Indigenous Peoples within Canada

A Concise History

Olive Patricia Dickason
William Newbigging

Fourth Edition

OXFORD

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Publisher's Preface

As stated in a 2011 headline of *The Globe and Mail*, Olive Dickason wrote the book (quite literally) on Indigenous Peoples' history within Canada. This edition is one of the legacies of that original project.

We have undertaken this edition with Olive's goals in mind: to continue to demonstrate that an Indigenous history is not only possible but is a worthwhile endeavour; to challenge the assumptions about the legitimacy and benevolence of colonization that so often inform the writing of settler-colonizers; and, through concrete historical data, to support and provide evidence for Indigenous land claims and Aboriginal rights in what is now Canada.

With this focus, the early chapters of this text underscore the diverse and complex societies and cultures that existed in North America before European colonizers arrived, and they provide support for the argument that First Nations were, and are, nations, with rights to the land they lived on. This book, then, illustrates the rationale behind Indigenous leaders engaging in trade, military agreements, and, eventually, treaty negotiations with settler-colonial governments. Ensuing chapters provide evidence that Indigenous Peoples retained their autonomous spirit as well as their right to and desire for self-determination throughout all of the interactions between Indigenous and European nations, despite the efforts of the settler-colonial nations. The final chapters summarize and evaluate the most recent efforts of Indigenous Peoples to exercise self-determination, to have land claims respected, and to seek reconciliation for the harms perpetrated by the settler-colonial governments. The goal has been to ensure that readers new to the discipline recognize that these issues are ongoing; at the same time, *Indigenous Peoples within Canada: A Concise History* serves as a straightforward resource of background context for those who are in the process of tackling these issues, whether politically or socially, at the national level or within their own lives.

At the time Olive first wrote, she was under the constraints of the academic world's expectations and biases. While we do not aim to be fully free of the constraints of the discipline of history (and its reliance on documents), the interdisciplinary drive of Indigenous Studies departments, which has been gaining momentum and attention across the country, has allowed for movement and improvement in the study of Indigenous history that has been a long time coming.

With this edition, we are able to do some of the things Olive was unable to do at the time of first publication, such as adding origin stories to the history of "time immemorial," and, as much as possible, using autonyms for all Indigenous groups and individuals throughout the text. We have also benefited from extensive and excellent reviewer feedback that has helped us to improve some of the representations throughout the book, which, while at the time they

were written were cutting-edge by virtue of being included at all, we can now identify (with the benefit of new scholarship and the clarity of hindsight) as problematic and in need of change.

We have also revitalized the art program throughout, giving preference to the work of Indigenous artists—including photographers, illustrators, and designers—over historical photos taken by Europeans without clear consent (although a very few historical photos remain, because of their historical importance and power). The inclusion of this art is meant to further incorporate Indigenous perspectives on the history being recounted in these pages. It is also a reminder, throughout the text, that this historical legacy is still being experienced by Indigenous people today.

Unfortunately, this focus on Olive's goals, as well as ongoing evidentiary shortcomings in the discipline of Indigenous history, means that some gaps could not be addressed with this revision, as to do so would require us to write an entirely different book. In particular, we remain aware of the lack of coverage around the lifeways of Indigenous women, and we hope that other books with different mandates will be able to take on this vital project as more material becomes available on this important area of history.

Similarly, the bulk of material covering Inuit and the Métis has remained in the later chapters, despite calls to integrate more coverage of both throughout. Olive's original organization reflects the way in which Inuit and the Métis peoples have had to fight for Aboriginal rights as well as, more generally, any attention, consideration, or respect from the colonizing government bodies across what is now Canada. To change this structure would undermine Olive's organizing principles and would be an undertaking beyond the scope of this new edition.

We hope that you are able to read and enjoy this edition for what it is: a loving treatment of one of the most important books in Canadian history, and a dedicated ethnohistorical account of the Indigenous right to self-determination within what we now call Canada. We also hope that this gives you a solid grounding to better understand the current political climate and the fast-paced changes happening in politics and in the courts, and that it inspires you to keep reading in this increasingly vibrant area of scholarship. As a starting point, OUP Canada publishes a variety of titles in Indigenous Studies; you can find them all at www.oupcanada.com/indigenousstudies.

Acknowledgements

It is a genuine pleasure to thank publicly and profoundly the many people who helped me both with this edition of the text and in a more general way, with the long formation that has given me the background with which to undertake this task. At the National Archives of Canada I was assisted over the years by André Desrosiers, Gilles Durocher, and Marie Lewis. At the Section des cartes et plans of the Bibliothèque Nationale I was helped by Monique Pelletier. At the Art Gallery of Hamilton, the Manager of Collections and Research, Christine Braun, was very helpful.

Historians of the Indigenous Peoples within Canada, however, are required to move beyond the museums and galleries and into the communities. For their insights and wisdom I would like to acknowledge the help generously given to me by Doug Belanger, Joe Tom Sayers, Carol Nadjiwon, and Roland Nadjiwon of Batchewana First Nation; Mike Cachagee of Chapleau Cree First Nation; Judy Syrette and Anne-Marie Jones of Garden River First Nation; Butch Elliott and Germaine Trudeau-Elliott of the Sault Ste Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians; Elizabeth Angeconeb of Missanabie Cree First Nation; Bob Chiblow and Donnie Mcleod of Mississauga First Nation; Georges Sioui of Wendake and the University of Ottawa; Pipe-carrier Lornie Bob of Atikameksheng Anishnawbek; and Edsel Dodge and Dean Jacobs of Walpole Island First Nation.

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anonymous. Four editors at Oxford University Press were helpful and patient. Caroline Starr, Amy Gordon, Michelle Welsh, and Richard Tallman worked very hard to improve this text.

On a personal note I would like to acknowledge the help and support of my family: my parents Graeme and Barbara Newbigging; my wife Kathryn Kohler; and our children Cameron Newbigging and Janet Newbigging. Finally, I am compelled to note that I drew inspiration from two people who deserve mention here: my old friend W.J. Eccles of the University of Toronto, who first encouraged me to study the history of Indigenous Peoples within Canada, and Karrie Wurmann, a great childhood friend whose adoptive parents took her every week to Tlingit dance classes so that the Tlingit culture of her birth would be able to claim its place alongside their Irish and German backgrounds. As promised, Karrie, I will send you a copy of this edition.

Introduction

Within a generation, First Peoples living within Canada have claimed, or more accurately reclaimed, a place at the centre of the political, economic, and social history of the country. Issues long ignored, or worse, hidden, are now the subjects of editorials, news stories, and investigations on a daily basis. Governments are constantly being called upon to answer hard questions by people across the country. This shift to prominence is one of the central themes of this edition of this text. Only by understanding the reasons both for the long-term neglect and for the recent revitalization can we hope to understand this fascinating history. Only by understanding the past can we hope to learn both from the mistakes that were made and from the courage and resilience of people who have been doing the hard work of building a better future.

We look in vain for a single cause to explain this re-found prominence; history is too complex to allow for simple solutions. We can, however, point to one act of courage that has emerged as a symbol of the determination required to bring change. On 22 June 1990, Elijah Harper held an eagle feather aloft in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly as a powerful protest against a political system that had not been inclusive in its attempts to change the country's constitution. Political actions and protests are important in raising the profile of causes, but actual change requires hard work and constant effort. With that in mind we must look at the contributions of Indigenous people across Canada—such as Professor Cindy Blackstock advocating tirelessly on behalf of children, and Justice Murray Sinclair masterfully leading the Truth and Reconciliation Commission—if we want to find the real reasons for the revitalization. The goal of this text, then, is to put all of this in context.

The challenge confronting the authors of this text is twofold. First, the pace of change has increased exponentially. Even as these lines are being written new developments are unfolding, such as the announcement about the Sixties Scoop payment and the Supreme Court ruling on what is to become of the evidence presented to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.[1] Similarly, the implications of important recent rulings are not yet fully understood. For example, the 2014 ***Tsilhqot'in* case**, the first legal decision in Canadian history in which a court declared Aboriginal title to lands outside of a reserve, has raised a new set of issues, and historians have not yet had the time to understand and explain the various consequences.[2] These are interesting times indeed.

A second challenge concerns language and perspective. Over the centuries history had become a documents-based discipline. This was not always the case, of course; the ancient Greek writer Herodotus, the "father of history," undertook his researches based on oral traditions. Nevertheless, over time, historians have relied on the written record. This has caused

numerous difficulties for historians of the First Peoples living within Canada. The earliest written records, those created by French explorers, traders, missionaries, and officials, employed words and concepts that were not the words and concepts used and understood by the people so described. Problems of interpretation take on a totally different aspect when considering early European accounts of the Americas. For one thing, as one scholar, Ian S. MacLaren, has pointed out, words used in the sixteenth or eighteenth centuries might have different meanings today. For another, what appeared in print could differ markedly from what the author had written. Publishers were sometimes more concerned about sales than about accuracy.[3] Since the printed word should not be taken automatically at face value, the researcher is left with the necessity of cross-checking with whatever other sources are available. These are usually few, and sometimes non-existent.

This text has always embraced the ethnohistorical approach, the attempt to bring the Indigenous perspective to the forefront by moving out of the libraries and archives and into museums, historic sites, and cultural centres. Historians have embraced the possibilities to be found in the study of language and material culture. The ethnohistorical method—the combined use of anthropological, archaeological, linguistic, and historical studies—has offered a generation of Canadian historians important new insights into the history of Indigenous Peoples within what would become Canada. We now know a great deal more about the ways in which they understood their world, and this knowledge is growing constantly.

Language studies offer a particularly exciting possibility for learning in regard to the study of place names, or toponyms. Indigenous place names across the country offer glimpses into how people identified what was significant in their particular environments. They indicate geographical or ecological characteristics, or else recall a historic event that happened on the spot. Unlike Europeans, and with one major exception, Indigenous people do not name places or geographical features after persons or groups. The exception concerns reserves, sometimes named after individuals, such as Ahtahkakoop and Mistawassis. Northern Quebec has switched to Inuktitut for its place names. The study of place names remains one of the most promising means of learning more about the Indigenous perspective on their own history.

Problems of translating concepts and even words from one language to another are notorious for misleading the unwary. The word "father" is a good example of this. For sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europeans, the connotations of the term included authority and control of the family. In Indigenous languages, the term implied a protector and provider, who could be influential but who lacked authority in the European sense, particularly among matrilineal societies. When the Haudenosaunee, for instance, referred to the French king as "father," they were not placing themselves under his authority. If that had been their intention, they would have used the term "uncle," as the authoritative member in Haudenosaunee families was one's matrilineal uncle—but they never did.[4]

More importantly, the careful use of language allows us to reassert in the text an Indigenous perspective by employing the autonyms—the names by which people referred to themselves—as opposed to the exonyms—the names that others used. To explain this choice, and for the reader to understand its significance, we first must recognize the important connections between language and history. We will do this by means of an example.

