visiting, fasting, moon ceremonies, sweat lodges, and other Indigenous ceremonies.

Most notable was the kin time we spent together in 2018–2019 with Gaudet while working on a CIHR Métis women’s wellness project in the St. Louis and St. Laurent areas. The CIHR project guided by Gaudet was a Métis community-centred collaboration to build evidence about Métis methodological approaches such as *keeoukaywin*. The project, which applied Métis spiritual, arts, and sewing-based methods, accentuated Métis women’s knowledge and their roles in advancing the wellbeing of Métis women and their families, including those within the North and South Saskatchewan River kinship system.³ The three Métis women researchers conducted spiritual protocols before the CIHR project began and throughout the Métis research gatherings.

¹ Anna L Flaminio, “*Kiyokewin: Urban Indigenous Kinship-Visiting Methodology and Approach for Urban Indigenous Youth*” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2018), <https://hdl.handle.net/1807/101621>; Anna Corrigal Flaminio, “Kinship-Visiting: Urban Indigenous Deliberative Space,” in *Renewing Relationships: Indigenous Peoples and Canada*, ed. Karen Drake and Brenda L. Gunn (Saskatoon: Wiyasiwewin Mikiwahp Native Law Centre, University of Saskatchewan, 2019), 143–67.

² Janice Cindy Gaudet, “*Keeoukaywin: The Visiting Way—Fostering an Indigenous Research Methodology*,” *Aboriginal Policy Studies* 7, no. 2 (2019): 47–64.

³ The CIHR Métis women’s wellness research led to journal articles and a book chapter: Janice Cindy Gaudet, Leah M. Dorion, and Anna Corrigal Flaminio, “Exploring the Effectiveness of Métis Women’s Research Methodology and Methods: Promising Wellness Research Practices,” *First Peoples Child & Family Review* 15, no. 1 (2020): 12–26; Anna Corrigal Flaminio, Janice Cindy Gaudet, and Leah M. Dorion, “Métis Women Gathering: Visiting Together and Voicing Wellness for Ourselves,” *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 16, no. 1 (2020): 55–63; Janice Cindy Gaudet, Leah M. Dorion, and Hannah Bouvier, “Celebrating the Wisdom of Our Métis Matriarchs: Sewing our Wellness All Together – *Kood toot aansamb*,” in *Around the Kitchen Table: Métis Aunties’ Scholarship*, ed. Laura Forsythe and Jennifer Markides (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2024).

The CIHR research included smudging, pipe, moon, and talking circle ceremonies. Spiritual methodologies, including carrying out Métis-specific Indigenous ceremonies prior to and throughout a research project, were important methods that we intentionally carried forward into this Métis cemetery project.

Research Overview

“By travelling to the resting place of our ancestors, we connect with the strength and spirit of our ancestors; in turn we become more balanced and healed, ready to walk stronger.”

– Elder Curtis Breaton

In summer 2021, we initiated this research project, *Wîpinâhwasowin: English-Métis & the HBC – Following the Tracks, Trails, and Resting Spots of Our Ancestors*. The project centered on visiting Anglican English Métis cemeteries in the Saskatchewan River Valley near Prince Albert. Our research goal was to offer respect, acknowledgement, and commemoration¹ of the original Métis fur trade families and to consciously acknowledge ancestral Métis women. The research team consisted of two Métis women: Anna Corrigan Flaminio, Assistant Professor at Toronto Metropolitan University, and Leah Marie Dorion, Métis scholar and artist. Corrigan Flaminio applied for an Indigenous Governance Grant from Toronto Metropolitan University, and our research project was awarded \$5,000. In June 2021, the project received research ethics board approval. The *Wîpinâhwasowin: English-Métis & the HBC* preliminary research project was assisted by Métis knowledge keeper Curtis Breaton, who helped guide spiritual protocols. The research team included the Métis co-researchers, a Métis youth, a Métis Elder, and local Métis grandmothers. We were supported at each site by local Métis grandmother-hosts, including Vivian Meabry, Faye Corrigan Flaminio, Brenda Hryciuk, and Laurie Paul, who all have Métis kinship connections at the cemeteries. Importantly, Métis youth Louis Lafferty greatly assisted the project by documenting the Métis cemetery sites through his photography² using his distinct Métis youth lens.

The *Wîpinâhwasowin: English-Métis & the HBC* project centred on visiting Anglican English Métis cemeteries in the Saskatchewan River Valley near Prince Albert. In the summers of 2021 and 2022, we visited and took part in spiritual protocols with the land and ancestors at seven key cemeteries:

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|----|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) | Sunday, June 6, 2021 | St. Mary’s Anglican Cemetery, R.M. 461 Prince Albert |
| 2) | Sunday, June 6, 2021 | St. Catherine’s Anglican Cemetery, R.M. 461 Prince Albert |
| 3) | Sunday, June 13, 2021 | St. Andrew’s Anglican Cemetery, R.M. 461 Prince Albert |
| 4) | Sunday, June 20, 2021 | St. Paul’s Anglican Cemetery, R.M. 461 Prince Albert |
| 5) | Sunday, June 27, 2021 | St. John’s Royal Cemetery, R.M. 461 Prince Albert |
| 6) | Sunday, July 10, 2022 | Church of the Epiphany / Glen Mary Anglican Cemetery |
| 7) | Sunday, July 17, 2022 | St. Cyprian’s / Wingard Anglican Cemetery |

¹ For more on Indigenous cemetery commemoration methods, see the following: Pamela M. Cunningham, “The Meeting Place at the Bend in the River: An Examination of the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground, Edmonton, Alberta” (master’s thesis, University of Alberta, 2006); Kevin Gambell, “Cemetery Spaces of Shxwôwhâmel Stó:lô and the Île-à-la-Crosse Métis” (master’s thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2009), <http://hdl.handle.net/10388/etd-11262009-231053>; Ruth Swan and Edward A. Jerome, “The History of the Pembina Métis Cemetery: Inter-Ethnic Perspectives on a Sacred Site,” *Plains Anthropologist* 44, no. 170 (1999): 81–94.

