

Introduction to In Two Worlds

First Nations and Métis people are often required to accept many values and principles of larger society in order to operate within the cultural mosaic of our communities. Laws, history, the norms of society are presented at a school level that present a western philosophical perspective.

The elders connected to the VFNMEP project have identified several categories that they believe are fundamental to the understanding of First Nations and Métis peoples. Within these categories, there are several topics that have been identified as important topics to highlight. It has also understood that this information has been developed to be presented from a First Nations/Métis perspective.

It is in this context, that the information for these topics has been developed. The purpose of these is to provide background information to assist teachers when they present information on these topics to their students. In addition to the information, a few key resources or websites have been identified to assist the teachers as they pursue other information in these designated areas.

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- 1.2 Pre- European contact

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- 6.1 Respecting our ancestors' way of life
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- 6.3 Contributions to western society
- 6.4 The empowering of First Nations and Métis people
- 6.5 Positive lifestyles

- 6.6 Balancing Two Worlds: Medicine Wheel Teachings
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7. Cultural/language Understandings

- 7.1 The culture/language of the home, school and community
- 7.2 Cultural customs and protocols
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- 7.4 Oral tradition and research
- 7.5 First Nations and Métis perspectives
- 7.6 Development of cultural skills
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- 8.4 Community healing
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1. Métis/First Nation Related Terminology

1.1 Pre-European Contact

Prior to the arrival of Europeans as colonizers to North America, First Nations people lived in a fashion that recognized the each other as sovereign nations with specific territories that each claimed as their hunting territory. When necessary, they formed trade agreements, alliances, and treaties with each other to maintain the balances that they sought.

The First Nations people observed a way of life that focused on harmony with nature and they operated within the natural rhythms of the seasonal cycles of the earth. The lifestyle generally had some aspect of hunting and gathering and limits were observed on how much you needed to survive and to ensure continued availability of the animal or plant. They had lived in this way for thousands of years.

Each First Nation has a creation story that tells of there evolution or coming to Turtle Island (North America). With that story comes a spiritual connection to the land and where

they belong in the natural world. Each nation had their own language, belief system that has unique spiritual helpers, as well as their own educational and political structure. They observed natural laws by recognizing the difference between right and wrong and lived in an ethical manner.

The First Nations communities did not have populations that numbered in the millions. The Elders say that communities were a series of connected villages with populations that numbered in the thousands. The communities were structured based on the availability of food and water. Some villages were permanent structures and the people lived a sedentary lifestyle based on agriculture supplemented by hunting while others practised a hunting culture that revolved around game animals. This required a lifestyle based on mobility and knowledge of the land and the environment.

First Nations societies incorporated natural elements into their daily lives. Clothing and design incorporated natural materials. Tools and weapons were made of wood, bone and stone. Some use of soft metals such as copper was used; an example is the West Coast societies in the making of dishes and masks.

The Bering Strait Theory has put forward that during the last ice age that Indian people crossed a land bridge that was created. The theory says that Indian peoples came to the Americas from Asia approximately 12,000 years ago. First Nations people maintain that they have been here from time immemorial. Scientific evidence from archaeological dig sites in Canada and the US concur that First Nations people have existed in the Americas for at least 60,000 years. This information is based on scientific techniques that study layers of soil and the use of carbon dating techniques.

European documentation of First Nations societies has occurred over a relatively short period of time. The First Nations people have existed and have maintained their own systems of order for a much longer period. Oral histories that have been told and collected recall how the people co-existed with nature and maintained a balance within the circle of life. Affiliations and relationships also existed between different nations to ensure control and responsibility to geographic territories.

Additional Resources:

Goodman, Jeffrey, (1981). *American Genesis: the American Indian and the origins of modern man*. New York: Summit Books.

Pettipas, L. (1996). *Aboriginal Migrations: a history of movements in southern Manitoba*. Winnipeg: Museum of Man and Nature.

Ray, Arthur J., (1996). *I have live here since the world began: an illustrated history of Canada's Native peoples*. Toronto: Lester Pub.

1. Métis/First Nation related terminology

1.2 Historical Chronology after European Contact (1500–1700)

There is historical evidence that Vikings came to North America several hundred years prior to European contact. History books have credited Christopher Columbus with “discovering the new world” and have tried to depict that North American history began in the year 1492. There certainly is a recognition that First Nations societies were definitely affected and many changes occurred as a result of contact with the European explorers.

European society was experiencing vast changes at that time as well. The Feudal system was in chaos and the peasants were demanding better treatment for their services to their landowners. Gunpowder had been introduced and there were many examples where the working class had used violent protest to their advantage. The merchant class had banded together to form companies that were looking for ways to create profits from outside sources. A method that was introduced was to hire ships to travel and to seek sources of wealth that could be acquired and brought back to Europe. As a result, the Age of Colonialism was born. The European Nations observed the Doctrine of Discovery which meant that the European country that arrived and established themselves “or discovered” a new nation, that they had first rights to obtain its wealth. Colonialism also meant bringing European laws, views, religions and language to the new colonies.

The impacts on indigenous peoples around the world were devastating. Many of the contacts with European led to violence and conflict. European society had achieved the concept of metallurgy and was able to transform and combine metals. Guns, metal swords, armour, and other metal products were used to give the Europeans an advantage in the conflicts with the indigenous populations.

European contacts with the First Nations peoples of Canada have been portrayed as less confrontational than in other parts of the world. Based on geography and climate, Europeans needed the First Nations populations to harvest the furs in order to acquire the wealth. In order to develop this process, relationships needed to be established and, as a result, the fur trade industry was born.

The Métis people were born as a result of these first unions. The Métis became a bilingual, bicultural partner in the fur trade economy. A new language emerged, based on the fur trade industry. Tools, traps, boats, clothing, transportation all changed and new meanings and methods were developed. These changes led to other changes and a very competitive industry

was born.

The impacts on First Nations people were ignored by European societies in their quest for wealth. Furs were considered prime in the winter months and this was the time when the men were required to be on the trap lines. Winter was used as the time for storytelling, teaching of traditional skills and community development. The impacts of trapping in the winter season caused many changes to the traditional lifestyles. Many societies were negatively affected and the changes led to societal breakdowns.

Western terminology became integrated into First Nations and Métis languages. A prime example is the Michif language. This language of the Métis evolved from the fur trade economy and was a mixture of Cree, Nakawē, French and English. Other huge changes occurred in clothing styles. Cotton and other cloth garments were introduced as trade goods. Wool blankets and wool coats became prominent. European design, ribbons, beads, and sewing equipment became a visible part of First Nation's society in a very short period of time.

The introduction of technology as a commodity, without sharing on how to develop the technology, created a dependency on European goods by First Nation's society. The gun is perhaps the most recognized example of this. Huge changes in hunting, hunting territories and types of animals hunted greatly affected how people lived and interacted with each other.

Additional Resources

Brizinski, Peggy (1993). *Knots in a String: an introduction to Native studies in Canada*. Saskatoon: Univ. of Saskatchewan. Univ. Ext. Press.

Dickason, Olive Patricia, (2002). *Canada's First Nations: a history of founding peoples from earliest times. Third edition*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

http://www.operation-dialogue.com/history_pdf4.html

1. Métis/ First Nations Related Terminology

1.3 Areas of First Contact and the Effects

First Nations of North America had their own cultural systems long before contact with Europeans. They had and still recognize specific territories that they resided in, speak their own languages and trade with others for the goods they needed. Historically, these trade goods usually involved types of stone for pipes, tools or arrowheads and certain types of vegetables or grains that were used for food preparation, and medicines from various areas.

European traders first came to the area now known as the Grand Banks which are located off the coast of the Maritimes. They traded European trade goods for furs and fish. It was through this process, that the European traders were invited ashore and established friendships and trading partners. Eventually, marriages occurred between these European traders and First Nations women which resulted in the birth of the Métis people. Seen as products of their mixed heritage with a bilingual, bicultural background, these new peoples served as go-betweens with other First Nations and Europeans.

The impact of the European trade goods on the First Nations was both positive and negative. The introduction of metal knives, tools, axes and cooking pots was very helpful to the women as they prepared meals and gathered wood and prepared animal hides. The gun and metal traps had a huge impact on hunting practises. The men were able to catch many more game and fur bearing animals than before. Over time the dependency on these European trade goods caused detrimental impacts on the First Nations community structures.

Upon European contact, the First Nations people did not have a similar concept of land ownership. They had territories that were used by the families and the different nations. They did not practise individual land ownership and believed the land was held in trust for the future generations. The land was hunted on and animals were harvested based on need but caution was taken not to over hunt. The guns and traps and the pressure applied by Europeans for more furs led to over harvesting and depleted the game animals

The missionaries accompanied the European traders. First Nations people were perceived as pagans because they did not worship as Christians. These missionaries, predominately Jesuits, became very active in attempting to baptize First Nations people as Christians. Missions were set up in conjunction with the fur trade forts to support the church doctrines. The introduction of European diseases also helped the Church to have a huge impact on First Nations people and their belief systems. .

England and France were the two prime colonizers of Canada. England had established colonies on the eastern seaboard in the United States in the late 1500's and early 1600's. France started the first colonies in Canada, They established Port Royal, now Nova Scotia in 1605, Quebec City in 1608 and later Montreal under Champlain. These first settlers were employees of the fur companies, missionaries and young entrepreneurs from France who were looking for adventure. These young men married First Nations women and had mixed blood (Métis) children who became an able bodied work force for the fur trade companies. The first colonies were established Quebec in the 1660's as a seigniorial system with the support of the French Crown. These new settlers created a peaceful relationship with the Huron people and had periodic struggles with the Iroquoian nation.

The dominance of the fur trade companies in the late 1600's and up to the mid 1700's in Eastern Canada ensured that trade and commerce were the primary industries. As the fur trade expanded westward, treaties were signed with First Nations bands in an effort to establish agricultural communities and a land base.

Military contact occurred as conflict between the French and English. They made trade alliances with the First Nations and supplied them with European trade goods, muskets and hatchets for their loyalty in their fight. This increased the minor conflicts that existed between various Eastern nations that had existed over territory and trade routes. These alliances with the European nations caused the First Nations to be recognized in the Royal Proclamation which recognized First Nations ownership of hunting territories.

The expansion of the fur trade to western Canada, the immigration of farmers and the signing of treaties created conflicts that were to be resolved by the North West Mounted Police. Conflicts were recorded in 1870 in Manitoba between the Métis and the Canadian Government which eventually led to the creation of Manitoba and in Saskatchewan in 1885 at Battleford with the Cree and Batoche with the Métis. Conflict with the Métis of 1885 caused the Fort Qu'Appelle area to be put under martial law by the Canadian government. The American army had also pursued the Dakota people out of the United States in the 1880's as the American army took over control of the American mid-west. The individuals who now reside on the Standing Buffalo First Nation are the direct descendants of these who fled for their lives from the American army.

In short, contact with Europeans has not been considered a positive experience for First Nations people. Conflicts, disease, European laws, religion, and colonial processes all have put the First Nations people in a stressful situation. First Nations people shared a great deal of their land and resources in order to maintain peace and to ensure their survival. The Métis

are the by-products of this historical time. Their experience varied, depending on the circumstance, they were seen as both friend and foe by the European colonizers and specific First Nations.

Additional resources:

Brizinski, Peggy (1993). *Knots in a String: an introduction to Native studies in Canada*. Saskatoon: Univ. of Sask., Univ. Extension Press.

<http://www.ualberta.ca/~bleeck/Canada/canhist.htm#aboriginals>

http://www.canadiana.org/citm/glossaire/glossaire_e.html

1. Métis/ First Nation related terminology

Historical relationships among Métis/First Nation/ Non-Aboriginal

The area of southern Saskatchewan and southern Manitoba has experienced some very interesting dynamics. Prior to the coming of the fur trade industry, this territory was recognized as a Nakoda hunting territory. Smallpox severely decimated the people and left a vacated area. The Métis had no hunting territory of their own and had been relegated to living around the fur trade posts. They had gone on large buffalo hunts which originated in the Winnipeg area with their Nakawe cousins. They came out into the Treaty 4 territory and conducted seasonal hunts. They established small camps which became hunting centres for brief periods in the spring and in the fall at locations which later became permanent communities.

One example of a conflict occurred in the late 1840's between the Métis and the Dakota. They established a peace based on a series of letters which created adopted families in the rival camps for individuals who had their family members killed. This established a lasting peace on the prairies between the Métis and the Dakota First Nations.

During the late 1800's and early 1900's European immigration to Saskatchewan was at its peak. Many small towns in Saskatchewan sprang up. Immigrants were given homestead land by the government and became a key ingredient of the Federal government's national policy of settlement of the Canadian west for agrarian purposes. These settlers believed that they were given new opportunities to start over and were quite happy to leave oppressive situations from their former homelands.

The signing of Treaty 4 in 1874 had created reserves and the sizes of the reserves were to be based on 128 acres of land per person. The Indian Act defined First Nations people and the First Nation's children were sent to residential schools in an attempt to assimilate them. For the most part there was no interaction between First Nations people and the rest of society. The Indian agents were placed in control of each reserve and the agent had the ability to decide if First Nations people could leave the reserve.

World events happened which changes the status quo. For example the Second World War saw many First Nations and Métis men and women join the armed forces. They were seen as equals and were called brothers in arms. At the end of the war, they returned home and the First Nations veterans were restricted to reserves and the Métis veterans were marginalized citizens. These events had a profound effect on the returning veterans and were seen as unacceptable. It is believed that by the returning veterans played a role in the inclusion of Métis children in the education

system and began the process of changing the Indian Act.

In the early 1950's, changes to the Indian Act lifted confinement of First Nations people to the reserves. Many First Nations and Métis people were encouraged to migrate to the cities in the hope of better education and employment opportunities. This eventually led to the rise of First Nations and Métis political organizations as they began to lobby for better access to the system. This then began to expose the shortcomings of government policies as they pertain to First Nations and Métis peoples. Issues such as land claims and resource sharing surfaced and these automatically placed the descendants of the early settlers in a potential conflict situation with First Nations people over land ownership and resource sharing.

These discrepancies and struggles continue to play out in the milieu of daily events. Under employment, under education and colonial ideologies continue to permeate the society in which we live. Every day reminders of the colonial past surface and the First Nations community continues to be affected by the assimilation and cultural genocide policies of the past. The government policies of residential schools continues to affect people on a personal and community level and the Indian Act continue to segregate and define First Nations and Métis people and affects how they identify as people.

The leadership of the First Nation, Métis and, mainstream society find common threads in education, employment and community building. They have found ways to work together to support each other in an effort to create a balance that build relationships and partnerships that lead to mutual benefits. There are times, however, where situations occur that upset the balance and create stresses that damage the relationships and a great deal of energy is required to attempt to heal the damage.

Additional Resources: This information has not been chronicled in any one source. It would be best to refer to many newspapers and websites.

New Breed Magazine, Windspeaker Magazine, Sage Magazine, Regina Leader Post.

Websites: www.turtleisland.org; www.sicc.sk.ca;
www.metismuseum.ca; www.fsin.com; www.metisnation.ca

2. Treaties: A First Nation/Métis Perspective

2.1 Chronology of Treaties

Treaties were not a new concept. Indian peoples have negotiated treaties long before the arrival of Europeans. Treaties were primarily used to end wars or conflicts and to determine the hunting territories that each Nation would use or share. One of the earliest recorded

treaties was the Great Law of Peace made between the Seneca, Onondaga, Cayuga, Oneida, and Mohawk peoples. It was used to govern, establish laws and relationships between these Nations.

Europeans have also negotiated treaties amongst themselves for centuries. Their treaties were primarily used to settle borders and territorial disputes. They also were occasionally used to settle wars and conflicts.

The Treaty of Paris, set out in the Royal Proclamation of 1763, established the legal rights of the British Crown to begin treaty negotiations with the Indian peoples who inhabited the land mass now known as Canada. The Royal Proclamation guaranteed many things to Indian peoples. They included: sovereignty, preservation of hunting territories, protection from private individuals, the right to negotiate with the British Crown, public negotiation of treaties, and purchase of land by the Crown.

Historically, the British Crown negotiated hundreds of treaties with First Nation peoples in the East on a nation to nation basis to purchase small tracts of land for settlements and road construction. Canadian Confederation in 1867 marked an end to treaty making with the British Crown and all treaties in Canada after that date were negotiated with the Canadian government.

The settlement of the Canadian West was a major factor in prompting the Canadian government to negotiate treaties. British Columbia had obtained provincial status in 1871 and one of the conditions of entry was that the federal government agreed to build a railroad linking them to the rest of Canada within ten years. With a strong desire for geographic unity to the rest of Canada, it became necessary for the Canadian government to enter into treaty negotiations for the land mass between the two areas.

This began the treaty process, which became known as the numbered treaties. In 1871 treaty negotiations began in Manitoba and the southeast part of Ontario. Treaties 1, 2 and 3 were negotiated between 1871- 1873. The treaties ensured a large agricultural base for the many immigrants that were pouring into Canada. A large timber base was also secured for the construction materials needed for the railroad.

Treaty 4 was negotiated in what later became the southern half of Saskatchewan. This provided a large agricultural base for the immigrant populations and to provide a border due to fear of American annexation. Treaty 5 was negotiated in Northern Manitoba to provide river access on the Saskatchewan River to the interior.

Treaty 6 was negotiated in 1876 and Treaty 7 in 1877. These two treaties secured the land mass of the rest of Saskatchewan and Alberta. This enabled the Canadian government to meet its commitment to British Columbia and to establish the national dream of an

inter-continental railroad. The land mass that we now recognize as Saskatchewan has been impacted by Treaties #4,5,6,8,10.

Concessions and guarantees were provided to First Nations people. Peace and good will were mutually agreed upon for all treaties. Rights such as hunting, fishing and trapping, health and education appear in some treaties but not in others. Land, farm assistance, payments, annuities and special benefits appear in all treaties.

It is very important to remember that the Treaties are signed by two parties. They are also treaties that are with the rest of Canada. There is a responsibility by all citizens of Canada to respect and understand the treaties and their commitments. All citizens of Canada have obligations to the treaties because they are signed by the Canadian government.

Additional resources:

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. (1997). *First Nations In Canada*. Ottawa: INAC

Price, Richard T., (1991). *Legacy: Indian Treaty Relationships*. Edmonton: Plains Publishing Inc.

www.fsin.com

www.otc.com

2. Treaties: A First Nation/Métis Perspective

2.2 Treaties in Saskatchewan

In the mid-1800's, the politicians in Ottawa perceived the West as a huge untapped resource. There was some successful farming in Ontario, and the West was seen as having additional farming potential. Many eastern Canadians also held a very ethnocentric view; they believed in British cultural superiority and that their way of life was superior to people living in the West. In an effort to create a farm economy that could provide a wealth base, the Canadian government began to negotiate treaties with the First Nations people in the West.

The Palliser and Hind expeditions identified huge tracts of land in the West which were rich and fertile and would make excellent farmland. This area covered what was known as the Red River District in Manitoba to the Rocky Mountains in the West with the Saskatchewan River as the northern border. This area became the prime area that the federal government set out to obtain through treaty negotiations.

Treaty 4, known as the Qu'Appelle treaty was made up of 194,000 square kilometres of land. This land mass stretched from the United States Border in the South to the South Saskatchewan River in the North. Small areas of Southern Alberta and Southern Manitoba were also included. This treaty was signed at Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan on September 15, 1874 with the Cree and Nakawē nations. There were thirteen principal bands that signed onto Treaty 4. Later, other bands signed adhesions to the treaty and were awarded reserve land.

Terms of the treaty included Indian rights to hunting, trapping and fishing with the federal government providing ammunition and other supplies. Each family also received farm tools and a group of families received a plough and harrows. Each chief, on behalf of the band received a yoke of oxen, a bull and four cows and a chest of carpenter's tools. Each family also received a gift of clothing and \$5 annually. Each chief was awarded \$25 per year and a suit of clothing every three years. Each headman was awarded \$15 annually and a suit of clothing every three years.

Each band of the thirteen Cree and Nakawē nations that signed onto to the treaty was awarded one section of land (640 acres) for each family of five. This determined the size of each reserve. Provision for education was also made and the Crown agreed to maintain a school on the reserve as soon as the band was settled and prepared to accept a teacher. Treaty 6, was negotiated in 1876 at Fort Carlton and Fort Pitt with the Plains Cree, the Wood Cree and the Nakoda [Assiniboine]. The size of the treaty area consisted of approximately 310,000 square kilometres. Chief Big Bear, one of the principal chiefs of the Plains Cree refused to sign the Treaty along with other chiefs because they felt their cultural identity would not be recognized. This matter was later resolved when the government withheld rations until the dissenting Chiefs adhered to the treaty. A second part of Treaty 6 was added in 1889 to include a land mass of approximately the same size in contemporary central Saskatchewan. This second part included the Cree from Saskatchewan who had initially refused to sign Treaty 6.

The articles from Treaty 6 were similar to Treaty 4 with some others articles added. Additional supplies and farm animals were provided in order to convince the Cree to sign. A medicine chest was also provided to be kept at the home of the Indian agent and a promise for assistance from pestilence and famine was given.

First Nation's leaders refer to "the spirit and intent of the treaties". The leaders that negotiated the treaties believed that both peoples would prosper and that peace and good will would be maintained. In contemporary society, the terms of the treaties are being interpreted and adjusted to meet with the realities of today. For example, the medicine chest represents medical care and a school house on the reserve includes post-secondary allocations for First Nations people. First Nations band members still meet annually with representatives of the Crown to receive their \$5 annuity. In today's economy, this is largely seen as a symbolic

gesture of the spirit and intent of the treaties and that both sides continue to honour and respect the treaty process.

Additional resources

INAC, (1997) *First Nations in Canada*. Ottawa: Government of Canada.

