

Indigenous Services in Alberta's Public Libraries May 2018

Colette Poitras

In Edmonton - We would like to acknowledge that the traditional territories of the people of Treaty 6 and the home of the Metis Nation Region 4.

We are grateful to the original caretakers of the land and seek to create a new relationship that is respectful and truthful.

Outline

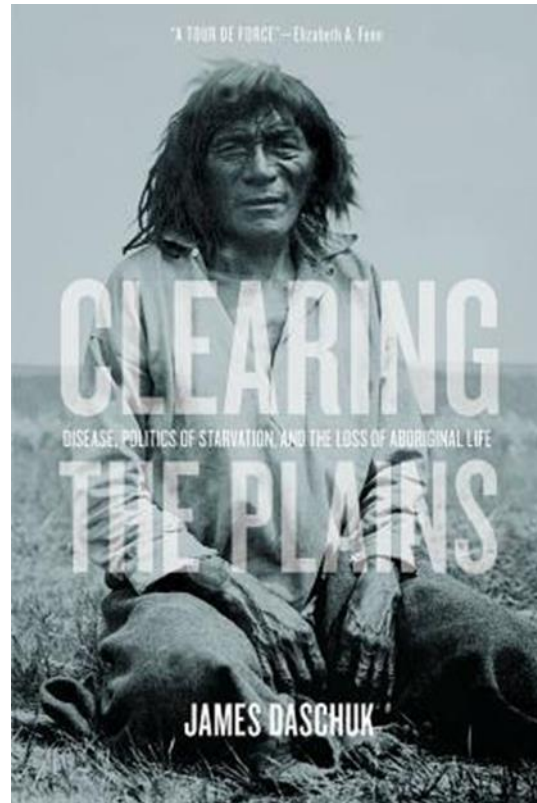
- **First, a little history**
- **UNDRIP and the response from the Government of Alberta**
- **Reconciliation – what do we do, how can we help?**
- **PLSB Initiatives**
- **Questions**

History – why do we need to know?

- **There can be no reconciliation without first knowing the truth.**

First, a little history

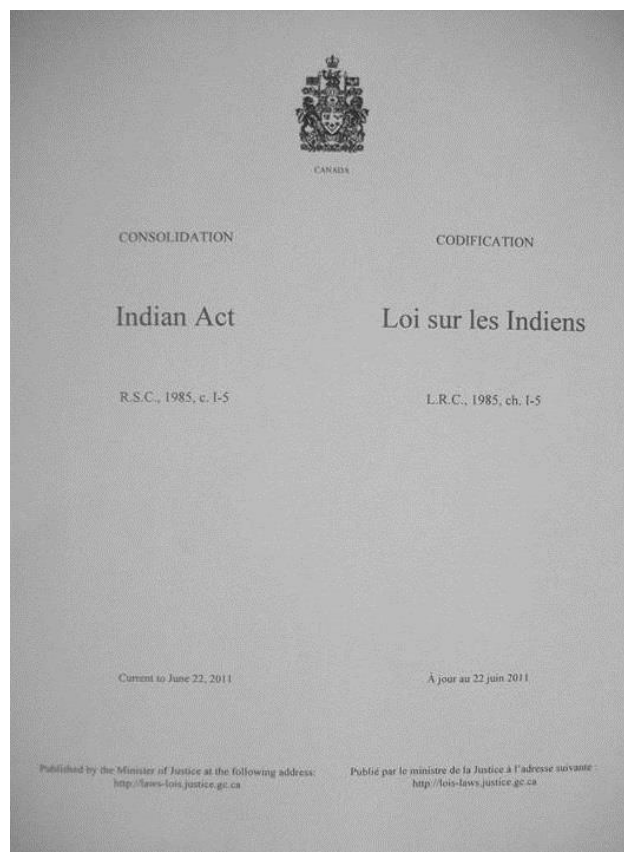
- **Treaties**



Daschuk, J. (2013). *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*. Saskatchewan, Canada: University of Regina Press. 334 pp (Paperback). ISBN-10: 0889773408

First, a little history

- **Indian Act Legislation – 1876**



First, a little history

- Residential Schools

The Legacy of Canada's Residential Schools

Odds of **dying** for **children** in **Indian residential schools**:

Odds of **dying** for **Canadians** serving in **WWII**:

