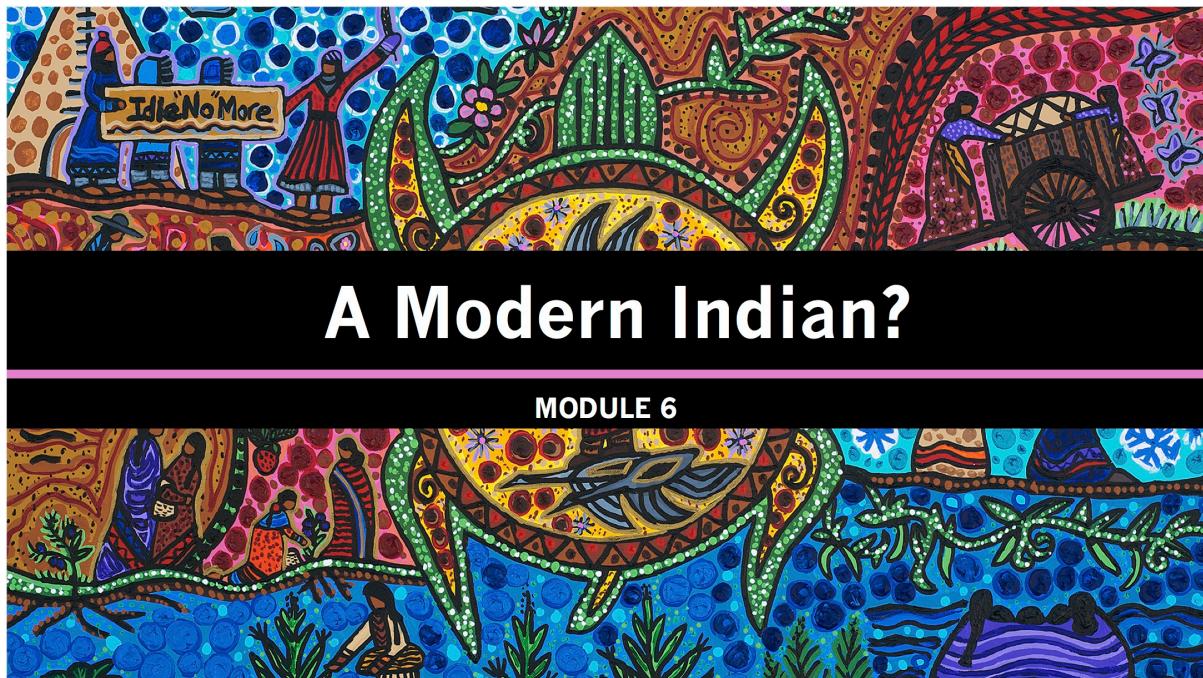


Indigenous Canada: Looking Forward/Looking Back



Cover Image: Artwork by Leah Dorion

The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory and respects the history, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our institution.

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Module 6 Introduction

As the fur trade declined and traditional economies began to fade in the late 1800s, more and more Aboriginal individuals and communities became more involved in economies focused predominantly around wage-based labour. This turn towards a wage-centered living would eventually lead to some groups turning away from their previous migratory lives and become permanently settled in both rural and in urban areas. The types of wage labour that Aboriginal people engaged in depended on the geographical region where they lived and what natural resources were prevalent in that region. On the northern plains of what is now Alberta and Saskatchewan following the near extinction of the bison in 1879 and the evaporation of its associated economy, First Nations and Métis people here found themselves without their primary source of income in a rapidly changing landscape (Lux 2001; Carter 1999 and 1990).



Figure 1 Métis camp on the prairies, 1872; Credit: Library and Archives Canada

Section One: Traditional Economies

Plains Métis Women

Plains Métis women have always played a significant role in ensuring the financial well-being of their families. During the early biannual hunts out of Red River Settlement, women prepared the pemmican that fueled the fur trade (Ray 2007, 57). When the fashion tastes and industrial demands of North America caused a rise in the demand for bison robes, it was the women who prepared them for transport and market. Facing a new reality that fundamentally altered their way of life, Plains Métis women adapted old practices and adopted new ones to ensure the financial stability of their families in the post-bison period (Campbell 1973; Douaud 2007; Haggarty 2013).

