



INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF MANITOBA

a guide for newcomers

A RESOURCE GUIDE COMPILED BY ANIKA REYNAR AND ZOE MATTIES
FOR MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MANITOBA



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Readers may choose to read the whole booklet, or only the chapters that interest them. Each chapter has further resources, which are useful for seeking out more information. There is a glossary of terms at the end to define difficult or new terms. These terms will appear [like this](#) throughout the document.

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

This resource was made with care for people who are newcomers to Canada and may be learning English, but its content is relevant to all Manitobans. Those of us who are not Indigenous Manitobans are settlers here and are “newcomers” in a sense. We share a responsibility to learn from our Indigenous neighbours and build relationships of friendship and respect.

A NOTE FROM MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

We acknowledge the rich diversity of teachings and history within First Nations and even within individual Nations. We have tried to be as accurate as possible, but this resource is not as comprehensive as we would like it to be and does not include all of the distinctions that exist within First Nations. We are grateful for the Indigenous people who have had input into this resource and for their encouragement to publish it, and we hope that it will promote continued discussion and learning beyond what is written in its pages.

Further Resources:

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION
goo.gl/amMh2v

**ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
CHIEFS** manitobachiefs.com

**SOUTHERN ASSEMBLY OF
CHIEFS** scoinc.mb.ca

QUICK FACTS goo.gl/8zp4RF

**BUFFALO SHOUT, SALMON
CRY: CONVERSATIONS ON
CREATION, LAND JUSTICE,
AND LIFE TOGETHER**, ed. Steve
Heinrichs (Herald Press, 2013).

SEE MORE AT goo.gl/w1g83v

- DAKOTA
- OJIBWAY
- OJI-CREE
- DENE
- CREE



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INTRODUCTION

Canada is a country that values and is proud of its multi-cultural heritage. People from all over the world come to make their homes in Canada. An important aspect of Canada for newcomers to understand is the history and culture of Canada's **Indigenous** people: the first people to live in Canada. Newcomers may not always have access to accurate information about Indigenous people. Often newcomers are exposed to unhelpful stereotypes (oversimplified or wrong ideas) about Indigenous people.

This booklet introduces newcomers to the different groups of Indigenous people of Manitoba, the history of the relationship between Indigenous people and the Government of Canada, and some current initiatives that Indigenous people are involved in. Each section includes resources for newcomers to learn more about the Indigenous people of Manitoba.

SUMMARY

There are three groups of Indigenous people in Canada: First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Manitoba is located in the traditional territories of the Cree, Dakota, Dene, Ojibway, and Oji-Cree First Nations, as well as the Métis nation. Just over half of Indigenous people in Canada live in cities.¹

Winnipeg, the capital of Manitoba, has the largest Indigenous population of any city in Canada.² Winnipeg is located in **Treaty 1** territory. A treaty is a signed agreement between the government and Indigenous people. This is how we respectfully introduce where we live, and acknowledge that Indigenous people first inhabited this country. It is important to recognize what treaty territory you live in, or are a guest in, because all Canadians, not just Indigenous people, have rights and responsibilities that came about because of the treaties. For more information on treaties, see page 25.

Indigenous cultures across Canada are very diverse. For example, there are over 50 Indigenous languages spoken in Canada.³ This guide will describe some of the important details of the Indigenous cultures in Manitoba. Understanding the history of the relationship between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people helps us to better understand our own histories and where relationships are at today. This guide addresses some, but not all of the contemporary issues faced by Indigenous people today.

¹ “Fact Sheet-Urban Aboriginal Population in Canada.” Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100014298/1100100014302> (accessed August 11, 2014).

² News. “Winnipeg has most aboriginal people in Canada.” CBCnews. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-has-most-aboriginal-people-in-canada-1.768714> (accessed August 11, 2014).

³ “Aboriginal languages in Canada.” Aboriginal languages in Canada. http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/98-314-x/98-314-x2011003_3-eng.cfm (accessed August 11, 2014).

CREE

The name “Cree” was first written as “Kristineaux” by French European representatives. Later, the name was shortened to “Cri.” Finally the word became “Cree” in English.⁴ In the Cree language, the proper name for the people is Inninewak “*In in o wak.*”

Language

The Cree language is the most widely spoken **Indigenous** language within Canada. Many Cree words have been adopted into the English vocabulary. For example, Winnipeg is a Cree word meaning muddy water, in reference to the Red River.⁵

Location

The Cree were traditionally a nomadic people. Their territory extends from Quebec to Alberta.

Further Resources:

THE CANADIAN ENCYCLOPEDIA

goo.gl/TKlQ4g

A SIMPLE SUMMARY OF CREE

CULTURE goo.gl/6z7sWh

CREE CULTURAL INSTITUTE,

QUEBEC creeculture.ca

There are four groups of Cree that live in different territories and speak different dialects. The Plains Cree traditionally lived in Central Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. The Woods Cree lived in Northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The Swampy Cree lived in Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec. There are also the Rock Cree, who live in Manitoba. These groups are somewhat different because of where they live, but they are also very similar. The three groups share the same language and many of the same customs.⁶

In Manitoba today, there are 23 Cree communities, which are dispersed across Northern Manitoba.

Traditional Community Structure

In traditional Cree communities, there were three important groups: the family, the hunting group and the “macro band.” From August to June, the Cree organized themselves into hunting groups made up of 10-20 people. During the summer months, several hunting groups would come together and form “macro bands” of 75-150 people. These macro bands would fish together and hold many social events. Cree communities were based on communal principles of cooperation and respect for the land.⁷

⁴ Banting, Erinn. *Canadian Aboriginal Art and Culture: Cree*. Calgary: Weigl Educational Publishers Limited, 2008.

⁵ Steckley, John, and Bryan David Cummins. *Full Circle: Canada's First Nations*. Toronto: Prentice Hall, 2001.

⁶ Banting, Erinn. *Canadian Aboriginal Art and Culture: Cree*. Calgary: Weigl Educational Publishers Limited, 2008.

⁷ Steckley, John, and Bryan David Cummins. *Full Circle: Canada's First Nations*. Toronto: Prentice Hall, 2001.

The Cree relied on hunting, fishing and collecting wild plants for their survival. Men and women engaged in specific roles. Men hunted and fished. Women set up camp, prepared and preserved food, cared for children and made clothing. The women carefully preserved meat and berries by drying, salting or smoking it. This way, food could be used throughout the winter. During the winter, an important food was pemmican. Pemmican is a cake made out of dried meat, animal fat, berries and nuts.

Cree homes were different depending on the land. The Plains Cree lived in teepees. The Woodlands and Swampy Cree lived in wigwams made out of birch bark. The way the Cree travelled also depended on the land. The Cree were well known for birch bark canoes.

Spirituality

The Cree believe that everything is interconnected; dividing the world into living and non-living things has little meaning because everything is dependent on each other. Cree understand that everything, including land, water, plant-life, animals and humans must be respected. This respect is paid through various ceremonies, rituals, and songs. In hunting, for example, it is very important to the Cree to respect the animal. They do this by asking for the blessing of the animals being hunted.

Traditions

In Cree tradition, ceremonies and celebrations are very important. There are many celebrations throughout the year to mark important events. One of these ceremonies is the Walking Out ceremony. The Walking Out ceremony celebrates when a child first learns to walk.⁸ Music and dance are important parts of ceremonies. Cree songs use repeated notes and sounds. Drums, bells and whistles, often accompany these songs.⁹

In Cree communities, sharing stories is also very important. Cree can be written but Cree people mainly communicate orally. *Atayohkewina*, or sacred stories, are used to teach children lessons about life. Through the telling of stories, the Cree preserve community wisdom.

⁸ "The Walking Out Ceremony." Creeculture.ca. <http://www.creeculture.ca/content/walking-out-ceremony> (accessed July 3, 2014).

⁹ Banting, Erinn. *Canadian Aboriginal Art and Culture: Cree*. Calgary: Weigl Educational Publishers Limited, 2008.

