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Canadian Aboriginal Books for Schools

selected & evaluated by teacher-librarians

2016 • 2017



Jim Oskineegish | Bountiful Harvest, 2008

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CANADIAN ABORIGINAL BOOKS FOR SCHOOLS

WELCOME TO OUR 2016/17 CATALOGUE

Dear teacher-librarians, public librarians, wholesalers, and retailers:

The Association of Book Publishers of BC (ABPBC) welcomes the recent and significant interest in Aboriginal material generated in part by the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The importance of this time for Aboriginal peoples and for Canada cannot be overstated.

Canadian publishers have long produced excellent books by Aboriginal writers, about Aboriginal issues, and from Aboriginal publishing houses. This resource catalogue and those that preceded it will assist teacher-librarians and others in their selection of Canadian First Nations, Métis, and Inuit titles. Nine years ago we launched *Canadian Aboriginal Books for Schools* and have been delighted by the positive responses we have received. Past issues may be found on our website in PDF format (books.bc.ca/resources/for-teacher-librarians). You may also want to check out BC Books Online (bcbooks.49thshelf.com) where you may find further Aboriginal titles.

Teacher-librarians select and annotate the titles here providing grade range and curricula links, as well as comments and cautions. Our annotators inspire us with their knowledge, professionalism, and their love of books. We hope that the information they provide to us will help you with your selection process.

If you are new to the catalogue, you will find that it is helpfully organized by grade level: Elementary (K–7), Secondary (8–12), and Cross-Grades for those books that are appropriate at both levels. Entries are then organized alphabetically by title within each section. Because this catalogue is distributed nationally we have chosen to provide generic subject areas, which we hope is sufficient for your resourcing needs.

The ABPBC partners in this venture with the following agencies: The Government of Canada through the Canada Book Fund of Canadian Heritage, The Canada Council for the Arts, the City of Vancouver, and Creative BC. Thank you for your generosity.

We always welcome feedback on your use of the catalogue and improvements we may make, please drop us a line at admin@books.bc.ca.

Best regards,

Margaret Reynolds
Executive Director
Association of Book Publishers of BC

September 2016

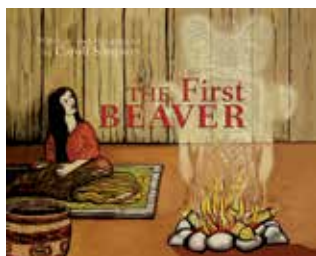
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COVER ARTIST

"Bountiful Harvest" © Jim Oskineegish, Artist,
Courtesy of Canadian Art Prints and Winn Devon
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Jim Oskineegish *Bountiful Harvest, 2008*

Jim Oskineegish is an Ojibwe artist who is a registered member of the Eabametoong First Nation which is located in northwestern Ontario, Canada. Jim paints in the Shamanistic Woodland Style using bold lines and bright colours. He loves to paint legends and stories of his people and hopes that his art can bridge a universal understanding of love, faith, and unity. "I want to promote positive Ahnisenabae culture to the world."



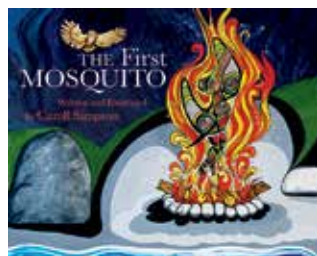
THE FIRST BEAVER

Caroll Simpson
Caroll Simpson, illus.

This origin legend about the first beaver is centred on Reede, an auburn-haired girl who disappears in the night and saves her family and community during times of danger. The setting is the Pacific Northwest and the rich illustrations point to the daily life, cultural practices, and physical environment of Pacific Coast First Nations. Button blankets, totem poles, spacious longhouses, masks, woven attire, and natural surroundings support and expand upon the written text to convey the Coastal First Nations' connection to the land and nature. Crest animals figure prominently in the full-page colour spreads and the author points to their importance in the glossary. The detailed illustrations invite cross-curricular examination and interest in the art and culture of First Nations people while the themes of giving, sharing, and family connect Aboriginal values to social-emotional learning at various grade levels.

