Deconstructing Canada's Colonial Narrative: Creating Space for Indigenous Narratives in Canadian Heritage

Master of Environmental Studies Thesis

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Abstract

Canada's colonial legacy affects how heritage spaces are interpreted to emphasize nation-building at the expense of Indigenous narratives. This project explores how Canadians might collaboratively deconstruct the dominant narrative and create a space for a more inclusive heritage overviews of the country, while examining the power dynamics between European settler history and Indigenous narratives that have been largely ignored. It will explore the effects of colonial legacy by examining how heritage spaces (museums and parks) are interpreted to emphasize Canadian nation-building at the expense of Indigenous narratives. Contemporary heritage spaces provide an opportunity for Indigenous community members, museum professionals, and researchers to collaboratively re-examine past and present narratives and to authentically re-tell Canada's history in a decolonized manner. The objectives of this research were to: 1) aid in the deconstruction of Canada's colonial historical narrative by examining how Indigenous narratives are showcased in heritage spaces; 2) examine how Canada has represented heritage diversity in the past and present, and to determine the success of these methods; and 3) explore how heritage spaces have worked to integrate authentic Indigenous narratives into Canadian heritage programming in a mindful, meaningful, inclusive, respectful, and collaborative manner.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted, transcribed, and interpreted as my main methods. These included museum personnel to investigate the perceived success, failure, accessibility, and accuracy of history shared in their heritage spaces in relation to Indigenous narratives. Other interview topics included Indigenous views on the inclusivity of Canadian heritage and what they believe the path forward should be. While heritage spaces need to explore and celebrate the varied immigrant experiences of past and contemporary Canada, the focus of

my research provided an opportunity to identify where deficiencies exist in the sharing of Indigenous narratives in Canadian heritage, and how we can collectively move forward. These results were examined using a critical theoretical lens. The themes that emerged from my analysis focused on education, landscape, Indigenous ways of life, language, collaboration, authenticity of narratives, respect, relationships, stewardship, and ceremony. All these themes can be applied to explore how to move forward and decolonize heritage spaces making room for authentic Indigenous narratives.

Acknowledgements

Writing this thesis has been a work of sweat and tears of my own decolonizing journey, and an act of truth-telling as an Indigenous ally of primarily settler heritage. I am from Newfoundland, and both my paternal and maternal family heritage extends back to the early settlements of the island in the mid-1600s, with origins in England and Scotland, and my paternal heritage additionally stems from the Mi'kmaq from Sipekne’latik or Nova Scotia. Raised in Alberta in Treaty 6, 7, and 8, this vast and diverse prairie landscape has become my home and a place that I love. I firmly believe that connection to yourself starts in your awareness of your personal connection to place. This thesis has been researched, investigated, and written in a variety of places, and I acknowledge: the traditional territory of Fort William First Nation; Treaty 3 Anishinaabe territory; and Treaty 6 and 7 territories, the traditional and ancestral lands to the Blackfoot, Cree, Dene, Nakota Sioux, Saulteau, Tsuu T’ina, and the Métis Nation of Alberta. My heritage spaces reside in Treaty 3, Treaty 5, Treaty 6, and Treaty 7 territory. I acknowledge all of the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit whose footsteps have marked these lands since time immemorial.

My research has had to pivot multiple times due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in me looking for employment, which brought me back to Alberta to explore opportunities within the provincial park system. These opportunities led me to my current role within parks visitor engagement, which allows me to continue this important work, and share that with Albertans through interpretive programming in the central region. While working full time, working on my master’s thesis was challenging, but it was also rewarding as I was able to learn new skills and develop my ability to multi-task and focus. The COVID-19 pandemic was challenging as heritage spaces were closed, but it offered new opportunities to explore how to serve Canadians

and foreigners in these spaces. This added a unique perspective that I was able to capture in this thesis.

I have a Bachelor of Arts in psychology and a Bachelor of Science in archaeology and geography, culminating in this multi-disciplinary thesis. While my background aided in the inspiration, it truly is the people who have supported me along the way who have made this research possible. I would like to thank my family, especially my parents, who have always supported me and encouraged me to follow my dreams wherever they may take me and fostering my love of adventure and education. To my friends who have read excerpts of my thesis or allowed me to brainstorm with them, or ensured I took time for myself while working on this project (grabbing a beer, going for a hike, going on spur of the moment adventures) - thank you. To my graduate supervisor Dr. Scott Hamilton and committee members Dr. Martha Dowsley, and Dr. Jill Taylor-Hollings - thank you for all your enduring support as I have been procrastinating and slowly writing this thesis (I promised I would get this done!). You all took me in as family when I moved to Thunder Bay, and that meant the world to me. Thank you for all the pep-talks, encouragement, support, laughs and friendship - without you all I would not have completed this work. Finally, I would especially like to acknowledge the late Glenn Jourdain from Couchiching First Nation with whom I spent many mornings sharing stories over cups of McDonald’s coffee. Due to his friendship and encouragement while I was living in Fort Frances, I explored how Indigenous narratives were being represented at the local museum that I worked at, translating into the heart of this thesis. I will honour his memory by continuing this decolonization journey in my personal life and in my work as an Indigenous ally. Thank you, Glenn, for taking me under your wing and being a grandfather to me. Miigwech.

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Key Terminology

This thesis will explore themes by considering heritage as a space. Before we delve deeper into this thesis, these definitions should provide some clarity of topics to be discussed in further sections and chapters.

Heritage Site: these are designated physical locations on the landscape that have been designated as important for heritage of Canadians and we see it memorialized through designation as parks, museums, and through national and global designations (i.e., National Historic Sites and UNESCO World Heritage Site). This definition is very static and does not allow much change in heritage narratives.

Heritage Space: is an abstract space where heritage narratives can be explored within a physical space, on the landscape, within a group of people, or as a project spanning across a vast area. It is dynamic and allows people to explore beyond any physical representations of heritage on the landscape, looking at the culture that is imbued within the landscape (the culture of peoples that acted upon the landscape).

History: this lends to the established history that is told across Canada – more formalized. Canadians look at history through inherited traditions, monuments, objects, and culture. This also includes oral histories, pictographs, and scrolls from Indigenous peoples.

Indigenous: a collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants. The Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups: First Nations, Inuit, and Métis.

Narrative: this is a spoken or written account of events that are related.

Non-Indigenous: Canadians whose ancestors immigrated to Canada after the initial colonization of Canada from the 1900s on.

Settler: non-Indigenous Canadians with European heritage stemming from the original

colonization of Canada (mainly British and French).

Time Immemorial: represents a time reaching beyond memory.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC): this commission was created in 2007 and was developed to provide an opportunity for Indigenous peoples who were directly or indirectly affected by the legacy of Indian Residential School system to share stories and experiences. This resulted in the development of the 94 Calls to Action in 2015 which are recommendations for all levels of government to further reconciliation between non-Indigenous, settler, and Indigenous people.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP): this document was developed by the United Nations for the protection of Indigenous peoples worldwide. It was accepted globally in 2007, with Canada acknowledging but not signing. Canada did not sign until 2021.

Chapter 1: Introduction

"Narratives continue to have a powerful influence on how Indigenous people and settlers understand and misunderstand each other today. The dominant-culture belief that the settler version is the real history - the factual recounting of what happened - whereas Native history is just a legend or make-believe story is a way of saying that the former is true and the latter is not."

Regan (2010, p. 68-69)

"Teaching citizens this history could provide an opportunity for all of us to work seriously to create a country not afraid to see the past for what it has been in order to build a strong present and a stronger future based on respect for future generations, for the ancestors, and for all the human beings who now live together on this land."

Nock & Haig-Brown (2006, p. 6)

1.1 Introduction

The phrase, history is written by the victor, explains how different narratives have been created, emphasized, changed, or silenced in Canada. Our country has a long history, but much of the major events taught in classrooms and in institutions are predominantly colonial events, ignoring or underplaying the fact that Indigenous people have been in Canada for thousands of years. It makes it seem that Canadian history starts when the Norse arrived at L'Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland around the year 1000 CE (Government of Canada, 2022), then there is a gap in historical events (even though Indigenous people were living here) until John Cabot arrived in Newfoundland in 1497, ignoring any Indigenous history or events in this period. By doing a simple google search of "History of Canada" the first link that populates is "Discover Canada – Canada's History" (Government of Canada, 2015). The first section in that website is about Indigenous peoples with only eight sentences discussing their heritage before it jumps into colonial interactions. This example is one of many that you can find either online or in books. Indigenous history in Canada is much more dynamic and nuanced than how it is currently portrayed, but slowly that narrative is changing for the better.

History is the study of past events, and how those historic trajectories influenced the present. In Canada, most people studying history tend to consider it through a colonial lens, and frame it following Western academic conventions defined by key dates and eras. These colonial events are then memorialized by museums and parks, sharing a version of the past to the general public which is showcased on the Government of Canada's National Historic site webpage. This webpage brings viewers to an interactive map to select a site in Canada to learn more about. At a first glance it focuses on fort sites, battles between settlers and Indigenous peoples, and important European Settlers in Canada's history (Government of Canada, 2022). While these sites are impressive in the retelling of Canadian historical events, from my experience they are frequently not inclusive of Indigenous narratives or offer only one-dimensional and culturally uninformed representations of that narrative. Indigenous histories are sometimes not tied to a formal calendar timeline, they are often shared as stories and passed down through generations through oral traditions. Consequently, many Canadians have dismissed these narratives as legends or myths, and therefore less reliable or accurate than the Euro-Canadian perspective informed by written text and validated as 'official history'. Oral traditions have only recently been accepted in legal context as a valid way to recount history, as proven by the Delgamuukw vs British Columbia in 1997, where it established that oral traditions can be used as proof of occupancy on the land (Turner, 2019).

To change how the public engages with Indigenous narratives, we (academics and heritage professionals) need to "begin a process of 'unlearning' whereby we begin to question received truths," (Nock & Haig-Brown, 2006, p. 4), thereby making room in heritage spaces for previously unshared and hidden narratives of the intertwined non-Indigenous and Indigenous histories. This is done in part by listening to the oral traditions shared by Indigenous

communities and not writing them off as myth. While some may argue that this process may start with academia, I believe that this work needs to be done in heritage spaces with Indigenous communities to showcase Indigenous historical narratives to the general public. By doing this, we can transform our heritage spaces to be truly inclusive.

1.2 Research Problem

My thesis will explore the effects of Canada's colonial legacy by examining how heritage spaces (museums and parks) are interpreted to emphasize Canadian nation-building at the expense of Indigenous narratives. While the history of Canada is an interwoven mosaic of many cultures, Canada's foundational history relies heavily on non-Indigenous memory of how British and French immigrants came to Canada, explored, discovered, settled, and built a nation from its colonial roots, rendering Indigenous existence and contributions to Canadian development passive and relegated to the background (Furniss, 2000; Hamilton, 2016; Logan, 2014; Neufeld, 2012). While there are other immigrant influences, Canada's primary dominant historical narrative comes back to the two founding colonial nations: Britain and France. This thesis will look at the power dynamics between European settler history and the impact this has on Indigenous narratives still today.

1.3 Study Areas

This thesis examines the research problem in four different heritage spaces in western Canada: Writing-On-Stone/Áísínai'pi Provincial Park in Alberta (Government of Alberta, 2018); the Saskatchewan Archaeology Society (Saskatchewan Archaeological Society, 2023); my work with the Six Seasons of Asiniskaw Īthiniwak (Gosse, 2020) (Figure 1 Map); and Pimachiowin Aki UNESCO Heritage Site in Northern Ontario/Manitoba (Corporation, Pimachiowin Aki, 2016) (Figure 2 Map). At Writing-on-Stone/Áísínai'pi Provincial Park, Saskatchewan Archaeological Society, and Pimachiowin Aki UNESCO World Heritage Site, there were no specific projects analyzed. Rather the focus at these sites was on the organization, their heritage programs as a whole, and their efforts to be inclusive of Indigenous narratives. These spaces showcase how Indigenous narratives are interpreted and presented to the general public. Writing-

Figure 1. Overview map of the four case studies (Gosse, 2023 via Google Maps).

on-Stone/Áísínai'pi Provincial Park and Pimachiowin Aki are both newly designated UNESCO World Heritage sites (since 2018) with similar Indigenous themes connecting cultural heritage to the landscape. The Saskatchewan Archaeological Society is an active society seeking to share the heritage of Saskatchewan to the public in authentic and multi-varied ways. The Six Seasons of the Asiniskaw Īthiniwak Project is a SSHRC partnership[1] project with the overarching goal to transform how Rocky Cree children learn about their heritage in the classroom. It may well provide a template for changing the broader Manitoba curriculum to enable re-learning of

Figure 2. Closeup map of First Nation communities and park sites within Pimachiowin Aki (Gosse, 2023 via Google Maps).

[1] The Six Seasons of the Asiniskaw Īthiniwak Project Partners: University of Winnipeg, the Asiniskow Īthiniwak Mamawiwin, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Family & Community Wellness Centre, the O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation, Lakehead University, the Manitoba Government Education and Training Branch, the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre Inc., the Government of Manitoba Indigenous and Northern Relations Branch, the Manitoba Museum, the Government of Manitoba Sport, Culture and Heritage Branch, and Portage and Main Press.

Canada’s national history, ultimately contributing towards reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (Six Seasons, 2020). This collaborative effort demonstrates how intuitions and individuals are willing to collaborate to help change the dominant narratives in education. The two UNESCO sites are traditional types of heritage spaces, while the society and Six Seasons project are unique in how they approach cultural heritage and creating heritage spaces to share about Indigenous narratives. They were selected because they showcased a blend of traditional and non-traditional ways of creating space.

1.4 Objectives

Deriving from my research question are three main thesis objectives:

1. To aid in the deconstruction of Canada’s colonial historical narrative by examining how Indigenous narratives are showcased in heritage spaces;
2. To examine how Canada has represented heritage diversity in the past and present, and to determine the success of these methods; and
3. To explore how heritage spaces have worked to integrate authentic Indigenous narratives into Canadian heritage programming in a mindful, meaningful, inclusive, respectful, and collaborative manner.

These objectives are important to investigate because I feel that even today there is not a balanced approach in how Indigenous versus non-Indigenous narratives are showcased. In my experience, Indigenous stories still seem to be told through a European lens. While there are more approaches offered and more stories are being shared and highlighted, I want to employ a critical theoretical perspective to evaluate how/if authentic Indigenous narratives are making their way into Canadian heritage programming in meaningful and inclusive ways.

1.5 Theoretical Approach

To address how heritage spaces (this can be museums, parks, or any space, physical or abstract, that enable sharing of narratives regarding heritage) are often interpreted to emphasize Canadian nation-building at the expense of Indigenous narratives, I have utilized a critical theoretical approach. This critical examination of Canadian heritage spaces is essential because of the underlying power dynamic between European settlers and Indigenous peoples that still exists today. European settlers first came to Canada in the 1500s, and eventually came to dominate the colonial 'landscape'. Historical syntheses of those events emphasize settlers' stories at the expense of Indigenous narratives. Europeans 'settled' the land and sought to force the assimilation of Indigenous peoples to European cultural values. The Indian Act and the Indian Residential School system are overt examples of this agenda and have been described as contributing to cultural genocide. These agendas usually underlie how heritage spaces in Canada are created, interpreted, and valued. It is in this context that I critically consider the power structures at play and how it influences how we deliberately and unwittingly create and share in heritage spaces today. The theoretical approach will be elaborated on in *Chapter 3*.

1.6 Methods

My research focus considers the effects of Canada's colonial legacy by examining how heritage spaces (museums and parks) are interpreted to emphasize Canadian nation-building at the expense of Indigenous narratives. To address this focus, I conducted qualitative interviews (Appendix A) with six heritage professionals across western Canada about: 1) how Indigenous narratives are showcased in spaces (physical or abstract); 2) if that changed considering the TRC

94 Calls to Action (2015); and if there was a trend for decolonization within these spaces and whether the participants had recommendations for other spaces. The specific methods and rationale for using them will be elaborated on in *Chapter 3*.

The Canadian government's relationship with Indigenous peoples has been changing over the past few decades (Joseph, 2018; Northern Affairs Canada, 2017). In 2008 Prime Minister Steven Harper apologized for the past systemic racism and Residential Schools, leading to the Indian Residential Schools TRC that culminated in its 2015 94 Calls to Action that summarized the findings of its multi-volume report. However, change has been slow and not many of those 94 calls have been addressed. This thesis examines 13 of these calls as they relate to heritage to see the connections between the recommendations given to Canada and how they are being acted upon. These themes and analysis are reviewed in *Chapter 4.3* and *Chapter 5.1*.

In recent years several collaborative methods have been utilized to deconstruct the predominantly Euro-centric narratives and create spaces for more inclusivity in Canadian historical narratives (Onciul, 2017; Six Seasons, 2020). Contemporary heritage spaces provide an opportunity for museum professionals, researchers, and Indigenous community members to work collaboratively to re-examine these past and present narratives to tell Canada's history in a decolonized and more authentic manner (Lowman & Barker, 2015; Belanger et al., 2008; Duhamel, 2017; Onciul, 2017). This process is ongoing as new themes and methods are continuously being explored. While Indigenous narratives have become increasingly visible in the previous decade, heritage spaces can do more to acknowledge the impacts of colonialism and create spaces for authentic Indigenous stories and themes that come directly from Indigenous communities and elders that reflect appropriate cultural values. This research will examine how Canadian heritage spaces are currently representing Indigenous narratives, which will result in

exploration of how these heritage spaces can go further in deconstructing the current historical narratives to provide new and inclusive platforms for Indigenous voices.

1.7 Thesis Organization

This thesis is organized with this chapter introducing the thesis research question, study area, objectives, theoretical approach, methods, and context. *Chapter 2* will review the literature around Canadian heritage in the past, present, decolonization, the TRC's 94 Calls to Action, and how these apply to heritage spaces. Then, *Chapter 3* will explore the critical theoretical approach used to examine my results, while also highlighting the methodology underlying processes of data collection and analysis. Next, *Chapter 4* will review what heritage spaces are and each of my case study heritage spaces; and *Chapter 5* will report the results of the interviews conducted. *Chapter 6* will interpret the findings and limitations through a discussion. Lastly, *Chapter 7* will discuss conclusions and future directions for research. The objectives of my research will be addressed in various chapters:

Objective 1: To aid in the deconstruction of Canada's colonial historical narrative by examining how Indigenous narratives are showcased in heritage spaces. This will be addressed in *Chapter 2* in a review of the literature surrounding Indigenous narratives in Canadian heritage spaces; in *Chapter 4* that looks at the specific case studies for this thesis; and in the results, analysis, and conclusion in *Chapters 5*, *6*, and *7*.

