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Pulling Together: Manitoba Foundations Guide (Brandon Edition) was adapted by the Manitoba Foundations Group from Kory Wilson's *Pulling Together: Foundations Guide*.

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ARTIST STATEMENT

The cover art for Pulling Together: Manitoba Foundations Guide (Brandon Edition) was created by Emery Knight and based on the piece Pulling Together by Lou-ann Neel, a Kwakwaka'wakw artist. In her words, Lou-ann was “inspired by the annual gathering of ocean-going canoes through Tribal Journeys,” and “intended to represent the connections each of us has to our respective Nations and to one another as we Pull Together.” Emery Knight is an Anishinaabe Artist who grew up in the Parkland and Brandon areas who respected Neel’s voice and story as a guide to reflect his vision of Indigenous Peoples in Manitoba.

The end of the birch bark canoe bleeds off the page to represent the space that there is for everyone on this journey. The river flows from the foreground to the background, from left to right, and ebbs back and forth to express the journey’s path into the unknown, and acknowledges the organic nature of it. The only way forward is together, guided by our grandmother and grandfather’s teachings of the land.

TITLE STATEMENT & PROJECT CONTRIBUTORS

Thank you to all of the writers and contributors to the guides. We asked writers to share a phrase from their Indigenous languages on paddling or pulling together:

Maamawi-bimiskaadaa (let's all paddle together) – Anishinaabe (Ojibway)

Mamawi Pimiskatan (paddling together) – Cree Language

Wiikoopitamihk Aswaambl – Michif Language

The Manitoba Foundations Group decided to retain the main title of the guide produced by BCcampus in order to honour their good work and to make it easier for those searching for this particular resource to find the various adaptations that are available. In the subtitle, we struggled with the name “Manitoba.” On the one hand, it is a name applied to a bordered area created through colonization. On the other hand, it is a name that has been adapted from Indigenous language and, as has been observed, was suggested by Louis Riel himself—acclaimed Métis leader and founder of the Province of Manitoba.

Manitoba: The most common and widely accepted source of the name is from the Cree words ‘manitou’ (Great spirit) and ‘wapow (sacred water)’, or the Ojibway word ‘Manito-bau’. These names refer to the narrows of Lake Manitoba, where waves dashed against rocky shores of Manitou Island. These sounds were thought to be sacred beats that dashed throughout Creation and created beauty, definition and meaning. It is the voice of the Great Spirit, Manitowapow (Sinclair & Cariou, 2011, pp. 4–5).

Thank you to the Cultural Diversity and Awareness Steering Committee, Campus Manitoba, Assiniboine Community College, and Brandon University. Knowledge Keepers, Elders, faculty, and staff offered their precious time and energy to guide this project. Your expertise, gifts, and generosity are deeply appreciated.

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ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

Accessibility features of the web version of this resource

The [web version of the *Pulling Together: Manitoba Foundations Guide \(Brandon Edition\)*](#)¹ has been designed with accessibility in mind by incorporating the following features:

- it has been optimized for people who use screen-reader technology
- all content can be navigated using a keyboard
- links, headings, and tables are formatted to work with screen readers
- images have alt tags
- information is not conveyed by colour alone
- it has the option to increase font size (see tab on top right of screen)

Other file formats available

In addition to the web version, this book is available in a number of file formats including PDF, EPUB (for eReaders), MOBI (for Kindles), and various editable files. Here is a link to where you can [download this book in another file format](#).² Look for the “Download this book” drop-down menu to select the file type you want.

Those using a print copy of this resource can find the URLs for any websites mentioned in this resource in the footnotes.

Known accessibility issues and areas for improvement

While we strive to ensure that this resource is as accessible and usable as possible, we might not always get it right. Any issues we identify will be listed below. There are currently no known issues.

Accessibility standards

The web version of this resource has been designed to meet [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0](#).³ level AA. In addition, it follows all guidelines in [Accessibility Toolkit: Checklist for Accessibility](#).⁴ The development of this toolkit involved working with students with various print disabilities who provided their personal perspectives and helped test the content.

Let us know if you are having problems accessing this guide

We are always looking for ways to make our resources more accessible. If you have problems accessing this resource, please contact us⁵ to let us know so we can fix the issue.

Please include the following information:

- The location of the problem by providing a web address or page description
- A description of the problem
- The computer, software, browser, and any assistive technology you are using that can help us diagnose and solve your issue
- e.g., Windows 10, Google Chrome (Version 65.0.3325.181), NVDA screen reader

Notes

1. Web Version of *Manitoba Foundations Guide (Brandon Edition)* (<https://pressbooks.openedmb.ca/PullingTogetherManitoba>)
2. Alternate File Formats of the Resource (<https://pressbooks.openedmb.ca/PullingTogetherManitoba>)
3. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (<https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/>)
4. Accessibility Toolkit: Checklist for Accessibility (<https://opentextbc.ca/accessibilitytoolkit/back-matter/appendix-checklist-for-accessibility-toolkit/>)
5. Report an Open Textbook Error: email us — open@campusmanitoba.ca

PREFACE

Redefining the Relationship

What you are reading is unfinished. This guide is intended to be a living document. Just as human relationships are dynamic, so too is this document meant to grow and change. Change is holistic. When we change the way we think about things, these changes are reflected in our minds, bodies, spirits, and the ways that we relate to one another. Change is not easy, but it is necessary to look at history with fresh eyes to understand that colonization has and continues to affect us all. To be clear, there is a distinction between decolonization and Indigenization that may be new to people beginning to learn about the truth of Canada's history. Indigenization is an important step, but this step must be approached with the full participation of Indigenous peoples: "Nothing about us without us." Decolonization, on the other hand, is something we can all do. We can all identify the ways in which our thinking has been colonized and how we can learn in new ways.

Doing the work that is necessary to decolonize our thinking will benefit everyone, but it works best when we challenge ourselves on many levels. Decolonization isn't just a box to tick on a form to say we've done it. It is emotional, experiential, and sometimes uncomfortable. We must re-examine history to uncover what Indigenous Peoples have long understood: Colonization has resulted in the denial of fundamental human rights for Indigenous Peoples living in Canada. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), adopted internationally in 2007, wasn't signed by Canada until 2016, having originally voted against it. To date, Canada has not enacted legislation that would implement UNDRIP in this country.

Before contact, Indigenous Peoples were living and thriving on what many refer to as "North America" in complex societies with their own distinct governing traditions, cultures, languages, and ways of knowing. The Original People still exist and live all over Canada, from their traditional territories to urban centres. Indigenous Peoples have made, and continue to make, enormous contributions to Canadian society—politically, economically, and culturally. Sadly, too many Canadians are unaware of these contributions, and this lack of awareness is a barrier to improving relationships between all Canadians, whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous.

The relationship between non-Indigenous and Indigenous people has not been an easy one, as you will learn throughout this guide, but it is vital that this relationship continue to improve. The strength of a good relationship is that everyone understands and knows the truth about past and contemporary realities. This is especially important in regard to Indigenous Peoples. By learning the truth about the past, confronting it, and acknowledging its consequences, we can move toward an inclusive future.

- This guide will introduce you to the Indigenous Peoples of Canada and to the historical relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada.

- You will learn about the past and the contemporary realities of Indigenous Peoples. This is an often misunderstood history, but we believe that it is only through an understanding of the past that we can create a better future.
- Whether you are Indigenous or non-Indigenous, we hope this guide and the accompanying links, videos, and activities will increase your understanding of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

Turtle Island Creation Story

Long ago Kitchi-Manitou, the Great Mystery, decided to purify the Earth by sending a great flood, a mushko'-be-wun'. The Original People had become argumentative and were not showing respect for one another or their earthly relatives. The only one to survive the great flood was Nanaboozhoo, who held the oral traditions of the Anishinabe, and some of the animals. They survived by floating on a log, but there was no other land to occupy. One by one the animals tried to bring up some earth from the depths of the water, but it was too deep and they could not make it without becoming weak or out of breath. Finally the muskrat took a turn, but he was gone for a very long time. The others believed he had perished. When muskrat finally surfaced it was clear that he had died, but in his paw he clutched a ball of Earth. The others gave thanks for muskrat's brave sacrifice. Turtle offered to carry the Earth on his back. Nanaboozhoo spread the Earth on turtle's back. The wind arose from the Four Directions and spread the Earth into a large circle so that the People could begin life again on Earth. To this day, the contributions of muskrat and turtle hold special significance to many Indigenous peoples.

Adapted from "The Creation Story–Turtle Island for the Ojibway/Anishinabe People" at <https://www.pipekeepers.org/stories-legends.html>

Video: [Ojibway Story of Creation \(2 min, 7 sec\)](#)¹

Activity

Find a creation story from a different First Nation, Inuit, or Métis tradition. How is it the same as the one presented here? How is it different?

Let's imagine a society, maybe Canada; we'll call it "northern Turtle Island." Imagine when people came off the airplane they were met by Indigenous people, not a customs person. When we look at traditional ways of entering up here on the coast, there was a whole protocol of ceremony and approach. What is your intent in coming? Are you coming for war? Are you coming for peace? If the newly arrived say, "I'm coming here for my family. My family is struggling, we need to help make money for them," Indigenous people would welcome them. They'd help them get a job and help them get what they need. They would teach them about the real name of this continent, Turtle Island, and about the territory they've entered.

– Curtis Clearsky, Blackfoot and Anishinaabe First Nations, *Our Roots: Stories from Grandview Woodland*, Vancouver Dialogues, 2012.

Notes

Ojibway Story of Creation (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cX4GJ`TtSigY>)

OVERVIEW

Purpose of This Guide

The *Manitoba Foundations Guide (Brandon Edition)* is the first Manitoba adaptation of an open professional learning series developed for staff across post-secondary institutions. Guides developed in the series include: [Foundations](#)¹; [Leaders and Administrators](#)²; [Curriculum Developers](#)³; [Teachers and Instructors](#)⁴; [Front-Line Staff, Student Services, and Advisors](#)⁵; and [Researchers](#)⁶. This guide is an adaptation of the Foundations Guide published by BCcampus and the Ministry of Advanced Education in collaboration with a steering committee of Indigenous education leaders from post-secondary institutions in British Columbia.

This guide is intended to support the systemic change occurring across post-secondary institutions and beyond through Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation. A guiding principle from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada process states why this change is happening.

Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Aboriginal peoples' education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, the administration of justice, and economic opportunities and prosperity. (2015, p. 3)

We all have a role to play. As noted by Universities Canada, “higher education offers great potential for reconciliation and a renewed relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada” (2015, para. 4). Similarly, Colleges and Institutions Canada notes that “Indigenous education will strengthen colleges’ and institutes’ contribution to improving the lives of learners and communities” (2015, para. 3). These guides provide ways for faculty and staff to begin to decolonize and Indigenize their practices in post-secondary education. The guides provide beginning steps, but deeper understanding is experienced when readers thoughtfully engage in the activities that go beyond these pages. Trust and mutual respect are best built through relationships.

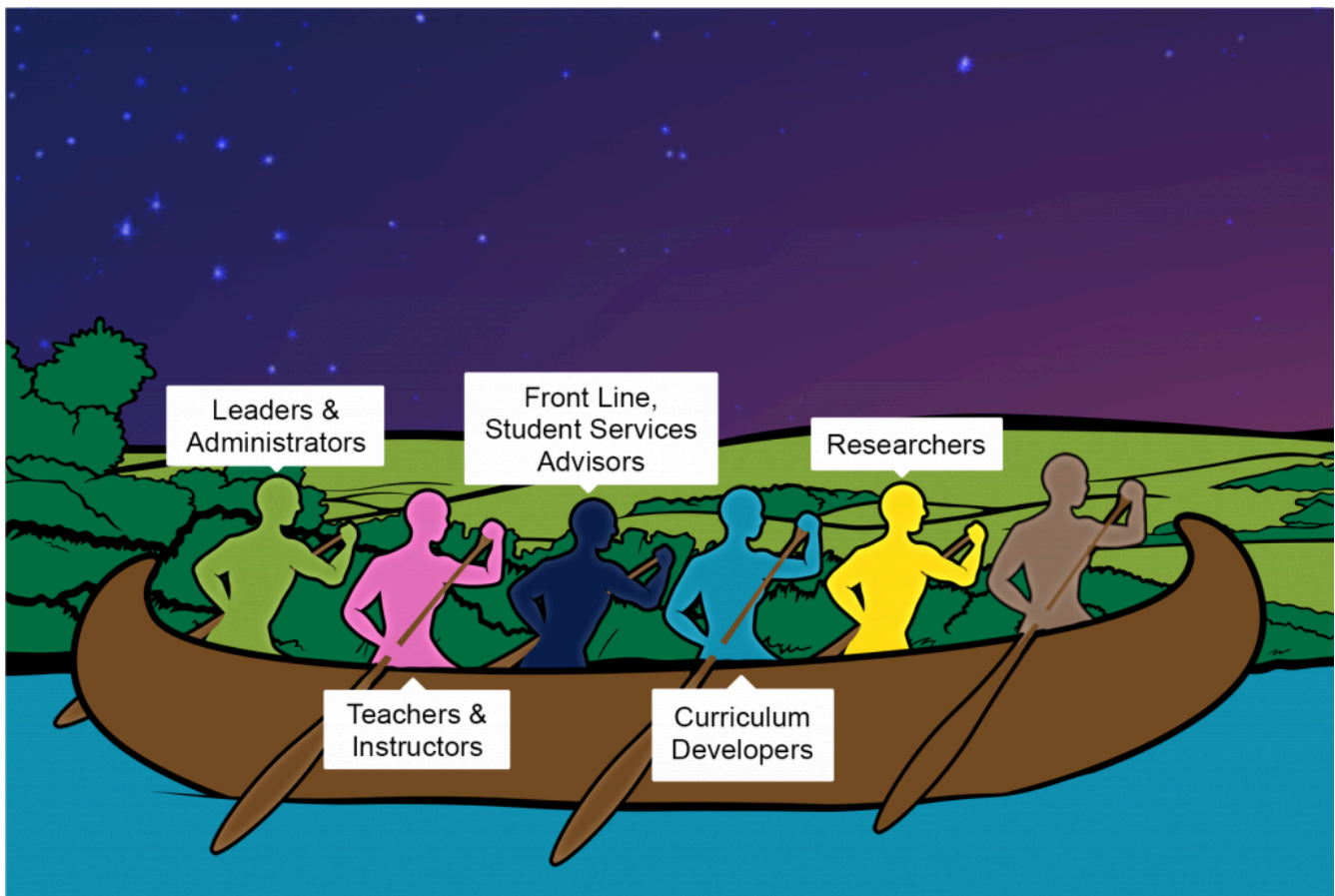


Fig 0.1: This image is a derivative of “Pulling Together: A Canoe Journey” by Diane Biin, used under CC BY. It is licensed under CC BY by Emery Knight.

Indigenization can be described as an evolving story of how diverse people can journey forward in a canoe (Fig. 0.1). In Indigenous methodologies, stories emphasize our relationships with our environment, our communities, and with each other. To stay on course, we are guided by the stars in the sky, with each star a project principle: deliver holistically, learn from one another, work together, share strengths, value collaboration, deepen the learning, engage respectfully, and learn to work in discomfort. As we look ahead, we do not forget our past.

The canoe holds Indigenous Peoples and the key people in post-secondary education whose roles support, lead, and build Indigenization. Our combined strengths give us balance and the ability to steer and paddle in unison as we sit side by side. The paddles are the open resources. As we learn to pull together, we understand that our shared knowledge makes us stronger and makes us one.

The perpetual motion and depth of water reflects the evolving process of Indigenization. Indigenization is relational and collaborative and involves various levels of transformation, from inclusion and integration to infusion of Indigenous perspectives and approaches in education. As we learn together, we ask new questions, so we continue our journey with curiosity and optimism, always looking for new stories to share.

We hope these guides support you in your learning journey. As open education resources, they can be

adapted to fit local context, in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples who connect with and advise your institution. We expect that as more educators use and revise these guides, they will evolve over time. This guide, for example, is one that was adapted for the prairie regions. This foundational guide will be appropriate for use for many organizations, not just for educational institutions. We envision participants coming from all walks of life, industries, professions, and service provision areas.

Reflection Question: What are the roles of the people in your canoe who are pulling together to work on decolonization and support Indigenous awareness and perspectives in your spaces? In your department? In your social spaces and communities?

How to Use and Adapt This Guide

The *Pulling Together: Manitoba Foundations Guide (Brandon Edition)* explores Indigenous-Canadian relationships from contact to the present. To be clear, the guide is short and very limited in its scope. This resource cannot begin to cover the complexity or the detail of history, colonization or decolonization.

This guide looks at the diversity of Indigenous Peoples and the historical and contemporary realities since contact. It may be a first step or guide to becoming involved in conversations about these important topics.

You can use the guide to

- increase your awareness of Indigenous People, our histories, decolonization, and reconciliation
- enhance your knowledge of how Indigenous history and realities in Canada affect relationships and how this may influence your work with Indigenous people/s and colleagues in post-secondary education

Along with a qualified facilitator, this guide can be used within a learning community. The guide can also be worked through as a self-study course. Whether users are in a group or using the self-study option, we encourage learners to take their engagement with the material out into the world and seek out experiences that will contribute to their understanding. There are suggestions throughout the guide where participants may take a “deeper dive” into the material through a variety of media or lived experience. Although conceived as a guide for faculty and staff in post-secondary settings, the resource may be adapted for use by a variety of users, including employees or students, both within or outside of post-secondary institutions.

The Manitoba Foundations Guide (Brandon Edition) is not a definitive resource, since First Nation, Métis, and Inuit perspectives and approaches are diverse across North America. We invite you to augment it with your own stories and examples, and, where possible, consider how you can respectfully incorporate Indigenous voices, perspectives, and resources from your area in the materials.

This textbook can be referenced. In APA style, it should appear as follows: Manitoba Foundations Group. (2021). *Pulling Together: Manitoba Foundations Guide (Brandon Edition)*. Campus Manitoba. Retrieved from <https://pressbooks.openedmb.ca/PullingTogetherManitoba>

Media Attributions

‘Pulling Together: A Canoe Journey’ (Diane Biin) is an adaptation by Emery Knight, and is licensed under a CC BY (Attribution) License.

Notes

1. *Pulling Together: Foundations Guide* (<https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationfoundations/>)
2. *Pulling Together: A Guide for Leaders and Administrators* (<https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationleadersadministrators/>)
3. *Pulling Together: A Guide for Curriculum Developers* (<https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationcurriculumdevelopers/>)
4. *Pulling Together: A Guide for Teachers and Instructors* (<https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationinstructors/>)
5. *Pulling Together: A Guide for Front-Line Staff, Student Services, and Advisors* (<https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationfrontlineworkers/>)
6. *Pulling Together: A Guide for Researchers, Hil̓k̓ala* (<https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationresearchers/>)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND WHO WE ARE

The materials in this guide have been adapted from First Peoples: A Guide for Newcomers, created for the City of Vancouver in 2014 by Kory Wilson and Jane Henderson. The Manitoba Foundations Guide group is grateful for Kory's work in adapting the online materials as an open educational resource for public post-secondary institutions. The guide you are reading is the result of literal "pulling together" to meet the need for a prairie-based resource for Assiniboine Community College (ACC) and Brandon University (BU) faculty and staff, with the support of Campus Manitoba. We are grateful that we recognized the opportunity for us to move beyond acting individually and found strength in working together. The *Pulling Together: Manitoba Foundations Guide (Brandon Edition)* group is broadly based, inclusive, and primarily Indigenous-led.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Aboriginal: An English word that actually means “not original.” In many cases the preferred term is Indigenous. Typically people refer to themselves and their identity more specifically as Cree, Dene, Anishinaabe, or another heritage.

Colonization occurs when a new group of people migrates into a territory and then takes over and begins to control the Indigenous group. The settlers impose their own languages, cultural values, religions, and laws, seizing land and controlling access to resources and trade and monopolize the political power that would enable Indigenous peoples to change the structures that subjugate them .

Comprehensive Land Claims: The Government of Canada’s term for modern treaties.

Cultural appropriation: The inappropriate adoption or use of culturally significant items or ideas by someone from another culture. Usually, during this process the original meaning is lost or distorted, or the user/adoptee receives a social, economic, or political benefit. An example of cultural appropriation is the wearing of costume headdresses at a sports venue. Another example is using Indigenous artwork without permission or compensation on designer-labelled goods.