GRADES: 1–7, ARTS EDUCATION, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, SOCIAL STUDIES

Index/Bibliography: no/no
©2015 32pp. 10.25"x8.25"
colour illustrations
ISBN 9781772030624 \$12.95 PA
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THE FIRST MOSQUITO

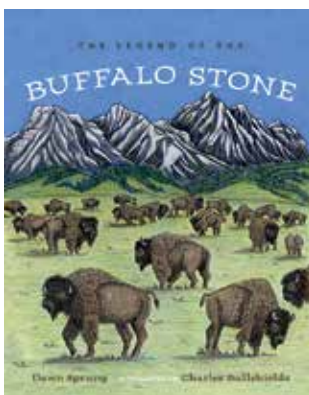
Caroll Simpson
Caroll Simpson, illus.

While the book is an origin story of how mosquitoes came to be, it is also a cautionary tale as well as a rich introduction to the First Nations cultures of the Pacific Northwest. The supernatural creatures and monsters are part of the legends told by Elders who used storytelling to “teach important lessons, such as not to leave the village area, and to be good.” Also embedded in the story through dynamic narrative and elaborate full-page illustrations are local flora and fauna, physical environment, commerce, and family values. This picture presents the complex culture of the First Nations of the Pacific Northwest and their relationship with the natural world.

Includes a glossary of Northwest Coast supernatural creatures as well as the titles of the books that informed the author's understanding of Aboriginal art.

GRADES: 1–7, ARTS EDUCATION, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, SOCIAL STUDIES

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THE LEGEND OF THE BUFFALO STONE

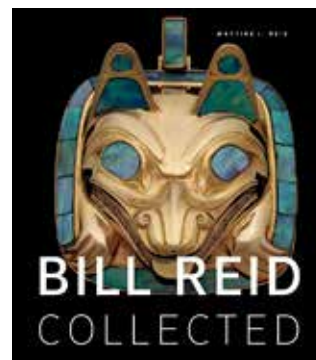
Dawn Sprung
Charles Bullsheids, illus.

In this version of a traditional Blackfoot story, a girl named Hanata is led to a buffalo stone (*iniskim*), a talisman which she uses to convince her starving people they will soon have plenty of buffalo (*innii*) to eat. *Iniskim* is the Blackfoot word for ammonite, an iridescent stone which is fossilized ammonite, a nautilus-like sea creature that inhabited the sea that covered much of Alberta millennia ago. The first half of the story includes details about the traditional dependence of the Blackfoot on the buffalo for many aspects of their lives, including food, shelter, and clothing.

The author consulted on the story of the buffalo stone with Linda Many Guns, a member of the Blackfoot Nation and a First Nations scholar at the University of Lethbridge. The illustrator is a self-taught Blackfoot artist.

GRADES: 2–5, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, SOCIAL STUDIES

Index/Bibliography: no/no
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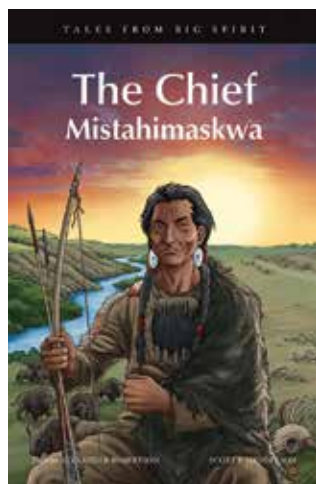
BILL REID COLLECTED

Martine J. Reid

This book pays tribute to one of Canada's most renowned 20th century artists. Reid's career, which spanned five decades, was driven by his passion for the well-crafted object and his gradual discovery of the culture and themes of his Haida heritage. Reid lived and worked between both the Haida and European traditions. This book presents the largest chronological collection of Reid's most significant works including the bronze sculpture *The Spirit of Haida Gwaii*, which is on display at the Vancouver International Airport. Beautiful photographs showcase his many sculptures, carvings, jewelry, screenprints, and paintings. Comprehensive details are included for each work of art. An introductory essay provides insight into Reid's early life as a goldsmith and the force behind his many accomplishments. In 1994 Reid received the National Aboriginal Achievement Award for Lifetime Achievement.

GRADES: 6–12, ARTS EDUCATION, TEACHER RESOURCE

Index/Bibliography: no/yes
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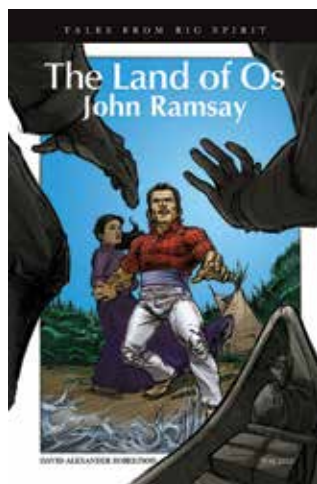
THE CHIEF

MISTAHIMASKWA

David A Robertson
Scott B Henderson, illus.