Objective 2: To examine how Canada has represented heritage diversity in the past and present, and to determine the success of these methods. This will be examined in *Chapter 2* by looking at how heritage has been constructed along a primarily

Euro-centric focus to today; and in *Chapters 5*, *6*, and *7* which will look at how these methods employed by heritage spaces have been successful or not.

Objective 3: To explore how heritage spaces have worked to integrate authentic Indigenous narratives into Canadian heritage programming in a mindful, meaningful, inclusive, respectful, and collaborative manner. This is addressed through the results, analysis, and conclusion sections of this thesis as I explore the results and impacts of my case study sites in *Chapters 5*, *6*, and *7*.

Chapter 2: Western Canada's Culture History and Current Narratives in Heritage Spaces

This chapter offers a brief overview of the culture history of western Canada, specifically in terms of addressing events involving Indigenous peoples. It is divided into four sections, each with a timeline. The rather large-scale periods in the Precontact timeframe are generally derived from archaeological interpretations. I then discuss the Protocontact and Postcontact periods, based heavily upon written documents or ethnography. Still later, the modern context of western Canada is detailed.

I will also examine decolonization, the TRC of Canada and the specific calls to action that address cultural heritage, and the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples. This chapter will discuss the background for how and why contemporary heritage spaces exist today and Indigenous narratives we might see within them.

2.1 Western Canadian Culture History

The European narrative of Canada's history only extends back 500 years when Europeans landed on the shores (with outlying events like the Vikings landing in Newfoundland in 100 CE). Indigenous narratives of their heritage of what we now know as Canada, goes back to time immemorial. Blending the two perspectives is complex as they are steeped in power dynamics between non-Indigenous/settler and Indigenous peoples. This results in knowledge gaps and interpretative extrapolations that usually reflect exclusively settler experiences. To illustrate this phenomenon, I created a brief timeline of important events using a variety of sources, with particular reliance on the *Key Moments in Indigenous History* by Historica Canada (2016), and the Canadian Encyclopedia First Nations Timeline (2023). I acknowledge how my positionality affects my views of history as informed through a chronological timeline, however many

Indigenous perspectives view history as a cycle of being and becoming (Cardinal et al., 2005) – it is not fixed to a timeline scale. Previous renditions of Indigenous heritage have been described primarily through male Caucasian settler Canadians in academia. While these perspectives of Indigenous histories and culture were done presumably with the best intentions, they tend perpetuate the colonial experience through their personal and professional biases and experiences. By simply being of this particular background, they have more privilege than their Indigenous male or female counterparts in Canada, resulting in them becoming unwitting agents of the continuing colonial process that infiltrates Indigenous narratives today. This thesis seeks to examine how widely accepted heritage narratives are shared in Canada to understand the power dynamics that were and still are at play, and to understand how we can create more inclusive spaces where Indigenous communities can share their narratives authentically. Here is the problem: how do we move away from non-Indigenous/settler people sharing Indigenous stories and create space for Indigenous voices? While my background is primarily non-Indigenous, I can look at how non-Indigenous heritage frameworks need to be more inclusive and where non-Indigenous people can aid in the creation of these safe spaces in heritage. This thesis will investigate through case studies to see how heritage spaces today are actively trying to create a platform for Indigenous narratives to be shared authentically.

The framing of Indigenous history and how it is shared is undergoing change. In school curricula there is the acknowledgement of North America Indigenous people's history, but not explicitly identifying that Indigenous peoples have been in Canada since time immemorial (Alberta Education, 2020; Indigenous Education Responsibility Framework Advisory Committee, 2022). Time immemorial is a phrase which means time reaching beyond the extent of memory and tradition, which is particularly relevant in light of Indigenous oral history culture.

Time immemorial can mean different things to different groups: the Anishinaabe story of the creation of Turtle Island (what settler Canadians now identify as Canada); extending back beyond living memory; or a term to indicate that Indigenous peoples were here before Europeans. Even with this vastness of time and space, we only see small little segments of that history being shared in curricula, with the bulk reflecting Indigenous/Settler relations starting as early as the 1500s in eastern Canada, and the 1700s for much of western Canada (Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortium, 2023). For the purposes of this thesis, time immemorial represents a time reaching beyond memory. Many Indigenous nations and individuals share a world view focused on knowledge transmission through oral traditions. Stories are shared from one generation to the next and are continually passed along through time. While details of stories might change, due to specific events or the community that is sharing it, the moral or core of a shared story and history is the same. Prior to the 2000s, textbooks commonly found in Canadian schools were very Eurocentric, and implicitly focused on the perceived successes of the British empire. Textbooks disseminated in school classrooms focused on how Canada developed as a nation from its two 'founding colonial nations', predominantly ignoring Indigenous narratives except for brief moments when Indigenous peoples helped European settlers with the establishment of the fur trade and in early wars (Foxcroft, 2017).

These next sections briefly consider how Indigenous role is addressed in the conventional Canadian historical narrative by considering four different general time blocks: from time immemorial to 1493; from 1500s to the mid 1800s; mid 1800s to the mid-1990s; and then the current situation. The events listed below are by no means exhaustive, but I have selected events from previously made timelines on Historica Canada (2016) and The Canadian Encyclopedia (2023). Many of these events seem to direct Indigenous narratives at events happening 'to'

Indigenous people through the lens of European events. They are briefly summarized to set the stage for discussions in the thesis. These events will specifically be highlighting the unequal power dynamic, showcasing how European narratives have become the prominent historical record, with Indigenous perspectives fading to the back.

For a more detailed overview, review the timelines published by Historica Canada (2016) and The Canadian Encyclopedia (2023).While these are incomplete and are heavy biased towards Upper Canada and Quebec, they provide an overview of Indigenous events in Canadian history from time immemorial to today.

2.1.1 Before European Settlers Came to North America - Time Immemorial to 1493 CE

To set the stage, Indigenous peoples have been living on Turtle Island (now known as Canada) since time immemorial. Archaeological evidence indicates human occupation by at least 18,000 BCE in North America (Historica Canada, 2016), supporting the Indigenous narrative of occupancy of Canada as soon as this landscape became accessible after the last ice age. During this early period, Indigenous people moved across the continent in small migrating groups shortly after the landscape and its resources could support them. In western Canada, there is evidence of people inhabiting southern Alberta archaeological sites by at least 10,000 years ago based on evidence found at Wally’s Beach in the St. Mary’s Reservoir (McNeil et al., 2005). This demonstrates humans were hunting megafauna like horse and bovids. The Indigenous

people of this late Pleistocene period are characterized by the distinctive clovis projectile point used by them (Keyser & Klassen, 2001; McNeil et al., 2005).

Archaeologists generally group the precontact era into broad timeframes such as the Paleoindian period (9500 to 7000 BC), the Archaic period (7000 to 1000 BC), Woodland period (1000 BC to 1600 CE) and Post Contact period (1600 CE to present) (Ontario Archaeological Society, 2023). These time periods are determined by evidence of cultural technological changes, and absolute and relative dating (Keyser & Klassen, 2001), however these broad frameworks are variable, and change based on an individual's perspective (some stick to using early, middle, and late for time periods). For the purposes of this thesis, this broad timeframe gives a general understanding of time and will not be used for any analysis.

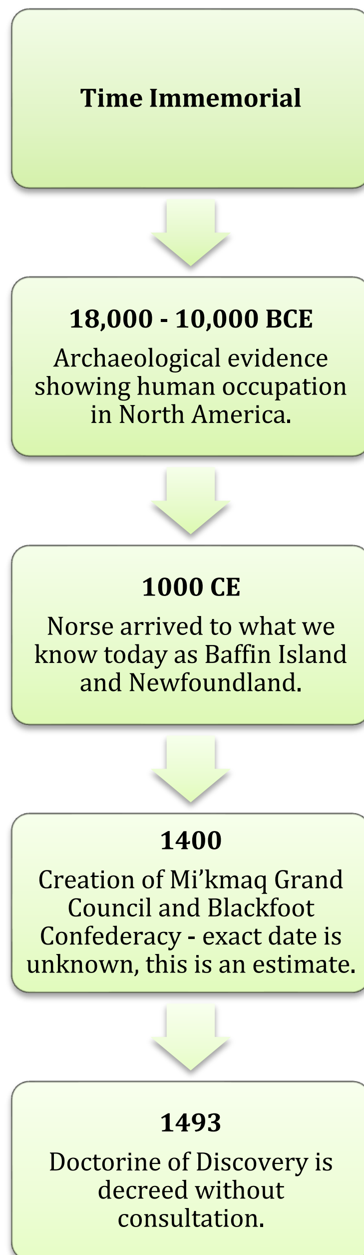


Figure 3. Timeline from Time Immemorial to 1493 (Gosse, 2023).

Much later, during the Woodland period, in some regions larger socio-political groups were formulated that involved larger governing bodies (councils and confederacies, such as the Blackfoot Confederacy in central/south Alberta and northern Montana (Historica Canada, 2016). A review of ethnographic and contemporary literature suggests that many Indigenous nations are characterized by world views that value respect for the land and offer

expectations how people are to interact within it. Even into modern times, these Indigenous world views emphasize humans as a part of nature, and never its master (Morton, 2017). Given that much of widely accepted understandings of ancient Indigenous culture and history derive from archaeology, the key spiritual and socio-political themes are sparsely represented in the timelines. Frequently more detailed discussion is geographically specific, based on better documented archaeological evidence and some oral history accounts. However, it is important to note that accounts of oral history have been lost due to the cultural genocide and attempted assimilation of Indigenous peoples by European settlers.

The pace of change represented in these timelines transformed for some Indigenous peoples after the Norse briefly landed in Newfoundland around 1000 CE and later with Basque whalers in the late 15th century (Proulx, 1993). While these Basque groups were here looking to hunt and fish, rather than claim lands, their poorly documented interactions with the local Indigenous peoples likely contributed to change. When Christopher Columbus landed in Caribbean in 1492, he claimed the discovery of the Americas, and deemed the Indigenous peoples of the land to be ‘savage’ in nature according to the secular and religious authorities of the time (LibreTexts Social Sciences, 2022). These and other early colonial explorations contributed to a series of Papal Bulls in the mid-late 1400s, including *The Doctrine of Discovery*, that was used as “legal and moral justification for colonial dispossession of sovereign Indigenous Nations, including First Nations in … Canada,” (Assembly of First Nations, 2018). This became the quasi-legal justification for how explorers from various European nations laid claim to lands on behalf of their respective nations. These doctrines reflect unquestioned assertions of European racial, spiritual, and moral superiority, and was the rationale for forced assimilation and colonial

domination that contributed to the cultural genocide of Indigenous peoples throughout Canada throughout the last 500 years.

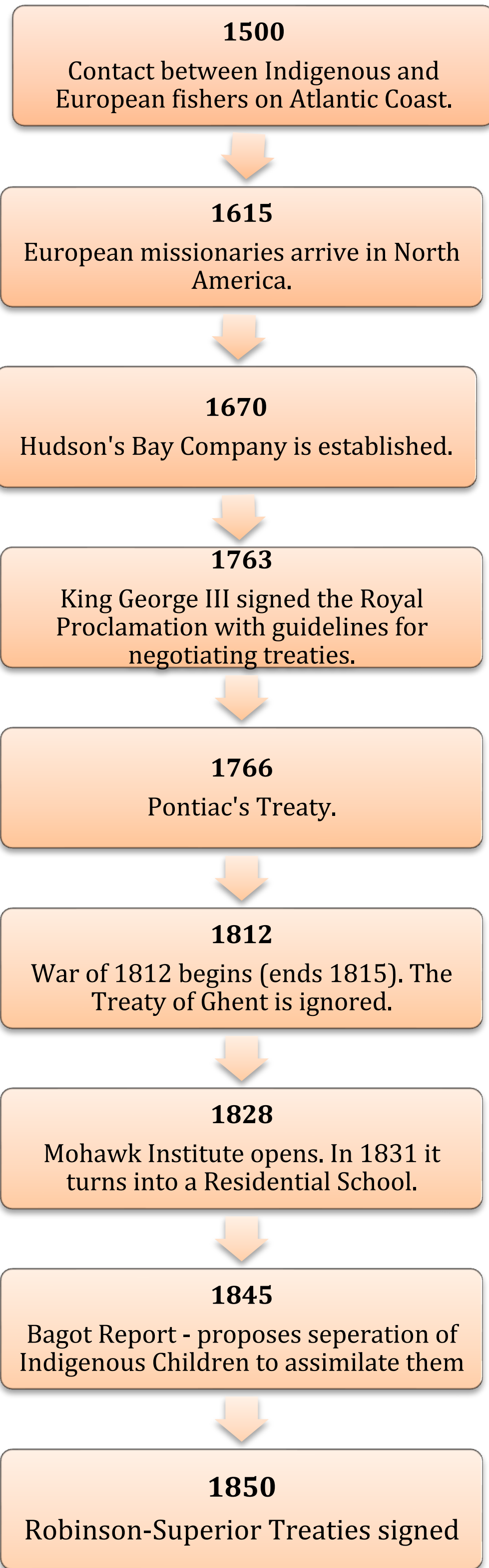


Figure 4. Timeline 1500 to 1850 (Gosse, 2023).

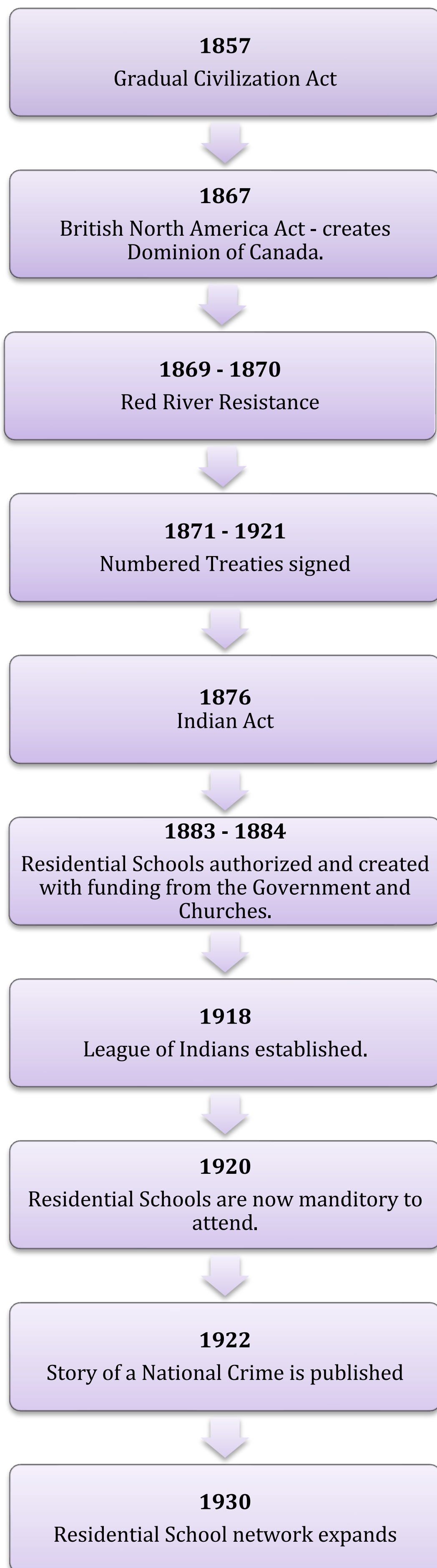
2.1.2 Arrival of European Settlers to the Start of Treaty Signings - 1500s to mid-1800s

Beginning as early as the 1500s, Europeans immigrated to Canada to escape persecution at home or to seek a better future (e.g., Irish groups or the northern Scottish who were removed from their lands by landlords during the Highland clearances in the 1700s (Prebble, 1969)). As the initial trickle of colonial settlement became a deluge, the newcomers where able to assert economic and political dominance. Not all interactions between Indigenous and settlers were hostile - some were comparatively congenial, and they would work collaboratively in the Fur Trade period in many regions (Finkle, 2012). We can see this in the early establishment of settler communities and how they were assisted with survival in the winters in this harsh new land, and how to fend for themselves by hunting, fishing, and trapping (Finkle, 2012). Trade alliances were established, and later treaties were formulated under what Indigenous peoples considered to be nation-to-nation agreements where both

parties worked together. European leaders reneged on their part of the treaties or offered up subpar opportunities which they eventually forced Indigenous populations into (i.e., reserve system and residential schools being the most devastating ones).

After the 7 Years War that left Britain with colonial control over most of North America, King George III signed the Royal Proclamation of 1763. This provided the basis for how settler administrators would interact with Indigenous peoples on a nation-to-nation basis within British North America. It guaranteed certain rights and protections for Indigenous peoples, and the processes through which the established Euro-Canadian government could acquire their lands (treaties) (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2023).

In 1775, the America Revolution began, rocky the British empire, and culminating in the loss of much of southern North America (as it has become the United States of America). The War of 1812 further aids in the contention between Americans, the British, and the Indigenous groups that were stuck in the middle. The Treaty of Ghent was signed in 1815 at the end of the War of 1812, which "declared that Indigenous peoples were entitled to the land they had occupied before the war and were not to be targets of hostility" (Hall & Albers, 2022), although neither the Americans nor British upheld these promises to the Indigenous peoples. Following this, both Americans and the British exerted colonial pressure and displaced Indigenous peoples as settlers moved further west (Hall & Albers, 2022), and the 'Nation to Nation' relationships promised were supplanted by assimilationist policies that contributed to the cultural genocide of Indigenous peoples. This set the foundations for treaties to be used as a tool to confine Indigenous Nations to reserves under the authority of the government, which would free up land for immigrant settlement.



By the mid 1800s these assimilationist policies became well established with the production of reports (i.e., Bagot Report proposing the assimilation of Indigenous children (Bagot, 1845)) and the start of treaty signings (i.e., Robinson-Superior Treaty in 1850 (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2023)) that reinforce paternalistic control of the state over Indigenous communities. Indigenous people signed treaties in good faith, but ultimately these eroded their economic, political, and military power by the end of this period, expediting the shift in power from Indigenous communities to the state. This resulted in confinement to reserves, loss of culture, inability to participate in ceremony, and the establishment of the Indian Act which allowed residential schools to have this enormous power in critical cultural genocide of Indigenous peoples.

