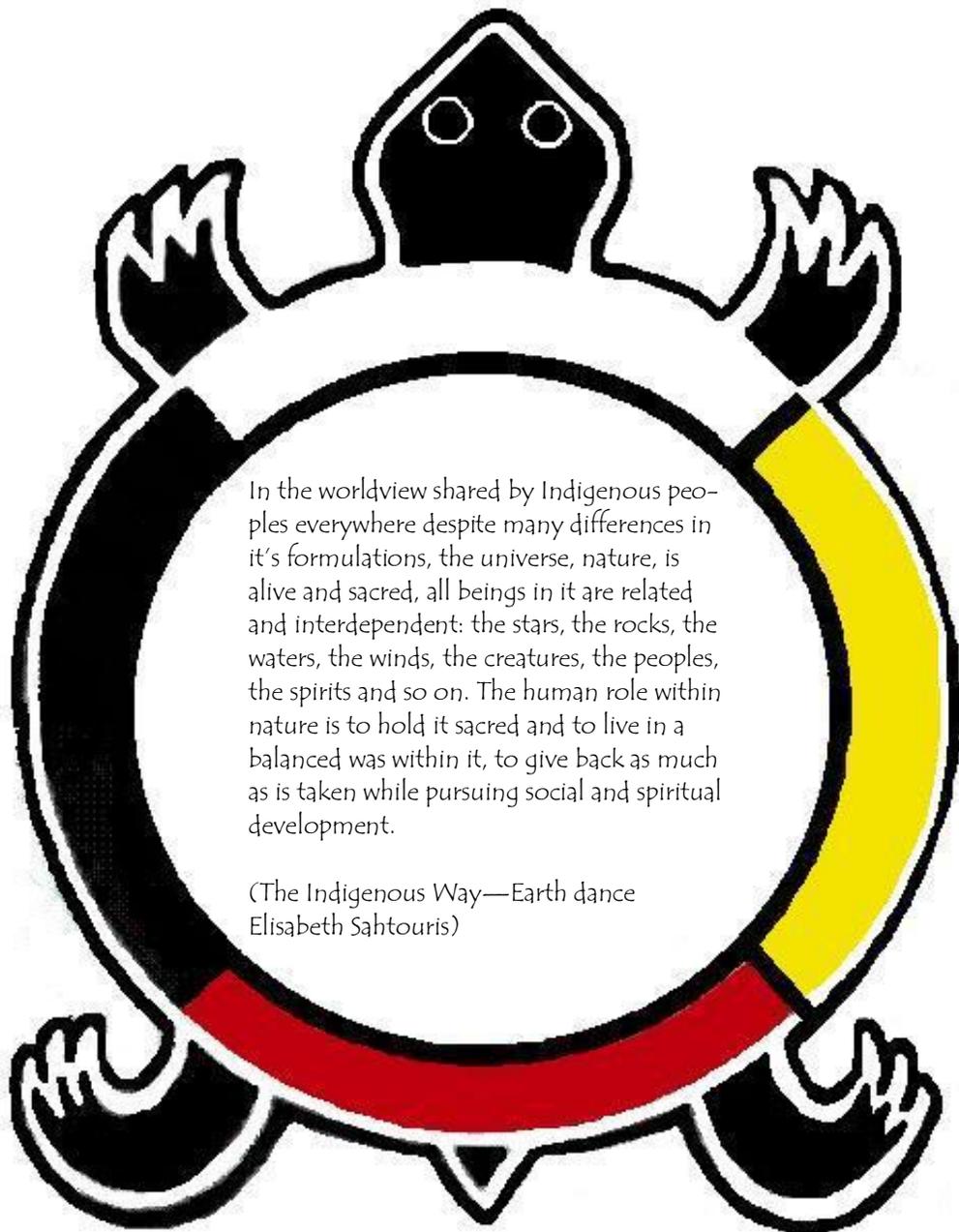


2. Worldviews



Introduction

In order for a people to view themselves positively, they must be able to experience and understand the history, the stories, the language, and appreciate the perspectives of what their people value as a community.

These values, traditions, songs, ceremonies, language, etc. combine with the social, political, economic, educational, kinship, religious systems to shape how people develop common experiences to which they can create common bonds to form what can be perceived as a new and unique structure.

Indigenous people all over the world have some common elements that are connected to the natural elements of the cosmos that create a similar understanding of the world and the cycles within the universe and how they are inter-related.

