Indigenizing the Curriculum:  
An Appendix of Films and Movies, and their Supportive Books

Abstract

This work, following its initial introduction, is an evolving annotated bibliography that encompasses a wide range of Aboriginal films and movies and, where available, books (both text and audio) that the films or movies are based on, or that supplement the films or movies. While the print version contained within the First Nations Perspectives journal includes only the introduction, the on-line version, available at www.aboriginalcurriculum.ca (under Resources), includes the entirety of the document; that is, the introduction as well as the reviews for all the films, movies, and accompanying books. The resource is primarily intended for the use of schools, universities, and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. In schools and universities, films and movies can be purposefully integrated into curricular outcomes, with work to activate the learning and the inclusion of applying activities following the film or movie. In Aboriginal communities, in support groups, and in non-Aboriginal settings, films and movies can be an important resource for knowledge acquisition, and thus can serve as a springboard for dialogue in the healing journey, for everyone. The annotated bibliography entries within this longer work are intended to serve as a beginning point. Teachers and community workers are encouraged to screen all films and movies twice, while also undertaking additional research so that they can construct valuable learning activities and opportunities for dialogue that are particular to their situation.

Introduction

The motivation for this work evolved from a major SSHRC/CURA grant. In 2005 we began our work on a project entitled Community-Based Aboriginal Curriculum Initiatives: Implementation and Evaluation, with one million dollars in funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Community-University Research Alliance (SSHRC/CURA) initiative. Our program involved efforts to integrate more Aboriginal culture into school curricula, with regular collaboration among the participating schools and community knowledge keepers as they worked as in-school artist-educators. As our work progressed, we also found that we needed to focus on integrating much more Aboriginal literature. We developed an Aboriginal Curriculum Initiatives Centre on campus, and provided support for our grant’s participating First Nations schools, as well as for teacher candidates and visiting teachers from other schools. Over time, we extended our literature to include other culturally-relevant resources, like posters, puppets, puzzles, figurines, and games, as well as curriculum documents and other supportive resources from many organizations and jurisdictions. As well, I began to research and become familiar with Aboriginal films and movies, and we expanded that collection, as well.

The use of films and movies taps into different ways of knowing. There has been much written about multiple intelligences, or various ways of knowing and learning. Howard Gardner’s (1983/2011) ground breaking work suggested that there were more than
verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences, that in fact there were musical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences, as well as naturalistic and experiential intelligences. Daniel Goldman’s (1995/2005) work on emotional intelligence is also significant. In other words, we have different ways of living and moving in the world and integrating its teachings. The use of films and movies allows teachers to diversify instruction for students. As well, because learning reaches automaticity, or a level of deeper metacognitive understanding, with some repetition, the use of films and movies allows for that focus, but with a different learning strategy; thus, the repetition does not actually seem repetitive or boring, and so students remain engaged with their learning. The learning from a film or movie may be more likely to reach the stage of emotional learning, and thus students may tap into a level of understanding beyond the concept of intellectual knowing. As well, because the films and movies tell a story, if the aspects that students are to learn involve a challenge to their current ways of thinking, a film or movie can allow students to more gently tease out, become aware of, question, and then address their own biases. Accompanying literature and audio books also help in that process, as they allow for an appreciation of different ways of viewing the world, and of living one’s life.

On a final note, the use of films and movies is, for the most part, currently incompatible with the way schools and universities structure their class time in short blocks. That is a major drawback, as there may not be time to view the film or movie in its entirety at one sitting, and there may also be little time for crucial immediate and follow-up dialogue. Opportunities for incubatory dialogue are needed as well, where students can continue to explore their learning from the film or movie. The use of films and movies may be discouraged if the school and the teacher are more focused on quickly accomplished ‘sound-bite’ objectives rather than the deeper learning that can be mentored with the use of films and movies. Support for change is necessary from schools, universities, and communities if Aboriginal films and movies are to serve us well during the healing journey.

References

Film and Movies, and Accompanying Books (text and/or audio).
This film, while older now, can still be used to activate student projects around urban First Peoples, including Elders. In this film Elder Vern Harper from Toronto tells about his work in an urban setting and in a prison environment. The viewer learns how Mr. Harper helps urban Aboriginal people stay strong in their culture and identity even if they are not on the land, but rather have been born, raised, and still live in the city. Students might create questions for Elders
that they invite to their class, as they talk about how to create and sustain a healthy identity as a grounded Aboriginal person amidst all the contemporary pressures and challenges. (MY, SY, Adult)

Alexie, Sherman. (Director & Writer), & Taylor, Holly (Director of photography & Editor). (2002). The business of fancydancing [Motion picture]. US: Outrider Pictures (Distributor). (103 running minutes)

The movie is based on Alexie’s first short story and poetry collection. The movie’s approach is captivating in that the story is put together with a variety of scenes that depict the struggles of the successful gay Native American poet Seymour Polatkin (Evan Adams), and his home community. Seymour’s poetry is embraced in the mainstream, although the subjects and stories of his poetry emerge largely from his home, and the history and experiences of Aboriginal people in general. He has become estranged from his community; there is resentment from his former friends, intelligent Aristotle (Gene Tagaban) and violinist Mouse (Swil Kanim) that while Seymour has turned his back on them, he has gained success on the backs of their stories. Both former friends are struggling with addictions, and Mouse overdoses and dies. Seymour’s former lover Agnes Roth (Michelle St. John), the moral centre of the story, is a mixed race Spokane/Jewish woman who has relocated to Seymour’s community to teach. She phones Seymour, the call is taken by his current white gay lover Steven (Kevin Phillip), and Seymour goes back to the community for Mouse’s funeral. There he confronts his past. The movie is layered with an interview (Rebecca Carroll) of Seymour; the black—race, ethnicity, and sexuality are all themes in the movie—interviewer is aggressive, and wishes to stress Seymour’s financial success with writing about the poverty and associated challenges of his people while remaining separated from them. As well, there are scenes of fancy dancing and violin playing. Swil Kanim, who plays Mouse, actually played and also helped to compose the music that he plays.

The movie is unconventional with its layered approach, but very effective in engaging the viewer at a deeper level. The dialogue within the screenplay is stunning, like Seymour’s comment to Agnes when she tells him of her background: “Jewish and Indian? Damn, so you got your tribal enrollment numbers tattooed on one arm and death camp numbers on the other” (p. 41). The screenplay is enjoyable to read, but the read is more engaging after viewing the film rather than prior to viewing. It includes a list of all the contributors to the film, as well as written notes by many of them. Some of the poems within the short story and poetry collection are read within the movie; however, the movie itself is more emergent from the collection than being based on any particular poem or story. As well, much of the movie is improvised; thus, while the movie is guided by the screenplay, it is also emergent from the actors and the situation. The movie (and accompanying books) is essential to the study of Indigenous film, as it focuses so
deeply on many issues facing indigenous people, and yet is so deeply personal. Many of Alexie’s friends and acquaintances are involved with the film, and some of the movie is autobiographical with reference to Alexie. Issues of racism, classism, and sexuality allow for deep dialogue and examination of one’s own place in the story. More information on the film can be accessed on Sherman Alexie’s official website: www.fallsapart.com. The DVD also contains exceptional interviews with Sherman Alexie and Evan Adams together, which are almost as engaging as the film itself, and certainly instructive, as the conversation occurs in conjunction with the replaying of scenes from the film. (SY, Adult)


The video is a wonderful production, with many featured Allen Sapp paintings, some elaborated with accompanying stories from Cree Elders. Allen Sapp is also included in the film as he walks around the yard of his childhood home and talks about where everything was situated. The film is hosted and narrated by Gordon Tootoosis, who provides Allen Sapp’s biography and the background experiences that gave the direction for his career as a painter. Originally painting ‘contemporary’ pictures that had little to do with his culture, Mr. Sapp was encouraged by Dr. Allan Gonor to paint what he knew. That encouragement has resulted in a body of work that provides a visual history of Allen’s life experiences. Elders participating as interviewees include Josephine Frank (Poundmaker First Nation [F.N.]); under the title Breaking the Land, Solomon Stone (Mosquito F.N.) and Alma Kytwayhat (Makwa Sahgaiehcan F. N.), who both talk about the permit and the pass systems; under the title The Cree Way, Wallace Semeganis (Poundmaker F. N.), Alma Kytwayhat (Mawwa Sahgaiehcan F. N.), Edwin Tootoosis (Poundmaker F. N.), Irene Fineday (Sweetgrass F. N.), and Jonas Semaganis (Little Pine F. N.), who all talk about the traditional Cree way of life with their stories interspersed with Allen Sapp’s paintings. This exceptional film should be shown on a larger screen (e.g., Smartboard) in order for the paintings to be fully appreciated. Students may do further research on Allen Sapp, and on aspects elaborated by the interviewees (e.g., permit system, pass system). (EY, MY, SY, Adult)

On a separate DVD, the 149-page Teacher Resource Guide is an essential accompaniment. It provides rich additional information under four themes: The Wisdom of Elders, Life on the Land, Treaties, and Memories of the Richness of the “Old Ways.” As well, there are countless great ideas for classroom activities, both stemming from Allen Sapp’s art and with reference to traditional Cree culture and treaties, particularly the Saskatchewan numbered treaties. This resource was created by the Saskatchewan Office of the Treaty Commissioner as part of their Treaty Kit K-12 that is used in all Saskatchewan schools (See http://www.otc.ca/Treaty_Kit_K12/).
The book by W.P. Kinsella is excellent. It includes 80 colour reproductions of Sapp’s paintings with a sentence describing each painting contributed by Allen Sapp himself. Kinsella provides accessible biographies of both Allen Sapp and Allan Gonor, as well as the nature of their friendship and details of Dr. Gonor’s support of Allen Sapp’s work. Many photographs are included. Kinsella met and developed a friendship with both Allen Sapp and Allan Gonor. While a portion of his book provides details of Kinsella’s own autobiography and how some of his growing up and struggles for recognition were similar to Allen Sapp’s, that digression can be embraced by most readers. As we admire Allen Sapp’s work, many of us see something of our own growing up experiences within Sapp’s paintings, particularly if we are from the prairies. Indeed, that is the attraction of Allen Sapp’s work—that it is so human and tells his story so well, a story that connects his experiences to ours. (EY, MY, SY, Adult)


This film was chosen because the sustenance of the caribou migratory routes, while essential to the caribou themselves, is also crucial for the lives of the Aboriginal people within the geographical area of the film. Leanne Allson (environmentalist & filmmaker), and husband Karsten Heuer (wildlife biologist) are alarmed at the plans in the United States for oil drilling in the midst of the calving grounds of the northern caribou. To raise awareness of the situation, they follow a herd of thousands of caribou from their wintering grounds in the Yukon, north to the calving grounds in Alaska, and back again. Along the way they carry a George Bush doll so that he might see the potential effects of the planned exploration.

The award-winning film is amazing in that it allows the viewer to go along with Leanne and Karsten who, as the film’s narrators, regularly report on their days’ experiences, and their feelings along the way. They evolve from tracking the caribou into a feeling of ‘being caribou’. The trip begins at Old Crow, a Gwich’in community where they are welcomed, taken hunting, and sent on their way by Randall Tetlichi. Along the trip they encounter abrupt changes in the weather all while shouldering immense back packs while hiking, skiing, and/or canoeing the entire route. They capture amazing footage of the caribou, including the birth of a new calf, as well as footage of many other animals and birds (e.g., grizzly bears). At the location of the calving grounds, the caribou feed on rich cotton grass that strengthens the quality of their milk for the newborn calves. While at the calving grounds the filmmakers seldom leave their tent, as they do not want to disturb the birthing mothers. After several days the herd begins the post-calving aggregation, and then begins south again, meeting up with the bulls. On the way, the calves are at risk of separation from their mothers; if that happens they soon die as no other female will accept them. With the meeting up of the herd, the fall dispersal begins, with all the animals seeking sufficient food for the winter months. Leanne notes that the environment allows all your senses to open up, which is difficult in noisy cities as there would be sensory overload.
As they are heading south, they are surprised one day by another canoe; it is Randall welcoming them back. As a note, the travelers receive three drops of supplies during their trips, including the last one that included the canoe.

When the trip is over, the pair finds that the hardest work is before them. When they travel to Washington, they are given a polite audience with various representatives from the House of Congress, and some Senators, but they feel that no one is listening. However, given the acclaim that the film received, there is hope that awareness has been achieved and the United States will protect the habitat of the caribou, just as it is protected on the Canadian side of the border (at least at the time of the film and in that area of Canada). (upper MY, SY, Adult)

The 48-page beautifully-rendered book by Karten Heuer is an excellent accompaniment for the film, as it reminds the viewer of some aspects of the film and includes many still photographs from the film itself. The only disappointment was that it could have been longer. The book can also be read prior to the film as an activating strategy to engage students, acquainting them with the wildlife of the North and the threats to its survival. Students may also be encouraged towards nature and wildlife photo-journalism projects in their own area. (EY, MY, SY, Adult)


This film is included in this collection for two reasons. First, the travels of Leanne Allison, husband Kersten Heuer, son Zev, and dog Willow are through traditional Aboriginal lands and waterways. Secondly, the family follows the trail of several of Farley Mowat’s books, many of which brought attention to the environment, its animals, and the effects of European encroachment on the animals’ habitats and on the life ways of the Aboriginal people. Throughout their trip, the family corresponds with Farley Mowat. Earlier—and what prompted this film—Leanne and Kersten had sent Mowat a copy of their film *Being Caribou*. When he had responded positively, they decided they would like to meet him, but rather than just flying to Nova Scotia to his summer home, they decide to travel where Farley travelled and lived when he was writing some of his most lasting stories.

The family leaves from their home in Canmore, Alberta, on May 15 of the year, and paddles to Calgary and toward the prairies on the South Saskatchewan River, toward the settings for *Born Naked* and *Owls in the Family*. From Saskatoon, they head north toward Arviat through the settings for *Never Cry Wolf* and *People of the Deer*. By July 8, they meet up with a couple who have disagreed with much of what Mowat has written, thinking that he both sensationalized his books and staged some of the events that he describes. While Leanne and Kersten had known that Mowat has been controversial, at that point they are tired and discouraged. They carry on, however, and soon regain both their momentum and their good spirits. When reaching Arviat, they board a train to Churchill, then buy an old van to head south. They find a friend with a schooner who takes them to Newfoundland and then to Nova Scotia where they finally meet
Farley and his wife Clair in September. This is a great film, with toddler son Zev and the dog Willow adding to the experience. Zev is delightful! (MY, SY, Adult)


This film was created by de-frocked United Church clergyman, Kevin Annett and, it would seem, by some of his colleagues in their organization entitled Hidden from History. The viewer must be able to critique, as Kevin Annett is a very controversial figure even now (There are many websites critiquing him and his work, both for and against). The film is as much about Kevin Annett, as a telling of his side of the story of his treatment, as it is about the genocide of Aboriginal peoples within the system of residential schools. There are several examples that provide information about the actual killing of students and the cover-up of those murders, as well as infanticide involving babies born and then killed within the residential school environment. Within an Indigenous Inquiry Kit on residential schools, this film might find a place for the mature viewer. For the most part, however, the focus of the documentary on the radical, swearing Kevin Annett himself would sideline this film. (Adult)


This movie outlines the events of June 26, 1975, that led to the conviction of Leonard Pelletier for the murders of FBI agents Jack Coler and Ronald Williams on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. These deaths happened just two years after the Wounded Knee occupation of 1973. During the time prior to the 1973 occupation, traditional full-blood members of the community had asked for the support of the American Indian Movement (AIM) as they were being harassed by the more Americanized, mostly mixed-race elements who were ruling the community at the time. Tribal Chairman Dick Wilson and his teams of GOONS (Guardians of the Oglala Nation) were terrorizing community members. Pine Ridge had a murder rate far exceeding the national per capita average. Following the Wounded Knee occupation, the violence and Dick Wilson’s reign of terror continued. While AIM was no longer occupying strategic locations, their members were still in the community, camping out at Calvin Jumping Bull’s property on the southern side of Oglala. One of the AIM members was teenager Jimmy Eagle who had recently been in a scrap and had been reported to have stolen someone else’s boots. When the two FBI agents spotted his vehicle, a red Jeep pickup, they followed it onto the reservation and toward the Jumping Bull compound. They were shot at, not surprising given the then current situation of fear experienced by the community’s people at the hand of Dick Wilson’s GOONS. In this situation, however, two FBI agents were killed, rather than just their own people, so the U.S. federal government and the FBI were determined to find someone who would pay for the crimes. Two accused, Darrell (Dino) Butler and Bob Robideau, were found not guilty of the killings. Leonard Peltier had fled
to Canada but he was illegally extradited with perjured documents from Myrtle Poor Bear who had been bullied by the FBI into saying she was Peltier’s girlfriend and had seen him kill the two FBI agents, when in fact she did not know Peltier and was not at the Jumping Bull compound at all. Those who described the red pickup changed their story, saying that it was a red and white van, which was the description of the vehicle driven by Peltier. Pictures of the two vehicles show the distinct difference. Many and various interviewees contribute to this documentary, and it seems clearly evident that the case against Leonard Peltier was cooked so that the FBI could convict someone. Leonard Peltier received two consecutive life sentences and continues in jail to this day, in spite of all the evidence, then and since, that casts doubt that he committed the killings, and in spite of all the lobbying on his behalf (See http://www.freeleonard.org/case/ Also see http://www.leonardpeltier.net/). Amnesty International placed the Leonard Peltier case among their “unfair trials” section of their Annual Report, USA 2010. This film is an excellent production to add to a broader, deeper research project, as controversy continues to surround this case. Half of the film is available on You Tube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aoKX01Vg2qM Also see 1) http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/robert-redford-renews-fight-to-release-jailed-aim-activist-leonard-peltier-1.2598981; and http://www.cbc.ca/player/Radio/The+Sunday+Edition/ID/2446547190/ (upper MY, SY, Adult)

Auger, Dale (Director & Writer x 1), Desnomie, Tessa (Director & Writer x 1), & Olson, Lorne (Director & Writer x 1). (2009). Second stories: Honour thy father; It had to be done; and Deb-we-win Ge-kend-am-aan [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (3 x 22 running minutes)

This collection of three short films follows the First Stories collection, and provides an opportunity for the recounting of three different life experiences from First Nations people. Each film will be reviewed separately. For guidance in the use of the films see http://www3.nfb.ca/sg/100631.pdf


In this film, Dale Auger looks at the experience of his family when his father passed. While his parents were Christian—his Mom more so than his Dad—and his father was buried in the Anglican church cemetery, Dale was refused permission to accompany his father’s final journey with the drum and a smudging ceremony. Dale’s Mom, in having attended residential school for many years, was more passive about the decision of the church, but Dale pursued the matter, noting that his father, in having attended residential school for just two years, was more traditionally spiritual. Meetings are held with church officials to ask for permission for the traditional ceremonies now. When that permission does not come, the family goes ahead on its own. It is evident, in the film, that the church does not have a policy that forbids the collaboration of Christian and traditional ceremonies at funerals, but that the practice depends on
the local minister and congregation, with some more embracing than others. It would be interesting to see what churches in contemporary times are now more inclusive. (SY, Adult)

Desnomie, Tessa (Director & Writer), & MacDonald, Joe (Producer). (2009). Second stories: It had to be done [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (22 running minutes)

This is an interesting film about residential schools, primarily because the two interviewees, while they attended a residential school for many years, returned to the same school to work there for many more years as adults. Both Doris Bellegarde and Anita McKay went to the Catholic residential school at Labret in the Qu’Appelle Valley in Saskatchewan (Qu’Appelle Indian Residential School). Archival pictures show that the girls, while not in braids, all had long hair, most with it pulled back from the face, rather than being cut short in an identical style. The women talked about their education at the school, which included a study time of two hours each evening. They also spoke of the poor menu, Anita noting that one thing she was bent on changing when she went to work at the school (she worked there for 32 years) was that the children would be fed better than she was. Doris, in her role as a child care worker, said that things were changing by the time she worked in the school (she worked there for 25 years), with no beatings and no strap being used. That followed the changes in practice at public schools as well, with corporal punishment less in evidence by the 1950s. Any dialogue about residential schools is fraught with controversy, not least in this instance around why these women would have worked in a residential school, and thus helped to perpetuate its existence. It must be remembered that at the time such an approach to the education of Aboriginal students was government policy. While these women lobbied successfully for improvements while working at the school, it was beyond their power at the time to erase the residential school system altogether. The Qu’Appelle Indian Residential School in Labret closed in 1998 and was taken down the following year. (MY, SY, Adult)


