

## Camp Heritage Fair Journal

I'm a little late to the Camp Heritage Fair party—but getting started has nonetheless been very interesting!

### August 2: Brainstorm ideas and questions! (Aug 4)

- Origins of Vancouver: “How did Vancouver develop into the city that it is today?”
- Chinatowns: “How did Chinatowns emerge across Canada?”
- Indigenous languages: “How have Indigenous language revitalization efforts been growing around our country?”
- James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement: “What is the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, and what is its legacy and significance?”
- Canadian women in STEM (e.g. Harriet Brooks): “How have Canadian women contributed to STEM over the years?”

### August 3: Find hidden or forgotten history near you! (Aug 4)

I find that some of the most intriguing hidden or forgotten history is local. This is history that you interact with on a day-to-day basis. We take the places that this history is tucked within for granted because we encounter them so often—but that's precisely why we *should* be curious. You can't help but get a sense of wonder when you learn the fascinating backstory behind such locations!

Recently, during a routine commute, I passed by a former school of mine called [Sir Wilfrid Laurier Annex](#)—or at least, that's what it *was* called until a few years ago. Nowadays, it's a Francophone school, but its old name still adorns its side. In hindsight, I realized that despite having attended this school for several years, I know very little about its history. For starters, I did not know how it came into being. How did the Vancouver School Board build it—e.g. what sort of paperwork, processes, decisions, and conversations were needed? I did not even know when this school was built. These details may come off as mundane, but to me, they are analogous to learning how a community is born. Another thing I recall is that there used to be a papier-mache moose statue in the corridor—our school mascot. Where is that statue now? Who created that symbol of my childhood? We can extend that question to the school in general.

When reflecting on this school, it becomes clear to me that all these questions have answers—I just cannot find them, and perhaps never will. As a bit of a history nerd, that is one of the bitterest truths in life. Somewhere on planet Earth is somebody who can resolve this mystery, just as once upon a time there lived a society whose language is now dead and indecipherable. Think of all the knowledge that has been lost due to time's erosion of memory, or that has been lost simply because not enough people are inquisitive. Like a stone thrown into an ocean, long-lasting ripples are created, but the origin of these ripples is never to be seen again.

On a lighter note, the school's namesake fits the building's current status as a Francophone school perfectly. Sir Wilfrid Laurier is one of Canada's most respected prime ministers and leaders, with one of the reasons being that he attempted to resolve conflicts between English-Canadians and French-Canadians. Laurier was a French-Canadian himself.