Office of the Treaty Commissioner. (2002). *Treaty Resource Kit*. Saskatoon: website: www.otc.ca

Price, Richard T. (1991). *Legacy: Indian Treaty Relationships*. Edmonton: Plains Publishing Inc.

www.fsin.com

2. Treaties: A First Nation/Métis Perspective

2.3 Treaty Implementation

Treaties signed in Canada between the British Crown and First Nations peoples are a significant part of our history. All Canadian people are affected by the treaties and how they have been applied. Early treaties signed before 1850 usually were concerned with very small parcels of land. The discovery of minerals on the shore of Lake Superior and Lake Huron prompted the Canadian government to attempt to extinguish 'Aboriginal' title to land led to the Robinson Treaties and the Manitoulin Island Treaty where larger tracts of land for mining and settlement were negotiated. These treaties established a format where large tracts of land became the focus of the British Crown.

The eleven Numbered Treaties were signed between 1871 and 1921. The Canadian Government aggressively pursued the negotiation of treaties 1-7 in the 1870's to pave the way for settlement of the Canadian West by European immigrant farmers. The treaties dealt with reserves, agricultural practises and equipment, schools, annual payments and hunting, fishing and trapping issues. It is often assumed that the treaties dealt with land ownership and that the British Crown now became owners of the land. The wording of the treaties show that First Nations people relinquished title to the land but it is also clear that the First Nations leaders who signed the treaties had very little understanding of the English concepts of land ownership, which were very different from their own.

First Nations people did not use a written language and operated using an oral tradition. They interpreted oral promises and dialogue as agreements. They used a pipe and implemented agreements under the principles of honour, respect and truth. The British

Crown used secretaries who took notes and some verbatim transcripts, which became the written clauses of the treaties. Conflicting formats, viewpoints, worldviews and interpretations all contribute to the current dialogue on how the treaties are being interpreted by government officials and First Nations people.

There are many examples in history where promises made in the treaties have been not been fulfilled or adjusted. There are also, many citations in history books that state where rations were withheld by Indian agents to secure cooperation. Restriction of movement and the confiscation of guns are other examples where the Indian Act has been used to enforce a government interpretation of specific clauses of the treaties. The British Crown negotiated the treaties with First Nations people and therefore these fell under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Government upon Confederation. The Canadian government is responsible for providing the necessary supports to implement the clauses of the treaties. The revenues for this are often interpreted by Canadians as having come from their tax dollars and therefore

a great deal of resentment is directed at First Nations people for creating a perceived tax burden. What never is explained or understood is the billions of dollars that is generated by Canadian citizens or the Canadian Crown on the millions of acres of land that First Nations peoples agreed to share at the signing of the treaties. The percentage of the costs in comparison to the benefits received are indeed, very small.

One of the important considerations for the contemporary setting is how the treaties are being interpreted and implemented. First Nations peoples no longer are restricted to reserves and confined to residential schools. They are very involved in the mainstream economy and therefore the rights and promises outlined in the treaties must be interpreted to reflect the changes. Urban reserves, university education, health care are examples of some of the present day issues that need adjustments.

It is important that all citizens work toward implementing and understanding the clauses of the treaties. We are all affected by them and of course, all benefit from them. Canada is seen as an excellent place to live in the global economy. Many of these benefits have resulted from the treaties that were signed over the past 150 years. Those clauses which were interpreted as being fair at the time must continue to be honoured and adjusted to reflect the contemporary realities we face.

Additional resources:

Purich, Donald (1986). *Our Land: Native Rights in Canada*. Toronto: James Lorimer & Company.

Price, Richard T. (1991). *Legacy: Indian Treaty Relationships*. Edmonton, Plains Pub. Inc.

Otc.ca (website for the office of the treaty commissioner).

inac.gc.ca (website for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada).

www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/prl/trts/hti/site/mainindex_e.html

2. Treaties: A First Nation/Métis Perspective

2.4 Treaty Land Entitlement

The Office of the Treaty Commissioner was established in 1990. The primary function of this office was to develop recommendations to resolve treaty land entitlement issues in the province of Saskatchewan. A secondary goal was to educate the citizenry of Saskatchewan about the treaties. Many First Nations bands had not received proper land allocations in accordance with the treaties when they were signed. A federal government report outlined the existing outstanding claims and recommended that all outstanding treaty land entitlements be resolved as soon as possible and comprehensively by using an equity formula. Land was given a monetary value based on 1989 land prices.

The Saskatchewan Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement was negotiated in 1992. This was a joint process between the Government of Canada, the Government of Saskatchewan, and the chiefs of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nation bands that were entitled to land settlements. This framework agreement recognized that there were outstanding obligations to 26 different Saskatchewan bands. The framework agreement outlined a process that had time frames and a formula to be used for settlements.

Each band was required to sign an agreement which outlined the terms and conditions specific to that specific band. This agreement needed to be ratified by band members and then a trust agreement was to be established. The funds were then placed into a trust account that would be transferred via 12 annual payments.

The equity formula that was agreed upon has some specific processes. The first step is identifying the historical population and multiplying this by 128 acres. This equalled the amount of land that the band should have received when the reserve was originally surveyed. The difference between what the First Nations band should have received and what the First Nations band did receive is called the shortfall. The shortfall is then divided by the amount of land the band should have received when the reserve was first surveyed and then multiplied by 100 to give a percentage of the band members who did not receive land. The final step is taking the percentage of band members who did not receive land and multiply it by 128 acres

and then multiply by the population as of March 31, 1991. This will then determine the amount of land that the band is entitled to under the TLE process. The amount is transferred to the current value of unimproved farmland to give it a dollar value.

An example:

Step 1- Historical population of 1,000 X 128 acres = 128,000

Step 2- should have received 128,000 acres – reserve is 108,000 acres- 20,000 shortfall

Step 3- 20,000 divided by 128,000 = approximately 16% did not receive land.

Step 4- 16 % or 160 members X 128 acres X current band membership (2000)

$160 \times 128 = 20,480 \times 2000 = 40,960$ acres of entitlement.

Step 5- $40,960 \times 400\$$ (value of land per acre) = \$16,384,000 settlement.

These settlements have varied, in that, some First Nations bought farmland while others negotiated agreements which required them to buy a percentage of farmland before any monies can be used for economic development. Some bands invest in urban settings and are in the process of establishing urban reserves with the support of the cities and the municipalities.

Additional Resources:

www.indianclaims.ca

First Nations University of Canada Library has various holdings.

Office of the Treaty Commissioner, Saskatoon, Sask. 306-975-6131.

www.otc.ca

2. Treaties: A First Nation/Métis Perspective

2.5 Métis Scrip

Scrip is a term that comes from the word 'description'. Scrip were certificates issued by the federal government to Métis people several times in the history of Canada. Scrip was issued in two forms, land scrip and money scrip.

Land was valued at one dollar per acre at the time of the settlement of western Canada. When the British Crown signed treaties with First Nations to settle land claims, they issued scrip to the Métis. Scrip certificates in the form of land scrip and money scrip were used. A modern day example of scrip would be the coupons we often receive in the mail that give us a discount on products. Paycheques are also a form of scrip. Scrip is a representative document that represents a cash value for goods and the payee will receive the good represented on the coupon based on certain conditions.

Land scrip was issued in denominations of 80 acres, 160 acres, 240 acres depending on time of issuance. It was issued to the head of a family and represented a denomination similar to the 128 acres per person issued to First Nation people under the treaty negotiations process.

Money scrip used the same denominations but did not require a person's name. The "pay to the order section" merely stated Pay to the Bearer upon demand. This format was very transferable and recognized as cash.

The Manitoba Act of 1870 was the most significant issuance of scrip for Métis people. Under the terms of the Manitoba Act, 1.4 million acres of land was designated to be set aside for Métis people who resided in Manitoba.

History reveals that the majority of scrip that was issued to Métis people did not meet its objectives and do what it was intended to for the Métis community. Land speculators, lawyers, storekeepers, bankers, government officials and others conspired to undervalue and short value the scrip certificates. For example, money scrip certificates were half valued. Meaning, if the scrip certificated stated an amount of \$160, and it was presented at a bank or a store, the bearer would be told that it had a cash value of \$80 and the person would receive that amount in cash or in goods.

Land scrip was a bit more difficult and required other measures. The majority of incidents that occurred when the Métis individual brought the land scrip certificate to the land office for redemption. They were told that the land they were entitled to was not the land they lived on. The land that was assigned was usually the equivalent of one or two provinces away. They were then offered money scrip in exchange for the land scrip and it could be used as cash. Other examples in history reveal that actors were often hired by scrip speculators to pose as Métis people and get land scrip certificates from the land office.

History shows, that 95-99 % of all Métis scrip that was issued to Métis people was lost or swindled in one fashion or another that would be considered fraudulent under current laws. There has been some research conducted by the Métis government structures in an attempt to rectify this through a legal process. Unfortunately, this type of research is time consuming and costly. Also, the costs of a legal challenge are prohibitive and the Métis communities lack adequate funding to mount this challenge.

Currently, the scrip argument is used as a justification by the Canadian government as having satisfied any historical claim to land rights by the Métis people. The Métis people in general feel that the federal government needs to revisit this matter and undo the wrongs that they allowed to happen.

Additional information

Gabriel Dumont Institute (1984). *Scrip* (video) Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute

www.metismuseum.ca

Manitoba Métis Land Commission, (1978). *Riverlots and Scrip: Elements of Métis Aboriginal Rights*. Winnipeg: Manitoba Métis Federation Press.

3. Demographics of Métis Settlements and First Nation Bands

3.1 Definition of a Métis Member and a First Nation Band Member

Defining oneself is very personal. It is important that people create an identity for which they can be proud of and through that pride, build character and self esteem. Being identified through a blood quantum formula comes from colonial times when slavery still existed. There are examples in history that placed a higher value on a slave or their role in the master/slave relationship was determined by their blood quantum. Being assigned a label or a category has been used by colonial powers to classify people throughout the world.

For First Nation and Métis people, this process has had some problematic results. The federal government created a legal definition for whom they deemed was an Indian person through the Indian Act. The restrictive nature of the Indian Act allowed the government to categorize and keep track of Indian people with a system, known as the Blue Book. The births and deaths of band members were recorded and tracked by the Department of Indian Affairs employees.

With the lifting of the restrictions in the 1960's and the migrations to the urban centres by First Nation people we see a large urban population by the year 2000. The Canadian Census of 2001 shows that about 50% of First Nations people live off reserves. The census also reveals that 70% of the Métis population live in urban settings. This has caused many mixed marriages and relationships that are in conflict with the government definitions and labels.

The Indian political structure defines its membership using aspects of the criteria that finds its roots in the blood quantum practices of the past. Treaty Indians were identified by the Department of Indian Affairs. With the implementation of Bill C-31 in 1985 was intended to restore Indian status to Indian people who had lost their status for one reason or another, band lists can be generated by the band councils of individual reserves. These definitions work for the political identity but cause some confusion at the cultural identity level. People who identify themselves as Indians and do not fit the political criteria have been integrated within society. In short, the criteria, either recognizes or excludes individuals.

Métis people have only been recognized by the Federal Government since 1982. Métis societal organizations have attempted to identify themselves through an historical relationship that evolved in Western Canada. Through these relationships of First Nations and Europeans an unique identity evolved. Recently, they have gone more to a cultural definition and people define as Métis and are recognized as Métis by their community.

The interesting dynamics play out at the community level as a result of the political definitions. One's ability to identify with the First Nations or Métis political structure can change based on personal choices, marriages or political decisions made by others. An example might be a person can define themselves as Métis or Non-status Indian but choose to become recognized as a member of a First Nation through the Bill C-31 process. The translation of this act is that the person is now identified differently with different rights. They now become eligible for special rights recognized under treaties for education and health and can live on a reserve if they choose to. Band councils then have the sovereignty to establish band membership codes.

Trying to make distinctions between First Nations and Métis cultural values is often troublesome. Community issues are similar and changing your legal identity doesn't always alter your circumstance. A social problem can occur in the area of housing. There are low-income housing corporations that have tenant selection criteria based on their ability to identify with a specific First Nations or Métis identity. The confusion can also exist at a more social level. An example to illustrate this point might be dancing. First Nation people are identified as pow wow dancers and Métis people are recognized as jiggers. There are many situations at the community level which contradict the political definitions. It is certainly at the community level that more than one world can blend together.

In a larger societal context, membership to society is usually not as problematic. Irish Canadians and German Canadians still are recognized as Canadians first, and First Nation and Métis peoples are recognized as 'Aboriginal' peoples by the Canadian Charter of 1982 and considered a minority group. They are not given a choice to be seen as a Canadian or having a separate cultural identity. This creates a great deal of confusion in members of the society who are not intricately involved in the First Nations/Métis community and often creates difficulties for youth as they struggle to find their place in society.

Additional Information:

www.fsin.com

www.metisnation.ca

3. Demographics of Métis Settlements and First Nation Bands

3.2 Recognizing First Nations and Métis communities

During the 1870's the British Crown set about negotiating treaties in what is now western

Canada. In the Saskatchewan area, two treaties were signed, treaty 4 in the south and treaty 6 in the northern half of the province. Treaty 6 surrendered approximately 300,000 square kilometres and Treaty 4 surrendered 194,000 square kilometres. The number of reserves in Saskatchewan has changed recently. For many years there were 74 reserves. This number has increased to 76 as two original reserves were divided. Recently, as more land claims are being resolved, urban reserves are being created that have some connections to the original reserve lands.

When Treaty 4 was first negotiated in 1874, there were 13 chiefs that signed on behalf of their respective bands. According to the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre's website, there are currently 34 reserves in the Treaty 4 area; 28 in what is now Saskatchewan and 6 in Manitoba. The remaining reserves were created through adhesions which granted First Nations bands the same rights as the principal signatories. The Métis communities largely exist in the northern part of the province. In fact, of the 35 small towns and hamlets, most are recognized as Métis communities based on population demographics. In the Treaty 4 area, there are only two communities that recognize and trace their origins to the Métis buffalo hunters. These are the communities of Lebret and Willowbunch.

In the 2001 census, 83,745 people are recognized as having First Nation's status in Saskatchewan. Information provided by the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre state that the First Nation's population in the treaty 4 area is 48,311 (excludes Little Black Bear numbers). Of this number, 38,996 are in Saskatchewan, and 9,315 live in Manitoba. Statistics also reveal that slightly less than 50% will live on a reserve while the other 30,000 live in an urban setting.

The census also reveals that 43,695 people have Métis status. The census claims that 70% of the Métis live in an urban setting and 30% live in rural areas. If we use the same geographic formula for the Métis we can estimate that approximately 20,000 live in the Treaty 4 area with 15,000 living in Regina, Moose Jaw, Yorkton, Melville, Weyburn and Swift Current with 5000 dispersed amongst the small communities of southern Saskatchewan. The majority of the Métis population have family connections to at least one of the reserves in the Treaty 4 area.

Of the 34 First Nations bands language is one of the variables that distinguish them from each other. There are 15 Nakawe (Saulteaux) reserves, 14 Plains Cree, 3 Nakoda, 1 Lakota, and 1 Dakota. The two Métis communities recognize Michif as their language. Michif uses Cree nouns, French and English verbs and some communities use a dialect that has added Saulteaux words.

Many of the First Nations families that remain on the reserves have a history that is connected to residential schooling. Many of the Métis families that live in the rural areas have

connections to living on the road allowances, but many also attended residential schools. There was a period in Saskatchewan history from around 1930-1950 where many Métis families lived on Crown land that had been set aside for the building of roads. They were seen as squatters and were not recognized as residents.

The changing demographics in Saskatchewan have placed greater importance on various components of society. For example, the average person in Saskatchewan is 38 years old while the average age of the First Nations and Métis population is 20 years old. Another interesting statistic is that the average age of the workforce in Saskatchewan is 43 years. These statistics provide information that has implications for the future. The numbers show that it is vital that young First Nations and Métis students complete high school and become involved in the economy of the province. It also shows that greater recognition and ownership must be given to First Nations and Métis community organizations for the development of programming and training opportunities that will support community development.

Additional Information;

<http://www.fnmr.gov.sk.ca/>

www.sicc.sk.ca

www.metismuseum.ca

3. Demographics of Métis Settlements and First Nation Bands

3.3 Current 'Aboriginal' population and census in Saskatchewan

In 2001, the Canadian census figures outlined the population numbers of Canadian citizenry in accordance to how people identify themselves. Areas of significant growth were seen in First Nations and Métis populations at large. Demographics show that the First Nations/Métis community is much younger than the rest of the Canadian population.

According to the Canadian Constitution, the term, 'Aboriginal' includes First Nation [Indians], Inuit and Métis people. It is estimated that 1.3 million or 4.4% of the Canadian population are of 'Aboriginal' ancestry. The 2001 census reveals that 976,310 people claim to be from an 'aboriginal' identity. The Prairie Provinces have the largest percent per capita of First Nations and Métis people in relation to the rest of the population, with the exception of Nunavut.

Saskatchewan has a total population of slightly over 1 million people. The First Nations and

Métis populations combined, in Saskatchewan is slightly over 130,000. It is estimated that approximately 14% of the entire Saskatchewan population is of First Nation, Inuit or Métis ancestry. Broken down, this represents approximately 84,000 First Nation, 44,000 Métis and 1,000 Inuit people.

Approximately 50% of First Nations people live on one of the 74 Saskatchewan reserves that were negotiated in the treaties. The other 50% live in rural and urban centres, but often maintain connections to the reserve in which they are affiliated. 70% of the Métis community live in the three urban centres of Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert. Northern Saskatchewan's population is over 80% First Nations or Métis. About two-thirds of the population live in 35 small municipal communities, while one-third are members of one of the twelve First Nations. The small Inuit population is not specific to any region or locale.

The 'Aboriginal' population, according to Census Canada 2001, in Saskatchewan is 13.3% of the total 'Aboriginal' population of Canada. Regina reports an 'Aboriginal' population of 7.1%, Saskatoon is 7.5%, and Prince Albert is 24.9% of their total citizenry. In Saskatchewan the median age of the 'Aboriginal' community is 20.1 years old. This is even more pronounced in Northern Saskatchewan because nearly 50% of the northern population is under 20 years old. The rest of Saskatchewan has a total population of around 30% under the age of 20. The non-Aboriginal population of Saskatchewan has a median age of 38.8 years old and leads all Canadian provinces.

In 2001, 49% of First Nations/Métis women and 57% of First Nations/Métis men had not completed high school. This is an increase of approximately 5% since the last census. University attainment for First Nations and Métis people is about 50% of that of the non-Aboriginal population.

The First Nation and Métis community is under-represented in the workforce of Saskatchewan. Employment statistics for First Nation people is approximately 55% and about 70% for Métis workers. The non-Aboriginal community is employed at approximately a 90% participation rate. First Nation and Métis people participating in the work force have less earning power. The average wage earned is approximately 75% of the average wage in the non-Aboriginal community.

Income, well-being, health, housing, levels of education, and employment are all contributing factors to how a society lives and how they are doing. The First Nations and Métis community fares less well in comparison to their non-Aboriginal counterparts in Saskatchewan. The demographics reveal huge growth projections in terms of population within the First Nation and Métis community. It is projected that the First Nations and Métis populations will reach 25% of Saskatchewan's total by 2025.

The gap that exists in education, employment, income and general well-being is slowly closing. It is imperative that agencies continue to network to address the shifts and changes to the best of their ability. Saskatchewan's First Nations and Métis population has been viewed as an asset to build upon by the government and the First Nations and Métis citizens will play a key role in the future of Saskatchewan.

Additional resources

Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (1997) *Saskatchewan and Aboriginal peoples in the 21st Century: Social, economic and political changes and challenges*. Regina: Printwest Publishing Services.

<http://www.statscan.ca/cgi-bin/downpub/freepub.cgi>

Saskatchewan Labour, Status of Women Office (2001) *A Profile of Aboriginal Women in Saskatchewan*.

3. Demographics of Métis Settlements and First Nation Bands

3.4 Urban Populations

First Nations and Métis people had a very difficult time during the settlement of the Canadian West. They were seen as a surplus population that did not fit into what the Canadian government wanted as citizens. First Nation peoples were confined to reserves and Métis people were marginalized and became known as "Road Allowance" people. In an effort to improve their lot in life, many First Nation and Métis people migrated to urban centres after World War II in an attempt to find employment.

Today, approximately 50% of First Nation people live in urban centres. The Métis population have about 70% living in an urban setting. Manitoba, Alberta, and Saskatchewan all have large First Nation/Métis populations living in their cities. Saskatchewan has the largest. Saskatoon's First Nation/Métis population is slightly over 20,000 (7.5%), Regina is approximately 16,000 (7.1%), and Prince Albert nearly 12,000 (24.9%). Calgary has the least, with an urban First Nation and Métis population of approximately 2%. These statistics are from the census metropolitan areas (CMA) reports.

Today the First Nations and Métis population is growing, with a large proportion being much younger than the non-Aboriginal community. These young people will represent a significant component of the Saskatchewan work force in the years to come. Data collected shows that education, employment, income levels and an over-representation in the justice

system are huge priorities that need attention. Highlights of this data reveal:

- 6% of Western Canada's population is First Nation/Métis compared to 1.5% of the rest of Canada.
- First Nation/Métis labour market rates are more than 10% lower than the rest of society.
- First Nation/Métis unemployment rates are approximately 25%.
- First Nation/Métis income levels average 60% of the rest of society (approximately \$10,000 a year lower).
- a higher percentage of First Nation/Métis people receive income from government transfers than the rest of the population.
- a higher proportion of First Nation/Métis people live in sub-standard housing.
- a higher proportion of First Nation and Métis children are being raised in families that have only one parent.
- over 50% of the First Nation/Métis community do not complete their grade 12.
- the rate of participation in post-secondary training for the First Nation/Métis community is approximately half of the participation rate of the rest of society.