This is an excellent film about the importance of two-spirited people within traditional Aboriginal cultures. The terms ‘gay’, ‘queer’, even ‘homosexual’ came later and do not reflect the way that two-spirited people were honoured for their ability to see the world in multiple ways, rather than the focus being on their sexual orientation. The many interviewees in the film celebrate their two-spiritedness with the making of beautiful outfits, which they wear at the International Two-Spirited Gathering. They talk of being misunderstood and mistreated, and many stressed the importance of their traditional culture in supporting them as they came out, that is communicated their two-spiritedness more openly. One noted that “Being a two-spirited person for some human beings is a desolate gift.” However, the film also communicates the happiness of the participating interviewees, as they are finding a place to belong. The final part of the film notes what each interviewee was doing at the time of the filming. This film is important for many reasons. It will provide a much-needed life line for many two-spirited youth and adults. As well, it will help everyone to understand and embrace two-spirited people, and all
others whose walk in life is different from theirs. With support and explanation, this film can be presented to younger students. Because of the nature of some communities, however, the use of this film should be preceded with permission from the school and communication to and permission from the parents. (EY, MY, SY, Adult)

Aung-Thwin, Mila (Co-director), Gaylor, Brett (Co-director), & Cross, Daniel (Co-director), with eight Inuit students (Co-directors); & Lapointe, Pierre (Producer). (2004). *Innuuvunga: I am alive, I am Inuk* [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (58 running minutes)

This film, in Inuktitut with English subtitles, follows the lives of eight Inuit students who are graduating from high school: Dora Ohaituk, Caroline Ningiuk, Rita-Lucy Ohaituk, Willea Ningeok, Sarah Idlout, Bobby Echalook, Laura Iqaluk, and Linus Kasudluak. All the youth can speak their own language. The filming takes place in Inukjuak, Nunavik, and features students and staff from Innalik School, as well as including interviews and/or footage with students’ family members. The students are given cameras to document their lives and to explore the issues that they find important. In particular, they are concerned with youth suicide, the social conditions in their community, and the loss of their traditional culture, the latter as they observe with their own struggles to communicate with their Elders. The youth show a combination of southern and northern ways. While they listen to hip hop music, drive their skidoos, and play hockey for example, they also speak their language, hunt seal and caribou, and learn to travel on the land. The students are vibrant, funny, and curious. They take a trip to Montreal, seeing aspects that are new to them (e.g., skyscrapers, trains). They are also feeling constrained, to some extent, by the limited opportunities in their own community. The prospects of an adult life without a deeper purpose, as well as the youth suicide in their community, are never really addressed; rather, the film involves more of a coming-of-age celebration for the graduating youth. The year following the release of the film one of the youth, Dora Ohaituk, also became a victim of youth suicide. It would be interesting to know what and how the other youth are now doing. This film will springboard into dialogue of how to create a life of purpose and still stay connected to one’s family and community, as well as how peers and adults might support those youth who are struggling. (upper MY, SY, Adult)


Blaise, Aaron (Co-director), Walker, Robert (Co-director), & Williams, Chuck (Producer). (2004). *Brother Bear* [Motion picture]. US: Walt Disney Pictures. (85 running minutes) (EY, MY, SY, Adult)

Jackson, Dennis (Director), Cameron, Trevor (Co-writer), & Wheeler, Jordon (Co-writer). (2006). *Wapos Bay: They dance at night* [Animated film]. CA: Wapos Bay Productions/ National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (24 running minutes) (Pre-K, K, EY)


This collection allows for a creative approach to the study of Aurora Borealis, the Northern Lights. The film by Aurora Experience includes wonderful footage by the founding owners (Arnold Bjornsson, Johan Isberg, and Sigurour H. Stefnisson) and narration that covers both the scientific explanation for the northern lights, as well as legends and beliefs from many parts of the world (For the website see http://www.auroraexperience.com/Default.asp?Page=308).

The second film, the animated *Bother Bear* (EY, MY, SY, Adult; there is mature, delightful humour) is an alternating sad and funny film, about a young Inuit man being given the Bear totem, which stands for love, as he is approaching manhood. While the film does seem to mix First Nations and Inuit cultural ways, the young man Kanai (voice is Joaquin Phoenix) is unhappy with the Bear totem as his sign and he rebels. He leads his two older brothers Denahi (voice is Jason Paige) and Sitka (voice is D. B. Sweeney) into a dangerous situation in trying to protect him from a bear attack, and Sitka and the attacking bear die and both are taken by the Northern Lights up to live with them in the sky. While trying to extract revenge, and having refused the Bear totem, Kanai is himself changed into a bear, as he must learn to understand the honour meant by the bear totem. The rest of the movie is about his coming of age and learning from other bears, particularly the cub Koda (voice is Jeremy Suarez). That journey is alternatingly poignant, sad, and funny. Kanai finally comes to a new appreciation, while discovering that Koda is the cub of the mother bear he killed, and he decides to remain a bear
and take care of Koda. In other words, Kanai comes to embrace the love totem of the Bear. The Northern Lights are featured several times in the movie.

The Alan Booth NFB production provides a more complex documentary treatment as it traces the scientific explanation for the Northern Lights over the decades. While fascinating for older students, this approach—also with less footage of the Northern Lights themselves—may limit the use of this film for early years. Teachers may choose some aspects of the film, however, as some of the sections on the legends include animated production.

The Wapos Bay film is a good choice for early years. An animated production set in a northern Saskatchewan Cree community, young Raven finally learns to whistle, but then is afraid that she has angered the Northern Lights by whistling outside at night, thus causing havoc in her community. As well, Raven and her cousin T-Bear also have forgotten to respect and honour other Cree traditions. All the children are helped by their Elders to set things right again. The Wapos Bay films are very well done, with well-known actors as the voices for the various characters. While entertaining to watch, they are also intended to be teaching films.

With reference to the books, Blaikie’s book, wonderfully illustrated with her batik art, is a mystical journey that seems to be imbued with the writer’s grief and/or sadness. Dwyer’s book illuminates various aspects of the Northern Lights using the alphabet format. Esbebsen’s book retells, in poetry form, a number of legends about the Northern Lights from different parts of the world; the author includes valuable additional information at the back of the book. Kinsey-Warnock’s book tells of the Pepin family from the far north whose grandfather tells many stories, especially to his grandson Henry, including that of loupgarou who make the Northern Lights dance; one dark night the fiddler arrives! Kusugak’s book addresses the grief of a young girl for her mother who has died from tuberculosis; her grandmother helps to teach her that the Northern Lights are really all those who have gone before who are playing soccer in the sky. MacDonald’s book is a stellar resource for teachers and older students, an absolute must-have for a kit on Inuit culture and/or the night sky. The book includes the following chapters: 1) The Arctic Sky, 2) The Universe, 3) Stars, Constellations, and Planets, 4) Sun, Moon, and Eclipses, 5) The Atmosphere (which includes meteor and shooting stars, Aurora Borealis, halo phenomena, and rainbows), and 7) Time. Included at the end of the book are Inuit legends and their translation. Sabuda’s book tells the story of the girl from the dark North who makes a robe for Blizzard, who is greatly feared by all the people; as a reward, Blizzard gives the people the Northern Lights. Waboosè’s book is a joyous story of two sisters walking out in the evening and dancing together under the Northern Lights. All the books are wonderfully illustrated; that focus can provide a foundation for several lessons, as each illustrator adds to the story in their own special way. For a current report on a satellite that will allow us to learn more about Aurora Borealis, see http://www.cbc.ca/player/AudioMobile/Blue%20Sky/ID/2409989025/ (Films & Books: EY, MY, SY, & Adult)

Austin, Alan (Director & Editor), Joyce, Lori (Producer & Writer), Coolidge, Rita (Host & Narrator), Crancer, John (Co-producer), Reichert, Bruce (Exec. producer), &
Sacagawea (1788-1812) was the young Shoshone woman who helped guide the Corps of Discovery (May 1804 to September 1806) team led by Merriweather Lewis and William Clark. Their expedition travelled through what is now northwestern United States to the Pacific Ocean. The journey, in opening up the area to settlement from the United States, soon resulted in the removal of the Aboriginal people in the area from their own lands, as well as the decimation of the flora and fauna upon which they depended for their livelihood. As such, the study of the life and work of Sacagawea will always be controversial as she unwittingly assisted the process of U.S. expansion, and her position as a lasting heroine is largely associated with her facilitation of the Corps of Discovery journey. Having provided that introduction, in order to critique U.S. expansion policies and the take-over of Aboriginal lands, an awareness of how those policies played out is necessary.

The first film, *The Journey of Sacagawea*, is an excellent documentary with host and narrator Rita Coolidge that includes re-enactment. Interview participants include descendants of Sacagawea, historians, and Hidatsa, Nez Perce, and Mandan people, all of whom are aware of Sacagawea’s contributions. As well, there are many contributed readings from the journals of both Merriweather Lewis and William Clark. Sacagawea was kidnapped from her Shoshone people at the age of 12 by a Hidatsa raiding party, and taken far west to their lands in what is now North Dakota. Reportedly raised well as a captive, as a teenager she became one of two wives to French fur trader Toussaint Charbonneau, who lived in the Hidatsa village. Nearby, the Corps of Discovery was preparing for their journey and needed an interpreter for the trip. While Charbonneau was engaged for the job, the primary contribution was from his wife Sacagawea, who accompanied the men with her newly born son. The story of that contribution is re-enacted with the assistance of the interviewees and the voice-over contributions from the Lewis and Clark journals, as well as the ‘shaded in’ portrayals of Sacagawea and events of the journey. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

The National Geographic film, *Lewis and Clark: Great Journey West*, depends more heavily on re-enactment, with the host Jeff Bridges providing details of the journey. Lewis was 28 and Clark was 32 when they were commissioned by then U.S. President Thomas Jefferson to engage in the trip across the northwest to the Pacific Ocean. Their travels would take them through lands claimed by the United States but currently belonging to many different tribes, for example the Shoshone, Blackfeet, Crow, Arikara, Cheyenne, Sioux, Omaha, and Arapaho, but more than 170 tribes in total. The film’s re-enactment includes excellent footage of the natural environment (e.g., rivers, mountain ranges) through which the Corps of Discovery travelled throughout their 2½ year voyage. During the voyage Lewis collected many specimens of the plant life, while Clark mapped the area through which they passed. Sacagawea introduced Lewis
and Clark to her Shoshone people, as she herself reunited with them after many years of separation. From the Shoshone the Corps received the necessary horses for their journey. From the Nez Perce, they received food and lodging, as well as materials for the building of canoes. Some details are provided of the lives of both Lewis and Clark following the journey, as well as speculation about Sacagawea. The life of Sacagawea after the journey was not recorded. While Clark adopted her son Jean Baptiste Charbonneau and raised him as his own, it seems that Sacagawea died at an early age, even though some have suggested that she actually left Charbonneau, married into a Comanche community, and lived to be very old. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

**Bailey, Norma (Director x 2), Johnston, Kim Aaron (Director x 1), & Mazur, Derek (Director x 1). (1987). Daughters of the country, Part 1 & 2 [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (229 running minutes)**

This collection consists of four dramatization episodes, each that will be addressed separately. *Ikwe* and *Mistress Madeleine* are on Disc #1; *Places Not Our Own* and *The Wake* are on Disc #2.


The scene is the Canadian Northwest in 1770, and a Scots trader Angus (Geraint Wyn Davies) canoes up to an Ojibway camp with his Cree interpreter Bluecoat (William Ballantyne). In an effort to secure a trading agreement with the camp, Bluecoat offers more goods on behalf of the trader Angus, as well as asking, unknown to Angus, for a marriage between the Chief’s (Patrick Bruyére) daughter Ikwe (Hazel King) and Angus. At first Angus is appalled, but the deal is made and Ikwe becomes Angus’ wife, helping him to survive in the harsh winter climate. Several years later, the two have three children, an older boy and girl, as well as a baby. On the trip to the fort, it is evident that Angus has benefitted from the marriage by his trade with Ikwe’s community, as his furs are much better than others being brought in for trade. However, tragedy strikes in that smallpox has infected the Aboriginal camp near the fort, where Ikwe goes to spend her time. As well, Angus arranges to send their son away to Europe to school. Devastated to lose her son, Ikwe takes the rest of the small family and returns to her home village. But she takes the smallpox virus with her, and soon most of the people fall ill. Ikwe and the baby also take sick, but not the older child. In a desperate attempt to save her daughter’s life, Ikwe sends her away, telling her to follow the river until she finds a settlement that will take her in. (MY, SY, Adult)


Set in the 1850s during the fur trade, Mistress Madeleine (Mireille Deyglien) is the ‘country wife’ of the junior factor of the fort, Charles McKay (Neil Munro). They are deeply
devoted to each other and to their two young children. Mistress Madeleine is Métis from the nearby community. Her brother Joseph (Harry Daniels) and other men from the community are reputed to have been ‘free trading’ with the Americans, and thus their activities are being scrutinized and opposed by the fort, where there is also apparent racism against the Métis. MacGregor (Victor Cowie), the current chief factor of the fort, encourages Charles to go to England for ‘meetings’ and there to court and legally marry a well-connected white girl, that being the way to advance in the company. Charles leaves reluctantly, is gone for a year, and returns with a white wife, as well as with a promotion to chief factor of the trading fort. Mistress Madeleine is devastated by the betrayal, and she returns to her community even after having had a falling out with her brother over the trade. She is accepted, but Charles still wants her, as well as his now legal wife. She refuses and the matter is finally settled when, obviously with an order from Charles, the Métis community is invaded and Joseph is arrested by the unscrupulous Kirk (Alan Williams). Kirk also kills Loon (Makka Kleist), a troubled woman who had been country wife to the former chief factor MacGregor, as she tries to defend her people by attacking Kirk. Madeleine turns the gun on Kirk, telling him to leave the community. She and Joseph reconcile, and the community is intact while also having defended their own rights to trade with whom they wish. (MY, SY, Adult)

Mazur, Derek (Director), Birdsell, Sandra (Writer), Bailey, Norma (Co-producer), & Yetman, Ches (Co-producer). (1987). Places not our own: Daughters of the Country, Disc 2, Part 2 [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (57 running minutes)

This film is disturbing in many of its aspects, but the most unsettling is the rampant racism that almost everyone displays. The setting is the Great Depression of 1929 in southwestern Manitoba. Flora’s (Diane Debassaige) family has just moved to the little town of Napinka, only to find that there is no work there for the father Alex (Steve Isfeld) who then soon leaves to go north to find work. The family is left squatting in a shack on the railway right-of-way, with mother Rose (Tantoo Cardinal) taking in sewing and doing housework in people’s homes. She wants her children to go to the town school, but they are turned away because, so they are told, there is no room and they do not live in the town limits. In the meantime, the town ‘fathers,’ including Mr. Harvey, are debating whether their small allowance of money should be spent on a new school or in pursuing the railway through their community. Mrs. Harvey, a former schoolteacher, shows Flora great kindness, and teaches her on her own time. Daughter Alice Harvey is jealous of Flora, saying unkind words to her in front of other classmates. Flora retaliates by spending time with the older boy Roger Delorme (Eli Goldstein), whose Métis parents have been good to Flora’s family but who Flora’s mother Rose thinks are beneath them. The two young people accidentally burn down a hen house when Roger goes to steal eggs, and he is sent to a reform school. Flora’s family finally heads north to join the father, much to Rose’s chagrin that the children will now have to attend a reserve school. As a final act of defiance Flora has stolen the book Little Women from Mrs. Harvey, the one person who showed her kindness and who was lobbying for a new school, rather than for the railroad that would displace Flora’s family once again. The film provides opportunities for learning about the
situation of the Métis as they were displaced and became ‘road allowance people’. As well, the many instances of racism within the film provide opportunity for dialogue, including whether ‘two wrongs make a right.’ Was Flora right in taking Mrs. Harvey’s prized book as revenge for having been treated poorly by the community? (MY, SY, Adult)


This final dramatization of the two-disc collection is set in Alberta in 1985 (although it is filmed at Manitoba’s Broken Head First Nation, and in Winnipeg). Joan (Victoria Snow) is a single parent whose partner has deserted the family. While working to raise her children, she is also supporting Donna (Diane Debassige), the oldest of three children taken into the custody of Child and Family Services. The community is struggling with social challenges, including lack of employment, alcoholism, and lack of purpose. R.C.M. P. officer Jim meets and falls in love with Joan. They develop a relationship but it is troubled with the spectre of racism and the Jim’s policing role in the community. Jim is also white, and Joan is Métis. Jim’s boss Crawford (Frank Adamson) has been hardened by his years of policing in the community, and when he and Jim try to apprehend a truck full of partying youth, including Donna, he shows little empathy. When the youth drive out onto the lake and the ice breaks, Crawford says that there is just three feet of water, and it would teach the youth a lesson to have to get out on their own. But the lake is much deeper than that, and four of the five youth drown. Only Donna is able to exit the truck. When Joan confronts Jim he lies at first, and while admitting that he and Crawford were chasing the youth, he does not tell Joan that they were there when the truck broke through the ice. When Donna tells the whole story to Joan, she is furious, and again confronts Jim, who, while admitting the truth and showing remorse, refuses to take the matter further as it may cost him his job. Joan leaves in disgust. Later Jim tries to attend the wake for the four youth, but he is refused entry by the men from the community. This film is very unsettling, as there are no answers provided for the community’s challenges. The viewer is given a disturbing view of the work of the R.C.M.P. with this film’s portrayal. (MY, SY, Adult)


The movie, based on the book by Gordon Sinclair Jr., tells the story of the killing of John Joseph (J. J.) Harper, on March 9, 1988, by Constable Robert Andrew Cross of the Winnipeg Police Department. The movie re-enacts the events. Leaving his brother Harry Wood (Eric Schweig) on a Winnipeg street, J. J. Harper (Adam Beach) is soon accosted by Const. Cross (Currie Graham), and is shot and killed. According to Cross, Harper struggled with him over his service revolver and was accidentally shot. That was the initial, accepted report of events, and the conclusion of the Winnipeg Police Department’s Firearms Board of Enquiry. However, a
much more thorough investigation of the details of the case was conducted by the Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission (See http://www.ajic.mb.ca/volume.html), and by Gordon Sinclair Jr. The provincial inquiry was prompted by both J. J. Harper’s death, and the murder of Helen Betty Osborne near the Pas in 1971, but about which the townspeople kept silent for 17 years. While the initial inquiry prompted by the two cases was started by the NDP (New Democratic Party) provincial government, it was not acted upon from 1991 to 1999 when the Conservatives were in office. Even when the NDP returned to power, there was inadequate attention paid to the underlying issues, according to many First Nations people (See http://injusticebusters.org/05/Harper_JJ.shtml). The excellent movie tells the story from an Aboriginal perspective. In particular, Eric Schweig is powerful in his role as Harry Wood, as is Garry Chalk in his role as Inspector Ken Dowson—who took his own life on the day he was to testify before the inquiry. Currie Graham as Const. Cross communicates his struggle as the events prompt an ever-increasing mental unbalance, with a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder. The film also includes Gordon Tootoosis as James Harper, J. J.’s father. While the film is excellent, it is also disturbing. Mature viewers might use the film to initiate research into the relationship of Aboriginal people with police services. The film is difficult to acquire; as well, Sinclair’s book is now out of print. (SY, Adult)

Barrett, John (Producer), & Hudlin-Wheelan, Kyle (Director). (2008). Of mice and men (Aboriginal adaptation) [Motion picture]. CA: Argyle Fox Productions. (74 running minutes)


This amazing movie was a school project at Argyle Alternative School in Winnipeg. Working with many mentors, including Columba Bobb, the students completed almost all aspects of the movie, from acting to directing, to the music, and all the stage preparations. Adapted from Steinbeck’s novel, in this version of the story, Lennie (John Cook) and George (Stanley Wood) are two Aboriginal teenagers from northern Manitoba. They are non-treaty, so they have no First Nation home community, but they dream of getting a little patch of land in the bush where they can set up a trap line, and hunt and fish. They drift into Winnipeg with hopes for employment from a local program. After spending the night on the banks of the river and fishing for their supper, they go to the boarding house and meet with the supervisor (The Boss, Curley’s Dad, played by David Taylor-Young), who provides the links to the jobs. In this version, Candy (Matt Montour) and his old dog look after the reception, the cooking, and the cleaning and laundry at the rooming house. Crooks (Albert Flett) is a reclusive and shunned young handyman living in the basement; he has a bright red birthmark covering half of his face. Similar to the story line in the book, Candy is brought into the plans for the place up north; he has some money but his health is failing due to his untreated diabetes. He is anxious to leave after his old dog is shot by Carlson (Darion Anonychuk). Crooks also wants to go, but then backs out; he so fears being rejected that he does the rejecting first. The cast also includes actors playing the roles of
Slim (Beau Sweatman), Curley (Kyle Hudlin-Wheelan), and Curley’s wife (Veronica Zorn-Chandler).

