

Photo taken by Mission School District staff

ey kw'ese te shxweli - Welcome To This Place

A brief Indigenous historical guide for Mission School District Staff Members

SECTION ONE:

tém:éxw – the Land



Photo taken by Mission School District staff

Local Nations



Leq'á:mel



Sema:th



Matheqwi



Sq'éwlets



Qwó:tl'el

Turtle Island

Many Indigenous Peoples refer to North America as Turtle Island, and there are different stories which tell of the way it was created. When telling these stories, always credit the source.

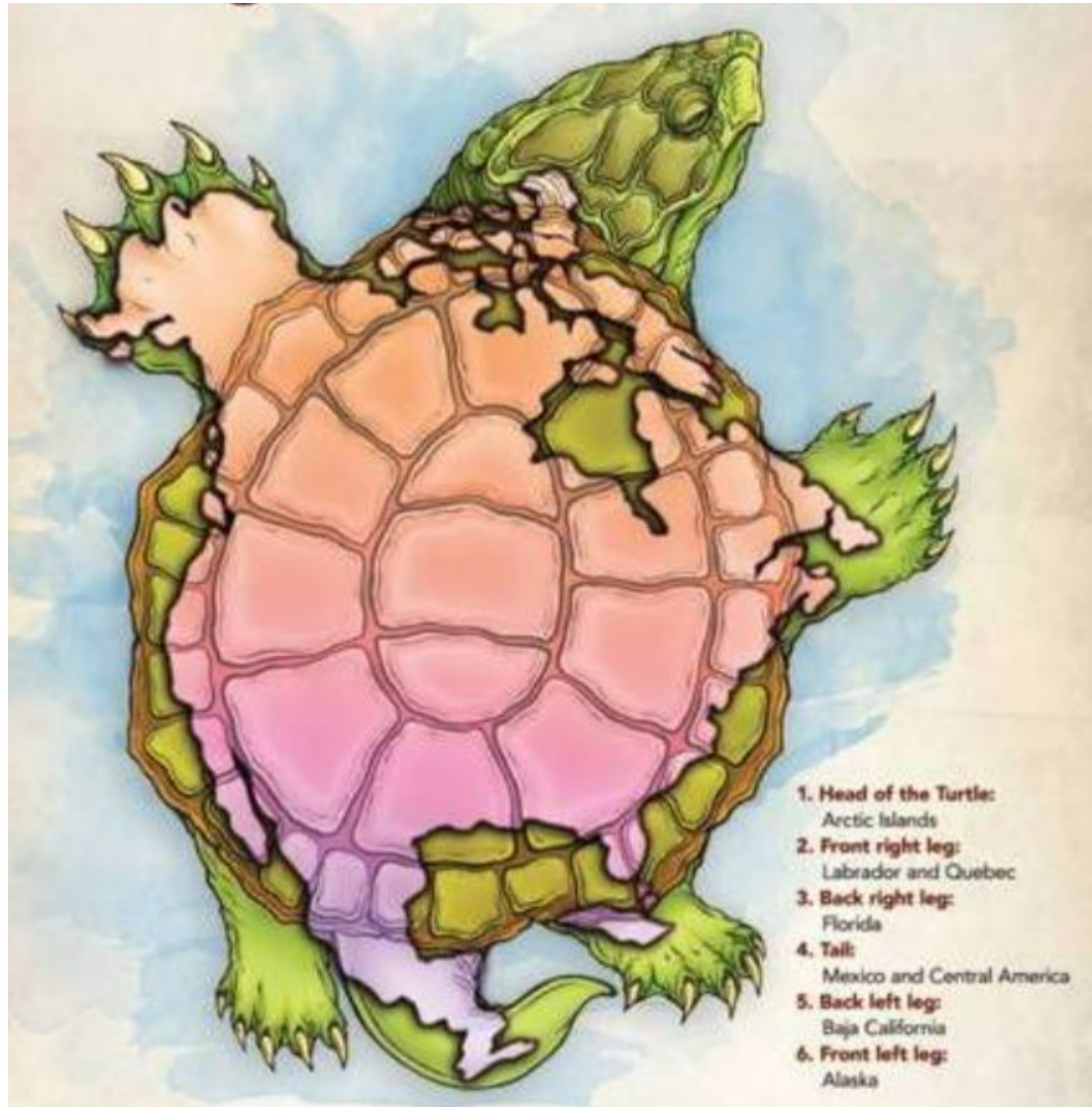


Photo from <https://www.inspiringyoungminds.ca/turtle-island-the-story-of-north-americas-first-pe.html>

SD75 Land Acknowledgment



Photo taken by Mission School District staff

Story of Mission's land acknowledgment

<https://sd75curriculum.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/the-story-of-the-land-acknowledgment-april-2024.pdf>



I stl'i kw'els spipetstexw kw'ezet ite xwelmexwelh stexwlaq temexws ye Stó:lō mestiyexw.