2.1.3 Rise and Fall of Residential Schools – 1850s to 1996

Instead of being a safe place to learn and grow, Indian Residential Schools were designed to

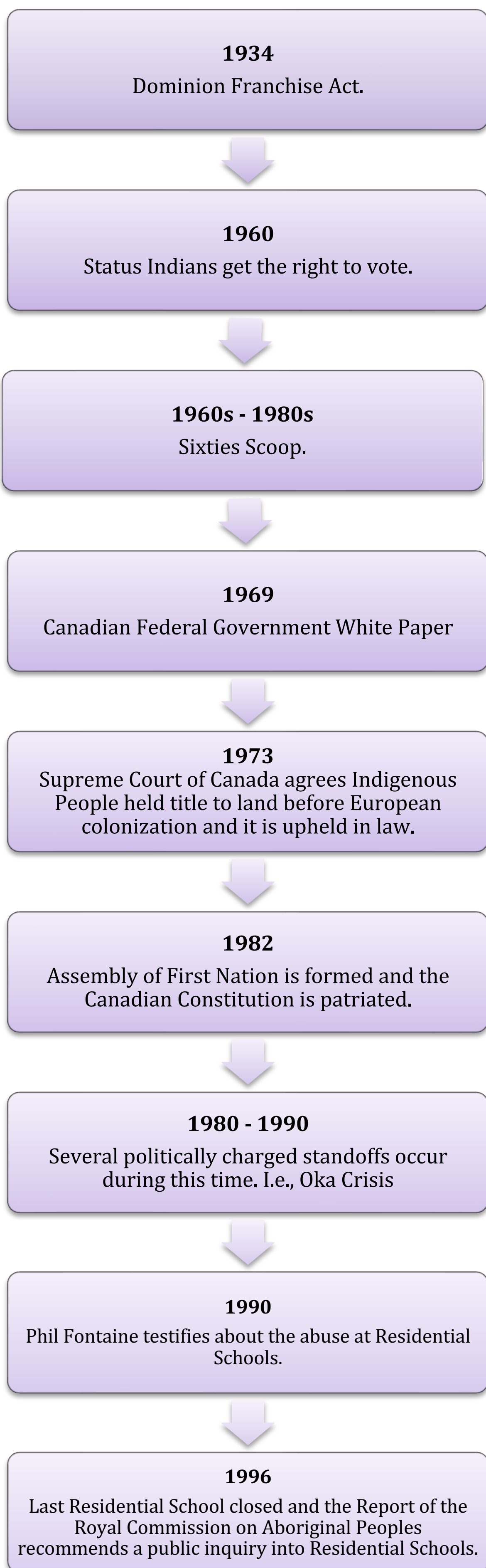


Figure 5. Timeline 1857 to 1996 (Gosse, 2023).

execute the forced assimilation of Indigenous children, and where at least 4,130 children died. During the period from the 1850s to 1996, we see the rise and fall of Residential Schools in Canada that coincided with the signing of various treaties which essentially gave settler governments paternalistic control over Indigenous Nations and as a result contributed to the cultural genocide of Indigenous people in Canada. The treaties stripped Indigenous peoples of their autonomy as they were confined to allotted reserve lands under the authority of the Indian Act. Diseases repeatedly spread through communities, decimating the populations particularly on the plains (Daschuk, 2013). The implementation of different reports and acts (Bagot Report (Bagot, 1845), Gradual Civilization Act (Hanson, 2009), Indian Act (Hanson, 2009), Dominion Franchise Act (Hanson, 2009)) contributed to the loss of Indigenous access to lands and rights promised under treaties that were made in the spirit of nation-to-nation agreements.

During this period, Indigenous resistance occurred in several different places – for example, the Red River Resistance in Manitoba, and the Frog Lake Incident in Saskatchewan (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2023). These incidents reflect how Indigenous people sought to regain independence and rights from colonial settlers and to stand up against the disenfranchisement that had been progressively legislated. In 1870 Louis Riel led the Métis resistance to the sale of Rupert's Land without their representation in negotiations. This 1870 resistance led to the Provisional Government in Manitoba (Métis Nation of Ontario, 2020). This push against the overarching European power extending from government demonstrates the resilience of First Nation and Métis people in their desire to maintain their communities and cultures and to protect their rights. This early establishment of a government structure within Manitoba enshrined the importance of language and land rights for the Métis residents of the Red River Settlement.

In Canada, from 1871 to 1921 there were 11 signed treaties[2] (known generally as the numbered treaties) which further widened the divide between settler groups and Indigenous peoples. They were originally structured with a Nation-to-Nation approach (at least, that is how Indigenous leaders understood this process as (Filice, 2016)), however, they acted to cement the power imbalance between Indigenous Nations and the Canadian Government. From 1871 to 1877, Treaties 1-7 were signed solidifying Canadian claims to the lands north of the United States of America/Canadian border, and it enabled the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway west opening these lands for settlement (Filice, 2016), and aiding in the success of the agricultural economic investments in the prairies. Treaties 8-11 were signed from 1899 to 1921, and these facilitated access to natural resources in the north and even more access from British

[2] For more details about treaties in Canada, visit www.native-land.ca. This website gives an overview of all treaties signed with Indigenous peoples globally, and links people to resources to learn more about them.

Columbia to Central Canada (Filice, 2016). These treaties while promising Indigenous Nations access to medicine, education, and resources in the changing world, were ultimately a way to further assimilate these groups into Euro-dominated culture. These treaties laid even more foundational policies (i.e., the Indian Act of 1876) for forced assimilation of Indigenous Nations and lead to targeting Indigenous children by removing them from their communities and placing them in the residential school system. The first Prime Minister of Canada Sir John A. McDonald said,

> "*When the school is on the reserve the child lives with its parents, who are savages; he is surrounded by savages, and though he may learn to read and write his habits, and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write. It has been strongly pressed on myself, as the head of the Department, that the Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence, and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men."* (McDonald, 1883, p. 1107-1108)

This clearly demonstrates the perspective and motivation of European settlers in Canada at this time. Indigenous peoples were not considered to be of the same calibre of human as those who's ancestry stemmed from Europe. This demonstrates that there was no illusion behind what the intent of purpose was for residential schools in Canada.

In 1922, Bryce (1922) highlighted the gross neglect of Indigenous health across Canada, particularly in Residential Schools. Unfortunately, his report was suppressed by the federal government, and the schools were expanded during this timeframe. The overarching goal of many political acts and residential schools was to assimilate all Indigenous peoples into the

European world (Milloy, 2017). These imperial policies decimated Indigenous communities and contributed to intergenerational trauma long after school closure. Despite these impacts, Indigenous communities continue to resist assimilation, and many are undertaking cultural reclamation and revitalization.

Throughout the 1900s, Indigenous peoples faced many political barriers that resulted in crucial impediments to cultural expression, notably the loss of ceremony and language. Losing these critical pieces to the social fabric of their communities through legislation and residential schools crippled communities for years to come, and we still see the impacts today. Repeatedly during the 20th Century, Indigenous peoples participated war on behalf of Canada but were still considered wards of the state and did not receive benefits that most non-Indigenous veterans received when returning home. To gain those benefits, Indigenous veterans faced a stark choice: becoming enfranchised to gain the benefits, thereby giving up Treaty status and remaining on the reserve with limited resources. The equal treatment Indigenous peoples may have experienced on the frontlines disappeared once they returned to Canada (Dempsey, 1983).

Over the last three decades of the 1900s, we see gradual development of Indigenous grass-roots resistance to assimilationist policies of the Canadian federal government. In 1969, the Trudeau government proposed a white paper policy with the stated goal of achieving greater equality for Indigenous peoples. However, what non-Indigenous writers of the white paper failed to see is that by abolishing the Indian Act, Indigenous people would essentially lose the status of being members of discrete nations who had entered agreements with the British Crown, and would become just like other Canadian citizens (Hanson, 2009), furthering the assimilationist policies that have been present since the 1800s. This was eventually abandoned by the federal government, which changed the trajectory of how Indigenous peoples were treated, setting the

Figure 6. Timeline 1990 to 2019 (Gosse, 2023).

stage for eventual constitutional affirmation of the rights of Indigenous peoples in Canada (Hanson, 2009).

2.1.4 Modern Times

In 1996, the last residential school is closed in Canada, and the last 25 years reflects a time of gradual acknowledgement of the consequences of colonial actions Indigenous and injustices endured by Indigenous people. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was created in 2007, and shortly thereafter in 2008 Prime Minister Stephen Harper offered apologies for the impact of Indian Residential Schools (see *Section 2.3* for an explanation of the Calls to Action that resulted). The TRC examined the horrors inflicted upon Indigenous peoples in Indian Residential Schools in Canada and created a road map for action and reconciliation. Work in reconciliation is nowhere near complete, but by working together, we can do what was originally intended by the treaties: to be equal partners, and learn from each other, and to support each other as we move forward together.

Throughout this summary timeline of events defining Indigenous history, events involving Euro-Canadians are deemed important and pivotal. It can be argued that not until the post-1970s that Indigenous peoples claim agency in defining what events are important and pivotal to their own histories. The narratives focusing on European Canadians is still the focal point of the histories shared in Canada, which demonstrates the power dynamic that is still in place. Facts we consider important still have a European/non-Indigenous spin, and events seem to be consistently negative things happening to Indigenous peoples at the hands (whether directly or indirectly) of settlers, which still impact how we share narratives of Canadian history today.

2.2 What is Decolonization?

In Canada 'decolonization' means an active effort to recognize the history and impact of colonialism upon Indigenous peoples, how this colonialism still permeates their everyday lives, and to develop strategies to curtail such inequities (Joseph, 2017). It is a long-term process whereby governments, institutions, and organizations shift from their position of power and authority to be collaborative in considering (not appropriating) Indigenous thoughts, beliefs, language, and education (Joseph, 2017; Wilson, 2018). While this research analyzes how selected heritage spaces are actively addressing the calls to action from the TRC, it is ultimately focused on facilitating decolonizing efforts in these spaces and the path forward.

Decolonization is *not* the process of re-establishing what was existing before colonial powers came to North America with the consequent mass influx of non-Indigenous/settler peoples. Instead, it is a movement of respect for Indigenous peoples and the land in this current timeframe (Wilson, 2018). This process looks different to everyone. For some, it is a return to ceremonies, to traditional ways, and recognizing Indigenous languages. For others, it involves

rethinking relationships with the land, incorporating Indigenous knowledge into all classrooms, support for Indigenous peoples, and revitalizing Indigenous history and culture (Joseph, 2017; Monkman, 2018; Wilson, 2018).

Decolonization is part of the reconciliation path. It is a journey, not an endpoint (Ritskes, 2012). It is on this journey that both Indigenous and Settler-Canadian communities can heal, moving away from injustice, anger, and grief to a place where Indigeneity can thrive (Wilson, 2018) in all communities across this country. This will take time and may not happen for all. For decolonization to be possible in Canada, it needs to be supported by individuals, friends and families, communities, and ultimately, the nation (Wilson, 2018). Through action, this can result in changes in how we frame our government and institutional structures so that they are inclusive and collaborative spaces (Ritskes, 2012; Sanchez, 2019; Wilson 2018).

The idea of decolonization serves some Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples by allowing the former to have their voices truly heard and not ignored/dismissed. It may help non-Indigenous people understand and learn more about the hidden, often genocidal, histories of Canada. By working together, people may begin the process of acknowledging the past and how it still affects Indigenous peoples into the present (and into the future) (Joseph & Joseph, 2017). Decolonization might be for everyone, or it may not. It starts with recognizing where you come from, how you play a role in the contemporary colonial process, and what you can do to start to change how you perceive the world around you (Sanchez, 2019). Sanchez[3] (2019) tells the audience to go home and look at your ancestry and learn about what territory you are currently living in. What Sanchez (2019) recommends is a small step that everyone can take in their

[3] Nikki Sanchez is a woman of mixed ancestry (Pipil/Maya/Irish/Scottish) who is an academic, Indigenous media maker, and environmental educator. Sanchez has a Masters degree in Indigenous Governance and is a Ph.D. candidate looking at emerging visual media technology as it relates to Indigenous ontology (Decolonize Together, 2023).

personal reconciliation journey. On a national level, the reconciliation process was assisted by the TRC of Canada when it released its 2015 reports into the investigation of the residential schools coupled with the 94 Calls to Action. This process is still ongoing, making Indigenous lives more visible (Denzin et al., 2008).

2.2.1 The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

When considering decolonization, an important perspective to identify is the assertion that Canada made a huge misstep when it did not sign the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2007 (Gray, 2008; Groat, 2018; United Nations, n.d.). Canada, along with Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, voted against accepting this declaration - notably all which are global powers with challenging colonial pasts. The UNDRIP document is important because, "it establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world and it elaborates on existing human rights standards and fundamental freedoms as they apply to the specific situation of indigenous peoples," (United Nations, 2023). It gives Indigenous peoples a place at the metaphorical table. The point of concern with the UNDRIP document is the phrase "free, prior, and informed consent" of Indigenous communities in matters that impact them. This declaration is worrisome for governments and institutions as they are concerned that Indigenous communities will utilize this veto power for everything. In essence, resistance to the UNDRIP document may reflect ongoing colonial power relationships within Canada and other similar nations in reference to Indigenous Nations, when instead, it gives opportunities for dialogue between groups. Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution states, "the existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of the Aboriginal people of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed" and "for

greater certainty, in subsection (1) 'treaty right' includes rights that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired" (Abedi, 2019, para. 23). The UNDRIP document echoes what the Canadian Constitution references regarding Indigenous rights. These rights have been repeatedly affirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada, requiring that Indigenous groups be consulted and accommodated by the government prior to making decisions that will impact upon Treaty and Indigenous rights. The duty to consult lies with the Crown, however operational responsibilities are frequently devolved from governments to corporations, which many Indigenous leaders deem to not be appropriate in a framework of a Nation-to-Nation engagement. In 2010, the Canadian federal government shifted its position, and endorsed the UNDRIP document, but claimed it was aspirational and not legally binding (Fontaine, 2016).

The UNDRIP document encourages countries to change their decision-making from claiming to work in the best interests of people to a position whereby those people have agency to determine and articulate their own interests and to facilitate the achievement of those interests. With the 2015 shift from Stephen Harper's Conservative government to Justin Trudeau's Liberal government, the latter promised a nation-to-nation approach to working with the Indigenous peoples in Canada (APTN National News, 2019; Joseph, 2018; Smith, 2015). While this promise has been received positively, some Canadians challenge the government with going too far in investing resources towards Indigenous communities, while some believe that Trudeau has not done enough to reconcile with Indigenous communities (APTN National News, 2019, October; Hutchins, 2018; Olsen, 2013; Robson, 2017; Smart, 2019). In 2016, Trudeau's Liberal government removed its objector status to the UNDRIP, and it was adopted by parliament (Fontaine, 2016). While this is a positive step, there is much more to do to ensure we are

inclusive of Indigenous narratives in all aspects of our government and society as we are all treaty people.

2.3 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: 94 Calls to Action

In 2008 Canada acknowledged the harm done to Indigenous peoples in the past with an apology from the Prime Minister, and the establishment of the Indian Residential School Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) with a mandate to "inform all Canadians about what happened in Indian Residential Schools… [by] document[ing] the truth of survivors, their families, communities, and anyone personally affected by Indian Residential School experience" (TRC, 2015). This includes all First Nations, Inuit and Metis former students, families, communities, many churches, former school employees, the government, and Canadians. In 2015, the TRC completed this investigation, and published a multi-volume report of its findings, and 94 Calls to Action that serve as a road map for addressing and acknowledging the injustices represented by Indian Residential Schools. While this commission was established to address Indian Residential schools, the findings demonstrate the power dichotomy between Indigenous Nations and the Canadian Government underlying the establishment of these schools with the purpose of further assimilation by stripping children of their Indigeneity. By revealing the truths of the Residential School experience, it was hoped a process of healing could begin, in part by repairing relationships through education, awareness and fuller understanding of Indigenous lived experience with colonialism. The Calls to Action also pointed out the systemic issues negatively affecting Indigenous people that required policy changes in government, education systems, and in other institutions including heritage spaces. The 94 Calls to Actions (TRC, 2018) are particularly important since they crystalize a series of actions required by all Canadians to

undertake real transformation in order to address issues involving child welfare, education, language and culture, health, justice, and reconciliation (CBC, 2018; TRC, 2015).

When considering heritage spaces and their role in responding to the TRC Calls to Action, at least 13 specific items address issues related to cultural heritage and the need to decolonize how Canadians think about culture and history. This requires collective action from both non-Indigenous and Indigenous people to take responsibility and work together to transform how cultural and historical knowledge is identified, shared, and showcased (Kovach, 2021; Lowman & Barker, 2015). In *Chapter 4* I identify the 13 calls to action that I have deemed relevant for this thesis, and in *Chapter 5* I review my analysis of the work done thus far.

2.4 Summary

Understanding the historical and cultural context of heritage spaces is incredibly important. Understanding the heritage in Canada, before and after European arrival, sets the stage for better understanding of events today. It is important to recognize that while I have utilized a timeline to chronologically list events and to organize events in a linear fashion, this is not always how Indigenous world views perceive their world or their history. I have tried to be inclusive, highlighting specific events that were key to shaping Indigenous narratives and how they are reflected and changing today. It is in this conversation we also discuss what is decolonization in Canada, how the UNDRIP plays into decolonization in Canada and into heritage spaces, and the TRC 94 Calls to Action which specific calls will be further analyzed in this thesis (see *Chapter 4 and 5*).

Chapter 3: Theory and Methods

"Decolonizing research is not necessarily postcolonial research. Decolonization is a process that critically engages, at all levels, imperialism, colonialism, and postcoloniality. Decolonizing research implements indigenous epistemologies and critical interpretive practices that are shaped by indigenous research agendas."

Smith, 2021, p. 20

3.1 Introduction

I approached the thesis case studies from the perspective of a settler Canadian, and as an Indigenous Ally researcher with experience in the museum and heritage sectors. This work is done in the spirit of decolonization and reconciliation and showcases the power imbalances that still exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. This requires self-reflection as I examine my case studies through a critical lens.

I visited and worked at two of the four heritage spaces used as case studies. I interacted with them as a researcher and critically examining them to address how heritage is being presented as opposed to passively observing them as a visitor. Considering this previous exposure, I was aware that I might have biases towards certain spaces (I have worked and volunteered at Writing-on-Stone/Áísína'pi Provincial Park and with the Six Seasons of the Asiniskaw Īthiniwak project) and sought to look at each site with some degree of analytic distance. I chose two Canadian UNESCO World Heritage sites to compare (Pimachiowin Aki and Writing-on-Stone/Áísínai'pi), and then considered two other non-traditional spaces to explore heritage (Saskatchewan Archaeology Society and the Indigenous community-based work through the Six Seasons of the Asiniskaw Īthiniwak project). I wanted to showcase diverse heritage spaces, illustrating that heritage can be shared in a variety of ways and not just in a physical space. Space then becomes an intangible thing where people can explore heritage in a safe way. I wanted to see if there were any commonalities between both UNESCO sites, the

archaeology society, and the community-based programming, and what recommendations heritage professionals working in these spaces had for other sites or programs seeking to address decolonization of cultural heritage public interpretation.

