

LIFE AT A RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

This portrayal of life at a residential school is fictional. However, it is a composite based on many First Nations and Inuit children's experiences. Many available resources give first-hand accounts. Some are more positive than this composite.

Early in the morning, the children awoke to the clanging of a bell. In the half-dark of their crowded dormitory, they hurriedly pulled on their clothes, then filed into the chapel for a brief morning service. After that they ate breakfast. Then came three hours in the classroom.

The teachers at the front of the classrooms were nuns, priests, or ministers, and often had little or no formal training in education. In Tsuu T'ina, they were *mik'iyi ja ni tu na* — "priests" or "the ones with the long robe." Their lessons were usually straightforward, focusing mainly on the three Rs — reading, writing and arithmetic — plus a fourth R: religion.

Class discipline was difficult to maintain because the teachers were poorly trained, the classrooms overcrowded, and the students hungry and unhappy. Many teachers kept leather straps or wooden paddles handy, and did not hesitate to use them. The rules of behaviour were often strict, and punishment was swift.

The other half of the day was devoted to practical education. In other words, the students were given manual chores. They were told that this would help build the skills they needed to find jobs later in life. Many students suspected that free student labour was the only thing that kept the schools financially afloat.

In many of the schools, the surface discipline concealed a strong undercurrent of resistance. Students took

every opportunity to quietly subvert their teachers' authority. Many continued to speak their own languages in private, even though this was often strictly forbidden. Some stole food from the pantries. Others ran away, desperately trying to return home.

In the chapel, in the classroom, and in the fields, children heard a consistent message: their culture was inferior.

Sometimes this message was explicitly taught, sometimes it was only implied, but either way it was deeply hurtful. In some students it bred feelings of anger and resentment. Others turned that anger inward, and learned to hate themselves.

At the end of the day, many students crawled into their beds, hungry, homesick, and exhausted.



Ruth MacLaurin's painting, St. Joe's Residential Residue, is a depiction of the legacy of physical and sexual abuse that some residential school students endured. What evidence of her message can you see in the artwork?

REFLECTION

What was life like at a residential school? Reflect on your thoughts in your journal.



Nicholas Flood Davin was a Member of Parliament representing Regina, Saskatchewan. Why was his report so influential to the Canadian government?

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

When mission and day schools did not accomplish their stated goal of assimilation, the government looked for a new education system for First Nations. They believed that the solution might lie south of the border. Prime Minister John A. Macdonald appointed a backbencher, Nicholas Flood Davin, to study American methods for educating Native American children. Davin toured the United States, and came away very impressed with the American system of industrial boarding schools. In 1879, Davin issued his report.

He recommended separating First Nations children from their families and communities. "If anything is to be done with the Indian," Davin wrote, "we must catch them very young."

Davin recommended taking children as far away as possible from the cultural influence of their families and communities. He proposed a system of industrial boarding schools across western Canada where students could be trained to lead a Christian lifestyle and to practise European work habits.

Both the government and the churches warmly embraced the Davin Report. The government began to shift emphasis away from day schools and towards what they called Indian Residential Schools. Six years later, because of the 1885 Resistance, the government became more convinced than ever of the importance of assimilating First Nations people.

Despite many problems with the system (see page 179), some First



Students of residential schools studied religion as one of their main subjects. These boys are pictured at Bishop Horden Memorial Residential School, at Moose Factory, Ontario, an Anglican school.

Nations and Inuit people look back fondly on their times at residential school and at the people who taught them there. Some successful residential school students eventually returned home to become leaders of their communities.

The majority of the staff and administrators of the schools sincerely believed that they were acting in their pupils' best interests. Working at a residential school demanded a great deal of dedication and personal sacrifice.

In 1868, there were only two residential schools in Canada. By 1894, that number had grown to forty-five. The government took several steps to boost First Nations enrolment. In 1894 and 1920, amendments were made to the Indian Act to make school attendance

compulsory. Indian agents on reserves exerted pressures of their own, withholding food and benefits from families who did not send their children to school.

The number of residential schools reached its peak in the 1930s. There were eighty schools, spread throughout every province and territory except New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Prince Edward Island. Beginning in 1930, Indian agents had the power to hold First Nations students at residential school until age eighteen.

Area administrators in Inuit communities fulfilled the same role in the Arctic, forcing Inuit children to attend school. From the 1930s–1960s, Inuit children were taken from their families to *ilibariniartuat iningat*, Inuvialuktun for “residential schools,” that were sometimes 1000 kilometres from home. In earlier years, the children travelled by boat. In the 1960s, they were collected by plane. The long distances sometimes meant Inuit children could not return to their communities for holidays or summers. Their parents could not travel the long distances to visit. Some went several years without seeing a family member.

Church missions would likely have built schools for Métis children as well, if there had been funding from the government to do so. In fact, no education was offered specifically to Métis people — they were ignored as a group by the federal government. The only school built expressly for Métis children was at the St. Paul des Métis settlement. You learned about

TYPES OF SCHOOLS

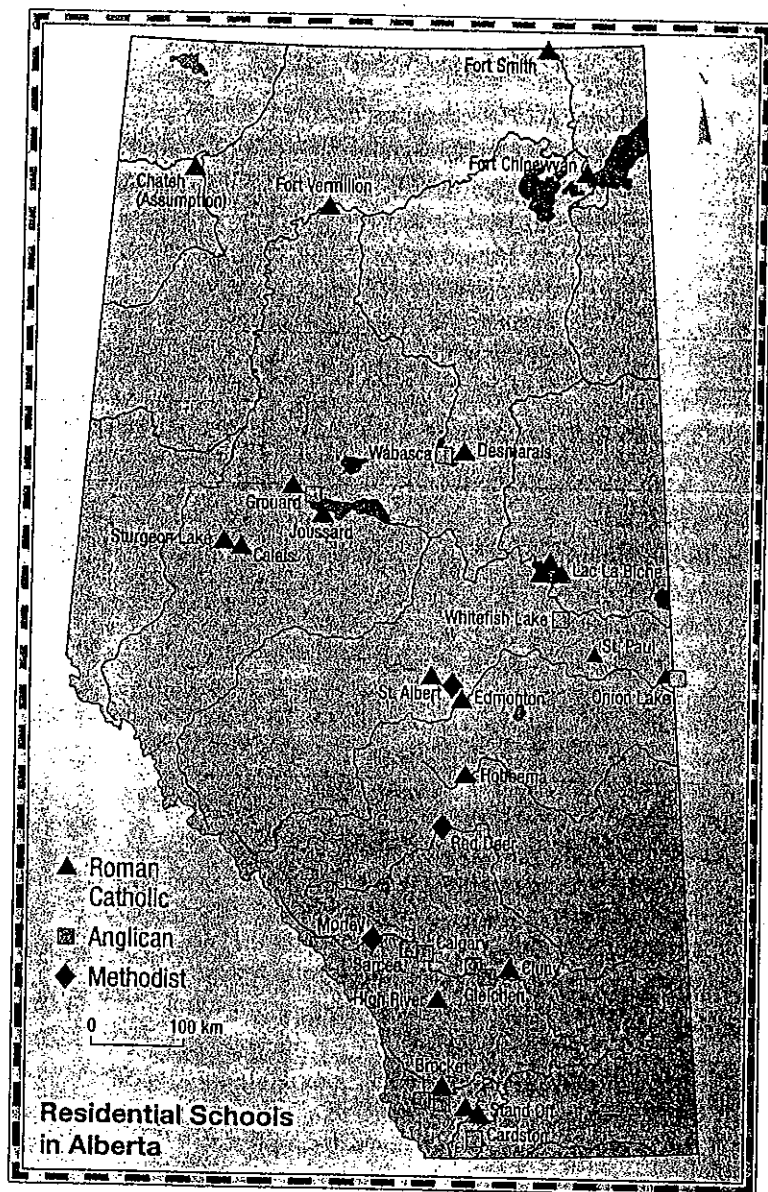
There were many different types of schools and names for schools throughout the evolution of First Nations formal education. The terminology can be confusing.

Mission schools began to open shortly after first contact with Europeans. Missionaries who travelled to North America established small settlements called missions, and often operated a school within the mission. These mission schools were most often *day schools* — the students attended classes during the day and returned home to their families each night.

Industrial schools were introduced based on a model found in the United States. The industrial schools were sometimes day schools, and sometimes *residential schools* — where students lived in dormitories within the school and only returned to their families for holidays. The defining aspect of an industrial school was that students usually spent part of their day in classes, and part of their day working and learning hands-on skills for farming and homemaking. The Dunbow Industrial School in High River, Alberta, was used as a showcase for the government to display its First Nations school system. Missionaries operated residential and industrial schools on behalf of the Canadian government when the formal residential school system was established — they were not the same as the original mission schools.

Residential schools were also sometimes known simply as *boarding schools*. Over time, the term *residential school* came to imply not simply boarding school, but a harmful, coercive, or abusive institution intended to interrupt the continuity of First Nations culture.

After some provisions for First Nations control of education were established, numerous day schools operated on reserves. These schools were *federally-operated schools* or *band-operated schools* that were federally funded. These were different from the original day schools operated by missionaries, and resembled non-Aboriginal *public schools*.



consequences. Attendance remained low, in both residential and day schools. Only 3 per cent of First Nations children remained in school beyond Grade Six.

Some non-Aboriginal Canadians had their own concerns about residential schools. Alberta newspaper publisher and politician Frank Oliver pointed out that the Ten Commandments tell Christians to honour our mothers and fathers. "It seems strange," he wrote in a 1908 letter, "that in the name of religion a system of education should have been instituted, the foundation principle of which not only ignored but contradicted this command."