Part of the *Tales from Big Spirit* series, this graphic novel incorporates Aboriginal storytelling techniques to reveal the life of Cree Chief Mistahimaskwa (Big Bear). Over 60 years of significant historical events of the Blackfoot, Cree, and the Chief's life during the 1800s are retold including the bison migrations, the devastating smallpox epidemic, Blackfoot camp raids, peace treaties, the Belly River Battle, first interactions with white settlers, near extinctions of the bison, to the Chief's death in 1888. Readers are drawn into these important Canadian historical events by the vivid illustrations and thoughtful dialogue.

Although not authored by an Indigenous person, this graphic novel depicts themes and issues important within Aboriginal culture and ways of life.



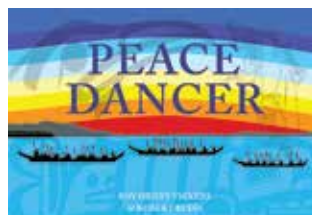
THE LAND OF OS

JOHN RAMSAY

David A Robertson
Wai Tien, illus.

Incorporating Aboriginal storytelling techniques, this graphic novel from the *Tales from Big Spirit* series features John Ramsay, a community builder and advocate for the Sandy Bar band (Cree and Saulteaux people) during the late 1800s in Manitoba. After the 1870s exodus of Icelanders who resettled in Manitoba, the Sandy Bar Band was dissolved due to being left out of treaty negotiations. They lost their land and all rights associated with it, creating rocky relations with the Icelandic settlers. With Ramsey's help during the devastating smallpox epidemic of 1876 and his pleading his case to Manitoba's Lieutenant Governor, he earned the settlers' trust.

Although not authored by an Indigenous person, the book depicts themes and issues important within Aboriginal culture and ways of life.



PEACE DANCER

Roy Henry Vickers &
Robert Budd
Roy Henry Vickers, illus.

Peace Dancer, the fourth book in the *Northwest Coast Legends* series, is a Tsimshian flood story that reminds us about honouring all life and showing respect for the Earth. When the adults go fishing, the children devise a trap for hunting. Instead of freeing the bird they trap, they remove its feathers. In response, rain falls until the community is flooded and the people must flee in their canoes. By promising to follow the laws of the ancestors, Creator stops the rain so that all life is saved. This authentic Aboriginal story explains why the Peace Dance is performed at Tsimshian potlatches. At the end of the book, Vickers tells how he first heard this story and that he is the Peace Dancer for the House of Walkus.

Other books in the series are *Raven Brings the Light*, *Cloudwalker*, and *Orca Chief*.



NILH IZÁ SPTÁKWLHKALH

THESE ARE OUR LEGENDS

Lillooet Elders, narrator
Jan van Eijk, transcription
and translation
Marie Abraham, illus.

This fifth book in the *First Nations Language Readers* series is a collection of seven oral stories told by elders from the Lillooet First Nation and translated into English. All stories appear in Lillooet language and syllabary, as well as English. The introductory section speaks to how and when the *sptakwlh* or stories were collected. Another section explains the phonology, morphology, and syntax of Lillooet language. The book concludes with a Lillooet-English glossary. Most of the *sptakwlh* are from the time when animals and people could talk and Coyote is most frequently the main character.

Caution: Some stories have explicit topics and are appropriate for secondary grades only. All stories should be previewed before use in the classroom.

GRADES: 6–10/12, ENGLISH
LANGUAGE ARTS, SOCIAL
STUDIES

Index/Bibliography: no/no
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colour illustrations
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HighWater Press
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GRADES: 6–10/12, ENGLISH
LANGUAGE ARTS, SOCIAL
STUDIES

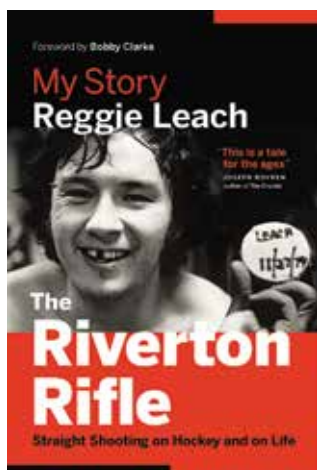
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GRADES: 2–12, ENGLISH
LANGUAGE ARTS, SOCIAL
STUDIES

