#2
THE BLACKFOOT CONFEDERACY
INTERPRETATION AND PAINTING BY HENRY STANDINGALONE

This scene depicts the things that are important to Blackfoot people yesterday and today.

The sun was worshipped for its life giving source to the Blackfoot people and they offered prayers to the creator, prior to the settlers coming to this area.

The buffalo skull, which represents the Power and Spirit of the traditional food source, was painted with ceremonial colours and laid on top of each Medicine Lodge facing east. The painted symbols represent: Sun in the centre; pairs of Sun Dogs on each side; Crescent Moon above; Morning Star below; and Hail Stones, or Thunder, all around.

The Medicine Lodge was used for sacred ceremonies of the Blackfoot such as the Sundance. The only people who could set up a Medicine Lodge had to be pure or had done nothing wrong in their life, they were usually constructed by women. Anyone in camp could make an offering, this is a symbolic gift to the Holy Spirit - to Sun, Moon, Sky, Stars, Birds, Animals. The chosen holy person would then pray to the Spirits on behalf of the offerer. Later all offerings were brought to the Medicine Lodge and tied permanently to the Lodge's Centre Pole.

The Medicine Lodge Ceremony was purified by sweat baths. The Sweat Lodges were built by members of the four different men's societies. Each sweat lodge frame was constructed of 100 long straight willows. The South side was painted with red earth representing the power of the warm summers, the North side was covered with black paint, representing the power of the winters. It was used for ceremonial cleansing of the body and soul and is still being done today.

The Tipi- represents the main household that was originally made from buffalo hides. The Seven Moons - is a representation of the Legend of the Dipper and all the legends that have been passed down from generation to generation.

#3
PLAINS CREE WAY OF LIFE
INTERPRETATION AND PAINTING BY NONA FOSTER

"In the centre of this design is a late fall or early winter campsite. The trees are bare and it has snowed, the people are going about their business and preparing for colder days to come. There is meat drying, pemmican being made, hides being cleaned and stretched, wood stored and other activities going on.

The people are dressed in leathers and buckskins, some have acquired trade blankets and hats. Most of the tools are still primitive and most of the activities and skills shown are traditional and time honoured.

Around the bottom half of the border are traditional outfits. The one on the left was used in the Sun Dance ceremonies and has the Sun Dance symbol on it. Other designs show very old Cree designs; the morning star (with the four directions) the floral work on the moccasins, the tobacco bag and the vest.

The top half on the border shows some of the animals that my ancestors shared the land with, and used for food, clothing and shelter.

Tobacco was used in many ceremonies and rituals; healing of the sick, to make war, to make peace, before raids and hunts. Tobacco helps you find comfort and when you pray and burn tobacco, the smoke carries your prayer straight to the Great Spirit."

#4
PLAINS CREE CEREMONIES
INTERPRETATION AND PAINTING BY ROBERT ANDERSON

This painting represents some of the many ceremonies in our Cree culture.

The four ribbons are representative of the four directions:

Blue - Sky Blue, representing the South
Red - Sunrise, representing the East
Yellow - Sundown, representing the West
White - Snow, representing the North

This information was supplied courtesy of Gordon Oaks from Nikaneet Band, Maple Creek, Sask. Other Tribes have different colours with different meanings.

The sweatlodge, only built once, can be used for pleasure, to ask for guidance from the spirit powers, for a time of prayer, or as part of a ritualistic cleansing prior to any ceremony such as the Sundance.

In our Cree culture, the peace pipe plays a very important role. A pipe is lit to call upon the spirit powers. The smoking of the peace pipe also symbolizes peace and friendship. All who take part in the smoking of the pipe are truly welcome in friendship.

The stone border has engraved cree symbolic lettering. It says "Plains Cree Ceremonies." The stone is taken from the mountain in the background or from the rock from which many things are made, eg. the peace pipe, and many other tools and weapons. The rock is strong and by having the title engraved in it shows that the strength of our culture will never be destroyed and is permanent in it's ways.

The sacred Sundance Ceremony is one of our most important ceremonies. The Sundance is a ritual of self torture and is done in obedience to vow to give thanks to the Great Spirit for help in battle and in sickness. The pledger, always a man, either has his own Sundance songs or he asks a man who had such songs to conduct the ceremony. The pledger chooses four assistants to sing with him on the night of the three new moons prior to the date set for the Sundance. The fourth and final preliminary singing takes place before the Sundance.

These are my 3 story Boards.

Saa[illegible]epee

The Indian Paintbrush
Art by NONA
NONA FOSTER
[illegible] VAL MARIE SASK. S
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#8

THE METIS OF THE PLAINS INTERPRETATION AND PAINTING BY NONA FOSTER

The Metis people came from a meeting of two powerful human cultures and the emergence of a new and distinct people with inherent rights rooted in both cultures. This is shown by the native woman and the pale skin man. The man was a voyager of either Scottish or French descent. I have picked a very blond, blue eyed traveller. They came for furs and needed help, which they found in the Native people and more so in the Native women. The children born of these people are the Metis people of today.

