

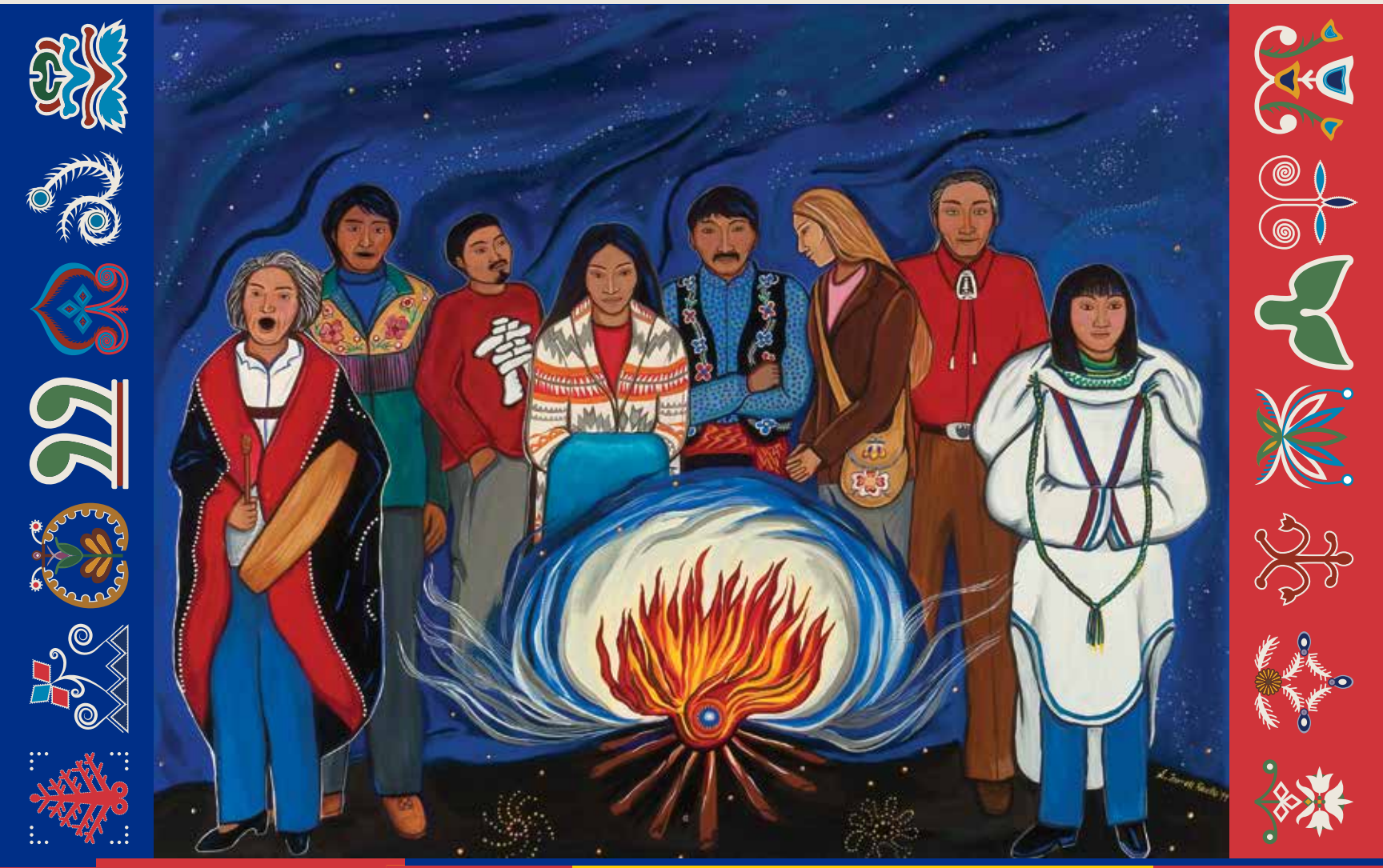
RCMP



ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

INDIGENOUS INSIGHTS

Building Relationships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis



Royal Canadian Mounted Police Gendarmerie royale du Canada

Canada

ON THE COVER: Honour the Fire Within by Artist Sherry Farrell Racette,
(Métis/Temiskaming Algonquin/Irish) Regina, SK

This painting is based around two central concepts: growth and fire. The fire is a sacred energy that draws people together and burns within each of us. The eight individuals represent the diversity of Indigenous Peoples. An older woman from the North West Coast calls people to the circle. Dene and Inuk men stand beside a woman from the plains. The Métis man and woman represent the central regions of the country and a Mohawk man of the Bear clan stands in the east. A woman from the eastern arctic completes the circle. Each individual is wearing contemporary clothing, but the garments and imagery are distinct, familiar and meaningful to the people from each region. The painting is bordered with motifs found in traditional and contemporary beadwork.



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The RCMP would like to acknowledge the contributions of RCMP Indigenous Relations Services' Staff Sergeant Jeff Poulette and National Communications Services' Liz Gilbert who coordinated this project and brought it to fruition.

Subject matter cultural expertise and content for the development of this guide was provided by the First Peoples Group.



“If I observe or experience behaviour that I do not understand, there may be a cultural explanation.”

Jim Potts, Insp. (ret'd)
Mah-ki-ki-Maqua. (Medicine Bear)

Forward

This material is designed to facilitate effective communication between Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) and law-enforcement. The reader will soon realize that cross-cultural communication is the underlying theme.

As with any set of training materials, it is not possible to claim universal application. Remember, Indigenous people are individually as different from each other, as you are from your friends and neighbours. Cultural generalizations made here should not be considered as absolute but for what they are - general observations.

The most significant qualifier to remember is:

“If I observe or experience behaviour that I do not understand, there may be a cultural explanation.”

The intent of reading this guide will not only serve to enhance the knowledge base of the reader, but also improve skills and reinforce the importance of the absolute need to be sensitive to the many nuances of any culture.

The overall goal is to provide officers and other employees with information to enable them to provide a professional, fair and effective police service for Indigenous Peoples, always keeping in mind that:

“Doing things right is often difficult at first, easier later. Doing things wrong is often easy at first, difficult later.”

Jim Potts, Insp. (ret'd)
Mah-ki-ki-Maqua. (Medicine Bear)

Inspector James Richard (Jim) POTTS, Officer of the Order of Merit, is a Status Ojibway, from the Te-mis-kam-ing, First Nation in Ontario and joined the RCMP on April 8th, 1958. In February 1988, Jim became the first regular member of First Nation descent to be commissioned to the rank of Inspector in the history of the RCMP. Jim served 36 years with the RCMP and an additional 9 years with the O.P.P. In 1974, Jim developed the first “Indigenous Perceptions” training in the Canadian police universe. Jim also served as a Liaison Officer during six major Indigenous disputes in Canada, from Oka in 1990 to Elisipogtog in 2013. In 1993, Jim developed the Native Spirituality Guide for the RCMP. This guide has been widely used by many organizations in Canada and requests have been received for copies of it from as far away as Australia.

During a four-hour Sweat ceremony in Manitoba in 1988, Jim received his Spirit Name “Mah ki ki Maqua” (Medicine Bear) from Ojibway Elder Art Shofley who explained that “Mah ki ki maqua” was the Prairie Grizzly. It kept the buffalo strong by culling the sick and the lame from the herd, as does the wolf, to keep the caribou strong. As the buffalo is in the center of the RCMP badge, the carrier of this name must do what he can to help keep the RCMP strong.

In retirement, Jim continues to live up to his spirit name supporting the RCMP and other organizations with learning more about Indigenous culture and the importance of relationship building with Indigenous people they serve.

RCMP



Elder Jim Potts, Insp. (ret'd)
Mah-ki-ki-Maqua. (Medicine Bear) in
PEI 2020.



Native Spirituality Guide published 1993 and Red
RCMP Tobacco Pouch.
(Both produced by Insp. Jim Potts (OOM) ret'd.)

RCMP

RCMP



Commissioner Brenda Lucki

From the Commissioner

I would like to acknowledge that in 1993 when Inspector Jim Potts developed the Native Spirituality Guide for the RCMP, the goal of that guide was to assist RCMP employees in increasing their knowledge and understanding of First Nations culture.

28 years later, the RCMP has prepared a second guide for employees, “Indigenous Insights, Building Relationships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis.” This guide provides essential awareness and education on the Indigenous culture of First Nation, Inuit and Métis people. The guide also provides examples of some steps towards Reconciliation that the RCMP has taken. It is clear that there is still a very strong need to have information available for RCMP employees to assist them in increasing their ability to develop meaningful relationships with the Indigenous people we serve.

In closing, I would also like to acknowledge that Inspector Jim Potts, of Ojibway descent and a member of the Te-mis-kam-ing First Nation, was the first First Nation person of the RCMP to be commissioned to the rank of Inspector. After 45 years of service, Inspector Jim Potts continues to contribute his time and knowledge to assist the RCMP in areas related to building relationships with Indigenous Peoples and working with RCMP employees to better understand Indigenous culture.

Commissioner Brenda Lucki

Acknowledgements:

This guide was produced on the unceded, unsundered territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin People.

The RCMP would like to acknowledge the numerous RCMP employees who have contributed to the development of this new guide.



Table of Contents

Forward	1	CHAPTER I: FIRST NATIONS	15	CHAPTER II: INUIT	37
From the Commissioner	3	Demographics	16	Demographics	38
Purpose of this Guide	6	Language	17	Language - ᐅᓃᓃᐅᓃᓃᓃ - uqauhiq	40
Terminology	8	Culture	18	Culture	41
Indigenous vs Aboriginal	8	Societal Structure	18	Traditional Inuit Values	41
Definitions	9	Role of First Nation Elders	20	Spiritual Beliefs	42
Common Acronyms used in Canada	10	Traditional First Nation Values	21	Oral History / The Written Word	42
Demographics	11	Governance	21	Traditional Tattoos	43
The Indigenous Population in Canada	11	The Circle	21	Relationships / Naming	43
Language	11	Concept of Respect for All Things	22	Celebrations	44
Indigenous Languages in Canada	12	Smudging/Cleansing	22	Return of the Sun	44
Post-European Contact	13	Tobacco	22	Throat Singing	44
An Indigenous Perspective on		Drumming	22	Singing of Pisiit	44
History	13	History	23	Drum Dancing	44
Blanket Exercise	13	Explorers	23	Inuit Games	44
		Fur Trade	23	Feasting	44
		World War I	23	Quviasukvik	44
		World War II	24	Nunavut Day	44
		Veterans	24	International Inuit Day	44
		<i>Indian Act</i>	25	History	45
		Reserve System	27	Pre-contact	45
		Residential Schools	27	Explorers	45
		National Day for Truth and Reconciliation	28	Whalers	45
		Orange Shirt Day	28	Traders	46
		Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)		Missionaries & Residential Schools	46
		Final Report	29	Forced Relocation	48
		Child Welfare System	29	Sled Dog Slaughter	48
		First Nation's Rights and Land Claims	30	Tuberculosis in Inuit Communities	49
		Historic Treaties (Include treaties between 1701-1923)	30	Inuit Rights and Land Claims	50
		Modern Treaties	32	Nunatsiavut Land Claims Agreement	51
		Self-government Agreements	32	Nunavik Land Claims Agreement	51
		Treaty Day Celebrations	34	Nunavut Land Claims Agreement	51
		Duty to Consult	35	Inuvialuit Land Claims	51
				Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami	51

CHAPTER III: MÉTIS	53	CHAPTER IV: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND POLICING	69	CHAPTER VI: MOVING FORWARD	86
Demographics	54	Indigenous Peoples and the Criminal Justice System	69	APPENDIX A: RCMP-Indigenous Historical Timeline	88
Eastern Canada	54	RCMP and Restorative Justice	71	APPENDIX B: The Impact of Colonialism on Indigenous Peoples in Canada	90
Language	56	Assertion of Rights and Land Claims	71	APPENDIX C: Additional Resources	103
Culture	56	Indian Residential Schools Burials	73	Books	103
Spiritual Beliefs	56	First Nations and Inuit Policing Program	73	Films & Documentaries	104
Traditional Medicines	57	Community Service Provider Working Groups	73		
Métis Oral Tradition	57	CHAPTER V: THE PATH TO RECONCILIATION	75		
Worldview	57	Building Relationships Principles	75		
Traditional Knowledge and Conservation	57	Reconciliation in Action	77		
Role of Elders	58	Returning Louis Riel artifacts	77		
Métis Music and Dance	58	RCMP National Eagle Staff	78		
The Métis Sash Celebrations	59	Cultural sensitivity Eagle Feather Initiative	79		
History	60	Uniform and dress	79		
Fur Trade	60	Focus on Indigenous employees in the RCMP	79		
Red River Resistance 1869-1870	60	National Indigenous Peoples Day	80		
Scrip	61	Significant Dates	80		
North-West Resistance 1885	63	Territorial Acknowledgement	81		
Road Allowance People 1900-1960	63	Advances in Reconciliation	83		
Métis Population Betterment Act	64	Reflections on Reconciliation	84		
Residential Schools	64				
Métis Rights and Land Claims	65				
Métis People and Treaty	65				
Manitoba Métis Federation Land Claim Decision	65				
Recognition of Métis Rights	66				
Future of the Métis Nation	67				

Purpose of this Guide

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada was established in 2008 to embark on a truth telling and reconciliation process in response to the legacy left by the residential school experience. The Commission released its 94 Calls to Action in 2015 that appealed for all members and entities of Canadian society to engage in reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. Call to Action 57 calls upon all levels of government in Canada to educate public servants, including law enforcement and peace officers, on the history of Indigenous Peoples. This education has to address the legacy of residential schools, Indigenous rights, and the unique relationship between Canada and Indigenous Peoples.

Call to Action 57

Calls upon all levels of government in Canada to educate public servants, including law enforcement and peace officers, on the history of Indigenous Peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.¹

RCMP



Elder Barbara Dumount-Hill (Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg) and Insp. Kurtis Kamotzki (Red River Métis Citizen). Presentation of tobacco to the Elder, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Moment of Silence, RCMP National Headquarters, 2019.

¹ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) has a long and evolving relationship with the Indigenous Peoples of Canada. Its history of service to First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities goes back to the early days of the Northwest Mounted Police in the 1870s. In the past, the RCMP has been involved in various administration of government programs such as removing children to take them to residential school,² enforcing the pass system, and banning cultural ceremonies such as potlaches.³

Today, RCMP detachments serve many Indigenous communities across Canada. Contributing to the safety and well-being of Indigenous communities is an RCMP priority. The RCMP is committed to providing culturally competent policing approaches and initiatives that address local priorities.

Recognizing that the RCMP has played a role in the residential school system and that its relationship with the Indigenous population has been complex and strained, the RCMP is dedicated to providing education and cultural awareness training to its employees.

Learning about the historic relationship between Indigenous Peoples and RCMP allows us to understand current stereotypes that either group might hold towards the other. In some Indigenous communities, relationships with law enforcement and other colonial structures will be met with apprehension or disdain. It is important to look at the past in order to create a more positive relationship moving forward.

While the best source of this education and cultural safety comes from building direct relationships with Indigenous communities, this guide assists RCMP employees with a baseline knowledge of Indigenous communities and encourages the learner to continue building on this knowledge.⁴ It will explore some of the culture and history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and will suggest ways to improve and strengthen relationships between the RCMP and Indigenous communities.

It is vital for all employees of the RCMP, along with Canadian citizens, to understand the important role they play in the lives of Indigenous people in urban, rural, northern and reserve settings, and ways they can improve community interactions and relationships and thereby, improve community safety and security.

2 M-E. LeBeuf, *The Role of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police during the Indian Residential School System*, (Ottawa, ON: Royal Canadian Mounted Police), 2011.

3 Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

4 Note that there are similar yet very different definitions in the realm of Indigenous anti-racism (for example, cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, and cultural safety). For a discussion see: Aboriginal Nurses Association, *Cultural Competence and Cultural Safety in Nursing Education: A Framework for First Nations, Inuit and Metis Nursing Report* (2009), pp 2.



Terminology

The terminology used is extremely important for conveying respect and building relationships with Indigenous Peoples. The United Nations use “Indigenous Peoples” to refer broadly to peoples of long settlement and connection to specific lands who have been adversely affected by incursions by industrial economies, displacement, and settlement of their traditional territories by others.

For the purposes of this guide, the term *Indigenous Peoples* refers generally to the Original inhabitants of the land that is now called Canada, regardless of their distinct origins and identities. It includes First Nations, Inuit and Métis people.

Indigenous vs Aboriginal

Whether to use “Indigenous” or “Aboriginal” is a frequently asked question. Initially, “Indian” was replaced by the term “First Nations,” then “Aboriginal Peoples” became the more popular term, as it was more inclusive and included Inuit and Métis people. “Aboriginal” was widely adopted by government and many national groups. This distinction was made legal in 1982 when the *Constitution Act* came into being. Section 35 (2) of the Act states: In this Act, “Aboriginal peoples of Canada” includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.” This remains the legal term in use.

The federal government has now moved to embrace Indigenous, which is consistent with the United Nations and Indigenous people globally. By recognizing First Nations, Inuit and Métis as Indigenous Peoples, the government is acknowledging their internationally-held legal right to offer or withhold consent to development under the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which Canada endorsed with conditions under former Prime Minister Stephen Harper.⁵

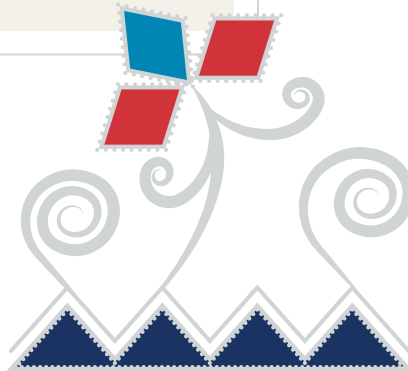
In some instances, this guide will cite quotes and references that use the term *Aboriginal* but only when referring to a title of a document or when it is used in a legal context.

The terms Indian, native, half-breed and Eskimo have a negative connotation today but may be used for technical or historical reasons, such as the reference to Indians in the federal *Indian Act*, which is still in effect today. When in doubt, the most respectful approach is to ask how an Indigenous person wishes to be referred to.

Important Note

Avoid using the possessive phrase “Canada’s Indigenous Peoples (or First Nations/Inuit/Métis)” as that implies ownership of Indigenous Peoples. A better approach would be “Indigenous Peoples of Canada”.

⁵ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007).



Definitions

Assimilation – The process in which one cultural group is absorbed into another, typically the dominant culture.

Colonization – Colonization may simply be defined as the establishment of a settlement on a foreign land, generally by force. It is also often used to describe the act of cultural domination.

Cultural Protocols – are the etiquette, customs, codes, and other behaviors of a particular cultural community or group and the appropriate processes for conducting business with that group. Although protocols share some common themes and practices, it is important to recognize the great diversity that exists among Indigenous Peoples and communities, who each have their own culture, heritage and language—all of which influence proper protocol.

Eurocentrism – a focus on Europe, its peoples, institutions and cultures; assumed to mean ‘white culture’; and is often meant to be arrogantly dismissive of other cultures.

First Nation – “First Nation” is a term used to describe Indigenous Peoples of Canada who are ethnically neither Métis nor Inuit. This term came into common usage in the 1970s and 1980s and generally replaced the term “Indian,” although unlike “Indian,” the term “First Nation” does not have a legal definition. While “First Nations” refers to the ethnicity of First Nations peoples, the singular “First Nation” can refer to a band, a reserve-based community, or a larger tribal grouping and the status Indians who live in them. For example, the Stó:lō Nation (which consists of several bands), or the Tsleil-Waututh Nation (formerly the Burrard Band).⁶

Indian – refers to the legal identity of a First Nations person who is registered under the *Indian Act*. The term “Indian” should be used only when referring to a First Nations person with status under the *Indian Act*, and only within its legal context. Aside from this specific legal context, the term “Indian” in Canada may have negative connotations linked to the *Indian Act*, the Indian Department (precursor to INAC), Indian Agents, Indian residential schools, etc.⁷

Indian Agent – Indian Agents were the Canadian government’s representatives on First Nations reserves from the 1830s to the 1960s. Often working in isolated locations far from settler communities, Indian Agents implemented government policy, enforced and administered the provisions of the *Indian Act*, and managed the day-to-day affairs of Status Indians. Today, the position of Indian Agent no longer exists, as First Nations manage their own affairs through modern band councils or self-government.⁸

Indian Band – is also a legal term under the *Indian Act* to denote a grouping of Status Indians. (For more information on this, see our section on bands.)

Inuit – Inuit are the original people of Arctic Canada. This region is referred to by Inuit as “Inuit Nunagnat.” It includes the Inuvialuit Region of the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Nunavik (Northern Quebec), Nunatsiavut (Northern Labrador), and the ice, land, and water within these regions. The word “Inuit” means “the people” in the Inuit language and is used when Inuit are referring to themselves as a culture. Inuit is also the plural form of “Inuk”.

Native – is a general term that refers to a person or thing that has originated from a particular place. The term “native” does not denote a specific Indigenous ethnicity (such as First Nation, Métis, or Inuit). “Native” was also formerly a common term but now can be considered uncivil and rarely used in respectful conversations.

⁶ Indigenous Foundations, University of British Columbia, *Terminology*.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ The Canadian Encyclopedia, *Indian Agents in Canada*.

Métis – Métis are people of First Nation and European ancestry. They have a unique culture that draws on their diverse ancestral origins, including Scottish, French, Ojibwe and Cree. The gradual establishment of distinct Métis communities resulted in the genesis of a new Indigenous people - the Métis. Métis people maintain their own distinct culture, language (Michif) and traditions. The Canadian Constitution recognizes Métis people as one of the three Aboriginal peoples. The Métis National Council has a more specific definition of who are Métis and restricts membership to those who can trace ancestors to the “historic Métis Nation.”⁹

This term has general and specific uses, and the differences between them are often contentious. It is sometimes used as a general term to refer to people of mixed ancestry, whereas in a legal context, “Métis” refers to descendants of specific historic communities.¹⁰

Reconciliation – is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in this country. For that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, an acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour.

Status – those registered (or entitled to be registered) under The *Indian Act*.

Status Indian - Status Indians are entitled to have their names included on the Indian Register, an official list maintained by the federal government. Only Status Indians are recognized as Indians under the *Indian Act* and are entitled to certain rights and benefits under the law.

Treaty Indian – A Status Indian who belongs to a First Nation that signed a treaty with the Crown.

Non-Status Indians – Non-Status Indians are people who consider themselves Indians or members of a First Nation but who are not recognized by the federal government as Indians under the *Indian Act*. Non-Status Indians are not entitled to the same rights and benefits available to Status Indians. In the past, Status could be “lost” to a person for a variety of reasons including marriage, divorce, certain occupations and military service.

Common Acronyms used in Canada

AFN: Assembly of First Nations

ASIST: Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

ELC: Embrace Life Council in Iqaluit and sits on its board of directors along with the Government of Nunavut’s - Quality of Life secretariat

IFA: Inuvialuit Final Agreement

IQ: Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit

ISR: Inuvialuit Settlement Region

ITK: Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

LFMO: Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak - Women of the Métis Nation

MNC: Métis National Council

MMF: Manitoba Metis Federation

MMIWG: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

MNO: Métis Nation of Ontario

MNR: Ministry of Natural Resources

NLCA: Nunavut Land Claims Agreement

NTI: Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated

NWAC: Native Women’s Association of Canada

⁹ Strategic Alliance of Broadcasters for Aboriginal Reflection

¹⁰ Indigenous Foundations, University of British Columbia, *Terminology*.



PIWC: Pauktituut Inuit Women of Canada

RCAP: Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

RCMP: Royal Canadian Mounted Police

RCMP CCMG: Community Conflict Management Group

RIRS: RCMP Indigenous Relations Services

SCC: Supreme Court of Canada

TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission

UN: United Nations

UNDRIP: United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Demographics

Today, Canada is home to over 600 unique First Nations,¹¹ 50 Inuit communities, dozens of Métis communities,¹² and more than 70 Indigenous languages.¹³ According to Statistics Canada, there are 1,807,250 Indigenous people living in Canada, which is 5.0% of the total population.¹⁴ This population has grown 9.4% since 2016, surpassing the growth of the non-Indigenous population over the same period (+5.3%). It is expected to continue its fast growth rate and reach between 2.5 million and 3.2 million over the next 20 years.¹⁵ The First Nation population has had the largest increase, followed by Métis, then Inuit. The increase is a function of natural fertility rates but also a surge in respondents self-identifying as Indigenous.

11 Assembly of First Nations.

12 The dozens of Métis communities form the Métis Homeland, which is expansive and includes communities in Western Canada, Northwest Territories, northwest Ontario, Montana and North Dakota. Significant communities include the well-known Winnipeg, Manitoba; Batoche and Prince Albert in Saskatchewan; and Edmonton, Alberta. Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada.

13 Statistics Canada.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

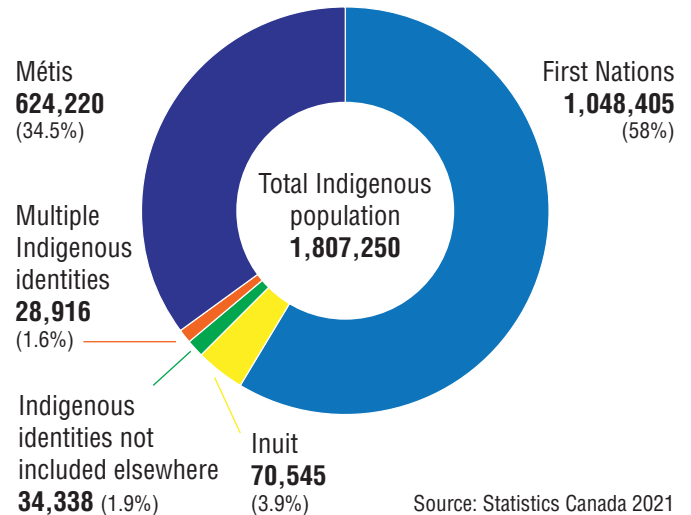
18 Ibid.

Language

The 2021 Census recorded over 70 Indigenous languages grouped into 12 distinct language families.¹⁶ The 2021 Census reported that almost 237,420 could speak an Indigenous language, which is a 4.3% decrease from 2021.¹⁷ However, there appears to be a trend toward learning a second language as opposed to one's mother tongue.¹⁸ The three most prevalent languages are Cree, Inuktitut, and Ojibway. Due to colonial practices, many of the once-flourishing Indigenous languages have become extinct and many are on the brink of extinction.

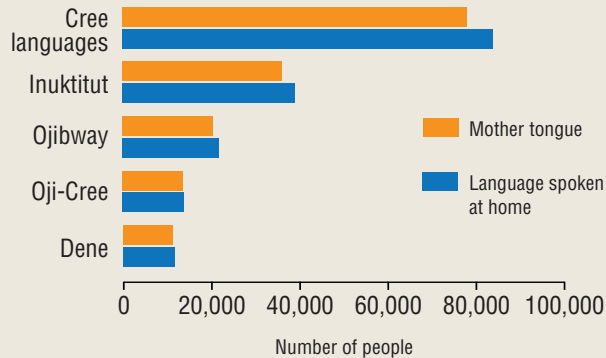
The Indigenous Population in Canada

A breakdown of the Indigenous identity population in Canada in 2021

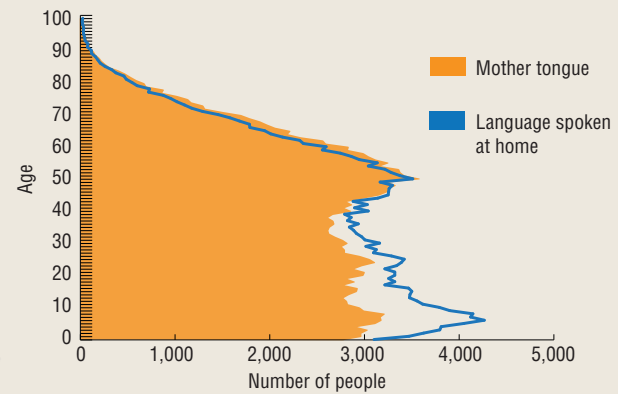


Indigenous Languages in Canada

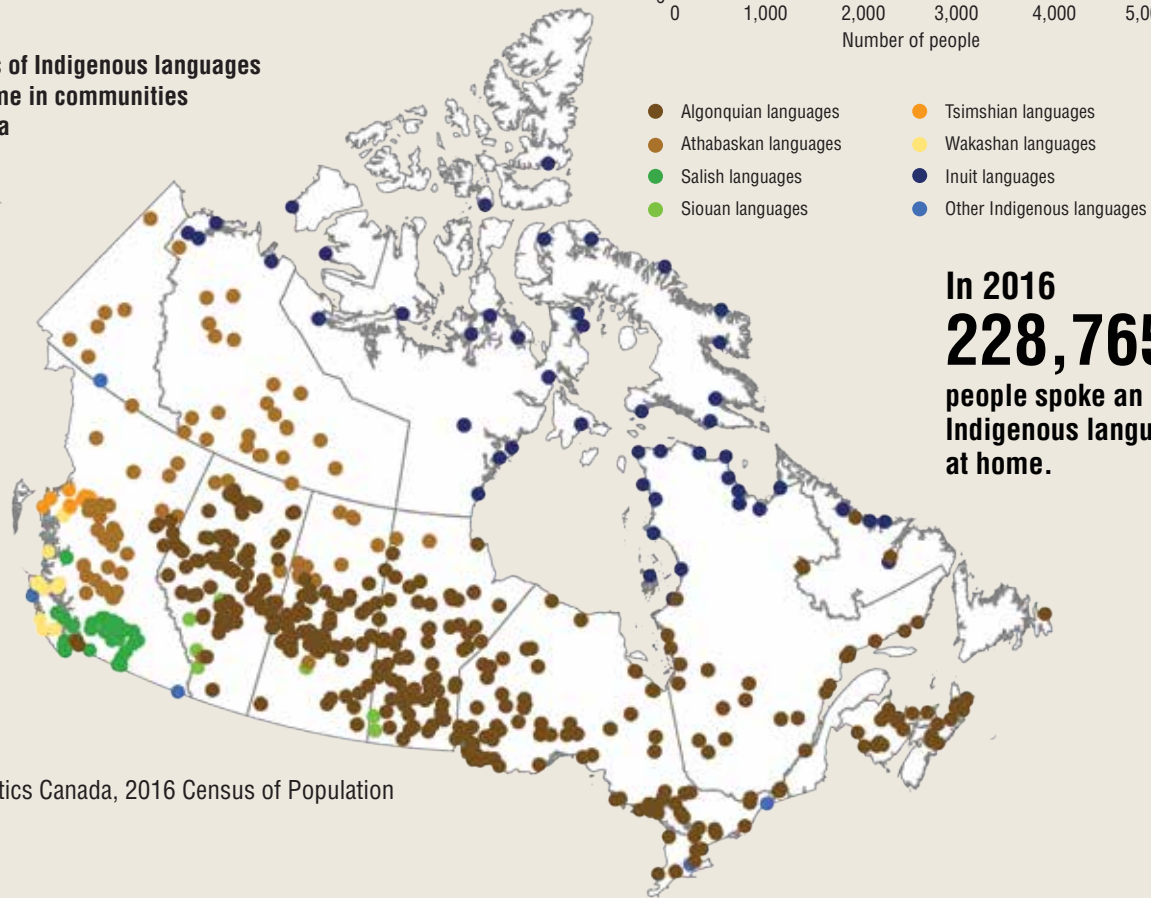
The Indigenous languages most reported in 2016



More people speak an Indigenous language at home than have an Indigenous language as a mother tongue, especially among youth



Main families of Indigenous languages spoken at home in communities across Canada



In 2016
228,765
 people spoke an
 Indigenous language
 at home.

