

# MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE

## PRE-TEACH/PRE-ACTIVITY

Review the concepts of push-pull factors (e.g., push: lack of jobs, natural disasters, shortage of food; pull: low crime rates, stable government, better access to education) and discuss with your students the different ways that people move around the world. Students in your class may have moved from across the city, country or world to get to where they live now. Explain that sometimes people move because they want to, and sometimes they are forced to move. Many groups of Indigenous Peoples have moved to follow animal migrations, to take advantage of better resource availability and for many other reasons. Unfortunately, many groups of Indigenous Peoples were also forced to move by colonial settlers, and this resulted in the fragmentation of communities and families, and led to population declines. Discuss both forced and chosen movement patterns with your students.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Students will learn the difference between forced and chosen movement patterns.
- Students will explore the different reasons why Indigenous Peoples have moved or migrated over the course of millennia.
- Students will understand the long-lasting effects of forced relocation.

# MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE

## Foundational knowledge and perspectives

### FIRST NATIONS

**"When the caribou herd moved on, and the moose hunkered down in the snow, we moved to the ice. We were out on the ice in the muddy hole near the mouth of the Flat Bay Brook. Ice, that because of the flowing river near it, never got too thick, which was both convenient for our task and also dangerous. Ice that had a slimy bounty beneath it nestled in the deep river mud. Ice that could barely hold the weight of one man, let alone 40. Yet still we moved to the ice, because it was the only place we could go.**

The 'slimy' bounty are eels, and for hundreds of years the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland used eels as a staple of our diet. A delicacy for the rich in other cultures, the Mi'kmaq harvested eels more regularly and in all seasons, but they became particularly valuable during winter when the larger land game was scarce. One of the more interesting ways to harvest eels in winter, the way that my father showed me, was to spear them through a hole in the ice."

*—from "Seasonal Movement" by Gregg White, in the First Nations volume of the Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada*

**"On Oct. 6, 2017, Carolyn Bennett, minister of Crown-Indigenous relations and northern affairs, announced an agreement-in-principle to compensate First Nations people who were adopted in what is now known as the '60s Scoop. The agreement-in-principle would compensate those adopted between 1951 and 1991. There was finally an admission of guilt from the federal government that thousands of Indigenous children had been forcefully removed from their homes and communities. Many were shipped off to live with strangers, had their last names changed and struggled to find their ways back home, if they were lucky enough to."**

**"From having grandparents in residential schools to having cousins who were adopted in the '60s Scoop to having nieces and nephews who are permanent wards**

in the child welfare system, one thing is clear: Indigenous children are still being apprehended and removed from their communities at an alarming rate. The residential schools have shone a bright light on the inter-generational effects of trauma and parenting. Many of the children of residential school Survivors were not given the love and support they needed to become good parents. This was passed down to many of the children of the '60s Scoop. This vicious cycle of being brought up as wards of the state has had a devastating impact on First Nations communities as a whole."

*—from "Urban Indigenous Populations" by Lenard Monkman, in the First Nations volume of the Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada*

**"On Aug. 4, 2014, the tailings pond at Imperial Metals' Mount Polley mine failed at a catastrophic level, releasing more than 24 million cubic metres of tailings waste (ground rock particles, waste water and chemicals)**

into the fish-bearing waters of Polley Lake, Hazeltine Creek and Quesnel Lake. Indigenous communities immediately impacted by the disaster, including the Secwepemc, Dakelh, Tsilhqot'in and St'at'imc, spoke

**“ Yet still we moved to the ice, because it was the only place we could go. ”**

out about the need to be involved in the government response and decisions related to this disaster — all are located within the same Fraser River watershed and depend on its salmon for food.

After more than 150 years of land dispossession and court battles over Indigenous title and rights, Indigenous Peoples are engaged in land use planning processes, establishing Indigenous parks and protected areas, and conducting territory inventories and baseline studies of land and water with newly formed Indigenous guardian and ranger programs. In addition, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has become a hot topic between industry, governments, and Indigenous Peoples. In

Continued...

# MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE

## Foundational knowledge and perspectives

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particular, Article 10 of the declaration addresses “free, prior and informed consent” in relation to forced removal or relocation of Indigenous Peoples. “Business as usual” now must include Indigenous Peoples — a far cry from the disenfranchisement and assimilation policies of the past.

At a United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights hearing held in Williams Lake, B.C. in May 2017, UN representatives heard from Indigenous

representatives about the lack of consent for industrial projects, and the direct human rights impacts from the Mount Polley mine disaster. As part of its response, the United Nations has stated that B.C.’s mining regulatory framework must be “urgently reformed and brought into compliance with Canada’s international human rights obligations.”

*—from “Protected Areas” by Jacinda Mack in the First Nations Volume of the Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada*



# MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE

## Foundational knowledge and perspectives

### MÉTIS

**The 1885 Northwest Resistance** had a deleterious impact upon the Prairie Métis. Without question, the Battle of Batoche (the concluding battle of the 1885 Northwest Resistance) was Western Canada's Plains of Abraham. It ensured that an Anglo-Protestant-led settler society would impose its dominance on the Canadian Prairies for several generations. Whether they participated or not, the outcome for First Nations and Métis peoples in Western Canada would be bleak. First Nations were forced to stay on reserves, and would only be allowed to leave via the infamous pass system. Their children were sent to residential and day schools to be assimilated.

After the 1885 Northwest Resistance, many Métis were dispersed from their traditional lands to locations in the United States such as Fort Belknap or Lewiston in north central Montana and Turtle Mountain in North Dakota. Others would become the wandering nucleus of the Rocky Boy or Little Shell bands in Montana. Many already had kin in these locales and were going to their ancestral bison-hunting grounds. Others went north to parkland areas in what are now Saskatchewan and Alberta, or to the southern fringes of the Assiniboia district of the North-West Territories, later southern Saskatchewan and southeast Alberta. Other families stayed close to their original communities, near old hibernant (wintering) communities, fur trade posts and First Nations reserves.

All Métis, whether they participated in the 1885 Northwest Resistance or not, would face some very difficult choices about their place in this new society. Although only a few hundred Métis took up arms, the region's

Métis were stigmatized as 'rebels.' This stigma of being labelled 'rebels' or 'traitors,' as well as facing unending racism for being Indigenous, forced many Métis, over several generations, to hide or deny their identity. As a result, many hid their Métis heritage and called themselves 'French,' 'French-Canadian' or 'Scottish' to escape racism and for their own cultural safety.

Following the 1885 Northwest Resistance, the vast influx of non-Aboriginal settlers and the failure of the scrip system greatly disrupted the Métis' traditional lifestyles. Most Métis would lose out in the Prairie West's new social and economic landscape as newcomers flooded into the region.

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Métis practised a mixed economy that included harvesting seasonal flora and fauna resources, supplemented with farming and wage labour. After 1885, however, most Métis would become socially, economically and politically marginalized. In most instances, the Métis didn't have title to the land, and thus paid no taxes, which precluded their children from obtaining an education. With this marginal ex-

istence emerged a myriad of social problems, including poor health and self-esteem, and poverty.

The crux of Métis marginalization centred on the issue of land tenure. The fraudulent Métis scrip system, in which the vast majority of recipients never kept or received their scrip land, created a large number of landless, rootless Métis people. Many Métis rented the land or worked as labourers in towns and cities. Other Métis managed to keep their scrip land and owned it for a

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# MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE

## Foundational knowledge and perspectives

### MÉTIS

while, but lost their homesteads because they could not afford to pay their property taxes, particularly during the Depression of the 1930s. This was the case for the Métis at Cochin, Sask., and Ste. Madeleine, Man.

Because of their dispossession through the fraudulent scrip system, many, perhaps most, Métis never owned title to their lands. Many of them squatted along the approaches to rural roads or road allowances. Hence, the Métis were known as the “road allowance people.” Some of the main road allowance communities were settled by Métis returning to Canada from the United States. One example is Round Prairie, Sask. (formerly Prairie-Ronde), which was settled primarily by Métis who returned to Canada from the U.S. from 1903 to 1939. During the Depression, many of the residents of this Métis community moved to nearby Saskatoon. Other Métis from North Dakota settled in the Crescent Lake road allowance community near Yorkton, Sask.”

