



Stepping Stones



A TIMELINE OF ALBERTA'S INDIGENOUS HISTORY

Planning your learning journey

What are the key historical events that have affected the past and current First Nations, Métis and Inuit populations living in Alberta?



The Alberta Teachers' Association uses the term **Indigenous** to mean the original people of the land and their descendants and is used in the Alberta context to refer to First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

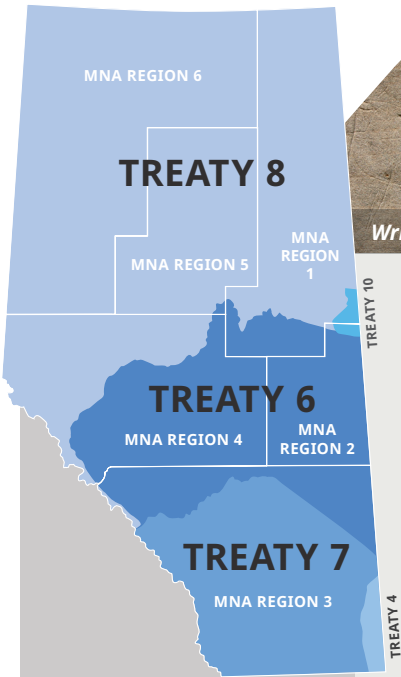
FIRST STEPS



Indigenous people have inhabited the land now known as Alberta for many generations. When Europeans arrived, first peoples were impacted positively and negatively by the political, economic and social actions of the governments of the time. In some cases, the actions of individuals also had a significant impact. These historical events have affected generations of people and will continue to affect future generations.

The events that occurred after Europeans arrived on Turtle Island have been documented in various forms and are therefore more readily accessible than the precontact history of Indigenous people. This timeline is not a complete summary of Indigenous history in Alberta, so teachers are encouraged to refer to the resources listed throughout this resource and to engage with Indigenous people in their communities for more information about specific events.





Writing-On-Stone Indigenous Carvings



Buffalo Hunt ^A



PRECONFEDERATION

According to oral history, Indigenous peoples have inhabited Turtle Island for many generations. Turtle Island is the name used by some Indigenous groups for what is presently called North America.

Treaty Areas and Métis Nations of Alberta Map

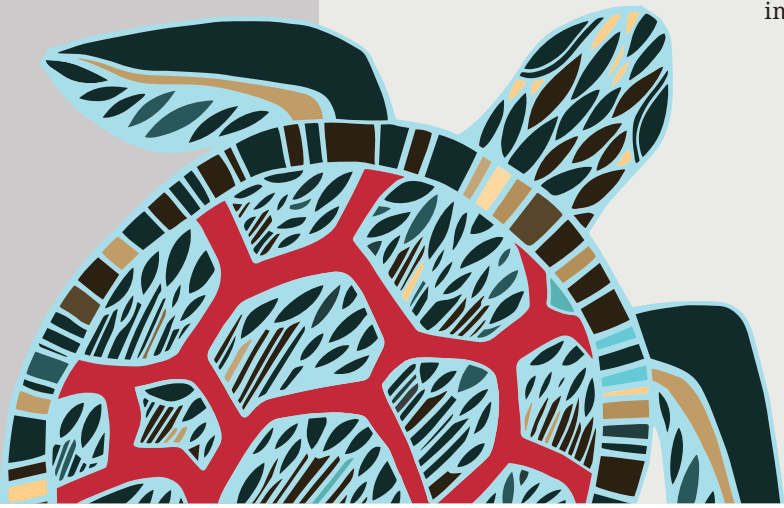
Information specific to each of the **TREATY** areas, **MÉTIS** and **INUIT** is highlighted throughout.


MNA Regional Zones Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) Association

TREATY 7 Archeological evidence at Vermillion Lakes indicates there was human activity in the Bow Valley area dating to 10300 BC. Ancestors of the Blackfeet are nomadic, moving across the land with the seasons following the animals they hunt and the plants they harvest. Communal bison jumps, such as Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump west of Fort McLeod, yield huge supplies of meat. Southern Alberta is partly occupied by Siouan-speaking people, who first brought horses into Alberta and constructed a fort on the Bow River, east of present-day Calgary.