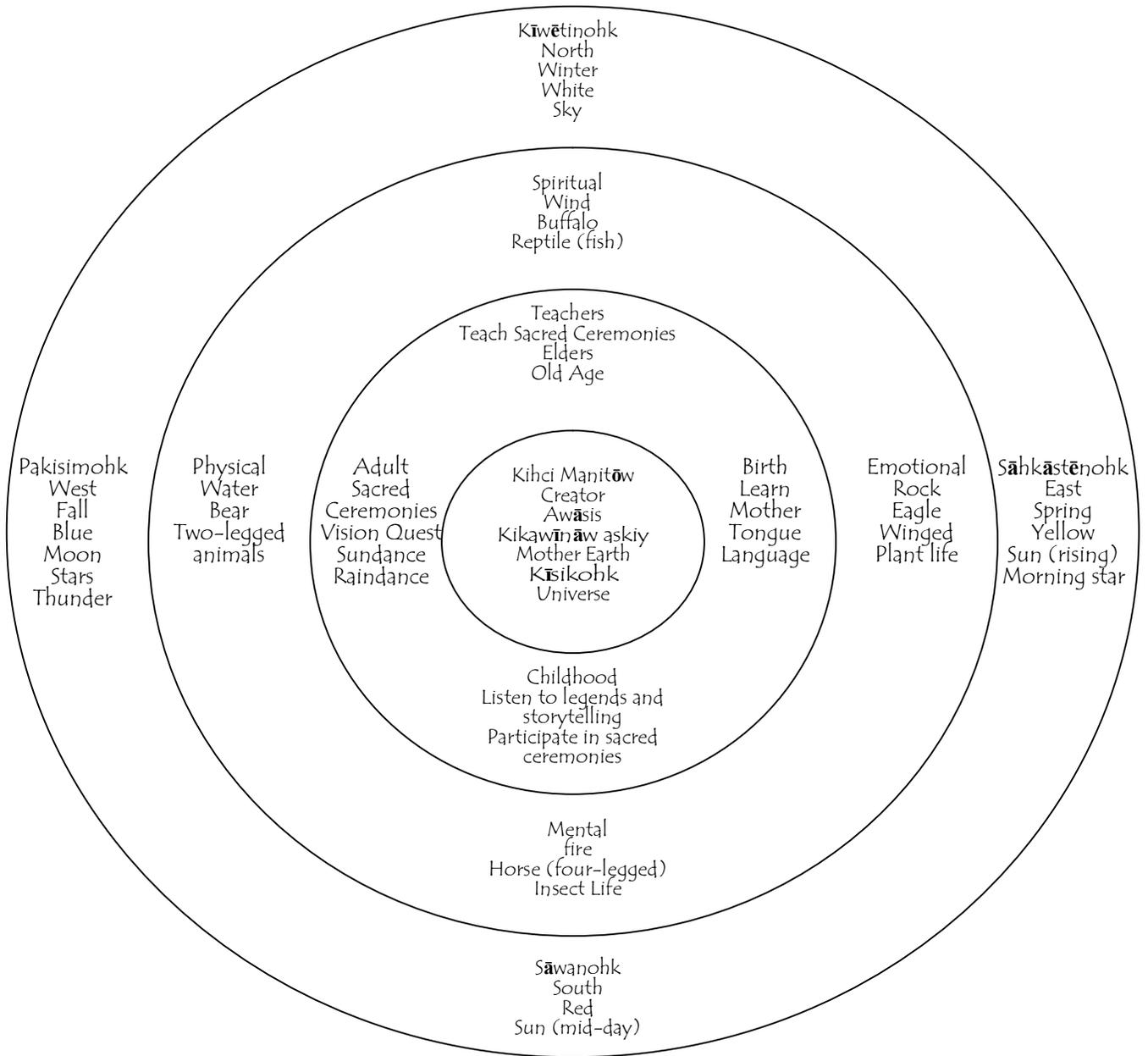
In this context, we have looked at the four culture-language groups of the Treaty 4 area of Saskatchewan and have incorporated elders and recognized community based people to assist in the developing of a unique worldview that is specific to these four language-culture groups. These four peoples have many common elements, but all have unique attributes that identify them as unique and distinguishable from others.

" A world view, for our purposes, consists of the principles, including values, traditions, and customs, society acquires to make sense of the world around them. Once a worldview has been formed, the people are then able to identify themselves as a unique people." (Oskar Kawagley), 1995 as cited Culture-Based Curriculum: A Framework. Ontario Native Literacy Coalition, April, 2001.

Néhiyáwak (Cree) Worldview



Néhiyāwak (Cree) Worldview Visual



Nēhiyāwak Cree Worldview

Spiritual

Nēhiyāwak from the Treaty four area oral traditional teachings are kisê-manitôw kâ-tipêyicikê has the ultimate spiritual power of all living things and created all living things with different spiritual powers. All life forms begins with and exists at the will of kâ-tipêyicikê. Upon creation kâ-tipêyicikê created the universe, sky, sun, moon, and stars. The universe was the only existence after the flood. Wisâkêcahk was the only human being left after the flood, it was Wisâkêcahk who created the land on turtle island. Wisâkêcahk was a mysterious human being with great spiritual powers, also know as the tricksters amongst Nēhiyāwak. Nēhiyāwak believe Wisâkêcahk is only spoken of during the winter months. If spoken of during other seasons Nēhiyāwak believe with his powerful spiritual name Wisâkêcahk does mysterious things to our weather or other things in nature. A legend is told of how creation of earth and creation of all living things came to be after the flood era which was handed down orally from generation to generation. Many different versions of the creation legend is told with many similarities.

After the land was created, Wisâkêcahk formed different things with mud, which represented the plants, animals, birds, rock, reptiles and 4 different human shapes. He used his spiritual powers to bring them to life but after many attempts he failed. Wisâkêcahk then asked Kâtipêyicikê for assistance, Kâtipêyicikê instructed him to use one of his special gifts the whistle, which will bring life to his formations. With the assistance of his special gift the whistle, Wisâkêcahk formation's came to life with guidance of Kâtipêyicikê. The whistle is also used in the Sundance/Rain dance lodges, which symbolizes the same significance.

Every living thing was given spiritual powers and was told they are interconnected with one another and respect one another.

Every living thing was given a reason for their existence; sweet grass plant was told he would be the messenger to carry the prayers to Kâ-tipêyicikê, as his brothers and sister prayed in different ceremonies. Other plants were given their medicinal proposes.

The Buffalo was the most sacred animal, and instructed to look after the people by sacrificing itself to be a ceremonial symbol in most ceremonies, provide food, provide



clothing and others tools for the people. The moose and deer were also instructed to provide food, clothing, tools and spiritual helpers for the people. Other animals were instructed to be spiritual helpers for the people. The most common ceremony is the horse dance, which was held to honor people, ask the horse spirit for better health, and ask for guidance for families.