Post-European Contact

Indigenous communities have creation stories that have been passed down orally from generation to generation. These stories explain how people came to be and speak to mapping the boundaries of territory, community values, and community history. It would be erroneous to assign a single version as each has been adapted by people in different parts of the land who have led very different lifestyles. Additionally, Christianity is also deeply embedded in some Indigenous communities due to the efforts of missionaries to convert voluntarily or involuntarily Indigenous people to this religion. As such, each community operates under a unique umbrella of interwoven beliefs, values and ideologies.

Indigenous people adapted over thousands of years, creating societies with their own unique languages, customs, traditions, governance and community structures. The arrival of European settlers in the sixteenth century changed the lives of Indigenous people forever, bringing Christianity, conflict, assimilation and disease. Colonization, including these factors listed, caused the Indigenous population to be systemically reduced by an estimated 90% by the 20th century.¹⁹

An Indigenous Perspective on History

Oral histories of Indigenous cultures in North America predate the arrival of Columbus by centuries and probably millennia. The image of a daring European adventurer claiming a wilderness for his king means little to Indigenous people. Their history paints a picture of starving, disease-ridden Europeans who took refuge in local villages, where they were fed and nurtured.

While many non-Indigenous historians celebrate the exploration and colonization in Canada, the Indigenous version is more likely to describe disease, disaster and betrayal. While many Canadians

proudly commemorate the pioneering qualities of their frontier ancestors, Indigenous people recall sharing their knowledge, land and resources with the newcomers. While the two European founding nations celebrate their achievements, Indigenous people remember what made those achievements possible: the treaties, the military alliances and the agreements made with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people.²⁰

Blanket Exercise

The KAIROS Blanket exercise is a group activity that is worth taking with your colleagues. It synthesizes 500 years of colonization into one and a half hours under the observation of a local Indigenous Elder or facilitator.

The exercise is a unique, participatory history lesson developed in collaboration with Indigenous Elders, knowledge keepers and educators. During the exercise, participants walk on blankets representing the land and into the role of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples by reading scrolls and carrying cards which ultimately determine their outcome as they literally 'walk' through situations that include pre-contact, treaty-making, colonization and resistance. The Blanket Exercise program was created in response to the 1996 report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Since 2018, the KAIROS Blanket Exercise has been part of the Cadet Training Program at Depot.

Instructors at the RCMP Academy in Regina, Sask., are trained on how to do the blanket exercise.



¹⁹ Canada Guide, *The Indigenous Peoples of Canada*.

²⁰ Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.



CHAPTER I

FIRST NATIONS



First Nations

The term “First Nations” generally includes individuals that are status or treaty Indians, and non-status Indians. Status or treaty Indian typically refers to those who are registered under the *Indian Act*, the first iteration of which was passed in 1876.²¹ The Act outlines rules governing First Nations and their reserve lands and has been amended several times.²² The intent of the Act was to assimilate First Nations into Canadian society through various methods, including restricting governing powers, regulating alcohol consumption, restricting voting, movement, and prohibiting the practice of customs.

Status Indians have a complex relationship with the Act. It unilaterally imposes discriminatory policies but also affirms the federal government’s responsibility and legal obligations owed to First Nations people and governments. It also offers some treaty rights to registered Indians, such as health benefits, property rights and tax exemptions.

Non-status Indians are not registered under the *Indian Act* and are not entitled to register because they or their ancestors lost their status. There are numerous reasons why an individual involuntarily lost or gave up their status, such as serving in the Canadian Armed Forces, attending post-secondary school, or Indian women marrying non-Status men. At that time, these people were not entitled to the benefits available under the *Indian Act*.

RCMP



Staff Sergeant Jeff Poulette (Oneida/Mi'kmaw), RCMP
National Eagle Staff Keeper, Ottawa, ON, 2019

²¹ Indigenous Foundations, University of British Columbia, *Terminology*.

²² This is primarily why the term *Indian* is still used, which contemporarily is a pejorative term when not in specific reference to the *Indian Act*.

Demographics

There are over 600 First Nations communities in Canada with a population of 1,048,405 (which includes registered / treaty Indians and Indigenous people who are not-registered or do not have a treaty).²³ An estimated 40% live on-reserve, while the remaining 60% live off-reserve. The First Nations population increased by 56.8% between 2006 and 2021, nearly four times faster of the non-Indigenous population over the same period. A trend that is expected to continue. This growth rate may be attributed to an increase in people identifying as First Nations as well as a high fertility rate.²⁴ This increase may contribute to worsening economic conditions related to housing, limited resources, poverty, education and child welfare.²⁵



CIRNAC

INAC Map Room²⁶

The greatest concentration of First Nations people is in Western Canada.²⁷ Ontario has the largest number of First Nations people provincially, making up nearly one-quarter.²⁸ First Nations make up 11% in Quebec, and 7.6 % in Atlantic Canada. The remaining 1.9% of First Nations people lived in the territories.²⁹

²³ Assembly of First Nations.

²⁴ Statistics Canada.

²⁵ K. Kirkup, "Canada's Indigenous population growing 4 times faster than rest of country" *Global News* (2017-10-25).

²⁶ Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

²⁷ Statistics Canada.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

Language

First Nations can commonly be distinguished by their language. Language families may depict relationships between individual nations, or tribes. In Canada, 70 Indigenous languages belong to 12 major language families – ten of which are of the First Nations, and Inuktitut, the language family of the Inuit. Some language families are large and strong, while others are smaller with a lesser chance of survival.

First Nations identity population, by age and selected language characteristics, Canada, 2016³⁰

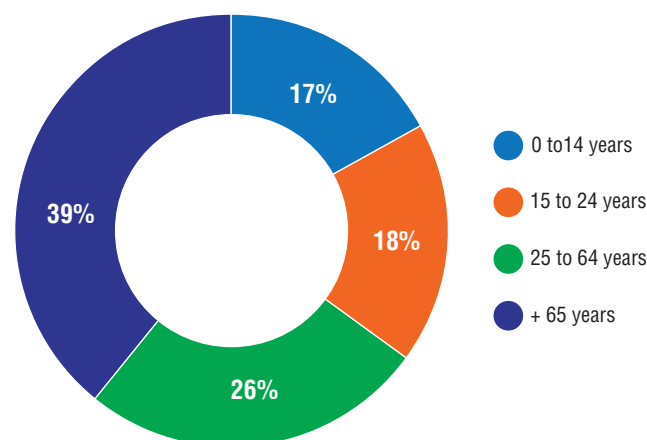
Age Group	Total First Nations Identity population	Can conduct a conversation in an Indigenous Language		Has an Indigenous mother tongue	
	number	number	percent	number	percent
Total	977,230	207,755	21.3	164,060	16.8
0 to 14 years	285,825	45,135	15.8	30,540	10.7
15 to 24 years	170,700	28,155	16.5	20,880	12.2
25 to 64 years	458,635	112,340	24.5	91,990	20.1
65 years and older	62,070	22,125	35.6	20,645	33.3

The following list names the 11 major Indigenous language families in Canada, with two additional categories to account for the differences in dialect for the Cree language and the Plateau:

- Algonquin
- Athapaskan
- Cree
- Haudenosaunee (Iroquoian)
- Inuktitut,
- Dakota (Lakota)
- Plateau,
- Wakashan
- Tsimshian
- Haida
- Tlingit
- Kutenai (almost extinct — southeastern British Columbia)

First Nations languages and culture vary a great deal throughout Canada. Statistics Canada reported that one in five, or 207,755 (21.3%), of the First Nations population can speak an Indigenous language, most of whom live on reserve. The most spoken languages were Cree languages, Ojibway, Oji-Cree and Dene.³¹

Percentage of First Nations population that can conduct a conversation in an Indigenous Language



³⁰ Statistics Canada.

³¹ Ibid.

Culture

With over 600 First Nations communities, it is important to recognize that each Nation has its own traditions, customs, and worldviews. Each Nation is influenced by their own unique experiences on the land, resulting in a diverse mix of cultural practices, beliefs and symbols. While some similarities can be made and are outlined below, the best way to get to know a specific community is to build relationships. Take the time to be quiet and just listen.

In many First Nations cultures, storytelling is very important. It is best to be respectful and patient when you are in the presence of someone telling a story about their lives, the land, or the community.

It is especially important to be respectful when an Elder is speaking and praying before a feast, cultural gathering or an important meeting. You may be asked to stand when a prayer is being shared.

Note that some First Nations may not appreciate or even accept eye contact as something key to conversation.³² As more First Nations join the work force, many of them do not feel this way and they would prefer eye contact.³³ If you are unsure about what you should do to be respectful, it is always best to ask. Most First Nations people are open and welcoming to answer such questions.

Societal Structure

Prior to European contact, leadership and decision-making was tied to forms of social organization, which was informed by location and lifestyle.

Groups that lived in small, family-oriented hunting bands would choose a proficient hunter to lead. Plains groups would choose a Chief with an Elder advisory council. East coast groups had three levels of leadership, a local Chief, a district Chief and a Grand Chief. West coast and Iroquois nations were members of clans that had resource, land and cultural claims based on lineage.³⁴ Regardless of the structure, decisions tended to be made on a consensus basis. The current Chief and Council system that uses voting for decision-making was created and is governed by the *Indian Act*.

Created in 1982, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is a national political organization that represents approximately 900,000 Indigenous people in Canada and is modeled after the United Nations General Assembly. Its executive is made up of the National Chief, 10 regional Chiefs and the chairs of the elders, women's and youth councils.

The AFN holds elections every three years and their main activities include hosting national and regional discussions, analyzing government policy and law, advocating for the treaty rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and facilitating the Indigenous-Crown relationship.³⁵

32 Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., *Eye Contact and Aboriginal Peoples* (2012-04-11).

33 Indigenous Works, *Working with Aboriginal Colleagues*.

34 Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

35 Assembly of First Nations.



Yan̄yèidí

The name “*Yan Yedi*” has been interpreted as meaning “White Cedar People”, “mainland people”, or “place of hemlock people”.

McClellan differentiates between “old” and “new” Yan yedi. The Old Yan Yedi refer to themselves in English as “wolf wolves”, while they call the “New” Yan Yedi “wolf fish-hawks”. This means that the “Old” Yan Yedi claim the wolf as their crest, while the “New” Yan Yedi claim the golden eagle.³⁶

EXAMPLE

Yukon First Nations – Clans

Traditional Yukon First Nations social and political organization is based on two moieties (anthropology term of descent groups) that are commonly referred to as clans. Clan membership is matriarchal throughout the Yukon. The rule of marrying someone from the opposite clan (Crow must marry Wolf, Wolf must marry Crow) ensures that there are ties between clans and between people from distant places.

The Yukon moiety system follows many traditional laws to ensure peace and balance in everyday life. Many of these traditional laws continue to be emphasized today. Although there are similarities among the laws of most Yukon groups, there are also distinctive differences. All traditional laws set out specific rights and responsibilities for individuals and their families.

The Inland Tlingit clan structure reflects many of the traditions of the coastal Tlingit with whom they have historic ties. There are six clans within the two moieties, Wolf (Gooch) and Crow (Yeitl). Two of the six clans are Wolf and four are Crow. Dakh̄l'awèdì (Killer whale) and Yen̄yèdí (Wolf) are both part of the Wolf moiety. Dèshitàn (Beaver), Ganaxtedi (Raven), Kùkhhittàn (Crow) and Ishkitàn (Frog) are all part of the Crow moiety.

Each clan owns and carries a crest or emblem. This crest can be attached to their regalia such as a button blanket, dance tunic or vest. The crest is worn when people attend certain functions, such as potlatches, and it identifies their clan. It is against traditional law to wear a crest or emblem that is not your own. Wearing a crest that is not your own is so disrespectful that it is considered a mockery. Crests let people of other clans know who they are.³⁷

³⁶ Carcross/Tagish First Nation.

³⁷ Yukon First Nations Five. *Yukon First Nations Clans Teacher's Guide*, (2008).



Role of First Nation Elders

First Nation Elders are highly respected in First Nation communities. Elders and traditional teachers play a prominent, vital, and respected role. They are held in high regard as knowledge keepers, carrying traditional teachings and information passed down through oral history, customs and traditions which encompass beliefs, values, worldviews, language, and spiritual ways of life.³⁸

Elders may be older members of society, but not all seniors are considered Elders. And while Elders may have expertise in several areas, an individual is not expected to be an expert in all things. As issues arise, people in the community will know which Elders hold the relevant knowledge.

Some Elders are entrusted with the history of a nation and are expected to share this information at appropriate times.³⁹ With the loss of traditional languages, some First Nation groups are looking to modern recording methods, like film and audio, to preserve and pass this information onto future generations.⁴⁰ Western science is beginning to put more stock in the validity of oral history and traditional knowledge.⁴¹

In 1997, the Supreme Court of Canada decided that the provincial governments had no right to extinguish the Indigenous Peoples' rights to their ancestral territories and in doing so also stated that oral history and tradition must be accepted as evidence in Indigenous rights and title cases, much like historical documents are.⁴²

First Nation peoples value their Elders and all older people, and address them with the utmost respect.

Whenever traditional feasts are held in First Nation communities, the Elders and older people are often asked to offer prayers to bless the events or to do the opening or closing ceremonies.

It is not uncommon to ask an Elder to provide an opening prayer and/or closing prayer at a significant workplace event or ceremony.

When seeking assistance from a First Nation Elder, an offering of tobacco is offered as per First Nation protocol. Make sure to check on local protocols in the First Nation you work in.

Elders are also served meals first, should not have to wait in line and should have priority when seating.



38 Carleton University, *Guidelines for Working with First Nation, Metis and Inuit Elders and Knowledge Keepers*.

39 Canada's First Peoples.

40 A. Johnson, "Why is First Nations oral history embracing voice, video and paper?" *Regina Leader-Post* (2016-06-23).

41 N. Mortillaro, "How science and First Nations oral tradition are converging" *CBC News* (2016-11-22).

42 D.T. McNab, "The Spirit of *Delgamuukw* and Aboriginal Oral Traditions in Ontario" *Fraser Institute*.

Traditional First Nation Values

Most First Nations belief systems are grounded in the idea of balance. That is, all living things have a spirit and are interconnected, and thus all living things must work together to achieve and maintain a balanced system. In many origin and creation stories, the land is regarded as female and the Mother to all living things, and She is to be treated with great respect.

Governance

The basis of many First Nations governance systems is the idea that there are many centralized individual and community roles and responsibilities, and that no one role or level is more significant than the other. The basis of this is the notion that the balance of the collective will be maintained by individual roles and responsibilities.

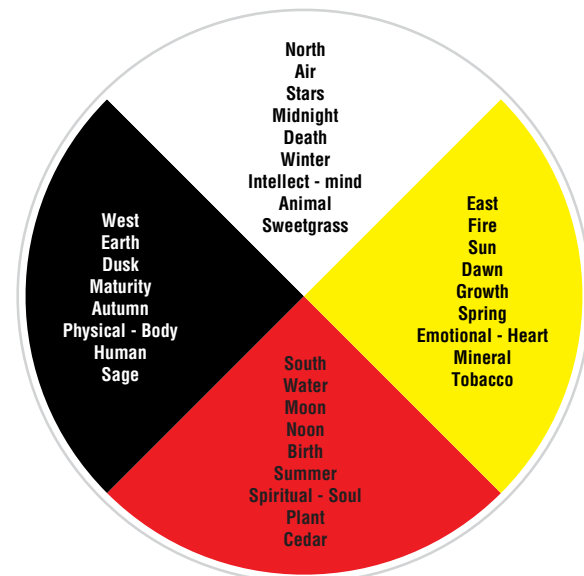
The Circle

Many First Nation teachings share the belief that ‘we are all connected’ and ‘we are all one’. All life is part of the circle and the circle is the Great Spirit. Therefore, everyone within the circle is related and most First Nations use the analogy of an extended family to explain this concept. So not only are human beings’ brothers and sisters, but the winged, the four legged, the stones and the plants are also brothers and sisters too. The expression “all my relations” is used frequently and refers to the notion of connectedness.

This concept is sometimes known as the Medicine Wheel. Included here is just one example of an Ojibway Medicine Wheel. It is important to keep in mind that this is only one community’s teaching and there are many different versions. In this example there are four directions, four cycles of life, four seasons, four quarters of the moon, etc.⁴³ For some, the colours represent the different races of people. The Wheel can also represent different stages in life, elements in nature, ceremonial plants or otherwise.

How the wheel is interpreted and applied varies from nation to nation. Even the order of the colours varies.⁴⁴ There are some First Nations that do not recognize the Medicine Wheel at all, so it is important not to take a general approach.

The concept of the circle is often used in various First Nation communities in the form of talking circles as a means of community engagement, sharing and healing. Talking circles ensure that each person gets the chance to speak on the topic at hand. A general rule is that when it is your turn to speak, everyone listens and should not interrupt. You may also choose to pass, say only a few words or spend a lot of time speaking if you choose to share. The talking circle may move clockwise or counter-clockwise depending on the ceremonial direction of the nation using this approach, and sometimes a talking stick, feather or other object is passed and held by the speaker.



Indigenous Corporate Training

Example of one type of Medicine Wheel ⁴⁵

⁴³ Anishinaabemowin.

⁴⁴ National Library of Medicine, *Medicine Ways: Traditional Healers and Healing*.

⁴⁵ B. Joseph, Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., *What is an Aboriginal medicine wheel?* (2013-04-16).

Concept of Respect for All Things

Since the Great Spirit lives within all and everything, First Nations people are taught to honour what they have been given, and respect what they take from the Earth. When they are taking something from Mother Earth, they are taught to give something back to ensure there is reciprocity and balance. For instance, when picking the sacred medicine sage, traditionally, First Nations people will begin with a prayer to honour the plant for its gifts, followed by an offering of thanks with a small pinch of tobacco. When taking the plant, they will be careful not to rip it from its roots, and they will only take what is needed. If a plant is heavy with seeds, they will leave it so it may continue to grow, as they will be mindful of their responsibility to the generations to come.

While it should be kept in mind that all First Nation cultures have their own distinct ceremonial practices, there are some teachings that are common across many of the nations.

Smudging/Cleansing

Some First Nations use plant-based medicines to clear energy within and around them. In First Nations spirituality, medicines are used to cleanse the physical body, the mind, the spirit, and the heart, and this is achieved in many First Nations cultures through an energy cleansing process called smudging. Some of the plants and herbs used by First Nations are sage, sweetgrass and cedar. Once the herbs are blessed and thanked, they are placed into a special bowl and lit. The smoke from the herbs is used, like a bath, to 'cleanse' their being. Smudging is voluntary and should not be forced on anyone. Anyone can smudge and it is good practice to learn the teachings of the medicines from an Elder or a cultural teacher.

Tobacco

In many First Nation cultures, tobacco was given to the people by the Great Spirit, to be used as an offering. It is believed that the smoke from the tobacco is a communication link to the Great Spirit. Typically, it is burned, smoked in a sacred pipe, or given in offerings. It has a variety of uses and purposes including protection, respect and honour. When seeking guidance or assistance from a First Nation Elder, tobacco is often expected to be presented to the Elder prior to making the request for assistance. If the Elder can assist you, he or she will accept the tobacco. If they are unable to help you, the tobacco will be returned and may direct you to another Elder for assistance.

Drumming

Drumming is another component of many First Nations cultures that is used as a basis for healing. Drums are made from animal skin and tied to wood. To some First Nations, drums are considered the heartbeat of Mother Earth and are used for a variety of purposes such as cleansing energy, celebrating, communicating and achieving altered states of consciousness. In many Indigenous cultures, the drum is a sacred object that has a consciousness and spirit.



History

Explorers

Early explorers arrived in North America with the false belief that they would discover vacant territory. Christopher Columbus was deemed to have “discovered” the New World in 1492.⁴⁶ Columbus mistakenly thought he arrived in the East Indies, which led him to call Indigenous people he encountered “Indios,” the Spanish word for Indians.⁴⁷

In the 1500s, European explorers met Indigenous civilizations on the Eastern seaboard, with whom they established positive relationships through the cod harvest. This relationship evolved with trade of tools and technology; a large part of this trade included the trade of furs. Eventually, French and British settlers began to push westward, expanding their power and influence. By the 1600s, the British established several colonies across the country and began to settle on a large scale.⁴⁸

Fur Trade

The fur trade between First Nations, European settlers and various alliances of the two, expanded rapidly across the country and at a higher caliber than ever before. The British allied with the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the French allied with First Nations north of the St. Lawrence River. Clashing interests caused a number of violent conflicts between various parties and alliances throughout the 16th and 17th centuries. Competition led to warfare between nations such as the Haudenosaunee and Huron, which resulted in the Huron leaving their traditional territory for Georgian Bay. Much conflict in the Great Lakes region area came to an end in 1701 when 40 First Nations, as well as France, signed a treaty called the Great Peace.⁴⁹ First Nations also aided other countries in various wars, including the war of 1812, during which the Haudenosaunee fought alongside the British.

46 Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., *Did Christopher Columbus Discover the New World?* (2013-02-12).

47 Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., *Indigenous Peoples Terminology Guidelines for Usage* (2016-07-20).

48 Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

49 Ibid.

50 Canadian Encyclopedia, *Indigenous Peoples and the First World War*.

51 Veterans Affairs Canada, *Brigadier-Magistrate*.

World War I

During the First World War (1914-18), the federal government expropriated 313,398 acres of reserve lands and forced some bands to lease reserve land without their consent. Many First Nations were indifferent or even hostile to contributing to the war, some because of a difficult past relationship with the government or because this was not their war. In more remote regions, First Nations were insulated from global events and the war barely touched their daily lives.

When the war ended in 1918, Indigenous soldiers returned alongside their comrades to what they hoped would be a better world. First Nations veterans — because they were already government wards as Status Indians and viewed as “looked after” — found themselves largely shut out of benefits provided for non-Indigenous returning soldiers. Doubly painful was the *Soldier Settlement Act*, meant to help soldiers begin farming. Not only was it almost impossible for Status Indians to qualify, but the government confiscated an additional 85,844 acres from reserves to provide for non-Indigenous soldiers under the plan.⁵⁰

Brigadier Oliver Martin, a Mohawk from the Six Nations Grand River reserve, served in both world wars, and remains the highest-ranking Indigenous officer in Canada.⁵¹



World War II

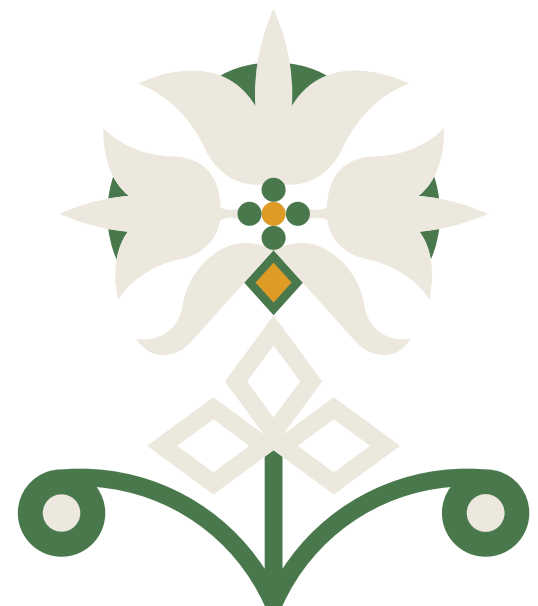
As in the First World War, thousands of Indigenous soldiers and nurses volunteered with many serving with distinction in the Canadian army, navy, and air force during the Second World War (1939-1945). Many donated huge sums to humanitarian and patriotic causes, participated in drives to collect scrap metal, rubber, bones (even from old buffalo jumps); conducted public and ceremonial expressions of support and loyalty; and worked in war industries and production in unprecedented numbers.⁵²

In order to enlist, the federal government required First Nations people to give up their Status. This act of disenfranchisement meant that they became legal non-entities, as Indigenous people did not have the right to Canadian citizenship. First Nations leaders remembered the limited exemption in 1918 and protested that it was unjust to compel people without citizenship rights to fight and defend those same rights. This policy remained unchanged until late 1944, when the conscription (mandatory enlistment) crisis forced Prime Minister Mackenzie King to begin sending conscripts into combat overseas, including Status Indians. This, however, violated promises made during negotiation of several historical treaties and Indian Affairs requested a limited exemption for Status Indian conscripts, which was passed in December 1944. The exemption covered only recruits from Treaties 3, 6, 8 and 11, roughly one-fifth of the Status Indian population (in the Prairies and Northwest Territories). Relatively few Indigenous men were included in the 2,463 conscripts that saw combat in 1945.

Veterans

Many First Nation veterans experienced challenges upon their return home after the war. They returned with illnesses, such as pneumonia, tuberculosis and influenza, which they had contracted overseas. Many unknowingly carried the deadly influenza virus back with them to their isolated and susceptible communities where it quickly spread. Sadly, many veterans died shortly after returning from the war as an indirect result of their service.

The equal treatment that First Nation veterans experienced during the war also disappeared once they returned home to Canada. Veteran benefits were theoretically available to all veterans equally. In practice, however, Status Indians access to advising, application forms and all programs was not equal, as Indian Affairs handled most of their case files in ways that disadvantaged many veterans. Whether or not they received benefits, Indigenous veterans faced a steeper climb to successfully re-establishing themselves in civilian life than their non-Indigenous comrades.⁵³



⁵² Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

⁵³ Ibid.



LEGACY

National Aboriginal Veterans Monument

This deeply symbolic memorial features a large bronze eagle at its top, with four men and women from different Indigenous groups from across Canada immediately below. A wolf, bear, bison and caribou (powerful animals that represent “spiritual guides” which have long been seen by Indigenous cultures as important to military success) look out from each corner. Remembrance ceremonies are held at this special monument in Ottawa, ON, including on National Aboriginal Veterans Day, which is observed each year on November 8.

Indian Act

An Act to amend and consolidate the laws respecting Indians or the “Indian Act” is the second oldest piece of legislation in Canada after Confederation (1876). It is a legal mechanism created to impose government control and oversight on all aspects of First Nations governance, land ownership and daily life. The Act’s measures were oppressive and imposed various controls, including preventing Indigenous people from hiring a lawyer, bans on governance, ceremonial, and cultural practices. The Act also determined Indian status through birth and marriage regulations, among various other paternalistic controls. Until amendments were passed in 1985, an Indigenous woman who married a non-Status man lost Indian status for herself and her children.

The *Indian Act* enabled the government to determine the land base of these groups in the form of reserves, and even to define who qualifies as an Indian in the form of Indian status. It also provided for the election of band chiefs, who were given limited authority over matters such as the allocation of reserved lands and road maintenance.

After World War II, leaders began to raise concerns about poor education, health and living conditions of their communities. In 1969, the federal government published a White Paper proposing the abolition of the *Indian Act*, the equitable termination of all treaties and an end to special status for First Nations. Indigenous people rejected the White Paper.⁵⁴

54 A. Scow. Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples. *Transcriptions of Public Hearings and Round Table Discussions*, 1992-1993, Ottawa, Ontario. Thursday, November 26, 1992, pp. 344-5.

The White Paper, however, galvanized the Indigenous community into political action and increased public awareness of Indigenous issues significantly. In 1982, Indigenous leaders were successful in adding to the *Constitution Act, 1982* a section that affirmed the existence of Indigenous and treaty rights and include the First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities within the definition of “Aboriginal peoples of Canada”.⁵⁵

Despite its apparent inadequacies, the *Indian Act* is still the major federal statute governing First Nation policy in Canada. Several amendments were made to the Act in 1951 and in the late 1980s. In 1985, an Act to amend the *Indian Act*, Bill C-31, was passed.⁵⁶

Bill C-31 enabled people affected by the discriminatory provisions of the old *Indian Act* to apply to have their Indian status and membership restored. This legislation also eliminated certain discriminatory provisions of the Act, including the section that resulted in First Nation women losing their Indian status and membership when they married non-Status men.