Even the best-run residential schools and the most dedicated staff inflicted untold damage because of the flawed system. Entire generations of First Nations and Inuit people were essentially deprived of a normal family life. Parents lost the chance to raise their own children, and children lost the love and security of their homes, families, and communities. Not only was traditional education of First Nations and Inuit children interfered with, the traditional family structure was broken.

The hurt was cultural as well as personal. At residential schools, First Nations and Inuit children were taught that their cultures — their spiritual beliefs, their languages, even the clothes they wore — were inferior and wrong.

A minority of residential school staff deliberately used their positions to abuse students emotionally, physically, and sometimes even sexually. Because of their positions of power,

More residential schools were built on the prairies than in eastern Canada. Why do you think that was? Give reasons based on what you have learned about the history of western settlement.

- ① what happened to that school, and
- ② about the Métis struggle for access
- ③ to public schools, in Chapter Four.
- ④ Despite the legislation and the
- ⑤ pressures, many First Nations and
- ⑥ Inuit people resisted the govern-
- ⑦ ment's efforts to assimilate their
- ⑧ children. Some spoke out directly
- ⑨ against the system. Many others
- ⑩ simply refused to send their children
- ⑪ to school, no matter what the

and the relative powerlessness of their victims, these abusers never expected to have to someday account for their crimes. The sexual abuse that took place in some schools damaged the self-identity of the abused children, which led to increased violence and suicide in First Nations and Inuit communities.

Many residential school students received an inferior education. Because they spent only half of each day in the classroom, they did not have the same opportunities as other children. In the eyes of the system, First Nations and Inuit people were fit only for menial work. It was considered a waste to prepare them for anything more. Many children left the schools at age eighteen with the equivalent of only a Grade Five education.

The survivors of the Indian residential school system have, in many cases, continued to have their lives shaped by the experiences in these schools. Persons who attended these schools continue to struggle with their identity after years of being taught to hate themselves and their culture. The residential school led to a disruption in the transference of parenting skills from one generation to the next. Without these skills, many survivors had difficulty in raising their own children. In residential schools, they learned that adults often exert power and control through abuse. The lessons learned in childhood are often repeated in adulthood with the result that many survivors of the residential school system often inflict abuse on their own children. These children in turn use the same tools on their children.

— Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

Issues for Investigation

COMPARING CANADA'S RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS TO AUSTRALIA'S

Australia's policies to help people deal with... similar to those of First Nations and Inuit peoples... a school system... education...
One with a mandate to compare the Australian Aboriginal school system to the residential school system of Canada... create a plan that depicts the similarities and differences...

Over time, government officials and church leaders came to recognize the tragic error they had made in trying to assimilate First Nations and Inuit peoples. They had to face up to the damage they had done to individuals, families, and communities. They also had to confront the abuse that had gone on unnoticed, and sometimes condoned, in their midst.

UNRESOLVED ISSUES: VICTIMS OF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL ABUSE

In the early 1990s, Canadian newspapers were filled with stories about sexual abuse in Newfoundland's Mount Cashel Orphanage. Members of the Catholic order that ran the orphanage were jailed for abusing children in the 1970s. Canadians were shocked to learn that religious caregivers could inflict such cruelty. They were also moved by the courage of the victims, who came forward to tell about the lasting damage the abuse had caused in their lives.

Soon, Canadians learned that Mount Cashel was not a unique case. First Nations and Inuit people who had attended church-run residential schools had horror stories of their own to tell. Phil



On January 7, 1998, Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Phil Fontaine and Indian Affairs Minister Jane Stewart shake hands in Ottawa in this photograph. Stewart delivered a speech apologizing on behalf of the federal government for sexual and physical abuse suffered by First Nations and Inuit people at residential schools. Do you think an apology from the government helps victims? Why or why not?

Fontaine, then leader of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (and later National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations), spoke out publicly about sexual abuse he had suffered as a boy at a Catholic-run residential school. By speaking out, Fontaine gave a public voice to rumours that had been quietly circulating for decades.

In the weeks that followed, Fontaine's office was flooded by hundreds of calls from First Nations and Inuit people who had also been abused at residential schools. The media began calling for a public inquiry into residential schools,

Put simply, the residential school system was an attempt by successive governments to determine the fate of Aboriginal people in Canada by appropriating and reshaping their future in the form of thousands of children who were removed from their homes and communities and placed in the care of strangers.

— Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

When we talk about violence, it doesn't have to be punching somebody's lights out. Violence is what is done to people to deny them their sense of self worth.

— Phil Fontaine
on residential schools

similar to the one being held for the non-Aboriginal victims at Mount Cashel.

In 1996, the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* came out. It gave a great deal of attention to the legacy of residential schools, and the ongoing pain and suffering they left behind. The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs set up a Residential School Unit to begin examining formal claims. More than 200 claims were presented, but in the years that followed the number grew into the thousands.

In 2001, a new government department was created to attempt to resolve outstanding claims. In 2004, Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada had over 5000 cases on its books, involving nearly 12 000 individuals. Churches are involved in 70 per cent of the claims.

Government and churches have formally apologized to First Nations and Inuit people for the residential school system, and they have accepted moral and legal responsibility for the harm they did to the children in their care. They face a massive logistical and financial challenge to compensate the victims.

First Nations and Inuit people are adamant that the victims of residential schools deserve justice. Until all of the wrongs they experienced have been addressed, this chapter of Canada's history will remain open.

OFFICIAL APOLOGIES

The following are excerpts from the official statement of apology to First Nations and Inuit people from the Anglican church.

I am deeply conscious of the sacredness of the stories that you have told and I hold in the highest honour those who have told them.

I have heard with admiration the stories of people and communities who have worked at healing, and I am aware of how much healing is needed.

I am sorry, more than I can say, that we were part of a system which took you and your children from home and family.

I am sorry, more than I can say, that we tried to remake you in our image, taking from you your language and the signs of your identity.

I am sorry, more than I can say, that in our schools so many were abused physically, sexually, culturally and emotionally.

On behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada, I present our apology.

— Michael Peers, the Anglican Church of Canada Archbishop and Primate, to the National Native Convocation, Minaki, Ontario, August 6, 1993

The Canadian government and other churches have also issued official apologies to the estimated 87 500 people alive today who attended residential schools. How do you think these apologies have affected First Nations and Inuit communities?

FIRSTHAND RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

Read these excerpts from interviews with First Nations Elders. The excerpts present both positive and negative experiences from residential schools.

I went to the St. Paul's Anglican Indian Residential School from 1957 to 1961. I had to go there. My parents were going to be charged if I didn't go to school. My sister tricked me into going because she said that they showed movies there every night. I thought that would be so fun so I went.

We were taught math, English, reading, writing and we had religious classes. This was a little useful as I learned some English.

When I went to school I only spoke Blackfoot. We used it all the time at home. Of course, when we went to school we were not allowed to speak it anymore. I got hit for speaking Blackfoot. I was really hit with a wooden pointer. If you couldn't pronounce a word properly, you would get hit. I always dreaded going back to class because I knew what was going to happen.

— Kainai Elder/Survivor S who attended St. Paul's Indian Residential School in Cardston, Alberta, as recorded by Makarstoo (Leo Fox) in *Kipaitapiwahsinnooni: Alcohol and Drug Abuse Education Program*



Kainai children at meal time at the Anglican St. Paul's Indian Residential School in Cardston, Alberta. The school opened in 1900 and closed in 1972.



Children attending the Anglican St. Peter's Indian Residential School in Grouard (Lesser Slave Lake), Alberta, pose in front of the school, circa 1924-1925. The school opened in 1900 and closed in 1932.

[The] Sisters didn't treat me good — they gave me rotten food to eat and punished me for not eating it. [I] was locked in a room, fed bread and water and beaten with a strap, sometimes on the face, and sometimes [they] took my clothes off and beat me — this is the reason I ran away.

— Christine Haines, who attended Williams' Lake Residential School in Caribou, British Columbia. *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*

No one forced me to go. I wasn't pulled away from my family.

I'm not saying times were not hard, but I'm always thankful that I was in the school. I can't say the nuns were not mean. It's true we had whippings pretty near every night...

We always had a lot to eat. The food wasn't always that good but we ate better than some people on the reserve. Life at the school wasn't always work, work, work. I learned how to sing. I can still sing the requiem mass.

— Theresa Gadwa, Cree, Saddle Lake First Nation, who attended Blue Quills Indian Residential School in Lac La Biche, Alberta, as printed in the *Edmonton Journal* June 11, 1991

In the classrooms of the schools, we faced unimaginable racism and discrimination, in our tattered clothes, dirty faces and unkempt hair. No one saw the terror in our eyes, or knew of the horrors we experienced at home, after school, the abuse, physical, mental, emotional and sexual. Many of us relied on the trash cans behind the stores and hotels for food. The dropout rate was extremely high among Dene students, even in elementary school, and there was no wonder why. Every member of my generation has a personal account of brutal hardship and despair. We came to believe as children that we were the last Dene people in the world, since our parents could not talk anymore.

— Ila Bussidor, Sayisi Dene, Tadoule Lake, Manitoba, who attended MacKay Indian Residential School in Dauphin, Manitoba, June 1, 1993, *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*

As we went by the school I said a silent prayer that I would never have to see the inside of it again as long as I lived.

There was a lump in my throat and I felt like crying from the happiness, and in my heart there was such hope and optimism at the thought of my home waiting for me.

— Alice French, Inuit, who attended Aklavik Catholic Indian Residential School in Aklavik, Northwest Territories, *The Restless Nomad*

As a child I lived in perpetual fear of saying and doing anything, even if it was good, for if my work was too good, I knew that would bring the response, "Who do you think you are? You think you're such a big shot!" And I was always afraid to do my best. If I knew my work was good, I made sure that I didn't finish it. Then the nun could only yell, "Why didn't you finish the job I asked you to do?" To me, that was better than being ridiculed.