Many women took advantage of various government policies to make ends meet, i.e. Métis scrip in Canada, homesteading in the United States, and entering treaty in both Canada and the U.S. Those that could afford to do so bought land and either farmed or ranched, while others continued to run trading posts that adapted to serve a growing immigrant population. Several women joined their husbands in the 1880s and 1890s collecting the millions of bison bones that littered the plains, while others helped cut and haul firewood that was sold to the area's new inhabitants. These same settlers began to build small prairie towns that came to dominate the landscape of the southern plains. These communities provided new opportunities for Métis women who took odd jobs at local hotels and restaurants, while other women offered various laundry and tailoring services. This wage labour often remained secondary to the traditional practice of hunting and trapping that not only served to put food on the table, but also continued to involve women's labour. Reminiscent of the bison era, many women also maintained their seasonal movements when roots and berries were harvested and either preserved for family use or traded at one of the many local farmyards (Farrell-Racette 2012).

Often overlooked (but a vital part of Plains Métis women's work) were the many objects that women made and sold to the growing settler population. Long known in the fur trade for their vibrant artwork and designs, Métis women adapted these skills and their associated networks in the post-bison economy to meet the demands of a new market. These items included elaborately beaded moccasins, vests, and gauntlets that were sold at town fairs and train stations as souvenirs. Others crafted more practical everyday objects, like woven laundry baskets, which filled a specific local demand. These objects were as varied as the women who crafted them. For example, quillwork place mats and silk embroidered book covers throughout southern Manitoba and northern North Dakota, and moose hide wall pockets and calendars in Saskatchewan and Montana. The women who lived along the Qu'Appelle Valley were known for their hooked rugs, and certain families along the northern Missouri River were renowned for their beautiful hide coats. These women adapted longstanding practices and adopted new ones in response to the changing economic reality on the plains. Drawing on the artistic skills and networks developed during the fur trade era, Plains Métis women were able to adapt their unique skills in response to a blossoming souvenir niche and to fill the growing demand for wage labour. This, when combined with other traditional activities, was crucial in maintaining family financial stability in the post-bison period (Farrell Racette 2005, 17–46).



Figure 2 Beaded moose hide gauntlets; Credit: Dawson City Museum, Yukon

Farming

New forms of subsistence, like farming, were also used as tools to assimilate those living on reserves into becoming involved in Western economies, lessening, and in some cases even abandoning, traditional hunting and gathering practices (Carter 1990, 18) At the time Native leaders knew that practicing farming and animal husbandry was one of the only possibilities to live a sustainable lifestyle. However, soon after farms

were established on reserves, troubles began to mount. In 1876, Indian agents were given the task for providing farming instructions to reserves (Carter 1990, 22–54). Because agents were in charge of large swaths of geographical territory, their instructions were often inadequate, as were the tools Indigenous farmers were provided with to undertake farming practices. These issues, along with periodic droughts, meant that Aboriginal attempts at farming often did not provide sufficient yields of produce despite their early successes (Ray 2011, 255).



Figure 3 Aboriginal man with an ox cart, ca. 1907; Credit: John Woodruff/Library and Archives Canada

When farms did produce promising yields, settler farmers voiced their complaints to government officials. After this, restrictions were placed on Aboriginal farmers, dictating the price that they could sell their goods for, to whom they could sell their goods, and perhaps most importantly when they could sell their goods. These regulations worked to eliminate any direct competition between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal farmers. Later, those who were not involved in harvesting their own fields would be employed as hired hands, helping non-Indigenous farmers to cultivate their fields. Hired hands not only gained wages but experience from working the fields (Ray 2011, 245).

Revival of the Fur Trade

Areas in which farming was not viable experienced a distinctly different change in their economies. As we have learned in previous lessons, Canada's declining fur trade left

many Aboriginal trappers without sustainable economies. Between the mid 1890s and the First World War, however, Aboriginal trappers began to see an increase in the demand for furs. This was due in part to new technology that allowed for furs to be dyed at a low cost, as well as a changing global market (Ray 2011, 268).