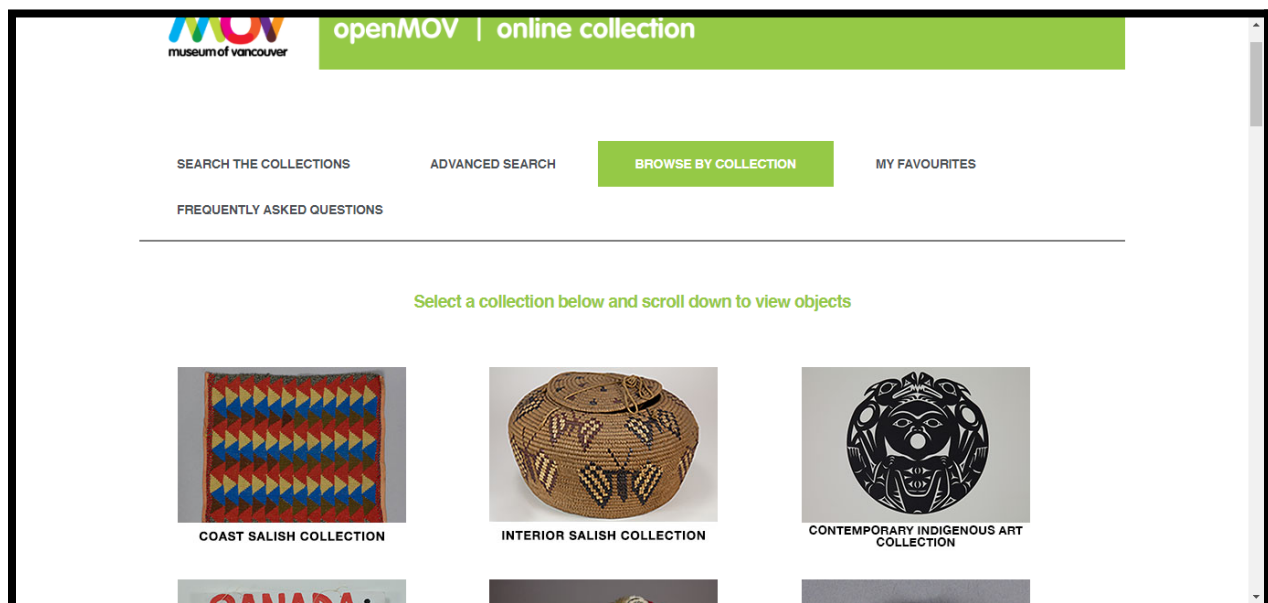
*Croiriez-vous cela?*

#### **August 4: Visit a historic site! (Aug. 6)**

For better or for worse, life has been pretty darn busy for just about everybody in my family over the past few months. With studies mounting, it becomes downright impossible sometimes to stretch your legs and travel somewhere nice, or just somewhere different!

Luckily, I have a bit of an alternative in the form of online museums and exhibitions. Take the Museum of Vancouver, for instance. It boasts an online collection made up of countless photographs of artifacts, ranging from Indigenous tools to urban neon signs. It's a record of how Vancouver has served for years as a junction for social movements, cultures, and ethnicities, as well as the important roles played by Indigenous Peoples in the city's history.

This connects strongly to one of the potential topics which I have chosen—the origins of Vancouver. It serves as a testament to the eclectic background of one of Canada's most prominent cities.



Not too long ago, however, I did have the pleasure of visiting a local historical site in-person: my brother had his high school graduation in June, and it took place at the Orpheum Theatre. I had previously been there for a

musical performance years ago, and though my memories of the theatre were faint, one of the main things I recalled was the beautifully-decorated domed ceiling. Returning in June, my memories of the theatre's grandeur were confirmed! Intricate architectural details, tasteful art and lighting, and an excellent orchestral performance put on by my school's music students all made for a truly unforgettable occasion—combined, of course, with the joy of watching the grads enter a new stage in their lives. In that building, you couldn't help but be awed by both the impressive history of the venue and the innumerable possibilities that lie ahead for those attending the event!

### **August 7: Listen to the BCHFS podcast!**

The podcast episode which I chose was “Kai, The First Canadian Stamp.” I felt that it really fits in with the questions and topics that I have been thinking of, since it is very relevant to the development of Canada's identity.

Listening to Kai and Freddie talking about the history of Canada's first stamp was very interesting! Kai knew the subject very well, and Freddie asked a lot of questions that really helped show the depth of this topic. It was quite a surprise to learn that the beaver was at the centre of the first stamp to not feature a monarch. Certainly, it serves as food for thought regarding Canada's colonial roots—as well as our history as a whole.

It was also intriguing to contemplate the role of lettermail in modern Canada. True, emails may be a bit quicker, but postcards and handwritten letters still have that timeless charm—and with them, stamps. I like stamps quite a bit: over the years, I've collected a few, and I have a stamp catalogue that is several centimetres thick tucked away in a corner of my house! But, as Kai reminds us in the podcast, the line separating a simple component of our everyday lives and artistic and cultural expression can often get blurred. Frankly, it's always beautiful when such a phenomenon happens.

Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed listening to the BCHFS podcast!

### **August 9: Research a Heritage Topic**

The topic which I decided to research was the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA). The question which I wanted to answer was this: “What is the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, and what is its legacy and significance?”

First off, what is the JBNQA? It is an agreement that was signed on November 11, 1975 by the Inuit and Cree peoples of Northern Quebec and the Quebec government and Canadian government. It is a complicated agreement that has been subject to numerous revisions over the years, and its overall legacy is even more difficult to wrap one's head around. Perhaps it is best to look at it, as many people do, as a “modern treaty”—or more

officially as a comprehensive land claim agreement. The JBNQA's initial purpose was to resolve a dispute between the Quebec government and the Cree and Inuit living in the James Bay region of Canada.