Douglas Treaties: 14 land purchase completed between 1850 and 1854 by James Douglas, governor of the British colony of Vancouver Island. They applied to territories on Vancouver Island and covered small tracts of land around Victoria, Nanaimo, and Port Hardy.

Eskimo/Esquimaux: A settler term historically used to refer to Inuit. It is neither accurate nor respectful and should not be used.

FNMI: This acronym stands for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. It is often used interchangeably in Canada with the broad term Indigenous.

First Nations: The accepted term for people who are Indigenous and who do not identify as Inuit or Métis. Today there are around 630 First Nations in Canada.

Historic treaties: Treaties signed by First Nations and the British and Canadian governments between 1701 and 1923.

Historic Métis Nation Homeland: The historic Métis Nation Homeland encompasses the Prairie Provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta and extends into contiguous parts of Ontario, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories and the northern United States.¹

Indian: Refers to the legal identity of a First Nations person who is registered under the Indian Act. This term is also used in Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution. It should be used only within this legal context, and is otherwise considered an offensive term.

Indian Act: Legislation passed by the federal government of the Dominion of Canada in 1876, and still in

existence today. This Act gives the federal government jurisdiction or control over, according to the Canadian Constitution, “Indians and Lands reserved for Indians” (Section 91, 24).

Indigenous Peoples: From the Latin *indigena*, meaning “sprung from the land; native.” Indigenous is being used synonymously with Aboriginal, and in many cases is the preferred term. It includes the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in Canada (FNMI). Note that not all people use this term. Some people may prefer to use the term Aboriginal. Some may only identify using their specific heritage. It is okay to ask people how they prefer to be addressed.

Intergenerational trauma occurs when the effects of traumatic experiences are passed on to the next generations. Intergenerational trauma is a term used to describe the lasting effects of residential schools, displacement of communities, loss of culture and languages, and many other facets of colonization.

Inuktitut is one of the dialects of the Inuit language spoken in Nunavut.

Inuit (singular Inuk) are an Indigenous group living in the Arctic regions of Canada, Greenland, Alaska, and Russia. Historically they were referred to in Canada as “Eskimos,” or “Esquimaux,” but this term is neither accurate nor respectful and should not be used.

Innu is a First Nation in eastern Canada. They are not Inuit.

Métis are a distinct Indigenous people and nation recognized in the Constitution Act 1982 as one of the three Aboriginal peoples in Canada.²

Métis Nation emerged in the historic Northwest during the late 18th century, originally the mixed offspring of Indian women and European fur traders. As this population established distinct communities separate from those of Indians and Europeans and married among themselves, a new Indigenous people emerged – the Métis people – with their own unique culture, traditions, language (Michif), and way of life, collective consciousness and nationhood. The Métis Nation have acted collectively to protect and fight for their rights, lands and ongoing existence as a distinct Indigenous people and nation within the Canadian federation –from the Métis provisional governments of Riel in Manitoba (1869-70) and Saskatchewan (1885) to contemporary Métis governments. This dedication continues to exist as citizens and communities throughout the Métis Nation Homeland keep the nation’s distinct culture, traditions, language and lifestyle alive and pursue their own political, social and economic development.³

Microaggressions: This term describes the insults, dismissals, or casual degradations a dominant culture inflicts on a marginalized group of people. Often they are a form of unintended discrimination, but one that has the same effect as willful discrimination. Usually perpetrators intend no offence and are unaware they are causing harm. Generally, they are well-meaning and consider themselves to be unprejudiced. An example of a microaggression is saying that Vikings discovered North America. This statement suggests that there was no one in North America, or that North America was no one’s land (see *Terra nullius*). Another microaggression is the offering of social support services to only Indigenous parents in a public school.

Michif is an Indigenous language unique to the Métis Nation. Michif can also be sometimes referred to as Southern Michif or Heritage Michif. It is a critically endangered language.

Modern treaties: These treaties are negotiated today. Sometimes tripartite negotiations occur with three

levels of government: the Indigenous People, the Government of Canada, and the province affected. Sometimes modern treaties are negotiated directly between the Indigenous People and the Government of Canada.

Non-Status Indian is a person who identifies as Indian but who is not entitled to registration under the Indian Act. Some non-Status Indians may be members of a First Nation.

Numbered Treaties: 11 treaties signed by the First Nations peoples and the reigning monarchs of Canada between 1871 and 1921, providing the settler government with large tracts of land in exchange for promises that varied by treaty.

Peace and Friendship Treaties: These treaties were signed in the Maritimes between 1725 and 1779 intended to end hostilities and encourage cooperation between the British and Mi'kmaq and Maliseet First Nations.

Status Indian is a person who is recognized by the federal government as being registered under the Indian Act. Status Indians may be entitled to certain programs and services offered by federal agencies and provincial governments.

Terra nullius (Latin for “nobody’s land”): These were unexplored landscapes drawn by European map-makers as blank spaces representing empty land waiting to be settled, rather than territories occupied by Indigenous Peoples for thousands of years.

Traditional territory: This is a geographic area identified by FNMI peoples as the land they and their ancestors traditionally occupied and used.

Treaty: These are documents viewed by settlers and settler governments as transferring and surrendering title and control of Indigenous Peoples’ land to them. Treaty benefits and responsibilities apply to both settlers and Indigenous peoples. They are signed on a nation-to-nation basis, in much the same way as trade agreements between nations, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement signed by Canada, the USA, and Mexico. Treaties also record agreements to end conflicts. Treaties depend upon the signing parties to uphold their agreements. In some cases the terms of treaty were solidified through the exchanging of gift items or through the creation of shared items, such as a wampum belt.

Turtle Island: is the name many Nations used to refer to what is now known as ‘North America’. The name is reflected in various creation stories of Indigenous Nations across the continent. . Some Indigenous people prefer to use this term.

Unceded lands: These are lands that Indigenous people never ceded/surrendered or legally signed away to the Crown or to Canada. In Manitoba, for example, several Dakota First Nations lands are unceded.

Notes

1. Métis Nation FAQ (www2.metsnation.ca/about/faq/)
2. Métis Nation FAQ (www2.metsnation.ca/about/faq/)
3. Métis Nation FAQ (www2.metsnation.ca/about/faq/)

PART I

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

1.

INTRODUCTION



Fig 1.1: Camp scene of Métis people with carts on prairie. Manitoba, Canada.

Indigenous People Globally

Indigenous Peoples are present all over the world. Their populations, languages, practices, and ways of life have often been decimated by colonizers. Many, however, have shown incredible resiliency and are reclaiming and celebrating the histories, reviving the languages and traditional ways of life, and lifting up the accomplishments of their peoples. The United Nations issued a declaration to affirm the rights of Indigenous Peoples worldwide, known as UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007). Most (144)

nations signed on to the Declaration, while 11 abstained, and 4 nations voted against it. Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand all voted against the Declaration, but have since reversed their decisions and signed on.

You can read the UNDRIP document here:

[United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)¹

Section 1 will introduce you to the Indigenous Peoples in Canada, their histories, and their cultures. It will also answer some of the questions that people often ask about Indigenous Peoples and debunk some of the common myths and misconceptions.

Topics

In Section 1 you will learn about

- Aboriginal or Indigenous?
- Indigenous Peoples in Canada
- First Nations
- Métis
- Inuit
- Urban Indigenous peoples
- Demographics
- Acknowledging traditional territories

It should take around an hour to complete Section 1. Please complete the Locate Yourself activity first.

Activity 1: Locate Yourself (10 min)

Reflect on the area, city, or town where you live.

1. Within whose traditional First Nations, Métis, or Inuit territory do you currently live, work, and play?
2. How do you know?
3. If you don't know, spend some time researching this online. See [Our Home on Native Land](#)² and others.

Media Attributions

'Métis Camp' (Library and Archives Canada) is licensed under a Public Domain License.

Notes

1. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (<https://undocs.org/A/RES/61/295>)
2. Our Home and Native Land (<http://native-land.ca>)

SOME WORDS ON TERMINOLOGY

Section 35 (2) of the Constitution Act, 1982, defined “Aboriginal peoples in Canada” as including “the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.” For example, “Indian” is now considered offensive and has been replaced by “First Nations.” And we are hearing the term “Indigenous” more and more in Canada. It is being used synonymously with “Aboriginal,” and in many cases it is the preferred term as the collective noun for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. There are many reasons for this shift. One reason is that the prefix ab- means “away from” or “not,” so “aboriginal” actually means “not original.” “Indigenous” comes from the Latin word *indigena*, which means “sprung from the land; native.” And Indigenous Peoples recognize that rather than a single group of people, there are many separate and unique Nations (Ward, 2017).

Many folks in Canada are confused by the terminology used to refer to the Original Peoples of this land. To be sure, the terms Indian, Native, Aboriginal or Indigenous peoples (depending on when, where, why, or how) is just as confusing to the people they label. One of the many problems of changing terminology is the hesitancy of non-Indigenous people to use any form of address. In their aim not to offend, non-Indigenous people sometimes say nothing at all.

The changing terminology has complicated many aspects of life in Canada. Think about the legacy of laws, organizations, buildings, agencies, and departments that are named over the years and places throughout Canada. For example, though we do not use the word “Indian” generally in conversations, the Indian Act remains in force. Some First Nations people still use the word themselves within certain contexts or among themselves. It means that we need to pay attention to when, where, and how we use these words. Similarly, though the words Aboriginal and Native have generally fallen out of favour, for quite compelling reasons, there are organizations, agencies, and other entities that still use these words because they have a legacy of good work that is not diminished by the name or acronym they are known by. For example, a well-known program in Brandon University, PENT, is the Program for the Education of Native Teachers. It has welcomed and educated hundreds of students who have gone on to be educators in their communities and beyond. Similarly, BUCARES, the Brandon University Centre for Aboriginal and Rural Education Studies, is a research centre that supports and facilitates applied research to improve educational strategies for rural and Indigenous learners. The Brandon Urban Aboriginal Peoples Council, BUAPC, is another well-known organization with a record of relationship-building work in the community. It can be difficult to change the names of these long-standing organizations.

What is important for non-Indigenous peoples to understand is that what matters are relationships. Most people are very understanding of people who are learning, especially if they approach humbly and with a good

heart. If you make a mistake, simply apologize, correct, and move on. Wherever possible, though, you should use the specific names of the Nations and communities, especially if you are acknowledging territory and identity. “What do you call yourself?” is a more respectful inquiry than, “What should I call you?”

Remember as well that this advice refers to more than just what people call themselves. It also refers to communities. In Canada, the legal term for land set aside for First Nations is “reserve,” not “reservation,” a term used in the United States. Most people, however, use the term “community” when inquiring where someone is from. Another common mistake is to refer to powwow or dance regalia as a “costume”. Again, a humble approach, good heart, and willingness to catch your own mistakes goes a long way to building and maintaining good relationships. Accept that mistakes will happen; it is how we recover and move forward that sets the tone for trust.

[What’s in a Name? Indian, Native, Aboriginal, or Indigenous?](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/what-s-in-a-name-indian-native-aboriginal-or-indigenous-1.2784518)¹

Notes

1. What’s in a Name? Indian, Native, Aboriginal, or Indigenous? (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/what-s-in-a-name-indian-native-aboriginal-or-indigenous-1.2784518>)

3.

FIRST NATIONS

In Canada, the accepted term for people who are Indigenous and who do not identify as Inuit or Métis is “First Nations.” In the past, these people were referred to as “Indians.” Today, “Indian” is considered an offensive colonial term and should not be used.

First Nations people have lived and thrived since time immemorial on this land now called Canada. They have many different languages, cultures, traditions, and spiritual beliefs. Historically, First Nations managed their lands and resources with their own governments, laws, policies, and practices. Their societies were very complex and included systems for trade and commerce, building relationships, managing resources, and spirituality.

Today, there are around 630 different First Nation communities across Canada – about half of which are in British Columbia and Ontario. According to the [2016 Census](#)¹, there are over 70 distinct Indigenous languages recognized across the country, and UNESCO’s world atlas of languages in danger [recognizes over 80 distinct Indigenous languages in Canada, including those that no longer have speakers](#)².

Frequently asked questions about First Nations

How many First Nations people are there?

First Nations make up the largest group of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. In 2016, there were 977,230 First Nations people in Canada.

Where do First Nations people live?

First Nations people live in every province and territory. The largest First Nations populations are in Ontario, British Columbia, and Alberta. However, while First Nations people living in these provinces accounted for less than 4 percent of the total provincial populations in 2011, they represent almost one third of the total population of the Northwest Territories and almost one-fifth of the total population of Yukon.

Do all First Nations people live on reserves?

No. Many First Nations people live off reserve. In 2011, only about half (49.3 per cent) of the 637,660 First Nations people in Canada who reported being Status Indians lived on a reserve. The numbers vary widely by province, with Quebec having the highest proportion of First Nations people living on reserve, at nearly three-quarters. Winnipeg’s population has populations of 38,700 First Nations, 52, 130 Métis people, and 315 Inuit people as of the 2016 Census. The Census also reported tenure of housing for Aboriginal people: 50% own their own homes, 37% rent, and 10% are in band housing. In Canada, only 0.2% of the entire land mass is devoted to reserve lands (Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., 2018, point #2).

Is it okay to use the word “Indian” to describe First Nations people?

The term “Indian” refers to the legal identity of a First Nations person who is registered under the Indian Act. “Indian” should be used only when referring to a First Nations person with status under the Indian Act and only within a legal context. Otherwise, the use of the term “Indian” in Canada is considered outdated and offensive.

You may notice that the terms “American Indian” and “Native Indian” are still in current and common usage in the United States. Some First Nations people in Canada will also refer to themselves as “Indians,” and the federal legislation is still called the Indian Act. But “Indian” is still not a term you should use.

What does “Status Indian” mean?

A person who is recognized by the federal government as being registered under the Indian Act is referred to as a “Status Indian.” Status Indians may be entitled to certain programs and services offered by federal agencies and provincial governments.

There have been many rules for deciding who is eligible for registration as an Indian under the Indian Act. Significant changes were made to the legislation in 1951, 1985, and again in 2011. People who identify themselves as Indians but who are not entitled to registration on the Indian Register under the Indian Act are referred to as “non-Status Indians.” Some of them may be members of a First Nation even though the federal government does not recognize them as Status Indians. For more information on the Indian Act see [The Indian Act](#)³ and the Timeline in Appendix B.

Do First Nations people pay taxes?

It is a common misconception that First Nations people in Canada do not pay federal or provincial taxes. Under certain circumstances, Status Indians can be exempted from paying tax. For example, income earned on a reserve can be tax exempt, and any goods or services purchased by a Status Indian on a reserve or delivered to them on a reserve are sales tax exempt.

So there are limited situations where Status Indians may not have to pay income tax or sales tax. However, non-Status Indians, Métis people, and Inuit are not eligible for any tax exemptions.

Do First Nations people get free housing?

No.

There are two main categories of housing on reserves: market-based housing and non-profit social housing. Market-based housing refers to households paying the full costs associated with purchasing or renting their housing. This is not free housing!

The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Agency delivers housing programs and services to all Canadians across the country under the National Housing Act.

Do First Nations students get free post-secondary education?

Some students will and some students will not get funding for post-secondary education. It depends on the First Nation to which the student belongs and whether the First Nation has funding for the student. The demand for funding is often greater than the funds available, and some communities are in states of crisis in which they must focus their resources on other areas.

First Nations Culture

Culture is an expression of a community's worldview and unique relationship with the land. Indigenous cultures across Canada are diverse, but there are commonalities among them. Traditionally their societies have been communal, every member had roles and responsibilities, there was equality between men and women, nature was valued, and life was cyclical.

You will learn more below about other significant characteristics of First Nation cultures, particularly those within Manitoba.

Language

In Manitoba, there are five First Nations groups categorized by the languages they use: Dene, Cree, Oji-Cree, Ojibway, and Dakota. Explore this link to learn more about each First Nation community, view a map, and hear a pronunciation of the community names: [Community Map](#)⁴. Language preservation and revitalization are extremely important as cultural knowledges, histories, and teachings are embedded within the languages themselves.

Education

Traditional Indigenous education is different from European-style education. Children learn with their families and immediate community. Learning is holistic, ongoing, and does not take place at specific times. Education is entwined with language and connected to Mother Earth. Children learn how to live, survive, and participate in and contribute to their community. They are encouraged to take part in everyday activities alongside adults to watch and listen and then eventually practise what they have learned. Today, not all Indigenous children receive a traditional education, even those living in reserve communities. Some youth are able to receive some traditional or land-based education alongside the more westernized style of education they receive. Many Indigenous peoples who live in reserve communities must leave their homes to access post-secondary education.

Education is a lifelong process, continuing as people grow into different roles—child, youth, adult, and Elder. The importance of lifelong learning has been affirmed by the Assembly of First Nations: [Lifelong Learning](#)⁵.

Community

Indigenous cultures are traditionally inclusive. Lynda Gray (2011), from the Tsimshian First Nation, writes: “Everyone had a place in the community despite their gender, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, or age. Women, Elders, Two-spirit, children, and youth were an integral part of a healthy and vibrant community” (p. 32).

Elders

In Indigenous cultures, Elders are cherished and respected. An Elder is not simply an older or elderly person but is usually someone who is very knowledgeable about the history, values, and teachings of his or her culture. He or she lives according to these values and teachings. Each Indigenous community determines who are respected Elders. For their knowledge, wisdom, and behaviour, Elders are valuable role models and teachers for all members of the community. Elders play an important role in maintaining the tradition of passing along oral histories. In some instances, Elders may be referred to as Knowledge Keepers.

Oral traditions

First Nations pass along values and family and community histories through oral storytelling. Oral histories and stories have been passed down from generation to generation and are essential to maintaining Indigenous identity and culture. People repeat stories to keep information alive over generations. Particular people within each First Nation have memorized oral histories with great care. Indigenous cultures also tell stories and histories through symbolic objects. Carved totem poles and house posts are a good example of this kind of visual language, with a long history on the West Coast.

Ownership

Each Indigenous culture, community, and even family has its own historical and traditional stories, songs, or dances. Different cultures have different rules about ownership. Some songs, names, symbols, and dances belong only to some people or families and cannot be used, retold, danced, or sung without permission. Sometimes they are given to someone in a ceremony. Other songs and dances are openly shared.

Ceremony



Fig 1.2: Four Medicines. Barb Blind.

The importance of ceremony to First Nations peoples of Manitoba cannot be overstated. Ceremony is a way of life and people who live the traditional way see no disconnect between daily activities, teachings, and ceremony. Some examples of ceremonies observed and practiced in Manitoba are Sun Dance, Sweatlodge, Naming, Shaking Tent, Pipe, and Water ceremonies. In the past, these ceremonies were illegal under the Indian Act. The Indian Agent was the representative of the government who oversaw the application of the Act to reserve communities. Often the agent would go home on weekends, and the people would hold ceremonies in secret, adapting them to the shorter weekend time frame. These ceremonies were preserved through these acts of resistance and resilience. The pipe and drum carry great

significance for First Nations people in Manitoba, and their use is integral to ceremony. The four sacred medicines are also vitally important: tobacco, sage, cedar, and sweetgrass.

Ceremony should be approached cautiously and respectfully by non-Indigenous people. Some ceremonies are closed, while others are open. Some ceremonies are gender-specific. It is important to seek confirmation of the appropriateness of attendance before entering into ceremony. If you are welcomed into ceremony, be aware that there may be some protocols around behaviours and guidelines for what to wear or items to bring along. Confirm protocol details with the person who invited you to participate in the ceremony prior to attending. Even within a single culture, some leaders will have different ways of conducting ceremony. Friendship Centres and Indigenous Peoples' Centres can answer questions about ceremonies and let you know about ceremonies you may wish to attend.

[Earth Lodge – First Nations Treaty 2 Territory](#)⁶

[It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit](#)⁷

[The Journey of the Spirit of the Red Man](#)⁸ (book is widely available through booksellers)

Media Attributions

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Notes

1. Census in brief. The Aboriginal languages of First Nations people, Métis, and Inuit (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016022/98-200-x2016022-eng.cfm>)
2. UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger (<http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/index.php>)
3. The Indian Act (https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/the_indian_act/)
4. Community Map (<https://mfnerc.org/community-map/>)
5. Lifelong Learning (https://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/10_-_fact_sheet_-_lifelong_learning.pdf)
6. Earth Lodge — First Nations Treaty 2 Territory (<http://lodge.fnt2t.com>)
7. It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit (<https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/support/its-our-time/index.html>)
8. The Journey of the Spirit of the Red Man (<https://www.facebook.com/The-Journey-of-the-Spirit-of-the-Red-Man-411609432226730/>)

4.