With the revival of the fur trade in the twentieth century, the prospect of easy profits brought a large number of new traders to the north in search of customers. This was made possible by major improvements in northern communities, such as new transportation systems and telegraph/telephone services. Telegraph services proved to be extremely important as Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) could no longer monopolize up-to-date market news. Between 1920 and 1930 the northern regions opened further to the expansion of the fur industry as the railway began to move northward, steamboat services began to expand in the Mackenzie and Athabasca districts, and bush pilots began offering service to the north (Ray 2011, 270). Innovations in technology now meant that furs could reach the market faster than ever before.

With new technology came the opportunity for other companies to expand their business, as was the case with the Revillon Frères and Lamson & Hubbard. This led to new competition with Hudson's Bay Company. Aboriginal communities and trappers welcomed this return of the fur trade and took advantage of the opportunity to buy and sell furs for cash. Aboriginal people now attained high prices for their furs and were free to buy merchandise from the merchant whose products were at the lowest cost. Competition for Native customers allowed for new lines of merchandise to be introduced to the North (Ray 2011, 272).



Figure 4 An Inuit man carrying bales of fox fur from HBC warehouse for loading onto the R.M.S. Nascopie, 1946; Credit: George Hunter/National Film Board of Canada/Library and Archives Canada

Fur Conservation Policies

As the modern fur trade moved into the 1930s, the Government of Canada began focusing on fur conservation policies, limiting the number of animals that could be harvested. Policies were made that would distinguish the difference between hunting for subsistence and hunting for commercial means (Harring 1998). Later this would become an issue in hunting rights legal cases for Aboriginal people. These regulations would have an effect on the livelihood of trappers, impacting their means to produce an income. Some regions of Canada saw Aboriginal resource harvesters at the hands of Indian agents or Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) who took the responsibility of deciding when and what Aboriginal people could hunt (Ray 2011, 284).

Department of Indian Affairs records show that from 1920 to 1930 Native hunting and trapping incomes did not keep pace with the rising value of furs. This was due to the fact that non-native trappers had begun to increase their share of the total harvest, and by the Second World War fur ranching was the cheapest and most preferred method for obtaining fur. Aboriginal caught pelts were now considered to be low-valued pelts (Ray 2011, 285-286). Due to new transportation technology, HBC no longer needed Native people to haul furs and goods. Once again, the fur trade declined, leaving Aboriginal people in a vulnerable state looking for other work opportunities.

Fisheries

On the west coast, bountiful and diverse marine resources provided a secure livelihood for a large population inhabiting the rivers and coastlines. Several different species of salmon were an abundant supply of nutritious food. The people of this region produced fish and shellfish for ceremony, food, and trade purposes. It is not generally recognized, but following the demise of the fur trade in approximately 1870, Aboriginal people played vital roles in the wage economies of many new natural resource industries (Newell 1993, 75).

Native women worked in fish plants and were a vital labour component of the British Columbia fish canning industry. Many Native men fished for commercial companies.

Native people played a central role in a formative industry in modern British Columbia's economic history (Harris 2001). However, in the late 19th century, various fisheries regulations began to restrict Aboriginal access to marine resources by placing limits on what types of gear that could be used and when harvesting could occur (Newell 1993, 15). Licenses were another mean to block access to resources, and the division of fisheries into 'food' and 'commercial' purposes changed the way marine resources could be produced and consumed by Native people (Harris 2008, 127). Decades of struggle and opposition to regulations eventually paid off when the Supreme Court of Canada provided judicial recognition for some constitutional protection for some fishing Aboriginal practices. On For many west coast peoples, participating in wage labour, unions, and resisting excesses of capitalism were the first steps to modern political organizing.

Section Two: Resource Extraction & Shifting Roles

The Canadian government began to assert control over Indigenous lands, and modernized resource extraction developed, expanded, and intensified (Tough 1996). Still today, resource extraction industries are often viewed as an inevitably destructive force at odds with the cultural practices of Indigenous communities. And while this may be true in many cases, many Indigenous communities are open to the economic benefits of new local industries if cultural practices of sustainability are adhered to and the environmental impacts do not undermine traditional land usage, such as hunting and fishing.