² Celeste Pedri-Spade, “*Waaasaabikizo*: Our Pictures are Good Medicine,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 5, no. 1 (2016): 45–70; the researchers were also inspired by photo-based newsletters produced by Janice Cindy Gaudet throughout the CIHR research on Métis women’s wellness.

We deliberately visited on Sundays to honour Metis gathering protocols; we practiced Metis-focused spiritual protocols at each Metis resting place. This article is a summary of our *Wîpinâhwasowin* project and includes the debrief visit with the two Metis co-researchers, who met near Prince Albert to record a research debrief conversation on July 27, 2022. That visit, which reviews our research findings, is a Metis women’s evaluative approach to research. We visited and reviewed the Metis-specific methodologies and spiritual protocols that we honoured when visiting English Metis Anglican cemeteries in the summers of 2021 and 2022.



Our Purpose

“Modern reconciliation and peace-making begins with knowing where you come from and listening with an open heart for the gentle whispers of the ancestors.”

– Leah Marie Dorion

As many of these sites involve Metis ancestors living in contested eras of history—including the 1885 Northwest Resistance and the 1700–1800 fur trade history—we incorporated Metis-specific peace-making methods, known as *wîpinâhwasowin* or “making a peace offering” in the Cree language. This project explored the leadership roles that Metis women played, such as peacemaker or caretaker of cemeteries.

Our research focus was on English Metis fur traders and their kin, who came from the Red River to live along the North and South Saskatchewan Rivers. We carefully examined maps to better understand the lay of the land. Leah found historical maps of the area in the Prince Albert Historical Society Museum and Archives, including a poignant map showing the historical river lots in Prince Albert. We asked for spiritual guidance about which cemeteries to visit—meaning ceremonial offerings and prayers to ancestors and spirit helpers—and clarity came to visit primarily English-Metis Anglican cemeteries. Most of the cemeteries are in Rural Municipality 461 Prince Albert.

This region is located south of Prince Albert and runs to the boundary of St. Louis. The aim of this research observational project was to visit cemetery space and enact both spiritual protocols and a Metis “visiting with self” reflective writing approach. This approach, commonly known as Indigenous autoethnography,¹ was accomplished by journaling our embodied Metis experience. Importantly, we conducted place-based Metis spiritual protocols by offering gifts of tobacco, tea, and berries to lands, rivers, and ancestors.

This research was ceremony, and ceremony was the goal of our search.² Our research aim was to visit each Metis cemetery and be open, through ceremony, to developing a more refined research question. Indigenous ceremony must occur before research begins and throughout its course. We viewed the cemetery site visits as doing the background research and ensuring that Indigenous protocols, such as laying tobacco at each land place, were honoured. *Kiyokewin* and *wîpinâhwasowin* often involve gifting and ceremony. We conducted place-based spiritual protocols by gifting tobacco, tea, and berries to land, river, and ancestors. We had to connect with and honour the land with gifts and offerings of tobacco and tea before we proceeded with our next steps. Our cemetery visiting was ceremony as we spiritually honoured Metis ancestors.



¹ For more on Indigenous autoethnography, see Onowa McIvor, “I Am My Subject: Blending Indigenous Research Methodology and Autoethnography through Integrity-Based, Spirit-Based Research,” *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 33, no. 1 (2010): 137–55; Ashleigh Sanduliak, “Researching the Self: The Ethics of Auto-ethnography and an Aboriginal Research Methodology,” *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 45, no. 3 (2016): 360–76; Brenda Isabel Wastasecoot, “Showing and Telling the Story of Nikis (My Little House): An Arts-Based Autoethnographic Journey of a Cree Adult Educator,” (PhD diss. University of Toronto, 2017), <https://hdl.handle.net/1807/82394>; Paul Whitinui, “Indigenous Autoethnography: Exploring, Engaging, and Experiencing ‘Self’ as a Native Method of Inquiry,” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 43, no. 4 (2013): 456–87.

² See, generally, Shawn Wilson, *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (Black Point, NS: Fernwood Publishing, 2008).

McKay Clans and Interrelations

Our visits to Metis cemeteries were a chance to revisit the often difficult, and at times violent, settler colonial history in the Saskatchewan River Valley. The Metis co-researchers recognized they were both interrelated with John McKay, who was originally from Sutherlandshire in northern Scotland. John McKay married Mary Favel (Mary's parents were John Favel and Titameg). We decided to focus our research on finding McKay ancestors buried in the Saskatchewan River Valley, south of Prince Albert. We wanted to find the resting places of the McKay clans, especially the McKay women who had married into notable Metis families such as the Corrighals, Turners, McDonalds, and Houries.

Perusing our family trees, we became aware we were interrelated with John McKay's sons, John Richards McKay and Donald McKay, who were both HBC fur traders. Prior to our cemetery site visits, we began to find John McKay's Cree-Metis descendants buried throughout the area surrounding Prince Albert. For example, Alexander McKay and Catherine McCorrister McKay were living in the Red River Settlement in St. John's and St. Andrew's communities, respectively, and both travelled to the valley in the 1870s. We also knew that the children of Alexander McKay and Catherine McCorrister, such as Maria McKay Corrighal, who is buried in St. Andrew's Halcro cemetery, all lived and are buried in Metis cemeteries south of Prince Albert. She was the local midwife and lived south of Prince Albert, near the town of St. Louis. Maria came from the large McKay clan, with many of the men working for the HBC in the 1800s.