1 in 25 **1 in 26**

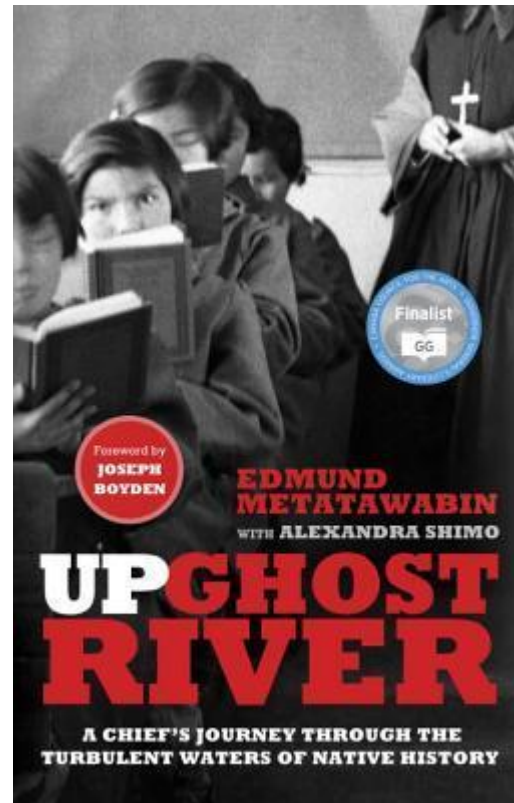
CBCnews

Image courtesy: Library and Archives Canada

The infographic features a black and white photograph of a classroom with children sitting at desks and a nun standing at the front. The text is overlaid on the image, with a vertical line separating the two statistics.

First, a little history

- **Residential Schools**



Metatawabin, E., & Shimo-Barry, A. (2014). *Up Ghost River: A chief's journey through the turbulent waters of Native history*. Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Canada.

First, a little history

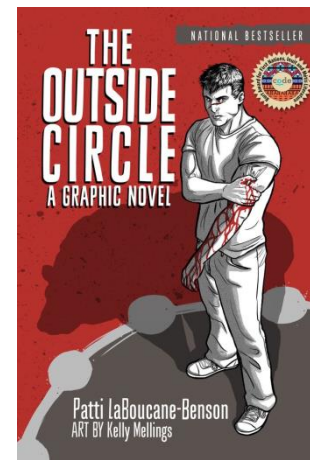
- “Scoops”



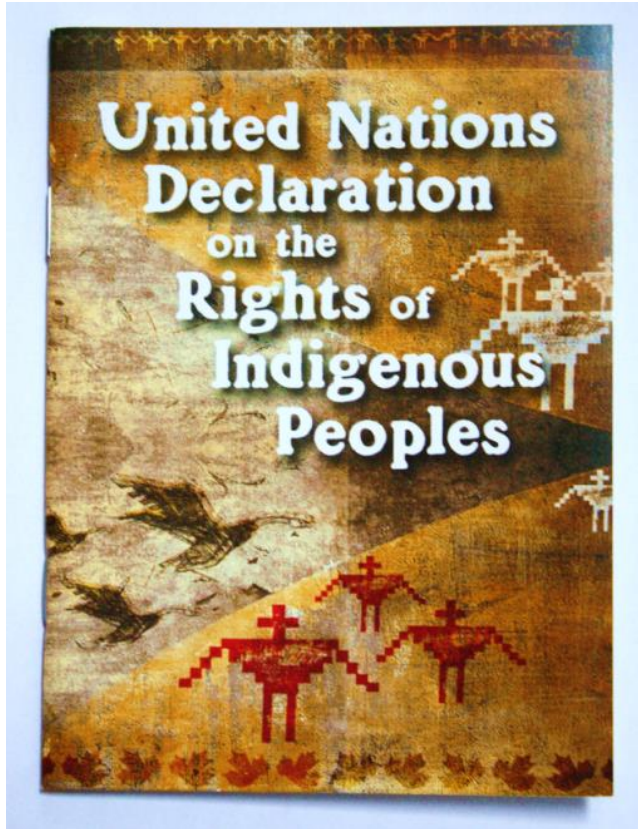
Hubbard, T. (2016). Birth of a Family. NFB. Retrieved from:
https://www.nfb.ca/film/birth_of_a_family/