— Isabelle Knockwood, Mi'kmaq, who attended Shubenacadie Indian Residential School in Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia, *Out of the Depths*

I was raised in Siksika by my grandparents. They did not believe in sending me away to school early, so I stayed home longer than the other children of my age. I attended Crowfoot Roman Catholic Indian Residential School as a day student. I was well treated there and I cannot criticize that school at all. It hurts me to hear other people say unkind things about the priests and nuns. I learned to sew, and do household chores and keep a clean house. I am grateful for all that I learned. Whenever I got the strap or was punished, it was usually my fault. I learned about my religion and to respect elders. I quit school at 15 years of age to take care of my sick mother.

— Mia nistohkomiakii (Mary Ann Wells), Siksika, who attended Crowfoot Indian Residential School in Cluny, Alberta, *Kitomankitapiiminnookiksi: Stories from Our Elders*



— Cree children play in the snow at the Catholic Sturgeon Lake Indian Residential School in Sturgeon Lake, Alberta, circa 1946. The school opened in 1907 and closed in 1957.

REFLECTION

Before you read these stories by Elders and survivors of residential schools, were you familiar with the history of residential schools in Canada? What was your impression of their impact on First Nations and Inuit peoples?

After reading these stories, has your impression changed? Did you find out something new?

Based on these stories, think about how the residential school system impacted First Nations and Inuit cultures in Canada. Write down your ideas in your journal.

SYMBOLISM AND EXPRESSION



Thomas Moore before and after his entrance into the Regina Indian Residential School in 1897. What is the significance of his altered appearance?

CLOTHING AND APPEARANCE

A person's choice of clothing and hairstyle can be a powerful form of self-expression. Different cultures often have radically different styles and kinds of clothing. An individual's appearance is often enough for an observer to make an educated guess as to another's cultural background.

When First Nations and Inuit students entered residential schools in Canada, they faced many restrictions to their self-expression. For example, they often were not allowed to speak their own language. The images of Thomas Moore on this page demonstrate another restriction — many Aboriginal children were not allowed to wear the usual clothing and hairstyles that were common in their communities.



David Neel is a Kwak'waka'wakw sculptor from Vancouver, British Columbia. The title of this artwork by David Neel is Residential School Survivor Mask. Why do you think he made this mask interactive? What makes it different from other works of art?

SYMBOLISM

Other forms of expression are less obvious, and more symbolic. The artwork depicted on this page of a mask both open and closed, can be seen as a representation of a person who periodically hides their true self. Students living at residential schools often felt limited in their capacity to express themselves freely.

Your Project

Create a dramatic presentation that demonstrates the harm caused to students forced to suppress their own culture. For example, you might include language or dress.

LOOKING BACK

Before moving on to the next section, answer these questions:

What is assimilation? What elements of the Canadian education system for First Nations people promoted assimilation?

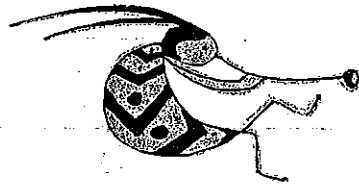
What was the David report? Why is it significant?

Why is the history of residential schools so significant to First Nations and Inuit history? How is the legacy of residential schools being resolved?

Indian Way

FIRST MOON • JANUARY

MOTHER EARTH



IN THE MOON WHEN THE SNOW BLOWS LIKE SPIRITS IN THE WIND, Grandpa Iron told us how Our People found the tipi and how it changed our lives.

Our People had always lived in caves and built their homes from bark and branches until one day some old men were sitting and watching children playing with cottonwood leaves. The children were stacking the leaves against each other in circles and using little sticks to keep them from falling down. So, the old men learned how to make tipis. We could now follow the buffalo and take our homes with us. The old people still say that we should always watch and listen to children.

Grandpa said that the tipi is a circle, as are all natural things in the world. The circle reminds us of our Mother Earth and of trees and plants. The circle stands for the sun, moon, and all round things in the Creation. The circle reminds us of the hoops of the tribes that lock together to form one great chain of circles.

Grandpa Iron would tell us to hold hands and form a circle. While the wind blew flakes of snow through the open cracks between the logs, we danced and sang the songs of the hoop Our People had known. Grandpa and Uncle Kail would laugh and tease us, telling us "that's good, that's good," or "lift your legs higher, lift your legs higher," while we danced on the worn board floor of the old log house.

Grandpa taught us that the circle means that all living things are related to each other on our Mother Earth. He told us we should respect everything that is alive. He taught us we should realize that our Mother,

FIRST MOON ● MOTHER EARTH

the Earth, is alive and that if we respect her, she will respect and take care of us.

He explained that our Mother Earth provides our food, clothing, water, and homes. We are each responsible for taking care of these things that she provides, and we are each responsible for teaching others to do the same. Take only what you need, and leave the land as you found it.

And then, while Grandma cooked our big meal of the day, we would run out and play barefooted in the snow until our feet were numb and we had to run back in by the stove to get warm. After our supper of skillet bread and deer meat, Grandma Iron would tuck us under the pile of quilts that were stacked on top of an iron frame bed. And we dreamed of circles and life.

And the Earth stayed young.

TWELFTH MOON • NOVEMBER

THE FOUR DIRECTIONS



IN THE MOON WHEN THE RIVERS START TO FREEZE, we started walking to Grandpa's house as the sun was saying hello to the evening star.

When we were about halfway there, we heard something mocking us. We would laugh and talk, and then it would laugh and talk. We got scared and started running. When we reached Grandpa's house, we told him what had happened. He laughed a little and told us what it was.

It was an owl, he said. The spirits of our ancestors sometimes live in owls. He was mocking us because we were too loud and getting silly and not thinking about what we were doing.

Grandma said she would feed the spirits of our ancestors to apologize for our disrespect. Before supper, she left morsels of food outside the door.

After our meal was over, Grandpa sat us down and cedared us all off with the sweet-smelling smoke. After laying his cowboy hat on the bed, he stood in the center of the circle we formed around him on the floor.

He faced the west, and he told us that it is the direction where the Thunder Beings live. Its color is blue gray like the storm clouds. It has the power of rain that gives life. He said that the lightning and the bow stand for the powers to kill so we may have food, and the wooden cup stands for the rain.

He faced the north, and he said that it is the direction where the Great White Giant lives. Its color is white like the snows that come on winds of cleansing and healing in the winter. The white goose feather stands for the clean snow, and the white medicine herb from the north stands for the healing power of that directi

TWELFTH MOON ● THE FOUR DIRECTIONS

Grandpa faced the east and talked about the peace and harmony found in that direction. He said that our sacred pipe stands for peace and that the morning star stands for the wisdom that peace and harmony bring to our lives. Its color is red like the sunrise.

He faced the south and he told us that its color is yellow like the summer sun. The six sacred branches stand for warmth. The little hoop stands for the circles of Our People that grow with the life that the sun gives.

Grandpa walked from the south direction toward the north and he said that it was like a road, a road of spirit, and that it is the good red road.

He walked from the east direction toward the west, and he told us that it was also a road, the black road of life. He said it was a road of trouble and need, but if we walked both roads in balance we will find the center where the roads cross. At the center grows the tree of life. If we water the tree, it will grow and fill with leaves and blooms and singing birds. He said that the center of the roads is found in our hearts and that all the good things from the four directions would come into our lives if we always remembered to water the tree.

Before I fell asleep that night, I heard an owl calling out to another owl in the woods by the river. He was telling the tale of how he frightened us and how he had taught us to show respect for all our relatives in the universe.

The colors of the four directions were in my dreams, and I remember dreaming of a small tree pushing its way up through dry, cracked earth.

And the Earth stayed young.

THE SWEAT LODGE



The sweat lodge is one of the most important Indian practices. It is used to purify your mind and body. It is conducted before and after all other ceremonies.

All the elements that are found in our Mother Earth are present.

The fire that heats the stones represents the powers of the Creation and the sun.

The rocks represent our Mother Earth.

The water represents the changes of our lives.

The air represents the breath of our Mother Earth.

If you are invited to participate in a sweat lodge ceremony, ask your parents for permission to attend. It is important that the person conducting the sweat is qualified.

It is good.

THE SUNDANCE



The Sundance is one of the most important ceremonies of many tribes. It was misnamed by non-Indians who thought it was about worshipping the sun. The true name is the Offering Lodge.

Those people who participate are giving themselves up to the Creation by fasting, without food and water, for up to seven days. Their purpose is to bring a good life for the people, their families, themselves, and for all living things, our relatives.

You can attend a Sundance at many places in America during the summer.

It is good.

THE VISION QUEST



When you are becoming an adult, you can go out to an isolated place to ask for a vision. This is called a vision quest.

This search for a vision means that you are in need of direction in your life. The Creation will show you the way. It can come from many places in nature or even from a dream.

Take a bedroll, your sage offerings pouch, strips of cloth in the colors of the four directions, and water. Place the colors of the directions about 15 steps apart. Place yourself in the center. Stay until you are satisfied within yourself that your answer has come.

Take an adult with you so that there is always someone nearby to attend to any of your needs and to conduct each sunrise ceremony.

It is good.

MEDICINE WHEELS



Medicine wheels are artistic expressions of the important things in our lives. You can make these medicine wheels from construction paper or cardboard and crayons or paints. Look at your medicine wheels every day and remember what each stands for.

①

The night sun or crescent moon. It represents a person and everything that lives and dies.

