

*Click on the treaty medal for a Treaty 1 story



The Doctrine of Discovery

In the 15th century, the Pope of the Catholic Church made a series of decrees that gave Christian empires the authority to invade the lands of non-Christian peoples and take their resources. These decrees became known as the [Doctrine of Discovery](#) and became the justification for colonial expansion around the world, including North America.

The Doctrine of Discovery was based on the belief that Indigenous Peoples and other non-Christians were not human. Therefore, their lands were considered uninhabited or empty (terra nullius). This belief was so deeply held, it continued to influence the laws and policies of the Canadian government in regard to Indigenous Peoples from the time of Confederation in 1867. The Indian Act of 1876 is but one example.

DID YOU KNOW . . .



One location where the signing of Treaty 5 occurred is the HBC Archway in Norway House. Click on the image above for a tour of other significant treaty-related sites in Manitoba.



Limited access to clean water is a very important issue in Northern Manitoba. Click on the image above to find out how poor water quality is considered a breach of Treaty 5.



Click on the above image to view the video *Canada in Focus: A Promise to Share*. You will learn more about the Indigenous perspective to treaty making and how we know the government understood that perspective.



The language issue, the interpretation, seemed to work against the First Nation people. When the agreement was crafted or was written in Ottawa ... it came out that we ceded the territory. Elders of the day had a different interpretation. They never agreed to surrender the land, nor would they conceive of such a thing. For us to turn around and give up our Mother [earth] is like giving up our life.

Elder Dennis White Bird, former Treaty Commissioner of Manitoba as quoted in [Manidoo-Abi: A true story about the land we share](#) by Donna Carreiro, June 13, 2021

Learn More:

- about the Doctrine of Discovery from the [Canadian Museum of Human Rights](#).
- from the **Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba (TRCM)**:
 - See their monthly Newsletters, [Wetutoskimetowin: To Work on it Together](#).
 - **Teachers**: The TRCM's Newsletters include access to cross-curricular lesson plans and classroom resources. We highly recommend teachers sign up for the [TRCM's E-Newsletter](#) that is delivered via email.
 - View online [Videos](#) and [Webinars](#)
 - See also these PowerPoint Presentations [for Grade 3 to 6](#) and for [Grade 7 to 12](#)
 - and interactive [Treaty maps, timelines, and stories](#)
- see the [IWOL Blog](#) for additional Treaty Education information and resources.