First, a little history

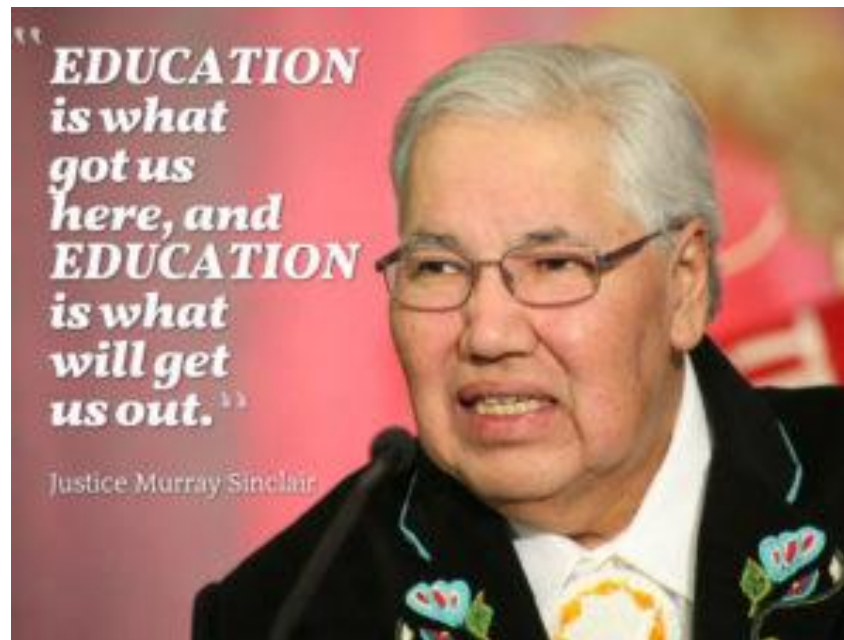
- **Colonialism: the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically. – Oxford Dictionary.**



UNDRIP and the response from the Government of Alberta



Reconciliation – what do we do, how can we help?



<https://www.kairosCanada.org/murray-sinclair-education-key-reconciliation>

Reconciliation – what do we do, how can we help?

BECOMING AN ALLY WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

10 Things you can do to work towards being an Ally with Indigenous People

- Recognize your own privileges
- Listen more than you speak
- Learn about treaties
<http://www.mediacoop.ca/blog/dru/15600>
- Educate yourself constantly (especially about historical and ongoing colonization and cultural genocide)
- Expand opportunities for Indigenous people to speak for themselves
- Defer to Indigenous leadership, decision-making and priorities
- Question and resist stereotypes
- When criticized, listen, apologize, and act differently going forward
- Read and promote the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
<http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=3>
- Celebrate National Aboriginal Day - June 21st
- Celebrate Treaty Day - October 1st

breakthesilenceNS.ca

Reconciliation – what do we do, how can we help?

- **Recognize and celebrate resilience!**
- **Ceremony**
- **Culture**
- **Language**
- **Art**



Niitsitsikii, late 19th century.

<https://www.historymuseum.ca/cmhc/exhibitions/aborig/mocasin/mocpg1e.shtml>

Reconciliation – what do we do, how can we help?

#1 Always consult with Indigenous community

- To engage with persons and community, source out local resources when possible – they are out there!
- Universities and community colleges often have an Indigenous liaison.
- Urban communities often have Native Friendship Centres.
- If the library is near a First Nations reserve, staff can contact the local Chief, band council and/or Chief Administrative Officer CAO.
- Information and help can be found at provincial Metis organizations, provincial Inuit associations and the Assembly of First Nations
- Any of these organizations may also provide contacts for Elders - remember that there may be cultural protocols and if you are unsure - ask! Each Nation has its own traditions.
- Engaging with Indigenous communities document available at : http://cfla-fcab.ca/en/indigenous/indigenous_canada_mooc/ (see handouts)

Reconciliation – what do we do, how can we help?

- Create safe/decolonized spaces with collections, signage, artwork and language materials
- Create inclusive programs including ceremony (when appropriate, with guidance by an elder), culture programs, language programs and art programs



Signage at outreach service, Whitefish Lake First Nations

What libraries have been doing

- Educational opportunities for Canadians to learn the history. One example: University of Alberta MOOC:



INDIGENOUS
CANADA

- Morinville Community Library has integrated the MOOC with a very successful 12 week sharing circle program

What libraries have been doing



- Northern Lights Library System is providing popular library services to Saddle Lake First Nations and Whitefish First Nations once a week.
- NLLS has a webpage devoted to Indigenous services: <http://www.nlls.ab.ca/Indigenous>
- Lac La Biche provides outreach service to Heart Lake First Nations once a week

What libraries have been doing



Cold Lake Public Library

Pop Up Library Service

Tuesdays

11:30 am – 1:30 pm

CLFN Dene

Wellness Centre

Wednesdays

11:30 am – 1:30 pm

CLFN English Bay

Community Centre

Thursdays

11:30 am – 1:30 pm

Cold Lake Native

Friendship Centre

Thursdays

3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Elizabeth Métis Settlement

Youth Centre



Check out library books for all ages!

