

Treaty Backgrounder



If relations between Treaty First Nations and other residents of Saskatchewan are to be harmonious, all people in Saskatchewan will need to be made aware of the history of relations between the Treaty First Nations and other people of Saskatchewan. In order to gain respect for each other, Treaty First Nations and Saskatchewan people need to be more informed about the traditions, customs, values, institutions, and laws of each other. This is consistent with a tradition of the Saskatchewan people - one of valuing and being enriched by their cultural diversity.

gained rights through treaty - rights to lands and rich resources in our province. Building on these foundational rights, Saskatchewan people built a culture and way of life on these lands. Treaties were to be mutual, assisting both parties. The wealth generated from these lands and the freedoms associated with living in the province benefitted Saskatchewan people and their descendants.



Elders, veterans, Chiefs, government officials and other dignitaries gathered at Fort Carlton Historic Park to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the signing of Treaty 6 on August 22, 2001.

The people of Saskatchewan can benefit from learning more about the historical events associated with the making of treaties as they reveal the mutual benefits and responsibilities of the parties. There is ample evidence that many people are misinformed about the history of the Canada's relationship with Treaty First Nations. Until recently, the perspective of many Canadians has been to view treaties as frozen in time, part of Canada's ancient history. Some Canadians still hold this view of treaties as "real estate transactions." Non-Aboriginal Canadians forgot that they, too,

People need to become better informed about the role of the treaties, and their contribution to the creation of Canada and to the well-being of today's generation of Saskatchewan citizens. In order to continue to build a more knowledgeable and respectful community, the people of Saskatchewan and Treaty First Nations must understand their common history, take actions to renew the treaty relationship based on fair dealing, trust and respect, and understand the nature of their rights and responsibilities as descendants who continue to benefit from the Treaties in Saskatchewan.

Treaties in Saskatchewan	2
Treaty Boundaries in Saskatchewan	4
Statistical Information	5
Treaty Boundaries in Canada	6
Reading Treaty	7

Office of the Treaty Commissioner
1150 - 606 Spadina Crescent East,
Saskatoon, SK, S7K 3H1
Tel.: (306)244-2100, Fax: (306)244-4600
www.otc.ca, otcmail@otc.ca

OVERVIEW OF TREATIES IN SASKATCHEWAN

During the 1800s, the Canadian government, representing the British Crown, and the Cree, Saulteaux, Assiniboine and Dene people, negotiated five Treaties in the territory that is now the province of Saskatchewan. These include Treaties Four, Five, Six, Eight and Ten. While the province also includes a portion of the Treaty Two boundaries in the southeast, there are no Treaty Two First Nations in Saskatchewan.

Treaty Four

For the first four and a half days of negotiations for Treaty Four, the Saulteaux leaders refused to enter into substantive negotiations because they were upset that land, which they considered as their territory, was 'sold' to the Dominion of Canada by the Hudson's Bay Company without their consent. Once negotiations were underway, Treaty Four Elders state that their forefathers agreed to share the land 'to the depth of a plow.' In exchange, the Queen would see that their needs were met and would protect them from the encroachment of settlement. And thus, the Crown was provided the land to enable settlement in this part of the west.

For Treaty Four, also called the Qu'Appelle Treaty, livelihood was an important theme - First Nations were interested in acquiring new tools that would provide a bridge to future prosperity. Provisions for assistance with education, protection for traditional economic activity, provisions for assistance with agriculture, and annuities were included in the Treaty agreement. The Crown also undertook to set aside lands for First Nations in addition to the provisions of flags, suits and medals.

Treaty Five

Negotiations for Treaty Five were held at Berens River, Norway House and Grand Rapids. For the Crown, the coming of the steam boat to the Lake Winnipeg waterway would require a treaty to deal with access of settlers and traders to the water systems. It also wanted access to lands to enable agriculture in the territory. First Nations knew the steamboats would disrupt their way of life, as well as threaten the employment of nearly 200 of their people in the famous York boat factories.