3.2 Theoretical Approach

I applied a critical theory approach to this examination of heritage spaces. That approach derives from the humanities and examines how insight reflects the power structures underlying the issue at hand (Baird & Shackel, 2017; Carr-Locke, 2015; Brown & Morrow, 1994). In the case of this research, I examined how heritage spaces are politically and socially constructed, and how those constructs colour or direct the nature and expression of public heritage education and interpretation. That is, what is the culture of heritage, and how is heritage interpretation a locus of political tension in Canada?

By looking at Canadian heritage and heritage through a critical lens, I explored the dynamics and policy structures of heritage spaces in the past and present. This viewpoint included consideration of the potential opportunities for growth (Winter, 2013) to create more inclusive and collaborative Indigenous narratives. The basis for critical theory has roots in Marxist and Feminist theoretical perspectives (Walsh & Lee, 2006). Prior to the emergence of these self-reflective perspectives in the early/mid 1900s, many theoretical paradigms were common in the social sciences. There was little or no recognition of how these perspectives shared unexamined assumptions reflecting the pervasive impact of global colonization dating from the 1600s, and how fundamentally Eurocentric perspectives came to be treated as unchallenged reality.

For example, intellectual concepts such as 19th century biological evolutionary theory were seen by early anthropologists and sociologists as powerful tools for understanding global variation in human culture and history. These 19th century cultural evolutionary models also served as convenient rationalizations of colonial power dynamics, with notions of human cultural evolution envisioned as progressive, with civilization (specifically epitomized by European societies) at the top of the ladder and savagery (Indigenous peoples who were being subjected to colonization) at the bottom. Edward Burnett Tylor and Lewis Henry Morgan (Haas, 1998) developed this ladder of cultural evolution in the 1870s (see Figure 9 of adapted ladder below), which showcased how societies were perceived to move progressively from one stage of cultural evolution to the next to ultimately achieve civilization.

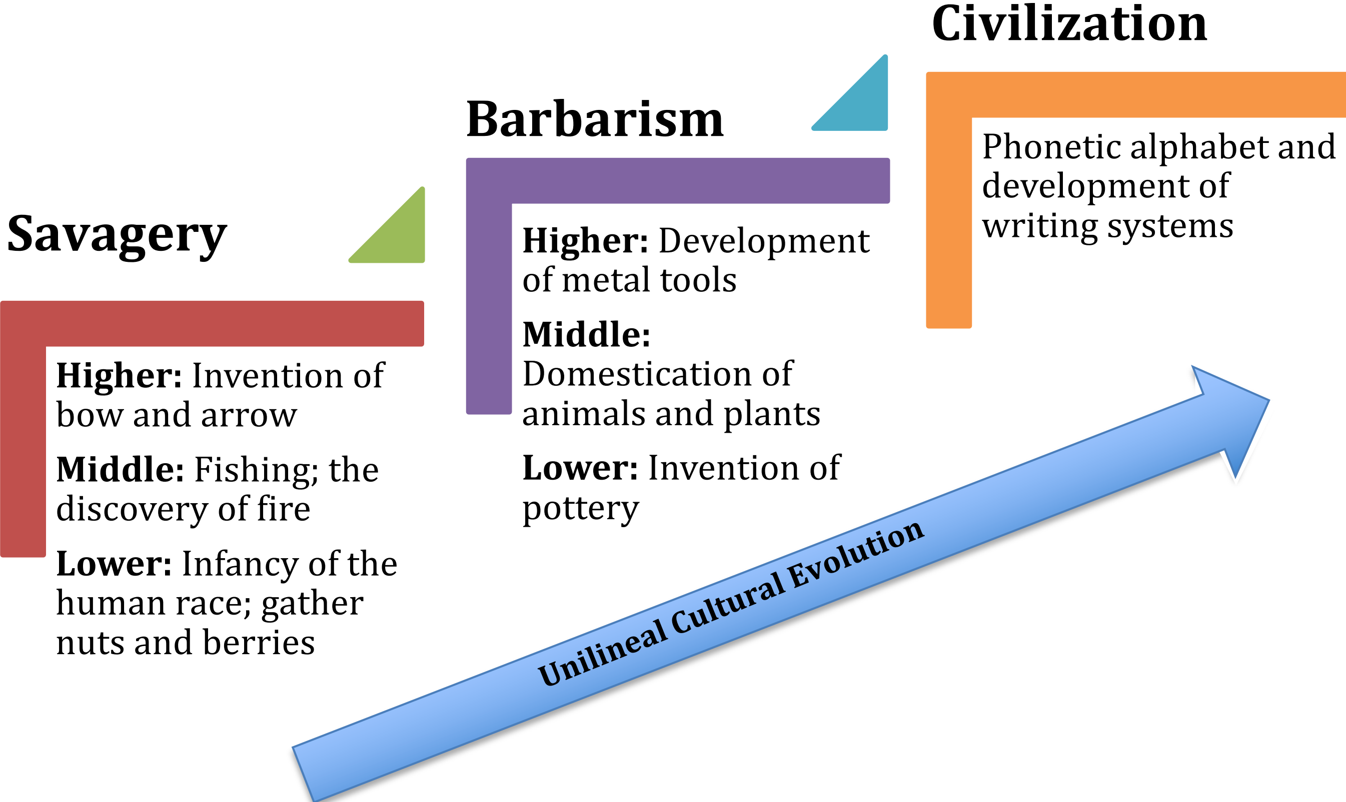


Figure 7. Ladder of Cultural Evolution as created by Tylor and Morgan in the 1870s adapted from LibreTexts Social Science (2022).

While this cultural evolutionary model is no longer utilized by academics due to its blatant racism and untenable assumptions, it was the dominant scholarly perspective well into the 20th century and persists into the modern period as a popular model how many view social transformation. It also enjoyed widespread acceptance by powerful colonial governments in the 19th and early 20th Centuries as an academically validated rationale used to impose dominance over those societies deemed to be at a lower stage of evolutionary progress. While we would like to relegate these ideas to the past, they unfortunately persist into the present among some as an implicit component of how many individuals place 'self' and their own society relative to others (Wong, 2023). This is explicitly evident in efforts by the Canadian government to establish and financially support Indian Residential Schools for over a century. That is, the schools' explicit purpose was to force the acculturation of Indigenous children to Euro-Canadian values by eradicating their comprehension of their own language and culture. These strategies are clearly genocidal and were widely used by colonizing nations seeking to culturally assimilate Indigenous peoples. This is readily evident with the Gradual Civilization Act of 1857 in Upper Canada, and with subsequent legislated actions (i.e., the Indian Act) after of the formation of the Dominion of Canada.

By the late 20th century, scholarly attention began to address some kinds of landscapes as being culturally structured (Haas, 1998). Such places were generally interpreted as serving a cultural function associated with values, memory, and identity. However, many such interpretations reflect a strong Eurocentric perspective whereby such cultural landscapes are deemed to have 'cultural' rather than 'natural' meaning when they exhibit the enduring marks of human agency and transformation. UNESCO Heritage sites are designated based on outstanding universal value, wherein the landscape exhibits the marks of human impact or influence

(UNESCO, 2023). As discussed in more detail below, this is particularly important as I challenge such meanings of cultural landscape. In *Chapter 4* I lay out the 10 criteria used with designating such sites. Nomination of heritage spaces for UNESCO designation requires determination whether such sites fit natural, cultural or both sets of criteria, and whether such sites are globally significant and unique. At issue here is whether these criteria inappropriately reflect Euro-centric perspectives that run counter to Indigenous world views of how they interact with their landscapes. These perspectives were challenged by the successful nomination of Pimachiowin Aki (Pimachiowin Aki Corporation, 2023).

Otto Schlüter classified landscapes using attributes that include settlements, economic use/cultivated land, and routes of transportation (Leighly & Speth, 1995), which are used as proxies measuring 'progress' towards cultural complexity often described as 'civilization'. Such approaches are ineffective when considering Indigenous landscapes whereby human relationships with landscapes are often framed in terms of spiritually grounded relationships between human and 'other than human' sentient power (Sepie, 2017). Such powerful relationships that are common among mobile forager societies are notable for their lack of enduring physical evidence of human modification. Rather, these relationships with landscape are maintained through the oral transmission of information about these sacred relationships, enduring names for locales, and the stories that are passed down for generations about the landscape.

Rather narrow and romanticized perspectives of what cultural landscapes are derive from Carl Sauer, W.G. Hoskins, and J. B. Jackson, who viewed landscapes as physical spaces in which regular people have modified, live in, and make connection to. Writing from the perspective of the early/mid 1900s, Sauer considered cultural landscapes (as opposed to natural

landscapes) as a product of cultural change (Solot, 1986). Hoskins identified deliberately and formally modified landscapes (think manicured lawns and gardens) as the ideal and explored this in his novel The Making of the English Landscape in the 1950s (Bender, 1992). While Jackson was critical of the American landscape, he asserted that built landscapes reflect regular peoples' connection to them (Dreller, 2022). All three viewed landscapes in a nostalgic sense – wishing it to be of simpler times, connecting it back to relationships between communities and greatly built landscapes, and how people interact with it (Bender, 1992; Dreller, 2022; Solot, 1986). These perspectives were particularly influential in framing the traditional perspective of a cultural landscape and were particularly influential in the initial formation of UNESCO's criteria. More current approaches view cultural landscapes more broadly. From Indigenous world views, cultural landscapes are not necessarily exhibiting enduring cultural modification, but are places where people interact within different frames of reference that are grounded in spiritual relationships with 'other than human' sentient power that animates all things (Sepie, 2017). Such cultural formulations of landscape are not consistent with those offered up by Sauer, Hoskins, and Jackson - the latter strongly reflecting unexamined assumptions about the relationships between humans and their landscape habitats.

This brings us to Feminist and Marxist views of landscape - looking at power dynamics of society and how that can showcase inequality across a broad spectrum of topics and subcategories (i.e., power dynamics, class structure, race, and gender inequality). Feminist and Marxist theoretical views cover a broad range of subcategories, of which power in social structures is extremely poignant when looking at heritage. Critical theory allows us to examine, "the persistence of Euro-Canadian dominance in social structures and the exclusion of perspectives of the original peoples and immigrant groups other than the Europeans … [which

reflects still a] colonial mode" (Denzin et al., 2008, p.6). This explicitly addresses a key aspect of the issues addressed in this thesis. Predominant and unquestioned reliance on lenses reflecting Euro-Canadian settler viewpoints traditionally frame cultural heritage interpretation and education, making it difficult for Indigenous narratives to challenge those of mainstream Canadian society. Looking at this topic is both political and moral and requires non-Indigenous researchers to be self-reflective to understand how their perspectives colour the heritage interpretative agenda. At issue is how to actively work towards decolonization by yielding 'space' for Indigenous perspective and narratives (Denzin et al., 2008). In effect this research stems from activist thinking (Waterton & Watson, 2013) to move beyond Eurocentric accounts (Winter, 2013).

3.3 Data Collection & Methods

Before beginning to data collection, I wrote a detailed proposal with my supervisor, which was reviewed by the Research Ethics Board at Lakehead University. After discussions and revisions, I received ethics approval many months later in February 2022 to proceed with data collection. Shortly thereafter I contacted individuals associated with each of my case study sites and requested interviews. I explained the goals of my research to see if anyone from their museum and community would like to participate. The qualitative interviews took place from May to mid-June 2022.

Data was collected though semi-structured interviews with staff and volunteers from each case study heritage space. Considering COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, these interviews were conducted via Zoom video conference or while socially distanced as part of in-person discussion. With the permission of the interviewee, the interviews were video, and audio recorded, and then

transcribed. This data is stored on a hard-drive and on Google Drive, to safeguard it in two different locations.

The semi-structured interview format allowed the researcher to frame the topic of discussion but allowed for participants to freely express their opinions and ideas. This provided more latitude for expression of opinion than would be the case from using a questionnaire. My participants were able to express unique ideas that came up organically through the interviewing process. It also allowed me to capture ideas more fully behind how cultural heritage is conceived by the participants and allowed more flexibility to explore incorporation of Indigenous narratives into these spaces.

There were four case studies used in this study: Writing-On-Stone/Áísínai'pi Provincial Park in Alberta (Government of Alberta, 2018); the Saskatchewan Archaeology Society (Saskatchewan Archaeological Society, 2023); my work with the Six Seasons of Asiniskaw Īthiniwak (Gosse, 2020) (Figure 1 Map above in *Chapter 1*); and Pimachiowin Aki UNESCO Heritage Site in Northern Ontario/Manitoba (Corporation, Pimachiowin Aki, 2016) (Figure 2 Map above in *Chapter 1*). From each of these case studies (excluding the Six Seasons Project), I attempted to select at least four museum/park personnel and volunteers to interview, with the number of participants increasing at the larger heritage institutions. Interviewees were selected based upon who would like to be interviewed and share their experiences and knowledge. Interviewees were contacted prior to interviews, with them having ample time to review and sign their consent forms. They were given a copy of the research questions (Appendix A) before the interview so that I did not catch any participants off guard with any questions. I reviewed their consent and received approvals to record before each interview.

The semi-structured interviews (Appendix A) consisted of general questions asking about the interviewees' positionality and then investigating the perceived success, failure, accessibility, and accuracy of the exhibits in relation to Indigenous narratives. Other interview topics included views on the inclusivity Indigenous narratives in Canadian heritage and what they believed the path forward should be.

The interviews from this research were interesting since there was a mix of online and socially distanced in-person. This did affect the general feeling of the interviews as there were not natural pauses in-between question and answers due to technology, and it also made it hard to gauge body language of participants in contrast to what they were sharing. The data obtained is still good data, however, in-person interviews with no distance or COVID-19 protocols would have increased the ability of the researcher to read into non-verbal cues of interviewees.

3.4 Data Analysis & Tools

Data from the semi-structured interviews were transcribed after each interview. Following transcription, I performed a thematic analysis to identify common themes or comments that were striking or surprising to me. I used Microsoft Excel to code and track themes that emerged from my qualitative data. This was done by identifying key words and assigning them to a number. These the same numbers were added to each other to determine the frequency the key words were brought up throughout the interviews. These were then compared and contrasted against one another for qualitative data analysis.

An assortment of recording equipment was employed to capture the audio of each interview: Zoom recording; a microphone on iPhone recording. Some participants did not want

to be recorded due to personal preference, and I respected those wishes, creating alternative methods of making notes via pen and paper.

Deconstructing the current Canadian heritage narrative to create space for Indigenous voices is a way to contribute to the TRC 94 Calls to Action by the TRC, particularly "Action 79: *develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration"* (TRC, 2015, p. 9). The 79th Call to Action is particularly important for my research since it acts upon the call for new methodologies to better incorporate more collaborative and inclusive platforms for integration of Indigenous voices in Canadian heritage spaces. While heritage spaces need to explore and celebrate the varied immigrant experiences of past and contemporary Canada, the focus of my research sought to identifying where deficiencies exist in the sharing of Indigenous narratives in Canadian heritage spaces and how to mitigate this in a collaborative, respectful, and inclusive way.

3.5 Timeline and Travel

The research described herein involved coordinated Zoom video conference and in person meetings with interviewees that were approximately an hour long. While the time frame was not long, the data garnered from these interviews was effective in providing insight how Canadian heritage professionals consider heritage. It also allowed me to attempt to deconstruct the heritage structure to determine the degree of success of methods currently being employed by heritage spaces.

There was minimal travel required to obtain my research as most interviews were conducted remotely via Zoom Video Conferencing, which was recorded and transcribed, and some done socially distanced in person, which were also recorded and transcribed.

3.6 Summary

As an Indigenous Ally, I was cognizant of my inherent influence and position in being able to explore and dissect how Indigenous narratives are being showcased in Canadian heritage spaces. The case studies I selected allowed me to explore the power dynamics at play at UNESCO World Heritage sites, how they compare to one another, and how these power dynamics and European influences affect these sites and other smaller spaces attempting to share Indigenous heritage. By using a critical theoretical lens, I can look at how cultural landscapes were perceived previously, how they are perceived today, and opportunities of how to look at cultural landscapes/spaces in the future.

Chapter 4: Heritage Spaces

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews what heritage spaces are and why they are important; examining the relevant themes within the TRC 94 Calls to Action; looking at UNESCO World Heritage Sites and how it fits into heritage spaces; and then discussing the case study sites. The four heritage spaces making up the case studies are spread out across western Canada in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Northwestern Ontario (Figure 1). They include two UNESCO World Heritage sites (Pimachiowin Aki and Writing-On-Stone/Áísínai'pi), an archaeological society (Saskatchewan Archaeological Society) and a community-based project (Six Seasons of the Asiniskaw Īthiniwak) that integrate heritage spaces into educational programming that is accessible to visitors or event participants in novel ways. I will discuss a brief background of each of these spaces to set the context for the results of my interviews. I have not interviewed any participants from the last alternative space, however I have worked with many members of the large team and contributed through my own innovative project. That final section will include a section about my reflections about my engagement with the Six Seasons partnership.

4.2 Heritage Spaces

4.2.1 What are heritage spaces?

Using concepts deriving from historical ecology, one can examine the interaction between humans and their collective impact on the landscape (Lonzy, 2006). This specifically addresses the history of interactions between humans and their environment longitudinally, allowing for all periods of time to be included since there are no unimportant periods (Lonzy,

2006) in a region. The cultural and natural history are key variables to aid in understanding a specific landscape.

Cultural landscapes are those that showcase interactions between humans and their environment (Pungetti et al., n.d.). The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines this further and divides cultural landscapes into three categories: clearly defined landscapes designed and created intentionally by humans (garden and parklands constructed for aesthetic reasons and potentially associated with religious or other monumental buildings); organically evolved landscapes (social, economic, or religious landscape that is either in the past or still continuing today); and associative cultural landscapes (religious or artistic cultural associations within the natural landscape instead of a material cultural evidence) (Pungetti et al., n.d.).

When examining heritage, the term 'site' is frequently used. However, the word is static, implying that a physical place, landscape, or environment separate from the historical context with its complex cultural, spiritual, and emotional connections. By looking at heritage as a 'space', we can more readily consider specific landscapes and events collectively. The concept of space evokes feelings of connectedness where people can feel safe to explore concepts within heritage (i.e., science, education, spirituality, culture, etc.). Using the term space is more inclusive and will be used for describing places with identified heritage 'valuation' or 'meaning' in this thesis. Intersections between the management and study of physical locations/sites and intangible cultural heritage (Guiterrez & Armstrong-Fumero, 2017, p.3) are not clear cut. These relationships are incredibly intertwined and must adjust and adapt to contemporary realities. By considering heritage in the context of space, we can more fully explore these intangibles through various lenses explore nuanced meanings for both local communities as well as visitors from

other cultural traditions. Globally, heritage is a part of every culture and impacts humans economically, emotionally, socially, politically, academically, and environmentally (Chabiera, 2019). By being able to incorporate all these different facets into the examination of a 'cultural space', we can start to develop a fuller, more cohesive understanding of heritage.