MÉTIS

[Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada](#)¹

Frequently asked questions about the Métis

Who are the Métis?

The Métis are one of the “aboriginal peoples of Canada” identified in Section 35 of the Constitution Act of 1982. The Métis are people who are Indigenous and do not identify as First Nations or Inuit. The Métis National Council defines “Métis” as a person who “self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Indigenous peoples, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry and who is accepted by the Métis Nation.”

What is the “Métis Nation”?

The Métis Nation comprises contemporary Métis Citizens who self-identify, are accepted by the contemporary Manitoba Métis Community, and descend from the historic Métis Nation—an Indigenous nation from what was formerly known as the Northwest—who rose to defend their people and their Homeland in the early 19th century from invasion. The Métis National Council has represented the Métis Nation on both the national and international stages since 1983. In Manitoba, the Manitoba Métis Federation is the Manitoba Métis Government and represents Manitoba Métis Citizens. (See note 3 for further reading)

What is the “Métis Nation Homeland”?

The Métis Nation Homeland includes the three Prairie Provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta) as well as parts of Ontario, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories and the Northern United States.



Fig 1.3: Métis Nation Homeland © Manitoba Metis Federation.

What does it mean to be an “MMF Citizen?”

An MMF Citizen is a person who is registered with the Manitoba Métis Federation’s (MMF) and has gone through the MMF’s ‘objectively verifiable process’ to be registered as a Métis Citizen. As part of this process the applicant must:

1. Self-identify as Métis: The application for MMF Citizenship Identification card provides an objective and verifiable way of self-identifying as a Métis. The application process, and the subsequent issuance of cards, protect our Métis rights by preventing non-Métis from wrongly claiming and abusing our self-government and harvesting rights;
2. Show an ancestral connection to the Historic Métis Community: In order to objectively verify the ancestral connection to the Historic Métis Nation, applicants in the MMF must submit a copy of their own Métis genealogy, or a family member’s Métis genealogy, and the required supporting evidentiary documents;
3. Be accepted by the contemporary Manitoba Métis Community: An objectively verifiable means of showing acceptance by Métis Nation’s Manitoba Métis Community is to have the MMF, as its duly elected self-government representative, issue you an MMF Citizenship (also known as membership) card through the application process¹.

Can anyone who has an Indigenous ancestor be a Métis Citizen?

No.

Self-identification is one of four criteria that each Métis Citizen must meet to register with the Nation. This concept of Métis identity is complicated by those who self-identify as Métis because of their longing to belong to one of the Constitutional Aboriginal groups in Section 35 (1) but cannot claim Indian Status or assert their Inuit ancestry. Many of these individuals believe their mixed ancestry justifies their claim to be Métis. As we have seen in the definition of who is Métis, there are individuals who are not in turn accepted by the Métis Nation because they have no connection to the Historic Métis Nation Homeland and no ancestral ties to the Métis Nation.

This can be hard for people outside of the Métis Nation to understand; however, it is important that there is awareness on this topic. To quote Chris Andersen, a Métis scholar and professor of Native Studies at the University of Alberta who has written at length on this issue:

“I’m Métis because I belong (and claim allegiance) to a set of Métis memories, territories, and leaders who challenged and continue to challenge colonial authorities’ unitary claims to land and society. What’s your excuse for recognizing me – for recognizing us – in any terms other than those of the Métis nationhood produced in these struggles?” (2011)

In September 2002 the Métis Nation adopted the MMF’s Manitoba Metis Federation’s definition of Métis. Article III of the [MMF Constitution](#)² defines “Métis” as follows:

1. “Métis” means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry, is distinct from other Aboriginal Peoples and is accepted by the Métis Nation;
2. “Historic Métis Nation” means the Aboriginal people then known as Métis or Half-Breeds who resided in the Historic Métis Nation Homeland;
3. “Historic Métis Nation Homeland” means the area of land in west central North America used and occupied as the traditional territory of the Métis or Half-Breeds as they were then known;
4. “Métis Nation” means the Aboriginal people descended from the Historic Métis Nation, which is now comprised of all Métis Nation Citizens and is one of the “aboriginal peoples of Canada” within s.35 of the Constitution Act of 1982;
5. “Distinct from other Aboriginal Peoples” means distinct for cultural and nationhood purposes.

What is the Manitoba Métis Federation?

The Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) is the Manitoba Métis Government. The MMF was created in 1967 to be the democratic and self-governing representative body of the Manitoba Métis Community. To find out more about the Manitoba Métis Government, [visit their website](#)³.

Do Métis people pay taxes?

Métis Citizens are not exempt from paying Provincial Sales Tax (PST) or Goods and Services Tax (GST).

Do Métis people get free post-secondary education?

No. Métis students are not eligible for funding through the federal government's Post-Secondary Student Support program; only status First Nations and Inuit students are eligible for funding through that program. For the Manitoba Métis, students may be eligible to apply to the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) Post-Secondary Education Support Program or to the MMF's Métis Employment and Training programs for tuition support.

Métis Nation, Culture, Symbols, and Languages

Métis culture is unique and different from First Nations and Inuit cultures. There are several national and cultural symbols that are unique to the Métis Nation.

A well-known national symbol to the Métis Nation is their historic and national flag. Referred to frequently as the 'infinity flag' it has a blue background with a white infinity symbol and reflects the joining of two cultures and the existence of a people forever. It was recorded that the flag was flown for the first time in 1816 at the Battle of Frog Plains in Red River (present day Winnipeg) and has since been used as the national flag of the Métis Nation.

The sash is recognized as a part of Métis culture. Historically, it was part of the clothing worn by Métis people (predominantly men) every day for both fashion and function. It had many uses such as a holder, washcloth, bridle or saddle blanket. In contemporary times, the sash is worn by Métis people today (men, women, and non-binary) in celebration of their culture and identity. It can be worn on one's waist just above the hip or across one's shoulder.

Historically, Métis traditional styles were a distinctive blend of European and First Nation styles and traditions. Clothing and other garments were made with leather, wool, and cotton textiles. Clothing, garments, and other items such as horse saddles, dog tuppies, and interior household items would often be adorned with beautiful floral embroidery, quillwork, pompoms and, of course, distinct floral Métis-styled beadwork. The adornments on these items were distinctively Métis and were a symbol of identity, pride, and their spirits—a people with a passion for a joyful life. Their style was so distinctive, they were recognized as 'the flower beadwork people' of the plains.

Following the Reign of Terror (see note 1) on the heels of the Red River Resistance in 1869-1870 (see note 2), many Métis hid their identifiable garments and stopped their artistic traditions for fear of their lives and the lives of their families. Today, however, many Métis have reclaimed their artistic traditions and new artists are emerging to bring back to life old-style Métis beadwork, embroidery, and quillwork in both historic and contemporary fashions.

The Métis people are a spirited people, who have always had a love of music and dance. They are renowned worldwide for their unique fiddle music that compliments their distinctive high energy dance known as 'the jig' or 'the red river jig'. The main musical instrument of the Métis is the fiddle, which the Métis traditionally made from maple wood and birch bark. Unlike other styles of music, the Métis style of fiddle music is not contained in a bar structure. As a result, there is 'a bounce' to the tune that is unique to the Métis-style. This is not a trained style, but rather has been passed down from generation to generation. This type of music style

lends itself to the jig—which is a unique dance of the Métis that pulls from Scottish, Irish, French, and First Nation dance traditions. To learn more about the music and dance of the Métis, see note 4.

Métis Languages

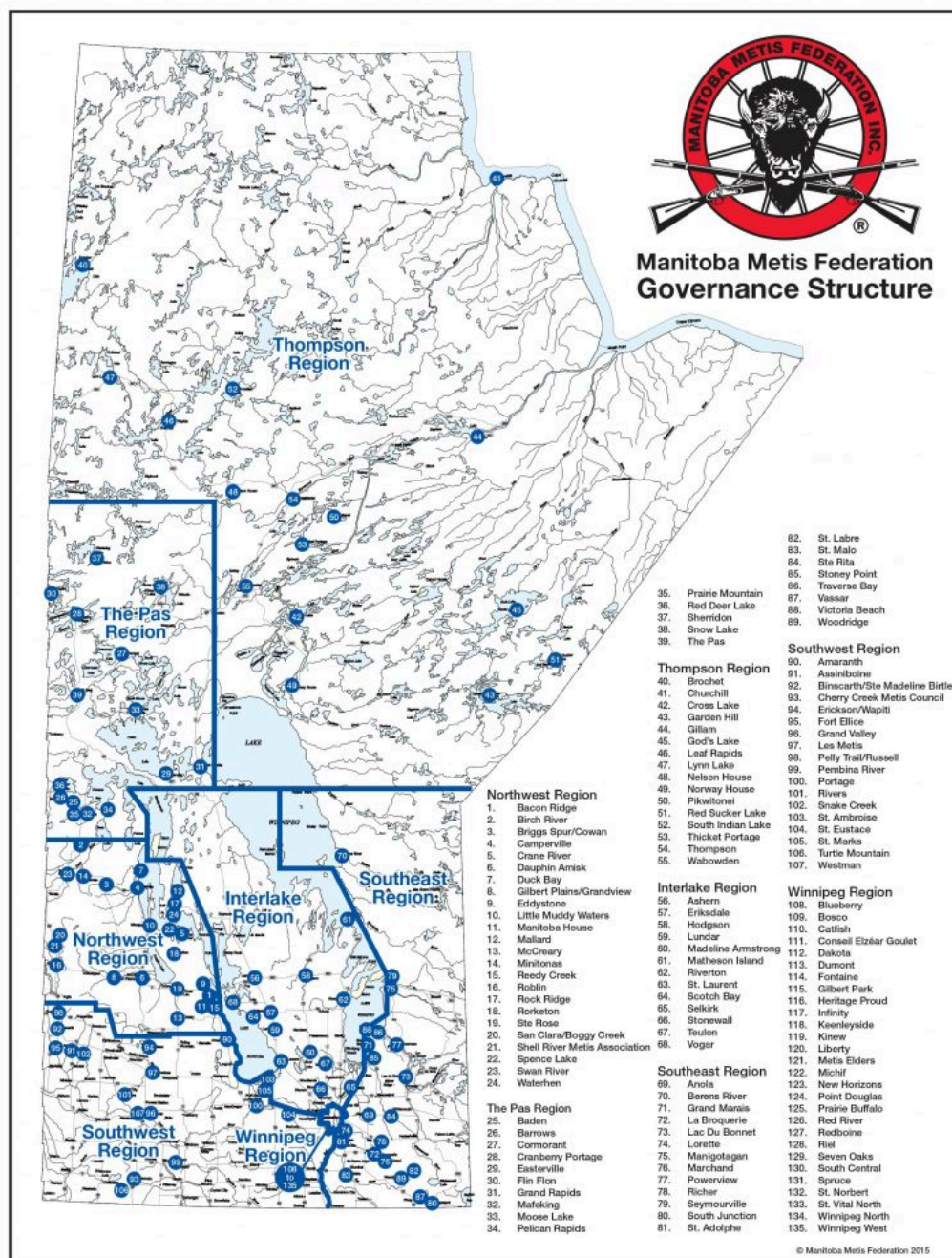
The Michif language is a distinct language to the Métis Nation. Michif, (also referred to as Southern Michif or Heritage Michif) has grammatical and lexical features of Indigenous languages (Cree, and Saulteaux) and Michif-French (a Prairie-French dialect of the French language). The Michif language is a very unique language among languages around the globe, as no other languages show mixed nouns from one language and verbs from another in the manner that Michif does. Unfortunately, as a result of colonization, the Michif Language is critically endangered with very few speakers left. The Métis Nation is currently working with their governments, communities, and language revitalization experts to bring the Michif language back into use and increase the number of fluent speakers.

The Métis are a polylingual Nation, meaning that many people and families within the Nation spoke multiple languages, including both Indigenous and European languages. Due to their high mobility across the Métis Nation Homeland, their kinship relations, and their social, economic, and political relations many Métis also spoke (and still do) Cree, Dene, Saulteaux, and Michif-French.

Métis spirituality

A common misconception is that the Métis practiced only the religion of their European ancestors (Catholic or Protestant). However, the reality is that people and families within the Métis Nation have varying experiences with religious affiliation and spirituality. Like any Indigenous Nation, some people and families have fluid, rigid, simple, or complex spiritual practices and affiliations from both their Indigenous or European ancestors' traditions.

Fig 1.4: MMF
Locals © Manitoba
Métis Federation.



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Notes

1. <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/149078>
2. https://www.manitobametis.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/MMF_Provisional_Gov_BookletWeb.pdf
3. <https://www2.metisnation.ca/metis-nation-2020/historic-timeline/>
4. <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/14602>

5.

INUIT

Inuit¹ are Indigenous Peoples living in the Arctic regions of Canada, Greenland, Alaska, and Russia. Inuit have lived and thrived in the Arctic for thousands of years. Traditionally they lived off the resources of the land, hunting whales, seals, caribou, fish, and birds, and many Inuit continue to harvest these resources today. Inuit existed prior to contact and Inuit is the accepted term for people who are Indigenous and do not identify as First Nations or Métis.

The Inuit way of life and culture changed when Inuit made contact with European missionaries, whalers, and explorers and later began participating in the fur trade. It changed again between about 1950 and 1970, when the Government of Canada moved many Inuit communities away from their traditional “hunting and gathering” or mobile way of life on the land and into permanent, centralized settlements.

Historically Inuit were referred to as “Eskimos” or “Esquimaux,” but this term is neither accurate nor respectful and should not be used. The word Inuit (singular Inuk) means “the people” in the Inuktitut language.

Frequently asked questions about Inuit

Where do Inuit live?

Many Inuit live in communities across the northern regions of Canada, mostly along the Arctic coast, in Inuit Nunangat, which means “the place where Inuit live.” Inuit Nunangat consists of four regions: Inuvialuit Settlement Region (northern Northwest Territories), Nunavut, Nunavik (Northern Quebec), and Nunatsiavut (northern Labrador).



Fig 1.5: Map of Inuit Nunangat (Inuit Regions in Canada). Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

How many Inuit are there?

Approximately 65,000 Inuit live in Canada, according to the 2016 Census. The majority live in Nunavut, with smaller numbers in the other three regions of Inuit Nunangat, as well as a small number living in urban centres in southern Canada.

Are Inuit First Nations?

Canada's Constitution (s. 35) recognizes three groups of Indigenous peoples – First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. These are three separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices, and spiritual beliefs. Inuit are distinct from First Nation and Métis groups.

What language do Inuit speak?

The Inuit language is made up of a variety of dialects that vary from region to region. The Government of Nunavut selected the term Inuktitut to represent all Inuit dialects spoken in Nunavut, including Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun. However, even within Nunavut there are variations in pronunciation and vocabulary.

Do Inuit live on reserves?

Inuit do not live on reserves, but in contemporary communities.

Do Inuit live in igloos?

Inuit do not live in igloos. However, many elders still practice building igloos and pass on their knowledge to the younger generations.

Do Inuit have land claims?

Yes, land claim agreements have been signed in all four Inuit regions:

- Nunavik (as part of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement) in 1975
- Inuvialuit in 1984
- Nunavut in 1993
- Nunatsiavut in 2005

Under their respective land claim agreements, Inuit were granted title to certain blocks of land. These four land claim regions cover about 40 per cent of Canada's land mass.

Do Inuit pay taxes?

Yes, Inuit are tax-paying citizens of Canada.

Who are Innu?

Innu are a First Nation in eastern Canada. They are not Inuit.

Inuit culture

Inuit have lived on Nunangat (the land, water, and ice) since time immemorial and continue to do so today.

Cultural and oral traditions are based on sharing, co-operation, and respect for the land, the animals, fish, and peoples.

Government and communities

Once the comprehensive land agreements were signed, governing organizations were formed to manage land claim implementation: Nunatsiavut Government, Makivik Corporation, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation. The national organization, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (which means “Inuit are united in Canada”), holds permanent seats for Inuit Circumpolar Council, Pauktuutit Inuit women of Canada, and the national Inuit youth council.

Most of the 53 Inuit communities across these regions operate as municipalities. The capital of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region is Inuvik; the capital of Nunavut is Iqaluit; the capital of Nunavik is Kuujuaq; and the capital of Nunatsiavut is Nain. [This interactive Google Map²](#) provides population density and images for each community.

Elders

Regarded and respected as the knowledge keepers and advisors, Inuit Elders have seen their roles change since contact.

As advisors, Elders ensured that everybody’s voice was heard in decision making to ensure survival. Today, since contact and relocation, Elders now see themselves as the holders and teachers of their language and values, as they only form about 2 percent of the Inuit population. They also have a voice in research, as they have seen the rapid climatic changes to the land and animals.

Knowledge of the land, importance and continuance of family structures, and rites of passage is just one of the contributions Elders make to maintaining Inuit communities today, using an oral tradition.

Language

There are numerous dialects of Inuktitut, with varying levels of speaker fluency. Dialects are nuances in a language that reflect a specific location and community. Today, each regional governance organization supports language learning in schools and communities to continue the use of the language in everyday life.

There are two styles of Inuktitut writing: syllabics and Roman orthography. Syllabics use symbols to represent sounds rather than letters. Roman orthography uses the English alphabet to sound out the words.

Notes

1. Please note that this section has not been vetted by Inuit writers and the information is based on current Nunavut government information.

2. Interactive Google Map (<https://goo.gl/8Tvs2A>)

URBAN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Disclaimer: In this section you will see statistical information that is compiled in part by Environics. Bear in mind that statistics are sometimes useful for identifying certain trends and characteristics. Statistics don't tell the whole story, and don't necessarily ask questions that Indigenous nations would ask their own people. Furthermore, the onus is on participants to self-identify—which can be problematic—in that Nationhood is necessarily determined by the Nation itself, not individuals.

In 2016, almost 900,000 Indigenous people lived in urban areas (towns and cities with a population of 30,000 or more), accounting for more than half of Indigenous people in Canada. They are often referred to as “Urban Indigenous peoples.” The largest Urban Indigenous populations are in Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver, Calgary, and Toronto.

Many Indigenous people move to cities seeking employment or educational opportunities. Some have lived in cities for generations, while for others the transition from rural areas or reserves to urban settings is still very new. Many Canadian cities occupy the traditional territories of Indigenous peoples and sometimes reserves of First Nations are embedded within the city itself. For example, Winnipeg lies on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe (Ojibway), Ininew (Cree), Oji-Cree, Dene, and Dakota, and is the Birthplace of the Métis Nation and the Heart of the Métis Nation Homeland. Most Urban Indigenous peoples consider the city they live in to be their “home.” However, for many it is also important to keep a close connection to the Indigenous community of their family's origin. This could be the place where they were born or where their parents or grandparents lived. Connection to these communities helps many people retain their traditional and contemporary Indigenous culture.

Urban Indigenous peoples in Winnipeg

The Urban Indigenous peoples in Winnipeg are an important and visible part of the city's life. However, the majority believe they are viewed in negative ways. Despite this, according to the Urban Indigenous Peoples Study: Winnipeg (2011), among Indigenous people

- 72 per cent are “very proud” of their First Nations/Métis/Inuk identity
- 78 per cent are “very proud” of being Canadian
- 46 per cent are not concerned about losing their cultural identity; they feel it is strong enough to continue and that they can protect it
- 54 percent think Indigenous culture has become stronger in the last five years

- 55 per cent prioritize that young people from the next generation stay connected to their cultural family values, and
- 93 per cent believe there is unfair or discriminatory treatment by non-Indigenous people.

The Urban Aboriginal Peoples Survey by Environics has researched several Canadian cities and results do vary from city to city. In terms of overall results for Canada, urban Indigenous peoples are generally proud to be First Nations, Métis, or Inuk (82%). This finding is particularly true for Inuit (91% are very proud), while First Nations (88%) and Métis (77%) follow closely behind. Métis pride is strongest in Calgary, Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto, and Halifax, where it is equivalent to that of First Nations. It is noteworthy that status and non-status First Nations peoples demonstrate pride that is very similar in strength.