- All birds had similar shapes, which changed as wîsâkêçahk gave them their own distinctive identity as years past into creation. Nêhiyawak believe that the Eagle and thunderbird are the most sacred birds in their culture. Different ceremonies are held to honor these birds and other birds. The Chicken Dance is most common ceremony held to honor all winged for their spiritual guidance.
- Mêmêkwêsiwak or the little people were instructed to be spiritual helpers to guide the people in the positive direction within the communities.
- Kâ-tipêyicikêt gave Nêhiyawak of this area, sacred rites to help them develop themselves in spiritual domain, physical domain, social domain, and mental domain. These ceremonies are; nipâhkwêsimowin or the Sundance/Raindance lodge, ospwâkan itâskonikêwin or the pipe ceremony, matotisânowin or the Sweatlodge, misâtimosimôwin or the horse dance, wîhtikôkânahk or the contrary dance, wihkokêwin or the feast, kihkosimôwin or the vision quest or boys puberty ceremony, wâkayosiwin or the girls puberty rites and wâskâsimowin or Round Dance. All of these ceremonies were given rites of passages for individuals who were to conduct these ceremonies. Every ceremony has protocols that are followed by male and female. Later the traditional pwâtisimowin or the pow-wow ceremony was adopted from their relative the Siouan tribe.
- Nêhiyawak, believe in reincarnation and also after death the spirit goes to the great land. Nêhiyawak believe Kâ-tipêyicikêt sets out our life journey before birth, and if we take our own spirit, it will wander on this earth until it was set to end its journey.
- Nêhiyawak were told to always teach children about retaining their traditional ways both culture and language, respecting all living things and getting along with one another or destruction will occur within families and communities.



Political

- All nations were created by Wîsâkêcahk with the assistance of Kâ-tipeyicikê and exist at the will of kâ-tipêyicikê. Each nation was given a territory, language, traditional practices and ways to govern their people. Each nation was told their purpose of existence and equal importance of existence. kâ-tipêyicikê instructed Wîsâkêcahk that all nations must respect each others territory, language and ways of life. No nation will have the authority to exert control over the other nation or destruction of nations will occur.
- The Cree language consists of 5 different dialects, which are; the R dialect originates from what is presently called northern Quebec, the L dialect from central Manitoba and Saskatchewan, the N dialect from North East Saskatchewan and North West Manitoba, the TH dialect from Northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba and the Y dialect Southern Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba, British Columbia and Northern Montana. The Y dialect Cree speakers always lived in these areas and migrated to different locations according to the seasons.
- Nêhiyawêwak from the past formed camps and selected a leader to represent them. The leader selected one member from each household to form the council to assist in the decision making. The leaders were chosen for their leadership skills, spiritual powers, good hunter and generosity for other people. The leader was judged by his generosity, ability to give good counsel and influence fair decision making. Nêhiyawêwak who did not agree with the actions of their leader or the decision made in council were free to move to another camp or if they had enough support a new camp was created. When two or more camps camped together the most senior leader was expected to take the leadership role and councils would meet as one.
- Nêhiyawak leader's decision making was guide by the principles of being a good relative, respect, sharing and maintaining a state of harmony with other tribes. Leader's importance was human relations, and well being and safety for the camp. The leader always asked kâ-tipêyicikê for guidance to assist in decision-making. The guidance was asked in different ceremonies.
- Nêhiyawak adopted other nations to strengthen their relationships. They believe nations who adopted one another should be loyal to each other and treat one another as family.



Economic

- Nêhiyawak, survived on all living things and respected all living things. The animals, birds, plants and earth were interconnected for survival. Mother earth was not destroyed in anyway as Nêhiyawak believe if you destroy mother earth it destroying your own mother.
- Men and woman roles were equal to one another, without each other's roles a camp would never have survived. These roles were never interfered by one another. On special occasions one called upon another for assistance. Children also had a role in the camp.
- Men were responsible to look after their family by hunting, providing tools for survival and protecting the family. Men followed protocols before hunting for the animal and after the hunt to show respect for the animal. Men who were the oldest of the family were responsible to look after family who were struggling to maintain their camp. The women prepared the meat by drying the meat for food for future and tanning the hide for clothing. The women picked and dried berries in the summer for wintertime. The women and children prepared the wood for the camp. The Elders were responsible to teach the children their language and ways of life.
- The leaders assigned others to look after the orphans and widows who did not have family. Everyone had a role to do in order for the camp to survive. Nobody was allowed to be lazy unless physically handicapped.
- Nêhiyawak believed in ownership and respected individual property. Nobody entered the property while owners left their home. The women were the owners of their home and household items. Men owned weapons, tools and horses associated with their work. Both women and men shared their items with others as materialism was not important. Human life, generosity and sharing was more valuable. Both believe in living in harmony with others and nature.
- Nêhiyawak traded tools, medicine and material items with other nations to obtain other material to survive in the camp.



Cree terms

Creator –Kisê-manitôw
Kihci-manitôw
Mâmiwi-wîyôhtâwîmâw
Kâ-tipêyicikêt

Cree people –Nêhiyawak

Little people – mêmêkwêsîwak

Trickster –Wîsâkêcahk

Compiled by Doreen Oakes

Elders:

Ivan Obey

Sylvia Obey

Eᑎna Brass

Mike Pinay (Elder's helper)

Rick Favel (Elder's helper)

Brenda Mosquito (Elder's helper)

Reference

Late Gordon Oakes stories about Creation and ceremonies.