Mission Public School District is located on the Traditional, Ancestral, Unsurrendered, and Shared territories of Stó:lō people, of Leq'á:mel, Semá:th, Máthxwi, Sq'éwlets and Qwó:ltl'el First Nations, stewards of this land since time immemorial. Halq'eméylem is the language of this land and of Stó:lō ancestors.

The place from where Halq'eméylem (Upriver dialect) originates is Leq'á:mel. The language comes from the land, and it has been this way since time immemorial.

We, as members of the Mission Public School District community, embrace our commitments to strengthening partnerships and relationships with all First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities.

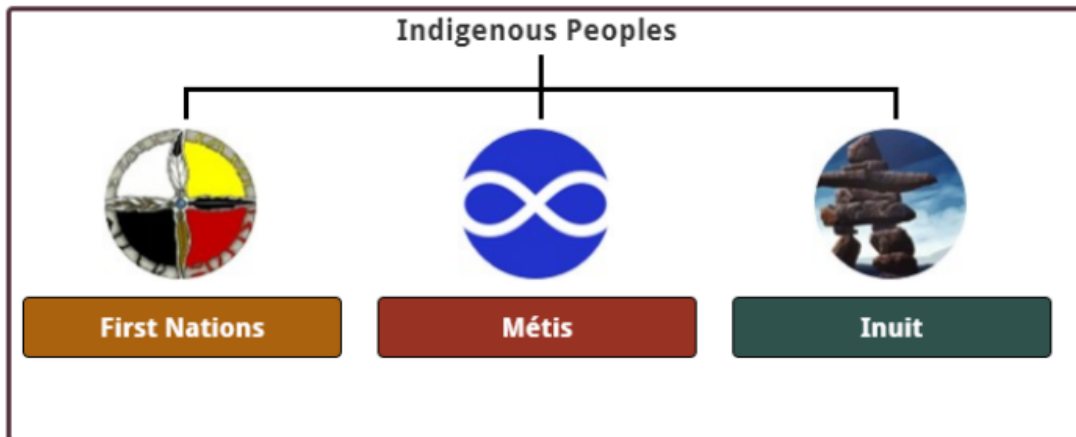
SECTION TWO:

sth'kwóllh – the People



Photo taken by Mission School District staff

Who are Indigenous Peoples in Canada?



“Indigenous” is an umbrella term for anyone self-identifying as having Indigenous ancestry.

Note: the terms “Native” or “Indian” are no longer considered appropriate in Canada for non-Indigenous persons to describe these Peoples, except in the specific case of the Indian Act.

In Canada, there are three recognized groups of Indigenous Peoples:

- First Nations (Status and Non-Status)
- Métis
- Inuit



Indigenous Identities: First Nations

First Nations is a collective term for Indigenous Peoples who have been here since *time immemorial* and whose traditional lands are typically below the 55th parallel.

Nations are often part of larger groups of nations, bound by ties of language, trade or culture. For instance, a member of the *Leq'á:mel* First Nation is also part of the *Stó:lō* People, who are part of the Coast Salish. It is usually preferred to call the person by their most specific Nation or tribe.

Status First Nations: An individual who has certain rights as decreed by the *Indian Act* (law). Status First Nations individuals are registered members of a specific First Nation.

Non-status First Nations: Historically, the Canadian government created many laws to define who was an “Indian” and to remove “status” from First Nations individuals for the purpose of assimilation (disenfranchisement). A non-status First Nations individual may or may not have membership with a particular First Nation. With changes in laws across our country, some individuals have been able to restore their “status” under the Indian Act.



Indigenous Identities: Métis

Métis communities were first established in early colonial times by people who were of mixed settler (usually French or Scottish) and First Nations (often Cree or Ojibwe) heritage. These communities were culturally and linguistically distinct from any other community. Modern Métis are descendants of a family line directly connected to a recognized historical Métis community such as the Manitoba Red River Settlement of Louis Riel fame.



Fraser Valley Métis Association and Métis Nation BC work with local Métis families to provide a variety of services and supports.