The *Indian Act* continues to be highly contentious and criticized by Indigenous people for its paternal nature. The Assembly of First Nations describes it as a form of apartheid.⁵⁷ Amnesty International, the United Nations, and the Canadian Human Rights Commission have continually criticized it as a human rights abuse. These groups claim that the Canadian government does not have the right to unilaterally extinguish Indigenous rights—something the government could legally do to Status Indians up until 1985 through the process of enfranchisement, and can still control through Status.⁵⁸

Despite its controversy, the *Indian Act* is historically and legally significant for Indigenous people. It acknowledges and affirms the unique historical and constitutional relationship Indigenous people have with Canada. For this reason, despite its challenging nature, efforts to outright abolish the *Indian Act* have been met with widespread resistance.⁵⁹

When the *Canadian Human Rights Act* was passed in 1977, Section 67 (originally subsection 63(2)) was created specifically to prohibit First Nations people from filing an official complaint that the *Indian Act* was a human rights violation. This was later described as a “serious disregard for human rights.” The exemption of the *Indian Act* from Canada’s own human rights law is an implicit recognition by the Canadian government of how unreasonable the *Indian Act* truly is. In May of 2008, the House of Commons unanimously passed Bill C-21 to repeal this section of the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.⁶⁰



55 Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

56 Ibid.

57 “This apartheid law prohibited traditional First Nation government systems from existing in the native communities and in its place established the present day ‘band council’ system.” Assembly of First Nations.

58 Indigenous Foundations, University of British Columbia, *The Indian Act*.

59 Ibid.

60 Section 67 of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* states, “Nothing in this Act affects any provision of the *Indian Act* or any provision made under or pursuant to that Act.”

Reserves are held by Her Majesty for the use and benefit of the respective bands for which they were set apart, and subject to this Act and to the terms of any treaty or surrender, the Governor in Council may determine whether any purpose for which lands in a reserve are used or are to be used is for the use and benefit of the band.⁶¹

Reserve System

Under the *Indian Act* and treaty agreements, an Indian Reserve is a tract of land set aside for the exclusive use of an Indian band. Band members possess the right to live on reserve lands, and often band administrative and political structures are also located on these lands. Reserve lands are not strictly “owned” by bands but are held in trust for bands by the Crown. The *Indian Act* grants the Minister of Indian Affairs authority over much of the activity on reserves.⁶²

The reserve system was, on a fundamental level, a government-sanctioned displacement of First Nations. At the stroke of a pen, reserves divided not only lands but peoples and Nations that had existed for hundreds if not thousands of years. Families, houses and clans that had hunted and gathered together for generations were abruptly and arbitrarily joined up with other families and houses, disrupting social networks and long-established kinship systems that determined who could hunt, fish, and gather in particular areas.

As a part of the Crown’s responsibilities for its new Indian wards, government officials sponsored the construction of housing on reserve. These houses were designed with the Western nuclear family unit in mind, and could not accommodate larger, more extensive Indigenous families. Often shoddily built on a small government budget, housing became yet another foreign and divisive experience imposed by reserves.

Residential Schools

The federal residential school system operated between 1883 and 1996.⁶³ The system removed Indigenous children, as young as age four, from their homes by priests, Indian Agents and RCMP moving them in to institutions where they were stripped of their language, culture and connection to family. Approximately 150,000 Indigenous children attended these schools, whose purpose was to Christianize, civilize and assimilate Indigenous children into the greater body politic of Canada. The Government and church saw Indigenous ways of life and culture as inferior and improper compared to those of European settlers.

Many residential schools had high mortality rates due to malnourishment and unsanitary conditions. The Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner, Murray Sinclair estimates that more than 6,000 children died due to their experience at residential schools. Furthermore, countless children experienced physical and sexual abuses and were punished for speaking their language and demonstrating “unacceptable behaviour” such as laughing, dancing and boisterous behaviour. According to the Assembly of First Nations there are close to 80,000 residential school survivors alive today, and even more intergenerational survivors (the children and grandchildren of survivors) who still suffer greatly. Significantly, Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission and former Supreme Court Chief Justice, Beverly McLachlin referred to the residential school era and other colonial practices as cultural genocide.

61 Indigenous Foundations, University of British Columbia, *The Indian Act*.

62 Ibid.

63 The residential schools were originally operated by churches pre-Confederation and then the Government of Canada became involved in the 1883. The Canadian Encyclopedia, *Residential Schools in Canada Plain Language Summary*.

The last residential school was closed in 1996. One of the most notorious schools was St. Anne's located in Fort Albany First Nation, along Ontario's James Bay coast, which had a homemade electric chair that was used on children. Today, survivors of the residential school system are healing, however the intergenerational effects continue because of the trauma faced by survivors. Such intergenerational impacts on the children and grandchildren of survivors include mental health disparities, high suicide rates, and drug and alcohol abuse, with a major causal factor being language and culture loss.

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

On June 3, 2021, the government passed legislation to designate September 30th as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Like all Canadians, this day provides an opportunity for employees to recognize and commemorate the legacy of residential schools and the thousands of Indigenous children who attended.

30 Days of Action - Reconciliation Begins with Me

Every employee has a role in acknowledging and confronting the uncomfortable truths especially around Indian Residential Schools and intergeneration trauma this has caused. For the month of September, employees can actively participate on the path to reconciliation by watching, listening, reading and learning more about residential schools and the legacy of this system, as well as the RCMP's role. Search 30 days of Action on the RCMP Infoweb to learn more.

Orange Shirt Day

September 30th marks the day to honour and remember the thousands of Indigenous children who were taken and forced to attend residential schools in Canada. Orange Shirt Day is a legacy of the St. Joseph Mission residential school commemoration event held in Williams Lake, BC, Canada, in the spring of 2013. It grew out of Phyllis' story of having her shiny new orange shirt taken away on her first day of school at the Mission.⁶⁴ It is an opportunity to keep the discussion on all aspects of residential schools happening annually. Watch the Shaw video on YouTube.⁶⁵ It is worth the three minutes.

September 30th was chosen as the date because it is the time of year in which children were taken from their homes to residential schools. It is an opportunity to set the stage for anti-racism and anti-bullying policies for the coming school year. It also gives teachers time to plan events that will include children, to ensure that we are passing the story and learning on to the next generations.⁶⁶



RCMP

⁶⁴ Orange Shirt Day, *Phyllis (Jack) Webstad's story in her own words.*

⁶⁵ Shaw TV Northern BC, *St. Joseph's Residential School Stories* (2013-05-24).

⁶⁶ Orange Shirt Day, *Home.*

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Final Report

The striking of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was one of the terms of the Indian Residential School Agreement reached in 2007. Led by Justice Murray Sinclair, over six years, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission travelled the country and heard testimony from 6,000 witnesses.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's work brought considerable national attention to the terrible devastation to Indigenous Peoples resulting from the residential school system. It shone a light on the serious abuses suffered by individual children and the deliberate assimilationist policy of its originators to “kill the Indian in the child.” More than 150,000 children went through residential schools in Canada. The final report makes 94 Calls to Action to help reconcile the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians.

Child Welfare System

As residential schools began to close, Canadian social service authorities continued to take children from their homes and placed in child-welfare institutions to be adopted out to non-Indigenous families.⁶⁷ This is known as the Sixties Scoop, although the practice extended well beyond that decade. The removal of children from their birth families posed many social and developmental challenges for children, their families and communities.

In 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal determined that the child welfare services provided to First Nations children were “flawed, inequitable and discriminatory.”⁶⁸ Under *Jordan's Principle*, the Tribunal ruled that the federal government discriminated against First Nations children on reserves by

failing to provide the same level of child welfare services that exist elsewhere. The decision says the government must “cease the discriminatory practice and take measures to redress and prevent it.” It calls for the redesign of the child welfare system and its funding model, urging the use of experts to ensure First Nations are given “culturally appropriate services.”⁶⁹ Minister Jane Philpott called the disproportionate number of Indigenous children in the child welfare system a “humanitarian crisis.”⁷⁰

As of 2019, there were currently more Indigenous children in care than during the height of the residential school system.⁷¹ In early 2019, the federal government introduced Bill C-92, *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*.⁷² This legislation is aimed at allowing Indigenous communities to have the jurisdiction to govern their own child and family services.⁷³

In July 2020, Ontario announced plans to reduce by one-quarter the number of Indigenous children in foster care and ensure that 85% of the time in care be with family-based placements, as part of a wide-ranging overhaul of the child welfare system. In the future, more efforts will be made to keep children linked to their family, safety permitting, with services and support offered to both children and relatives or caregivers allowing those children to retain links to their previous life and avoid moving fully into the child welfare system.

Ontario's plan is to move from a culture of apprehension to one of prevention. At the time, just 10% of the budget went to prevention services. Ending birth alerts was a recommendation of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). Manitoba ended birth alerts in September 2019, British Columbia in September 2019 and Ontario announced it would immediately do the same.⁷⁴

67 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

68 Canadian Child Welfare Research Portal, *Canadian Human Rights Tribunal On First Nations Child Welfare*.

69 Canada School of Public Service, *Indigenous Historical Timeline*.

70 J. Barrera, “Indigenous child welfare rates creating ‘humanitarian crisis’ in Canada, says federal minister” *CBC News* (2017-11-02).

71 L. Krugel, “Child welfare system is the new residential school ‘monster’, senator says” *The Canadian Press* (2018-10-26).

72 *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*

73 Justin Brake, “Indigenous child welfare legislation has promise but needs fixing, say leaders” *Aboriginal Peoples Television Network* (2019-02-28).

74 T. Dawson, “Ontario to overhaul child welfare system, will focus on keeping children linked to their family” *National Post* (2020-07-29).

First Nation's Rights and Land Claims

Historic Treaties (Include treaties between 1701-1923)

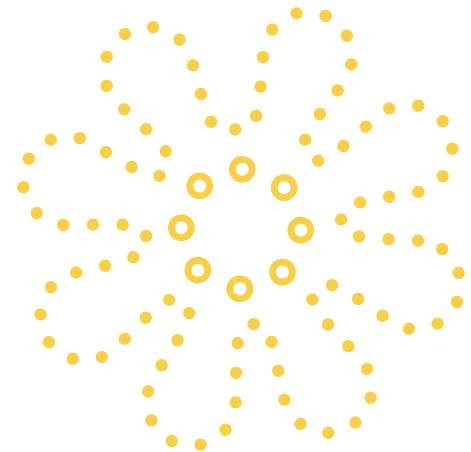
A treaty is a formal agreement between the Crown and a First Nation that defines their relationship often dealing with Indigenous title and land rights, how power and resources are to be shared and define the terms under which the signatories co-exist.

The Crown signed various historic and foundational treaties with First Nations people in Canada. The first series of treaties began with the *Peace and Friendship Treaties* in the maritime regions in the early 18th century that focused on relationships and trade with settler populations.

Indigenous Peoples consider the *Royal Proclamation of 1763* a definitive and integral treaty through which the British Crown assumed a legal duty and responsibility for ensuring the protection and preservation of Indigenous lands and interests in the settlement's territories.⁷⁵ In the late 18th century following confederation of Canada and establishment of the *British North America Act*, the Crown signed various numbered treaties with First Nations. In the mid-1800s, Canada along with a number of First Nations signed an additional series of treaties such as the *Robinson Huron and Superior* treaties.⁷⁶ The last of the historic treaties, *Williams*, was signed in Ontario in 1923.

In the past, the Crown has taken a more literal approach and has looked to the courts to interpret and enact historic treaty rights, focusing on surrendering of lands and limits of First Nations' harvesting rights. Often, the courts have perceived treaty terms and conditions at the time the agreements were made, and often fail to allow treaty terms and rights to evolve or be considered in the modern economic context.

Through vehicles such as Recognition of Indigenous Rights and Self-Determination discussion tables, Canada and Treaty First Nations are exploring ways to advance treaty rights and interests. The Specific Claims process provides an avenue for addressing past grievances in relation to the management of land and other First Nation assets and to the fulfillment of historic treaties. Resolving First Nation specific claims through negotiated settlements helps address past wrongs and honours treaty obligations.⁷⁷

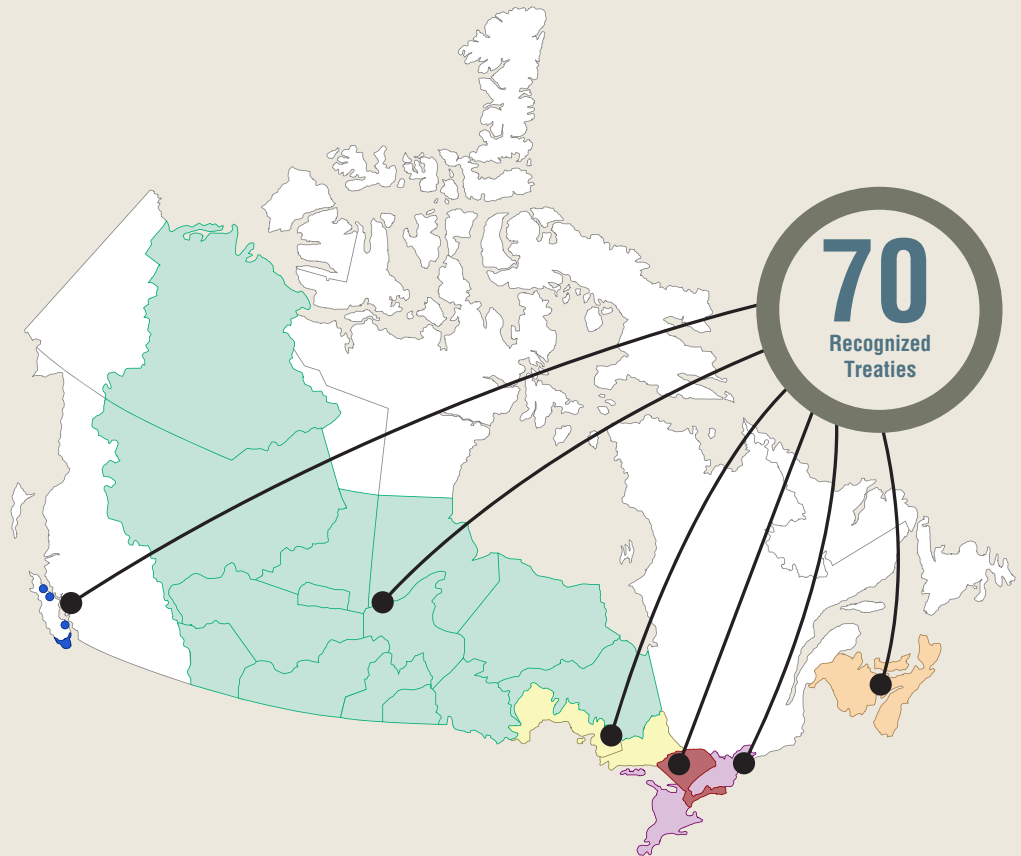


⁷⁵ *Royal Proclamation of 1763* RSC, 1985, App II, No 1.

⁷⁶ Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

- 14** Douglas Treaties (1850-1854)
- 11** Numbered Treaties (1871-1921)
- 2** Robinson Treaties (1850)
- 2** Williams Treaties (1923)
- 30** Upper Canada Land Surrenders (1781-1862)
- 3** *Peace & Neutrality Treaties (1701-1760)
- 8** Maritime Peace and Friendship Treaties (1725-1779)



* Note: As there is no defined geographic extent for the Peace and Neutrality Treaties, they cannot be represented on a map.

The Government of Canada recognizes 70 historic treaties in Canada signed between 1701 and 1923. These treaties include:

- Treaties of Peace and Neutrality (1701-1760)
- Peace and Friendship Treaties (1725-1779)
- Upper Canada Land Surrenders and the Williams Treaties (1764-1862/1923)
- Robinson Treaties and Douglas Treaties (1850-1854)
- The Numbered Treaties (1871-1921)

These treaties form the basis of the relationship between the Crown and 364 First Nations, representing over 600,000 First Nation peoples in Canada.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

Modern Treaties

A series of court decisions, most notably the *Calder* decision along with *Malouf* and *Paulette*, recognized ongoing and existing Aboriginal (Indigenous) rights in many parts of Canada. This led to the establishment of the Government of Canada's Comprehensive Claims Policy and the beginning of modern treaty negotiations over new land settlements.

Since 1973, 122 comprehensive land claims have been accepted for negotiation. Only 26 of these agreements have been finalized in the 42-year process, with 80% of claims processes taking over 10 years to complete, some having taken up to 30 years. Today, there are a total of 75 modern treaties in the making.⁷⁹ Of the 26 signed agreements, 18 included provisions related to self-government. These settlements have provided:

- Indigenous ownership over 600,000 km² of land (almost the size of Manitoba);
- Capital transfers of over \$3.2 billion;
- Protection of traditional ways of life;
- Access to resource-development opportunities;
- Participation in land and resource management decisions;
- Certainty with respect to Aboriginal (Indigenous) land rights in approximately 40% of Canada's land mass; and
- Associated self-government rights and political recognition.

⁷⁹ Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

In the landmark case of *Calder v. Attorney General of British Columbia*, the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) declared that Indigenous title to land (Indigenous land rights) exists as a concept, which influenced the negotiation of modern treaties (or comprehensive land claim agreements). *Delgamuukw v. Regina* was a landmark case because it clarified that Indigenous title (Indigenous rights to land) in fact exists as a concept and such rights are protected under the Constitution. Furthermore, this case is the first case where the SCC held that oral testimony can be used to present evidence.⁸⁰

Self-government Agreements

As recognized under section 35 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982, Indigenous Peoples have an inherent right to self-government. Recognized by the Government of Canada, the inherent right to self-government forms the core of the Crown's relationship with Indigenous Peoples. Canada reiterated its recognition of the section 35 right through the 1995 Inherent Right to Self-Government Policy, which is expected to be replaced through the Recognition and Implementation of Indigenous Rights Framework.⁸¹

Recognition of the inherent right is based on the view that the Indigenous Peoples of Canada have the right to govern themselves in relation to matters that are internal to their communities, integral to their unique cultures, identities, traditions, languages and institutions, and with respect to their special relationship to their land and their resources. There are different perspectives on the nature, scope and content of the inherent right.

“Today, we talked about the strides taken towards self-determination, and our shared desire to ensure Indigenous Governments continue to thrive for the benefit of Indigenous communities and all Canadians ... I was inspired to hear from Indigenous Governments taking concrete steps to manage their lands and resources, and to promote the social and economic health and sustainability of their communities. This work greatly benefits their communities and the country as a whole.”⁸²

Self-government agreements are diverse and are distinct amongst First Nations. Most self-government provisions and agreements have been established in one of four ways:

- a separate agreement associated with a modern treaty (pre-2000), like the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in First Nation Self-Government Agreement (1998);
- a provision within a modern treaty (post-2000), as in the Nisga’a Final Agreement (2000);
- a stand-alone self-government agreement without a modern treaty, such as the Westbank First Nation Self-Government Agreement (2004); and
- a sectoral agreement that establishes self-government over specific jurisdictions, such as the Anishinabek Nation Education Agreement (2017), which recognizes the First Nation’s jurisdiction over primary and secondary education.

Whether associated with a modern treaty, or as a stand-alone agreement, the Government of Canada has obligations set out in specific provisions of both modern treaties and self-government agreements.

After meeting with Modern Treaty and Self-Governing First Nations leaders and representatives on November 1, 2017, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau reiterated the shared commitment to support Indigenous Governments in their paths towards self-determination, including self-government.



82 Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

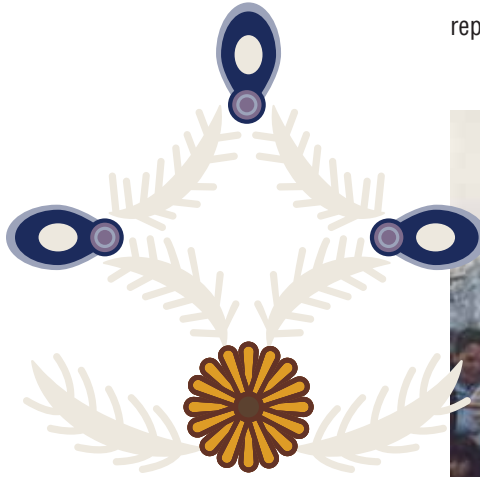
Treaty Day Celebrations

Treaty Annuity Payment Events are instances where treaty payments are distributed to those registered as a Status Indian, and who are members of a First Nation that signed a historic treaty providing for annual payments.

Historically, government officials would be accompanied by doctors to distribute treaty monies, food and hunting and fishing equipment. RCMP members, acting as representatives of the Crown, have been attending payment events for well over a century. This has been a long-standing tradition that continues today to honour treaty agreements and fosters good will between the RCMP and First Nations communities.

It is critically important to understand that Treaty Days are not about the money per se and they are viewed by First Nation people as a representation of an ongoing treaty relationship and a way to honor the Treaties. The presence of RCMP at payment events is a significant symbol for First Nations and is especially meaningful for Elders.

Both the RCMP and First Nations communities value history and tradition, both in terms of dress or belief systems. Honoured symbols and historical bonds run deep both within our organization and within Indigenous communities. One such symbol is the highly identifiable Red Serge. The presence of an RCMP member in Red Serge has long since been a renowned part of Treaty annuity payment events. The RCMP often play a role in handing out the annuity payment and are a physical representation of the Crown on Treaty Day.



“Governor General Vanier paying treaty money to the Indians at Cold Lake. It is believed that this was the first time that a Governor General of Canada presented the treaty money. Cold Lake, Alberta.”⁸³



83 Library and Archives Canada, *Collections*.

Duty to Consult

In November 2004, the Supreme Court of Canada released its decisions in *Haida Nation*⁸⁴ and *Taku River Tlingit*,⁸⁵ two important cases which dealt with Indigenous consultation and accommodation obligations related to resource development. The two decisions provided greater clarity regarding the role and responsibilities of government, Indigenous groups and industry in consultations with and accommodation of Indigenous communities. The Court confirmed the existence of the Crown's "Duty to Consult" Indigenous Peoples prior to proof of rights or title claims and its duty to accommodate their concerns. Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada said,

The Court also confirmed that the honour of the Crown cannot be interpreted narrowly or technically but must be given full effect in order to promote the process of reconciliation between the Crown and Indigenous Peoples, as mandated by section 35(1) of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

It is important that when referring to relationships with Indigenous communities that the word "consult" is not taken lightly. More often than not, the RCMP relationship should be defined as "engagement" and not "consultation" with Indigenous stakeholders. If you are ever unsure, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Policy Centre (National Communications Services).

“The primary goal of accommodation is to avoid, eliminate, or minimize the adverse impacts on potential or established Aboriginal or Treaty rights, and when this is not possible, to compensate the Aboriginal community for those adverse impacts. In some circumstances, appropriate accommodation may be a decision not to proceed with the proposed activity.”⁸⁶

84 *Haida Nation v. British Columbia* (Minister of Forests) [2004] SCC 73.

85 *Taku River Tlingit First Nation v. British Columbia* (Project Assessment Director), [2004] 3 S.C.R. 550, 2004 SCC 74.

86 Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, Aboriginal and Treaty Rights Information System.





CHAPTER II
INUIT



Inuit

The Inuit are a group of northern Indigenous people who migrated seasonally around the Arctic tundra. They embrace the seasonal changes, ocean tides and the movement of the animals they hunt for sustenance. Prior to European contact, Inuit lived on the land independently, while hunting, fishing, whaling and harvesting what they could on the land during the warmer months.

The arrival of explorers, whalers, and missionaries affected the Inuit way of life greatly. Trading posts were established, churches were built, and permanent communities were created to sustain this new way of living with the Qallunaat, or non-Inuit, people. As a result, the Inuit language and their core spiritual beliefs were nearly destroyed. With Christianity forced upon them, schools were established where English and French languages were taught to students, and the written word was introduced rather than relying on their customary oral traditions. Their language, spirituality and culture centred around the belief that all living and non-living things have a spirit, and they preserved their traditions for thousands of years by passing down these teachings through the generations.

Today, Inuit live a much different lifestyle than their ancestors, but they have maintained their individuality in the Canadian cultural fabric. Inuit languages are spoken and taught in schools, protocols have been established to ensure that the traditional knowledge of hunting, fishing, clothes making, spirituality and art are being passed down to future generations. Elders' stories are also being recorded to be passed down. Elders' wisdom holds special meaning for Inuit and is increasingly being relied upon by scientists concerning climate change.⁸⁷

RCMP



Sergeant Lisa Leith,
Inuvialuit (Banksland), NWT

87 G. Mingarelli, "How Inuit Elders Are Preserving Their History And The Wisdom of the North" *Huffington Post* (2014-10-23).

Demographics

Statistics Canada's 2021 Census reported that there are 70,545 Inuit in Canada. This represents an increase of 8.5% from 2016. Inuit homeland encompasses almost one third of Canada from the eastern part of the Yukon to the eastern coast of Labrador. The land occupied by the Inuit in Canada is called Inuit Nunangat. Inuit Nunangat is divided into four regions, each with distinct languages and populations: Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, Nunavut and Inuvialuit.⁸⁸



“Cpl. E. Covell performing a magic trick for an Inuk man. No Date.”
Library and Archives Canada

Nunatsiavut is located in Labrador and extends to the Quebec border. In 2021, Nunatsiavut's Inuit population was 2,095 people, or 3.0% of the overall Inuit population.

Nunavik is located in Northern Quebec, bordered by Hudson Bay to the west, and Hudson Strait and Ungava Bay to the north. In 2021, Nunavik's Inuit population was 12,590 or 17.8% of the total Inuit population.

Nunavut is the largest territory with the least number of inhabitants in Canada. It borders with the Northwest Territories and Manitoba. As of 2021, Nunavut's Inuit population is the largest in Canada with 30,865 Inuit, or 43.7% of the Inuit population. Inuit people also make up 85.4% of Nunavut's entire population.

Inuvialuit is located in Canada's western Arctic stretching from Alaska to Nunavut. In 2021, this region had a population of 3,145 Inuit, or 4.5% of the total Inuit population.

The majority of Inuit (39%) live in 50 communities in Nunangat with the remaining population (31%) living in urban centres across Canada. The census metropolitan areas with the largest Inuit populations were as follows: Ottawa-Gatineau, Edmonton, Montreal, Yellowknife and St. John's.⁸⁹

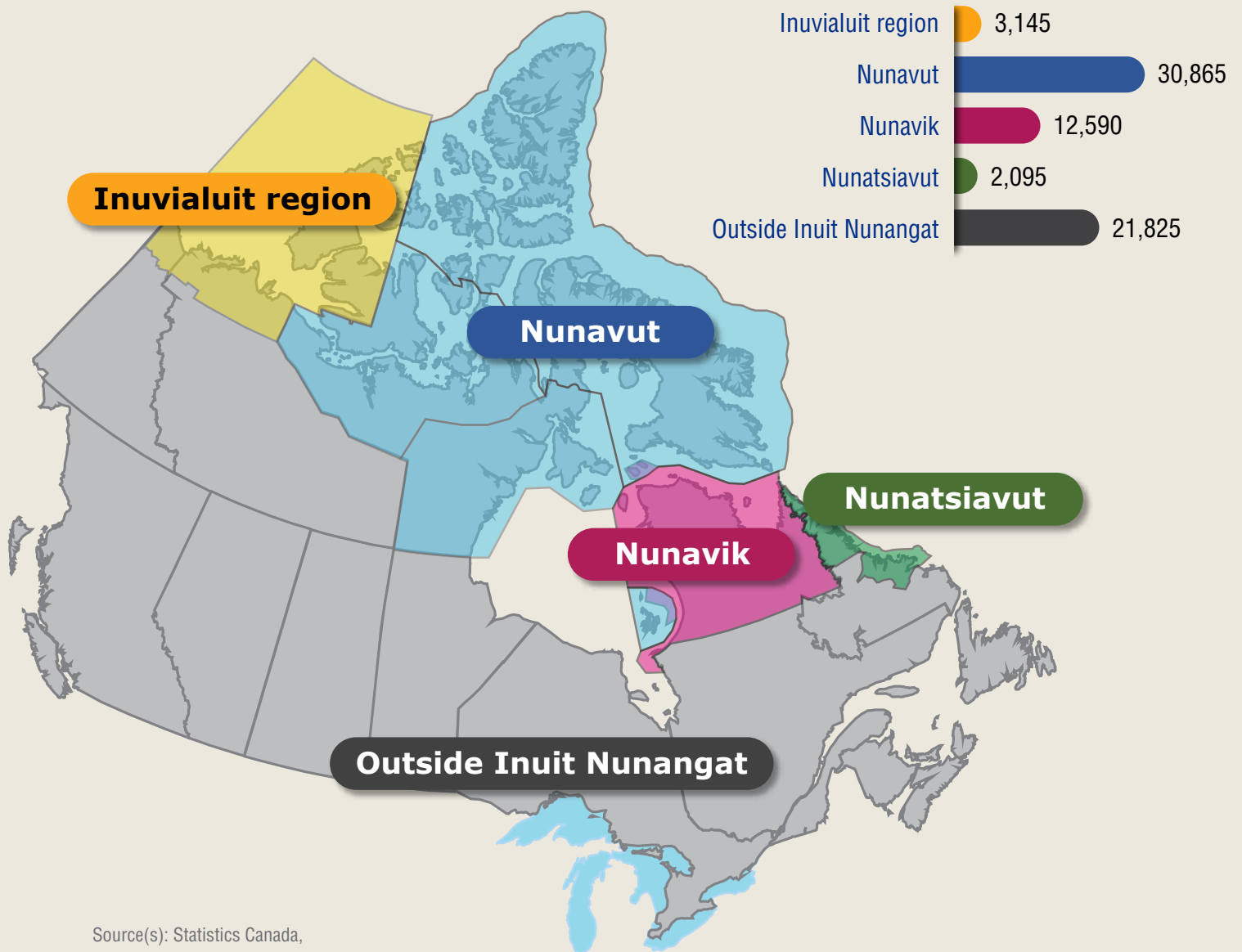
The Inuit have eight ethnic groups: Labrador, Ungava (Quebec Inuit), Baffin Island, Iglulik (Igloodik), Caribou, Netsilik, Copper and Western Arctic Inuit.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

⁸⁹ First People of Canada.