When he wrote "Social and Warlike Customs of the Odahwah Indians" in 1858, the Odaawa historian Francis Assikinack discussed a problem that has always bedevilled historians, that of language. He was trying to come to terms with "Manitoulin," a word of great importance to him as it was both the island of his birth and the spiritual homeland of his people. He wrote: "As far as I know, there is no such word in the languages spoken by the Odahwahs, Ojibwas or any of the surrounding tribes. Manitoulin may be a Huron word: but, not being acquainted with the Mohawk, which, I understand nearly resembles the Huron or Iroquois language, I can not say positively."[5]

Assikinack's problem began with the use of the letter "l," a consonant not used in Anishinaabe-mowin, the language of the Odaawa people. He knew that the "l" was used by the Wendat people (he calls them Huron here), so he speculated that "Manitoulin" might be a Wendat word. He was quick to note, however, that he was not acquainted with the Kanienkehaka language (he calls it Mohawk here) and so could not be positive. He decided to call Manitoulin Island "Odaawa-minis," which means simply Odaawa Island, based on the information he had at the time. In fact, we now know that the Wendat word for Manitoulin is "Ekaentoton."[6] The word "Manitoulin" is merely a French transcription of "Mnidoo-mnising," which means the island of the spirit.[7]

The difficulties that Francis Assikinack encountered still confront us today and they are still a great concern to anyone seeking to come to a greater understanding of Canada's Indigenous Peoples. Language is always a powerful tool in the historian's atelier, and to historians of peoples with strong oral traditions language is primordial. Language is a foundational element in this text and it forms the base upon which the history will be constructed. If we hope to create a fair and balanced account of the past, we need to work extra hard to use the linguistic implements available to us. Although it is true that the issue of language creates complexities, as Francis Assikinack demonstrates, it also provides countless opportunities for understanding.

In order to embrace that opportunity, we have decided to represent people in the way they choose to represent themselves. By using examples of descriptive language in general, we are able to gain greater insights into how Canada's First Peoples understood their long and productive relationship with the resources, lands, and waters of this vast country. For some years now historians of Indigenous Peoples within Canada have embraced the use of autonyms, the names by which peoples refer to themselves. This text, in its various editions, has been part of that effort, and in this edition we are taking the attempt to another level. Thus, wherever possible, we will use the correct autonyms.

A number of issues are associated with this effort, but we have taken steps to alleviate the difficulties. In the first place, it is important to note that the old names are still familiar and they exist in the titles of books, in place names, and in the primary documents. Bruce Trigger's magisterial work is called *The Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1660* and not *A History of the Wendat People*. Similarly, we still have Lake Huron, Huron College, Huron County, Huronia, and, of course, the *Jesuit Relations* and all the other French sources use the word "Huron" rather than "Wendat." We also chose to provide people, wherever possible, with their own names as opposed to the translations and corruptions (Joseph Brant, Poundmaker,

etc.) that have been used previously. In these cases, the familiar translated name is given in parentheses following the first reference.

A second issue concerns spelling. In his fine study of the community, life, and language of his great-grandfather, Francis Pegahmagabow, the historian Brian D. McInnes lists eight variations in spelling of the Wasauksing place name. Interestingly, they contain shades of meaning: shining rock (twice); white around the shore; something white in the distance; white stakes you can see in the distance; distant outlook; distant view; and shining light.[8] Even when the words are the same, the spellings can differ widely. Many people were contacted to determine the correct spellings of their various autonyms, but they frequently provided different spellings. One said he made it a point of pride to use a different spelling each time he wrote the word. Another said simply that she did not care how the word was spelled; how it was *pronounced* was the important point. Both were making the point that the oral language should take precedence over the written language. The spellings we provide here are thus an inevitable compromise.[9]

Another compromise is to be found in the choice of autonyms themselves. Some people still choose to self-identify with the names they were given by others. For reasons of convenience some choose to retain those names as umbrella terms and refer to themselves by a much more specific autonym. In other cases, the preferred terms remain in dispute, for various reasons. The most difficult word proved to be "Cree." Many people self-identify as Cree or as a group within that umbrella term. We tried to use specific language wherever possible, but we could not always manage this. These kinds of debates are hardly unique to the Indigenous people, but they did present a challenge in the writing of this edition. The chart below, original to this edition, should help readers to learn the autonyms.

We did not take the decision to use autonyms lightly. More and more Indigenous people are using autonyms as a means of reclaiming the past. The opportunity to learn something about the past by understanding the history of the autonyms is something too important to miss.[10] The clash of oral and written cultures brings about many compromises and this one seemed more than justifiable. The promotion of language is a vital component in the promotion of the culture and history of Canada's Indigenous Peoples. On the other hand, timelines—a construct of the written tradition—were retained.

Finally, it is important to note that this edition carries a new title: *Indigenous Peoples within Canada: A Concise History*. In the interests of accuracy and inclusivity, the terms "Indigenous Peoples" and "First Peoples" are the accepted, general, and inclusive terms for the collective of the three groups of Indigenous Peoples within Canada: First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. The term "First Nations" is still to be found in the text where there is a reference to a specific First Nation or group of First Nations. The word "nation" is used in this text because it is used by Indigenous people to describe the members of a distinct community. As mentioned above, "nation" was not originally an Indigenous concept, but it has been embraced over the centuries and is now widely used. It is also a word that the earliest documents used for the same purpose. The United Nations prefers the word "Indigenous" to "Aboriginal," and the government of Canada has recently changed the name of National Aboriginal Day to National Indigenous Peoples Day.

The word "Aboriginal" is still used where it is a legal term or part of a name, as in Aboriginal rights or Aboriginal council. Similarly, "band," as in "band council," is preferred to the word "tribe," which is common in the United States. Of course, older terms—"Indians," "Natives," "Native Americans," and the portmanteau word "Amerindian"—still appear in quotations from documents and in the titles of books and reports. Thus, we have terms like "Indian Act" and "Native Brotherhood." We sincerely hope that Francis Assikinack, Francis Pegahmagabow, and Olive Dickason would approve of these changes and the spirit in which they were made.

Autonym Chart

Umbrella Grouping	Alliance/ Confederacy Name (if applicable)	Autonym or Preferred Term of Group/Band	Alternate Spellings (if applicable)	Exonym (name in European History)	Geographic Location (approximate)	Language or Language Group
Inuit ["Eskimo"; descendants of Thule and the earlier Dorset people (evolved from the Ancient Inuit or "Paleo Eskimo")]	n/a	Sallirmiut	Sadlermiut	Sadlermiut; Eskimo (likely last of the Dorset people)	Sanikiluaq (northwestern Hudson Bay)	Inuktitut
	n/a	Nunatsiavummiut; Inuit		Eskimo	Nunatsiavut (northern coastal Labrador)	Inuttitut
	n/a	Nunavummiut; Inuit		Eskimo	Nunavut	Inuktitut
	n/a	Nunavimmiut; Inuit		Eskimo	Nunavik (Arctic Quebec)	Inuktitut
	n/a	Kivallirmiut; Inuit		Caribou Eskimo (Inuit)	Nunavut (west and inland of Hudson Bay)	Inuktitut
	n/a	Kitlinermiut	Inuinnait	Copper Eskimo (Inuit)	Nunavut and NWT (Banks and Victoria islands and adjacent central Arctic)	Inuktitut
	n/a	Inuvialuit		Western Arctic Inuit or Mackenzie Delta Inuit; Eskimo	Kuupak (Mackenzie Delta)	Invialuktun
Beothuk	n/a	Beothuk		Beothuk; Red Indians	Island of Newfoundland	Beothukan
Cree*	n/a	Innu		Montagnais or Naskapi	Northern Quebec and western Labrador	Innu-aimun (Algonquian)
		Mushkegowuk	Maskêkowiyiniwak	Western Swampy Cree	Manitoba west through to Saskatchewan	Cree (Algonquian)
	Nishnawbe-Aski	Omushkegowack	Omaškêkowak	Eastern Swampy Cree/ Moose Cree/Lowlands Cree	Western James Bay through to Manitoba	Cree (Algonquian)
	Nishnawbe-Aski	Iynu	Iyyu	James Bay Cree	Eastern James Bay	Cree (Algonquian)
	Nishnawbe-Aski	Oji-Cree		Oji-Cree	Northern Ontario and Manitoba	Oji-Cree (Algonquian)
	Nishnawbe-Aski	Oupeeshepow		East Main Cree; Eastern James Bay Cree	Hudson's Bay	Cree (Algonquian)
	Nishnawbe-Aski	Attikamekw		Attikamegue or Tete de Boules	Nitaskinan (Saint Maurice River Valley, Quebec)	Cree (Atikamekw)

	Nehiyaw-Pwat	Plains Ojibwa	Anihšināpē	Saulteaux	Historically the Upper Great Lakes and then from Manitoba to Alberta	Anishinaabe-mowin (Algonquian)
	Nehiyaw-Pwat	Plains Cree [or Cree]	Nehiyaw	Plains Cree	Historically northern Ontario and then from Manitoba to Alberta	Cree (Algonquian)
	Nehiyaw-Pwat	Métis		Métis; Metis	Red River Valley and then west into Saskatchewan	Anishinaabe-mowin and French; Michif
Dene [collective name, known in European historical documents as Athapaskans], Dene Confederacy	Dene Confederacy	Tłı̨chǫ		Dogrib	Northwest Territories	Tłı̨ chǫ Yatìì (Athabaskan)
	Dene Confederacy	Denésoliné		Chipewyan	Northwest Territories	Dënesųłiné (Athabaskan)
	Dene Confederacy	T'atsaot'ine		Yellowknives or Copper People	Northwest Territories	Na-Dené (Athabaskan)
	Dene Confederacy	Dene Dháa	Dane Zaa/Dene Tha	Beaver People	Northwest Territories	Na-Dené (Athabaskan)
	Dene Confederacy	Wet'suwet'en	Dakehl-né	Carrier	Northern British Columbia	Witsuwit'en (Athabaskan)
	Dene Confederacy	Sekani	Tsek'ahne	Sékanis or Interior Carrier	Northern British Columbia	Tsek'ehne (Athabaskan)
	Dene Confederacy	Tsilhqot'in		Chilcotin	Northern British Columbia	Tsilhqot'in (Athabaskan)
	Dene Confederacy	Gwich'in		Kutchin	Yukon	Dinjii Zhu' Ginjik (Athabaskan)
	Dene Confederacy	Tagish		Tagish	Yukon	Tagish, Tlingit (Athabaskan)
	Dene Confederacy	Tutchone			Yukon	Tutchone (Athabaskan)
	n/a	Interior Tlingit		Tlingit	Yukon and northern British Columbia	Lingít, Na-Dené (Athabaskan)
Tr'ondëkHwëch'in	n/a	Tr'ondëkHwëch'in		Han	Yukon	Han-kutchin