Nêhiyawêwin itwêwina compiled by Arok Wolvengrey
– spelling check



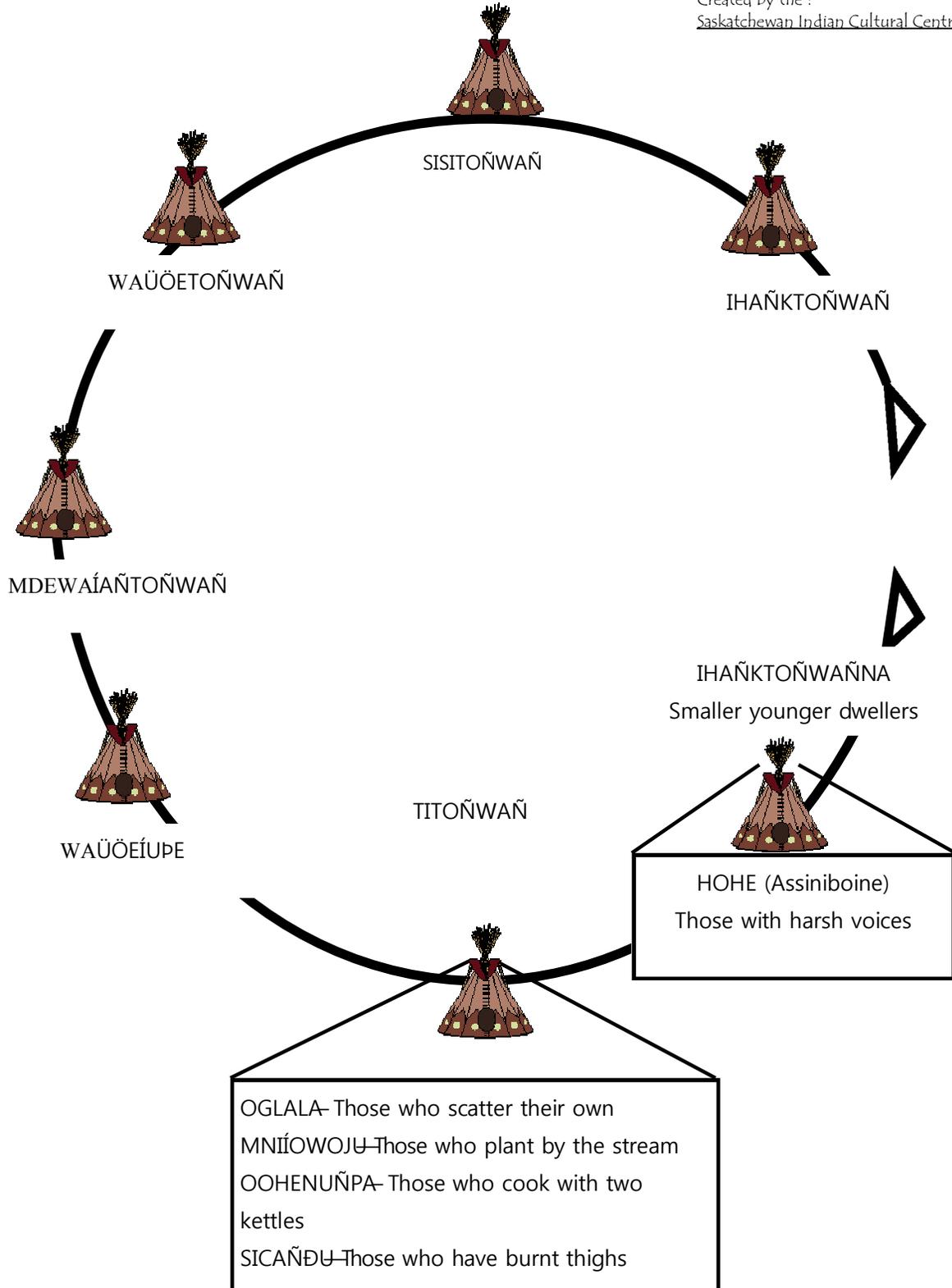
D/N/L Worldview



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Camp Circles

Created by the :
Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre



STRUCTURE OF THE

Created by the :
Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre

OYAPE

The Nation Comprised of the seven otoñwañ
or campfires who claim a common ancestry

OTOÑWAÑ

The campfires or main divisions comprised of
a number of oßöaye who claim common
ancestry,
i.e. Waüöetoñwañ,

OŞÖAYE

Major subdivisions comprised of a number of
tiyoßöaye who claim common ancestry
i.e. Oglala, Hohe

TIYOŞÖAYE

Minor sub-divisions or extended family
groups which reside in one or more wi©oti.
i.e. Kul Wi©aßa tiyoßöaye of the Si©añöu
oßöaye.

WI©OÄE

The common camp unit made up of two or
more äiwahe which are related through
blood, marriage and/or adoption.
i.e. Tatañka Najiñ Wi©oäi

ÄIHAWE

The Household usually made up of individuals
who are related by blood, marriage and/or
adoption

WI©AŞA

The individual

Oᑕeāi šaúowiñ Worldview

The Oᑕeāi šaúowiñ in the seventeenth and eighteenth century accepted these ideas as their fundamental beliefs: (taken from the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre)

Spiritual

- All life began with and exists at the will of Waíañ Tañúa. Wakañ Tañúa, the Great Mystery, is comprised of sixteen aspects. The oldest of these is Iñyañ, the Rock, who put things in motion and took from himself to create the universe. When he had finished putting things in motion all that was left of him was rock.
- Iñyañ gave a piece of himself or a spirit to everything that was created. Through their spirit, all things within the universe are connected or have a common ancestor, Iñyañ. All are our relatives whether they are visible or invisible, good or bad. That understanding is the essence of Miᑭaúuye Oyasiñ, which is the foundation of the Oᑕeāi šaúowiñ worldview. Miᑭaúuye Oyasiñ means, "we are related" or "all my relations".
- The Oᑕeāi šaúowiñ and the buffalo have the same ancestors, the Pte Oyate, the buffalo cow people, who were created to be servants to the spirits and lived many generations below the surface of the earth. Iᑭpomi, the trickster, lured seven families of them to the earth's surface. They had great difficulty feeding and clothing themselves, therefore they prayed to Waíañ Tañka for assistance. In response more Pte Oyate were sent to the surface of the earth, in the form of the buffalo, to provide for the first ones. Together they developed the Oᑕeāi šaúowiñ wiᑕoüañ, the way of life or culture.
- All aspects of the universe have a  purpose in the scheme of existence

- The Great Spirit gave the Ojéai šáúowin seven sacred rites to help them develop themselves and in being good relatives. These ceremonies are the Iníöi or the sweat lodge, Hañbleöiya or the vision question, Wanađi Yuhaöi or spirit keeping, Huñúa or making of relatives, Wiwañyañg waöiöi or the sun dance, the Ißnaâi Awiöalowañöi or girls puberty rite, and Taöa Wañíayeyaöi or throwing of the ball.
- The Ojéai šáúowiñ, believe in reincarnation but they have no concept of a God sitting on a throne looking down on us, who will damn us to a hell if we do not do what he says. They believe that Waíañ Tañúa is compassionate and will give his children as many chances as it takes to learn and develop. Everything is in a circle and life is just what you make it.