James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement

The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement was a case of resource extraction that led to court cases pertaining to Aboriginal rights (Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec 1995). In 1971 construction began on the James Bay Project, a massive initiative for generating hydroelectric power (McCutcheon, 1991). The proponents of the project, the Hydro-Québec Corporation and the Quebec government, ignored the existing land use patterns. This project concerned the drainage basin of rivers flowing into James Bay, which was used by the Indigenous peoples of northern Quebec. This

conflict over land use resulted in the development of the first modern land claims agreement. Much of the controversy surrounding the project concerned the environmental impacts of the impounding river basins by dams.

Over 10,000 square kilometers of land was flooded. One of the impacts of impounding northern rivers was the increase in mercury contamination of fish, which was toxic to the fish and to the organisms that ate them, including humans. Other impacts of the flooding included changes to the natural landscape, a decline in wetland productivity, changes to the temperature and natural seasonal flow pattern of rivers, and disruption of animal migration routes. These environmental impacts and loss of lands threatened a way of life for northern Quebec Indigenous people.

Following the announcement of the project by Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa, the James Bay Cree, who had not been consulted, opposed the project. The ability of the Quebec government to move the project forward was thwarted by the Cree and their ownership of lands required by the project. The Quebec government's opposition to negotiating with the Cree and Inuit necessitated legal proceedings. Subsequently, Indigenous people, the Quebec and Canadian governments, and the James Bay Development Corporation agreed to negotiations.

The negotiations produced the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, which is now appreciated as the first modern treaty. This agreement allowed the project to proceed, protected the traditional way of life of Indigenous signatories, created some innovative terms for environmental protection, and set aside lands for communities. However, the surrender of rights and titles of the Cree and Inuit were required. Income support for Cree and Inuit trappers was a significant and unique feature of this agreement.

In 1978, the Northeastern Quebec Agreement amended the original James Bay Agreement with the addition of the Naskapi. The agreement itself provided principles for economic development in northern Quebec, as well as cultural, social, and

governmental institutions for James Bay Cree communities and people. For the Cree, problems were encountered with the implementation of the terms provided by the agreement. Subsequent processes have made joint management of lands and revenue sharing from resource extraction activities possible. It should be appreciated that this modern treaty was negotiated because of a large impending resource extraction and development project that would affect Aboriginal communities within the proposed development region (McCutcheon, 1991).

Case Summary

Though this modern treaty has proven successful for Aboriginal peoples, also shaping other subsequent modern treaties in the north, resource extraction can and does have many negative impacts. For example, resource extraction such as mining and forestry often affects the most marginalized members of communities, and in most cases this means that women are most affected. The Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada Sexual Health Unit has stated that women carry most of the burden of modernization and industrialization, including increased violence. There is an increase in the number of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections resulting from the exploitation of women. For example, the already high levels of sexually transmitted infections and frequency of HIV/AIDS in the North is elevated by prostitution that caters to miners. In an effort to support communities and the challenges, the Pauktuutit organization suggests that a framework for dialogue could be a helpful means to passing on effective information (<http://pauktuutit.ca/health/sexual-health/>).

Gender Roles

Both within rural and urban areas Indigenous peoples' lives were changing to become more westernized. Agriculture became one of the key economies for those living in rural farming areas. With the switch to agriculture, gender roles of both Aboriginal men and women began to change, and so did the way they expressed those roles.



Figure 5 Cree women and children working as labourers on a sugar beet farm, ca. 1910; Credit: John Woodruff/Library and Archives Canada

Traditionally Aboriginal women's roles were to collect food provisions and to make household tools. Childrearing was one of the many jobs that women held. The switch to wage labour not only affected men but forced Aboriginal women into working outside the household to provide for their families. The young Aboriginal girls who attended residential schools were taught domestic skills to enter occupations that affirmed their prescribed or "proper" gender roles (McCallum 2014, 4). Many Aboriginal women entering the workforce for the first time were employed in domestic services (McCallum 2014, 22).

As Aboriginal farming began to develop, women started to obtain jobs cultivating fields alongside the men. If a woman was widowed she would often take over the duties running the farm, as the overseeing of the farm was considered to be "men's work." If the family was raising cattle for the purpose of milking, it was women who were assigned to this task (Miller and Chuchryk 1996, 31).