DENESULINE

The Denesuline are one of the groups that make up the larger Dene Nation. The name “Dene” translates to “the people.”¹⁰

Language

The Denesuline people are a part of the Athapaskan language group. They speak a language called Denesuline.¹¹ Denesuline is spoken in many dialects, but less than 4000 people speak the language. The Government considers the Denesuline language to be endangered.¹²

Further Resources:

SASKATCHEWAN INDIAN CULTURAL CENTRE
goo.gl/x7fWJw

THE DENE NATION AND ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS NWT
goo.gl/Wzvcyu

Night Spirits: The Story of the Relocation of the Sayisi Dene, by Ila Bussidor and Ustun Bilgen-Reinart (University of Manitoba Press, 2000)

Denendeh: A Dene Celebration, with photographs by Rene Fumoleau (The Dene Nation, 1984)

Location

The Dene people are one of the largest **First Nations** groups living in the subarctic region. The Dene territory covers the western part of the Northwest Territories, and the Northern Sections of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.¹³ In Manitoba, there are currently only two Dene communities. These communities are Lac Brochet and Tadoule Lake. The Dene call their land *Denendeh*, which means “The Land of the People.”¹⁴

Traditional Community Structure

In Dene society, leadership was shared between all members of the community. Everyone agreed on a leader, who was usually an elder. This leader was given the respect of the community. The leader oversaw the community, but big decisions were made together by the community instead of by the leader. People took turns as leaders when they were best suited for a job. This meant that no one had too much control.¹⁵

In the community, the education of children was very important. Every part of life was seen as an opportunity to teach children valuable survival and relational skills. Children were taught to relate to everyone with respect. They learned that everything was to be shared. Most importantly, children were taught to show love for their people. Grandparents played an important part in this education. Grandparents told stories that passed down old values and traditions to the younger generation.¹⁶

¹⁰ “ABOUT US | DENE NATION.” ABOUT US | DENE NATION. http://www.denenation.com/about_us.html (accessed July 7, 2014).

¹¹ Steckley, John, and Bryan David Cummins. *Full Circle: Canada's First Nations*. Toronto: Prentice Hall, 2001.

¹² Koopmans, Carol. *Canadian Aboriginal Art and Culture: Denesuline*. Calgary: Weigl Educational Publishers Limited, 2008.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Fumoleau, René. *Denendeh: A Dene Celebration*. Yellowknife, Denendeh, N.W.T.: Dene Nation, 1984.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

In traditional Dene community, the extended family was the most important unit. The whole community cared for children. Children could easily be adopted between families.¹⁷

Like most First Nations communities, the Dene relied on hunting for survival. Hunting was done by the men. Caribou was the main source of food. Caribou was also important for shelter and clothing. Caribou hides were used to make teepees. Women were responsible for collecting roots and berries, fishing and food preparation, and making clothing.¹⁸

Spirituality

The Dene have a lot of respect for nature. They believe that everything has a spirit (Inkonze) that connects all things.¹⁹ The Dene believe that the land and spirituality are inseparable. They believe that the land is alive, and everything is sacred. They have very strict hunting rules and ritual protocol. These rules and rituals pay respect to the life of the animal.²⁰

In Dene spirituality, drum songs are very important. The Dene also believe in the power of traditional medicine. In each Dene community, there are three or four people who have medicine power or who have been given a drum song. Medicine men/women are the spiritual guides of the group. Medicine men/women communicate with the spirits. The spirits provide the Medicine men/women with guidance and direction. The Medicine men/women then tell the community stories as a way to communicate what the spirits have said. Medicine people instruct the community to do certain things in order to hold off evil and keep the spirits happy.²¹

The drum is another way for the community to connect with the Creator. The drum serves many purposes. Sacred drum songs are used for praying, healing and seeing into the future. There are also songs of thanksgiving. These songs are especially important during a Ti Dance. A Ti Dance is a celebration that happens every spring to thank the Creator for bringing the communities back together after a winter of hunting in separate groups.²²

¹⁷ "Profile of the Sayisi Dene Nation of Tadoule Lake in Northern Manitoba." *Tribal Law Journal* 5 (2005). awschool.unm.edu/tlj/tribal-law-journal/articles/volume_5/profile_of_the_sayisi_dene_nation_of_tadoule_lake_in_northern_manitoba/index.php (accessed July 7, 2014).

¹⁸ Koopmans, Carol. *Canadian Aboriginal Art and Culture: Denesuline*. Calgary: Weigl Educational Publishers Limited, 2008.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Fumoleau, René. *Denendeh: A Dene Celebration*. Yellowknife, Denendeh, N.W.T.: Dene Nation, 1984.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

Today

Today in Manitoba there are two communities of Dene people located in Lac Brochet (T'suline Dene) and Tadoule Lake (Sayisi Dene). The history of the Sayisi Dene is a story of hurt and struggle. In 1956 the Sayisi Dene were forced to move from the location of their traditional homes to the edges of the town of Churchill.²³ The Sayisi were forced to move because the Government believed that the traditional hunting practices of the Dene were depleting the Caribou population. Later the Government realized that the caribou population was healthy, and there was no need to relocate the Dene.²⁴

Before 1956, the Sayisi Dene lived by Duck Lake. After being relocated to Churchill, the Dene community spent over a decade living in shantytowns. In shantytowns, people lived in tents or poorly made houses. During this time it is estimated that nearly one third of the Dene community died because of violence, poverty and racism.²⁵ In 1973, the Dene leadership found enough strength to set up a new community at Tadoule Lake.

Today, the Sayisi Dene at Tadoule Lake continue to struggle to heal and to regain their cultural identity.²⁶ In 2010, the Government of Manitoba issued an apology for its involvement in the relocation. The Government stated that they intend to work alongside the Sayisi Dene to move towards reconciliation.²⁷

²³ "Profile of the Sayisi Dene Nation of Tadoule Lake in Northern Manitoba." Tribal Law Journal 5 (2005). awschool.unm.edu/tlj/tribal-law-journal/articles/volume_5/profile_of_the_sayisi_dene_nation_of_tadoule_lake_in_northern_manitoba/index.php (accessed July 7, 2014).

²⁴ "News Release - Manitoba." Province of Manitoba. <http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=9346> (accessed July 7, 2014).

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Petch, Virginia P. 1998. "Relocation and Loss of Homeland: The Story of the Sayisi Dene of Northern Manitoba". University of Manitoba. <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk2/ftp02/NQ32015.pdf> (accessed July 7, 2014).

²⁷ "News Release - Manitoba." Province of Manitoba. <http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=9346> (accessed July 7, 2014).



OJIBWAY

The Ojibway call themselves *Anishinaabeg*, meaning “first” or “original people.” Ojibway is a name that settlers used to call the *Anishinaabeg*, although many *Anishinaabeg* call themselves Ojibway. In the eighteenth century the French called the Ojibway “Saulteaux” or “people of the falls.”²⁸

Language

The Ojibway speak Anishinabe.

Location

The Ojibway homeland was very large.²⁹ It stretched from the northern plains to the southeastern shores of the great lakes. In Canada, it extended from central

²⁸ Lomberg, Michelle. *Canadian Aboriginal Art and Culture: Ojibwa*. Calgary, Alberta: Weigl Educational Publishers Limited, 2008.

²⁹ *They Came for the Children: Canada, Aboriginal Peoples and Residential Schools*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2012.

Saskatchewan through southern Manitoba to southern Ontario and southwestern Quebec. In Manitoba, the Ojibway have communities in the southern part of the province.

Traditional Community Structure

There are two main groups of Ojibway. The Plains Ojibway and the Woodland Ojibway. In the plains, the Ojibway traditionally depended on bison hunting. Plains Ojibway rode horses, and relied on bison for food and clothing.³⁰

In the woodlands, Ojibway survived by hunting, fishing and gathering. They traveled by birch bark canoe in warm weather and snowshoes in the winter.

The Ojibway people lived in structures called wigwams, shaped like a dome. They used wooden poles covered with rush mats and birch bark. Some also lived in bison hide teepees, which were easy to take down and move.³¹

In their communities, a group of families that were related to each other was called a clan. Clans were named after animals, for their unique abilities and skills. Groups of people who were related through marriage were called **bands**. **Chiefs** led bands of 300-400 people. In the summer, bands lived together in villages, and in the winter each family would hunt on its own.³² Most people were treated equally in the community. Everyone, including children had an important role to play. Certain people held respected positions, such as the chief and the Medicine Man/Woman. A Medicine Man/Woman was a person believed to have special spiritual and healing knowledge.³³

Spirituality

Ojibway groups believed in a creator called *Kitchi Manitou*, or Great Spirit.³⁴ They also believed in evil spirits that would bring illness or famine to the people. Ojibway people would participate in ceremonies and vision quests to find meaning and spiritual fulfillment in their lives.