②

The sacred morning star, which stands between the darkness and the light.
It represents knowledge.

③

The sun; it represents the power to grow.
Our grandfather, which represents all living things in the universe.

④

Our Mother Earth and all of her life:
all the two-leggeds, four-leggeds, the ones who fly,
the ones who swim, and the ones who slither in the grasses.

⑤

The heavens and all our relatives,
all living things in the universe.

Family Life

FOCUS



This section will help you understand

- the importance of family life in traditional Aboriginal cultures
- how some government policies undermined Aboriginal families
- how Aboriginal peoples are reviving traditional family values.

Traditional Family Patterns

Traditionally, Aboriginal peoples lived in small communities where the family played an extremely important role. Often the family was an extended group which included parents and children as well as grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Among many Aboriginal peoples such as the Cree and Inuit, extended families spent much of the year together hunting in a close-knit group. Family members all had roles to play in daily life and they depended on one another.

In some Aboriginal cultures, families also belonged to specific clans. For example, the Mohawks divided families into the Wolf, Turtle, and Bear clans, while the Haida had two clans—the Raven and the Eagle. The clan a family belonged to had great significance. A clan often had specific traditional hunting areas. Clan membership also affected a person's relationship with the spirit world and social status within the community.

In some communities, clans defined the roles and responsibilities of individuals. In many First Nations communities, only individuals from particular clans could rise to leadership positions or become healers. The Seneca of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy had nine clans but only six could elect chiefs to the council. People from different communities often belonged to the same clan. In this way, clans helped to unite Aboriginal peoples. Clans are still important among many First Nations today.

Raising Children

In most traditional Aboriginal cultures, children were considered gifts from the spirit world and were celebrated. In early childhood, Aboriginal children learned by observing older people in a variety of activities including hunting, carving, weaving, or performing ceremonies. The children gained a rich

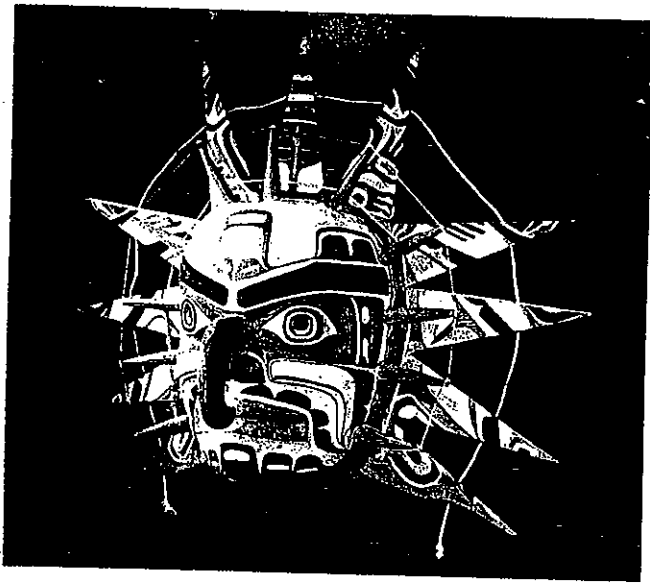


Figure 7-1 This mask represents the sun, which was the main crest of the Sisinlae family lineage of the Nimpkish clan at Alert Bay. The right to this crest would be explained in a origin myth involving an ancestor and the sun.

astronomy, language, and spiritual teachings. They developed a sense of morality through observation and through listening to stories and legends. Parents and elders modelled appropriate behaviour and encouraged children to be responsible to the group. Elders would watch children to see who showed special interests or skills. Then they would encourage those children and provide opportunities for them to develop their skills.

Government Policies and Changing Family Patterns

Government policies and other social pressures have had a profound impact on Aboriginal families.

- From the 1840s to the 1960s, residential schools removed children from their families; as a result, many children could no longer fit into traditional lifestyles on reserves, nor could they adjust to



Figure 7-2 *Father Image I*, 1991 by Jim Logan. In this painting two boys interrupt their game to have their picture taken with a priest at a residential school. Children were often sent to residential schools at ages as young as five or six. They often did not return home for many years, losing contact with their parents. The priest often became a father figure to these children.

- ▶ Many Aboriginal people have experienced poverty, inadequate and substandard housing, and poor health care on reserves. For most of the 20th century, child mortality rates for Aboriginal people ranged two or three times that of the total Canadian population.
- ▶ Social welfare agencies tried to deal with such problems in the 1960s by removing Aboriginal children from their birth families and putting them into foster care. For example, in British Columbia in 1955, less than 1% of the children dealt with by social welfare agencies were Aboriginal, but by 1964, 34% were Aboriginal. With time, the situation only grew worse. In 1980, Aboriginal children accounted for 36.7% of all children in care, but were only 3.5% of all children in the province. The situation in other provinces was much the same. Most social welfare agencies also put the children up for adoption into non-Aboriginal households against the wishes of their parents; this practice continued until the 1980s.



Figure 7-3 *Father Image II*, 1991, by Jim Logan. This painting is of Jim Logan and his father, a Métis who fought for Canada in WW II. Father and son are enjoying a hockey game together. What point do you think the artist is making in these two paintings?

Poverty, high rates of unemployment, and social breakdown have led to problems such as substance abuse, family violence, and sexual abuse. Aboriginal peoples have tried to combat these problems by establishing healing centres and by creating Aboriginal child welfare agencies to keep Aboriginal children within extended families. Although the problems do not affect all Aboriginal people, they do exist and in many cases are quite severe.

Primary Source

Traditional values, such as respect for all people and living things, a strong sense of family and community, caring, sharing and encouraging each other, these are our most important values. We must cherish our values, which are the basis of our strength as individuals and as First Nations and keep them close to our hearts.

—Pauline Pelly, Keeseekoose First Nation Elder and past Counsellor with the Saskatchewan Indian Technologies Institute, 1996, Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre, Saskatchewan Elders Site www.sicc.sk.ca

RECONNECT



1. Why was family life so important in traditional Aboriginal culture?
2. Identify three ways that government policies affected Aboriginal families.
3. What steps are Aboriginal people taking to combat problems caused by past government policies?

Appendix 17

Source: <http://www.aboriginaltimes.com/culture/traditional%20governance/view>

"Aboriginal traditional governance -- in all shapes and sizes"

By Edmund Metatawabin, *aboriginaltimes*, December 2002 - Many misconceptions about traditional Aboriginal leadership exist within the Canadian consciousness—the most prevalent misunderstanding being that all First Nations leaders in Canada were called Chiefs.

I was told that four elderly women from my Nation in Mushkegowuk Territory—history books still call us Cree—delivered me at birth. They were the same ladies I heard talking in hushed tones amongst themselves when they came to visit my great-grandmother. Young and old alike made way for them at the store or the meeting place in our Nation, located north of Timmins, Ontario, because it was just the thing to do. The community still awarded them the honoured place—a remnant cultural behaviour, which in its prime, may have looked something like this:

The head of the clan sat in the middle of the other clan leaders. The leader's place was in front of the fire, their placement indicating they would have the final word. The leader listened as each of the other clan heads gave their version of events followed by their suggestions on what could be done to resolve the immediate dilemma.

"The fire is in danger of being snuffed out," said the speaker. "It is our duty to step in and make an uncomfortable decision. We will instruct the Carriers what to do."

In even tones, soft but firm, the Talking Stick—the speaker's sceptre—made the rounds of the council. Once everyone had spoken, the chosen head for the day stood up to address the assembly.

"Women of the Circle!" she began and all heads swiveled to face her.

The carriers waiting outside somehow knew the time for a decision was close at hand and all tasks unfinished received renewed attention.

"You have the responsibility of leadership," she continued. "We give direction on how to repair internal difficulties. We endorse the need to protect our external boundaries. We dance with our people in celebration to honor significant cycles. Customs received from ancestors will continue. The fire burns to acknowledge our role will not go out. It will be the carriers, the men of our nation, who will ensure the heads of clans will always have protection."

That is the way it was before the changes, elders say, telling stories using descriptions of a matrilineal society. The gift of the woman as creator will ensure the continued existence of the people. The man's gift was to be the carrier due to the physical strength he acquired at birth. Fire, in this setting, symbolizes love because it warms the Clan heads, rescuing them from pain, anger and insecurity. Δ

Appendix 18

Information-Skills Process – Project Overview

<u>Research Steps</u>	<u>Student Activities</u>	<u>Project Schedule</u>	<u>Teaching Concepts</u>
Appreciation	1) Select a topic	Day 1 - Introduction to topics	- Choosing a topic
Presearch Overview	2) Preview reference material	- Browse available information	- Locating information
Relationships	3) Develop a RESEARCH PLAN	- Complete planning sheet	- Project planning / timeline
Search	4) Develop a RESEARCH WEB	Day 2 - Brainstorming and webbing	- Brainstorming and webbing ideas
Identify info. Providers	5) Formulate your THESIS and OUTLINE	- Complete outline	- Outlining the essay body
Select info tools	6) Conduct your RESEARCH	- Begin filling in research grids	- Filling in research grids
Seek info	- organized grid sheets	Day 3 - Research period	- Recording bibliographical info
Interpretation	- ongoing bibliographical information	Day 4 - Research period	- Writing introducing and concluding paragraphs
Communication	7) Write your FIRST DRAFT	Day 5 - Research period	- Bibliography format
Apply info	8) Edit your draft	- Prepare project	- Review project and presentation requirements
	9) Revise the edited draft	Day 6 - Prepare project	
	10) Write your FINAL COPY	Day 7 - Prepare project	
Share knowledge	11) PRESENT your findings	Day 8 - Presentations	
		Day 9 - Presentations	
evaluation	12) Feedback on process	Day 10 - Wrap-up	