Throughout the research project, we took on a more feminine visiting¹ or *kiyokewin* approach by learning more about all the McKay auntie-sisters. Part of our project includes the process of locating Metis auntie graves and their resting places to honour feminine Metis energy and their strong stories in our lineage. Through visits to their graves, we learned that their loving Metis auntie energy continues to reverberate in the Saskatchewan River Valley. We were pleased to locate the McKay sisters—Auntie Mary, Auntie Catherine, Auntie Margaret, and Auntie Harriet—who married into the Corrighals, Turners, McDonalds, and Houries, respectively. We looked forward to continuing finding and sitting with Metis aunties at their resting places and honouring the Metis protocols of *kiyokewin* and *wîpinâhwasowin*. Our visiting approach in this project was very similar to how many First Nations people seasonally return every year to sacred sites to pay respect and seek guidance from ancestors.

Broad Metis Protocols: Visiting, Peace-Making, and Sitting with Relatives

We prayed for peace and to our ancestors to help guide us towards peace. We sat with our Metis ancestors and fed them with tea and berries, praying for clearing and peace. We knew that Metis ancestors living in contested eras of history—including the 1700–1800 fur trade and the 1885 Northwest Resistance—faced violence, racial discrimination, and shame imposed by settlers, missionaries, and church entities, challenges that are still very real today. It became clear that these Metis cemetery spaces, while beautiful and peaceful, needed cleansing through prayer, smudge, and gifting.

We honoured the Cree-Metis method of *kiyokewin* by visiting the gravesites and spirits of our Metis ancestors. We also enacted the Cree-Metis concept of *wîpinâhwasowin*, or “peace offering.” Spiritual gifting, such as tea, berries, and tobacco, is a local Indigenous protocol that was a respected way of honouring and making peace with the land and Metis ancestors at each resting place. Tobacco was placed around the perimeter of each cemetery, and tea and berries were offered as a way of visiting and commemorating relatives.

¹ For more on Indigenous feminist and queer methodological research, see Eve Tuck et al., “Visiting as an Indigenous Feminist Practice,” *Gender and Education* 35, no. 2: 144–55; Kim Anderson, *A Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Women's Press, 2016); Lucy Fowler, “Kaa-natoonamaan taanshi chi-ishi-natoonikeeyaan: My Search for How to Research Things (in a Queer Métis Paradigm),” in *Around the Kitchen Table: Métis Aunties' Scholarship*, ed. Laura Forsythe and Jennifer Markides (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2024).

Our goal was to practice sitting on the earth with our relatives—*mâmapapôwin achiôma, ni-wahômâkanak* (sitting together here with my relatives)—and to consider Metis-specific ways of making peace with the history of the Saskatchewan River Valley. We found that by visiting each English Metis cemetery, we recognized the continuity between historical and present-day Metis women as peacemakers, of making peace with and between our Metis ancestors, who we pray rest in peace on the banks of the North and South Saskatchewan rivers. *Kiyokewin/ keeyoukaywin* is still enacted by Metis families in these places, as we witnessed current Metis community members still burying their family kin groups in very close proximity, caring for cemetery gathering spaces and remaining together in life and death.

Prairie Metis Spiritual Methods

The project enacted Metis protocols and relational obligations, which were grounded in Anna's previous research about the *kiyokewin* or kin-visiting method and Metis scholar Janice Cindy Gaudet's *keeyoukaywin*: the visiting way methodology. The key aspect of our spiritual research was ensuring that we enacted Metis ways of visiting by making prayers and gift offerings to the ancestors and spirits of each Metis cemetery space. This was our way of enacting, embodying, and practicing *keeyoukaywin*.

We also believed it was important to document both through Indigenous autoethnography—in our case through Metis-style journals—and through photographic documentation at each site. At each cemetery, we enacted prairie Metis methods by incorporating some or all the ceremonies and protocols, including:

1. Visiting and community host diplomacy
2. Smudging and gifting cloth, ribbon, and giveaways to grandmothers
3. Pipe ceremony and prayers
4. Drum song
5. Tea spirit gifts
6. Berry spirit gifts
7. Tobacco spirit gifts
8. Documenting through journals, photographs, and a recorded debrief

We regarded these prairie Metis-specific research spiritual protocols as essential methods that must take place first, before we expanded our project. Spiritual protocols were important methods to employ first: to fully honour First Nations and Metis lands and ancestors through the enactment of *kiyokewin* and *wîpinâhwasowin*. If researchers go down the road of enacting spiritual protocols, they must be open to surrendering, because they are inviting guidance from ancestors. They must surrender to the process and to the spiritual signs that show what must be done next. This surrendering and relational vulnerability are crucial when researchers choose to follow Indigenous protocols and conduct spiritual ceremonies.

We decided to contact local Metis families and grandmothers connected with each cemetery to discuss our research and to humbly ask if they could host us while visiting and feeding ancestors and setting spiritual intentions at each place. We felt it was important to document our preliminary research project in numerous ways, including photography, journaling, and audio-recording our debrief visit. We had initiated ceremonial protocols at each site, and we needed to visit together in person to reflect on the reasons we had initiated and activated these spiritual protocols. The following pages contain an edited transcript from our research debrief visit, which was held near Prince Albert on July 27, 2022. The visit was important, as our conversation discussed the deeper meanings behind our decision to engage Metis spiritual methodologies in our research project.

Research Debrief Visit

LEAH: We're with Dr. Anna Flaminio for the debrief session on July 27, 2022.

