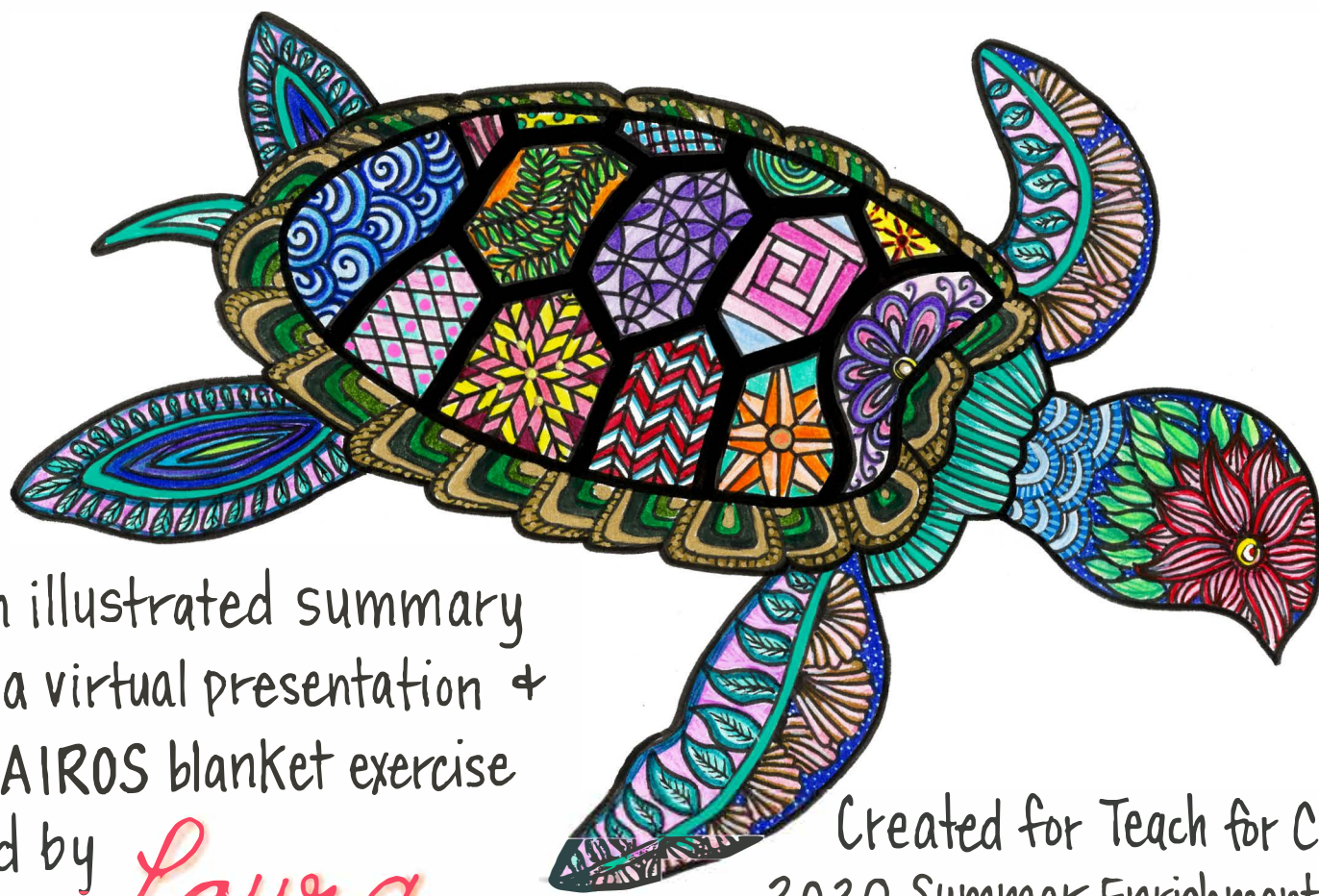


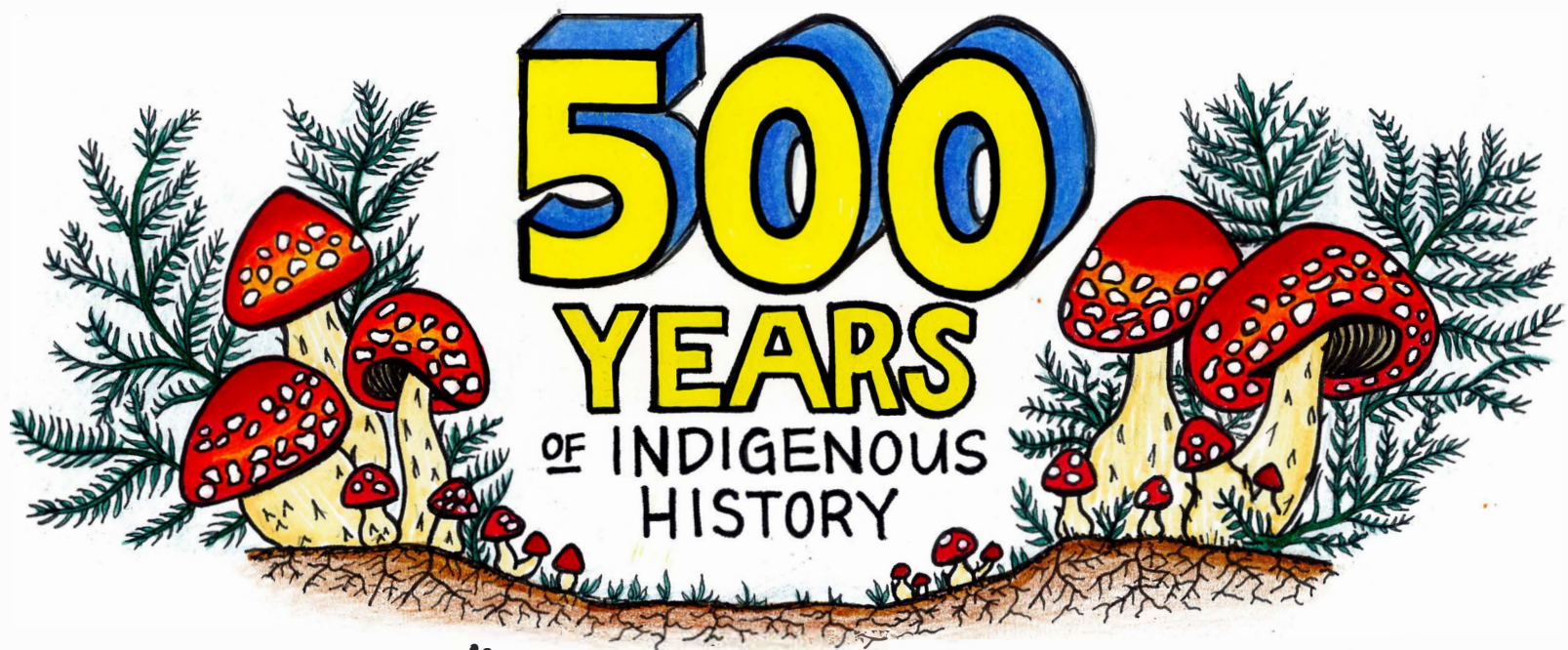
INDIGENOUS HISTORIES OF TURTLE ISLAND



An illustrated summary
of a virtual presentation &
KAIROS blanket exercise
led by

*Laura
Maracle*

Created for Teach for Canada's
2020 Summer Enrichment Program
by *Leah Horzempa*
Sister Circle Consulting



"Where common memory is lacking
where people do not share the same past,
there can be no real community.
Where community is to be formed,
common memory must be created."

— GEORGE ERASMUS, Dene Nation, Co-chair,
Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

FIRST THINGS FIRST...

Take a deep
breath, stretch+remember
to take care of yourself
with what you have in
your circle.

blanket



candle
to represent your
inner fire in
place of a
campfire

water



special
personal
item



photo
of a
loved
one



white
sage
to smudge
if you have it

BEFORE ~~THE~~ EUROPEANS...

