

This conversation guide is designed for use by instructional leaders and learning communities or as a self-paced study. It is designed to give each reader parts of “truth” that will lead individuals and groups in the direction of reconciliation. This guide is not a substitute for engaging in meaningful conversations with the indigenous community. Consult the *Advancing Reconciliation Conversation Guide*.

References

Numbered Treaties

<https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1360948213124/1360948312708>

The Role of the Indian Agent

http://www3.brandonu.ca/cjns/17.2/cjnsv17no2_pg227-258.pdf

Essential Terminology

<https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Human-Rights-Issues/Terminology%20%20%2828PD-WT-16a%29.pdf>

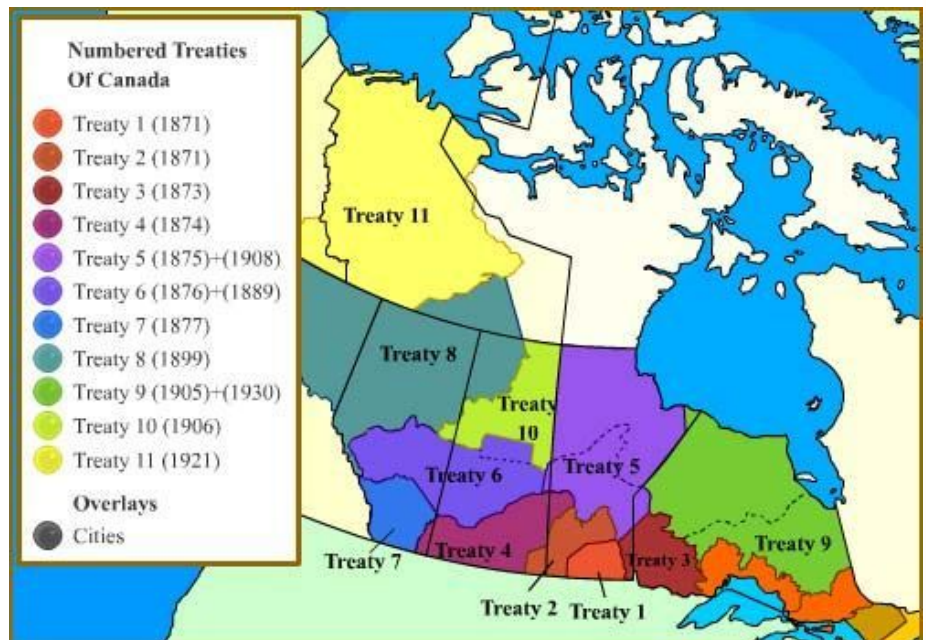


Numbered Treaties

In Canada, treaties are legal documents made between the First Nation peoples and the Crown. Prior to Confederation, treaties were signed by the British Crown and the First Nation people. Early contact treaties primarily concerned issues of peace and friendship.

In 1876, the *Indian Act* was passed, giving the Department of Indian Affairs the authority to create policy in regard to “Indian matters,” including managing land, setting up elected band councils as governing bodies on reserves and helping to “civilize” the people.

There are eleven “Numbered Treaties” that were signed between 1871 and 1921. The government thought the treaties would help to assimilate First Nation peoples into white, colonial society and culture. To First Nation peoples, treaties were oral agreements that discussed sharing the land. These oral agreements were later written by the government, omitting certain oral promises. Oral tradition and the spoken word held more importance to First Nation peoples than what was written on paper. First Nation groups of Alberta and government representatives understood the process of treaty negotiation and signing from very different perspectives.



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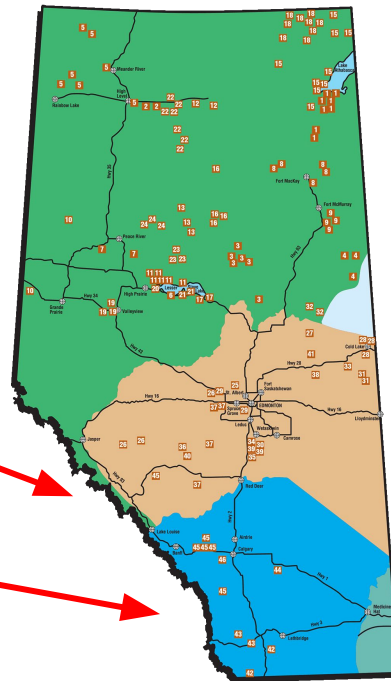


Numbered Treaties in Alberta

Treaty 8 was signed in 1899.