ANNA: Excellent, good afternoon. Happy to be with Leah for our debriefing after the two summers of our 2021–2022 cemetery project. I think we need to remind ourselves what “pre-research” really meant, because we didn't have a question yet, a so-called research question yet, so we were going in, from an Indigenous research perspective, with just a sense of love and curiosity and dreaming about the future of Indigenous youth. We wanted to really visit, *kiyokewin*, and honour our kinship relationships, *wahkotowin*, and be with our ancestors, and remember that our ancestors are all around us. I didn't realize how many were buried all around us. We have written notes, journal notes, which we can speak about. A Metis youth took photography, and the focus also became the importance of maps, first looking online and then looking at other maps and historical maps. And because there's not enough research in this area, with the English Metis specifically, it was about creating new maps. Right, Leah?

LEAH: I really enjoyed the hand-drawn maps. I think that was the highlight for me. It was the way I debriefed our experience, how I planned ahead for our visits, how I placed the journey visually. I literally took maps and notes and drawings as my way of reflecting and thinking about the experience. It really helped me get that sense of place and space for the project. And when you plot the map, you really see that our old trails and gathering spaces are so clear. And all these Anglican church sites for these historic markers were erected where our relatives are buried in these beautiful Anglican, English-Metis cemetery spaces. You can really see the connection to the fur trade and the old overland and river routes.... And this project really gave me insight into the area that I currently live in. You know, being a Cumberland House descendant, that's where the river flows to, so it was like tracking the earlier journey where we traveled by this river to get to our most recent home in Cumberland House. We have kin all in this river system here. So, the North branch and the South branch of the Saskatchewan River.

So, Anna, I like the fact that you took on a project like this, and you were so willing to apply traditional methods of preliminary research with protocol and engagement in the community. And the spiritual protocol: it takes a great deal of courageous spirit in a university setting. I think what we did for preliminary research—to make diplomatic spiritual offerings and protocol and doing ceremony in our special resting places of our English-Metis ancestors—was just so profound. That's the highlight of the project: to be able to offer tea, tobacco, pipe ceremonies, cloth offerings in these places. And make that beautiful acknowledgement and ask for blessings and guidance and peace. The whole thing is about creating peace in an area with much trauma and divide, because there's so much work that needs to be done to heal that. I think what we've done is, we went there to be peace-making people and heal and learn from the hard decisions English-Metis had to make.

ANNA: Yes, and that's getting me thinking: how do we make peace? And I just had a little light bulb come on, coming from a criminal law background. You know, we're talking about dispute resolution and in the Treaty 6 area, it's about making peace between the parties; how do we come to make peace? Because sometimes I wondered, how does this cemetery research on our Metis ancestors, what does this have to do with some of my previous research on criminal law? But we see that colonial history that was part of these original crimes of taking away the land and we see presently, where we are in Prince Albert, it's a city of jails, a city of the penitentiary. But our ancestors are connected to this place, in and all around this place. So how do we make peace both from the settlers who came in that colonial history and then also, as we've discussed, that internal conflict with the French Métis and the English Metis, and some of the issues that came up in 1869 in Manitoba and then here in 1885. A teaching for me is that it was more nuanced. It wasn't just, here's the Métis that did fight, and here's the Metis that didn't fight. And I'm still working through making peace with myself, with those ancestors. So that theme might

come up bigger with some of our McKay ancestors who were called traitors with Riel's folks that were fighting for the land, because they didn't want to fight. So, in a way, making peace with our Métis ancestors¹ who were fighting for the land but also who were not fighting and keeping that connection with the land. So, there's so much in this: just us going visiting and trying to make peace with some of that history.

LEAH: Yes, and what I find too, all of these are historical cemeteries of the Anglican church. Because I'm a research historian, before the project I went to the museum and did a deep dive, and those churches just didn't just pop up through Anglican administration. They came because of the demands of Metis families for continuity, for recognition; and the Metis families of old, they really picked the locations of these historic places. They built the first churches, and there's not one that I can see in our research that didn't have Metis hands build the original structure: we're talking about the log church that offered the first services. And it was a period, because of looking at the church in the integration of Metis history and the relationship, that the church did go from a more open, accepting collaborative model and had to accommodate too, as 1885, to a more colonial, stronger stance, exclusionary and not supportive of the original relationship with the Metis. So, we are seeing families who saw the build [of the original log church] and then the demise of the structure of family-controlled churches because of "the 1885." ... It's a big marker. It is called the "trauma marker." In Metis history, when you study it as a spectrum, like other scholars, like Lawrence Barkwell, it's the marking point; there's a trauma rip in the tear of our history that has affected every Metis in this nation. So, we're seeing families that saw pre- and post- [1885 Resistance]. If you look at the markers here, they're born before 1885 and they lived through, and many died even in the 1920s or after 1895–1896.... So, they are families that saw the most epic transition, and they saw the pre- and the post-1885.

ANNA: There's a Cree term, isn't there, for 1885: "where things went wrong" or something of that nature? There's a Cree term for 1885.²

LEAH: Oh, yes!

ANNA: And definitely, what we saw when we visited—and we didn't take the approach of trying to write down every single Metis grave—we were just trying to visit the Metis ancestral families and community that was there, and most of them were born in the mid-1800s. And so, as you say, they witnessed stuff [resistances] going on at the Red River, and then coming this way to the South and North Saskatchewan and witnessing, or at least hearing about, the happenings of 1885 and what the repercussions were for all of Metis families growing up in [Prince Albert] today?