Rodeo

As roles of women changed in Aboriginal communities, so did the roles of men. For example, one of the ways in which Aboriginal men were able to maintain and express their masculinity was through their participation in rodeos in western Canada. Indian rodeos were realms in which Indigenous men could interact in an area that was not outright political, nor was it dedicated to dealing with the struggle of Indigenous people.

Yet there was a sense that being an Indian rodeo cowboy meant having experienced those struggles in a personal way, which also related to a communal experience (Kelm 2011, 207).

Although there was a sense of community within Indian rodeos, there was an ever-present colonial narrative, as those who wished to participate in these rodeos still had to prove their Indigenous authenticity by having to demonstrate their Indian status (Kelm 2011, 207). In some cases, Indian rodeos would allow the participation of those without status, such as Métis participants, or these rodeos may even allow for settlers to participate.

Rodeos acted as a place where social and cultural growth could and often did happen. Rodeos emphasized family and community through a connectedness to animals. They also contributed to the political careers of some Alberta First Nations leaders (Kelm 2011, 208).

Military

The rodeo was not the only realm where Indigenous men were able to maintain and exhibit masculine attributes. For many, enlisting in the First World War was a way to replace the warrior ethics and warfare exploits in which the generation prior had been involved.

A significant proportion of First Nations men eligible for duty in Canada enlisted in World War I (Sheffield 2005, 406). The numbers for women, Métis, and Inuit are not as well known, as only status Indians were officially counted in the registry. The enthusiasm for war was demonstrated in the estimates of over 4,000 First Nations soldiers who served and participated in the war, out of a population of roughly 100,000 First Nations people in 1914.

Enlistment promised adventure, a steady wage and meals, and a ticket to travel the world. Other reasons for enlisting included having their family members or friends enlist

and also to honour the relationship between themselves and the British crown. Thousands of Aboriginal people voluntarily enlisted in the Canadian military during World War I. Among them was Lieutenant Frederick Ogilvie Loft, also known as Onondeyoh. He was from the Six Nations of the Grand River in Ontario.

The end of the war in 1918 brought its load of problems for Indigenous veterans (Winegard 2014, 153). Unlike other veterans, their files went through Indian Affairs. The ministry, however, could not properly fund the returning men. Frustrated, Loft decided to push the concept of the creation of the League of Indians – an early effort at pan-Indian organizing – to assure the protection of Aboriginal rights. Many of the grievances were tied to the Indian Act, which pushed the federal government to suppress the work of the League. Even though it did not become a national force, its western branches continued their work until the 1930s mainly in Saskatchewan (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations) and Alberta (Indian Association of Alberta) under the leadership of John Tootoosis and Edward Ahenakew (Meijer Drees 2002). After the Second World War, First Nations once again tried to unite nationally. In 1948, Andy Paull established the North American Indian Brotherhood. Similar to its predecessor, efforts were hindered by a lack of nationwide support and suppressive government actions. In addition to First Nations, Métis also contributed to active service. For example, influential Métis leader Malcolm Norris enlisted and served in the Canadian military forces. Norris went on to play a central role in organizing Métis communities politically beginning in the late 1920s.



Figure 6 Lieutenant F.O. Loft, ca. 1914-1918; Credit: Canada. Dept. of National Defence/Library and Archives Canada

During World War I, Levi General (also known as Deskaheh), a Cayuga man who lived as a farmer on the Six Nations Grand River territory in Ontario, petitioned the League of Nations in Geneva for Haudenosaunee self-determination (Winegard 2014, 162). In 1917, he became chief of the Cayuga and was given the traditional name of Deskaheh. He brought the cause of Iroquois sovereignty first to England in 1921. Deskaheh travelled with a Six Nations passport fully aware that the federal government would deny a Canadian passport. In London, he distributed a pamphlet entitled "Petition and Case of the Six Nations of the Grand River" and met with Winston Churchill, who was at the time the British undersecretary for the colonies. Unfortunately, the petition was rejected, with Churchill citing reasons that it remained a Canadian issue and not a British one.