Name: _____ Subject: _____ Grade: _____

Topic: _____

Identify Known Knowledge

Identify Areas to Acquire Knowledge

Brainstorm

Categorize Information Areas

Concept Map / Research Web



Name: _____ Subject: _____ Grade: _____

Establish Topic

Topic: _____

Subtopics: _____

Thesis: _____

Identify Information Sources

Keywords: _____

Resources: _____

Identify Assignment Expectations

Requirements: _____

Due Date: _____

Establish Evaluation Criteria

Requirements: _____

TOPIC: _____

Name: _____

Sub-topic: Key Words: Question:	Source: 1) 2) 3)
Sub-topic: Key Words: Question:	Source: 1) 2) 3)
Sub-topic: Key Words: Question:	Source: 1) 2) 3)

5 Paragraph Essay Outline

Introductory Paragraph

- A general statement _____
- Main claim or thesis _____
- Review main topics _____

Body – Include major points or sub-points that support the thesis statement

I.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

II.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

III.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

Concluding Paragraph

- Thesis reminder _____
- Review key points _____
- Closure statement _____

Bibliographical Information Sheet

<p>Author: _____</p> <p>Title: _____</p> <p>Other Title: _____</p> <p>Publisher: _____</p> <p>Place: _____</p> <p>Date : _____</p> <p>Pages: _____</p> <p>Volume: _____</p> <p>Format: _____</p>	<p>Author: _____</p> <p>Title: _____</p> <p>Other Title: _____</p> <p>Publisher: _____</p> <p>Place: _____</p> <p>Date : _____</p> <p>Pages: _____</p> <p>Volume: _____</p> <p>Format: _____</p>
<p>Author: _____</p> <p>Title: _____</p> <p>Other Title: _____</p> <p>Publisher: _____</p> <p>Place: _____</p> <p>Date : _____</p> <p>Pages: _____</p> <p>Volume: _____</p> <p>Format: _____</p>	<p>Author: _____</p> <p>Title: _____</p> <p>Other Title: _____</p> <p>Publisher: _____</p> <p>Place: _____</p> <p>Date : _____</p> <p>Pages: _____</p> <p>Volume: _____</p> <p>Format: _____</p>
<p>Author: _____</p> <p>Title: _____</p> <p>Other Title: _____</p> <p>Publisher: _____</p> <p>Place: _____</p> <p>Date : _____</p> <p>Pages: _____</p> <p>Volume: _____</p> <p>Format: _____</p>	<p>Author: _____</p> <p>Title: _____</p> <p>Other Title: _____</p> <p>Publisher: _____</p> <p>Place: _____</p> <p>Date : _____</p> <p>Pages: _____</p> <p>Volume: _____</p> <p>Format: _____</p>

- Is a list of all materials used to complete a project, report, or essay
- Generally includes the: author, title, place, publisher, and date
- Is arranged alphabetically by author's last name or by the first significant word in the title
- Uses hanging indentation so that the author's surname will stand out
- Titles of books and magazines are underlined, titles or articles are enclosed in quotation marks
- Is a separate page at the end of your paper

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ABORIGINAL LAND CLAIMS

BACKGROUND...

In 1992, North Americans celebrated 500 years of "discovery": Christopher Columbus' first voyage from the "old" world to the "new". Conventional history textbooks have tended to celebrate this as one of humanity's finest hours, but the aboriginal peoples of the Americas saw it very differently.

To the aboriginal peoples, the New World was so old that it was the only world. "Turtle Island", as many called it was a great piece of land supported on the back of a giant turtle. Every kind of society from nomadic hunting groups, settled farming communities and civilizations with cities as large as any then on earth flourished here.

The arrival of the Europeans changed this. The nations now known as Canada and the United States are the result of colonization and unlike Asia and Africa, the colonizers never left. Aboriginal people have seen their lands and their peoples decimated, largely due to crippling diseases which saw their populations drop to less than a tenth of what they had been prior to contact.

Although colonialism broke the connection between many peoples and their traditional land, aboriginal people have struggled since contact to keep their land and their distinctive ideas of land tenure, and have fought to preserve their culture. Today, you cannot pick up a newspaper without reading of aboriginal peoples in North America seeking to reclaim their birthright through land claims, setting up barricades and protest marches. There is an important reason for this: for aboriginal peoples, the land was part of their identity as a people. The Earth was their Mother, the animals were their spiritual kin and all were part of the greater whole, which was life. Their culture was grounded in nature. Time was marked by the changing seasons and the rising and setting of the sun, rather than by numbers, and their existence was marked by an acceptance of and respect for their natural surroundings and their place in the scheme of things.

The most fundamental of rights for aboriginal people is the right to their identity as aboriginal people. Since that identity was derived largely from the land they used and occupied before the arrival of Europeans, they believe they had - and still have - certain rights in regard to the land, including continuing habitation and use of the land, whether it be for hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering food and medicines, or for any other

traditional activities.

The right to identity also implies the further right to self-determination, for it is through self-determination that a people preserves their collective identity. Yet, the right of aboriginal people to pursue a traditional economy is disrupted or damaged when natural resources are exploited and abused on a large scale, such as by a hydro-electric project, a pipeline, or a strip mine. Furthermore, the right of aboriginal people to sustain their communities so that their cultures may develop and thrive is severely hampered by not having access to a sufficient land base. Thus, when aboriginal people assert their land rights, they include the resources beneath the soil, the trees and animals, the rivers, hills, coastal waters, ice and air. "Mother Earth", they maintain, incorporates all of these elements. Aboriginal peoples also speak of their collective and inalienable right to the land. Land, as they see it, is not a commodity to be bought and sold, but a responsibility of the community, which must be passed on to future generations. The land is more than just an economic resources: it is also a place where spirits live, where their ancestors are buried and where new generations will grow up.

It is sometimes suggested that, through the process of treaty-making, aboriginal people agreed to "yield up" the land they traditionally used and occupied, and to move to reserves in order to make room for expanding white settlements. Indeed, many aboriginal groups signed treaties with representatives of the British Crown in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, the aboriginal view of the importance of treaties differs considerably from that of the Europeans who negotiated them. In treaty-making, the European objectives were to exercise complete control over the land and to make it safe for settlement and for the development of its resources. Aboriginal people considered the treaties to be agreements between sovereign nations. While Europeans considered the treaties as transfer of titles to the land, aboriginal nations perceived them merely to be agreements to share the land, as they did with the animals and other groups. While aboriginal people had strong concepts of territory, they did not believe that land was something which an individual could divide, transfer, surrender, destroy or own to the exclusion of all others.

Today, aboriginal people believe their treaty rights are a series of broken promises, as Canada still refuses to implement fully the terms of existing treaties. Furthermore, many aboriginal groups in Canada did not sign treaties. Much of the Canadian land mass has been claimed by aboriginal people as never having been given away. As a result, many aboriginal peoples have sought return of their land (or compensation) in the courts, in Parliament and in land-claims negotiations.

In the settlement of land claims, aboriginal peoples seek a wide range of

opportunities. In some cases, this may mean local renewable resource activities, activities such as fishing and hunting that local people can undertake, that can be locally managed and controlled and that are related to traditional aboriginal values. However, aboriginal people also seek access to economy of the dominant society, where large-scale technology (such as logging, commercial fishing, and mining) predominates. The settlement of aboriginal land claims has to provide the means to enable aboriginal peoples to thrive, and aboriginal cultures to develop, in ways denied to them in the past. Most importantly, the sense of community and identity of aboriginal life must be affirmed. The very well-being and existence of aboriginal peoples depends upon it.

Despite major land claims agreements such as the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, the Northern Flood Agreement in Manitoba, the Umbrella Final Agreement in the Yukon and the Nunavut Agreement in the Northwest Territories, there continues to be a lack of commitment on the part of the government of Canada to settle the many claims of aboriginal people. With First Nations spread across the country, each having its own individual specific claim, it is difficult for them to sustain sufficient pressure on governments to achieve positive and speedy action on any of the particular claims. This fuels the belief that claims are only settled when there is a show of public anger or violence such as that witnessed in the summer of 1990 in Oka. Unless the federal government makes a strong commitment to settle all outstanding aboriginal land claims, the protests of aboriginal people will continue. Rectifying historic injustices, through the settlement of aboriginal land claims, is vital for the well-being of all Canadians.

STUDENT QUESTIONS

1. You and your aunt have planned for many months to spend a week together at her cottage on Lake Woebegone. She comes to pick you up on a sunny Saturday and you are excited - soon you will be fishing, water skiing, swimming and sun tanning. As you get closer to the cottage, you turn off the highway and encounter a roadblock. There are dozens of aboriginal men and women sitting at the blockade, with signs which state they are demanding resolution of their land claim. They refuse to let any cars drive on the road through their community. Your aunt cannot get to her cottage, and is very angry. She shouts at some of the people on the roadblock, calling them "terrorists." How do you feel? Are you angry at the people on the blockade or sympathetic? What do you tell your aunt? What would you do to make the situation better?

2. Consider the following quotation, in a letter from Canada's Secretary of State in 1871, Edmund Allen Meredith:
- "You will also turn your attention promptly to the condition of the country outside the province of Manitoba, on the North and West: and while assuring the Indians of your desire to establish friendly relations with them, you will ascertain and report to his excellency the course you may think the most advisable to pursue, whether by Treaty or otherwise, for the removal of any obstructions that might be presented to the flow of population into the fertile lands that lie between Manitoba and the Rocky Mountains."*

What did Meredith mean by "the removal of any obstructions"? Discuss with the class what is meant by "the Indian problem," from the point of view of Canadian government officials. Can you think of any contemporary examples where Canadian governments and officials have considered aboriginal people to be "obstructions"?