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GRADES: 4–12, ENGLISH
LANGUAGE ARTS, SOCIAL
STUDIES

Index/Bibliography: no/no
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University of Regina Press
www.uofrpress.ca

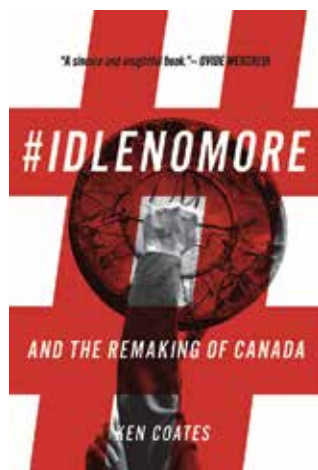


RIVERTON RIFLE

MY STORY—STRAIGHT SHOOTING ON HOCKEY AND ON LIFE

Reggie Leach with Randi Druzin

Reggie Leach's autobiography tells the stories of his "real good friends" who helped Reggie past a childhood characterised by deprivation and discrimination to rise through the ranks of professional hockey to playing for the Stanley Cup-winning 1975 Philadelphia Flyers team. Affirming that "it all comes down to making the right life choices," Leach eventually left professional hockey in order to retain his sobriety. A role model and advocate for Aboriginal youth, he participates in the Shoot to Score hockey school.

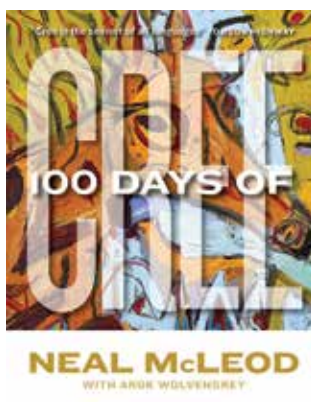


#IDLENO MORE

AND THE REMAKING OF CANADA

Ken Coates

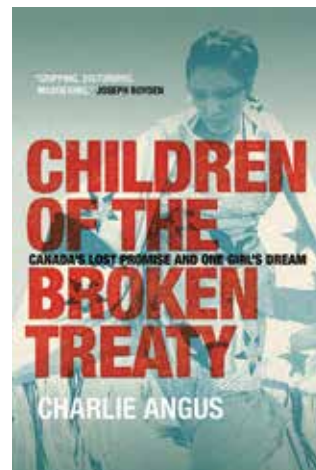
#IdleNoMore explores the ongoing grassroots social movement that is seeking self-organized social change related to Aboriginal culture and historic oppression. It arose out of the determination to resist Bill C-45 and its sweeping consequences. Attempting to bridge the gap between Canadians in this human-rights dispute, the book is an accessible, well-researched explanation of the movement, its accomplishments, and its continuing influence. Of particular note is the role social media played in the organisation and development of the movement. For example, despite Chief Spence diverting mainstream media attention, Vimeo, Facebook, and YouTube allowed Aboriginal people to express themselves directly in "the largest and most sustained affirmation of aboriginal determination and culture in Canadian history". *#IdleNoMore* presents a timeline of the course of the movement.



100 DAYS OF CREE

Neal McLeod with Arok Wolvengrey

100 Days of Cree is divided into one hundred themes and offers Cree words and English explanations for everything from powwows and sweetgrass to Facebook and Star Wars. A mix of stories, prayers, and essays comprise the text in Cree (with guide to pronunciation) and in English. Believing that one of the key things about learning a language is that people assist each other in the process, the author took a crowdsourcing approach to the project, connecting with other Cree speakers on Facebook with the aim of both gathering classical Cree vocabulary and creating words related to modern-day life. Celebrating the history of the Cree language is crucial, hence the collective effort to bring the old stories into the present day and at the same time collect terms for future Cree speakers. The work is leavened by a good sense of humour on the author's part.



CHILDREN OF THE BROKEN TREATY

CANADA'S LOST PROMISE AND ONE GIRL'S DREAM

Charlie Angus

Shannen Koostachin, a young Cree activist, campaigned to bring a school to her community. Following her accidental death in 2010 at age 15, she attained the stature of a modern civil-rights icon who George Stroumboulopoulos named as one of "five teenage girls who kicked ass in history". The author shows how breaches of treaties, broken promises, and callous neglect deliberately deny First Nations children their basic human rights. Focussing on the disastrous effects of the residential school system and buttressed with in-depth research into government documents, the author avoids partisan politics to argue persuasively for action to correct the institutionalized inequitable treatment of First Nations peoples and credits the continuing influence of Shannen's work to attain this goal.