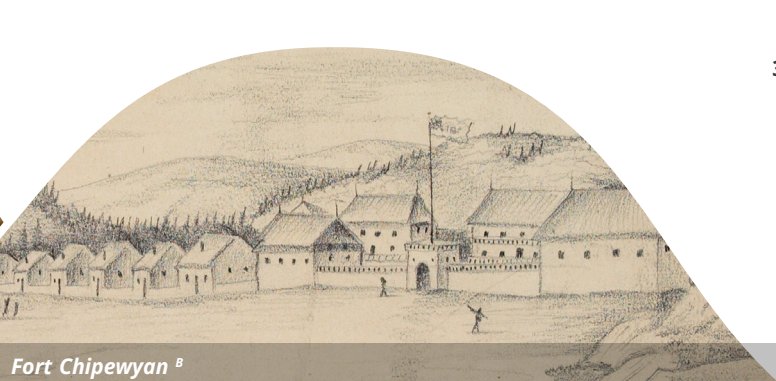
TREATY 8 Northern Alberta is partly occupied by the Dene in the subarctic and Woodland Cree in the boreal forest. These subarctic peoples are nomadic and move throughout the north following the animals they hunt and the plants they harvest.

TREATY 6 Central Alberta is a diverse landscape of rivers, lakes and forests that are rich in fish moose, elk, deer and beaver. Rivers like the Athabasca, North Saskatchewan and the Pembina are important waterways. Many different groups live in these areas including the Cree, Nakota Sioux, Blackfoot, Tsuu T’ina, Dene and Saulteaux. Key gathering places include Elk Island, Amiskwaciy or “Beaver Hill,” and Maskwacis or “Bear Hills.” People gather here for many reasons: ceremony, trade, meetings, hunting, celebrations and rest. Lakes throughout the area are important camp locations. Stories and knowledge are shared, crafts and goods are traded, and marriages between nations are formed.





Doctrine of Discovery



*Fort Chipewyan*⁵

1452

The Doctrine of Discovery is put into law by European monarchies after the Crusades in order to legitimize the colonization of non-Christian lands outside of Europe. In the papal letter *Romanus Pontifex*, Pope Nicholas V directs King Alfonso V of Portugal to “capture, vanquish, and subdue the savages, pagans and other enemies of Christ,” to “put them into perpetual slavery,” and “to take all their possessions and property.” Thus, when Columbus sails west across the Sea of Darkness in 1492, it is with the express understanding that he is authorized to “take possession” of any lands he “discovers” that are “not under the dominion of any Christian rulers.”¹

1534

Jacques Cartier lands on the Quebec coast, the traditional territory of the Innu people.

MÉTIS With the arrival of the Europeans, children of mixed blood are born to French and English fathers and First Nations mothers. Later “Métis” becomes the accepted term for children born to First Nations women and European men.

1537

Papal bull: *Sublimus Dei*, on the topic of enslavement and evangelization of Indians, is issued by Pope Paul III to all the Catholic bishops in all countries of the world. In this papal bull, Pope Paul III states that

*“Indians and all other people who may later be discovered by Christians, are by no means to be deprived of their liberty, their possessions or their property; nor should they in any way be enslaved.”*²

1600

Following traditional ways of reciprocal sharing of resources with those in need, Indigenous communities across Turtle Island assist the newcomers as they arrive. Indigenous people act as guides, translators and share knowledge of food sources and treating illnesses.³

1763

In the Royal Proclamation of England, 1763, King George III says that Indigenous nations own their lands. The King declares that the only legal way newcomers can gain control of those lands is by making treaties between the two nations.

The Royal Proclamation establishes the constitutional framework for the negotiation of treaties with the Indigenous inhabitants of the North American Territories.⁴

1780

European diseases came with the fur traders to Alberta. Initial epidemics were particularly deadly, and smallpox claimed thousands of lives. Some people believe that half the Indigenous people alive at the time died from the diseases.

1788

TREATY 8 The Northwest Trading Company establish a trading post at Fort Chipewyan in 1788, making it the first settlement in Alberta. More than 230 years later, Fort Chipewyan is still isolated by its natural surroundings and can only be accessed by plane or boat in the summer and by ice roads in the winter. Its residents continue to enjoy trapping and fishing activities on the land.⁵

1 Newcomb, Steve. 1992. “Five Hundred Years of Injustice: The Legacy of Fifteenth Century Religious Prejudice.” *Shaman’s Drum Journal*, Fall: 18–20. Also available at http://ili.nativeweb.org/sdrm_art.html.

2 Papal Encyclicals Online. 2017. “*Sublimus Dei*.” <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Paul03/p3subli.htm>.

3 University of Calgary. 2015. “Indigenous Agency Timeline Handout.” Calgary Anti-Racism Education. Also available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/cared/laindigenouagencytimeline>.

4 Hall, A J. 2006. “Royal Proclamation of 1763.” *The Canadian Encyclopedia* website. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/royal-proclamation-of-1763/>.

5 Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB). “Fort Chipewyan.” RMWB website. <http://www.rmwb.ca/living/Communities/Fort-Chipewyan.htm>.