3. Compare and contrast the following quotations, concerning humanity's relation to the earth:
- "The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself." - Chief Seattle, 1854*

*"Man is the measure of all things."
- Protagoras, Greek Philosopher (458-410 B.C.)*

Based on the above quotations, what do you think are some of the differences between the worldview of aboriginal and European peoples? Can you give some examples which reinforce your argument?

4. Consider the following quotation by George Erasmus, former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations:
- "The history of our people needs to be told. We need to present accurately what happened in the past, so that we can deal with it in the future... I don't like what has happened over the last 500 years. We can't do much about that. But what are we going to do about the next 500 years? What are we going to do about the next ten years?"*

Do you think that history can ever be an impartial and accurate representation of events? Why or why not? Can you think of historical representations of the settlement of Canada which may not be told from an aboriginal point of view? How can this be changed?

1. Canada's aboriginal people are not alone in the struggle to reclaim land which was stolen from them. Indigenous peoples around the world are organizing to protect their lands and cultures from abuse. Collect newspaper clippings or a book about the struggles of an Indigenous people in another country. For example, the Arhuaco (Columbia), Caribs (Caribbean), Cheyenne (USA), Hoopa and Yurok (USA), Ixil (Guatemala), Kayapo (Central America), Lakota (USA), Sirionos (Bolivia), Wauja (Brazil). Compare that information to what you know about aboriginal land claims in Canada.
2. Until twenty years ago, Canadian courts refused to accept that aboriginal people had an interest in Canadian land. The courts' treatment of the "native land question" is an example of how the legal system has discriminated against aboriginal people by providing legal sanction for their oppression. However, in 1973, the Supreme Court of Canada delivered its landmark judgment in *Calder v. Attorney General of British Columbia*. The case was brought by the Nisga'a of northern British Columbia, who argued that they possessed aboriginal title to their traditional territory since time immemorial and they never surrendered or lost their rights to the land. The court agreed that aboriginal title was a valid legal concept recognized by the Canadian common law (although the judges were divided about whether the Nisga'a title had been extinguished). The decision in *Calder* forced the Canadian government to recognize aboriginal claims to their traditional lands.

Obtain a copy of the *Calder* case. It can be found in any law library, under the following citation: *Calder v. Attorney General of British Columbia*, [1973] S.C.R. 313 (ask the librarian if you need assistance in finding the case). Write a brief essay which explains the significance of the *Calder* case. Why do you think that, in the opinion of aboriginal peoples, the court did not go far enough in recognizing aboriginal title?

3. The British and French settlement of Canada is based on the legal principle of the doctrine of "discovery," in which the "discovering" nation acquired the sole right before all other European nations to title over all the land in the New World. The concept of terra nullius ("a territory belonging to no-one") upon which the doctrine of "discovery" is based was rejected in the recent decision of the Australian High Court in *Mabo v. State of Queensland*. The Court stated:

The fiction by which the rights and interests of indigenous inhabitants in land were treated as non-existent was justified by a policy which has no place in the contemporary law of this country... Whatever the justification advanced in earlier days for refusing to recognize the rights and interests in land of the indigenous inhabitants of settled colonies, an unjust and discriminatory doctrine of that kind can no longer be accepted.

While legal concepts such as aboriginal and treaty rights have been interpreted favourably by Canadian law, Canada's courts have yet to reject the concept of terra nullius. Why do you think this is so? Write an essay on how Canadian law has been used to justify the European expropriation of aboriginal lands.

Appendix 20

United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child

In 1959, the United Nations adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. In addition to all the rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, children everywhere should also enjoy the following:

The right to affection, love and understanding.

The right to adequate nutrition and medical care.

The right to protection against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation.

The right to free education and to full opportunity for play and recreation.

The right to a name and nationality.

The right to special care, if disabled.

The right to be among the first to receive relief in times of disaster.

The right to learn to be a useful member of society and to develop individual abilities.

The right to be brought up in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood.

The right to enjoy these rights, regardless of race, colour, sex, religion, and national or social origin.

Life with Restrictions: The Indian Act

Life in a dictatorship means many restrictions and few freedoms. The lives of citizens are controlled by uncaring officials, who sometimes have police powers. These officials also act as prosecutors and judges when citizens break a rule. Citizens have no right to vote.

Citizens cannot travel without a travel pass. There are limits on the choice of careers. Children may be taken to state-run residential (live-in) schools. There may be a law stating that parents have no authority over their children while they are at these schools. Citizens may not be allowed to use their language or practise their culture freely. Citizens are not encouraged to use their initiative. If they do, they are rarely rewarded and may even be punished. The state prefers citizens who are docile because they do not cause any trouble.

This might be an accurate description of life under a dictatorship. It also describes the conditions that applied to First Peoples in Canada for many years.

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

The Indian Act was passed in 1876. It was revised in 1880, 1885, 1951 and 1985. The parts summarized below were in effect from 1876 until the 1960s, except in British Columbia.

STATUS

- The Government of Canada decides who is an Indian and who is not. People with Indian status – that is, defined by the law as “Indian” – have certain rights.
- Aboriginal women who marry non-Aboriginal men lose their Indian status. This law does not apply to Aboriginal men who marry non-Aboriginal women.
- An Indian Agent is responsible for life on each reserve. This Agent controls activities, money and movement on the reserve, and enforces the Indian Act. This agent is a White person.
- Aboriginal people who become lawyers, doctors or university graduates must give up their Indian status.
- Aboriginal people who wish to vote in federal elections must give up their Indian status to do so.

CULTURAL PRACTICE

- Aboriginal dances, festivals and ceremonial displays are forbidden. People may be jailed for taking part in Aboriginal ceremonies such as the Sun Dance or potlaches.

INDIAN AGENT'S POWERS

- Aboriginal people must have the permission of the Indian Agent to leave the reserve in native dress.
- Aboriginal people must have the permission of the Indian Agent to sell any farm crops harvested on their reserve or any farm animals raised there.
- Aboriginal people on the Prairies must have the permission of the Indian Agent to leave their reserve for any reason.
- Band funds are managed by the Indian Agent for each band.

ELECTIONS

- Band members vote to elect chiefs and councillors on each reserve. The chiefs and band councils pass laws for the reserve.
- Aboriginal people may not vote in federal or provincial elections.

EDUCATION

- Aboriginal children are sent to residential (live-in) schools when they are six years old. At these schools, the children are forbidden to speak their native language and are trained in the ways of the non-Aboriginal culture.



Residential Schools

FOCUS



This section will help you understand

- a. the nature and purpose of residential schools
- b. the long-term impact of these schools on Aboriginal peoples.

At the Indian residential school, we were not allowed to speak our language; we weren't allowed to dance, sing because they told us it was evil. It was evil for us to practise any of our cultural ways.

—Kamloops Indian Residential School student.

The Purpose of Residential Schools

By the Indian Act, the federal government had responsibility for providing educational services to Aboriginal children. Beginning in the mid 1800s, the government began establishing what would become the residential school system. The schools were funded by the government but were operated by the Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, and United churches. By 1931, the churches were operating 80 residential schools across the country, as well as day schools on some reserves.

For the federal government, the schools were another cornerstone in its policy of assimilating Aboriginal peoples into mainstream society. Aboriginal children were removed from their homes and lived in these residential schools. Officials believed that the best way to assimilate the children was to separate them from their families, communities, and culture. The schools were also meant to promote economic self-sufficiency by teaching Aboriginal children to become farmers and labourers.

The goal of missionaries who taught at the schools was to convert the children to Christianity. Children were often severely punished for practising traditional spiritual beliefs. Aboriginal peoples sent their children to the schools because they wanted them to receive an education. Many parents believed their children needed the skills to participate in the new economy and society.

Life at the schools was often harsh and rules were strict. Much of the day was spent in Christian religious instruction, learning English or French, doing chores such as laundry and kitchen work,



Figure 17-1 These photographs from 1896 show Thomas Moore, a young Aboriginal boy, before he attended a residential school in Regina and after he had been at the school for some time. Officials and missionaries often used photographs like these to show the radical change brought about by the "benefits" of the residential schools.

and learning some practical skills. Boys were taught farming and some trade skills such as carpentry and blacksmithing. Girls learned household skills such as sewing and cooking. The schools typically spent less than two hours per day on academic subjects. Many students felt the system left them ill-prepared for life outside the schools.

Lasting Impacts

For the most part, students received a poor education at residential schools. In 1945, for example, few students completed grade 9 and over 40% of the teaching staff had no professional training. Many children died of illnesses or caught diseases such as tuberculosis which destroyed their health. In an environment where they were often poorly fed and ill-treated, students did not learn well. Many parents began withdrawing their children from the schools and refusing to participate in the system. The schools were not phased out, however, until the 1960s.

Residential schools have had a devastating long-term effect on Aboriginal people and their communities. The schools broke the connection between children and their parents and culture. Many children, unable to reconnect to their family and culture after the enforced isolation and anti-Aboriginal instruction, rejected their past. Others suffered from the effects of physical, sexual, and psychological



Figure 17-2 This photo of a dining room in a residential school reflects the strict supervision and table manners. Boys and girls were separated.

abuse. In 1996, the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples pointed to residential schools as a major factor in the high rates of substance abuse, suicide, and family problems among Aboriginal peoples. On the other hand, many students have begun the healing process or have moved on to lead successful and healthy lives.

Eye Witness

These quotations from students at the Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia 1907 to 1963 describe their feelings and experiences.

Before I left (home), I was full of confidence; I could do everything that was needed to be done at home. But when I arrived here all that left me, I felt so helpless. The Shuswap language was no use to me... the supervisors couldn't understand.