GRADES: 7–12, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Index/Bibliography: no/no

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b/w and colour photographs

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Greystone Books

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GRADES: 10–12, SOCIAL STUDIES

Index/Bibliography: yes/no

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b/w maps, photographs and charts

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GRADES: 8–12, CREE LANGUAGE DICTIONARY

Index/Bibliography: no/no

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b/w drawings

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GRADES: 10–12, SOCIAL STUDIES

Index/Bibliography: no/yes

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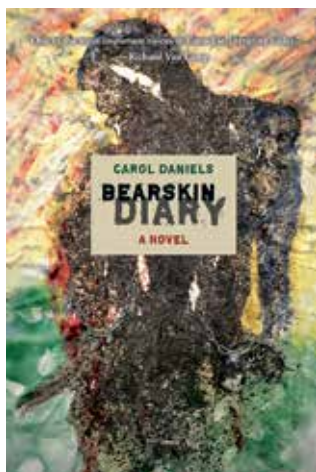
b/w photographs

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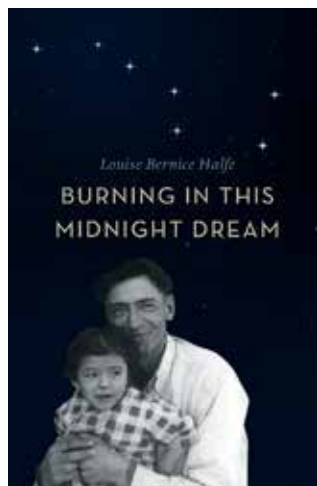
BEARSKIN DIARY

A NOVEL

Carol Daniels

Daniels clearly drew on her own life experiences as a broadcast journalist and Aboriginal Canadian in writing this gritty, eye-opening, and ultimately hopeful novel about Sandy, an infant “scooped” and adopted into a non-Aboriginal family. Now grown, she is unconnected to Aboriginal culture, faces discrimination in life and as a TV reporter, and struggles with alcoholism. The novel touches on many themes and topics including racism, disconnection, spirituality, reconciliation, and the vulnerability of Aboriginal women in today’s society.

Caution: *Though appropriate in context some readers may find the content offensive. These include explicit sexual content including sexual violence, police brutality, the use of alcohol, and descriptions of Aboriginal spiritual beliefs and practices.*

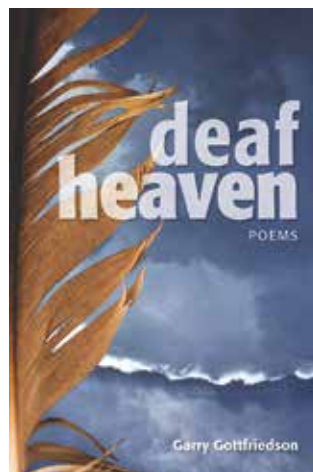


BURNING IN THIS MIDNIGHT DREAM

Louise Bernice Halfe

Saskatchewan poet Halfe, also known as Sky Dancer, is all too familiar with the residential school experience. She understands its long-lasting harmful effects on individuals, families, and communities. These poems address some of the complex issues that rise out of the Truth and Reconciliation process and often present situations of abuse or torment. Among her poems are these words of reconciliation, given by her great grandfather: “We...seek a new road / for our people. We must find the pathway / that leads to the stars.” Many of the poems are titled with a Cree word, followed by its English translation. As a result, the Table of Contents serves as a kind of glossary. The author’s family photos are interspersed among her poems.

Shelagh Rogers’ interview with Halfe (CBC’s *The Next Chapter*, April 4, 2016) may enhance students’ appreciation of this poet.



DEAF HEAVEN

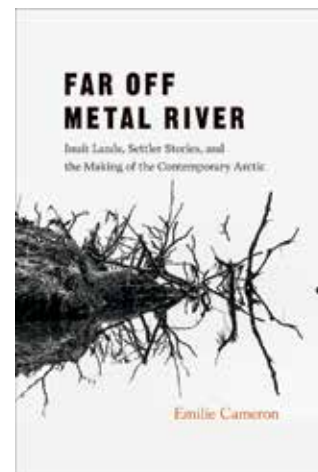
POEMS

Garry Gottfriedson

From harsh and angry poems concerning difficult lives to tender love poems, this is a book of extremes. The author is critical of Aboriginal people (*Pretender, Band Elections, Micromanager*) and people of the dominant culture (*Guilty, Reality, CFOs*). These are revealing poems of contemporary urban culture and historical atrocities as well as brave and honest looks at sexuality and male behavior towards females. Four coherent sections allow the reader to enter into the worlds imagined and remembered by the poet. Gottfriedson is a Secwepemc writer who uses the images from his people to talk about the injustices he and others have suffered.