Back in the 1970s, the government of Quebec wanted to build hydroelectric dams in the James Bay region. However, this move was made without the consent of the Indigenous Peoples in the area, the majority of whom were Cree and Inuit. Upon learning of this plan, resistance towards the plan mounted among the region's Indigenous Peoples, who had never ceded control of this land to the government. Asserting these rights, the Cree and Inuit founded the beginnings of an organized effort against this expansion.

First, the Cree worked with the Indians of Quebec Association (IQA) to try to explain to the government how this expansion would harm Indigenous Peoples. When their protests fell on deaf ears, they turned to the legal system as a means of bringing the government to the bargaining table. Arguing that the Quebec government had ignored legal agreements from 1898 and 1912 that had stipulated the need for negotiations before land rights could be relinquished, the Indigenous advocates won a major victory in November 1973. A Superior Court judge had paused dam construction as part of a ruling that also called upon the government to uphold its obligations to the Indigenous parties. An appeals court ruling later overruled this result, but nevertheless, talks between the Indigenous Peoples and the government began in around late 1973 to early 1974.

Disagreements between the IQA and Cree parties over the scope of the land claims being settled led to the former leaving the talks in summer 1974. The Cree had set up the Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec after their alliance with the IQA had begun to sour. Shortly thereafter, the Cree and Inuit put together a prototype agreement with the province's government.

As relations between the government and the Indigenous parties improved, a deal began to emerge. It culminated in the November 1975 signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, which in essence gave the Quebec government the ability to resume work on the dams, in exchange for the Indigenous parties receiving financial compensation and the legal affirmation of their rights. The latter part is perhaps the most critical: the JBNQA set down, in law, the protection of many important components of Indigenous Peoples' lives. The Inuit and Cree were given significant rights concerning fishing and hunting for large swathes of Quebec that were tens of thousands of square kilometres in size. They could now use traditional lands—covering more than half of Quebec's surface area—for these purposes. The political authority that Indigenous Peoples had over lands under their jurisdiction was also bolstered significantly, as 14,000 km<sup>2</sup> of land was now overseen by local Indigenous governments. Something akin to a universal basic income program was introduced for some Cree families, and Indigenous language rights were secured. The James Bay Native Development Corporation was also created as a means of supporting Cree people to achieve prosperity and to give them a political voice.

When considering all of this, it is easy to think that the legacy of the JBNQA is a proud one. Some might point to the fact that three years later, the Naskapi people also became a signatory, and that after several years more the

historic 1984 *Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act* was passed, providing a crucial boost for Indigenous autonomy efforts throughout Canada. But relations between the Indigenous signatories and the Quebec government grew fragile, especially against the backdrop of the 1995 independence referendum. Amid concerns that the Quebec government was not meeting their end of the agreement, the Cree re-asserted their political rights. The Cree said that because of this, they could choose to remain in Canada—regardless of Quebec’s decision. This led to another agreement between the Cree and the government being signed in 2002, called *La Paix des braves*, or Peace of the Braves. Friendlier relations were established, and the Cree gained more autonomy in the process.

The JBNQA has also experienced some criticism. For instance, George Manuel, President of the North American Indian Brotherhood, has stated that he feels the JBNQA represented a trend of Indigenous groups essentially selling their land rights. Some Indigenous groups had been left out of the agreement, and had to continue fighting for this recognition. An Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP) analysis found that while the quality of life among the Cree and Inuit in Northern Quebec had improved in the wake of the JBNQA, they were roughly similar to Indigenous communities elsewhere in Canada that had not been a signatory to this agreement. On the other hand, the efforts towards providing Indigenous Peoples with political representation have been very important to the development of Indigenous self-governance in Canada.

In many ways, as the IRPP noted, the strongest element of the JBNQA’s legacy may lie in how it served as a spark for Indigenous advocacy and self-governance movements throughout our country, laying the foundations for countless social, cultural, economic, and political possibilities to come.