Lennie accidentally kills one of the puppies from Slim’s dog’s litter (just as he does in the novel), and is already distraught about that when Curley’s wife comes into the garage where Lennie is. All of the other boys are playing pool, so she says that it is all right for Lennie to talk to her. When Lennie tells her that he likes to pet soft things, she extends her silk scarf for him to touch. Her hair falls on the scarf and Lennie begins stroking her hair. She becomes frightened and pulls back, but Lennie hangs on, and tries to silence her. In so doing, he breaks her neck and kills her. He becomes very fearful, and then remembers that George told him that if he ever got into trouble to go to the bush by the river where they spent their first night. He runs there. In the meantime, the body of Curley’s wife has been discovered, and the hot-headed Curley, with his friends, is determined to extract revenge. George realizes now that all is lost—their dream will never be realized—and he slips out and retrieves the gun Carlson used to kill Candy’s dog. He agrees to Candy phoning the police, and to he, Candy, and Slim heading out to find Lennie before Curley and his friends do. But then George takes another route and finds Lennie by the river. He knows that Lennie will go crazy if he is locked up, and that there is no way out of this situation. So he asks Lennie to recount the story of their plans, once again, while looking across the river. He eases himself up behind Lennie and shoots him in the head, killing him. Just as Lennie collapses, all the other boys come onto the scene.


US: Hallmark Entertainment/Artisan Entertainment. (180 running minutes)


This exceptional, award-winning movie, which can be viewed in segments, follows Lakota Grandpa Pete Chasing Horse (August Schellenberg) as he tries to help his 17-year old grandson Shane (Eddie Spears) come back onto the Good Red Road. As the movie begins, there is a past story of young Eagle Boy (Chaske Spencer) on a vision quest, but also the current story of Shane—set on Pine Ridge Reservation—who has gotten mixed up with a bad crowd and now owes them drug money. Shane doesn’t want anything to do with his traditional culture, and he refuses when his Mom (Tantoo Cardinal) asks him to take his Grandpa to the All Nations
Powwow in Albuquerque, along with Grandpa’s old horse. He changes his mind about the trip, however, when the gang comes after him. Along the way, Grandpa tells Shane stories from Native American culture. The movie diverts to each of these stories, which are mini-movies in the larger film. There are ten legends in all, with a host of notable Aboriginal actors. The first is the Legend of Eagle Boy’s Vision, which then infiltrates the other included legends, as well as the current story of Shane as it is suggested that it is time for Shane’s vision quest. Eagle Boy is granted three powers: material power, spirit power, and supernatural power. He must combine them in good ways for the benefit of his people. In the second story, the Legend of Blue Bird Woman and High Horse, the exploits of High Horse (Sean Wei Mah) are told as he tries to win the hand of Blue Bird Woman (Sage; she also plays the role of Mae Little Wounded, the real life girl who Shane is trying to impress, as he spends the drug money on a ring for her). Having embarrassed himself in his efforts to win her attention, in the legend High Horse commits to a suicide ride into a Crow camp, but the Crow run away and High Horse returns with many ponies, and wins Blue Bird Woman’s Hand. In the third Legend of She Crosses the Water and Thunder Spirit, the young woman (Alex Rice) agrees to go the skies and become the wife of Thunder Spirit (Michael Greyeyes). When she becomes pregnant, however, she must return to the earth, but with the command from Sky Woman (Casey Camp-Horinek) that her child Thunder Boy (Griffin Powell-Arcand) should never be hit, or he would return to the skies with his father. Clearly this is a story told to counsel people to treat their children well.

As Grandpa and Shane are travelling along the highway, there is a red-haired hitchhiker, a ‘wannabe’ Indian, who Shane does not want to pick up. But his Grandpa helps him change his mind with the fourth Legend of Tehan, the Red Haired Kiowa. Raised by the Kiowa, Tehan (Scott Grimes) is much loved by his sister Talks a Lot (Delanna Studi), but another young man Broken Lance (Nathaniel Arcand) is suspicious. Determined to prove himself Tehan leaves the camp, but is captured by the Calvary and taken to Camp Sill. His sister leads the rescue, but the Calvary comes after the Kiowa. Along with other young men, Tehan stays back to fight the Calvary so that the women and children can escape; his bravery earns him a place as a true Kiowa. In the fifth story, the Legend of Coyote and Iktomi, Coyote’s (John Trudell) tricks come back to haunt him. Making a bargain with Grandfather Stone, he gives up his knife, only to then take it back from the Grandfather when he needs it for hunting. Grandfather Stone loosens from his moorings, and while Iktomi (Gary Farmer) escapes from climbing a tree, Coyote is squashed. This story refers to Shane’s purchase of the ring for Mae Little Wounded, only to immediately ask for it back from her so that he can pawn it to pay his drug debts. The gang has followed Shane and his Grandpa, with a surprising conclusion. In the sixth story, the Legend of Coyote and Iktome, and Iktome’s Wife, Coyote, having survived being flattened by Grandfather Stone, is invited for a meal by Iktomi, who leaves to go hunting. When Iktome’s wife (Geraldine Keams) eats the food intended for Iktomi, she blames Coyote, who had seduced her, whereupon Iktomi turns Coyote into a real coyote, and off he runs.

In the seventh story, the Legend of Dirty Belly and the Dun Pony, Grandpa tells of Dirty Belly (Dakota House) and his Grandmother (Tantoo Cardinal), both of whom are poor and ostracized by the community. Clearly, once again, this story is meant to be a very personalized
teaching for Shane. Dirty Belly takes the old dun pony, left behind by his people the Pawnee, and
the pony transforms and carries Dirty Belly into battle against the Oglala. However, Dirty Belly
disobeys the command of the pony to count coup on his enemy only four times, and he makes a
fifth charge, whereupon the dun pony is killed. Dirty Belly is remorseful, and the dun pony
returns to life and gives Dirty Belly and his family many fine horses. Dirty Belly marries Chief
Iron Spoon’s (Floyd Red Crow Westerman) lovely daughter (Sheena Shymanski). This story is
beautifully told in Paul Goble’s Mystic Horse (EY, MY, SY, Adult). The eighth story, the Legend
of Quillwork Girl and her Seven Star Brothers tells of the young woman Quillwork Girl (Teneil
Whiskey Jack) who, for many months, makes six sets of men’s clothing, and finally a seventh set
for a younger boy. She tells her mother Morning Horse (Michelle Thrush) that far away live
seven brothers who need a sister. She travels to join them; while they are happy for some time,
soon the chief of the Buffalo People wishes to claim Quillwork Girl for his wife. When his
request is refused Quillwork Girl and her brothers are attacked. The youngest shoots an arrow
into a tree repeatedly making it grow higher and higher. The girl and her brothers climb to the
sky, where they become the Big Dipper, with the youngest brother becoming a small star beside
one of the larger stars—his sister—on the Big Dipper’s handle. This story is also told by Paul
Goble in the book Her Seven Brothers.

In the ninth story, the Legend of Raven, there is a warning that a great sickness will
spread among the people of the Northwest. The only remedy is for a Chief’s daughter to sacrifice
herself by leaping from a cliff. While the village head Chief (Cliff Solomon) rules against this
action, his daughter (Misty Upham) leaves the village on her own and makes the ultimate
sacrifice. In the tenth story, the Legend of Ekuskini and the Ghost Hunter, Ekuskini (Travis
Dugas) is following on the trail of his dead Blackfoot father, the ghost hunter (Sammy Simon).
The ghost disappears but there is a small stone left, whereupon Ekuskini promises to return to his
traditional beliefs with the stone always close to his heart. As he does, he is always successful in
the buffalo hunt. In this legend Grandpa Pete is foretelling his own death.

At the end of the trail, Grandpa and Shane come upon a small encampment rather than
the powwow, and Shane realizes that this was the plan all along. In the trailer at the encampment
is Shane’s father Sam Chasing Horse (Gil Birmingham), who had long since disappeared from
Shane’s life and become a wandering alcoholic. The two reunite, and Grandpa dies during the
night. When they start out for home, with Sam committing to stay by his son, Shane decides to
stop and ride Grandpa’s horse into the powwow, where he sits down and begins to tell stories to
the youngsters. This is a powerful movie, clearly one of the best. It can be used to initiate a great
number of assignments, as well as deep and healing dialogue. As well as the actors listed, there
are many other notable Aboriginal actors in this film (e.g., Gordon Tootoosis, Tyrone Tootoosis,
Sheila Tousey, Simon R. Baker, Cody Lightning, Georgina Lightning, Sagimaw Grant). Filming
took place primarily in Canada, and involved cultural advisors from the Lakota, Kiowa,
Cheyenne, Pawnee, Blackfoot, Mohawk, and Crow tribes. For a listing and short description of
the legends in the movie see: http://www.ucan-online.org/legend.asp?legend=4660 (MY, SY,
Adult)
Beresford, Blair (Director), & Moore, Brian (Screenplay). (1991). *Black Robe* [Motion picture]. CA/AU: Atlantis Alliance/Samson Productions; Samuel Goldwyn Co. (Distributor). (101 running minutes)


The movie, based on Brian Moore’s book, is a story about the attempts by the Jesuits to convert the Hurons (Wendat, Algonquin language) to Christianity. Father LaForgue (Lothaire Bluteau), accompanied by the young Daniel (Aden Young), is sent from what will become Quebec City out to find a distant Catholic mission. A group of the Wendat Algonquins are charged with accompanying Father LaForgue and Daniel. They include Chomina (August Schellenberg), his wife (Tantoo Cardinal), and their daughter Annuka (Sandrine Holt). The task is controversial among the Wendat, and Father LaForgue is deeply distrusted. Many think that the Jesuit is a demon, that he is bad luck, and that he is responsible for diseases plaguing the community. That opinion is strengthened when the Wendat encounter a group of Montagnais (Innu) and their shaman Mastigoit (Yvan Labelle). During the trip Daniel and Annuka fall in love, and Daniel turns to the Wendat culture and away from the Christian church. Father LaForgue, as well, is increasingly troubled by his own doubts. The group are attacked by the Iroquois, and many of the group, including Chomina’s wife, are killed, while the rest are captured. They escape with Annuka’s help, but Chomina dies, still refusing conversion to Christianity. Daniel and Annuka give Father LaForgue the directions to the lost Wendat mission, and he leaves them on his own. Finally, in a snow storm, he finds the village, but most of the people have died from smallpox. He finds the church, and one surviving Jesuit priest who dies during the night. The remaining Wendat people in the community ask Father LaForgue if being baptized will save their lives. At this stage, Father LaForgue admits that it will not. However, just as he thinks that he has failed, the remaining village people ask if he loves them, and when he realizes that he does and answers ‘yes’, they ask to be baptized. A final inter title notes that fifteen years later the village is attacked by the Iroquois, everyone is killed, and the Jesuit mission is deserted.

This is more than a ‘white man’s Indian movie’. It opens up for study the complexity of the utter devastation visited upon many Aboriginal people as a result of contact with and adherence to white trading practices and Christianizing work. As well as English, the film includes the Algonquin, Mohawk, Cree, and Latin (Father La Forgue’s prayers) languages. Because of the sex scene (not full nudity) between a fur trader and Annuka, as well as between Daniel and Annuka, and the rape of Annuka, as well as the subject of the movie itself, a mature viewing audience is advised. (SY, Adult)

For more information about the Wendat, an exceptional book is Kathryn Magee Labelle’s *Dispersed but Not Destroyed: A History of the Seventeen-Century Wendat People* (SY, Adult). Stemming from the author’s doctoral research, the book is well-researched and accessible,
quickly drawing the reader into the story. Joseph Boyden, in his novel *The Orenda* (SY, Adult), also addresses the missionary efforts of the Jesuits, and the Wendat and Iroquois enmity. Interestingly, Boyden appears to have drawn from Brian Moore’s book *Black Robe* and/or from the writings of the Jesuits themselves. In Moore’s book, and the movie, the Wendat (Hurons) express a fascination with a clock, thinking that the movement of its hands, and especially the striking of the gong to indicate each hour, has special power (See pp. 300-302, pp. 476-477 of *The Orenda*). Brian Moore likely took the incident of that story from yet another source, either Francis Parkman’s (1823-1893) work, or the works referred to by Parkman himself, the *Relations*, which were huge volumes of reports written by the Jesuits about their work in North America. Brian Moore’s book is an excellent read; the story is unflinchingly about the Jesuits and their experience. Swear words are often included, as well as sex scenes, so teachers should review the book beforehand, and use it with caution with a mature class. While Boyden’s book has received much positive attention, including winning the 2014 Canada Reads selection, it has also been critiqued as having used the *Relations* as the primary source of information. Thus the book is written from the Jesuit standpoint, and gives their impressions, and is not a book authentic to either the Wendat or the Iroquois experience. In particular, the novel by Boyden focusses much more on the violence of the attacks between the Iroquois and the Wendat, including the torture, than it does on the spirit, or orenda, that the people believe is within all life, animate and inanimate. For a review of *The Orenda* see http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/the-orenda-faces-tough-criticism-from-first-nations-scholar-1.2562786. (Books: SY, Adult)


Although created by a smaller company, and using an earlier American term for residential schools, this is a good film for several reasons. The host, Jannica Hoskins is working to discover her own identity in the context of her grandmother’s attendance at residential school. The film includes archival photos, some re-enactment, the visiting of a still-standing (but vacant) residential school, and many interviews with a wide variety of people, including Phil Fontaine, then Chief of the Assembly of First Nations and himself a survivor of residential school abuse, as well as other Chiefs, Elders, Cultural Advisors, a Director from the Kamloops Residential School Museum, former politicians, and legal experts. During the program, the host provides an excellent overview of the history of residential schools, including portraits of and quotes from the key players in the creation of those schools (e.g., John A. McDonald, J. A. Macrae, Edgar Dewdney, Duncan Campbell Scott), and details from a report from Dr. Peter Bryce detailing the rampant health issues within the schools, around which he wrote a book, *The Story of a National Crime*. In other words, the conditions in the schools were known by the government of the day. Because the film’s host Jannica Hoskins resides in British Columbia, most the interviewees and
the settings are from that area of the country, particularly Kamloops. A full list of the interviewees and the sources for the research is included with the film. As well as the film being valuable with reference to its content, it is also worthwhile to look as an example for students’ research into their own family and community experiences with residential schools, either as a first project on their own or more formally with the assistance of a skilled videographer and filmmaker. This film is put together with several ‘revisits’ of the conversation with most interviewees. That approach works well. There are some aspects that might be improved. For example, presumably for the sake of closer shots, the host is always in the personal space of the interviewees, almost of top of them. How can that aspect be addressed? In the final shots of the film, host Jannica Hoskins is attending and informally dancing at a powwow, which was a great way to end the film, given her own search for identity. (MY, SY, Adult)

Bibby, Alan (Director, Co-producer, & Co-writer), Cunningham, David (Co-writer), Krepakevich, Jerry (Co-producer), & McIntosh, Jerry (Co-producer). (1998). The long walk [Documentary]. CA: Bibby Productions/National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (49 running minutes)

This exceptional documentary tells the story of Ken Ward, who contracted the HIV virus from infected needles. Although an older film now, Ken Ward is still living and actively working as an AIDS activist and community facilitator (e.g., http://www.treeofcreation.ca/main.html).

A great speaker and a courageous man, Ken Ward, from Enoch First Nation in Alberta, came out as having the HIV virus in 1990. Since that time, he has primarily worked with First Nations communities, where the virus is spreading amidst the poverty and hopelessness within many communities. However, the awareness of the HIV/AIDS virus, how it spreads and how it can be prevented, is still not openly communicated in many First Nations. It is that educational work that motivates Ken Ward, as well as his compassionate outreach and support for many people who, like him, have contracted and are living with the disease. For many, both family and community are slow to embrace the person with HIV, as there continues to be misunderstanding of the disease. Ken helps to counteract that lack of knowledge, embracing those with HIV and encouraging education among families and communities. This excellent film should be used in schools and community groups, native and non-native. Several websites feature Ken Ward (e.g, http://www.panow.com/node/150494 See also http://thesheaf.com/2012/03/02/loneliness-and-isolation-are-still-a-problem-for-hiv-patients/); it may also be possible to engage him as a guest speaker. (upper MY, SY, Adult)


This excellent, award-winning movie is based on the stage play of the same name by Tony Briggs, son of one of the original Sapphires. It is loosely based on the true story of the 1960s singing group from Australia, which consisted of Laurel Robinson, Beverly Briggs, and Naomi Mayers, the latter two who did not go to Vietnam (the focus of the film), which was when Lois Peeler, Robinson’s sister, was recruited. In the movie the names of the singing group are changed to Julie (Jessica Mauboy), Gail (Deborah Mailman), Cynthia (Miranda Tapsell), and Kay (Shari Sebbens), with Dave Lovelace (Chris O’Dowd) playing the agent who discovered the girls. While they did not have an agent in truth, the addition of the alcoholic, bumbling, but skilled Dave adds both humor and drama to the film, as he and Gail fall in love. The beginning of the movie story is fraught with in-fighting among the girls and with their experiences with racism, but the girls persevere and eventually coalesce to form a strong group. Much of the story takes place in Vietnam, and covers their singing tour for the troops there. They are caught in the cross fire of a battle, with the girls escaping by helicopter, but with Dave being left and being wounded. Gail reads the letter he had written and given to her beforehand in which he proposes. Dave survives, Gail finds him in a Vietnam hospital, and she agrees to marry him. The final scene sees the group back in their home community, with Dave asking permission of Gail’s family to marry her, and a final community concert for family and friends. There is lots of singing throughout the movie, the songs of which are available on the movie’s soundtrack, as listed. Many of those songs are sung by Jessica Mauboy, as they are in the movie; details are included within the CD paper insert. The CD insert includes pictures from the movie. As well, there are numerous YouTube websites featuring various songs, as well as interviews with the original Sapphires, who are also included within the bonus features of the movie. (SY, Adult)


This film (see NFB at https://www.nfb.ca/film/round_up) is the third about Pete Standing Alone from the Blood First Nations in Alberta. For a description of the trilogy see https://www.nfb.ca/playlists/pete-standing-alone-trilogy/. In this final film, Pete’s life is reviewed, initially with his own struggles after his eight-year residential school experience resulting in his alienation from his own culture. The first film, *Circle of the Sun* (30 minutes; see NFB at https://www.nfb.ca/film/circle-of-the-sun), released in 1960 by director and writer Colin Low, chronicles that struggle, with young First Nations people separated from their traditional cultures but not identifying with the white world either, nor finding a place to belong in it. With the next film, the 1982 *Standing Alone* (58 minutes; see NFB at https://www.nfb.ca/film/standing_alone), also by Colin Low, we see Pete Standing Alone going from oil rig worker, rodeo rider, and cowboy, to returning to his traditional roots and passing the knowledge to young people. In this final film, we now see Mr. Standing Alone riding with his horses on a final roundup before he sells his herd. At age 81, he still is passing on the traditional knowledge to the young people. These films chronicle a life devoted to the continued strength of traditional culture. All the films are available in their entirety from the National Film Board website designations, as noted. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

Although an older film now, this documentary is still a stirring dramatization and an effective way to teach about racism and its harmful effects. Based on a true story about Rhonda Gordon and her daughter Angela, who are interviewed following the documentary, the film shows three teenagers, Ian (Drew Vodrey) among them, who make racist comments to Rhonda (Tina Keeper) and her daughter Angela (Tiffany Peters) as they are waiting for the bus. Rhonda sees where the boys get off at their school, and the next day, after Angela has cut off her braids the previous night, Rhonda decides to visit the school and confront the teenager. The principal (Lee J. Campbell) goes from classroom to classroom, and then out to the playground before Ian is found. Refusing to look at Rhonda and Angela, Ian initially denies responsibility, but after hearing the effects of his taunts, he is remorseful and apologizes. In the real-life version, apparently ‘Ian’ then spent time with Rhonda and Angela to learn more about them and about their Aboriginal culture. (EY, MY, SY, Adult)

Busch-Johnston, Catherine (Director, Videographer, Editor, & Writer of narration), Pearson, Maria (Cultural consultant), & Westerman, Floyd “Red Crow” (Host). (2000-2005). *Spirit of the trees* [Six part Documentary]. CA/US: National Film Board of Canada (NFB)/Trees Forever. (Each program 29 running minutes)


This excellent group of short documentaries, each packaged and available separately, addresses the importance of trees to Aboriginal people, both spiritually and for everyday use. Filmed in and concentrating on areas within (what is now) the United States, each episode includes interviewees from various tribal groups situated in the area of the country where the filming takes place and concentrating on the trees from that geographical and tribal group area. The six-part series includes the following titles: *Circle of Life* (Central United States), *People of the Cedar* (Northwest), *Living knowledge* (Northeast), *Malam ‘aina* (Hawaii), *Continuing Traditions* (Southwest), and *Natural Harmony* (Southeast). For more information see http://www.treesforever.org/Spirit. (upper EY, MY, SY, Adult)

In the first episode, *Circle of Life*, the tribal groups include Anishinabe (or Ojibway), Hochunk, Sioux (Oglala, Lakota, & Yankton), and Monominee. The host of this program (as well as for the other five) is the Dakota Elder, Floyd “Red Crow” Westerman. Included are many archival photographs, as well as great footage of several natural areas. The activities of a sustainable maple syrup business from White Earth Reservation are shown. Interviewee Winona LaDuke emphasizes that biodiversity is as important as cultural diversity. Elder Eli Young Thunder from the Black River Falls Hochunk community tells about the construction, using saplings, of the sweat lodge and the importance of that ceremony. There is a demonstration of the manner in which the growth rings of a tree are removed and prepared for the making of baskets.
Marshall Pecore, the Forest Manager of Menominee Tribal Enterprises gives a phenomenal interview as he talks about their area as “an island of timber in an ocean of cleared land.” He stresses the importance of taking care not to cave in to pressure from those (e.g., ‘developers’) who lust after their land. This episode, like the others, takes the viewer into the forest with the interviewees. With that approach, the viewer not only appreciates the unique biodiversity of that area, but is prompted to think about, appreciate, and devise ways to create their own projects involving the trees in their own area.