Photo from <https://www.wikiwand.com/fr/Inuits>

Indigenous Identities: Inuit

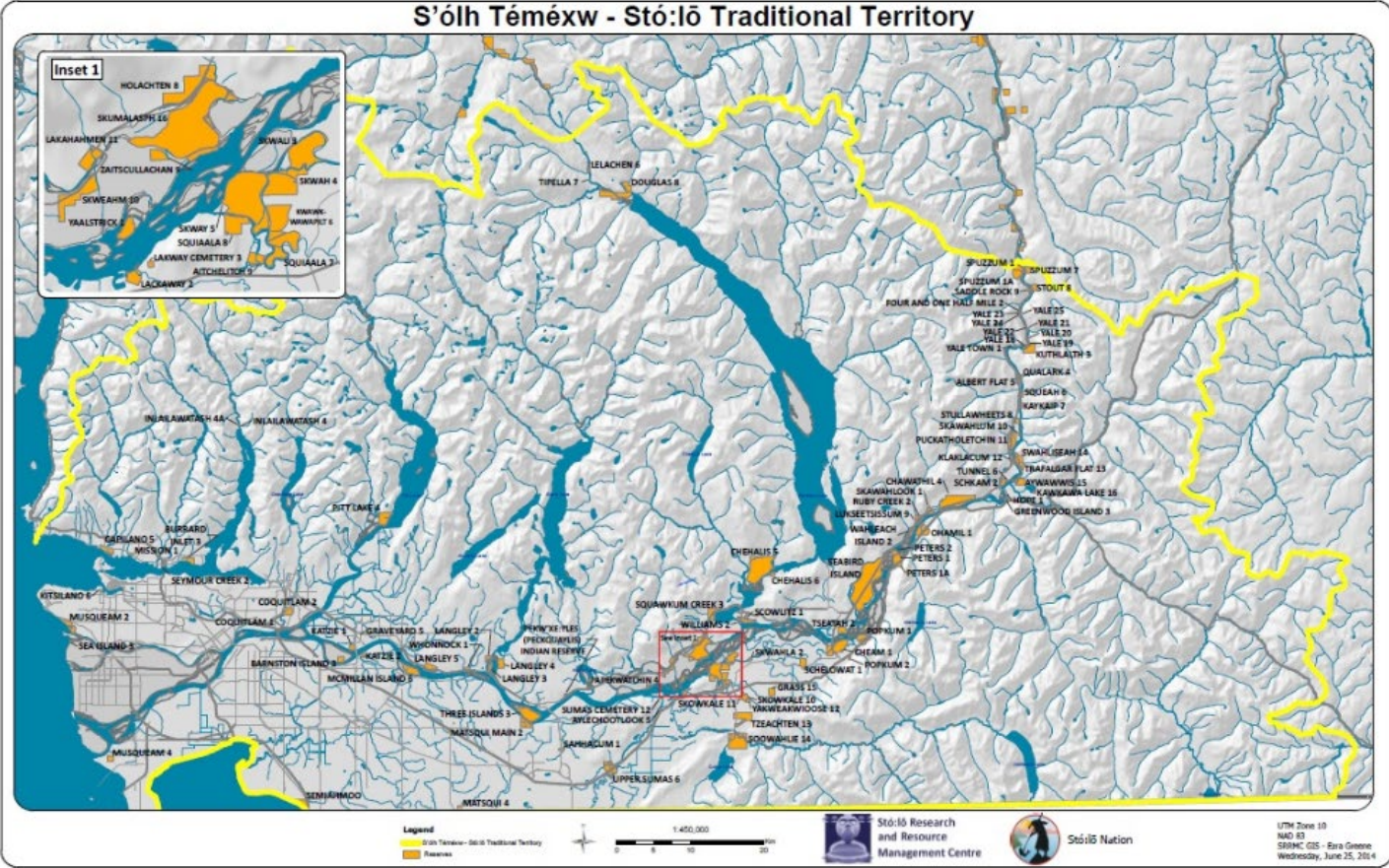
Indigenous Peoples and stewards of lands found above the 55th Parallel North, with a distinct culture and origin story that speaks of arriving in their land by boat long before the arrival of the Europeans.

Who are the Stó:lō?

The First Peoples of the Fraser Valley are the Stó:lō, which means "river" in Halq'eméylem. The people are organized in 24 Nations within the Stó:lō lands, 5 of whom have lands within the boundaries of Mission School District.



Mission School District – on s'ólh téméxw, Stó:lō Traditional Territory



Click to play video:
Guardians of the Land

What is the language of the Stó:lō?

Halq'eméylem is the language of the Stó:lō people. The Stó:lō are part of the larger cultural family called the Coast Salish.

As a result of systemic cultural genocide, Halq'eméylem (like most Indigenous languages in Canada) was almost destroyed.

Called 'a Stó:lō national treasure', Elder Dr. Siyamiyatiot Elizabeth Phillips has spent more than 50 years preserving, revitalizing, and transmitting the Halq'eméylem language. She is the last fluent speaker and has been working on this critically important legacy since the 1970s, when she helped the original Coqualeetza Elders to gather Halq'eméylem words.



From <https://indspire.ca/laureate/dr-siyamiyatiot-elizabeth-phillips/>

A BRIEF HISTORY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS IN CANADA

This is an abbreviated timeline of decrees, Acts, policies, reports and events that have shaped Indigenous history in Canada.

1763 ●

The Royal Proclamation

Signed by King George III giving limited recognition of title to Indigenous communities and providing guidelines for negotiating treaties on a nation-to-nation basis.