Millions of First Nations People and Inuit have called this place home since

TIME IMMEMORIAL

Living in hundreds of Nations and communities with distinct languages, cultures, traditions, laws + governments, we fished, hunted, harvested + farmed with uniquely adapted technologies.

"Earth is
our Mother
because everything
she provides keeps us
alive" - Laura Maracle

"One of my favourite things about my culture is how we're taught that everything on earth is to be RESPECTED, including yourself... the Land, water, plants, air, animals..."

ALL are very important to our culture + need to be respected.

- Kateri, Mohawk youth from a community in Quebec.



As Peoples we are distinct and we have things in common. Our RELATIONSHIPS with the LAND define who we are and all of our needs are met by the

Land,
air + waters.

KNOWLEDGE

of how to live is embedded in our languages + passed down by the Elders + Knowledge Keepers through the generations by:

- experiential learning
- teachings
- songs +
- stories.



We **TRADE**

and share knowledge and gifts through networks of trails + water routes across thousands of Kilometers.



Our **KINSHIP TIES**

alliances + families are key to survival. Adoption and marriage between Nations are common + positive.



When there was conflict we ended disputes among Nations through consensus + treaty-making focused on

CREATING PEACE not

ending war.

Everyone has different + unique

ROLES +

RESPONSIBILITIES

+ in many cases gender fluidity is celebrated as a gift from Creator.

BY THE END
OF THE
15TH
CENTURY

European explorers "discovered" Turtle Island, leading to the colonization of Canada, as they competed for & negotiated amongst themselves to divide up control of our Peoples & Lands with the blessing of the Christian Church. This practice became known as...

THE DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY

Initially, Europeans relied on the Indigenous Peoples for survival & recognized our laws, governments, & ways of life.

Although many relations between European men & Indigenous women were violent, in some cases men married in & formed mutually beneficial alliances, leading to the Métis Nation, who developed unique language, culture, music, governance, & political identity.



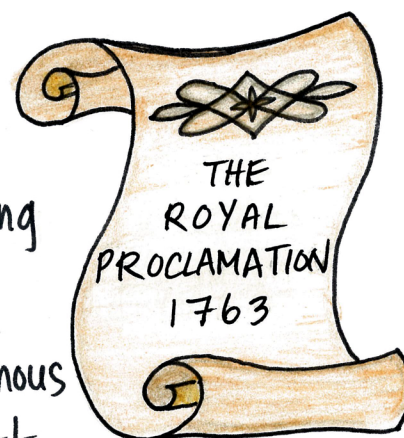
TREATIES

BY THE
END OF
THE WAR
OF
1812

- our military alliances were no longer heeded,
- the fur trade dried up,
- and the Europeans turned to farming & started looking for more Land...

In the Royal Proclamation, King George III of England stated that the Indigenous Nations own ALL the Land & settlers could only inhabit those Lands sold to him by TREATY. Treaties are sacred agreements & statements of PEACE, FRIENDSHIP, HONESTY, RESPECT, & SHARING. But

as more Europeans arrived, they encroached on more & more of our Lands & ways of life, using unsustainable practices that depleted our food & shelter.



Eventually, Europeans

OUTNUMBERED

us largely due to the

DISEASES

they brought:

- **SMALLPOX**
- **MEASLES** &
- **TUBERCULOSIS**



In many communities, blankets infested with deadly viruses were gifted or traded to us by settlers with support of military leaders like Lord Jeffrey Amherst. In some communities

9/10 people died, often quickly & without notice, sometimes resulting in the **LOSS** of **ENTIRE** knowledge systems.

Some historians estimate that more than **HALF** of all Indigenous People **DIED** from these foreign diseases.

In the
EAST

Violence against us was rationalized through the principle of...

The **BEOTHUK**, one of the First Peoples of what is now called Newfoundland, died from European encounters! including disease, starvation caused by settler over-hunting & being hunted & killed for bounties. In 1829, the last of the Beothuk died along with their language & culture.

TERRA NULLIUS

"Land belonging to no one"...