Umbrella Grouping	Alliance/ Confederacy Name (if applicable)	Autonym or Preferred Term of Group/Band	Alternate Spellings (if applicable)	Exonym (name in European History)	Geographic Location (approximate)	Language or Language Group
Wabanakhik or Wabenaki Confederacy [sometimes referred to in European history as the Dawnland or Atlantic Coast People, or the Abenaki]	Wabanaki Confederacy	Mi'kmaq (singular and as adjective: Mi'kmaw)	Wabenaki	Micmac; Toudamans; Souriquois; Taranteens	Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia with fishing and sealing stations on the island of Newfoundland)	Míkmawísimk (Algonquian)
	Wabanaki Confederacy	Wuastukwiuk	Wolastoqiyik or Wulastukw	Maliseet; Etchemin; Eteminquois	New Brunswick and eastern Quebec	Malecite-Passamaquoddy (Algonquian)
	Wabanaki Confederacy	Wabanaki		Abenaki	Quebec, Maine, and New Brunswick	Aroosagunticook (Algonquian)
	Wabanaki Confederacy	Lenni Lenape		Delaware	New Jersey but now southern Ontario	Unami (Algonquian)
	Wabanaki Confederacy	Sokoki		Missiquoi or Western Abenaki	Missiasik in Vermont	Aroosagunticook (Algonquian)
Algonquian	Omamiwinini	Omamiwinini [group of nations including the Onontchataronon]		Ottawa River Algonquians	Eastern Ontario and western Quebec	Anicinàbemowin (Algonquian)
	n/a	Nipissing		Nipissing	Lake Nipissing	Anicinàbemowin (Algonquian)
	n/a	Amikwa		Amikwa	Northern Georgian Bay	Anicinàbemowin (Algonquian)
	n/a	Teme-agama Anishnabay		Temagami	Northeastern Ontario	Anicinàbemowin (Algonquian)
	Niswi-mishkodewin [referred to in European historical record as Three Fires Confederacy, or Council of Three Fires]	Odaawa (pl.: Odaawak) [group of nations]		Ottawa	Northern Lake Huron	Anishinaabe-mowin (Algonquian)

Algonquian (continued)	Niswi-mishkodewin	Ojibwa [group of nations]	Ojibway, Ojibwe	Ojibway; Ojibwe; Chippewa	North of Lakes Huron and Superior	Anishinaabe-mowin (Algonquian)
	Niswi-mishkodewin	Boodwaadmii	Boodawaadomi and sometimes Bodewadomi	Pottawatomi	Between Lakes Huron and Michigan and now in southern Ontario	Anishinaabe-mowin (Algonquian)
	Wabash Confederacy [in what is now the United States of America but were involved in the history of what is now Canada]	Mesquakie (pl.: Meshquakiehaki)		Fox; also Renards and Outagami	West of Lake Michigan and south of Lake Superior	Meskwaki (Algonquian)
	Wabash Confederacy	Osaakii (pl.: Osaakiiwaki)		Sauk; Sac; Osagi	Green Bay	Meskwaki (Algonquian)
	Wabash Confederacy	Giiwigaabaw		Kickapoo	Wabash Valley, south of Lake Michigan	Meskwaki-Myaamia (Algonquian)
	Wabash Confederacy	Piankeshaw		Piankashaw; Pangicheas	Wabash River	Myaamia (Algonquian)
	Wabash Confederacy	Waayaahtanwah		Wea	South of Lake Michigan	Myaamia (Algonquian)
	Wabash Confederacy	Myaamiaki		Miami	South of Lake Michigan	Myaamia (Algonquian)
	Irenweewa [sometimes Illinwek; in European history known as the Illinois Confederacy]	Kaashkaashkia		Kaskaskia	Upper Mississippi Valley	Myaamia-Illini (Algonquian)
	Irenweewa	Kaahokia		Cahokia	Upper Mississippi Valley	Myaamia-Illini (Algonquian)
	Irenweewa	Peewaarehwaa		Peoria	Upper Mississippi Valley	Myaamia-Illini (Algonquian)
	Shaawanwaki			Shawnee	Historically south of Lake Erie and now Oklahoma	Shaawanoki (Algonquian)

Umbrella Grouping	Alliance/ Confederacy Name (if applicable)	Autonym or Preferred Term of Group/Band	Alternate Spellings (if applicable)	Exonym (name in European History)	Geographic Location (approximate)	Language or Language Group
Maskó:kí	Maskó:kí			Muscogee or Creek	Historically Tennesee, now Oklahoma	Muscogee (Muscogean)
Iroquoian-speaking nations; may be referred to in historical record under umbrella term "Iroquois"	n/a	Stadakohnans		St Lawrence Iroquois	Quebec City	Iroquoian
	n/a	Chonnonton		Neutrals	Between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario	Iroquoian
	Haudenosaunee Confederacy (also fall under the term Haudenosaunee) [in European historical record, referred to as Five Nations Iroquois, or Six Nations, or Iroquois League, or Iroquois Confederacy, or Iroquois, or People of the Longhouse]	Kanienkehaka		Mohawk	Historically south of Lake Ontario and east of the Niagara River but now in the Grand River Valley, Ontario, Wahta, Ontario, and in Quebec	Kanienkéha (Iroquoian)
	Haudenosaunee Confederacy	Onyota'aka		Oneida	Historically south of Lake Ontario and east of the Niagara River but now in the Grand River Valley, Ontario	Oneida (Iroquoian)
	Haudenosaunee Confederacy	Onondaga	Onondagega	Onondaga	Historically south of Lake Ontario and rast of the Niagara River but now in the Grand River Valley, Ontario	Onoñda'gegani-gaweño'deñ (Iroquoian)
	Haudenosaunee Confederacy	Onondowaga		Seneca	Historically south of Lake Ontario and east of the Niagara River but now in the Grand River Valley, Ontario, and New York	Seneca (Iroquoian)

Iroquoian-speaking nations (continued)	Haudenosaunee Confederacy	Guyohkohnyo		Cayuga	Historically south of Lake Ontario and east of the Niagara River but now in the Grand River Valley, Ontario	Cayuga (Iroquoian)
	Haudenosaunee Confederacy	Skarùren		Tuscarora	Moved north to join the Haudenosaunee Confederacy in 1722. Historically in the Carolinas, then south of Lake Ontario and east of the Niagara River but now in the Grand River Valley, Ontario	Skaròrə (Iroquoian)
	Wendat or Wendat Confederacy [in European historical record, referred to as "Huron" or "Huron Confederacy"]	Attignawantan		People of the Bear	Historically Wendake (Penetanguishene Peninsula) but now Quebec City	Wendat (Iroquoian)
	Wendat Confederacy	Attigneenongnahac		People of the Cord	Historically Wendake (Penetanguishene Peninsula) but now Quebec City	Wendat (Iroquoian)
	Wendat Confederacy	Arendarhonon		People of the Rock	Historically Wendake (Penetanguishene Peninsula) but now Quebec City	Wendat (Iroquoian)
	Wendat Confederacy	Tahontaenrat		People of the Deer	Historically Wendake (Penetanguishene Peninsula) but now Quebec City	Wendat (Iroquoian)

Umbrella Grouping	Alliance/ Confederacy Name (if applicable)	Autonym or Preferred Term of Group/Band	Alternate Spellings (if applicable)	Exonym (name in European History)	Geographic Location (approximate)	Language or Language Group
	n/a	Ataronchronon		People of the Marsh	Historically Wendake (Penetanguishene Peninsula) but now Quebec City	Wendat (Iroquoian)
	[Adjacent to Wendat Confederacy]	Tionnontaté		Petun	Southern Georgian Bay	Iroquoian
Niitsitapi [collectively known in in European history as Blackfoot]	Niitsitapiikwan** [known in European historical record as the Blackfoot Confederacy]	Siksika (pl.: Siksikawa)		Blackfoot	Southern Alberta	Siksika (Algonquian)
	Niitsitapiikwan	Piikani	Piikunii; sometimes given as Aapátohsipikáni	Peigan; Northern Peigan	Southern Alberta	Siksika (Algonquian)
	Niitsitapiikwan	Káínaa (pl.: Káínawa)		Blood	Southern Alberta	Siksika (Algonquian)
Tsuu T'ina	Niitsitapiikwan	Tsuu T'ina		Sarcee	Southern Alberta	Tsuut'ina (Athabaskan)
A'ani	Niitsitapiikwan	A'ani	Atsina	GrosVentre	Historically Minnesota and Manitoba but now Montana	Atsina (Algonquian)
Dakota [collective term] Očhéthi Šakówin	Dakhóta Oyapé [Dakota People]	Dakhóta		Eastern Sioux	Southern Manitoba	Dakhótiyapi (Siouan)
	Dakhóta Oyapé	Lakhóta	Lakoda	Teton Sioux or Western Sioux; Assiniboine	Southern and central Saskatchewan	Lakhótiyapi (Siouan)
	Dakhóta Oyapé	Nakoda	Nakota	Stoney and Assiniboine	Central Alberta	Nakodalsga (Siouan)
	Dakhóta Oyapé	Apsáalooke		Crow	Wyoming, Montana, and North Dakota	Dakhótiyapi (Siouan)

Hoocąągra	n/a	Hoocąągra		Winnebago	South of Lake Superior	Hoochąąnq (Siouan)
Shoshone	n/a	Shoshone	Shoshoni	Snakes or Gens du Serpent	Wyoming	Shoshone (Numic)
Ktunaxa	n/a	Ktunaxa	Kutenai	Kootenay	Interior of British Columbia	Kutenai (an isolate language)
Tlingit	n/a	Tlingit		Coastal Tlingit	Northern coastal British Columbia	Lingít, Na-Dené (Athabaskan)
Haida	n/a	Haida	Xaayda	Haida	Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands)	XaatKil (an isolate language)
Tsimshian	Tsimshian	Tsimshian		Coast Tsimshian	Northern coastal British Columbia	Sm'algyax (Tsimshianic)
	Tsimshian	Nisga'a		Nishga	Northwestern British Columbia	Nisga'a (Tsimshianic)
	Tsimshian	Gitxsan		Gitksan	Northwestern British Columbia	Tsimshianic
Salish	Interior Salish [language affiliation only]	Secwepemc		Shuswap	Interior of British Columbia	Secwepemctsín (Interior Salishan)
	Coast Salish	Songhees		Songish	Vancouver Island	Lekwungen (Coast Salishan)
	Coast Salish	Sḵwx̱wú7mesh	Sḵwx̱wú7mesh-Úxwumixw	Squamish	Southern coastal British Columbia	Sḵwx̱wú7mesh sníchim (Coast Salishan)
	Coast Salish	Nuxalk		Bella Coola	Southern coastal British Columbia	Coast Salishan with some relationship to Interior Salishan
	Coast Salish	Snuneymuxw		Nanaimo	Vancouver Island	Hul'q'umi'num
Wakashan [language group]	n/a	Heiltsuk		Bella Bella	Central coast of British Columbia	Heiltsuk-Oowekyala (Wakashan)
	n/a	Kwakwaka'wakw		Kwakiutl	Central coast of British Columbia	Kwak'wala (Wakashan)
	n/a	Nuu'chah'nulth		Nootka	Central Vancouver Island	Nuu'chah'nulth (Wakashan)

*Nehiyaw, Nehiyawak, Nihiwak (Cree). "Cree" is the preferred term by most speakers. The listed groups all identify as Cree. Many of the nations listed here are grouped under the political umbrellas of the Nishnawbe-Aski. Note that the "Plains Cree" (Nehiyaw) also identify as "Cree" and so are listed as Cree, but are distinct from the Eastern Cree, and so their other preferred term "Plains Cree" is used to retain that distinction in the text.