In the second episode, People of the Cedar, which focuses on the tribes of the northwest coast of Alaska (e.g., Sabota, Luiseno, Haida, Tsimshian, Nisga’a, S’kallam, Quinault, Muckleshoot, Tlingit, & Yakima), the interviewees speak of the importance of the cedar tree to their culture. Skilled traditional artists include makers of baskets; clothing, including the Chilicat chiefs’ robes; totem poles; brentwood chests; and canoes. Each interviewee demonstrates their work, and some take us into the forest as they harvest their materials. We see the making of the cedar canoe, and its paddling on the water. As well, traditional drumming, dancing, and ceremonies are included, as well as canoeing and fishing, all which teach more about the culture of the First Peoples in the area whose life centres on the cedar. The people of the Muckleshoot First Nation, having successfully defended the forest against the Plum Creek Lumber Company, now find that they are much more likely to be considered during the logging operations. The Yakima Nation has its own forestry company, actively planning for sustainable harvests that provide the community with lasting revenue, all the while being respectful of the eco-diversity of the forest. One interviewee notes, “The landscape reflects the values of the people.” This excellent episode is instructive for those who may not be as well versed in the culture of the First Peoples who live by the sea.

In the third episode, Living Knowledge, which concentrates on northeastern seaboard tribes (e.g., Mashpee Wampanoags, Nansemonds, Pequots, Mohawks, Mohegan), the participants talk about the central roles of trees, and indeed nature as a whole, in their culture and way of life. Included is Chief Jake Swamp, now passed, of the Akwesasne Mohawk Nation, and founder of the Tree of Peace Society as well as the author of the excellent book Giving Thanks: A Native Good Morning Message. He notes that the white pine is seen as a peace symbol. Mr. Swamp talks of how, with the coming of the settler society, many of the actual roots of trees were being destroyed, and that the roots of their Native American culture also experienced upheaval: “The day will come when the tree will weaken. You the leaders will remain strong with your joined hands, as when the tree falls it will fall on your arms and you will hold it there for a long time, burdened with its weight and its heaviness. You shall never permit it to touch the ground, for if you do peace will never come back.” Other interviewees include Amelia Bingham, Russell Peters, Chief Oliver Perry, Faith Damon, Don Kuhns, Edith Kuhns, and Thomasina Jordon. Like all other films, this episode is excellent for use with many units within the science curricula.

In the fourth episode, Malama ʻAina, the producers take the viewer to Hawaii, where interviewees talk about the importance of trees for their traditional practices and customary ways of healing. The film shows us a stark city with its huge high rises, and then takes us to the green land. In itself, that transfer of scenes might provide an excellent ‘motivating strategy’ for a
lesson. How did you feel in each instance? Is it important to have time in nature, with trees? Why or why not? According to one interviewee, “without the land we are nothing.” Interviewee Millilani Hanapi shows how the heavy, dense wood of the kappa tree is used to make cloth. Sam Gon III (Ph.D.), an amazing chanter, talks about his work at the Nature Conservancy of Hawaii. Ala’ Pai Hanapi talks about the various woods he uses in his carvings. This episode also includes the filming of a collaborative effort between the Hawaiians and the Tlinget of Alaska. The ancestors of the Native Hawaiians used huge cedars to create double hulled canoes that were fitted with sails. These vessels took the Hawaiians to where they live now and among the various islands. But all those trees have been harvested, and the people wanted to make another such double hulled sailing canoe. The Tlinget people of Alaska offered trees from their area. The program follows the ceremony for the harvesting of the trees, and shows amazing footage of the completed canoe sailing on the waves. The interviewees for this aspect included Lilli Kala Kame’elehihwa (Ph.D.), a traditional canoe maker from the Centre for Hawaiian Study from the University of Hawaii. This is a unique and compelling episode.

In the sixth episode, *Natural Harmony*, the focus is on the relationship of the Seminoles in what is now Florida to the trees in their area. There are archival photos shown of the draining of the everglades, as interviewees stress their conservation efforts against such projects. They talk of their work to maintain the biodiversity of their lands, with a particular focus on the importance of the trees and other vegetation for traditional medicines. Jeanette Cypress, with her grandmother Suzie Billie and her mother Agnes, show what women’s medicines to gather and what each is used for. While the cypress tree is important, traditional canoe maker Henry John Billie talks of how canoes were made from the hardwood trees, most of which are too small for the purpose now with past over-harvesting. Woodcarver Ingram Billie Jr. shows his skill while he talks of the importance of living within nature. Footage shows children learning traditional songs from their elders. Linda Beletso illustrates the harvesting of grasses and her beautiful basket weaving. Poet Moses Jumper Jr. shares a poem he wrote about the Council Tree, a huge old oak that has served as the setting, for many years, under which council meetings have been held. A map shows the placement of the six Seminole reservations in Florida. This episode is accompanied by beautiful flute music.

their native culture through their art. The book includes photographs of his carvings. Similar projects for students might encourage them to interview people in their community who focus on the preservation of trees, along with other aspects of nature. (MY, SY, Adult)

**Campbell, Peter (Director), Schreiber, Dorothy (Assoc. director), Krepakevich, Jerry (Co-producer), Rankin, Katherine (Co-producer), Brisbin, Helen (Narration script), & Cardinal, Susan (Narrator). (1999). Footprints in the Delta [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (44 running minutes)**

This film documents the effects of British Columbia’s WAC Bennett Dam, built in 1967, on the Peace-Athabasca River Delta. In the past (before the dam), the Delta depended on annual floodwaters to renew its fluid ecosystem, particularly to refresh the many small lakes, called perched basins. Those floodwaters were assisted by ice jams that raised the water levels in the 4000 square kilometre Delta, which is part of the Mackenzie River system that drains one-fifth of Canada, and which is 80% in Wood Buffalo National Park. With three-quarters of Canada’s population now living in cities, and with lack of awareness of the environmental ramifications of the electricity-producing WAC Bennett Dam, the future of the Delta is threatened. Much of the area previously under water is now covered with brush. Some species upon which the First Nations people depended for their livelihood, like the muskrat, have all but disappeared. The film’s contributors include scientists, spokespeople from BC Hydro and from Parks Canada, and First Nations chiefs and Métis leaders from several communities in the area of the Delta. This is an excellent film to use in environmental science classes. Students might follow up on the current situation with the Peace-Athabasca River Delta, including phoning First Nations in the area. As well, research projects might focus on other human interventions that have resulted in environmental change and decimation of plant and animal species. (MY, SY, Adult)


**Cuthand, Doug (Director & Writer), Kuffner, Lori (Co-producer), & Torrance, Jennifer (Co-producer). (1999). Patrick’s story [Documentary]. CA: Cooper rock Pictures/National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (24 running minutes)**


This collection focusses on foster and/or adopted children. In the first award-winning film *Foster Child*, Métis filmmaker Gil Cardinal researches to find his own family, and follows his own journey in the film. Raised in a loving foster home, he did not become active in his search until he was 35. He is frustrated with the roadblocks that are put in his way, largely because of policy that will protect his birth family. The social worker does contact some of his family, and there are a few who will meet him, including an uncle and the wife of his recently deceased brother Don. His good friend Maria Campbell helps to support him in his search, and in his struggle. He finally has two pictures of his mother, who has also passed, and stories that help him to connect to his past. He states, “My search will never end but through it, I have simply, quietly realized that I belong to two realities: I have two mothers, two families, two cultures.” Gil Cardinal has had a long and distinguished career in filmmaking, primarily but not exclusively with the National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (upper MY, SY, Adult)

The film *Patrick’s Story* follows one young man’s rode to purpose and self-worth. While he knew his father’s name was Jake Badger, he says that his birth was the result of an initial short relationship between his parents. In spite of that, his parents did keep him, it seems, until the age of 11, when they took him to a home with someone he did not know, and left him there. He did not see them again for four years. He mourned his parents then as if they had died. That sense of abandonment exacerbated a sense of worthlessness which he felt after having been sexually assaulted by an older boy when he was a smaller child. After a few months in that first home, he was formally placed in the foster system, and was shuffled regularly from one home to another, estimating that he must have been in 30 homes before going to Kilburn Hall, a youth detention centre in Saskatoon. By that time, he had begun hurting himself, even trying once to shoot himself, but the gun misfired. At Kilburn Hall, Patrick met Docina, who was training to become a social worker. She was an older lady, married, and she and Patrick immediately connected. Docina saw Patrick as troubled and vulnerable, but also as a winner, a survivor. According to Patrick, “That was the beginning of a long, loving relationship that continues to this day. She is my adoptive mother. She took me in. She helped me get out of that place, and that was the last time I was in any kind of foster home or institution.” Docina connected Patrick with Elders and sought the help for him that he needed to overcome his anger and hurt. Patrick reconnected with his father, but his father died shortly afterwards, which prompted a relapse, another downward spiral that Patrick had to work hard to overcome. He began to go to Joe Duquette High School (now named Oskāyak High School) in Saskatoon, and found his niche, quickly accelerating through the grades. He also discovered a love for playing the guitar, often joining a local band as
a guest performer. Patrick notes that making the film was part of his healing process, along with the wish to help other youth that may be struggling as he was. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

The third entry listed, which is also the second production directed by Doug Cuthand, includes two parts. The first film *Child Welfare: The State as Parent*, was initiated by the research work of Dr. Caroline Tait. This documentary includes many interviewees from across Canada who comment primarily about the foster care system. That focus turns out to be unfortunate as most interviewees speak of negative experiences within the foster care system; as such, there is an inherent suggestion that the problems experienced by the children and youth were because they were taken from their natural parents and placed with bad people. Although interviewee Sharon Acoose does stress that there are some good foster homes, only interviewee Bob Pringle states that child abuse is often the reason why children are taken from their natural homes. The film is excellent for critique as viewers might dialogue about how children can be protected, and what the role of the government is in that process. With reference to assistance, what can be done to support natural families and foster families in nurturing all children in safe, caring environments? In that consideration, it is crucial to address the issue of residential schools and their legacy. How can parents emerge from that trauma and take responsibility for their decisions as adults and parents? What is the role of the government to provide continued rather than spasmodic, short-term program funding to support residential school survivors and their families (and the children of the children of residential school survivors, and so on)? Interviewees include former fostered children, now adults, Chelsea Gunn, Emil Brandon, Wanita Bird, and recording artist 2 BLAQ whose moving song about his own experiences is included in the production. Other interviewees include Donald Worme (Q.C.); Father André (founder of gang intervention program STR8-UP); Joan Globe (Former Exec. Director of Mi’Kmaq Family and Children’s Services); Dr. Jo-Ann Episkewew (Exec. Director, Indigenous Peoples’ Health Research Centre); and Beverly Whitehawk (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations).

The second film within this second Doug Cuthand production is connected to the first and is entitled *Do you find this unethical, partner?* In this film, more is contributed about how we can support individuals and families when their needs are occurring rather than when children are finally taken away from them. Interestingly, similar to the ‘Justice’ System, the Child Welfare System seems to be able to find ‘reactive’ funding (e.g., to incarcerate youth; to take children away and place them in foster homes), but insufficient ‘proactive’ funding for the more support that is needed up front. What is the ethical way to provide support? How can we critique the current system to see if what we have allows us to ethically address the needs of individuals and families? Repeatedly, interviewees talk of insecure funding, of time-consuming proposal-writing and reporting, and of long wait times for people who need immediate support. Dr. Mike De Gagné, who headed the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, talked of its flexibility in meeting the needs of individuals and communities, but also of its finite funding, leading to what he called the ‘unintended consequences’ of government action (rather than intentional harm, which he did not believe to be the case). Several interviewees talked of ‘silo’ funding, where there is lack of integrated support across programs—for example, mental health, addictions, and healthy parenting—to address the complex needs of some individuals and families. While some
interviewees from the first film also participate in this second film, there are also many additional contributors from across the country, including both Métis (Gabe Lafond) and Inuit (Lori Idlout) interviewees. Those interviewees include people involved with treatment programs and mental health, and also people from universities. It is encouraging to see that the young people interviewed for the first film are getting their lives back on track, and especially that they are now working as role models for others. For more information on and resources within the Ethical Toolkit, of which these films are a part, see https://ethicaltoolkit.ca/content/resource1. There are suggestions included for classroom use of the documentaries, along with case studies and training materials.

The film about Richard Cardinal is very upsetting in that his succession of poor foster home experiences ultimately led to his suicide. He had 28 placements in foster and group homes before he took his own life at the age of 17. The film is based on a diary that he left, and also includes interviews with some of the foster families with whom he stayed, as well as with his brother Charlie. All of the children in the family were taken from the parents, with some placed in homes together. Even Richard was placed with Charlie and his sister a couple of times, but his bedwetting problem seemed to be too much for either the foster parents or Social Services to address, and he was often moved largely because of that one issue, it would seem. It was finally just too much for him and he ended his own life. How could this tragedy have been prevented? Why was Richard so poorly served? The siblings were finally brought together, but for Richard’s funeral. (SY, Adult)

The film Walker is an exceptional dramatization for students of all ages. Walker (Luis Brascoupe) is staying with a foster family after his parents have been killed in an accident. His only friend is the stray dog Dylan. When treated poorly by two neighbourhood non-Aboriginal teens, along with the one boy’s little brother Jamie (Jamieson Boulanger), Walker does not retaliate. Instead, he reaches out to Jamie, who is afraid of dogs, and they become friends. Part of the Playing Fair series, this film would be excellent to use for many curricular outcomes, and certainly when addressing the Seven Teachings. (EY, MY, SY, Adult)

The supportive books are diverse. Earl Einarson’s children’s (EY, early MY) book The Moccasins recounts his loving foster home, with his foster Mom making moccasins for him, and telling him that he was Native and that that was very good. He wore the moccasins out, but his Mom mended them, then saved them for him and brought them to him when he was married and had a child of his own. Littlechild’s book (EY, MY, SY, Adult) explores his art, with the book full of his wonderful paintings. Like Gil Cardinal, he sought to find his birth family, while also being embraced by a loving foster family that encouraged his gift of art. His manner of finding and reclaiming his Native identity is within his visual art, while Gil Cardinal’s path was through the art of filmmaking.

James Tyman was adopted into a non-Native family who loved him dearly, but who did not help him to connect with his Native culture or family. As an adolescent he began to act out, finding a negative identity within the culture of crime. His book Inside Out (SY, Adult) was written while he was in prison. Eventually he did find his birth mother, only to conclude that for him, his real mother was his adoptive mother. James Tyman’s lifestyle resulted in an early
passing at the age of 38. He rests with his adoptive parents at Qu’Appelle in Saskatchewan. Given its graphic descriptions of his criminal lifestyle, *Inside Out* should be reviewed with school administration and parents before being used.

Wagner’s short chapter book (upper EY, lower MY) could be matched with the film *Walker*. Living with his grandparents, Jason becomes attached to the rescued appaloosa colt Binesi who comforts him in his loneliness for his parents, who have recently died in an accident. He helps to raise the colt and rides him in a winning race. Jason does insist to the doubting children that he will win the race with Binesi; this aspect might open conversation about how best to respond when being teased or confronted by others. How did Jason respond, compared to Walker?


The television mini-series *Big Bear* is divided into two parts; the total viewing is long for one sitting. The story involves the history of the Cree Chief Big Bear’s (Mistahi Muskwa, played by Gordon Tootoosis) refusal to sign Treaty 6 for six years as he tried to negotiate better terms for his people. Always wishing to engage with dialogue rather than violence, he was finally forced to sign in 1882, as there were few buffalo or other wild game left to sustain his people and, as a result, they were starving. The government, with their formal starvation policies, withheld rations until he did sign. Even after the signing, the younger people—including his son Little Bad Man (or Imasees or Little Bear, played by Lorne Cardinal)—continued to push for more violent responses to their ill treatment by the Canadian government. In 1885, the young warriors, by now led by Wandering Spirit (Michael Greyeyes), joined the Métis in their resistance and participated in the killing of nine white people at Frog Lake. Although he tried to stop the violence, Big Bear was arrested, tried, and sentenced to three years at Stony Penitentiary. He was released in 1887, returned to Poundmaker Reserve in Saskatchewan, and died in January, 1988. The movie involves many Canadian Aboriginal actors, including Tantoo Cardinal as Big Bear’s wife, Running Second; Simon Baker as Horse Child, Big Bear’s young son who refused to leave his father; Kennetch Charlette as Lone Man; and Gail Maurice as Nowakich. Gordon Tootoosis and Tyrone Tootoosis (Poundmaker in the movie) are both nephews of Poundmaker. As a political statement, all the actors speak in English, except the treaty messengers, all of whom speak in gibberish with the translator interpreting to English. (SY, Adult)
Of all the included books, the one by Dempsey is the best, and should be the required reading if one could select only one of the books. Dempsey is related by marriage to Big Bear (His wife’s uncle was a grandson of Big Bear). The book is meticulously researched, and includes interviews with many of Big Bear’s descendants. One feels that they get to know all the players in the conflicts at the time. Dempsey articulates the starvation policies of the government, as well as the family conflicts within Big Bear’s circle. Big Bear’s role as a peacemaker and as an activist for treaty rights and the proper treatment of his people is elaborated in detail. Unfortunately, Big Bear held on for so long that he lost his decisiveness, which led to his ill treatment from members of his own family, and basically the taking away of hischieftainship by the more aggressive war chief Wandering Spirit. As well, his own sons Twin Wolverine and Imasees deserted him, the latter finally being granted a reservation in Montana. As the band had been splintered, and Big Bear was sent to prison after the Riel resistance and the Frog Lake massacre, they never were allotted their own reserve in Canada. Of all his children, those from his youngest wife, the boy Horse Child and the girl Earth Woman, were those who stayed with Big Bear in his times of trouble: Horse Child accompanied him during his trial and his initial imprisonment, and Earth Woman nursed him from his release on January 27, 1887, when he went to Little Pine reserve, until his death there on January 17, 1888. (SY, Adult)

Both books by Rudy Wiebe are good reading. The movie is based on The Temptations of Big Bear, and it is more detailed book than the later edition entitled simply Big Bear. The former book is more an adult book; given its detail and ‘layering’ (going in and out of different times, speakers, and situations), it is a difficult read at times. The latter more readable book (later MY, SY, Adult), written as part of the Extraordinary Canadians series (Series editor is John Ralston Saul), provides a good historical read as well, including a chronology at the back of the book, and many quotes from Big Bear, including his most famous to the treaty messenger Reverend George McDougall in 1985:

“We have heard your words, and now here are ours. We want none of the Queen’s presents. When we set a fox-trap we scatter pieces of meat all around, but when the fox gets into the trap, we knock him on the head. We want no bait. Let your chiefs come like men and talk to us.” (p. 58)

The 133 page book by J. R. Miller is a very readable biography, accessible to middle years’ students and older. It includes archival pictures, maps, and a chronology. See the following website for most of the included photos: http://amertribes.proboards.com/thread/314. There is no index, an aspect that complicates additional focused reading of the book. As well, Miller states that Big Bear’s first wife Sayos was the mother of his youngest son Horse Child (p. 33); that needs to be verified, as Horse Child was very much younger than the other children Big Bear had with Sayos (Nowakitch, Twin Wolverine, and Bad Child/Little Bad Man/Imasees), and is considered to be the child of Big Bear’s youngest wife Running Second, who deserted him during his troubles. Rather than that aspect discouraging the reading of Miller’s biography, however, it should serve only to prompt further research into the life of the great Chief Big Bear.