⁹⁰ M.A. Freeman (Updated by A-M. Pedersen and Z. Parrott), “Inuit”, *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, (2015-03-04).

Inuit Population by Inuit Region of Residence, Canada, 2021



Source(s): Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021 (3901).

Language - ᐅᑦᑲᐅᑦᑲᑦ - uqauhiq

In Nunatsiavut (ᐅᐅᑦᑲᐅᑦᑲᑦ), (Inuit region in Northern Labrador) Inuktitut (ᐅᐅᑦᑲᐅᑦᑲᑦ) is the language of the Labrador Inuit; however, there are dialectal differences between different communities. There is a German influence in the language due to Moravian missionaries' arrival in the 18th century. By 1949, only English was taught in Nunatsiavut. In the late 1970s, the Torngosat Cultural Centre was created in an effort to revitalize the Inuit language. The effort was successful as the primary language of Nunatsiavut is Inuktitut, although the official languages remain English and French. Inuktitut is currently protected within the Labrador Inuit Land Claims agreement.

In Nunavik (ᐅᐅᑦᑲᐅᑦᑲᑦ) (Inuit region in Northern Quebec), Inuktitut is the dominant language and is taught in schools until the third grade. Students then choose between English or French to continue their education. Language retention in Nunavik is 95% among Inuit. Inuit have the highest proportion of Indigenous people able to speak their native language, due to the efforts to re-establish teaching Inuktitut in schools.

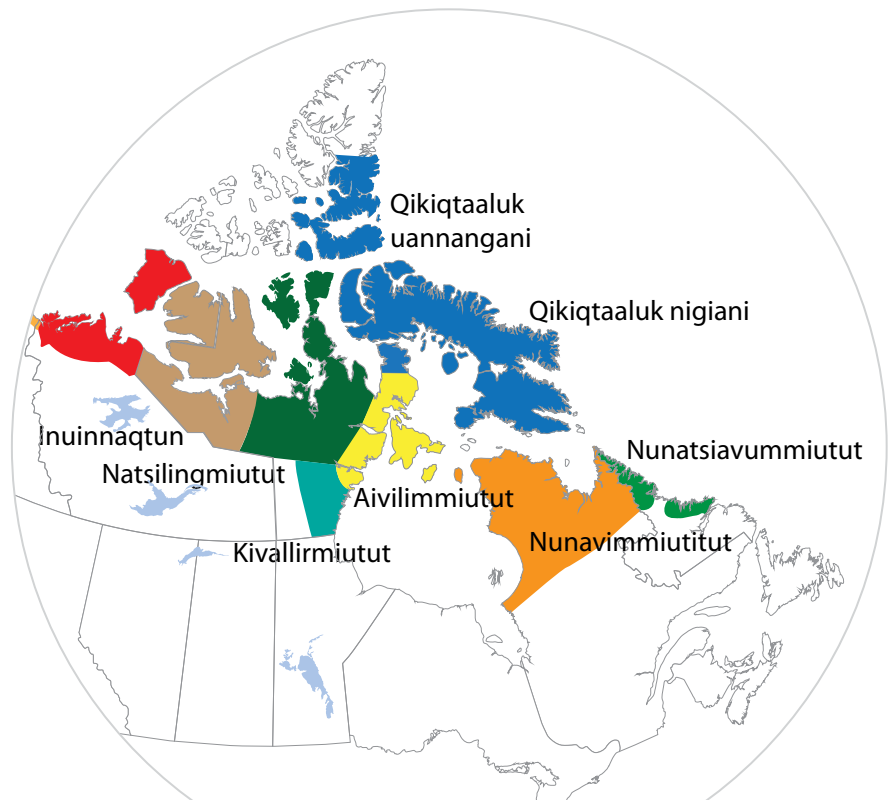
Thank you

Inuinnaqtun – quanaqutit

Inuktitut - Nakurmiik (Na-koor-meeek)⁹¹

There are three main administrative regions in **Nunavut (ᐅᐅᑦᑲᐅᑦᑲᑦ)**: Qikiqtaaluk or Qikiqtani (Baffin) region;⁹² Kivalliq or Keewatin (southern mainland) region;⁹³ and the Kitikmeot (Central Arctic) region.⁹⁴ Each region has distinctions between dialects. The official languages of Nunavut are Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun (83% of the population call these languages their mother tongue) followed by English and French.⁹⁵ English is the working language of government and industry.

In Inuvialuit, Inuvialuktun (in the Western Arctic) is the main language which is broken into three dialects: Siglitun, “people located closest to the shore,” spoken in coastal communities; Uummarmiutun, “people of the evergreens and willows,” spoken in tree-lined communities; and Kangiryuarmut, “people of the large bay,” spoken on Victoria Island. Inuvialuktun is considered an endangered language as it is spoken by less than 50% of the Inuvialuit population.⁹⁶



91 Inuinnaqtun to English Dictionary.

92 Qikiqtani Inuit Association.

93 Kivalliq Inuit Association.

94 Ibid.

95 Government of Nunavut.

96 Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, “Language”.

Culture

Traditional Inuit Values

Non-interference - Inuit place in high regard the right of individuals to lead their lives free from the interference of others. Inuit may feel discomfort when placed in positions of authority over other Inuit. Inuit are also unlikely to welcome someone trying to dictate actions to them or to speak for them without their consent.

Response to questions about other people - Inuit find it uncomfortable to respond to direct questions concerning other people and their motives. Responding on the behalf of someone else can be viewed as a violation of that person's privacy. One may get the reply of "I don't know," when asking about another person. This reply could indicate more of an unwillingness to talk about that person rather than how much they actually know about that person.

Strangers and friends - A common greeting with Inuit is with a handshake and a smile. Someone who is shy may look downward and grin. It is not polite in Inuit culture to make direct eye contact especially with strangers. The Inuit will be cautious with someone who is deemed aggressive or rude. It is best to develop a rapport, be friendly, and explain your intentions when seeking information. Visiting is an important part of Inuit life. Dropping by for a visit without advance notice is normal as the Inuit may simply wish to see how you are doing.

Inuit perceptions of non-Inuit - Some Inuit feel that non-Inuit are aggressive, prying, domineering and too free with unsolicited opinions. To compound the difficulty, the cultural value of non-interference prevents the Inuit from openly telling others how they feel. It takes a person experienced with Inuit to pick up on the subtle signs of disapproval from the Inuit.

Inuit are adept at picking up on changes in intonation or facial expressions that might go unperceived by anyone else unfamiliar with the culture. These subtle cues are how the Inuit express their emotions. The raising of eyebrows indicates a positive response to a question while a slight scrunching of the nose indicates "no."

Inukshuk or Inuksuk

Inukshuks are placed throughout the Arctic landscape acting as "helpers" to the Inuit. They are used as hunting and navigational aids, coordination points and message centres (e.g., they might indicate where food was cached). Certain inuksuk-like figures have spiritual connotations and are objects of veneration. Often, they mark the spiritual landscape of the Inummariit — the Inuit who know how to survive on the land living in their traditional way.

The Inuit also construct a stone figure called an inunnguaq, which means "in the likeness of a human." This familiar stone figure with head, body, legs and arms is often mistakenly referred to as an inuksuk. Its purpose is more symbolic than functional.



In 2017, retired Corporal, Lew Philips, was commissioned to carve a wooden Inukshuk for the RCMP for awareness training.

Spiritual Beliefs

Inuit have their own spiritual belief system. Angakkuit (Shamans) have the power to communicate with the spirit world and Sedna, the sea Goddess. Sedna carries several names across Inuit Nunangat including Nuliajuk, Tuutalik, Takanaaluk, Sanna, Inuulamillu, Uinigumasuittuq, Sassuma Arnaa, and others.

Sedna (Inuktitut: ᐱᓐᓐ, Sanna) takes the form of a mermaid who lives at the bottom of the ocean. She is the higher power who controls Sila (the environment / weather). Inuit live by a strict set of rules and taboos that appeased her. When she became upset due to Inuit misbehaviour, she would trap all of the sea mammals in her long hair to give Inuit a hard time with hunting. The Angakkuq was the one who could travel to her and comb out her hair and only then she would release the animals. She could also cause bad weather conditions and the Angakkuq would then have to travel to the moon and see from above where good hunting was on earth.



Oral History / The Written Word

Prior to written forms of language using syllabics and roman orthography as used in the English and French languages, all traditional knowledge, history, legends and basic teachings were passed down orally. The history of the Inuit has been preserved orally for thousands of years through the art of storytelling. These stories typically were short dramatic pieces about creation, the heavens, birth, love, hunting and sharing food, respect for the aged, polygamy, murder, infanticide, healthy relationships, death and the mystery of the afterlife. Inuit storytellers continue to remodel old myths and create new legends.⁹⁷

The writing system of the Inuit can be broken down into two different categories: syllabics and roman orthography. Both systems were developed as a way for missionaries to translate the Bible to be understood by the Inuit. Syllabics are prevalent in Nunavut and Nunavik, while roman orthography is used in the Inuvialuit and Nunatsiavut regions.

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⁹⁷ The Canadian Encyclopedia, "Inuit Myths and Legends."

Traditional Tattoos

There has been a huge resurgence in traditional tattoos all over the world and Inuit are no exception. Traditional facial and body tattoos on women are called Tunniit or Kakinniit and they represent a transition in a woman's life. The first tattoos are received when a girl menstruates for the first, and more are added as she becomes a woman, wife, mother, hunter, seamstress, and so on. Only women in Inuit culture receive tattoos and give tattoos. It is a very divine feminine practice. The tattoos tell stories of a woman's life and family and hold much power and respect. As such, it is respectful not to ask too many questions unless they are welcomed because these tattoos are extremely personal and a spiritual practice.

With the arrival of the missionaries, this aspect of Inuit culture and spirituality was discouraged and deemed evil. Today, although there is much healing that is being done, this is still a sensitive topic to engage in. Some Inuit are still in the colonial mindset that these tattoos are taboo and do not want to return to this practice.



A Southampton Island woman with tattoos, 1903-04. Original title: Southampton Island, Woman tattooed Source: Library and Archives Canada/Natural Resources Canada fonds/a050920

Relationships / Naming

Inuit families are commonly large and people call others by their relation to them, such as mother, father, older sister/brother, younger sister/brother, cousin from mother's side, cousin from father's side, etc. Lineage is important and everyone is encouraged to know all of their relations and to keep family ties close. In small communities, it was very important to know one's lineage and family ties as intermarriage was unacceptable.

Inuit have a unique naming system that is still very strong. It is important to know that in the Inuktitut language, there are no gender-based words such as he/she, him/her, his/hers. Further, there are no gender-based names, and many traditional names are descriptive words. For Inuit, names carry spirits, so when a baby is given the name of another (alive or deceased), they inherit a part of their namesakes' spirit. It is also believed that in inheriting someone's spirit through their name, the child will receive qualities and personality traits of their namesake.

In addition to calling people by their relation to them, Inuit also call and treat a person by their relation to their namesake. For example, if a child is born and is given the name of a community member's mother or father, they will be called mother or father by those community members. This is the same as if they are given the name of a brother, sister, grandmother, grandfather, etc. This is a way for Inuit to cope with the loss of a relation, as well as to show respect to their spirit. This makes for a much larger family and scale of relatives. If Inuit did not have such closeness within their communities, it would be more difficult to survive in such harsh conditions of the Arctic.

Celebrations

Return of the Sun

One of the main and most celebrated occasions is the Return of the Sun. The winters are long and cold in the Arctic with the sun being gone for up to three months out of the year in some areas. When the sun finally rises above the horizon, it is a time to celebrate life.

Throat Singing

Throat singing is traditionally done by two Inuit women, but men are not discouraged to sing. They use their voice, breath, and throat to make sounds that resonate off each other. Songs are interpretations of the sounds of nature and the environment. The singers sing until the other loses their breath, starts to cough, cannot keep up, or laughs first. This can be spiritual or competitive. Songs tend to end in laughter by both the singers and the audience.

Singing of Pisiit

Pisiit are songs that are sung in Inuktitut and there is a personal story that goes with each song made by the composer.

Drum Dancing

A traditional Inuit drum is called a Qilauti. The stick used to hit the frame of the drum is called a Katuk. Men primarily perform the drum dances but there are women who drum dance as well. When a man drum dances, women typically sit in a circle and sing Pisiit while the man drums within the circle.

Inuit Games

Inuit games are physical and difficult to play. They teach endurance, patience, balance, hand-eye coordination, and exercise strength. Most games use little to no equipment as resources were not always available to Inuit.



RCMP

Initiative: Strength through Sewing in Paulatuk. Left to Right: Nolan Green, Cpl. Cara Streeter and Lily Ann Green

Feasting

Traditional land foods, or country foods, are extremely important to Inuit. As Inuit are connected very closely with the land, this makes their connection with animals close as well. Eating together is a cultural component in daily life. Caribou, polar bear, seals, whales, northern birds, fish, and walrus are delicacies in Inuit communities. It is common to lay large sheets of cardboard on the floor that meat is placed on. Inuit will sit on the floor around the meat with their own knives or ulu's (traditional woman's knife) and feast with each other.

Quviasukvik

Quviasukvik is the Inuit winter feast that celebrates the coming year and placates the roaming spirits for good luck in the year to come. Inuit have retained many of their traditions even as Christmas is becoming more of a commonly celebrated event in the Central Arctic communities.⁹⁸

Nunavut Day

Nunavut Day is celebrated July 9th every year. It is the day Canada's Parliament passed the law establishing Nunavut as a separate territory.

International Inuit Day

International Inuit Day falls on November 7th.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Arctic Kingdom, "Quviasukvik: The Inuit Winter Festival & Christmas" (2019-12-20).

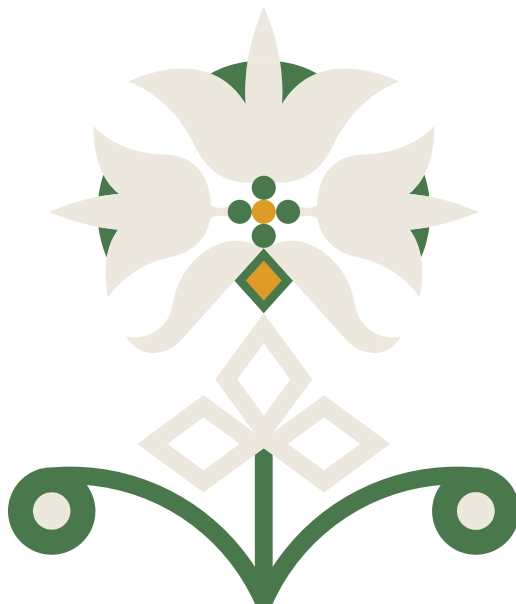
⁹⁹ Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., *Honour Inuit Day – #Inuujunga*, (2014-11-07).

History

Pre-contact

Prior to the arrival of Europeans, Inuit society was guided by the following concepts and values:

- **The Environment:** Animals, land, water, weather;
- **Family:** Marriage, children, relatives, love - family is the centre of orientation during their entire life;
- **Spirituality:** The way they carried out their lives, acted, their relationship to people and the environment;
- **Seniority:** Elders carried the most experience and wisdom;
- **Sharing:** The expectation of sharing is automatic. With such low numbers of population and resources, the chances of survival would be small if Inuit did not share everything with each other; and
- **Respect:** Derived from the realization of their dependency upon great elemental powers.



Explorers

Martin Frobisher was the first European documented to arrive in the Arctic in 1576. The Inuit did not know of outside cultures and people until explorers from Europe crossed the ocean. This contact created awareness among Inuit that there are other people in the world. It also brought disease such as tuberculosis and smallpox as awareness of the Arctic began spreading to the rest of the world when the explorers mapped it out. The interaction between Inuit and explorers was sparse and sporadic.

Whalers

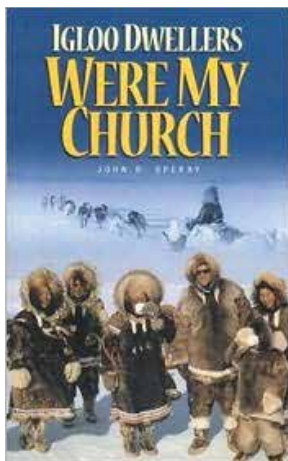
In the 19th century, the United States, Russia, and countries in Europe sent whalers to the Canadian Arctic to hunt bowhead whales for their baleen and fat during the Industrial Age. The Beaufort Sea, Cumberland Sound, and Hudson Bay were popular areas to hunt as the populations of whales were high. The baleen was used for corsets and carriages, and the oil from the fat was used for lamps, perfumes, soaps and lubricants. Interaction between Europeans and Inuit increased in this era as southern goods and employment were introduced.

Whaling ended in 1915 when the bowhead whale was hunted nearly to extinction and the Industrial Age was over. The bowhead whale is a traditional food for Inuit. Now, as time has allowed the population to recover, there are quotas on hunting the bowhead whale and it is a celebration when communities organize the hunt and gather to feast. Since traditional hunting knowledge was almost lost, it is an Inuit law to use this knowledge during the bowhead whale hunt such as making the harpoon head and spearing the animal.

In the North, the whale is known as Arviq or Arvik (Inuktitut and Inuvialuktun), Agkhovik (Inupiat), Akhgvopik (Yupik) and Ittiv (Chukchi).

Traders

In the early 20th century, the industry for fox fur in America and Europe was huge. The Northwest Company and the Hudson's Bay Company were the major players in the trading industry at that time. There were also some independent traders. The first trading posts in the Arctic, built in 1913, created more opportunities for employment for Inuit. By this time, Inuit were becoming more dependent on southern goods such as rifles, ammunition, flour, tea, matches, and tools as they were introduced to them by the whalers. Traditional ways of life began changing dramatically such as hunting and spiritual beliefs. Inuit started to settle themselves closer to the trading posts rather than continuing a nomadic lifestyle. Leadership powers in the community diminished as settler voices of authority grew louder bolstered by their commercial goods. Cash, debt, and credit were introduced whereas in the past, Inuit had shared all of their belongings and tools.



John Sperry's *Igloo Dwellers Were My Church* is the account of the transition from “the old” to “the new” based on his experience, from 1950 to 1970, as the missionary at Coppermine (formerly Fort Hearne, now Kugluktuk) in the central Arctic. In his words, “with a group of Inuit who were among the very last people in North America to be introduced to and influenced by our Euro-American/Canadian culture and technology.”

Missionaries & Residential Schools

The missionaries arrived in the Canadian Arctic in the early 20th century to convert Inuit to Christianity. The Anglican and Catholic denominations were first to make their presence known but now there are many other churches and faiths in the North. The history of residential schools and the impact the missionaries had on Inuit is still prevalent. Many social issues come from the traumas of families being torn apart, languages being lost, physical and sexual abuse, and the loss of culture and spirituality.

Government and church-run residential schools or federal hostels in the North started operating in the 1950s, with Chesterfield Inlet Residential school (in Igluligaarjuk) opening in 1951 as the first government-regulated school for Inuit.¹⁰⁰ While residential schools had been operating in the south of Canada since the early 1800s, these schools were not in existence until the 1950s in the North. Before a Supreme Court Decision in 1939,¹⁰¹ the Inuit were not considered “Indians” and were not under federal jurisdiction.¹⁰² Residential schools for Inuit continued to open into the 1960s and by 1963, 3,997 Inuit children were attending these schools. In June 1964, 75% of Inuit children and youth aged six to 15 years old were enrolled in the schools.¹⁰³

100 Legacy of Hope, *We Were So Far Away: The Inuit Experience of Residential Schools*.

101 This changed due to a Supreme Court of Canada case: *Reference as to whether "Indians" includes in s. 91 (24) of the B.N.A. Act includes Eskimo in habitants of the Province of Quebec*, [1939] SCR 104.

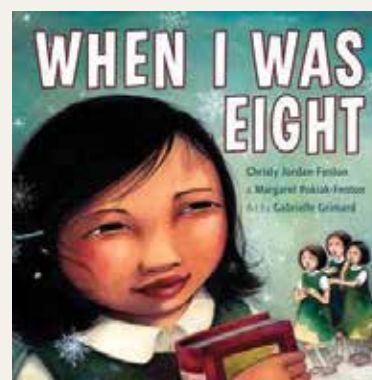
102 Ibid.

103 Ibid.

As with Indian residential schools in the south, Inuit children as young as four and five years old were taken many kilometres away from their families, without parental consultation.¹⁰⁴ They were prevented from contacting their parents and were often subjected to cruel punishment as well as physical and sexual abuse by priests and teachers.¹⁰⁵ The rich tradition of oral storytelling, music, dance and craft and a respect for the environment that were an integral part of Inuit knowledge and way of life was eroded as a result of the imposition of residential schools.¹⁰⁶



Royal Canadian Mounted Police Constable W. Yakemishin with a young Inuit boy in the Federal Day School at Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories.
Library and Archives Canada.



When I was Eight (Ages 4-8)

by Christy Jordan-Fenton & Margaret Pokiak-Fenton
Illustrations by: Gabrielle Grimard

When I was Eight is a powerful book based on the true story of Margaret Pokiak-Fenton. It is the account of a young Inuit girl who goes to a residential school and suffers terrible abuse from the nuns at the school.

Check out YouTube where the story is read by Leas Lion¹⁰⁷



104 Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, *Violence and Abuse Prevention, Residential Schools.*

105 Legacy of Hope, *We Were So Far Away: The Inuit Experience of Residential Schools.*

106 Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, *Violence and Abuse Prevention, Residential Schools.*

107 Read Aloud To You, YouTube (Sep. 2022)

Forced Relocation

At the time of the Cold War, the Canadian government wanted to assert northern sovereignty and it sought to do so by creating communities where people lived in the high Arctic. Families were forcibly removed from their home communities and displaced without adequate supplies or shelters.¹⁰⁸

While there were multiple government relocations of Inuit, in 2010, Member of Parliament John Duncan apologized on behalf of the Government of Canada for the most well-known relocation of the Inuit from Inukjuak, Nunavik. Known as the High Arctic Exiles, this group of 87 Inuit was persuaded by the Canadian government to leave their homes in 1953 and 1955. They were promised access to better hunting and the option to return home in two years. This promise was never fulfilled. They were taken to Ajuittuq, ᐱᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅ (Grise Fiord) and Quaasuituq (Resolute Bay), Nunavut, more than 2,000 kilometres away.¹⁰⁹

The Ahirmiut (the “out-of-the-way Dwellers”) filed a lawsuit against the federal government in 2008 to seek redress for their relocation. A \$5 million deal was ratified August 20, 2008, in Arviat, Nunavut. The action stemmed from a series of relocations that began in 1949 from Ennadai Lake in what is now the southwest corner of Nunavut.

[Ottawa, Inuit agree on compensation for forced relocation in 1950s, Aboriginal Peoples Television Network \(August 28, 2018\)](#)¹¹⁰

Inuit struggled to survive in this strange location as the living conditions were very different from northern Quebec. The sunny days were shorter and there was more darkness in the winter, with little vegetation or animals to hunt, gather or fish. Many Inuit suffered great hardship such as starvation and death during this period in history.¹¹¹

In 1996, the federal government agreed to pay \$10 million into a trust fund to compensate the families of the relocated people.

Sled Dog Slaughter

In the 1950s and 1960s, it was alleged that nearly 20,000 qimmiit or Inuit sled dogs were killed by the RCMP across Nunavik and the Baffin Region of what is now Nunavut.¹¹² Sled dogs were invaluable to hunting-based livelihoods and key to culture, survival, and community health.

It is a long-held belief that those dogs were slaughtered as a part of the Canadian Government’s plan to force the Inuit to assimilate and abandon their traditional lifestyle. Interviews from 350 Inuit were gathered during the Qikiqtani Truth Commission from 2007 to 2010. The Commission was set up in response to an RCMP investigation that found there was no evidence of a conspiracy by police to kill Inuit sled dogs and that RCMP were following animal control laws rather than executing federal assimilation policies.¹¹³ However, its findings grew to capture the larger picture of hardships faced by Inuit.

In August of 2019, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Carolyn Bennett, gave an apology to the Inuit of Baffin Island as the first step in the Qikiqtani Inuit Association’s (QIA’s) action plan. This is QIA’s plan to move forward from the wrongs done to Inuit by the Government of Canada from 1950 to 1975.

108 Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

109 Sponagle, “‘We called it ‘Prison Island’: Inuk man remembers forced relocation to Grise Fiord” CBC News (2017-07-18).

110 APTN News, Ottawa Inuit agree on compensation for forced relocation in 1950s.

111 Ibid.

112 “Inuit dog killings no conspiracy: report” *CBC News* (2010-10-20).

113 Qikiqtani Truth Commission, *Thematic Reports and Special Studies 1950–1975, QTC Final Report: Achieving Saimaqatigiingniq* (2013).

“We failed to provide you with proper housing, adequate medical care, education, economic viability and jobs. We took away your independence by imposing our own priorities and forcing you to survive in a difficult environment and in locations that were not of your choosing, nor your traditional home.”

Tuberculosis in Inuit Communities

From the 1940s to the 1960s, there was a tuberculosis (TB) epidemic in Inuit communities. Similar to the Sixties Scoop, the federal government removed thousands of Inuit patients from their communities to hospitals and sanatoriums down south for treatment via trains, aircraft, and large ships.¹¹⁴ Many Inuit were not able to say goodbye to their families before leaving. Many of them died in treatment centres and families were not told about what happened to them or where they were buried.¹¹⁵ In March 2019, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau apologized for the Government of Canada’s “colonial and misguided” process of handling the TB epidemic that separated family members from each other.¹¹⁶

The Public Health Agency of Canada reported in 2018 that the rate of tuberculosis among Inuit in Canada was 290 times the rate among non-Indigenous people born in Canada.¹¹⁷ There continues to be a national Inuit and Government of Canada strategy to eliminate TB in Inuit communities by 2030.¹¹⁸ Over-crowded housing, poverty, malnutrition and a high percentage of smoking continue to exacerbate and spread high rates of TB in Inuit communities.¹¹⁹

Recent research papers and articles have substantiated the poor and cruel treatment of the Inuit at various “Indian Hospitals” and sanatoriums.

114 S. Hogan, “Tuberculosis rate among Inuit is 290 times higher than for non-Indigenous people in Canada. Here’s why” *CBC News* (2019-03-08).

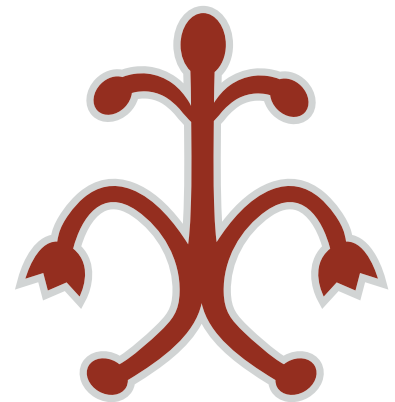
115 Ibid.

116 T. Pedwell, “We are sorry’: Tears as Trudeau apologizes for mistreatment of Inuit during TB outbreaks” *The Canadian Press* (2019-03-08).

117 M. Patterson, S. Flinn, K. Barker, “Addressing tuberculosis among Inuit in Canada” *Canada Communicable Disease Report*, Volume 44-3/4, (2018-03-01).

118 Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, “Progress Update from Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Government of Canada on Inuit TB Elimination” (2019-03-24).

119 S. Hogan, “Tuberculosis rate among Inuit is 290 times higher than for non-Indigenous people in Canada. Here’s why” *CBC News* (2019-03-08).



Inuit Rights and Land Claims

Inuit are not included in the *Indian Act* and are considered a separate and distinct population. However, in 1939 the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in a reference that “Eskimos” were considered Indians under the section 91(24) and to whom the federal government had a fiduciary obligation.¹²⁰



Source: Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

Following the Calder decision in 1973 wherein Indigenous title to traditional lands was recognized, Inuit have received support from both International and Canadian law in recognizing their territorial rights over the Arctic waters, ice and the resources above and below the ice cover. The James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement, signed in 1975, marked a turning point in the history of the Inuit. This agreement granted self-government and a number of benefits and services to the Cree, Inuit and Naskapi, and is considered the first modern land claims settlement in Canada.¹²¹

Large areas of Inuit Nunangat are covered by treaties between Canada and the Inuit. The majority of Inuit view these as agreements to share their territories, rather than giving up their title to the land. Each of the four regions within the Nunangat have their own unique land claims agreements. These treaties cover Inuit rights over areas of the ocean and not just the land they occupy.

¹²⁰ Reference as to whether “Indians” includes in s. 91 (24) of the B.N.A. Act includes Eskimo in habitants of the Province of Quebec, 1939, CanLII 22 (SCC), [1939] SCR 104.

¹²¹ Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

Nunatsiavut Land Claims Agreement

The Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement is a precedent setting document in that it includes self-government provisions, making Nunatsiavut the first of the Inuit regions in Canada to have achieved self-government. The agreement was made official on June 15, 2005, with the passing of Bill C-56, and came into effect on December 1, 2005, when the constitution was ratified.¹²²

The Nunatsiavut Government is an Inuit regional government with authority over many central governance areas including health, education, culture and language, justice, and community matters.¹²³ Nunatsiavut remains part of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Nunavik Land Claims Agreement

On December 1, 2006, the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement was signed, providing for ownership of 80% of the islands in the Nunavik Marine Region, and overlap agreements between the Inuit of Nunavik and the Inuit of Nunavut, the Cree of Eeyou Istchee, and the Inuit of Nunatsiavut. Some of these agreements include joint ownership of lands, shared land and water management, equal engagement in impact assessment processes and the sharing of wildlife and other benefits.

Nunavut Land Claims Agreement

The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) is the largest Indigenous land claim settlement in Canadian history. When the Agreement was signed on April 1, 1999, legislation was also passed leading to the creation of a new self-governing territory called Nunavut, whose land mass was previously part of the Northwest Territories.

The NLCA gives title to Inuit-owned lands measuring about 350,000 square kilometers, of which about 35,000 square kilometers include mineral rights.

Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) was set up as a private corporation in 1993 to ensure that promises made in the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement are carried out. In 2006, NTI launched a lawsuit against the Government of Canada for failure to implement promises made under the NLCA. This was settled in 2015, providing funding, new dispute resolution processes and training opportunities for Inuit public service members.¹²⁴

Inuvialuit Land Claims

After 10 years of negotiations, the Government of Canada and the Inuvialuit signed the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA) on June 5, 1984. It was the first comprehensive land claim agreement signed north of the 60th parallel and only the second in Canada at that time.

In the IFA, the Inuvialuit agreed to give up their exclusive use of their ancestral lands in exchange for certain other guaranteed rights from the Government of Canada. The rights came in three forms: land, wildlife management and financial compensation.

The Inuvialuit have been negotiating a self-government agreement since 1996. The parties are close to finalizing the self-government agreement, financial agreements and implementation plan.¹²⁵

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

Today, leaders of the Inuit rights-holding land claims organizations together govern a national representational organization called Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), which exists to protect and advance the rights and interests of Inuit in Canada. Located in Ottawa, ITK represents a unified Inuit perspective in its relations with the government, especially on issues where treaty rights might be affected by government decisions.

¹²² Nunatsiavut Government, *The Path to Self-Government*.

¹²³ Nunatsiavut Government.

¹²⁴ Nunatsiavut Government, *Settlement Agreement Signed in NTI Lawsuit* (2015-05-04).

¹²⁵ Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, *Self-Government*.



CHAPTER III

METIS



Métis

Métis are a distinct Indigenous people recognized in the Constitution as one of three Indigenous Peoples with historical roots in this country. The history of the Métis Nation dates back to the late 18th to early 19th centuries as a people of the fur trade. Their ancestral heritage largely traces to the unions of Scottish and French (although not exclusively) men and Cree, Saukteaux (Anishnaabe), Dakota, and Dene (although not exclusively) women who married within the context of that economic environment in order to facilitate relationships that made trade possible.

The historic Métis had distinct cultures and lifeways, were recognized as being their own people and were given distinct names by Indigenous nations and by the European fur traders, such as Otipemisiwak, Apeetogosan, gens libres and Bois-brûlés.¹²⁶

Métis people have worked to have their rights restored and be recognized as a distinct Indigenous people. In 1982, with the determination of Métis communities and their leaders, the Métis were identified in section 35 of the *Constitution Act* as one of three Aboriginal peoples in Canada. In 2016, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the Métis (as well as non-status Indians) were in fact “Indians” under the meaning of s. 91(24) of the *British North America Act* and therefore are a federal jurisdiction in the same way that status Indian and Inuit peoples have been legally defined.

The Métis flag is the oldest flag to originate in Canada. The infinity sign represents the joining of two cultures and the “existence of a people forever.”

¹²⁶ Canadian Geographic, *Métis Identity*.



RCMP



Cpl. Keith Hendricks (Red River Métis of St. Laurent and Winnipeg, MB) wearing a traditional Métis Sash, NHQ Leikin 2019

Demographics

Métis are one of Canada's fastest growing demographic groups. According to the 2021 Statistics Canada survey, 624,220 people self-identified as Métis. Of that 224,650 reported being a registered member of a Métis Organization or settlement. This makes the Métis people the second largest Indigenous nation in the country. Métis account for 34.5% of the overall Indigenous population. Today, 55.4% of Métis people reside in an urban center.¹²⁷

The census counted 224,655 people reporting membership in a Métis organization or Settlement, with four-fifths (79.8%) reporting being a member of one of the five signatories of the Canada-Métis Nation Accord (2017). Among other objectives, the accord sought to “advance reconciliation of the rights, claims, interests and aspirations of the Métis Nation.” Five Métis governments are recognized as signatories of this accord: the Manitoba Metis Federation, the Métis Nation—Saskatchewan, the Métis Nation of Alberta, Métis Nation British Columbia and the Métis Nation of Ontario).¹²⁸

Many areas within the traditional Homeland have governing bodies that represents the Métis. In Alberta, governing bodies include the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) and the Alberta Federation of Métis Settlements (AFMS), also referred to as the Métis Settlements of Alberta. Other provincial and regional governing bodies recognized within Canada include, the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan (MN-S), Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC), Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) (this includes all Red River Métis who want to be part of MMF regardless of where they live in) and the Northwest Territory Métis Nation (NWTMN). The Métis National Council (MNC) is a federal level governing body.

¹²⁷ Statistics Canada.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

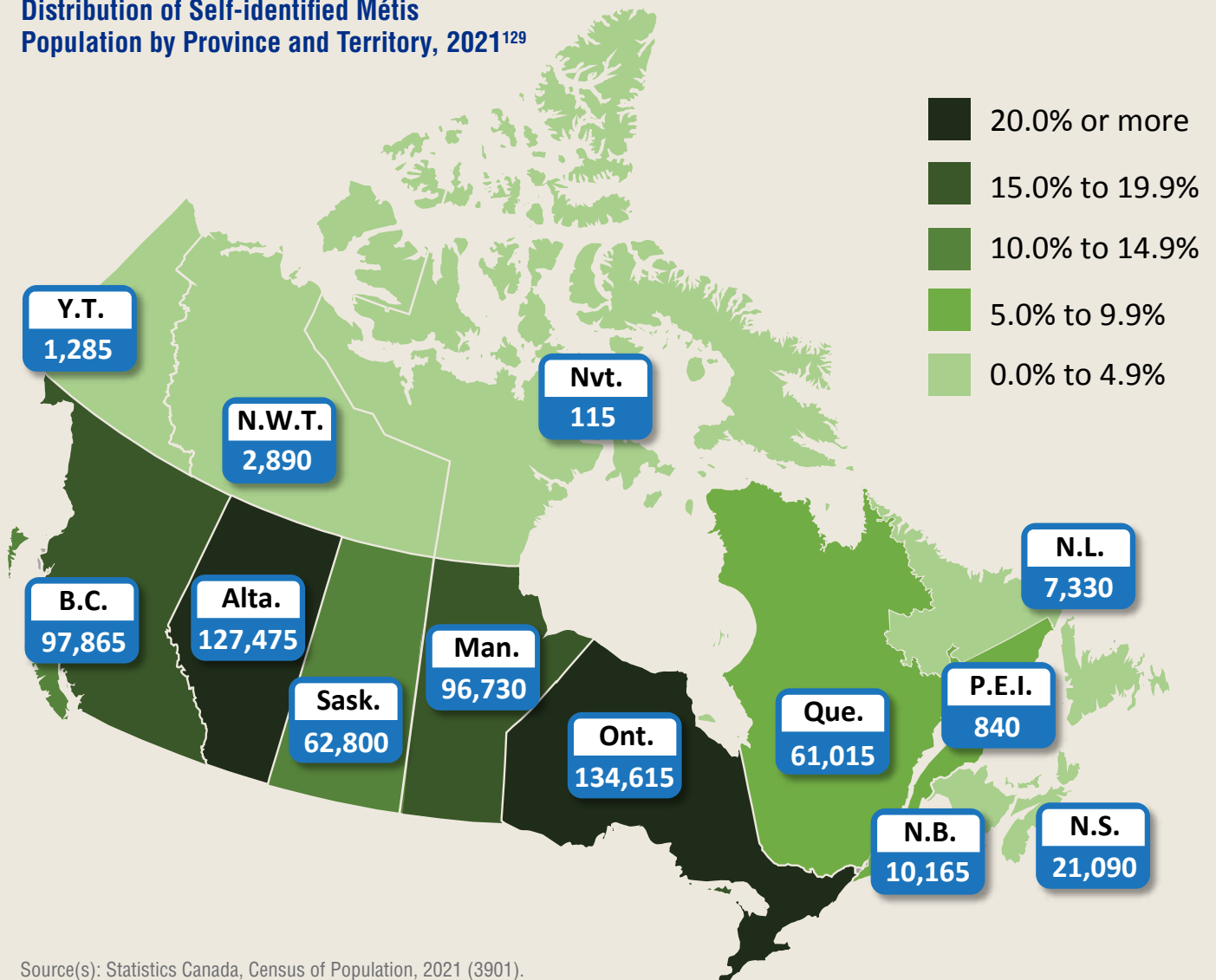
Eastern Canada

The increase in Métis self-identification in Atlantic Canada, for example, is a growing concern for the Mi'kmaq, as well as for Métis organizations in the west who state that the generalized eastern claims to Treaty and inherent rights diminish efforts made by actual beneficiaries of the Peace and Friendship Treaties, which historically did not extend as far as Atlantic Canada. Métis are now protected under s. 91 of the *Constitution Act* if they are formally recognized by the MNC.



This traditional Métis Sash is one of the many Indigenous items in the Indigenous Spirit Room at Depot. This room provides a quiet place of reflection, meditation and prayer.

Distribution of Self-identified Métis Population by Province and Territory, 2021¹²⁹



Source(s): Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021 (3901).

Language

Métis are primarily known for speaking Michif, the official language of the Métis Nation. According to Statistics Canada, less than 500 people speak Michif today.¹³⁰ However, Métis speak other languages, including French Michif, a dialect of Canadian French with some Algonquian linguistic features, Northern Michif, a Plains Cree dialect with extensive borrowing of French nouns, *nêhinawêwin* (Swampy Cree or the “N” dialect), *nêhiyawêwin* (Plains Cree or “Y” dialect), *nakawêwîwin* (Saulteaux or Plains Ojibwa), and *dênesųlîné* (Chipewyan/Dene).¹³¹

thank you = maarsii

hello = taanishi or boon zhoor

Métis also spoke Bungi or Bungee, a Métis dialect of English that includes many Cree and Scots Gaelic words. It was spoken in Manitoba wherever Scots-Métis settled. Métis working in the fur trade also spoke Slavey Jargon (Slavey mixed with French and Cree) in what is now southern Yukon, and Chinook Jargon or Chinook Wawa (a trade language made up of Nootka, Chinook, French and English words) throughout the Pacific Northwest.¹³²

All Métis heritage languages are endangered. Losing any of them would mean losing a rich oral tradition, healing traditions, spiritual systems, communitarian values and harvesting strategies.

¹³⁰ Statistics Canada.

¹³¹ Canadian Geographic, *Languages*.

¹³² Ibid.

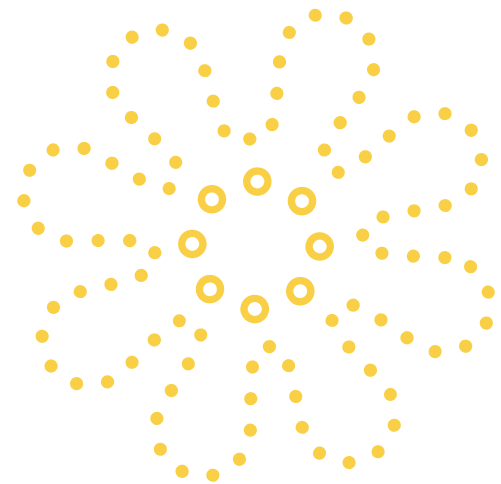
¹³³ Canadian Geographic, *Worldview*.

Culture

Spiritual Beliefs

Métis spirituality is reflected in the diversity of Métis people themselves. Many Métis are Catholics, others are mainline Protestants, some are evangelical Protestants, some are Jehovah’s Witnesses, others are Mormon, many more adhere to the old “Indian religions,” and some blend Christianity with traditional Indigenous spirituality. Mixed spiritual practice was very common among many traditional Métis.

Respect for the dead is a cornerstone of traditional Métis spirituality. When loved ones die, wakes are usually held for four days. Ancestors are remembered and honoured through prayers and offerings. All Souls’ Day (November 2nd) is an important liturgical event. Often, when feasts are held, an extra table setting with food and cutlery is set for the ancestors, and after the meal concludes, the food is put into a fire to honour them. The northern lights, or “*lii chiraan*” in Michif, are believed to contain the souls of the dead who are dancing. Métis Elders say that you should never whistle at the northern lights, otherwise the dead will take you away. This belief is from the Métis’ Cree and Ojibway ancestral cultures.¹³³



Traditional Medicines

There are four traditional medicines that the Métis use—sweetgrass (fwayn seukrii, fwayn di bufflo), cedar (li sayd), sage (l'aarbr a saent) and tobacco (li tabaa). These plant medicines are used for cleansing, for sacred offerings and for prayer.

Métis Oral Tradition

Métis oral tradition is rooted in spirituality. Creation stories of how things came to be are usually told as trickster stories. Roogaroo (werewolf) or li Jiyaab (the Devil) stories are told so children do not forget their spiritual obligations to the Creator. In addition, traditional prayers and the giving of thanks in Métis heritage languages are handed down to families and are told only on very specific occasions. Some narratives in the oral tradition are considered sacred and are told only at certain times, and only to specific people.

Métis stories are often ongoing and can be carried over through time. The stories are layered and have multiple meanings, so people of varying ages will be left with different interpretations. Valuable life lessons are taught in the Métis oral tradition and are not just for entertainment purposes. They are an integral component of the Métis worldview and have an undercurrent of fact and should not be easily dismissed as myth or superstition. They are important to the Métis storytellers because they connect the storyteller to their Elders, ancestors and language.

Métis stories should be treated with respect. The storyteller who is sharing the story is doing so for a specific reason. If you retell a Métis story, you must obtain the permission from the storyteller who told it to you. Not obtaining permission is a grave insult.¹³⁴

Worldview

The Métis worldview is centred around family relations as the underpinning of all aspects of life, whether social, economic, or political. This worldview is expressed in Cree through the term “wahkootowin” which, simply defined, means relative. Within their worldview about family, creating and acknowledging relatives is key to understanding the world within a web of interconnected relationships.

Being a good relative means that relatives share responsibilities and social obligations to one another, but wahkootowin as a conceptual framework ensures that the shared history of a people is remembered and passed on to future generations. It is essential in ensuring the collective memory of a people is maintained. When stories are told about the community, they include the involvement of people within the community who then assume the moral responsibility to remember that narrative.¹³⁵ In this way Métis people have continued to tell the stories of their communities even after having been removed from traditional lands and often ending up in urban contexts.

Traditional Knowledge and Conservation

Traditional knowledge is still an emerging field of study. In the past, it was often thought that only First Nations and Inuit possessed traditional knowledge and most studies tended to leave out Métis forms of understanding the natural world.

Métis people have a wide and varied knowledge system, including ancestral knowledge that goes well beyond the mainstream understanding of science. Métis worldviews teach that we must walk humbly upon the land and respect the fact that Métis, as a people, were the last of all those created. Among Métis people, the protection and conservation of water is of paramount importance. It is understood that nothing can exist without water and that it is the lifeblood of Mother Earth.

134 Canadian Geographic, *Languages*.

135 N. McLeod, “Coming Home Through Stories” in *(Ad)ressing Our Words: Aboriginal Perspectives on Aboriginal Literatures* (Penticton: Theytus Books, 2001), pp. 20.

Role of Elders

In Métis society, the role of Elders is central to the transmission of Métis culture and spirituality to the next generation. In Michif, Elders are called “lii vyeu” or the “old people.” They were also known in Michif as “Ahneegay-kaashigakick” or “the ones who know.”¹³⁶ Elders are considered by their community to be traditional knowledge keepers and often work with youth in order to ensure that Métis culture is passed on. Métis Elders are respected and valued within their communities and their advice is often sought when a decision affecting the entire group is going to be made. It is generally understood that the knowledge and experiences of an Elder can provide an important perspective that might not otherwise be considered.

Métis Elders, in some communities, hold sacred stories and know how to conduct traditional ceremonies in order to facilitate healing in a person. Some Elders are also traditional medicine people who can assist those suffering physically, spiritually, emotionally or mentally by utilizing different traditional medicines.

When working with Elders, you must follow strict protocols. When sharing information or stories related to Elders, you must first seek their permission, and you must acknowledge them when relating the information. You should always present Elders with a gift for sharing their wisdom with you. This could be a tobacco offering or a small gift (something that they can use or appreciate) or an honorarium. It is always best to clarify the protocol with the Elder or their helper ahead of time. At public gatherings, Elders are always acknowledged and served first at mealtime.¹³⁷

Métis Music and Dance

Music and dance are a central aspect of all cultures and, in this way, Métis fiddle music and jigging have come to represent Métis culture. Early on, Métis families acquired fiddles from Scottish and French fur traders that were making their way northwest along the trade waterways. Métis, who originally established their communities along the banks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, learned to play and love fiddle tunes and it was at this site that the famous “Red River Jig” fiddle tune and dance were created. Today, most Métis celebrations feature fiddling and jigging.



Métis musicians - Music and dance were important parts of Métis culture. They are famous for their fiddle music and dancing.

Source: First Peoples of Canada

¹³⁶ Canadian Geographic, *Worldview*.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

The Métis Sash

There is no symbol more closely tied to Métis identity than that of the Métis Sash. Brought to the western plains by voyageurs from French Canada, the Sash was originally designed in the village of L'Assomption northeast of Montreal. Often referred to as the “ceinture flechée” meaning “arrow belt”, the Sash became an important staple in the fur trade during the late 18th century. The Sash could, for instance, serve as a belt to hold a coat closed, but was also used as a towel, wash cloth, saddle blanket, tourniquet, rope or pulley; and its fringe could be used as an emergency sewing kit, or to hold keys and other objects.¹³⁸



A/Commr. Breton and Constable Brochu (Métis, Red Deer, AB), first Métis person to wear a Métis Sash at Graduation Ceremonies at Depot 2019.

Today, the Sash is worn predominantly during celebrations and is a symbol of Métis pride. It has come to represent Métis culture, and, for many Métis, there are protocols surrounding how to wear and care for a sash. Historically, only men wore sashes, but today people of any gender wear them. In the past, shawls, often in a tartan pattern, were worn. These articles of clothing are now making a comeback in many Métis communities.

Celebrations

In most provinces across the Métis Homeland, Louis Riel Day is celebrated on November 16th, which commemorates the anniversary of his death. In Ontario, Métis people mark the anniversary of the Powley Decision each year on September 19th. Each July in Saskatchewan, the annual Back to Batoche Gathering is held near the Batoche National Historic Site. The Back to Batoche festival is the largest Métis gathering in the Homeland and draws thousands of people each year.



History

Fur Trade

The earliest Métis settlements are connected to the fur trade, its transportation system and bison-hunting activities. Because of this, the traditional Métis Homeland is largely defined as being fur trade territory. It is extensive and includes dozens of communities in Western Canada, Northwest Ontario, Northwest Territories, Montana, Minnesota and North Dakota. Many Métis men found work as traders, translators, boatmen and other fur trade occupations.

The influx of non-Indigenous settlers that moved westward at the turn of the 19th century was the first of many waves of newcomers arriving in the area. Their arrival directly impacted the way of life of Métis as well as First Nations peoples living on and relying upon the resources of the Plains. The impending threat to Métis ways of life represented by the settlers began a period of Métis resistance movements aimed at securing their rights to the land they had occupied and survived on for generations.

Red River Resistance 1869-1870

The resistance began as a response to the largest land sale in history. In 1869, Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) sold Rupert's Land to the Dominion of Canada for \$1.5 million (while being granted 1/20th of all land in the area near the southern border called the Fertile Belt, amounting to nearly 7 million acres) without consulting its Indigenous residents. Métis were surprised at this attempted transfer of their homeland and felt that HBC did not possess the right to sell the territory without consultation or consent.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada, *Métis, Communities* and Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research, *Red River Cart*.



Louis Riel
(1844-1885)

Louis Riel was an important Métis leader and figure in both Métis and Canadian history who led the fight for Métis rights and sovereignty in Canada. He was a central figure in the Red River and North-West resistances.

Riel led two popular Métis governments and was central in bringing Manitoba into Confederation. He was executed for high treason and hanged in Regina, SK, for his role in the 1885 resistance to Canadian encroachment on Métis lands. This was controversial then and it is controversial now. The Métis see his execution as judicial murder.

Initially dismissed as a rebel by Canadian historians, he is now acknowledged as a Métis leader who fought to protect his people who were wronged by the Canadian government.

In the century following his execution, the cultural awakening Riel had dreamed of has happened. Métis people are proud of the sacrifices their ancestors made, particularly the sacrifice made by Riel himself. Riel is officially recognized as a founder of the province of Manitoba. Today, Métis people across the Homeland commemorate the life and legacy of Louis Riel each year on November 16th and annually in July meet at Batoche to reaffirm their connection to one another.

Source: The Canadian Encyclopedia, Louis Riel (Plan Language Summary), 2022

The Red River Resistance, often referred through a colonial perspective as the Red River Rebellion, began when Louis Riel gathered together men and successfully turned back the surveyors. Angered, the Red River Métis formed the National Committee of the Métis and called for an independent Métis republic on October 16, 1869. They elected John Bruce as president and Louis Riel as secretary.

On November 2, 1869, 500 Métis seized Upper Fort Garry, where the Council of Assiniboia (the pre-1869 government) met and where HBC had its main administrative offices in the region. Métis gained food, armaments, and a defensive position from which to advance their cause.¹⁴⁰

In early December 1869, the Métis formed a provisional government that was eventually led by Louis Riel. This government negotiated with the Dominion government to enact the formal entry of Rupert's Land into the Canadian Confederation. In January 1870, the Convention of Forty (20 English Métis and 20 French Métis) met to draft the second "List of Rights" (entitling it the *Bill of Rights*), which formed the basis of the *Manitoba Act, 1870*. This list of rights outlined the need for Métis people to have their rights to land acknowledged and protected. On May 12, 1870, the *Bill of Rights* was ratified and became the *Manitoba Act, 1870*. For the Métis, this Act included significant provisions such as bilingual denominational schools, judicial and parliamentary systems, and measures to address their "Indian" title to the land, through the granting of 1.4 million acres of land to "the children of the half-breed heads of families."¹⁴¹

As a result of the *Manitoba Act, 1870*, the province of Manitoba entered into Confederation in July 1870. Many Canadians moved to Manitoba and, as newcomers, were often hostile to the Métis' desire to assert their hard-fought rights. For instance, the Métis were persecuted for their role in the Red River Resistance and the

execution of Thomas Scott. He was an Orangeman from Ontario and was part of the original survey teams. Scott was tried and executed by firing squad by the provisional government. English Canada held Louis Riel personally responsible on what they regarded as the murder of Scott.

As a response, the Red River Expeditionary Force was organized and sent to take control of the region and locate Riel in order to bring him to 'justice' in August 1870. Canadian troops arrived in Manitoba and began a reign of terror against Métis citizens. Métis women were raped, and some Métis men were murdered. As a result of such an intolerable climate of violence and fear, more than half of the Métis in the new province of Manitoba left for the North-West Territories or the Dakota territory.¹⁴²

Scrip

The Métis scrip system was implemented after the 1869-70 Red River Resistance. Under the *Manitoba Act*, the federal government had a fiduciary responsibility (Section 43) to protect Aboriginal rights for both Métis and First Nations. This meant they had a duty to limit non-Indigenous settlement in a region until the local First Nations and Métis inhabitants had their Aboriginal title dealt with through treaty and scrip. "Section 125 of the Act paved the way for the infamous scrip system implemented by the federal government in an ineffectual attempt to extinguish the land rights of Métis".¹⁴³

A provision of the Act set aside 1.4 million acres of land for the children of Métis families in an effort to settle land claim issues. Once this land grant was exhausted, the government supplemented it through scrip distribution to individuals rather than the collective. Sadly, most of the initial 1.4 million acres of land wound up in the hands of non-Métis settlers.

140 Canadian Geographic, *Red River Resistance*.

141 Ibid.

142 Ibid.

143 Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada, *Scrip*.

Dominion Lands Act: *The Dominion Lands Act* became law in 1872. The Act provided free homesteads to those who (mainly Euro-settlers) applied to settle on farm and ranch land in Western Canada — provided they settled the land, farmed on it and made improvements to their property. The *Dominion Lands Act* also provided the legal basis for the establishment of the scrip system.

In 1879, amendments to the *Dominion Lands Act* acknowledged that the Métis had outstanding claims to their lands in the North-West Territories (including land in what is now Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan).¹⁴⁴

There are two types of scrip that were created. One was the land scrip (paper certificates) and the other was the money scrip. At the beginning, the value of the scrip was a choice between 160 acres of land or \$160 cash to be used for the purchase of land. The value increased later to 240 acres or \$240. First Nations people, also took scrip and became Métis. As a result, some family members would become Status Indians and others would be Métis.

The issuance of scrip to Métis people in Manitoba was slow and many became frustrated by the process. After the Battle of Batoche, the federal government was prompted to deal more quickly with land claims, and between 1885 and 1921 there were no less than twelve Half-breed Claims Commissions set up to distribute scrip. It is believed that up to 90% of the scrip issued to Métis ended up in the hands of speculators and bankers. As there was also no protection against fraud. Land speculators forged names without knowledge or bought scrip from Métis at very low prices and then sold it to the main chartered banks in Canada. Land speculators ended up obtaining 12,560 money scrips out of the 14,849 Issued. Only one per cent of the 138,320 acres of land scrip issued was left to the Métis in northwest Saskatchewan.¹⁴⁵



Sheet of Cancelled Land Scrip certificates, January 20, 1905, RG15, Vol. 1406

Land scrip to Métis: Library and Archives Canada

¹⁴⁴ Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada, Scrip.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

North-West Resistance 1885

The North-West Resistance was a violent, five-month uprising against the Canadian government fought mainly by Métis militants and their Indigenous allies in what is now Saskatchewan and Alberta. It was caused by rising fear and insecurity among the Métis and Indigenous Peoples as well as the white settlers of the rapidly changing West. A series of battles and other outbreaks of violence in 1885 left hundreds of people dead with the Resistance eventually being defeated by federal troops. The result was the permanent enforcement of Canadian law in the West, the suppression of the Métis and the Plains tribes.¹⁴⁶

On July 6, 1885, Louis Riel was tried for high treason for his role in the 1885 Resistance. He was found guilty and executed on November 16, 1885 at the North-West Mounted Police Barracks in Regina, SK (now the RCMP training academy, Depot.)¹⁴⁷ Shortly after this, six Cree and two Assiniboine men were hanged in Battleford, SK, for their involvement in the Resistance at conflicts situated at Cut Knife that were focused on the state's violation of Treaty Six and policy of forced starvation. This was meant to suppress First Nations autonomy and make them more compliant to the federal government's goals of assimilation.¹⁴⁸

The hanging of Riel devastated tight-knit Métis families who clung to each other more than ever in the wake of their culture being vilified by the Canadian government. In the years that followed, Métis people held on to the belief that they would one day witness the cultural rebirth Riel had spoken of prior to his death when the Métis could once again take pride in their traditions rather than closely protecting them within the privacy of their homes.

For an in-depth historical account of the 1885 North-West Resistance and the Mounted Police check out the Canadian Geographic Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada.

Insp. Eric Sheppard, RCMP



Red River Cart location at the exact site of Riels execution in 1885 at Depot RCMP Training Academy.

Road Allowance People 1900-1960

After the 1885 North-West Resistance, many displaced, landless Métis squatted on Crown land set aside for the creation of roads in parts of the prairie provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. This Crown land became known as “li shmaen dii liings” in Michif.¹⁴⁹ Métis “squattin communities” could be found along in areas where there was temporary employment. Métis worked for farmers picking rocks and roots, clearing trees, and doing other labour jobs. They were paid minimal wages or were paid with bits of food such as chicken, pork, or beef. As a result,

146 Canada School of Public Service, *Indigenous Historical Timeline*.

147 RCMP Heritage Centre

148 Bob Beal, Rod Macleod (Updated by Richard Foot and Eli Yarhi, “North-West Rebellion” *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (Published February 7, 2006; Last Edited February 22, 2019).

149 Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada, Canadian Geographic – Metis Communities

they could not afford to buy their own homes or pay rent. Their shelters were usually uninsulated structures, roofed with tar paper and built from discarded lumber or logs and various “recycled” materials. These small one- or two-room dwellings housed entire families.¹⁵⁰

To supplement their income, many families picked Seneca root, picked berries, grew gardens, trapped and hunted game. Unfortunately, by 1939, laws were put in place making it illegal to hunt and trap out of season or without a licence. Many Métis went to jail or had to pay expensive fines for hunting out of season. In many cases, the animals they were hunting were their only source of food.

Michif was spoken among community members, and the Elders provided a traditional education to the children because they were not allowed to go to school if their parents did not pay property taxes. Métis were independent and provided for their families the best they could. Community members helped one another, and families were close-knit. Even though life was difficult on the road allowance, many Métis Elders look back fondly on a time when life was simpler and people looked out for one another.¹⁵¹

Métis Population Betterment Act

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, there was public pressure to deal with the “Métis problem.” In places like “Little Chicago,” near Lestock, SK, or Ste. Madeleine, MB, Métis families were forcibly removed. In Ste. Madeleine, families returned home from hunting to find all their homes had been burned down to make way for a community pasture for the Euro-settlers.

This forced the Alberta and Saskatchewan governments to address the economic, social, and political marginalization of the road allowance people. Métis leaders such as Malcolm Norris, Jim Brady and Peter Tomkins, convinced the Alberta government to enact the Métis Population Betterment Act in 1938. This created 12 Métis colonies — now known as the Alberta Métis Settlements, the only legislated Métis land base in Canada. Saskatchewan developed various Métis rehabilitation schemes such as Métis farms and colonies and special Métis schools, although these were shut down in the mid-1950s.