LEAH: A real learning absolutely. I think for me too there's this beautiful journey to the spaces. I had been there as a child. I was just talking with a dear family friend who grew up in the Colleston area, and I said to her, "My dad used to take us out by vehicle to all these Metis cemeteries when I was a child." I recognized them all and I said, "Is that normal? I just want to hear from another Metis family." And she said, "Leah, that's just what Metis did, that we still go to these places, and we do this type of pilgrimaging into our cemeteries to visit. It's just perfectly normal to do what you did." So, it was nice to get that validation from another community member, who just said, "You [are] doing what all those Metis did ... we still do."

¹ See, generally, Aurelio Ayala and Peter Carrington, "Interdependence and Colonization: Métis Auxiliaries and the North-West Mounted Police, 1874–1895," *Great Plains Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (2016): 101–30.

² The Cree term *ê-mâyahkamikahk*, which translates into English as "where it all went wrong," is a Cree term for the 1885 Resistance in Batoche, Saskatchewan, and the colonial dispersions and exiles that ensued, see Neal McLeod, *Cree Narrative Memory: From Treaties to Contemporary Times* (Saskatoon: Purich Publishing, 2007).

I was so happy, as we were looking to get the community connections before we went to visit. Even though they're publicly open, we wanted to get those Metis family hosts to come and be with us and share that experience. So, we reached out to a lot of people. And they joined us, and you really saw the care, the continuity of care, of English-Metis descendant families, is there. It's just beautiful: it's intergenerational, and it's subtle, and it's beautiful, and the care is there.

ANNA: The care is there, definitely by Lindsay, by MacDowall, Halcro, and Glen Mary [cemeteries]. You can see that those families and individuals are still there today. So, they are all active cemeteries, and there are certain [Metis] families who have kept up the caregiving, the grass cutting, the trimming of the trees: you know, cleaning out the outhouses. All the care involved, and even with the Halcro cemetery, the yearly fundraising where they have an ice cream social, as it's called, to raise money for that, because there's costs involved. And we witnessed, the first one we went to, maybe because it's such an old cemetery, St. Catherine's, that families have moved farther away. And so, it's interesting, we saw different levels of caretaking. It's not that people don't care anymore, but it was good for me to learn, as someone who didn't grow up regularly visiting Metis cemeteries like you, I felt this is great, we're revitalizing this visiting and, at least for me, almost reminding me that my grandpa would have done this visiting. And you know, me being a city slicker, then, if mom marries a non-Indigenous person, these things can change and, in a way, we might forget.

LEAH: Disconnect, too, because you're not even getting your feet there; you don't even know how to drive there if you're not taken by somebody.

ANNA: Well, that's it. And in a way, back to your community hosts, not only did we invite someone ... and I think you made many phone calls, to make sure we were talking to... the person who took care of that church.... And they knew we were coming to pray, to visit these relatives.

LEAH: They knew we were coming.

ANNA: Yeah, it became clear, especially as we're both looking at your map, I didn't realize there's these similar family names at these Metis Anglican graves, especially in RM 461, in the vicinity of Prince Albert. We really saw some of the same names at the same cemeteries, of these strong people who came: the McBeaths, the McKays, the Sutherlands, McDonalds, Andersons that came from the Red River to this way, but also other families that were interconnected. Because we see that, you know, York Factory, Fort Albany, then they came, and then they're [English Halfbreed fur traders] in Brandon House. And then they're coming up either from Qu'Appelle or Cumberland House. So, they're coming from the [west] of Hudson Bay and they're coming down towards what's now Manitoba ... Some went down to the Qu'Appelle Valley, some went upwards to Cumberland House, and it's coming together where we visited, of course the Forks of those rivers, next to the South and North Saskatchewan, and Glen Mary [church and cemetery] is, of course, near the Forks, so that, to me, was amazing.

LEAH: Yes, it's amazing; we're travelling the highways of our ancestors. And I really appreciated the fact that this last season, the second year of the research, we were able to get on a ferry to go to see Glen Mary [church and cemetery]. We were able to get to the ferry landings because those ferries were all previously manned, at one point in our history, by Metis. We manned and ran the ferry system extensively on the North and South Branch, and that's not well documented. That's a huge part of our history, and many Metis families kept the connection. And you heard stories as well; they worked as employees after the ferry system became part of provincial jurisdiction, operated by the province. And we see that those families were employed and there's an intergenerational connection even to the modern ferries. Before, we would have had the floating [ferries], the horses, and those old school ferries. Gabriel Dumont was known for his ferry as well. I just think it was really a highlight to get on that "river highway."

And all these places like St. Mary's, St. Catherine's, Wingard, Glen Mary, and Halcro had the most glorious views of the river valleys.

ANNA: Yes, I agree.

LEAH: And they [the cemeteries] were on hills and lookouts, which was so Metis, to get a prominent point to put those places of honor and integrity. And that's a spiritual practice that we've inherited, like fasting hills, prayer hills, right? We have a sacred hill: Red Deer Hill is a sacred, sacred, sacred hill in our area. And the Royal Road cemetery, which is Saint John's on Royal Road, is right at the base of Red Deer Hill, and it would have been right near the McKay lodge. The big McKay family had a big farm operation, the whole family, that was the first mayor of P.A., Thomas McKay, and his family is buried there: his wife, Catherine McKay, brothers of the McKay clan are all at that cemetery. And you know, it's just amazing how when you look at the land, you understand the worldview better as well. There's a worldview, and it's an oral past. You can't really find that in a book that the Metis went into this type of area and also being river lot-connected. The river lots have been so subdivided and the overlay of the townships grid system, but when you go and you research and you look, St. Mary's church and St. Catherine's church are on our [Metis] river lots. They were gifted to the church from the Metis families, and they have river lots: St. Mary's Church is river lot 55, St. Catherine's Church is river lot 24. You know how proud, how wonderful, to be able to say that we contributed.