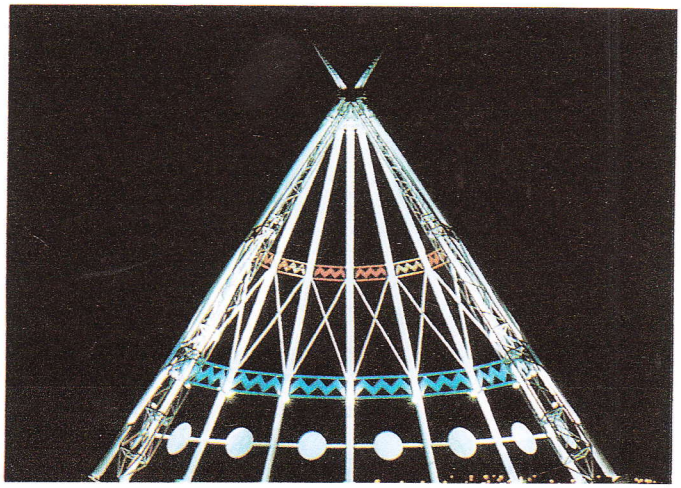
I have added a Metis sash, which originated and was made in L'assomption, Quebec, and was worn by the French Voyagers. The Thistle represents the Scots. There is yarrow to show that these people still need the plants in their medicines.

I have shown a "North West Half Breed Commission paper", of my Great Grandmothers. The signing of Scrip gave the native people a small amount of cash and took away their Treaty Rights.

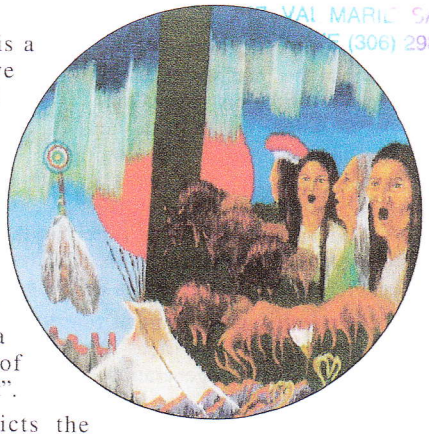
This is what the Scrip says: "Department of the Interior, Canada" North West Half Breed Commission, St. Albert, July 14, 1886. I hereby certify, under the powers vested in me by an Order in Council dated 1st March, 1886, that Catherine Sayer, a Half-Breed, has proven to my satisfaction that she is entitled to $48 dollars in Scrip as one of the heirs of...

There are a few professions shown to signify that Native people are involved in today's communities as educated, proud, and respected citizens.

The Flag has a rich temporal and spiritual significance which is conveyed by the Blue background, indicating the vast reserves of spirit and relates to an early alliance. The horizontal figure eight is derived from the infinity sign and symbolizes the two cultures and the resultant emergence of new and distinct people. This will carry on from generation to generation and the sacred symbol of the Metis Nation will serve to remind us of our inherent rights to land, self-determination, and pride in our unique cultural heritage which has existed since time immemorial.



T PEOPLE'S TODAY INTERPRETATION AND PAINTING BY MARILYN FRASER-KING

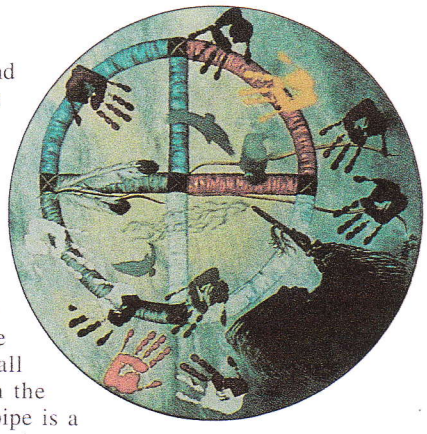


"Even though there is a passing of our Native culture from the old world into the new, we have kept our songs and sang them. To this day we still pass on the feather, we still sing, we still hear the stories, we still listen to the wind, and we still feel the power of the Northern Lights. It is a time to walk a path of treasure and enlightenment".

"This painting depicts the acceptance of both worlds and their challenges. We have become the educators, teachers, and a solid base for moving forward."

#10

CIRCLE OF UNITY - MULTICULTURALISM INTERPRETATION AND PAINTING BY NONA FOSTER



This is set on a dark and stormy sky, but there are breaks in the clouds and the life giving sun is shining through. Pointing towards the Sun and bright light, the Native Warrior holds his peace pipe invoking wisdom of the Great Spirit. The pipe represents the unity of all people and all things in the universe. Smoking the pipe is a profound rite, you smoke and are joined "Mitakuye Oyasin" (we are all related).

The crossed circle is one of the very earliest forms inscribed by humans to express the cosmos, life has no beginning or no end, and is a symbol of unity. The cross pieces represent the four directions:

South - White - birth, peace, happiness, life
West - Black - death, enemy, youth struggles
North - Blue - trouble, disappointment, cold, old age
East - Red - maturity, light, success, power

The buffalo is represented as a symbol of the Great Spirit's wisdom and generosity. They provided food, clothing, medicine, and shelter.

The Eagle and the Eagle Feathers are symbols of honour, bravery, love, friendship and mystical powers that move between man and the Great Spirit.

The different races of people are portrayed here by different coloured hands. Some are solid colour, some are mixed, representing different coloured skin, cultures and mixed peoples. The hand shake