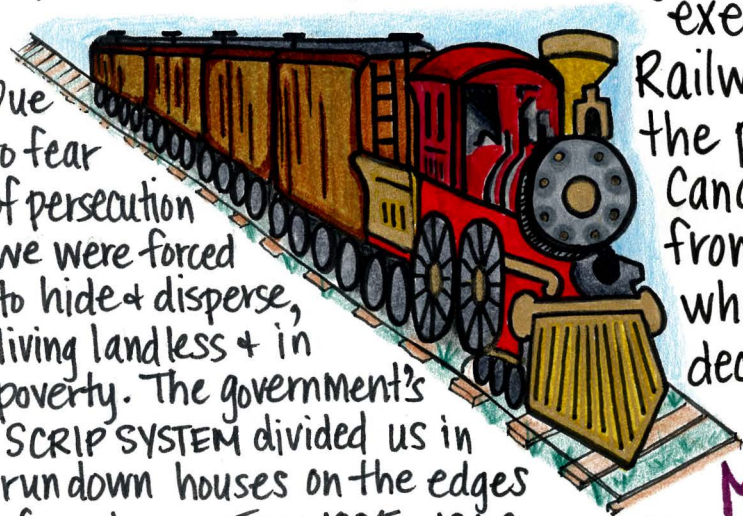
Which meant that Land belonging to non-Christians could be claimed, but they knew it belonged to us! Therefore the government made claims that we were "**UNCIVILIZED**" and unfit for sovereignty.

In the SOUTH

Our Nations were further divided when the border between the British Dominion of Canada & the United States was imposed, preventing us from moving across our Lands or exercising sovereignty.

The British North America Act, or Constitution Act of 1867, gave all lands & rights to Canada when Europeans become Canadians. We were now held at the mercy of the colonial federal government.

Due to fear of persecution we were forced to hide & disperse, living landless & in poverty. The government's SCRIP SYSTEM divided us in run down houses on the edges of roadways. From 1885-1960, many went underground to escape negative stereotypes & ongoing hardship.



In the WEST

Railway construction opened the prairies to the settlers, and Canada purchased our Land from the Hudson's Bay Company, which they had obtained by deception, devastating the sovereignty of the

CREE, BLACKFOOT & MÉTIS. The Métis fought in the RED RIVER & NORTHWEST RESISTANCES, & won some battles. But in 1885, we were defeated & our leaders were jailed or executed.

TRAITORS
WANTED
FOR BOUNTY

In the NORTH

INUIT & INNU communities (among others) were forcefully relocated to claim sovereignty or resources for the "national interest of Canada." High rates of death resulted from:

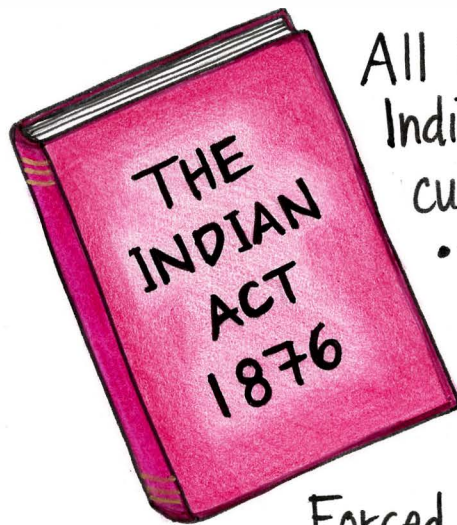
-TUBERCULOSIS-

By 1956, 1/7TH of Inuit were being treated for TB & 1/3 were affected. Many were segregated & sent south to underfunded & unsafe "Indian hospitals".

-STARVATION-

In the 1960's the RCMP cruelly murdered Inuit sled dogs on a mass scale, preventing traditional hunting.





All laws dealing with First Nations were compiled into the Indian Act. Despite the government's vast oppression, our cultures were still strong, so they used their laws to attack us:

- forcefully replacing our governance structures with European style elected Band Councils, often at gunpoint
- restricting hunting & fishing rights, &
- outlawing spiritual ceremonies, including the:

- **POTLATCH** &
- **SUNDANCE** &
- **SMUDGING**.