Residential Schools

Métis children were part of the residential school system and “Indian” day schools along with First Nations and Inuit students from the time that residential schools first opened until the closure of the last school in 1996. Métis children were sometimes sent to the federally-run schools, however, from a jurisdictional perspective, the federal government believed that the responsibility for educating and assimilating Métis people lay with provincial and territorial governments. It viewed the Métis as members of the ‘dangerous classes,’ whom the residential schools were intended to civilize and assimilate. As a result, sometimes Indian Agents would be instructed to remove Métis students from federally funded residential schools.¹⁵²

The Métis experience is an important reminder that the impact of residential schools extends beyond the formal residential school program that Indian Affairs operated. Existing records make it impossible to say how many Métis children attended residential schools. They would have undergone the same experiences—the high death rates, limited diets, crowded and unsanitary housing, harsh discipline, heavy workloads, neglect, and abuse.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada, Canadian Geographic – Métis.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

Métis Rights and Land Claims

Métis People and Treaty

From the mid to late 19th century and into the early 20th century the government of Canada engaged in treaty negotiations with First Nations peoples from Ontario to Alberta. During negotiations of the Robinson treaties and the Numbered treaties, First Nations chiefs and leaders often attempted to have their Métis relatives included in treaties under their own leadership. The response of treaty commissioners was that only those who were considered Indian would be allowed to enter into treaty and that all those considered “half-breeds” would not be included unless they entered treaty under the leadership of Indian chiefs and as members of Indian bands. Within that context, Métis would cease legally to be Métis, and would become registered as Indians under Canadian law.

There was one notable exception to this process. In 1873 a “Half-breed Adhesion” to Treaty 3 was signed in the territory around Rainy Lake and Rainy River, in what is now northwestern Ontario, under the leadership of Nicholas Chastelain/Chatelain. The adhesion outlined lands that were to be set aside for the creation of a Métis reserve. Along with land there were to be annuity payments, cattle and farm implements provided. The significance of the Half-breed Adhesion to Treaty 3 was that, unlike in previous and later treaties, Métis people were included as a distinct cultural group, rather than being classified as either Indian or White. This also signified the formal acknowledgement of Métis people having inherent Indigenous title to lands in northern Ontario by the Canadian government. However, the adhesion was never honoured by Canada and in 1876 the Métis families were removed from the treaty list unilaterally.

Manitoba Métis Federation Land Claim Decision

As discussed previously, Métis entered into confederation on the terms of the *Manitoba Act* which set out that 1.4 million acres of land would be set aside for the children of the Métis. Despite the terms of the agreement most of the land did not end up being owned by Métis families due to the poorly administered scrip system. In 1981, the Manitoba Métis Federation launched a lawsuit against the federal government claiming that Canada had failed in its constitutional obligations to the Métis.

After 32 years, the case made its way to the Supreme Court of Canada where, on March 8, 2013, the Supreme Court Justices ruled in favour of the Manitoba Métis Federation stating that “the unfinished business of reconciliation of the Métis people with Canadian sovereignty is a matter of national and constitutional import.”¹⁵⁴ The decision is significant because it provides the opportunity for Canada and the Métis to discuss the prospect of a land claims settlement in future.

¹⁵⁴ National Post, Supreme Court Ruling Opens Door for Métis People to Negotiate Claim to Vast Tracts of Land, Including all of present-day Winnipeg. March 8, 2013. Accessed June 10, 2014.



Recognition of Métis Rights

In the past 15 years, there have been a number of important decisions made by the Supreme Court of Canada recognizing and affirming Métis rights in the areas of harvesting and land claims and articulating federal obligations to Métis people. The following provides an overview of some of the most important rights-related decisions to be made so far.

The R v. Powley Decision¹⁵⁵

Two Métis men from Sault Ste. Marie shot a moose and tagged it using their Métis Nation of Ontario citizenship card. The Powleys claimed that they were exercising their Métis right to hunt for food for the winter. On September 19, 2003, in a landmark ruling, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the Powleys had the right to hunt in their traditional territory and set out rules for determining future harvesting rights. These rules comprise what is now known as the Powley Test for determining traditional Métis harvesting rights.

In 2004, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) and the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) signed an agreement whereby the MNR would recognize the MNO's Harvester's Card Registry which entitles Métis to harvest in their traditional territories.

The Powley Case marks the first time that the Canadian government has acknowledged the right of Métis to harvest in their traditional territories. Subsequently, the Manitoba Métis Federation has also signed a harvesting agreement with the province of Manitoba in 2012. This agreement would not have been possible without the Powley Decision.

The Daniels v. Canada Decision¹⁵⁶

Métis political leader Harry Daniels worked all of his professional life to ensure that the rights of Métis people would be recognized and affirmed. He was integral in ensuring that Métis were included in the 1982 constitution, and in 1999, Harry Daniels, a Métis political leader, led a lawsuit against the federal government in which they claimed that Métis and non-Status Indians should be considered *Indians* under section 91 (24) of the *Constitution Act* of 1867 for the purposes of law. The case further asked for two additional declarations: that the federal government owes a fiduciary duty to the Métis and non-Status Indians and that these two groups of people have a right to be consulted and negotiated with in good faith by the federal government on a collective basis through representatives of their choice, respecting all rights, interests, and needs as Aboriginal peoples.

On January 8, 2013, the Federal Court affirmed that Métis and non-Status Indians should be considered Indians under section 91(24) of the Constitution. The federal government immediately appealed the decision, which was upheld by the Federal Court of Appeal and then it went to the Supreme Court of Canada which ruled in 2016 that the term *Indian* in s. 91(24) did in fact include Métis and non-status Indians but declined to make the second and third declarations stating that the existence of a fiduciary relationship and the possibility of duty to consult was already settled in law.



¹⁵⁵ *R v Powley*, 2003 SCC 43

¹⁵⁶ Indian Affairs and Northern Development, *Daniels v Canada*, [2016] 1 SCR 99

Future of the Métis Nation

More and more people are celebrating their Métis identity and culture. Métis youth play an important role in the governing of the contemporary Métis Nation by their participation in youth councils across the Homeland. It is the responsibility of youth sitting as elected representatives on these councils to ensure that youth perspectives are present in conversations that concern matters of nationhood.

The Government of Canada has committed to nation-to-nation, government-to-government relationships with the Métis with the signing in Ottawa of the Canada-Métis Nation Accord during the first Métis Nation-Crown Summit on April 13, 2017. As well, Framework Agreements between Canada and governing members (Métis Nation of Ontario, Métis Nation of Saskatchewan and Métis Nation of Alberta) of the Métis National Council are now in place.

"My people will sleep for one hundred years,
but when they awake, it will be the artists who
give them their spirit back."

By Oral Tradition Attributed to Louis Riel
Source: Manitoba Métis Federation



CHAPTER IV

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND POLICING



Indigenous Peoples and Policing

Indigenous Peoples and Canada have had a long-standing relationship that dates back hundreds of years. In a 2012 speech at the Crown-First Nation Gathering, the Governor General spoke of the “deep roots we have together, of shared promise and partnership” dating back to the Royal Proclamation of 1763.¹⁵⁷ This basic promise of mutual respect is the foundation of the modern relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada.

This relationship has faced many challenges, including a colonial legacy that at times is in contradiction with solemn treaties and agreements made between Indigenous Peoples and Canada to co-exist respectfully and share lands and resources.

The colonial legacy of unfulfilled treaty promises, the administration of the *Indian Act* and creation of reserves, the devastating residential school system, Sixties Scoop, and the child welfare system have pushed many Indigenous people into the margins of Canadian society, living in poverty and with violence. Many are impacted by inter-generational trauma. This has created a situation where Indigenous people have become over represented in the Canadian criminal justice system both as offenders and as victims of violence and crime. Because the RCMP and its predecessors played a role in implementing or enforcing colonial rule, today's RCMP has inherited a complex legacy.

This complexity also takes into account the positive role the RCMP has played in protecting community members and helping to create safer communities. In many parts of Canada, the RCMP are perceived to be the representatives of the Queen and communities look forward to seeing officers wearing their Red Serge on important occasions such as Treaty Day celebrations.

Indigenous Peoples and the Criminal Justice System

Indigenous people are over represented in the Canadian criminal justice system which can be attributed to unfavourable socio-economic conditions that have resulted from past government practices and policies. Once in the system, Indigenous people continue to face challenges and unnecessary hardship. The legal language and concepts are not easily translated to Indigenous language or culture, which makes following the technical rules more difficult.¹⁵⁸

There is a high proportion of Indigenous people that are incarcerated solely on breaches to their probation orders, known as administration offences. In other words, they have not specifically committed a crime, but perhaps broke a condition, such as not to consume alcohol or be in the presence of someone who the offender has a no contact order with. Sometimes these conditions placed on them do not consider the context of rural, remote, northern communities and how Indigenous communities operate within them. In response to this, various institutions and approaches have been established to divert Indigenous people, especially youth, from the criminal justice system and help them on a journey to heal.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ *Royal Proclamation of 1763* RSC, 1985, App II, No 1

¹⁵⁸ Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission, *Chapter 7 – Aboriginal Justice Systems*

¹⁵⁹ Department of Justice, *Overrepresentation of Indigenous People in the Criminal Justice System*

Currently, steps are being taken in the right direction to improve the accessibility of the justice system to Indigenous people. The Department of Justice's Indigenous Justice Program offers an alternative approach to mainstream justice approaches in Canada, where appropriate.¹⁶⁰ It gives more administrative responsibility communities for their own justice. This includes incorporating Indigenous values into the justice system, which contributes to a decrease in the rate of victimization, crime and incarceration in Indigenous communities. Restorative Justice is a key component of this program, of which the RCMP's involvement is spoken to in the next segment.

Recently, the province of Ontario¹⁶¹ as well as the province of Nova Scotia¹⁶² opened Canada's first Indigenous courts, in 2017 and 2018 respectively. These courts handle proceedings involving Indigenous offenders and were established to help address the over representation of Indigenous people in the criminal justice system.

The *Criminal Code* of Canada s. 718.2(e) and subsequent jurisprudence dictates that when sentencing Indigenous offenders, courts should consider other reasonable sentences other than jail time and consider the offender's life circumstances (*R v. Gladue* and *R v. Ipeelee*).¹⁶³ This is commonly referred to as a Gladue report.

Enaahitig Miikanaake Justice Program

Miikanaake Court Diversion Program

The Miikanaake Court Diversion Program provides court diversion for Indigenous youth and adults who are pre- or post- charge. Common diverted charges include: assault, domestic violence and theft. The Court Diversion Program uses Indigenous teachings and holistic approaches to support rehabilitation. This program implements a range of restorative processes to reduce future contact with the criminal justice system.

Clients involved in the program work with a Justice Worker and voluntarily agree to carry out a comprehensive plan that seeks to restore balance. This plan includes transitioning clients into culturally appropriate supports, such as counselling, traditional healing, justice circles and other programs offered at Enaahitig and rehabilitation services in the community.

For the Inuit, it is important to note that Elders and relatives often act as intermediaries between young people who have broken the law and the court systems. The Inuit feel that it is more important to focus on the individual as opposed to the offence. The details surrounding the offence are considered when determining the penalty. Alternative sentencing measures might include venturing on the land with an experienced hunter to reflect and re-establish bonds with the land and community.¹⁶⁴ These alternative sentencing measures are also available in First Nations communities.

¹⁶⁰ *Indigenous Justice Program*

¹⁶¹ The Toronto Star, *Ceremony to be held marking the Grand opening of the Nova Scotia Indigenous Court.*

¹⁶² Canadian Broadcast Corporation, *Ottawa's first Indigenous peoples court to be announced Friday*

¹⁶³ Law Facts, *R v Gladue*, [1999] 1 SCR. 688. *R v Ipeelee*

¹⁶⁴ *Apihtawikosisan, Inuit Way*

RCMP and Restorative Justice

The RCMP is the primary police service of jurisdiction in the majority of rural, remote and northern areas in Canada and a primary point of law enforcement/criminal justice interaction for Indigenous people. Given this presence, the RCMP plays a crucial role in the promotion and implementation of Restorative Justice in Canada.

Both the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) and the *Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019)*, include recommendations which call for the need to expand and support Restorative Justice. Specifically, providing community sanctions and decreasing Indigenous overrepresentation in the criminal justice system are recommended.

Regular Members act as the referral mechanism for pre-charge Restorative Justice diversions out of the criminal justice system and are the first point of contact with the offenders, bystanders and victims. Discretion is used when referring individuals to community agencies for Restorative Justice processes. Without early diversions, cases can proceed to court unnecessarily, thereby aggravating the issue of overrepresentation.

The RCMP's national policy centre continues to promote Restorative Justice practices nationally across all divisions to help reduce the number of Indigenous people involved in the criminal justice system. It is very important that all employees understand, support and operationalize Restorative Justice pre-charge referrals. RCMP detachments need to increase their awareness of available community program options and to establish and maintain relationships between community led Restorative Justice programs.

Sweat lodges and healing

For many Indigenous people, the sweat lodge has spiritual, cultural and practical purposes. It is a place to connect with the Creator, nature, and restore order and balance in life. The sweat lodge is also a place to connect with Indigenous heritage and culture. Until 1951, the Indian Act forbade the use of the sweat lodge in Canada. The lodge therefore serves as a symbol of cultural resilience and resurgence. Sweats also have healing functions, which, for some individuals, have been significant parts of their journey towards recovery and overall good health.

As of January 2022, there are three sweat lodges on RCMP property: one at the RCMP Training Academy in Regina, SK; one at the "H" Division headquarters in Halifax, NS; and one at RCMP Headquarters in St. John's, NL. The sweat lodges were constructed under the guidance of community Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

Assertion of Rights and Land Claims

Indigenous Peoples' rights and interests in lands have been and are at issue in relation to countless small, medium, and large-scale natural resource and development projects taking place in and around Indigenous territories. Some groups have incorporated protections and/or economic benefits into treaties or direct agreements, such as training and employment opportunities. However, there are some circumstances where Indigenous groups have not supported a project. In such cases, protests, blockades, and other direct action is a way for Indigenous people to assert their rights and protect their interests.

The right to protest is for all Canadians and incorporates several *Charter* rights, namely freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly.¹⁶⁵ This right is not absolute and limitations exist at the federal, provincial and municipal levels.¹⁶⁶

Crown and Indigenous conflicts are highly complex situations that are compounded by legal, historical, and colonial issues that are typically a result of conflicting interests over land and Indigenous rights.

Law enforcement has been called upon to intervene at times. Unfortunately, some conflicts have led to arrests, injuries, and even deaths. Such conflicts have resulted in heightened media attention, as with the Oka Crisis in Quebec, the Ipperwash Crisis in Ontario, the Gustafsen Lake standoff in British Columbia and Elsipogtog in New Brunswick, to name a few. These are examples of what can unfold after failed negotiations, disagreement on legal rights, and long-standing unresolved treaty agreements.

Police should understand that conflicting Indigenous and Canadian laws can make their job very challenging. Law enforcement officers working in a First Nation community may encounter a situation where they have to enforce an injunction, court orders, or public peace laws against First Nation individuals who are defending and protecting their lands, rights, and interests. In these scenarios, early communication, dialogue, and intervention with the First Nation community is key to mitigating damage to the existing relationship, and to ensuring that the rights of all stakeholders are understood and respected.

A good example of this approach happened in 2014 when members of the Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations were protesting the Kinder Morgan pipeline. An exclusion zone (area where no one allowed to enter) was created, and protesters were moved off the drilling site; however, through relationship-building

and peaceful dialogue, the Elders explained that they were not protesting but “bearing witness to Kinder Morgan’s work”.¹⁶⁷ The RCMP then helped to move the sacred fire to another area within the exclusion area, and assisted the Elders safely off and on the site as needed. With permission from the Elders, the RCMP officers even helped tend to the sacred fire.¹⁶⁸ Getting to know the community members and having meaningful dialogue with the Elders allowed for the RCMP to have a deeper understanding of the protesters’ motivations and allowed the protesters to trust that the RCMP was working to keep everyone at the site safe.

Community Conflict Management Group (CCMG) course / Police Community Liaison Team (PCLT)

In 2015, the RCMP developed a national training known as the Community Conflict Management Group (CCMG) course which was designed to aid police officers in addressing situations relating to resource-based protests. The training emphasizes the importance of taking a measured approach to these situations and focuses on utilizing skills to build relationships of trust, respect, and mutual understanding between the police and all stakeholders in the three stages of a protest (pre-event, event and post-protest event). CCMG training also prepares police officers to understand their roles and provide support to communities and Detachments in establishing and maintaining open and transparent lines of communications with all stakeholders in a protest situation.

¹⁶⁵ Justice Laws Website, *The Constitution Acts, 1867 to 1982*, page 15

¹⁶⁶ Canadian Civil Liberties Association, *Fundamental Freedoms, Right to Protest*

¹⁶⁷ Vancouver Sun, *RCMP help keep a sacred fire burning at Burnaby Mountain*

¹⁶⁸ Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, *Kinder Morgan protest: RCMP help tend sacred fire*



Indian Residential Schools Burials

Fulfilling the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action 73 to 76 requires the active participation of all levels of government, Indigenous leaders and communities, residential school Survivors, churches and current landowners in relation to unmarked and unknown burials of Indigenous children. Where the RCMP is the police of jurisdiction, they may be requested to assist in activities in response to the Calls to Action. All RCMP contributions will be culturally sensitive and trauma-informed, and will take place in partnership with Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs and local Indigenous communities and organizations, and with the input of a number of local, provincial/territorial and federal departments and agencies. Any actions will be at the request and direction of the Indigenous communities.

First Nations and Inuit Policing Program

The RCMP is one of several police agencies providing professional and dedicated service to First Nations and Inuit communities under the terms of the First Nations and Inuit Policing Program (FNIPP). The responsibility for administration of the FNIPP belongs to Canada through Public Safety Canada and is cost-shared between the federal and provincial/territorial governments.

The FNIPP was created in 1991 to enhance the effectiveness of policing services in First Nation and Inuit communities by ensuring its cultural responsiveness. By strengthening the capacity of policing services in First Nation and Inuit communities through supplementing Provincial and Territorial Policing Service Agreement policing services, the FNIPP supports professional and responsive policing services that are unique to each Indigenous community receiving the RCMP's First Nation Community Policing Services.

In partnership with the Community Consultative Group, elected Indigenous leadership and the local Detachment, the creation of an annual community Letter of Expectation outlines and defines community goals, priorities, strategies and expectations of the RCMP First Nation Community Policing Services. The FNIPP allows Indigenous communities to have input into the type of policing services they receive.

In 2020, the Minister of Public Safety, Bill Blair, identified the importance to co-develop a legislative framework that recognizes First Nations policing and ensures that police services are culturally appropriate and reflect the communities they serve.

Community Service Provider Working Groups

Many Indigenous communities have various service provider organizations, such as medical, mental health and community centres, band administration, sporting groups, language programs, and other community initiatives. In addition to providing direct services to community members, these organizations often host community events and initiatives that police should get involved in to strengthen and enhance trust and familiarity with service providers as well as community members.

Many Indigenous community service providers have community working groups where various organizations meet regularly to review community issues, services and needs. Participation at these working groups is an effective way to become better aware of the needs of the community, and also to build partnerships with other service providers in the community. This can help police officers tailor their work and services to a particular First Nation community. However, if no such networks or working groups exist, police officers are encouraged to reach out to colleagues and service providers in the community to help create these organized community networks. A tool available is the communications protocol template which the Detachment and community leadership can fill out jointly and identify the appropriate service providers for any number of particular situations in which police may require assistance from the community.



CHAPTER V

THE PATH TO RECONCILIATION



The Path to Reconciliation

Building Relationships

Building relations between law enforcement and communities is key in delivering culturally sensitive and effective policing services. Establishing trust and positive relationships with Indigenous communities requires an open mind and attitude, and an investment of time and resources.

In many Indigenous communities, police officers will attend powwows, drum dances, feasts, ceremonies, community events, or other celebrations with Indigenous music, dances, food and crafts, schools and band council meetings. They also visit family homes to take time to meet new community members, foster relationships, and also learn about the community. While this is a great start, it is also very important to invest time in deeper relationship-building activities within the community. Engaging in pro-social, non-enforcement activities can have a positive impact on crime reduction and reduce the potential for violence at times of enforcement.

Another best practice is to inquire with the community to better understand what is appropriate to wear (uniform or non-uniform) for specific events. While a professional relationship is important in any career, the concept and practice of visiting is a very important tradition for many Indigenous communities. This is a positive way to build trust with community members and is a valuable way for police officers to build and maintain relationships.

Protocols, or ways of behaving and relating to each other, are extremely important to Indigenous people. They sometimes differ depending on how 'traditional' the community is or how 'traditional' the individual you meet with or with which you seek to build a relationship.

Many Métis communities, for example, have designed their own written protocols that help guide them in formal consultation processes or other research and economic development opportunities. These protocols are based on specific ways of knowing and community value systems. Métis communities, like all other Indigenous communities, are diverse and as such have diverse protocols. The acknowledgment of the distinctions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis worldviews, knowledge and realities is essential.

It is important to be aware of local protocols in meeting with or consulting Indigenous groups and/or when engaging an Elder. Some local protocols require that meetings use a talking circle format to encourage discussion and ensure equal opportunities for participation. In many First Nations and Métis communities, meetings begin and end with prayers, purification rituals such as smudging ceremonies, pipe ceremonies, the offering of tobacco and cloth, or even sweat lodge ceremonies. There are certain protocols to handling sacred medicines and items. Employees are encouraged to engage in dialogue with nearby Indigenous communities to ensure proper cultural protocols are taken into consideration.

In most First Nations and Métis communities, Elders have a significant and sacred place in the community. Taking time to visit with the Elders can help you establish trust and learn firsthand some of the nuances of how the community operates.

Principles

Respecting the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous people

The Government of Canada recognizes that:

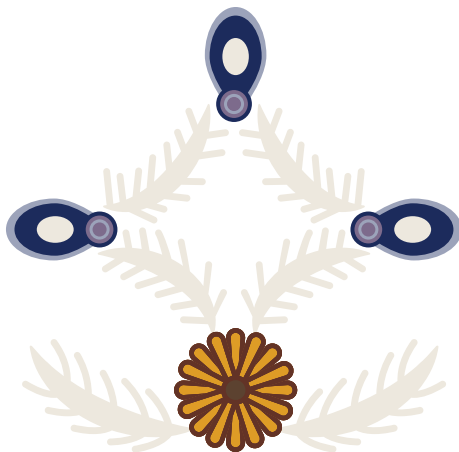
1. All relations with Indigenous Peoples need to be based on the recognition and implementation of their right to self-determination, including the inherent right of self-government.
2. Reconciliation is a fundamental purpose of section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.
3. The honour of the Crown guides the conduct of the Crown in all of its dealings with Indigenous Peoples.
4. Indigenous self-government is part of Canada's evolving system of cooperative federalism and distinct orders of government.
5. Treaties, agreements, and other constructive arrangements between Indigenous Peoples and the Crown have been and are intended to be acts of reconciliation based on mutual recognition and respect.
6. Meaningful engagement with Indigenous Peoples aims to secure their free, prior, and informed consent when Canada proposes to take actions which impact them and their rights on their lands, territories, and resources.
7. Respecting and implementing rights is essential and that any infringement of section 35 rights must by law meet a high threshold of justification which includes Indigenous perspectives and satisfies the Crown's fiduciary obligations.
8. Reconciliation and self-government require a renewed fiscal relationship, developed in collaboration with Indigenous nations, that promotes a mutually supportive climate for economic partnership and resource development.
9. Reconciliation is an ongoing process that occurs in the context of evolving Indigenous-Crown relationships.
10. A distinctions-based approach is needed to ensure that the unique rights, interests and circumstances of the First Nations, the Métis Nation and Inuit are acknowledged, affirmed, and implemented.

Care and respect are necessary should any employee be required to handle or safeguard any spiritual, religious, or cultural object on behalf of an individual in police custody. Some examples of these sacred items that may be in their possession could be an Indigenous medicine and/or sacred bundles (a small pouch containing objects of spiritual significance) or eagle feather. Used by some Indigenous people across Canada, these bundles may vary according to different Indigenous groups in its design or adornments and the spiritual artifacts therein.

Ensure the items are respectfully handled and retained for safeguarding. When dealing with a medicine bundle, it is advised that a female member should, whenever possible, have a male member handle the bundle once the male carrier has provided permission. This is due to the teachings that women, during their "moon time" (menstrual cycle), are spiritually powerful and should not be handling medicine or other sacred items during this time.

While Inuit do not share many of the same cultural practices as First Nations or Métis, it is just as important to engage with Inuit communities by getting to know local traditions and attend community events. The Government of Nunavut outlines eight guiding principles that anyone working in the north or with Inuit are encouraged to use when working in communities. These Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (IQ) Principles include:

- **Inuuqatigiitsiarniq:** Respecting others, relationships and caring for people.
- **Tunnganarniq:** Fostering good spirits by being open, welcoming and inclusive.
- **Pijitsirniq:** Serving and providing for family and/or community.
- **Aajiiqatigiinni:** Decision making through discussion and consensus.
- **Pilimmaksarniq/Pijariuqsarniq:** Development of skills through observation, mentoring, practice, and effort.
- **Piliriqatigiinni/Ikajuqtigiinni:** Working together for a common cause.
- **Qanuqtuurniq:** Being innovative and resourceful.
- **Avatittinnik Kamatsiarniq:** Respecting and caring for the land, animals and the environment.



Reconciliation in Action

The following are some examples of how the RCMP has responded to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and moved forward with Indigenous Peoples towards reconciliation. For more examples, please visit the national and divisional internal and external websites under "Reconciliation".

Returning Louis Riel artifacts

In 2016, the RCMP took a leadership role in responding to a request from a Métis community member who was requesting that the personal effects of Métis leader Louis Riel, which are currently housed in the RCMP Heritage Centre museum in Regina, SK, be returned to the greater Métis community. On September 23, 2017, the RCMP signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Manitoba Métis Federation and the Métis National Council in which the RCMP agreed to repatriate several artifacts connected to Louis Riel, including a knife, a crucifix and a book of poetry. The RCMP took these steps as a commitment the RCMP's efforts in reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

RCMP



Riel's published book of poetry, "Poésies Religieuses et Politiques," was gifted to the RCMP in 1943.

RCMP National Eagle Staff

After two years of dedication with assistance from First Nation Elders and military veterans, the RCMP's National Eagle Staff was first unveiled in Ottawa in March 2018 at a birthing ceremony at the Odawa Native Friendship Centre. The ceremony was led by First Nations Elders of the Algonquin Nation.

The RCMP National Eagle Staff was created by and presented to the organization by Staff Sergeant Jeff Poulette, a First Nation regular member. It was created to recognize and honour First Nations people on Turtle Island. This initiative is an important step for the RCMP in our reconciliation journey. For First Nations people the Eagle Staff is the sacred first flag of Turtle Island, that holds many different teachings.

This Eagle Staff represents the importance of honouring and recognizing the relationship and the spiritual connection to the land that First Nations hold in their hearts. The wooden staff was a tree in Nova Scotia and gifted by friends of the RCMP. The deer horn was shed from a white tail deer and gifted from a Métis person in Saskatchewan. The eagle feathers are from the Manitoba Wildlife Federation. The beaded RCMP Indigenous ensign (at top) was created by an Inuk woman in Ottawa, ON. Sinew used to attach the deer horn to the tree was gifted by an Algonquin First Nation Elder. The large red flag and small ensign flags (one for each province/territory) were created by the RCMP's Master Tailor.

In September 2021, in ceremony and in consultation with First Nation Elders an additional eagle feather beaded in orange beads was added to the National Eagle Staff by S/Sgt. Jeff Poulette. This was done to honour and commemorate the legacy of residential schools and the thousands of Indigenous children who attended them. "As the RCMP works towards reconciliation I wanted to ensure that the legacy of Indian residential schools will always be visibly represented by this additional eagle feather on our Eagle Staff".

RCMP



S/Sgt Jeff Poulette adds the orange beaded eagle feather to the RCMP National Eagle Staff to honour and commemorate the legacy of residential schools.

Since its birthing, the RCMP National Eagle Staff has been used in formal RCMP and Indigenous cultural events. The Eagle Staff was part of the Change of Command Ceremony for Commissioner Lucki as well as several division Commanding Officers, the Assembly of First Nations General Assembly's Grand Entry's, Moose Hide Campaign's National Day of Fasting, and at the Remembrance Day ceremonies at the National War Memorial in Ottawa, ON.

Cultural sensitivity Eagle Feather Initiative

The Eagle Feather Initiative was first launched in Nova Scotia in March 2018. The purpose of the eagle feather is to provide an option for people to use it in the same way as a Bible or affirmation in swearing oaths and may also be offered as a comfort for a client when interacting with employees at a detachment. All clients including victims, witnesses, accused persons and police officers have the option to swear legal oaths on an eagle feather.

This initiative has gathered momentum and has led to similar projects in other divisions.

RCMP



Example of First Nation Member wearing Eagle Feather in Red Serge, Cpl. Maureen Greyeyes-Brant, (Plains Cree from Muskeg Lake Cree Nation welcomed into the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte) NHQ, Ottawa, ON, 2020

Uniform and dress

In 2018, opportunities were identified in the RCMP Uniform and Dress Policy to formally recognize the important role of Indigenous culture in the RCMP. Working with Elders, subject matter experts in academia, and national Indigenous associations, a number of historic 'firsts' were introduced in 2019. Changes to national policy included: replacing cultural / religious exemption requirements with more inclusive policies and practices such as new grooming standards allowing regular members to wear their hair in braid in both operational and ceremonial uniforms.

In 2023, new national and divisional processes were introduced so Indigenous members may incorporate ceremonial gifts of honour and distinction from their communities into ceremonial dress. Now, the Eagle Feather and the Métis Sash can be seen with the Red Serge on ceremonial occasions and special events across Canada. Together, these amendments to the RCMP Uniform and Dress policy supports greater equity and celebrates the critical work of Indigenous members embodying meaningful change both within the RCMP, and across diverse Canadian and Indigenous communities.

Focus on Indigenous employees in the RCMP

In May 2021, the RCMP established a unit to lead the cultivation of a workforce that is knowledgeable and representative of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people, and their cultures, histories and realities. The work supports a culturally safe work environment based on trust and reconciliation. Indigenous employee networks provide input on human resource policies, processes and initiatives that impact Indigenous employees. Additionally, external engagement with Indigenous organizations and communities will also identify commonalities and joint priorities as well as test and assess innovative approaches to inform HR strategies and learning.