Population statistics show that living in an urban setting is becoming more common for the First Nations and Métis community every year. Canada's cities have large areas where First Nations and Métis people live and associate. These areas are largely dictated by economic conditions. In Saskatchewan, for example, the city of Regina has a large Core area that is over-represented by First Nation and Métis people in comparison to the rest of the city. The housing is older and is predominately rental property. There is very little development in this part of the city and programming is usually a social development initiative, funded and controlled by one of the levels of government.

The over-representation of First Nations and Métis people in specific Core areas coupled with the issues created by the highlights of the data, indicate areas of poverty and a lower standard of living. Urban ghettos for First Nations and Métis people are a reality in the cities of Western Canada. The citizens and the City of Regina are working very hard towards urban renewal and much of the Core area is receiving attention.

Additional resources:

Census Canada, 2001. Statistics Canada (www.statscan.ca).

Roach, R & Berdahl L. (2001). *State of the West: Western Canadian Demographics and Economic Trends Key Findings*. Calgary: Canada West Foundation (www.cwf.ca)

Saskatchewan Labour, Status of Women (2001). *A Profile of Aboriginal Women in Saskatchewan*.

3. Demographics of Métis Settlements and First Nation Bands

3.5 National 'Aboriginal' Population and Census

Census Canada conducts a survey of Canadian citizens every five years. The last census was completed in 2001. In general terms, the census reveals that the 'Aboriginal' population is on the rise, generally younger than the rest of the people and less likely to live with both parents. There are also more 'Aboriginal' people living on the Prairies and approximately half of the population live in an urban centre. The Canadian Constitution identifies 'Aboriginal' people as being "Indian, Inuit or Métis".

Statistics Canada state that approximately 1.3 million Canadians claim to be of 'Aboriginal' ancestry representing about 4.4% of the Canadian population. This is an increase from the 1996 census which said that the 'Aboriginal' population was 3.8%. In the past 50 years the 'Aboriginal' population has increased by a factor of 7 X while the rest of Canada has doubled. Birth populations are one contributing factor, but it is also believed that previously many people were not enumerated or they denied their 'Aboriginal' ancestry. The rise of people identifying with their 'Aboriginal' heritage has many contributing factors which come from numerous events, court decisions and the creation of the territory of Nunavut. It is estimated that 50% of this increase is due to self declaring while the other 50% is due to an increase in birth numbers.

62% of the 'Aboriginal' population identify as First Nation [Indian], 5% as Inuit and 30% as Métis. The remaining 3% identify as 'Aboriginal' but consider themselves as belonging to more than one of the three groups. The demographics from the last census reveal that the First Nation or Indian population increased by 15%, the Inuit by 12%, and the Métis by 43%.

The average Canadian population was 37.7 years old in 2001. The 'Aboriginal' population's average is much younger. Across Canada, it is 24.7 years, while on the Prairies it is younger and more concentrated. Alberta's average is 23.4 years old, Saskatchewan 20.1 and Manitoba at 22.8 years. These age statistics have huge projected implications for the work force, student numbers in school, and other societal factors.

The 'Aboriginal' population of Saskatchewan and Manitoba is approximately 15%, which are the two highest in Canada. Children are about 25% of the total of the 'Aboriginal' populations. 'Aboriginal' seniors are also on the increase. Life expectancy is still lower for 'Aboriginal' people; however, the gap is closing. In the past 25 years, the gap has closed from 11.1 years to 7.4 years. Infant mortality rates have also decreased by half in the 'Aboriginal' community during this time period.

Approximately 25% of 'Aboriginal' people converse in their own language. This is a decrease of 3.5% overall since the previous census of 1996. Six of the 14 languages that had at least 2000 speakers showed declines, while eight of the 14 languages that had at least 2000 speakers showed an increase. Statistics reveal that increases and decreases in 'Aboriginal'

knowledge were reflected as a direct correlation with increases and decreases in speakers of the language.

Less than half, (approximately 47%) of First Nation people now live on a reserve. The majority of First Nation people live in urban centres or in an urban reserve setting. These numbers reflect an increase in First Nations people moving to rural reserves of approximately 2% since the last census. In general, over 20% of the 'Aboriginal' community report moving from one home to another. Trends also reveal an increase of 'Aboriginal' people moving into the urban centres. Approximately 70% of the Métis population live in urban centres and account for the majority of the urban population increases.

The 'Aboriginal' group that remains the most constant are the Inuit. About 50% of the Inuit live in Nunavut where they maintain strong traditional connections to their history and language. Approximately 70% of the Inuit speak their own language and approximately 75% of the children live with both of their parents. The Inuit population has the youngest population of all 'Aboriginal' groups except for the First Nations population in Saskatchewan. The median age population for the Inuit is 20.6 years.

Population increases reflect that the 'Aboriginal' community should play an expanded role in all aspects of Canadian society. It reflects a greater need for participation of 'Aboriginal' people in the labour force, education and training institutions and the economic and business communities.

Additional Resources:

Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, (1997). *Saskatchewan and Aboriginal Peoples and the 21st Century: Social, economic and political changes and challenges*. Regina: Printwest Publishing Services.

Statistics Canada (<http://www.statscan.ca/cgi-bin/downpub/freepub.cgi>)

4. First Nations and Métis Government

4.1 Traditional Government Structure

Various First Nation bands have occupied North America since time immemorial. The different bands spread across the continent and developed territories based on their individual needs. These needs revolved around hunting, planting, and trading. They evolved traditional forms of government to manage their affairs and to keep their communities strong and intact. Decisions were made by the community through a model based on consensus. This meant that all levels of the community were considered and had an opportunity to express

any concerns or to add any support that they wished. When all concerns had been discussed and all options had been considered, then decisions were made that reflected the discussions.

Traditional governments revolved around communities, clan systems, or family systems within each community. The mother was the nurturer and care-giver to the family. This was the base unit of the governance structure and community organization extended from the social order created by the mothering given to children. The social harmony created by the power of the women created strong and healthy environments that allowed the nations to prosper.

First Nation social structures revolved around roles and responsibilities to the community. Hunters, medicine people, artists, and elders all had unique roles and responsibilities. Duties were never assigned and your sense of duty was your personal responsibility. Ability and status within the community was recognized in accordance to how well one performed their duties. An example would be the hunter. Once a man had proven that he was a very capable hunter, there would be many young men who wished to follow him and learn from him. Based on his ability, he would be perceived as the leader while the men were out hunting. His leadership responsibility would be relinquished when the hunt was over and the person best suited to lead would take responsibility. Hunting expeditions would require several days, and when camp had been struck for the night, someone else would take responsibility for the safeguarding of the camp or the telling of stories at night. Another example would be a woman who has displayed skill in creating an intricate design when making clothing for her children or husband. Other women would come and sit with her and watch her and attempt to learn the techniques to copy the new design.

This type of leadership was called emergent. The person best suited for the task at hand was considered the best choice as leader as it ensured a better possibility for success. The people could also choose to not follow a leader as well. For example, if a hunter decided to travel on a dangerous trip to hunt for large game, it was up to individual hunters if they chose to follow him. He was responsible for their safety and if the hunt was unsuccessful or misfortune struck some of the hunters, he would not have a following for future hunts. Hence, respect was earned, not given.

Young men were groomed for leadership positions. They were taken under the wing of very prominent leaders and were given personal instruction to refine their skills. Traditional chiefs were recognized as leaders in the camps and played a prominent role in ceremonies and the day to day council decisions on running of the camp. Elders played a prominent role as mentors and advisors.

Métis leadership was very similar in structure to the Plains First Nations leadership structure. The best person for the job was given the responsibility for the overall task. A hunt captain

was named for the buffalo hunt. He was assigned leadership over ten captains, who in turn were responsible for groups of ten men who were assigned duties for hunting, protection of the camp or travel.

European governance structures had been imposed on First Nations and Métis peoples during the 18 and 1900's. In the past few decades, First Nations and Métis peoples are beginning to assert themselves and are returning to traditional forms of government and leadership. These techniques are being incorporated with European structures to create new and unique ways of providing leadership.

Additional Resources:

<http://www.fsin.com/Departments/Departments.html>

<http://www.metismuseum.ca/exhibits/telegraph/>

4. First Nations and Métis Government

4.2 The British North American Act – 1867

The BNA Act was signed on March 29, 1867. It provided for the union of Canada (then Ontario and Quebec), Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and put them under the Crown of Great Britain and Ireland. It provided these provinces with a Constitution similar in principle to that of the United Kingdom. This divided Canada into four provinces and gave the British Crown the ability to direct the affairs of the government. Laws, provincial constitutions, legislative assemblies, and a senate were all created to govern the provinces.

Section 91 of the BNA Act deals with the distribution of legislative powers. This made it lawful for the Queen to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of Canada, and in relations to others that do not fall under the title of subjects. The Queen was given exclusive legislative authority for all matters pertaining to subjects of Canada. One of the clauses of section 91.24 states the Queen has jurisdiction for "Indians and Lands reserved for the Indians." Other provisions were made for exemption from taxation for Crown lands and the use of French and English as official languages of Canada. Section 146 also gave jurisdiction to the Queen to negotiate and admit any colonies or provinces into the union of Canada based on terms and conditions that the Queen felt were appropriate. This paved the way for the negotiations for other provinces to join Canada at a later date.

The BNA Act provided the legislative basis for the Canadian government to replace the British government in matters that pertained to Indians and the lands reserved for Indians. This gave the Canadian government the mandate to make legislation for Indians and to control the Reserves. Reserves are the lands that are held in trust for the Indians and the government has the ability to dispose or expropriate should they feel it is necessary.

One provision that the BNA Act provides is that Indian people have the right to ask the federal government not to transfer responsibility for them to another authority. In this way, all matters pertaining to Indians remain a federal responsibility and not a provincial matter.

The BNA act began the process on land surrenders. The Canadian Government purchased the territory known as Rupertsland from the Hudson's Bay Company. The claim of ownership of this territory has never been clear as ever belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company. The HBC was a British Crown corporation and there had never been a clear process that established their ownership of the land which allowed them to sell land to the Canadian government. They, in fact, may have sold land that belonged to the residents of the West.

The BNA Act set the stage for the Treaty making process and the Numbered Treaties followed shortly afterwards to allow the Canadian Government the ability to pave the way for the settlement of the Canadian West with European immigrant farmers. The reserves and land reserves for Indians were outlined in a formula during the treaty process. Rights and responsibilities within the treaties were the methods used for administering Indian affairs and Indian lands. Subsequently, the Indian Act was another piece of legislation that added on to the BNA Act and the Treaty process.

Additional Resources:

Brizinski, Peggy. (1993). *Knots in a string: an introduction to native studies in Canada*. Univ. of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon: University Extension Press.

<http://home.cc.umanitoba.ca/bna.htm>

4. First Nations and Métis Government

4.3 Indian Act – 1876

The British Indian department was established in 1755. For the next hundred years this department was responsible for dealing with First Nation peoples. In 1860, the responsibility for First Nation people was transferred to the British Province of Canada. As early as 1850,

legislative attempts had been made to define Indians for the purpose of making government policy. Canadian confederation occurred in 1867. One of the clauses in the Confederation Act gave the new federal government 'legislated authority over Indians and lands reserved for Indians'. The purchase of Rupertsland from the Hudson's Bay Company was completed in 1870 which established federal jurisdictional authority over the Northwest Territories to the Canadian parliament. The treaty process was well under way by this time and several treaties had been signed in Eastern Canada. Negotiations on treaties that become known as the Numbered treaties began in 1870 and involved dialogue with various First Nations.

The Indian Act was passed in 1876. It was originally designed to create a process to exempt Indian lands from taxation and to protect the land from European settlement in accordance with the Royal Proclamation of 1763. It became a means of disempowering Indian people, both politically and culturally. It gave the Department of Indian Affairs wide ranging powers over property, land use, health and community based processes. This allowed the statutes of the Act to be applied in other ways. Soon Indian people were denied the right to vote, the right to sit on juries, the right to citizenship, and exemption from conscription to the army.

The Indian Act then became the means to attempt to socialize and assimilate the Indian peoples. It was used to outlaw ceremonies such as the potlatch or the sun dance. It became the vehicle to regulate where Indian people could or could not go and gave total control to the Indian agent. It also became the vehicle to remove children from their homes and place them in residential schools to receive a European education.

The original Indian Act of 1876 has been reviewed and clauses added or deleted, at different times in history. Major revisions occurred as pressure was placed by Indian veterans that returned from WW II and the Korean War. The pass system was eliminated and Indian peoples were no longer confined to the reserves in the 1950's. This allowed for large populations of Indian people to move to urban centres in search of jobs and educational opportunities. Indian people were given the right to vote in 1960 which legally recognized them as citizens of Canada.

There are clauses of the Indian Act that have affected how Indian people integrated into society. Banks would not give loans to Indian people as personal loans or business loans. Reserves were seen as collectives and thus could not be used as collateral to hold against a loan. To this day, Federal policies that come out of the Indian Act continue to affect the First Nations line budgets, surplus or deficits, third party and band management structures.

The Indian Act is a piece of Canadian legislation that does not fit within a democratic society. It has the ability to single out a segment of the population based on criteria that was used to determine a specific group of people. These people are identified on the basis of government legislation and membership is determined and controlled by the federal

government through the Minister of Indian Affairs.

Recently, the Liberal *Red Book* and the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* have made several recommendations and promise change. The Minister of Indian Affairs put forward revisions to the Indian Act in the new millennium and this proposed, newly revised Indian Act was rejected by First Nation leaders across the country. The government has finally conceded that any changes to the Indian Act will only occur in consultation with First Nations people. It is expected that within the next decade a new piece of legislation to replace the Indian Act will be tabled. All of the restrictive legislation of the past will be removed and First Nations people will develop the necessary infrastructures to become self-governing and have self-regulating organizations.

Additional Resources:

<http://www.bloorstreet.com/200block/sindact.htm>

<http://www.soonet.ca./fncpa/hrdc/historcial.htm>

<http://www.sicc.sk.ca/saskindian/a78mar04.htm>

<http://www.ualberta.ca.-esimpson/claims/indianact.htm>

4. First Nations and Métis Government

4.4 Louis Riel's Provisional Government and the Resistances of 1869-70 and 1885

Canadian Confederation occurred in 1867 and consisted of the four provinces of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. By the spring of 1868, the sale of Rupertsland had been negotiated between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Dominion of Canada. October 1, 1869 was the date that had been set for the transfer of this land mass. Residents of the Red River area had never been consulted and were very apprehensive about the sale and transfer. They felt that their issues and concerns were never addressed and their rights to language, religion, culture and land were being ignored.

On December 8, 1869 Louis Riel formed a provisional government with the support of the Métis citizens of the Red River area. Under the "Law of Nations", a provisional government can be established in the absence of a responsible government until such time a responsible government is established. A responsible government is considered one that is elected, not appointed.

A second provisional government was constructed that consisted of both French-speaking and English-speaking delegates. This second provisional government was established on Feb.

10, 1870 and set about drafting a List of Rights that would establish the territory as the province of Manitoba and allow it entry into the Dominion of Canada. The list of demands included recognition of the cultural life of the citizens, which included language and religion. It also requested representation in the legislature, exemptions from previous debts, bilingual government structures and that local property rights be maintained.

The Manitoba Act of 1870, passed on May 12, established the province of Manitoba. In the transfer, 1.4 million acres of land was set aside for the Métis citizens of Manitoba, to be issued as scrip. A new survey system was used that did not recognize the Métis system of riverlots that had been used to assure that everyone had access to river frontage for water and transportation.

With the establishment of Manitoba, the area fell under federal jurisdiction and a large military force was sent west to police the area. The stated intent of the force was peace-keeping, but it soon became apparent that the force was interested in a \$5,000 reward that had been placed on the capture of Louis Riel and Ambroise Lépine for their role in armed insurrection. The military force placed the area under martial law and began to terrorize the citizens. As a result, the Métis citizens loaded their possessions on red river carts and dispersed to their buffalo hunting winter camps outside the provincial boundaries. In Saskatchewan and Manitoba, they relocated to communities and areas we now recognize as Batoche, St. Louis, Duck Lake, Lebret, Willowbunch, Wood Mountain, Moose Mountain, Turtle Mountain, and the Cypress Hills. They also relocated into the Medicine Hat and Edmonton regions of Alberta.

With expansion into the Canadian West through railroad construction, treaty negotiations with First Nations, and the importation of immigrants, the Métis began to once again feel threatened with respect to their land rights and cultural survival. As a result, the Métis citizens of the Batoche area sent a delegation to Montana to find Louis Riel and ask him to assist them in negotiating settlement and provincial rights as he had previously done in Manitoba.

Louis Riel immediately set about organizing the settlers and drafted a petition to be sent to Ottawa with a list of grievances of the inhabitants of the area. Riel then put forward a motion at a public meeting to form a provisional government. It was his contention that the government was not acting in a responsible fashion because they had never settled the land claims issues of the Métis. A bill of rights was also put forward similar to those demands submitted that formed the basis of the Manitoba Act.

The federal government interpreted this as insurrection and sent out a large delegation of troops to quell any resistance. The petitions that had been sent from several Métis communities in the West were used to identify the potential trouble spots. The result was the North West Resistance in which the Canadian army had three armed conflicts with the Métis

people and the end result was a Canadian army victory at the Battle of Batoche.

In retrospect, historians have analyzed this time period in history and have made some conclusions. It is an accepted fact that according to the Law of Nations, Riel was justified in forming a provisional government in Manitoba in 1869-70. The Canadian Government did not have legal jurisdiction at that time and the subsequent negotiation of Manitoba into confederation was based on the fact that the Métis were the majority of the population of the area and it made good sense to create a new province. The historians have also determined that the provisional government of 1885 was not a legal government under the Law of Nations because the federal government of Canada had legal jurisdiction to the area. They also note that the Canadian government had a legal structure of government in the area, but accept the fact that the government was not really responsible to its citizens.

Additional Resources

Pelletier, Joanne, (1985). *Red River Insurgence 1869-70*. Regina: Gabriel Dumont Institute.

Pelletier, Joanne, (1985). *The North West Resistance of 1885*. Regina: Gabriel Dumont Institute

Racette, Calvin (1985). *Metis Development and the Canadian West*. Regina: Gabriel Dumont Institute.

<http://www.metismuseum.ca>

4. First Nations and Métis Government

4.5 First Nation/Métis Participation in the World Wars

When World War I broke out in 1914, the Canadian Government put out a call for volunteers. One in three able bodied First Nation men, approximately 4000, enlisted to serve as soldiers. The First World War lasted until 1918 and as First Nation men came of age, they continued to enlist in the war effort as soldiers. There are no exact numbers recorded as to how many First Nation soldiers actually fought in the war, but it would be safe to say that there were over 5,000 First Nation soldiers in World War I. The 107th battalion, a unit from Winnipeg, was made up of five hundred First Nation soldiers from the Prairies. Their reasons given for joining the army varied. Many said that they joined to defend their country. Some said for adventure and some out of loyalty to the British Crown and the obligations they felt as a result of the Treaties. Many First Nation soldiers were recognized and decorated for bravery and other heroic acts. Many of the First Nation soldiers excelled as snipers. The most highly decorated was Francis Pegahmagabow, an Ojibwa man from Parry Island First Nation

in Ontario.

There were no distinctions made between Métis soldiers and other Canadian soldiers, but it would be a safe assumption that there were as many of Métis soldiers as First Nation soldiers. There could have been at least 5,000 Métis soldiers in World War I as well. The Métis soldiers also excelled as marksmen and often served as snipers. The most recognized Métis sniper was Henry Louis Norwest from northern Alberta.

First Nation/Métis women also played a very important role in the First World War as nurses. One nurse that was recognized for her service in a British hospital was Edith Anderson Monture. The families at home made huge contributions as well. Donations of nearly \$50,000 were made by First Nation/Métis Canadians to the war effort during the first war. It is estimated that over 300 First Nation/Métis soldiers gave their lives during this war. Many others returned home infected with tuberculosis, which often proved fatal.

When Canada declared war on Germany in 1939, the First Nation/Métis community was very quick to support with money for the Red Cross and with soldiers enlisting. There were over 3,000 recorded First Nation men and women enlisted. There were many other Métis and Non-status Indian soldiers enlisted, as well. The First Nation soldiers were exempt from conscription or compulsory service in the first war, but were not considered exempt during the second war. Inuit were exempted from conscription during WW II. Many First Nation soldiers from the southern part of the Prairies joined American forces that participated in the War.

First Nation/Métis soldiers stated similar reasons for joining as did those in the first war. Adventure, employment or a sense of duty were again the reasons. Many young participants cited the stories shared by the veterans from the first war as strong motivations as to why they joined.

The most decorated First Nations man from WW II was Tommy Prince. The most decorated Métis man was Charles Byce. They were both decorated for bravery and valour. Oliver Martin, from the Mohawk Nation, received the highest rank of any First Nations soldier. He retired from service in 1944 with the rank of brigadier.

The Korean War began in 1950. Canada sent soldiers as a military force in the defense of South Korea. First Nations and Métis soldiers participated in this effort as well. It is estimated that several hundred First Nations and Métis men joined this effort.

In total it is estimated that over 7,000 First Nation soldiers participated in these three wars. Records of Métis participation were not recorded. One veteran estimated that over 12,000 Indian and Métis soldiers participated in these three wars. The veterans were required to overcome many cultural barriers and to make many sacrifices to help restore and keep peace

in the world.

First Nations and Métis veterans are very proud of their efforts. Another significant contribution was the use of Indian languages as communication codes. German intelligence was never able to translate the First Nation languages so were unable to understand the messages that were being sent. First Nation and Métis soldiers are buried in many European locations where battles were fought. The veterans are very proud of their contributions and Remembrance Day of November 11 is a day where the First Nations and Métis soldiers are recognized with a great deal of pride.

Additional Resources:

Gabriel Dumont Institute (1994) *Metis Veterans*. Regina: Gabriel Dumont Inst. Pub.

Gaffen, Fred (1984) *Forgotten Soldiers*. Penticton: Theytus Books.