4.2.2 Understanding Heritage Spaces in Canada

Understanding our spatial interactions in the landscape are critical for understanding colonial influences as there is an inherent power dynamic at play in geography, where there may be the push to dominate or resist the imposing power (Lonzy, 2006). Heritage spaces have been a place where we record, examine, represent, and celebrate our history in Canada. These narratives have been evolving over time, particularly in spaces where more Indigenous examples are being created to explore themes that fall outside the dominant narrative. Campbell (2011) demonstrates this by recounting the activities of Parks Canada (originally called the Dominion Parks Branch) since its 1911 establishment. The organization was created for the people of Canada in response to "public demand, political strategy, environmental concern, cultural symbolism, and scientific debate" (Campbell, 2011, p. 2). Neufeld (2012) adds that the Canadian park system was created as a method to enforce the nation-state identity of Canada by creating a national cultural space. These spaces have frequently included parks and museums which primarily tell a 'white-washed' version of our nation's history with Indigenous narratives playing subordinate roles in the background (Campbell, 2011). The officially sanctioned history that has defined Canada is reflective of the two-founding-nations theme (French and English) popularized by the language policy of the Liberal government of Pierre Trudeau in the 1960s and 70s. This can be seen as a political response to the Quiet Revolution in Quebec where significant socio-political and -

cultural changes deriving from renewed Quebecois nationalism, contributed to the broader federal government and national policies at the time (Durocher, 2015).

As new national parks were designated across Canada over the next several decades, the exclusion of Indigenous peoples from these lands became normalized (Goldstein, 2013). By the late twentieth century, this trend started to reverse with Indigenous peoples regaining special rights to use park land and eventually consultation over the direction of park operations (Furniss, 2000; Goldstein, 2013). Consultation in these heritage spaces was, and continues to be, on a case-by-case basis, yet continues to lack standardized practices and protocols with Indigenous communities (Moore et al., 2016; Whitelaw et al., 2009; Youdelis, 2016).

The lack of standardization over consultation is not exclusive to federal parks, but it is also reflected in Canadian museums (Logan, 2014; Onciul, 2017) that have typically been established and developed using Western academic models and heritage interpretative frames of reference. In essence, they can be viewed as reflecting and reinforcing colonial value systems and priorities (Clifford, 1997). Many museums in Canada have dedicated exhibit space for interpretations of the First Peoples of Canada, but most of the time communities are not consulted about how they would like their stories to be told (Furniss, 2000; Logan, 2014).

Logan (2014) discussed her experiences within the Canadian Museum for Human Rights and how she was asked to decolonize how Indigenous groups are consulted and represented in the museum. She faced many institutional barriers when initially working to include Indigenous communities. The location for the museum was established without Indigenous consultation, then local Indigenous groups were not adequately consulted when archaeologists were called in to address and mitigate the building footprint. Upon excavation, archaeologists discovered important and very complex archaeological deposits, but were rushed through to completion so

that the museum could break ground (Logan, 2014). Additionally, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights wanted to focus more on representations of the Holocaust, and other genocides that Canada formally recognizes (the Holodomor, Armenia, Srebrenica, and Rwanda). While these topics have global importance, Logan (2014) discusses how it should also be addressing domestic issues related to Indigenous heritage and racism (Levin, 2016).

Some Canadians believe that the issue of Indigenous peoples is a moot subject - that the topic needs to stop being brought up, that these people need to 'just get over it', and they wonder why these Indigenous peoples are still 'causing problems' (Hutchins, 2018; Olsen, 2013; Robson, 2017). However, since the publication of the TRC Calls to Action in 2015, we see a shift whereby more Canadians are beginning to comprehend the intergenerational impacts of colonization (Schiffer, 2016) and how it affects Indigenous peoples in Canada today. This apparent blind spot of our national memory for many people is exacerbated by statements such as the one from former Prime Minister Steven Harper: 'Canada has no history of colonialism' (Logan, 2014). Not all hope is lost in this endeavor as Indigenous narratives are enjoying a vigorous resurgence using technology, social media, and grassroots organizations such as *Idle No More* (Logan, 2014). It is through grassroots movements that Indigenous peoples and Indigenous allies are arguing that decolonization in government and in government institutions is an essential priority (Logan, 2014). To do this, all levels of government need to speak in actions and not just symbolic gestures through these public institutions and education systems (Neeganagwedgin, 2019).

In recent years, multiple levels government have begun taking more concrete actions. Parks Canada, for example, has taken meaningful action to recognize and restore the rights of Indigenous peoples to use and manage their traditional lands that are now integrated within

federal national parks (Goldstein, 2013). We see this in how Parks Canada has been revamping their whole brand to be more inclusive of Indigenous narratives and communities on their webpage as of 2023. Upon an initial glance, the website readily guides users to Indigenous and Métis tourism experiences throughout the whole country and provides a variety of options. It is exciting to see Indigenous narratives being given a more visible platform, and it appears that more consultation with communities is being sought in developing the program offerings. I hasten to note this is merely speculation on my part deriving from recent reconciliation and consultation trends within the provincial and federal government park bodies. This is refreshing to see this change as Parks Canada (and provincial parks) and previous Indigenous tourism opportunities have been notoriously colonial (Grimwood, Muldoon, & Stevens, 2019). Actions such as this have been spurred on by 'bottom-up' approaches from the communities starting as grassroots efforts to be active in plant and animal conservation, and acknowledgement of treaty rights within these boundaries. Increasingly more collaborative action is being taken by Parks Canada administration with Indigenous groups, demonstrating an increasing commitment to consider other voices (Goldstein, 2013; Youdelis, 2016).

The start of the conversation about re-establishing Indigenous rights in protected spaces stems back to the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement of 1975 which established that Inuit and Cree would share authority with the provincial and federal government bodies on decisions how to manage, supervise and regulate resources and environmental protection (Goldstein, 2013). Since 1975, this type of consultation and collaborative work has spread across the country to a variety of heritage spaces. We can see the impact of such collaborations with Indigenous communities in how narratives are being changed. The change in government policy enables development of more inclusive educational programming to understand of Indigenous

world views more fully, which in turn will continue to shape our heritage spaces (Neeganagwedgin, 2019).

Canadian heritage spaces have not always been inclusive and collaborative, but the literature indicates that institutions are seeking to be more mindful, and Indigenous peoples want their voices to be heard. My research will examine which methods are being successfully implemented within these heritage spaces, as well as which ones are not, and how we can move forward collectively and collaboratively and how we can look at heritage narratives in new and novel ways.

4.3 Truth and Reconciliation Commission: 94 Calls to Action; Review of Relevant Themes

The TRC: 94 Calls to Action are a series of recommendations publicly presented to all of Canada to address the "ongoing legacy of residential schools and to advance the process of Canadian reconciliation," (Truth and Reconciliation Commission Of Canada, 2015). Of the 94 Calls to Action, I have selected 13 which relate to heritage, archives, museums, and heritage commemoration (CBC, 2015) to consider how Canadians have progressed in addressing them since their 2015 release. This is relevant to my thesis because these calls directly tie into how heritage is being showcased in heritage spaces. Below are the 13 themes I determined were relevant to the context of this thesis and their status:

Professional Development and Training for Public Servants

- *Call to Action #57:* Educate public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples
  Status: In Progress - Projects Underway

Museum and Archives

- *Call to Action #67:* A national review of museum policies and best practices

Status: In Progress - Projects Underway

- *Call to Action #68:* Mark the 150th anniversary of Confederation with a funding program for commemoration projects on theme of reconciliation

  Status: Not Started

- *Call to Action #69:* Library and Archives Canada to adopt UNDRIP, ensure records on residential schools accessible to public

  Status: In Progress - Projects Proposed

- *Call to Action #70:* A national review of archival policies

  Status: Complete

Commemoration

- *Call to Action #79:* Develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration

  Status: In Progress - Projects Underway

- *Call to Action #80:* Establish a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation as a statutory holiday

  Status: Complete

- *Call to Action #81:* Commission and install a Residential Schools National Monument in Ottawa

  Status: In Progress - Projects Proposed

- *Call to Action #82:* Commission and install a Residential Schools Monument in each capital city

  Status: In Progress - Projects Proposed

- *Call to Action #83:* Canada Council for the Arts to establish a strategy for Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists to undertake collaborative projects

  Status: Complete

Media and Reconciliation

- *Call to Action #86:* Journalism programs and media schools to require education for all students on the history of Aboriginal peoples

  Status: In Progress - Projects Proposed

Sports and Reconciliation

- *Call to Action #87:* Tell the stories of Aboriginal athletes in history

  Status: In Progress - Projects Underway

Newcomers to Canada

- *Call to Action #93:* Revise the information kit for newcomers and citizenship test to reflect a more inclusive history of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada

  Status: In Progress - Projects Underway

These calls give an overview of what themes we should be expecting to see in the results of interviews with heritage professionals. If Canadian heritage spaces are following along with the TRC Calls to Action, we should see themes showcasing education of public servants and public; reviews of policies and best practices; accessibility of spaces to Indigenous peoples; reflection of UNDRIP in policy revisions; collaboration on projects between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people; revision of how Indigenous narratives are told so they are inclusive and authentic.

4.4 UNESCO World Heritage Sites

Receiving UNESCO World Heritage designation helps to ensure the protection of the site, allows for global emergency assistance, supports public awareness for heritage conservation, encourages participation from the local community, and helps to create/establish conservation and management plans for the site (UNESCO, 2023). The UNESCO World Heritage designation is important because it helps to protect and conserve heritage spaces for all people and for the future. However, while these are important reasons to protect heritage spaces, they may fail to effectively address Indigenous world views and environment perceptions, and how these narratives 'give back' to the world. Many heritage sites are located within Indigenous territories, but the UNESCO criteria are often too narrow in scope to effectively incorporate Indigenous narratives and world views (Disko, 2017; Rabliauskas, 2020). Disko (2017 p. 41) maintains that the primary Indigenous criticism of UNESCO criteria is that they focus on tangible aspects of heritage at the expense of the intangible heritage.

Two case studies addressed in this thesis are UNESCO World Heritage Sites, making it prudent to review UNESCO classifications. UNESCO World Heritage sites are classified into three different protected categories: Natural, Cultural, or Mixed (both natural and cultural). These categories are also evaluated against 10 criteria. For places to qualify as UNESCO World Heritage sites, these places must be of outstanding universal value and meet one or more of the following criteria (UNESCO, 2023):

I. To represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
II. To exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning, or landscape design;

III. To bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

IV. To be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;

V. To be an outstanding example of traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of (a) culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

VI. To be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance (the committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);

VII. To contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;

VIII. To be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms or significant ongoing geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;

IX. To be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems, and communities of plants and animals;

X. To contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

The Pimachiowin Aki team sought to be nominated as a mixed site due to its success in 2018 as a mixed site using criteria III, VI, and IX (Pimachiowin Aki Corporation, 2015). Writing-on-Stone/Áísína'pi Provincial Park modeled their 'mixed site' nomination in light of the success of the Pimachiowin Aki's nomination and identified criteria I, III, IV, and VI (Government of Alberta, 2018) as part of their nomination. UNESCO only accepted criterion III for them to be designated, making the site only cultural and not mixed as had anticipated. While a heritage space may seem to have the desired characteristics indicated by the UNESCO Heritage Site criteria, much depends upon how arguments are articulated in the nomination papers and the interpretations of adjudicators of the designation. This makes the process complex and potentially drawn out.

During the initial nomination of Pimachiowin Aki in 2013, the documents were sent back to the Pimachiowin Aki nomination committee members to provide more information. Although two delegates from UNESCO had completed a field site tour, with another later site visit with two different adjudicators (Taylor-Hollings, personal communication, 2023). The initial nomination draft was rejected, but reconsideration proceeded after the UNESCO committee evaluating the nomination was introduced to the Indigenous perspectives by the local community members who participated in the nomination (see Figure 2 map). The First Nations involved explained that they did not see their homeland as exceptional and did not compare themselves to other Indigenous groups, nor think of their relationships to the land in the expected superlative terms (Rabliauskas, 2020; Pimachiowin Aki Corporation, 2023; Vandenbussche, 2021). These

perspectives are directly contrary to UNESCO criteria used to evaluated space, with particularly emphases on their universal value and global uniqueness. It can be argued that the UNESCO evaluation criteria are inherently Eurocentric and failed to comprehend important values of humility and modesty imbued within Indigenous worldviews (Rabliauskas, 2020). This also reflected a failure to grasp human-land relationships built around sacred responsibilities to care for the land that provides life, and not to evaluate its value to that of others' homelands. Indigenous perspectives on landscape are deeply personal and inextricably tied to oral traditions on how people need to interact with the landscape with respect. Just because the landscape did not contain as many physical structures as found at other UNESCO World Heritage sites, does not mean that this space was not just as important to the heritage of all Canadians. This Indigenous framing of landscape and peoples' relationship with it encouraged UNESCO to re-evaluate its own method of determining what constitutes outstanding universal heritage. This is particularly important when looking at Indigenous nominations since land and culture are inextricably intertwined. Recognition of other 'ways of knowing' begins the process of decolonization at an international level, allowing for intangible aspects of Indigenous worldviews to be honoured and value at the global level. The very large partnership involved with Pimachiowin Aki was determined to encourage change on the international stage, setting a new standard and example for how heritage spaces should be evaluated in the future.

4.5 Case Studies

4.5.1 Pimachiowin Aki ('The Land that Gives Us Life')

Heritage is not always tangible - it can be represented more abstractly, and this is well represented by the Pimachiowin Aki UNESCO World Heritage site, located along the border of

Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario. This heritage space is protected by the Anishinaabeg, who have been stewards of this space for over 7000 years (Pimachiowin Aki Corporation, 2023). Pimachiowin Aki is run by a corporation that comprises four First Nations including Bloodvein River, Little Grand Rapids, Pauingassi, and Poplar River in addition to Woodland Caribou Provincial Park in Ontario and the adjacent Atikaki Provincial Park in Manitoba. The project was first initiated by a First Nations accord that also included Pikangikum First Nation. This collective group initially submitted a UNESCO nomination in 2004, that was ultimately successful on July 1, 2018, but after Pikangikum First Nation had withdrawn from the process. This site, which was the 20th UNESCO World Heritage site in Canada, is one of 39 mixed values heritage sites globally and is the only mixed heritage site in Canada. Its nomination was accepted for criterion:

> **III.** To bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
>
> **VI.** To be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance (the committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);
>
> **IX.** To be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems, and communities of plants and animals.

These criteria are of both cultural and natural history which makes this site one of the few mixed nominated heritage spaces that UNESCO has.

Pimachiowin Aki is translated to 'The Land That Gives Us Life' in English. It is the largest protected area in the North American Boreal Shield, with over 32,000 kilometers of shoreline wetlands, 3,200 lakes, 5,000 freshwater marshes, and 7 million acres of forest and wetland (see Figure 8) that shelter a variety of mammals, birds, fish, and reptile species. In addition to these ecological features, the history of the Indigenous people in the area spans over 7,000 years, with archaeological evidence showcasing wild rice being cooked in pots 1,200 years ago. This landscape is home to over 30 pictograph locations (images thought to be made of red ocher and animal or fish fat painted on cliffs over water), making it the largest collection of pictographs in Canada. Additionally, there are over 700 historical cabins and campsites, with the

Figure 8. Aerial photograph of Pimachiowin Aki (Bertzky, 2015). Image obtained from UNESCO Website.

majority of archaeological cultural sites having been found along the waterways (Pimachiowin Aki Corporation, 2023). However, it should be noted that very limited archaeology has been conducted within Pimachiowin Aki, and with the current sample being strongly oriented along the waterways- the most accessible part of this vast region. For an archaeological overview of the Ontario side of the site see Taylor-Hollings (2017).

These characterizations offer some of the tangible evidence that showcases the Anishinaabeg's connection to the landscape, while integration of the Indigenous worldview regarding relationships with the landscape make it truly outstanding. By establishing this space as a UNESCO Site, they have been able to preserve their cultural heritage by inventorying sites, registering them with the government, preserving language, documenting named places, and connecting youth to the land (Pimachiowin Aki Corporation, 2023). While these were tangible, Rabliauskas (2020) shares that in addition to the evidence above, the collective group of Pimachiowin Aki, "insisted on … more meaningful involvement by our Elders, recording their stories and extensive knowledge," (p. 13) as their voices were critical to give substance to the evidence in the nomination. This shows through the result in their preservation and sharing of Anishinaabe culture through tourism, education, and through the Guardian Program which protects the various cultural and environmental features of this unique landscape.

4.5.2 Writing-On-Stone/Áísínai'pi ('It Is Pictured' or 'It Is Written') Provincial Park

The name Writing-On-Stone is a misnomer, as the Blackfoot name Áísínai'pi means 'It Is Pictured' or 'It Is Written'. It is close to the original meaning of the Blackfoot name, but it does not convey the spirituality of the place like the original name does. This is why today, Writing-on-Stone/Áísínai'pi is represented by both names when referencing the site. This place is sacred

for the Siksikaitsitapi (the Blackfoot peoples) and has the highest concentration of rock art (pictographs and petroglyphs) in the Northwestern Plains (Brink, 2007; Turney et al., 2021). It is home to over 200 rock art sites and 1000s of markings and demonstrates the sacred character of this heritage space. The Siksikaitsitapi have been visiting this space since time immemorial, and these lands were used for ceremony, camping, consulting with spirits, and for burying their dead – all events recorded on the stone. These images are vulnerable, primarily through natural processes like erosion and weathering, but are also targets of vandalism and graffiti. The park tries to teach through education and exposure to this site on why we need to protect these invaluable markings that are so critical to the Siksikaitsitapi narrative and heritage, to ensure we can keep them as long as possible.