National Indigenous Peoples Day

June 21st of each year marks National Indigenous Peoples Day, a celebration of Indigenous cultures and traditions in Canada. This is an important day to be a part of community celebrations as we continue to build our significant relationship with the Indigenous communities we serve.



Cpl. Shannon Montpetit RCMP Indigenous Relations Services at National Indigenous Peoples Day celebrations, NHQ Leikin, 2019.

Significant Dates

February (the third Monday) - Louis Riel Day is an annual general holiday in the province of Manitoba each February. It commemorates the life of Louis Riel, a politician who represented the Métis people's interests.

May 5

Red Dress Day / National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)

May (third week)

National Indigenous Awareness Week in the federal public service.

June 21

National Indigenous Peoples Day (Summer Solstice).

July 9

Celebrated annually in July; commemorates the passing of the Nunavut Land Claims Act and the Nunavut Act.

August 9

United Nations International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

September 30

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day acknowledging the Indian residential school legacy in Canada.

October 4

Sisters in Spirit Vigil - Honouring Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Territorial Acknowledgement: Honouring our connection to the land and people who call it home

The Territorial Acknowledgement stems from a traditional Indigenous diplomatic custom. When an Indigenous person found themselves on another nation's territory— even if only passing by—it was protocol to announce their presence by acknowledging that they were on that nation's territory. Recognition that we are all connected and share this land is important in any de-colonial activity.

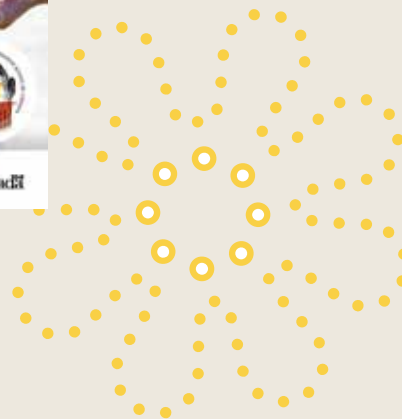
What it is

A statement of recognition & respect that...

- Acknowledges the presence of Indigenous Nation(s) on the territory where the meeting is taking place.
- Honours our connection to the land and people who call it home, and provides an opportunity to be part of a collective experience.
- Inserts awareness and provokes critical reflection, ongoing learning, and discussion.

Honouring this custom doesn't change the past but it is a significant step forward as per the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, because it:

- Creates a space for Indigenous people to share their stories about the harms they endured as a result of colonization, land expropriation, and residential schools.
- Provides an opportunity to listen and gain a deeper understanding of the history that shaped—and continues to shape—Canada.
- Establishes a foundation for healthy and reciprocal relationships by showing recognition and respect.
- Unites people around a shared goal of reconciliation.

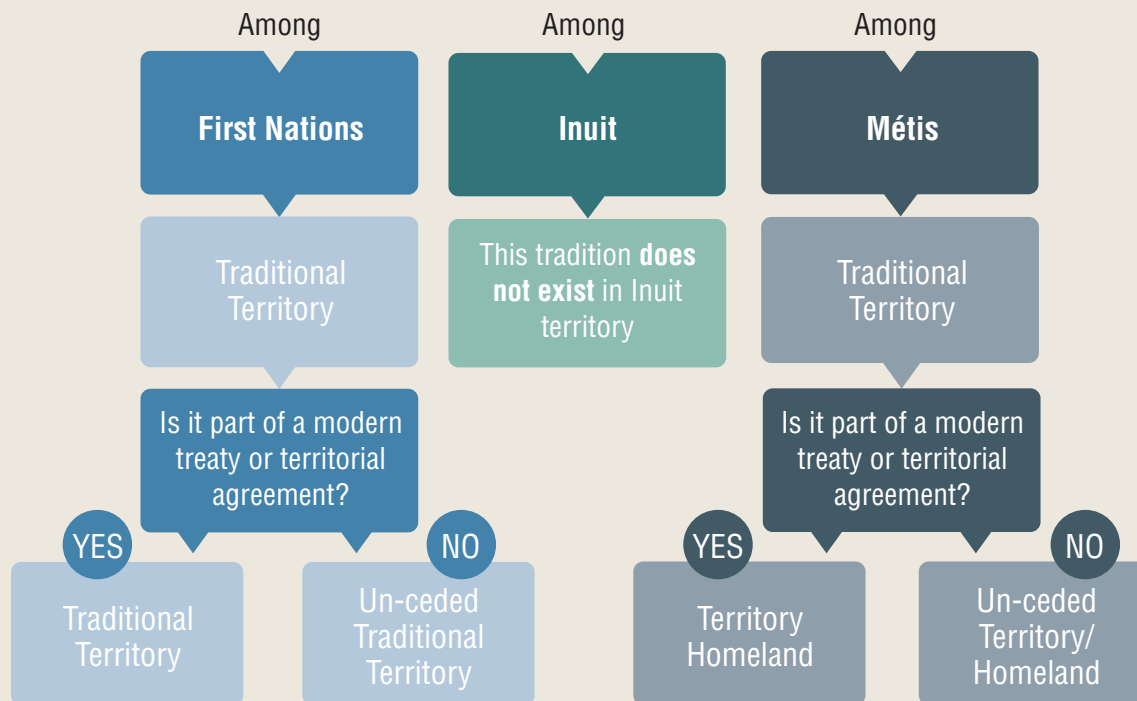


When is it appropriate?

- At formal and/or informal events, meetings, and gatherings, regardless of whether the topic is relevant to Indigenous culture.
- If done virtually, only recognize the territory on which you are physically located and encourage others to do the same.
- It can also be incorporated in your email signature block, too!

Example: RCMP NHQ, Ottawa: First Nations, Traditional Un-ceded Territory: We [I] would like to respectfully acknowledge that we are gathered on the traditional un-ceded territory of the Anishinaabe Nation, and recognize the continuing presence of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in this region.

Where am I?



This graphic was adapted from: <https://www.cspsefpc.gc.ca/tools/blogs/insights/indigenous-territory-eng.aspx>

Advances in Reconciliation

In 1996, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) was established to address a breadth of Indigenous issues. The 4,000-page report was released with 440 recommendations, with one chapter focusing on residential schools.

In 2004, RCMP Commissioner Giuliano Zaccardelli publicly apologized for the RCMP's role in the residential school system.

In 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized to Indigenous Peoples in Canada for the damaging and long-lasting impacts of the residential school system on Indigenous Peoples and their Nations and established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. While the 2008 apology was accepted by some, many survivors and Indigenous people across Canada were not satisfied.

In Alberta in 2014, at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's National Event, Commissioner Bob Paulson apologized for the RCMP's role in the residential school system.

In 2015, the TRC released their final report and 94 Calls to Action to urge all levels of government - federal, provincial, and Indigenous - to learn about, and repair harm done by, the residential school system and move forward with reconciliation. It also calls upon Canadian citizens to do the same. Reading the findings in the final report gives an in depth understanding of the historical impacts that have created the state of affairs in Indigenous communities.

In 2016, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau issued a second apology to Indigenous Peoples for the impacts of the residential school system, which was more broadly accepted. In 2017, Prime Minister Trudeau also delivered a specific apology to residential school survivors in Newfoundland and Labrador. They were omitted from the 2008 apology due to refusal of previous leadership to accept responsibility for pre-Confederation impacts of the system, with Newfoundland and Labrador only joining confederation in 1949.

While the term "reconciliation" was coined more recently, efforts to reconcile the relationship between the Crown and Indigenous Peoples have been underway for the past several decades. In 1982, the repatriation of Canada's Constitution also resulted in the protection of Aboriginal and treaty rights for Indians, Inuit and Métis peoples. The Indigenous Peoples in Canada lobbied the Canadian government, which led to the inclusion of section 35(1) of the Constitution that states: The residential school system has been abandoned; Canadian courts have opened doors for Indigenous rights and title where legislators have been too slow or unwilling; The residential school system has been abandoned; and Canadian courts have opened doors for Indigenous rights and title where legislators have been too slow or unwilling.

The push for reconciliation has also been supported at the international level. Almost a decade after it was adopted to address protection of Indigenous Peoples worldwide by the United Nation's General Assembly, Canada's objector status to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was officially removed in 2016.

On June 21, 2021, Bill C-15 received Royal Assent. This Bill states that the Government of Canada must take all measures necessary to ensure that the laws of Canada are consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and must prepare and implement an action plan to achieve the objectives of the Declaration.

UNDRIP is a key document in the fight for Indigenous self-determination. The adoption of such a document by Canada, without qualification, would allow Indigenous people to determine their own futures, with the leadership of traditional and contemporary leaders and grassroots citizens. This means the revitalization of traditional Indigenous governance structures and the strengthening of communities.

For the most recent information about the RCMP and reconciliation, check out both our internal and external websites under "Reconciliation".

Reflections on Reconciliation

- Cultural competency is the capacity to respect the differences of others by adopting a set of attitudes, behaviours and skills that enable you to work effectively within a cross-cultural environment.
 - It is more than being aware of differences—it is about being able to value and adapt to diversity. You need to have your own identity and know about your cultural biases to be able to collaborate with people who are different than you.
 - Know the history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and understand the current reality of life in Indigenous communities.
 - Recognize that your cultural beliefs are not everybody's beliefs.
 - Build relationships with Indigenous Peoples and communities to understand their goals and priorities, rather than only considering the goals and priorities of your department.
 - Know your responsibilities as a public servant in enacting reconciliation, through measures like the implementation of modern treaties and self-government agreements, meaningful consultation processes, and the design and implementation of programs, policies and legislation that align with the rights and interests of Indigenous Peoples.
- Consider your role, both personal and professional in Canada's reconciliation efforts:
 - Share the truth about residential schools and other assimilationist/colonial policies and their long term-impacts. Have discussions at work about whether or not your program or policy supports self-determination for Indigenous communities and their ability to make their own decisions.
 - Share the truth about residential schools and other assimilationist/colonial policies with your family and social network. Many Canadians have not had the opportunity to learn about these policies and practices and their long-term impacts.





CHAPTER VI

MOVING FORWARD



Chapter VI: Moving Forward

While work is ongoing to improve educational outcomes and the health disparities in Indigenous communities, there are many stories of change that give us hope. Indigenous language and culture are making a comeback and recent commitments by the federal government to a renewed nation-to-nation relationship, will strengthen what some commentators refer to as a cultural resurgence. The Supreme Court of Canada has made a number of significant rulings, as mentioned in this document, which have changed the development of the landscape in Canada and have given the tools to Indigenous communities to be partners in developments in their territories.

Many Indigenous people interact with police as partners in making communities safer. Establishing, developing, and maintaining relationships and networks within Indigenous communities is key to providing public safety and safer communities.

The authors of Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action number 57 understood that education and awareness among Canadian public servants would enhance services for Indigenous Peoples, as well as increase common understanding between Canadians and Indigenous Peoples. Police officers, as public servants and as citizens, can benefit professionally and personally by continuing to learn about Indigenous Peoples, the communities and the diverse cultures.

There are many resources, opportunities, and ways to continue learning about Indigenous Peoples and their important history. The RCMP, Canada School of Public Service, various government organizations, Indigenous community services, and private companies offer Indigenous awareness training. There are also countless books, academic articles, and public education resources available that address a plethora of important and interesting Indigenous issues, such as law, treaties, history, culture, spirituality, politics, and governance.

In his remarks on the Truth and Reconciliation Report, Senator Murray Sinclair stated that his hope had been strengthened by changes being made by people and organizations in response to the TRC Calls to Action.

Indigenous Resilience

Alongside the history of suffering, there are many Indigenous people thriving and working passionately to advocate and make change for their communities. Notably, there are many national, provincial, territorial, and regional Indigenous associations that advance politics, health and education such as the Assembly of First Nations (created in 1982), Congress of Aboriginal People (1971), Métis Nation of Canada (1983), and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (1971).

Similarly, from the 1970s onward various Indigenous women's organizations such as the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), Pauktuutit, and Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak/Women of The Métis Nation have been created to address issues specifically related to Indigenous women. These national organizations develop policy and advocate on a number of topics such as human rights, economic development, housing, health, violence prevention, supporting MMIWG and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Two Spirit community members.

“Achieving reconciliation is like climbing a mountain — we must proceed a step at a time. It will not always be easy. There will be storms, there will be obstacles, but we cannot allow ourselves to be daunted by the task because our goal is just and it also necessary. Remember, reconciliation is yours to achieve. We owe it to each other to build a Canada based on our shared future, a future of healing and trust.”

- The Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ Maclean's, *Justice Murray Sinclair's remarks on the Truth and Reconciliation Report*



APPENDIX A: RCMP-Indigenous Historical Timeline

The RCMP has a long, sometimes difficult history with Indigenous communities in Canada that dates back some 145 years. We are committed to positive change – which includes renewing our vital relationships with Indigenous Peoples.

To promote better understanding and respect, we have taken several important steps to:

- strengthen collaboration with Indigenous Peoples;
- improve community policing and Indigenous recruitment; and
- move towards healing and reconciliation.

This timeline includes historical events that contribute to our relationship with Indigenous Peoples and communities. For a more extensive and current list of events, please check out the RCMP-Indigenous historical timeline on the RCMP national website.

- 1874:** The North West Mounted Police (NWMP) deployed to Western Canada. It employed Métis as guides and interpreters.
- 1875:** The NWMP first employed First Nations and Métis people as “scouts”.
- 1877:** As one of the two Treaty Commissioners acting for the Crown and the Government of Canada, NWMP Commissioner James Macleod negotiated and signed Treaty Number 7.
- 1892:** NWMP discontinued the “scout” employee category, except several scouts employed as interpreters. It employed First Nations and Métis people as Special Constables.
- 1904:** To further recognize the service of the Force for the Crown, King Edward VII proclaimed the Force as the Royal North West Mounted Police (RNWMP).
- 1920:** The Government of Canada amalgamates the RNWMP and the Dominion Police to become the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).
- 1936:** The RCMP began referring to Inuit employees in Arctic detachments as Special Constables, an official rank.
- 1960s:** The RCMP began to expand its role in Indigenous communities beyond law enforcement (e.g., giving school presentations).
- 1973:** The RCMP established the Native Special Constable Program to recruit more Indigenous members.
- 1989:** The RCMP converted Native Special Constables to Regular Member status.
- 1990:** The RCMP formed the Commissioner’s National Aboriginal Advisory Committee.
- 1990s:** The RCMP established a dedicated Aboriginal Policing Directorate, the group known today as RCMP-Indigenous Relations Services.
- 1991:** The Government of Canada established the First Nations Policing Program.
- 1994:** The Aboriginal Pre-Cadet Program began. It allowed Indigenous candidates to spend three weeks at Depot to learn policing skills.
- 2003:** The RCMP identified Indigenous communities as a strategic priority.

- 2004:** RCMP Commissioner Giuliano Zaccardelli publicly apologized for the RCMP's role in the residential school system.
- 2006:** The RCMP created the Aboriginal Community Constable program. It becomes the Community Constable Program in 2013.
- 2008:** The RCMP established Métis Community Liaisons in the divisions.
- 2011:** The RCMP produced its report *The Role of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police during the Indian Residential School System*.
- 2012:** The RCMP unveiled its Aboriginal Policing Ensign.
- 2014:** At the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's National Event, Commissioner Bob Paulson apologized for the RCMP's role in the residential school system.
- 2014:** The RCMP produces the *Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operational Overview* and subsequent 2015 *Update to the National Overview*.
- 2017:** The Depot curriculum incorporated Indigenous cultural training, the Blanket Exercise.
- 2017:** The RCMP unveiled the Eagle Feather initiative in Nova Scotia. Shortly after, the feathers were distributed to all 54 detachments in Nova Scotia.
- 2017:** The RCMP signed an agreement to return Métis artifacts.
- 2018:** Commissioner Brenda Lucki apologized to the families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls at the National Inquiry.
- 2018:** The RCMP introduces the National Eagle Staff.
- 2018:** The RCMP officially unveiled the first permanent sweat lodge at headquarters in Dartmouth, NS.
- 2019:** The RCMP in Manitoba adopts the Eagle Feather initiative.
- 2019:** RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki participates in a land transfer ceremony to honour and commemorate the Regina Indian Industrial School cemetery where at least 35 children were buried.
- 2019:** The Federal government apologizes to Baffin Inuit for sled dog killings and forced relocations.
- 2020:** Statement by Commissioner Brenda Lucki on systemic racism in the RCMP.
- 2020:** New Brunswick, PEI RCMP and MCPEI adopt the Eagle Feather initiative.
- 2021:** Saskatchewan RCMP are now holders of the Eagle Feather.
- 2021:** RCMP signs historic agreement with Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada to reduce violence against Inuit women, children and gender-diverse persons.
- 2021:** Release of the first RCMP Reconciliation Report: Path of Reconciliation: Strengthening Trust in the RCMP
- 2021:** Release of divisional reconciliation strategies
- 2021:** Addition of a new Eagle Feather in orange beads added to the RCMP National Eagle Staff to honour and commemorate the legacy of residential schools and the thousands of Indigenous children who attended them.
- 2021:** RCMP commemorates the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation by raising the "Survivor's Flag" and having employees engage in an internal 30 Days of Action calendar of activities.
- 2022:** Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the RCMP collaborate on a workplan to improve the relationship between the RCMP and Inuit communities.

APPENDIX B: The Impact of Colonialism on Indigenous Peoples in Canada

A Historical Timeline

Canada School of Public Service - GC Campus 2022 – Indigenous Learning Series

Note the below is a shortened version of the online timeline. Check out the most up to date, full timeline under the Indigenous Learning Series on the Canada School of Public Service's website.

1492 – Contact - It was probably not the first time Indigenous Peoples had come into contact with others: Leif Eriksson had established outposts in what is now Newfoundland circa 1000 CE. However, it was Christopher Columbus's "discovery" of the "New World" that would launch a long era of European colonization, with devastating effects on Indigenous Peoples of South, Central and North America. These included the rampant spread of diseases against which Indigenous communities had no immunity, wars, and starvation as a result of loss of land. Indigenous populations were decimated, and many communities are still recovering today.

1493 - Les doctrines de la découverte et le concept de *terra nullius* - Pope Alexander issued a Papal Bull recognizing Spain's claim to the newly discovered land in the Americas. This was the first in a series of Roman Catholic laws that would come to be the source of the ideas behind what is now referred to as the Doctrine of Discovery and of *Terra Nullius*, which in Latin means "empty land." The concept of *Terra Nullius* was used by colonial nations to assert their "right" to absorb any barren or uninhabited territory encountered by explorers. Over time, this concept was expanded to include lands not occupied by "civilized" peoples or those not being put to "civilized use."

1534 - Early exploration of Canada - Jacques Cartier made his first expedition from France to the St. Lawrence River. On a second expedition in 1535-36, the Iroquois saved his men from scurvy by feeding them boiled spruce bark, which contains vitamin C. However, other interactions were much more negative and violent, and his efforts to start a colony during his third voyage in 1541 ended after a conflict with the Iroquois.

1576–1578 - Inuit encounters with Frobisher - First encounters of Inuit are reported by Martin Frobisher on his expeditions to Baffin Island (Qikiqtaaluk). After the disappearance of five of Frobisher's crew, he took an Inuk hostage with the hope of getting his crew members back. When this did not occur, Frobisher went back to England with the captive Inuk, who passed away shortly after arrival.

1605 - Mi'kmaq leader welcomes the French - Mi'kmaq Grand Chief Membertou welcomed the French, who wished to build a permanent settlement at Port Royal on the Bay of Fundy. On June 24, 1610, Grand Chief Membertou was the first Indigenous person in what would become Canada to be baptized as a Christian. Membertou was signaling his desire for peaceful relations with the European nations.

1608 - Settling New France - The long-term colonization of the continent began with the construction of the Habitation de Québec by Samuel de Champlain. This officially marked the start of New France. Over the course of his career in Canada, Champlain developed a vast trade network by forming and consolidating alliances with the Montagnais (Innu) of the St. Lawrence, the nations on the Ottawa River, and the Hurons of the Great Lakes.

1610 - Pushing through to Hudson's Bay - Some of the first encounters between the Cree people and Europeans were during Henry Hudson's search for the Northwest Passage, leading him to "discover" James Bay and Hudson Bay.

1670 - The Fur Trade - In the 17th century, the fur trade emerged as a major commercial enterprise in North America due to European demand for felt hats made from beaver fur. The fur trade depended almost entirely on knowledge of the land collected by First Nations and Métis, and their labour was purchased in return for manufactured goods.

1670 - Emergence of the Métis - The growth of the fur trade required close relations between the First Nations who were trapping the furs and the European traders who wished to acquire them. These interactions led to personal relationships and the birth of children with shared European and First Nations ancestry. European authorities and trading companies tried to discourage the relationships, but they continued to be formed and children continued to be born. Over time, people who did not identify as European or First Nations joined together to form communities of their own, and the Métis came into being.

1701 - The Great Peace of Montreal - The French colonists of New France also established their own formal relations with First Nations people. The Great Peace of Montreal was a peace treaty between New France and 40 First Nations of North America. The Great Peace brought an end to more than 50 years of conflict. Signing of the treaty was followed by many years of economic harmony, wealth and mutual respect.

1740 - The Iron Confederacy (Nehiyaw Pwat) - The Plains Cree, the Saulteaux (Plains Ojibwa), the Nakoda, the Métis and some Iroquois formed a political and military alliance in the Northern Plains. The confederacy often acted as middlemen for the fur companies. It also controlled the entry and distribution of European goods, such as guns and ammunition. This complex political entity acted as guardian of Indigenous control of the Northern Plains.

1756-1763 - The Seven Years' War - The Seven Years' War was the first global war and it was fought in Europe, India, North America, and at sea. The military support of local Indigenous nations was critical to both sides in the conflict. The British and Indigenous negotiated neutrality in exchange for treaty agreements. In the end, this proved decisive for the British.

1755 - The First Indian Department - The Indian Department was established to oversee the relationship between the British colonies and Indigenous people.

1762 - Obwandiyag's (Pontiac's) War - Obwandiyag's War was the most successful First Nations resistance to the European invasion. Although it failed to oust the British from First Nations lands, the conflict forced British authorities to recognize Aboriginal rights. This step had far-reaching consequences, even to the present day.

1763 - Royal Proclamation - The Royal Proclamation was issued by King George III to establish a basis of government administration in the North American territories. The Proclamation established the constitutional framework for the negotiation of treaties with the Aboriginal inhabitants of large sections of Canada, and it is referenced in section 25 of the Constitution Act, 1982. It has been labelled an "Indian Magna Carta" or "Indian Bill of Rights."

1764-1862 - The first land surrender treaties—Mississauga and Upper Canada Treaties - The first of the land surrender treaties was signed in 1764. The migration of the Loyalists after the American Revolution resulted in the division of Quebec into two jurisdictions: Lower Canada and Upper Canada. In some of the earliest agreements, it was understood that the Indian signatories would be allowed to continue to live, hunt, and fish in the unsettled areas as the growth of settlement was slow. However, in the years following the War of 1812, settlement increased rapidly and the harvesting concerns of Indigenous groups were entered into the minutes of treaty negotiations. The courts have interpreted the minutes as part of the treaty and some of these first agreements now protect harvesting rights.

1812-1814 - The War of 1812 - The War of 1812 was a military conflict between the United States and Great Britain. As a colony of Great Britain, Canada was swept up in the War of 1812 and invaded a number of times by the Americans. Some 10,000 First Nations warriors and Métis soldiers fought alongside British troops and Canadian militia against invading American forces during the War.

1816 – Battle of Seven Oaks - The Hudson's Bay Company had strong links with the British colony on the Red River. It used those connections to manipulate the laws in its favour, to the disadvantage of the North West Company. The Métis provided provisions and services to both companies, and were economically harmed by the British attempts to limit sales of pemmican and furs to other parties. On June 19, 1816, a conflict erupted at Seven Oaks when the governor of the Hudson's Bay Company and 28 men stopped a load of goods being escorted by Métis and First Nations men. In the end, the governor and 20 of his men were killed, as well as a 16-year-old Métis man, Joseph Letendre.

1821-1823 - Parry Expedition - A British Naval Expedition led by Admiral Parry provided the first informed, sympathetic, and well-documented account of the economic, social, and religious life of Inuit.

1828 - The First Residential School - The Mohawk Institute (called "Mush Hole" by its survivors) was the oldest continuously operated Anglican residential school in Canada, closing in 1972. It was established as the Mechanics' Institute, a day school for Native boys from the Six Nations Reserve in present-day Brantford, Ontario. Three years later, the school took in boarders and girls were later admitted.

1850 - Indian Protection Act - The 1850, the *Act for the Better Protection of the Lands and Property of the Indians in Lower Canada* was one of the first pieces of legislation that included a set of requirements for a person to be considered a legal Indian. This was a precursor to the concept of "status," that is, "legal recognition of a person's First Nations heritage, which affords certain rights."

1850-1854 - Douglas Treaties - Between 1850 and 1854, James Douglas, on behalf of the British Crown, negotiated 14 land purchases on Vancouver Island, which are known to this day as the Douglas Treaties. Controversy remains over whether these were actual "treaties," what was agreed to within them, and who was covered by them. According to First Nations oral history, many of the signatories assumed they were signing a peace treaty to share, not cede, their lands.

1850 - Robinson Treaties - Two treaties were negotiated and signed for the north shores of Lake Superior and Lake Huron. Part of the early northern expansion of what would become Ontario, the Robinson Treaties opened up the area's natural resources to initial exploration and exploitation. The Robinson Treaties also became a loose model for future Numbered Treaties in Western Canada.

1857 - Gradual Civilization Act - This *Act* was adopted by the colonial legislature of Canada. It encouraged First Nations to enfranchise and abandon their traditional ways of life, offering lands to those who qualified. Under the Act, a debt-free, "educated Indian" who was of "good moral character" and who could read or write in English or French could apply for a land grant from the federal government. Only one person was voluntarily enfranchised under this law.

1867 - Canadian Confederation – Quebec, Ontario, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick - The Dominion of Canada was created under the terms of the *British North America Act*, Canada's first constitution. Section 91(24) of the Act also established federal jurisdiction over "Indians and lands reserved for the Indians." The Act specified how First Nations peoples were put "under the protection" of the Crown. It provided the legal basis for treaties and emphasized the government's central priorities of "assimilation, enfranchisement and civilization."

1869 - Enfranchisement Act - The *Enfranchisement Act* was designed to give greater incentives to First Nations individuals to abandon their communities and traditional way of life. It established the first foundations of the chief-and-council system and the extremely limited self-governing powers, which were controlled by the Dominion government. It also started the era of Status and Non-Status Indians, whereby women who married non-Indian men would lose their Indian identity, as would their children. In the decades to follow, First Nations peoples experienced compulsory enfranchisement and legal loss of Indian status and access to benefits and rights associated with recognized status if they graduated from university, became Christian ministers, achieved professional designations as doctors or lawyers, or served in the military. In such cases, they also lost access to the benefits and rights associated with recognized status.

1870 - Manitoba emerges out of the Red River Resistance - The uprising in the Red River Colony was sparked by the transfer of the vast territory of Rupert's Land to the new nation of Canada. The colony of farmers and hunters, many of them Métis, occupied a corner of Rupert's Land. They feared for their culture and land rights under Canadian control. The Métis declared a provisional government to negotiate terms for entering Confederation, with Louis Riel as their representative. The result was an uprising and the creation of the province of Manitoba. Louis Riel emerged as the Métis leader, a hero to his people and many in Quebec. At the same time, he was declared a traitor and an outlaw by the Canadian government.

1870s-1920s – Métis Scrip - The scrip system was designed to extinguish the Aboriginal title of the Métis in Western Canada, much as the land surrender treaties did in the case of First Nations. Under the *Manitoba Act* and the *Dominion Lands Act*, individual Métis were encouraged to exchange their Aboriginal title for a certificate, or "scrip," redeemable for land or money (whichever the individual chose). Initial scrip offerings were for 160 acres or 160 dollars but these figures varied over time and in different places.

1871-1921 - Numbered Treaties - Following the model of the 1850 Robinson Treaties, the Crown negotiated 11 treaties between 1871 and 1921. The treaties covered the area extending from the Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains and the Beaufort Sea. Similar to the Robinson Treaties, the so-called "Numbered Treaties" promised reserve lands, annuities, and the continued right to hunt and fish on unoccupied Crown lands in exchange for Aboriginal title. From the beginning, there were First Nations complaints that treaty agreements were not being honoured, wholly or in part. There are still ongoing legal disputes about the oral and written versions of the treaties to this day. Other issues concern non-fulfillment of promises; later reserve land annexations by the Crown; fraudulent practices by Crown agents; and disagreements over hunting, fishing and trapping rights.

1914-1918 - First World War - Not all First Nations supported involvement in the First World War but some 4,000 First Nations men voluntarily enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, even though they had no rights of citizenship. This represents an estimated enlistment rate of one in three able-bodied First Nations men who were of age to serve. An unknown number of Métis also enlisted, as did at least 15 Inuit from Labrador. Indigenous women served as well. In spite of the glowing official reports about enthusiastic "Indian" support for the war effort, the policy of enfranchisement had a significantly adverse impact on returning First Nations soldiers: they lost their Indian status and their access to government programs for First Nations members, and at the same time they were denied programs intended for veterans. This meant that they did not receive the same benefits and support after the war as their non-Indigenous comrades.

1917 – “Eskimo Murder Trial” - The first Inuit to be brought to trial for murder under Canadian law were Sinnisiak (died ca. 1930) and Uluksuk (died 1924), Inuit hunters from the Coppermine region of the Northwest Territories. This case allowed the Canadian government to demonstrate that its law applied in the North, supporting the Canadian claim to sovereignty. The case also exposed Inuit to the force of Canadian law and the Canadian government’s expectations for Inuit behaviour. By commuting the sentence, the government demonstrated the potential for mercy in the judicial system that Inuit were expected to follow.