Minister of Supply and Services Canada (1993). *Native Soldiers Foreign Battlefields. Forgotten Soldiers*

4. First Nations and Métis Government

4.6 The White Paper - 1969

The end of the Second World War and the Korean War saw huge discrepancies in treatment of veterans. First Nation soldiers found when they returned home that they were not treated as equals as they had been in the army and were expected to revert to the treatment outlined in the Indian Act. They refused to accept unfair treatment and worked hard to create their own support system, as veterans. With the emergence of First Nations organizations in the 1960's, a process began where the First Nations organizations assumed more control and voice over the issues that affected the First Nations community. Changes had been made to the Indian Act and Indian people were no longer confined to the reserves. First Nations people had also been given the right to vote and were beginning to make noticeable impacts on the labour market.

The Canadian government policy of assimilation changed in the way it operated. As First Nations people left the reserves and went to urban centres, they began to integrate into society. The reserves still existed and people living on the reserves were involved in a traditional lifestyle based on hunting and trapping. Increases in financial supports were channelled to the reserves in the form of family allowances, pensions and social assistance. This infusion of capital created a false economy but did not address any of the concerns that existed around housing, alcohol abuse, or situations that dealt with settlement of land claims

or economic development issues. Many First Nations people were enfranchising and giving up their rights as Indians and attempting to integrate into mainstream society.

Civil rights issues in the United States caused pressures in Canada and liberal minded citizens pushed for the legislation that would create a situation that ended special treatment for any groups and that all people would be treated the same. The United Nations condemned racism and Canada's policy on Indians was often referred to as discriminatory and a form of apartheid. In 1968, Canada elected a liberal government under Pierre Trudeau that ran on the position of developing a strong federal union that rejected the principles of special status to Quebec. This carried over to the special status that was held by Indians in accordance with the treaties.

In 1969, the Minister of Indian Affairs, Jean Chretien, announced a new direction for Indian Affairs. This government policy plan was called the White Paper and outlined a position where the Indian Act would be repealed and First Nations people would be treated the same as the rest of the citizens of Canada. It put forward a humanitarian perspective that suggested the policies directed at the First Nations were responsible for unfair treatment and the hardship that First Nation people had been forced to endure. A new direction could eliminate all of the injustices and First Nation people would begin to see benefits similar to the rest of Canadians.

The proposal also intended to eliminate all responsibility for First Nation peoples by the federal government. The discriminatory practices and the protections of the Indian Act would also be eliminated. Rights to land, education, health, government support for economic and social development would also cease to exist as rights that First Nation people had had. First Nation's culture would be recognized that it played an important role in the history of Canada but existing treaty rights and services would no longer be guaranteed. The policy outlined that lawful obligations would be honoured and First Nation's lands would be transferred to the First Nations peoples in the same manner as other Canadians. This meant that First Nation lands would be taxed and the concept of community ownership would no longer be recognized.

The reaction to the White Paper by First Nations leaders was one of rejection. They had not been consulted and a groundswell of support from the First Nation communities sparked a strong reaction. Many First Nation organizations responded and the reaction paper was called the Red Paper. This marked a turning point and strong nationalistic identity began to emerge that caused a new era for First Nation/Federal government relations. The Federal Government did not implement the White Paper and stated that it was merely a draft discussion paper that was not official policy. The groundswell of support for First Nation organizations led to the intensified goal of First Nation people taking control of their own affairs.

In the past two decades, since the White Paper had been proposed, there have been many policy changes and new directions implemented for and by First Nation people. There are many who still believe that parts of the White Paper's goals are being implemented and First Nations people are losing their rights and their identity. There are others that believe that the White Paper caused a major turning point in First Nation's history and became the defining moment where self-government and self-determination found their origins.

First Nation people have been able to maintain their identity and status in Canada as people who have special recognition. We can safely determine that the fundamental goal of the White Paper was the assimilation of First Nation people into mainstream Canadian society. History has shown that the White Paper has never achieved what it set out to do.

Additional resources

Brizinski, Peggy (1993), *Knots in a string: an introduction to native studies in Canada*. Saskatoon: Univ. of Sask. Press.

Weaver, Sally (1981) *Making Indian Policy: the hidden agenda 1968-1970*. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press.

<http://www.danielpaul.com/Canada'sWhitePaper1969.html>

<http://www.creum.umontreal.ca/Textes%20colloque/Turner.pdf>

4. First Nations and Métis Government

4.7 'Aboriginal' Rights

'Aboriginal' rights are determined to be rights that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people have because of their status as 'Aboriginal' people in their own land. They have occupied these lands since time immemorial. There are several documents in history that play a role in Canadian law and recognize 'Aboriginal' rights. The earliest is the Papal Bull of 1537 issued by Pope Paul III. It recognized indigenous people as rational human beings that were capable of holding jurisdiction over their lands and that settlement agreements needed to be negotiated with them by settlers. The second document and probably the one most recognized is the Royal Proclamation of 1763. This document recognizes a formal

relationship between the British Crown and First Nations. It recognized that the First Nations are autonomous political units and that they had rights to land. This formal recognition created a process where First Nations peoples would be treated fairly and justly in 'settlement issues'.

The negotiation of the Numbered Treaties recognized 'Aboriginal' rights as treaty promises. First Nation's people received special recognition in the areas of health, education, hunting, fishing and trapping, land, farming assistance, payments, annuities and special benefits. They occur throughout the eleven Numbered treaties with some minor variances.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 is the first document to recognize human rights and has been adopted by the human rights movement as a charter. It recognizes rights of nations and also the rights of individuals. The individual rights include the rights to: legal recourse, life, liberty and freedom of movement, equality before the law, be presumed innocent until proven guilty, to appeal a conviction, be recognized as a person, to privacy, free thought, free opinion, and free assembly. This charter also outlines economic, social and cultural rights. As a member of the United Nations, Canada has been accused of violation of the charter through the Indian Act and the clauses that placed restrictions on First Nation people. This caused many of the clauses that placed restrictions on First Nations people to be amended.

The Constitution Act of 1982, has a special section that outlines rights for the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada. In addition to the rights and freedoms, democratic rights, mobility rights, legal rights, equality rights, educational and language rights and enforcement rights which are enjoyed by all Canadians, 'Aboriginal' Canadians have special recognitions. Existing 'Aboriginal' and treaty rights are recognized and affirmed with a commitment to settling outstanding land issues. This indicates a need for a process that includes First Nations, Inuit and Métis representation at a government to government level to deal with matters involving rights.

The issue of existing 'Aboriginal' rights is a complex matter. 'Aboriginal' rights are based on a distinct history and on a history that predates European contact. This creates different perspectives that all people cannot agree upon. Therefore a clear definition has never been reached that satisfies all parties. 'Aboriginal' rights end up being negotiated on a claim by claim basis in the Supreme Court of Canada. A specific example is the Sparrow case of 1990 which recognized that Mr. Sparrow's First Nations status gave him rights where the laws under the Canadian fisheries act were not applicable.

First Nations/Métis people have identified self-government and self-determination as key aspects of their future. The early legislation acknowledged these areas and the degree of existing rights need to be discussed, negotiated, or legislated. The issues that flow from

self-determination, such as language and culture, services in education, health, and social areas need to be continually addressed. The establishment of membership codes, band lists and who controls them are also fundamental rights that need to be determined. It is felt that the solutions will be found in how the relationships between First Nations, Métis, and non-Aboriginal Canadians are interpreted. The courts have given some direction, but ultimately 'Aboriginal' rights will be determined through a process that will be guided by relationships and how all Canadians value and are prepared to work to protect the rights of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Canadians.

Further Resources:

Brizinski, Peggy. (1993). *Knots in a String*. Univ. of Saskatchewan. Univ. Ext. Press.

<http://www.bloorstreet.com/200block/rsparrow.htm>

<http://www.hrweb.org/legal/undocs.html>

<http://www.ualberta.ca/~nativest/pim/waitangi.htm>

<http://www.canadianlawsite.com/CdnCharter.htm>

5. Colonization of First Nations

5.1 Pressure to Assimilate

Assimilation means becoming part of a society and taking on the characteristics of that society. The colonization of Canada began a process where Europeans attempted to change the First Nations people for economic reasons. The primary purpose of the colonization of Canada was based upon the extraction of furs and other raw materials to benefit the European economy. The large geographic land mass, the climate, and the acquisition of the furs required the services of the inhabitants to implement the process. First Nations and Métis peoples were seen as a necessary and integral part of the process.

This meant that relationships needed to be developed and an economic process had to be arranged. The Hudson's Bay Company was established and paid employees came from England to work on their behalf as trading partners with the people. France sent many independent traders to integrate and marry into the First Nations to establish family-based partnerships with the French based trade network.

European trade goods became highly sought after by the First Nations. The concept of metallurgy had not been established in North America. The steel knife, the metal traps,

mirrors, beads, needles and most of all, the gun, became highly sought after items. This prompted the fur trade; the exchange of goods that had mutual benefit for both parties as its central focus.

The First Nations used a political structure that looked after their own members. They did not perceive that they had jurisdiction over any one else. The European concepts of governance and control over others and territory was foreign to the First Nations. The European 'state governments', recognized each other and transferred ownership and claims through European processes that led to the Royal Proclamation, the British North American Act, the sale of Rupertsland and the establishment of treaties.

The fur trade period introduced many things that were very harmful to First Nation people. The over-trapping of fur bearing animals upset the balance of nature that existed. The introduction of smallpox and other European diseases inflicted mass destruction of Indian societies and destroyed the balance held between the people and their medicine people, and challenged their belief structures.

Dependency on fur trade goods occurred over several generations. First Nations/Métis people were given trade goods but never the technology to manufacture their own. The dependency on the gun and other steel goods became huge contributing factors to problems within First Nations societies. The fur industry flourished in the winter months and required the First Nations/Métis men to be away from home. This also hastened the destruction of the community based lifestyle.

The Numbered treaties and the Indian Act became aggressive forms of assimilation. Canadian government policy of the 1870's and 1880's was to "wean them by slow degrees, from their nomadic habits, which have become almost an instinct and by slow degrees absorb them on the land" (Brizinski, p. 153). This aggressive policy to change First Nation people from hunters and gatherers created reserves where First Nation people were contained and forced to become farmers.

The creation of reserves allowed the government to intervene into the day to day activities of First Nation people and to create changes. Kinship, educational, religious, political, health, economic, and recreational systems were all affected. The churches were also heavily involved in the creation of the reserves and the residential schools to make their work easier. In short, there was a very systematic attack launched on First Nations people in an effort to assimilate them into mainstream society.

In a more modern setting, there is less emphasis on assimilation in policies. The pressures that exist are in the areas of Western standards, credentials, the education curriculum, and employment structures. The Indian and Métis communities are expected to conform and

operate using the Western based system.

The First Nations/Métis communities assert the perspective that they can live and operate in two worlds. Respecting and learning their traditional ways is viewed as very important to some First Nation and Métis people while others feel it has less of a significance. For those that stress the traditional aspects, the speaking and teaching of the language is central. Many who attempt to walk and work in both worlds believe that they can maintain their cultural identity as a First Nations or Métis person and maintain the values and honour the traditions of their people and also have a meaningful interaction with mainstream society.

Additional resources:

Brizinski, Peggy (1993). *Knots in a String*. Saskatoon: Univ. Extension Press.

Steckley, John L. & Cummins, Bryan D. (2001). *Full Circle: Canada's First Nations*. Toronto: Prentice Hall.

Frideres, James S. & Gadacz, Rene R. (2001). *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts 6th Edition*. Toronto: Prentice Hall.

5. Colonization of First Nations

5.2 Intergenerational Impacts

From the mid 1800's until the 1960's the residential schools in Canada were operated by the Catholic, Anglican, and United Churches and funded by the federal government. The purpose of these schools was to assimilate the children into a European value system and to destroy the Indian values that the children possessed. The quality of life for the First Nations children was horrible. The children were poorly fed, forced to work at labour intensive jobs, and exposed to diseases that were not properly treated. Residential schools and the impacts caused by restrictions of the Indian Act are seen as the principal causes of the negative cycles experienced by many First Nations people.

In addition to a substandard life and education, many First Nations children were often subjected to physical and sexual abuse. There have been cases cited where children had needles pushed through their tongues for speaking their own language, were confined to isolation for long periods of time and were also physically beaten and verbally abused. Former students reported to having been forced to wrap their heads in a soiled sheet as a result of wetting the bed. There also have been several hundred former students have also stepped forward and filed allegations of sexual abuse.

In 1991, the Federal Government began the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) to improve relationships between the First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and non-Aboriginal Canadians. The *Gathering Strength* document of 1998 issued a four part Statement of Reconciliation to all 'Aboriginal' peoples. The four part process included an apology to sexual and physical abuse victims, a healing foundation to provide community based healing projects, a dispute resolution process where the government, the church and former students could sit down and develop solutions, and a litigation process for cases that proceed to the courts.

The intergenerational impacts on the First Nations/Métis community have been many. System wide, indigenous knowledge has been denied and continues to be denied in the public education system. First Nations and Métis people are predominately living in urban or reserve settings that are plagued with sub-standard conditions. The statistics show that First Nations/Métis people have significant lower income levels, employment and education levels and a much higher representation in prisons and are more in need of medical services. It is believed that the intergenerational affects often lead to higher instances of crime, abuse and dependency on the system. The economic infrastructures provided for the First Nations/Métis communities are inadequate. This, in turn, often leads to governance issues and creates abuse cycles at a community level. Substandard housing and homelessness are commonplace. These, often lead to higher rates of suicide, cases of fetal alcohol syndrome, single parent families, and incidents of petty crime and racism. Studies on young offenders show that First Nations and Métis youth are drawn to the streets and are over-represented in the youth justice system and in gang association.

Since the creation of RCAP, the federal government has created the Healing Foundation and put \$350 million dollars into community support systems. The public inquiry sparked a process of blame where the government and churches blamed each other for their roles in residential schooling. The processes were not in the hands of the First Nations community and the victims were forced to recount their experiences where the information was not kept confidential. The discomfort of this and the lack of trust held by the First Nations and Métis individuals in the system made this a very unpleasant process. Lawyers, courts, legal jargon, definitions, and rules of law have made a very personal experience into a situation that blames the victim.

The proposal by the government is to provide a one-time payout to victims of residential school. They propose to use a formula determined by the courts where the payout would be determined by the degree of abuse. To date there are over 12,000 claims put forward through lawyers on behalf of the First Nations victims. There were 130 residential schools operated throughout Canada and it is expected that 100 of the schools will be named in litigation. It is also estimated that there are slightly less than 1 million First Nations people who are former residential school students still alive.

It is very apparent that the residential school experience has negatively affected the First Nations community. They have been marginalized and treated poorly for many generations. In general, the First Nations/Métis community have never been able to access the privileges at the same rate as other Canadians. The process of turning around several generations of abuse, denial, racist attitudes and dependency has begun. It is believed that it will require many years of hard work and commitment by governments, organizations and individuals to level the playing field.

A one time government payout controlled and established by lawyers is not being viewed as having long term benefits by the First Nations community. The First Nations and Métis community proposes the building of infrastructures under the control of their own community in partnership with governments and government agencies. These services can develop the necessary processes to implement long term strategies that can begin to address the negative impacts experienced by the victims of the residential schools.

Additional resources:

Miller, J. R. (2000). *Shingwauk's Vision: a history of native residential schools*. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press.

<http://www/cfcj-fcjc.org/full-text/residential.htm>

http://www.irsr-rqpa.gc.ca/english/2001-1002_DPR_IRSRC.htm

<http://www.usask.ca/nativelaw/rs.htm>

5. Colonization of First Nations

5.3 Residential Schools

The British North America Act of 1867 was the document which enabled Canadian Confederation in 1867. Section 92.4 of the Constitution Act of 1867 proclaimed that the Federal Government of Canada would be responsible for Indians and land reserved for Indians. The Indian Act was first implemented in 1874 and defined who was Indian. The Indian Act also defined what Indian people were required to do and where they were required to live. The Indian Act gave the Federal government jurisdiction over the First Nation's people and this meant that education could be enforced by law.

The federal government's intention was to assimilate First Nation's people and to teach them European values and eventually adopt a European based lifestyle. Day schools were

implemented on some reserves and children attended school during the day and returned home at night. This process did not prove to be a very effective tool for assimilation.

The federal government then created residential schools. First Nations students, deemed Indians under the Indian Act were required to attend residential schools from Grades 1-8. An Indian agent from each reserve was responsible for ensuring that all school age children were gathered up and sent to the school. The schools were large institutions built in central locations where children were required to live for the school term.

The schools were operated in a partnership between the Federal government and the Churches, both Catholic and Protestant. Funding for the schools was provided by the federal government and amounts were based on student numbers. The school curriculum was designed and delivered by the Churches and the teachers they employed.

The Indian children were not allowed to practice cultural ways, speak their language or practice any ceremonies. The children were required to learn a European based curriculum and to speak English. In short, they were forced to assimilate to a European worldview. Failure to conform was punishable and there are many examples of abuse and violence directed at the students as punishment. Some of the children returned home in the summer and no longer fit into their community.

There were 130 residential schools that operated in this fashion across Canada until approximately 1960. In the 1960's the residential schools no longer were operated by the churches and were taken over by local Indian affairs offices in partnerships with tribal councils. The last school was closed in the late 1990's. The legacy left behind by residential schools has been viewed as a devastating experience to First Nations communities. Inquiries into the residential school experience have uncovered horrifying testimonials and examples of abuse, torment and pain experienced by the students. Churches have issued formal apologies for the role they played in this history. The federal government have established funds in an effort to provide compensation for the estimated one million people still alive who had attended the residential schools.

The inter-generational effects left by the residential school experience continue to devastate the First Nations. This can be seen in the higher representation of First Nations people in the prison system, the social services industry and a higher percentage of suicides and high school drop-outs. Many programs and initiatives have been implemented in attempts to address the symptoms and the after effects with limited success. These symptoms are often described as alcohol and drug abuse, poverty, violence and sub-standard living conditions.

The First Nations community has begun the healing process. Healing circles are one example of community health initiatives used to benefit residential school survivors.

Positive results include higher rates of school completions, and as a result, more First Nations students are entering into post secondary training and finding employment upon graduation.

The greatest successes lie in the future. As the inter-generational effects of residential schools recede, the First Nations community will assert more autonomy. The establishment of local reserve based schools enhanced by First Nations curriculum materials will greatly assist the healing process.

Additional Information:

<http://www.rqpi.gc.ca/english/questions.html>
http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/gs/schl_e.html
<http://www.schoolnet.ca/aboriginal /issues/schools-e.html>
http://www.irsr-rqpa.gc.ca/english/historical_events.html

5. Colonization of First Nations

5.4 The 60's Scoop

A common belief within the First Nations/Métis community is that the children are the future and that they hold a special place in the community. Traditionally, when a problem was identified, solutions were identified before a situation rose to a crisis. In this manner, families existed in communities that worked together to create harmony and balance.

Impacts caused by residential schooling placed many families in crisis and created situations where the families were unable to cope. Poverty was a common characteristic of the First Nations and Métis community in the 1960's. The European system measured comfort and success in terms of purchasing power and the accumulation of wealth. Generally, this created a process where the First Nations/Métis community was stereotyped as being unable to care for their children properly if they did not have adequate resources.

As changes to the Indian Act occurred and large segments of the First Nation's and Métis communities began to move to cities in search of a better way of live, they became increasingly involved with social service agencies and the Family and Child Protection agencies. History reveals that a relationship developed between the Federal Government and Provincial Child Protection Services. These provincial agencies equated family well-being with wealth and earning power, and as a result, many First Nations and Métis children were removed from their homes and placed in foster care.

These events led to what became known as the 60's Scoop within the First Nation/Métis

community. Between the 1960's and 1980's, social service agencies apprehended thousands of First Nations and Métis children from families living below the poverty line and placed them in care. In a study conducted in 1982, Saskatchewan led the nation, with 63% of all children in custody were of First Nation or Métis ancestry. Manitoba, Alberta, and B.C. also were also over-represented, but to a lesser degree. The Northwest Territories was the only region of the country where First Nations and Métis children were not over-represented in the child welfare system.

The majority of Indian and Métis children were placed in homes that valued the norms of Canadian society. The First Nations and Métis children were placed in colonial and assimilationist environments. The results of this experiment can be seen in the statistics in prisons, psychiatric hospitals, and suicide rates. A report about Indian and Métis adoptions released in 1985, titled *No Quiet Place: Final Report to the Honourable Muriel Smith, Minister of Community Services*, and cited in the *Gathering Strength Report* stated that the "road to hell was paved with good intentions and the child welfare system was the paving contractor".

Information, such as, birth parents and home communities was never shared with the children who were placed in care by social services agencies. The Child and Family Services Act prohibited the release of information, unless both the birth parent and the child asked for it. Many of the adopted children tell stories of abuse and torment at the hands of their adopted families and communities. Many adopted as foster children, don't know their culture and have suffered frustration in trying to find out their history and where they belonged. Many of these children began the process of trying to re-connect to their birth families as adults.

According to the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the Sixties Scoop is defined as cultural genocide. Indigenous people were denied their rights of living in freedom, peace and in security, as distinct people. Determining the numbers of exactly how many children were removed is virtually impossible because the adoption records rarely indicated First Nations or Métis status. In contrast to Residential Schools, the sixties scoop is not well known. Residential schooling was a policy that was written down while the child welfare apprehensions were part of the colonial process and never formulated in law.

The federal government has been able to assist individuals under the auspices of the Healing Foundation. Many of these individuals are trying to reconnect with their families. Some seek to regain their Indian status, to live in the community of their origin, or to uncover family medical histories. The majority lack the financial resources to do this on their own.

Many First Nation and Métis organizations operating at a community level have dedicated resources and personnel who work at helping people reconnect with their families. The

success stories are multiplying and many families are able to heal and begin to operate as family units. The involvement of band controlled Child and Family Services at the First Nation level and in community based Métis controlled community agencies are both seen as critical to assisting this process.