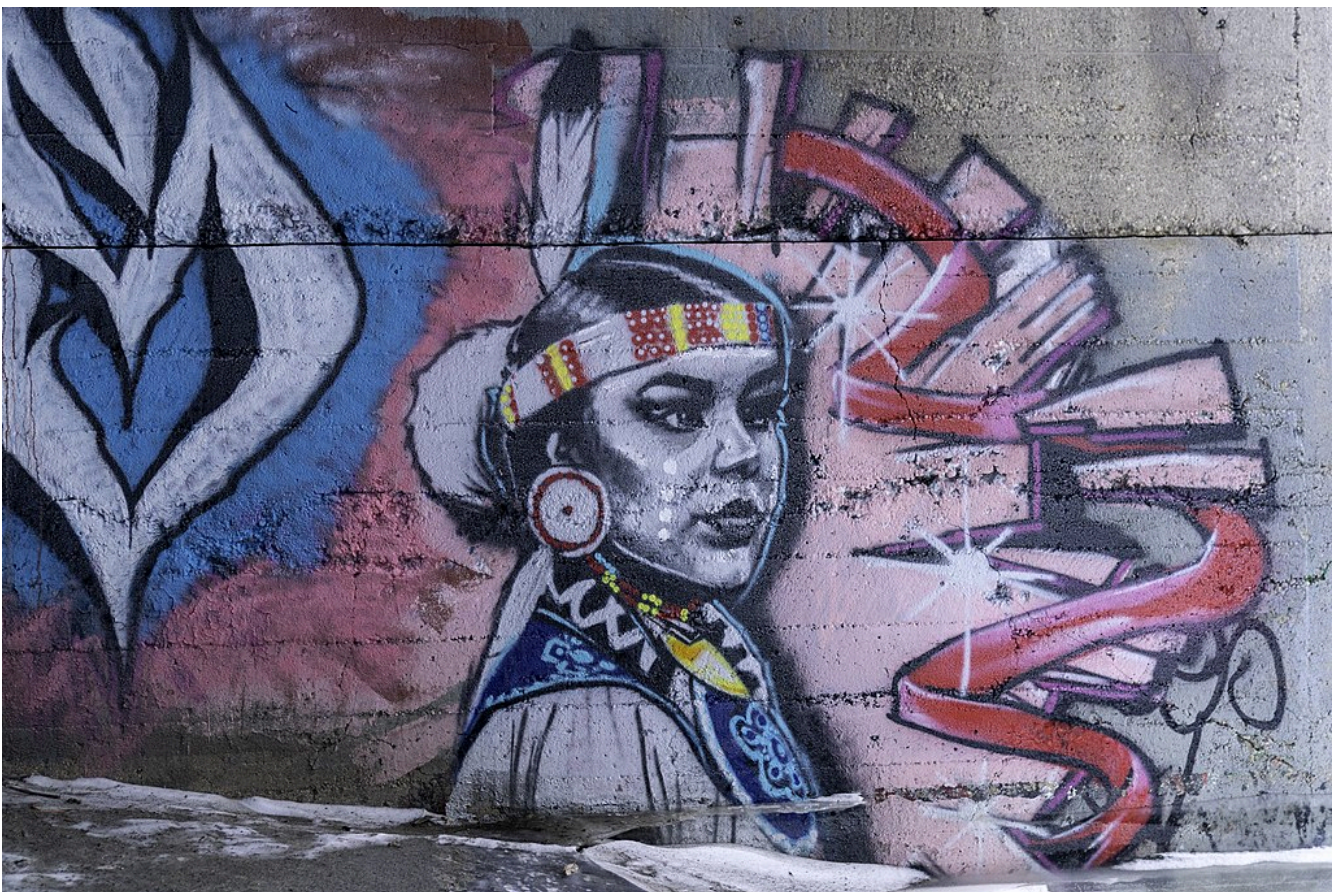


Figure 1.5: Graffiti of an Indigenous Woman in Winnipeg.

Urban Indigenous Peoples in Brandon¹

The City of Brandon takes into account information provided by the Brandon Urban Aboriginal Peoples Council (BUAPC). This community-based organization surveyed a diverse population of Brandon residents in educational settings in 2015 and presented its findings:

- The percentage of the population that identifies as Indigenous in Brandon is between 10-15% depending on the time of year as it pertains to cycles of the educational year and employment availability.
- Nearly 52% of respondents felt that Indigenous people received some recognition when they brought forward concerns, while nearly 33% felt that FNMI concerns received little attention. Respondents' comments on this question included that Indigenous-related events were covered for negative reasons rather than telling positive stories. Participants expressed dismay that political rhetoric linked to the concerns of Indigenous peoples, especially at election times, was quickly forgotten once elections were over. In general, too much talk and not enough action is tied to Indigenous matters.
- When asked which social issues are most closely tied to the economic development (success) of Indigenous people in Brandon, the top responses were availability of affordable housing for those that may need that resource, presence of negative stereotypes, and availability of quality childcare.
- Indigenous peoples in Brandon are involved in all kinds of community groups and organizations, some of which include charities or social organizations, youth groups, ethnic groups, business organizations, sports clubs or leagues, professional or farm associations, music or arts-based groups, and many more.

Media Attributions

'Graffiti of an Indigenous Woman in Winnipeg' (Lorie Schaul) is licensed under a CC BY-NC-SA (Attribution Non-Commercial Share Alike) License.

Notes

1. Statistical information and analysis provided by Brandon Urban Aboriginal Peoples Council from a study completed in 2015 [unpublished].

7.

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2016, there were more than 1.67 million Indigenous people in Canada, representing 4.9 per cent of the total population, up from 3.8 per cent in 2006.

Canadian and Indigenous Peoples population, [2016 Census](#)¹

In 2016, there were more than 1.67 million Indigenous people in Canada, representing 4.9 per cent of the total population, up from 3.8 per cent in 2006.

Table 1.1 Canadian and Indigenous Peoples Population

Group	Population*	Percentage of total Indigenous population	Percentage of total* Canadian population	Percentage increase since 2006
Total Canadians	35,151,728	–		
Total Indigenous Peoples	1,673,785	–	4.9%	42.5%
First Nations	977,230	58.4%	2.8%	39.3%
Métis	587,545	35.1%	1.7%	51.2%
Inuit	65,025	3.9%	0.2%	29.1%

In 2016, almost 900,000 Indigenous people lived in urban areas with a population of 30,000 or more, accounting for more than half (51.8 percent) of Indigenous people in Canada.

Where Indigenous Peoples in Canada Live

The largest First Nations population is in Ontario (236,680), followed by British Columbia (172,520) and Alberta (136,585).

According to the 2011 Census, First Nations people living in Ontario, British Columbia, and Alberta

accounted for less than 4 percent of the total provincial populations. However, First Nations people accounted for 32.7 percent of the total population of the Northwest Territories, 19.8 percent of the total population of Yukon, and about 10 percent of the population of Manitoba and that of Saskatchewan. In Nunavut, First Nations people account for 0.34 per cent of the population.

In Quebec, nearly three-quarters (72.0 per cent) of First Nations people with registered Indian status lived on reserve, the highest proportion among the provinces. This was followed by New Brunswick (68.8 percent) and Nova Scotia (68.0) per cent). In Ontario, 37.0 per cent of First Nations people with registered Indian status lived on a reserve, the second lowest proportion among the provinces after Newfoundland and Labrador (35.1 per cent).

Métis people live in every province and territory in the country, but in 2016 the majority lived in Ontario (120,585) and the western provinces (351,020). But the Métis population is growing fastest in Quebec and the Atlantic provinces.

The majority of Inuit live in Nunavut (30,135), followed by Nunavik (11,800), Inuvialuit (3,110), and Nunatsiavut (2,285). Another 17,690 Inuit live outside of Inuit Nunangat, many in urban centres in southern Canada, including Ottawa, Edmonton, and Montreal. Ottawa-Gatineau had the largest Inuit population.

Where Urban Indigenous peoples live

In 2016, Winnipeg had the largest Urban Indigenous population, followed by Edmonton and Vancouver. But Indigenous people account for a much larger proportion (around 35 percent in the 2006 Census) of the population of several smaller cities in the western provinces, including Prince Rupert, Prince Albert, and Thompson.

Table 1.2 Urban Indigenous Populations, 2016 Census

City	First Nations	Métis	Inuit	Total
Winnipeg	38,700	52,130	315	91,145
Edmonton	33,880	39,435	1,115	39,435 1,115 774,430
Vancouver	35,770	23,425	405	59,600
Toronto	27,805	15,245	690	43,740
Calgary	17,955	22,220	440	40,615
Ottawa-Gatineau 17,790	17,790	1	17,155 1,280	36,225
Montreal	16,130	15,455	975	32,560

Notes

1. Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: Key results from the 2016 Census (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/171025/dq171025a-eng.htm>)

8.

ACKNOWLEDGING TRADITIONAL TERRITORIES

Activity: Watch these two short videos and try to pick out the main idea from each one.

[Land Acknowledgment–Baroness Von Sketch Show \(2 min, 14 sec\)](#)¹

[Land Acknowledgment–Stephen Paquette \(2 min, 45 sec\)](#)²

What is a Territorial Acknowledgement?

A Territorial (Land) Acknowledgement is a respectful way to honour Indigenous people and to recognize that they have lived on these lands for thousands of years. We usually mention the treaty territory on which we stand when giving an acknowledgement. Treaties are mutual agreements between nations. Canada has signed many treaties with Indigenous Peoples, from coast to coast. The spirit and intent of those treaties were to share and care for the land together, forever.

Individuals or organizations will often acknowledge the First Peoples on whose traditional territories they live and work. This acknowledgement takes place at ceremonial events (awards/graduations), feasts, gatherings, orientations, workshops, celebrations, and announcements. It is not necessary to do a land acknowledgment at the opening of, say, each class session. Also, giving a land acknowledgment is highly personal to the one giving it. Calling upon someone to “do” a land acknowledgment without making those arrangements in advance and in private can place people in an uncomfortable position. Some Indigenous Peoples do not believe that they should deliver an acknowledgment, as they are the Original Peoples. Some, however, will deliver a welcome to the territory. It is also appropriate to acknowledge when one is a guest in another territory. In that way, there is a spirit of hospitality, both in hosting and in being a good guest. These acknowledgments speak to the larger concern of caring for one another and the environment in a way that leaves the Earth intact for future generations.

Land acknowledgements vary in length and scope, with some being very personal while others formal acts or statements from governments and organizations. Whenever you hear a land acknowledgement, it’s important to think about:

- The history of this territory and its people
- The impacts of colonialism to the land and its people
- Your relationship to this territory and its people (past, present, and future)

Unceded means that First Nations people never ceded or legally signed away their lands to the Crown or to Canada. A traditional territory is the geographic area identified by an Indigenous Nation as the land they and/or their ancestors traditionally occupied and used. In Manitoba, the Dakota First Nations lands are also unceded territories.

If you wish to add a traditional territories acknowledgement to your own work, be sure to check with a knowledgeable source in your organization to be sure it is worded correctly and that the nations are represented accurately. If you are delivering an oral acknowledgement, do it slowly and enunciate clearly. Check on how to pronounce names. Acknowledging territory is meaningful as long as it is undertaken in a respectful way. If an acknowledgement is conducted in a way to ‘check off a to-do task,’ then it is considered tokenistic and inappropriate. When you give a land acknowledgment, it is important to think about the context of the event and why you are doing it.

It is not necessary to follow a scripted acknowledgment, but some use a script until they build their own knowledge and reflective practices. Also remember, this is a learning journey for all of us in this relationship—do not be offended if you are corrected—we are all in this together!

Assiniboine College Territorial Acknowledgment Example

Assiniboine College campuses are located on the traditional territories of Treaty No. 1 and Treaty No. 2, and the shared traditional lands of Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, Dene and Anishinaabek/Ojibwe peoples, and the homeland of the Métis Nation. We also recognize other Treaty territories where our community-based training takes place. We welcome students who seek knowledge here.

[Our Commitment | Assiniboine College](#)³

Brandon University Territorial Acknowledgment Example

Brandon University campuses are located on both Treaty 1 and Treaty 2 territories. Our main campus is located in Brandon, Manitoba, on Treaty 2 territory. This is traditional shared land between the Dakota, Ojibway and Métis peoples. We at Brandon University acknowledge and respect the history, land and the people of this area.

[Indigenous Peoples' Centre](#)⁴

It is important to recognize that practices around territorial land acknowledgments are complex and evolving. Indigenous peoples have a variety of opinions on territorial land acknowledgments. As your engagement with Indigenous peoples grows, you may want to expand your thinking around acknowledging Indigenous origins and realities. For a more thorough discussion of land acknowledgments, check out this article by Robinson et al. (2019).

[Rethinking the Practice and Performance of Indigenous Land Acknowledgement](#)⁵

Here is a [map of the First Nation traditional territories in Manitoba](#)⁶:

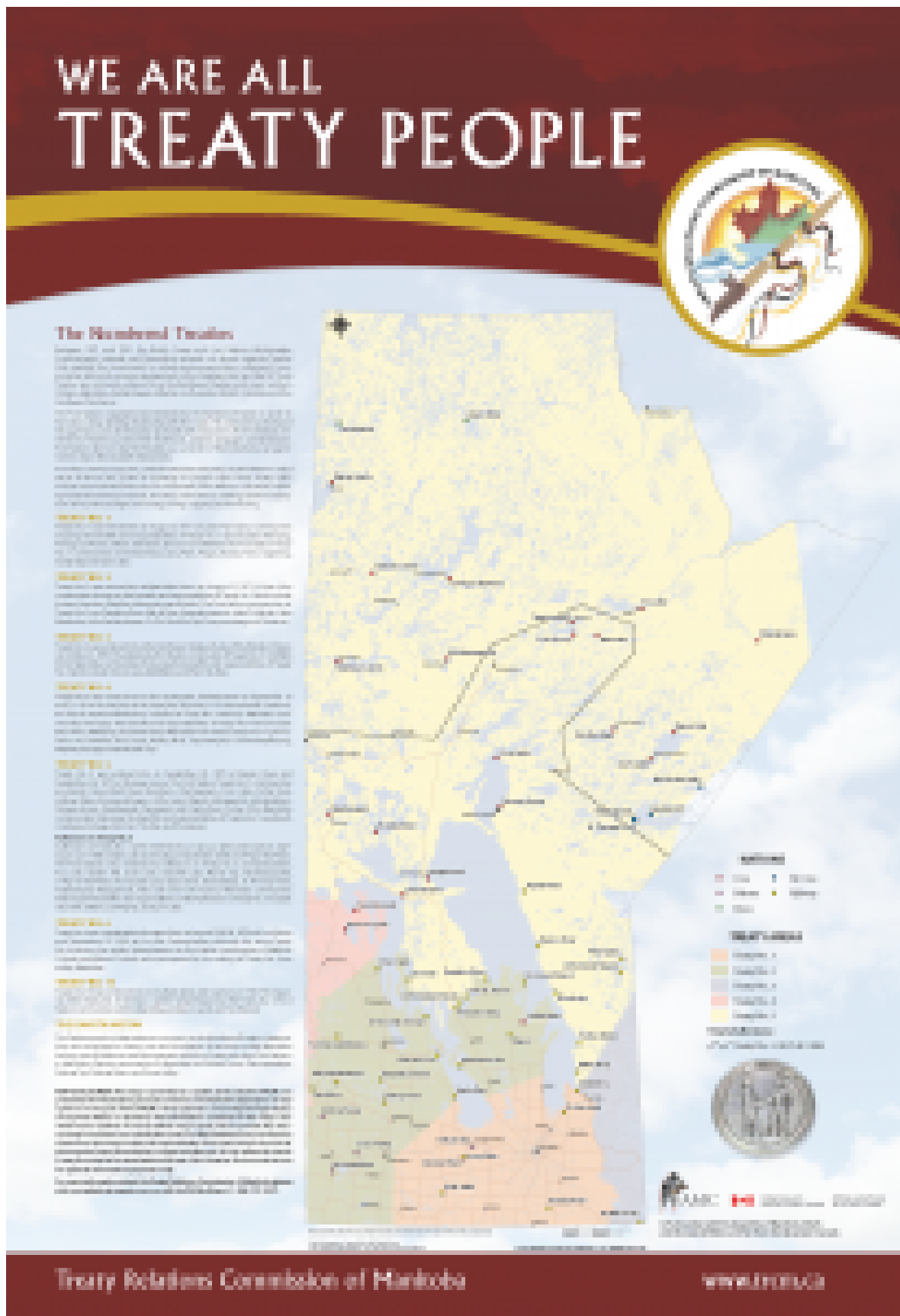


Fig 1.6: Manitoba Numbered Treaties Map. Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba.

Media Attributions

‘Manitoba Numbered Treaties Map’ (Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba) is licensed under an All Rights Reserved License.

Notes

1. Land Acknowledgement: Baroness Von Sketch Show (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlG17C19nYo>)
2. Land Acknowledgement: Stephen Paquette (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlG17C19nYo>)
3. ACC Commitment (<https://assiniboine.net/study-here/why-assiniboine/indigenous-students/our-commitment>)
4. BU Indigenous Peoples’ Centre (<https://www.brandonu.ca/ipc/>)
5. Rethinking the Practice and Performance of Indigenous Land Acknowledgement (https://uwaterloo.ca/faculty-association/sites/ca.faculty-association/files/uploads/files/rethinking_the_practice_and_performance_of_indigenous_land_acknowledgement.pdf.)
6. Traditional Territories Map (<http://www.trcm.ca/treaties/treaties-in-manitoba/view-pdf-interactive-map-of-numbered-treaties-trcm-july-20-entry/>)

CONCLUSION

You have reached the end of Section 1 of the *Manitoba Foundations Guide*. You should now have a beginner's understanding of some of the history and culture of Indigenous Peoples on Turtle Island. You should have also debunked some of the common myths and misconceptions about Indigenous peoples. There is no resource that replaces building relationships with people and doing your own reading and research to further your understanding. The best way to broaden and deepen your knowledge of Indigenous Peoples is to get to know them as colleagues, neighbours, and friends, not as those responsible for teaching you about themselves or colonization.

Knowledge Check

Now that you have completed Section 1, answer the Knowledge Check questions.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://pressbooks.openedmb.ca/pullingtogethbermanitoba/?p=39#h5p-1>

Note: If you are not using the online version of the Foundations Guide, you can find the Knowledge Check questions and answers in Appendix A.

PART II

SECTION 2: COLONIZATION

10.

INTRODUCTION



Fig 2.1: Hauling A York Boat Over the Robinson Portage, Hayes River, Manitoba. BiblioArchives/ LibraryArchives.

Section 2 will examine the role of colonization and how it continues to affect Indigenous Peoples in Canada and define the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people today.

Topics

In Section 2, you will learn about

- Colonization
- Treaties
- Laws and Acts of Parliament
- The Reserve System
- Indian Residential Schools

- TB Sanitoriums
- Sixties Scoop
- Truth and Reconciliation

It should take you up to three hours to complete Section 2, including watching the recommended videos.

Please complete the Locate Yourself activity first.

Activity 1: Locate Yourself (10 min)

Reflect on the following questions.

1. Have you ever experienced being stereotyped or discriminated against?
2. If yes, what were the short-term consequences? What were the long-term consequences?

Media Attributions

‘Hauling a York Boat Over the Robinson Portage, Hayes River, Manitoba (BiblioArchives/LibraryArchives) is licensed under a CC BY (Attribution) License.

11.

COLONIZATION

Before the arrival of European explorers and traders, North America was occupied by Indigenous Peoples living and thriving with their own distinct cultures, languages, and ways of knowing. Today, while many Indigenous people are very successful in business, law, medicine, arts, and sports, Indigenous Peoples as a group are at the negative end of every socio-economic indicator. How did this happen?

The short answer is colonization.

What Is Colonization?

In Canada, colonization occurred when a new group of people migrated to North America, took over, and began to control Indigenous Peoples. Colonizers impose their own cultural values, religions, and laws and make policies that do not favour Indigenous Peoples. They seize land and control access to resources and trade. As a result, Indigenous people become dependent on colonizers.

Today many Indigenous people still struggle, but it is a testament to the strength of their ancestors that Indigenous People are still here and are fighting to right the wrongs of the past.