ANNA: That's right. And that reminds me of one of those first original maps you gave me of Prince Albert, the way it was before the city streets were there. And it shows those river lots you're speaking about, to the west of Prince Albert, and then the river lots to the east... The whole East Flat of Prince Albert was also river lots. That was a new learning for me, and it was exciting to think about all those relatives, all mainly English-Metis, that were on those river lots.

LEAH: I have my map right here. I even laminated the map [of Prince Albert in the 1870s] and Anna has a copy. I love my laminated map. This is very important, and if you were to take all these families, like the Whitfords in St. Catherine's, the Sandersons and Andersons ... So, these families end up in those cemeteries, St. Catherine's, and of course, some of the families are at St. Mary's as well, like James Isbister. So, you can see a lot of these families end up in other places, you know in Glen Mary as well, and there's this huge connection, huge connection.

ANNA: And it makes me think too, like with some of the names like Dreaver, and some of the other names, it makes me think of our interrelations. Some were under Treaty and under "reserve," but we were all related and are still related ... but that colonial history divided us with status, non-status, Métis, but you see us all living together here on the North Saskatchewan and in what's now Prince Albert, so for me that was also a learning of our interconnections.

LEAH: I really am a fan of old maps and post journals. I feel you can get so much. I feel if you can look at that with a discerning eye and open—you've got to really have that openness to connect dots—but it's amazing what little tidbits are behind these documents. And again, then going to the actual on-location cemeteries where you see families buried in strategic ways together as families and groups. The kinship system is laid right out for you. So, it takes the paper, a map, a family tree, and then you go to the special site and then you see the family groups. That is education that's beyond the book... it's lived, and you *see*. To me as a visual artist, I could go back to every one of these [to see] the art on the grave markers, the sayings, the choices of the art, the mantras, the statements are profoundly inspiring and such wisdom and such interesting choices of selection. And I have to say because our project was about making peace and becoming a person of peace to help heal and to go to our ancestors' places of peace and resting, when I saw that one quote on the grave marker, "peace perfect peace," it really stopped me and I had to take my quick photo of that marker because that really says what we were about; we want to really help make peace and to just make sense of how to keep that peace of life and integrity of life.

ANNA: Let's talk about when we first started thinking about this [Metis] history that was challenging and difficult for many of our ancestors. I know you spoke to your auntie, thinking about those Metis and Cree concepts that would fit better than this English word of "peace." And maybe you could speak about that.

LEAH: Anna, you've probably done a bit of the research and read some of the new research you know we have that Master's [thesis] by Paget Code and some other scholars since. And one of the hallmarks about English Metis is their Cree language fluency and their Cree worldview and their Cree belonging; they really bonded with that. So, my family is still fluent in Cree. My late father was fluent and with Cumberland House Cree, one of the words that we felt was so important is when you come with a request, or you come with an intention. You give an offering—*wîpinâhwasowin, wîpinâhwasowin*—and it is an offering that you make of peace and acknowledgement, and it's very important we bring cloth, we bring tobacco, we bring tea. I learned that from the northern, northern, northern Metis relatives when they could not get tobacco. You needed something that was so special, and a lot of those old women had canisters of good old loose leaf Hudson's Bay Company tea, and they did not do the tobacco. They did tea, loose leaf tea, and they would do it like tobacco and they would carry that tea, and they would substitute tea leaves for tobacco ... very feminine ... Women tended to do the work with that tea, and it is just because we honored women and our roles, and we're women researchers, and we wanted to acknowledge these women of history that married into these men of the Hudson's Bay Company. We wanted tea, brewed tea. We actually brewed pots and brought warm tea to put down after the ceremonies, and like really poured it beautifully, the looseleaf tea. Also, that offering: we did the berries as usual because that's such a big profound part of our valley, a sacred food is our berries, and it's a ceremonial food. It's the first food after you break fasts, berries. So, we did the tobacco, the berries, the tea. It was just a beautiful way to involve a feminine approach of making offerings and peace offerings and of course prayer flags: you know, now that we have access to all that.... And I think that's why it was such a deep emotional experience, taking those actions and having them validated as research methods.... That's huge for me, and Elder Curtis as well.... He was just so happy to do this, the spiritual protocols in a Metis style female manner, and as a man, as a male Elder to bear witness to it, and to support women. He says, "Wow, I just tended to grandmothers"; him and Louis [the Metis youth] were the only males holding space, and I loved it, and they were the perfect two. We couldn't have gotten a better young male and beautiful male Elder to support us. So much love to the team; it's a very beautiful team that we have who went out.



ANNA: Well, I think too that it is important, because Maria McKay's dad was Alexander McKay, and her mom was Catherine McCorrister McKay. And Catherine's mom and dad were Alexander James Towaness McCorrister and Catherine Jones who was Cree. So, you see of course other lines, you'll see up the McKay line, Titameg, so that's the Saulteaux and the Cree coming into our lines, and really all these people around Prince Albert spoke Cree easily, along with Michif and Bungee; it's amazing how multilingual they were.... But I think that feminine energy was my biggest grateful teaching, that loose leaf tea, because it really did feel like those women, even though, yes, there is that difficult history working with the HBC ... and part of that was also the goods that became available with the cloth and the tea, so for me it felt just as beautiful of a plant, the black tea, as tobacco.

LEAH [laughing] I have tea stains on my map all over the place!

ANNA: So, I feel that tea energy really came strong and that was a really strong protocol where you and Curtis would ask a couple of us, either myself and/or some grandmothers, to lay down those berries, the tobacco, and the tea by those special trees. As you were saying, I didn't notice it until we were there, but there's something about those large spruce trees.