The Ojibway also had an organization called the *Midewiwin* or Grand Medicine Society. Usually limited to men, membership was determined through rites of initiation, periods of instruction, songs, herbal remedies and Medicine bundles. The Med-

Further Resources:

**SASKATCHEWAN INDIAN
CULTURAL ROSEAU RIVER
FIRST NATION WEBSITE**
roseauriverfirstnation.ca

**INFORMATION ON OJIBWAY
CULTURE** goo.gl/0TbKK7

**THE OJIBWE PEOPLE'S
DICTIONARY** ojibwe.lib.umn.edu

THE OJIBWAY STORY
goo.gl/2JdASl

³⁰ Lomberg, Michelle. *Canadian Aboriginal Art and Culture: Ojibwa*. Calgary, Alberta: Weigl Educational Publishers Limited, 2008.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

icine bundles were made of different items such as feathers, skins, roots, or pipes and wrapped up in animal skins. Each item in the bundle had a different meaning, sacred myth and song attached to it. Most ceremonies focused on these medicine bundles.

The Ojibway have Seven Sacred Teachings that are important to their spirituality. These are: love, respect, courage, honesty, wisdom, humility and truth. These seven teachings guide the lives of Ojibway people and allow them to have full and healthy lives. Each of the seven teachings is represented by an animal, which reminds Ojibway people of their connection to the land.³⁵

Traditions

The Ojibway have many different traditions; the most well-known is the powwow celebration. The powwow is an important part in celebrating **Indigenous** culture. Hundreds of people gather to sing, drum, dance, eat and celebrate. Dance competitions are a popular reason to gather and celebrate culture.³⁶ Powwows are not limited to the Ojibway.

Life lessons, history, values and beliefs were passed down through the generations through storytelling. These stories explained how the world was created, why the Ojibway live in that part of the world, how to behave, how to live off the land, how to resolve disputes and so on. Most often the stories illustrated what was expected in relationships with each other, with the earth and the creatures in it.³⁷

The Ojibway regarded their land as a gift from the Great Spirit to their people, and it belonged to everyone in their tribe.³⁸

Today

Today many things have changed in Ojibway ways of life. In the 1800s, many settlers came to Canada and settled on traditional land. At that time, the government urged the Ojibway to stop practicing traditional ways of life. The Ojibway were forced to settle on **reserves**. Many left the reserves and settled in cities. Many Ojibway still practice traditional ways of life including powwows and traditional celebrations. Today many Ojibwa wear store-bought clothes, although buckskin jackets, beaded moccasins and mittens are also popular.³⁹

³⁵ "The Sharing Circle - Season 15." The Sharing Circle - Season 15. http://www.thesharingcircle.com/sacred_teachings.html (accessed August 8, 2014).

³⁶ "The Ojibwe Native Americans." - Traditions. <http://ojibwenativeamericans.weebly.com/traditions.html> (accessed August 11, 2014).

³⁷ "Ojibwa Culture." Native Art in Canada: An Ojibwa Elder's Art and Stories. <http://www.native-art-in-canada.com/ojibwaculture.html> (accessed July 20, 2014).

³⁸ "Countries and Their Cultures." Ojibwa. <http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Le-Pa/Ojibwa.html> (accessed August 9, 2014).

³⁹ Lomberg, Michelle. *Canadian Aboriginal Art and Culture: Ojibwa*. Calgary, Alberta: Weigl Educational Publishers Limited, 2008.

OJI-CREE

Further Resources:
wasagamackfirstnation.ca

The Oji-Cree Nation is a unique mix of both Ojibway and Cree culture, language and tradition. The Oji-Cree are a part of the broader Anishinaabeg group. They are located in the area between traditional Cree and Ojibwe lands.⁴⁰ In Manitoba, there are four Oji-Cree communities. These communities are located in the Island Lake region. Every Oji-Cree community has a different blend of Ojibway and Cree culture.

DAKOTA

Some say that Dakota means “friend” or “ally.”⁴¹ The Dakota are also called Sioux, which comes from the Ojibway word for snake because the Dakota were originally enemies of the Ojibway. The Dakota prefer to be called Dakota.⁴²

Language

The Dakota people speak the Dakota language, also called Siouan. The number of people who speak this language is in rapid decline in Canada. Twenty-five years ago, Dakota was still learned by many children on the **reserves** as their first language; now this is very rare. The largest number of speakers is found in Manitoba on the Dakota Valley Reserve.⁴³

Location

The Dakota people live in southern Manitoba. There are only five Dakota communities in Manitoba. The Dakota have permanently lived in Canada since the mid 1860s, but they migrated in and out of the area long before that. The Dakota inhabited areas from Lake of the Woods to what is now southeast Saskatchewan.⁴⁴ They settled in southern Manitoba and the North-West Territories (now Alberta and Saskatchewan).⁴⁵

Traditional Community Structure

Before contact with settlers in North America, the Dakota people lived by camping, hunting and traveling together. They lived in large buffalo hide tents, called teepees

⁴⁰ “Aboriginal Identity Declaration (AID).” Government of Canada. edu.gov.mb.ca/aed/aid_identifiers.pdf (accessed July 8, 2014).

⁴¹ “Dakota Indian Fact Sheet.” Facts for Kids: Dakota Indians (Dakotas, Dakota Sioux). http://www.bigorrin.org/dakota_kids.htm (accessed August 11, 2014).

⁴² “Dakota [archive].” Article Archives: Dakota. <http://www.bigorrin.org/archmn-dakota.htm> (accessed August 11, 2014).

⁴³ “Education, Language, and Communication.” Multicultural Canada. <http://www.multiculturalcanada.ca/Encyclopedia/A-Z/a11/7> (accessed August 11, 2014).

⁴⁴ “Dakota.” The Canadian Encyclopedia. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/dakota/> (accessed July 23, 2014).

⁴⁵ “History.” Multicultural Canada. <http://www.multiculturalcanada.ca/Encyclopedia/A-Z/a11/2> (accessed August 11, 2014).



that could be easily taken down and packed up to move. Dakota women were in charge of building and keeping the family home. The men were hunters and warriors, responsible for feeding and defending their families.⁴⁶ Traditionally, the Dakota were corn and squash farmers, as well as hunters.⁴⁷ Once they acquired horses, they mostly gave up farming and moved frequently to follow the seasonal migrations of buffalo herds. They ate buffalo, elk and deer. This meat was cooked in pits or pounded into **pemmican**. Both men and women took part in storytelling, artwork, music and traditional medicine.

When the Dakota arrived in Canada, they were close to starvation, and had lost most of their possessions in the move. They had to quickly adapt to the new location where they settled. Some Manitoba groups began gardening and raising animals along with the traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering of wild plants. **Bands** located near towns and villages added to their income by working in town or for other farmers

⁴⁶ "Dakota Indian Fact Sheet." Facts for Kids: Dakota Indians (Dakotas, Dakota Sioux). http://www.bigorrin.org/dakota_kids.htm (accessed August 11, 2014).

⁴⁷ "The Dakota People." Historic Fort Snelling. <http://www.historicfortsnelling.org/history/american-indians/dakota-people> (accessed August 11, 2014).

in the area. As agricultural techniques became more mechanized and costly, farming on the reserves began to decline since the Dakota did not have enough money to continue farming.⁴⁸

Spirituality

Traditional spiritual beliefs center on the term *wakan*. *Wakan* refers to spiritual force, power and sacredness. *Wakan* is found in nature and is more noticeable and concentrated in some places than in others.⁴⁹ The Dakota believe in a supreme being called *wakan-tanka*, the Creator. They also believe in other lesser spiritual beings who appear in the form of animals such as eagles, hawks and bison. Some of these beings are forces of good, and some are forces of evil.

The Dakota believe that everything in nature was placed there by the Creator and may be a source of *wakan*. This being so, all nature is treated with respect. Human beings are not meant to dominate nature. They may take what they can put to good use, but must ask permission and give thanks for what they use. This is how a person can show respect to nature and come to know the place where one lives.⁵⁰

Traditions

Generosity was, and is, the highest social quality among the Dakota. Families will often sponsor “giveaways” in honor of a person who has gone through a big life change. At a giveaway, relatives honor the individual by giving gifts in his or her name. Special care is given to older people, the poor and people who have traveled a long way. It is a chance for family to bond and spend time together. Traditionally, history and culture was passed on from generation to generation through the art of storytelling.⁵¹

Some well-known Dakota ceremonies include the **sweat lodge**, the **vision quest** and the powwow. A sweat lodge is a dome shaped hut with very hot steam in it, used as a way to purify before a ceremony.

