

Muskowekwan First Nation



Who we are and where we come from...



Memphis.W

Dedicated to the People of Muskowekwan First Nation

I am very honoured to have this book come to be and for it to have been created by the students of Muskowekwan School. It is good that we know our history and we are able to pass this history onto our future generations. Treaty and Inherent Rights to Education is a key principle for Muskowekwan First Nation.

- Chief Reginald Bellerose

Our ancestors were strong and hardworking people. They looked to the Creator and Mother Earth to provide us with everything we needed to live in balance. We were called Saulteaux, or "people of the falls," because long ago we lived near the waterfalls in Sault Ste Marie, Ontario. There, we enjoyed hunting and fishing. In the forest and fields nearby, we gathered plants for food and medicine.



The scouts would go to
Scouting Hill to keep a lookout for
our enemies, who would approach the camp
to steal our horses and women.



In the 1600's when the Newcomers arrived,
we shared our knowledge of Mother Earth.
We helped them to survive on our land and showed
them how to hunt and trap beavers for furs.
In return, the Newcomers gave us blankets, metal
tools and new weapons. They also brought
strange diseases and conflict, which
changed our way of life.



After many seasons passed, our
Saulteaux ancestors decided to leave their
eastern home and travel west in search of a better
life. They trusted the Creator to carry
them safely to a new home.



L. Moise & P. Fehr

They journeyed south of
Lake Superior, west along rivers and
swampland, onto the grasslands and then north until
they arrived in the Qu'Appelle Valley. Here they
found a beautiful new home with clean water,
plenty of wildlife, plants and berries
and no diseases.



Chief Ka-kee-na-wup (One Who Sits Like an Eagle) saw that the time of the buffalo herds was coming to an end. Ka-kee-na-wup signed Treaty 4 on September 15, 1874. He was promised free education, hunting rights and land for his people. Sadly, within a year of the signing, Ka-kee-na-wup passed on to the Creator. His son, Muskowekwan*, became our Chief for the next thirty-six years.

**Muscowequan or Muskowekwan in the Anishinaabe language*



Leeroy Bigsky

Muskowekwan (Strong Back/Strong Quill)

led our people through many changes.

The Indian Act of 1876 forced our people to leave behind our traditional way of life and become farmers. Our trap lines were disturbed in 1882, with the expansion of the telegraph, through Touchwood Hills. The telegraph brought information from our people, who lived far away.



Taneja
Wolfe

After being surveyed by Dominion Land surveyor John C. Nelson, in March 1884, Muskowekwan Indian Reserve No. 85 was created in Little Touchwood Hills. Chief Muskowekwan and forty-five families were part of our original thirty-six square miles, plus six and one-half sections.



In 1886, the Day School was built on our reserve.
It had a model farm attached to it and our Elders
recalled stories of the Moshums and Kokums
going there to learn how to farm.



By: Courage

When the Grand Trunk Railway came through in the early 1900's, the company applied to the Department of Indian Affairs to build a track through the reserve.

Without consulting Chief Muskowekwan, the government granted access in 1906.

Although Chief Muskowekwan agreed to surrender the land in 1907, he did not sign the papers until 1910. At that time, the town of Lestock was created on 960 acres of reserve land.



In 1932, two years after the Education Act was revised, the second* Muskowekwan Residential School was opened. The government forced all children on our reserve to attend this school. Sadly, the Residential School was a place where our children lost their Saulteaux language and culture. Over the next fifty years they were taught Roman Catholic beliefs instead of their ancestors' native teachings. All of our children suffered from the loss of contact with their families and the harsh treatment by staff at the school. ** The First Residential School burned down.*