Additional resources:

<http://www.ammsa.com/windspeaker/WINDNEWSSEP99.html>

http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/si4_e.html

<http://www.wrcfs.org/rep/stolennation.htm>

<http://www.turtleisland.org/healing/liberate.doc>

<http://www.wrcfs.org/rep/childrengoing.htm>

http://nativechild.org/rep_rpt.pdf

5. Colonization of First Nations

5.5 Statement of Reconciliation

The legacy left behind by residential schooling continues to negatively impact many members of the First Nations/Métis community. It is believed that these negative effects continue to affect their day to day lives and the relationships with each other. It is believed that the solution is found in a healing journey that all parties must play a role in.

There were several accusations and investigations conducted in the 1990's into abuses that occurred at the residential schools. Several members of the church run schools were accused and charged with sexual abuse. A decade of finger pointing and trying to pass the blame to someone else occurred. Some guilty charges resulted in jail terms, but this never led to any form of reconciliation for the victims. Some cases were settled as out of court settlements and this method was believed to be a better way. Healing circles became a method where the guilty could meet with their accusers and formerly apologize. This process empowered the victims and allowed them to begin a healing process.

In 1998, the Federal government issues a statement of reconciliation. It formerly acknowledged their role in residential schooling and the legacies that it left in the First Nations community. They also realized that a piecemeal approach could not work and that a healing strategy was necessary. The statement began with an apology and proposed an

ongoing reconciliation strategy be implemented.

The Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, and United churches all participated in the operation of the residential schools and all have been named as defendants. There are approximately 12,000 claimants alleging abuse as a result of the residential schools. The churches have issued apologies for actions of their employees and have taken responsibility as an organization.

As part of the healing process, the federal government created an Aboriginal Healing Foundation and committed \$350 million to its establishment as part of the *Gathering Strength Initiative*. The churches also agreed to provide amounts of funds to pay for their share of compensation for the victims of validated physical and sexual abuse. These agreements signalled a commitment by the government and the churches to respond to the legacy of the residential schools and to deal with the situation in a proactive, constructive manner.

The federal government created a process where former students of the residential schools could meet with federal government officials and churches to discuss how solutions could be reached and they could work together to resolve the outstanding legal claims. Many of the claimants are finding that an out of court solution is preferable because it provides a less adversarial approach and a better opportunity for long term reconciliation and healing.

The government have recognized the value of First Nation approaches to the healing process. Through discussion and cooperation of all the parties involved, a process has been arrived at that responds to the victims as well as the taxpayers and still maintains a positive relationship with the churches. A new era appears to have emerged where the government and the churches are taking proactive positions in terms of incorporating First Nations and Métis cultural values into their programs. These are intended as support systems to enhance the healing journey.

The reconciliation process began with an admission of guilt on behalf of the government and the churches and a formal apology from them. The next phase was the implementation of a process to deal with the situation. This process included all affected parties. The next phase was to provide financial supports to enable the process and to provide compensation for the victims. The final stage is dialogue, discussion, healing and eventual forgiveness for the shameful actions carried out against the victims in the form of physical and sexual abuse. A sacred trust has been violated and the past cannot be undone. It is believed that a climate of openness, honesty, and of reconciliation will help heal that historical past.

Additional resources:

http://www.stpeters.sk.ca/prairie_messenger/Sutton_10_04_00.html

<http://www.turtleisland.org/news/apology.htm>

http://www.rqpa-irsr.gc.ca/english/news_07_09_01.html

http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca?gs/rec_e.html

<http://generalsynod.anglican.ca/ministeries/rs/reports/rsupdate15.html>

5. Colonization of First Nations

5.6 Veteran's Rights

Canadian soldiers have played a major role in many of the conflicts that have been part of the history of war. Canadian soldiers returning from these conflicts have been recognized as veterans and were awarded recognitions in terms of medals and in most cases, benefits. Veterans of WWI and WWII have received the most recognition. Veterans of the Korean War did not receive recognition until 1991 and veterans that were captured by the Japanese during WWII at Hong Kong are still being denied benefits by the Canadian Government.

The First Nations and Métis communities were very active during the war years. Over 12,000 First Nations and Métis soldiers participated in the war as soldiers. Other members of the First Nation and Métis community were very active at home working in the factories and fundraising to support the war effort. Shortage of workers gave the members of the First Nation community opportunities that had previously been denied to them under the Indian Act.

The conditions of war and the friendships needed to survive in the trenches went way beyond race. The infantry faced appalling conditions and had the highest casualty rates. First Nations/Métis and non-Aboriginal soldiers became brothers in arms and race became unimportant issue on the battlefield. First Nation and Métis soldiers were treated as equals and many returning veterans have commented on the importance as being seen as equal and treated as equal with other Canadian soldiers.

By the middle of WWII, the Canadian bureaucrats were looking at obtaining land for Canadian veterans as they returned from the war. The lands that were being coveted were First Nation lands that had been negotiated under the Treaties. Much of this land was acquired, so that it could be distributed to the returning soldiers under the Veterans' Land Act. This act, outlined a belief that stated that agriculture was a good means to rehabilitate veterans and that it was in the best interest to support veterans for training and the opportunity to purchase land and equipment. A loan was provided to the veterans at minimal

interest, with a large portion of it forgivable, and the remaining payments spread out over a long period of time.

First Nation veterans did not get the same benefits. Theoretically, they could, if they chose enfranchisement and give up their rights as Indians under the Indian Act. Should they choose to do this they could not live on a Reserve. In reality, this was not seen as a viable option by the returning First Nation veterans. This meant that they would be isolated from their families, probably unemployed with no access to financial support. Another factor was that the Department of Indian Affairs placed themselves in a position to administer the benefits and pay of the First Nations soldiers while they were in action.

Soldiers were entitled to a separation allowance for men with wives and children and the allowance was sent home to assist the families. First Nation families were declared ineligible due to the children's attendance at residential schools. Allowances that were to be sent home to the First Nation wives were reduced by half and kept by the Indian agents to be used as general revenues. The reason cited was that the First Nations women were not used to having money and would be unable to handle it properly and would be taken advantage of by others.

Upon their return home, First Nation veterans did not receive their land allotment under the veteran's act unless they enfranchised. They also had no access to the veteran's affairs administrators because of the role of the Indian agents. They were also refused entry to legions, as Indians were not allowed liquor under the Indian Act and the legions served alcohol. These exclusions kept information from veterans and, in many cases, resulted in the veteran's inability to access any benefits at all. For Métis veterans, the situation was considered slightly better, but access to legions and other supports were limited based on the fact that the many of the Métis veterans lived in the northern part of the province or in the rural areas of the south. Information was not readily shared and most Métis veterans were never made aware of what they could access for benefits. Non-status Indians also faced problems due to the bureaucratic nature of veteran's affairs and Indian affairs. The onus was put on the veterans to prove their entitlements and then it was consistently challenged by the departments.

First Nation and Métis veterans who survived the war are elderly and now number fewer than 1000 in total. In June of 2002, the Government of Canada offered a package to First Nation veterans or their surviving spouses in the sum of \$20,000 as gesture of goodwill. This courtesy was not extended to non-status Indian or Métis veterans. The Métis veteran's association has challenged this under the Constitution Act of 1982 which recognizes them as 'Aboriginal' peoples. Also, prior to the war they were underprivileged and could not access education and as a result could not access the university and vocational training that was offered to veterans upon their return home.

The National Council of Veterans Associations have filed a claim with the United Nations in Geneva on behalf of all First Nation and Métis veterans, who because of their First Nations or Métis status and identity have been able to receive benefits after WWII and the Korean War. They hope that their actions will shame the Canadian Government into dealing fairly with their issues. There is a great deal of support from other veterans for their actions. Today, First Nation and Métis veterans are well recognized in their respective communities. They often serve as flag bearers at pow wows and lead the grand entry ceremony. They usually are asked to participate in any ceremonies within the communities. On Remembrance Day, the surviving First Nation and Métis veterans proudly don their medals and join the marches to the war memorials that honour the dead. They only wish to be recognized as equal participants who made equal sacrifices and they believe that they deserve equal benefits.

Additional resources:

http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/sg45_e.html

<http://www.cda-cdai.ca/symposia/1998/98lackenbauer.htm>

http://www.metisnation.org/news/02_Nov_Vets2.html

<http://www.easterndoor.com/9-44/4-44-3.htm>

5. Colonization of First Nations

5.7 Healing Journey

Many people are not fully aware of the impacts of residential schools. The survivors and their families continue to deal with cycles of physical and sexual abuse, alcoholism, drug addictions, family violence, and neglect. In order to deal with these issues, the First Nation and Métis community have had to go through a reconciliation process to address the issues. In this context, it is referred to as a healing journey. Healing implies putting things right, putting them back into a state of balance where harmony exists. In order to do this, the whole person must be dealt with and a balance must exist in the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual domains.

The First Nation and Métis communities have faced many generations of debilitating experiences that have left them broken and confused. The attacks have been in the form of

diseases, cultural genocide, traditional governance destruction, and family and community breakdown through social destruction. The effects play out at the individual, family and community levels. The individual, affected by drug or alcohol abuse are unable to trust, hold down a job or be able to have consistent relationships with others. The families lack the basis for stability in the basic human needs of love, safety and security needed to create a stable and healthy foundation. The communities suffer from wide spread levels of distrust, gossip, a climate of fear and intimidation by those in power and a general lack of success in community based initiatives.

A healing movement began in the early 1980's. The early initiatives focussed on addressing alcoholism and the effects it had on the community. Although, some communities achieved success with alcohol problems, it became very clear that this was only a starting point. There were many other problems that were affecting the patterns of a normal community life. Parenting, family violence, suicide, sexual abuse, anger and residential school traumas were all identified as being problematic. Other areas, such as education, employment, justice, and health were also identified as areas that the First Nation and Métis community were behind in.

Research conducted through the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* in 1996 by the Federal Government refers to the lasting effects of the oppression and systematic racism experienced by the First Nation and Métis community. There is no blueprint that outlines the recovery process. The Federal Government created the Aboriginal Healing Foundation as a support network to the First Nation /Métis community and their community based agencies. These agencies are involved in the critical challenge of working with individuals and communities that are dealing with healing issues.

The healing journey has been described as a process that removes barriers and builds the capacity for the communities to enable them to address the determinants of their health. Things have been recognized that constitute healing are culture, identity, traditional knowledge, values, spirituality, self-determination, self-esteem, and skill acquisition. Agencies within the First Nation/Métis community provide services that have been described as a mirror that helps people see themselves more clearly. This is the first step of a process that requires the individuals to accept themselves and what took place and forgive those involved in the process that created the situation.

First Nations and Métis health centres have been established to promote healthy lifestyles. Elders and dieticians play a major role in these centres. Healing lodges and treatment centres offer traditional healing approaches to victims of abuse, addictions and family dysfunction. Shelters are available for women and children in crisis. Community wellness workers, crisis workers, translators, outreach workers, restorative justice programs, head start and healthy baby programs are examples where positive impacts are being made.

It is believed that the healing journey may take several generations before things have been restored to a place of balance. This journey will be different for every person because of our uniqueness as people and as individuals. The process has several layers and must address the issues faced by and the individual, family and community. It also must be addressed within the larger society and partnerships must be established that support the healing process. Employers, educators, social workers, police officers, and many other civil servants play a key role in supporting the healing process.

Additional resources:

http://www.ahf.ca/english-pdf/interim_evaluation2.pdf

http://www.psepc-sppcc.gc.ca/publications/abor_corrections/APC2002_e.asp

<http://www.turtleisland.org/news/rsexhibit.pdf>

www.ahwsontario.ca

6. Creating the Rightful Place for First Nations and Métis

6.1 Respecting our ancestors' way of life

First Nations people believe that creation is a gift, and therefore respect must be given to all things given by the creator. The sky, the wind, the water, the trees, the animals are a few examples of what are considered gifts. The Elders believe that a spiritual connection is made to these beings through the power of prayer. The Elders also believe that energy exists and can be transferred between beings through prayer and belief in the power of prayer.

Gatherings, more commonly known as pow wows create, collective energy; a walk in a forest produces a bond of energy with the trees. Many First Nations people believe antiquities housed in museums still contain the energy of the person who created or owned it. These objects must be respected through prayer and smudging ceremonies because they are living, powerful things.

First Nations and Métis worldviews are connected to the land. It is a common understanding among First Nation's peoples that consideration must be given to the impacts these decisions will have on the next seven generations. It is also believed that the previous seven generations can be called upon for guidance.

Every language has nuances that create humour, respect and fun. These historical nuances become memories that are key elements to the formation of words and phrases. These memories are expressed through stories and how the stories are told. There are protocols that accompany these stories to show respect for the spirits that have come to help you with the sharing of the stories. These stories are told to help you in your daily life and to give you direction and to teach you lessons.

First Nations and Métis traditions create a sense of community, a collective sharing where an awareness of others and their needs plays a central role. All things have a role and deserve respect. There is a common understanding that there are unseen powers that affect our lives and these powers exist as patterns of natural law. All forms of nature have the ability to communicate and in order to connect with them, you must listen. Ceremonies are also considered very important means of communicating with the powers of nature.

In our contemporary society, First Nations and Métis ways of knowing have often been ignored and European philosophy has dominated the learning curriculum. Western practices of doing research come totally from an European perspective and First Nations knowledge was disregarded. If any First Nations or Métis ways of knowing have been incorporated, usually any rights to intellectual ownership were ignored. Recently, there have been strides made at re-connecting with these traditions to form a basis for strengthening First Nations and Métis communities and giving some recognition to the proper owners.

Western society is now starting to recognize that First Nations and Métis traditional ways have a valid place and that much can be learned from connecting with these ways. Much of this has resulted in the practice of patents and ownership of copyright. Many contemporary First Nations and Métis people are writers or artists who have developed new ideas or new technology. The laws of Canada recognize that these individuals have intellectual property rights. Strides have been made to recognize First Nations and Métis perspectives and Indigenous knowledge within the context of these rights.

Researchers that work with First Nations and Métis communities and traditions are adopting new strategies while conducting research. They are recruiting speakers of the First Nations language and recognizing that Elders have a great deal of knowledge. These researchers are also developing respect for the land and learning some of the history and values that First Nations and Métis people hold for the natural environment and the land.

Through policy development, First Nations peoples are now recognized as the primary caregivers of the traditional knowledge and that First Nations people have legal ownership of this knowledge and have the ability to control how this knowledge is used. Consent for the use of this knowledge must be given.

The respect and reconnection to traditional ways of knowing can be seen in the youth of today. Many First Nations and Métis youth are beginning to develop cultural skills with the assistance of elders. There is a revitalization of First Nations and Métis traditions and philosophy and these are providing some forms of balance to our communities.

* The majority of this work was created in consultation with Elders.

For additional information:

<http://www.ahwsontario.ca/policies/pdf/IndigenousKnowledgePolicy.pdf>

<http://www.aand.gov.ab.ca/PDFs/3.%20BP%20Conducting.pdf>

Brascoupe, Simon, And Endemann, Karin (1999). Intellectual Property and Aboriginal People: A Working Paper. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Govern Services Canada. Catalogue No. R-32-204/1999-1E. ISBN 0-662-28017-2.

6. Creating the Rightful Place for First Nations and Métis

6.2 Partnerships with mainstream society

The term partnership implies an equal and shared relationship where two or more parties join together to create an arrangement that provides mutual benefit to both organizations. Historically, partnerships between First Nations and Métis peoples and mainstream society have not been equitable. For First Nations peoples, partnerships were interpreted through section 91.24 of the Constitution Act, 1867 which gave legislative control to the Federal government for 'Indians and lands reserved for Indians'. Government agencies made decisions and then determined a procedure for implementing the decisions. For Métis people, their relationship with society was one of marginalization. Métis organizations have never been founded in legislation and are on file in the non-profit corporation sector and are subjected to the rules outlined in the legislation for non-profit corporations. As a result, the history of partnerships with First Nations and Métis peoples has been very one-sided in Canada.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) has created a foundation for a new era, and opportunity for meaningful partnerships has been established. Beginning with an apology and a statement of reconciliation, the Canadian government has an established goal of creating partnerships with First Nations and Métis peoples and facilitating partnerships between the First Nations/Métis community and the private sector. Several initiatives have been started by the Federal Government that established new ways of working with various segments of the First Nations and Métis community. A great deal of work is still required in

the area of governance and urban issues.

Changing First Nations and Métis demographics has created a sense of urgency in Saskatchewan. The First Nations and Métis population is increasing twice as fast as the non-Aboriginal population. Partnerships are being sought in many different sectors. The economic and business areas have created workforce participation strategies and have signed partnership agreements. Education and Health are two other key areas that have recognized that much needs to be done in order to create new structures that can meet the changing needs.

The First Nations and Métis community remain optimistic about the nature of partnerships, although history has shown that partnerships with mainstream society have not been balanced and have been based on European control. They continue to discuss ways to change the system to reflect what a true partnership is about.

The First Nations and Métis community believes that partnerships are based on truth, respect and understanding. Partnerships must be open-minded and have the ability to recognize that there are other ways of being valid. First Nations/Métis input does not need to be validated by another partner, it must be recognized and respected as being valid in its own right. The First Nations and Métis community also recognizes the fact that partnerships are inevitable and that these partnerships will play a major role.

Many of the partnerships with the First Nations and Métis community have been pursued in areas that are social in nature. The community based partners have focussed their energy on housing, education and training, child welfare, justice and community development. The creation of First Nations and Métis agencies to interact and support mainstream institutions has proven to be very beneficial.

In order for the partnerships to become true partnerships more work needs to be done in the political area. Shared ownership and shared responsibility needs to be created at the political level where policy is developed. It is felt that in order to become meaningful partnerships, the First Nations and Métis community must have equal voice and equal control. They have long recognized that 'you don't do well the things that you do not own'. It is imperative that in order to become equal contributing members of society, the First Nations/Métis community must become equal contributing partners to society. Shifting of power and control by mainstream agencies and governments will dictate the rate that the partnerships evolve.

* The majority of this information was gathered in a discussion with Elders.

Additional resources: http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/gs/chg_e.html

http://www/chief-of-ontario.org/economic/ec_m04.html

<http://finalreport.healthcarecommission.ca>

www.turtleisland.org/discussion/viewpoint.php?t=198

Indian and Northern Affairs. (1998). Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative: Employer Toolkit. Ottawa.

Tymchak, M. (2001). Task Force and Public Dialogue on the Role of the School: School Plus A Vision for Children and Youth. Final Report to the Minister of Education, Government of Saskatchewan. Feb 28, 2001.

6. Creating the Rightful Place for First Nations and Métis

6.3 Contributions to Western Society

North America has undergone some interesting transformations throughout history. The Governments of Canada and the United States have constructed economies based on capitalism and democratic ideals. Capitalism has been and continues to be a very difficult process for economically disadvantaged minorities in North America. First Nation and Métis peoples in Canada and the U.S. have been subjected to many government policies and regulations that have controlled them and have had dramatic negative effects on First Nations and Métis cultural identity.

First Nations and Métis people make many contributions to contemporary society. Unfortunately, very few of these contributions are recognized as to their origins. Many names of towns, cities, or provinces come from various First Nations languages. Manitoba, Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Toronto, Chicago, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Nokomis, and Sintaluta are several examples.

Patent medicines probably owe the largest debt to First Nations society. It is estimated that approximately 60% of all of the patented medicines on the Saskatchewan drug plan are medicines that came from First Nation peoples. Healing properties of many different plants and herbs have long been used by First Nation and Métis societies to maintain healthy communities.

The river routes that explorers travelled and the highway systems used today are based on the original travel and trade routes used by First Nations prior to European contact. The original trade networks were well used and goods were traded from Mexico to the Arctic. Many communities are constructed upon the original sites of the villages of long ago.

Another interesting aspect is that the majority of the National Parks in Canada and the Provincial Parks in Saskatchewan were once Métis and First Nations settlements.

Many foods are also recognized as coming from First Nations peoples. Corn, beans and squash are called the three sisters and were grown together to give each other help. Different herbs, spices and wild berries that are now commonplace came from First Nations peoples. Examples are rosehips used for Vitamin C and in tea, senneca roots for aspirins and spruce needles for tea and cold remedies.

There are countless examples in the clothing and fashion industry of designs, patterns, or styles of clothing from First Nations and Métis designers. Turquoise and silver jewellery is recognized as a Navajo contribution. Beadwork, quillwork, basket weaving, paints, dye and carving are all examples where First Nation and Métis peoples have made huge contributions to the art world. Two examples; Bill Reid, a Haida carver has been recognized internationally, Doug Cardinal, a Métis architect has incorporated First Nations and Métis themes and design techniques into buildings that he has designed.

First Nation and Métis people have contributed greatly to the environmental movement. They believe that all things are interconnected and what you do to one thing has an effect on something else. First Nations world views state that First Nations peoples are keepers of the land and that their role is to protect the earth and all things connected to it. There is also the seven generations philosophy and that decisions that are made are to be assessed in terms of how the results of the decisions will impact on First Nation people seven generations from now.

The social justice area is now looking to First Nations philosophies for solutions. Ironically, many First Nations things are being included but have to be justified in terms of a western rationale. Examples of this are the restorative nature of sentencing circles and healing circles and also the 12 step rehabilitation plan that is used for addictions programming finds its roots in the First Nations world view.

Additional resources:

Keoke E.D & Porterfield K.M. (2003). *American Indian Contributions to the World: 15,000 Years of inventions and innovations*. New York: Checkmark Books.

Keepers of the Earth and the other books in the Keepers series. Caduto M. and Bruchac J. Saskatoon: Fifth House Publications. 1989.

Wetherford, Jack (1988). *Indian Givers: How the Indians of the Americas transformed the World*. Toronto: Random House.