First Nations of Treaty Five were concerned with securing a new means of livelihood for their people. Agriculture and education were viewed as means in acquiring new tools to survive in a changing environment. Annuities, medals, and suits of clothing were presented. Other provisions included tools and implements for agriculture, assistance with education, ammunition, twine, and nets for fishing and the prohibition of alcohol. As well, protection for traditional economies was included in Treaty Five, as well as land to be set aside. However, for reasons unknown, less land was received (160 acres per family of 5, compared to 640 acres per family of 5 in Treaty 4) .

Treaty Six

Similar to the negotiations of Treaty Four and Five, the Crown representatives and First Nations leaders (including the Cree, Saulteaux, and Assiniboine) participated in the treaty making process, using their own distinct customs and protocols for Treaty making. The Crown presented the written articles of Treaty and the Chiefs presented the pipe - symbolizing the solemnity of the Treaty agreement.



Photograph of Big Bear at Fort Pitt in 1884. From left to right: Fire Sky Thunder, Sky Bird, Matoose, Napasis, Big Bear, Angus McKay, Dufrein, L'Goulet, Stanley Simpson, Alex McDonald, Rowley, Corporal Sleigh, Edmund, Henry Defrain. Credit: National Archives of Canada.

By participating in the pipe ceremony, the Commissioners were viewed as accepting the friendship of the Cree Nation. In return, many Chiefs touched the pen to the written articles of Treaty to signify their acceptance of the Treaty agreement.

At this time, the buffalo were in serious decline and the Cree were recovering from a smallpox epidemic a few years earlier. First Nations stressed the need for livelihood, and accepted the Crown's offers for education and agriculture. However, they also negotiated for relief in times of 'pestilence and famine', and a medicine chest, the best medical care available, at the house of each Indian agent. The Cree and Saulteaux leaders were looking for a partnership with Canada to obtain the Queen's 'benevolence and protection.'

Treaty Eight

Overall, in the few years prior to the making of Treaty Eight, First Nations were experiencing extreme conditions. Once gold was discovered in the Klondike in 1897, the Crown became interested in entering into a Treaty with the Cree and Dene in this area.

Treaty Eight was the first Treaty to be negotiated after the 1885 Resistance. In 1899, Commissioner J.A.J. McKenna initially questioned the appropriateness of setting aside reserves in the north, recognizing that the First Nations did not form large tribal organizations, but rather lived dispersed on the land. First Nations had considerable apprehension that their way of life would be threatened and their livelihood curtailed - they wanted to fish, hunt, trap and gather as they always had. Being assured they would retain their way of life was the key to persuading the First Nations to accept Treaty Eight. The Treaty Commissioner assured the Cree and Dene that the Treaty would not interfere with their mode of life, that it did not open the way to the imposition of any tax, and that there was no fear of enforced military service. Other provisions included annuities, suits, medals and flags, education, relief in times of famine, and the choice to select reserve land collectively.

Treaty Ten

In 1906, Commissioner J.A.J. McKenna presented the text of Treaty Eight as a draft text of Treaty Ten to the First Nations in Ile a la Crosse, Portage la Loche, and Buffalo Narrows. During Treaty Ten negotiations, Treaty Commissioner McKenna told the First Nations that the Crown's objective was to do for them what had been done for other Treaty Nations when trade and settlement began to interfere with First Nation's way of life.

First Nations held concerns about their way of life and livelihood similar to those expressed during the negotiations of Treaty Eight. They expressed concern about the restrictive and confining nature of the reserve system, and did not want reserve creation to impede their traditional way of life. McKenna assured First Nations that 'the same means of earning a livelihood would continue after the treaty was made as existed before it,' and that the Crown would assist them in times of real distress, and would help support the elderly and indigent. Verbal assurances were given by Commissioner McKenna that education and medical assistance would be provided to the First Nations. Also promised were suits, medals, flags, annuities, lands and protection for hunting and fishing practices. Protecting a way of life and securing livelihood was the primary concern of First Nations of both Treaty Eight and Ten.

Documented Treaty Adhesions for Saskatchewan First Nations

Treaty Four adhesions: September 8 and 9, 1875, Qu'Appelle Lakes; September 9, 1875, Swan Lake; September 24, 1875, Swan Lake; August 24, 1876, Fort Pelly; September 25, 1877, Fort Walsh.