These culturally significant markings at Writing-On-Stone/Áísínai'pi were the basis of the proposal submission to become a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site. The proposal was based on criterion III (To bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared), as the Blackfoot peoples still gather and practice ceremony in this heritage space, while sharing their history and heritage with the world (UNESCO, 2019). It was initially submitted to be a mixed site, following the model of Pimachiowin Aki. Writing-on-Stone/Áísínai'pi is situated within the unique Milk River Valley and coulee systems deriving from the late Wisconsin Glaciation (Writing-on-Stone/Áísínai'pi Provincial Park, Various) which resulted in a meandering river system with sandstone cliffs and hoodoos which feature as culturally cultural for Blackfoot people, but ultimately it was accepted as only a cultural site. Narcisse Blood, a Kanai Elder, said the following at the 2019 UNESCO designation ceremony:

> "Our ancestors need us as much as we need them, and our contact with our ancestors is through places like Writing-On-Stone. We are re-establishing our relationship with our ancestors, but it was painful for our people to lose contact with Writing- On-Stone. Our loss is everyone's loss, as Western society can still learn a lot from us. I wouldn't be involved in this commemoration if it wasn't important. I appreciate all the work put into this designation, and I'm glad we are working together. We will all gain from this joint effort." (UNESCO, 2019)

His words highlight the connection between the Siksikaitsitapi and the landscape, and how that translates into universal value for all people to share and protect. He reflects on how the Blackfoot peoples, under the authority of the Indian Agent of that time (ca. 1886) were barred from this space due to the pass system that restricted movement off Indigenous Reserves. Indian Agents of settler descent were appointed by the federal government who held authority over many aspects of people's lives. They could issue passes to Indigenous individuals enabling them to leave the reserve for a specified reason and time. Failure to abide by the conditions of the passes could result in arrest. Despite being removed from their homeland and confined to reserves, and with their children placed into Residential Schools, Blackfoot people nonetheless retained their ceremonies and oral traditions. While traditional use of Writing-On-Stone/Áísínai'pi declined during the late 1800s and into the 1900s, Blackfoot people continued to travel through the Milk River as work on ranches increased. In turn, this enabled persistence of the Blackfoot horse culture to the present day (Writing-on-Stone/Áísínai'pi Provincial Park, Various).

While Writing-On-Stone/Áísínai'pi is extremely important due to the images on the sandstone cliffs, the geology of this landscape is also unique in the prairies: sandstone cliffs carved out by the glacial melt of the Late Wisconsin glaciation (1.8 million years ago), with the meandering Milk River through the valley, sandstone hoodoos (ma'tapiiks), coulees, and the Sweet Grass Hills (Katoyíssiiksi) in the distance just over the border in Montana (see Figure 9) (UNESCO, 2019). This heritage space is incredibly special and through the lens of the Blackfoot people and how they view their world, you can see the intrinsic value that permeates through the landscape into the cultural values and lessons that are shared today.

Figure 9. Photo overlooking the Milk River Valley at Writing-On-Stone/Áísínai'pi where you can see Police Coulee and the Sweet Grass Hills in Montana (Alberta Parks, 2006). Image obtained from UNESCO Website.

4.5.3 Saskatchewan Archaeological Society

The Saskatchewan Archaeological Society mission is to connect Saskatchewan's past to its citizens through archaeological heritage education (Saskatchewan Archaeological Society, 2023). They do this through public education and conservation of archaeological sites, objects, and records with the focus of responsible stewardship of heritage (Saskatchewan Archaeological Society, 2023). The society was established in 1933 (The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, 2022) as amateur archaeologists wanted a space to network and explore archaeology in the province. This organization has grown to have the main office in Saskatoon (with three paid employees) and seven chapters throughout the province. Saskatoon is in the parkland ecozone, while other chapters are found in the prairie ecozone. The membership is comprised of students, avocational and professional archaeologists.

Archaeological societies are found across all the Canadian provinces, but the Saskatchewan Archaeological Society is particularly active in terms of its public education mandate. They have developed a multitude of programs including meetings and presentations, ArchaeoCaravan bus tours, field schools, study tours, application development for the City of Saskatoon archaeological heritage, traveling exhibitions, archaeological kits for classrooms, workshops, resources for educators, bursaries for students, and supporting research projects (Saskatchewan Archaeological Society, 2023). One program that is unique in helping people understand the archaeological heritage of Saskatchewan is the ArchaeoCaravan (see Figure 10) program that ran in the late 1990s, then from 2012 to 2016. This program partnered with local museums to assist with curation of collections and to deliver public programs about archaeology in Saskatchewan (Cairns, 2015; Saskatchewan Archaeological Society, 2023).

Figure 10. Archaeologist Kayleigh Speirs with the Saskatchewan Archaeological Society ArchaeoCaravan sharing with the public about archaeology in Saskatchewan (Cairns, 2015). Image retrieved from SaskToday News Website.

Looking at archaeological societies relates perfectly to this thesis topic, as societies like this want to share about archaeological heritage in their province, linking it back to Indigenous narratives. Heritage in this context is not associated with a specific physical space, but rather, a learning space for people to explore, grow, and become excited about cultural heritage. By having a safe space to explore heritage, people become more invested and become stewards of heritage and advocate for change in how the public perceives heritage and Indigenous narratives within it.

4.5.4 Six Seasons of the Asiniskaw Īthiniwak ('Rocky Cree') Project

I have chosen this as a study example, since it is part of my Master's degree journey at Lakehead University and offers multiple approaches to considering heritage spaces. I have been working since 2019 with the Six Seasons of the Asiniskaw Īthiniwak partnership project, which is centered on Asiniskaw Īthiniwak (or Rocky Cree in English) communities in Northern Manitoba, and with its academic home at the University of Winnipeg. The Six Seasons project is organized into teams titled the story, history, production, curriculum, and evaluation and policy teams. The archaeology team is located in the Department of Anthropology at Lakehead University, with Dr. Hamilton as the team leader. This allows the project to create a multi-disciplinary perspective to explore and share the narratives of the Rocky Cree people of Northern Manitoba.

The Six Seasons project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Partnership grant ($2.5 million) and has the overarching goal:

"... to support the ongoing work of reclaiming Indigenous languages, histories, and

> knowledges among the Asiniskaw Īthiniwak (Rocky Cree), work that is taking place now in the context of the calls to action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) for, among many other things, the revitalization of Indigenous cultures, the "relearning of Canada's national history," and the reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people."
>
> Six Seasons of the Asiniskaw Īthiniwak, 2023

This Six Seasons project was inspired by the 1993 discovery of a 25-year-old Cree woman's remains that were eroding from the shores of South Indian Lake in Northern Manitoba. Archaeological analysis revealed that she lived about 350 years ago. The historical storybooks that are produced through this project are inspired by this woman. William Dumas, the author, imagines her life as a young girl, and that of her extended family as represented in a proposed six stories – one for each of the six seasons of the Rocky Cree annual cycle (Six Seasons of the Asiniskaw Īthiniwak, 2023) (see Figure 11). At this time, four books have been published

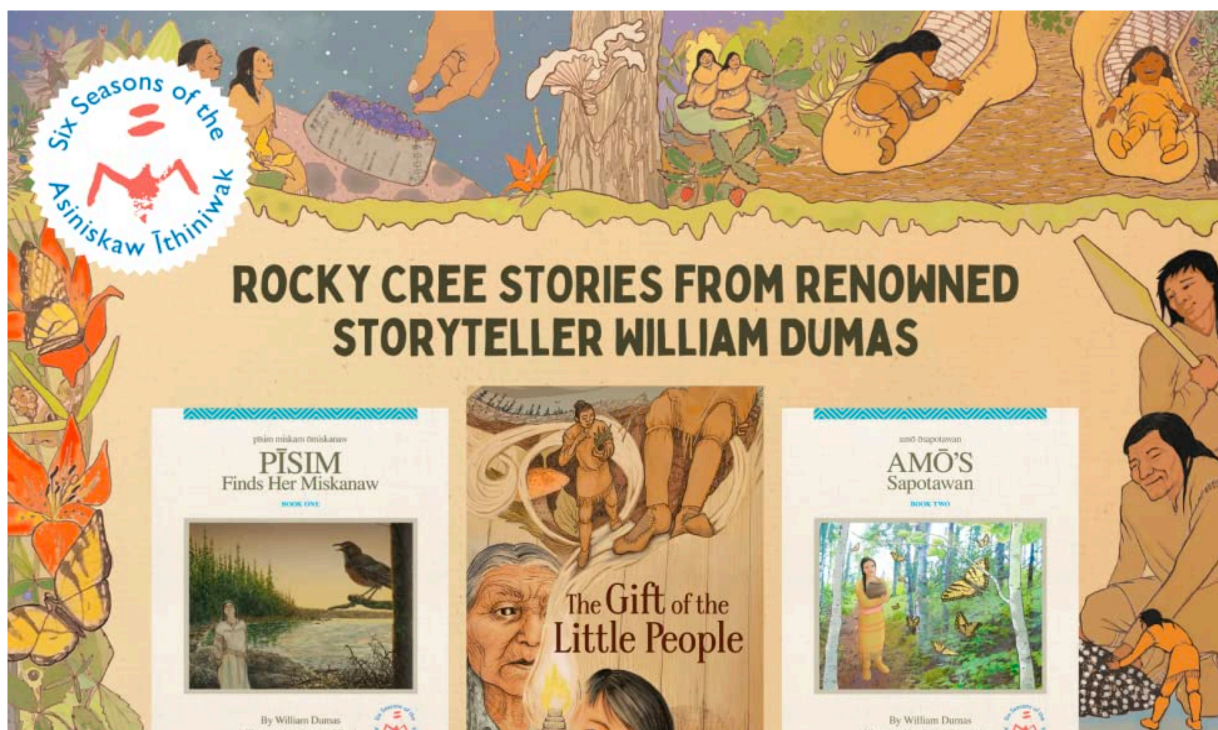


Figure 11. Three books that have been published through the Six Seasons project (from Highwater Press, 2022).

including one revised version of the original *Pīsim* book (Dumas & Brynjolson, 2022 a and b; Dumas & Paul, 2013; Dumas & Paul, 2020). Accompanying these stories are curriculum guides designed to help school teachers integrate these resources into their classroom. Also featured as part of this project are the development of mobile applications (Apps) that illustrate the stories with accompanying games and language lessons. These Apps feature narration in English and Rocky Cree, with written text in English, Rocky Cree syllabics and Cree Roman Orthography. This package of learning materials is designed to aid the reclamation of language and culture by Cree children and has a clear decolonization mandate.

One of my roles within this project was to develop a companion edu-kit for the second edition of the *Pisim* book (Dumas & Paul, 2020), which I named the "Shoebox Archaeology Dig" (Gosse, 2020). This includes a teacher's guide to accompany modeled, 3D printed, and painted replicas of actual archaeological recoveries from Northern Manitoba to support archaeology-based activities within the classroom to supplement the revised Pīsim book. I worked with the curriculum team to produce activities that teachers could easily implement and added archaeological contextual details in the teacher's guide to support the activities. This involved working with an array of individuals at Lakehead University and University of Winnipeg who were members of several teams.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic prevented travel to Northern Manitoba during my time at Lakehead University, in 2020 before the shutdowns I attended one of the team meetings in Winnipeg. In addition to the Shoebox Archaeology Dig, I assisted Drs. Hamilton and Taylor-Hollings on starting the archaeology story notes for the *Amō's Sapotawan* book (Dumas & Brynjolson 2022a).

Projects like this are critical to sharing Indigenous narratives in heritage spaces because the stories a Rocky Cree author who drew inspiration from stories, places, and characters associated with several Rocky Cree communities in northern Manitoba. It allows the community to share their stories in the ways that they want them shared. It allows for the relearning of Canada's history through a different lens, and it encourages the sharing of Indigenous culture with the youth, so it can be learned, appreciated, and perpetuated into the future. It helps to preserve this part of heritage - the part that is not tangible, but culture based, and linked to the land.

Community-based and Indigenous-led projects are incredibly important, and we see more resources becoming available to support such projects for museums to community based cultural spaces (*Cultural Spaces in Indigenous Communities Program*, 2023; First Peoples Cultural Foundation, 2021; *Heritage Program - First Peoples Cultural Council*, n.d.; Canadian *Indigenous Heritage — Museums Assistance Program*, 2022). As more resources become available, we shall see more movement and change in how we as a national community view Indigenous heritage and how it ultimately lays new foundations for understanding Canadian history.

4.6 Summary

In sum, heritage spaces are incredibly complex cultural landscapes which can be tangible or intangible. There are a number of ways to try qualifying and protecting these spaces that include designating them as provincial/federal parks or UNESCO World Heritage Sites. However, this process can be complex and hard to navigate as it is steeped in European perspectives and evaluation approaches that do not fully comprehend or understand Indigenous

worldviews. Change is happening, but slowly. This is shown through how barriers in colonial frameworks in Canada have been shifted and broken down, and as a result are changing how Indigenous perspectives are being showcased, even on the world stage (i.e., Pimachiowin Aki). From this, it is also interesting to see how heritage spaces are being utilized at grassroots efforts through local archaeological societies like in Saskatchewan and through community-based projects like the Six Seasons of the Asiniskaw Īthiniwak partnership. These spaces tie into narratives that have been asked to be re-evaluated as part of the TRC: 94 Calls to Action, specifically the 13 items I noted above. I will examine these items in more detail in the next chapter to set the stage to see where we are as a nation when addressing these calls since 2015.

Chapter 5: Results of the TRC Calls to Action Analysis & Interviews

This chapter begins with my analysis of the 13 Calls to Action to examine how many have been completed since 2015 and how that is reflected in my interview data. Although my intent was to interview more individuals at each of the case study sites (Writing-On-Stone, the Saskatchewan Archaeological Society, and Pimachiowin Aki), I was able to secure six interviews within the temporal scope of a Master's program constrained by the COVID-19 pandemic. For much of my Master's program, pandemic restrictions severely constrained my ability to travel and visit heritage spaces. I also reflect on my work with the Six Seasons of the Asiniskaw Īthiniwak partnership project and the work they continue to do considering the themes that emerge from the data below. Given the small sample, I will compile the data to report all interviews collectively rather than by each case study. Firstly, generalizations made will give thematic baselines to understand where or how these spaces are utilizing authentic Indigenous narratives. The following sections will review the results of the questions that I asked during the interviews (see all questions together in Appendix A). Then, I will highlight the emerging themes that will be discussed in *Chapter 6*.

5.1 Results of TRC 13 Calls to Action Relevant Themes Analysis

Since their 2015 release, only 19% of the 94 TRC Calls to Action have been completed, with the remaining either not started, projects proposed, or projects underway (see Figure 12). Of the specific 13 calls to action that I have listed in *Chapter 4* that are pertinent to this thesis, 23% are completed, and the remainder either not started, projects proposed, or projects underway (see Figure 13). This process represents a long-term commitment, with those with comparatively few

barriers being already completed. The more difficult to achieve items are those that are either in proposal or are in progress, but a significant number remain not started.

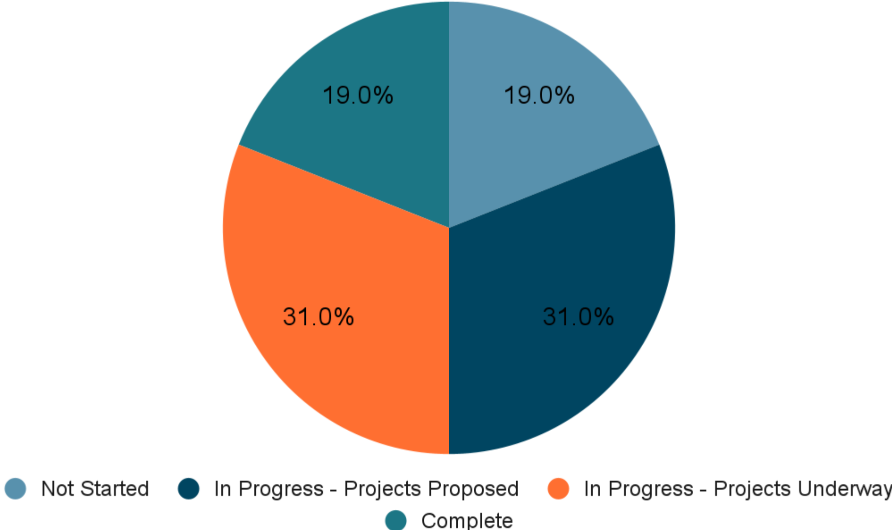


Figure 12. Pie chart showing the TRC 94 Calls to Action and their breakdown of progress since 2015 (Gosse, 2023).

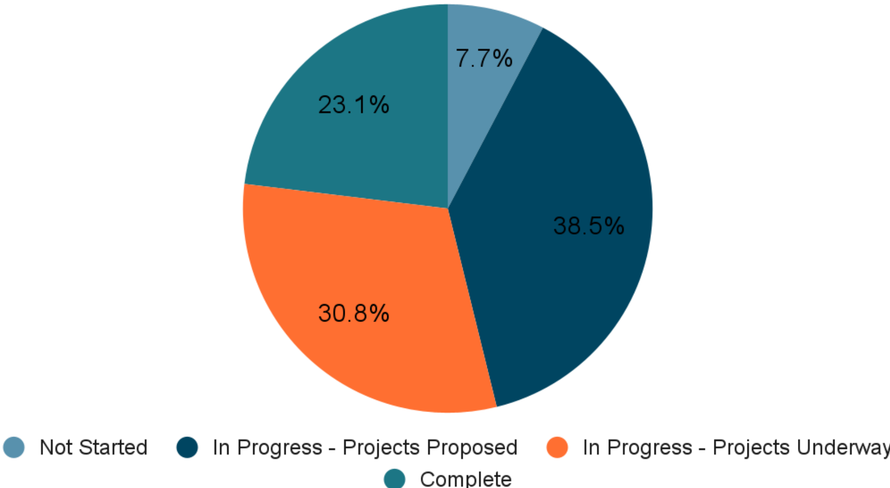


Figure 13. Pie chart showing the TRC 13 Calls to Action related to Heritage, Museums and Commemoration breakdown of progress since 2015 (Gosse, 2023).

Addressing potential processes for decolonization in Canada is uncomfortable and not characterized by a single approach (Lowman & Barker, 2015; McMahon, 2017; Sanchez, 2019). To aid in deconstructing colonization in Canada, we need to first look to our education system and then in our heritage spaces. For over 150 years, education was a significant tool used by the colonizers to enable forced assimilation and this continues to affect all living generations of Indigenous peoples. Using education to help repair these wrongs will be a long process. As Joseph (2012, para. 5) stated, "Seven generations were affected, and it will take seven generations to fix." Today, we also use education as a tool to help decolonize our educational institutions and heritage spaces (Battiste et al., 2002). By changing how we approach education in Canada, we change how we identify and showcase Indigenous histories in heritage. This can be seen in the themes that emerged in the interview questions below.

5.2 Results of Questions 1 & 2

1. *Can you please state your name, what sites you work at or are affiliated with, and what your role is at these heritage sites?*
2. *How do you identify (Caucasian, Indigenous, etc.)?*

These first two questions are general demographic questions to observe patterns about how my participants identified and the context of their role with their employer. Although my sample size is small, it suggests some patterns. All of my participants were employees of these heritage spaces, with two males and four females, and five identifying as Caucasian and one identifying as Indigenous. I believe this skews the data, as participants of primarily settler background are sharing perspectives about whether (or how) their heritage spaces are inclusive of Indigenous narratives or not. While some may be mindful of their position of privilege and

how that might skew their perspective, it demonstrates that such institutions remain dominated by non-Indigenous staff. It is not clear whether institutional barriers affect Indigenous employment, or whether this reflects the education and employment choices of Indigenous people. While limiting broader perspectives, I believe this reflects how European settlers are still in positions of power in framing the development of heritage interpretative themes and the selection of narrative perspectives to feature within their facilities.