Sources used:

<https://irpp.org/research-studies/aboriginal-quality-of-life-under-a-modern-treaty/>  
<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/james-bay-and-northern-quebec-agreement>

Additional sources:

<https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1407867973532/1542984538197>  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/impact-assessment-agency/corporate/james-bay-northern-quebec-agreement.html>  
[https://www.quebec.ca/en/news/actualites/detail/the-quebec-government-marks-the-45th-anniversary-of-the-signing-of-the-james-bay-and-northern-quebec-agreement-and-renames-the-james-bay-road-in-honour-of-grand-chieftain-billy-diamond](https://www.quebec.ca/en/news/actualites/detail/the-quebec-government-marks-the-45th-anniversary-of-the-signing-of-the-james-bay-and-northern-quebec-agreement-and-renames-the-james-bay-road-in-honour-of-grand-chief-billy-diamond)  
<https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/handle/1773/42932>  
<https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/362/AAND/Evidence/EV1039871/aandev17-e.htm#T1540>

### **August 10: read a historic novel**

Unfortunately, it doesn’t seem that there are many novels out there regarding the JBNQA. However, there are documentaries about the agreement, and the inspiration for this entire project had come from a *Kayak*

magazine—namely, issue 65, Sept. 2018, titled *We Are All Treaty People*. In it was a short comic called “Power of the People,” created by Alex Diochon, that summarized the JBNQA in six pages. It was very artistically done, and I heartily recommend giving it a read—it was a concise and engaging overview of one of the most important milestones for Indigenous self-governance in Canada.

#### **August 14: Visit your local museum! (Aug 15)**

Owing to a rather busy summer vacation, I haven’t been able to do a lot of travelling. Thankfully, however, I was able to come across another local museum that boasts online resources and digital exhibitions along with photos on the web of its collection: the UBC’s Museum of Anthropology. I visited the MOA several years ago as part of a class field trip, and I still remember how awe-inspiring its many artifacts were. The museum’s physical location has been closed down for seismic upgrades, but its website continues to host the aforementioned education opportunities.

The MOA is particularly relevant to my topic because Canadian Indigenous cultures are among its focuses. In fact, the Indigenous artifacts in the museum’s collection are the artifacts that I recall the strongest from my field trip. Additionally, some of the MOA’s digital exhibitions cover Indigenous advocacy efforts.

Reviewing these resources has been a very interesting experience, with the knowledge gleaned helping to provide the context for the JBNQA. [The photographs of Indigenous artifacts in the museum’s online collection](#) illustrate how Indigenous cultures have changed over the years amidst cultural genocide and colonization, while the online exhibition about the [Heiltsuk Nation’s resistance towards oil tankers and the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline](#) shows how Indigenous Peoples have been fighting to protect the future of their ancestral lands. Similar to the Indigenous activist efforts of the 70s in northern Quebec, the Heiltsuk Nation’s protests are on environmental grounds, and they are dissenting against a major energy project.

There is the old adage that history repeats itself, but what these stories indicate is that there are plenty of people in the world who would like to break that cycle.

#### **August 15: Learn About a Local Building!**

After browsing [the Vancouver Heritage Foundation’s website](#) for sites in this city that are significant to Indigenous Peoples, I came across [an article about the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society](#), which is currently situated at [1607 E Hastings Street](#)—its location since 1981. It was officially founded in 1963 as the Vancouver Indian Centre Society, but it has roots in an earlier Indigenous-oriented organization founded in 1950. The VAFCS was the second-ever friendship centre founded in Canada, but many now exist across the country. They provide countless services to people of Indigenous ancestry, which include hosting cultural events, providing opportunities for social interaction, caring for those in need, and much more. Also among the VAFCS’s main priorities is looking after Indigenous people who have just moved into the city. The VAFCS is

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one of 25 friendship centres across BC, which in turn form the British Columbia Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres. The Greater Vancouver District's friendship centres support upwards of 40,000 Indigenous persons.

It was very interesting to learn about the history behind this part of Vancouver. It reminds me that there is never such a thing as knowing everything about your neighbourhood!