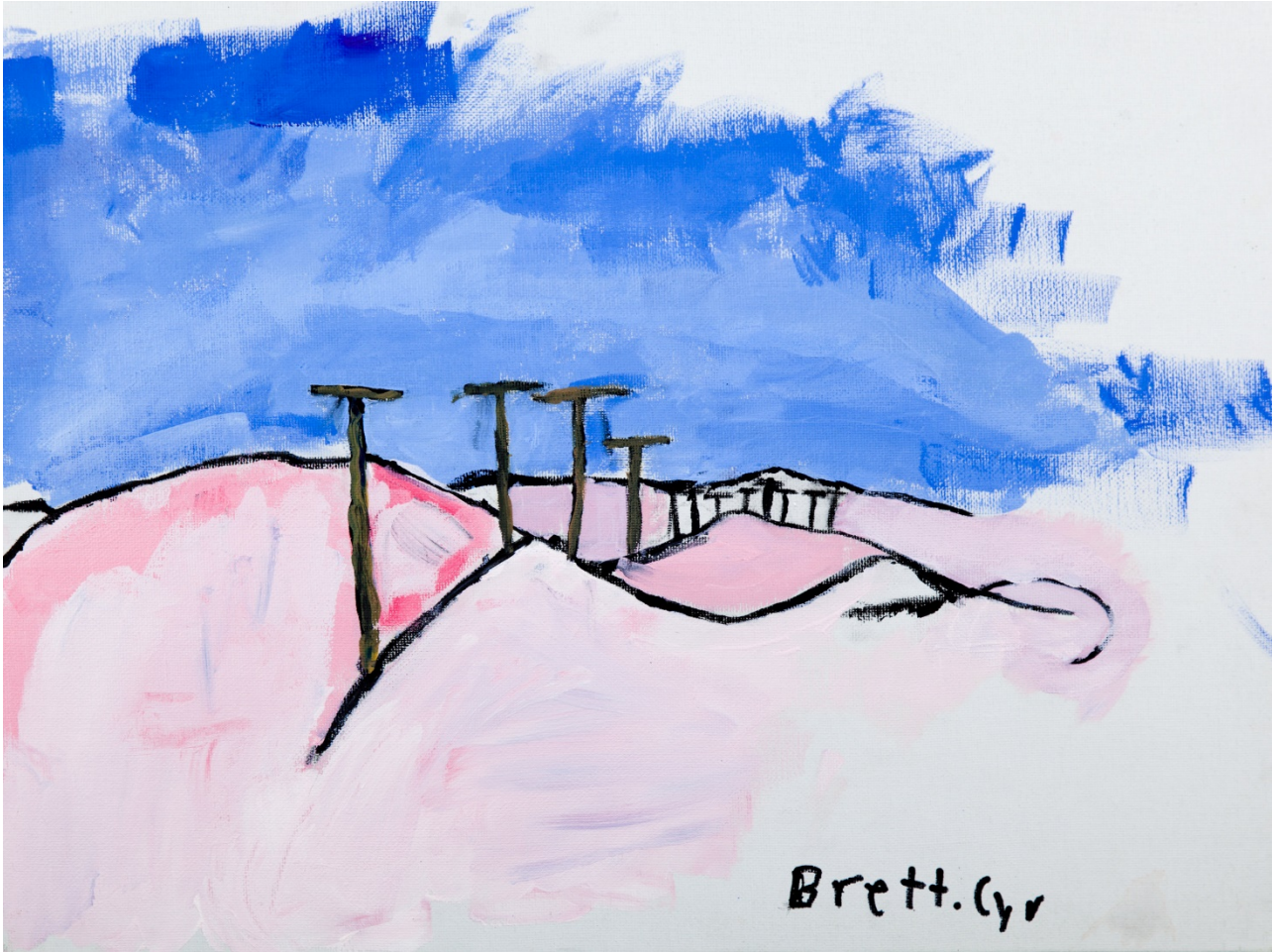


Jessi
Wolfe

Survivors of the Residential School and their children have slowly worked to rebuild native traditions in our community. Events like feasts, rain dances and sweats, which were banned for most of the 1900's, are now celebrated on our reserve. The Saulteaux language is spoken by the Elders at our school and is being reintroduced to our students.







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Treaty 4 Education Alliance Inc.



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