1876 ●

Indian Act, 1876

Consolidation of Indian policies

1953 ●

Inuit relocation

The federal government forcefully moves Inuit from Inukjuak in northern Québec to Ellesmere and Cornwallis Islands

1982 ●

Canadian Constitution Act, 1982

Aboriginal and treaty rights (s.35) entrenched in the supreme law of Canada

2008 ●

Formal apology

Prime Minister Stephen Harper delivers the formal apology to residential school survivors and their families

2019 ●

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls National Inquiry

Report published

● 1400s

Doctrine of Discovery

A means of legitimizing the colonization of lands outside of Europe.
Christopher Columbus arrives in the Americas

● 1867

British North America Act (now known as Constitution Act, 1867)

Colonial responsibility for Indigenous peoples and lands is transferred to the new federal government

● 1885

Northwest Rebellion

Métis and their allies lead the five-month Northwest Resistance against the federal government in what is now Saskatchewan and Alberta

● 1960s

The Sixties Scoop

Thousands of Indigenous babies and children are taken from their families and placed in boarding schools or foster homes of middle-class Euro-Canadian families

● 1996

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

Report recommends a public inquiry into the effects of residential schools

● 2015

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

Report published

SECTION THREE:

kwe sqwélqwel – Some History

CONTENT WARNING:

The following section include information which may be upsetting to some participants.

It contains information about Canada's dark history, including sensitive subject matter on racial and cultural injustices, violence and trauma against Indigenous Peoples.

Employee supports are available



Pre-Contact

- Before the arrival of the Europeans, Indigenous Peoples thrived in communities unique to the land on which they lived.
- Living in harmony with the land and waters, they had established complex cultural structures for governance, economics, education, arts, transportation, spirituality, laws, food production and trade with neighboring Indigenous Peoples.



Photo from Stó:lō Wikipedia



First Contact

- When Europeans came to Turtle Island seeking to claim the resources and lands of the new world (as endorsed by the Pope and European rulers), they brought new diseases with them such as smallpox
- Before the first European had stepped foot into Stó:lō land, smallpox contaminated trade goods had travelled throughout Turtle Island following the traditional trade routes, exposing Indigenous Peoples to the highly contagious and deadly disease
- By the time the first Europeans journeyed up the Stó:lō River in 1792, 80% of the Stó:lō population had already died.

The Indian Act: Cultural Genocide

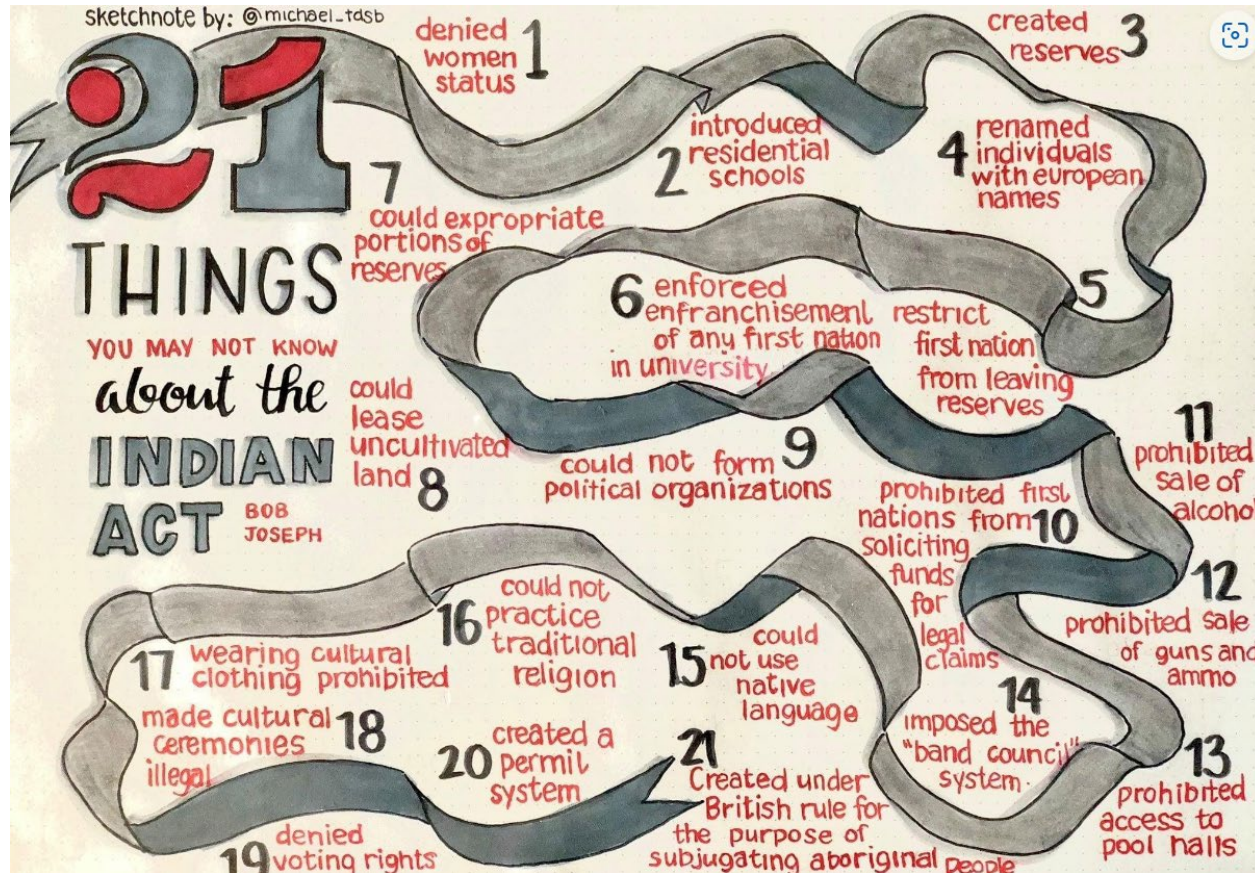


Image taken from 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act, Bob Joseph

