

continue to see today.... It's a very toxic legacy.... One of the truths about Canada is that it was created as a white man's country and this term was used over and over again.... Twenty years ago, I became a Canadian citizen and one of the things that wasn't made clear to me ... was that when we took that oath [of allegiance] we would become party to the Treaties that were signed.... We were given this very uplifting lecture on the rights of Canadian citizenship but what was excluded was [information] on our responsibility and obligations ... as now being parties to these Treaties.<sup>297</sup>

Winnie Ng said,

I was born in Hong Kong and came to Canada in 1968.... I landed in Victoria, BC, the oldest Chinatown in the country.... It has been a journey for me as a person of colour, as a person of the non-Indigenous communities ... to learn about the history of this Native land and my own social location and privilege as a member of the newer arrival communities.... From the [Chinese] labour of the CPR, to the head tax and the *Chinese Exclusion Act* ... the Chinese, along with Indigenous children, were secluded in the education system for so many years ... there's been a constant narrative of systemic racism, exclusion, and exploitation.... I think [we need to talk about] remembrance, resistance, and reconciliation.<sup>298</sup>

## Becoming citizens

In preparing to become Canadian citizens, all immigrants to Canada study a booklet called *Discover Canada*. It explains, "To understand what it means to be Canadian, it is important to know about our three founding peoples—**Aboriginal**, **French** and **British**." It says the following about Aboriginal peoples:

The ancestors of Aboriginal peoples are believed to have migrated from Asia many thousands of years ago. They were well established here long before explorers from Europe first came to North America. Diverse, vibrant First Nations cultures were rooted in religious beliefs about their relationship to the Creator, the natural environment and each other. Aboriginal and treaty rights are in the Canadian Constitution. Territorial rights were first guaranteed through the Royal Proclamation of 1763 by King George III, and established the basis for negotiating treaties with the newcomers—treaties that were not always fully respected. From the 1800s until the 1980s, the federal government placed many Aboriginal children in residential schools to educate and assimilate them into mainstream Canadian culture. The schools were poorly funded and inflicted hardship on the students; some were physically abused. Aboriginal languages and cultural practices were mostly prohibited. In 2008, Ottawa formally apologized to the former students. In today's Canada, Aboriginal peoples enjoy renewed pride and confidence, and have made significant achievements in agriculture, the environment, business and the arts.<sup>299</sup>