Go forth, nor bend to greed of white men's hands,

By right, by birth we Indians own these lands.

– Emily Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake, 1861–1913; Mohawk/English poet and performer), from “A Cry from an Indian Wife”

Before the arrival of European explorers and traders, Indigenous Peoples were organized into complex, self-governing nations throughout what is now called North America. In its early days, the relationship between European traders and Indigenous Peoples was generally mutually beneficial. Indigenous Peoples were able to help traders adjust to the new land and could share their knowledge and expertise. In return, the traders offered useful materials and goods, such as horses, guns, metal knives, and kettles to the Indigenous Peoples. However, as time went by and more European settlers arrived, the relationship between the two peoples became much more challenging.

The Myth of Terra Nullius

European map-makers drew unexplored landscapes as blank spaces. Instead of interpreting these blank spaces as areas yet to be mapped, they saw them as empty land waiting to be settled. When settlers arrived in North America, they regarded it as terra nullius, or “nobody's land.” They simply ignored the fact that Indigenous

Peoples had been living on these lands for thousands of years, with their own cultures and civilizations. For the settlers, the land was theirs to colonize. As time went on, more and more settlers took over the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples.

Changing Names and Rewriting History

The settlers began to give their own names and descriptions to the land they had “discovered.” Take, for example, the City of Regina:

Indigenous people have lived in this region through many thousands of years. This area was one of the important places where Indigenous people would come to hunt the roaming herds of bison. They began to stack the long bison bones into large piles in an effort to honour the animals’ spirit as the bison herds were becoming depleted due to overhunting by non-Indigenous hunters. Indigenous peoples named the area *oskana ka-asastēki*, which roughly translates to “bone piles”. European explorers, fur traders and settlers translated this to Pile of Bones.

European settlement began in the 1880s as an agricultural community and served as a distribution point for farm materials and produce. As the settlement grew and became established, it was renamed Regina (Latin for “queen”) after Queen Victoria, who was the British monarch at the time. (City of Regina, n.d., para. 2-3 under History & Facts)

The land, landmarks, bodies of water and mountain ranges already had names, given to them by Indigenous Peoples. Often, settlers did not learn these names and made their own names for landmarks, mountains, bodies of water, and regions instead. This was one of the ways in which history was rewritten to exclude Indigenous Peoples’ contributions and presence.

The Language that Surrounds You

In some cases settlers adopted Indigenous place names, but often these were altered to make them easier for non-Indigenous settlers to pronounce. As a result, many place names in this area reflect Indigenous roots. Assiniboine and Saskatchewan are examples of names with Indigenous roots, but they have been changed to make the words easier to say.

Like place names, other words have made their way into regular usage within the English language. For example, the word “tipi” is a Dakota word that means “where one dwells.” Although the word is used widely, few know the meaning or origin of the word.

Competing Priorities and Worldviews

Initially, the relationship was mutually beneficial for settlers and Indigenous Peoples, but this relationship did not last. Each group had their competing priorities based on fundamentally different values such as

- the role and place of women
- ownership and use of land
- who should govern and run the society
- education and child-rearing

Colonizers used their numbers, laws, policies, and powers to gain control of Indigenous Peoples, thus leading Indigenous Peoples to be dependent on colonizers.

The colonizers' worldview

The British and French were fighting for control of North America, which they viewed as a rich source of raw materials. In their worldview, the natural environment was a resource that could be exploited for individual gain. Individuals and companies could become very wealthy by controlling the resources of this “New World.” The colonizer worldview valued competition, individualism, and male superiority.

The Indigenous worldview

In contrast, Indigenous Peoples value the group or the collective more than the individual. Each person has their role, and each contributed to the success of the group. Extended families were large and included aunts, uncles, cousins, and so on.

Indigenous Peoples viewed women as being equal to men. Women were supported, honoured, and respected for their role as the givers of life.

In the Indigenous worldview, everything has a spirit and deserves to be respected. The natural world was not simply a resource to control or conquer.

Justifying Colonization

The colonizers thought they were superior to all those of non-European descent, and some did not consider Indigenous Peoples to be “people” at all. They did not consider Indigenous laws, governments, medicines, cultures, beliefs, or relationships to be legitimate. They believed that they had the right and moral obligation to make decisions affecting everybody, without consultation with Indigenous Peoples. These beliefs and prejudices were used to justify the acts and laws that came into being as part of the process of colonization.

The Impact of Disease

When the Europeans arrived, they brought smallpox and other diseases that were previously unknown in North America. The Indigenous population had no immunity because, unlike the Europeans, they did not have centuries of exposure to these diseases. It has been estimated that as many as 90%–95% of the Indigenous population died from these introduced diseases.

A punishment from God?

These deadly epidemics happened before either the settlers or Indigenous Peoples properly understood the causes of disease. Christian missionaries told Indigenous people that one of the reasons for their sickness was

the fact that they did not believe in the Christian God and did not attend church. Indigenous people saw that the settlers were not as badly affected by disease, and many were persuaded to abandon their traditional beliefs and convert to Christianity.

THE TOOLS OF COLONIZATION

In the rest of Section 2, we will look at the ways in which the Europeans colonized the country. The process of colonization and gaining control over the land, now called Canada, was a multifaceted action. We will consider four tools of colonization:

- Treaties
- Laws and acts of Parliament
- The reserve system
- Residential schools

One of the tools was the creation and signing of treaties, which the settlers viewed as a process that transferred title and control of First Nations' land to non-Indigenous people and governments. These treaties were obtained through unequal negotiations and the purpose, meaning, and long-term significance of the signed treaties were understood differently by each signatory body. The British government, and then the Canadian government (after 1867), viewed the treaties as the completion of the transfer and control of land title to the "Crown." First Nations viewed themselves as equal partners (a Nation) when they signed the treaties, and as such they would still have access to their way of life and their traditional territories for their people, much like two governments working in parallel.

Treaties—Who gains?

In theory, both parties to a treaty should gain something by signing, and each party also has obligations to the other. However, this was not the case for Indigenous nations who entered into treaty agreements with the crown.

Indigenous nations entered into these treaties in good faith. They saw them as an alternative to conflict and a way to forge a better relationship. Besides, no one can really "own the land," so they assumed the land would still be available for their use.

The actual negotiations of the treaties were fraught with trickery, as many Indigenous nations were not fully informed of the real content and meaning of the treaties. They were written in English, which they often could not read, and oral translations were not always accurate. Indigenous nations leaders often had no real way of verifying what they were signing and assumed that the oral agreement surrounding the paper treaty was just as

important. An oral agreement is honoured and is often witnessed by others present. The witnesses' key task is to then remember and share what they heard in the agreement between parties.



Fig 2.3: James Bay Treaty (Treaty 9)

Media Attributions

‘James Bay Treaty’ (Treaty 9) is licensed under a Public Domain License.

TYPES OF TREATIES

There were many types of treaties, each signed with different goals in mind. Treaty types include

- Historic treaties
- Peace and Friendship Treaties (1725–1779)
- Douglas Treaties (1850–1854)
- Numbered Treaties (1871–1921)
- Modern treaties

Prior to 1960, the treaties signed in Canada covered all of the country except for most of Yukon, British Columbia, and Nunavut.

Historic Treaties

Historic treaties are those treaties signed by First Nations and the British and Canadian governments between 1701 and 1923. The British and Canadian governments wanted to sign treaties with First Nations in order to reduce the possibility of conflict and to support European immigration and land settlement, agriculture, natural resource use, trade, and other economic developments.

Peace and Friendship Treaties (1725–1779)

The Peace and Friendship Treaties, signed in the Maritimes in pre-Confederation Canada, were intended to end hostilities and encourage cooperation between the British and Mi'kmaq and Maliseet First Nations. Unlike later treaties signed in other parts of Canada, the Peace and Friendship Treaties did not involve First Nations surrendering rights to the lands and the resources they had traditionally used and occupied. In modern times, the Supreme Court of Canada has confirmed that Mi'kmaq and Maliseet First Nations continue to enjoy their treaty rights to hunt, fish, and gather.

The Douglas Treaties (1850–1854)

James Douglas was the Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1849, when its western headquarters were moved from Vancouver, Washington to Victoria in the new British colony of Vancouver Island. Douglas

became governor of the colony and began to encourage British settlement on First Nations lands. Over a period of four years, he made a series of 14 land purchases, known today as the Douglas Treaties. These treaties applied to territories on Vancouver Island and covered small tracts of land around Victoria, Nanaimo, and Port Hardy.

The Manitoba Act (1870)

On May 12, 1870, the Manitoba Act received Royal Assent and Manitoba was legally recognized as the fifth province to join Confederation. This was the first and only Indigenous people to bring a province into Canada's Confederation. While the Act is not legally referred to as a 'Treaty', in many ways, the Manitoba Act (1870) was the Métis Nation's treaty with Canada.

The Manitoba Act (1870) was a way for the Métis Nation to fight for their rights and the future rights of their children (including important land, language, education, and religious rights) in face of the newly Confederated Dominion of Canada encroaching westward into the Métis Nation's Homeland.

To learn more about why the Manitoba Métis chose to rise up and enter into negotiations with Canada, see:

[MAKING MANITOBA LA CRÉATION DU MANITOBA](#)

Unfortunately, Canada did not lawfully fulfil their obligations as outlined in Section 31 of the Manitoba Act (1870), and in 1981, the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) took Canada to court (Manitoba Metis Federation Inc. v. Canada). It was not until 32 years later, in 2013, that the Supreme Court would rule in the MMF's favor. In 2016, the MMF and Canada signed a framework agreement that would lay a path forward for reconciliation on this issue.

To read the Supreme Court Judgement, see: <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/12888/index.do>

The Numbered Treaties (1871–1921)

Eleven Numbered Treaties were signed by the First Nations in Canada and the reigning monarchs of Canada (Victoria, Edward VII, or George V) between 1871 and 1921. The treaties provided the government with large tracts of land in exchange for promises made to the First Nations of the area. The specific terms differed with each treaty.

[See here for information about Manitoba numbered treaties¹](#)



Fig 2.3: Numbered Treaties Map.

The First Nations leadership and the Canadian government had different goals in signing the Numbered Treaties.

The First Nations' goals were to

- secure the survival of their people (who had been seriously affected by disease and starvation)
- establish a peaceful relationship with the settler government
- ensure their cultural and spiritual survival as separate and distinct nations by keeping their own form of government and institutions
- begin to transition from a hunter-gatherer society to an economy based on agriculture and animal husbandry

The Canadian government's goals were to

- advance colonization across the Prairie regions
- complete the Canada Pacific Railway
- extract the resources from the area

It is important to note that not all Nations are signatories to numbered treaties. For example, the Dakota peoples are not signatories. The Métis people generally did not enter into treaty agreements with the exception of one group that negotiated adherence to Treaty 3 in northwestern Ontario (Métis Nation of Ontario, 2020).

Also, some Nations did not sign at the same time as neighbouring Nations, so there are instances where a community within a Treaty Territory may have signed a later numbered treaty. For example, Rolling River First Nation is a Treaty 4 community within the Treaty 2 boundary.

For more on how the Dakota peoples came to be holders of unceded territories and their stories of Indigenous title and resistance see [Dakota claim in Canada²](#).

Modern treaties

Many modern treaties are being negotiated today. The Government of Canada officially calls modern treaties Comprehensive Land Claims. As of May 2017, 65 First Nations in British Columbia were participating in the treaty process. Six First Nations have completed a treaty. These negotiations are “tri-partite,” meaning that three levels of government are involved: the First Nation, the Government of Canada, and the Province of British Columbia. The first modern treaty in British Columbia was completed in 1999 with the Nisga’a First Nation¹ although this treaty was negotiated outside of the B.C. treaty process.

There are many barriers to First Nations achieving a treaty today. Some First Nations have been working for decades to get treaties for their people. The process is very slow and expensive. Also, for many years the Government of Canada tried to stop First Nations from organizing a treaty process. From 1927 to 1951, the Indian Act made it illegal to meet or raise funds for Indigenous rights and lands claims issues.

For these and other reasons, some First Nations in British Columbia do not agree with the treaty process. Union of BC Indian Chiefs² has described why these agreements are not fair or equal:

- The Government of Canada gets recognition of its sovereignty, but First Nations do not. First Nations get limited recognition of their right to a piece of land that is always much smaller than their traditional territory. They have to co-manage that land with the government.
- First Nations may achieve self-government, but they have to obey Canadian and provincial laws. Canada does not have to obey any First Nations laws.
- Modern treaties are the “full and final settlement” between First Nations and the federal and provincial governments. The First Nation agrees it will not make any legal claims against Canada or B.C. to right historical wrongs. For example, it will not seek compensation for any past extraction of resources or destroyed habitat.

Media Attributions

‘Numbered Treaties Map’ was a BCcampus adaptation (Yug), and is licensed under a CC BY-SA (Attribution Share Alike) License.

Notes

1. Manitoba Numbered Treaties (<http://www.trcm.ca/treaties/treaties-in-manitoba/>)
2. Dakota Claim in Manitoba (<https://vantagepoints.ca/stories/dakota-claim-canada/>)

LAWS AND ACTS OF PARLIAMENT

We are not your slaves. These lakes, these woods and mountains were left to us by our ancestors. They are our inheritance; and we will part with them to none.

– Pontiac or Obwandiyag (c. 1720–1769; Odawa chief, French ally, and resistor of British occupation)

A second tool of colonization used to exert colonial power was through making laws and passing acts of Parliament. Prior to Canada becoming a country in 1867, many laws and acts were made and passed either in the British Parliament or by the colonial governments in North America. In both cases, these laws and acts were made without consultation with the Indigenous Peoples whom they affected. After 1867, the federal and provincial governments of Canada passed acts and laws that were designed to encourage settlement on Indigenous land and to assimilate Indigenous Peoples—encouraging them or coercing them to abandon their culture, languages, and lifeways and to adopt settler culture.

Royal Proclamation, 1763

An important early legal document was the Royal Proclamation issued by George III in 1763. It formally ceded North America to Britain from France. According to the Royal Proclamation, British colonists were forbidden to settle on Indigenous lands, and settler officials were forbidden to grant lands without royal approval. It further stated that Indigenous lands could only be ceded to the Crown and that they could not be sold to the settlers. The Royal Proclamation is significant in law, and it is referenced by the Supreme Court of Canada.

Gradual Civilization Act, 1857

In 1857, the pre-confederation Parliament of the Province of Canada passed the Gradual Civilization Act. It was created with the purpose of terminating First Nations men's Indian identity and enfranchising them to become British subjects. It was assumed that First Nations men would willingly surrender their legal and ancestral identities for the “privilege” of becoming British. Individuals or entire bands could enfranchise. If a man was enfranchised, his wife and children were automatically enfranchised. This contributed to the marginalization of First Nations women.

Under the Gradual Civilization Act, enfranchised men were entitled to “a piece of land not exceeding fifty acres out of the lands reserved or set apart for the use of his tribe.” This land and money would become their property, but by accepting it they would give up “all claim to any further share in the lands or moneys then

belonging to or reserved for the use of their tribe, and cease to have a voice in the proceedings thereof.” Often the promises of enfranchisement were not honoured and the First Nations man would not receive what was promised.

Enfranchisement was to remain an important aim of the government after Canada came into existence in 1867. Enfranchisement could occur involuntarily if a First Nations man wanted to go to university, enlist, was “of good moral character,” or spoke English.

Other Pre-Confederation Laws

During the same period, the Province of Canada introduced other laws that treated First Nations people differently, including

- consumption laws (banning First Nations people from consuming liquor)
- taxation (exempting some First Nations people from paying certain taxes)
- commercial laws (First Nations people could only sell their land to the Crown)
- different treatment of First Nations men and First Nations women

THE INDIAN ACT

Indian Act, 1876

The most important single act affecting First Nations is the Indian Act, passed by the federal government of the new Dominion of Canada in 1876 and still in existence today. The Indian Act was another attempt to assimilate First Nations people into Canadian society as quickly as possible. Under section 91(24) of the British North America Act (1867), the federal government was given jurisdiction or control over “Indians and Lands reserved for Indians,” providing exclusive authority over Indian affairs. You can [read the complete Indian Act online¹](#).

Who is an “Indian”?

In the Indian Act, the Government of Canada defines who is an “Indian.” If the government defines you as an “Indian,” you are said to have “Status.” For this reason, “Indian” is a legal word, but not one that many Indigenous people are comfortable using to describe themselves.

Not all people who identify as First Nations are Status Indian under the Indian Act. Over time there have been many different laws defining who is and who is not eligible for status. Defining who is and who is not an “Indian” is challenging and complicated. “Indians” are the only group of people where the Government of Canada decides who belongs and who does not.

Status and non-Status

Historically, the Indian Act applied only to Indigenous Peoples that the Crown recognized as “Indians.” It excluded Métis and Inuit, and created a group of people who were not entitled to Indian status, referred to as “non-Status Indians.” “Status” determines who the government considers to be entitled to rights that apply to some, but not all, First Nation Peoples in Canada, including

- the granting of reserves and the rights associated with them
- an extended hunting season
- a less restricted right to bear arms
- some medical coverage
- more freedom in the management of gaming and tobacco

Enfranchisement

The Indian Act made enfranchisement legally compulsory. Under the Indian Act from 1876 until 1955, Status Indians would lose their legal and ancestral identities (or Indian Status) for a variety of reasons,

especially if they were women. Enfranchisement was offered to men (although if they were married, their wives and children would be considered enfranchised too).

Until as recently as 1982, the legal status of First Nations women was affected by who they married. First Nation women with Status lost their Indian Status when they married a non-Status man. First Nations women also lost their Indian Status when they married Métis or non-Indigenous men. All the children in these marriages would not be entitled to Indian Status.

Women also lost their status if their husbands died or abandoned them, in which case the woman would

- lose the right to live on reserve land and have access to band resources,
- not necessarily become a member of her previous band again,
- be involuntarily enfranchised, losing her legal Indian status rights; her children could also be involuntarily enfranchised as a result.

Further discrimination against women

Under the Indian Act, First Nations women were also banned from voting and running in Chief and Council elections. The oppression of First Nations women under the Indian Act resulted in long-term poverty, marginalization, and violence, which they are still trying to overcome today. Inuit and Métis women were also oppressed and discriminated against and prevented from

- serving in the Canadian armed forces
- getting a college or university degree
- leaving their communities for long periods (e.g., for employment)
- becoming an ordained minister
- becoming a professional (e.g., a doctor or lawyer)

Impacts of the Indian Act: A Timeline

Over the years, the Indian Act has legislated extreme changes in the lives of Indigenous Peoples. Navigate the timeline below to view some of these impacts.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can [view it online here](#)²:

Note: If you are not using the online version of this guide, you can find the timeline in Appendix B.

The problem is we, as Indigenous peoples, have not been dealt with fairly, and also the governments have not dealt with the Indigenous issues the way we would like them to have.

– Elijah Harper (1949–2013; Oji-Cree; Canadian politician, first Treaty Indian elected as a provincial politician, Chief of the Red Sucker Lake community, recipient of the Order of Manitoba and the Stanley Knowles Humanitarian Award, and a key player in the rejection of the Meech Lake Accord)

Amendments to the Indian Act in 1951 made it no longer illegal for First Nations people to

- gather in groups of more than three
- leave the reserve without a pass
- hire a lawyer
- own property
- practise their culture

But many of the more harmful provisions still remained, including

- the definition of who is an “Indian”
- the reserve system
- residential school policies
- an imposed system of government

As of 2017, all of these provisions still remain, except residential schools.

1985

In 1985, Bill C-31 was passed, amending the Indian Act to bring it into line with gender equality under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. There were three major goals:

- to address gender discrimination in the Indian Act
- to restore Indian status to those who had been forcibly enfranchised
- to allow First Nations to control their own membership as a step toward self-government

Today, the Indian Act is still in force, which is a major reason why the use of the offensive term “Indian” persists today.

Note: The Indian Act uses the terms “Indian” and “White” as these were the terms used at the time. These are not terms that you should use in your conversations.

Notes

1. Indian Act (R.S.C., 1985, c. I-5) (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/i-5/>)
2. Timeline, also in Appendix B (<https://pressbooks.openedmb.ca/pullingtogethermanitoba/back-matter/appendix-b-indian-act-timeline/>)

THE RESERVE SYSTEM

We the Original Peoples of this land know the Creator put us here. The Creator gave us laws that govern all our relationships to live in harmony with nature and mankind.