Treaty 6 was signed in 1876.

Treaty 7 was signed in 1877.

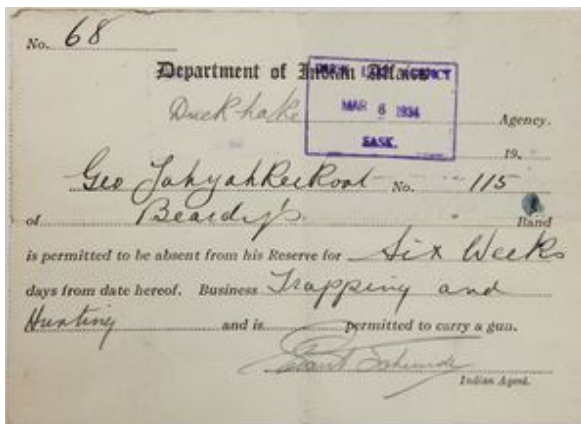


The Role of the Indian Agent

Much reserve land was lost to dishonest deals by the Indian agents. These agents were assigned to Indian reserves and bands and attempted to act as a liaison between the Government and First Nation communities. Indian Agents played a large role in the governing of reserves and communities after the making of treaties.

Indian Agents were hired by the Department of Indian Affairs, which was created in the 1880s. Indian Agencies controlled a number of different bands and reserves within a geographical boundary. For example, one agency might oversee three different reserves. The Blood reserve was considered so large that it was seen to need its own agency within the community. The Indian Agents were individuals who ran an Agency, which could have several employees including farming instructors, clerks, ration issuers and interpreters.

When the position of Indian Agent was first established in the 1870s, their role was to ensure social control and social transformation of First Nations groups. Indian Agents had the power to recommend a Chief be removed from council; to enforce (or disallow) attendance at residential schools; to enforce leaving and entering the reserve, which included moving; to allow cultural and spiritual practices; to define who was in need of rations; or to act as a justice of the peace in dealing with legal matters.



The pass system was implemented in 1885. First Nation peoples living on a reserve had to carry a pass, approved by the Indian Agent, that stated their reason for being off the reserve and how long they would be gone.

Permit from Indian Agency in Duck Lake Saskatchewan allowing a First Nations man to leave the reserve for hunting purposes. Dated 1934.

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Treaty 6

- Signed at Fort Carlton in 1876 and at Fort Pitt a few months later. Additional signings occurred in 1877-1882, 1889, 1950-1956. Adhesions were signed in 1877, 1944, 1950. Adhesions were often imbalanced in favor of the Europeans.
- 50 Nations signed this treaty, including Cree, Saulteaux, Nakota and Dene Peoples.
- At the original signing, approximately 2000 First Nation people came to witness the event.
- It was agreed that a medicine chest, or “health care,” would be maintained by the Indian Agent for use by the band. This medicine chest was often a wooden box containing limited medical supplies. Assistance would be provided in times of famine and pestilence, such as small-pox, measles and influenza.
- Once bands had been surveyed, the treaty signatories would receive a supplement of \$1000 per year to assist in the cultivation of the land for the first three years. The promise of free education was written in the treaties.



Signed by,

Lieutenant Governor Alexander Morris, James McKay, Indian Commissioner, WJ Christie and head chiefs of the Carlton Indians: MIS-TO-WA-SIS (X his mark); AU-TUK-UKKOOP (X his mark); and chiefs: (all signed with X) PEE-YAHN-KAH-NICHK-OO-SIT; AH-YAH-TUS-KUM-IK-IM-AM; KEE-TOOWA-HAW; CHA-KAS-TA-PAY-SIN; JOHN SMITH; JAMES SMITH; CHIP-EE-WAY-AN and councillors. (*Education is Our Buffalo*, 2016).