This episode of the *Chiefs* series elaborates the life of the controversial Joseph Brant. His Mohawk name Thayendanegea means “two sticks bound together in strength”, and the film explains Brant’s twin driving purposes in his life—a liaison between the British and the Aboriginal societies, and personal ambition. His allegiance with and work for the British in the American Revolution is alleged to have cost his people their land in what is now the United States. The film includes many interviews, some with direct descendants of Brant, as well as re-enactment, with Lawrence Bayne as Joseph Brant and Sandra Laronde as his influential older sister Molly. Although of relatively modest birth—Joseph Brant was not a hereditary chief—Brant enjoyed the largesse of his sister’s common-law husband, Sir William Johnson, who sent Brant for an education. As well, when his mother remarried, her new husband had close connections with the British. Brant thus worked to secure the support of the Iroquois confederacy for the British during the American Revolution. The result was not unanimous among the confederacy, with the Mohawk, Cayuga, and Seneca siding with the British, the Oneida and Tuscarora remaining with their German and Dutch allies among the American colonies, and the Onondaga’s vote split. Given that outcome, Brant has often been credited with destroying the Iroquois confederacy. With the American victory, those siding with the British lost their lands and came to Canada. The Oneida were the only tribe able to keep their land in what became the United States. More than 1600 people moved north, and were granted land on the Grant River—six miles deep on either side, starting at Lake Erie. Over the years that land shrunk greatly in size, with only 5% now remaining of the original one million acres as the current Six Nations reserve. It is purported that Brant benefitted from the sale and/or lease of the lands; he built a large mansion in 1803 on Burlington Bay and lived a privileged life there. As the years went on, his support dwindled and he lived in self-imposed exile, dying on November 24, 1807. He was buried there for 43 years until his body was taken to Brantford in 1850 and where a monument, still standing today, was dedicated to him in 1886.


This excellent film on Poundmaker features three of his descendants: Tyronne Tootoosis, a great-great nephew in the role of Poundmaker; great nephew Gordon Tootoosis as interviewee; and nephew Jim Tootoosis Sr., whose father was Yellow Mud Blanket, the brother of Poundmaker. After the Métis resistance of 1885 in Saskatchewan, it was believed that some of the Cree people from both Big Bear’s and Poundmaker’s bands assisted the Métis. Poundmaker,
the adopted son of Crowfoot, was known to the authorities prior to 1885 and was still seen as threatening. During the drive to relocate the prairie’s Aboriginal people onto reserves so that the railway could be built and the West settled with farmers, Poundmaker had resisted: “This is our land. You would cut it up like pemmican and give it back to us in little pieces. It is our land and we will take what we want.” Similar to Big Bear, however, to whom Poundmaker was a mentor, he lobbied for non-violence during the 1885 resistance in Saskatchewan, and did not want his men to join Louis Riel and the Métis. Poundmaker, unlike Big Bear until much later, had touched the pen (Treaty #6) and taken a reserve, which still bears his name. Because the buffalo had been slaughtered, there seemed little choice, and Poundmaker tried to become a farmer on the poor land designated as their reserve. He also thought, when signing the treaty, that the promise of rations for his people would be kept. When it was not, his younger warriors became increasingly agitated. They began not to listen to the counsel for peaceful means, even as Poundmaker continued his refusal to become involved in armed resistance. Many others began to join Poundmaker’s camp, among them some Stoney Indians to whom has been ascribed the responsibility for killing farm agent James Payne, as well as Bernie Trumont. That association was enough to implicate Poundmaker, which led to his arrest on charges of treason-felony and his subsequent trial. Another farm agent Jefferson, who was actually Poundmaker’s brother-in-law, testified in exchange for immunity at Poundmaker’s trial, saying that Poundmaker had written a letter of support to Louis Riel. Poundmaker’s lawyer soon shredded that claim, and also established, with support from witnesses, that Poundmaker had held his men back after they had rebuffed an attack by soldiers, an action that had saved the soldiers from being annihilated. As well, it was established that the travel of his camp to Battleford was not for the purpose of attack, but simply to ask for the rations that they had been promised and that for so long had been denied. In spite of the lack of evidence against Poundmaker, he was found guilty, and sentenced to three years in Stoney Mountain Penitentiary in Manitoba. He contracted a severe lung ailment after eight months in prison, and was released, only to die in Alberta soon afterwards, in 1886, while visiting his adoptive father Crowfoot. He has been returned to rest at the reserve that bears his name. This excellent film concludes with a powerful quote from Poundmaker (Tyronne Tootoosis), which but for its length would be included here; suffice it to say that the quote itself would inspire much dialogue. Also see http://www.galafilm.com/chiefs/htmlen/cree/ev_trial.html. (MY, SY, Adult)

Stonechild’s and Waiser’s accessible book Loyal til Death recounts the roles of both Poundmaker and Big Bear during the 1885 Métis resistance (which they call a rebellion). While essential reading, with its detailed research and its archival photos, the book may be embraced more by First Nations readers than by the Métis. The primary purpose of the book, as the title suggests, is to establish that Poundmaker, just as he himself claimed, was loyal to the treaty that he had signed with the Queen. Although long refusing to sign a treaty, Big Bear too counselled for peace and tried to stop the bloodshed. (SY, Adult)
Cardinal, Gil (Director, Writer, & Narrator), & Donahue, Daron (Director of Cinematography). (2003). *Totem: The return of the G’psgolox pole* [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (70 running minutes)

Cardinal, Gil (Director, Writer, & Narrator), & Donahue, Daron (Director of Cinematography). (2007). *Totem: Return and renewal* [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (23 running minutes)

Both films address the repatriation of the G’psgolox totem pole, which is a mortuary pole that was taken from the British Columbia Haisla First Nation community in 1929. Its location was not discovered for 60 years when it was finally found at a museum in Stockholm, Sweden. In this film, Gil Cardinal follows the efforts of the Haisla people to repatriate the pole. Footage includes travel to the original community of Misk’usa where the pole was situated (A move was made to the current community because of the risk of landslides at Misk’usa). Originally, the pole was carved as commissioned by Chief G’psgolox because of the death of many of his family due to European disease; as well, the pole related his encounter with a supernatural being. At some time, many years later, the pole would have fallen and returned to mother earth, as was the way. While the pole was reportedly purchased by the Swedes, as such poles were then the rage in Europe, the details of that ‘purchase’ were never recorded. The Swedish museum agreed to return the pole. As well as interviews, we see master carver Henry Robertson (grandson of the original carver), and his nephews (with a focus on Derek Wilson) and granddaughter at work creating two replicas of the G’psgolox pole, one to put at the original site at Misk’usa, and one to give to the Swedish museum to replace the original pole. Some people in the community did not agree with the creation of the replicas, but they recognized that although the G’psgolox pole was taken, it was also cared for. The carving and the efforts to repatriate the original G’psgolox pole help the community to reclaim their culture and heritage, and in so doing to heal their community. The community also raised money for a building to house the G’psgolox pole when it returned home. At the time of the first film, the replicas had been completed, with the one raised at Misk’usa and the other taken to Sweden. But the original G’psgolox pole was still in Sweden, as no building had yet been built to house it at the Haisla community. While people from around the world should learn about the history and culture of indigenous people, this film will spawn dialogue on how that learning of Aboriginal history might happen while still remaining respectful of the indigenous cultures and their need to keep and to protect their own cultural artifacts. Film footage also showed many other indigenous artifacts in the Swedish museum.

In the follow-up film, *Totem: Return and Renewal*, Cardinal briefly recounts the original story, then follows and narrates the process of negotiations to repatriate the G’psgolox pole to the Haisla people at Kitimat, B.C. The negotiations took 15 years, and involved the Swedish museum releasing their condition that a suitable environment for the G’psgolox pole be provided before the transfer. As noted, the Haisla people had carved a replica pole that was sent to Sweden. Finally an agreement was reached when the condition of provision of a suitable building was lifted. A special crate protected the G’psgolox pole during its shipping, and because the First Nation community at Kitimat did not yet have a suitable place for it, they approached
the owner of the Kitimat mall in the nearby city of Kitimat, and a place was granted there. As well as many interviews, including one with hereditary chief Don Paul, and documented public ceremonies, the film also includes the traditional ceremonies for the G’psgolox pole when it was returned. While the G’psgolox pole was taken to Sweden, it was protected and preserved well; a controversial part of the film is the comparison of the manner in which the pole was secured in Sweden—with a metal collar—to the experience of First Nations people in residential schools. Dialogue might help to address the tensions created from the contradictions of such a comparison. (MY, SY, Adult)

Caro, Niki (Director). (2002). *Whale rider* [Motion picture]. NZ/DE: Pandora Film/Newmarket Films (Distributors). (101 minutes running time)


The movie, drawn from the book of the same name, features twelve-year-old Paikea Apirana (Keisha Castle-Hughes; named Kahu in the book, short for Kahutia Te Rangi, the girl is eight years old). Pai, as she is called, is in line for the leadership in her community of Ngati Konohi in Whangara, New Zealand, but her great-grandfather (Rawiri Parantene) rejects her, as he believes that the leader, a descendent of the ‘whale rider’, must be a boy. Pai struggles to be recognized, and in secret learns all the lessons that she must know in order to assume the role. Pai wins a speech contest in which she extols the worth of the Maori culture and of her great-grandfather, but he is not there to hear her, as several whales have beached and he is trying to save them. Only when Pai climbs to the top of the lead whale, speaks to him, and leads him and the pod back out to sea, almost dying in the process, does her great-grandfather recognize that she is a whale rider and the next leader of her community. Both the book and the movie are exceptional, with the movie having won several awards. The movie might prompt many discussions, among them related to the issue of gender roles. (MY, SY, Adult)

Chartrand, Ervin (Director & Writer), & Christensen, David (Co-producer), & Macdonald, Joe (Co-producer). (2012). *Fight* [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (44 running minutes)

Filmed in Winnipeg, this documentary follows the path of Rene Catcheway and Melvin Delorme, both at-risk of not completing high school after having had many challenges in their pasts. Teacher Randy Baleski gets them interested in boxing, a sport that requires discipline and dedication, with the hopes that the two will transfer that commitment to their academics, as well life purpose and relationships. The film includes interviews with all three participants, as well as boxing coach Roland Vandal, along with footage of some of the boys’ boxing matches. As well as being a great film for students, the movie might also be used for teacher professional development. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

This excellent production, featured as a special on Canada’s evening news program The National, includes several aspects. The documentary itself includes Voices (Chapter 1, nine minutes) and The Next Generation (Chapter 2, 10.5 minutes). The special features include the Apology from Prime Minister Stephen Harper (11 minutes); the Apology from the Stéphan Dion, then leader of the Liberal party and the Official Opposition (14 minutes); and the Native Response (three minutes). To quote the statement from the production’s jacket cover:

After decades of waiting, Aboriginal Canadians received a formal apology from the federal government on June 11, 2008. This landmark event in Canadian history recognized the loss of culture caused by the church-run schools that thousands of Aboriginal children were forced to attend. It acknowledged the physical and sexual abuse that many suffered in those institutions.

Interviewees in the Voices chapter include Alice Littledeer, Raymond Mason, and Madeline Dion Stout. Interspersed with their stories are narrated, inter-title quotes from several leaders (e.g., John A. Macdonald, Duncan Campbell Scott, Egerton Ryerson) of the later 19th Century and early 20th Century who illustrate the then current approach to the education of Aboriginal children. Alice Littledeer talked not only of attending herself, but of having to send each of her 11 children to residential school. Raymond Mason spoke his sexual abuse, and about being beaten when, as a small child, he ran to his sister and hugged her. Madeline Dion Stout spoke about becoming strangers in their own land, about the nurturing relationships in the family being severed, and about the resultant mental stress. The interviewees from The Next Generation talk about the lasting impact of residential schools. Michael Loft spoke about how his father never knew when he was going to be hit at the residential school, and he essentially became that kind of parent, as he himself then also did. He noted how his Dad struggled with the unpredictability of the outside, and went back to the residential school for one more year by his own choice. Loreena Fontaine spoke not only of the abuse she experienced, but also the shame that her parents and grandparents communicated about their own culture. In the final part of this section, Madeline Dion Stout states that residential school survivors and their families do not have the monopoly on pain and hurt, that she would like everyone to move forward and make a difference for children who are experiencing difficulty today. That message is a statement of both truth and reconciliation.

It is important for all Canadians to view and listen to the formal apology from the Canadian Government. That apology is an historic event, as is the Native Response. The apology from the leader of the Official Opposition is also important to listen to and to watch. Unfortunately, in his address, Mr. Dion does project the impression that he is trying to upstage Mr. Harper and the leading party. The responses from the Native leaders are so positive and embracing of the shared responsibility to move forward with dialogue, truth, and reconciliation. (upper MY, SY, Adult)
Combary, Hyacinthe (Director, Researcher, & Writer), & Bisaillon, Yves (Producer). (2004). *Tales of sand and snow* [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (48 running minutes)

In this film African Canadian filmmaker Hyacinthe Combary is struggling to maintain his connections to his Gourmantche culture of Burkino Faso in Africa. His people read their future in the sand, with community elders translating the meaning for the benefit of the people. Combary feels a sense of guilt for having left his village in Africa and is struggling for a sense of identity in his new home in Canada. He travels to northern Quebec to visit the Atikamekw at Wemotaci. There he meets several Elders and Knowledge Keepers, and finds that there is a connection between the two cultures, with the Atikamekw seeking their spiritual connections, and guidance for their lives, within the purification ceremonies of the traditional sweat lodge. As well, each culture includes drumming and the teachings of the drum to guide the people. Combary also learns of the common experiences that Africans and Aboriginal Canadians have with colonization. As the film progresses, we are taken back and forth between the Atikamekw community of Wemotaci in northern Quebec, and Combary’s home community in Africa. Combary sees that there are common connections, and that he can seek guidance in Canada for the two questions that continue to plague him: How can one not grow distant from one’s own soul? How can one not become dehumanized? In that, he may feel comfortable and connected wherever he resides. Eighteen participants help to provide the grounding for Combary’s search, both from the Atikamekw community of Wemotaci, Quebec, and from Combary’s village in Africa. This film may be viewed in its entirety from the NFB website: https://www.nfb.ca/film/tales_of_sand_and_snow (upper MY, SY, Adult)


This is a great film about Jim Settee, a man who inspired and helped many people during his long life. Looking for her own roots and a deeper meaning in her life, Jeanne Corrigal spent time with Jim. Along with other interviewees in the film, Jeanne talks about how Jim made her feel special, how he remembered her from when she was a baby as the child of his former colleague Andy Corrigal. Interviewees for the film include Jim himself, although he passed before the film was completed. As well, family members, friends, and former colleagues are also interviewed. These include Audrey Kingfisher (granddaughter), Priscilla Settee (cousin), Tammy Wathen (granddaughter), Luther Ferguson (former Park Warden), Norman Henderson (Elder, Montreal Lake F.N.), Ron Davis (former Park Warden), Howard Halkett (former Vice-chief, Montreal Lake F. N.), Larry Settee (nephew), Jane and Gladys Settee (daughters), Edward Lavallee (former Fish Lake resident), John Henderson (friend), Noland Henderson (former Chief, Montreal Lake F. N.), Bishop Anthony Burton (Anglican Church), Erin Settee (great granddaughter), Tina Settee (granddaughter), Henry Fremont (Prince Albert National Park Manager Aboriginal Affairs), and Colleen Berwing (Prince Albert National Park Interpreter). So deeply impressed was she when meeting Jim, that folk singer Connie Kaldor wrote the song Old
Friends (Mr. Settee’s Song). That inspiring and deeply moving song, which is on Kaldor’s CD entitled Small Café, is included in the film.

Born in 1911, Jim’s own life was shaped by his parents and grandparents, with their strong native traditions combined with their work in the Anglican Church and as school teachers. Well educated for the time, the Reverend James Settee Sr. founded Stanley Mission in northern Saskatchewan. Jim worked tirelessly as well, and was instrumental in establishing the Fish Lake Métis community. The film includes instruction on the manner in which the former Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada defined who was status Indian and who was not, often separating families, with some members being allowed to live on the reserve as First Nations people and some defined as Métis, and thus not able to live on the reserve. Jim lobbied for the rights of both Métis and First Nations people, helping many people with letter writing and with negotiating the details of the cumbersome federal system. At the age of 80 he decided to enter theological college, and became ordained as an Anglican minister at the age of 86, thereafter ministering to his people until his death at 93.

During his final days, when he was so ill, Jeanne Corrigal went to visit Jim in the hospital. She held his hand and suddenly he sat upright and, with a huge smile on his face, said to her, “I’m going home tomorrow.” He asked Jeanne to give his daughter a message: “Tell her there are a lot of roads, but I know which one to take. Tell her I know the way home.” It is clear that Jim Settee inspired many people and that he also helped Jeanne Corrigal find her own way home.

This film is a tribute to a life well led, a life spent in validating others. As Jim said, “The most important thing is to love each other unconditionally.” Students might initiate their own projects that feature those who have inspired them. They also could talk about how they might and do demonstrate their unconditional love for each other. (MY, SY, Adult)

Costner, Kevin (Director & Co-producer), Wilson, Jim (Co-producer), & Blake, Michael (Screenplay). (1990). Dances with Wolves [Motion picture]. US: Tig Productions/orion Pictures (Distributor). (181 running minutes)


Although the movie Dances with Wolves has now somewhat fallen out of favour as a ‘white man’s Indian movie,’ still it continues to be identified as an important film in that it clearly illustrated public interest in Aboriginal content movies. Chris Eyre, in his interview in the documentary Reel Injun, indicates that he still thinks that the movie is good, but that it is just not primarily about Aboriginal people. The story line of the film follows the novel quite closely except that in the novel the Aboriginal tribal group is Comanche, while in the movie the tribal group is Dakota. The movie’s central figure is Lieutenant John Dunbar, and the theme essentially revolves around white guilt for the theft of Indian lands.