The Laws of the Creator defined our rights and responsibilities. The Creator gave us our spiritual beliefs, our languages, our culture, and a place on Mother Earth which provided us with all our needs. We have maintained our Freedom, our Languages, and our Traditions from time immemorial. We continue to exercise the rights and fulfill the responsibilities and obligations given to us by the Creator for the land upon which we were placed.

The Creator has given us the right to govern ourselves and the right to self-determination. The rights and responsibilities given to us by the creator cannot be altered or taken away by any other Nation. – A Declaration of First Nations from the Assembly of First Nations (1980; Note–The Assembly of First Nations was officially founded in 1982.)

Before colonizers arrived, First Nations people and Inuit had the use of all the land and water in what is now Canada. Their traditional territories were (and are) very large. When Europeans arrived, they and the First Nations people and Inuit came into conflict over who would control these lands and resources.

The Creation of Reserves

Under the Indian Act, the Canadian government defined a reserve as land that has been set aside (not apart) by the government for the use and benefit of an Indian band. Reserve land is still classified as federal land, and First Nations do not have title to reserve land. Reserves were often created on less valuable land and sometimes located outside the traditional territory of the particular First Nation. If the First Nation had lived traditionally by hunting and gathering in a particularly rich area, confinement to a small, uninhabitable place was a very difficult transition. Allotted reserves were always small compared to the First Nations' traditional territory.

Reserves in the 20th Century

In the early 20th century, there was a rapid increase in poverty on reserves due to imposed laws and policies. Canadian laws made it illegal for First Nations people to use traditional means of resource distribution and limited their ability to fish and hunt. An amendment to the Indian Act in 1927 also made it illegal for them to challenge their situation in court. Many First Nations people living on reserves found that they could not

sustain themselves or their families. However, leaving the reserve meant facing discrimination and assimilation in the cities and giving up their rights as Status Indians.

The Reserve System: Important Facts

It is important to know the following facts:

- First Nations people were not consulted when reserves were created. They did not give consent.
- They were not compensated for the lands that were taken from them.
- Since their creation, reserves have been moved and reduced and their resources have been taken—all without compensation for First Nations.
- Until as recently as 1958, people living on reserve needed written permission from the Indian Agent in order to leave the reserve for any reason.

The Reserve System Today

Many First Nations people continue to live on small reserves, which the government still controls. This is a source of much of the conflict between First Nations and the government, at both provincial and federal levels.

Today, First Nations people still live with the problems created by the reserve system:

- There is often not enough land for all members to have housing.
- Some services are provided only to people living on reserve, so people living off reserve do not get the same services.
- Many reserves are very isolated and do not have basic services, such as electricity or running water.

Despite the hardships caused by the reserve system, reserves, as communities, are also a place of cultural survival, where Indigenous languages are spoken and taught in schools and cultural practices are thriving.

INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

For roughly seven generations nearly every Indigenous child in Canada was sent to a residential school. They were taken from their families, tribes and communities, and forced to live in those institutions of assimilation. The results while unintended have been devastating. We witness it first in the loss of Indigenous languages and traditional beliefs. We see it more tragically in the loss of parenting skills, and, ironically, in unacceptably poor education results. We see the despair that results in runaway rates of suicide, family violence, substance abuse, high rates of incarceration, street gang influence, child welfare apprehensions, homelessness, poverty, and family breakdowns. Yet while the government achieved such unintended devastation, it failed in its intended result. Indians never assimilated.

– Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair (Mizanay Gheezhik; Ojibway; first Indigenous judge in Manitoba, superior court judge, adjunct professor, and chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission), speech to the United Nations, 2010.

One of the most infamous consequences of the Indian Act was the promotion of residential schools. Duncan Campbell Scott, Head of Indian Affairs from 1913 to 1932, famously said in 1920 that “the goal of the Indian Residential School is to ‘kill the Indian in the child.’” Sadly, in many cases, this goal was accomplished. Children were not allowed to speak their language and had to give up their cultural practices, beliefs, and any connection to their Indigenous way of life.

Today, Indigenous Peoples are still living with the legacy of residential schools in the form of post-traumatic stress and intergenerational trauma.

The legacy of the residential school system is still with us today, and it is important that all people understand its history and legacy. Only when we understand the true history of Canada and its relationship with Indigenous Peoples can reconciliation begin. We can create a Canada that is inclusive of Indigenous Peoples and where Indigenous Peoples are self-determining in a nation-to-nation relationship.

The Indian Residential School System

The residential school system consisted of 140 schools across the country, funded by the federal government and run by churches. More than 150,000 Indigenous children attended the schools. The Mohawk Institute in Brantford, Ontario, opened in 1830, and took in its first boarding school student in 1831 (Miller et al., 2021, para. 3). The first government-funded residential schools were opened in the 1870s. The last federally funded residential school closed in 1996 in Saskatchewan.

Day schools and residential schools were made mandatory for Indigenous children between the ages of 7 and 15 in 1884. Parents could no longer choose between sending their children to the schools and keeping them at home, and they could be fined or even sent to prison if they tried to keep their children at home.

The government wanted to assimilate Indigenous Peoples into Canadian society, which meant they would have to give up their languages, spiritual beliefs, and cultural practices. Indigenous children were removed from their parents, family, and all cultural influences and traditions. They lived at residential schools for months or years at a time rather than going home every day after class. Many of these children did not see their families for very long periods of time.

Since the intent of the government and churches was to erase Indigenous culture in the children—“kill the Indian in the child” and stop the transmission of culture from one generation to another—many people think the residential schools were a form of cultural genocide.

The Residential School Experience

On the children’s arrival at the residential schools, the staff took away their clothes and cultural belongings. Their hair was cut and they were required to wear Euro-Canadian uniforms. They were forbidden to speak their language, practise their cultural traditions, or spend time with children of the opposite sex, including their brothers and sisters, and were physically punished if they did. They were required to practise Christianity.



Fig 2.4: Boys harvesting in the vegetable garden, Brandon Indian School Farm [1913-1915].

Children usually attended school in the morning and the boys worked as farm labourers in the afternoon while the girls did domestic chores and cleaned. They often received only a Grade 5 education, as it was expected that they would be low-paid workers in Canadian society.

The government paid the church a certain amount of money for each student. The more students at the school, the more money the church would receive. The children did not get enough food and lived in buildings that were hot in the summer and cold in the winter. Overcrowding and poor diet meant that diseases spread rapidly, and many students died in the schools.

Disconnection from their families, communities, languages, and cultures led to great suffering for the children. Many also experienced neglect and abuse—physical, psychological, and sexual—at the schools. Some committed suicide. Some died trying to escape. Indigenous children are the only children in Canadian history to be taken from their families and required by law to live in institutions because of their race and culture.

For most Indigenous people, the memories of residential school are negative and life-altering. They remember feeling lonely, hungry, and scared. They remember being told that Indigenous culture is strange and inferior, that Indigenous beliefs and practices are wrong, and that they would never be successful.

The Continuing Legacy of the Indian Residential School System

Canada's residential school system had and continues to have serious consequences for Indigenous Peoples. It is important to understand this history so it is not repeated and to work toward righting the wrongs of the past so Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can move forward in a spirit of nation-to-nation relationship based on respect, transparency, and accountability.

The discovery of the bodies of 215 children in an unmarked mass grave at a residential school outside of Kamloops, BC, has shocked many Canadians and brought the trauma and suffering of the survivors and the deceased to widespread recognition. Many are calling upon the federal government and church groups to fully investigate residential school sites to reveal the full count and identities of those whose young lives were lost because of the policy of cultural genocide. The former Brandon Indian Residential School site is currently being led by the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation with partners at Simon Fraser University, Brandon University, and the University of Windsor (Finding Indigenous Children: The Brandon Indian Residential School Project, 2021).

Loss of confidence and culture

Many of the people who attended residential schools left with very little education and a belief that it is shameful to be an "Indian." Many were unable to speak their language, so they could not communicate with their family members and particularly their grandparents, who in many communities would have been important sources of knowledge for them. Many also found it hard to fit into Canadian society. They had a low level of education and faced racism and discrimination when they tried to find work. Unable to fit into community life and not accepted in mainstream society, some felt that they did not belong anywhere.

Psychological Effects

Many people who attended residential schools experienced a variety of psychological effects, including

- post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)—terror, nightmares, and flashbacks that develop after a terrifying experience
- survivor syndrome—guilt felt by people who have survived a threatening situation that others did not survive

Sadly, the effects of residential schools are not only felt by those who attended residential schools. Intergenerational trauma are the effects of traumatic experiences passed on to the next generations. For example, the children and grandchildren of residential school survivors grow up feeling that something is wrong, but they do not know what because parents and relatives live with the pain and grief of their experiences in silence.

Effects on communities

Traditionally, Indigenous histories, traditions, beliefs, and values were passed from one generation to the

next through experiential learning and oral storytelling. With the children away at school, there was no one left to receive this knowledge. Many Indigenous languages that were spoken in Canada are now gone. Many cultural and spiritual practices have been lost.

The loss of culture is a loss for both Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous people in Canada. Families suffered from the separation for many years. Because they were removed from their families, many students grew up without the knowledge and skills to raise their own families. It prevented children from learning from their Elders and growing into a role in their community and having a healthy self-esteem and identity.

Brandon Residential School



Fig 2.5: Postcard view of Brandon Indian Residential School (circa 1910).

The residential school in Brandon opened in 1895. There was great resistance on the part of the parents of the children being taken to the school. It was clear that the goals of the school were under suspicion from the time it opened:

When heading northward, Semmens [the superintendent] recorded several questions frequently asked by parents, including if the children would return after their studies were completed, was it the government's plan to destroy their languages and tribal life, whether their children would be enslaved and exploited for money, if the children could freely return

home by their own decision or the decision of their parents and if the government would actually keep their promises surrounding the schools. (Slark, 2021, p. B5)

Although the federal government pressed on with compulsory attendance, initially the school recorded sparse attendance. Decades later, the school's records indicate that children ran away with alarming frequency. Parents complained about their children being fed a poor diet while being housed at the school. Despite these realities, one teacher interviewed for an article in the *Winnipeg Free Press* expressed hopes that the school's environment would educate students to the point that they would become "discontented" with their reserve communities (Slark, 2021). Allegations of abuse were not unheard of, but did not appear to be thoroughly investigated. The vacant school was demolished in 2000.

The land that the school and its grounds occupied is now owned by three entities: the research farm, a private campground owner, and Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. The landscape has been flooded repeatedly in the last few decades. To date, there are estimated to be 104 children's bodies buried in three sites, though there are only records of 78 deceased children (Slark, 2021). Access to the site is limited by the complicated division of ownership. A research partnership of Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, Simon Fraser University, Brandon University, and the University of Windsor has secured Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council funding to aid in identify the children. The complete investigation of residential school remains of children is the subject of #71-76 of the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

There were many other residential schools throughout Manitoba and Canada. At the time of writing, many are being investigated with ground penetrating radar to begin to account for the children whose bodies remain at the schools, largely in unmarked graves. Along with the TRC, many Indigenous leaders, communities, and families of the children are calling for complete physical investigation of all school sites and the opening of church records. There are also calls for criminal investigation of the children's deaths in cases where that action is appropriate. There have also been repeated calls for an official apology from the Vatican.

[Residential Schools Locations](#)¹

[National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#)²

Apologies and Reparations

In the 1990s, groups of residential school survivors sued the Canadian government and the churches that ran the schools. One of the largest class action suits in Canadian history was settled in 2007. It resulted in the establishment of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement and payment of \$1.9 billion. This settlement made several promises. It gave more funds to the Indigenous Healing Foundation (now closed) for healing programs in communities and offered payments to survivors as reparation. Reparation payments are compensation for past wrongs endured by the victims.

The official apology

On June 11, 2008, the Government of Canada issued a formal apology. You can view a video of the apology online. Here is part of the text of the apology:

The treatment of children in Indian Residential Schools is a sad chapter in our history.... Two primary

objectives of the Residential Schools system were to remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families, traditions, and cultures, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture. These objectives were based on the assumption Indigenous cultures and spiritual beliefs were inferior and unequal. Indeed, some sought, as it was infamously said, “to kill the Indian in the child.” Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country.... To the approximately 80,000 living former students, and all family members and communities, the Government of Canada now recognizes that it was wrong to forcibly remove children from their homes and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that it was wrong to separate children from rich and vibrant cultures and traditions that it created a void in many lives and communities, and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that, in separating children from their families, we undermined the ability of many to adequately parent their own children and sowed the seeds for generations to follow, and we apologize for having done this. We now recognize that, far too often, these institutions gave rise to abuse or neglect and were inadequately controlled, and we apologize for failing to protect you. Not only did you suffer these abuses as children, but as you became parents, you were powerless to protect your own children from suffering the same experience, and for this we are sorry....

Healing

Many Indigenous families and communities have organized formally and informally to heal from residential school legacies, and many survivors are now Elders. [The Indian Residential School Survivors Society \(IRSSS\)](#)³ grew out of a committee of survivors in 1994. It has centres in B.C. cities, including Vancouver. Its many projects include providing crisis counselling, court support, workshops, conferences, information and referrals, and media announcements. The society researches the history and effects of residential schools. The IRSSS also advocates for justice and healing in traditional and non-Indigenous ways.

Media Attributions

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‘Post Card View of Brandon Indian Residential School (circa 1910)’ (Gordon Goldsborough) is licensed under a Public Domain License.

Notes

1. Residential Schools Locations (<http://www.trc.ca/about-us/residential-school.html>)
2. National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (<http://www.trc.ca/about-us/residential-school.html>)
3. Indian Residential School Survivors Society (<https://www.irsss.ca/>)

TB SANATORIUMS

(Note: The following section makes use of the term Aboriginal rather than Indigenous to describe the populations involved. This terminology reflects the preference of the section's author, and the Pulling Together group respects that preference. For a fuller discussion of terms used to reference First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, please [see 'Some Words on Terminology,' section 1, chapter 2](#))¹.

Aboriginal peoples in Manitoba have a long history with tuberculosis (TB). This disease is directly linked to poverty, which is why it was, and continues to be, problematic for Aboriginal Peoples. For instance, many lived in overcrowded, dilapidated homes, could not afford to purchase nutritious foods, did not have access to clean safe drinking water, and were denied healthcare. In the early 1900s, sanatoriums were built to isolate and treat those suffering from the disease because no effective medications were available. When sanatoriums opened, only members of the mainstream population were admitted, leaving Aboriginal Peoples few options in terms of accessing care. In the mid-1940s, medications to treat TB were discovered and infection rates began to drop among the mainstream population. However, TB remained problematic for Aboriginal peoples and in order to protect the health of society, sanatorium care was finally offered to them. Although they were offered care, the TB situation among the Aboriginal population persisted well into the 1960s; and it remains a health concern for Aboriginal Peoples today.

Sanatoriums, which were large, intimidating colonial institutions, were often far from patients' homes, separating them from their loved ones, communities, cultures, and lands. Sanatorium care was, in many ways, quite similar to residential schools and those receiving care were separated from their families and communities, expected to speak English, adopt Christianity, were segregated from society and the opposite sex, and some were victims of abuse. One primary difference between residential schools and sanatoriums was students would eventually age out; whereas, patients had no idea if their stay would be months or years or if they would succumb to TB. For many, being institutionalized for an indeterminate amount of time while battling a deadly disease caused a great deal of trauma for them and their families.

Notes

1. 'Some Words on Terminology,' Section 1 (<https://pressbooks.openedmb.ca/pullingtogethermanitoba/chapter/some-words-on-terminology/>)

19.

THE SIXTIES SCOOP

Feel free to provide resources and/or stories about survivors of the Sixties Scoop and how they were affected.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

We must be honest about the real two solitudes in this country, that between Indigenous and non Indigenous citizens, and commit to doing tangible things to close the divide in awareness, understanding and relationships.... We can no longer afford to be strangers to each other in this country that we now share. We could actually come to know each other not just as labels or hyphenated Canadians but rather as neighbors and as friends, as people that we care about.

– Dr. Marie Wilson (award-winning print, radio, and television journalist; university lecturer; commissioner, Truth and Reconciliation Commission).

Like other policies under the Indian Act, the negative effects of residential schools were passed from generation to generation. Indigenous Peoples have been working hard to overcome the legacy of residential schools and to change the realities for themselves, their families, and their Nations. The federal government established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) to deal with the legacy of residential schools. Its mandate was to accumulate, document, and commemorate the experiences of the 80,000 survivors of the residential school system in Canada, so the survivors could begin to heal from the trauma of these experiences.

The TRC had two overarching goals:

- to document the experiences of all survivors, families, and communities personally affected by residential schools—including First Nations, Inuit, and Métis former residential school students and their families and communities, the churches, former school employees, government, and other Canadians
- to teach all Canadians about what happened in residential schools

The TRC pursued truth by gathering people's stories and statements, researching government records, and providing public education. The TRC saw reconciliation as an ongoing individual and collective process.

The TRC's 94 Calls to Action

The TRC built on the Government of Canada's Statement of Reconciliation dated January 7, 1998. The commission completed its work on December 18, 2015. However, the journey of Truth and Reconciliation is far from over.

The TRC produced several reports based on the histories and stories of residential school survivors. One of

the most significant reports is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, which proposes 94 specific calls to action aimed at redressing the legacy of residential schools and advancing the process of Canadian reconciliation. You can [read more at the Reconciliation Canada website.](#)¹

The work of the TRC was not just about documenting a particularly difficult part of Indigenous history in Canada. It was rooted in the belief that telling the truth about our common history gives us a much better starting point in building a better future. By ending the silences under which Indigenous Peoples have suffered for many decades, the TRC opened the possibility that we may all come to see each other and our different histories more clearly and be able to work together in a better way to resolve issues that have long divided us. It is the beginning of a new kind of hope.

See the Beyond 94 website to [discover how many of the 94 Calls to Action of the TRC have been completed or are in progress.](#)²

Reflection assignment: What do you know about the CTAs? How has your workplace and /or community responded?

Activity 1: Stolen Children: Voices (30 min)

This 20 minute CBC mini-documentary, [Stolen Children: Voices.](#)³ shares stories from survivors and the effects of residential school on their culture, community, and families.

Reflect on Stolen Children

- What was the most shocking part of the video? What was the hardest part to understand or accept?
- What would have happened to you as a child if you had been taken away from your family?
- How do you think the impacts of these schools might still be affecting Indigenous Peoples today?

Activity 2: Tons of stuff you need to know

In this book, [First Nations 101: Tons of Stuff You Need to Know about First Nations Peoples.](#)⁴ Tsimshian author Lynda Gray discusses and debunks many stereotypes and misinformation about First Nations people. Read this book to learn more, and then share this book with others.

Notes

1. Reconciliation Canada (<http://reconciliationcanada.ca/>)
2. Beyond 94 (<https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform-single/beyond-94?&cta=1>)
3. *Stolen Children: Voices* (<https://youtu.be/vdR9HcmiXLA>)
4. *First Nations 101: Tons of Stuff You Need to Know about First Nations Peoples* (<http://www.firstnations101.com/>)

CONCLUSION

You have reached the end of the Section 2 of the Foundations Guide. You should now have an understanding of what colonization means and how the history of colonization has affected, and continues to affect, Indigenous Peoples today.

Knowledge Check

Now that you have completed Section 2, answer the Knowledge Check questions.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://pressbooks.openedmb.ca/pullingtogethbermanitoba/?p=52#h5p-2>

Note: If you are not using the online version of the Foundations Guide, you can find the Knowledge Check questions and answers in Appendix A.

PART III

SECTION 3: DECOLONIZATION

22.

INTRODUCTION



Fig. 3.1: East Site Sunset. Deidre Gregory.

Each day that Indigenous rights are not honoured or fulfilled, inequality between Indigenous peoples and the settler society grows.

– Idle No More, “The Story”

In Canada, we are still dealing with the legacy of colonization. Media, institutions, and ordinary people still perpetuate harmful stereotypes and beliefs about Indigenous Peoples. This creates a society that continues to discriminate against Indigenous Peoples.

Decolonization is the “undoing” of colonization and a process by which Indigenous Peoples are regaining their rightful place in Canada and are thriving.

In Section 3, we will address some of the challenges that exist because of centuries of institutionalized racism.