Gottfriedson has been nominated for the Anskohk Aboriginal Award and the Canadian Authors Association Award for Poetry.

Caution: *Includes some coarse language, references to sexual abuse, and illicit drug use.*



FAR OFF METAL RIVER

INUIT LANDS, SETTLER STORIES, AND THE MAKING OF THE CONTEMPORARY ARCTIC

Emilie Cameron

This book offers a critical description of how stories shape our relations to people, things, and places. It centres on Samuel Hearne’s account of the 18th century ‘Bloody Falls massacre’ in the Canadian Arctic, in which his First Nation Dene travelling companions were said to have killed a group of Inuit. The incident shaped ideas of race and historical truth, and the story still influences non-Inuit relations with the North. Tracing Hearne’s tale from the past into the present, Cameron weaves in alternative stories to learn to “relate differently”. Written by and for non-Inuit, non-Indigenous, non-Northern people, the book is about “how we relate to the North and Inuit, and the consequences of these relations”.

Written at a college level, suited to gifted students.

GRADES: 10–12, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, SOCIAL STUDIES

Index/Bibliography: no/no

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ISBN 9780889713116 \$21.95 PA

epub 9780889710771 \$21.95

Nightwood Editions

www.nightwoodeditions.com

GRADES: 10–12, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, SOCIAL STUDIES

Index/Bibliography: no/no

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b/w photographs

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Coteau Books

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GRADES: 11–12, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, SOCIAL STUDIES

Index/Bibliography: no/no

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Ronsdale Press

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GRADES: 11–12, SOCIAL STUDIES

Index/Bibliography: yes/yes

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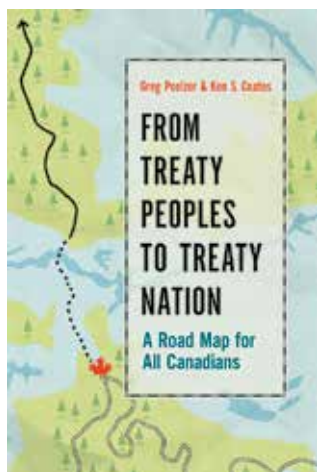
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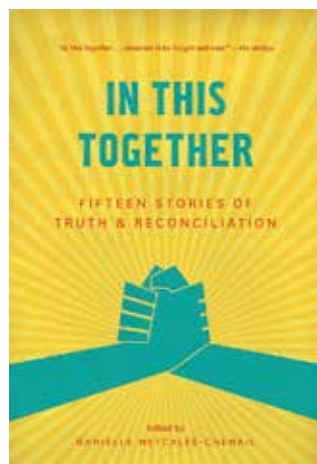


FROM TREATY PEOPLES TO TREATY NATION

A ROAD MAP FOR ALL CANADIANS

Greg Poelzer & Ken S. Coates

This book evaluates the turbulent and tangled relationship between Indigenous peoples and newcomers in Canada from colonial to contemporary times. In presenting the failures of traditional approaches to this relationship and recent attempts at treaty negotiations and treaty federalism, the wide-ranging views are a critique of and a challenge to the idea of treaty making and breaking in Canada. The main strength of the book lies in the positive and optimistic way forward envisioned if Canadians, take ownership of challenges facing Indigenous communities and work in concert with the First Nations. This will require acceptance of Aboriginal concepts of law and justice, sovereignty and self-government.



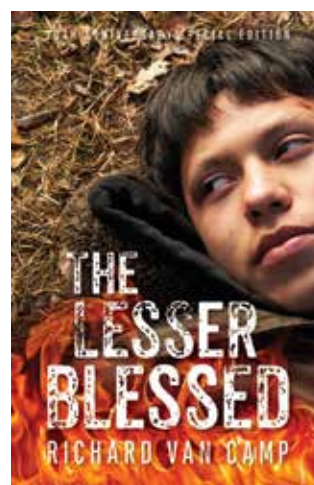
IN THIS TOGETHER

FIFTEEN STORIES OF TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Danielle Metcalfe-Chenail, ed.