5.3 Results of Question 3

3. *Can you tell me about your heritage space?*

Question 3 is structured to be quite open-ended, allowing participants considerable latitude to share details about their space, and from these, I identified common themes that seem relevant to all locations. This question was asked to get participants thinking about the specific details of their space and how visitors are encouraged to interact with it, in order to aid in contextualizing the interview. Themes that arose from the interviews related to language, oral history, ceremony, landscape, education, and stewardship. While each case study involves management and interpretation of a physical space or objects, visitors are encouraged to move beyond materiality to engage with and appreciate them in other ways through culture. It is a collaborative space where language, history and ceremony are shared.

While the case study sites might address specific Indigenous nations that are geographically linked to the spaces, the context that is presented to the public may still unconsciously reflect pan-Indian generalizations and perspectives (i.e., Indigenous uses of tools or ceremonial practices). These spaces are actively trying to ensure that specific Indigenous Nations in their specific geographic area are unique and diverse from other Nations in Canada,

but more education might be needed by the public to conceive of this beyond generalizing to all nations. I say this based on my own experiences with tourists and having to reiterate or reintroduce topics in a certain way showcasing the diversity between Nations.

5.4 Results of Questions 4 & 5

4. *When you reflect on Canadian heritage, what do you think of?*
5. *When you reflect on Indigenous Canadian heritage, what do you think of?*

These two questions ask participants to reflect more generally on both Canadian and Indigenous heritage in Canada. I asked these two questions separately to see if there was any overlap between them or whether they evoked different responses. Overall, they were viewed as synonymous with themes of respect, teaching, multiculturalism, general history, natural and cultural heritage, interactions with the land, way of life, ceremonies, relationships, and uniqueness emerging. These themes were often linked in the response, specifically in terms of respect. I specifically asked them these questions to see if participants differentiated between general Canadian heritage and Indigenous Canadian heritage. It was interesting to note that all participants reflected heavily on Indigenous themes when asked question 4, and then seemed to be surprised by my follow-up question of number 5. Participants were very conscious to include Indigenous heritage in with Canadian heritage versus separating them out.

5.5 Results of Questions 6 & 7

6. *How long have you been working within heritage in Canada/at this site?*
7. *From when you started to work in heritage until now, have you noticed any trends specific to Indigenous narratives in heritage and how it is shared?*

These two questions ask the participants to reflect upon their careers working within heritage interpretation, and what trends they may have noticed over that time. Responses to the duration of time in heritage range from just under 10 years, under 20 years, under 25 years, under 30 years, and their whole life. This indicates a broad range of career experience among the participants. Themes that emerged from noticed trends highlighted the efforts of Canadians in recent years to understand more about Indigenous culture, Indigenous language, way of life, landscape, UNDRIP in heritage, social media, and the importance of authenticity within heritage.

From the context of the interviews, in the 1990s, there was not much shared about Indigenous heritage in Canadian heritage spaces, but with more recent public awareness, people are becoming mindful about how Indigenous narratives have been absent from heritage interpretation in Canada. Comments from interviews suggested that the catalyst for change began as more Indigenous people took a more active role in their heritage spaces. This appears to be tied to a shift in attitude whereby heritage professionals stopped exclusively telling someone else's stories and accepted the role of listening to other's stories. It was noted that by the early 2010s more Indigenous staff were employed at these sites which helped transform the narratives, and as public interest began to change as information about Residential Schools became more publicized and available beyond Indigenous communities.

While this trend now is a very intentional part of the organizational structure of many heritage institutions, it appears to have started organically as the Canadian public became more aware of Indigenous issues. This may have started in the 1980s with many Indigenous communities resisting colonial rule during such highly publicized crises the Oka Crisis or Kanesatake Resistance, or death of Dudley George during the Ipperwash protests (Pindera &

Jardin, 2020). As media coverage increased on Indigenous peoples, they used it as a platform to reach out and share their stories.

5.6 Results of Question 8

8. *Do you know about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action regarding heritage?*
    - 8.1. *If yes, what are your thoughts about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action regarding heritage?*
    - 8.2. *Do you think the heritage space you are affiliated with has changed due to these calls to action?*
        - 8.2.1. *If so, how? If not, why?*
        - 8.2.2. *If no, share the calls to action and then ask them the above questions.*

This question consisted of multiple parts to see if participants had general knowledge of the TRC 94 Calls to Action, what their thoughts were around these calls, and if they thought their heritage space had changed as a result of these calls being released in 2015. Most thought their site had changed (albeit slightly), with two noting no real change since these calls were made public. Themes that came out of these questions related to education, apologies of Canadians to Indigenous peoples, noting that this is progress but just the start, looking at UNDRIP in concert with the Calls to Action, the landscape of the heritage space, communities and the relationships that have been created since 2015. Question 8, while multi-parted, was intended to be probing to see if participants noticed trends in heritage interpretation, in particular to how things have changed (or have not changed) since 2015 when the TRC 94 Calls to Action were released.

5.7 Results of Question 9

9. *Do you think the heritage space you are affiliated with is inclusive of Indigenous narratives?*

    9.1. *Why or why not?*

This question sought to find out if participants thought their site was inclusive of Indigenous narratives. My goal was to determine if there were any underlying themes that connected all four heritage spaces, and what aspects of their site that participants believed to be inclusive of Indigenous narratives. All promptly responded yes that their site is inclusive, with most then indicating that they hope their site is inclusive which speaks to some degree of reflexivity among the participants. The themes which emerged focused on inclusion of Indigenous ways of life, inclusion of Indigenous perspectives of the landscape, ceremony, inclusion of language and education, and inclusion of Indigenous communities. Settler participants were very careful with their responses, highlighting that they have worked with communities and the importance of speaking with Elders to ensure that their space is showcasing appropriate stories, while noting there is always room for improvement. There seems to be self-awareness and reflection from the settler participants noting that there is still much more to do, and this is just a starting point. One settler participant and the Indigenous participant both noted that change is coming from the young people who are making their way into heritage spaces and are more open to sharing about Indigenous narratives, whether or not they are Indigenous themselves. They can share with the general public more confidently and interact with a wide variety of people when sharing their particular narrative. The Indigenous participant highlighted

that their heritage space is at a starting point in sharing narratives, and this is coming through sharing language and the Indigenous way of life at their particular site.

5.8 Results of Question 10

10. *What are some challenges you or your heritage space have encountered when utilizing Indigenous narratives? What are some positive occurrences?*

Question 10 was written to examine what the participants perceived as challenges and positive outcomes when utilizing Indigenous narratives within the heritage interpretative program. Themes reflecting challenges emphasized visitors' lack of respect, visitors/general Canadians lack of understanding of Indigenous world views, the need for authentic Indigenous voices in these spaces, fear of saying/doing the wrong things when working with Indigenous communities, and the lack of budget and time. Positive outcomes from utilizing Indigenous narratives were in enhancing education on site, language sharing, fostering of stewardship of heritage space, and relationship-building between the heritage space and Indigenous communities.

5.9 Results of Question 11

11. *What is the best way to incorporate authentic Indigenous narratives into Canadian heritage spaces?*

    11.1. *What is one thing you would share for other heritage spaces to utilize when looking at inclusivity of Indigenous narratives?*

This question examined how the participants perceived the best way to incorporate authentic Indigenous narratives into heritage spaces and their recommendation for other heritage

spaces based on their own experiences. This resulted in a multitude of themes emerging that included going back to the source (i.e., Indigenous community), Elders, Indigenous languages, facilitating all touchpoints of the site to have aspects of inclusion, authentic Indigenous voices sharing the stories, taking time, and building relationships.

The top recommendations for other heritage spaces seeking to be more inclusive of Indigenous narratives were collaboration, making a sincere effort and interest in Indigenous narratives, listening to the communities, taking the time, and not to give up since effective engagement requires considerable time. The settler participants recognize that they are on a reconciliation journey within themselves and their heritage sites, and that they are not the best people to tell Indigenous stories and are working to employ Indigenous staff. However, they recognize that some of their sites are remote, and it can be hard to find employees, so they need to be cognizant when training their non-Indigenous staff of the Indigenous narratives that truly shape these heritage spaces.

5.10 Results of Question 12

12. *When visitors come to your space, what do they express the most interest in or ask the most questions about?*
    - 12.1. *Is this the focus you want them to have at your space?*

The subject of Question 12 sought to examine what participants noticed when visitors came to their heritage space and if these were what they wanted visitors to focus on when they were there. The main focus of these spaces was Indigenous ways of life and the landscape – this is looking at predominantly historical Indigenous lifeways and how it translates to now, and the physical landscape (the beauty and uniqueness of it) and how that ultimately translates into a

cultural landscape. This tied into the overarching goals of what participants wanted visitors to experience during their visit, which was Indigenous languages, focus on education, as well as uniqueness of the landscape and culture.

5.11 Results of Questions 13 & 14

13. What do you think is the future for Canadian Heritage?

13.1. Do we as a nation still have more work to do in reconciliation regarding showcasing Indigenous heritage?

14. What are the future directions at your space to continue to be inclusive and collaborative with Indigenous communities?

14.1. Is there a 5, 10, 15-year plan?

These two questions looked to the future of the participants' heritage spaces and what they perceived to be the future for Canadian heritage and reconciliation in showcasing Indigenous heritage. For future space inclusivity and collaboration, it was identified that partnerships, education, and management plans were either in place or underway. For future directions in heritage, participants identified the need for nation-to-nation collaboration, that this is a healing process, understanding Indigenous ways of life, the importance of consultation, some impacts of UNESCO designation in Indigenous focused heritage spaces, and the importance of having Indigenous staff to share these authentic narratives.

5.12 Summary of Results

This research culminated in identification of 48 separate themes surrounding heritage spaces in western Canada. These themes were identified throughout the interview and were

coded based on frequency of mention. Figure 14 shows the 48 themes that were identified throughout all of the interviews. The larger sections for the pie chart indicate the high frequency these themes were shared across all interviews. Some of these results were expected, such as relationship building, education, and partnerships. Others were surprising, as I have also encountered several of these themes in my own work in heritage but perhaps did not think too deeply about them. Themes like landscape, language, stewardship, consultation, and ceremony, I personally find incredibly important, and their importance has grown throughout my career in heritage. I was intrigued to see that these themes were also important to others, and most specifically at the forefront of all of those identified. These themes also tie into the intent of the TRC 94 Calls to Action, which highlight the importance of sharing Indigenous narratives

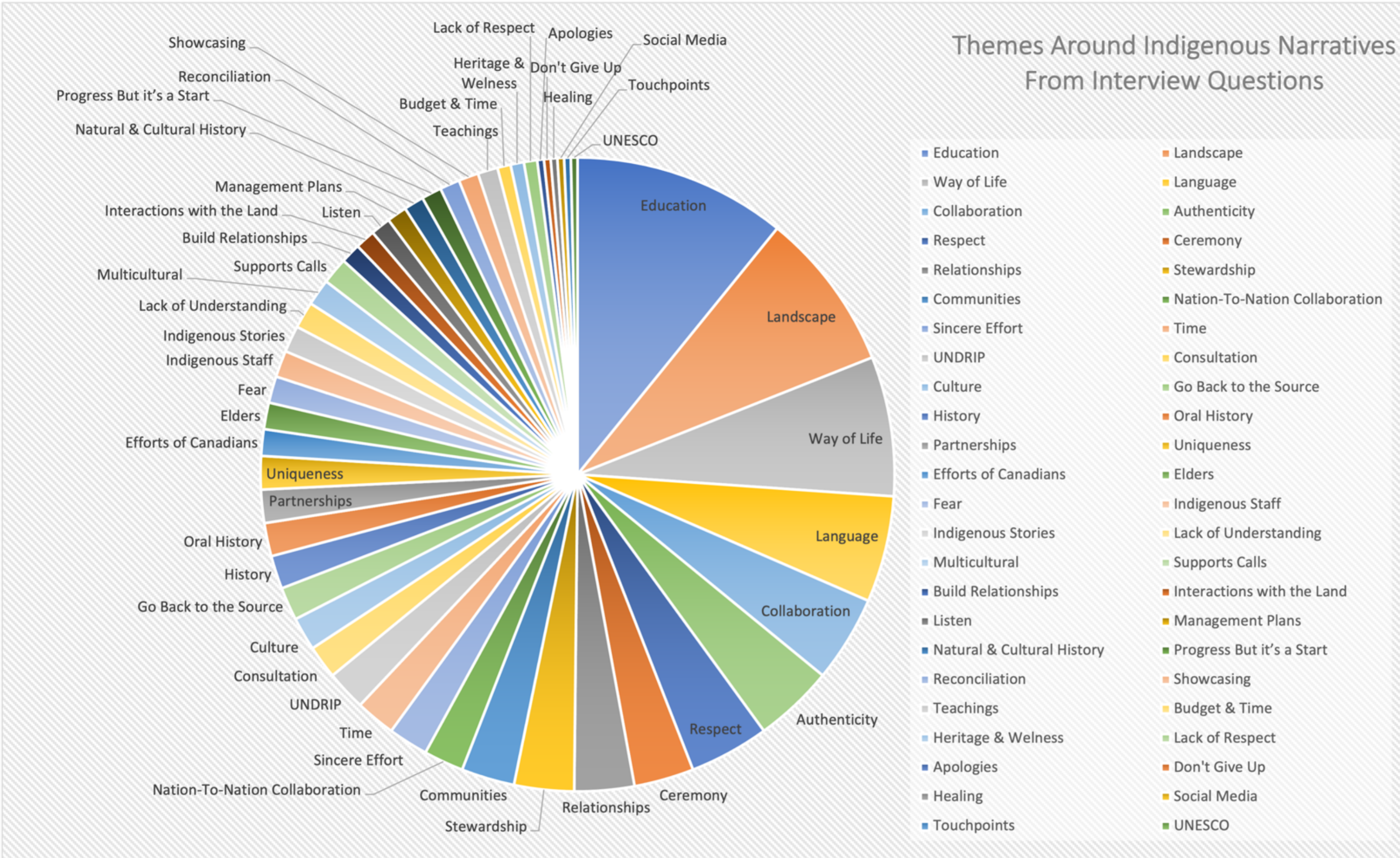


Figure 14. Pie chart of themes around Indigenous narratives in heritage spaces from interview questions.

authentically and working with communities to share their specific stories. I can see through these interviews that even though some spaces face bureaucratic hurdles, the staff at the ground level are actively trying to make their heritage space safe, inclusive, and collaborative.

As I interpret this research looking at Indigenous narratives in heritage spaces, I have experienced aspects of all these themes in one way or another. I find that incredibly intriguing, especially in noting that fear is a theme that came up several times, which is something I personally experienced as a settler Canadian sharing Indigenous narratives, and it is something that continues as I write this thesis. While the fear of overstepping my place is poignant, I feel like my role as a settler Canadian is to identify where I and other formal heritage spaces developed by settlers are currently at on this path to reconciliation. By acknowledging the power dynamics within these institutions, and that it is not a quick or easy path, heritage professionals can map out a path to work with other non-Indigenous peoples and Indigenous peoples to bridge together. It is uncomfortable, and I still feel that uncomfortableness as I continue to explore and learn.

While reviewing the themes as they emerged, I thought that some might have been mentioned more (like consultation), but some that I did not expect to rate as highly as they did (like ceremony). Based on the bias of my sample (primarily Caucasian settler/non-Indigenous Canadians with one Indigenous person), I expected the data to be skewed with a settler/non-Indigenous-leaning perspective. Ceremony is not a theme I would have attributed to emerge from my settler/non-Indigenous participants; however, it ranked highly in my analysis. To me this speaks to the honest and real engagement that is taking place in these heritage spaces. This factor is also something I have experienced when visiting and working in these spaces – the participants are cognizant of ensuring that touchpoints of the facilities or engagement

opportunities are sharing authentic Indigenous perspectives appropriately in lieu of not having full time Indigenous staff onsite.

From my experience working at Writing-On-Stone/Áísínai'pi Provincial Park, this was prevalent as staff welcomed visitors to the site in Blackfoot, and this language trend continued to the tours as well, with guides using as many Blackfoot words and phrases as they could, explaining them to visitors and encouraging them to learn and say the words. Using key words and phrases of a language may seem small, but this is incredibly important as the Blackfoot language is in danger of being lost (Comrie, 2019). Using Indigenous languages in sharing about a site is part of revitalizing a key part of Indigenous culture, as languages are incredibly descriptive and central to identity.

While these themes are based on what I identified as patterns within the sample of interviews available, this may be reflective of other heritage spaces across Canada as people are working to decolonize their practices. If this research can be expanded to include more evaluation methods and increasing sample size and a greater variety of case studies, I believe we would see similar themes emerging ranked in a similar manner.