Political

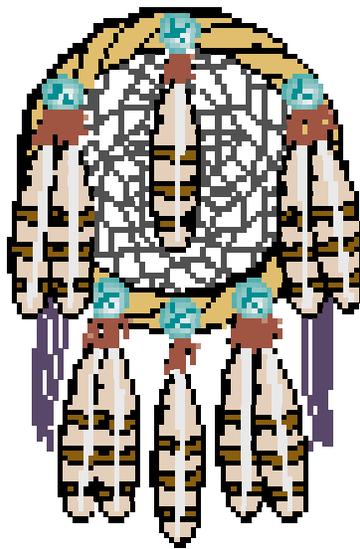
- Nations exist at the will of the Great Spirit. The Great Spirit created many nations and gave each a territory, language, and way of life including spiritual practises and a way to govern themselves. Each has a purpose and is of equal importance in the scheme of existence. No nation has the right to exert control over another.
- The Ojéai šáúowiñ originated in their territory that extended from the Great Lakes west to the Rocky Mountains and from the Parklands of present day Canada to the Smokey Hills River of Kansas. Since the beginning, the spiritual centre and heart of their territory has been the Black Hills. (they did not migrate from Asia or from the east to the west)
- The terms Dakota/Nakota/Lakota mean those who consider themselves kindred or family. All who are lineal descendants and those who have established a relationship through marriage or adoption are considered members of the Ojéai šáúowiñ. All members are expected to loyally fulfil their kinship obligations and to make whatever  sacrifices are needed to assure the

- Oᑕeāi šaúowiñ decision making was guided by the principles of “being a good relative” and maintaining a state of harmony or wolaíopa. Even in war, respect was accorded to the enemy. To kill another was considered disrespectful, honours were given to those who counted coup or struck the enemy.
- The Oᑕeāi šaúowiñ believe nations can adopt one another to strengthen the relationship that naturally exists between them. They believe nations who adopted one another should be loyal to each other and treat one another as kindred or family. The first treaties that the French, British, and Americans had made with them were perceived as adoptions.