Treaty Five adhesion: September 7, 1876, The Pas.

Treaty Six adhesions: August 29, 1878, Battleford; September 3, 1878, Carlton; July 2, 1879, Fort Walsh; December 8, 1882, Fort Walsh; February 11, 1889, Montreal Lake; June 25, 1913, Waterhen Lake; November 21, 1950, Witchehan Lake; August 18, 1954, Cochin; May 15, 1956, Cochin.

Treaty Eight adhesion: July 25 and 27, 1899, Fond du Lac.

Treaty Ten adhesion: August 19 and 22, 1907, Lac du Brochet.



"Cree children circa 1900." Credit: Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Population

Today, the Treaty First Nations population is growing more rapidly than the general population in Saskatchewan. From 1991 to 1996, the population grew by 22% whereas the provincial population remained considerably stable. The population of First Nations in Saskatchewan can be characterized as relatively young. More than 54% of the First Nations population in the province are under the age of 20 years, in comparison to the 29% of the general population. A larger, more youthful, First Nations population in Saskatchewan will impact the provincial economy and growth.

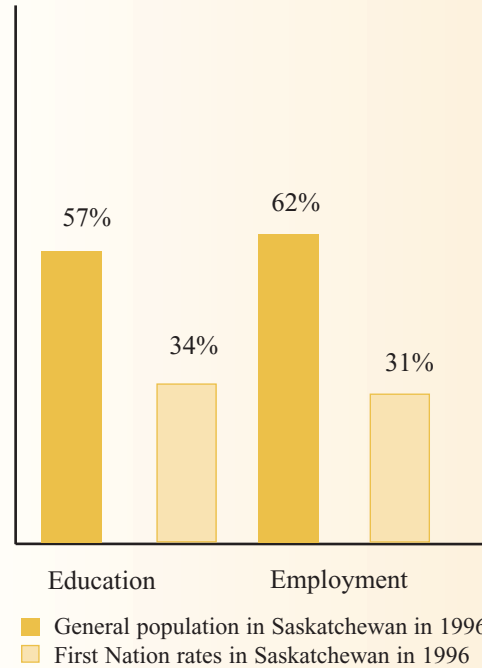
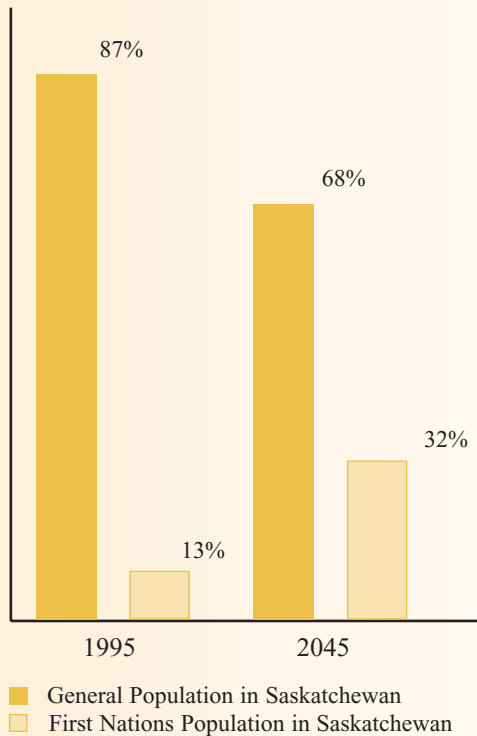
In 1996, approximately 48% of First Nation people lived off reserve in Saskatchewan.

Projected Aboriginal Population

The projected population of Aboriginal peoples in Saskatchewan will grow from 13% of the total provincial population in 1995 to 32% in 2045. The non-Aboriginal population in Saskatchewan was 87% in 1995 and will decrease to 68% in 2045.

Projected First Nations Labour Force

The proportion of First Nation peoples that were labor force age in 1991 was 59.7%. The estimated projected First Nation population that is labor force age in 2041 is approximately 71%.



Education

The formal education levels for the on-reserve First Nation population are improving but the gap between First Nation and non-First Nation levels is still wide. The proportion of on-reserve adult population with at least grade 12 increased from 29% to 34% between 1992 and 1996. The proportion of the general population with at least grade 12 was 57% in 1996.