Today

Today Dakota people only put up teepees for fun or for ceremonies. Most Dakota families live in modern houses and apartment buildings.

Further Resources:

**THE CANADIAN
ENCYCLOPEDIA** goo.gl/bKMbre

**SIOUX VALLEY FIRST NATION
WEBSITE** svdngovernance.com

**INFORMATION ON DAKOTA
CULTURE** goo.gl/E1eTMz

**HISTORY OF THE DAKOTA
PEOPLE** goo.gl/Ex5VZR

⁴⁸ “Economic Life.” Multicultural Canada. <http://www.multiculturalcanada.ca/Encyclopedia/A-Z/a11/3> (accessed August 2, 2014).

⁴⁹ “Dakota [archive].” Article Archives: Dakota. <http://www.bigorin.org/archmn-dakota.htm> (accessed August 2, 2014).

⁵⁰ “Religion.” Multicultural Canada. <http://www.multiculturalcanada.ca/Encyclopedia/A-Z/a11/6> (accessed August 2, 2014).

⁵¹ “Dakota [archive].” Article Archives: Dakota. <http://www.bigorin.org/archmn-dakota.htm> (accessed August 2, 2014).

INUIT

Inuit is the Inuktitut word for “the people.” An Inuit person is known as an Inuk. In the past, Inuit people were called Eskimos. In Canada today, it is no longer respectful to use the word Eskimo to refer to Inuit people.⁵²

Language

The Inuit people speak Inuktitut. In Canada, there are many different dialects of Inuktitut.⁵³

Location

The Inuit have lived in the Arctic for thousands of years. The majority of Inuit in Canada continue to live in small northern communities. The largest Inuit presence is in Nunavut, followed by Northern Quebec, the Northwest Territories and Yukon.⁵⁴ More and more, Inuit are moving to larger cities for health care, school, to reconnect with family or to find employment. In Winnipeg there is a growing Inuit population.⁵⁵

Traditional Community Structure

The Inuit people were traditionally a hunter and gatherer society. They relied on hunting, fishing and gathering nuts and berries. Hunting caribou, whales and seals was essential for their livelihood.⁵⁶ Today, it is very expensive for many types of food, such as vegetables and fruit, to be transported to the northern regions. As a result, the northern Inuit communities continue to rely on traditional methods of gathering food.⁵⁷

During the summer, the Inuit lived in tents made of animal skin. In the winter, the Inuit made homes out of stone, ice and snow.⁵⁸ Homes made out of snow are called igloos. Inuit communities were traditionally **nomadic**, so the homes had to be easy to build. Between camps, the Inuit used dog sleds and canoes or kayaks for transportation.⁵⁹

⁵² “Inuit.” The Canadian Encyclopedia. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/inuit/> (accessed July 15, 2014).

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ “Manitoba Urban Inuit Association.” About Us. <http://www.manitobainuit.ca/en/about/> (accessed July 15, 2014).

⁵⁶ “Arctic Voice - the inuit.” Arctic Voice - the inuit. <http://www.arcticvoice.org/inuit.html> (accessed July 15, 2014).

⁵⁷ “Inuit.” The Canadian Encyclopedia. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/inuit/> (accessed July 15, 2014).

⁵⁸ Banting, Erinn. *Canadian Aboriginal Art and Culture: Inuit*. Calgary: Weigl Educational Publishers Limited, 2008.

⁵⁹ “Arctic Voice - the inuit.” Arctic Voice - the inuit. <http://www.arcticvoice.org/inuit.html> (accessed July 15, 2014).

The structure of Inuit communities was based on cooperation.⁶⁰ There was no official leader within the groups. Smaller family groups would create alliances with other family groups. In the winter, groups joined into larger winter camps of around 100 people. In the summer, small hunting groups of around 12 were formed.⁶¹

Spirituality

The Inuit believe that all things have a spirit that must be respected. Stories are used within communities to teach others about how to respect all things in nature.⁶² Within the communities, there are leaders called *Angokoqs*. *Angokoqs* are believed to have the power to heal the sick and speak to spirits. People also relied on *Angokoqs* to control the weather or improve hunting.⁶³

Further Resources:

THE CANADIAN ENCYCLOPEDIA
goo.gl/OTExnL

MANITOBA URBAN INUIT ASSOCIATION
manitobainuit.ca/en

CANADA'S NATIONAL INUIT ORGANIZATION itk.ca

INUIT CULTURAL ONLINE RESOURCE
icor.ottawainuitchildrens.com

When the Europeans made contact with the Inuit, they brought Christianity with them. Today, many Inuit are Christians.⁶⁴

Traditions

The Inuit culture is very rich and diverse. The Inuit have many celebrations that circle around nature and the seasons. In the spring, the Inuit celebrate the return of the Sun. The Inuit use art forms such as drumming, throat singing and carving as a way to express their culture. Throat singing is especially unique to Inuit culture. Traditionally, throat singing was used to express the blessings and hardships of life. Songs were created between two people who worked together to combine their voices to make interesting sounds.⁶⁵

Inuit people also built stone structures called Inukshuks, which were used to mark good fishing sites, provided shelter from the wind, or marked a place where caribou were often seen.

Today

The Inuit do not fall under the same category as the **First Nations** People and have been treated differently by the Government as a result. They were never subject to the **Indian Act**, and were largely ignored by the Government. In 1939, the Government began a policy of **assimilation** of the Inuit people. As part of the assimilation movement, many Inuit communities were forcibly relocated.

⁶⁰ Banting, Erinn. *Canadian Aboriginal Art and Culture: Inuit*. Calgary: Weigl Educational Publishers Limited, 2008.

⁶¹ "Inuit." The Canadian Encyclopedia. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/inuit/> (accessed July 15, 2014).

⁶² Banting, Erinn. *Canadian Aboriginal Art and Culture: Inuit*. Calgary: Weigl Educational Publishers Limited, 2008.

⁶³ "Inuit Art Alive — Spirituality." Inuit Art Alive — Spirituality. http://www.inuitartalive.ca/index_e.php?p=119 (accessed July 27, 2014).

⁶⁴ Banting, Erinn. *Canadian Aboriginal Art and Culture: Inuit*. Calgary: Weigl Educational Publishers Limited, 2008.

⁶⁵ "Inuit Cultural Online Resource." Inuit Cultural Online Resource. <http://icor.ottawainuitchildrens.com> (accessed July 22, 2014).

During the 1970s, Inuit began to organize themselves politically and push for the right to self-governance. Eventually, the Government agreed to create the territory of Nunavut in 1990. Nunavut is now a self-governed territory of the Inuit. This means that the Inuit have their own government that controls things like education, police and health care.⁶⁶

Even with securing a self-government, many northern Inuit communities struggle with high living costs, over-crowding and lack of access to health care. Many Inuit people have migrated to cities such as Winnipeg. The majority of Inuit who live in Winnipeg have come from the Kivalliq region in Nunavut, just north of the Manitoba border.⁶⁷

MÉTIS

The word **Métis** comes from a French term meaning “mixed”. When European people came to Canada for the first time they had children with **Indigenous** people and their children became the first people to be called Métis.⁶⁸

Language

Métis people developed their own language called Michif, which is a mix of French and Indigenous languages such as Ojibway and Cree. Many Métis people spoke an indigenous language as well as French or English.⁶⁹

Location

There are Métis people all over Canada, but the most well-known Métis population are from the Red River region of what is now Winnipeg, Manitoba.⁷⁰

Traditional Community Structure

Métis people in Manitoba settled in the Red River region and along fur trade routes, where many Métis worked. They also hunted bison, farmed and transported goods. The Métis lived in log cabins, but travelled often, using teepees as housing. The Métis developed a culture that combined Indigenous and European cultures, yet were independent from them. The culture today is known for its fine beadwork, fiddling and jigging (a kind of dancing).⁷¹

⁶⁶ “Inuit.” The Canadian Encyclopedia. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/inuit/> (accessed July 15, 2014).