Sign up for a free membership, pick up a newsletter, return your books, find out what's happening at the library and more!

Call 780-594-5101 for more information



What libraries have been doing



- In addition to outreach to Enoch Cree Nation, Edmonton Public Library has a full time Indigenous Relations Advisor.
- EPL has an Indigenous section on the website with curated book lists and resources:
<https://www.epl.ca/browse/indigenous/>
- EPL also hosts *Voices of Amiskwaciy*. It is a digital public space to share Indigenous Stories



What libraries have been doing



- **The Exploring Reconciliation Series: live events, giving Edmontonians opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of reconciliation and how it impacts all Canadians**

EXPLORING
RECONCILIATION



What libraries have been doing



- **Calgary Public Library has a full time Indigenous Service Design Lead as well as full time Indigenous Program Facilitators.**
- **There is an Indigenous page with library resources, initiatives, programs and events on the CPL website: https://calgarylibrary.ca/browse_program/indigenous/**
- **The library hosts Creation Lodge (a space to celebrate Indigenous live events), Storytimes, Indigenous drumming circles, beading workshops, a re-integration program and more!**



What libraries have been doing



Wood Buffalo Regional Library provides regular outreach library services and programs to 6 Indigenous Communities (Conklin, Janvier, Anzac, Fort McMurray First Nation #468, Fort McKay and Fort Chip), in addition to collections and programs in the Bouchier Aboriginal Cultural Corner

What libraries have been doing



- Peace Library System supports the Paddle Prairie Public Library, as well as funding and support for Indigenous focused activities at member libraries;
- Peace offers an Indigenous webpage with informational resources:
<http://www.peacelibrarysystem.ab.ca/services-indigenous-communities>

What libraries have been doing



MARIGOLD
LIBRARY SYSTEM

- **Marigold Library System has a part time First Nations Liaison who provides library service, creates positive relationships, takes out travelling Indigenous book collections as well as a mobile computer lab for on-reserve use. They create Indigenous collection development newsletters for distribution to their libraries.**

What libraries have been doing



- **Yellowhead Library System provides some library service at the Alexis and Paul First Nations and supports an Indigenous Outreach position at the Wetaskiwin Public Library.**



- **St. Albert Public Library has a staff member devoted part time to Indigenous Services**

What libraries have been doing



- **Parkland Regional Library has a temporary full time Indigenous Services Liaison who is providing regular outreach service to Sunchild First Nations and Maskwacis.**

What libraries have been doing



Chinook Arch
Regional Library
System

- **Chinook Arch Regional Library provides vouchers for free library cards; has a travelling collection of Indigenous materials; designated a First Nations staff liaison; and supports the excellent work at Kainai Public Library (please see handouts)**



Kainai Public Library

Unit #1, Shot Both Sides Building, Hwy #2
Standoff T0L 1Y0

<http://www.kainailibrary.ca/>

PLSB Initiatives

- Newly updated *Standards and Best Practices for Alberta Public Libraries, Working with Indigenous People and Communities*



PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES – BEST PRACTICES

April 2018

- **Policy for services to Indigenous persons will be available in 2018/2019**

PLSB Initiatives

- New online reporting tool for grant recipients
- New cataloguing standard being developed with University of Alberta