This collection of essays represents each contributor's journey of personal identity in relation to Canada's colonial past. The authors challenge readers to examine their personal stereotypes and prejudices about Canadian Aboriginals. Through texts and personal narratives contributors reflect on paddling 500km through the Yukon, participating in the Oka protests, feelings of 'white guilt', and sharing wisdom from Elders. Each contributor sheds light on the complexities of colonialism. A conversation between Shelagh Rogers, an honorary witness for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair, is included.

Metcalfe-Chenail is Edmonton's Historian Laureate and author of *For the Love of Flying* and *Polar Winds*.



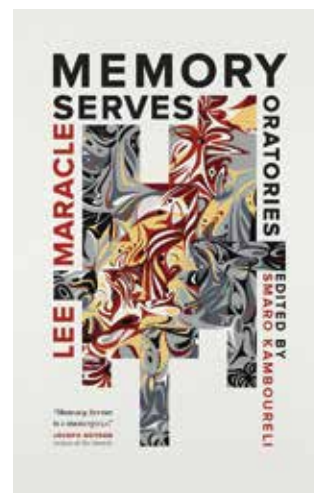
THE LESSER BLESSED

Richard Van Camp

This coming of age story's main character is Larry Sole, a Tlicho Dogrib teenager from Fort Simmer, NWT. A bit of a nerd, he goes to high school, listens to heavy metal bands, and has a huge crush on Juliet Hope. Newcomer Johnny Beck arrives on the scene, befriending Larry in order to get close to Juliet. Johnny initiates him into the world of hot-knifing, partying, and fighting that brings on flashbacks of a terrible fire and the murder of Larry's rapist and abusive father. This 20th anniversary edition includes an additional two short stories. Van Camp has an original writing style, using humour to offset some of the horrific situations. Many of his complex characters are second generation residential school survivors.

The novel was made into a film in 2012.

Caution: Includes violence, sex and drugs, and a disturbing description of sexual abuse.



MEMORY SERVES

ORATORIES

Lee Maracle
Smaro Kamboureli, ed.

This challenging but worthwhile collection of oratories is rightfully described by Joseph Boyden as a masterpiece. It is a collection of lectures given by Maracle over a 20-year period that presents the case for a different way of thinking about Canada, history, Aboriginals' place in both, humanity's place in the world, and oral versions of literature. These wide-ranging pieces challenge the reader to reconsider what we value as knowledge and how that came to be, who gets to draw our physical and intellectual maps, and the depth of Aboriginal story/poetry characters and themes. Every essay could be the foundation of an extended study and examination of the prejudices and limitations in world view of Canadian Aboriginals, recent immigrants, and descendants of original European settlers.

GRADES: 12, SOCIAL STUDIES, TEACHER RESOURCE

Index/Bibliography: yes/yes

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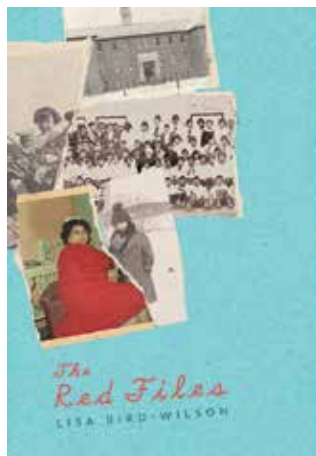


MESSAGE STICKS

TSHISSINUATSHITAKANA

Joséphine Bacon
Phyllis Aronoff, trans.

Written by Innu songwriter and documentary maker Bacon, this inspiring book of sparse poems speaks of the travels on a forbidding landscape that her people made every year in their nomadic life. In vivid images and fragments of narration the reader is taken into a world view that is rich in relationship, story, and history. Bacon also laments the changes and losses that the modern world has forced upon the Innu way. Elders are valued as essential in a way that will usefully inform modern young readers. In an informative Afterword the "back country" is put in context for the reader. This bilingual edition (Innu and English) has been translated from French. It includes a glossary of some useful Innu language.