Battle of Queenston Heights, 13 October 1812 ^c



Mistahi maskwa (Big Bear ca. 1825-88), Plains Cree chief, trading. ^d



Louis Riel ^e

1812

During the War of 1812, First Nations warriors and Métis fighters play important roles in the defense of the British territories against invading American forces. More than 10,000 First Nations warriors and Métis fighters fight beside British troops and Canadian settler militias in nearly every battle of the war.⁶

MÉTIS The Red River Colony is established at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers in Manitoba. After 1836 the colony is administered by the Hudson's Bay Company and populated by francophone and anglophone Métis people.

1818

TREATY 7 The London Convention of 1818 extends the border between the United States and British North America from Lake of the Woods, across the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. This border divides First Nations and Métis communities and cuts people off from each other.

1829

The Beothuk, the original people of Newfoundland, suffer from British attacks, starvation, illness and exposure. Shanawdithit, the last known member of the Beothuk people, dies of tuberculosis; thus, the Beothuk culture and language become extinct.

1849

TREATY 8 Oblate priests establish the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mission in Fort Chipewyan.

1857

The federal government enfranchisement policies are the most common legal process by which First Nations people lose their Indian status under the *Indian Act*. First Nations people lose legal Indian status if they earn a university education (eg, in medicine, education or law); serve in the Canadian Armed Forces; leave the reserve for a long period of time (eg, for employment); and, for Indian women, if they marry non-Indian men or if their Indian husband dies or abandons them.⁷

1866

TREATY 6 The sacred Manitou Stone, sometimes called “Old Man Buffalo,” is taken from a hilltop near Hardisty by George McDougall, a Methodist missionary. First Nations believe the meteorite is a protector of the buffalo and bringer of peace and prosperity, and if removed, the buffalo will disappear. In 1874 the Manitou Stone is given to a museum in Ontario, but is returned to the Royal Alberta Museum in 1972.⁸

CONFEDERATION

1867

The Dominion of Canada, consisting of four provinces, is formed under Confederation: Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

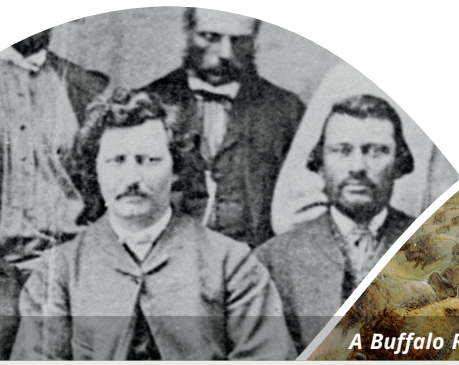
The *British North America (BNA) Act*, also known as the *Constitution Act*, puts “Indians and lands reserved for Indians” under the control of the federal government.

The Government of Canada buys a vast piece of Rupertsland from the Hudson's Bay Company. This territory consists of 3.9 million square miles, including land in present-day northern Quebec and Ontario, most of Manitoba, most of Saskatchewan, south and central Alberta, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories.

6 Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). 2016. “Indigenous Contributions to the War of 1812.” INAC website. <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1338906261900/1338906300039>.

7 MCardle, B. 2006. “Enfranchisement.” *The Canadian Encyclopedia* website. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/enfranchisement/>.

8 Kirman, P. E. 2013. “Consultation Process to Continue for Repatriation of the Manitou Stone.” *Alberta Sweetgrass*, volume 20, issue 6. Alberta Multi-Media Society website. <http://www.ammsa.com/publications/alberta-sweetgrass/consultation-process-continue-repatriation-manitou-stone>.

A Buffalo Hunt^fFathers of Confederation^g

1870

MÉTIS Led by Louis Riel, the Métis establish a provisional government and negotiate the entry of Manitoba into Canadian confederation under the *Manitoba Act* of 1870. The *Manitoba Act* states that Métis lands will be protected but that all other lands are the property of the Dominion of Canada.⁹

1874

TREATY 8 AND MÉTIS The Holy Angels school is founded at Fort Chipewyan, in what is now Alberta. The school moves to a new building in 1881, which is enlarged in 1898, 1904 and 1907. A new school opens in 1944, and in the 1950s a day school operates out of the residential school. Many of the students at the school are Métis. From the 1950s onward Holy Angels increasingly becomes a child-welfare institution. The school closes in 1974.