**Note that the first three were the original members and the last two joined the Confederacy later as affiliates

Dedication

Olive Dickason was proud of the role she played in raising the profile of Indigenous history within Canada. That pride was fully justified. When she entered graduate studies in the 1970s, she found few opportunities for study in her chosen field. Nevertheless, through courage and determination she soon established herself on the leading edge of an emerging movement that hoped to restore Indigenous history to its rightful place at the heart of Canadian history. Others were also part of this effort, but no one did more than Olive to bring Indigenous history back into the mainstream. As I write this dedication, Indigenous affairs are certainly at the centre of the national consciousness. In fact, events have moved so quickly that we had a difficult time staying in front of them. During the last few months, important Indigenous rulings, legislation, actions, and hearings have dominated the national news. This would not have been a surprise to Olive. In February of 1991, as we drove through a heavy snowstorm along the frozen banks of the Red River, she predicted that Indigenous people were going to find their rightful place at the centre of the nation's past, present, and future. She further told me that I had an obligation to do what I could to contribute to this movement. When we reached Lower Fort Garry, she said, "You have seen injustice and now you have to do something about it. Some of us have been working on it but we can't go on forever." She was 70 years old then, and in spite of her protest she did go on to make many more contributions to help to fight against this injustice. The challenge that she issued to me is now passed on to you, the reader. In the pages of this text, you will find ample evidence of injustice and it is up to you to work together to do something about it.

William Newbigging

1 Origin Stories

CHAPTER OUTLINE

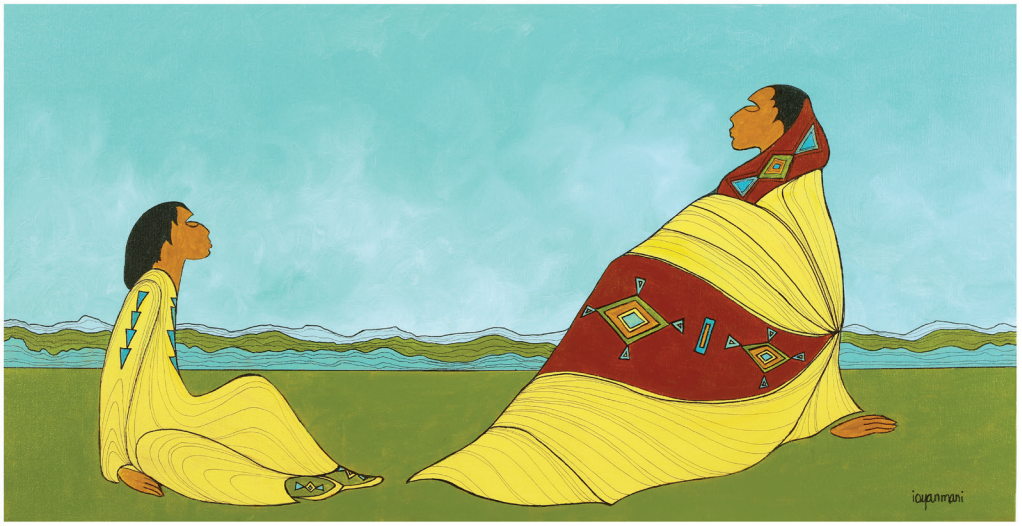
In the opening chapter we examine origin stories, taken from across Canada, to show how a critical reading of them helps us to gain understanding of the beliefs and diversity of Indigenous Peoples within Canada. We then discuss how these stories dovetail with what ethnohistory knows thus far about the origin of Indigenous Peoples in the Americas.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will understand the importance of the oral tradition as it applies to the history of Indigenous Peoples within what has become Canada.
2. Students will learn to discuss how an ethnohistorical approach, including understanding the themes and concepts of the various oral traditions, enables us to overcome the challenges posed by an exclusively documents-based, classic historical approach.
3. Students will gain insight into the rich diversity of Indigenous Peoples within Canada.
4. Students will discover ethnohistorical evidence that supports the origin stories of Indigenous Peoples, as well as the gaps that still exist in the scientific evidence.

Introduction

Canadian history begins with the First Peoples. Indigenous Peoples have been here from time immemorial[1] and have contributed enormously to every aspect of Canadian life: political, social, economic, and cultural. Pride of place, however, has not meant a fair claim on the historical narrative of the country. There are many reasons for this but the most important one has to do with the conflict between the traditional, documents-based history of Eurocentric historians and the oral traditions of Indigenous Peoples within Canada. Other variables—such as bias, politics, economics, and nationalism—also influenced the incompatibility perceived to exist between classically trained historians and oral traditions.[2] Scholars have now come to practise a more inclusive and useful methodology, which has made it possible for Indigenous knowledge to be incorporated and accepted into the historical narratives taught at Western institutions. This approach is called **ethnohistory.** Ethnohistorians incorporate Indigenous voices into the historical narrative, using oral history, artwork, material culture, archaeological evidence, and etymology as source materials, and incorporate work from scholars in other disciplines such as linguistics, anthropology, and archaeology. Until very recently, most academic historians were non-Indigenous, but now Indigenous scholars are helping to transform the field through their greater knowledge of Indigenous languages and access to oral tradition and other cultural knowledge, as well as their ability to exert greater influence by virtue of their presence at academic institutions. Most importantly, more Indigenous language courses are now being offered and the field is being transformed as language reassumes its rightful place



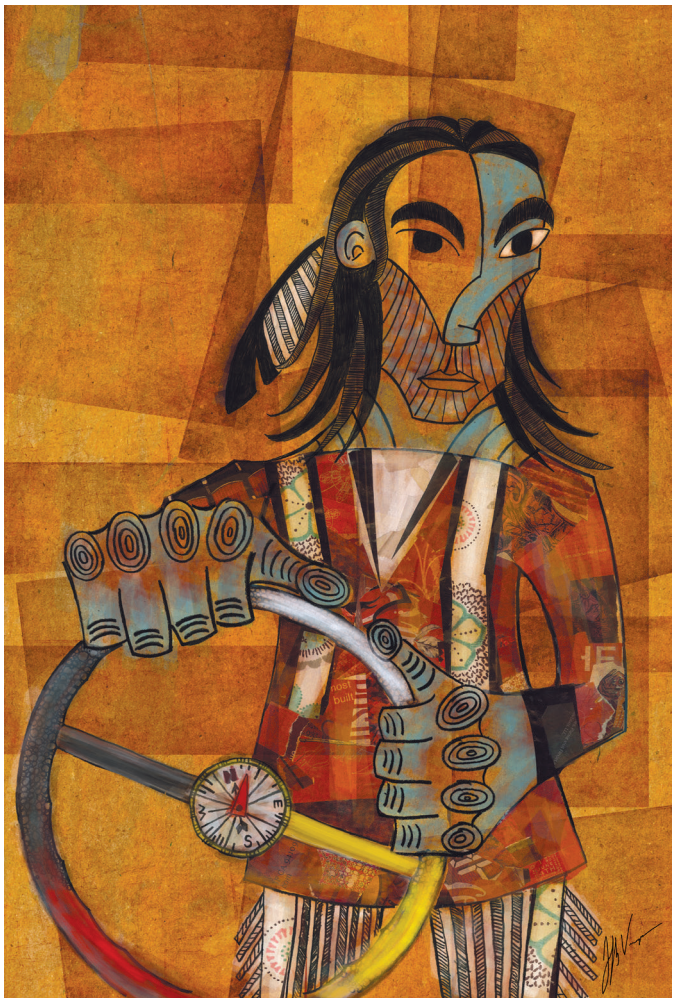
Ancient Teaching - Maxine Noel : IOYAN MANI
Photo courtesy of Canadian Art Prints

***Ancient Teachings* by Ioyan Mani (Maxine Noel).** Maxine Noel signs her artwork with her Dakota Sioux First Nation name, Ioyan Mani, which translates as "Walk Beyond."

as a key to cultural knowledge. Through their work, ethnohistorians, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, have worked hard to provide us with guidance as we attempt to rebuild the history of people who mostly did not keep written records, or who had their written records made for them by others. And yet, the efficacy of this approach is still debated in scholarly circles and in mainstream history. At its core, the rejection of Indigenous Peoples' history, as kept through oral tradition, has stemmed from colonial attitudes, which we will discuss in more detail in later chapters.

Often the best way to understand a culture is through exposure to its stories. The stories of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada contain universal human themes and symbols, but they also contain themes and symbolism unique to their tellers and to the ancient traditions of their tellers' peoples. By examining both the universal and the unique in the origin stories we can come to a greater understanding of how they understood the world around them. We can learn something about building relationships with the land, the waters, and the resources of this vast country. We can also learn something about the ways in which these peoples identified the necessities of life in what was sometimes an extremely difficult and even harsh climate.

The stories chosen in this opening chapter reveal, in the voices of the people themselves, many insights into the ways Indigenous Peoples within Canada understood their world and how this understanding was passed on from generation to generation. The rich oral tradition exists from sea to sea to sea, and it exists in a vast number of stories reflecting both the shared humanity of the people and the vast differences in climate and resources of the land. To demonstrate



Untitled, Jeffrey Veregge. Permission granted by artist.

Untitled by Jeffrey Veregge. Veregge, a member of the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe near Kingston, Washington, writes: "My origins are not supernatural, nor have they been enhanced by radioactive spiders. I am simply a Native American artist and writer whose creative mantra is best summed up with a word from my tribe's own language as: 'ta?ča?χʷé?təŋ', which means 'get into trouble'."

this we have chosen stories from all four cardinal directions: east, south, west, and north. The directions have significance in various Indigenous traditions, and are incorporated into a variety of Indigenous teachings. As explained by Elder Betty McKenna, from the Anishinaabe nation:

> We seek knowledge from those four directions. We get power from those four directions. They pull stuff into our lives. When we call out to them in prayer, they will bring things to us. The four directions came with creation. We didn't. We were the last thing created.[3]

The four stories included here begin to illustrate something of the richness and diversity of Indigenous cultures and offer a foundation upon which we might build a better understanding of the history of Indigenous Peoples within Canada.

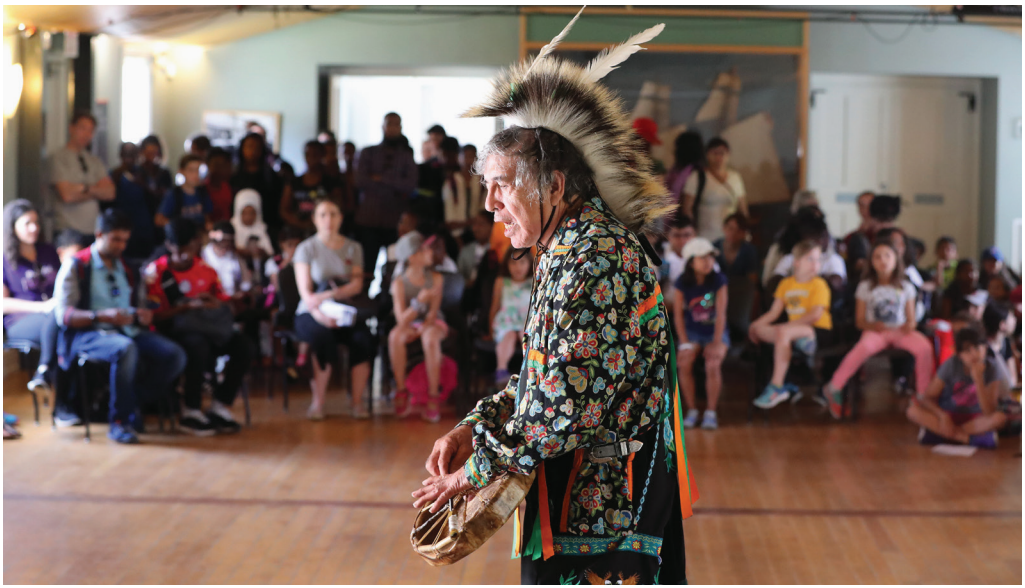
The epistemological significance of the oral tradition cannot be gainsaid. Oral traditions preserve and promote knowledge and understanding, and the storytellers are the living storehouses of that knowledge. The themes of the stories teach lessons about the world and its necessities. The stories provide insight into ontology, that is, the nature of being, but also about the means of transmitting that knowledge to future generations. Thus, those listening to the stories are being educated about the world and about how knowledge is transmitted in the world. One listens to a story, learns the lesson of the story, and also learns how to transmit that lesson to the next generation through the story. The circle, that most central of all Indigenous Peoples' ontological metaphors, is thus made complete.