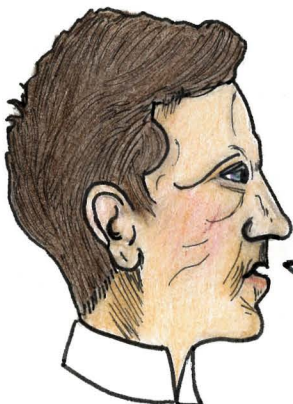
Forced into isolation & poverty on reserves, we became dependent on the colonial government & white Indian Agents determined our every move. The government dictated who was part of our communities by controlling "Indian status" & continues to deny us basic rights like

- health care
- good schools
- adequate housing &
- clean water.



The goal was...

In 1920...



"to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and that there is no
INDIAN PROBLEM"

Duncan Campbell Scott,
Superintendent of Indian Affairs

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The policy of "ENFRANCHISEMENT" was in place from 1876 - 1961 & meant we would be stripped of our Indian status & forced to leave our communities if we went to university or became doctors, lawyers, soldiers, teachers or clergymen. Including lawyers was an easy way to quash land rights cases before reaching the courts.

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

were created to further the government's goal of **ASSIMILATION**.

OVER
7 GENERATIONS
150,000
CHILDREN WERE
TAKEN

From the
mid-1800's
to 1996...



The Mohawk Institute or "mush hole" on the Six Nations Territory [Brantford, Ontario]

- Indian agents, the clergy & the RCMP helped the government to forcibly remove First Nations, Inuit, & Métis children from our communities & put them in boarding schools run by Roman Catholic, Anglican, & Presbyterian churches, often very far away.

At these schools:

- children's names were replaced with numbers or Christian names
- they were not allowed to speak their languages
- they didn't get enough food
- some endured dangerous medical experiments
- most suffered many types of abuse
- many died & were buried in unmarked graves or cemeteries & others died when they ran away
- many lost connections with their cultures, families, & communities & ended up on the streets or incarcerated

1950's
to 1980's

- Thousands of First Nation, Inuit & Métis children were taken & fostered or adopted by non-Indigenous people, again for the purpose of **ASSIMILATION**.

This period became known as the

STOLEN GENERATIONS

or SIXTIES SCOOP...

although the practice did not end in the Sixties & is ongoing today.

INDIGENOUS WOMEN

have also been targeted by the Indian Act.

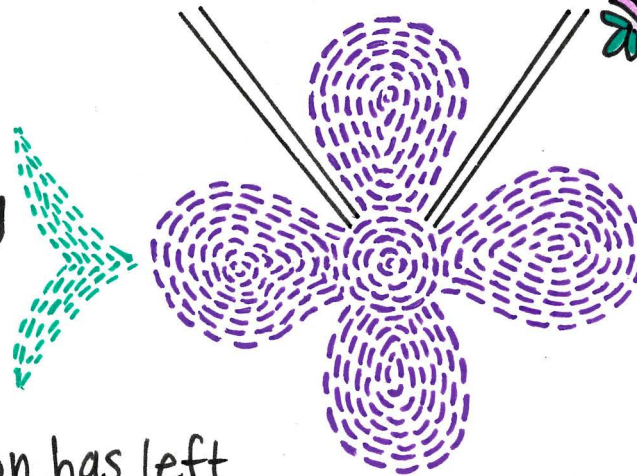
Until 1985, if a First Nations woman married someone without status, they lost their status, along with their children. Resulting from persistent Indigenous activism, the final elements of gender discrimination were removed in 2019.



Almost 1200 cases of missing & murdered Indigenous women & girls have been documented since the 1970's, although community groups estimate the real number to be

4000

For many of us, women are the carriers of culture, & targeting them meant targeting the HEARTS of our Nations, making it easier to take our Lands.



← National Inquiry into Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls 2019.

The violence of colonization has left a lot of pain & shame in our communities, and the relationship between Indigenous & non-Indigenous Peoples is damaged, & in many places broken. Over the years, political leaders have not fulfilled promises to repair the relationship. We don't need more broken promises, we need to close the equity gap, shift power & resources & build respect, honesty, & trust & find ways to move forward, together.