The story has Lieutenant John Dunbar (Kevin Costner) assigned to what turns out to be a deserted army post, Fort Sedgwick. There is nothing much there except him and visiting animals, particularly wolves. He begins to rebuild the post. No other soldiers come to join him, as planned; unknown to him, both the Timmons (Robert Pastorelli), the wagon driver who took him
there, and Major Fambrough (Maury Chaykin) who gave him the assignment, have died, leaving no one even aware of Dunbar’s posting. All the while Dunbar is being observed and taunted by nearby Sioux people. When he decides to go and try to establish a relationship with the people, he comes across a white woman Stands with a Fist (Mary McDonnell) who had been adopted by the tribe’s medicine man Kicking Bird (Graham Green) and his wife Black Shawl (Tantoo Cardinal). (There is no explanation for the use of the names: Kicking Bird was a High Chief of the Kiowa, while Black Shawl was the name of Crazy Horse’s wife.) (The movie’s portrayal of the white adopted woman is off-putting, as Stands with a Fist has been clumsily made up with a dirty face and dishevelled hair, as she remains throughout the film. What is the message?) Dunbar takes her back to the tribe and a rapport is begun, which evolves into sincere friendship as Dunbar spends increasingly more time with the tribe, adopting their lifestyle and clothing, and participating in hunts. (Again off-putting, one scene sees Dunbar as a better hunter than the Sioux, even scolding one man for his lack of action.) In particular, he develops a closer friendship with Wind in his Hair (Rodney A. Grant). He also develops a romantic relationship with Stands with a Fist, and when he is accepted as her husband, he leaves Fort Sedgwick. In the meantime, he has been given the name Dances with Wolves when he was seen cavorting with a young wolf that had come to his camp, trying to chase it and catch it. When Chief Ten Bears (Floyd Red Crow Westerman) decides to move the tribe, Dunbar goes back to Fort Sedgwick to retrieve his papers, only the find the fort now re-occupied by the United States army. He is captured, but then freed by the Sioux, after which he decides that he and Stands with a Fist must leave the community, as the army will be coming to track him. The movie is notable in its use of many Aboriginal actors; other than those already mentioned, and others with lesser roles, the following Aboriginal actors star in the movie: Jimmy Herman as Stone Calf; Nathan Lee Chasing His Horse as Smiles a Lot; Michael Spears as Otter, Jason R. Lone Hill as Worm; and Wes Studi as a Pawnee warrior. (SY, Adult)


This excellent documentary addresses many aspects of puberty. It is created by and for Aboriginal youth, and includes a lighter, often rather humorous approach that should put adolescents at ease. The producers begin with an introduction about residential schools and their negative effects. While those effects are very real and need to be taken seriously, to include that aspect in this film might seem puzzling, as it seems to draw attention away from the normal questions and challenges that many adolescents face during puberty. For example, the program then begins with a boy being aghast at his wet dream and a girl being frightened by her first menstrual cycle. The next section, Name that Anatomy, sees host Sid Bobb and a group of male and female youth (all older teens) identifying the aspects of the male and female reproductive organs, while giving the viewers the information about each particular part, for example the ova in girls and the prostate in boys. Afterwards, a more elaborated section addresses The Female Anatomy (but interestingly without a corresponding section on the male anatomy). Within that
section, there is an enactment of girls in a washroom helping a young student who is experiencing her first period with the various products she can use, including a pad, a panty liner, and a tampon. A short section on Erections provides helpful hints for how a boy can cover an uninvited erection in a public setting (e.g., hands in pockets, covering one’s crotch area with a back pack). Next, an Aboriginal Elder sits with the youth in the outdoors, in the woods around a campfire, and tells the adolescents about the different practices of the traditional Puberty Rites Fast for both boys and girls. Next the scene changes, and the youth participating in the film enact a Safe Consensual Sex skit that sees one of the male youth asking several students—female and male, “Do you want to have safe consensual sex with me?” In turn, each youth answers all with “No,” but gives their reasons why, some by stating a different sexual orientation and explaining what that means. A short section also addresses masturbation. “Dr. Maddi” then gives a talk about Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), naming and explaining each one. The next, excellent section of the film has the participating youth drawing questions from a bucket, all posing some challenge around puberty that the questioner has posed, with the final query in each case, “Am I normal?” In each instance, the youth who has drawn that question answers, some with help from others including the host Sid Bobb. There is also a short section on Bullying, which could have been longer, but it does bring up that topic, which then might be addressed further. Finally, the youth talk about the Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers and how each teaching helps them as a young person. The teachings addressed are honesty, respect, love, wisdom, humility, courage (also addressed as self-confidence), and truth. Bonus features of the film include a 30-second clip entitled N’ginaajiw that focuses on healthy body image for females and respectful treatment of girls and women. As well, a four-minute short entitled Zach and Mindi enact the positive way in which the two youth negotiate their budding relationship.

This is an excellent production (other than for the confusing introduction, which seems to blame the residential schools experience for puberty and its struggles) that helps adolescents navigate the challenges of puberty. It is well done by mature but ‘cool’ young people, with the featured aspects moving along seamlessly and employing various teaching approaches that keep the viewer engaged. The disc insert is available at http://librarypdf.catie.ca/pdf/ATI-20000s/26387.pdf. There are also several portions of the film available on You Tube, as well as several websites that provide commentary. The use of this film in schools must be preceded with the approval and permission of school administration and of parents/guardians. It is advised that a previewing and question period evening(s) be available for parents/guardians so that they will have the opportunity to see and talk about the film prior to its classroom use. (upper MY, SY, Adult)


In this second excellent film sponsored by the Union of Ontario Indians, the focus is on assisting those addicted to drugs and helping to prevent more people from becoming addicted, as well as helping all of us to become more informed. Introductory information provides statistics of the numbers of Aboriginal people infected with HIV and AIDS at 80% of all cases in Canada.
and 12.8% of new infections, but with only 3% of the total population of the country being Aboriginal. Interviewees in the film include drug addicts, front line workers, those responsible for the various available programs, and medical personnel. The film is intended for all of these people, as well as educators and the general population who need to learn more about drug addiction. Some schools now are providing access to drug addictions counsellors for their students, for both prevention and intervention counselling.

With reference to those who are addicted, while information is given for those ready to quit the habit, the film focuses on harm reduction, and in so doing stresses helping the addict rather than judging them. The Ontario program dispenses kits to the addicts that will keep them safer and less likely to contract HIV through shared needles and/or unprotected sex. A worker shows all the items in the kit (e.g., needles, water, cookers, filters, alcohol swabs, tourniquet, male and female condoms).

According to Dr. Ralph Dell’Aquilla, “Addictions happen because the brain reward system has been hijacked. That’s why will power is not enough.” He talks of an inverted triangle of drug usage, where the first experimental stage involves the larger number of people who are motivated by curiosity to experience new feelings or moods; the second stage involves the taking of drugs in a social setting; the third stage involves some moving onto a pattern of taking drugs in response to specific situations; the fourth stage involves a fewer number who become more intense and frequent in their use; and the final stage being the compulsive stage with persistent and frequent use producing psychological and physiological dependence.

The film acquaints viewers with various healing approaches and programs, for example the combination of medication with behavioural therapies. As well, the Niigan Mosewalk (Walking Forward) Youth Program is introduced, with interviewees explaining how young people will be supported in leaving more negative, self-destructive lifestyles toward more positive ways of living. Youth experience a camp environment where they learn about their culture and about how to become a positive parent. With reference to harm reduction, one interviewee notes that, “First Nations communities are often crisis driven. They need to be practical and have visions for the long run. We need to anticipate the needs before they happen.”

While that is true, everyone also needs awareness of the challenges facing communities (For example, see the following article about the founders of Indian Posse: http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/the-ballad-of-daniel-wolfe/article1357474/?page=all)

This is an excellent production that all teachers need to view for applicability in their situation. Given its subject area, school administration and parents need to be aware of and provide permission for the film’s use. An initial evening(s) that allows parental viewing of and conversation around the film would be advised. It is crucial not to ignore the topic and this film. As the speakers in the production stress, it is important to make connections and to bring the conversation about drug use and its impact out in the open rather than to deny that these problems are occurring. (MY, SY, Adult)


The movie *Justice Denied*, which closely follows the book of the same name by Michael Harris, stars the accomplished Billy Merasty as Donald Marshall, Jr., the young Micmac (now spelled Mi’kmaq). To provide the setting, Harris’ book, exceptionally well-written and entirely engaging while also deeply upsetting, should be read first. The teenager Donald Marshall, Jr., or Junior as he was often called, was a scrappy kid. On May 28, 1971, he was with Sandy Seale (Steve Marshall) walking in a park in Sydney, Nova Scotia, thinking they might ‘roll’ someone for some money. They came upon an older man Roy Ebsary (Wayne Robson) with a younger man Jimmy MacNeil. When accosted by Junior and Sandy, Ebsary pulled a knife and viciously stabbed Sandy, who died soon afterwards in hospital. A strange sequence unfolded, under the guidance of the local Sydney Sargent of Detectives, later Chief of Police, John McIntyre (Thomas Peacocke). Even though Junior and Jimmy had witnessed the stabbing, and Ebsary’s daughter Donna (Sheva Carr) saw her father wash off the bloody knife when he returned home, and the stories of acquaintances in the park did not add up, Donald Marshall Jr. was charged with the murder. The book is very difficult to read, and the movie to watch, as the police created stories for the three most damning witnesses implicating Junior—Maynard Chant, John Pratico (Vincent Murray), and Patricia Harriss—and, with the crown lawyer as part of the team, relentlessly practiced those stories with them, all without the parents of these young teens being present. Many documents were never shared with Junior’s defence attorneys, including the fact that the ‘witnesses’ had changed their stories. Donald Marshall Jr. was found guilty and spent eleven years in prison even though over that time, many stories came forward about who the real killer was, including Donna Ebsary telling the police about her father. Eventually two new RCMP officers were assigned to the case—Jim Carroll (J. Winston Carroll) and Harry Wheaton (Peter MacNeill)—and they had the patience and the tenacity to get to the truth of the story. All former witnesses admitted that they had lied, and Ebsary’s knife that had killed Seale was found with fabric from Marshall’s jacket still attached. Unlike Marshall, Ebsary received a one year sentence for the crime.

While in jail, Donald Marshall had learned to be tough. He had to in order to survive in the maximum security Dorchester institution. That led, understandably, to reintegration challenges upon his release. It took a long time to get a settlement, with the first inquiry essentially blaming Marshall for his own fate, as he had not been a good witness for himself. It is true that he was not, as noted in the details provided by writer Michael Harris. While the police
and the crown attorney schooled their witnesses, it would seem that Junior’s original attorneys
did nothing to prepare him for the trial before the all-white jury. It took a long time, and a public
inquiry, before Donald Marshall, Jr. received a substantial settlement. For a copy of the Royal
Commission inquiry report see http://novascotia.ca/just/marshall_inquiry/. The first paragraph of
the inquiry report reads:

The criminal justice system failed Donald Marshall, Jr. at virtually every turn from his
arrest and wrongful conviction for murder in 1971 up to, and even beyond, his acquittal
by the Court of Appeal in 1983. The tragedy of the failure is compounded by evidence
that this miscarriage of justice could – and should – have been prevented, or at least
corrected quickly, if those involved in the system had carried out their duties in a
professional and/or competent manner. That they did not is due, in part at least, to the fact
that Donald Marshall, Jr. is a Native. (p. 4)

Sadly, Donald Marshall, Jr. died on August 6, 2009, after having spent much of his time after
being released from prison fighting for Aboriginal rights, including fishing and hunting rights
(See review of Is the Crown at war with us?). (SY, Adult)

With reference to the accompanying books, the most exhaustive treatment is provided by
Mike Harris in Justice Denied. At just over 400 pages, the book is the more lengthy read, but, as
previously noted, is exceptionally well researched and written (SY, Adult). Boer’s book
Wrongfully Convicted includes chapters on several innocent people in Canada who have been
convicted of crimes. As well as Donald Marshall Jr., the book includes chapters on David
Milgaard, Guy Paul Morin, Thomas Sophonow, Wilbert Coffin, and Steven Truscott. This
accessible book will provide the initial research into student projects on this subject (upper MY,
SY, Adult). Mannette’s edited book Elusive Justice includes essays from five authors who
provide an academic analysis not so much of the original case, although the details are provided,
as of the Inquiry and its results. For the academic researcher, these essays are an essential part of
efforts to understand the Marshall case and its effects. Authors include Alex Denny, James
youngblood ‘sakej’ henderson, Joy Mannette, M. E. Turpel/Aki-Kwe, and Bob Wall (Adult).
Swan’s 178-page book (small pages and widely spaced print) Real Justice is a recent publication,
and is written more as a summary for the layperson or for students. Having said that, there is a
reference to a sex threesome (p. 33), including Donald Marshall Jr. as a teen, which may
discourage the book’s use in schools. Otherwise, this book is the most accessible of those listed
dealing with just the Marshall case (upper MY, SY, Adult).

Coyes, Gregory (Director & Co-writer), Wheeler, Jordan (Co-writer), Doxtater, Michael
(Co-producer), Geddes, Carol (Co-producer), & Krepakevich, Jerry (Co-producer).
(47 running minutes)

This film follows the work of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) that
was created after the Oka crisis by then prime minister Brian Mulroney. For several years, the
members of the Royal Commission travelled to over 100 communities and listened to over 2000
representative speakers. The commissioners included co-chairs René Dussault and Georges
Erasmus, as well as Paul L. A. H. Chartrand, J. Peter Meekison, Viola Robinson, Mary Sillett, and Bertha Wilson. An original member, Allan Blakeney, resigned from the commission. For a concise report of the RCAP, delivered November 21, 1996, see 

The broad mandate of the Commission was translated into a large and complex research agenda. Consultations were held with Aboriginal groups on the development of the research plan. The integrated research plan, which was published in 1993, had 4 theme areas: governance; land and economy; social and cultural issues; and the North. In addition, these themes were addressed from 4 perspectives: historical, women, youth and urban perspectives. Two co-directors were engaged to manage the research program. In its public hearings process, the Commission visited Aboriginal communities across Canada and heard briefs from over 2000 people. More than 350 research studies were commissioned.

As the filming included many Aboriginal contributors, for a listing please see https://www.nfb.ca/film/no_turning_back. For a study of the work of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, this film is essential viewing, as it follows the commissioners’ work and travel, and includes footage of many of the contributions by First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people, as well as by the commissioners themselves. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

Coyes, Gregory (Director). (2002). How the fiddle flows [Documentary]. CA: Streaming Fiddles Media/National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (48 running minutes)

Interspersed with fiddle music, this documentary film recounts the history of the Métis and the importance of music to their culture, noting that freedom and music are the two greatest loves of the Métis. Narrator Tantoo Cardinal relates how the fiddle was introduced by the European fur traders and voyageurs who intermarried with the Aboriginal women. The children of these unions – the Métis – embraced the instrument and created new tunes that connected to their culture and the land. There is re-enactment, archival photos and documentation, and contributions from many interviewees and fiddle players, as well as paintings by Sherry Farrell Racette. Maria Campbell is a noted contributor, as well as Yves Dumont, Jean Morisset, and Ray St. Germain. The interviewees talk about the important contributions of early fiddlers like Andy De Jarlis and Mel Bedard, the latter who released the first album specifically stating that he was a Métis fiddler. Fiddlers include John Arcand, who hosts a fiddling gathering every year; Yves Lambert, who founded La Boutine Surante; James Chuchoo, master of the St. James Cree style of fiddling; Solomon Ballantyne, who shows how a fiddle would have been repaired using animal parts like horse hair and sinew; and a young fiddler, Mark Morriseau. This film is excellent viewing for those wishing foundational information about the Métis, their history, and their music. There are several good websites that review the film; however, the following website
provides good additional information, including details about each of the fiddle selections played in the film: http://www.reelgirlsmedia.com/printfiles/media/HowtheFiddleFlows (MY, SY, Adult)


The *Chief and Champions* series features twelve outstanding Aboriginal leaders, as community chiefs and/or in the realm of sports. While this particular episode features middle-distance Olympian Angela Chalmers, all of the episodes are as follows:

8) Darren Zack (fastball pitcher). For a description see https://indspire.ca/laureates/darren-zack/

The episodes ran over three seasons, from 2005 to 2007. Other episodes included Annie Frazier Henry and Greg Coyes as directors, all with the same producing collaborative companies.

The particular episode included here concentrates on Olympian Angela Chalmers, who became known as one of the top three female middle distance runners in the world. Although she ran in the 1988 Seoul Olympics, she did not place, as she was receiving little formal training at
the time. In 1990 she won both the 1,500 and 3000 metre at the Commonwealth Games. She won
the bronze medal in the 3000 metre race at the Olympic Games in Barcelona in 1992. Retiring in
1997, Angela Chalmers is inducted into the Sports Halls of Fame in both Manitoba and British
Columbia. At the time of the filming, Angela was living in Australia with her husband Simon
Doyle (a middle-distance runner, as well) and two children.

The film, hosted by Tom Jackson, includes interviews not only with Angela, but with
many members of her family, along with people from her running/athletic life. Angela was born
into the middle of a family of nine children. While her Mom came from Chan Kagha Otina
(Birdtail) Dakota Nation in southwestern Manitoba, her Dad was of Irish ancestry and was in the
military. Given his occupation, the family moved several times. Angela speaks of her closeness
with her family, and particularly to her father, who she lost when she was attending the
University of Northern Arizona on a sports scholarship. Although she was a long time dealing
with the depression that her father’s death precipitated, she eventually committed herself to
winning an Olympic medal for him. With reference to the interviewee contributions, family
members talk about how Angela was always competitive. Brothers Ed and Ken Chalmers, as
well as sister Marg Ducharme, recall amusing anecdotes about their shared experiences while
growing up. Mother Betty hilariously talks about trying to entice Angela into doing well with the
promised reward of Kentucky Fried Chicken. She said that Angela would repeat “Kentucky Fried
Chicken” over and over when she ran to sustain her rhythm. According to Betty, “Rhythm is
important in sports no matter what it is.” As Angela trained and competed, several others were
involved in Angela’s life, and are interviewed in the film: Wynn Gmisroski (former coach);
Rockford McKay (Race Director); and Georgette Monk (racing ‘colleague’).

The contributions from Angela herself in this film will be inspiring for everyone,
including youth. She talks of the importance of her family, and of her native heritage. Although
her Mom was orphaned at an early age, there were two aunts who assumed a parenting and
grand-parenting role in both Betty’s life and the lives of Betty’s children. They never
discriminated because Angela’s father was white. The children felt loved for who they were.
Angela contributes her thoughts, with humanity and humility: “As a person I have regrets, but as
an athlete I have none. I did it to the best of my ability. It was an honour to compete for my
country, myself, and my family.”

Teachers might use this and other films in the Chiefs and Champions series to initiate
research projects that will inspire youth with positive role models. Students might also write
about their own important role models, just as Angela Chalmers talks about her inspiring family
members, and how as young people, they too might serve as role models for others. (EY, MY,
SY, Adult)

Craig, Dustin (Co-writer, Co-producer, & Co-director), & Colt, Sarah (Co-writer,
Episode # 4 from We shall remain: America through Native eyes [Documentary]. US:
Native American Public Telecommunications for The American Experience, PBS
Broadcast. (77 running minutes)


The two documentary films by The American Experience explore the history of the Chiricahua Apache Geronimo with several years between the productions. The 1988 production involves more narration, with many photographs and interviews with many direct descendants of Chief Naiche (son of Cochise) and Geronimo: Elbys Hyar, Berle Kanseah, Ruby Darrow, Mildred Cleghorn, Allan Hauser, Melfred Yuzos Sr., Anita Lester, Josephine Lawhon, Narcissus Grayhorn, Kathleen Kanseah, and Evelyn Gaines. The more lengthy 2009 documentary is also narrated, includes photographs, and involves the contributions of even more interviewees, both from among the Chiricahua Apache descendants of Geronimo and his contemporaries and from numerous historians. As well, the 2009 film uses some animation for effective teaching of lessons to be communicated. Both films, particularly the 2009 film, provide an excellent picture of the history and culture of the Chiricahua Apache, one of four Apache tribes, the others being the Mescalero, Western Apache, and Jicarilla.

Apache land covered parts of what is now part of Mexico and the United States, and while they often raided for horses from other tribes, the Chiricahua were not considered warlike, although the Comanche, Navajo, and Ute, with bordering territories, were considered their traditional enemies. Their initial struggles were with the Mexicans, where the government offered bounties for Apache scalps: $100 for a man, $50 for a woman, and $25 for a child. In March of 1851, 400 Mexican soldiers attacked an undefended Apache camp when most of the men were away. Geronimo’s mother, wife, and three children were among those slaughtered. After that, essentially for the rest of his life, Geronimo was bent on revenge. While Geronimo and the Chiricahua initially did not dislike the Americans, that situation changed after a settlement between the warring Mexico and the United States gave much of Mexican Apache land to the United States. After that, the intrusion into Apache land by American miners and settlers intensified, and demands were made of the United States government for protection from the Apache when they resisted the intrusion into their lands. By 1871, with the Camp Grant massacre of over 100 Apache women and children by settlers, the pressure intensified to relocate the Apache onto reservations. In 1871 then President Ulysses S. Grant sent General George Crook to subdue the Apache, who finally, with their revered Chief Cochise, made an agreement and settled onto a reservation. After Cochise’s death, the United States, with the pressure from
settlers and miners, broke their treaty, and moved the Chiricahua north from their own land to San Carlos. Geronimo and some others escaped in 1877 but were captured and returned, escaping again in 1881. Crook was sent to track down the group, and did, but Geronimo, although agreeing to return to a new reservation at Turkey Creek in 1884, became restless and once again escaped, in May of 1885. Again Crook tracked Geronimo’s group and on March 25, 1886, the two men met, and Geronimo agreed to return. He changed his mind and escaped the next day, whereupon Crook was relieved of his duties, to be replaced by the more rigid General Miles, who was sent with one-quarter of the United States army—5000 men—to hunt down 39 Apache. Only when Miles agreed to reemploy the Apache scouts in the search was Geronimo and his group found. They agreed to surrender, accepting the terms agreed to with General Crook. Those terms were almost immediately broken by the United States government, and the remaining Chiricahua men, women, and children spent the next 27 years as prisoners of war. The children were forced into residential schools. While Geronimo was taken on several expeditions with several leaders of the United States, and became somewhat of an icon, in his final words in 1909, he spoke of his regret that he had ever surrendered.