This is not to suggest, however, that the primary purpose of oral stories is necessarily didactic. To be sure, they teach the listeners about the world and a particular world view—about themselves—but at the same time they entertain and, depending on the story, they can amuse, strike fear, and otherwise draw on the wide range of human emotions. Indigenous Peoples within Canada remain strong adherents of oral traditions that have served them well for thousands of years, and these stories all exemplify the power of the oral tradition. We can only do so much justice to the oral tradition in a written format. For a better experience, we recommend visiting some of the suggested resources at the end of the chapter.

Oral History and Origin Stories

The best way to understand the history of Indigenous Peoples within Canada is to understand how they understood their world, and the best way to do that is to examine the layers of meaning in their oral histories and origin stories. This is not as easy or straightforward a task as it might seem. In the first place, the enormous diversity of cultures means that there are as many oral histories and origin stories as there are peoples. Even within confederacies, individual villages, clans, and even families had their own oral histories and origin stories and, as small differences matter, it is important to remember that these histories and stories hold very specific and important clues about how people understood their world. For example, the individual origin stories often refer to specific elements that, in turn, explain more universal concepts.

In this section we will first look at four specific origin stories—one from the east, one from the south, one from the west, and one from the north—and then will examine some of the larger



Steve Russell/Getty Images

Elder Gary Sault storytelling at the National Aboriginal Day and Indigenous Arts Festival at Fort York in Toronto. The tradition of storytelling continues in what is now Canada today. As one prolific example, Elder Gary Sault of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation shares his knowledge through ceremony and story at major events across southern Ontario.

themes that appear in the oral histories. We will also consider how the oral tradition enriches our understanding of the past. The stories themselves, it should be noted, are in English translation and, as with all translations, nuances are lost and the beauty of the language is diminished. As the Italians say, "*traduttore, traditore*," or "translator, traitor," but that, too, loses something in the translation. Second, these stories are brief, written accounts of longer stories meant to be told by a storyteller and experienced over several hours or days. Still, by learning the stories and by examining the symbolism in its appropriate context, we have the best possible chance of overcoming the language difficulties occasioned by the need for translation. As we will see, words, names, and place names provide countless opportunities to understand aspects of the cultures of Indigenous Peoples that might at first seem unclear.[4]

The East: The Mi'kmaq of Listuguj

The origin stories of the peoples of eastern Canada often feature Glooscap as the creator. Glooscap himself was created when a bolt of lightning fused sand into the shape of a person. Glooscap was then made animate by the Creator. Glooscap made the natural features of the world and he made the animals who live in the world. The following is one story of Glooscap's arrival as related according to the tradition of the Mi'kmaq of Listuguj, who live at the mouth of the Restigouche River at the base of the Gaspé Peninsula, as told by Emanuel *Nàgùgwes* Metallic, Mi'kmaq of Listuguj.[5]

> A very long time ago, our Mother the Earth was only a globe of water. In the Skyworld where the supernatural beings lived, the twins, Glooscap ("good") and Malsm ("weak"), were sent to earth in a large stone canoe. Where they landed, the canoe turned into land that we know today as Cape Breton. Glooscap set about and created all the animals and birds from the dirt. He made the animals much larger than they are today; in those days the beaver was as large as a bear. Likewise, Malsm created the badger, who represented evil because of its deceitful ways. Glooscap eventually killed Malsm.
>
> Things continued to happen, like Glooscap's creation of human beings. It was from four arrows he shot at four different white ash trees that emerged the Passamaquoddy, Penobscot, Maliseet, and the Mi'kmaq peoples. He then set about teaching them what to eat and what to gather. Eventually, Glooscap had to leave. Before leaving towards the setting sun, he gathered and told them they could find him if they searched hard enough.

A number of important themes in this story help to explain the Mi'kmaw world view. In the first place, it is important to note that Glooscap created the four separate peoples in exactly the same way. There is no sense of hierarchy here. Second, Glooscap taught all the peoples about the resources of their territory. The link between knowledge and the tradition is thus made explicit in this origin story. Third, Glooscap made the beaver "as large a bear" in this story. The beaver was an important source of food and fur for the Mi'kmaq, and larger animals meant a kind of abundance. This may also be a reference to the "megafauna" that existed at the time the events of this story took place. This part of the story is very similar to other stories from other

INDIGENOUS LEADERS | Basil Johnston (1929–2015)

Few people have contributed to the preservation of Indigenous Peoples' past more than Basil Johnston. He was born on the Parry Island Indian Reserve and attended the St Peter Claver School for Boys in Spanish, Ontario, the largest residential school in the province. Johnston worked in education before joining the Department of Ethnology at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) in Toronto in 1969. It was during his time at the ROM that Johnston made his most significant contribution. He published several books that preserved Anishinaabe stories that might otherwise have been lost. He was also a keen student of language and gave hundreds of talks on elements of Anishinaabe-mowin. His most important publications—*Ojibway Ceremonies*; *Ojibway Heritage*; *By Canoe and Moccasin: Some Native Place Names of the Great Lakes*; and *The Manitous: The Spirit World of the Ojibway*—are still widely read in schools and universities across Canada. Johnston's efforts to preserve knowledge and language were of great significance. He understood very clearly the importance of language and oral tradition in the promotion and preservation of Indigenous Peoples' history and culture, and he worked to promote and preserve both.

Indigenous Peoples across Canada. Finally, Glooscap leaves to go west, or "towards the setting sun" as the storyteller expresses it. This, too, is a common theme in traditional stories across Canada and it is a specific acknowledgement of the movement of peoples as the land was settled following the retreat of the glaciers. As Glooscap finished his work in the east, he then went west, one supposes, to create new worlds there.

The South: The Kamiga Odaawak

At the time of their first contact with the Europeans, when the explorer Samuel de Champlain arrived at the mouth of the French River in the summer of 1615, the Kamiga Odaawak lived at the western end of Manitoulin Island and on the islands running along the limestone spur of the Penetanguishene Peninsula as far west as Mackinaw in the south and St Joseph Island in the north. They were the third largest of the four constituent nations who together formed the Odawaa Confederacy.[6] The Kamiga Odawaak were smaller in number than the Sinago Odaawak, who lived at the eastern end of Manitoulin, and the Kiskakon Odaawak, whose main village was at Nottawasaga in what is now called the Georgian Bay, but they were larger in number than the Nassauakueton Odaawak, who lived at Michilimackinac, on the coasts and islands of the strait where Lake Michigan's waters flow into Lake Huron. The following origin story comes from Doug Belanger of Batchewana First Nation.[7]

> One spring Namepich, the spirit keeper of the *namaybin*, or white suckers, told a female sucker to swim out of the water and onto the sand shore of a river. My people say this was the Thunder Bay River in Alpena, Michigan, and if you go there you can still see the place where this happened. It is called "The Sandies," I think. Now other people might tell you this happened somewhere else, but our story says it was the Thunder Bay River. The sucker laid her eggs in the sand where they were dried by the sun into the form of a woman who became mother to all of the Kamiga Odaawak.

The French were impressed by this story, and in their documents they always referred to the Kamiga Odaawak as les Outaouais du Sable, or the "Sand Odaawak" to distinguish them from the other three constituent groups of the Odaawa Confederacy.[8] Unlike the Kiskakon Odaawak and Sinago Odaawak, the Kamiga Odaawak did not name themselves after their ododam or totem; their name, which means sand or earth, is a reference to their origin story.[9] Within the Odaawa Confederacy, the Kamiga Odaawak were responsible for protecting the Michilimackinac gateway into Lake Huron and for maintaining good relations with the Bawating Ojibwa villages in the region of eastern Lake Superior. The Kamiga Odaawak invited members of the other three Odaawa nations to Bawating and Michilimackinac during the November whitefish run to participate in the fishing.

The origin story reveals something that, at first reading, might seem difficult to understand. The sucker does not seem to be a particularly noble animal. A bottom-feeding fish with a diet of aquatic insects lacks some of the obvious qualities one might expect to find in an animal used

as a totemic symbol. The white sucker has neither the physical power of the bear nor the anticipatory industry of the squirrel. But the white sucker does have other, less immediately obvious qualities, and the oral tradition helps to explain the relevance.

Before contact with the French colonizers, the Kamiga Odaawak had lived at Bkejwanong, the area between Lakes Erie and Huron, present-day Canada's southernmost region. Some documentary records indicate this, but the oral tradition makes the location explicit.[10] The Michigan oral tradition of Makade-binesi or Chief Andrew J. Blackbird, as recorded in his History of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians of Michigan (1887), refers to his own people, "the Undergrounds" (a reference to people who came from the sand or earth), living at Detroit.[11] Other oral sources—from Francis Assikinack and William Warren—also refer to the Kamiga Odaawak presence in Lake Huron.[12] The best source comes from the oral tradition as kept by Nin-da-waab-jig at Minishenhying Anishanaabe-aki.[13]

According to Nin-da-waab-jig, the presence of the Kamiga Odaawak at Bkejwanong (the area of the straits between Lakes Huron and Erie), specifically at Wauwi-Autinoong (also known as Lake St Clair), may be traced to the arrival of the ancient Anishnaabeg in the region sometime around 5,000 years ago.[14] Here, at Bkejwanong, the water of the Upper Great Lakes flows through the shallows and into the Lower Great Lakes. According to Nin-da-waab-jig, the water undergoes purification as it passes through the shallows. The bulrushes of the shallow water help to add oxygen to the water. According to the tradition, this process was not only physical, but it was spiritual. On the physical level the rich plant life of the region produced oxygen and absorbed impurities, but the Kamiga Odaawak tradition also teaches that there is a spiritual significance to the process. As Dean Jacobs of Walpole Island First Nation explains:

> As the water passed through Bkejwanong a circle was made complete. The water was made fresh and renewed. The white suckers have a role to play in this renewal. In the spring, when the rich plant life of the shallows begins to grow it is threatened by aquatic insects who devour the young plants as they begin to push through the lake bed. Just then, the white suckers swim into the shallow water to spawn and to feed on the aquatic insects. Thus they act as part of a larger circle of life which ensures that the waters of the Great Lakes will remain pure.[15]

As the lakes were the source of whitefish—the most important Odaawa resource—there can be no doubt as to the importance of this process of renewal. Thus the white sucker assumes a central role in the health of the Great Lakes.[16] The lesson from the Kamiga Odaawak, then, has to do with conservation and with respect for the natural cycles of nature.

