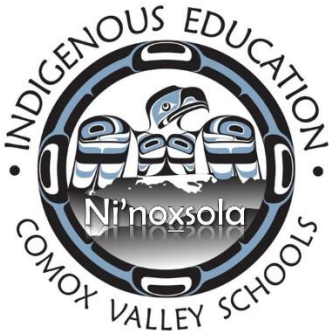


# ***Ni'NOXSOLA***

Elders in Residence Program  
Indigenous Education Comox Valley Schools



Sheila Buchanan  
The Red River Jig



The red river jig is a dance performed by Métis people.

It is taught to children from an incredibly young age. It was taught to me when I was 5 years old. It is performed at all Métis functions and competitions are always taking place.

The competitions performed are to find out who has the fanciest steps. There are often cash prizes for the best performance.

It is also particularly good exercise and one must be in good shape in order to maintain stamina to dance. It is very strenuous and hard on the knees, due to the stomping of the feet and jarring the legs.

Seniors compete in the jig because the music moves their spirit. It is difficult to keep still when the fiddle begins to play.

Almost every weekend in Alberta there are competitions somewhere and a lot of people gather and compete to try for a trophy and some cash. They have different categories to ensure it is fair. For instance, a teenager will never compete against a senior or a young child. There are different age groups.

I was told by an Elder that the Red River jig originated at the Red River. The Métis trappers used to carry their fiddle everywhere they went. It gets cold in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. They would build a big bonfire and dance around the fire to try and get warm.

There are many other versions of the original.

There are several other Métis dances, but the main one is the Red River jig.



Sheila Buchanan (Kookum)