⁶⁷ “Manitoba Urban Inuit Association.” About Us. <http://www.manitobainuit.ca/en/about/> (accessed July 15, 2014).

⁶⁸ Howse, Jennifer. *Canadian Aboriginal Art and Culture: Métis*. Calgary, Alberta: Weigl Educational Publishers Limited, 2008.

⁶⁹ “Michif Language.” Manitoba Metis Federation Inc.. http://www.mmf.mb.ca/michif_language.php (accessed July 28, 2014).

⁷⁰ Howse, Jennifer. *Canadian Aboriginal Art and Culture: Métis*. Calgary, Alberta: Weigl Educational Publishers Limited, 2008.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

The infinity symbol on the Métis flag symbolizes the joining of two cultures and that culture will live forever. The Métis flag is the oldest patriotic flag indigenous to Manitoba.⁷²

Louis Riel was a famous leader of the Red River Métis in the late 1800s. He led two resistance movements against the Canadian Government for Métis people's rights to the land. In 1885 he was charged with betraying the Government of Canada and he was hanged.⁷³ He is known as the founder of Manitoba and his grave is located at the cathedral in St. Boniface in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Today Métis communities celebrate Louis Riel day in February to honour the work he did for the Métis people.

Spirituality

The Métis practiced the spiritual beliefs of their Indigenous family members. Many also practiced the Catholic religion of their French relatives or the Anglican, Protestant or Methodist religion of English relatives. Many Métis settlements had churches.⁷⁴

Today

The Métis community is still working towards their right to land in Manitoba. Recently the Supreme Court ruled that the Canadian Government did not follow through with its promise to give the Métis land after the Red River resistance. It is the hope that the Government and the Métis people will be able to find a resolution acceptable to both parties.⁷⁵

Further Resources:

LOUIS RIEL INSTITUTE
louisrielinstitute.com

LEARN MICHIF learnmichif.com

THE MÉTIS MUSEUM
metismuseum.ca

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ "Louis Riel." The Canadian Encyclopedia. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/louis-riel/> (accessed August 12, 2014).

⁷⁴ Howse, Jennifer. *Canadian Aboriginal Art and Culture: Métis*. Calgary, Alberta: Weigl Educational Publishers Limited, 2008.

⁷⁵ News, CBC. "Métis celebrate historic Supreme Court land ruling." CBCnews.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/m%C3%A9tis-celebrate-historic-supreme-court-land-ruling-1.1377827> (accessed August 12, 2014).



THE ROYAL PROCLAMATION 1763

The Royal Proclamation is an important document regarding the relationship between the Crown and the **Indigenous** people in Canada. When Canada became a country it was a colony of Great Britain. Canada was loyal to the King or Queen of Great Britain, who was called the Crown. The Crown was the government of Great Britain at the time. The Royal Proclamation defined how the French Colony (Quebec) would be governed under British Rule. Secondly, it laid out guidelines for the European settlement of Indigenous territory.⁷⁶

The proclamation recognized that Indigenous people had rights to the lands they occupied. It stated that Indigenous land could not be taken or bought unless an official signed agreement was made with the Crown. The proclamation also prevented settlers from buying land from Indigenous people. Settlers could only buy land if the Crown first bought it from the Indigenous people and then sold it.⁷⁷ The Royal Proclamation laid the foundation for the later creation of Treaties.⁷⁸

The proclamation included many good things, but it also led to conflict between the Crown and the Indigenous people. Land ownership is not a concept that is traditionally part of Indigenous culture. Indigenous people believe that they are the spiritual guardians, rather than the owners of the land. They believe that land cannot be sold or bought.⁷⁹ The land is understood to be a gift from the Creator. The idea of “surrendering” the land caused great confusion among the Indigenous communities and created the space for further injustice.⁸⁰

Many Indigenous people today continue to understand the Proclamation as a bill of rights. They argue that the Royal Proclamation is still valid because no law has overruled it. Indigenous people recognize the Royal Proclamation as the first step to Indigenous rights being recognized.⁸¹

Further Resources:

INDIGENOUS FOUNDATIONS

goo.gl/uLG5ZF

THE CANADIAN ENCYCLOPEDIA

goo.gl/djCpv7

Broken Covenant: Documentary,
by Steve Heinrichs (Mennonite
Church Canada, 2014)
goo.gl/TFW5Fa

⁷⁶ “Royal Proclamation, 1763.” Royal Proclamation, 1763.

<http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/royal-proclamation-1763.html> (accessed July 27, 2014).

⁷⁷ Steckley, John, and Bryan David Cummins. *Full circle: Canada's First Nations*. Toronto: Prentice Hall, 2001.

⁷⁸ “Royal Proclamation, 1763.” Royal Proclamation, 1763.

<http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/royal-proclamation-1763.html> (accessed July 27, 2014).

⁷⁹ “1763 - 1791: The Royal Proclamation, 1763, and the Québec Act, 1774.” *Canada in the Making*.

http://www.canadiana.ca/citm/themes/aboriginals/aboriginals3_e.html (accessed July 27, 2014).

TREATIES

“A treaty is a negotiated agreement that clearly spells out the rights, responsibilities and relationships of First Nations and the federal and provincial governments.”

TREATY RELATIONS COMMISSION OF MANITOBA⁸²

In Manitoba, five **treaties** cover the majority of the province’s territory. These treaties belong to what are called the Numbered Treaties. The Numbered Treaties were signed between 1871 and 1921. There are also several Treaty Adhesions that were entered into after 1921. Adhesions were entered into because some bands were not present at the original negotiations. **First Nations** who adhere to the treaties agree to the same terms of the original treaty. To First Nations, treaty adhesions are just as sacred as the original agreements.⁸³ Winnipeg is in Treaty 1 territory. Treaty 1 was negotiated in August 1871 at Lower Fort Garry.

The Government saw treaties as necessary in order to be able to expand westward, to establish settlements and to build the railway. At the time of the treaty negotiations, the First Nations people were struggling because of the introduction of disease into their communities. They were also struggling because of the declining fur trade. They understood treaties as a way of creating a secure life for future generations.⁸⁴

Under the Numbered Treaties, First Nations people gave up much of their land to the Government in exchange for **reserve** land, farm equipment and animals, annual payments, and ammunition. The treaties also included promises that schools and education would be provided within the reserves. With this exchange the Government then gained the right to settle people in the land given up by the First Nations.

The treaties contain many important promises. When the treaties were negotiated between the Europeans and the First Nations, there were different cultural

⁸⁰ *Broken Covenant? The Royal Proclamation of 1763 as Instrument for the Emancipation of Indigenous Peoples and the Liberation of Canada*. Winnipeg: Mennonite Church Canada, 2014.

⁸¹ “Royal Proclamation, 1763.” Royal Proclamation, 1763. <http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/royal-proclamation-1763.html> (accessed July 27, 2014).

⁸² “Treaties.” Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba. <http://www.trcm.ca/treaties/> (accessed July 29, 2014).

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ “Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba.” Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba. <http://www.trcm.ca/> (accessed July 29, 2014).

understandings. As a result, there was often miscommunication within the treaty negotiations that has caused frustration. The First Nations understood oral promises to be sacred. The Europeans only recognized written agreements as valid. In the treaty process, many of the oral promises were not written down. Both First Nations and European representatives signed the final copy, but it was written in English. At that time, English was a language that most First Nations leaders could not read. First Nation leaders often had no way of verifying what they were signing. They assumed that both the written and oral promises that had been made were equally important.⁸⁵

The treaty agreements still inform many of the ways the Government interacts with First Nations. Treaties are about relationships. They are agreements of honour and respect between First Nations and the Government.⁸⁶ There continues to be tension because many First Nations groups argue that the treaty promises are not being kept.⁸⁷

Treaties are important for all Canadians to understand because we are all treaty people. Alexander Morris, one of the first treaty commissioners stated in 1873 that treaties will last “as long as the sun shines, grass grows and river flows.”⁸⁸ Whether First Nations or Non-First Nations, we all have rights and responsibilities given to us by the treaties that are still relevant today.

Further Resources:

**MANITOBA KEEWATINOWI
OKIMAKANAK** mkonorth.com

**TREATY RELATIONS
COMMISSION** trcm.ca

**TREATY LAND ENTITLEMENT
COMMITTEE OF MANITOBA**
tlec.ca

⁸⁵ “1492 - 1779: From First Contact to the Peace and Friendship Treaties.” Canada in the Making. http://www.canadiana.ca/citm/themes/aboriginals/aboriginals2_e.html (accessed August 5, 2014).

