



History Program
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**“The Edmonton and District Stragglers:
Gendered Strategies of Treaty and Scrip, 1876-1886,”**

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ABSTRACT

Metis women listed as Edmonton and District Stragglers made strategic familial and economic decisions during the treaty and scrip period of the nineteenth century. In so doing, they influenced the development and administration of the Canadian government's treat and scrip policies. Department of Indian Affairs Inspector Thomas Wadsworth created the straggler classification as an expedient solution to a bureaucratic problem – a way to pay people who, by not belonging to an Indian band, were behaving in a way policy makers had not anticipated. The deconstruction of ethnic and band categories reveals that aboriginal women used administrative categories, including 'straggler,' 'Indian,' and 'halfbreed,' in ways unexpected by government authorities. The ways women used these categories of rule had long-term implications. Their decisions influenced their descendants' ethnic identities. Furthermore, official policy was far different from practice. When individuals responded differently than expected, new administrative categories and policies were created to accommodate for the discrepancies between expected and actual responses.