In retaliation, the Canadian government sent the RCMP on the reserve to search houses and prohibited the Iroquois to cut wood for fuel. These actions pushed Deskaheh to go to Geneva in 1923 hoping the League of Nations would place sanctions on Canada. He stayed there for six months giving lectures to the Swiss people. During his speaking tour, he spoke of the obligations under the two-row wampum, the most significant pact made between the Iroquois and the Europeans. In 1924, the Canadian government ordered the dissolution of the traditional government of the Six Nations as well as an election in accordance with the Indian Act. Although Deskaheh did not succeed in being heard by the League of Nations, he did leave a copy of a proclamation at their offices, and his mission is still remembered on the international scene.



Figure 7 Levi General/Chief Deskaheh, 1922;
Credit: The Graphic

Section Three: Aboriginal Women

As Aboriginal communities and individuals became increasingly embedded in the changing culture of Canada, Aboriginal women became some of the first peoples to move off reserve lands and into western communities (Lawrence 2004). This was due in part to the Indian Act enfranchisement policies of the Canadian government and the forced enfranchisement of women who married non-status Indian men. Status Indian women who married non-status Indian men, even if they were ethnically and self-identified as Indigenous, had their Indian status revoked. Women lost their Indian rights when they were enfranchised and often had their band membership terminated as well. Enfranchisement meant a loss of compensation and support, and termination of band membership, which prevented women from accessing their home communities. The exclusion extended to any of her children. In addition, enfranchised Indians were unable to pass on their Indian status and associated rights to their children, which resulted in women's ties to their communities being severed (Jamieson 1978). Women were separated from their communities on a number of levels, including, emotionally, physically, geographically, and spiritually (Anderson 2000, 126).

Status Indian Women

Although in place in earlier versions of the Indian Act, the 1951 amendments, specifically section 12.1(b), introduced that Indian women with status were not entitled to Indian status registration under Canadian law if they married a person who was not Indian (Jamieson 1978). Without legal status, these women were unable to access Indian Act benefits, practice inherent rights to live on their reserve, inherit family property, or be buried on reserve with ancestors. Restricted from access to their First Nation community, women without Indian status were unable to participate in ceremonies and rituals on their traditional land. However, these conditions did not apply to status Indian men who married non-status women. In fact, status Indian men who married non-status women were able to keep their status. Section 12.1(b) of the Indian Act worked to disadvantage the position of Indian women and can be considered an

attempt to demolish their families and alienate these women from their land. Non-Indigenous wives of status Indian men gained Indian status in these marriages. Inflicting discriminatory laws, the Canadian government marginalized and disadvantaged First Nations women (Palmater 2011).

Enfranchisement Provisions

Additional enfranchisement provisions included the removal of status of those who withdrew from treaty and received what at the time was called, half-breed scrip. The Indian Act provisions also applied in cases where people gave up their scrip to enter into a profession, such as a lawyer or doctor, or if they voted or owned property. Due to these and related provisions, many women were forced to leave their home communities and migrate to urban areas. This would create a huge disconnection for these women from their extended families and vice versa. Section 12 of the 1951 amendments gained the attention of female political movements contributing to a variety of proposals for reform. It would not be until the implementation of Bill C31 in 1985, and later Bill C3 in 2011, that many formerly status Indian women would regain lost status, and their children would gain status (Palmater 2011).

Pull to the City

In addition to the “push” factors just described, several “pull” factors led women to move into the city (Lawrence 2004, McCallum 2014). These included educational opportunities and work placement. For example, in the 1940s Canadian medical sectors began to train Indigenous women to become nurses and healthcare practitioners.



Figure 8 Aboriginal nurses in Calgary, ca. 1954-1962; Credit: Rosemary Gilliat Eaton/Library and Archives Canada

These programs required women to leave their home communities and make the move into cities to attend formal training. The largest struggles for many of these women, however, came after they had received their degrees. In some cases, women were denied positions within their own communities, even though their training had focused on community nursing, which was a seemingly a good fit for community needs. Educational programs were just another way in which the government of Canada attempted to assimilate Aboriginal women into Canadian society. This is reflected within the context of women being denied positions in their own communities due to fears that they would culturally backslide from assimilation if they returned to their home communities (McCallum 2014, 195). Due to such concerns, non-Aboriginal professionals would maintain control of healthcare in Indigenous communities.