- Competing interests led to the creation of new laws that favored the new settlers
- In particular, the Indian Act of 1876, became a tool to assimilate and establish control over every aspect of the lives of First Peoples.
- The Indian Act served to treat First Nations individuals as “minors” under the law – undermining their cultures, values, ways of life, spiritual beliefs, governance structures, identities, health and wellbeing.
- From 1885-1951 First Nations individuals were forbidden to engage in traditional ceremonies under penalty of incarceration and seizure of cultural artifacts.

Forced Relocation: Indian Reserves

Status Indians were forced or tricked into moving to “reservations” (small plots of land compared to their vast territories) in order to make ways for European settlement. Until recently, it was illegal for lawyers to help Indigenous communities fight the laws that had been imposed on them. Only individuals with “status” under the Indian Act could live on the reserves and thus many individuals were separated from their families when they lost their “status”.

First Nations Peoples (and later Inuit) lost status when

- a. A status woman married a man without status (even if he was Indigenous)
- b. They received a university degree
- c. They served in the military
- d. They decided to vote



Image from <http://canadianpatrio.org>

Forced Relocation: Métis Script

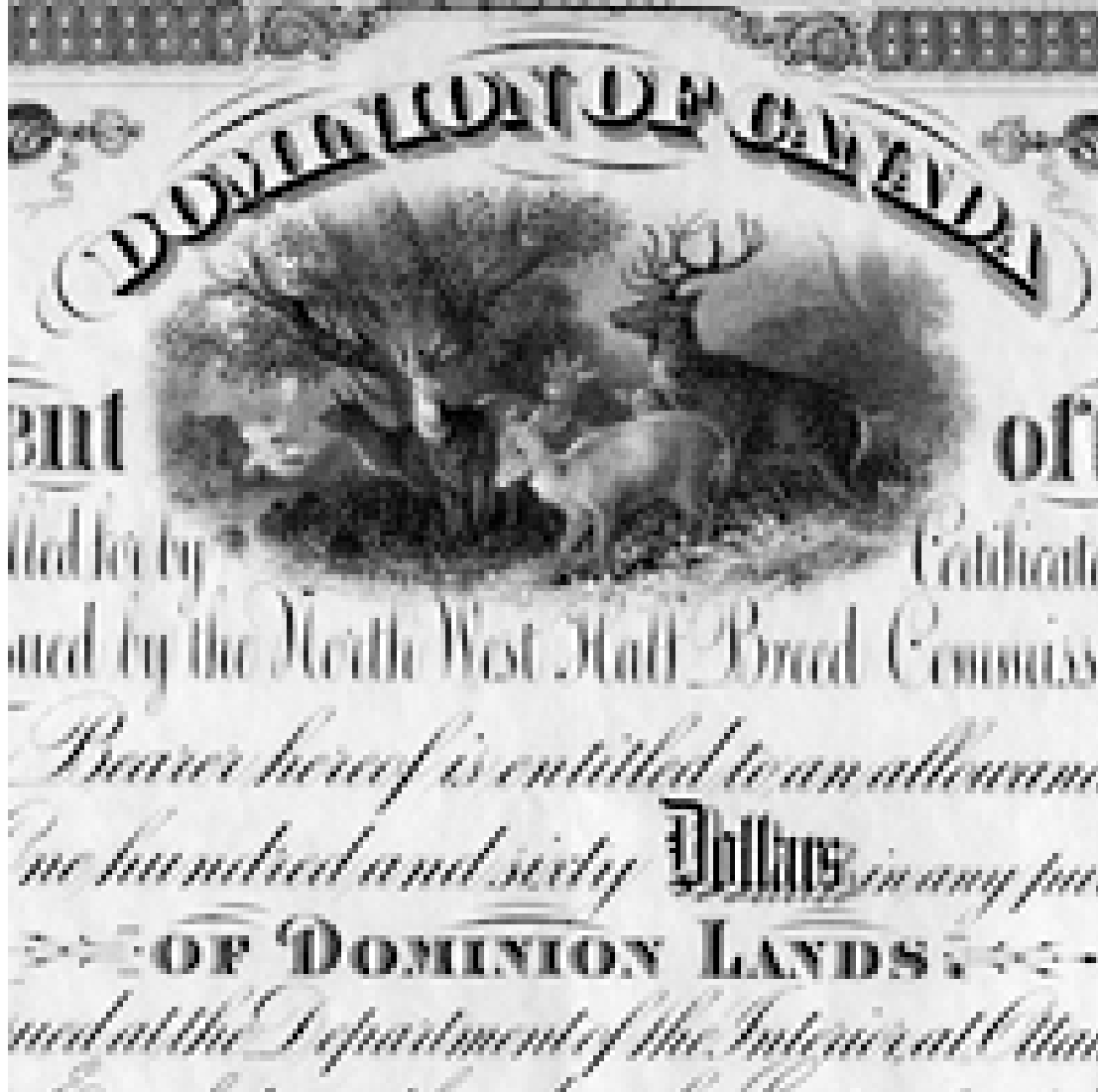


Image from [https://digital.scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/exhibit scrip](https://digital.scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/exhibit_scrip)

- In the prairies, the Métis only gained rights to land by joining a First Nation or taking “Scrip” - land offered to them by the Manitoba Government. Many did not pursue the lands because they were located hundreds of kilometers from their homes/families or were otherwise undesirable.
- Métis also faced much higher land tax rates on their scrip lands - often as much as double or triple the amount being paid by European settlers, which was not sustainable
- Over 60% of the Métis were made homeless. The “Road Allowance Law” allowed camps to be made in 10 foot wide spaces alongside prairie roadways. Thus, communities of Métis emerged as the *road allowance people*.

Forced Relocation: Inuit Hunting Lands

- The Canadian Government imposed seasonal restrictions on the Inuit for hunting caribou, other animals and birds - the Inuit primary sources of survival.
- They relocated the Inuit from their nomadic lifestyles and settled them into communities, many of which were harsher climates and landscapes.
- Some of these moves happened in the middle of winter, leaving them vulnerable to the harsh winter conditions. This led to desperate conditions for Inuit with widespread hunger and famine.



Photo taken from <https://allthatsinteresting.com/inuit-people#21>



Photo from <https://cultmtl.com/2020/09/residential-schools-indigenous-children-canada-deemed-a-national-historic-event/>



Photo from <https://carleton.ca/chaimcentre/2015/truth-reconciliation-myreconciliationincludes/>

Indian Residential Schools

Children were at the heart of Indigenous communities and the entire culture oriented itself towards raising and teaching children.