6. Creating the Rightful Place for First Nations and Métis

6.4 Empowering First Nations and Métis People

Researchers have been reporting that the First Nations and Métis population is vastly over-represented in the prison system and the health system. They are vastly under-represented in the education system, the workforce and the political system. These reports cite many reasons why they believe these statistics occur. Residential schooling, poor housing, low-income, single parent families, loss of identity, and non-Aboriginal systems that are used to teach the children are all seen as contributing factors. There are always recommendations made about what needs to be done. The approach to restoring dignity to the First Nations and Métis community has been fragmented at best, and therefore gains and setbacks are difficult to monitor.

The Elders believe that the best way to empower young people is to validate them as First Nations or Métis people, giving them a sense of pride. If young people have this pride, they will be interested in the language and the past and they will want to learn about history from a First Nations or Métis perspective. In order for this to happen, the opportunities to learn about the past must be provided.

The Elders recognize the importance of a community identity. Improvements to housing, health and education systems provide a positive perspective and help create a sense of what is normal. Transferring traditional knowledge to a contemporary setting is considered a method of establishing a community identity. An example is to take a traditional song and transfer the song to a modern day setting using language and modern song lyrics.

Leadership structures are considered vital to the development of community. Indian Affairs structures must be tempered with traditional leadership models and First Nations and Métis ways of knowing must be recognized as valid. This can provide an opportunity for role models and First Nations and Métis philosophical ideals to prosper.

The Elders look at it from two points of view. The first is what can you do as a people? The other is what can agencies do to assist in the process? Criticism of the agencies is well documented. Judgements have always been made on European standards and never on First Nations standards. Historically, churches and governments have validated each other and have not validated First Nations and Métis value systems.

The First Nations and Métis community is undergoing what is considered a healing process. The controls previously applied by the Federal Department of Indian Affairs is allowing for First Nations to manage their own affairs and resources. The creation of self determining structures has provided examples where First Nations and Métis communities or organizations have played a vital role in the empowering process. Organizations such as, the First Nation's University, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology, Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre play a huge role for First Nations people. For the Métis, Gabriel Dumont Institute and the Métis Economic Development Foundation are good examples of organizations that promote community and personal empowerment. Perspectives and definitions of what is true and what is not is changing to be more balanced. Political voice by First Nations and Métis leaders is being heard and the media is providing opportunities for First Nations and Métis to share their views.

The empowering process takes many forms when dealing with various segments of the First Nations and Métis community. School based activities, youth group functions, theatre, and interaction with elders are examples where youth have found a place where they can experience positives and build their self-esteem. Adults have made progress through attendance of community based programs that enhance their education and employment opportunities. The ability to participate within mainstream activities has contributed to their communities and family development. Parenting and decision-making skills benefit from these experiences. Elders have an opportunity to provide teaching opportunities and share the traditional stories. The use of language and the incorporation of tradition knowledge provide an opportunity for a traditional method of learning.

* The basis of this information was gathered through a discussion with elders.

Additional Resources:

Alberta Native News – www.albertanativenews.com

Aboriginal Peoples Television Network – <http://www.aptn.ca>

Eaglefeather News – www.eaglefeathernews.com

National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation – www.naaf.ca

Say Magazine – www.saymag.com

<http://www.turtleisland.org/news/absenuyrpt.pdf>

6. Creating the Rightful Place for First Nations and Métis

6.5 Positive Lifestyles

Much has been written about the negative experiences of First Nations people. The Indian Act and residential schools are seen as the tools of colonization and forced assimilation, as well as cultural genocide. In contemporary First Nations families, where violence occurs, it is seen as a symptom of the past. Addressing these instances or symptoms is part of the process of revitalization and creating a healthy community. The First Nations and Métis communities, with the support of many levels of government emphasize a holistic approach where the physical, emotional, spiritual and mental needs are addressed.

Empowering the community is seen as a central component of the healing process and the building of a positive environment. Home visits, workshops, community meetings and community based programming are some of the vehicles used to create positive environments. Elders play a key role in this aspect. Their involvement and support serve as a foundation and a bridge to the community as they experience community based activities that are promoting positive lifestyles.

The incorporation of First Nations and Métis philosophies are central to the community based organizations. People who work with the families must have an understanding of the holistic approach and some empathy and experience to what the community has experienced. These individuals must understand that many members of the First Nations and Métis community have been exposed to what would not be considered a positive lifestyle and a form of optimism is needed.

Individuals must be made aware of the forces that support them as well as the forces that detract from them. They must also be exposed to natural medicines to heal addictions as opposed to doctor prescribed medicines. They must be able to find their place in their community where they can live and act in a consistent fashion. They must be seen and recognized as member of a community and also be able to recognize that there are support networks available to them from their community.

Elders play a huge role in the establishment of a community. They are considered the keepers of the cultural traditions and the language. These elements are recognized as key components of the identity and self-esteem building that is necessary to live and maintain a healthy lifestyle. The other key component is diet. The First Nations and Métis community has more instances of diabetes and other diseases that are affected by diet. Access to a balanced diet is more common to activities that lead to purchasing power that result from employment, education and training.

Community based agencies that provide outreach and advocacy play a major part in the promotion of positive lifestyles. They create posters, provide activities for youth, organize community based functions and create viable alternatives. These agencies bring in role

models who have achieved in sports, dance, business or other activities that are considered positives. Young people and adults alike get to meet and talk to these individuals to find out what they needed to do in order to achieve at a high level. These opportunities have varying degrees of success and it is recognized that the more times these role models come back or the more opportunities to exposure to role models, the greater chance for positive things to happen within the community.

Successful people who have made the transition that return to their home communities have the ability to have huge impacts, especially on the youth. When the youth realize that there is opportunity and support and that they can succeed, the impacts are much greater. This creates a community based approach that promotes healthy behaviour and creates an environment that is moving in a positive direction.

* The basis for this information was provided in discussion with elders.

Additional Resources:

<http://www.ammsa.com/birchbark/topnews-Oct-2003.html>

<http://www.turtleisland.org/news/absenuayrpt.pdf>

<http://www.abwsontario.ca/about/familyhealing.htm>

<http://www.unfc.org/healingwellness.html>

6. Creating the Rightful Place for First Nations and Métis

6.6 Balancing Two Worlds: Medicine Wheel Teachings

The Circle is a very important concept in the lives of traditional Plains First Nations. It appeared in the arrangement of camps and the conical shape of the homes. It was a common symbol used in the designs on clothing, ceremonial objects and day to day equipment and tools. Life was perceived to travel in a circle and the universe was perceived in terms of circles, beginning at home and extending outward. Understanding and interaction with the circles corresponded to a person's personal development as they went from childhood to old age.

The term Medicine Wheel is derived from approximately fifty large stone circles that are located in present day Saskatchewan, Alberta and the northern United States. These large

circles made of stones have been the study of many scientists attempting to justify or understand their purpose. The summer solstice lines up with the cairns made of stone, so it is believed there is a connection to calendars. There is also some alignment with constellations in the sky at specific times, therefore making further connections to astronomy. Bits of pottery, broken rocks and old spear points have been found at some of these sights. Connections have been made to these as having spiritual significance. Some First Nation's Elders have said that these formations were placed here by the Creator as a teaching device, others say that they were built by little people as offerings to the Creator. The best explanation would be, that there is no single answer.

Medicine Wheels have become an educational model for teaching holistically. The Medicine wheel teachings seek to deal with all aspects of our lives. There is place for reflection, healing, critical analysis, transformation, personal, community, and cultural ideals. It also refers to the four aspects of human learning; emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual. The circular model allows for process and the use of concentric circles. The circle is divided in quadrants and different characteristics, animals, seasons, plants, aspects of nature, feelings, emotions and colours are all connected to certain quadrants. There is variation from nation to nation in how different interpretations are made to quadrants. Therefore, there is also no single answer or single way.

The circle is an eternal concept. It provides the foundation for families, community, spirituality, daily life, arts and cultural transmission. It provides a vehicle to examine situations from many different aspects, based on various perspectives and life experiences. The circle serves as a reflection of our lives and our connection to nature and the Creator. There is no mystery to the fact that all things living develop in cycles and are round in shape. Plants, trees, the human body, animals are examples. The circle is about unity and direction. It is also about balance.

The teachings of the Medicine Wheel reflect values, virtues, and reflect how things work in harmony. Families that do not have consistency are said to be out of balance and are in need of support. Recognizing that balance is needed and how to get there is necessary. This allows us to find and live in comfort zones. The Medicine Wheel also provides a model to validate the teachings of the Elders. In Canada, First Nations history has been one of colonization and residential schooling. The teachings of the Medicine Wheel help to remember the stories that people heard as children. They provide strength and new understanding to their own life experiences as they connect with the teachings and stories.

The Medicine Wheel teachings can be looked at as a way of life. It can be seen as a way of teaching and learning. It can be used for personal growth and self analysis. It comes from within and expands outward. Medicine wheels are seen as tools for teaching and interconnecting those teachings to all things created in the universe. It is a symbol of

peaceful interaction among all living things and their relationship to each other.

The term medicine used in a western context implies drugs or herbal remedies to heal sickness. In the context of First Nations philosophy, it implies inner energy and healing or spiritual strength. These teachings are being used as a central part of the process that provides the methods for individuals, communities and nations to recover from the onslaught of European colonization. Being able to connect the past to the future allows for understanding, learning, and forgiveness.

* The basis for this information was gathered from a discussion with Elders.

Additional resources:

Nikiforuk, Andrew (1992). Sacred Circles. Canadian Geographic Vol. 112, #4, 51-60.

Pewewardy, Cornel (1999). The Holistic Medicine Wheel. Winds of Change. Autumn 1999, 28-31.

http://www.shannonthunderbird.com/medicine_wheel_teachings.htm

<http://www.ammsa.com/buffalospirit/June-2000/medicinewheel.html>

<http://www.allmyrelations.ca/east/medicine.html>

6. Creating the Rightful Place for First Nations and Métis

6.7 Applying First Nations and Métis perspectives (Self-Determination)

The concepts of self-determination and self-government are often thought of as being synonymous. There are differences between these two concepts. Self-government has been looked at as dealing with a land base and First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people making the decisions about what happens on that land base in terms of the delivery of services and the development of political models and institutions. The best examples of self-government would be the creation of Nunavut, the Nishga's Final Agreement, the Sechelt Agreement, the Yukon First Nations Agreement, and the James Bay Agreement. These all convey structures of government where 'Aboriginal' peoples have asserted their authority over

territories of land and developed a political mandate to govern the territory. This type of structure can be viewed as an external process that deals with land, laws, and control that are set in context with another group.

Self-determination can perhaps be described as more of an internal process. This process looks at things from a more personal dimension. Basic needs such as the right to life, shelter, language, personal and group identity, traditional foods, beliefs, access to historical wisdom, local decision making ability to access the natural resources are key components of self-determination. People must be able to have control over the cultural, spiritual, social, and physical dimensions of their worlds.

These processes have been denied through the forces of colonialism and oppression. First Nations and Métis peoples have been placed in a state of dependency, where they have been controlled, the decisions have been made by someone else and the First Nations and Métis voices have been ignored. The Indian Act stands out as the document that has probably been the most controlling and devastating to the First Nations community.

The internal processes include duties and responsibilities. It is important that First Nations philosophies and that the unwritten laws from the natural world be incorporated and respected. It is necessary to ensure that everything is connected. Decisions must flow in a natural process that respects the natural world and that the First Nations and Métis worldview of preservation and protection for future generations must be adhered to. Accountability in maintaining these traditional values are central to the process of self-determination.

Indigenous nations have been disconnected from their traditional histories. The process of self-determination allows the reconnection to their past, their histories, their ancestral ways and philosophies. There needs to be a process that re-connects them to the land, the trees, the animals, and the water. First Nations and Métis people have been seen as caretakers and stewards to the land. They have a responsibility to protect the land and ensure a philosophical base to allow for the community to once again develop this responsibility. This will provide the basis that can allow for the process of self-government.

The First Nations/Métis community have been subjected to the influences of Christianity through the residential schools and the domination of western political structures. The First Nations community needs to re-establish the connections to the ecosystems and where they fit within the universe. There has been a history of thousands of years that need to be respected and revisited.

Maslow has developed a hierarchy of needs that need to be considered. The principles of self-determination require rights to the basics: life, shelter, language, and food. It also means going beyond to the rights to your own belief system, historical wisdom, and natural

resources. The development of these, along with the duties and responsibilities that come from it, can create a foundation for the First Nations and Métis community to once again become self-determining.

Additional resources

<http://www.turtleisland.org/news/news-happynook.htm>

<http://www.pum.umontreal.ca/revues/surfaces/vol2/coon-com.html>

http://www.canadiandimension.mb.ca/archive/28_5_p4.htm

7. Cultural/language Understandings

7.1 The culture/language of the home, school and community

Many First Nation/Métis languages in Canada are in jeopardy of being lost. The Elders of the communities have expressed their concerns that the young people are not learning their traditional languages. Some Elders believe that many of the traditional languages will disappear. The work being done to preserve languages at the community level has been affected by under-funding, lack of commitment and political will. The colonial past experienced by the First Nations and Métis communities is witness to this. The Elders realize that if First Nations people lose their language, they have no way of regaining it, unlike the rest of Canada, who can go somewhere else to relearn their language.

The history of the Residential schools revealed that many First Nations children were punished for speaking their language and as a result many have not taught the language to their children. Another reason for the loss of traditional languages is that First Nations or Métis language speakers experience variations in pronunciation when attempting to translate to English. The phonetic base of the First Nations language is different from English and therefore some First Nation language speakers often speak in a dialectal form of English which is not considered proper English.

As a result, First Nation language speakers are often penalized when they enter school or the work force for having the ability to speak their first language. The penalty is based upon the speaker a dialectal form of English or broken English and this affects promotion within schools or work sites. Many parents have encouraged that their children speak English only to avoid the obstacles a first language may create. This move to English only has caused other issues to occur within the First Nations and Métis cultural system.

The Elders of the communities believe that much of the culture is in the language. In order

to understand the history and to really be able to understand who we are, we must be able to speak and understand the language. Losing the ability to speak our traditional language never allows us to connect with many things from our heritage and community's history. This has led to other issues and concerns that deal with identity, self esteem and finding our place in our communities.

The Elders suggest that a balance needs to be found. They believe that the move towards community schools and the incorporation of language and community values assist in finding this balance. The consistent use of language allows it to shift from the spoken form to a written form. This poses other problems as traditional languages are oral in nature and the translation to a written format has some affects on how language is learned and shared. The environment also has a huge influence on language and standardizing it in a written format doesn't allow for environmental or regional influences. This is best outlined by recognizing the geographic differences between Northern and Southern parts of Saskatchewan and the differences in the variations of the languages in these regions.

Much of the recent history of First Nations and Métis people has revolved around poverty and marginalization. The communities are seen as dispossessed and have a poorly developed economic base. Reserve based and rural people living in these situations often are required to survive in a manner that takes them closer to the land and they rely on the animals and nature. This connection enhances the spiritual connection to the animals and creates a greater awareness and valuing of the cycles of nature. As a result, First Nations and Métis people who are connected to the land have more contact to the natural world and have a better understanding of it. This lifestyle is also reflected in the language, the communication style and how language is used.

Traditionally lifestyle required the master of skills in order to survive and thrive. As a result, the learning of the skills were cherished and valued in order to live in a balanced way. Modern education that incorporates the lifestyle and the language of the community must incorporate a virtues based program that recognizes traditional skills. The Elders say that we must move toward what benefits all people. Universal values such as honesty, patience, courage, fortitude, generosity, and humility allow a place for the values of a community to be incorporated into the mainstream system. Recognition and support of the community values builds esteem, character and the reinforcement of a traditional philosophy.

*The majority of this work was created in consultation with Elders.

Additional resources:

<http://www.answers.com/topic/language>

<http://www.gdins.org/GDC.shtml>

<http://www.sicc.sk.ca>

7. Cultural/language Understandings

7.2 Cultural customs and protocols

The First Nations and Métis communities are very active in working at keeping their cultural traditions and sense of community alive. The Elders keep the traditions and customs alive. They have the ability to make the historical connections to the past, the present, and the future. The First Nations and Métis community recognize that their identity and survival as a people are linked to the cultural customs and protocols established through traditional ceremony and contemporary lifestyle choices.

In a European based society, museums categorize old things as antiquities that should be preserved in order to be studied and put on display. These antiquities are seen as inanimate objects that exist as part of a past. They serve to show how things were in the past and that technology has changed the past and modern inventions have replaced these old objects.

First Nations Elders believe that these objects housed in museums have a spiritual energy that can be transferred to the contemporary and the future. The Elders assume a responsibility for these objects and their role is caring for these objects. They don't see these objects as antiquities, but as a part of a living tradition. To illustrate this point we can examine the example of a dancer dropping an eagle feather at a pow wow. Often, the dance is immediately halted and a ceremony is held where the eagle feather is reconnected to the dancer as a conduit to the creator. Other tasks that come from traditional practises such as vision quests and fasting are also considered methods of creating a conduit to the creator.

Ceremonies are considered re-enactments of sacred moments of historical memories. Pow wows are not just for the dancers; they are meant to invigorate and re-energize everyone. There is energy provided by the dancers, but the people who attend also bring energy to the event. The use of patterns is very important and serves to arrive at an outcome. In comparison we can make compare this to a liturgy in church where the minister follows a pattern in order to arrive at an outcome. The differences occur in the way that traditional people appreciate things as opposed to scientific thought. An example might be, the traditional thinkers are more interested in the patterns that are needed to make it rain and the scientific thinkers are interested in the relationship between the ground, the clouds and

the weather systems.

Following the protocols has been seen as a very important method of ensuring that historical traditions survive. For First Nations Elders, the offering of tobacco serves to represent what one may be asking the Elder to do. The Elder then has the right to accept or reject

We must become educated both in the ways of our ancestors and in the new knowledge and skills required to carry our communities forward. And, most urgently, we must begin to re-create a place of honour and respect within our societies for young people.

(Peace, Power, Righteousness An Indigenous Manifesto-Taiiaki Alfred,1999)

4. In Two Worlds

the tobacco. Their choice will then represent whether they will do what you are asking them to do or not. Other objects have been used and continue to be used as protocol gifts, horses, blankets and cloth are items that are most commonly given.

Many of these protocols and traditions have been retained for many generations in First Nation communities and may be specific only to that community. These are passed on from generation to generation and are seen as a way of life. Protocols are specific to men and to women. Gender specific roles can be observed in a feast, women prepare the food and men serve the food. Many of these protocols are enacted through prayer and the gifts given in prayer are not intended as items of influence but to recognize the generosity of giving. The most common would be the burning of sage or sweetgrass for First Nations people. The Métis ceremonies would entail the burning of rummo which was cedar leaves blessed with holy water. The burning may have a dual purpose. It may serve to acknowledge the creator but it also may serve to drive away any spirits that are considered negative.

The Elders are considered the keepers of the languages and the traditions in many communities. They take on special roles in the cultural renewal of the community. Some Elders are seen as healers, while all Elders are seen as traditional knowledge keepers who teach life skills, language, self-awareness and historical traditions of their community. This role cannot be over-emphasized in a Canadian context. There is continuous cultural change as successive generations of people adapt to Canadian society. The Elders serve as the keepers of the languages and the cultural traditions and protocols in order to help young people develop a positive sense of their cultural identity.

* The majority of this information was gathered through a discussion with Elders.

Additional resources:

<http://www.niichro.com/Elders/Elders11.html>

Jacobs, Don T. & Jacobs–Spencer, Jessica. (2001). *Teaching Virtues: building character across the curriculum*. Lanham: Maryland, Scarecrow Press Inc.

Underwood, Paula . (2000) *The Great Hoop of Life: Vol. 1 a traditional medicine wheel for enabling learning and for gathering wisdom*. Anselmo, Ca., A Tribe of Two Press.

7. Cultural/language Understandings

7.3 Cultural teachings

Cultural teachings of a community are recognized as those traditional ways that were identified as natural activities done by a community in order to help each other. These skills and teachings would evolve when a group of people would come together as a community with the recognition that they needed each other to ensure their well-being. The natural evolution would produce virtues and other practises which would be recognized as cultural ways. This also meant learning one's place and what one's responsibilities were to that community.

Language was considered one of the most important elements and is certainly recognized as central to cultural teachings. First Nations languages are considered true in their intent and meaning. For example, in Dakota society the word that means child translates into "a sacred being". If we compare English variations of the word for child, such as "kids," this does not reflect a proper respect for the value children hold.

Cultural teachings are also considered in the manner one interacts with the natural environment. Being able to contribute to the community through the interaction of the environment around you is an important cultural teaching. In a broader sense, these teachings may be considered informal learning by the contemporary society. More formal learning might be considered as those things learned in a school or modern education setting.

Another cultural teaching was how to be a productive member within a community. If you were considered not being a contributing member of your society, then you were seen as being in need of support. The process would then entail an attempt or a series of attempts to restore that balance. This process would usually involve the whole community. At the centre would be the individual who had a responsibility to be honest and true to himself or herself. The outcomes of the restoration of balance would evolve from a process based on consensus from the community itself. A modern version would be using a healing circle within the community.

First Nations people who follow traditional ways believe that everything is spiritual and

interconnected. Everything revolves around relationships and the interaction between all things. Ceremonies are part of these relationships and help you understand who you are in relation to other things. These understandings are demonstrated in the way you interact with the earth and nature, and how you respect and see yourself in relationship to other things. Stories are considered cultural teaching tools. It is through the use of stories that children can be taught the significance and importance of relationships and how balance must be maintained. Other methods of teaching cultural protocol have been through the use of observation, role models, and mentors. Historically, the use of a society structure would help develop levels of understanding and when levels were achieved promotion would occur in these societies.