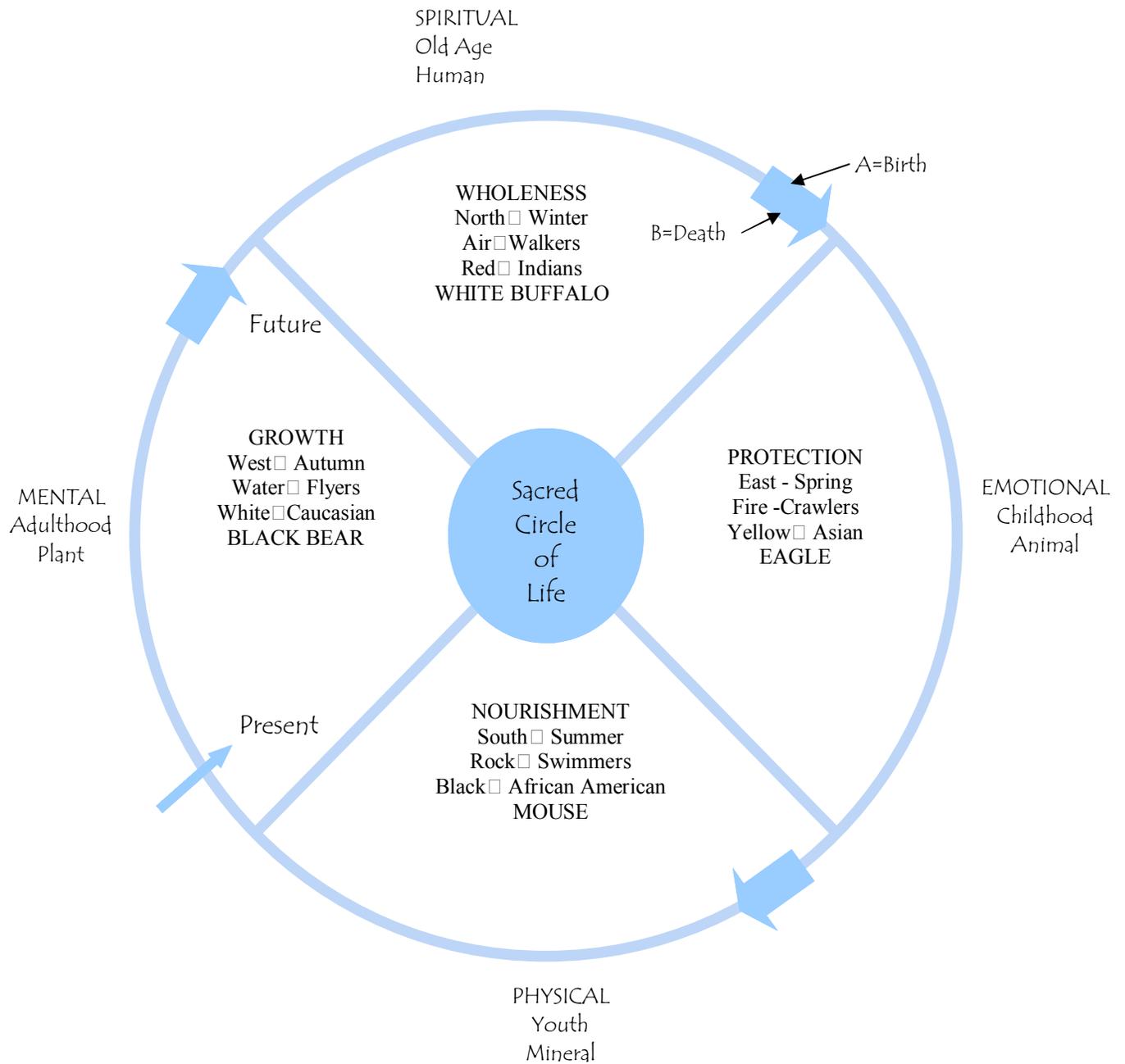
Economic

- The Oᑕeāi šaúowiñ and the buffalo have a mother/child relationship with the earth, who nurtures them. The earth should be treated with the same respect that one shows to their mother. Man should not attempt to manipulate or control her but instead seek to live in harmony with her.
- Among the Oᑕeāi šaúowiñ the sexes were seen to be complimentary and the two combined made the whole. Each sex had their own roles and responsibilities. It was considered disrespectful for one sex to interfere in the affairs of the other. Only in special circumstances did one call upon the other for assistance.
- The Oᑕeāi šaúowiñ had a high regard for those who were industrious but had no toleration for those that shirked their responsibilities or were lazy. The able bodied were expected to help those who were not as physically capable. The survival of the people depended on each person doing their part to assure the sustenance of the camp.
- The Oᑕeāi šaúowiñ believed in in-  dividual ownership and respected

Nakawá (Saulteaux) Worldview



Nakawá (Saulteaux) Worldview



Nakawē Saulteaux Worldview Introduction

Kizē-manitō (Creator) is the ultimate entity, the ultimate power of life. The Creator then made the universal laws of nature.

First, Kizē-manitō made the universe, the Kīzik (sky), Kīzis (Sun), Tibik-Kīzis (Moon) and Anangōk (Stars). All these entities have a spirit that the people pray to in their ceremonies. These entities enable the people to predict the weather and provide direction.

Kizē-manitō made Aki (earth) with its four elements. These four elements are Asin (rock), Iskotē (fire), Nōtin (wind), and Nibi (water). Each of these elements have their own power and spirit. Aki (earth) provides all creation with food, shelter, medicine and many other gifts. Each of the elements has a gift to give. These four elements provides life for all Creation. Therefore they are treated with respect.

Next, Kizē-manitō made the plant life. Plants are also the food source for all life forms. Plants were given spiritual healing powers to be used by animals and man. Creation stories tell of a time when plant life could interact with man. There are four sacred plants that are used by man; Wīngask (sweetgrass), Pizikwi wīngask (sage), Mināsigan (cedar), Asēmā (tobacco). These plants were used in reverence for purification and offering purposes.

Kizē-manitō made mankind who is totally dependent on all Creation for survival and contributes very little towards the life cycle. Mankind was given the greatest gift of all-language. Language gives mankind a special identity and enables him to pray to Kizē-manitō and provides him with the ability to communicate with other people.

All creation lived by these universal laws of nature. Thus, Kizē-manitō brought into existence the creation of the universe.



Spiritual

Anisinābek from the Treaty four area oral traditional beliefs are Kizē-manitō has the ultimate spiritual power of all living things and created all living things with different spiritual powers. All life forms begin with and exists at the will of Kizē-manitō. Upon creation Kizē-manitō created the universe, sky, sun, moon, and stars. The universe was the only existence after the flood; it was Nēnabos who created the land on Turtle Island. Nēnabos was a mysterious human being with mysterious spiritual powers also known as the Trickster amongst the Anisinābē. Anisinābek believe Nēnabos is only spoken of during the winter months. If spoken of during the other seasons, Anisinābek believe with his powerful name will evoke mysterious happenings to our weather and nature. Ātasokan (a legend) is told of how creation of all living things came to be after the flood era which was handed down orally from generation to generation. Many different versions of the creation story is told with many similarities.

- After the land was created, Nēnabos formed different things with mud, which represented the plants, animals, birds, rock, reptiles and four races of man. He used his spiritual powers to bring them to life, but after many attempts he failed. Nēnabos than asked Kize-manitō for assistance.
- Every living thing was given spiritual powers and was told they are interconnected with one another and must respect one another.
- Every living being was given a reason for their existence; wīngask (sweet grass) plant was told it would be the messenger to carry the prayers to Kizē-manitō, as his brothers and sisters prayed in different ceremonies. The other plants were all given a gift of their own to aid the animals and mankind.
- The moskotē-piziki (buffalo) was the most sacred animal, and was instructed to look after the people by sacrificing itself to be a ceremonial symbol in most ceremonies , to provide food, clothing and other tools for the Anisinābē people. The moose and deer were also instructed to provide food, clothing, tools and to act as spiritual helpers for the people. The most common ceremony is the Horse dance, which was held to honour people, to ask the horse spirit for better health and to ask for guidance for families.



- Kiniw (eagle) and thunderbird are the most sacred birds in the Anisinābē culture. All birds had similar shapes which changed as Nēnabos gave them their own distinctive identity as years past into creation. Different ceremonies are held to honour these birds and other birds. The chicken dance is the most common ceremony held to honour all winged for their spiritual guidance.
- Mēmēgwēsīwak or the little people were instructed to be spiritual helpers to guide the people towards a positive direction within the communities.
- Kizē-manitō gave Anisinābeg of this area, sacred rites to help them develop themselves in a holistic manner (mental, spiritual, emotional, physical). The nipagwēsīmowin (ceremonies) are the opwāgan nanagonigēwin (pipe ceremony), maṭōtizōwin (sweatlodge), mistatimosimōwin (horse dance), witigoganag (contrary dance), wīg-wāding (feast), waḡāsimōwin (round dance), and the nimīding (council dance).
- All of these ceremonies were given rites of passage for individuals who were to conduct these ceremonies. Every ceremony has protocols that are followed by all. Later the traditional pwanisimowin or the powwow was adapted from the Siouan people.
- Anisinābeg believed when someone passes on that their spirit goes back to the great land of our ancestors.
- Anisinābeg were always told to teach their children about retaining their traditional and cultural ways, for they represent and are blessed with the gift of life.
- Anisinābeg believe that the fundamental ethic is manacihitiwin-respect to sustain harmony.
- Spirituality is a way of life, to live in harmony amongst all of creation and be mindful of the roles we play in the circle of life.