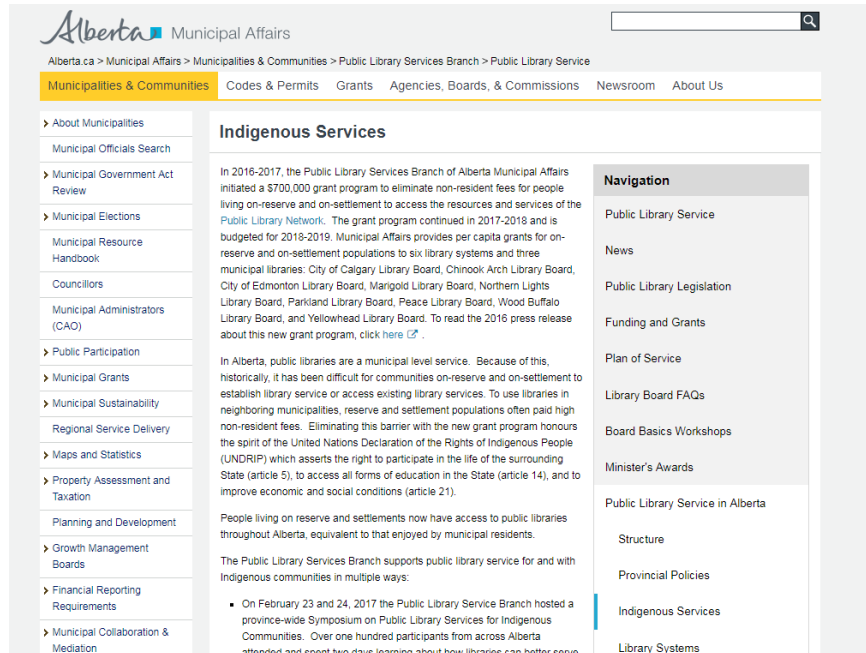


- A proof of concept is being developed for a provincial digital platform for Indigenous stories



PLSB Initiatives

- **Indigenous Library Services working group email list:**
<http://lists.talonline.ca/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/ilswg>
- **Indigenous Services page is on the PLSB website**
<http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/public-library-service-indigenous-services>



The screenshot shows the Alberta Municipal Affairs website. The page title is "Indigenous Services". The breadcrumb trail is: Alberta.ca > Municipal Affairs > Municipalities & Communities > Public Library Services Branch > Public Library Service. The navigation menu includes: Municipalities & Communities (selected), Codes & Permits, Grants, Agencies, Boards, & Commissions, Newsroom, and About Us. The left sidebar contains a list of links: About Municipalities, Municipal Officials Search, Municipal Government Act Review, Municipal Elections, Municipal Resource Handbook, Councillors, Municipal Administrators (CAO), Public Participation, Municipal Grants, Municipal Sustainability, Regional Service Delivery, Maps and Statistics, Property Assessment and Taxation, Planning and Development, Growth Management Boards, Financial Reporting Requirements, and Municipal Collaboration & Mediation. The main content area has the heading "Indigenous Services" and contains the following text: "In 2016-2017, the Public Library Services Branch of Alberta Municipal Affairs initiated a \$700,000 grant program to eliminate non-resident fees for people living on-reserve and on-settlement to access the resources and services of the Public Library Network. The grant program continued in 2017-2018 and is budgeted for 2018-2019. Municipal Affairs provides per capita grants for on-reserve and on-settlement populations to six library systems and three municipal libraries: City of Calgary Library Board, Chinook Arch Library Board, City of Edmonton Library Board, Marigold Library Board, Northern Lights Library Board, Parkland Library Board, Peace Library Board, Wood Buffalo Library Board, and Yellowhead Library Board. To read the 2016 press release about this new grant program, click [here](#)." Below this, it states: "In Alberta, public libraries are a municipal level service. Because of this, historically, it has been difficult for communities on-reserve and on-settlement to establish library service or access existing library services. To use libraries in neighboring municipalities, reserve and settlement populations often paid high non-resident fees. Eliminating this barrier with the new grant program honours the spirit of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) which asserts the right to participate in the life of the surrounding State (article 5), to access all forms of education in the State (article 14), and to improve economic and social conditions (article 21)." It then says: "People living on reserve and settlements now have access to public libraries throughout Alberta, equivalent to that enjoyed by municipal residents. The Public Library Services Branch supports public library service for and with Indigenous communities in multiple ways:" followed by a bullet point: "On February 23 and 24, 2017 the Public Library Service Branch hosted a province-wide Symposium on Public Library Services for Indigenous Communities. Over one hundred participants from across Alberta attended and spent two days learning about how libraries can better serve". The right sidebar has a "Navigation" section with links: Public Library Service, News, Public Library Legislation, Funding and Grants, Plan of Service, Library Board FAQs, Board Basics Workshops, Minister's Awards, Public Library Service in Alberta, Structure, Provincial Policies, Indigenous Services (highlighted), and Library Systems.

PLSB Initiatives

- Diana and Colette belong to CFLA-FCAB Indigenous Matters Committee

<http://cfla-fcab.ca/en/indigenous/>



- Information kit being developed with University of Alberta and Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak/Women of the Metis Nation similar to the *Indigenous Canada* MOOC Library toolkit (available on the CFLA-FCAB website)



UNIVERSITY OF
ALBERTA

PLSB Initiatives

- **Course Designer: Indigenous language upload capability through language software, Pronunciator.**

pronunciator: 

- **Working with Book Publishers Association of Alberta to increase accessibility of Indigenous titles**



- **PLSB staff available to present at conferences and workshops and help nurture relationships.**
- **PLSB supports public library initiatives.**

Questions?

- Thank you!
- Colette Poitras. Manager, Indigenous Public Library Outreach colette.poitras@gov.ab.ca