For Métis people, their history has been seen as a history based on struggle for recognition and rights. The cultural teachings have evolved as a means of trying to continue that struggle for what might be considered a place of equality in society. The common bonds and strengths that come from these teachings assist in building a sense of community. The problems occur for both First Nations and Métis youth when they perceive the cultural teachings either too idealistic for them to achieve or in conflict with the society in which they live because that society may give a distorted reality of tradition and cultural teaching.

For First Nations and Métis people, incorporating cultural teachings into the modern education structure is an important process. Historical cultural practises cannot be taught or learned in isolation. These teachings are there to help you know who you are and therefore must be placed in a context of your daily life. The education system, the health system, the justice system, the social system must incorporate methods that allow youth to find the balance that comes from learning their cultural traditions.

* Much of this information was gathered through a discussion with Elders.

Additional resources:

<http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/depts/sese/csew/hall/res/O4informallearning.htm>

http://mcfs.ca/id32_m.htm

<http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/forum/rjweek/aborig/heale.shtml>

http://sage.medical.org/sogcnet/sage_docs/common/guide/pdfs/ps100_3.pdf

7. Cultural/language Understandings

7.4 Oral Tradition and research

Oral tradition can be recognized as a process that has been used by First Nations and Métis people to pass on information in an oral fashion. Until recently, First Nations used oral traditions to pass on their knowledge and skills. The skills of survival, tools, religious practises, ceremonies, hunting, and medicines were learned through telling or showing one another how to do things. Elders play a valuable role in this process. They are seen to have knowledge and life experience gained throughout their lifetime.

Singing, telling stories, dramatic interpretations, and dancing can all be seen as methods of passing on oral traditions. In historical times, storytellers were key members of the communities. Stories were used to remember important events, to explain creation and how things were connected. Some stories were healing stories to help the community during the winter. Stories also were use to preserve and transmit culture. Stories engage our imagination, promote language development, and help us understand ourselves and others.

Contemporary society is in a state of conflict with oral traditions. Elders tell us that if stories are written down, they will die. There are other issues such as ownership and copyright. Contemporary laws on copyright often don't recognize the proper protocols of who owns the story, they merely recognize the recorder. What has evolved is an understanding that Elders own the information but people can access it and use but they are not allowed to claim it as their own.

Governments and research institutes have used of elder testimonies in the area of land claims, land use, traditional territory and mapping. These Elder testimonies are valuable because of their intricate understanding of the land and their respect for the land. They had in depth knowledge of many things that respect the relationships between the people, the land, and the rest of nature which provides insight that goes beyond superficial thought.

Elders say that there are many uses for oral traditions. They will immediately refer to the learning and use of language. Understanding the complexities of languages gives you additional skills, a better understanding of history, the treaties and the unwritten rules of living in a community. You have greater insight into relationships and to what is being communicated between animals or nature. Oral traditions may also assist you in understanding how to run a ceremony and the protocols of men and women. They will tell you that this is another way of learning songs, and how and why something was given in a ceremony or the differences between songs for different ceremonies. Elders will also tell you that oral tradition is how old people knew what was coming in the form of prophecies and this is how you learned your responsibility to the universe.

The use of artistic expression is seen as a natural expression of how you feel. For example, First Nations dancing or Métis jigging is not choreographed unless it is a competition or controlled by a caller. It is an expression or an extension of the dancer's emotions or feelings. Modern competitions are different because it is recognized that they are required elements that need to be covered in the competition. Other modern influences have also played a huge role as negatives to the oral tradition. One example is that drugs and alcohol are recognized as having a spirit of their own and someone who uses them are in conflict with the protocol of the oral tradition as a teaching tool.

Many types of oral traditions are being incorporated in different avenues of mainstream society. Schools are asking for Elders to come to the classrooms to tell stories or to share their knowledge with students. One theme that has become popular is about historical prophecies. Many First Nations people understand and use the seven generations prophecies in their teaching and learning. These prophecies tell of the hardships that affected First Nations people as a result of European contact. It is the seventh generation after the European contact they will be able to finally move beyond the hardships and lead the way back to a healthy community. It is also believed that the youth of today are the seventh generation. In this way the oral tradition is used as a method of developing and motivating the youth.

* Much of this information was gathered in a discussion with Elders.

Addition sources of information:

<http://pwnhc.learnnet.nt.ca/research/otm/otrman2.htm>

<http://www.museevirtuel.ca/Exhibitions/Holman/english/storytelling/index.php3>

http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/orl/rpn_e.html

7. Cultural/language Understandings

7.5 First Nations and Métis Perspectives

The makeup of the Canadian population is seen as very diverse. There are people from many different European backgrounds that are considered Canadians. There are also many First Nations as well and there is a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds within the Métis community. There are many things that all Canadians can agree on but having a common point of view on all matters is virtually impossible.

First Nations and Métis people have political perspectives when it comes to self-government and self-governing institutions. They also see self-determination as a process where they can look at things from a more personal perspective. They must have control over the cultural, spiritual, social and the physical dimensions of their world.

Applying their perspectives is an implementation of the controls over their own world. For example, when we use blanket terms such as First Nations or Métis views, we make some automatic assumptions and believe that everyone shares the same perspective. First Nation's language, stories, foods, environmental factors are other examples where things can vary. By stating that all Métis were buffalo hunters and all supported Louis Riel's fight against the Canadian Government in 1885 is also a generalization as history reveals that there were Métis who did not get involved in the battles. Being able to recognize and appreciate the smaller details and differences allows us to recognize the value and perspective that each of us brings to the table.

The integration of First Nations and Métis perspectives into school curricula enables students to learn about history from a perspective that is reflective of that time period. Too often, the history of First Nations and Métis peoples are studied from a contemporary point of view. Studying history in a proper context allows the First Nations and Métis students to develop a much richer appreciation of their history. When the material is presented in a fairer context, non-Aboriginal students gain a much better understanding of First Nations and Métis people.

The focus of the First Nations and Métis community is more on social development and community development as opposed to self-determination. The vehicle to attain this is education. When we look at it as a collective we are strengthening the cultural, spiritual, social and physical dimensions of our world. The focus is on group and not on differences. The application of common perspectives seeks to tie the common bonds together. The First Nations and Métis community look at many of the successes or negatives from the past as situations to gather strength or learn from. In several cities across Canada, the First Nations and Métis communities have opened their own schools with an emphasis on cultural survival. Those living in urban centres often do not have the same levels of support and services as those living in the home communities. Taking responsibility or having someone being responsible for these services has a different structure.

It has often been said that you do not look after the things you don't own. Community driven initiatives and activities that support and respond to the individual needs are often in conflict with legislation, government policy or priority. Being able to have a voice that allows for varying perspectives is often difficult. Those agencies that have that ability to be heard and meet the needs of their clients and community members continue to make

progress. It is through these initiatives that the First Nations and Métis community is finding ways to meet their unique needs. The larger community needs to appreciate and recognize that the First Nations and Métis community has different realities and these realities are often in a state of change. Allowing the community members to apply their own perspectives will demonstrate ownership and responsibility for solutions.

* The basis for this information was derived from a discussion with elders.

Additional resources:

http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/rpt/per_e.html

http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/cjl_e.pdf

<http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/abedu/abperspe.html>

http://www.socialunion.ca/In_Unison2000/iu01400e.html

7. Cultural/language Understandings

7.6 Development of Cultural skills

Having cultural skills can be explained by saying it is those people who have the ability to bead, tan hides, skin rabbits, cook, set traps and so on. Developing these cultural skills has other variables that need to be considered. These are founded in the community and begin with a process of how learners develop the proper protocols for gaining access to this knowledge and wisdom and learning how to value and respect it. Elders and other knowledgeable people usually provide access within the community to begin this process.

In order to appreciate this, traditional knowledge and language must be treated as an asset where this knowledge is seen as a benefit. Too often, traditional skills and values are seen as a deficit to learners. Having the ability to move back and forth between two worlds provides flexibility and empowerment for learners. Developing these skills allows young people to move into the mainstream workforce while still honouring the cultural teachings. The development of cultural skills and the teaching of these skills involve the use of role models. There is always someone, usually an Elder, who has the ability to teach the skill.

The teaching process has many layers of learning that require persistence and respect. First you must consider how you teach the skill. This is a hands-on process that may require extensive periods of time on the land or in a setting that is perceived as presenting hardships. Some Elders are true to historical ways while others will use modern conveniences to make

the task easier. Some Elders will use many variations that involve language, practise, and increased difficulty. Secondly, you must consider the learner. There are different ways of learning and it is important to match the teacher's skill with the learner's ability.

Another factor that needs to be considered is the traditional skill that is being learned or passed on. Some traditional skills may be seen as unnecessary. For example, it may be asked why would someone want to learn how to make fish traps out of willow trees when there are modern fish nets that can be used to catch the fish? Another consideration that must be taken into account is that there is a certain kind of knowledge that you gain by being involved in a project. This may not be recognized a cultural skill but the ability to complete tasks and the sense of accomplishment gained from this are recognized as cultural teachings.

In a contemporary education setting, the learning and teaching of cultural skills is being recognized as valuable knowledge. The use of virtues and reflection are considered valuable learning and teaching methods. First Nations and Métis youth can develop pride and self esteem by realizing that they can develop by learning their cultural traditions and do not have to assimilate in order to succeed.

Artists and cultural practitioners can find meaningful ways of employment in the modern classroom. These skills are being re-developed and are deemed to effective practises in the education of First Nations and Métis children. Artisans continue to develop the teaching methods and continually evolve new techniques of doing. They do this through practise, dreams, perhaps by experiencing this somewhere else or through learning from other artisans. Ultimately, the proof rests in the communities. Research, that has been conducted on communities that have a rich and artistic traditional base show that these communities are deemed to be more progressive in their economic performance, and the most resilient in their economic structures.

* Much of the information provided here is a result of a discussion with elders.

Additional resources:

<http://capes.usask.ca/ccstu/teacher.html>

<http://www.eciad.bc.ca/pla/cultconn.pdf>

http://www.ssta.sk.ca/research/indian_education/OO-10.htm

7. Cultural/language Understandings

Universal Laws

Christian worldviews believe the Ten Commandments to be universal laws. Scientists believe that there are universal laws to science and creation. Business organizations believe that there are universal laws to business and others believe there are universal laws of truth. Our modern society assumes that human beings are the dominant beings in the world and often interpret universal laws to be the Declaration of Human Rights that were developed in 1948. Society believes that there is a Law of Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are the guiding principles that we adhere to.

First Nations worldview has a different understanding of universal laws. Many First Nations people believe in the principles of interconnectedness and cause and effect relationships. They believe that all things in nature are linked together and depend upon each other to maintain balance. When something upsets the balance there is a reaction that causes stress to another part of nature. Many First Nations people also believe that all of creation is sacred and do not place human beings above the rest of nature. Human are on the same plane and what we do affects the rest of nature.

Many First Nations people also believe that everything is equal and therefore all things deserve respect. They believe that everything has a place and is seen as a sacred being or a sacred object by the creator. The concept of natural law exists and this creates the co-existence that we have with nature. Natural law provides the gift of a conscience and helps us to know the difference between right and wrong. It assists us to live and operate in a moral way. Many First Nations people believe that natural laws occur as a result of ethical fairness and prefer to deal in principles.

When things are disrupted in the order of things and the rules of natural law are not respected, attempts are made to put things right. This is done through prayer and the use of ceremonies. An example would have been upon preparation for the hunt or after a successful hunt. A more contemporary example is if an animal or a bird is accidentally struck by a vehicle, tobacco and prayer are offered to the creator to restore the balance. First Nations worldviews believe that the natural world is the conduit between them and the creator.

Many Métis values are greatly influenced by western value systems and are similar to church or Catholic values. These Métis people believe that the negatives in nature are caused by the sins of man. This can be applied to the natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, vermin and pestilence. The majority of the Métis community were raised in a Christian value system and believe that the church and Christ are the mediators to the creator, but many Métis people have value systems that incorporate First Nation's views.

In the last decade many of the principles of First Nations worldviews are being considered and applied within the education system. Worldviews are being promoted as character education and virtues. These virtues have not been applied to guide people towards exclusive values or views but attempts to create citizens of good character who have the well-being of all as a core value. These virtues translate as: love, honesty, respect, humility, wisdom, courage, and truth. This is also not considered an exclusive list of virtues that can be applied within the context of education. Often, the principles of First Nation's spirituality have been confused within the education system as religion. It is important to realize that religions are seen as answers about creation and the meaning of life where spirituality is an understanding of the interconnectedness and sacredness of all things in the universe.

The Elders make us aware of the connections that occur within nature. They believe that the universe is organic and has the ability to shift in order to accommodate the collective thoughts of people. This allows some balance to a consumer driven society that dominates our current worldviews.

* The majority of this work was created through a discussion with elders.

Additional resources:

<http://www.firstnations.org/natureknows.asp>

<http://www.dd-rd.ca/english/commdoc/publications/indigenous/decade/Indig2005b#T12>

Jacobs, Don & Jacobs-Spencer, Jessica (2001). Teaching Virtues: building character across the curriculum. Lanham, Maryland. The Scarecrow Press Inc.

8. Contemporary Issues

8.1 Self-Government

First Nations peoples have resided on the North American continent for thousands of years prior to European contact. They exist as independent, self-governing nations that organize themselves politically, socially and economically to meet the needs of their communities. They select leaders, establish laws, protocols, and ceremonies to provide structure and guidance to their own nations. Each nation has their own history and relationship with the environment and creates their own ways to co-exist in harmony with it. They observe the necessary protocols to maintain this balance.

Modern day self-government for is seen by First Nation and Métis people as making decisions and being in control of those decisions that affect their daily lives. First Nation and

Métis people see themselves involved in their own justice, education, health, employment and economic systems. They see themselves as making the necessary decisions to allow them to be in control of the necessary decisions to allow their communities to be healthy and self-sustaining. Too long, many of these decisions were made for them, and current leaders are working to establish the necessary partnerships to restore the balance needed.

Self-determination, international laws, and international human rights have been used by First Nation and Métis peoples to pursue the concept of self-government. The Canadian Constitution 1982 recognized the inherent right of self-government and it has become the cornerstone of the federal 'Aboriginal' policy on self-determination. This piece of legislation laid a foundation for the government to make a commitment to the recognition and implementation of fundamental rights for First Nation and Métis peoples. The majority of these rights had been previously denied or ignored.

In 1983, the Penner Report recommended that the federal government recognize First Nations and Métis government as another level of government and to pursue processes that allow for the devolution of services to the First Nations and Métis community. This would enhance opportunities and develop growth in the education and economic sectors. In 1998 the federal government released *Gathering Strength – Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan*.

The federal government recognized that the First Nations and Métis community was very diverse and that circumstances varied considerably across the country. They realized that a 'one size fits all' approach was inappropriate and that arrangements were required to meet the diverse historical, political, social, cultural and economic circumstances of the different First Nations and Métis communities. Some guiding principles were put in place to guide the self-governing process for First Nation and Métis peoples. In general, these principles meant that First Nations and Métis political structures were given more control to make and enforce policy and laws. These could not conflict with existing Canadian laws and that the rest of Canada would not be negatively affected by new levels of jurisdiction.

Several models of self-government have been negotiated by individual First Nations. The Cree of James Bay negotiated a model that created local governance structures that limited the role of the federal government in the day to day affairs of the local municipalities and communities. The Sechelt Band of British Columbia created a municipal based government structure on based on a provincial legislation format and has jurisdiction over all aspects of local governance. The Yukon First Nations created a model where they have control over the internal management of the community and control over land and all aspects of land management. The creation of Nunavut established a structure very similar to a province with similar powers for the Inuit people. The Nishga Tribal Council in British Columbia has a central government with village governments similar to a village that governs local matters. Different First Nations have established urban reserves in Saskatchewan. These self governing

territories are home to many fast-growing economic development and training initiatives for First Nation citizens.

The new self governing processes that are being established by the First Nation and Métis communities are creating positive circumstances. By having First Nation and Métis people involved in the development and delivery of programs and services, a sense of ownership and self assurance has developed. The community is able to develop structures that ensure their cultural identities and create a direction that they choose to pursue. They are incorporating First Nation and Métis values and creating a society that reflects the aspirations of the community it serves.

Additional resources:

Frideres, James S. & Gađacz, Rene R. (2001). *Aboriginal peoples in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts 6th Ed.* Toronto: Prentice Hall.

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/informationlibrary/PRBpubs/prb9919-e.htm>

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/informationlibrary?PRBpubs/962-e.htm>

http://www.ainc.gc.ca/pr/pub/sg/plcy_e.html

<http://www.schoolnet.ca/aboriginal/isses/selfgov-e.html>

8. Contemporary Issues

8.2 Urban Reserve Creation

The creation of urban reserves in Saskatchewan has come about for many reasons. Their largest impacts are probably in the economic development area, but there are also political, social, and cultural objectives. The Treaty Land Entitlement process created in 1976 provided an opportunity for reserves that are entitled to land claims settlement, to select areas of land for purchase within urban centres.

At the early stages, municipal governments, represented by non-Aboriginal people, were often opposed to the creation of urban reserves. Their approach was to focus on problems or potential problems and to ignore the potential benefits. As a result of concerns, many levels of government were forced to get involved to ensure that a level playing field concept was observed. For example, First Nations are exempt from property taxes. The reserve then enters a service agreement with the City to pay an amount that would be the same as the property tax amount. The reserve would then impose its own form of taxes on its members to the

equivalent to the taxes what the City would collect. This ensures fairness and that every business is subject to the same rules.

Urban reserves operate as economic development initiatives only, and have not been used to establish residential areas. It would appear, to date, that they are proving to be a successful venture. Several hundred jobs have been created, which lead to economic spin offs for the urban centres as well as benefit the First Nations community. Saskatoon, for example, has rejuvenated a part of the city that had not been very viable prior to the creation of the urban reserve.

The impacts on the First Nations community have been very positive. It is a reality that nearly half of the First Nations people live off reserve due to the lack of economic opportunities on the rural reserves. The urban reserves have created economic and training opportunities that reduce dependency on social services agencies. The standards of living have improved due to increases in revenues. The community has been able to organize and deliver culturally relevant services as well. One example is the First Nations University which fosters a strong identity and a positive supportive network.

Urban reserves that have been created follow some basic principles. The economic benefits that are generated must be considered important services for both the First Nations and the non-Aboriginal populations. There must be a substantial level of First Nations people living in the area. The area that is being developed must be located geographically reasonably close to the rural reserve that sponsors the development and there also has to be federal land available for development.

The most successful urban reserves have resulted due to a positive, progressive relationship held between its partners. Success is directly attributed to positive race relationships, interpersonal skills and recognition of the economic benefits for both parties. The partner agencies involved in the urban reserves have recognized a win-win situation that improves both societies. They realize that a harmonious co-existence is important and necessary to reduce potential conflicts. In the larger scheme of things, urban reserves are not considered as causing any problems by city developers and contractors. They don't receive competitive advantages that would create conflict. They provide opportunities for the First Nations community to strengthen their infrastructure to support their community. This in turn, provides education, training and economic opportunities for First Nations people, which may have been previously denied. This makes good business sense as it creates a higher standard of living for First Nations people which creates a reduced dependency on support systems provided by social agencies.

The leadership that comes from the creation of urban reserves is empowering the First Nations. It ensures that First Nations people can participate fully within mainstream

society without losing their identity and culture. It also creates sound economic development practises which reflect a strong governance model. Several levels are involved at the rural, local, provincial and national level. They all have a stake in the urban reserve process and it is vital that they work cooperatively to reach maximum benefits. These partnerships also create strong commercial partnerships which lever other finances and create unique opportunities that were not previously possible.

Additional resources:

Barron, L. & Garcea, J.(1999). *Urban Indian Reserves: forging new relationships in Saskatchewan*. Saskatoon: Purich Publishing.

http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nr/prs/m-a2000/2-00151_e.html

http://www.dougcuthand.com/Columns300/Column312_dougcuthand.html

<http://www.policyalternatives.ca/Manitoba/fastfactssept19.html>

<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/Indian/a88may19.htm>

8. Contemporary Issues

8.3 Social Justice

There is an over-representation of First Nation and Métis people involved with the justice system. The 'Aboriginal' population of Canada, according to the 2001 census, is approximately 1.3 million or 4.4% of the Canadian population. The rates of incarceration statistics reveal that there is a much higher percentage of First Nation and Métis people within the prison system than the Canadian 'Aboriginal' population of 4.4%. This statistic indicates that First Nation/Métis people have different realities and face more hardships.

Social development consists of primarily three areas: health, education and community relations. The prison statistics extend also to the young offender situation. First Nations and Métis youth are also vastly over-represented in the young offenders programs. There is a reported increase in the numbers of First Nations/Métis youth that are getting involved in street gangs in the urban centres. The general consensus is that the youth are being drawn to a gang concept because of the acceptance factor. Many of the youth come from broken homes and the gang gives them an identity and some feelings of security.

First Nations and Métis adults experience problems with the court system, as well. There has

been a great deal of discussion on how and why First Nation/Métis offenders are more involved with the justice system. Critics state that the courts are biased and that First Nation/Métis offenders are more readily incarcerated than majority society. Reasons given are based on language barriers, lack of understanding of the process, and an inability to pay fines. Solutions that have been identified are cross-cultural training, and more First Nations and Métis police, lawyers and judges.

In order for First Nation/Métis people to attain social justice within the court system, many things need to be addressed. First Nation and Métis philosophies on justice must also be incorporated through the use of sentencing circles and healing circles. First Nations and Métis women also have many widespread issues with the justice system. Community based research on community support systems and the relocation of prisons needs to be done to bridge some of the issues.

Statistics reveal First Nations and Métis people experience poor health to a much greater extent. They are more prone to diseases caused by diet and therefore have a shorter life span than the rest of society. First Nations and Métis people have more involvement with treatment centres and there are higher percentages of First Nation and Métis people affected by Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. In general, First Nation and Métis people are much more at risk in terms of all aspects of health. Lack of information, poverty and unstable social conditions are considered major contributors to higher risk to First Nation and Métis people in the health area.