⁸⁶ “Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba.” Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba. <http://www.trcm.ca/> (accessed July 29, 2014).

⁸⁷ “Treaty Land Entitlement Committee of Manitoba Inc.” Treaty Land Entitlement Committee of Manitoba Inc. <http://tlec.ca> (accessed August 5, 2014).

⁸⁸ “Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba.” Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba. <http://www.trcm.ca/> (accessed July 29, 2014).



THE INDIAN ACT OF 1876

The first Europeans who came to North America thought they had arrived in India, and called the people they found here, “Indians.”⁸⁹ Historically the Government used this word to describe a **First Nations** person who was governed by the **Indian Act**. Today, this term is disrespectful and should not be used. Non-First Nations people should not call First Nations people “Indians,” even though some First Nations people choose to use the word to describe themselves.

The Indian Act of 1876 is a piece of legislation that aimed to completely **assimilate** the **Indigenous** people.⁹⁰ The Indian Act was created after Treaties 1-5 had been negotiated. The treaties were a two-way agreement that gave First Nations the right to make their own decisions within their **reserve territory**.⁹¹ The Indian Act was created without talking to the First Nation People. According to the Indian Act, the reserve land belonged to the Crown, and would be controlled by the Government on behalf of the First Nation People.⁹²

⁸⁹ Lockhart, James. “The indigenous world and the word “Indian.” Encyclopedia Britannica Online. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/331694/history-of-Latin-America/60867/The-indigenous-world-and-the-word-Indian> (accessed August 6, 2014).

⁹⁰ Montpetit, Isabelle. “Background: The Indian Act.” CBCnews. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/background-the-indian-act-1.1056988> (accessed August 6, 2014).

⁹¹ “Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba.” Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba. <http://www.trcm.ca/> (accessed July 29, 2014).

⁹² “The Indian Act.” The Indian Act. <http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/the-indian-act.html> (accessed August 8, 2014).

Under the Indian Act, the rights of First Nations People were severely restricted. The governing powers of **band** councils (First Nation leadership) were regulated, and the government determined who would be eligible for band and **treaty** benefits. Significant cultural practices, such as the Sun Dance were outlawed. First Nations people were not allowed to vote or hire a lawyer, which prevented them from fighting for their rights in the court.

The Indian Act also discriminated against women.⁹³ Under Section 12 of the Indian Act, a **Status Indian** woman would lose all her rights if she married a non-Indian man. But, if an Indian man married a non-status woman, he would keep all his rights.⁹⁴ After World War II, people became more aware of human rights, and began to recognize how oppressive the Indian Act was. As a result, a few parts of the Indian Act were revised and First Nations Peoples were able to practice their customs and culture and allowed to hire lawyers.⁹⁵

Further Resources:

THE CANADIAN ENCYCLOPEDIA
goo.gl/u76WeF

INDIGENOUS FOUNDATIONS
goo.gl/aarRB7

In 1969, Prime Minister Trudeau proposed a “white paper” policy to put an end to the Indian Act, and the Department of Indian Affairs. Trudeau stated that this would make First Nation Peoples “equal” to all other Canadian citizens. The First Nations people protested this move, saying that **assimilation** was not the way to achieve equality. Instead the First Nations people pushed for continued legal recognition as Indigenous people, but with greater rights. In the end, the White Paper was abandoned, but this event marked a move towards establishing protected rights for First Nations.⁹⁶

In the 1970s there was a push for recognition of First Nations women’s rights. Finally, between 1982 and 1985 some of the laws were reworked so women who lost their Status rights could regain them. While not perfect, it was a step forward.⁹⁷

Today, The Indian Act continues to exist in Canada, but has been renamed The First Nations Governance Act.⁹⁸ There continue to be revisions to the Act, but parts of the Act are still discriminatory to First Nations people. The First Nations People continue to resist moves to abolish the act because it is the only thing that distinguishes First Nations from other Canadians. At the very least, it acknowledges that the Federal government has continued obligations to the First Nations People.⁹⁹

⁹³ Steckley, John, and Bryan David Cummins. *Full Circle: Canada's First Nations*. Toronto: Prentice Hall, 2001.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ “The Indian Act.” The Indian Act. <http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/the-indian-act.html> (accessed August 8, 2014).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ “Indian Act.” The Canadian Encyclopedia. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/indian-act/> (accessed August 10, 2014).

⁹⁸ “First Nations Governance.” KAIROS Canada. <http://www.kairoscanada.org/dignity-rights/indigenous-rights/indigenous-rights-archive-2/indigenous-rights-archive/> (accessed August 13, 2014).



RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

“In order to educate the children properly we must separate them from their families. Some people may say that this is hard but if we want to civilize them we must do that.”

HECTOR LANGEVIN
PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER, 1883¹⁰⁰

What were residential schools?

For over one hundred years, generations of **Indigenous** children were separated from their parents and raised in overcrowded, underfunded, and often unhealthy **residential schools** across Canada. There were at least 150 residential schools across Canada.¹⁰¹ They were funded by the Government and run by churches. More than 150,000 Indigenous children attended these schools.¹⁰² Many died in them and many more experienced abuse.

⁹⁹ “The Indian Act.” The Indian Act. <http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/the-indian-act.html> (accessed August 8, 2014).

¹⁰⁰ *They Came for the Children: Canada, Aboriginal Peoples and Residential Schools*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2012.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² News, CBC. “A history of residential schools in Canada.” CBCnews. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/a-history-of-residential-schools-in-canada-1.702280> (accessed August 13, 2014).

The Canadian government thought that Indigenous people needed to be **assimilated** into European-Canadian society. They thought that Indigenous people were not civilized and that their languages, cultures and beliefs had to be given up. The Government thought that the easiest way to do this would be to focus on separating the children from their villages, parents and any Indigenous influence.¹⁰³ The residential school system was created to do this.

The first official government residential schools were opened in 1883.¹⁰⁴ Indigenous children were brought or taken from their families to live at the schools for months or years without going home. In 1920 it became mandatory for Indigenous children to go to a residential school.¹⁰⁵ Parents who tried to keep their children at home could be fined or sent to prison. The last federally funded residential school was closed in 1996.¹⁰⁶

The majority of children who attended residential schools suffered abuse and neglect. Many children became disconnected from their homes, families, cultures, languages and beliefs. It was so terrible for some of the children that many died while attending the schools. Others died while trying to escape, and some even committed suicide.¹⁰⁷ This was not the only experience of children in residential schools. Some Indigenous people have come forward to say that they had positive experiences in a residential school.¹⁰⁸

What were the schools like?

Children who attended residential schools were not allowed speak their own languages, practice their own cultural beliefs or spend time with children of the opposite sex, including their brothers and sisters.¹⁰⁹

When the children arrived, their clothes and cultural belongings were taken away, their hair was cut, and they were required to wear uniforms. They were given new English names to reflect their new non-Indigenous identity.¹¹⁰ They would often go to school in the morning and work as agricultural workers or cleaning staff in the afternoons. They were also required to practice Christianity. Often they would be severely punished if they were caught doing something the staff at the school considered “uncivilized”. This was incredibly discouraging for many of the children.¹¹¹

¹⁰³ *They Came for the Children: Canada, Aboriginal Peoples and Residential Schools*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2012.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *First Peoples: A Guide for Newcomers*. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2014. <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/First-Peoples-A-Guide-for-Newcomers.pdf> (accessed July 24, 2014).

¹⁰⁶ News, CBC. “A history of residential schools in Canada.” CBCnews. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/a-history-of-residential-schools-in-canada-1.702280> (accessed August 13, 2014).

¹⁰⁷ *They Came for the Children: Canada, Aboriginal Peoples and Residential Schools*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2012.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

The children did not get enough to eat and did not have proper clothing for the cold winters and hot summers. Diseases often spread rapidly in the overcrowded schools.¹¹² Many children remember feeling scared, lonely, and hungry. They were told that their cultures were inferior, wrong and even sinful, and that they would never be as good as non-Indigenous people.¹¹³

“Fifty per cent of the children who passed through these schools did not live to benefit from the education which they had received therein.”

DUNCAN CAMPBELL SCOTT
DEPUTY MINISTER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS, 1913¹¹⁴

What are the effects of residential schools?