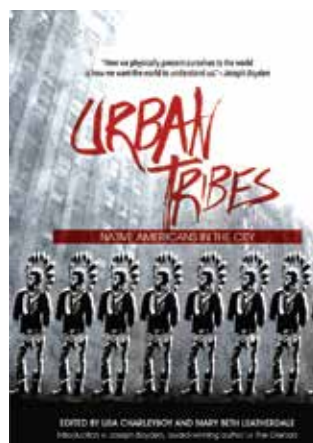


THE RED FILES

Lisa Bird-Wilson

This first poetry collection is named for the Federal government's organizational structure of Residential Schools Archives, which are divided into 'black files' and 'red files.' The collection can be loosely divided into three themes: children of the residential schools, the minimization of the impact of these schools, and the beginning to the reconciliation process. Bird-Wilson, a Cree-Métis poet from Saskatchewan, gives an authentic voice to the residential school experiences of her relatives and the students and survivors she researched in the Archives. "Mourning Day" provides a stark image of a loss of culture and identity through the cutting of the girls' braids. "The Apology" recognizes the experimentation with malnutrition, clothing and shelter denial, and the emotional loss of affection, protection, and belonging.

Caution: Includes some mature language and references to suicide.



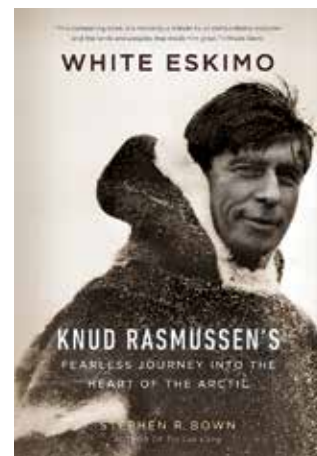
URBAN TRIBES

NATIVE AMERICANS IN THE CITY

Lisa Charleyboy & Mary Beth Leatherdale, eds.

The majority of Aboriginal people in Canada and the US now live off their reservations. This strikingly visual, illuminating, and accessible anthology of insightful stories, biographies, tweets, raps, poetry, and artwork highlights modern Native youth in cities across "Turtle Island" (North America). Their inspired, diverse contributions are divided into four compelling, themed sections: Tribal Citizens, Shattering Stereotypes, Building Bridges, and Native Renaissance. "Urban Tribes" are dynamic young citizens exuding pride in their own Indigenous heritage as well as an understanding of the larger, dominant culture, in which they often choose to live. They are, therefore, uniquely positioned to revitalize, enrich, and integrate both cultures.

Charleyboy and Leatherdale co-edited the *Dreaming in Indian* anthology.



WHITE ESKIMO

KNUD RASMUSSEN'S FEARLESS JOURNEY INTO THE HEART OF THE ARCTIC

Stephen R. Bown

White Eskimo is the first English biography of Knud Rasmussen. It tells the intriguing story of an adventurer, entrepreneur, writer, ethnographer, preserver, and conveyer of Inuit songs, stories, legends, and beliefs as well as his work as a lecturer and filmmaker. Rasmussen led seven expeditions of exploration from 1912 to 1933, both in Greenland and throughout all Inuit regions from Greenland to Alaska (a 1923 trip of 20,000 miles was the longest dogsled expedition in polar exploration). He was as comfortable in Inuit society with Inuit customs, culture, and language as in his Danish heritage. He was readily accepted as an Inuit by the Inuit tribes that he encountered.

The term "Eskimo" is used when quoting historical documents. Otherwise "Inuit" and "Greenlander" are used throughout.

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YOU WILL WEAR A WHITE SHIRT

FROM THE NORTHERN BUSH TO
THE HALLS OF POWER

Senator Nick Sibbeston

Sibbeston's mother once said, "Someday you're going to wear a white shirt". It proved prophetic as he became an MLA, lawyer, party leader, and premier, then a senator. This memoir recounts his early life, his time in territorial politics, and his post-political life. His experience at residential school affected him negatively for most of his life. This book is a thorough report of his political life and the evolution of territorial government. There is a comprehensive description of the Federal government and his work in the Senate. He always championed Aboriginal people, their languages, the land claims process, and residential school resolution. He fought to improve economic opportunities and to make the government accountable to Northerners.

Caution: *Includes mentions of sexual abuse, alcohol abuse, and extramarital affairs.*

GRADES: 10–12, ENGLISH
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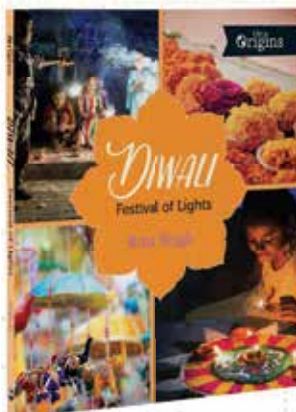
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