Beauty School

Another popular work option for Indigenous women was to enter beauty schools. Beauty programs were run in correspondence with government-sponsored placement and relocation programs. The Department of Indian Affairs highly supported hairdressing, as it was considerably more cost efficient than other government sponsored vocational training programs. Much of the training took place through apprenticeships or other training programs (McCallum 2014, 97).

An interesting aspect to the history of Aboriginal women in the beauty industry was the lack of racial segregation in a time when this was the norm (McCallum 2014, 100). This was due to the ideology of integration promoted and favoured by the Department of Indian Affairs, as it played into the ideas of assimilation. When promoting beauty schools, the department often emphasized the integration within schools in photo captions that pointing out Indians working on non-Indian clients (McCallum 2014, 101). Although there was an underlying aspect of assimilation, beauty schools became a place where race was less of a barrier for Aboriginal women. Race did not determine the quality of training they received, nor did it act as a determinant for where one could hold a job (McCallum 2014, 102). Similar arguments can be made for the treatment of Indian men in military services.

Section Four: Education in the City

Schooling

Often referred to by Indigenous elders as the new buffalo, education has increasingly become thought of as means to better oneself and, more importantly, one's community (Stonechild 2006). Through various levels of education, many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples have taken lessons learned in formal schooling and brought them back to the betterment of their home community. Although considered to be westernized institutions, Indigenous peoples are actively using mainstream education to improve standards of living for their peoples. That said, the pedagogical approaches being implemented by educators in primary to post-secondary schools are continually criticized for lacking any real use of Indigenous methodologies.

Throughout the country, the implementation of education for Indigenous children generally falls under the jurisdiction of provincial and territorial governments, or the federal government for students who are on reserve. Regardless of which body of government oversees the delivery of education programs, critics have stressed that the curriculum does not address the specific needs of Indigenous children. Instead, the existing curriculum is modified to simply include thematic content into lessons, but it

does not offer a fundamental shift in how education is delivered. Although many provincial curricula in Canada call for the infusion of Aboriginal perspectives, there is still a significant disregard when it relates to issues dealing with cultural sensitivities surrounding the integration of Indigenous worldviews and languages (Tsioniaon 2000). Amiskwaciy Academy, located in Edmonton, Alberta is an example of an urban-based school that is an exception to the norm. This public school caters to students from grades seven through twelve and integrates cultural practices and lessons in a manner that supports both the survival and growth of traditional activities. Not only does the school employ many Indigenous staff and faculty, but it also works with community elders and other educators in order to foster the development of modern Indigenous identities.

Perhaps surprising to some, schools located on reserves face similar problems as those in urban centres when trying to implement Indigenous-centred programs. Part of the issue is the disproportionate funding given to on-reserve schools as compared to those located in cities. Marie Battiste, an Indigenous professor in educational policy, has argued that, “despite the awareness among First Nations educators that the provincial curriculum is culturally biased and inadequate to meet their needs, little support has been provided to preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedoms of Aboriginal people to use, practice, and develop Aboriginal languages and knowledge in Canada through education” (Battiste 1998). In order to develop and implement curriculum that is focused on reviving and strengthening Indigenous languages and worldviews, on-reserve schools require infrastructure that is on par with provincially funded institutions.

Community-Based Education

Community-based education is more widely accepted by First Nations communities who see community-based education as a fundamental responsibility and requirement. Their demand for educational choice has provided an innovative context for reconciling both historical and modern contradictions. It has also provided a context for cultural renewal for some communities. The concept of Indian education has required continual reworking. Even the terms used to express the concept have shed their colonial thinking

and embraced a more empowering and reflective concept of education. The initial goals of federal, provincial, and band-operated schools proved restrictive when matched against the broad goals of tribal consciousness and the emerging knowledge of modern educational purpose and process (Battiste 1995, vii; Castellano 2000).

Post-Secondary Institutions

Indigenous students in post-secondary institutions, such as universities, colleges, and trade schools, have been highly under represented. Historically Indigenous children were educated solely for the purpose of dismantling their culture, i.e. the residential school system. In general, students were not given the proper education or deemed ready to take on higher education. However, there were a few individuals who did succeed in obtaining higher education. Due to government policies, these individuals faced a greater risk of enfranchisement under the Indian Act (Stonechild 2006, 8).