LEAH: White spruce can live up ... to be upwards of 150 years old. White spruce, they have such a long life, and the size of them, just knowing they were over 100 years old easily, easily. And maple is another beautiful tree, those two species, such keystone species for Metis culture, the spruce, and the Manitoba maple, and they were at both locations, and very old. They would have been witness to the families; that's the age of those trees.

ANNA: Right, I feel like they were the witnesses.

LEAH: They witnessed: they were small, and they grew, and then us coming to them. Those trees would bear witness to what we did and connect us deeper to our ancestors, because they watched our ancestors; they bear witness, so [it was a] very important protocol when we went to those key marking trees. You could feel them: the wisdom, the beauty, the peace that they brought into the resting spots. You know they were such definitive markers, and to be able to lay berry offerings at their base and to have blessings and have that clearing too, and that connection that we're still here: we want to keep connecting, and we want to keep moving forward in a good way, in a healing way, and we want to tell the stories that need to be told.

ANNA: Right and to help remember, at least for me, that Maria McKay Corrigan would have been knowing all the plants, so she would have been her own medicine person and midwife, and in my thinking, she did believe in the Anglican teachings, but she also was a plant woman, so she would have known about the healing properties of the sage, sweetgrass, and those things. So, it's not surprising to me that we wanted to honour them in a way with special prayers ... but I've never been surprised, growing up in P.A., that many of us practice ceremony ... because we all grew up knowing people who ... they're going to sweat lodge, they're doing a pipe ceremony. And it was part of growing up in Prince Albert, but you respected those who were going to Catholic church or Anglican church. I felt it was okay that we went and had a pipe ceremony to really honour, and more than okay: I felt that it had to be done to really honour them and smoke with them.

LEAH: And to go deep, to go deep.

ANNA: We were really asking for special prayers, right.

LEAH: And we really needed to go deep, and Elder Curtis, like when we were first consulting with him about that, it was like, "Do we do the pipes?" Then, it was a definitive, the guidance to him [from spirits and ancestors] was, it's definitive. If we want to do it deeply and really, really go and do that deep level of diplomacy ... the pipes need to come.

ANNA: And that is, in a way, this land's diplomacy.

LEAH: It was pipe diplomacy.

ANNA: It was pipe diplomacy: shaking hands, gift giving, and feasting.¹ So, we tried in our own way, our own Metis women's way of this region, to honour those protocols and to say ... a lot of Metis people have those responsibilities too, to keep those cultural protocols going.

LEAH: That's what I loved about the eating.... We always had our time after the ceremony; we'd always go have our tailgate meal [laughing], or if we had our blankets out, we would go and have our little picnic. And you know, that is one of the things we did as Metis, we would go picnic at these sites, sit on blankets and visit and picnic. Sunday picnics ... even in my childhood, I saw the remnants of Sunday picnics, and this is what would have been, Sunday picnic, and sharing food at all these sites: that is a common Metis experience. And I was so thrilled that we all had those tailgate meals, and we did share food, and gift giving was done; it really felt right. It felt like we were practicing those things that make us Metis.

ANNA: Yes, that's a good point, that's a good point. I think, at this time, when we first started ... of course a harder topic is that it's when they were just starting to find more of these [residential school] children's graves,² and then as we're finishing this project, the pope is visiting.

LEAH: Literally now, like right at this time.

ANNA: And what I learned is young people are buried in such a way that in some places was very violent and disrespectful, and protocols weren't kept in so many places across the land. In these [English-Metis Anglican cemetery] places, however, there are small places that I could feel the family's love, the community's love, for even the children who might have died early within this region of TB or the 1918 flu; we could still feel that family's love. But I guess what we did was infuse our prayers with everything that's happening today ... all those children and all those families that are finding those young ones now and that can have a resolution, in terms of "how do you make sure someone's resting in peace?" Like back to that "peace" word for me; that was a teaching, what does it mean? How we were honouring what's going on in society, and how we honor Indigenous relatives to make sure they are resting at peace and still loved and respected and really held up.

LEAH: And that was the beautiful thing because when the pipe was lifted for all, you know it's so unifying, and it acknowledges all life that's there and I think that was why to do the pipe ceremonies: they were so deep and so important because [even in the Metis cemeteries] there are many unmarked [graves]. People couldn't afford the headstones; there are families that could afford it, but there were a lot of wooden crosses and, you know, just people that would have survived that time.

¹ For more on Plains Cree ways of diplomacy, see Shalene Jobin, "Cree Peoplehood, International Trade, and Diplomacy," *Revue Générale de droit* 43, no. 2 (2013): 599–636, which discusses gift-giving as a diplomatic method of dispute resolution.

² Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc issued a press release on May 27, 2021, to announce that the remains of 215 Indigenous children had been found on the grounds of the Kamloops Indian Residential School (<https://tkemlups.ca/wp-content/uploads/05-May-27-2021-TteS-MEDIA-RELEASE.pdf>). See also Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Vol. 4, Missing Children and Unmarked Burials* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015); Scott Hamilton, "Where are the Children Buried?" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), <https://nctr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/AAA-Hamilton-cemetery-FInal.pdf>. At the time of writing, over 2,200 unmarked graves have been found at former residential school sites. The intent of our prayers is to support all Indigenous relatives.

ANNA: That's right, and we did in fact find those places, that even the Metis community knows that it's unmarked; they don't know the name, but they do know to a certain extent that there are graves towards the back. And as we found out, and we started praying for, with Curtis' help, laying tobacco for those that might be buried outside the fence ... and maybe there were reasons because the church didn't agree with something, marrying outside of [the faith] or even suicide, or just having no money was a huge one.... So, for me that also was a teaching, that even though these are loving beautiful Metis gathering cemetery sites, we tried to pray for those that might not be marked there ... and include everybody.

