

Cariole

A cariole was a toboggan-like sleigh that had a birch board bottom and raw hide sides. The hide would last one season and then would be repurposed when spring came. As time went on, the hide would often be painted to add decorative features to the cariole. A cariole would be used to transport trade goods, mail, or important people. People would run along with the dog sled team to shout commands to keep the dogs on track and someone else would run ahead to break a trail. The green cariole is a replica of one that was given to Countess Alice Grey, the wife of former Governor General Albert Henry George Grey. He was a man who strongly supported athletics, among other things, and created the Grey Cup in football.



McCord Steward Museum

North Island Métis (NIMA) publishes a monthly newsletter.

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NORTH ISLAND MÉTIS

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**NORTH ISLAND
MÉTIS**

**Métis Dog
Sleds and
Tuppies**



The Manitoba Museum (HBC 45-148) / photo by Andrew Workman

Sledge

Sledges were an open design toboggan, flat on the bottom with a guard at the front. They could carry one person or 100lbs of trade goods per dog on the team and would travel 75-90 miles per day (almost from Campbell River to Nanaimo!). There were often up to 25 sledges in a train at a time. The dogs were treated well and fed one pound of pemmican a day.



<https://recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/home/record?app=fonandcol&IdNumber=2837928>

“You don’t used all the time the dog blanket on the dog. When they go into town, you want to decorate yourself and you decorate the dogs. You want to put a different handkerchief on your neck. On the dog you have a blanket, too! Then, when you leave...town, well, then you take them off and put them in the bag again. So, you take it to the next town. But the standing iron stays there (on the dog) ...You don’t use the blankets all the time...too heavy. If the dog sweats with the blanket over him, then he’s going to stop, then he gets cold. Then he can’t lay down and curl up with his blanket on him, so we generally take the blanket off, so when we stop, why he can curl up and warm itself up.”

Bird, 1991 as quoted in Expressing Our Heritage: Métis Artistic Designs by Cheryl Troupe, 2002

Tuppies/Tapis

The Métis took great pride and honored their relationships with their animals. The men would have names for each of their dogs and know each of their personalities. The dogs would have a strong connection to their owners and respond to their names and commands. Blankets, made from wool or felt, would be decorated with vibrant beadwork or silk embroidered floral designs along with ribbons, yarn, and bells. These were known as li tapis or tuppies and they would go on every dog in the dogsled team. These blankets would be put on the dogs before entering a community, for the Métis to show their pride that they had in their team. The bells would jingle at each step as they made their way into town, it would likely have been an amazing sight to see and hear!



McCord Stewart Museum