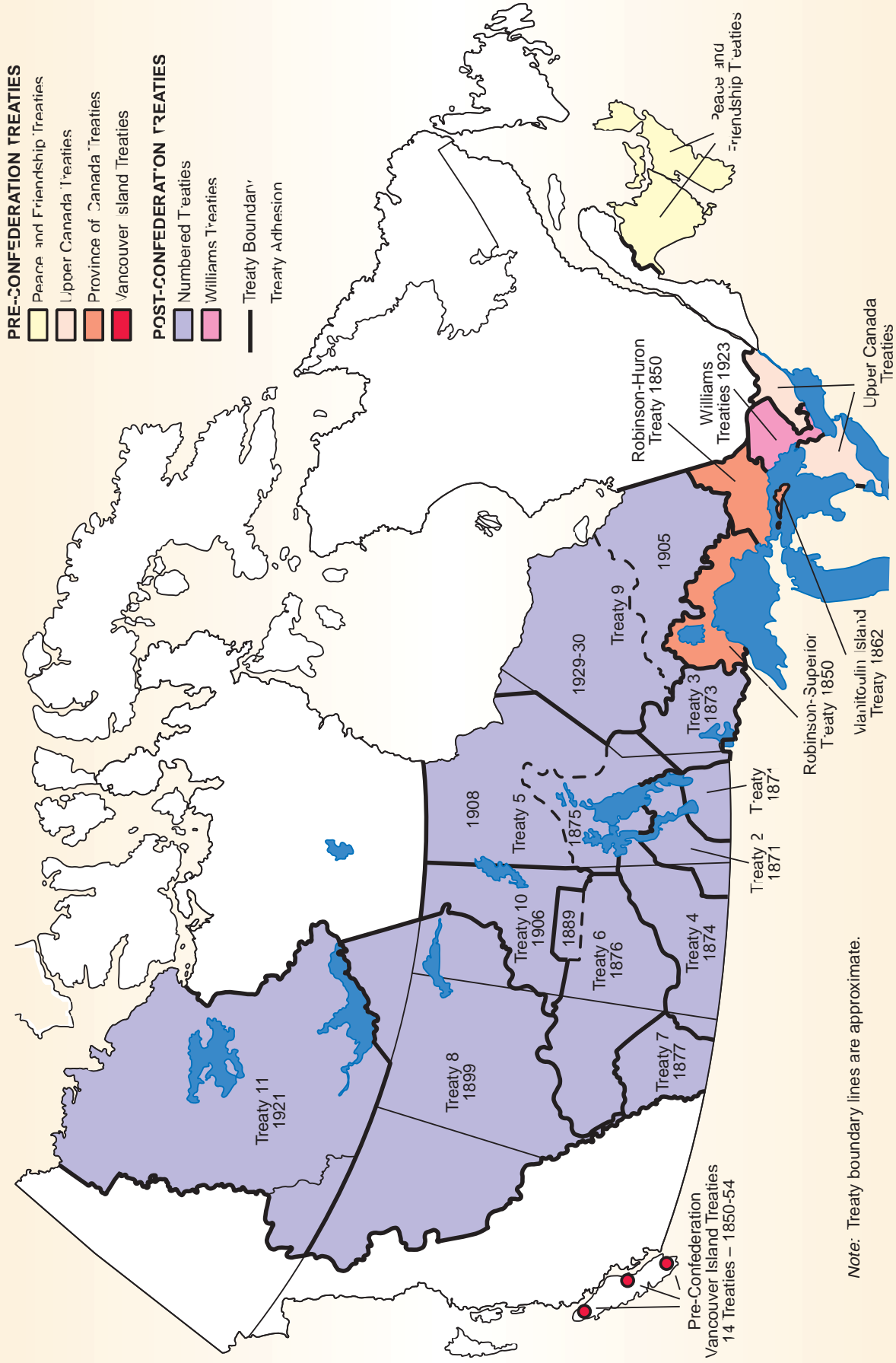
Employment

The employment rate on-reserve is still at one-half of the general rate - only 31% of the population 15 and older on-reserve were employed in 1996 compared with 62% in the province. In 1995, the average income for on-reserve households was less than one-half the provincial average.