Chapter 6: Interpretation and Discussion

6.1 Emerging Themes

Some of the themes identified as common threads evident the interviews conducted for this project echo my previous exposure with integration of Indigenous perspectives into public interpretation. They particularly resonate with my experiences in a variety of heritage spaces where I have worked or volunteered as part of the Alberta Archaeology Association – Lethbridge Chapter (2016-2018), Alberta Parks Volunteer (2017), Fort Frances Museum and Cultural Centre (2018-2019), Ontario Archaeological Society – Thunder Bay Chapter (2019-2021), the Six Seasons of the Asiniskaw Īthiniwak project (2019-2020), and Alberta Parks (various sites, 2020-2023). Of the 48 different themes identified from the interviews, the top 10 themes according to relative frequency of mention, provide an interesting synopsis of the way heritage practitioners are currently thinking of Indigenous inclusion and narratives in their heritage spaces (see Figure

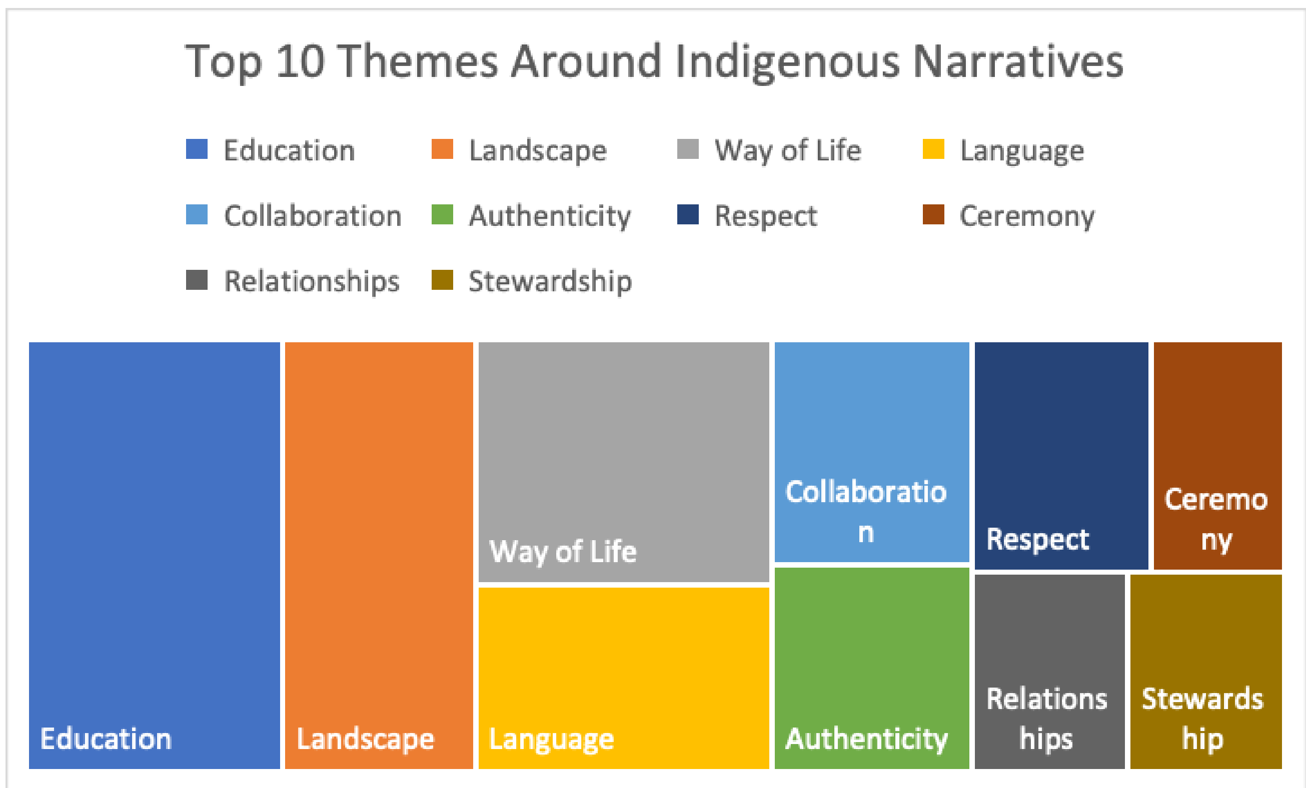


Figure 15. Chart of Top 10 Themes Around Indigenous Narratives.

15). Figure 15 demonstrates the top 10 themes and the larger the square, the higher the frequency the theme was mentioned throughout the entire series of interviews across all heritage spaces, and we can see where the participants are in regards to how they incorporate Indigenous narratives into their heritage space. Education is noted as by far is the most important theme, based on the number of comments that were made throughout the interviews. This is reflected in Indigenous narratives being shared as an important part about how Canadians may move forward along a reconciliation pathway, and what that process may look like (Bearhead, 2021; Demas, 2023; NCTR, n.d.). This is by far the most important way of building reconciliation, as the more people that know about the experiences of Indigenous people caused by imperialist agendas, the more we as a collective group can do to ensure that we can move forward together. This is evident in the narratives being showcased at *Pimachiowin Aki,* Writing-On-Stone/Áísínai'pi, Saskatchewan Archaeological Society, and with the Six Seasons of the Asiniskaw Īthiniwak project. Education will help to mend this bridge of reconciliation as we seek to understand our colonial heritage and the authentic Indigenous narratives that must emerge from it. This is not a process that will happen overnight, but rather it will take many more decades of healing, growing, and learning together.

Other top themes that emerged focused on the cultural landscape (specifically in conjunction with physical landscape), way of life, language, and ceremony. Cultural landscapes are difficult to conceptualize as they are intangible for outsiders to comprehend but hold considerable power for individuals who are a part of that culture. Cultural landscapes are comprised of "activity, memory and history [that have] created layers of meaning through which the place was perceived and acted upon," (Renouf, 2011, p.4), which we see at all heritage spaces. These cultural landscapes are places that have meaning to humans; they can be looking at

the culture of a city downtown or looking at a historical landscape and how humans have interacted with it. While cultural landscapes set the stage for other themes that contribute to the revitalization of Indigenous communities, language is especially important. Language is a living heritage and Indigenous languages are “vital for the transmission of knowledge systems passed on from generation to generation,” (UNESCO, 2023), which is evident in how we start to share heritage spaces.

An example of the power of language comes from my experience at the Fort Frances Museum and Cultural Centre (2018-2019). Fort Frances is a small town in Northwestern Ontario with several Ojibwe communities within an hour proximity around it. The museum tried to share stories that were inclusive of Indigenous narratives, and during my time there we invited more local Indigenous community members in to collaborate on how these stories should be told. What I felt made a significant difference was when we changed the welcome sign at the front of the building to include ‘Boozhoo’ which means ‘Hello’ in Ojibwe. More Indigenous people stopped into the museum casually and expressed their pleasant surprise at the front door plaque. While this seems like a small thing, such small gestures had the greatest impact for change. People are learning the native language of the land, what was there before, and continues today. Indigenous languages are incredibly descriptive, and things can get lost in translation. Language is how humans perceive and relate to the world. Therefore, it is so important to maintain and celebrate language - it directly ties back into culture.

The remaining themes from this top list (collaboration, authenticity, respect, relationships, and stewardship) really speak to relationship building and maintaining respectful connections between heritage spaces and Indigenous communities. Many heritage spaces in Canada have non-Indigenous people telling Indigenous stories. While this is not ideal, if proper

consultation is done with communities and permission is given, these stories can be shared. The preference will always be for Indigenous people to share their own stories, but extenuating circumstances like lack of Indigenous staff may hinder this. Heritage spaces will have to work with Indigenous communities to build relationships and respect to gain permission to share these stories in an appropriate way. When I worked as an interpreter at Writing-On-Stone/Áísínai'pi Provincial Park, my role was to share with visitors' insight about Blackfoot ways of life, culture, and the markings (rock art) left behind on the stone. At first, I was nervous and anxious about the work because my background is primarily non-Indigenous and not from that area – so how could I accurately represent and share on behalf of a culture? But by working with the Elder on staff, I was able to learn more about the nuances of Blackfoot culture, adding language into my tour, and was given permission to share the stories of the land with visitors in order to foster a sense of stewardship to a land that is not traditionally theirs. I did this by sharing about the Blackfoot way of life, as shared to me by the Elder, and using dialogic interpretation to get people to have a shared experience that was valuable to them, which would result in individuals becoming invested in this amazing landscape of coulees, hoodoos, and the Milk River Valley. The interpretive process is seeking to transmit sophisticated and nuanced messaging, but these signals might not be received given the deeply ingrained preconditioning of the visiting public who are casually consuming these messages. But by careful planning and reworking how to present these important themes, heritage spaces can transmit a more truthful Indigenous narrative.

6.2 Summary

The themes that emerged from the interviews are intertwined and complement one another. By examining these case studies, it is evident that staff and management at heritage

spaces are already making early efforts to incorporate authentic Indigenous narratives into Canadian heritage programming in a considerate, inclusive, respectful, and collaborative manner. The first step is to initiate consultation with Indigenous groups, approach the process with an open mind and respect, and work collaboratively to ensure that the narratives being showcased are authentic and align with the community's wishes. In the absence of Indigenous staff, it is crucial to ensure that the narratives shared at the heritage space are appropriate to be conveyed by non-Indigenous people. This is not a one-time event, but an ongoing process of consultation and learning. Individuals initiating consultation with Indigenous communities must be intentionally thoughtful and sincere in their efforts, and it is vital to acknowledge that building relationships takes time. I have observed this in my past and current work. Learning about the history of the land where I work and live is my first step. This way, I have a basic understanding of the cultural landscape I am in. When working with Indigenous communities, I tend to take a backseat and listen. In my current role, I am actively involved in partnership development. While creating partnerships with Indigenous communities, I acknowledge that it takes time, and although I may have a specific goal in mind, this is a relationship that requires nurturing to grow. Working with Indigenous communities is not just for a specific project; it is a commitment to collaborate and ensure that the space is open and welcoming to the community. This is particularly significant as I am an employee of the provincial government, which holds a specific power deriving from a colonialist legacy. My goal is to collaborate with my team on a reconciliation path and extend it to other departments as well. By collaborating with communities to ensure that narratives are conveyed appropriately, I am contributing to dismantling the colonial power that is inherent in my role as a government employee and moving towards decolonization.

Canada’s history is complicated, and by examining the trends of how heritage is shared, Indigenous narratives are now seen coming to the forefront, sharing stories that have been previously overlooked or dismissed. Indigenous people are still an essential part of this landscape, and their stories are significant as they demonstrate their resilience in the face of adversity despite how settlers have used colonialism to establish heritage spaces to convey history that is not ours. While this work is far from over, it is a start, and by working together, our communities can continue to grow and flourish, respect each other's heritage and knowledge, and provide space for authentic stories to be told and celebrated.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Future Directions

7.1 Summary

When starting this master's program in 2019, I could not predict how the process would ultimately go. Through several bumps and a global pandemic, my research has culminated in a topic that I am incredibly passionate about as I continue down my own personal decolonizing path, of which this thesis is a part. The research problem sought to examine the effects of Canada's colonial legacy in heritage spaces and how they are interpreted to emphasize European perspectives to the detriment of Indigenous narratives. I sought to explore how I could use a critical theoretical framework to look at the power imbalance that still exists between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada in heritage spaces to identify:

1) How Indigenous narratives are showcased in Canadian heritage spaces;
2) How Canada has represented heritage diversity in the past and present, and the success of these methods;
3) And how heritage spaces have worked to incorporate Indigenous narratives in Canadian heritage programing in a mindful, meaningful, inclusive, respectful, and collaborative manner.

This culminated in my four case studies: Writing-on-Stone/Áísínai'pi Provincial Park and UNESCO World Heritage Site in Southern Alberta, the Saskatchewan Archaeological Society in Saskatchewan, the Six Seasons of the Asiniskaw Īthiniwak project in Central and Northern Manitoba, and Pimachiowin Aki UNESCO World Heritage Site in Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario. The interviews from these case studies resulted in 48 themes, which could be linked to the identified 13 TRC: 94 Calls to Action that specifically look at heritage in Canada. The top 10 themes were: education, landscape, way of life, collaboration, authenticity, respect, relationships,

stewardship, and ceremony. These themes could be translated across all case study sites, and I would suspect across other heritage spaces in Canada. This indicates that Canadian heritage spaces and how they share about Indigenous narratives through interpretation are on the path of reconciliation. What is seen from these results is the start and not the end of the journey as there is collective work towards a more inclusive and safe heritage space through dismantling power structures that separate people which are reminiscent of Canada's colonial past (and still present influences).

7.2 Conclusions

According to the results of this thesis, and consistent with my personal experience in heritage, there are steps to effectively deconstruct the current settler narrative. One is to learn the language of the land and community in which you reside in. Two is to learn about the landscape where you currently live, which is inherently cultural and is tied to an Indigenous community whose ancestors have been walking upon this land since time immemorial. By taking time to understand whose land one is on, there can be movement forward in looking at the narrative presented, who is presenting it, and how it is presented. Heritage is celebrated across the nation, and the federal government has created National Historic Site designations which can be applied to a variety of sites across Canada to encourage remembrance and tourism. However, when doing a quick survey of National Historic Sites across Canada[4] (of which there are roughly 998), only 7.7% of them overtly address Indigenous heritage themes. The rest focus on colonial settler

[4] When looking at National Historic Sites in Canada, the page for this is nested under Parks Canada which is a federal government page. This site mentions that there are 1004 registered sites but will only give listings to National Parks or sites nested within a National Park. This number was pulled from a list on Wikipedia. I acknowledge that this is not the best place to find information, however, it is a list of registered National Historic Sites in Canada, which should be more easily accessible on the National Historic Site webpage.

heritage since Europeans 'discovered' North America. I did not include Fort sites in this number as they are inherently colonial structures and not created by Indigenous peoples. From the numbers alone, there is a heavy European bias of heritage that we celebrate here in Canada. The bulk of heritage sites are in Ontario and Quebec, comprising about 47% of this total (Indigenous sites within Ontario and Quebec equal about 3%).

The National Historic Sites of Canada board is currently reviewing how they designate historic sites, with one of the main objectives being the promotion of reconciliation[5]. In this review, one of the concerns are colonial assumptions (Parks Canada, 2022). For a site to be listed for review, a member of the public, an Indigenous community, local stakeholders or community members, or any advisory committees can request it. Of all the National Historic Sites listed for review, 71 have been listed because of underlying colonial assumptions. Colonial assumptions are referencing "designations related to colonial and religious leaders and their actions, and to settlement and nation building from an overly European perspective" (Government of Canada, 2022). While this is a step in the right direction of acknowledging the colonial impact on Canadian heritage, it is only the beginning of the decolonizing journey for Parks Canada and how they will share it with the public for years to come. The theme of nation-building is still strong, but collectively we can act against it by acknowledgement of its pervasive dominance. This review stage follows closely with how heritage spaces in my case studies have acted. They started off being created by settler Canadians, but now are working with Indigenous communities to ensure their narratives are authentic and share what the community wants shared.

This research faced many challenges that began with a global pandemic, the process of building my skills, and the necessity to integrate flexibility into my research approach. It is

[5] This revitalization is also in line with Bill C-23, The Historic Places of Canada Act, which will aim to make Canada's history more representative and inclusive, including Indigenous voices.

recognized that continued research is required to include more participants and more heritage spaces to address themes surrounding Indigenous narratives. This research served to create baseline data on where heritage sites and organizations are in regards to their process in reconciliation, and what obstacles have been identified in this process. The challenges identified by the participants focus on lack of education of some visitors, lack of understanding of Indigenous world views, the need for authentic Indigenous voices, lack of budget and time, and fear of saying or doing the wrong thing. However, these can all be overcome.

The general Canadian public's lack of education or understanding of Indigenous world views speaks to precisely what heritage spaces are designed to address – to foster a safe environment to learn about Indigenous heritage and perspectives in a collaborative way that does not perpetuate discredited stereotypes, or inaccurate generalizations. Visitors are coming to broaden their knowledge (whether they know it or not). My personal goal when working with visitors is to let them leave with at least one thing that they did not know or understand prior to stepping across the threshold. By doing this, we can make small, but impactful changes in how Canadians view Indigenous narratives.

Regarding authentic Indigenous voices, sometimes there are harder barriers to overcome when hiring staff, especially when no one of Indigenous background applies. In this case, heritage spaces need to rely on their network and collaboration with local Indigenous communities and Elders to build local Indigenous technical capacity and encourage greater involvement. They can help define the narratives being shared and help train non-Indigenous employees on what is culturally appropriate to share about the space. Educating staff on cultural protocols can go a long way in deconstructing the overt colonial impacts.

Although the lack of budget and time will always be present, building relationships is crucial. Relationships take time, and there is never enough of it. All that can be done is to make a sincere effort and acknowledge the power dynamic that needs to be shifted and changed. Approaching relationship building with an open mind can help Indigenous individuals and communities see that you are working to become an ally and making an honest effort.

The biggest obstacle of all is psychological, specifically, fear of overstepping or doing the wrong thing and facing rejection in the heritage space. As a settler Canadian, I have experienced this challenge firsthand and sometimes feel uncomfortable when sharing Indigenous narratives. However, I approach it with sincerity and the desire to learn more and share with others in my decolonization journey. To overcome this fear working with communities and Elders, immersing oneself in reading books from Indigenous authors, and exposing oneself to new opportunities can help. It is important to remember that Indigenous narratives are not non-Indigenous/settler stories to share but sharing in one's own experience in learning about the landscape prior to colonization can foster stewardship of shared heritage spaces. If sharing stories of Indigenous peoples, it should only be done with the guidance and approval of an Elder, and it should be prefaced that the knowledge being shared has been given permission to be shared in this way.

7.3 Limitations & Future Directions

While the scope of this thesis is limited to a small sample size, it has produced important themes that apply to various heritage spaces. To enhance the study's scope, I recommend taking a larger sample size across Canada, which should include more local smaller heritage spaces that do not typically receive as much support or funding. These smaller spaces are integral to

community development and education, which can have an upward impact on larger spaces. Additionally, I suggest designing the research to have both qualitative and quantitative portions to achieve more comprehensive results. Although the findings of this thesis can be generalized, there is a need to collaboratively delve deeper into the themes identified here to gain more insights into the gaps in heritage spaces regarding Indigenous narratives and rectify them for the future. Everyone is on their own decolonization path, and there is no specific timeline for it. I encourage others to acknowledge the landscape they are on, learn as much as possible, and build community within and outside of heritage spaces. This thesis reflects my journey of deconstructing colonial narratives in heritage spaces, and I hope it provides an overview for others to contribute towards creating more inclusive heritage spaces in Canada.

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Appendix A – Interview Questions

1. Can you please state your name, what sites you work at or are affiliated with, and what your role is at these heritage sites?
2. How do you identify (Caucasian, Indigenous, etc.)?
3. Can you tell me about your heritage space?
4. When you reflect on Canadian heritage, what do you think of?
5. When you reflect on Indigenous Canadian heritage, what do you think of?
6. How long have you been working within heritage in Canada/at this site?
7. From when you started to work in heritage until now, have you noticed any trends specific to Indigenous narratives in heritage and how it is shared?
8. Do you know about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action regarding heritage?
   - 8.1. If yes, what are your thoughts about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action regarding heritage?
   - 8.2. Do you think the heritage space you are affiliated with has changed due to these calls to action?
     - 8.2.1. If so, how? If not, why?
     - 8.2.2. If no, share the calls to action and then ask them the above questions.
9. Do you think the heritage space you are affiliated with is inclusive of Indigenous narratives?
   - 9.1. Why or why not?
10. What are some challenges you or your heritage space has encountered when utilizing Indigenous narratives? What are some positive occurrences?

11. What is the best way to incorporate authentic Indigenous narratives into Canadian heritage spaces?
    11.1. What is one thing you would share for other heritage spaces to utilize when looking at inclusivity of Indigenous narratives?
12. When visitors come to your space, what do they express the most interest in or ask the most questions about?
    12.1. Is this the focus you want them to have at your space?
13. What do you think is the future for Canadian Heritage?
    13.1. Do we as a nation still have more work to do in reconciliation regarding showcasing Indigenous heritage?
14. What are the future directions at your space to continue to be inclusive and collaborative with Indigenous communities?
    14.1. Is there a 5, 10, 15-year plan?