The residential school system had, and continues to have, serious consequences for Indigenous people. Many of the people who attended residential schools left with very little education and a belief that it is shameful to be an Indigenous person.

When children left the schools, many were unable to speak their mother languages anymore, so they were unable to communicate with their relatives, especially their grandparents, back home. In Indigenous communities knowledge is passed on orally and being unable to communicate with their grandparents meant they were unable to learn about their own culture anymore.¹¹⁵

Many also found it hard to fit into European-Canadian society. They had a low level of education, and many faced racism and discrimination when they tried to find work. Many people felt as if they did not belong anywhere.¹¹⁶ As the impacts of residential schools began to cascade through the generations, family and individual dysfunction grew, until eventually, the legacy of the schools became joblessness, poverty, family violence, drug and alcohol abuse, family breakdown, sexual abuse, prostitution, homelessness, high rates of imprisonment, and early death. It was very clear that residential school system was a failure.¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁹ *First Peoples: A Guide for Newcomers*. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2014. <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/First-Peoples-A-Guide-for-Newcomers.pdf> (accessed July 24, 2014).

¹¹⁰ *They Came for the Children: Canada, Aboriginal Peoples and Residential Schools*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2012.

¹¹¹ *First Peoples: A Guide for Newcomers*. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2014. <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/First-Peoples-A-Guide-for-Newcomers.pdf> (accessed July 24, 2014).

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *They Came for the Children: Canada, Aboriginal Peoples and Residential Schools*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2012.

What is being done to repair the damages done by residential schools?

Many Indigenous families and communities have organized formally and informally to heal the legacy left by residential schools. In 1994 the [Indian Residential School Survivors Society](#) was formed. Its projects include crisis counseling, court support, workshops, conferences, information and media announcements.¹¹⁸

In the 1960s churches began to apologize for their involvement and attempts to impose European culture and values on Indigenous people.¹¹⁹ There have been many lawsuits and legal claims against the Government and churches that ran the schools. In 2007, one the largest class action lawsuits in Canada was settled. A class action lawsuit is when a group of people gather together to bring a person, or group of people to court. This lawsuit resulted in the Residential School Settlement and payment of \$1.9 billion to survivors of residential schools. It also required an official government apology and the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.¹²⁰ In 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued an apology on behalf of all Canadians, in which he recognized that the purpose of residential schools was to remove Indigenous children from their homes and cultures in order to [assimilate](#) them better into the dominant culture. These objectives were based on the idea that Indigenous beliefs and culture were inferior.¹²¹

Further Resources:

OFFICIAL COURT WEBSITE
goo.gl/A52cLN

INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVOR SOCIETY irsss.ca/irsss

THEY CAME FOR THE CHILDREN goo.gl/k0aqCB

WE WERE CHILDREN FILM BY TIM WOLOCHATIUK
goo.gl/Mq0mzq

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

What is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission?

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is a national project with the goal of documenting and telling the stories of the experiences of anyone affected by residential schools. It documents the experiences of survivors, families, communities, government officials, staff and churches. The goal is to educate all Canadians about what happened in residential schools and work towards reconciliation.¹²²

What does reconciliation mean?

Reconciliation implies relationship. The residential schools badly damaged relation-

¹¹⁵ *First Peoples: A Guide for Newcomers*. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2014. <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/First-Peoples-A-Guide-for-Newcomers.pdf> (accessed July 24, 2014).

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *They Came for the Children: Canada, Aboriginal Peoples and Residential Schools*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2012.

¹¹⁸ "Who We Are." Indian Residential School Survivor Society. <http://irsss.ca/irsss/> (accessed August 13, 2014).

¹¹⁹ *They Came for the Children: Canada, Aboriginal Peoples and Residential Schools*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2012.



Further Resources:

**TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION
COMMISSION WEBSITE**
goo.gl/9bVUGg

ships within **Indigenous** families and communities, between Indigenous peoples and churches, between Indigenous peoples and the Government and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. These relationships can and must be repaired. The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement is a positive step in this process since it formally recognized the need to come to terms with the past. Reconciliation will require the commitment of individuals, churches and the Government. The Government in particular needs to recognize the unique legal **status** of Indigenous peoples as the original peoples of this country.¹²³ Reconciliation is an ongoing process that will take years of effort. Telling and learning about our history will give us a much better starting point in building a better future. By ending the silence that Indigenous people have suffered under for many decades, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission opens 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.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ "Statement of Apology." Government of Canada; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada; Communications Branch. <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1100100015649> (accessed August 13, 2014).

¹²² "Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)." Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). <http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=10> (accessed August 13, 2014).

¹²³ *They Came for the Children: Canada, Aboriginal Peoples and Residential Schools*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2012.

Some projects of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission:

- Creating a national Indian Residential School research centre. This centre is hosted in Winnipeg at the University of Manitoba.
- It has held seven national events in different cities to gather testimony and educate people.
- Supporting local community healing and commemoration events. Commemoration helps people remember an important person or event in the past.
- Creating commemoration projects.
- Gathering suggestions about reconciliation, healing, and commemoration.¹²⁴

Further Resources:

SIoux VALLEY DAKOTA NATION
svdngovernance.com

INDIGENOUS RIGHTS CENTRE
indigenousrights.ca/home

**FACT SHEET: ABORIGINAL
SELF-GOVERNMENT**
goo.gl/uxUg3Y

CURRENT ISSUES

The push for self-determination and self-governance

WHAT IS SELF-DETERMINATION?

Self-determination is “The right of a people or nation to govern themselves and to choose the type of government they want. It is the right of a people to determine their own political, economic and cultural futures independent of external interference.”¹²⁵

Under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of **Indigenous** Peoples, all Indigenous people have the right to self-determination. They have a right to choose their own government and make decisions for their own community.¹²⁶ The Indigenous people understand self-government as a way to reach self-determination. The Indigenous people in Canada had self-government for thousands of years before European contact. When the **Indian Act** was put into place, self-government was made illegal. Instead, the Government created **Bands** and Councils.¹²⁷ Now, the Indigenous people are fighting to regain their right to self-government. With a self-government, the Indigenous people would be able to make their own decisions about: language and culture, education, police, health care, housing, property rights, and adoption/child welfare.¹²⁸

While self-governments control most of their own affairs, they are not treated as separate countries.¹²⁹ They are still held to most Provincial and Federal laws. Currently,

¹²⁴ *First Peoples: A Guide for Newcomers*. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2014.
<http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/First-Peoples-A-Guide-for-Newcomers.pdf> (accessed July 24, 2014).

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Geneva: United Nations, 2008.
http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf (accessed July 24, 2014).

¹²⁷ *First Peoples: A Guide for Newcomers*. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2014.
<http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/First-Peoples-A-Guide-for-Newcomers.pdf> (accessed July 24, 2014).

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, located in Southwestern Manitoba, is the only self-governing nation in Manitoba.¹³⁰

Idle No More

Idle No More was started in October, 2012 by four women in Saskatchewan who were concerned that the introduction of Bill C-45 would take away Indigenous rights. Bill C-45 is a federal government bill that was being discussed in parliament at the time. It was finalized in December 2012. Bill C-45 allows the Government to buy **reserve** lands from the Indigenous people for resource extraction.¹³¹ The Government has promised to share the profits of these resources with the Indigenous people. Because of broken promises in the past, the Indigenous communities are protesting through Idle No More, and demanding **First Nation** Sovereignty.¹³² First Nation Sovereignty means that First Nation people have the right to self-determination.



Further Resources:

idlenomore.ca

Idle No More has grown to be one of the largest Indigenous mass movement in Canadian history.¹³³ There are peaceful protests that are held across Canada and in the United States. These protests attempt to resist the ways that the effects of colonialism are still felt by the Indigenous people. Through Idle No More, the Indigenous people seek to protect their traditional land and their sovereignty. Idle No More calls everyone in Canada to recognize the promises that were made in the Treaties. Idle No More is committed to work together to find ways to live respectfully with one another.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ "Governance." Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. <http://www.svdngovernance.com> (accessed July 20, 2014).

¹³¹ News, CBC. "9 questions about Idle No More." CBCNews. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/9-questions-about-idle-no-more-1.1301843> (accessed August 6, 2014).

¹³² "Idle No More." Idle No More. <http://www.idlenomore.ca> (accessed August 5, 2014).