While the third listing, the movie (rather than the documentaries), contains some historical inaccuracies, it was made during an era that finally had started to depict a more understanding and empathetic approach to the desecration of North American indigenous peoples and the stealing of their lands, and thus merits a considered viewing. Wes Studi is an intense actor, and as such, plays a convincing Geronimo. The United States army is tasked with tracking down Geronimo and his band of Chiracahua Apache, capturing him, and assuring that he and his followers are sent to reservations. Heading that mission is General George Crook (Gene Hackman), with Lieutenant Charles B. Gatewood (Jason Patric), assisted by 2nd Lieutenant Britton Davis (the narrator of the film, also writer of a 1929 book entitled The Truth about Geronimo; played in the movie by Matt Damon), and Chief of Scouts Al Sieber (Robert Duvall). All of these men, while tasked with subduing the Apache and the leader Geronimo, also admire them for their courage and tenacity. When the first surrender by Geronimo is betrayed by some of the army personnel, and the Dreamer (Pato Hoffman) is killed, Geronimo and his followers fight back, killing many of the army attackers (This segment is not considered historically accurate). They then escape and return to the mountains. The incident prompts Washington to relieve General Crook from his duties and to assign General Nelson A. Miles (Kevin Tighe) who then relieves all of the Apache scouts of their roles. When weeks go by with no sign of Geronimo and his band, General Miles reluctantly brings Gatewood back into the picture, promising him a large troop of soldiers. Gatewood wants only Davis, Sieber, and the Apache scout Chato (Steve Reevis). They track down Geronimo, but not before Sieber is killed by bounty hunters. Geronimo surrenders, is promised release after a short time of incarceration, and Gatewood is demoted to another smaller isolated post. All of the Apache scouts are stripped of their enlistment in the army, and sent along with Geronimo and his band to a jail in Florida. Again breaking their promises to the Apache leader, Geronimo is not released for 27 years. The movie won an Academy Award for Best Sound. Twenty-three Native Americans were cast in the movie.
The books assist in understanding the complexity of the history of the Chiricahua Apache, and Geronimo’s role (he surrendered several times), along with Chiefs such as Cochise and his son Naiche. Kent’s 32-page adolescent book provides a good overview, along with some photographs, although it does note a murder committed by Geronimo’s group, and the fear he engendered, even though it was Apache land that was being invaded. Having said that, it is to be noted that not all Chiricahua people agreed with Geronimo’s vengeful ways, with many revering Cochise more highly. Geronimo never became a chief. Kjelgaard’s adolescent novel is an older publication, and may not be acceptable by today’s standards; however, it does contain what would have been considered a remarkably understanding account of the reasons for Geronimo’s resistance. The book is essentially a fictionalized, historical biography of Geronimo, but it does also include the roles of his major contemporaries and elder chiefs, for example Mangus Coloradas, Victorio, and Cochise and his son Naiche, as well as the roles of some within the United States army, for example, General Crook, General Miles, and Lieutenant Charles B. Gatewood. What is glossed over is that Geronimo and many of his people were essentially held as prisoners of war from 1886 to 1909. The following quote could be used to initiate class dialogue; the quote is attributed to Geronimo, as he talks of how the United States purchased Apache land from Mexico:

“So we fight the white men whom we would not hurt at all, if they would just stay home. And they call us evil! Suppose we went to the people of the north, the Canadians, and paid money for the lands of the Americans. Then suppose we told the Americans that they must live by Apache laws or be punished. Would they not resist?” (p. 103)

The poster by Native Reflections is a good ‘at-a-glance’ reference for Geronimo, whose name was actually Goyathlay. Although Geronimo did fight to protect Apache lands, he also was involved for many years in revenge attacks on the Mexicans for having killed his mother, wife, and three children. He turned from being considered a brutal murderous man during the time of those attacks to somewhat of a folk hero in his older years; having said that, however, after his final capture he was never allowed to return to his homeland.

Utley’s biography of Geronimo is a comprehensive, adult read, and includes a map and several photographs. It provides an excellent background of Geronimo’s mentors (e.g., Mangas Coloradas; Cochise, son-in-law of Mangus Coloradas), and his Apache contemporaries (e.g., Victorio; Naiche, Cochise’s son), and those within the U.S. Army and some who served as Indian agents. Utley works to provide an honest portrayal of Geronimo’s strengths and weaknesses. As well, he reports atrocities of the U.S. Army, including their murder of the elderly Mangus Coloradas. This book is an excellent go-to reference for students of Geronimo as it is very detailed.

See the following website for a discussion of how Geronimo has been portrayed in film:
http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2013/07/04/geronimo-hollywoods-favorite-native-over-100-years-150287

Cuthand, Doug (Director), & Kerpakevich, Jerry (Producer). (2001). Donna’s story [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (51 running minutes)
This film tells the story of 34-year old Donna Gamble, a former sex-trade worker who not only left the streets but has worked to become a strong voice for other women who are struggling with the addictions and poverty that often put them on the street in the first place. Because Donna was still struggling during the documentary, going into relapse with her addictions, the use of the film should be approached with mature audiences, perhaps with a focus on those who are also struggling to stay clean. What supports need to be available to help Donna and others like her? For Donna, much of her support came from her family. Largely raised in foster homes, she had reconnected with her mother Sylvia, who had been abused by her own father and sold to his friends for alcohol. She had also become a prostitute, forced onto the streets prior to her teens, often leaving Donna to look after the younger children. For years, Donna resented her mother’s treatment but then she came to understand that her mother had little choice. Donna also had children, with four of the six having been in foster care as well. Her youngest, a boy, has been affected by his mother’s drug use during her pregnancy. Donna has reunited with two of her older daughters, and has two grandchildren, with a third grandchild coming during the filming of the story. The film documents how Donna also begins to work as a resource person for other young people such as herself, particularly with street youth in the Prince Albert Outreach Youth project. She marries, with the wedding being shown as part of the film, but the relationship quickly disintegrates. In the film Donna relapses, falling back into old ways, and then shaves her head as a reminder to take ownership of herself, of her anger and her grieving. She says, in the final part of the film, that she is in the storm now, but hopes to come to calmer days. In that the film ends with Donna in relapse, students might wish to find out if she did find the good Red Road again. For some news of Donna, see http://www.ckom.com/story/former-sex-worker-says-lifting-ban-brothels-not-right-step/49601 (SY, Adult)

Debonne, Yann (Producer; Segment producers: Carreira, Laurie; Coughlin, Brian; Rees, Carol; & Toller, Ann), Rosser, Bill (Director of Photography), Haffner, Craig (Co-exec. producer), Lusitana, Donna E. (Co-exec. producer), & Perkins, Jack (Host). (1995). Native American Legends: Sitting Bull, Chief of the Lakota Nation; Geronimo; Crazy Horse, The last warrior; and Who killed Crazy Horse? [Documentary]. US: Graystone Communications for A & E Network. (200 running minutes)

This older documentary, while poorly hosted by Jack Perkins (who may not have written the script), is useful if doing a research study of any of the featured First Nation leaders. Each of the episodes includes some re-enactment, but mostly interviews, archival photos, and narration. While most of the narration and interviewed historians are non-Aboriginal (e.g., Dee Brown, Robert M. Utley), each has established reputations as scholars with a penchant for the truth. Fortunately, some of the interviewees are also Native Americans, often direct descendants of the featured Native American leaders.

The first episode, Sitting Bull, Chief of the Lakota Nation, recounts not only the life of Sitting Bull and his accomplishments, but informs the viewer about the culture of the Sioux
people, their warrior and hunting society, and their uncompromising love of freedom. Adopting the horse meant that their culture changed, and their territories expanded. With encroachment from the United States and the rebuttal from Red Cloud, the United States took notice and signed the Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1868 with some of the Sioux tribes, which granted a large Sioux reservation, including all of the Black Hills. The United States constantly violated the treaty, including invading the Black Hills in the pursuit of gold. After the Battle of the Little Big Horn, where Custer was defeated and he and his men killed, the United States took revenge, and many of the Sioux, including Crazy Horse, surrendered. Sitting Bull went to Canada, but returned in four years, surrendering and settling on the Standing Rock agency. From there he travelled with Buffalo Bill Cody’s Wild West Show, but returned to his home on the reservation. There, particularly during 1890, the people adopted the Ghost Dance, believing that it would bring back their dead relatives and the animals that had been destroyed, as well as ridding their lands of the white invaders. Threatened by the cultural activities, Agent McLaughlin at Standing Rock ordered Sitting Bull arrested, sending Sioux police to do the job. Sitting Bull was killed on December 16, 1890. Shortly afterwards, at Wounded Knee on December 24, 1890, the 7th Calvary massacred over 300 people, mostly women, children, and the elderly, some of whom were from Sitting Bull’s band but who had fled to join Big Foot’s band. The film’s host ends the episode with a highly controversial claim about Sitting Bull’s death being also the death knell for Native American cultures. While that final contribution tarnishes the episode in its entirety, if it can be eliminated from the viewing, the film can still be used to advantage. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

The second episode, Geronimo, addresses the role of the great Apache warrior. With the help of interviews and archival footage, the film traces the resistance of Geronimo to the loss of his freedom and the enforced settlement on reservations. Possessed of great power to prophesy, as well as bravery, tenacity, and knowledge of his homeland, the warrior Geronimo repeatedly deluded capture, even when 5000 soldiers of the United States army was sent to pursue his 36 (noted as 39 in other sources) men. Even though he had surrendered a few times, Geronimo kept leaving the reservations to return to his territory. It was only with the use of his own people as scouts that Geronimo was brought in for a final surrender. The issue was that the United States wanted Apache land for settlement. With repeated encroachment from the United States Geronimo continued his attacks. The loss of his mother, wife, and children to a massacre raid from the Mexicans had served to embitter Geronimo, and he was determined to exact revenge on both sides of the border, particularly once the United States became more determined to take Apache lands. While he agreed to surrender to General George Crook in March, 1886, he never showed up on the appointed day. Crook subsequently asked to be relieved of his command and was replaced by General Nelson Miles who had little respect for Geronimo, or for honesty. Rather than spending two years in Florida as prisoners of war close to his family as promised during the September 1886 surrender, Geronimo was kept a prisoner of war for the rest of his life, although he was finally allowed to join his family, and the prisoners were relocated to Fort Sill in Oklahoma, a much better climate. The United States army sent many more men to Florida as prisoners of war than those fighting with Geronimo at the last, even including the Apache
scouts of the United States army that had helped to capture Geronimo. It is noted that some of his own people thought that Geronimo’s continued resistance led to all Apaches being punished by the United States. In his later years Geronimo became somewhat of a celebrity, at least in the white world, even riding in President Theodore Roosevelt’s inaugural parade. However, he was never allowed to return home, and died on February 17, 1909. Once again, the host’s commentary both at the beginning and the end of the film is off-putting and should not be included in a viewing of the film lest it taint the entire learning experience. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

The third episode, *Crazy Horse, The Last Warrior*, somewhat repeats the events of the first episode, but with an emphasis on Crazy Horse this time rather than Sitting Bull. Interestingly, this episode provides a more balanced approach, with the host, the narrator, and all interviewees clearly identifying the United States as the aggressor in the great Sioux war. Even after the surrender of some other Sioux leaders (but not Sitting Bull), Crazy Horse’s continued insistence on freedom of movement to live on the land was seen as an affront to American expansion. The film provides a biography of Crazy Horse, noting how he stood out as a leader from an early age. His vision quest as a young man outlined and guided his life. Born around 1840, Crazy Horse’s participation in the resistance to white expansion began early, in 1854 when Lieutenant Gratton of the U.S. army initiated an attack over a cow that had been stolen from a farmer near Fort Laramie. His attack was answered and 40 of his men were killed. Hostilities were interrupted during the extent of the American Civil War, but resumed with a major rout of Captain Fetterman in the summer of 1866. In 1868, with the Treaty of Fort Laramie, Red Cloud became an ‘agency Indian’ and worked towards accommodation, unlike Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse. As he gained stature and respect, Crazy Horse was given the honour of being a shirt-wearer by his people. Even though he later lost that privilege when he lured his beloved, Black Buffalo Woman, away from her husband No Water, he was still a recognized leader, especially during the Battle of Greasy Grass, or The Little Big Horn, when the attack from the U.S. army led by Custer led to the annihilation of Custer and his soldiers. That battle led to swift retaliation by the United States army, and because his people were suffering, Crazy Horse went into Fort Robinson. Various stories surround his death there on September 5, 1877. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

The fourth and final episode, entitled *Who killed Crazy Horse?* explores the events leading up to Crazy Horse’s death. As well as providing some background to the great Sioux resistance—already articulated in previous entries here—this episode explores who might have wanted to see Crazy Horse dead. While the army certainly had its motives—and Crazy Horse was killed with a soldier’s bayonet—there is speculation that many of his own people, some who came to get him to take him to the guardhouse, also had their motives, as many were jealous of the attention that Crazy Horse was receiving. Apparently, as one of the first chiefs to go onto the reservation (then named after him), Red Cloud was sensitive that Crazy Horse thought he, Red Cloud, had sold out, and because his people were suffering, Crazy Horse went into Fort Robinson. Various stories surround his death there on September 5, 1877. (upper MY, SY, Adult)
even his old friend Little Bad Man who held him as they were walking to the guardhouse. The
order to escort Crazy Horse to the guardhouse came in response to a report that Crazy Horse had
plans to attack General George Crook when they were to meet. Crazy Horse heard of the
suspicions when he was away to Spotted Tail Agency and was assured that he had to return to set
the record straight. While there are several versions of what happened at the guard house, in this
film’s version of events, it is said that Crazy Horse became suspicious, pulled out a knife, and
tried to escape by thrashing his way out of the building, whereupon he was bayonetted by one the
guards. Students might research other versions of events. Crazy Horse died on September 5,
1877. A controversial monument is being constructed in the Black Hills, carved out of a
mountain to commemorate the great leader for whom no known likeness exists. (upper MY, SY,
Adult)

Deer, Tracey (Director & Writer), Ludwick, Linda (Co-producer), Fon, Christina
[Documentary]. CA: Rezolution Pictures/National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (78
running minutes)

This controversial film looks at the aspect of blood quantum with reference to band
membership in the First Nation community of Kahnawake, in Quebec. Four women from the
community, including the filmmaker Tracey Deer, recount their challenges with membership in
their community for themselves and/or for their children. Starting in the 1980s First Nations
bands could control their own membership. In 2004 Kahnawake passed their own membership
laws that worked toward controlling membership based on the blood quantum of grandparents.
The aim was to keep the community as full-blood Mohawk. Tracey Deer met and married a
white man, and the film shows the birth of their child, who will not be granted membership in the
community. Similarly Olympic water polo athlete Waneek Horn-Miller also married a white
man, and their children will also thus be denied band membership. Sandra Schurman lives in the
community, and has all her life, but because her father was white, she has been unsuccessful in
attaining band membership. Lauren Jiles is a young person whose Kahnawake mother married an
African American. Interestingly, her process of applying for band membership is tracked in the
film, and she is successful, but her letter notes that her membership will be reviewed in another
two years. Given her success, then, it is apparent that the membership granting process is not
consistent, as some applicants with one non-community, non-Aboriginal parent are receiving
membership, and some are not. This documentary will promote a lot of dialogue. Note that film
shows the birth of a baby; thus, plans for the use of the film will be necessary for school
students, including permission from the school and parents. This film might be accompanied by
Lawrence Hill’s book Blood: The Stuff of Life. (SY, Adult)

Defalco, Martin (Co-director), Dunn, Willie (Co-director), & Wilson, David (Writer).
(1972). The other side of the ledger: An Indian view of the Hudson’s Bay Company
[Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (42 running minutes)
While now over 40 years old, this film will still educate viewers about the effects of the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) on Canada’s First Peoples—the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. The film was prompted by the 300th anniversary of the Hudson’s Bay Company in 1970, celebrations that were complete with many festivities and a visit by Queen Elizabeth. The documentary is narrated by George Manuel, who was president of the National Indian Brotherhood at the time, and includes archival footage of interviews and events with many other First Nations and Métis leaders from the time, including Howard Adams.

In 1670, then King of England Charles II granted the Hudson’s Bay Company a huge territory for a trade monopoly in what is now much of northern and central Canada, which then was called Rupert’s land. There was no consultation with the First Peoples of the area, just as there was none in 1869 when Rupert’s Land was returned to British control, who then gave it to Canada, while also compensating the HBC in the amount of 300,000 pounds.

The fur trade completely changed the way of life for Canada’s First Peoples. They began to depend on European trade goods, particularly the rifle. With the rifle and steel traps, the relationship of First Peoples to the animals changed. No longer did they harvest just what they needed. They now began to over-harvest as they came to rely on the foods and other goods supplied by the European traders. That led them to encroach on the traditional lands of other neighbouring First Peoples and friction became more common. Because the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) had a monopoly of the trade in the area, the First Peoples then became dependent on the HBC. While credit was usually granted to the Aboriginal trader, they were also seldom out of debt with the company, and thus were bound to the HBC as a sort of indentured servant, often for many years. In the meantime, the area was being emptied of fur-bearing animals. When the European taste in furs declined, the HBC changed their business plan to more of a cash purchase focus, rather than trade. For the most part then, given that their furs were often almost worthless, many First Peoples communities struggled to even feed and clothe themselves.

The contributions of the First Peoples interviewees in the film help the viewer to realize that the new ways of living, as introduced and controlled by the HBC and supported by successive governments in Britain and then also in Canada, decimated the cultures and ways of life of Canada’s First Peoples. Their lands, their culture, and their languages all came under attack. It is no wonder, then, that the 300th anniversary of the HBC would not be met with celebration among Canada’s First Peoples. (MY, SY, Adult)

Defalco, Martin (Director & Co-writer), Jones, David (Co-writer), & Pearson, George (Producer & Narrator). (1975). *Cold journey* [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (75 running minutes)

While this film is dated now, it still provides an excellent look at the seriousness of the residential schools through the experience of one Aboriginal teenager, Buckley (Buckley Petawabano). Buckley is searching for his identity, but at the end there is no one who really helps him. While he meets an older man, played by Johnny Yesno, and Johnny’s uncle, played by Chief Dan George, Buckley still cannot get over the feeling that he is lost, neither an Indian
because he no longer knows the Aboriginal ways or his Cree language, or a white man as he is rejected in their world, both at school and by his host home. Even his father and the family reject him, leaving him on the river bank when they go to fish. Having learned that the rivers and lakes are now polluted with mercury, Buckley’s father tells him there is no future there, and to go back to school and learn to be a white man. However, Buckley does not fit into that world either. Finally, he takes a skidoo for a joyride, and goes to Johnny’s trapping cabin. There he learns to trap, but he also shoots and wounds a wolf and is afraid to follow it into the bush to finish it off for fear that he will get lost. Johnny angrily takes the skidoo to find the wolf, leaving Buckley to conclude that he has failed the final test. When Buckley and Johnny are discovered with the stolen skidoo and taken to jail, the next morning Johnny tells Buckley just to take off so that he will not have to go to reform school. Buckley runs, but there is really nowhere to go, and he freezes to death by the railway tracks.

This film will generate a lot of dialogue. Everyone has failed Buckley. Of particular interest is the location and time of this film. It was filmed mostly in The Pas, Manitoba, and included actual people from the Guy Hill Residential School, Margaret Barbour Collegiate, the town of The Pas, and Piapot First Nation. The year of the film, 1975, is four years after the murder of Helen Betty Osborne near The Pas by four young white men. Even though the murderers were widely known in The Pas shortly after the crime in 1971, at the time of this 1975 film, and for another several years, the townspeople closed ranks around the young men, and the identity of Osborne’s murderers was covered up (See entry on The Conspiracy of Silence). It is astounding that at the same time as that cover-up, the residents of The Pas could participate in the making of a film that communicates so many of the underlying issues around the residential schools, as well as the racist treatment of Aboriginal people in the schools and in the broader community.

The film is well narrated. As well, three songs composed and sung by Willie Dunn add depth and emotion to the film. (MY, SY, Adult)


The movie, set in 1922, stars David Gulpilil as The Tracker, whose job it is to lead the three police—The Fanatic (Gary Sweet), The Veteran (Grant Page), and The Follower (Damon Gameau)—to The Fugitive (Noel Wilton), who has been accused of killing a white woman. The relationships develop and the characters reveal themselves as the group progresses further into the outback—the film is shot in Arkoroola Sanctuary, in Southern Australia’s Flinders Ranges. This movie explores racism and goodness in a way that deeply affects the viewer emotionally, with David Gulpilil’s commanding performance providing the moral compass for the story. The signature song for the film All Men Choose the Path They Walk was written by De Reer, with music by Graham Tardiff, and hauntingly performed by Aboriginal singer Archie Roach.

