TREATY RELATIONS
COMMISSION OF MANITOBA

LET'S EXPLORE

TREATY TURNING POINTS

WHAT ABOUT ..?

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S VISITS TO CANADA

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Queen Elizabeth II at the First Nations University of Canada with Eber Hampton, president of the University, 2005.

FIRST NATIONS AND THE CROWN

Many Indigenous peoples have long honoured their relationship with the Crown reaching back to 1763. Britain's King George III issued the Royal Proclamation that year recognizing and protecting their inherent rights. In 1764, First Nations met at the Treaty of Niagara. It was at Niagara that a nation-to-nation, Treaty-based relationship was accepted.

The Crown made many Treaties with First Nations before and after Confederation in 1867. These were meant to establish a relationship based on peace, co-operation and respect between settlers and Indigenous nations.

FIRST NATIONS AND QUEEN ELIZABETH II

Elizabeth II (1926-2022) was the United Kingdom's longest-reigning monarch, she was queen from 1952 until her death in 2022. As queen of the UK, she was also Canada's official head of state and to many First Nations people, the embodiment of the Crown as a Treaty partner.

While many First Nations felt a deep respect for the Queen, others saw the the Crown-Indigenous relationship as one of broken promises, stolen lands, and assimilative policies. This relationship has become more complex over time.

On Canada Day 2021, statues of Queen Elizabeth II and Queen Victoria were toppled at the Manitoba Legislature in response to the discovery of unmarked graves at the sites of several residential schools.

University of Manitoba professor, Niigaan Sinclair says the relationship between the Crown and Indigenous communities is complicated for several reasons. "The Crown has perpetrated terrible abuses against us as a people — been a part of stealing our lands, been a part of passing horrendously racist legislation. But on the other hand, the Crown harkens back to a relationship that in its infancy had a lot of promise, had a lot of opportunity between our nations and the Crown to share land, to live together".

Source: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-indigenous-groups-queen-elizabeth-deatj-1.6576617

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S VISITS TO CANADA

On the death of Queen Elizabeth II in 2022, the Assembly of First Nations and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs released a joint statement saying they were saddened to hear the news.

Cornell McLean, Deputy Grand Chief of the AMC: *"We are two sovereign nations who come together to honour the treaties between us, and we look forward to working with the new King as treaty partners."*

AFN Regional Chief **Cindy Woodhouse** said: *"As sovereign nations, First Nations in the treaty territories located in Manitoba greatly value the sacred treaty relationship with the British Crown."*

ROYAL VISITS TO CANADA

Throughout her 70-year reign, Queen Elizabeth II made 22 official tours of Canada. During those years, she visited every province and territory.

On a 10-day tour of the Northwest Territories and Manitoba for the province's 100th anniversary celebrations in 1970, Queen Elizabeth met a numbers of First Nations leaders in The Pas.

David Courchene of the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood (now the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs) made a speech: "It gives me a great deal of pleasure to welcome Your Majesty to [our] ancestral homeland. It has been almost 100 years since our forefathers signed treaties with Her Majesty Queen Victoria. Treaties which our forefathers held in high esteem. It is with sorrow that we note that the promises of peace and harmony, of social advancement and equality of opportunity, have not been realized by our people."

Source: https://www.cbc.ca/archives/queen-elizabeth-prince-philip-visit-1970-manitoba-northwest-territories-1.5640334

THE QUEEN VISITS THE FIRST NATIONS UNIVERSITY OF CANADA

In 2005, during Saskatchewan's centennial celebrations, the Queen travelled to the First Nations University of Canada in Regina. She presented the University with a stone plaque and said:

"This stone was taken from the grounds of Balmoral Castle in the Highlands of Scotland — a place dear to my great-great-grandmother, Queen Victoria. It symbolises the foundation of the rights of First Nations Peoples reflected in treaties signed with the Crown during her reign. Bearing the Royal Cypher of Queen Victoria as well as my own, this stone is presented to the First Nations University of Canada in the hope that it will serve as a reminder of the special relationship between the Sovereign and all First Nations Peoples."

SHARE YOUR UNDERSTANDINGS

- Do you think Queen Elizabeth's visits to First Nations communites in Canada offered awareness and a strengthening of the Treaty relationship? Explain.