

Industry Canada

IC Headlines

History of Inuit Métis in Southern Labrador comes to life

[Understanding the Past to Build the Future](#) is a five-year multidisciplinary study of the history of the Inuit Métis of southern Labrador being conducted by Memorial University of Newfoundland. The study is the first of its kind of the Labrador Métis and is funded by the [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada](#) (SSHRC) and various partners.

Directed by researchers at Memorial's Faculty of Arts, the project's objectives are to investigate the Inuit occupation of Southern Labrador, collect and analyze evidence of Inuit-European interactions, document cultural changes, and bring the history of the Métis into the present day. The project team is led by Dr. Lisa Rankin of Memorial University's Department of Archaeology. Dr. Rankin has worked closely with the Labrador Métis since beginning her Labrador fieldwork in 2001.

"Memorial researchers such as Dr. Rankin and her interdisciplinary team are doing important and fascinating work here in this province that will further shed light on the history and heritage of the Labrador Métis," said Dr. Ray Gosine, Associate Vice-president (Research) at Memorial University of Newfoundland. Dr. Gosine added that this significant \$1 million SSHRC funding builds on Memorial's reputation as a leading research university in Canada and is an example of how its Faculty of Arts is a key contributor to a growing range of world-class research. "Researchers like Dr. Rankin and her colleagues are able to carry out research that is important to understanding the culture and heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador."



Memorial University students excavating a 17th-century Inuit winter house near Cartwright, Labrador

Source: Dr. Peter Ramsden, Project Coordinator for Understanding the Past to Build the Future



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As a result of a Memorandum of Understanding between the provincial government and Aboriginal groups, local Aboriginal governments will eventually oversee the protection and development of archaeological sites in all of Labrador. Skills learned through this project will help to train Labrador Métis for this responsibility.

Findings from the new archaeological, archival and historical research will also provide a significant stimulus to the budding heritage tourism industry in southern Labrador. In addition, the employment of numerous Métis on the project will result in a body of trained experts who will be more than capable of developing this business. Labrador Métis and the public at large will also have full access to the ongoing research findings via the [project's website](#) as well as through touring exhibitions, public forums and other media.

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