Figure 9 First Nations University of Canada in Regina; Credit: Daryl Mitchell

As colonial policies began to diminish, more and more Indigenous children began to receive education that would allow for them to participate in post-secondary education. For many Indigenous people, post-secondary is now being regarded as highly beneficial. Indigenous communities and students have begun to assert their autonomy and give recommendations on the programs. Mainstream universities are trying to develop spaces for Indigenous students to gather, and offer programs that incorporate Indigenous content. Elders are sometimes provided for students to support them throughout their university journey and to provide spiritual support. For example, at the University of Alberta, the Faculty of Native Studies, the Aboriginal Student Services Centre, and various Aboriginal student groups each strive to create welcoming spaces for Indigenous students and to foster dialogue between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

In Canada, some post-secondary institutions are Indigenous run. Various smaller regional colleges exist, such as UnBQ, (University nuhelot'jne thaiyots'j / nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills) in St. Paul, Alberta, or Red Crow Community College on the Kainai First Nation in southern Alberta. Perhaps the most well-known Indigenous run post-secondary Institution in Canada, however, is the First Nations University of Canada (FNUC), formerly known as Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, located in Regina, Saskatchewan. FNUC began offering academic programs in 1976, including Indian studies, Indian languages, Indian teacher education, social work, fine arts, and social sciences. Today, in partnership with the University of Regina, FNUC continues to offer numerous courses and degree options.

Conclusion

Aboriginal peoples were impacted by changes in Canada's various economies; however, Aboriginal peoples also changed along with them. They continued to work, often while continuing to live traditional lifestyles. All the while, Aboriginal peoples contributed to the growth of Canada as a country, though this tends not to get acknowledged in conventional Canadian histories

Credits

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- Figure 3. Aboriginal man with an ox cart, ca. 1907-1908; Credit: John Woodruff/Library and Archives Canada; Restrictions on use: Nil; Copyright: Expired; URL: http://collectionscanada.gc.ca/pam_archives/index.php?fuseaction=genitem.displayItem&lang=eng&rec_nbr=3642700
- Figure 4. Inuit carrying bales of fox fur from the Hudson's Bay Company warehouse for loading aboard R.M.S. NACOPIE; Credit: George Hunter/National Film Board of Canada. Photothèque/Library and Archives Canada/PA-166459; Restrictions on use: Nil; Copyright: Expired; URL: http://collectionscanada.gc.ca/pam_archives/index.php?fuseaction=genitem.displayItem&lang=eng&rec_nbr=3227592
- Figure 5. Cree women and children working as farm labourers on a sugar beet farm; Credit: John Woodruff/Library and Archives Canada/C-007819; Restrictions on use: Nil; Copyright: Expired; URL: http://collectionscanada.gc.ca/pam_archives/index.php?fuseaction=genitem.displayItem&lang=eng&rec_nbr=3560184
- Figure 6. Lieutenant F.O. Loft, ca. 1914-1918; Credit: Canada. Dept. of National Defence/Library and Archives Canada; Restrictions on use: Nil; Copyright: Expired; URL: http://collectionscanada.gc.ca/pam_archives/index.php?fuseaction=genitem.displayItem&lang=eng&rec_nbr=3629837
- Figure 7. Newspaper photograph of Chief Deskaheh (Levi General); Credit: The Graphic (an illustrated weekly newspaper); License: Public domain; URL: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Deskaheh_photo.JPG
- Figure 8. Two Aboriginal nursing students and a nurse examining a medical mannequin, Calgary, Alberta; Credit: Rosemary Gilliat Eaton/Library and Archives Canada/e010975206; License: Permission received from Library and Archives Canada; URL: http://collectionscanada.gc.ca/pam_archives/index.php?fuseaction=genitem.displayItem&lang=eng&rec_nbr=4323851
- Figure 9. First Nations University of Canada in Regina; Credit: Daryl Mitchell; License: CC BY 2.5 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5/>; URL: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:First_Nations_University.jpg

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