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- Spirituality is a way of life, to live in harmony amongst all of creation and be mindful of the roles we play in the circle of life.

Political

- Kizē-manitō (creator) is greater than all governments. Kizē-manitō gave First Nations natural laws that addressed how to live life in peace and harmony with all creation. Kizē-manitō instructed Nanabush that all nations must respect each other in regards to territory, language, and ways of life. No nation has the right to exert control over another.
- The Anisinābē language is an Algonquian language which is a gift from Kize-manitō. It is a gift to use to communicate with Kize-manitō, oral tradition is rich in history, in the legends poetry and song. These are seen as powerful teaching tools, and the means of preserving the language and culture.



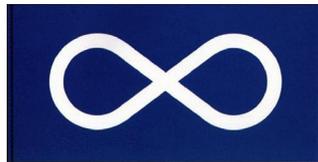
- Anisinabeg from the past formed bands and selected a leader. Leaders were chosen for their leadership talents, the strengths of their character, and their sense of commitment to the community; and skills as strategists. Those who did not agree with leadership were always free.
- Anisinabe leadership was based on the importance of human relations, well being, and safety for the camp. Decisions were made through a process of consensual decision making process. Leaders always asked kizē manitō for guidance and protection through the different ceremonies.

Economic

- Kizē-manitō (creator) provide for all needs. Mother Earth was not destroyed in any way. Human beings are the most dependent of all creatures. They depend on the earth, the animals, and the plants given to them by the creator for their sustenance.
- Kici-anisinabēg (elders) played an important role as teachers, guidance councilors, listeners, storytellers, healers and advisors to ensures community values. They influenced behavior by giving advice guidance and moral direct. Spiritual beliefs and language were the main focus of educating young children. Children also had a role in the camp, children were taught practical skills and Nakawē culture customs.
- Traditionally, raising a child was accomplished within the extended family. Parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, cousins all helped the child to grow. Children learned skills by emulating others. Time was spent observing and visualizing, making sure you knew and understood before attempting something.
- Men and women roles entailed a wide variety of duties. The women worked equally as hard as the men to ensure that families did not lack the necessities of life. To assure quality of life everyone had a role in order for the camp to survive. No one was allowed to be lazy.
- When the needs of all are taken care of there will be harmony and security within the society.



Métis Worldview



	Traditional (pre-Confed.)	Post-Confederation (1867-1950)	Contemporary (1950-Present)
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laws of the hunt • laws for the community • paramilitary structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provisional government • democratic principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • non – profit structure • trade union philosophy • Métis Nation – Saskatchewan
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • based on subsistence first • free enterprise, • entrepreneur-ship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • landless • wage economy , surplus labour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working class , unskilled, seasonal workers
Religious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emphasize First Nations traditions • some Jesuit influences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic faith , heavy Oblate influences • some First Nations influences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • heavy Catholic influence • some First Nations or Protestant influence based on regional needs
Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • team work and family units • organized around church parishes and trade partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organized around families • recognized through relationship with employer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more formal politically based structure
Kinship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extended family • church parishes and winter camps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extended family • community based 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extended families • genealogies, church & community
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plants , hunting & gathering • natural immunity to disease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • substandard diet & living conditions • above average exposure to viral diseases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher rates of diabetes • improved health system
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • modeling • apprenticeship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hit and miss education • exclusion • residential schooling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • western based • modeling & apprenticeship • limited post – secondary
Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social ,dancing , fiddle music • community events • traditional games and activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Métis cultural traditions in decline • more western based 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mainstream • traditions are being revived • cultural events

Métis World View

Historians have referred to the Métis people as "The Children of the Fur Trade". The first Métis were descendants of European fur-traders and Indian mothers. The term "Métis" is a derivative of the Spanish word for mixed. The Métis were classified as a mixed-blood people, but were also classified as the products of two different cultural world-views. The European world view was based on economic factors and profit while the Aboriginal world view found its base in social realities and subsistence.

From the origins, the Métis played a very significant role as go-betweens. They were bilingual and bicultural and were seen as "in the middle" between their European and First Nation roots. As a people, they were introduced to and practiced a wide range of European and First Nation cultural traditions. Based on location, affiliation and personal preference the Métis would follow either European or First Nation values. If neither value system worked in a particular setting, a variation of one, or a combination of two or more was implemented to meet the need.

Prior to Canadian Confederation in 1867, the Métis played a vital role in the European development of the Canadian west. They developed a unique lifestyle that took aspects of their parent cultures and created a unique identity. Examples of this can be found in the music, clothing and the language. This unique identity led to the Métis people being called many things. The Dakota people called them "The Flower-beadwork People", the Cree called them "The Wagon People, and the Ojibway called them "the half burnt woodmen" One of the names they called themselves was "ka tip aim sont chic", which translates as the people that own themselves.

The Métis value system was based on relationships. Family and community were central to the Métis life. Historically, the Métis are recognized as fun loving people who lived each day to the fullest. You could not change or control tomorrow, so you would deal with it tomorrow.

Historical, political, and social realities have played a major role in the world-view of the Métis people for the last century. As a people, they have been ignored, marginalized and oppressed. The Métis have been forced to live a lifestyle that reacts to a western philosophy dominated by economics. Therefore, the Métis identity covers a diverse range depending on the variables they were exposed to.