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

FURTHER LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

CANADIAN MUSEUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

85 Israel Asper Way, Winnipeg

humanrights.ca

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) is dedicated to the evolution, celebration and future of human rights.

CIRCLE OF LIFE THUNDERBIRD HOUSE

715 Main Street, Winnipeg

thunderbirdhouse.com

An Indigenous cultural center that facilitates various ceremonies, activities, and learning opportunities.

MANITOBA ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDSHIP CENTRES

(various locations around Manitoba)

In Winnipeg: Indian and Metis Friendship Centre of Winnipeg

45 Robinson Street

mac.mb.ca

An association providing support to Indigenous people in the city.

THE MANITOBA MUSEUM

190 Ruperts Avenue

manitobamuseum.ca

Provides an interactive way to learn about the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

WINNIPEG ART GALLERY

300 Memorial Boulevard

wag.ca

A permanent collection of Inuit art, along with occasional temporary exhibitions featuring various Indigenous artists.

NEECHI COMMONS

325 Dufferin Ave

neechi.ca

An Indigenous owned worker co-operative featuring a grocery store, restaurant, and Indigenous arts store.

SANDY-SAULTEAUX SPIRITUAL CENTRE

Box 210, Beausejour, MB

sandysaulteaux.ca

A centre providing cross-cultural and spiritual awareness for the larger community.

THE FORKS

123 Main Street

theforks.com

The Forks has been a meeting place for over 6000 years. Initially First Nations traded at the Forks, followed by many others after colonization. Landmarks to visit at the Forks include the Odena Celebration Circle, The Peace Meeting Site and The Wall Through Time.

LOWER FORT GARRY NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA

5925 Highway 9

St. Andrews, Manitoba

goo.gl/UCrgFI

Lower Fort Garry is the site where Treaty 1 was signed.

ANNUAL EVENTS

ABORIGINAL DAY LIVE

Date(s): June 21

339 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg

A day long public event showcasing Aboriginal talent and culture.

ABORIGINAL MUSIC WEEK

Date(s): Mid August

Various locations around Winnipeg

aboriginalmusicweek.ca

A music festival featuring Native, Metis, Inuit and Indigenous artists.

MANITO AHBEE FESTIVAL

Date(s): Held over a week in September

Various events and locations

manitoahbee.ca

A gathering that celebrates Indigenous culture and heritage through music, art, performance and ceremony.

WINNIPEG ABORIGINAL FILM FESTIVAL

Date(s): November

waff.ca

The 3rd largest festival in North America dedicated to showcasing the best new indigenous film and video from across Canada, the US and around the world.

GLOSSARY

ABORIGINAL People who have inhabited or existed in a land from the earliest times or from before the arrival of colonists.¹³⁵ This is a term used by the Government of Canada to describe the three distinct Indigenous groups in Canada: First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Many Indigenous people do not like this term and prefer the term Indigenous.

ASSIMILATE (V.), ASSIMILATION (N.) If people are assimilated they become part of another group by adopting their culture, often losing their own.¹³⁶

BAND OR INDIAN BAND A group of First Nations whose membership is defined by the Canadian Government. This is a legal term defined by the Indian Act.¹³⁷

CHIEF The leader of a group of people such as a First Nation or a Band. A chief may be elected or a hereditary or recognized leader in a traditional community.¹³⁸

COLONIZE (V.), COLONIZATION (N.) When a group of people is oppressed and encroached upon by a more powerful group of people usually for the purpose of exploiting the less powerful group's resources.

FIRST NATION A group of Indigenous people in Canada who are united by location, language and culture. There are over 614 First Nations across Canada and they have many different languages and cultures. First Nations are Indigenous people who do not identify as Inuit or Métis. First Nation can refer to a band, a reserve or a larger group of status Indigenous.¹³⁹ A First Nation is a “self-determined political unit of the **Aboriginal** community that has the power to negotiate, on a government-to-government basis, with the province and Canada.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ Abate, Frank R., and Elizabeth Jewell. *The New Oxford American Dictionary*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

¹³⁶ “assimilate” - Definition from Longman English Dictionary Online. <http://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/assimilate> (accessed August 13, 2014).

¹³⁷ “Terminology.” *Indigenous Foundations*. UBC: First Nations Studies Department. 2009. <http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/?id=7400> (accessed August 13, 2014).

¹³⁸ *First Peoples: A Guide for Newcomers*. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2014.

<http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/First-Peoples-A-Guide-for-Newcomers.pdf> (accessed July 24, 2014).

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

INDIAN The first Europeans who came to North America thought they had arrived in India, and called the people they found here “Indians”. Historically the government used this word to describe a First Nations person who was governed by the Indian Act. Today, this term is disrespectful and should not be used. Non-First Nations people should not call First Nations people “Indians,” even though some First Nations people choose to use the word to describe themselves.

INDIAN ACT Federal legislation that governs First Nations people with “Indian status” and their lives.¹⁴¹ It is now called the First Nations Governance Act.

Indian Residential School: A school for Indigenous children that was funded by the government and run by Churches. For over 100 years Indigenous families were forced to send their children to these schools where they suffered horrible conditions and abuses. The last school closed in 1996.¹⁴²

INDIGENOUS This term describes people all over the world who were the first peoples in a land. Many people prefer Indigenous over **Aboriginal**.

INUIT Indigenous people who have lived in the Arctic land and waters in what is now Canada for centuries.¹⁴³

MÉTIS Indigenous people who are of mixed Indigenous and European background.

NOMADIC When a group of people move from one area to another instead of living in one place. These people often move according to the seasons in search of food and water.

PEMMICAN Traditionally, pemmican is dried Bison meat pounded into powder and mixed with fat. It is dense, high in protein and is an excellent energy food source for travelers.

¹⁴⁰ "Key Definitions." Union of BC Indian Chiefs. <http://ubcic.bc.ca/Resources/ourhomesare/teachers/files/Key%20Terms.pdf> (accessed August 8, 2014).

¹⁴¹ Gray, Lynda. *First Nations 101*. Vancouver, B.C.: Adaawx Publishing, 2011. 51.

¹⁴² *First Peoples: A Guide for Newcomers*. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2014. <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/First-Peoples-A-Guide-for-Newcomers.pdf> (accessed July 24, 2014).

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

RESERVE A section of land that has been set apart by the government for the use of First Nations groups.

SELF-DETERMINATION The right of people to govern themselves and choose the type of government they want.¹⁴⁴

STATUS An Indigenous person who is officially recognized by the government and registered under the Indian Act. They have particular rights such as, to live on reserve, health care, treaty benefits, and inheriting property, among others.¹⁴⁵

SWEAT LODGE The sweat lodge is a spiritual place (hut), typically dome shaped and made of natural materials. It is used by Indigenous people for ceremonial steam baths and as a place of prayer to the Creator for specific needs.

TREATY A formal written agreement made by the government and the leaders of First Nations groups that names the rights and responsibilities of the people that signed it.¹⁴⁶

Vision quest: A rite of passage undertaken by Indigenous boys at the time of puberty. Through fasting and prayer, the participant hopes to find spiritual guidance and a deep understanding of his life purpose.

FOR MORE VOCABULARY CHECK OUT goo.gl/mZDx1O

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT INDIGENOUS PEOPLE VISIT mythperceptions.ca/resources.html

¹⁴⁴ "self-determination." - Definition from Longman English Dictionary Online. <http://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/self-determination> (accessed August 13, 2014).

¹⁴⁵ "Indian Status." Indigenous Foundations.

<http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/the-indian-act/indian-status.html> (accessed August 13, 2014).

¹⁴⁶ "treaty" - Definition from Longman English Dictionary Online. <http://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/treaty> (accessed August 13, 2014).



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Written and compiled by Zoe Matties and Anika Reynar.

Photos on pages 13, 17, 18, and 35 by Doug Thomas.

Thank you to Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba for allowing us the opportunity to research and write this guide. What we learned through this project has become invaluable to us.

A special thanks to Vincent Solomon for offering perspective and feedback, as well as to Steve Plenert and Brian Dyck for editing and offering suggestions and to all others who offered feedback and suggestions. Thank you to Sandra Schonwetter for doing the final edits and offering the perspective of an educator.

Inspiration for this project was provided by the city of Vancouver's publication *First Peoples: A Guide for Newcomers*.



**Mennonite
Central
Committee**