—from “Aftermath of 1885” in the Métis volume of the Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada

**“The Road Allowance period (roughly 1900-1960) is a key but little known element of Métis history and identity.** As immigrant farmers took up land in the Prairie provinces after the 1885 Northwest Resistance, many Métis dispersed to parkland and forested regions, while others squatted on Crown land used — or intended — for the creation of roads in rural areas or on other marginal pieces of land. As a result, the Métis began to be called the ‘road allowance people,’ and they settled in dozens of makeshift communities throughout the three Prairie provinces, such as Saskatchewan’s Spring Valley along the fringes of Prince Albert National Park, Chicago Line or “Little Chicago” in the Qu’Appelle Valley, and Manitoba’s Ste. Madeleine and Rooster Town (Winnipeg). Road allowance houses reflected the Métis’ extreme poverty — houses were usually uninsulated, roofed with tarpaper and built from discarded lumber or logs and various ‘recycled’ materials. These small one- or two-room dwellings housed entire families.

Road allowance communities popped up in areas where there was temporary employment. The Métis worked for

farmers picking rocks and roots, clearing trees, and doing other labour jobs. They were paid minimal wages or were paid with bits of food such as chicken, pork, or beef. As a result, they could not afford to buy their own homes or pay rent. “Squatting” on Crown land was one way of providing a home for the family. To supplement their meagre income, many road allowance families picked Seneca root and sold it by the pound. They also picked berries, grew gardens, trapped and hunted game. Unfortunately, by 1939, laws were put in place making it illegal to hunt and trap out of season or without a licence. Many Métis went to jail or had to pay expensive fines for hunting out of season. In many cases, the animals they were hunting were their only source of food.

The road allowance Métis had a much lower standard of living than nearby Euro-Settlers. This poverty occurred well into the mid-20th century. As hunting and fishing regulations increased and government work projects failed, more Métis turned to government aid or ‘relief’ to support themselves. Moreover, the Métis lived in a racist settler society that socially marginalized them, creating a myriad of social problems including poor health, low self-esteem, and a lack of viable employment opportunities. Road allowance Métis also lacked educational opportunities because children were not allowed to go to school if their parents didn’t pay property taxes. As a result, three generations of Métis were unable to receive a basic education. Those road allowance children who were allowed to attend schools were often teased and bullied about their customs, clothing, languages and food.

During the Depression, growing public pressure to deal with the ‘Métis problem’ forced governments in the Prairie provinces to act. As a result, in the 1930s and 1940s the Alberta and Saskatchewan governments began to address the economic, social, and political marginalization of the road allowance people. Métis leaders in Alberta, such as Malcolm Norris, James Brady (better known as Jim Brady), and Peter Tomkins, convinced the Alberta government to enact the Métis Population Betterment Act in 1938, creating 12 Métis colonies — now known as the Alberta Métis Settlements, the only legislated Métis land base in Canada. Saskatchewan

Continued...

# MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE

## Foundational knowledge and perspectives

### MÉTIS

developed various Métis rehabilitation schemes such as Métis farms and colonies and special Métis schools, although these were shut down in the mid-1950s.

The dissolution of these road allowance communities began during the Depression. Through the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act in 1935, community or ‘co-op’ pastures were created in rural areas, forcing many Métis out of their shanty communities. In places like ‘Little Chicago,’ near Lestock, Sask., or Ste. Madeleine, Man., road allowance Métis families were forcibly removed. In Ste. Madeleine, all the homes were burned down and the families were dispersed to make way for a community pasture.