Thus, perhaps the most destructive policy of the Indian Act was the creation of the church-run Indian Residential School System. Beginning in the 1880s, First Nations and Inuit families were forced by law to send their children to Indian Residential Schools. Those who resisted faced going to prison.

After each summer, Indian Agents would pick up the children, herd them into cattle trucks and transport them to schools.



Métis Education

Although the Métis were not part of the Indian Act, many Métis were sent to Residential schools. Some were allowed to attend public schools, and others were told they could not attend public school, as they were Indigenous. This created many educational and cultural gaps.

If Métis children were able to pass as “white”, many families gave up their public Indigenous identity to avoid discrimination, becoming Canada’s “hidden Indigenous peoples”.



Photo from <http://www.davidmckie.com/farming-and-child-labour-at-mount-elgin-residential-school/>



Photo from <https://firstnationsresidentialschools.weebly.com/historical-origins---objective-conditions.html>

Stolen Childhoods

When children arrived at Residential Schools, they were stripped and scrubbed, their long hair cut, and their personal clothing discarded for uniforms. To further erase their identities, they were given a new Christian name and were punished if the staff heard them speaking their own language. Meals were of poor nutritional value and infrequent, and many children suffered from malnutrition.

Despite being at school, children received minimal education and were forced into various forms of child labour.

St. Mary's Indian Residential School



St. Mary's Indian Residential Boys School and Girls School were built in Mission and was where most Stó:lō were sent from 1860s to the late 1950s.

← Click the image to play the video on St. Mary's.



Indian Residential Schools: Cultural Genocide

European disease and illness were rampant in the schools and made worse by malnutrition.

Children endured atrocities by school staff and were emotionally, physically, sexually, psychologically and spiritually abused.

Punished for speaking their language or displaying their culture, they became disconnected from their kinship ties and made to feel ashamed of their way of life.

When children returned home from residential school they were never the same.

Photo from Indian Residential School – Our Stories

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/indigstudies/chapter/chapter-1/>



Photo from <https://www.livescience.com/childrens-graves-residential-schools-canada.html>

Missing Children

Survivors of the Indian Residential Schools for decades, told stories about children mysteriously missing from these schools. Their stories were not believed.

The missing children were never reported by the schools as missing or having died, neither were they given a respectful burial. Their families were not notified, the children were simply never heard from again.

Indigenous families complained about their missing children, but the Canadian Government and Churches ignored these stories or told families their child had “run away”.

The Missing Children - Kamloops

In May 2021, a survey of the grounds at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School have uncovered the remains of 215 children buried at the site, the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation.