Levels of education and rates of employment are also major contributors to social well-being. Rates of completion of high school are much lower in the First Nation and Métis community which leads to lower graduation rates from post-secondary educational institutions than the rest of society. All of these numbers translate to the workforce. Unemployment rates within the First Nation and Métis community remain constant at around 25%. This is approximately 2 and one half times greater than the average across the country.

The First Nations and Métis community experiences issues with shortages of adequate housing as well. Instabilities at many levels cause families to be more under stress and more at risk of family breakdown. This eventually leads to more children being placed in care by the system and the children then are more at risk to become offenders.

The cycles that create social instability are much more prevalent within the First Nations/Métis community. Progress is slow and many issues need to be addressed at many different levels. It is projected that when the First Nations and Métis community has statistics similar to the rest of society in terms of health, levels of education, rates of incarceration, employment statistics and representation in community structures, they will be considered

to have achieved social justice. Until that happens, many agencies are needed to work towards meeting the basic needs at a community level and providing support for what currently exists.

Additional resources:

Saskatchewan Labour, (2000). *A Profile of Aboriginal Women in Saskatchewan*.

http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ps/jus_e.html

<http://www.saskjustice.gov.sk.ca/>

<http://www.canadiansocialresearch.net/sk/bk/mrk.htm>

8. Contemporary Issues

8.4 Community Healing

The First Nations community has experienced stress for many generations. European diseases, destruction of their traditional way of life through cultural and political genocide, residential schooling, alcohol and other substances have created breakdowns in many First Nations and Métis communities. Many individuals have lost their dignity and ability to be a contributing, trustworthy member. Entire families became dysfunctional and perpetuate the cycles of abuse and hurtful behaviours that were perpetuated against them. There are entire communities in constant turmoil due to the distrust, conflict, undermining of each other, and abuses of power. Communities in this state cannot grow and develop in a normal healthy manner. All of these negative experiences have required the First Nations/Métis community members to work closely together and to support each other. This has been a strategy that has been used to build strong people and healthy communities.

Many of the communities experiencing difficulty began healing journeys in the early 1980's. They began their healing journey to deal with the alcoholism that was destroying their lives. As individuals addressed alcohol problems, it soon became apparent that many other issues were affecting the communities. Abuse, both physical and sexual, family violence, suicide, anger, depression, and the effects of residential schools were all identified as causing problems

within the communities.

There are different ways to assist the healing process. The most important factor is the first step, which is to identify the barriers and begin the process of overcoming them. Elders play a valuable role in this process. Their connection to their culture and the ceremonies are part of the reconnection process. The sweat lodge and wilderness cultural camps help individuals to focus on their identity and self worth. One-on-one counselling sessions are also used to help the individuals deal with and understand the issues.

Communities that are on a healing journey have community programs to assist them. A great deal of energy goes into helping the youth to be involved in healthy activities. Communities have agencies that work together to link families and programs with political and public support. Healing processes incorporate the cultural values of respect, courage, wisdom, truth, love, humility and honesty as their basis. Individuals are empowered through the learning of their history, culture and traditional teachings. Each person is considered valuable to the community and has something to offer. In cases where criminal or abuse activity had occurred, disclosure and support are key. Processes are then established, either as healing circles or sentencing circles to support the situation.

Much of the healing process is a decolonizing process. Overcoming the cycles of dependency, dysfunction, colonization, and residential schooling are the focus of the journey. The restoration of personal self-esteem, identity, integrity and community well-being are central. The emphasis is on well-being and not on sickness. Individuals enter at many different stages and therefore the process has cycles of learning and retreat.

Community healing has been linked to social and economic development at the community level. Being able to participate in healthy activities that contribute to your community is vital. Having self worth and being able to work and earn an income is also important to the development of communities and families. Linking these activities with spiritual and cultural supports is also a strong component of the healing process. It is also necessary that information be provided to community members, there be consistent support for programming, and that there is some healthy separation between the healing process and the political structure of the community.

The systematic destruction of the First Nations and Métis community was a process that happened over many generations. In some parts of Canada, this process has lasted for 300 years. It is important to recognize that the healing process varies in different parts of Canada and that the timeframes are not the same. It is believed that it will take several generations of work to rebuild the First Nation and Métis communities to a level of self-sufficiency and self-determination.

Additional resources:

<http://www.usask.ca/nativelaw/publications/jah/seeds.html>

<http://www.usask.ca/nativelaw/publications/jah/ross.html>

http://www.psepc-sppcc.gc.ca/publications/abor_corrections?APC2002_e.asp

<http://www.peguis.ca/healingfoundation/>

8. Contemporary Issues

8.5 Métis Legal Identity

The Métis people, as a legal identity, are unique to Canada. As a people, their history spans about 500 years. They are the products of unions between European men, who came to Canada in the pursuit of furs, and First Nation women who lived here. They played a unique role in the evolution of the fur trade and later the settlement of western Canada.

They have been called many things over the course of their history. The Cree people referred to the Métis as wagon men because of their use of the Red River carts and they were perceived to be half wagon – half man. The Dakota people called them the Flower beadwork people as a result of the unique floral designs used by the women to decorate the clothing. The Métis who travelled down into the United States were referred to as the Free People because they did not have a specific hunting territory or after the establishment of the Indian Act, the Métis were not controlled by legislation. The settlers and the church referred to them as one and half men which was a reflection of their heritage and nature; half Indian-half White-half Devil. The French Métis referred to themselves as the Bois Brules which translates as wood men, and the Cree Métis referred to themselves as Ka tip aim sont chic, which translated into English means the people who own themselves.

Canadians have identified the Métis using several different definitions. Historians have referred to them as the Children of the Fur Trade who had European Fathers and Indian Mothers. There are further divisions based on their father's country of origin.

A second definition was cited in the Métis Population Betterment Act of 1938 created by the provincial legislature in Alberta. This was the only legal definition until recently. The Métis were defined as "an individual of mixed Indian and European ancestry who is at least 1/4 Indian but is not eligible for Indian status under the Indian Act."

The Métis began to assert their political voice in the 1960's and 70's. The Métis Society of Saskatchewan put forward a definition for Métis as "any individual descended from the

historical Métis who evolved in Western Canada into a unique people." It was determined that the historic Métis referred to those that could trace their lineage to the Red River Settlement. This definition was seen as exclusive and divisive because of the large number of Métis people in the northern part of the province who were not connected to the buffalo hunters of the Red River.

The Canadian Constitution Act of 1982 recognizes the Métis as one of the three 'Aboriginal' groups in Canada, which affords them 'Aboriginal' rights. A specific definition was not created at that time and, as a result, the Métis people through their political structures have worked at creating a legal definition.

A definition was put forward by the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan in the 1990's which stated that "a person is Métis if they identify as such, the Métis community accepts them as Métis and that they hold forth Métis values and practise Métis culture." This definition was very problematic for the Federal government because they could not have exact numbers to tabulate budgets, potential land claims and other 'Aboriginal' rights issues.

The Métis National Council put forward a definition that required the ratification of the provincial Métis organizations that make up its membership. There are five provincial organizations: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. They held meetings and the last to ratify was Saskatchewan in January, 2004. The definition recognizes Métis people as "those who originate from mixed marriages between 'Aboriginal' women and Scottish or French fur traders in west-central North America." This new definition has a personal and community based rationale. It creates a understanding that there is a difference between a Métis and a person with a mixed-blood heritage. This also recognizes that any rights received by the Métis through the Constitution Act of 1982 will be awarded through the community based political structure.

The Supreme Court of Canada discussed who they considered to be Métis people in a decision called Powley. They ruled that there is a possibility of more than one Métis people in Canada. Their ruling stated that "A Métis community can be defined as a group of Métis with a distinctive collective identity, living together in the same geographic area and sharing a common way of life."

Additional resources:

<http://www.metismuseum.ca>

www.metisnation.ca

<http://www.ualberta.ca/NATIVESTUDIES/sitemap.htm>

8. Contemporary Issues

8.6 Métis Land rights

In a historical context, the Canadian Government negotiated treaties with First Nations that enabled the settlement of the Canadian West. Some Métis were given the option to sign on to the treaties while they were being negotiated. If the Métis accepted and became a part of the treaty, they were considered Indians by the federal government and their descendents have been treated as Indians according to the Indian Act.

Scrip was issued by the federal government to the Métis of Manitoba as part of the Manitoba Act, which created Manitoba as a province in 1870. 1.4 million acres of land was set aside for the Métis under the terms of the Manitoba Act. The land was awarded through inconsistent processes and resulted in between 90%-99% has reverted back to the control of the federal government, who re-sold the land to immigrant farmers and land developers.

The Federal Government issued scrip whenever a treaty was signed in the West. The process used was not always the same and the amounts issued often varied. A great many of the Scrip documents were reportedly lost in a fire. Based on inconsistent records and missing records, the Métis have long argued that their land rights were never satisfied under the Scrip process. The Federal Government maintain the opposite and believe that Métis rights to land have been settled through the Scrip process. The issue has never been taken to court for a decision.

The Canadian Constitution of 1982 has identified the Métis as one of the three 'Aboriginal' peoples of Canada. The Canadian government recognizes the Métis as having 'Aboriginal' rights and historical rights to land. The land claims process began in Canada in the 1980's and many First Nations have been awarded land based on specific claims that resulted from shortages based on the treaty process. The Métis do not have clear guidelines outlined as to settlement of land and other rights. These must be negotiated on a claim by claim basis and the only process available is through the court system. This process is time consuming and expensive and as a result, the Métis people have experienced limited success.

Comprehensive land claims are based on the principles of first usage and traditional practices. The Métis have been successful in settling land claims in the North West Territories. In Saskatchewan, the Métis have negotiated with the provincial government for title to some farmland that was used as Métis settlement projects. The provincial government of Alberta has also established some land settlements based on the Métis Population Betterment Act of 1938.

The Manitoba Métis Federation were very active in the 1970's and 1980's, exploring the Métis case for a land base as a result of fraudulent scrip activity at the time of the signing of the

Manitoba Act. Their research has never resulted in any court action, so it can be determined that the many inconsistencies from the scrip history coupled with the cost of research and legal action have hindered this process.

The Métis political organization of Saskatchewan continues to conduct research based on traditional land use and occupancy. In 1994, 19 Northern communities on the north-west side of the province launched a land claim. They have challenged the existing government view that the issuance of scrip resolved Métis land claims in the West. The Federal government has provided some funding support to conduct research to explore the options and the validity of the claim. This research is currently ongoing.

Additional Resources:

Gabriel Dumont Institute Website: www.metismuseum.ca

Univ. of Alberta Website: <http://www.ualberta.ca/NATIVESTUDIES/sitemap.htm>

8. Contemporary Issues

8.7 Pan-Indianism

The term pan-Indianism was coined in the 1970's as a result of a growing unity of First Nation peoples in a reaction to the government White Paper of 1969. The term translates as all-Indian and serves as an all-encompassing term for many different Indian peoples from different nations. A large segment of the First Nations populations of Canada, upon leaving the reserves and moving to urban centres, became involved in many different organizations, training initiatives and university settings. These individuals put aside their differences as Indian people, and worked together to form a solidarity movement for Indian people. These individuals recognized each other as kindred souls, inter-married, and formed friendships and accepted that they were all Indians and their Cree, Nakawé, Dene, Mohawk, etc. origins mattered less.

Organizations such as the Assembly of First Nations, the Native Women's Association of Canada, Métis National Council are all examples of organizations that formed as a result of the solidarity movement caused by the White Paper. These organizations all had a national mandate and included representation from their own recognized membership. The AFN represented all Status Indians across Canada, the MNC had a national Métis membership and the Native Women's Association represented all First Nations and Métis women across Canada. Their mandates were huge and intended as lobby groups to work towards the improvement of social, political and economic conditions for their membership. These

organizations had provincially based affiliations and attempted to address conditions at a local, provincial and national level and work with their own respective level of government.

In the cultural world, the pow wow is perhaps the most recognized arena for pan-Indianism. Types of dances were shared between nations and the regalia from one nation was adapted by an individual from another nation to accommodate their interpretation of a dance. It is very common to attend a pow wow and the announcer will call for an inter-tribal dance and several fancy dancers from different nations will come to the arena to perform their own interpretation of a fancy dance.

Negative examples emerged in the form of stereotypical images that all Indian people have alcohol abuse problems or that all Indian peoples cannot be trusted and are often put in jail. First Nation and Métis people who work within the system are expected to have knowledge of all Indian people. It is common that a teacher who is Cree by origin is expected to know all about the First Nation's history of the West Coast or East Coast peoples as well all Plains people.

Many aspects of different Indian cultures began to be homogenized and began to be seen as something Indians have or something Indians do. Differences between Indian nations sometimes lessened and supported the National movement or sometimes created conflicts between Nations. Some Indian peoples wanted to hunt and fish, some wanted to be loggers, some wanted to be farmers. Some wanted to promote their own language, some wanted to have distinct societies and schools.

The concept of pan-Indianism became less of a goal of many First Nation groups and organizations towards the ends of the 1980's. First Nations peoples became very active in writing their own histories, creating their own stories, television productions, school curriculums that supported specific learning and the teaching of the material and was presented fairly and accurately. Too long, First Nations people have had their cultural histories trivialized and lumped into categories to be studied, similar to rocks or animals.

The concept of economic development is bringing together a new form of pan-Indianism. Items that are perceived as Indian items are being produced and marketed in international manners. Dream catchers, blankets and tablecloths with First Nations designs are being produced in Mexico and marketed in Europe as 'Indian' items. Wild rice is being harvested commercially and marketed through a commercial format.

At a national level, funds are being made available through First Nation's business ventures and people can apply for grants or loans. Support for these ventures are now being connected to national and international markets and contacts. Once again, the individual 'Indian' identity is under pressure for the well being of all First Nations peoples. The people who are hurt the most are the local artisans who cannot compete with large companies. They are also

in danger of not only losing their market or their livelihood, they are in danger of losing their identity as a Cree, a Dakota, a Dene, a Métis or a Nakawē.

Additional resources.

http://www.operation-dialogue.com/lafontaine-baldwin/e/2001_article_gm.taylor.html

<http://www.easterndoor.com/Vol.6/6-30.htm>

8. Contemporary Issues

8.8 Bill C-31

On June 28, 1985 the Federal government repealed specific sections of the Indian Act. These sections were declared in violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The bill restored "Indian status" to First Nation's individuals who had lost their Indian status for various reasons. These reasons included:

- Indian women who married non-Indian men (one interesting situation was that non-Indian women who married Indian men were given Indian status);
- Indian people who had taken scrip;
- Enfranchised Indians who had lost their status. Historically there were many ways to be enfranchised. It meant that you have to give up your Indian status as a personal choice in order to receive some societal benefits. Examples were the right to vote, the right to live in a town, the right to go to school and receive higher education;
- Indian people that served in the Armed Forces;
- Indian children that were classified as illegitimate.

Since 1985, over 100,000 individuals have had their 'Indian status' re-instated. New classifications have been applied as a result of new rules. There is a great deal of concern within the First Nation's community about Bill C-31. The primary concern is that the new rules will, within the next 50-75 years, virtually eliminates the concept of status and there will no longer be any status Indians.

There have been many other situations arise as a result of the changes to the Indian Act. At one point it was a requirement to live on the reserve to retain your Indian status. Under the new rules, there was no distinction where you lived and effectively means that band members have no say in who joins their membership. This right is retained by Indian Affairs Canada (INAC) in Ottawa. Large increases in numbers increased hardships at the reserve level. Reserves were not increased in size to accommodate new members, budgets were not increased accordingly and areas such as housing and education have reached new crisis levels.

Bill C-31 was challenged in the courts by various Indian bands. They challenged the Bill based on the principles of power and control. This was a process that was supposed to eliminate discrimination. The power and control was not held by the First Nations communities themselves, but by bureaucrats in the Federal Government. Concerns were voiced that new members could potentially have enough votes to overrule long standing members and practises at the reserve level and possibly liquidate band assets and sell the land. Recently, the court ruled in *Corbiere et al Canada and the Batchewana Indian Band* that band members living off the reserve had voting rights and they could not be ignored.

Bill C-31 gave the bands the right to determine membership but it did not give them the right to determine Indian status, the Dept. of Indian Affairs retained this right. A great deal of work was required and more needs to be done with the political leaders of the First Nation's bands and provincial organizations to ensure that Bill C-31 is widely discussed and understood by the communities.

At the community level there have been examples of both positive and negative effects based on Bill C-31. There are approximately 650 Indian bands that have reserve land in Canada. Approximately 80 of them will have population increases of over 100%, another 380 will face population increases between 10%-30%. More than 50% of the First Nations population live off reserve and surveys show that some of those individuals do not wish to be affiliated to a First Nation's band. Many of those surveyed primarily said they were interested on a reconnection to their culture.

The majority of the effects of Bill C-31 have been felt by the First Nation community that has lived through the changes enacted by the bill. Many have applauded the changes that it has made to their status, while others have experienced difficulties as a result of an increase in numbers without receiving monetary increases. The largest impacts will be experienced by the children and grandchildren of all First Nations citizens. The 6(2) category that does not allow some Indian people to pass on their Indian status to their children will continue to impact more and more Indian people. Indian communities are being placed in the hands of a bureaucratic structure that does not give them a level of rights or control that was previously available to them.

It is believed that for many First Nation people, Bill C-31 will enact the final stages of the assimilation process that was begun by the first Indian Act of 1874 and the subsequent legislation that came from it. The changes to the legislation project that First Nations people will lose the unique status that they enjoy in Canadian society. They will be assimilated into Canadian society within the next 50-75 years with no benefits as Canada's original peoples and owners of the land.

Additional sources of information:

<http://www.apcfn.ca/Bill%20C-31%20Report%20Atlantic%20Region.htm>

<http://www.turtleisland.org/news/news-c31.htm>

<http://www.ammsa.com/classroom/CLASSIC-31.html>

<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/saskindian/a85oct09htm>

8. Contemporary Issues

8.9 Racism

Racism is defined as attitudes and practises that disadvantage people based on their race, color or ethnicity. It exists at three different levels: individual, institutional and cultural. Individual racism is expressed by individuals. It comes out as prejudice, bigotry and stereotypes usually expressed in a form of graffiti, name calling or ethnic jokes. Institutional racism is when organizations or governments incorporate practises and rules that unnecessarily disadvantage people because of their race, color or ethnic origin. Cultural racism is practised when people are disadvantaged because of their cultural beliefs or practises.

Canada has a long history of racist practises perpetuated against its people by other Canadians. Chinese workers were badly mistreated during the construction of the railroad that linked B.C. to the rest of Canada. Japanese Canadians were interned in concentration camps and had their property confiscated during World War 2. Black Canadians and Jewish Canadians also experienced racism and suffered at the hands of discriminatory practises by other Canadians.

The group that has the longest experience of racial discrimination in Canada is Canada's First Nations and Métis Peoples. First Nation's people have been referred to as "savages" in school textbooks and in the churches by the priests who rejected First Nations spiritual and belief systems. Pope Paul III issued a Papal Bull in 1537 that decided that Indian "savages" were indeed human beings. Because of their so called pagan beliefs, it was still considered an accepted practise to classify First Nation's people as inferior and continue to distinguish them as "savages".

Genocide of the First Nations way of life was brought about through extinguishment policies, laws, programs, and the individual intentions of government officials. This process became known as assimilation and was an all out attack on the First Nation's identity and

community structure. European diseases, geographical removals and relocations, and the destruction of the game animals and the changing of how the land was used were all factors that led to the destruction of traditional lifestyles.

The Indian Act created the residential school system that was used as a method of removing the children from their homes, family, and community to prepare them for assimilation into the dominant society. The churches were given the mandate to operate the schools because of their commitment to the assimilation process.

Government practises and policies are filled with examples of discriminatory practises directed against Indian and Métis peoples. Indians were classified as aliens and were not allowed to vote until 1960, the White Paper of 1969, and the exclusion of Métis from the education system in Saskatchewan are three recent historical examples of discriminatory practises based on racist ideologies.

These invisible victims of a long history of systemic discrimination have fallen victim to the new practises following World War II. Instead of begin victims of society because they were perceived to be genetically inferior, they are deemed to be culturally inferior and therefore need to be assimilated. Another observation is that Canada has classified First Nation and Métis peoples as ethnic minorities and classified them as disadvantaged and underprivileged.

Racial segregation was practised but is now outlawed in the United States and Apartheid in South Africa. Those governments attempt to deny their history of racial discrimination. The state of affairs in the First Nations and Métis communities shows that there is something wrong in Canadian society. Over-representation in prisons, substandard housing, violence, unemployment, under-education, homelessness, disease, crime rates are all indicators of the racist ideologies and policies perpetuated against First Nation and Métis peoples.

Modern First Nations and Métis governing structures are also badly affected. They continue to follow the models of the colonial structure that had done so much damage to their people. Often, sums of money are provided by the federal and provincial government agencies to address social problems. All this often does is create turmoil and allow for situations of corruption in a community that is still suffering some effects of colonialism.

A classic example of on-going racism is the Indian Act. It discriminates against women and female children. It creates discriminatory practises between those who live on and off the reserves and has established that the next generations will fight over the distinctions between Status and non-Status Indians.

Ironically, in mainstream Canadian society, most citizens are ignorant of the daily practises of systemic racism and discrimination against First Nations and Métis people. Things are done because of the past practises and rationalized as that is how we have always done things.

As First Nations and Métis people continue to reclaim their cultural identity and to assert jurisdiction over lands and resources, these issues will become more magnified. Canada has a five hundred year history that has been established and legitimized by colonial acts and policies of England and France. Canadians must examine their definition of democracy and address these issues or the barriers will continue to haunt the First Nations and Métis community at the expense of the rest of Canada.

Additional Resources:

<http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/racism.htm>

http://www.hopesite.ca/remember/history/racism_canada_1.html

<http://www.gnb.ca/hrc-cdp/e/sayno.htm>