Above: Mayor of Edmonton Don Iveson and the Confederacy of Treaty 6 First Nations

Left: Treaty 6 medals presented to Michel Calliou (Callihoo) in Calgary in 1878 upon signing an adhesion to Treaty 6.
Courtesy of the Musée Héritage Museum

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Treaty 7

Prior to this signing, smallpox epidemics were killing communities, the buffalo was starting to diminish mainly due to the mass slaughter of buffalo on the prairies by non-Indigenous groups to make room for the railroad and settlement.

- Treaty 7 was signed in 1877 in southern Alberta at Soyoohpawahko, or Bowfoot Crossing.
- Five Alberta First Nations signed the treaty, including the Kanai (Blood), Siksika (Blackfoot), Piikani (Peigan), Nakoda (Stoney) and Tsuu T'ina (Sarcee).
- There were 4000 First Nations people present to witness the negotiations and signing.
- This treaty did not include the medicine chest clause, the famine clause and assistance with cultivation clause. Treaty 7 signatories wished to concentrate their agricultural efforts on ranching. With this in mind, the treaty commissioners agreed to reduce the amount of the agricultural implements and seed stock in exchange for an increased number of cattle, with an exception for some bands who wanted to focus on farming.
- In another significant difference from Treaty 6, Treaty 7 states that the Crown would pay for teachers' salaries instead of the maintenance of school buildings. Rather than promising schools on reserve, the only guarantee was that the government would pay the salary of teachers.



Treaty 7 is seen as unique as there was only 5 Nations that signed. In Treaty 8 there was 24 nations, and 50 nations in Treaty 6.

Signed by,
DAVID LAIRD, Lieutenant-Governor of North West Territories and Special Indian Commissioner JAMES F MACLEOD, Lieutenant Colonel, NWMP and Special Indian Commissioner CHAPO-MEXICO, or CROWFOOT, Head Chief of the South Blackfeet MATOSE-APIW, or OLD SUN, Head Chief of the North Blackfeet STAMISCOTOCAR, or Bull Head, Head Chief of the Sarcees MEKASTO, or RED CROW, Head Chief of the South Bloods SOOTENAH or RAINY CHIEF, Head Chief of the North Bloods SAKOYE-AOTAN or HEAVY SHIELD, Head Chief of the Middle Blackfeet ZOATZE-TAPITAPIW, or SETTING ON AN EAGLE TAIL, Head Chief of the North Peigan MAS-GWA-AH-SID or BEAR'S PAW CHE-ME-KA, or JOHN KI-CHI-PWOT or JACOB (*Education is Our Buffalo*, 2016).



Blood Tribe
Population: 13,000
Language: Blackfoot



Tsuu T'ina Nation
Population: 2,500
Language: Dene Suline



Piikani
Population: 4,000
Language: Blackfoot



Siksika Nation
Population: 7,500
Language: Blackfoot



Stoney Tribe
Chiniki, Wesley, Bears paw
Combined Population: 5,500
Language: Nakoda

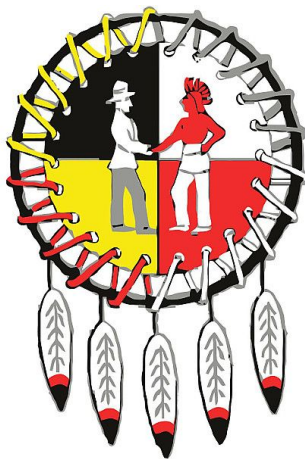
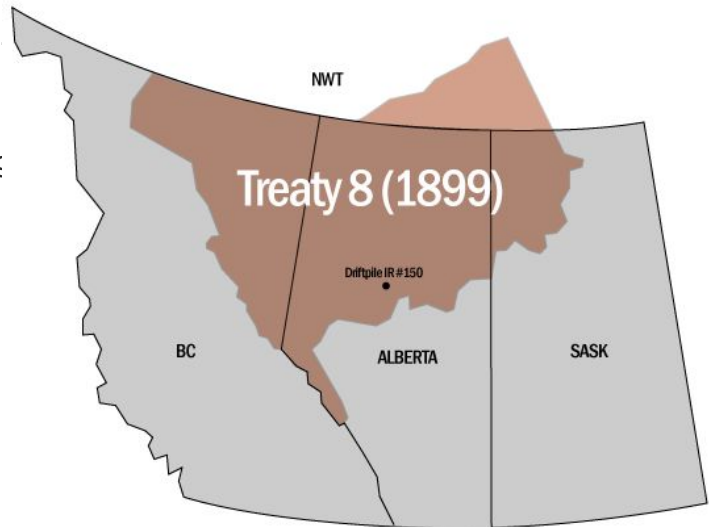
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Treaty 8