1876

All laws dealing with “Indians” are consolidated under the *Indian Act*, which gives greater control to the Department of Indian Affairs to intervene in a wide variety of issues and make sweeping policies. The *Indian Act* aims to eradicate First Nations’ culture in favour of

assimilation into Euro-Canadian society. The *Act* deprives First Nations people of the right to govern themselves, denies them Canadian citizenship and bars them from voting in federal and provincial elections. The *Act* restricts their ability to conduct commerce and to own land. The *Indian Act* also tries to stop First Nations people from fighting for their land by making it illegal to raise money for land rights claims in the courts until the 1950s. The *Indian Act* applies only to First Nations and not to the Métis or Inuit.¹⁰

TREATY 6 Treaty 6 is signed by representatives of the Crown and Cree, Saulteaux, Nakota, Dene, Assiniboine and Ojibwa leaders at Fort Carlton and Fort Pitt in Saskatchewan. The treaty boundaries extend across central portions of present-day Alberta and Saskatchewan. Treaty 6 is enacted at a time when many First Nations people are hungry due to overhunting of the buffalo and sick because of the smallpox epidemic. It is the only treaty that includes a medicine chest, which is interpreted as universal healthcare. It also includes the promise of education, which is something that generations to come would need. Some First Nations leaders are not present at

the treaty negotiations and sign an adhesion at a later date, thereby becoming a party to the treaty. Adhesions to Treaty 6 are signed at later dates and in different areas, including a signing at Fort Edmonton in 1877.

1877

TREATY 7 Treaty 7 is an agreement between Queen Victoria and several, mainly Blackfoot, First Nations bands in southern Alberta. Treaty 7 is signed at Blackfoot Crossing on the Siksika Nation.

1878

By 1878, the last remnants of the once great bison herds cross south into Montana. In 1830, some 40 million bison still roam the North American plains; however, accelerated overhunting of the plains bison by Indigenous groups and white settlers alike and other factors contribute to the bison’s near extinction. These factors include disease, drought, westward expansion, commercialization of hunting, colonialism and the introduction of domestic animals from Europe. As a result, the First Nations and Métis people lose their primary food source, and many die of starvation.¹¹

9 Dunn, W, and L West. 2011. “Manitoba Act 1870.” Canada: A Country by Consent website. <http://canadahistoryproject.ca/1870/1870-08-manitoba-act.html>.

10 Dunn, W, and L West. 2011. “Seven Treaties Signed 1871–1877.” Canada: A Country by Consent website. <http://canadahistoryproject.ca/1871-97/1871-03-seven-treaties.html>.

11 Foster, J E. 2006. “Buffalo Hunt.” *The Canadian Encyclopedia* website. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/buffalo-hunt/>.



Indian Industrial School, Battleford, Saskatchewan, 1895 ¹⁴



Students and parents from the Saddle Lake Reserve, Alberta ¹

1880

Ceremony ban: Section 3 of *An Act Further to Amend The Indian Act*, made practices like the sun dance, pow wow and other ceremonies a criminal offence. Anyone participating or helping in a ceremony can be imprisoned.

1883

Indian residential schools first appear in Western Canada in 1883–84, with schools opened in Qu'Appelle, High River and Battleford. The purpose of the residential schools in Canada is to educate and “civilize” or westernize First Nations peoples to make them adopt a more western—ie, European—lifestyle. Separating children from their parents and forcing religion on them, it is believed, are the only means by which to achieve the “civilizing” of the First Nations peoples. These schools are funded by the federal government and administered by Christian churches. The official partnership between the federal government and the churches ends in the 1970s, but some churches continue to operate schools until the 1990s.¹²

1885

MÉTIS The Canadian government’s promises of land to the Métis under the *Manitoba Act* are not fulfilled, and after 10 years of delay, the government introduces the “scrip” system. While some Metis do receive land allowances, most are issued paper scrip, transferable certificates, which unscrupulous land speculators pressure them to sell cheaply.¹⁶

Louis Riel is the leader of the Métis people in Manitoba and fights to preserve their rights, culture and lands in the Red River Rebellion (1869–1870). He later joins Gabriel Dumont in the North West Resistance (1885) in northern Saskatchewan, near the Métis settlements of Duck Lake and Batoche. The Canadian army is able to crush the Métis Resistance at a final battle at Batoche despite support from local farmers and the Blackfoot and Cree people. Riel is arrested and later hanged in Regina on November 16, 1885.¹³

TREATY 6 Cree war chief Wandering Spirit and seven other warriors are tried without legal counsel and hanged in Fort Battleford for their

roles in the North West Resistance. This is recognized as the largest mass execution in Canadian history.¹⁴ Some sources report witnesses in attendance include First Nations children from the nearby Battleford Industrial School. Cree leaders Poundmaker and Big Bear are imprisoned for treason although they did not take part in the North West Resistance battles.¹⁵

In order to control the movements of Indigenous people, the pass system is introduced in 1885 and enforced until the 1940s. It requires all First Nations people living on reserve to get written permission from an Indian agent when they need to leave their community. If caught without a pass, they are either incarcerated or returned to the reserve. The pass system is repealed in 1951.