I was punished quite a bit because I spoke my language... I was put in a corner and punished and sometimes, I was just given bread and water... Or they'd try to embarrass us and they'd put us in front of the whole class.

Leona came and we were all talking Shuswap... She said to us, 'You're never to get caught talking your language... You'll get whipped; you'll really get punished'... So we were careful after that not to be caught speaking... When we were way out there, we'd talk together in our language.

Something I remember is that I was always hungry. I lost weight there. I gained ten to twelve pounds in two months at home. They censored all our letters... They would make a big speech if we complained about food in a letter. There wasn't very many that complained... 'cause we knew it wouldn't get out anyway.

—Celia Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School* (Vancouver: Tillacum Library, 1988).

RECONNECT



1. Identify ways in which residential schools differ from your school.
2. List ways residential schools encouraged or forced students to lose their Aboriginal identity.
3. Explain in a paragraph how residential schools caused social problems in Aboriginal communities.

FOCUS


This section will help you understand

- a. why Aboriginal people want to control their own education
- b. recent changes in the education of Aboriginal students.

The Historical Pattern

In the 100 years following Confederation, the federal government used education as a way of assimilating Aboriginal peoples and eliminating their distinct cultures. In the view of the government, the traditions of many Aboriginal groups had no commercial or military value. Educators in residential and reserve schools especially targeted:

- ▶ aboriginal ceremonies. Many officials perceived these ceremonies as heathen and a waste of time.
- ▶ aboriginal languages. By forcing children to speak only in English, the government believed children would then lose their sense of identity as Aboriginal people.

As a result of this educational policy, many Aboriginal students were emotionally scarred.

The assimilation policy underlying Aboriginal education was laid out explicitly in the federal government's White Paper of 1969. Aboriginal groups strongly objected to this document and increased their push for more control of their lives, especially

in education. Since the early 1970s, more and more First Nations have begun to operate schools. By 1996, the number of band-operated schools had risen to 429 (from 64 in 1977). These schools were educating more than half the children living on reserves, and 75 % of students were remaining until Grade 12. As well, the number of Registered Indians and Inuit attending post-secondary institutions had risen to 26 305 (from only 321 in 1970).

Despite these signs of progress, the proportion of Aboriginal students completing high school and attending university remains lower than Canadian national averages.

Improving Education

The experience of First Nations students at off-reserve provincial schools can be difficult. Students often face racism in non-Aboriginal communities and, if separated from their families to attend school, suffer homesickness. The curriculum taught has limited Aboriginal content, and school materials and policies may contain unintended bias against Aboriginal students.

Many provinces and school boards have worked to reduce or eliminate these problems. The Vancouver School District employs First Nations support workers to assist the 2000 Aboriginal students in the area and has special programs for Aboriginal street kids. Saskatchewan has adopted a plan to recruit more Aboriginal teachers, involve more Aboriginal parents, and put more Aboriginal content into the curriculum at school boards where Aboriginal students are at least 5% of the student population. In both Vancouver and Saskatchewan, teachers are trained in cross-cultural awareness and alternative approaches for educating Aboriginal children.

Band-operated schools also face the challenge of incorporating Aboriginal knowledge and concepts

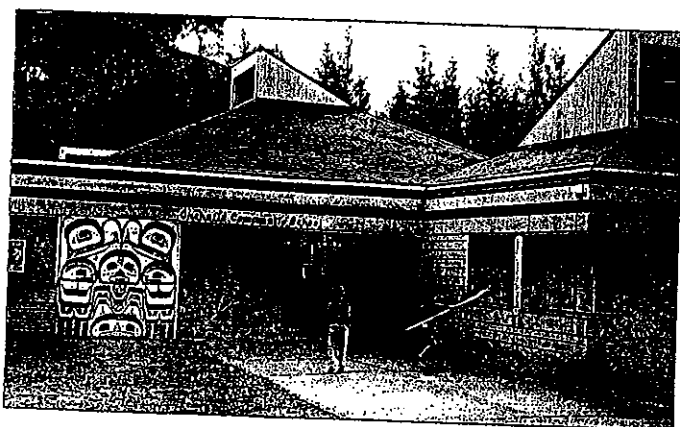


Figure 26-1 At the Chehalis Community School in the village of Chehalis, British Columbia, students are taught the Salish language Halq'emeylem from kindergarten onwards. The curriculum also includes cultural studies involving traditional beadwork designs and dance ceremonies using traditional costumes.

into the curriculum. Ideally, the school experience should strongly emphasize learning the students' Aboriginal languages and preparing students to make contributions to their communities and nations if they so desire.

E y e W i t n e s s

Colleen McGregor came to the Six Nations Reserve from Kahnawake to teach the Mohawk language at Kawenni:io/Gawenni:yo High School.

"When I heard about the (native language) immersion program, I thought, 'What a great idea.' Most parents of my age lost their language for a number of reasons. I'm really proud of the students here for knowing their culture at such a young age... Most of our young people here do attend our longhouse ceremonies. They take the initiative and they participate fully. I hope it continues, so they can teach the next generation."

CaseStudy



THE AHKWESAHSNE SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS PILOT PROJECT

In 1988, the Mohawk community of Ahkwesahsne created a novel project to incorporate a Mohawk world view into its mathematics and science curriculum. Mohawk health and science professionals, elders, and parents, as well as non-Aboriginal advisers, created the curriculum for grades seven to nine. The curriculum focuses on the natural world and incorporates the belief that everything in the world is interrelated. It also includes Western science and mathematics concepts.

Examples of Mohawk-centred lessons include the following:

- Plant study focuses on how plants contribute to Mother Earth, people, and animals; the medicinal uses of plants; the cultural significance of the Three Sisters (corn, beans, and squash); and the Western classification system for plants.
- Animal study includes the animal-based Haudenosaunee clan system used in Mohawk society, as well as cells, cell functions, and the Western classification system for animals.
- Mathematics includes Mohawk number systems and practical applications of numbers to agriculture and forestry.
- Water study includes fieldwork to monitor water quality at the Ahkwesahsne Reserve (located on the St. Lawrence River).



Figure 26-2 Taryn Thompson (left) and Kayla Point (right) are students in the culturally Integrated Curriculum Project. The project is run by the Ahkwesahsne Mohawk Board of Education, which operates three schools. In addition to a Mohawk-centred curriculum, students play field lacrosse and box lacrosse. Lacrosse is known as "the Creator's game."

RECONNECT



1. Why is education so vital to Aboriginal communities?
2. Describe two successful improvements in Aboriginal education.

Appendix 22



IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

Plains Indians worshiped the Great Spirit, who had created them, and all the other living things on the earth. Indian men and women tried to live in harmony with nature, taking care not to damage the unique environment of the Great Plains. They relied on nature's resources to keep them alive. They believed that success and failure in hunting or farming were sent by the Great Spirit. If people "trod carefully on the earth" they could expect a generous reward.

The Indians kept a sharp eye on the animals, birds, and weather of the Plains. They feared the deep, swirling waters of rivers during a flood, believing that the waves and currents were evil spirits. Many Indian groups would not eat fish, fear of offending these invisible powers. Unlike white American hunters, Indians only killed animals for food. They believed that killing for sport or pleasure was more than wasteful—it was also an insult to the Great Spirit. They dreaded thunderstorms, which flattened their crops. To

MEDICINE BAG

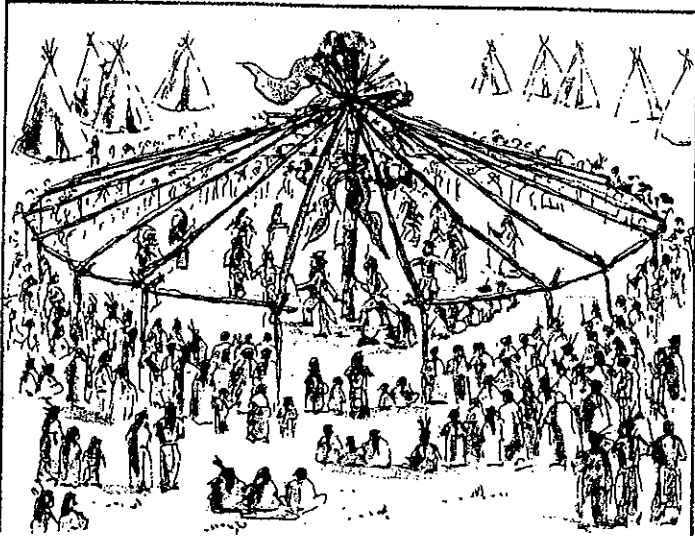
A modern copy of a traditional medicine bag, made in the shape of a turtle. Indians believed that magic bags like these kept their owners safe from harm, or brought good luck. This medicine bag contained an umbilical cord, preserved at birth, and designed to be hung on a baby's cradle.



▼ Dog dancer

A Hidatsa chief, taking part in the Dog Dance. Painted by Karl Bodmer, 1834. After sacrificing two dogs, warriors danced around, taking bites from the meat as it cooked. Only men who had killed an enemy in battle could dance.