- Signed at Lesser Slave Lake in 1899
- 24 Alberta First Nations signed the treaty.
- Adhesions were signed in 1900, 1906, 1911, 1913.
- Over 840,000 square kilometers of land was set aside; this is the largest land area covered by a numbered treaty.
- In 2000, the Tsek'ehne of McLeod Lake were officially brought into Treaty 8.



Prompted by the discovery of valuable resources in Canada's north, particularly the Klondike gold rush, this treaty involved First Nations who had a social organization that was different than those of any other Indigenous peoples the government had previously encountered. The terms and implementation of Treaty 8 differ because of their more northern location. Some of these clauses hold long-lasting consequences for governance and the peoples of that area.

Treaty 8 had some marked differences from other treaties. The primary addition in Treaty 8 were provisions for individuals who chose to live outside the band. These individuals would receive 160 acres, known as "lands in severalty." This was a response to populations that were not as concentrated in the North. Farm stock, implements and a suit of clothing for chiefs every third year was a unique clause in Treaty 8.



Signed by, David Laird, Treaty Commissioner; J.A.J. McKenna, Treaty Commissioner; and J.H. Ross, Treaty Commissioner. The chief was: KEE-NOO-SHAY-OO and his mark (X); the Headman were (and they all marked their signatures with an "X"): MOOSTOOS; FELIX GIROUX; WEE-CHEE-WAY-SIS; CHARLES NEE-SUE-TA-SIS CAPTAIN (headman for Sturgeon Lake) (*Education is Our Buffalo*, 2016).

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Myths and Facts about Treaties

MYTH: “Europeans just came and took the land.”

FACT: British law in Canada *required* treaties to be negotiated before any settlement in the west could occur. Many First Nation groups entered into treaties because they saw it as the only way their people would survive. First Nation groups may have wanted to sign treaties for many reasons; however, many communities signed out of desperation. The disappearance of the buffalo had created mass starvation. Smallpox and European diseases were killing the masses and they needed health care. First Nations did not have “formal education” and saw treaties as a means to survive in a white world.

MYTH: “All treaties are the same.”

FACT: The general form and scope of the agreements are similar, but the individual circumstances of the treaties resulted in unique clauses. Each treaty is a reflection of the parties' goals and hard-fought desires. All Alberta treaties are comprised of all the usual terms, such as giving 640 acres per family of five for reserve land.

MYTH: “Indigenous People get free money.”

FACT: It was agreed upon in each treaty of Alberta that all treaty members (those who signed a treaty) would receive \$5 every year. This is called a treaty annuity. In order to honour obligations set out in the treaties, individuals who are “treaty” still get \$5 per year. Despite inflation, this amount has not changed since 1899.

MYTH: “The Métis and Inuit were included in the treaties.”

FACT: The Métis and Inuit were not included in the signing of the numbered treaties. The Métis did not sign treaties with the Crown. As a result, Métis did not have reserves or lands reserved for them. Métis people were offered “scrip,” which was designed to extinguish Métis title. Scrip was a certificate that could be exchanged for land (land scrip) or for money to buy land (money scrip). For more information see *Conversation Guide: Métis in Alberta (Part 2)*.