Topics

In Section 3, you will learn about:

- Stereotypes
- Microaggressions
- Cultural appropriation
- Taking back control
- Indigenous rights, title, self-determination, and government
- Decolonization
- Reconciliation

It should take you about 1 hour to complete Section 3. Please complete the Locate Yourself activity first.

Activity 1: Locate yourself (15 min)

Reflect on the following questions

1. Have you ever experienced being stereotyped or discriminated against?
2. If yes, what were the short-term consequences? What were the long-term consequences?

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MYTHS, STEREOTYPES, AND RACISM

Read the following 9 statements about Indigenous Peoples, and select “Myth” or “Fact.” As you go through the remainder of Section 3, think about these myths.

Note: If you are not using the online version of the Foundations Guide, you can find the Myth or Fact questions and answers in Appendix C.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. [You can view it online here](#)¹.

Where Do the Myths Come From?

Although the situation is improving, far too many Canadians do not know the histories, cultures, or current issues facing Indigenous Peoples. There are many reasons for this:

- Years of government policies have worked to assimilate Indigenous Peoples into mainstream Canadian society.
- Reserves have isolated First Nations people from Canadian society.
- Very little is taught about the true history of Canada and Indigenous Peoples.
- Film, television, and media often perpetuate Indigenous stereotypes.

Stereotypes

In order to ensure that there is understanding, respect, and appreciation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, both need to meet, work together, and learn about each other. Otherwise, non-Indigenous people may learn about Indigenous Peoples only from the news and other sources. Usually what people know, or think they know, comes from the images and characters they see or read about in movies, TV shows, magazines, books, and news reports.

Stereotypes do great harm. Whether you are Indigenous or non-Indigenous, you will often hear negative stereotypes about Indigenous Peoples, but you might not always have enough information to see past the stereotypes and see past the racism to find the truth.

The Canadian school system has contributed to these stereotypes, as very little is taught about Indigenous Peoples and their real history. This is changing. For example, Manitoba Education has created K-12 resources for the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives. They also provide curriculum resources for schools who wish to include Indigenous language instruction (Manitoba Education, n.d.) Brandon School Division has a number

of initiatives and various programming supporting learners. Some examples include Treaty education, blanket exercises, Indigenous language courses, and a land-based learning course.

Indigenous stories and histories in the mainstream media have normally been told from a non-Indigenous point of view. This can lead to misunderstandings that can harm the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

The Hollywood film industry has made millions from telling stories about “cowboys and Indians.” In TV shows and movies, Indigenous characters are often played by non-Indigenous people and the representations of Indigenous Peoples are rarely accurate. Instead, filmmakers use stereotypes of Indigenous Peoples.

Negative stereotypes of Indigenous Peoples are still widespread in sports, though there is a growing movement to replace team names and mascots that perpetuate the stereotypes.

Overcoming the stereotypes

Indigenous people work in the media—in newspapers, radio, book publishing, film, web journalism, and television. The Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) is a cable television network in Canada that produces and broadcasts programs by and for Indigenous Peoples. These films and TV shows can help break down some of the negative stereotypes. In Brandon, Westman Communications Group has an access channel that broadcasts *Stories of Our Land*, a show that features interviews with local Knowledge Keepers and Elders, hosted by Jason Gobeil.

For non-Indigenous Canadians, the visible and positive presence of Indigenous Peoples in the media is a real alternative to stereotypes. Real people, places, and cultures are much more complex than stereotypes.

Getting to know Indigenous Peoples and learning about their real history and contemporary reality will help to break down negative stereotypes and can heal some of the damage. Many people are now working to ensure that future generations of children in Canada will receive more complete and accurate views of Indigenous Peoples and a more truthful account of Canadian history in their education.

Microaggressions

The term microaggressions is sometimes used to describe the insults, dismissals, or casual degradations a dominant culture inflicts on a marginalized group of people. Often they are a form of unintended discrimination, but one that has the same effect as willful discrimination. Usually perpetrators intend no offence and are unaware they are causing harm. Generally, they are well-meaning and consider themselves to be unprejudiced.

Many Indigenous people experience microaggressions on a regular basis. They are often statements that

- repeat or affirm stereotypes about Indigenous Peoples or subtly demean them
- position the dominant non-Indigenous culture as normal and the Indigenous culture as abnormal
- express disapproval of or discomfort with Indigenous Peoples
- assume all Indigenous Peoples are the same
- minimize the existence of discrimination against Indigenous Peoples

- deny the perpetrator’s own bias toward Indigenous Peoples
- minimize real conflict between the Indigenous Peoples and the dominant non-Indigenous culture

People who experience microaggressions may feel anger, frustration, or exhaustion from feeling that they must “represent” their group or suppress their own cultural expression and beliefs.

[Wab Kinew’s Soapbox \(1 min, 45 sec\)](#)²

Cultural Appropriation

Cultural appropriation is the adoption or use of culturally significant items by someone from another culture. During this process the original meaning is usually lost or distorted.

Pop culture has a history of using Indigenous symbols to sell fashion. Traditional Indigenous clothing with deep spiritual significance is marketed as “cute,” “sexy,” or “cool.”

Cultural appropriation is offensive when someone from a dominant culture exploits the cultural and intellectual property of a marginalized group of people and even more so when the dominant culture has outlawed many of the cultural items that are now being marketed. Here are some examples of cultural appropriation:

- providing ceremonies, such as sweat lodges, by unqualified people, usually marketed as a wellness or spa-like experience, or non-Indigenous people selling traditional “medicines”
- use of Indigenous artists’ designs in manufacturing of fashion, without asking permission and/or paying the artist for their work
- names or logos for sports teams that make use of stereotypes

Cultural appreciation differs from cultural appropriation in significant ways. It is okay to purchase items made by Indigenous artists and craftspersons, provided they are compensated directly or through a licensing agreement. It’s also appropriate to attend ceremonies that are open to all, provided one respects the sanctity of ceremony and the leaders who provide it. It is also appropriate and respectful to read Indigenous literatures, watch Indigenous-produced videos and live performances, and purchase and play video games created by Indigenous game developers. By all means, eat at restaurants that serve Indigenous food prepared by Indigenous chefs and their staff. If we stop and think about the purpose of what we are doing, it is not that difficult to determine the difference between cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation.

Notes

1. Interactive ‘Myth or Fact?’ Activity, also in Appendix C. (<https://pressbooks.openedmb.ca/pullingtogethermanitoba/back-matter/appendix-c-myth-or-fact/>)
2. Wab Kinew’s Soapbox (<https://fb.watch/68BhH1InBg/>)

TAKING BACK CONTROL

The idea of taking back control also incorporates a return to the ways of knowing and being—not necessarily back in time, but back to strengths in the ways of doing things. We can keep our modern lives, but still be connected to the wisdom of the past. It is what we always have had, and why we have survived. We need to step back into our truth. —Susie McPherson-Derendy, Cree Knowledge Keeper

As we have seen, in the past the Government of Canada has unilaterally enacted laws and policies that have adversely affected Indigenous Peoples. This continues to happen. However, Indigenous Peoples have been pursuing recognition of their “rights and title” and self-government. Some have done this through treaties, the courts, and/or negotiations. Increasingly, Indigenous Peoples are taking back control over the decisions that affect them. Some examples of important ways that nations are assuming control are by providing their own child and family services, culturally appropriate education, and reclaiming of language and place names.

Check these websites for examples of how Indigenous governments are taking back control over many aspects of organization of governance and services within Manitoba:

[Governance Agreement: Sioux Valley Dakota Nation¹](#)

[Your Métis Government²](#)

Indigenous Resistance

Although they have had serious consequences, the laws and policies stemming from the Indian Act did not succeed in destroying all Indigenous traditions. Indigenous Peoples have always fought against the Indian Act and for their rights.

Indigenous Peoples have continued to practice their culture underground and have found new ways to avoid persecution. They organized against residential schools and won court victories and an official apology from the Government of Canada.

Often Indigenous Peoples and their allies will use blockades as a way to raise awareness for climate and environmental issues or to dispute the misuse of Indigenous lands and/or resources by private or public organizations. If we think about how nations operate on a global scale, often governments will impose tariffs, embargoes, or blockades to resist unfair treatment by other nations. These forms of resistance are made on a nation-to-nation basis and are generally peaceful, though they are meant to create uncomfortable conditions to raise consciousness for their cause. Recall that Treaties have been negotiated on a nation-to-nation basis;

therefore, blockades or other forms of peaceful protest are often the best tool Indigenous Peoples have to make their case known to a wide audience and especially to those in the position to uphold treaty rights.



Fig. 3.2: Kanesatake Resistance, July 11, 1990 to September 26, 1990.

One of the most well-known blockades to have occurred in Canada was the Kanesatake Resistance (also known as the Mohawk Resistance or the Oka Crisis). This blockade began with peaceful protestors but was responded to by armed troops from the Canadian Army along with Quebec police. Mohawk warriors became engaged when the protestors were acted upon with violence. This armed conflict has become recognized for the violent way in which non-Indigenous authorities responded to the initially peacefully conducted Mohawk protest over the proposed use of sacred land. For more on this pivotal event, see [Kanesatake Resistance](#)³.

Indigenous Peoples have continued to raise their children to be proud of their cultures and identities and to resist assimilation in their everyday lives.

[Making Manitoba: The Role of the Métis in the Red River Resistance](#)⁴

[Response to the White Paper: Authoring of the Red Paper](#)⁵ (also known as Citizens Plus authored by the Indian Chiefs of Alberta, 1970)

Idle No More

A well-known recent response to colonization was the Idle No More movement. The movement began in November 2012 when four Saskatchewan women, Jessica Gordon (Cree), Sylvia McAdam (Cree), Nina Wilson (Nakota/Plains Cree), and Sheelah McLean (Canadian) responded to the government's omnibus

Bill C-45, which challenged First Nations sovereignty and weakened environmental protections throughout Canada. Using Facebook and Twitter, #IdleNoMore was created to promote a series of “teach-ins” on the impacts of Bill C-45.

The Idle No More movement inspired more than 100 protests, flash mobs, and round dances in shopping malls and in the streets. Support for Idle No More spread outside of Canada, with solidarity protests in the US, Sweden, UK, Germany, New Zealand, and Egypt.

Urban Reserves

Manitoba has a number of urban reserves that have been established by First Nations. These areas are often purchased with funds that have been provided through the settlement of Indigenous Title with the federal government. The urban reserve model provides many mutually beneficial development considerations to the municipality in which the reserve is located and the First Nations owner. The reserve can provide jobs closer to cities and tax exemption benefits to members.

Here are links to more information on just some of the urban reserve projects in Manitoba:

[Urban Reserves in Manitoba](#)⁶

[Brandon: First Nations Urban Development Area](#)⁷

[Treaty 1 Development Corporation \(Former Kapyong Barracks Site\)](#)⁸

[CBC Article about naming of Naawi-Oodena](#)⁹

[Waywayseecappo Gas Bar North of Brandon](#)¹⁰

Community-Based Organizations

Here are just some examples of community-based organizations in Manitoba. There are many more Indigenous-centred organizations that promote the wellbeing, livelihood, artistic, cultural, and academic excellence of their members.

Bear Clan

The Brandon Bear Clan is a community-based organization that came about as a result of Winnipeg Bear Clan work. According to their Facebook page, “The Patrol is a community based solution to crime prevention, providing a sense of safety, solidarity and belonging to both its members and to the community.” Part of the scope of the Winnipeg Bear Clan has been to take on the work of finding Missing and Murdered people. From those beginnings, the movement has spread and the work is essential to the street-involved folks living mostly downtown. Brandon Bear Clan’s scope is to prevent people from becoming missing or murdered. The Bear Clan reaches out to folks who are street-involved and cares for them in very direct ways.

Brandon Urban Aboriginal Peoples’ Council

This organization is currently chaired by Leah LaPlante of the Manitoba Métis Federation. The Council played a key role in promoting the establishment of urban reserves like the one for Gambler First Nation in

Brandon. The council builds cultural awareness within the City of Brandon. The City is open to advice from BUAPC to make things better for Indigenous residents.

Indigenous rights, title, self-determination, and government

Indigenous rights are collective rights that flow from the fact that Indigenous Peoples continuously occupied the land that is now called Canada. They are inherent rights, which Indigenous peoples have practised and enjoyed since before settler contact. In Canadian law, Indigenous title and rights are different from the rights of non-Indigenous Canadian citizens. Indigenous title and rights do not come from the Canadian government, although they are recognized by it. They are rights that come from Indigenous Peoples' relationships with their territories and land, even before Canada became a country, and from Indigenous social, political, economic, and legal systems that have been in place for a long time.

Aboriginal title is the inherent right of Indigenous Peoples to their lands and waters. It is recognized by common law. This inherent right comes from the long history Indigenous Peoples have had with the land. Inherent means nobody can take the right away.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples includes the right to **self-determination**. The Assembly of First Nations describes self-determination as a Nation's right to choose its own government and decide on its own economic, social, and cultural development. Today, Indigenous Peoples are exercising their Indigenous rights and title for self-determination and benefiting from the wealth and resources of this land that is now called Canada.

Self-government means First Nations can take control of and responsibility for decisions affecting them. Self-government can take many forms. It can include making laws and deciding how to spend money or raise money through taxation, deliver programs, and build economic opportunities. First Nations governed themselves for thousands of years before the arrival of settlers. Their governments were organized to meet their economic, social, and geographic conditions and needs and were shaped by their cultures and beliefs. First Nations governments were weakened by policies that imposed settler laws and forms of government. Under the Indian Act, the Canadian government created Indian Bands and Councils to administer and provide services to their memberships and made aspects of traditional Indigenous government illegal. First Nations are in the process of nation rebuilding and asserting self-government.

In 2014, Sioux Valley Dakota Nation in Manitoba became the first plains nation in Canada to formally enter into self-governance (Elias, 2017).

Media Attributions

'Kanesatake Resistance, July 11, 1990 to September 26, 1990' (Injuneering) is licensed under a Public Domain License.

Notes

1. Government Agreement: Sioux Valley Dakota Nation ([https://www.gov.mb.ca/inr/resources/pubs/sioux%20valley%20dakota%20nation%20tripartite%20agreement%20\(aug%202013\).pdf](https://www.gov.mb.ca/inr/resources/pubs/sioux%20valley%20dakota%20nation%20tripartite%20agreement%20(aug%202013).pdf))
2. Your Metis Government (<http://www.mmf.mb.ca/government.php>)
3. Kanesatake Resistancence (<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/oka-crisis>)
4. Making Manitoba: The Role of the Metis in the Red River Resistance (<https://www.manitobametis.com/resources/making-manitoba-the-role-of-the-metis-in-the-red-river-resistance/>)
5. Response to the White Paper: Authoring the White Paper (<https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/aps/index.php/aps/article/view/11690/8926>)
6. Urban Reserves in Manitoba (<https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1100100020463/1616074450028>)
7. Brandon: First Nations Urban Development Area (https://www.brandon.ca/images/pdf/council/FN_UrbanDevelopmentAreas_PublicInfo.pdf)
8. Treaty 1 Development Corporation (<https://treaty1.ca/kapyong/>)
9. Naawi-Oodena (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/kapyong-barracks-name-naawi-oodena-winnipeg-1.5997787>)
10. Waywayseecappo Gas Bar (<https://www.brandonsun.com/local/gas-bar-fuels-development-571797702.html>)

DECOLONIZATION

We know there are no boats waiting in the harbour to take all of the non-Natives back someplace. We know people are not going to get on planes and say, “Oh well, we didn’t get this country so we will go somewhere else.” The non-Natives are all going to be here after negotiations. And so are we. What I want to leave behind is the injustice. I wish that we could start again.

—Steven Lewis Point (Xwě lī qwěł tēl, Stó:lō, former lieutenant governor of British Columbia, former provincial court judge, former Chief of the Skowkale First Nation, chair of the advisory committee for Missing Women Commission of Inquiry), Foreword to A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Historical Atlas (2001).

Decolonization Is Every Canadian's Responsibility

A common misunderstanding is that decolonization is an attempt to re-establish the conditions of a pre-colonial North America and would require a mass departure of all non-Indigenous people from the continent. That is not the goal. As Canadians, we can all take part in building a genuine decolonization movement. This movement would respect the land on which we are all living and the people to whom it inherently belongs.

What would decolonization look like?

Decolonization would mark a fundamental change in the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. It would bring an end to the settler effects on Indigenous Peoples with respect to their

- governments
- ideologies
- religions
- education systems
- cultures

Decolonization requires an understanding of Indigenous history and acceptance and acknowledgement of the truth and consequences of that history. The process of decolonization must include non-Indigenous people and Indigenous Peoples working toward a future that includes all.

Canadian citizens must acknowledge that the Canada we know today was built on the legacy of colonization and the displacement of Indigenous Peoples. Decolonization must continue until Indigenous

Peoples are no longer at the negative end of socio-economic indicators or over-represented in areas such as the criminal justice or child welfare systems.



Fig 3.3: Women dancing at the 2011 Long Plain First Nation Pow Wow.

For Indigenous Peoples, decolonization begins with learning about who they are and recovering their culture and self-determination.

Many Indigenous people may have difficulty understanding different aspects of, or perspectives on, Indigenous knowledge. This process can be difficult for all of the reasons we have already discussed, and it will take time to overcome the difficulties. It must occur on many levels: as an individual, a member of a family, a community, and a Nation. It requires perseverance, support, and knowledge of culture.

The process of decolonization is a process of healing and moving away from a place of anger, loss, and grief toward a place where Indigenous Peoples can thrive. This can be overwhelming and seemingly impossible for some. It must be acknowledged that not all Indigenous Peoples are in the same place on this “decolonization journey,” but together Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous peoples can succeed.

Continuous reinforcement and rediscovery of Indigenous language, culture, and spiritual practices empowers people to move forward in their growth as proud Indigenous citizens.

Media Attributions

‘Women Dancing at the 2011 Long Plain First Nation Pow Wow’ (Wasme) is licensed under a CC BY-NC-SA (Attribution Non-Commercial Share Alike) License.

RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation is an important part of the process of decolonization. Reconciliation requires that Indigenous people tell their stories and that they are heard. It requires a shared understanding of our common past and a shared vision of the future.

An important step on the road to reconciliation was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), created in 2007 as part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. The TRC was inspired by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa.

What You Can Do

People ask, “What can be done?” or “What can I do?” or they are uncertain or uncomfortable about getting involved. It can feel daunting, and both responses are normal. The fact that you have taken the time to finish all of the sections in this guide has made a difference already, and if you can share what you learned with those around you, then you will make a difference. As we saw, many stereotypes and problems occur when people do not know the truth or even any information about Indigenous Peoples. Increasing awareness is very important.

If you would like to learn more, we encourage you to seek out information:

- Read the “Calls to Action” in the Truth and Reconciliation Final Report
- Visit a Friendship Centre or other Indigenous spaces in Brandon, such as those in Assiniboine Community College, Brandon University, and Thunderbird House in Winnipeg.
- Read books by Indigenous authors.
- Support Indigenous businesses and professionals by making purchases or using their services.
- Donate to a scholarship for Indigenous students or designate a donation to your post-secondary institution to support Indigenous initiatives.
- Add Indigenous voices and content to your music and podcast playlist.
- Participate in an online or in-person course taught by an Indigenous professor or instructor.
- Support businesses that are part of urban reserves.
- Find out about Jordan’s Principle and why it is so important to Indigenous children.
- Take a course or workshop on Indigenous Peoples’ history and culture.
- Form a group within your work team to talk about Indigenous issues or form a book club focusing on an Indigenous topic.
- Participate in events such as the Walk for Reconciliation and National Indigenous Day activities.

It is important to note that Indigenous Peoples need allies and not people to tell them what to do or to direct and benefit from Indigenous issues and challenges. We need to work together and support each other to make a place where all people are valued and included. Reconciliation is a very personal journey and one in which all Canadians must play a part.