LEAH: Exactly, yeah that's why that bigger vision was so important of area clearing and acknowledgement. And there are sites that are still being found, like Henry Budd's mission is now found, and it's across the river from Glen Mary, on the north side of the Saskatchewan River. And they are still finding places that were historically known, and there's so many places that I think are going to start coming out, and the land is revealing our history that we haven't been able to fully find. And I just feel, we're in this time of the great awakening, the great restoration, and our pieces of our history, our ancestors, are reviewing our story, so revealing themselves, and they're bringing us back to go to these places. We have to go back to our old places and put our feet back on the ground, and then we learn who we are, where we come from, and then we know the land again. And then we put that little seed back in ourselves, so that's what I think is important, we just started this microcosm, the circle, you know we grew the circle wider, and we've just been going further into that pulsating ripple from the RM of Prince Albert and rippling outwards, so it's been a really nice effect I think that we've started.

ANNA: Yeah, and part of some of the work we do is honoring these ancestors that are wanting to come to light and, in a way, be respected, fed, and prayed with in some kind of way.... So, these are all methodologies, Indigenous methodologies; there might be some more intellectual and emotional, but definitely they were spiritual methodologies that we're bringing in. I don't know if I'd even say "revitalized"; maybe in some places they weren't even lost ... that from our Cree and Saulteaux relatives that many of us Metis are related to and work with.... those things carry on, so that's good to remember too.... For me, it was an awakening of the practices I wasn't doing as a younger person of feeding and visiting.

LEAH: Yeah, it felt good, it felt really lovely to do that diplomatic relationship.

ANNA: Overall, I feel kind of a love of visiting the land and visiting Metis relatives and bringing a peaceful loving energy to it all.

LEAH: I feel that we, even though we said we didn't really have a question, we did have a goal, which was to visit English Metis, follow the Hudson Bay tracks and English Metis resting spots, the trails of our ancestors ... we just needed to get out. And I was told, "Leah, you've got to go walk on the trails of our ancestors." We've got to get on that Fort Carlton trail, we've got to get on those old trails, like Bennett's trail, we've got to get to the river where the old ferries were. I was told, "We have to get back; they're waiting for us." And then this project was one of the first. I really, really felt I actually took that teaching and advice, just saying what a lot of other Elders and community members have said; I actually felt we did it and was directed years ago to do those trails and those routes. They said, "If you're going to understand, you've got to go follow their trails and really get to know your ancestors, get on the land and follow their trails." And I finally did it and this is a start in that, and I think it really helped me. I feel more whole doing it, and I also feel spiritually cleared doing it as well, that's a wonderful personal thing.

ANNA: I just really appreciate you and Curtis and Louis, who really were, you know, we were sort of partners and co-researchers, and our spiritual advisor and that photo documenting. And I think we had to also visually share through the maps and the photographs and hopefully this beautiful brochure that's going to be coming out: we had to document our journey.... I appreciate it, I appreciate it.

LEAH: Okay, Anna, we did a beautiful debrief for the project files; hiy hiy.

Conclusion, Findings, and Contributions

Our Metis-specific research project was conducted by Metis researchers with the intent of supporting Metis communities' intergenerational connection to the resting place of our ancestors. The research partnership was between a prairie Metis Assistant Professor and a Metis Historian-Artist. We entered a working relationship as co-researchers and partnered with a Metis spiritual advisor and local Metis youth to assist with the Metis spiritual protocols and methodologies.

We also requested the assistance of four Metis community grandmother hosts, who were all interrelated with ancestors buried in the cemeteries. Each grandmother came to visit a cemetery with us, to oversee our interactions with Metis ancestors and to ensure respectful actions at the Metis gathering sites.

The benefit of this Metis research project was to contribute to the Metis community by reviving Metis *kiyokewin* practices through visiting Metis family cemeteries and gathering sites. This project actively supported Metis grandmother's authority over the lifecycle process and their role in helping community members reconnect peacefully with ancestral spaces. The project is unique, as we visited predominantly Anglican cemeteries that were historically Scots-Cree-Metis gathering places in the 1800s and remain gathering places to the present day.

The cemetery visiting project resulted in numerous research findings: (1) Leah and Anna are more closely related and kin-connected than they knew before; (2) our relatives are all lying so close around us; (3) Halfbreed cemeteries are beautiful, peaceful gathering places; (4) Halfbreed intermarriage was common, and we witnessed family relational lines on the land; (5) Halfbreed babies and children were lost early; (6) Hidden and unmarked Halfbreed graves are located in the forest and outside cemetery fences; (7) Halfbreed cemeteries were places of love and celebration (marriages, baptisms, picnics); (8) Halfbreed graves are cleaned and cared for by local Metis family members and communities; (9) Halfbreed ancestors want and need to be fed; and (10) *kiyokewin* is still alive and well, and our Halfbreed ancestors long to be visited.

Our most important findings, and what touched us most deeply, were the essential practices of Metis ways of visiting and making peace through gifting: *kiyokewin* and *wîpinâhwasowin*, respectively. Visiting and spiritual offerings became integral to Metis cemetery spaces. Our gifts of tobacco and berries were essential, and the importance of implementing Metis tea diplomacy became a respected method to feed ancestors and encourage peacemaking. *Wîpinâhwasowin* provides a viable way of revisiting and potentially resolving disputes of both past and present. We were humbled, as Metis community members and scholars, to reconnect with and pay our peaceful respects to land, community, and ancestors. As next-generation and humble peacemakers, Metis women and their helpers are engaging in diplomatic steps to connect with ancestors and to make space for distinctly Metis projects rooted in Metis protocols and traditions.

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