1919 - League of Indians of Canada - The League of Indians of Canada was the first national Aboriginal political organization in Canada. Its main goals were to protect the rights and improve the living conditions of First Nations people in Canada. The League’s offers to work with the Department of Indian Affairs were rebuffed.

1922 - A National Crime - Indian Affairs medical officer Dr. Peter Bryce noted numerous problems within Residential Schools, including overcrowding, poor nutrition and abuse. A 1907 report written by him was ignored and Dr. Bryce was removed from his position. He eventually published his findings in a publication called *The Story of a National Crime*.

1923 - Williams Treaties signed in Ontario - The 1923 Williams Treaties, named for the head of the commission, ceded all lands in the region to the Crown for a fixed one-time cash payment. Unlike the Numbered Treaties, which had recently been completed, the Williams Treaties extinguished hunting, fishing, harvesting, trapping and gathering rights. The First Nations signatories brought suit in 2012, and the case is still before the courts.

1924-1939 - Inuit “a Federal Responsibility” - A bill was passed to amend the Indian Act, assigning responsibility for Inuit to the Department of Indian Affairs but ensuring that Inuit would remain Canadian citizens. This bill was repealed, however, making the Northwest Territories Council in Ottawa responsible for Inuit. Because of its presence in the North, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police was delegated to administer relief (food and ammunition) in the area. In *Reference Re Eskimos* (1939), the Supreme Court found that, constitutionally, Inuit were to be classified as Indians in Canada. This decision made Inuit the legal responsibility of the Government of Canada.

1927 – Indian Act Amendment - The *Indian Act* was amended, preventing anyone from soliciting funds to represent First Nations. This effectively prevented Indigenous Peoples from initiating legal action and finding representation for many decades.

1930-1960s - Tuberculosis in the Arctic - By the mid-1940s and well into the 1960s, there was a tuberculosis epidemic in the Arctic, with some regions reporting up to 25 percent of the population as being infected. In those decades, many Inuit were sent to the South for treatment, sometimes for several years. Many of these patients never returned and relatives were not informed about what happened to them.

1939-1945 - Second World War - At least 3,000 Status (Treaty) Indians—including 72 women—enlisted in the Canadian Forces during the Second World War, as well as an unknown number of Inuit, Métis and other First Nations. The actual numbers were no doubt much higher. At least 17 decorations for bravery in action were earned.

1942-present – Canadian Rangers Program - The Canadian Rangers are a branch of the military, created in 1942. The Rangers are primarily local Indigenous individuals who bring their traditional skills to the job. The Rangers were originally formed to monitor the country’s northern and Pacific coasts during the Second World War. Today, the Rangers exist as part of the army’s Reserve Force, and operate from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

1940s-1970s - E-Numbers - Because of the growing need for administration of Inuit issues as well as unfamiliarity with the Inuktitut language, government officials established the “Eskimo identification disc” system. This created a registry of Inuit that replaced names with identification numbers. The system was widely viewed as dehumanizing and was abandoned in the 1970s.

1950s – 1960s - Inuit Education - Government officials began establishing schools for Inuit children, both hostelling schools and residential schools. Linked to other programs and benefits, the schools led to the increased settlement of Inuit in permanent communities.

1953 - Inuit relocation to the High Arctic - In August 1953, seven or eight families from Inukjuak, in northern Quebec (then known as Port Harrison), were transported to Grise Fiord on the southern tip of Ellesmere Island and to Resolute on Cornwallis Island. The families had been receiving welfare payments; they were promised better living and hunting opportunities in new communities in the High Arctic. The Inuit reported that the relocations had been forced and that the program’s aim was to assert Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic archipelago through the creation of settlements in the area. For its part, the federal government stressed that the “Eskimo problem” was linked to Inuit reluctance to give up their nomadic ways.

1958 - First Nations individual appointed to the Canadian Senate - In 1958, James Gladstone (1887–1971), a member of the Kainai (Blood) First Nation, became Canada’s first senator of First Nations origin. He helped create awareness of Indigenous issues and the need to reduce the marginalization of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

1959 - The Sixties Scoop - In what is called the “Sixties Scoop” (but which continued into the 1980s), thousands of children across Canada were fostered or adopted out to predominantly caucasian families in Canada, and also in the United States and Europe. In addition to losing their birth names, cultural identity and Indian status, many children suffered sexual, physical and/or mental abuse at the hands of their adoptive or foster families.

1960 - First Nations granted the right to vote - The Indian Act and the Canada Elections Act were amended to grant Status Indians full voting rights, and therefore full Canadian citizenship. Métis had never been denied these rights. Voting rights had been extended to Inuit in 1948, although little attempt was made to ensure their votes were collected until the early 1960s.

1970–1971 - Organizing to advocate for rights and interests - The National Indian Brotherhood was established to represent the interests of Status and Treaty First Nations. Over time, the Brotherhood evolved into the Assembly of First Nations, the national political organization that advocates on behalf of First Nations on issues such as treaties, Indigenous rights, and land and resources.

In 1971, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (now called Inuit Tapariit Kanatami) was established to work toward the greater interest of all Inuit in Canada. The Native Council of Canada was also established to represent the needs and interests of Métis and Non-Status Indians in Canada (those individuals who had lost their status as a result of forced enfranchisement). This group became a leading voice in the movement to recognize Métis rights in Canada. It later split into two new organizations, the Métis National Council and the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples.

1973 - The Era of Modern Treaties - A series of court decisions, most notably the *Calder* decision along with *Malouf and Paulette*, recognized ongoing and existing Aboriginal rights in many parts of Canada. This led to the establishment of the Government of Canada’s Comprehensive Claims Policy, the beginning of modern treaty negotiations over new land settlements, and eventually the signing of self-government agreements

1974 - Berger Report on the Mackenzie River Pipeline - Oil companies planned to build a pipeline through the Western Arctic, which would carry oil and gas from the Prudhoe Bay field in Alaska south through the Mackenzie River Valley to the United States. Chrétien asked Justice Thomas Berger of the Supreme Court of British Columbia to lead what is now known as the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry. In the end, Berger proposed that no construction take place for 10 years so that Inuvialuit, Dene and Métis land claims could be settled. This was significant since his recommendations and the supporting evidence provided a basis for Northern land claims negotiations to take place for over a quarter-century. Berger also concluded that the northern Yukon was too susceptible to environmental harm for a project of such magnitude to pass through that part of the route.

1975 - James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement - The James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement was signed in 1975. It was the first major comprehensive land claims agreement in northern Canada, heralding a new era in Aboriginal land claims. The agreement provided \$225 million in compensation to the James Bay Cree and Inuit of northern Québec, to be paid by the governments of Canada and Québec.

1982 - Canadian Constitution, Section 35 - Section 35 initially consisted of two subsections recognizing the “aboriginal and treaty rights” of the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada. Further text was added after consultations with Aboriginal representatives during the March 1983 First Ministers’ Conference on Aboriginal Constitutional Matters. The new wording confirmed recognition of rights conferred by existing or future land claims agreements. It also confirmed that the rights referred to in section 35 were guaranteed equally to men and women.

1983 - Northern Native Broadcast Access Program - The Government of Canada introduced a program to provide funding for the creation of Indigenous radio and television content in the Territories and the northern regions of seven provinces. The existence of the program helped spawn the creation of Television Northern Canada and later, the national service, Aboriginal People’s Television Network.

1984 - Guerin Decision - The Musqueam Indian Band in Vancouver, British Columbia, sued the federal government for breach of trust concerning 162 acres of the band’s reserve land, which had been leased to a golf club in the late 1950s. After the lease had been signed, the band discovered that Department of Indian and Northern Affairs officials withheld vital information about the value of the property, and failed to follow the band’s instructions as set out in the surrender process for reserved lands.

1985 - Bill C-31 - Bill C-31 was drafted in response to the 1981 decision of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in the case of Sandra Lovelace Nicholas. The intent of the bill was to bring the *Indian Act* inline with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The bill amended the *Indian Act*, restoring Indian status to First Nations women who had lost it due to marriage to someone other than another Status Indian. It also granted Indian status to the children of those women.

1985 - Simon Decision - The Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the 1752 Peace and Friendship Treaty is still in effect regarding the ongoing hunting and fishing rights of the Mi’kmaq in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

1988 - First Indigenous woman elected to House of Commons - The first woman was elected to Canada’s House of Commons in 1921. Sixty-seven years later, the first Indigenous woman was elected to the House: Ethel Blondin-Andrew. Born into a Dene family in the Northwest Territories, Blondin-Andrew was elected as Member for the Western Arctic in 1988.

1990 - Oka Crisis - The Oka Crisis was a 78-day standoff (July 11 to September 26, 1990) between Mohawk protesters, police and the army. The cause of the crisis was the proposed expansion of a golf course and development of condominiums on disputed land, which included a Mohawk burial ground.

1990 - Métis Settlements Act, Alberta - In 1985, the Alberta government passed what was known as Resolution 18, committing the province to transfer title of the Métis Settlements (Paddle Prairie, Peavine, Gift Lake, East Prairie, Buffalo Lake, Kikino, Elizabeth and Fishing Lake) to the Métis people, and to provide constitutional protection of the lands by means of an amendment to the *Alberta Act*. This paved the way for the historic 1989 Alberta–Métis Settlements Accord, which came into force with the *Métis Settlement Act*.

1990 - Sparrow Case - Referring to the *Constitution Act*, 1982, the Supreme Court of Canada defined the meaning of the word “existing” as used in Section 35 and established rules restricting the infringement of Aboriginal rights. These criteria are together known as the “Sparrow test.”

1993 - Nunavut Land Claim Agreement - The Nunavut Land Claim Agreement is the largest in Canadian history. Its provisions included: title to approximately 350,000 km² of land, 35,257 km² of which include mineral rights; the right for Inuit to harvest wildlife on lands and waters throughout the Nunavut settlement area; a share of federal government royalties from oil, gas and mineral development on Crown lands; the creation of three federally funded national parks; capital transfer payments of \$1.174 billion over 14 years and a \$13 million Training Trust Fund for the establishment of the Government of Nunavut.

1994 - Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples - The United Nations developed a draft declaration recognizing the rights of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination and independent government in matters related to internal and local affairs. The General Assembly of the United Nations also declared the years 1995 to 2004 the International Decade of the World’s Indigenous Peoples.

1995 - The Inherent Right Policy – The policy allows for the negotiation of self-government agreements with individual communities or an aggregate of communities in regions. From 1995 to 2019, the federal government signed 22 self-government agreements, recognizing a wide range of Aboriginal jurisdictions and involving 36 Aboriginal communities across Canada. Of those, 18 are part of a comprehensive land claim.

1996 - The Royal Commission on Aboriginal People - In 1991, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was established. The four Aboriginal and three non-Aboriginal commissioners were mandated to investigate and report back to the Government of Canada on one overriding question: What are the foundations of a fair and honourable relationship between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people of Canada? The Commission held 178 days of public hearings, visited 96 communities, consulted dozens of experts, commissioned scores of research studies, and reviewed numerous past inquiries and reports. In 1996, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada published their report. The five-volume report provided the most in-depth look at Indigenous–Canada relations, past and present, ever produced. Its 440 recommendations called for sweeping changes in the relationship, many of which remain pertinent today.

1996 - Badger Case - The appellants in this case were Cree people, Status Indians under Treaty No. 8, who had been hunting for food on privately owned lands located in tracts surrendered by the treaty. Each was charged with an offence under the Wildlife Act. Among other issues, the case involved the question of whether the individuals’ right to hunt, fish and trap had been extinguished by the treaty and subsequent provincial legislation.

1996 - The Last Indian Residential School - At the end of a long process that began in 1967, the last of the residential schools, Gordon Residential School in Punnichy, Saskatchewan, closed.

1997 - *Delgamuukw Decision* - The Delgamuukw case was a legal action brought by the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en peoples to achieve recognition of ownership, jurisdiction and self-government of their traditional territories from the governments of Canada and British Columbia. The Supreme Court of Canada ruled unanimously in Delgamuukw that Aboriginal title to the land had never been extinguished. The decision further confirmed that title involved a right to the land itself—not just the right to hunt, fish or gather—and that governments must consult with and may have to compensate First Nations whose rights are affected.

1998 - *Gathering Strength Action Plan* - In response to the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the Government of Canada announced an action plan to restructure its relationship with Aboriginal peoples (*Gathering Strength – Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan.*) The government affirmed that both historic and modern-day treaties would continue to be key elements in the future relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Crown.

1998 - *Nisga'a Final Agreement* - The first modern land treaty in British Columbia was signed after the Nisga'a had fought for 111 years to establish their right to govern themselves and assert title to their traditional territories. The Liberal Party of British Columbia under Premier Gordon Campbell and, later, even some members of the Nisga'a nation, challenged the constitutionality of the agreement. However, it has twice been upheld by the British Columbia Supreme Court, in 2000 and again in 2013.

1999 - *Marshall Decision* - In September 1999, the Supreme Court of Canada confirmed that Donald Marshall, Jr. had a treaty right to catch and sell fish. The Court ruled that Mi'kmaq and Maliseet people on the East Coast continued to have treaty rights to hunt, fish and gather to earn a moderate livelihood. On November 17, 1999, the Supreme Court provided further clarification of its first ruling. The Court stated that Mi'kmaq and Maliseet treaty rights were not unlimited and the fishery could be regulated, including Aboriginal fishing activities.

1999 - Nunavut Territory is created

1999 - *First Nations Land Management Act* - In 1991, a group of First Nations chiefs approached the Government of Canada with a proposal to opt out of 32 provisions of the *Indian Act* on land and resources. As a result of this proposal, the Framework Agreement on First Nations Land Management was negotiated by 14 First Nations and Canada in 1996, and became law in 1999 as the *First Nations Land Management Act*. Under the First Nations Land Management regime, land administration is transferred to First Nations once their land codes come into effect.

2000 - *The Indian Act amended* - The amendment of the year 2000 allowed band members living off-reserve to vote in band elections and referendums.

2003 – *Powley decision* - In 2003, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in the Powley case that Métis have ongoing hunting rights around Sault Ste. Marie, and established a test for future recognition of such rights across Canada. The Government of Canada started a process to help Métis organizations better identify their membership.

2004 - *Haida and Taku River Tlingit Decisions* - In November 2004, the Supreme Court of Canada released its decisions in *Haida Nation* and *Taku River Tlingit*, two important cases that dealt with Aboriginal consultation and accommodation obligations related to resource development. The two decisions provided greater clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities of government, Aboriginal groups and industry in consultations with and accommodation of Aboriginal communities. The Court confirmed that the Crown has a duty to consult Aboriginal peoples prior to proof of rights or title claims, as well as a duty to accommodate their concerns.

2005 - Kelowna Accord - The Kelowna Accord was the result of an 18-month consultative process involving the federal, provincial and territorial governments, as well as five national Aboriginal organizations. The Accord was a 10-year plan, including a five-year, \$5-billion commitment aimed at significantly improving Indigenous health, education, housing and infrastructure, economic opportunities, and accountability, as well as relationships between Indigenous communities and the federal government. The Accord remains significant to many for its collaborative and consultative process, involving representatives of all Indigenous Peoples in Canada along with the provinces and territories. With a change in national government in 2006, the deal was never implemented.

2006 - First Nations Fiscal Management Act - *First Nations Fiscal Management Act* is legislation that permits First Nations still operating within the *Indian Act* to develop modern-day financial tools, which they can use to address barriers in attracting investments to their lands. First Nations can choose whether or not to participate. It establishes three institutions: The First Nations Financial Management Board, the First Nations Tax Commission, and the First Nations Finance Authority.

2007 – Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement - Starting in the 1980s, former residential school students began seeking legal redress for the abuses they had suffered while at residential schools. The largest class-action settlement in Canadian history to date, the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement acknowledged the damage inflicted by residential schools and established a multi-billion-dollar fund to help former students in their recovery. The Agreement came into effect in September 2007.

2008 - Statement of Apology to Residential School Survivors - In a solemn ceremony in Parliament, Prime Minister Stephen Harper offered an official statement of apology for the abuse and suffering of residential school Survivors. Even more significant than the apology was the recognition that the schools' primary objective was "to kill the Indian in the child."

2010 - Apology for Relocating Inuit - On August 18, 2010, in Inukjuak, Nunavik, John Duncan, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, apologized on behalf of the Government of Canada for the forced relocation of Inuit to the High Arctic in 1953.

2010 - Nanilavut: Let's Find Them - In 2010, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (then called Indian and Northern Affairs Canada) and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. agreed to work together to identify the graves of Inuit buried in the South during tuberculosis evacuations of the 1940s to the 1960s. Many patients were treated and returned home; others succumbed to the illness and were buried in cemeteries near the treatment facilities.

2012 - The Crown-First Nations Gathering - Over 170 chiefs met with the Governor General, the Prime Minister and 12 Cabinet members at the Crown–First Nations Gathering in January 2012. Facilitated by the Assembly of First Nations, this was the largest meeting ever held between First Nations and the Government of Canada.

2012 - Idle No More - One of the largest mass social movements in Canada evolved rapidly over several months in 2012, thanks in large part to social media. Idle No More was started by four Indigenous women in Saskatoon. Partly, the movement was inspired by the liquid diet hunger strike of Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence, who was seeking better conditions on reserves. Partly, it was a reaction to alleged legislative abuses of Indigenous treaty rights by a federal government omnibus bill. The National Day of Action on December 10, 2012, inspired thousands of people across the country—Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike—to take action and commit to a change in the relationship.

2013 - First Nations Financial Transparency Act - The Act required that 581 First Nations, defined as Indian bands under the *Indian Act*, make their audited consolidated financial statements, along with the schedules of remuneration and expenses of their chiefs and councils, available to their community members and publish them on the Internet. On December 18, 2015, the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs issued a statement indicating that the department had stopped all discretionary compliance measures related to the *First Nations Financial Transparency Act*, was reinstating funding withheld from First Nations under these measures and was suspending any court actions against First Nations that had not complied with the Act.

2013 - Manitoba Métis Federation v. Canada - The Supreme Court of Canada ruled in the Manitoba Métis Federation case that the original allotment of land for Métis children as promised in the *1870 Manitoba Act* was performed improperly. The decision led to new discussions between Canada and the Manitoba Métis Federation about how to address outstanding land and rights issues in the province.

2014 - Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia - The decision in this case marked the first time that the Supreme Court of Canada granted Aboriginal title to a specific parcel of land. The Court concluded that the Tsilhqot'in Nation had established Aboriginal title to the area designated by the British Columbia Supreme Court. The provincial Supreme Court found evidence that the Tsilhqot'in regularly used the land, continuously occupied the claimed area before and after the assertion of sovereignty, and treated the land as exclusively theirs before sovereignty assertion by repelling other people from it and demanding that they seek permission to pass over it.

2015 - Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Final Report

- The establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was called for in the 2007 Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. The Commission's work focused national attention on the devastation that the residential school system brought to Indigenous Peoples. Its work also shone a light on the serious abuses suffered by individual children and the deliberately assimilationist policy of its originators, which sought to "kill the Indian in the child." The Commission's final report listed 94 "Calls to Action" to help restore the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians.

2015 - A New Era of Reconciliation? - For the first time in Canadian history, the mandate letters of federal government ministers were made public by the Prime Minister. In addition to specific commitments, every letter emphasized the government's goal of a renewed "nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership."

2016 - Jordan's Principle - The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruled that the federal government had violated Jordan's Principle and discriminated against First Nations children on reserves by failing to provide the same level of child welfare services that existed elsewhere. The Tribunal's decision stated that the government must "cease the discriminatory practice and take measures to redress and prevent it." It called for the redesign of the child welfare system and its funding model, urging the use of experts to ensure that First Nations received "culturally appropriate services."

2016 - Northern Gateway Pipeline - The Federal Court of Appeal overturned a permit for the Northern Gateway Pipeline project, finding that the Government of Canada failed in its duty to consult affected Indigenous communities prior to issuing approval.

2016 - Daniels Decision - In 2016, the Supreme Court of Canada issued a final decision on the Daniels case. The Court ruled that Métis and Non-Status Indians should be considered Indians as defined by section 91(24) of the *Constitution Act, 1867*. The Court also ruled that the federal government has jurisdiction over Métis and Non-Status Indians, and a fiduciary duty toward them.

2016 - Apology to the Sayisi Dene - In August 2016, the Government of Canada apologized for forcibly relocating the Sayisi Dene in the 1950s and 1960s. Without planning, consultation or explanation, the federal government removed the community from Little Duck Lake, Manitoba, flying them first to Churchill and then to North Knife River. The relocation left the Sayisi Dene far from their traditional lands, where they hunted caribou and harvested on key lakes and rivers.

2016 - A Matter of National and Constitutional Importance - In 2015, the federal Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs appointed a Special Representative on Reconciliation with Métis. The following year, the Special Representative released a report calling on the federal government to address Métis rights. The report made 17 recommendations to the government.

2016 - Commission of Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls - After years of public calls for action, the Government of Canada established the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The Inquiry's task was to bring a "national tragedy to an end." It issued an interim report in November 2017, and a comprehensive final report entitled *Reclaiming Power and Place* in June of 2019.

2016 - Canada officially adopts UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples - On May 10, 2016, the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs announced Canada's full support for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. "We are now a full supporter of the Declaration, without qualification," Minister Carolyn Bennett said, as she addressed the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at the United Nations in New York City. "We intend nothing less than to adopt and implement the Declaration in accordance with the Canadian Constitution."

2016 - Gender Rights in the Indian Act - In its August 2015 decision on *Descheneaux v. Canada*, the Quebec Superior Court held that several provisions of the Indian Act concerning who is considered a Status Indian violated the principles of equality protected by section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In particular, men and women could not transfer their Indian status equally to their children and grandchildren.

2017 - Permanent Bilateral Mechanisms - To better serve Indigenous people in the important work of advancing self-government and greater self-determination, the federal government created permanent bilateral mechanisms with First Nations, Inuit and the Métis Nation. The purpose was to facilitate Crown-Indigenous cooperation on annual priority-setting and joint policy development. The 2017 and 2018 federal budgets provided for increased and ongoing support for the permanent bilateral mechanisms.

2017 - Principles respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous People - On February 22, 2017, the Prime Minister announced the establishment of a Working Group of Ministers responsible for reviewing relevant federal laws, policies and operational practices to help further a nation-to-nation, Inuit-Crown and government-to-government relationship with Indigenous Peoples. A 2018 publication entitled *Principles Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples* set out the principles to guide the review.

2017 - Canada and Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada sign new partnership agreement - On June 15, 2017, Carolyn Bennett, federal Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, and Rebecca Kudloo, President of Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, signed a memorandum of understanding to establish a whole-of-government relationship for the purpose of addressing issues of common concern that directly affect the well-being and safety of Inuit women and children across Canada.

2017 - Launch of Co-Development of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Language Legislation - On June 15, 2017, Métis Nation President Clément Chartier, Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami President Natan Obed joined with Heritage Minister Mélanie Joly and Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett to announce their intention to co-develop legislation aimed at revitalizing and promoting Indigenous languages.

2017 - Anishinabek Nation Education Agreement - On August 16, 2017, the Government of Canada and 23 Anishinabek First Nations signed a historic self-government agreement on education. Achieved after over 20 years of negotiations, the Anishinabek Nation Education Agreement recognizes First Nations control over education from junior kindergarten to Grade 12, both on and off reserve.

2017 - Creation of the Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada and Indigenous Services Canada - In August 2017, the federal government implemented a recommendation in the 1996 report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. It dissolved Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, and replaced it with two new departments: Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, and Indigenous Services Canada.

2017 - Agreement-in-Principle in Sixties Scoop litigation - On October 6, 2017, Canada's Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Carolyn Bennett, joined with Marcia Brown Martel, Stewart Garnett, Priscilla Meeches, Catriona Charlie, Peter Van Name, Sarah Tanchak, and Jessica Riddle (plaintiffs in the proceedings) to announce achievement of an agreement in principle aimed at resolving Sixties Scoop litigation. The agreement in principle provided for the establishment of a foundation focusing on healing, wellness, language, culture and commemoration.

2017 - National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Interim Report - On November 1, 2017, the commissioners of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls released a 120-page interim report, entitled *Our Women and Girls Are Sacred*.

2017 - Apology to Residential School Survivors of Newfoundland and Labrador - On November 24, 2017, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau apologized to former students of Newfoundland and Labrador residential schools and their families in Happy Valley - Goose Bay. In 2008, Stephen Harper, who was then Prime Minister, delivered an apology to residential school Survivors, but it excluded students from provincially run residential schools in Newfoundland and Labrador.

2017 - First Indigenous leader of a provincial political party - In September 2017, Wabanakwut (Wab) Kinew was named leader of the Manitoba New Democratic Party.

2019 - National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls—final report - On June 3, 2019, the commissioners of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls released their final report, entitled *Reclaiming Power and Place*. The report documented the stories of 2,380 family members, survivors of violence, experts and knowledge keepers, which were shared during two years of cross-country public hearings and evidence gathering. It also presented 231 distinct calls to justice, for the attention of governments, institutions, social services providers, industry and all Canadians.

APPENDIX C: Additional Resources

The following section contains additional information from a variety of sources and is intended strictly for informational purposes only.

Books

- **21 Things You Might Not Know About the Indian Act: Helping Canadians Make Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples a Reality** by Bob Joseph, 2018, Indigenous Relations Press
- **Seven Fallen Feathers** by Tanya Talaga, 2017, House of Anansi Publishing
- **From the Ashes** by Jesse Thistle
- **Indian Horse** by Richard Wagamese
- **Igloo Dwellers Were My Church** by John R. Sperry
- **The Inconvenient Indian** by Thomas King, 2002, Doubleday Canada
- **My Conversations with Canadians** by Lee Maracle, 2017, BookThug Publishing
- **Annie Muktuk and Other Stories** by Norma Dunning, 2017, University of Alberta Press
- **Half Breed** by Maria Campbell
- **The Inuit Way: A Guide to Inuit Culture** by Pauktuttit Inuit Women of Canada
- **The Mishomis Book, The Voice of the Ojibway** by Eddy Benton-Banai, 1988, Indian Country Communications, Inc., Hayward WI
- **The Manitous, The Spiritual World of the Ojibway** by Basil Johnston, 1995, Harper Collins Publishing
- **Ojibway Ceremonies** by Basil Johnston, 1982, University of Nebraska Press
- **The Ancient Earthworks and Temples of the American Indians** by Lindsay Brine, 1996, Oracle Publishing, England
- **Kitchi-Gami Life Among the Lake Superior Ojibway** by Johann Georg Kohl, 1985, Minnesota Historical Society Press
- **The Wild West - History, Myth and the Making of America** by Frederick Nolan, 2003, Arcturus Publishing Ltd.
- **Animal Energies** by Gary Buffalo Horn Man and Sherry Firedancer, 1992, Dancing Otter Publishing
- **Sweetgrass** by Jan Hudson, 1984, Tree Frog Press Ltd.
- **Missions to the North American Indians** by The Religious Tract Society, Instituted in 1799
- **Buckskin Colonist** by John R. Hayes, The Copp Clark Publishing Company.
- **The Unjust Society** by Harold Cardinal
- **Prison of Grass: Canada from the Native Point of View** by Howard Adams
- **In Search of April Raintree** by Beatrice Culleton
- **The Flower Beadwork People** by Sherry Farrell-Racette
- **Stories of the Road Allowance People** by Maria Campbell
- **Prayers of a Métis Priest** by Father Guy Lavallee
- **Métis Legacy** by Barwell, Forion & Prefontaine
- **Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times** by Olive Dickason.

- **I Knew Two Métis Women: The lives of Dorothy Scofield and Georgina Houle Young** by Gregory Scofield
- **Remembrances: Interviews with Métis Veterans**, Editors: Dave Hutchison, Anne Dorion, and Rick Desjarlais
- **Métis Legacy II: Michif Culture, Heritage and Folkway**, Editors: Lawrence J. Barkwell, Leah Dorion and Audreen Hourie
- **The Great Giving Tree: A Retelling of a Traditional Métis Story**, Written and Illustrated by Leah Dorion
- **A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System** by John S. Milloy
- **A Fair Country** by John Ralston Saul
- **Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto** by Taiaiake Alfred
- **White Heat** by M.J. McGrath
- **Julie of the Wolves** by Jean Craighead George
- **The Polar Bear Son, An Inuit Take** by Lydia Dabcovich
- **Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit** by the Government of Nunavut
- **Canada's Relationship with Inuit** by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
- **The Comeback** by John Ralston Saul

Films & Documentaries

- **Atanarjuat – Fast Runner** (Film) By Zacharias Kunuk (National Film Board: 2001).
- **Experimental Eskimos** (Documentary) By Barry Greenwald (White Pine Picture, Enlightened Entertainment: 2009).
- **First Contact** (3-Part Television Series) (CBC: 2018).
- **CBC's 8th Fire** (2012).
- **Reel Injun** (Documentary) By Catherine Bainbridge, Neil Diamond, Jeremiah Hayes (National Film Board: 2009).
- **the pass system** by Alex Williams.
- **Two Soft Things, Two Hard Things**, by Mark Kenneth Woods and Michael Yerxa.
- **Indian Horse** by Stephen Campanelli
- **The Spirit of Annie Mae** by Catherine Anne Martin
- **Richard Cardinal: Cry from a Diary of a Métis Child** by Alanis Obomsawin
- **The Angry Inuk** by Alethea Arnaquq-Baril
- **Qallunaat! Why White People Are Funny** by Mark Sandiford
- **The Revenant** by Alejandro González Iñárritu
- **Is the Crown at War With Us?** by Alanis Obomsawin
- **Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance** by Alanis Obomsawin
- **Trick or Treaty?** by Alanis Obomsawin
- **Finding Dawn** by Christine Walsh
- **Smoke Signals** by Chris Eyre
- **Dances With Wolves** by Kevin Costner



“If I observe or experience behaviour that I do not understand, there may be a cultural explanation.”

Jim Potts, Insp. (ret'd)
Mah-ki-ki-Maqua. (Medicine Bear)





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