[Buffalo Circle Allyship–University of Saskatchewan](#)¹

[Ally Toolkit–Calgary Foundation](#)²

[Ally Bill of Responsibilities](#)³ by Lynn Gehl

[Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund](#)⁴

Notes

1. Buffalo Circle Allyship (<https://teaching.usask.ca/articles/buffalo-circle-nomination.php>)
2. Ally Toolkit (<https://calgaryfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/Toolkit-Final.pdf>)
3. Ally Bill of Responsibilities (http://www.lynngehl.com/uploads/5/0/0/4/5004954/ally_bill_of_responsibilities_poster.pdf)
4. Gord Downie and Chanie Wenjack Fund (downiewenjack.ca)

CONCLUSION

You have reached the end of Section 3 of the *Foundations Guide*. In this section, you explored the complexity of identifying and deconstructing falsehoods and misinformation that have been perpetuated through media and policy. You should now have an understanding of what colonization means and how the history of colonization has affected, and continues to affect, Indigenous Peoples today. You should be able to recognize how centuries of institutionalized racism have created stereotypes of and hostility toward Indigenous Peoples. You should also be aware of ways you can support decolonization and reconciliation.

The work of deconstructing and reconstructing is a shared process and not solely one for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples to tackle. It is a shared responsibility to rebuild relationships and create lasting partnerships and alliances.

The *Pulling Together: Manitoba Foundations Guide* group hope you have started your path to decolonization and reconciliation with the information highlighted in this guide. As stated at the beginning of the guide, this is not a definitive resource; it is a start for lifelong learning and positioning yourself within Indigenous-Canadian relations. Thank you for taking this journey with us.

Knowledge Check

Now that you have completed Section 3, answer the Knowledge Check questions.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://pressbooks.openedmb.ca/pullingtogethermanitoba/?p=59#h5p-3>

Note: If you are not using the online version of the Foundations Guide, you can find the questions and answers in Appendix A.

APPENDIX A: KNOWLEDGE CHECK QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Note: The same questions are used in the Knowledge Check at both the beginning and end of each section.

Section 1: Introduction to Indigenous Peoples

Questions

1. How many First Nations are there in Canada?
 1. Fewer than 100
 2. More than 100 but fewer than 500
 3. More than 500
2. The terms First Nations and Indigenous Peoples have the same meaning.
 1. True
 2. False
3. The five First Nations in Manitoba according to linguistic groups are Cree, Ojibway, Dakota, Oji-Cree, and Dene.
 1. True
 2. False
4. To be recognized as a Métis citizen in Manitoba, one must: (To be supplied by the Louis Riel Institute partner)

Answers

1. How many First Nations are there in Canada?
 1. Fewer than 100—Sorry, that's not right. You will learn how many different First Nations there are in Canada today in this section.
 2. More than 100 but fewer than 500—Sorry, that's not right. You will learn how many different First Nations there are in Canada today in this section.
 3. **More than 500**—That's right! The exact number can vary, but there are around 630 First Nations in Canada.
2. The terms First Nations and Indigenous Peoples have the same meaning.
 1. True—Sorry, that's not right. You'll learn the difference between these terms in this section.

2. **False**—That’s right! First Nations are one of the three groups of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, but not all Indigenous people are First Nations.
3. The five First Nations in Manitoba according to linguistic groups are Cree, Ojibway, Dakota, Oji-Cree, and Dene.
 1. True – That’s right! The five First Nations in Manitoba according to linguistic groups are Cree, Ojibway, Dakota, Oji-Cree, and Dene.
 2. False – Sorry, that’s not right. You will learn about the First Nations of Manitoba in this section.
2. To be recognized as a Métis citizen in Manitoba, one must: (To be supplied by the Louis Riel Institute partner)

Section 2: Colonization

Questions

1. Who decides whether someone is “officially” a Status Indian?
 1. The federal government
 2. The Assembly of First Nations
 3. Anyone can decide to be a Status Indian
2. First Nations people still have laws and policies applied to them that are different from those applied to non-First Nations people.
 1. True
 2. False

Answers

1. Who decides whether someone is “officially” a Status Indian?
 1. **The federal government**—That’s right! The federal government decides who is a “Status Indian.” There are no other ethnic groups in Canada for which the government decides membership. Further, there is only an Indian Act and not an Italian or Irish Act.
 2. The Assembly of First Nations—Sorry, that’s not right. You will learn about the laws and policies that apply only to Indigenous Peoples in this section.
 3. Anyone can decide to be a Status Indian—Sorry, that’s not right. You will learn about the laws and policies that apply only to Indigenous Peoples in this section.
2. First Nations people still have laws and policies applied to them that are different from those applied to non-First Nations people. (True/False)
 1. **True**—That’s right! The Indian Act still exists and status Indians are still governed by it. There are many areas where Aboriginal people are treated differently with different laws and policies.

2. False—Sorry, that’s not right. You will learn more about status in this section.

Section 3: Decolonization

Questions

1. _____ is when someone takes an image, symbol, idea, song, dance, and so on from a group of people that they are not part of and uses it or claims it as their own or to advance themselves or their product. It is done without permission from or respect for the group.
 1. Microaggression
 2. Cultural appropriation
 3. Stereotyping
2. Which of the following statements about Aboriginal rights is true?
 1. Aboriginal rights are rights that Indigenous people have by virtue of the fact that they are Indigenous.
 2. They are rights that have been protected in the Constitution Act, 1982.
 3. The Canadian courts continue to define the extent of these rights.
 4. Indigenous people view Aboriginal rights as expansive and inclusive of both their traditional and contemporary ways of knowing and being.
 5. All of these are true.
3. What was established on June 2, 2008, and completed in December 2015, with the overarching goal of documenting and acknowledging the experiences of residential school survivors while working toward reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people?
 1. The Indian Act
 2. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission
 3. The Canada 150+ Commission
4. _____ is a process by which Indigenous Peoples are reclaiming their identities, land, and ways of being and knowing.
 1. Decolonization
 2. Reconciliation
 3. The treaty process

Answers

1. _____ is when someone takes an image, symbol, idea, song, dance, and so on from a group of people that they are not part of, and uses it or claims it as their own or to advance themselves or their product. It is done without permission from or respect for the group.
 1. Microaggression—Sorry, that’s not right. You will learn about cultural appropriation in this

section.

2. **Cultural appropriation**—That’s right! Cultural appropriation is when someone takes an image, symbol, idea, song, dance, and so on from a group of people that they are not part of and uses it or claims it as their own to advance themselves or their product. It is done without permission from or respect for the group.
3. Stereotyping—Sorry, that’s not right. You will learn about cultural appropriation in this section.
2. Which of the following statements about Aboriginal rights is true?
 1. Aboriginal rights are rights that Indigenous people have by virtue of the fact that they are Indigenous—Sorry, that’s not right. You will learn about Aboriginal rights in this section.
 2. They are rights that have been protected in the Constitution Act, 1982—Sorry, that’s not right. You will learn about Aboriginal rights in this section.
 3. The Canadian courts continue to define the extent of these rights—Sorry, that’s not right. You will learn about Aboriginal rights in this section.
 4. Indigenous people view Aboriginal rights as expansive and inclusive of both their traditional and contemporary ways of knowing and being—Sorry, that’s not right. You will learn about Aboriginal rights in this section.
 5. **All of these are true**—That’s right! All of these are true.
3. What was established on June 2, 2008, and completed in December 2015, with the overarching goal of documenting and acknowledging the experiences of residential school survivors while working toward reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people?
 1. The Indian Act—Sorry, that’s not right. You will learn about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in this section.
 2. **The Truth and Reconciliation Commission**—That’s right! The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was established on June 2, 2008, and was completed in December 2015. One of the final documents to come from the TRC is the 94 “Calls to Action” that were released June 2015 with the goal of redressing “the legacy of residential schools and advanc[ing] the process of Canadian reconciliation.
4. _____ is a process by which Indigenous Peoples are reclaiming their identities, land, and ways of being and knowing.
 1. Decolonization—That’s right! Decolonization is the “undoing” of all that colonization did to Indigenous Peoples. It is the changing of laws and policies that have been used to oppress and control Indigenous Peoples. It is the court cases and land claims settlements that have been fought for to ensure that Indigenous Peoples are benefiting from the land and have a future of self-government and self-determination. It is the righting of the wrongs of the past and changing the socio-economic indicators so that Indigenous Peoples are at or are moving toward the positive end.
 2. Reconciliation—Sorry, that’s not right. You will learn about decolonization in this section.
 3. The treaty process—Sorry, that’s not right. You will learn about decolonization in this section.

APPENDIX B: INDIAN ACT TIMELINE

Timeline: The Impact of the Indian Act

Over the years, the Indian Act has legislated extreme changes in the lives of Indigenous Peoples. The timeline below provides some examples.

1867

Federal government assumes responsibility for all “Indians and lands reserved for Indians”

Canada became a country with the passing of the British North America Act. In Section 91(24) the federal government (Canadian government) was assigned responsibility for all “Indians and lands reserved for Indians.”

1876

Indian Act becomes law

The Indian Act became law, and Indigenous governance systems were replaced with elected or appointed Band Councils. Women were not allowed to participate.

1879

Residential schools become official policy

Residential schools became the official government policy for educating First Nations children. Residential schools forcibly removed First Nations children from their families and communities to attend distant schools, where many died and many more suffered abuse.

1884–1951

Ceremonies banned

The Indian Act banned ceremonies such as the potlatch, ghost dance, and sun dance. People were arrested for performing them and their ceremonial materials were taken away by the government. The effects of this prohibition are still felt today.

1911–1951

Reserve land taken from bands without consent

The government could take reserve land from bands without their consent and (between 1918 and 1951) could also lease reserve land to settlers without the band’s agreement.

1914–1951

Traditional and ceremonial clothing banned

It was illegal for Indigenous Peoples to wear their traditional and ceremonial clothing.

1927–1951

Status Indians barred from seeking legal advice, fundraising, or meeting in groups

It was illegal for Status Indians to hire lawyers or seek legal advice, fundraise for land claims, or meet in groups. Many had to stop organizing, but others continued to do so secretly to fight for their rights.

1951

Political organizing and cultural activities legalized

It was no longer illegal for Indigenous Peoples to organize politically to fight for their rights. And performing cultural activities was no longer illegal.

1985

First Nations people no longer forced to give up their “status”

It was no longer possible for the government to force people to give up their “Indian status” and lose their Indigenous rights. In the past, First Nations people could lose their Indian status through marriage, for example. And before 1960, a person had to give up his or her Indian status in order to vote federally.

APPENDIX C: MYTH OR FACT?

Indigenous Peoples never had a written language. That's a myth! European and Asian writing systems are one way of transmitting information in visual symbols, but there are others. Indigenous Peoples have used symbols and a variety of markings to communicate and tell a story. Totem poles, petroglyphs, and pictographs are examples of visual language.

Indigenous Peoples do not pay any taxes. That's a myth! All Indigenous Peoples are required to pay taxes like all other Canadians. This includes all income, federal, provincial, and municipal taxes, as well as taxes for goods and services bought off reserve. The only exceptions are for people recognized by the federal government as "Status Indians." They do not have to pay income tax if they earn 60 per cent of their income on a reserve, or provincial/federal sales tax if they purchase goods or services on reserve or have them delivered to the reserve.

Everything that happened to Indigenous Peoples "happened so long ago that they should just get over it." That's a myth! Indigenous Peoples are still dealing with the effects of colonization. Considering that Indigenous Peoples were almost eliminated by introduced diseases from settlers, those who were resilient and survived now experience ongoing impacts on their quality of life, identity, cultural expression, and traditional practice. For example, the Indian Act still controls many aspects of First Nations people's lives and limits the ability for First Nation communities to self-govern. Until 1951, it was illegal for First Nations people to gather in groups of more than three, leave a reserve without a pass, hire a lawyer, own property, or practise their culture. It has only been since 1982, with the amendment to the Constitution, that the legal status of First Nations women was no longer decided by who they married. The last residential school in B.C. closed in 1984, so even those who did not attend the schools still suffer from the ongoing legacy of pain, loss, and racism.

Indigenous Peoples are all the same. That's a myth! Indigenous Peoples and communities across Canada are very diverse in language, culture, and traditions. There are over 200 First Nation communities across B.C. They speak more than 36 distinct languages. In the 2016 Census, 270,000 people in B.C. self-identified as First Nation, Métis, or Inuit. This number does not include First Nations people on reserve, as many reserves were not included in the census. Depending on where you are in the province, cultural practices and traditions will differ from one another.

Indigenous cultures were very primitive. That's a myth! Indigenous Peoples have complex cultures and systems of governance, commerce, trade, and agriculture that thrived for thousands of years before settler contact. Even though numerous peace treaties were established in eastern and central Canada, the settler government would not recognize or validate these strong systems and approaches. For instance, B.C.'s Governor James Douglas negotiated agreements with First Nation communities on Vancouver Island, but subsequent governors nullified these agreements.

Indigenous Peoples get free university education and free housing. That's a myth! Some First Nations

people are eligible for post-secondary education funds, if they are a Status Indian and if their First Nation community has enough federally allocated money to fund all or part of their post-secondary education. Many Indigenous people receive no help from their communities or the government when pursuing post-secondary education. As for free housing, each First Nation negotiates with the federal government to access funding to build homes on reserve, and the First Nation then secures mortgages for the homes. Tenants make payments to the First Nation to repay the mortgage. If a tenant does get subsidized help with their housing, this is because they have a special low-income status. Even if a tenant pays off the mortgage, the house is not in their name and they cannot sell it.

Indigenous Peoples have more problems with addiction and crime than other people. That's a myth! As a population, Indigenous people are more likely to face addictions and are over-represented in the criminal justice system, but this is not because they are more criminally inclined or because their bodies are more susceptible to addictions (though this was thought to be the case by scientists and many people for decades). The reasons for the increased likelihood of addictions and over-representation in the criminal justice system are multiple and result from a combination of influences related to colonization. These include lack of recognition of their cultures, traditions, and languages; government policies; racism, discrimination, and stereotyping; breakdown in family structure; poverty; isolation; and residential schools, cycles of dysfunction, and intergenerational trauma. In large cities, there are more police officers in poor neighbourhoods. If Indigenous people are poorer than most Canadians (and statistically they are), then they are more likely to come into contact with police officers or the criminal justice system. In addition, once in the criminal system, Indigenous people face further discrimination as a result of lack of understanding and cultural differences that lead to institutional bias and racism. They are therefore more likely to be convicted and given longer sentences.

Indigenous youth were not affected by residential schools or colonization. That's a myth! Colonization has had a lasting effect on Indigenous communities, including breakdown of the family structure, poverty, depression, addictions, intergenerational trauma, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Indigenous youth must overcome many social and economic barriers in order to break this harmful cycle. Many Indigenous people continue to experience racism – sometimes direct and intentional and sometimes in the form of uninformed opinions, misunderstandings, and prejudice. This affects their ability to live healthy and productive lives.

Indigenous Peoples don't want to get along with the government and be a part of Canada. That's a myth! Indigenous Peoples are already part of Canada and want the federal government to recognize their autonomy and rights as distinct peoples, as stated in the Constitution. Indigenous Peoples have been unfairly treated in Canada – from having their lands and territories unlawfully taken to government decisions made on their behalf without consultation.

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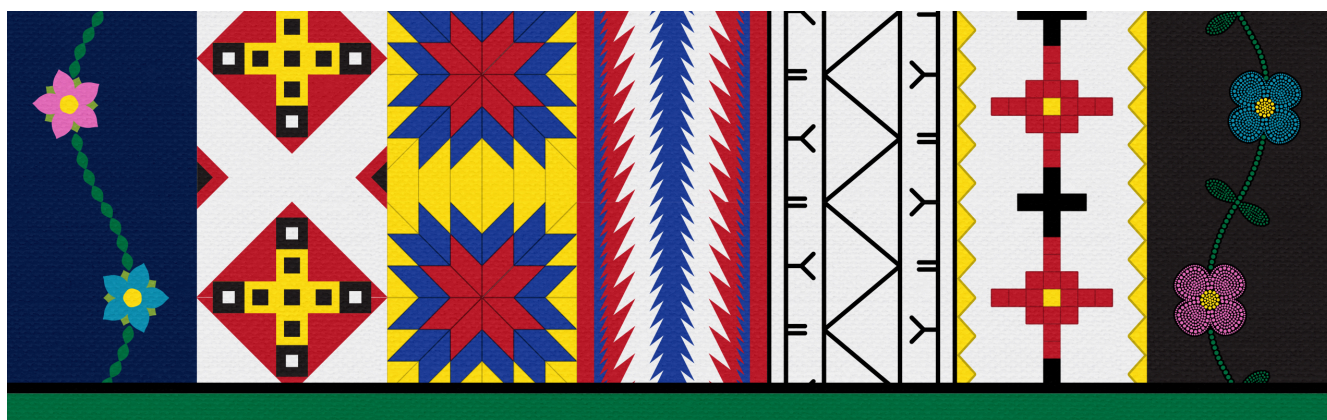
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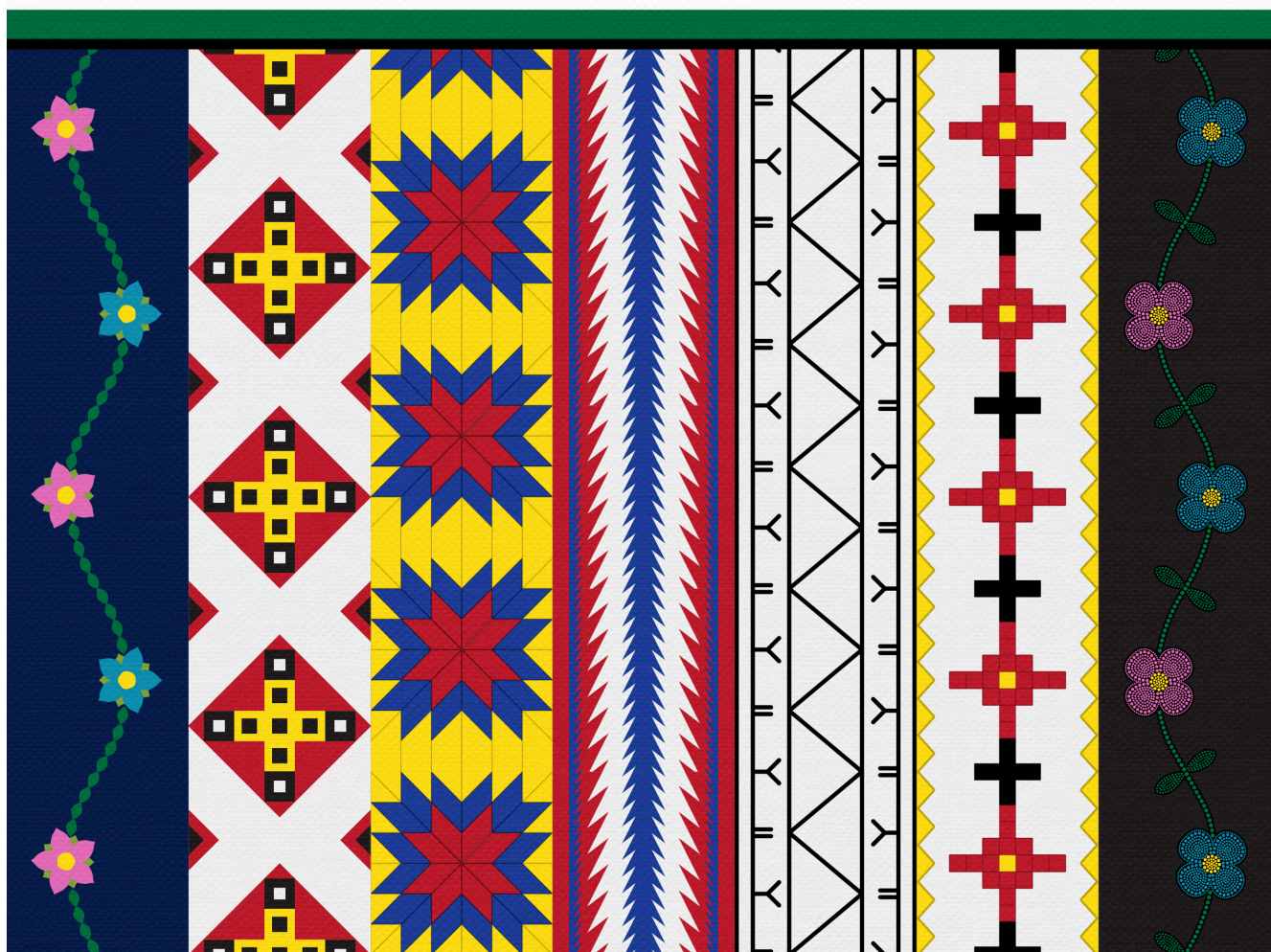


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