1887

TREATY 7 Banff National Park is formed in 1887, including land that had been previously allocated to First Nations in Treaty 7. The Stoney Nakoda First Nations are removed from Banff National Park between 1890 and 1920. The national park’s exclusion policy meets its goals of sport hunting, tourism and game

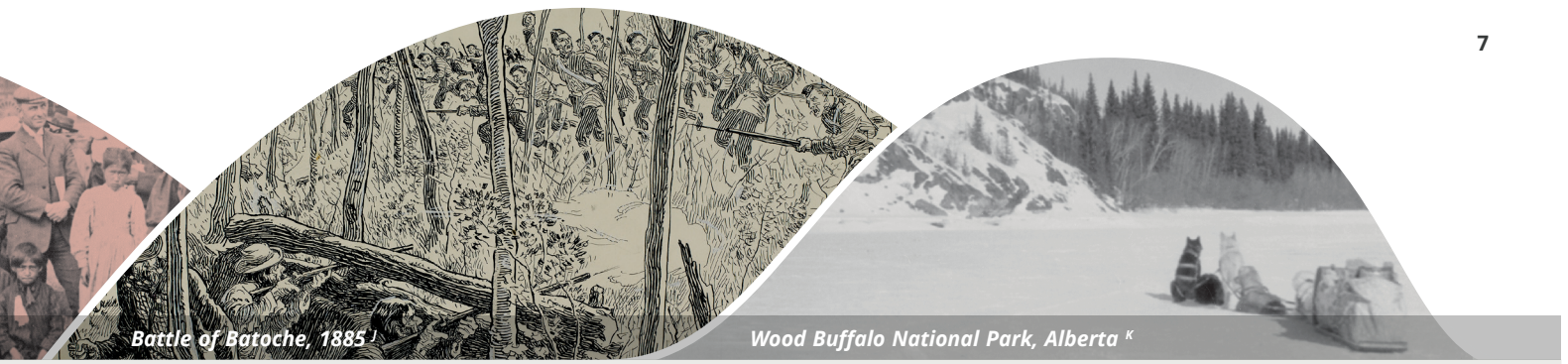
12 “Residential Schools: The Background.” 2002. The Making of Treaty 8 in Canada’s Northwest website. http://wayback.archive-it.org/2217/20101208174512/http://www.albertasource.ca/treaty8/eng/1899_and_After/Implications_and_Contentions/residential_schools.html.

13 “Historical Significance: The Métis People.” 2017. Rupertsland Institute Métis Centre of Excellence website. http://www.rupertsland.org/about/historical_significance.

14 Ogg, A. 2015. “An infamous anniversary: 103 years since Canada’s Largest Mass Hanging 27 November 1885.” Cree Literacy Network website. <http://creeliteracy.org/2015/11/26/130th-anniversary-of-infamy-canadas-largest-mass-hanging-27-november-1885/>.

15 “Battleford Hangings.” 1972. Saskatchewan Indian, July 1972. Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, Saskatchewan Indian Digital Collection website. <http://www.sicc.sk.ca/archive/saskindian/a72jul05.htm>

16 Gaudry, A. 2009. “Metis.” *The Canadian Encyclopedia* website. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/metis/>.



Battle of Batoche, 1885¹⁷

Wood Buffalo National Park, Alberta¹⁸

conservation, as well as the goals of those attempting to “civilize the Indians.” Hunting for food is considered savage and uncivilized.¹⁷

1894

The *Indian Act* is amended to make attendance at day schools, industrial schools or residential schools compulsory for First Nations children. Parents have no choice but to send their children to school. Sometimes the police arrive to take the children away. These schools are often very far from home, and the children have to stay at school for all or most of the year. Parent visits are restricted by the pass system designed to keep First Nations people on reserve.¹⁸

1895

TREATY 6 Proper health care for Indigenous people is slow in coming, particularly in northern regions of Canada. The mission at St Albert, run by the Grey Nuns, becomes the Edmonton General Hospital. The hospital hires physicians on a government salary, and the remaining medical team is staffed by nuns. Despite the free labour provided by the nuns, hospitals operate at a deficit and begin to empty as Indigenous people in them

die. Between Edmonton and Saddle Lake, near the town of Davenport, there is a hill called the Pile of Bones; in Cree it is *oskana-ahasstikwa*. First Nations people on their way to settle on the Saddle Lake Reserve are said to have camped on the hill. Many died of smallpox and had to be left there.