In September 2022, Stó:lō Nation Chiefs' Council, launched a broad-based and inclusive initiative to investigate potential unmarked graves and missing children related to three of the former Residential School sites within S'ólh Téméxw, including the former St. Mary's Indian Residential School.

Since then, the graves of over 1800 Indigenous children have been found at the sites of former Indian Residential Schools across Turtle Island.



Photo from <https://www.npr.org/2021/06/24/1009784025/hundreds-of-unmarked-graves-found-at-another-indigenous-school-in-canada>,



Photo from cbc article

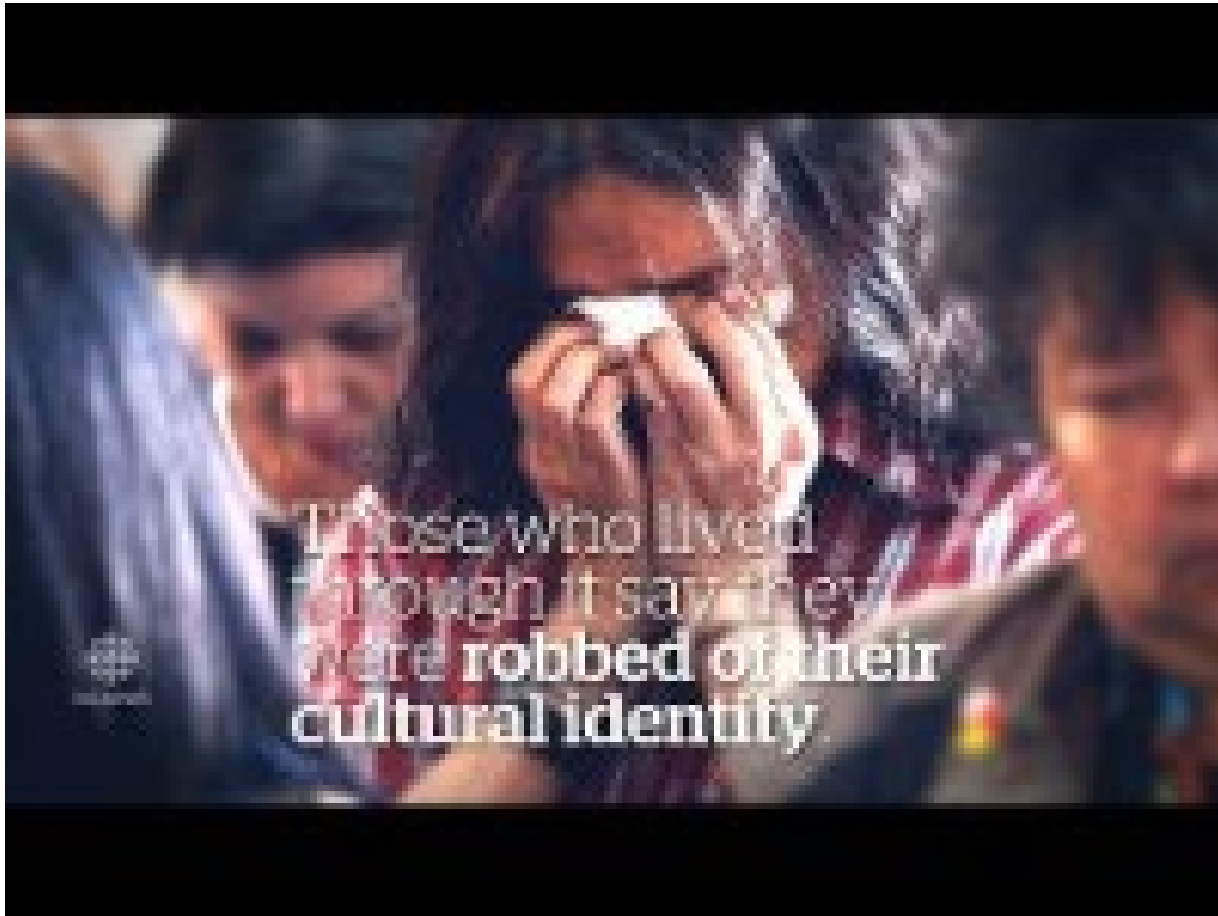
CBC
article



The Missing Children – St. Mary's

- *At St. Mary's old school, there are both marked and unmarked graves*
- *158 deaths of children have been confirmed through archival research and oral history*
- *CBC article about these findings:*
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/st%C3%B3-l%C5%8D-nation-residential-schools-missing-children-unmarked-burials-1.6974053>

The 'Sixties Scoop'



Indigenous children went from being forcibly removed from parents to attend residential schools to being forcibly removed from families by provincial child welfare agencies.

The aggressive apprehension of Indigenous children and fostering with non-Indigenous families between the 1960s and 80s is referred to as the Sixties Scoop.

Click the image to play a short cbc video on the 60s Scoop

MMIWG2S 'Red Dress' – Stolen Women



[Click the image to play the video to learn more](#)

Indigenous Nations were led by **matriarchs**.