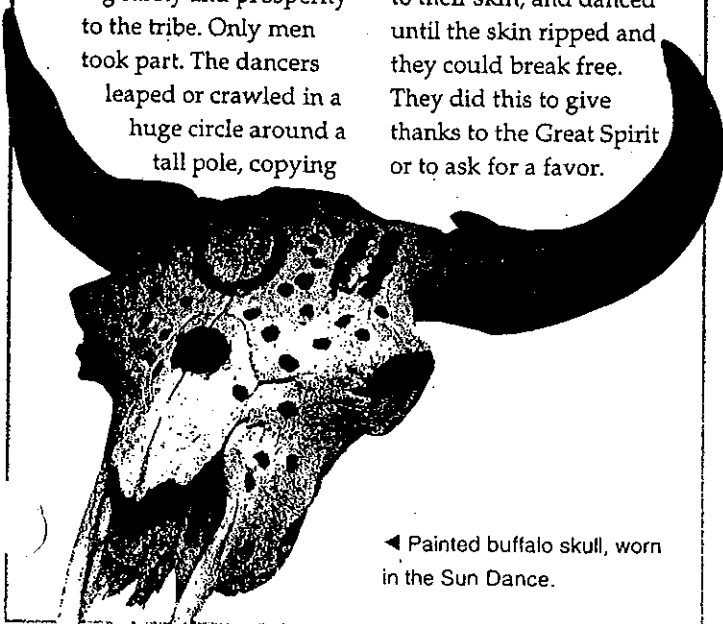


SUN DANCE

Many tribes performed versions of this dance. Taking part could mean different things to different people, but the dance was always an offering to the Great Spirit, designed to bring safety and prosperity to the tribe. Only men took part. The dancers leaped or crawled in a huge circle around a tall pole, copying

the way the sun moves in the sky. By doing this, they encouraged the sun to send light and warmth.

In many tribes, the Sun Dance also involved suffering. Men fixed ropes to their skin, and danced until the skin ripped and they could break free. They did this to give thanks to the Great Spirit or to ask for a favor.



◀ Painted buffalo skull, worn in the Sun Dance.

MAGIC TREASURES

Objects like these were used in ceremonies designed to bring Indian people closer to the Great Spirit.

Top: a Cree dance hoop, carried and shaken during the Sun Dance. Made of wood, cloth, sinews, and hawk feathers.



Center: a drumstick, made out of painted wood, with a stone head padded with deerskin.



Bottom: a Crow drum cover, used by dancers or by the musicians who played for them. It is decorated with cosmic symbols—sun and moon.

explain violent downpours, medicine men told ancient legends about the Thunderbird, which shot deadly arrows of lightning from its clawed feet.

Leisure time

Before the Europeans came, the Plains Indians had spent most of their days hunting or traveling in search of food. But with horses to help them, they had more free time. They used this for dances and other religious ceremonies, for telling and listening to stories and legends, or simply for pleasant conversation. As one traveler reported, "They are fond of fun and good cheer, and can laugh easily."



might run short, or tepees might be buried in a blizzard. No wonder Plains Indians prayed, "May I live to see the spring."

Following the buffalo

Plains Indians lived alongside buffalo from the cradle to the grave. Young babies were kept warm with blankets of buffalo fur, and corpses (dead bodies) were wrapped in a buffalo skin cloak, to shelter their spirits in the world of the dead. The buffalo provided almost everything the Indians needed. As well as meat and blood (which was drunk fresh), the buffalo gave fat, bones, hides, and hair.

Rawhide—untreated buffalo skin—was used to make ropes and wallets (called *parfleches*). Treated hides were used for tepee covers, or were sewn with thread made from buffalo sinews to make clothes and shoes. The skins were greased and softened with buffalo fat and brains. The thickest sinews were made into bowstrings. Containers for gunpowder and spoons for cooking could be



▼ Stampede

A herd of buffalo charging—or stampeding—toward a (rather brave) cameraman. This photograph was taken in Oklahoma, in the south of the Great Plains region. Once a herd had started to stampede like this, it could be driven by shouts or gunshots toward the place where they could be slaughtered.

▲ Under cover

Plains Indian hunters, disguised in white wolf skins, creeping close to a herd of buffalo. This picture was painted by George Catlin in 1831–32. The hunters had to approach the buffalo downwind, otherwise their human scent—and the smell of the wolf skins—would be carried toward the buffalo, and frighten them away.





A HUNDRED USES

Nobody knows exactly how many different uses the Plains Indians found for different parts of slaughtered buffalo, but there were probably at least a hundred. As well as food, clothes, and tepees, buffalo carcasses provided sinews for bow strings and sewing thread; bones for ice skates, shovels, war clubs, and dice; stomachs and bladders to make containers; tails to make fly swatters and whips; hair to make headdresses

HORNS
cups
spoons and ladles
headdresses
toys

HAIR
ropes
stuffing or padding
headdresses
medicine balls

or to stuff saddles and pillows; and hoofs to be boiled to make glue.

BONES
knives
arrowheads
scrapers
clubs
shovels
ice skates

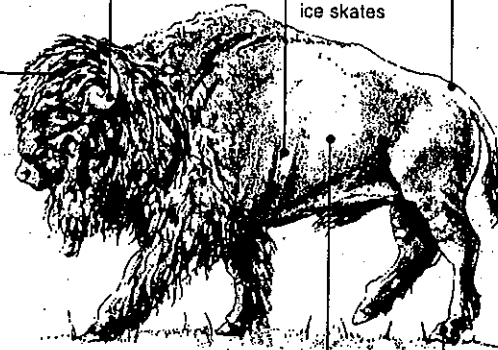
HIDE
buckskin:
clothes
bedding
belts
pipe bags
quivers
lepee covers
gun cases
dolls

rawhide:
saddles
shields
buckets
shoes
ropes
bullet pouches

TAIL
medicine
switch
whips
fly swatters

MEAT
every part eaten
tongue was best

HOOVES
glue
rattles



▼ Hunting skills

The normal way for Plains Indians to hunt buffalo after the

introduction of horses was to chase them. They fired arrows, often at full gallop, to kill them.



carved from buffalo horn, and hair was used to pad saddles, or plaited to make strong, lightweight bridles and halters for the Indians' horses. Stomachs and bladders were turned into buckets; bones were carved to form tools, whistles, and skates for the winter.

Hunting on foot

Traditionally, Indians hunted buffalo on foot. Disguised as animals, they crept close to the herd, aiming to kill at least one animal before the others took fright. At other times, they stampeded the animals into buffalo jumps, where the panic-stricken beasts became trapped in narrow valleys or fell over cliffs. All able-bodied men and women took part in hunts like these. Dead animals were butchered on the spot. Then women, children, and dogs carried the precious meat home.

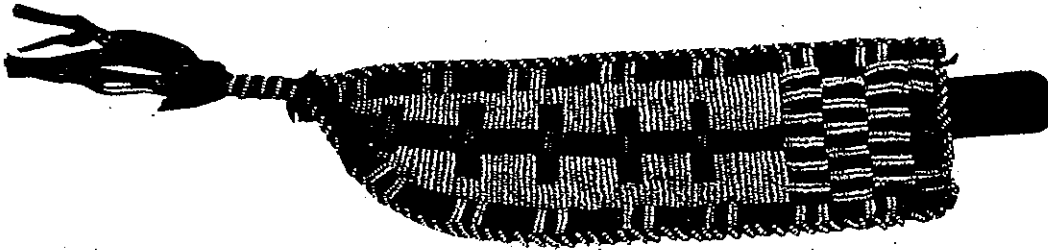
HUNTING AND GATHERING

Buffalo were incredibly useful. But Plains Indians could not survive on buffalo meat alone. They also relied on wild fruits, berries, and other foods gathered from the Plains, and used furs, feathers, and bones from other wild animals to decorate their clothes, tepees, and weapons.

Gathering was woman's work. As soon as they were old enough to be useful, children helped too. Many different kinds of berries were picked from short, scrubby bushes growing among the thick Great Plains grass. Delicacies included tiny raspberries and fruits like juicy wild plums. Some of these fruits were eaten fresh, but most were carefully sorted and spread out in the sun to dry. The dried fruits would provide vitamins and

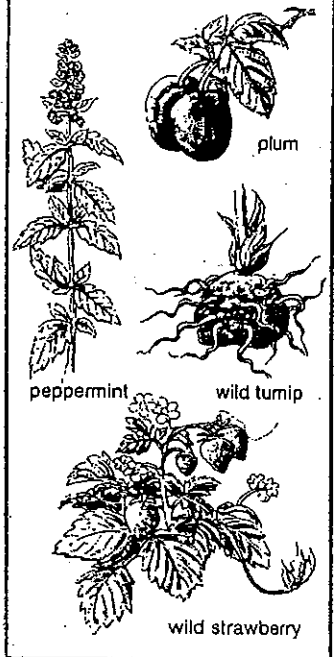
▼ Essential kit

Every hunting man would have a knife or dagger. Early daggers were made of stone or bone; later ones of metal imported from early settlers. They were also used for fighting.



FRESH FOOD

To add variety to a meat diet, women would gather food that grew wild like those below. Seminomadic tribes would grow their own crops for half the year, like corn, squash, and beans.

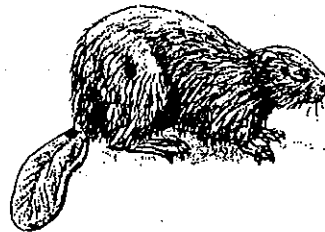


OTHER PREY

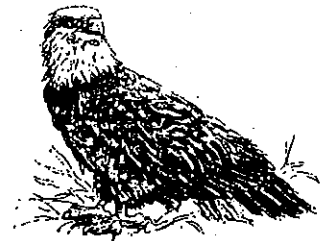
The buffalo was not the only wild animal hunted by Plains Indians. Here are seven examples of other wild animals caught by Indians. Each was prized for different reasons. In some areas even wolves and bears were killed and their skins used for decoration.



▲ The porcupine was caught for its quills which were used for weaving.



▲ The beaver was considered sacred and its skins used to make healing medicine bundles.



▲ The tail feathers of these bald eagles were used for achievement marks.