Despite being poor and facing racism on a daily basis, many Métis Elders remember the good parts of life on the road allowance positively. People danced to lively

fiddle music at house parties. They visited while picking berries and digging Seneca root. They told wonderful stories, and they enthusiastically celebrated ‘li Zhoor di Laan’ (New Year’s). Michif was spoken among community members, and the Elders provided a traditional education to the children. The Métis were independent and provided for their families the best they could. Community members helped one another, and families were close-knit. Even though life was difficult on the road allowance, many Métis Elders look back fondly to a time when life was simpler and people looked out for one another. Even though they were poor, they were rich in so many other ways.”

—from “Road Allowance People” in the Métis volume of the Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada



# MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE

## Foundational knowledge and perspectives

### INUIT

**"About 30 per cent of Inuit in Canada** now live outside Inuit Nunangat. The trend toward urbanization among Inuit is growing, yet Canadian cities are not fully prepared to facilitate this transition from northern hamlets and communities to large southern urban areas. Many cities in Southern Canada have organizations established with First Nations in mind; however, the needs and realities of Inuit are unique among Indigenous populations.

In Ontario alone, the Inuit population has grown from less than 100 in 1987 to an estimated 3,800 in 2017. The vast majority live in the National Capital area, making it the largest Inuit community in Southern Canada. According to Statistics Canada, the Ottawa-Gatineau area had an estimated 1,280 Inuit in 2016. But agencies that provide services to the community estimate the Inuit population in the capital is at least 3,700 and possibly as large as 6,000. Establishing improved data on Inuit outside of Inuit Nunangat is a priority; it is expected that the number of Inuit is much higher across Southern Canada than current data supports."

*—from "Urban Inuit" in the Inuit volume of the Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada*

**"Throughout Inuit Nunangat, a deep and costly housing crisis has persisted for decades. It began in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when more Inuit began to live in permanent settlements. In some cases, Inuit were forced to relocate to other settlements by federal, provincial and territorial governments because their communities were seen as too small or too remote to provide services. Commitments were made to provide housing to Inuit settling in these communities, but the housing provided was extremely inadequate. Many spent their first few years living in the communities in tents because no housing was available when they were relocated. Communities were instantly overcrowded, and households were ill-equipped by all standards, let alone those living in Arctic and Subarctic conditions."**

*—from "Housing" in the Inuit volume of the Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada*



# MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE

## Points of inquiry and activation related to the Giant Floor Map



- Spend some time as a class looking at the lands and communities displayed on the map, and discuss how these communities may have arisen in those locations. Explore parts of the map such as the island of Newfoundland, where Indigenous Peoples like the Beothuk used to live, and the Arctic, where many communities are located on coastlines. Discuss why some groups, like the Beothuk are no longer in their traditional territories. Consider why some communities, such as the Inuit communities in the North, chose to settle where they did.
- Focusing on your local area, use the props in the teacher's kit add (e.g., ropes and pylons) to show the movement of people (either in present day or historically) and reflect on how this movement is reflected in culture. What motivated people to move? Was it by choice or by force?
- Review with your students the examples from the Métis Road Allowance Communities cards and have students locate these communities that were forcibly closed by government authorities on the Giant Floor Map. Have the students read about the road allowance people ([indigenouspeoplesatlasofcanada.ca/article/road-allowance-people/](http://indigenouspeoplesatlasofcanada.ca/article/road-allowance-people/)) and research the history of additional road allowance communities. Ask students what trends they notice in the locations of these communities. Road allowance communities existed on the fringes of cities, near Crown lands that became community pastures, near First Nations reserves and near other land such as parks and garbage dumps. Ask the students why these places were chosen and whether they correlate with traditional Métis lands such as hibernant settlements, farming settlements and trapping and hunting grounds.
- Have students research forced relocations that were facilitated by the government of Canada. Refer to the resource section to learn more. Using the Relocation Examples cards provided, have students place cards on the relevant locations on the map and discuss how these movements affected communities and whether they believe the wrongs perpetrated against these communities have been corrected or not.

# MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE

## Age appropriate application and experiential learning

### ELEMENTARY

K-6

- **Using the Animal Migration cards**, select different animals that migrate in Canada. Have students show their migration patterns and show how different groups of Indigenous Peoples may have travelled to follow the migration of the animals.
- **Discuss with students what it would feel like** if their family was forced to move to a different part of the country where they had no knowledge of the land. Can they relate this to the history of Indigenous Peoples?
- **List different ways and reasons for why Indigenous Peoples travel** (e.g., Inuit going out on the Land for hunting or fishing). Connect this back to your local community if possible.
- **Examine how travel and migration changes** during the different times of year. Divide students into three groups, and have each group select a different Indigenous group. Have students investigate how each group travels, when and how it has changed over time.

### INTERMEDIATE

7-9

- **Look deeper into the movement of settlers** from Canada's mainland to Newfoundland and the effects of the encroachment onto Beothuk traditional territories.
- **Have your students research** incidences of natural and human-caused environmental disasters that caused the movement of people in Canada. Have them compare and contrast the degree of displacement, the resulting effects, and if people were able to return to their native land.
- **Have students locate** cities on the map that have a large Inuit, First Nation or Métis population. Ask students to identify any patterns or trends and to discuss why these areas may be attractive to each particular Indigenous group.
- **Have students compare** the characteristics and effects of forced relocations with the effects of residential schools. More attention is often paid to residential schools; is this warranted? Use the map to see if forced relocations were often in the vicinity of residential schools.
- **Have students look at the map**, and discuss relocations that took place inland, near the coast, in the North, in the Maritimes, in the South, etc. Give them time to think about the question: *why* were these people being relocated? See what they focus on in their answers. Do they touch on the fact that colonists were looking to gain access to land and resources and that relocation seemed to be their "solution"?
- **Could relocations happen in the future?** Could they be carried out in a kinder, gentler or voluntary way? Canadians as a whole still need resources, and with rising population numbers this demand will only increase. Have students suggest how they think this could be done. Focus on a region on the map with a proposed development that would infringe on a population.

# MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE

## Age appropriate application and experiential learning

### SECONDARY

10-12

- **Look at different creation stories and map** out the movement of people as described in the stories. How does this relate to where Indigenous people have lived traditionally and where they live now?
- **Research similarities** among the movement of groups of Indigenous Peoples around the world and those in Canada. Compare how these movements were enforced and if they have been corrected or not.
- **Look at current reserve lands** and compare this to migration pathways and habitats for animals. Ask your students to determine whether the current location of Indigenous-owned land is conducive to harvesting and hunting (i.e., whether the habitats and migration patterns of animals match up with the reserve lands).
- **Ask students to think about** what situations would make them want to leave their homes to relocate. Explain to students how the encroachment of Europeans onto Mi'kmaq territory and the ensuing mistreatment of the Indigenous population forced some groups to seek safety on Katamkuq, the land across the waves, now known as Newfoundland, a **part of traditional Mi'kmaq territory**. Ask students what knowledge and resources would have made the journey desirable. Challenge students to determine possible routes travelled by those who landed on the south coast and settled Conne River (in Newfoundland), deciding on the most logical area of landing. Tell students the story of that arrival and trace the route taken once the schooner arrived in Newfoundland to the permanent location of Conne River, which eventually became a federally recognized reserve in Canada.
- **Students could read** *Night Spirits: The Story of the Relocation of the Sayisi Dene* by Ila Bussidor and Ustun Bilgen-Reinart (2000) with the teacher and discuss how these people transitioned abruptly from a traditional nomadic life of hunting and fishing to a settled lifestyle in a slum.

# MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE



## DEMONSTRATION OF LEARNING

- **Have students share the journey of artifacts** (how items have ended up where they are now) that have been found around the country and relate this to the movement of people.
- **Have students present plays, poems or stories** about forced relocation to show their knowledge and learning.
- **Have students research popular Indigenous festivals or events** that take place in various parts of Canada, as well as when they take place, and who travels to these locations.



## LEARNING TO ACTION

- **Contact local Indigenous organizations and/or communities** to discuss their seasonal movements, traditionally and currently. Discuss how the transfer of land rights has affected how and where their people currently live.