The West: Haida

The Haida (spelled "Xaada" in this story) origin story, like many on the Pacific coast and in northern Canada, features the raven as creator, but as an imperfect creator. The raven, now

fairly common, was once a rare bird and perhaps this helped to give it a mysterious, supernatural quality. The Greek legend of Apollo makes reference to an equivocating raven oracle and the Book of Genesis relates the story of an unreliable raven messenger. Noah sends out a raven to learn if the waters from the Flood have subsided but it merely "went to and fro until the waters were dried up" (Gen. 8:7). Then, to gain a better understanding, he sends forth a dove. She "found no place to set her foot" (Gen. 8:8) and returns to Noah, but seven days later he sends the dove out again and she returns to the Ark with an olive leaf. In Norse mythology the ravens Hugin and Munin sit on Odin's shoulders to make daily reports on the state of the world. In his 1824 novel *St Ronan's Well*, the Scottish writer Sir Walter Scott calls an unreliable servant "a corbie messenger," "corbie" being the Scots word for raven.[17] The American poet Edgar Allan Poe makes explicit reference to supernatural associations in his 1845 poem "The Raven," and of course the shape-shifting Mystique character of the Marvel Comics and the *X-Men* films, whose alter ego is Raven Darkholme, employs this symbolism as well. Indeed, in Gord Downie and Jeff Lemire's animated *Secret Path*, the true story about a young boy who runs away from residential school only to die of the elements in an attempt to walk home, a raven plays a foreboding role. The universality of the symbolism remains unexplained, but there is no question about the centrality of the raven in the origin stories of the Indigenous Peoples of the Pacific coast and northern Canada. The following origin story, with Raven as the central character, is from the Council of the Haida Nation.[18]

Yaahl Sgalaalaanga (A raven song)

At one time the whole world was in darkness. The raven, yaahl, would fly over the ocean. He would fly and fly. That's all he would do. Then he saw something in the dark on the ocean. Then, through the misty pale darkness, he spotted something floating on the sea. It was a double-headed kelp. So he landed on it, and he decided to climb down, just as if it was a rope. As he climbed down he discovered that it was in fact a double-headed totem pole. So he climbed all the way down the shaft of the totem pole until he reached the bottom of the sea, and there, behind the totem pole was a longhouse. So, Raven walked in. He saw an old man busy at work. His head was bald and his old man's skin was pure white. He was like a seagull.

"Grandson, I have been expecting you," he said to Raven.

And Raven was pleased and proud to be treated so well. The old man took up two stones. One was black and the other was speckled. He told Raven, "Take this black rock as you are flying over the ocean and spit it down and it will become the seaward country. Take the speckled rock, bite it, spit it down and it will become Xaada Gwaay."

Now Raven often makes a few mistakes and when he took those stones, in his excitement, he mixed them up. After he chewed for a while, he dropped his first stone, the speckled stone, and it became the seaward country, now known as North

America. He took the black stone and threw down that and spat it down and it became Xaada Gwaay. But because he mixed them up Xaada Gwaay is smaller than North America. And that's the kind of thing Raven would do.

Now yaahl, the raven, was getting tired of only darkness. He had heard of a great sky-chief who was said to have all the light in the world. Raven decided that he would have to spy on the Sky Chief. He saw through the misty pale darkness that the chief had a daughter. And he watched as she went to get a drink of creek water. Now Raven could change his shape and could transfer into anything he wanted. So as she dipped her cup into the water, shape-shifter Raven turned himself into a hemlock needle and floated down the creek. The young girl scooped him up with her cup and swallowed him, and then he was inside her. The Sky Chief's daughter returned to her father's house, and not long after, yaahl was born as a child from her. As he was growing up, yaahl acted like any other child, and made a lot of noise when he didn't get what he wanted. And he knew his grandfather kept all the light in the world inside many bentwood boxes, and that's what he wanted.

Day after day he would cry, "Box, Box, Open the box!", until his grandfather opened one box.

There were 10 boxes, one inside each other, and after many days they finally came to the last one. Yaahl could see light shining through the edges of the bentwood box. (All the light in the world.) And he made so much noise that his grandfather finally opened it. It was a perfectly round ball of light brightly shining. And Raven played with it and rolled it all around the longhouse. The old chief saw how beautiful his wife and daughter were, and he was pleased with his grandson. But yaahl wanted to take the light away, and he changed back into his raven form. And he was a pure white raven. He snatched the white ball of light with his beak and flew away with it, up through the longhouse smoke hole when he became stuck and covered with soot, and turned completely black before he could fly away.

He flew as high as he could with the white light in his beak, but he couldn't fly high enough, so he had to break the perfect ball of light into pieces and then he spat them out into the sky. The small pieces became the stars and the large piece became the moon. And then he asked an eagle if he would take another large piece high up into the sky, where only the eagle can soar. And he did. And that became the sun. After then there was light in the world, but Raven has stayed black forever. Now that Raven could see everything, he wanted everything. And he heard about a chief that had all the salmon in the world, and he was very curious. After-all, he wanted to fill his world with good things to eat. And so he journeyed until he found this chief, his name was Beaver, Ts'ang. Once there, Ts'ang treated Raven as his guest and fed him plenty of fish. But he wouldn't let him see where the fish came from, and made Raven turn his back. So Raven watched Ts'ang closely in the reflection of a brightly polished mirror of argillite. And that's how he saw Ts'ang go behind his longhouse

to a perfectly formed lake, overflowing with salmon. It was almost too much for Raven to hold himself back, but he managed.

Then, one day when the chief was busy, Raven could wait no longer. He gorged himself full of fish. And after he had his fill, he lifted up one corner of the lake and he rolled it up, just like a blanket. He rolled up the water, and he rolled up the fish, and any salmon that fell out he stuffed into his feathers. When the beaver chief returned he was *not* pleased with Raven, and started to chase him. But Raven flew into a tree. Ts'ang started to chew away at its base, and just as it was about to fall, Raven flew lightly to another tree. This made Ts'ang very angry, and he followed him there too, and chewed 'til that tree was ready to fall. And Raven, who was enjoying himself, flew again to another tree. This continued until Ts'ang was too exhausted to follow. And then Raven flew along the entire coast with his rolled up lake of fish. And he started to drop water and salmon wherever he was flying. In this way, raven created all the lakes and streams and rivers. And then with the last of the rolled up lake, and the salmon, stuffed in his feathers, he flew over Xaada Gwaay, and created all the lakes and rivers.

And so Raven shared the wealth, at least the wealth he couldn't keep in his beak. And this is just the way Raven created things, always a little by accident. Now that Raven had all the lakes and all the rivers and all the fish that he needed, he was looking around for some company. As he flew over Niikun, he looked down and he saw a giant shell. He wanted to have a closer look and so he landed beside it on the beach. It was a giant clam shell. Raven started poking it. "Ma, ma," he said. He poked it with his sharp beak. "Ma, Ma." After a while the shell started to open, slowly. Raven looked inside and saw many little eyes peeking out at him.

"Come here." But they closed it back up again, fast.

Raven was very disappointed. He sat there for a while, hoping the giant shell would open again. And slowly, very slowly, it opened again, bit by bit. He wanted to know who those eyes belonged to, and he wanted them to come and play with him. And as the shell opened, Raven could see that inside were creatures with black hair, but no feathers and no fur.

"How could they survive?" he thought.

And they made funny sounds that he couldn't understand. But he wanted to help them. He knew these were his people, and he liked them. They started to come out. All but one. He stayed behind. Raven tried to help him, and he reached in, but he accidentally killed him. And so when Raven created life, he also created death. But he was like their grandfather, and he wanted to help them. He had noticed there were no females, so he took them to a part of the island where the waves were high, and full of chitons [molluscs]. And when the chitons came close to the shore, the humans went into the waves. The chitons attached themselves to some of the males, and almost swallowed their sexual organs. Raven probably laughed a little at this too. Those males then became female, and so both male and female were now

> created. And they became the Xaadas. This is just one of our origin stories. The raven was mischievous and made mistakes. But he made things happen. And since the very first tree, there have been people here, because of the raven. We have stories about the tree too. Maybe another day, hey?

Although his creational, transformative nature is notable in this Haida tale, Raven is typical of the **trickster-transformer** found in many oral traditions. For example, Anansi (the Spider) originated in the tradition of the Ashanti of Ghana in West Africa, and stories of Anansi travelled with people from West Africa and appear in the oral tradition in Jamaica and other Caribbean countries. Coyote—the likely inspiration for "Wile E. Coyote" in the Road Runner cartoons—is found among various North American Indigenous groups, including the Navajo, Apache, and Hopi in the American Southwest, various Indigenous communities in what is today California, and Salish-speaking peoples in present-day Washington and southern British Columbia. In North American popular culture, Br'er Rabbit, from the folklore of African Americans in the American South, is another well-known trickster.

Bill Reid Foundation: http://www.billreidfoundation.ca/banknote/raven.htm

***The Raven and the First Men* by Bill Reid (1920–1998).** In Haida culture, the Raven is the most powerful of mythical creatures. His appetites include lust, curiosity, and an irrepressible desire to interfere and change things, and to play tricks on the world and its creatures. The sculpture of *The Raven and the First Men* depicts the story of human creation.

This Haida story, like so many trickster-transformer tales, demonstrates the power of storytelling. An engaging storyteller can captivate her or his audience and can ensure that the essential elements of the story are committed to the audience's memory. Raven in this story has a sense of humour, at times tricks others, and is not always truthful. In other words, he is not perfect and occasionally responds to human appetites. This anthropomorphizes (gives human qualities to) Raven and makes him real to the audience. The effect of this is to give us some understanding of the ways in which the Haida people identified the necessities of their world: the land, the lakes, the rivers, and, perhaps most notably, salmon. Stories centred on Raven are common to Indigenous Peoples of the Pacific coast from California to Alaska, and also are popular among Na-Dené-speaking peoples of the Northwest interior in what is today Canada. Noteworthy, however, is how they are adapted to the particular environments of specific groups, so, for example, in the Haida tale Raven creates the specific landscape that the Haida call home.

The North: The Inuit of Sikusiilaq

The Inuit of Sikusiilaq (also known as Cape Dorset) on the southern coast of Baffin Island share the story of Sedna, the underwater goddess, with many of the peoples of Canada's Arctic region. Sedna's story is noteworthy because it describes the creation of the world, but it assumes that the people exist already. This is because the Inuit believe that their ancestors travelled from elsewhere to make their home in the Far North of what we now call Canada.

There are a number of variations of Sedna's story, but in essence it is the account of a young woman who refuses the offers of numerous suitors. Based on the version told by Victoria Mamnguqsualuk[19] (which when told in full can last well over an hour), the story goes like this.

> Finally, after terrific pressure from her parents she accepts the proposal of a young man who claims to be an expert hunter and who promises to provide for her exceptionally well. She will have meat to eat and warm fur clothes and fur blankets to keep her warm against the harsh cold of the Arctic. Sedna goes with him to live on his island where she soon discovers that he is not a man at all but rather a raven disguised as a man. To make matters worse his hunting skills are limited to fish. Sedna is distraught to have been deceived and to have to make do with her fish diet. Finally her father learns of her fate and travels to the island to rescue Sedna. In order to do this he kills the raven and puts Sedna into his kayak to take her home.
>
> The raven's friends are angered by this action and take their revenge by causing a huge storm. Terrified, Sedna's father throws her into the sea in order to save himself. She swims back to the kayak and grips on to its side. Her father, fearing she will now capsize his craft, tries to loosen her grip but Sedna will not let him. He then cuts off her fingers with his knife. Sedna swims to the bottom of the sea where she rules as an underwater goddess. From each of her bleeding finger joints issues forth a marine animal: a seal, a whale, a walrus, and so on. These, in turn, give birth to

> others of their type. Eventually there are so many animals the Inuit are attracted to come to hunt them and to live in the north.

