


## COLONIAL HISTORY IMPACT

Gordon Peters  
Deputy Grand Chief

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*“From the earliest times we have always made it clear that we know it was the intent of Creation that all peoples were created in their ancestral places for the specific purposes of being the caretakers and custodians of those places. Through that deliberate placement of our nations and peoples on this part of Turtle Island we were conferred a never ending responsibility that in English we could only equate to ‘sovereignty’”*

*- Author Unknown*

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## Nations and Families

- As Indigenous Peoples we have systems of governance (leadership selection, decision making, dispute resolution)
- Our Nations are comprised of our clan families
- We have a belief system that flows through our creation stories, our land, and our ceremonies
- We are united in our sacred relationship to the land, water, air, fire and resources

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## Treaty Relationships

- Relationships were established and maintained through agreements made between our Indigenous Nations prior to contact



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## Settler Relationships

- There are many treaties that only deal with peace, friendship and military alliance
- Treaties with the settlers are a double-edged sword
- Treaties are a recognition of our Nationhood – but also theirs
- Settlers used treaties to gain access and acquire our lands, resources, and waters

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## Treaty of Niagara

- In 2014 we celebrated the 250th Anniversary of the Treaty of Niagara
- This Treaty reaffirmed the political foundation for the Covenant Chain Relations between Great Britain and the Indigenous Nations of the Great Lakes and Northeastern Woodlands.
- It guaranteed the Indigenous Nations our lands, consent, hunting, fishing and other inherent rights.

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## Breakdown

- 1791 Constitutional Act GB created Upper and Lower Canada
- Post war of 1812 no longer required as a military ally
- Treaty of Ghent – get back what you had before the war
- Mid 1830 no more presents –

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## British North American Act 1867

- Established division of powers between a central government and the provinces
- Established house of commons , senate, justice and taxation system

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## BNAA 1867

- Federal view that Treaties surrendered all lands and resources
- Subsequently Federal government sold our treaty and traditional lands and resources to the province of Ontario for 62 million dollars

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## Indian Act 1876

Four basic elements of change

1. Governance - chief and Council
2. Established Reserves
3. Created status Indian /registry
4. Established enfranchisement – mandatory and voluntary

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## Residential schools

- Tried to make Indians to be farmers – to remove them from their treaty and traditional lands
- Deemed assimilation too slow
- Decided to take children to transform them to western ideology, religions and languages

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## Residential Schools

- Simply put by one woman at conference
- They taught me to hate my language
- They taught me to hate our ceremonies ( devil worship)
- Basically they taught me to hate myself!

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## 60's Scoop

- Children taken by CAS from the 50's - 70's
- Deemed Indians could not meet standards of care ie indoor plumbing , separate bedrooms sq footage of home etc
- Indian agent simply signed document
- Children farmed out all over the world

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## Voting

- Post world war to end all wars debate about return freedom to Indigenous peoples
- 1951 Canada responded by amending the Indian Act
- Voting was granted to Indians first in Ontario then by the federal Government 1960

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## Hawthorne Study

- Study conducted in early 60's to determine who Indians really were as they were not voting not participating generally in society
- The phrase "citizen plus" was coined and is still in use today

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## Citizen plus

- defined as being a citizen of Canada but with special rights
- Example fishing – when others cannot fish by described season and an Indian can
- Consequence over the years there is the call for equality for all citizens

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## Sec 35 constitution 1982

- Originally sec 34 was in constitution but removed Ontario and Alberta governments
- Peace train – nationally pressure many sectors
- Sec 35 is added to Constitution but with the word “existing”
- Today sec 35 defined by SCC in Vander Peet

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## VanderPeet

- Narrowly Defines and restricts sec 35
- Practice or tradition must be integral to distinctive to group – exist before contact
- If evolved into modern form must continued to exist 1982 when constitution act was passed and practiced today

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## Tools of Colonization

- Canada has and continues to use all available schemes to assimilate and extinguish our National identity
- The doctrine of discovery – the great lie is basis of court decisions
- Legislation and policy
- Narratives told through the media

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## Federal Framework

- Adopted 10 Principles to replace UNDRIP as the national standard
- No self-determination , no inherent rights, no consent -
- Propaganda message to Canadian public
- Canada's goal – certainty !

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## Certainty

- Canada wants absolute certainty that they have access to lands and resources unfettered
- Canada can interfere in our nations by 3 areas
  1. Safety
  2. Conservation
  3. when Canada is acting in best for national interests (trans mountain Pipeline)

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## Fly in Ointment

- If Canada truly believed we gave up lands and resources there would be no need to talk to us
- There would be no need for framework to diminish Inherent rights
- The Courts – not our allies but have been sending message to Canada – change is needed!

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## Positive changes

- We have survived the onslaught
- Services provided with cultural components in our workplaces and in general public
- Education includes portion of history from our perspectives
- Languages are getting stronger

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## Resiliency

- We are our ancestors and our ancestors are us
- We still have pre-existing jurisdiction
- We still have pre-existing title to our lands
- We continue to nurture our peoples, to provides services and a better quality of life
- Our next goal is to restructure our governments and the exercise of our jurisdiction

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