The contemporary Métis people continue to identify at various degrees based on the cultural influences of the others, or to the degree that their community was impacted in the past. This is reflected by the diversity of the Métis people. For example, many of the Métis of the north are more connected to the land and still maintain their traditional language. There is another segment of the Métis population from the Qu' Appelle Valley who work within the wage economy and still maintain their language and traditions. There is another segment of the Métis communities who has adopted European values and know very little about Métis traditions.

Systems of Culture (Harris and Moran)

POLITICAL

Traditional (Pre-Confederation)

- Based on the Laws of the Hunt
- Established laws for the community.
- Paramilitary lifestyle that had captains and each captain had ten men that he was responsible for.

Post-Confederation (1867-1950)

- Established a provisional government under the leadership of Louis Riel.
- Emphasized a democratic government structure.

Contemporary (1950-present)

- Political structure operates under the non-profit corporations act.
- The structure is based on the trade union movement and is divided in twelve geographic areas and has over 100 locals.



ECONOMIC

Traditional (Pre-Confederation)

- Based on subsistence where each person focused on providing enough resources to meet their own needs.
- In times of prosperity, entrepreneurship and trade would become prominent.
- Lifestyle would be based on free enterprise and hunting and trapping

Post-Confederation (1867-1950)

- Landless with a few exceptions due to contradictory practices with the issuance of scrip.
- Lifestyle based on a wage economy and the people were used as surplus labour.

Contemporary (1950-present)

- Considered working class people with the majority employed in unskilled, seasonal jobs.
- Very little or no control over decisions that impact the economy.

RELIGIOUS

Traditional (Pre-Confederation)

- Many follow the religious influences of the First Nations in their geographic area.
- There is some influences of Christianity and the Catholic Church through the Jesuits.

Post-Confederation (1867-1950)

- Majority of the Métis are Catholics due to the influences of the Oblate fathers.
- A minority continue to follow First Nations traditions.

Contemporary (1950-present)

- Majority are Catholic due to religious upbringing.
- A small minority practice a Protestant faith.
- First Nations influences still exist in some Métis communities and the community has often adopted a variation of the religious practices to meet their needs.



ASSOCIATION

Traditional (Pre-Confederation)

- Survival and success depended upon teamwork. The buffalo hunt worked in teams of ten.
- The entire family units played a role in daily life through job sharing.
- Entire communities organized around church parishes and trading partners.

Post-Confederation (1867-1950)

- Communities were organized around families. Heads of families were connected to employers.
- Families were recognized in relationship to their employment connections and their ability to access credit from their employer.

Contemporary (1950-present)

- The communities are organized into a more formal structure and are connected through a political organization (Métis Nation-Saskatchewan).

KINSHIP

Traditional (Pre-Confederation)

- The communities were structured around the extended family.
- Families were also connected through church parishes and winter camps.

Post-Confederation (1867-1950)

- Families remain connected through the extended family. The nuclear family plays a role, but the extended family is highly emphasized.
- Family units continue to work together and live together as a community.

Contemporary (1950-present)

- Extended families remain dominant.
- Families are connected through genealogies, church parishes and communities.



HEALTH

Traditional (Pre-Confederation)

- Very connected to First Nations traditions of plants and ceremonies.
- Diet consists of meat and vegetables.
- Some natural immunity to diseases based on European lineage.

Post-Confederation (1867-1950)

- Substandard diet that centred on wild game when accessible.
- Highly susceptible to viral infections and diseases due to substandard living conditions.

Contemporary (1950-present)

- Many still affected by substandard conditions and continue to have above normal rates of viral diseases.
- The entire community in general is affected with a higher percentage of diabetes.
- Conditions are improving in the Métis community based on provincial access to health programming and also a wider access by families that can access personal health plans through their employers.

EDUCATION

Traditional (Pre-Confederation)

- Children learned by watching and participation.
- Skills were modeled and a form of apprenticeship was enacted.
- The curriculum was based in nature and learning and teaching revolved around seasonal cycles and natural phenomena.

Post-Confederation (1867-1950)

- Métis children were excluded from mainstream education.
- Some attended Residential Schools.
- Some attended country schools but it was on the good-will of the teachers.
- It was considered illegal for Métis to go to public school until 1944. In 1944, the provincial government of Saskatchewan assumed responsibility for the public education of Métis children.



Contemporary (1950–present)

- Métis children participate in the contemporary Western based education system.
- Many young people continue to learn many of their practical skills from traditional methods of watching and apprenticeship.
- Post-secondary education access is often limited for Métis learners.

RECREATION

Traditional (Pre-Confederation)

- the Métis were very social people and community gatherings were common. Square dances and jigging competitions were common. The Métis adopted variations of Scottish and Irish music and incorporated many First Nations dance steps. Musical instruments consisted mainly of fiddles, concertinas, and spoons.
- New Year's celebrations were the highlight of the festive season. The Métis families would visit from house to house and the gatherings centered on food and dancing.
- Traditional games were common and consisted of horseracing, footraces, freight packing, tug of war, and hand games. Clothing played a very important role in recognizing the competitors. Sashes, shawls, leggings, coats, hats all brought recognition to the participants.

Post-Confederation (1867–1950)

- the traditional cultural activities of the Métis were not as prevalent. Many of the cultural gatherings ceased to happen and many Métis lost many of their traditions. The fiddles, sashes and socials disappeared. The Métis recreational activities revolved around western practices and the Métis children were not readily involved.

Contemporary (1950–present)

- Métis children are very involved in mainstream activities. Baseball, hockey and other community based sports are common.
- Traditional recreational activities are being revived. Métis dancing, fiddle music, and cultural events are much more common. Back to Batoche Days, Palmbere, and Lebret Métis Days are annual events that have contributed greatly to the Métis cultural revival of traditional recreation. At these events, many of the traditional games are revived and the fiddle and jigging take centre stage.