This story provides a glimpse into the Inuit understanding of their history. They knew the powerful attraction of game drew their ancestors to come into the harsh climate and to thrive in conditions that others would have found intolerable. The emphasis in the story on the skill of the hunter is a theme at the very heart of Inuit culture. One of the most fascinating elements of the story, however, concerns the timing. Here we find an interesting example of seeing history over the "long term," as the French Annales School of history would have us see it.[20]

The ethnographer Norman Hallendy, who has lived for many years at Sikusiilaq, explains the importance of this view to the Inuit. He notes that his first interpreter, Pia Pootoogook, went out to interview the elders of Sikusiilaq in order to understand their concept of time. The elders explained to Pootoogook that they divided the past into six eras: "[t]he time before there were humans; the time of the earliest humans; the time of the Tuniit; the time of our earliest ancestors; the time when we lived on the land; the time when most Inuit moved into settlements."[21]

Sedna's story fits into this timeline between the "earliest humans" and the "Tuniit," this last being the word for the people who lived in the Arctic before the Inuit. The archaeological work at Sikusiilaq has uncovered evidence of the existence of these people. The Sikusiilaq Inuit word "Tuniit" means the first inhabitants.[22] According to the tradition, as the Inuit moved in, the Tuniit left. This Inuit timeline is a good example of how the oral tradition and the archaeological evidence support one another. In other words, it is yet another strong validation of the value and accuracy of the oral tradition.

Turtle Island and the Journey towards the Setting Sun

The four origin stories discussed in this chapter indicate something of the rich diversity of Indigenous Peoples within what has become Canada. The origin stories, one from each cardinal direction, were chosen to illustrate four important aspects of meaning. Sedna's story from the Inuit of Sikusiilaq shows the importance of natural resources, the vagaries of nature, and the Inuit sense of time and the slow process of evolution. The importance of history studied over long periods of time is also shown in the story and in the Inuit timeline. The Glooscap story of the Mi'kmaq of Listuguj also reminds us of the importance of resources, but it contains as well the importance of teaching. Just as the story teaches us, so does Glooscap within the story remind the people of the importance of teaching. In the Kamiga Odaawak story we are shown specifically how an origin story can help a modern listener to understand something that was left unexplained in the documentary record. Finally, in the Haida story, Raven is an imperfect creator. This is an explanation for the difficulties people encounter in the world and is a common theme in Indigenous Peoples' stories.

Although we can discern common themes (like the importance of natural resources and the vicissitudes of the natural world), the stories are a direct reflection of the important differences between the Indigenous Peoples of this vast land. Some similarities, however, deserve to be mentioned, and so we will close this chapter by making reference to two ideas that transcend these differences. The first of these is the story of Turtle Island, the second, the belief that people moved from the East to the West, towards the setting sun.

The Turtle Island story is the most common creation story, or in a sense a re-creation story, as it involves a flood, as do many other creation stories around the world. Variants of the Turtle Island story are told by people from the Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario, the Prairies, and the Territories. In an Ojibwa telling of the story, the world is flooded by water and all the land is covered by a deep ocean. Sky-woman is saddened by the flooded world and promises the animals that live in the water that she will make some land for them. She persuades a huge turtle to come from the deep to the surface and a number of the water animals come to rest on the turtle's shell. Sky-woman tells them that if one of them can bring her a piece of earth from the bottom of the sea she will make it into a rich land. One after another, the beaver, the fisher, the marten, and the loon try but fail to reach the bottom. Finally, the lowly little muskrat announces that he will try. Ignoring the derision of the others, the muskrat dives in and then, after a very long time, resurfaces, barely alive. In his paw he has a few grains of earth from the bottom of the sea and Sky-woman fulfills her promise and uses this bit of earth to create an island, which, in turn, gives rise to more and more land.[23]

In this story, we are encouraged to try. The world is a difficult and at times unpredictable place, but if we persevere we, too, can succeed like the little muskrat. The mockery in this parable—the laughter of the other animals when the muskrat announces his intention to try—is an important and recurring theme in Indigenous Peoples' storytelling. Arrogance is to be avoided at all costs, and to be full of oneself is a sure path to disaster.

Another well-known Turtle Island story is that of the Wendat people, and it is related here by one of their best-known historians, Georges Sioui (translated from the French).[24]

> The Wendat people believe, as do the other Iroquois people, that the earth where we all live was once an island upon which landed a woman from a celestial world. She was called Aataentisic. This celestial woman was called to land on the back of a turtle by the animals of the earth, though at the time, of course, there were only aquatic animals. By diving to the bottom of the water the most humble of these animals, the toad, had succeeded in gathering silt which the little turtle then spread on the great turtle's shell. Eventually there was enough of this silt to form the landmass of the Americas, the whole world as would be known by the First Peoples.
>
> Aataentsic, in visiting this island, found a house occupied by an old lady whom she immediately called Shutai, or grandmother. It was in the house of the grandmother that Aataentsic gave birth to a daughter, whom she had been carrying from the celestial world she had come from before her arrival. This daughter soon grew to become a young woman. Many suitors, who were in fact masculine spirits, came

> to solicit the young woman's attention, but on the advice of her mother, the young woman chose the Turtle-spirit. This spirit left one of his arrows beside his sleeping love, and then, without her knowing it, came back and took it away. He was never seen again. Later, the daughter of Aataentsic gave birth to twin boys. The first was Tsestah, the man of fire, and he was destined to be the benevolent divinity of the Wendat people. The other was Tawiskaron, the man of flint, the creator and sower of traps, pitfalls, dangers, and difficulties in the life and in the environment of the Wendat people.

The themes of this story, although they belong to the Wendat world, are similar to those found in the Turtle Island myth from the neighbouring Anishinaabe world to which the Ojibwa belong. One theme in particular offers an important view into how the Wendat people understood their world. The twins Tsestah and Tawiskaron make clear that the world—that is, Turtle Island—is at once the source of all of our necessities and all of our troubles.

One final common theme in several origin stories is the movement of people towards the setting sun. This east–west movement is an important element in the stories of many Indigenous Peoples. The Glooscap story refers to it, as do some versions of the Anishinaabe Turtle Island story. Among certain peoples of central Canada, the ancestors are referred to as the Wabunukeeg, the "Daybreak People," a reference to their understanding that their ancestors came from the East.[25] Even among peoples whose ancestors do not appear to have migrated over great distances—such as the peoples of the Northwest—migration remains an important theme (for example, in the Tsimshian tradition).[26]

The stories in this chapter reflect the oral traditions of Indigenous Peoples from across Canada, but they are only a tiny sample, a brief introduction to the richness, diversity, and beauty of the tradition. Part of the richness of the oral tradition exists in the skill and creativity of the storyteller, and that is something that simply cannot be recreated in a written form. Winter was, and is, the storytelling season, and on long winter nights the elders, the living storehouses of Indigenous Peoples' knowledge, take hours to tell the stories that form the various traditions. To listen to a story is to take part in a living history, which immediately makes the listeners part of a process that exists as an unbroken circle to time immemorial.[27]

Origin Story from Ethnohistory

The origin story as written in ethnohistorical accounts is somewhat different but not contradictory to the ones above. New archaeological evidence found along the coast of BC indicates that members of the Heiltsuk Nation resided in what is now Canada as long ago as 14,000 years BCE,[28] while another site in Yukon has been dated at 24,000 years BCE, making it the oldest known site.[29] From physical and linguistic evidence, we know that humans were present in the Americas at least by 17,000 BCE, and perhaps by 50,000 BCE or even earlier.[30]Archaeologists are now in agreement that the general movement of many First Nations throughout the Americas was in a large clockwise direction.[31]

New discoveries and scientific breakthroughs are helping to improve our understanding of what we already know. While DNA evidence at first had archaeologists convinced that only one origin was possible for Indigenous Peoples, new evidence and better DNA analysis now suggest that there were a minimum of two separate origins for the First Peoples in the Americas,[32] which better fits the varied origins as described in different Indigenous traditions.

Two possible explanations for the northwestern origin of the First Peoples match the anthropological, ethnohistorical, and oral records. The first requires an American genesis, which is described in the traditions of some of the Indigenous Peoples of the Northwest. The tradition of the Gitxsan people maintains that their territory in the Upper Skeena River Valley is the original site of this American genesis and that all of the Indigenous Peoples can trace their ancestry to this origin. They see themselves as the people who never left.[33] Many other Indigenous Peoples in the Northwest share the tradition of having been born of the earth there.

Another possible explanation that fits with several origin stories is that the First Peoples arrived in the Americas from elsewhere. For a long time, the prevailing ethnohistorical theory was a land bridge, which allowed for a Pacific genesis and subsequent move to the Americas. At several periods during the late Pleistocene geological age this land bridge (known as **Beringia**) connected Asia and North America across the Bering Strait, and it is possible that some Indigenous Peoples, over the course of generations, crossed on foot during these times.[34]

The sea also offers an explanation for how people arrived in the Americas. In the Pacific, the Japanese current sweeping from the Asiatic coast eastward to the Americas provided a natural aquatic highway.[35] As described above, many origin stories of First Peoples include the arrival of people from elsewhere. The anthropological, geological, and archaeological evidence still being discovered is starting to help fill in some of the specifics that the origin stories do not provide.

Questions to Consider

1. What devices do the tellers use to help their audiences remember the key elements of the stories?
2. What is the significance of oral storytelling in Indigenous tradition?
3. What significance do the main themes have in the origin stories?
4. What has ethnohistory contributed to the discipline of history?

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2 At the Beginning

CHAPTER OUTLINE

As we have seen in the first chapter, the history of Indigenous Peoples within Canada is long, rich, and diverse. In this chapter we will examine the powerful geographic imperatives that helped to shape the different cultural adaptations across the country. We will turn to social organization and to the ecological basis for trade that connected nation to nation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will be able to understand the Indigenous Peoples' concept of their migrations across the North American continent.
2. Students will note the transition of many First Peoples from a hunter-gatherer economic strategy to an economic strategy that also incorporated agriculture.
3. Students will see how geography was the most important variable dictating economic choices.
4. Students will be able to identify aspects of the ecological basis for trade, which helped to forge relationships between different Indigenous Peoples.

TIMELINE From Time Immemorial to the 1200s

75,000–15,000 BCE
Ice Ages (Wisconsin glaciation), when Bering Strait land bridge was accessible for migration from Asia.

10,600–8700 BCE
Domesticated plants in Central and South America: gourds, avocados, beans, squash.

10,000–8000 BCE
Hunting of bison by means of drives and jumps begins.

7000 BCE
Earliest known domestication of corn, in central Mexico.

4300 BCE
Agriculture introduced in Northeastern Woodlands: squash.

3000 BCE
First local cultivated plant in Northeast: sunflower.

1000 ACE
Tobacco cultivated in Ontario; beans soon followed. Norse landing and brief settlement on northern tip of Newfoundland.

13,000 BCE
Bifacially flaked (fluted) stone points and knives dated to 11,000 years ago have been found and identified by archaeologists at both the Asian and North American sides of Beringia. Campsites of peoples of different cultural traditions scattered throughout North and South America. Northwest Coast culture established, based on salmon fishing and sea hunting—a sedentary culture with permanent settlements due to rich land and sea resources.[1]

8000 BCE
Migration of eastern Early Archaic peoples to western Plains and mixing with Plano (rippled flaking of spear and knife points) peoples creates Plains culture.