Colonial laws, the Indian Residential Schools and Christian patriarchal systems forced upon Indigenous Peoples dismantled this social structure, and the safety and role of Indigenous women became compromised.

This erosion of the importance of Indigenous women shows up today as the epidemic of violence of *Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirited Indigenous Peoples*.

A Gradual Movement Towards Equity



Photo from <https://www.timetoast.com/timelines/indigenous-rights-in-canada>

Despite the impact of generations of trauma and purposeful cultural genocide, Indigenous communities continued to persevere in efforts to preserve their languages and cultural traditions – even when this had to be done in secret.

By the 1970s and 80s, rising Canadian sentiment over equity concerns began to bring more national attention to the plight of Canada's Indigenous Peoples. Laws were changing.

Individuals whose parents and grandparents had lost “status” under the Indian Act began to be able to regain it under certain conditions.

Furthermore, oral histories had begun to be accepted by courts as evidence for land treaties and lawyers were no longer banned from helping Indigenous communities fight land claims.

Truth & Reconciliation Commission, 2007-2015

The TRC was charged to listen to Survivors, their families, communities and others affected by the residential school system and educate Canadians about their experiences.

From this **94 Calls to Action** were created to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation. In 2008, Canada's Prime Minister Stephen Harper officially apologized to Canada's Indigenous Peoples for the practices of cultural genocide.



Photo from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/walk-for-reconciliation-draws-thousands-to-downtown-ottawa-1.3094606>

Namwayut: we are all one.



Click the image to play the video



Siwal Si'wes – Department of Education

SECTION FOUR:

Equity Actions in Mission School District



The story of Siwal Si'wes – Indigenous Department
Click the link below or scan the QR code

<https://sd75curriculum.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/the-story-of-siwal-siwes.pdf>



Who are the Indigenous Learners in SD75?

There are currently over 1150 Indigenous learners in Mission School District, of which...

- 20% Status
- 45% Non-Status
- 35% Metis
- 0.2% Inuit

Indigenous learners in SD75 represent over 60 Nations in BC and several outside of BC, so the Indigenous student population is incredibly Indigenously DIVERSE.

Enhanced Service For Indigenous Learners

As part of Truth and Reconciliation initiatives, the Ministry of Education and Child Care provides enhanced funding to school age students who self-identify as Indigenous. Through a variety of supports, Siwal Si'wes Indigenous Education seeks to improve success and lower barriers for Indigenous students. The Indigenous Education Department also seeks to increase the profile of Indigenous culture, languages, voices, perspectives and history for all within the school district.

For more information, go to

<https://www.mpsd.ca/Programs/IndigenousEducation/>



SD75 Equity Symbol

Sp'óq'es, *The Eagle*: Honouring Relationships and Kin Connections

Swep'áth', *The Sunrise*: Creating and Maintaining Safe Learning Environments

Sq'émél, *The Paddles Raised*: Supporting Student Success in Equitable Ways

Sléxwelh, *The Canoe*: Honouring the Past, Being in the Present, Strengthening the Future



Photo by Mission School District staff

Cultural Safety



Due to a history of colonialism, oppression, marginalization, Indigenous people are under-represented in most categories of what would be considered successful learning outcomes. Governmental institutions such as schools were designed from a colonized perspective, and thus Indigenous learners often do not see themselves or their communities reflected in the learning activities or environment.

The work of dismantling barriers and biases that disadvantage Indigenous students is part of **decolonization**. Cultural safety is created through the efforts of educators to decolonize learning spaces.

For Teachers: Here is a link to a Siwal Si'wes document with more detail on creating a culturally-safe, decolonized classroom (or use the QR code above): <https://sd75curriculum.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/sd75-indigenous-cultural-safety-humility-and-competency-guide-1.pdf>



Practice Truth: Zones of Anti-Racism

Those of us born on Turtle Island are immersed from birth in colonial systems that promote both intentional and unintentional racism.

Where do you 'sit' on the Zones of Anti-Racism?

From Jo Chroma's book
Wayi Wah!

Be an Ally



Photo by Brittany Alaniz from <https://code.likeagirl.io/being-an-ally-is-a-journey-2c26f64a5db>



Scan to read SD 75 document on equity-based language expectations or click the link →

Being complacent to racist language and acts makes one complicit in active racism. Do not be a bystander.

Being an **ally** is about educating yourself and others on the realities and histories of marginalized people.

Being an **ally** is about directly challenging institutionalized/systemic racism, prejudice, colonization, and white supremacy by blocking or impeding racist people, policies, and structures.

How will you stand up for marginalized peoples?

What will this look like in your role in Mission School District?

<https://sd75curriculum.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/equity-based-language-culturally-offensive-language.pdf>



Photo by Siwal Si'wes, Mission School District

We are grateful to the Indigenous Elders, Leaders and Families for generously sharing their stories, teachings, time and knowledge with us, so that we can continue to grow and create equitable learning spaces for Indigenous learners in Mission School District.

Kw'as hó:y!