1899

TREATY 8 Treaty 8 is signed between Queen Victoria and various First Nations, including the Woodland Cree, Dunne-za (or Beaver) and Denesuline (Chipewyan) in northern Alberta, northeastern British Columbia, northwestern Saskatchewan and the southern Northwest Territories. Father Albert Lacombe, a trusted Catholic missionary, is asked by Canadian officials to be present to help convince First Nations that it is in their interest to enter into the treaty. A number of isolated First Nations communities are missed by federal treaty-makers at the time Treaty 8 is signed. Those First Nations later start land claims processes. Approximately 13 of those land claims have been settled; however, two claims, those of the Lubicon Lake Nation and Bigstone Cree Nation, are ongoing.

ALBERTA JOINS CANADA

1905

The provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan join Canada.

1907

TREATY 6 AND TREATY 8 First Nations people are expelled from the area that is now known as Jasper National Park following the park's creation in 1907. Not permitted to carry out a traditional lifestyle, they are forced to leave, taking with them their stories, their cultural traditions and their intimate knowledge of the park area.¹⁹

1922

TREATY 8 Wood Buffalo National Park is created on Crown land acquired through Treaty 8 with the local First Nations. Located in northeastern Alberta and southern Northwest Territories, it is the largest national park in Canada at 44,807 square kilometers. The park is established to protect the world's largest herd of free-roaming wood bison, and it is one of only two known nesting sites of whooping cranes.²⁰

¹⁷ Alexander, R. 2014. “Banff Indian Days affirmed stereotypes, reinforced culture.” Rocky Mountain Outlook, April 3, 2014. Rocky Mountain Outlook website. <http://www.rmoutlook.com/Banff-Indian-Days-affirmed-stereotypes,-reinforced-culture-20140403>.

¹⁸ Miller, J R. 2012. “Residential Schools.” *The Canadian Encyclopedia* website. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/residential-schools/>.

¹⁹ “Aboriginal Peoples: Background, Mountain National Parks.” Parks Canada website. www.pc.gc.ca/-/media/pn-np/ab/jasper/pdfs/plan/plan5/Aboriginal%20Groups.ashx.

²⁰ Finklestein, M W. 2009. “Wood Buffalo National Park.” *The Canadian Encyclopedia* website. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/wood-buffalo-national-park/>.



Girl carrying her baby sister in her mother's parka, Iqaluit, Nunavut¹



Caribou on Arctic Tundra, Nunavut

1925

TREATY 8 Over 6,000 plains bison are introduced to Wood Buffalo National Park, where they hybridize with the local wood bison, and introduce bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis into the herd. Parks officials have attempted to undo this damage since that time with successive culls of diseased animals.

1938

MÉTIS The Métis in Alberta begin to organize as a political movement in 1928. In 1938 Alberta's *Métis Betterment Act* sets aside land for 12 Métis settlements, which are later reduced to 8.²¹

1950

INUIT The tuberculosis (TB) epidemic reaches northern communities. The Inuit have little resistance to the disease, and a large number of them die from it. By 1956, one-seventh of the entire Inuit population is being treated for TB, while one-third of the population overall is affected. Many children are removed from their homes and sent south for treatment in TB sanatoriums, some never to return. One of these sanatoriums was the Charles Camsell Hospital in Edmonton, which operated from

1945 to 1967. In 2010 Health Canada reported the rate of TB among Inuit was 185 times higher than among Canadian-born, non-Indigenous people.²²

1951

The pass system is repealed, and First Nations people are allowed to leave their reserves without first obtaining permission from an Indian Agent.

1957

TREATY 8 In 1957, a disease-free wood bison herd of 200 is discovered near Nyarling River in Wood Buffalo National Park. In 1965, 23 of these bison are relocated to the south end of Elk Island National Park. Through conservation efforts the herd has successfully grown to more than 2000 individuals and has been used to restock other areas of North America.²³

1958

TREATY 6 The Michel Band becomes the first and only First Nations community to be involuntarily enfranchised by the federal government. They originally had a reserve near the present-day hamlet of Callihoo. In 1985 the Michel Band regained their Indian status under Bill C-31 but have yet to see any of their land returned to them.²⁴

1960

The Sixties Scoop: From the 1960s to the 1980s, thousands of First Nations and Métis children are forcibly taken from their homes and adopted or fostered, usually by non-Indigenous people.

1969

The Government of Canada introduces a White Paper that would abolish the *Indian Act*, which the government views as discriminatory; dismantle the special legal relationship between the government and the First Nations; and remove the distinct legal status of "Indian." Harold Cardinal, of the Indian Association of Alberta, helps lead a resistance and creates what becomes known as the Red Paper, which states, "the only way to maintain Indian culture is to remain Indians." After opposition from many First Nations, the government's White Paper is abandoned in 1970.