3500–2000 BCE
Olmec, the "mother" of American civilizations, in Gulf of Mexico region.

1500 BCE
Corn first cultivated in Canada, in present-day Ontario.

1200 ACE
Squash (and sunflowers) first grown domestically in Ontario, thus completing triad of the famous "three sisters" within Canada—corn, beans, squash.

Migrations, Movements, and Settlement

Whether born of the land or made from the land, the link between Indigenous Peoples and their ancestral territories is an undeniable manifestation of how they have always seen themselves (see Chapter 1). To understand the long-term relationship between the First Peoples and the land, we must also comprehend the waters and resources they relied on. In fact, some groups identified more closely with water than with the land and their mental maps included references to points on the shores of the seas, lakes, and rivers of Canada.[2]

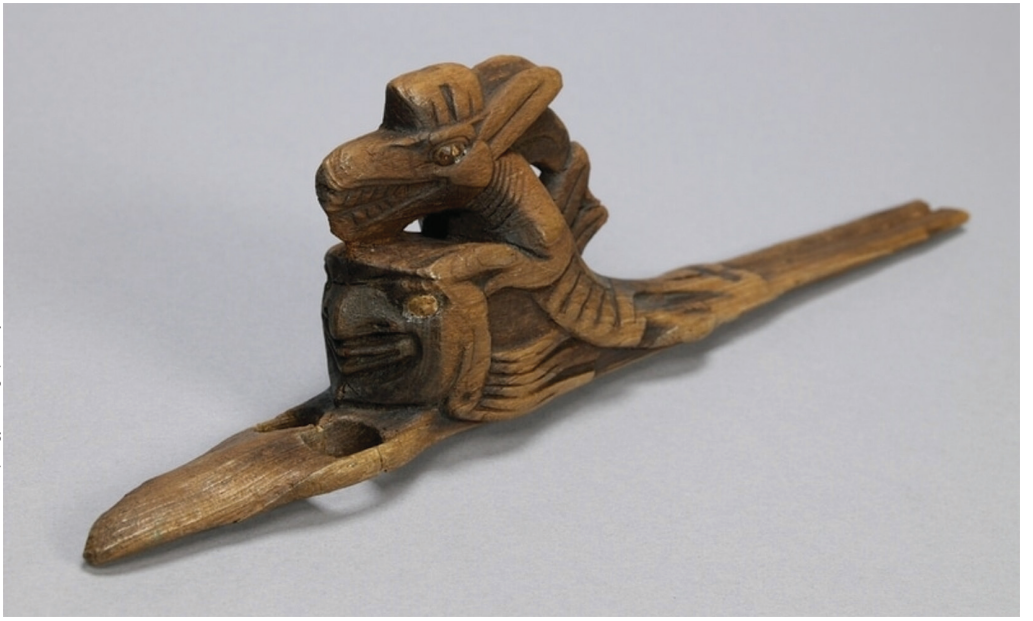
Algonquian speakers who occupy so much of Canada's Subarctic forest, the **taiga**, at some point in time fanned northward from the Great Lakes, and the buffalo hunters of the northwestern Plains came from two directions, south and east. The Dene, on the other hand, began to move south after living in the Far North since about 9,000 years ago, following a volcanic eruption near White River.[3] Indigenous Peoples reached the southern tip of South America by at least 11,000 BCE. The forebears of the Inuit, the last of the Indigenous Peoples to settle in what is today Canada, spread eastward across the Arctic from Siberia. The High Arctic was the last region to be populated, sometime after 5000 BCE.

By 11,000 years ago—about the time of the last known mammoth and mastodon kills—campsites of peoples with different economic adaptations and cultural traditions were scattered throughout the Americas. In that period, and during the next 3,000 years or so, some 200 species of major animals disappeared from the two continents. We do not know what caused these extinctions, but whatever the reason, the disappearance of the giant mammals does not seem to have changed people's hunting patterns, as such game as bison and caribou had always been important. People survived for the same reason then as later: by being adaptable. The way of life that developed was based on the exploitation of a wide variety of food sources coupled with one of humanity's great strides forward in technology—the development of stone and bone tools.

Early Technology

Technology is the product of an accumulated fund of knowledge. Stone and bone tool technology reached its highest point of development in the Americas, in delicately crafted projectile points (for example, the development of **fluted points** around 11,200–10,500 BCE), seed grinding technology making a wider variety of seeds available for food, such as the small seeds of grasses and amaranths[4]) and, later, in the massive constructions of the Maya in Central America and the Inca in South America. The ancient city at Teotihuacan, featuring massive pyramids and a grand central avenue, was built around 2000 BCE and was one of the largest and most complex cities in the world at the time of its construction. Some of the Maya cities are even older.[5] The architectural and engineering skill of the early Maya people who built these cities rivals that of the great Roman architects and engineers.

The Incas in South America created the largest empire in the world during the century that spanned approximately 1430 to 1530; their "realm of the Four Quarters" incorporated more



The spear-thrower—atlatl—was a key part of the hunter's tool kit. The notched atlatl gave extra power to hurling a spear. An unusually elaborate weight, in the form of a plumed serpent holding a human head, is shown in this image. Debate exists around the benefits of these weights; they may have added to the effectiveness of the spear, or may have added to the atlatl's utility as a multi-purpose tool. Carved out of yew-wood with inlaid white-shell eyes, it has been radiocarbon-dated to 17,000 years ago. It was dredged up from the Skagit River, about 50 km south of the current Canada–US border, in Washington State.

than 200 ethnic groups. Working with stone required detailed and accurate observation on the one hand, and a workable social organization on the other.[6] In addition to the advanced engineering, and the learning to support that engineering, the Incas also possessed the ability to organize complex construction projects in formidable and remote locations. The famous citadel at Machu Picchu in what is now Peru occupies a site located on a mountain ridge some 2,500 metres above sea level. This would be an impressive technological feat even today. When it was built in the decades before the arrival of Columbus, it was unique.[7]

Cultural Adaptations and Resource Management

At the time of the first European contact with North America, that of the Norse about ACE 1000, most of the nations of the area that would become Canada were hunters and gatherers.[8] We know more about hunting activities than we do about gathering activities because

hunting left recognizable debris that archaeologists could study, while gathering left very little. A number of well-known stories, however, have survived to the present. Most famously, we have many stories about the origin of maple sugaring.[9] As we shall see, various traditions have also carefully preserved the complex exploitation of plants for medicinal purposes.[10] The **hunter-gatherer** way of life evolved over thousands of years and grew out of an intimate knowledge of resources and the best way of exploiting them. From this knowledge of how and where plants would grow, North American people developed a new technology for managing food resources—farming.

Farming—The Three Sisters and Hundreds of Other Plants

There are no definite answers as yet as to why humans turned from collecting to cultivating plants in certain areas but not in others that seem equally suitable. The pressures of growing populations might have caused big-game hunters to turn to farming, but there is no physical evidence of this. Moreover, the switch in lifestyle was not all that sudden or complete.[11]

Furthermore, even though agriculture was closely associated with the development of permanent settlement, particularly as populations grew, the process of settling permanently in one location could (and did) begin without an agricultural base. What is essential for a sedentary way of living is an assured supply of food in one place, a situation not necessarily dependent on agriculture, at least in the period we are considering, when populations were usually small. Archaeological evidence indicates that permanent villages in the Americas date back to 15,000–13,000 BCE, before the domestication of plants. In the area that would become Canada, permanent settlement began at least 9,000 years ago.[12]

The exact timeline of the development and spread of agriculture in the Americas is not entirely known. Agriculture seems to have developed independently, within a span of a few thousand years at the end of the last Ice Age, in several widely separated regions of the globe: Mesopotamia, the monsoon lands of Southeast Asia, China, Mesoamerica, the Andes, and the Amazon. A sudden and unexplained jump in the atmosphere's carbon dioxide (CO^2), which occurred about 15,000 years ago, might provide the explanation. This increase in CO^2 made photosynthesis—the process by which plants convert sunlight into energy—more efficient, increasing growth rate and size. That might have triggered their domestication and the emergence of farming. Squash seeds found in a Mexican cave have been dated to 10,000 years ago.[13] The archaeological evidence shows that gourds were domesticated before corn, and so were squash and avocados. The first dates to 9000 BCE,[14] while the last two date to about 8700 BCE. Various beans, chili peppers,[15] and amaranth are at least as old. However, the Haudenosaunee origin story includes the cultivation of corn, beans, and squash (the **"three sisters"**) together since time immemorial. Whether Indigenous Peoples tried to domesticate these crops separately before realizing the advantages of cultivating them together, or whether the archaeological evidence is incomplete, is difficult to say. Probably, plant domestication began in several different places with various plants.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND | Herbal Medicine

The plant world always has been the major source of medicines. (According to the Cherokee, animals brought diseases and plants provided the cures.) Recollect missionary Chrestien Le Clercq (*c.* 1641–after 1700) would report from Acadia, where he was from 1675 to 1686: "First Peoples are all by nature physicians, apothecaries, and doctors, by virtue of the knowledge and experience they have of certain herbs, which they use successfully to cure ills that seem to us incurable."[16] That this knowledge had roots that went deep into the past is not questioned. The process by which Indigenous Peoples acquired their herbal knowledge has not been shared to a wider audience, but there is no doubt about the results. Indigenous Peoples originally used more than 500 medicinal drugs that are still used today.[17]

Plant domestication could not have occurred without an extensive botanical knowledge already in place, as suggested by the vast number of plants used for medicinal purposes (see Historical Background box). It was no accident that agriculture developed first in warm, moderately rainy latitudes, where plant diversity was greatest and ecological conditions allowed the necessary freedom for experimentation. Northerners were no less skilful and experimental in exploiting their resources, but the restrictions of their environment meant that they had fewer options.

The people who hunted on the northwestern Plains, for example, harvested plants, such as the prairie turnip ("white apple"), which they had to observe carefully to determine the right time to gather it for drying and pulverizing for winter use.[18] There is also some evidence that they moved plant stocks from one location to another.

In the Northeastern Woodlands of North America, agriculture was introduced with the cultivation of squash around 4300 BCE, probably via southern trade, and the first local plant, the sunflower, was domesticated around 3000 BCE. Corn was the first cultivated food crop to reach what is now southern Ontario, and that not until after ACE 500. It remained the only crop for five centuries. Tobacco appeared about ACE 1000, with beans following somewhat later.

Squash (with sunflowers) did not reach southern Ontario until the thirteenth century, finally completing the triad of the famous "three sisters" in the northernmost limits of its range. The time this took could have been that needed for the plants to be adapted to a shorter growing season. By the sixteenth century, the triad—corn, beans, and squash—was being grown throughout agricultural America. As crops, the "three sisters" benefited the soil when sown together: beans capture nitrogen in the air and release it into the soil; squash roots are extensive and help prevent soil erosion; and the tall corn stalks provide the other plants with some protection from hail, damaging wind, and excessive sunlight. This gave the "three sisters" a sustainability and permanence lacking in modern agriculture.[19] As food they reinforced each other nutritionally when combined in diets.

First Peoples originally grew more than a hundred species of plants that are still routinely farmed today. They cultivated crops that would be grown as far north as the climate permitted