The Inuit did not sign treaties. Based on the wording of Section 91 (24) of the *British North America Act of 1867*, which stipulated federal responsibility for “Indians” and no other Aboriginal group, the Inuit were considered “regular citizens.” Therefore, Inuit people fell outside the responsibility of the Department of Indian Affairs. Canadian Inuit are represented by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), which translates to “Inuit are united in Canada.” ITK was established in 1971 to help bring the Inuit of Canada together in asserting their rights to sovereignty and governance over traditional Inuit lands.

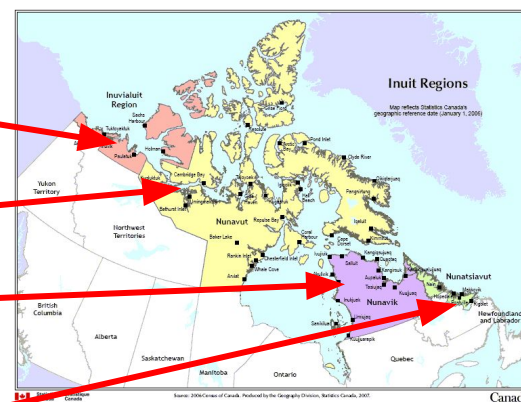
Although there are no “treaties” signed with Inuit, they have signed five modern land claims with the Government of Canada as early as 1975 (*James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement*). Each Inuit region in Canada has organizations responsible for land claims implementation. The four Inuit regions in Canada are collectively known as *Inuit Nunangat*. This Canadian Inuit term refers to land, water and ice. Inuit consider the land, water and ice to be the homeland and integral to their culture and way of life.

Inuvialuit (of the Northwest Territories)

Nunavut

Nunavik (Quebec)

Nunatsiavut (Labrador)



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MYTH: “All Indigenous people are ‘treaty’ people.”

FACT: There were many groups that were not considered “treaty Indians.” If you belonged to any of these groups (described below) you were considered a non-status Indian, which meant that you would not have a recognized land base and would have to spend years fighting for the rights to your original land that was once home to your ancestors.

Not everyone wanted to sign a treaty. Some were left out entirely in treaty negotiations and signing and some were not consulted and were forced away from their homeland. Some First Nations bands were not present at the original negotiations and signed at later dates in adhesions to treaty 6, 7 or 8.



Pihokahanapiwiyin (c.1842-4 July 1886), better known Poundmaker, later a Chief, peacemaker and advocate for Indigenous rights

- In Treaty 8, Conroy reported that the Fort St. John Indians were reluctant to adhere to the treaty. He noted that “the Indians at this place are very independent and cannot be persuaded to take treaty...they did not want to take treaty...and had no trouble in making their own living.” This group was admitted into treaty adhesions years later.
- In 1907, the Canadian Government signed an Order In Council that set aside land to establish the now popular Jasper National Park. The Mountain Métis were forced to leave in 1909 and 1910. The authorities seized guns and families had to flee and settle far from home. Their descendants now reside in Edson, Hinton and Grande Cache. The families included Lewis Swift, the four Moberlys-Ewan, Adolphus, William and John, as well as Isadore Findlay and Adam Joachim.
- Poundmaker, who was a brave and not a chief at that time, spoke up and said, “The Government mentions how much land is to be given us. He says 640 acres, one mile square for each band. He will give us, he says.” In a loud voice, he shouted, “This is our land, it isn't a piece of pemmican to be cut off and given in little pieces back to us. It is ours and we will take what we want.”

MYTH: “The Chiefs and signatories understood what they were signing, as did the Government Agents.”

FACT: Treaty negotiation required translators. Weak translation and omissions caused confusion and misunderstanding about the promises and their meanings for the First Nation people. Oral promises made during negotiations were often not included in the final written treaties. It was also important to the signing Chiefs that the sacred pipe be involved. In the presence of the pipe, only the truth must be used and any commitment made in its presence must be kept. In that sense, the only means used by the Indians to finalize an agreement or to ensure a final commitment was with use of the pipe. It is undocumented whether the Government Agents truly understood or respected the presence of the pipe in this agreement. First Nations had never been exposed to written agreements, nor did they understand the written English language. They were instructed to sign the letter “X” as a way of showing that they “agreed” to the treaty.

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