Clearwater River Dene Nation Students, June 1998

Location of Historical Treaty Boundaries in Canada



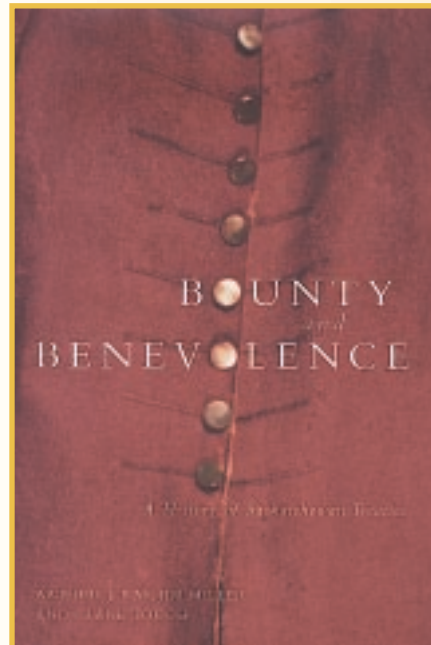
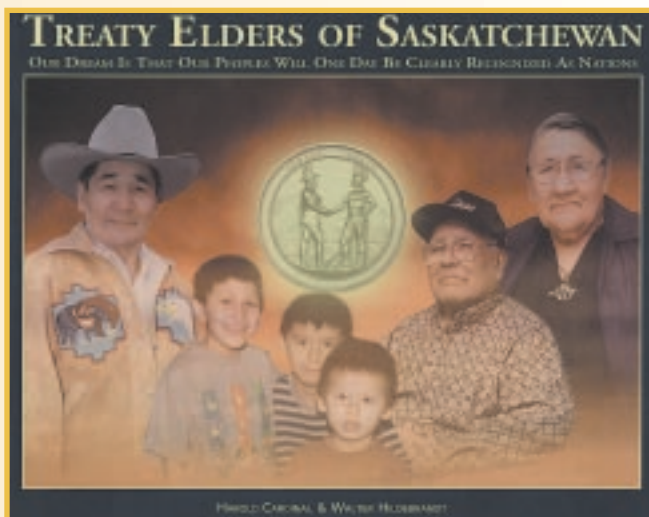
Note: Treaty boundary lines are approximate.

This map is based on information taken from the Geo Access Division maps. ©1998. Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada with permission of Natural Resources Canada.

READING TREATY

In 1998, the Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) commissioned independent research about the treaties in Saskatchewan that led to the development of two books.

Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan: Our Dream is That Our Peoples Will One Day Be Clearly Recognized as Nations, was written by Harold Cardinal and Walter Hildebrandt. This book examines the treaty relationship in Saskatchewan from past, present and future perspectives. Over 160 Elders contributed their understandings of the treaty relationship during the research process. Some of the Elders' comments appear in print for the first time in this book. *Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan* is published by the University of Calgary Press.



Bounty and Benevolence: A History of Saskatchewan Treaties, was written by Arthur J. Ray, Jim Miller and Frank Tough, published by McGill-Queen's University Press. These three scholars have assembled a book that details the foundation of the treaty relationship in Saskatchewan based upon archival, documentary, and historical records.

The pressures and rationale that led to the treaties that exist within the present day boundaries of Saskatchewan (Treaties 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10) are carefully examined. *Bounty and Benevolence* is published by the McGill-Queens University Press.

PUBLIC EDUCATION STUDY MARCH 1999*

Quick Facts Public Education Study March 1999*

- 1,005 non-First Nations Saskatchewan adults contacted for study (margin of error plus or minus 3.2%)
- 78% aren't knowledgeable about treaties;
- 68% believe an improved understanding of treaties will build better relations between First Nations and non-First Nations communities;
- 56% say it is important to settle issues, 29% say it is not important and 13% don't know or don't have an opinion;
- 41% oppose treaties and 38% support treaties. Given study's margin of error that's a dead heat between those who support and oppose.

*conducted by the Angus Reid Group