

## Métis Songs

The first recognized composer of Métis songs was Pierre Falcon (1793-1876). His song, "*La bataille des sept chênes*" or "*La chanson de la grenouillère*" ("The Battle of Seven Oaks" or "The Ballad of Frog Plains") was the unofficial Métis anthem for at least three generations. Falcon's songs were mainly about the Métis' martial prowess, and their bison hunting lifestyle. His songs were handed down through the Oral Tradition and as a result, there have been many variations of these highly lyrical folk songs.

The Métis also sang songs to keep their spirits high during times of crisis. For instance, during the 1885 Resistance, at the Battle of Fish Creek (April 24, 1885), the Métis sang "*La bataille des sept chênes*", and "*Malbrouk*". After the resistance ended, they sang M.A. Gérin-Lajoie's poignant "*Un Canadien errant*", which is about a French-Canadian rebel exiled to an Australian penal colony for his role in the 1837-38 Rebellion in Lower Canada. Louis Riel also wrote a song during the 1885 Resistance. "*C'est au champ de bataille*" (The Battlefield), or "*De tous champs de bataille*" or "*L'adieu de Riel*" ("Riel's Farewell") was written prior to his execution on November 16, 1885 and is a haunting song about the terrible sacrifice which war brings to its participants. Earlier Riel also wrote a song called "*La Métisse*" ("The Métis Girl"), which salutes the piety and patriotism of the Métis women during the Red River Resistance.

For the lyrics to many Métis songs follow this link to *Métis Songs: Visiting was the Métis Way* on *The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture*: <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/03146>

**Reference:**

Paquin, Todd, Préfontaine, Darren, and Young, Patrick. "Traditional Métis Socialization and Entertainment".  
<http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/00724>, 2003.