1970

TREATY 6 Members of the Saddle Lake First Nation near St Paul publicly protest the living conditions at the residential school in their community. They peacefully take over the Blue Quills building

21 "History in Brief." Métis Settlements General Council website. <http://www.msgc.ca/about-us/history>.

22 CBC Digital Archives. 1989. "Tuberculosis treatment in south takes Inuit from their families." *Midday*, January 30. <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/tuberculosis-tb-treatment-in-south-takes-inuit-from-their-families>.

23 "Plains Bison, Wood Bison: Which is Which?" 1994. *Smoke Signals*, volume 5, no 4. Also available at https://www.usask.ca/wcvm/herdmed/specialstock/resources/Smokearticles/1994_Nov_Subspeciesdifferences.pdf.

24 "Michele Band History." Michel First Nation website. <http://www.michelfirstnation.net/our-story.html>.



Patient with two children at the Charles Camshell Hospital, Edmonton, Alberta ^M

and transform it into the initial First Nations–controlled education centre in Canada. This inspired a movement across the country for Indian control of Indian education, and two years later, a policy paper by that name, produced by the Assembly of First Nations. Many First Nations postsecondary institutions promoting pride in Indigenous knowledge now operate across the province, including Blue Quills University, Maskwacis Cultural College, Yellowhead Tribal College, Old Sun Community College and Red Crow Community College.²⁵

1971

INUIT Inuit form the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) organization, which represents and promotes the interests of Inuit in Canada on environmental, social, cultural and political issues. Tapiriit Kanatami means “Inuit are united in Canada.”

1975

TREATY 7 St Mary’s Mission at Standoff, the last Indian residential school in Alberta, is closed.

1982

In the *Constitution Act* of 1982, the “aboriginal peoples of Canada” includes Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.

1983

TREATY 8 Wood Buffalo National Park is designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site for the biological diversity of the Peace-Athabasca delta, one of the world’s largest freshwater deltas, and for its population of wild bison. Parks Canada is responsible for the legal protection of the park, and staff work collaboratively with 11 Indigenous groups to manage the park and facilitate traditional harvesting and other cultural activities within the park.²⁶

1984

INUIT The Inuvialuit Comprehensive Land Claims Agreement is the first land claims agreement signed north of the 60th parallel and only the second in Canada at that time.²⁷

1985

The federal government passes Bill C-31 with amendments to the *Indian Act* that return Indian status to all those who lost it through marriage or other circumstances. Nellie Carlson and Kathleen Steinhauer of the Saddle Lake Cree Nation are among those who fought to eliminate discrimination against First Nations women in the *Indian Act*.

1989

MÉTIS The Alberta Métis Settlements Accord is adopted, providing a framework for Métis land and self-government.²⁸

1992

MÉTIS In 1992, Louis Riel is recognized as one of the founding fathers of Confederation. A monumental statue of Riel is unveiled on the grounds of the Manitoba legislature in 1996 in the same general area where many of the historical events surrounding Riel took place.

1993

INUIT The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and the *Nunavut Act* are negotiated concurrently, which results in Nunavut officially separating from the North West Territories on April 1, 1999 to become Canada’s newest territory.²⁹

2001

TREATY 6 The Papaschase Cree file a land claim to regain their original land, which includes much of south Edmonton. They win their case at the Alberta Court of Appeal in 2006, but the case is currently before the Supreme Court of Canada.

25 Blue Quills First Nations College. 2001. Pimoteskanaw. Blue Quills First Nations College 30th Anniversary Commemorative Book. <http://www.bluequills.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/BQ-30th-Anniversary-Book.pdf>.

26 “Wood Buffalo National Park.” 2017. UNESCO World Heritage List website. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/256>.

27 Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC). 2017. <http://www.irc.inuvialuit.com/document/inuvialuit-final-agreement>.

28 “History in Brief.” Métis Settlements General Council website. <http://www.msgc.ca/about-us/history>.

29 Indigenous and Northern Affairs (INAC). “Backgrounder to Nunavut Land Claims Agreement—Settlement Agreement.” 2015. INAC website. <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1430768382647/1430768614729>.



Chief Fontaine and Prime Minister Harper after apology for residential schools⁸

Castle Mountain in Banff National Park, Alberta⁹

2007

The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement is implemented with the aim of bringing a fair and lasting resolution to the legacy of Indian residential schools. The Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission is established.³⁰

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples becomes part of international law. Canada is one of four countries to object to the declaration. Chief Wilton Littlechild from Ermineskin Cree Nation, lawyer and later appointed commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, is one of the authors of the declaration.