### **August 17**

Because I can't quite take part in the activities for yesterday and today, I decided to watch a documentary about the JBNQA. It was highly absorbing! <https://gem.cbc.ca/absolutely-canadian/s17e26?autoplay=1>

### **August 21: Find Historic Photos!**

Here are only some of the sites where we can find excellent photos pertaining to the JBNQA:

<http://cccpp-hftcc.com/jbnqa-and-neqa/>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/impact-assessment-agency/corporate/james-bay-northern-quebec-agreement.html>

<http://nationnews.ca/voices/the-jbnqa-turns-45/>

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/james-bay-and-northern-quebec-agreement>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/robbie-tookalook-inuit-leader-remembered-northern-quebec-1.4349264>

<https://www.hydroquebec.com/indigenous-relations/agreements.html>

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=703914723438707>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/billy-diamond-james-bay-highway-cree-quebec-1.5676563>

<https://www.historymuseum.ca/blog/when-cree-and-inuit-transformed-modern-canada/>

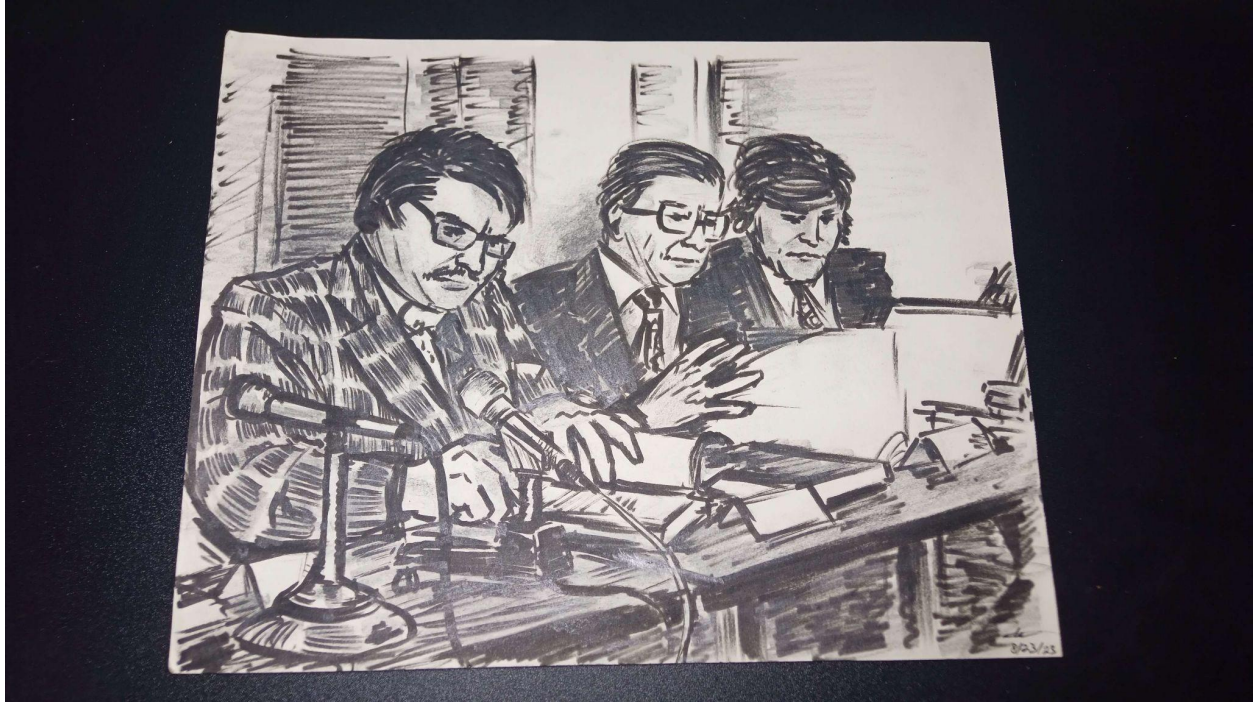
<https://waskaganish.ca/the-james-bay-project/>

The CBC Gem documentary that I watched on the 17th contains a lot of excellent archive footage, from which I can take a few screengrabs.

### **August 22: Draw a Historic Person, Place, or Thing (Aug 23)**

I used a photo I found on this website for inspiration: <https://waskaganish.ca/the-james-bay-project/>





**August 28: Write a blog post for the Alumni blog!**

The blog post was completed on a separate document on August 30.

Overall, Camp Heritage Fair has been very educational, and if it comes back next year, I'll gladly take part in it again!