2008

Prime Minister Harper rises in the House of Commons and offers a full apology on behalf of Canadians for the Indian residential school system.

2009

Fourteen-year-old Shannen Koostachin of Attawapiskat First Nation makes a speech at the University of Toronto advocating for

“safe and comfy” schools for First Nations children and youth, and classes that respect First Nations cultures. Shannen knew that it was hard for First Nations students to learn in under-resourced reserve schools. Shannen died in a car accident when she was 15, but her crusade lives on in a movement called “Shannen’s Dream.”³¹

The National Truth and Reconciliation Commission (NTRC) is initiated, and three commissioners are appointed: Justice Murray Sinclair, chair, and Mary Wilson and Wilton Littlechild. The Commission holds seven national events across Canada, including one in Edmonton in 2014.

2010

TREATY 7 Parks Canada and the Stoney Nation sign a memorandum of understanding acknowledging the traditional cultural and ceremonial use of the land in Banff National Park and giving band members free access to the park forever.³²

2015

The NTRC releases its final report in 2015 containing 94 calls to action. Prime Minister Trudeau announces

the Government of Canada’s commitment to work in partnership with Indigenous communities, the provinces and territories to fully implement the recommendations of the NTRC.

2016

The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal rules in a landmark decision on a case brought by Dr Cindy Blackstock. The ruling states that the federal government of Canada has a longstanding practice of underfunding child and family services on First Nations’ reserves and failing to ensure that First Nations’ children can access government services on the same terms as other Canadian children. The federal government is ordered to cease its discriminatory practices. Dr Cindy Blackstock is a member of the Gitksan Nation of BC, the executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Care Society, and an associate professor at the University of Alberta.³³

The Government of Canada announces at the United Nations that Canada is a full supporter, without hesitation, of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

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33 Kirkup, K. 2016. “Cindy Blackstock Says Feds Have Ignored Legal Order On First Nations Children.” *Huffington Post*, September 16. Huffington Post website. http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/09/16/cindy-blackstock_n_12043886.html.



Prime Minister Trudeau and Chief Bellegarde at the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly. P

TREATY 7 Siksika First Nation members vote to accept a financial settlement from the Government of Canada to compensate the Siksika for illegal use of the Castle Mountain area granted to them in 1892. Included in the settlement, band members will have free entry to Banff National Park forever and the option to purchase the leases of four businesses in the Castle Mountain area.³⁴

MÉTIS The Supreme Court of Canada rules in *Daniels v. Canada* that Métis and nonstatus Indians are “Indians” under section 91(24) of the *Constitution Act, 1867*. This ruling clarifies that the federal government has primary responsibility for the Métis. The full impact of the *Daniels v. Canada* case has yet to be determined.³⁵

34 Indigenous and Northern Affairs. 2017. “Canada and the Siksika Nation Advance Reconciliation with Signing of Castle Mountain Settlement.” News release, January 25. <https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-northern-affairs/news/2017/01/canada-siksika-nation-advance-reconciliation-signing-castle-mountain-settlement.html?undefined&wbdisable=true>.

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NEXT STEPS



As Canadians journey on the path to reconciliation, is it critical that we understand how the events of the past have shaped our shared history and continue to affect all Canadians including First Nations, Métis and Inuit. At the opening of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation at the University of Manitoba, Honorable Justice Murray Sinclair, commissioner for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, spoke about this. He said we must begin by understanding “truth.” To do this we must acknowledge the *truth* about what happened in the Indian Residential School system. We must learn as much as we can about the *truth* of what happened and how it has affected the individuals, their families and our entire society. The second step is “reconciliation.” Reconciliation needs to be our major focus in the future. We must focus on *what* can we do about this now and *how* can we deal with the damage that has been done to the relationships among the people in our society.

Intergenerational trauma resulting from the residential school system and the assimilation policies of the past is a shadow that falls on our classrooms and school communities. Teachers, through the programs of study, and in their personal contacts with the school community, have the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of past historical events and contemporary issues and to recognize the resilience of First Nations, Métis and Inuit. These positive actions will contribute to reconciliation with First Nations, Métis and Inuit and go a long way towards building a better future together.

Continuing your learning journey

a) *How can teachers promote the hope of reconciliation while still acknowledging the detrimental affects of past assimilation policies?*

b) *Who are the resilient First Nations, Métis and Inuit role models for today's youth and what are their stories?*

IMAGE CREDITS

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- P. The Canadian Press / Adrian Wyld



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For additional resources and information on Walking Together visit www.teachers.ab.ca.

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