This movie, with its deep and complicated development of characters, with The Follower increasingly struggling with the racism that clearly has demarcated the ways the Aboriginal people are treated by The Fanatic, will provide an excellent foundation for classroom dialogue of
racism. The scenes of cruelty toward Aboriginal people and of the revenge extracted on The Fanatic make this a film for mature audiences who have been prepared in advance. Teachers are advised to request permission for the viewing from school administration and parents. As well, some initial instruction will help students understand the Australian context from that time frame. Following the viewing of the movie, ample time for classroom dialogue, accompanied by journaling, will allow students to explore their thoughts and feelings. (SY, Adult)


The first film ever shot entirely in an Australian Aboriginal language (Yolngu Matha), this film is wonderfully narrated in English by David Gulpilil. The movie recounts Minygululu’s (Peter Minygululu) story to his younger brother Dayindi (Jaime Gulpilil), a story intended to teach his younger brother not to pine after his older brother’s young wife. As the story is told, the scenes go from black and white (the contemporary story) to colour (flashbacks to the story being told by Minygululu). Both stories take place prior to European contact. In the ‘mirror’ story to the younger brother, there is also an older brother (Ridjimiraril, played by Crusoe Kurddal) and a younger brother (Yeeralparil, also played by Jamie Gulpilil), with the younger brother pining after his older brother’s younger third wife. The older brother accidentally kills a man from another tribe, and according to tribal law, that tribe can then kill him or the other man chosen as his partner. Both brothers stand in ready and jump to dodge the spears, but finally Ridjimiraril is hit. He dies, and the younger brother, as is the custom, now becomes the husband of his brother’s wives, but all three of them, even the two much older ones, and not just the younger wife for whom he had pined. The younger brother is therefore taught that you should be careful what you wish for. The contemporary story plays out while the men are out hunting geese and goose eggs. It takes a long time to tell, and the younger brother is impatient; thus, there is also a lesson toward patience both with reference to the story and the younger man’s wish for a wife. Because of the nudity, the film is recommended for adult students; many adolescents will not have the maturity to get past the nudity and embrace the story. (Adult)

Dennis, Brian (Producer); Jewison, Norman (Co-exec. producer), & McDonald, Bruce (Co-exec. producer). (1996-1998). *The Rez* [Television series: Complete two seasons]. CA: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). (Each episode approx. 23 running minutes)


This series was based on the short stories in W. P. Kinsella’s collection *Dance Me Outside*. The same-titled movie, *Dance Me Outside*, would be an excellent preview or sequel to viewing some of the series episodes. In the television series, many of the actors are the same, with the primary change in that Frank Fencepost is played by Darrell Dennis, rather than by Adam Beach. Otherwise, Silas Crow is still played by Ryan Black; Sadie Maracle by Jennifer Podemski; Lucy Pegamegaaba by Tamara Podemski; Joseph Crow (Silas’s special needs brother) by Herbie Barnes; Illiana Crow by Lisa LaCroix; Illiana’s, Silas’, and Herbie’s Mom Simone by
Shirley Cheechoo; Illiana’s husband Bob by Kevin Hicks; and Mad Etta by Monique Mojica and later by Elaine Miles, with the first series also starring Patricia Collins as Eleanor Nanibush. Many of the episodes are written by Jordon Wheeler, with some also written by Peter Mitchell. Several of the episodes would be excellent to generate dialogue among upper middle years and senior students, as well as among educators and parents.

The first season (Disc 1) includes six episodes. The first, Dressed like a Fish (directed by Milan Cheylov), involves the marina owner dying and his estranged widow Eleanor coming to take over the marina, as well as Frank being given a mock funeral. In the second episode, Golf and Politics (directed by Gil Cardinal), Sadie discovers that the marina is partly on reserve land, and moves to take over part of that marina, demanding that her boyfriend Silas and Frank stop working for Eleanor. In the third episode, A Little Revealing (directed by Milan Cheylov), Frank is rooked into preforming as a stripper (not full nudity) for a fundraiser after Silas falls and hits his head. In the fourth episode, The Longhouse (directed by Milan Cheylov), Lucy is locked into a little shed by boyfriend Frank to try to get her to change her mind about leaving to go to the city. In the fifth episode, The Lark (directed by John McEcuyer), Joseph is scooped by Social Services and taken to a group home; Mad Etta helps to get him back. Finally, in the sixth episode, Dirty Girls. Kill! Kill! (directed by Milan Cheylov), Frank’s plan for a fund raiser goes awry; he is planning to have stripper girls wrestle in a kid’s pool filled with tapioca pudding. Joseph’s role in this episode is beautifully funny. All the actors in the series are good, but Ryan Black is especially engaging in his role as Silas.

The second season, first part (Disc 2), also includes six episodes. In the first, Strange Bedfellows (directed by Graeme Lynch), Chief Tom (Gary Farmer) has competition for the Chief’s election. George Twoshoes (Raoul Treyillo) is back after many years away from the community. He charms Sadie into joining his team, but he pulls out of the election right before it takes place, due to an ‘event’ staged by Tom’s team. Embarrassed at the event, Sadie asks to return to Tom’s team and he welcomes her. When Lucy returns to the community, Frank hopes that their romance with be rekindled, but that is not Lucy’s plan. In the second episode, They Call her Tanya (directed by Graeme Lynch), the racy looking young single Mom Tanya (Kari Matchett) comes to the community, and confronts Eleanor that she is that daughter that she gave up at birth. In the third episode, Poster Girl (directed by E. Jane Thompson), a jeans company comes to the community looking for an Aboriginal girl to feature in their advertisements. Chuck/Charlie (Adam Beach; Chief Tom’s son) is working with the jeans company, hoping to make some money. The young people struggle with the idea of using their Aboriginal faces to sell jeans, but Lucy is happy that she is being supported for the role by Charlie. However, the jeans company decides to go with Sadie instead. To save Lucy from losing face, Sadie insists on double the pay and on Lucy also being included. In the fourth episode, Like Father Like Son (directed by P. W. Peacocke), Silas’ long-lost father Ron (Dennis LaCroix) returns to community causing turmoil in everyone’s lives. Like many other episodes, this one could be used to generate deeper dialogue with students. In the fifth episode, Granted (directed by P. W. Peacocke), the community’s young people vie for a youth grant and become pitted against each other. Frankie wins, but the results are overturned. In the final, sixth episode, Lust (directed by John L’Ecuyer),
crucial issues of emerging sexuality are addressed with Joseph (Herbie Barnes), Silas’ special needs brother. He is attracted to a young teenager who has come to interview Silas for a school project, but who actually has a crush on Silas. The complex issues will serve to springboard dialogue among educators on how to protect both their special needs youth and those with whom those youth interrelate. When Silas tells Joseph that someday he will have a girlfriend, Joseph says, “No, I won’t. Because I am mental.” This comment prompts us to consider how to address the realization of many special needs youth that they are not ‘normal’ and will never have a ‘normal life.’

The second season, second part (Disc 3), includes seven episodes. The first, Windigo (directed by Gary Harvey), addresses fear and how to confront it. The Windigo takes advantage of fear, but cannot stand up to those who address their fears and conquer them to walk in a good way. The second episode, No Way to Treat a Lady (directed by Graeme Lynch), follows Silas’ Mom and Eleanor as they go to town. When Eleanor’s hot date doesn’t show up, she decides to cruise the bars. Silas’ Mom goes to find her, and is able to rescue both of them from being sexually assaulted. In the meantime, Silas throws a party, but they try to get everything cleaned up before his Mom gets home. That doesn’t quite work out, as she discovers Charlie (Adam Beach) and Tanya (Kari Matchett) in her bed. In the third episode, Between a Rock and a Hard Place (directed by Graeme Lynch), because of home and/or community issues, Silas, Frank, and Charlie begin work for a racist construction manager. Charlie is particularly targeted. When the manager asks one of them to plant explosives, for which none have any training, Frankie volunteers, with unusual results. In the fourth episode, Des Deutsche Indianer (directed by Gil Cardinal), Silas and Frank think they will make some quick money by guiding a German man, and his daughter and her husband, on a two-day traditional trip. However, the German man is familiar with many Aboriginal traditions and Silas and Frank’s tricks are uncovered very quickly. Only the intervention of Mad Etta (Elaine Miles) saves the day. In the fifth episode, Too Many Chiefs, a confrontation between Chief Tom and Sadie leads to Chief Tom declaring Sadie Interim Chief, and he leaves for a fishing trip. Sadie tries to do everything right, but everything seems to go wrong. She learns that the chief’s role is much more complex than she had realized. Her relationship with Silas suffers. Charlie and Tanya are also struggling with their relationship; some of their issues result from the pressure on an interracial relationship in a small reserve community. The sixth and seventh episodes, No Reservations, Part I and Part II, see Sadie breaking up with Silas just before she heads into Toronto for a youth forum. There she meets a young man with whom she starts to keep company. Lucy had already left for Toronto some time before. Silas ends up getting accepted for a writing workshop at the last minute, and he and Frank also travel to Toronto. He surprises Sadie at her residence in bed with her new boyfriend (brief upper body nudity) and is devastated. Frank tries to find Lucy, as does Sadie, and he thinks he sees her working the streets. In the second episode, Frank continues to seek Lucy, and finally finds her and tries to rescue her, only to discover that she was actually shooting a scene in a movie in which she plays a prostitute. Lucy is thrilled that Frank would care enough to try to rescue her, even if he was mistaken about what was happening. Silas is able to win Sadie back,
as well as succeeding in his writing workshop. Sadie is chosen as a youth delegate to go to Ottawa, but it is clear that she will return to the community and to Silas. (SY, Adult)


This excellent, award winning documentary (French with English subtitles) is available for viewing in its entirety from the website of the National Film Board (See https://www.nfb.ca/film/invisible_nation). The film documents the story of the Algonquin people, who, while once occupying vast areas of what is now central and northern Quebec, found themselves constantly relocated and their ancestral lands—as well as those lands where they were relocated—both enforcedly reduced in size and stripped of their natural resources, often with the encouragement and collaboration of the Catholic Church. That plunder has left the remaining Algonquin communities—except for the Kitigan Zibi near the town of Maniwaki (which is on Algonquin territory)—in a precarious position for securing even their most basic needs.

The filmmakers trace the details of removal of the Algonquin people to what is now central southwestern Quebec and central southeastern Ontario. Maps and archival photos support the historical content. While the Royal Proclamation of 1763 did require the British, and then Canada, to negotiate treaties with the First Peoples, that process was not followed in Quebec. According to the filmmakers, “By 1800, the white man no longer needed the Indians, just their land. They were becoming a burden.” The plan was to take the Algonquin from their vast territories in central and north Quebec and to concentrate them on reserves, a plan that was carried out in the mid-1800s. The filmmakers note that, at the time, “The people probably did not know that they lived in a new country called Canada, and that their territory belonged to the province of Quebec, and that they themselves belonged to the federal government. They probably did not know what rights were, let alone that they had none.” It was not until the mid-20th Century that First Peoples could even obtain legal counsel, or could vote. A map shows the location of the reserve communities where the people were relocated and where some live as squatters even at the time of the filming of this documentary in 2007. The documentary follows host Richard Desjardins as he travels to each of the communities and interviews a total of 35 people (all listed on the NFB website). To assist the viewer, the film includes the following chapters (all titled within the film itself): 1) Anishinabe Territory; 2) The Period of Contact; 3) The Two 1853 Reserves; 4) Timiskaming: The Dismembering; 5) Your Cheating Heart: Winneway; 6) The Last Nomads: Kitcisakik; 7) Treaty #9: Abitibinni; 8) The Invasion; 9) Taking the Children; 10) The Scars; 11) Young People from Lac Simon; 12) Specific Claims: Kitigan Zibi; and 13) Rapid Lake: The Third Power.

While some may think that widespread relocation of First Peoples was more evident as an American policy, this powerful film brings home the extent to which a similar Canadian practice
devastated the Algonquin people. While both non-Aboriginal, Desjardins and Monderie are environmental activists, a passion that drives their affinity with First Peoples’ enforced removal from their territories and the degradation of their lands. The two filmmakers (also folk singers) have also created the 1999 *Forest Alert* (http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0193912/combined) and 2011 *The Hole Story* (https://www.nfb.ca/film/hole_story). As well as learning about the Algonquin people and providing the initiative for many activities, this film can also spawn many projects about environmental degradation and how that is affecting First Peoples’ ways of life (See also *Footprints in the Delta* and *Land of Oil and Water*, both reviewed in this document). The film is controversial for many reasons, and needs to be used with full knowledge of one’s own contextual situation, and of school administration. The film encourages one’s participation as an activist, and thus can inspire students’ active involvement in important issues in their communities, provinces, country, and the world. If one believes that the avoidance of controversy through encouraging a more passive citizenry is the purpose of education, then this is not the film to watch. (upper MY, SY, Adult)


This short film involves a re-enactment of the lives of the voyageurs, rough and hardy men who paddled the large fur trading canoes deep into the interior to trade for furs with the Canada’s Aboriginal peoples. The film depicts the difficult water travel and the many portages, along with the evening’s fiddling and dancing. The film is accompanied by an all-male chorus that is rich and full, and which stands in the place of the singing of the voyageurs themselves as they paddled the rivers. One scene does depict what would seem to be a foolhardy decision to run dangerous rapids, complete with the canoe full of its provisions. Given the crucial importance of the voyageurs’ supplies and of the canoe itself, the viewer wonders if they would have taken such risks at the time. The film also re-enacts the evening drinking that occurred, which may limit the use of the film for younger audiences. (MY, SY, Adult)


The film explores the manner in which Aboriginal people have been portrayed in movies. Excerpts from older (e.g., John Wayne films) and from more contemporary (e.g., Atanarjuant) movies are presented, showing the evolution to Aboriginal filmmakers who employ Aboriginal actors within their movies. The past use of Italian and Jewish actors to portray Aboriginal people is particularly explored, highlighting the career of Iron Eyes Cody, a white actor who presented himself as Aboriginal. Cree filmmaker Diamond travelled throughout the United States to interview various actors and filmmakers, both Aboriginal (e.g., Chris Eyre) and non-Aboriginal (e.g., Clint Eastwood). He also elaborated his own childhood experiences of watching cowboys and Indians movies and all the Aboriginal children wanting to be the cowboys, as they were the
good guys. As well as always being the bad guys, over the decades most Aboriginal people were also portrayed as horse people from the plains, living in tipis and hunting buffalo. This film should serve as the introductory film for any course on Aboriginal films and movies. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

Dickie, Bonnie (Director, Co-researcher, & Co-writer of narration), Mason, Tina (Associate director, Co-researcher & Co-writer of narration), MacDonald, Joe (Producer), & Keeper, Joy (Narrator). (2000). *Hollow Water* [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (48 running minutes)

This documentary, filmed in the Ojibway community of Hollow Water in Manitoba, addresses the difficult topic of incest. A small community of around 450 people at the time of the film, it was estimated that two-thirds were victims of sexual abuse, with many of those people having become abusers themselves as they grew older. The film focusses on a program, initiated by members of the community, that would see the use of traditional community sentencing and/or healing circles for offenders, as well as support for victims. The work was begun under the initiative of Valdie Seymour. He convinced Burma and Joyce Bushie to attend an alcohol seminar with him in British Columbia. There it was revealed that there were underlying issues of sexual abuse in the community. The three took training as counsellors, and were joined by Lloyd Bushie, which was controversial as he had been a sexual offender himself. But the team continued, becoming more confident in their work. When their presentation at the school resulted in 60 disclosures from students, they were struck by the immensity of the challenges faced by their community. Two of those disclosures were from the two eldest daughters of Richard and Deborah Kennedy.

The remainder of the film follows the work with Richard and Deborah, who were courageous indeed in telling their story and in agreeing that part of their healing journey would become the subject of the film. For a long time, the Kennedy couple refused to admit and to take responsibility for their actions. Their children were taken away and placed in foster homes outside the community. However, after two years, they came to admit their guilt and to accept the role of what became called the Community Holistic Healing Circle (CHHC). When an additional circle followed after two years of work with Richard and Deborah, Judge Murray Sinclair sentenced them to another three years’ probation. Eventually, the couple’s children were brought back to the community to be placed in a foster home there, and then to begin to have some contact with their parents. Finally, the couple was allowed a week’s camping trip to Black Island, a summer camping place frequented by community members. There were many others there too, so the family was not alone. In a final circle, the family, including the children, were able to explain that they wanted a chance to be all together again. Hollow Water’s Community Holistic Healing Circle approach emphasizes taking responsibility for one’s actions and healing, rather than punishment.

The film includes interviews with several of the counsellors and with other people in the community, both adults and youth, who have benefitted from their involvement with the CHHC rather than going the traditional route to court and then, most often, to jail. The film shows the
offenders being talked to with honest sometimes blunt words about taking responsibility and changing their ways. This is an excellent, well-narrated film about a difficult subject to address. It may be used in a variety of circumstances, but always by a well-informed and prepared teacher, with permission from the school if used in that context, and with counsellors in attendance and regularly available following the viewing. (MY, SY, Adult)

Docherty (Director, Writer, & Producer, program #1), Hunka, Ryszard (Director, Writer, & Producer, programs #2 & #4), Philbert, Michel (Director, Co-writer, & Co-producer, program #3), Pednault, Michel-Claude (Co-writer, & Co-producer, program #3), & Kinew, Wab (Host). (2012). 8th Fire: It’s Time (Program #1); Indigenous in the City (Program #2); Whose land is it anyway? (Program #3); and At the Crossroads (Program #4) [Documentary]. CA: Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC)/CBC Learning. (Each program approx. 45 running minutes)

This excellent series introduces the Canadian learner to the history of Canada’s First Peoples. Including period settings, extensive interviewing, and an excellent host in Wab Kinew, the series should be used in high school and university classes in part or in whole. The first program It’s Time introduces the concept of the 8th Fire, which references “an Anishinaabe prophecy that declares now is the time for the Aboriginal peoples and the settler community to come together and build the ‘8th Fire’ of justice and harmony” (http://www.cbc.ca/8thfire/). Interviewees focus on residential schools, the work of teachers who are creating opportunities for their students to work together, and a cultural awareness workshop in Saskatoon. Participant interviewees include John Burrows, Alex Moss, Eldon Yellowhorn, and Delores Adolf (with reference to residential school), as well as comedian Howie Miller and workshop presenter John Lagimodiare. The second program, Indigenous in the City, tells of the contributions of Aboriginal people in our many cities. Extensive interviews are included with successful urban Aboriginal people, including Leslie Varley (Health Director), Steve Keewatin Sanderson (Artist), René Pelletier (Lawyer), Winnipeg’s Most (Rap artists), Linda Gray (Native Youth Association), Taiaiake Alfred (Professor), Lee Maracle (Writer, teacher, artist), Edith Cloutier (Exec. Director, Friendship Centre), Kent Monkman (Artist), Dr. Evan Adams (Doctor, actor), Jordon Tootoo (Hockey player), and Ron Linklater (Cultural worker). The third program, Whose Land is it Anyway? focuses, as expected, on land and land issues. Interviewees in this program include Chief Clarence Louis of the successful Osoyoos First Nation in British Columbia, with that community having many outstanding business enterprises in the use of its land. Armand MacKenzie, as land claims negotiator, helps viewers understand the reasons for Aboriginal land claims and the process. Secondly, the 1975 James Bay agreement is reviewed, including archival footage. Third, there is an overview of the agreement between Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (NCN, or sometimes known as Nelson House) in northern Manitoba with Manitoba Hydro. Fourth, the Impacts Benefit Agreement (IBA) between Attawapiskat First Nation and De Beers Canada is reviewed. Finally, the viewers are acquainted with the birth of our newest territory, Nunavut (April 1, 1999) and its significance as the founding of the first Inuit constitutional territory. The final program, At the Crossroads, addresses several more recent issues in Canadian
history, including the ‘60’s scoop’ where many Aboriginal children were taken from their homes and adopted into non-Native families. Host Wab Kinew introduces many ways in which non-Aboriginal people might learn more about Aboriginal culture, including watching the controversial television series \textit{Blackstone} (which is a questionable suggestion). Interviewees who are working to raise awareness of the culture and history of Aboriginal people include Dr. Stanley Vollant, students Cassandra Opikokew and Jacob Pratt from the First Nations University of Canada, rapper Samien, and youth activist Jessica Yee. There are many more notable interviewees within these films. See the website for more information on this excellent series of programs: \url{http://www.cbc.ca/8thfire/}. (MY, SY, Adult)

\textbf{Doran, Anita (Writer & Director).} (2013). \textit{The lesser blessed} [Motion picture]. CA: Entertainment One/First Generations Films. (86 running minutes)


\textbf{ISBN:} 9781550545258

The movie, based on the novel of the same name, is a coming-of-age story about Larry Sole (Joel Nathan Evans), a 16 year-old native youth from a fictional town in the Northwest Territories. The northern Dogrib author Richard Van Camp, in writing the book, wanted to tell a real story of what it was like growing up in the North. Larry is struggling with a dark past, where he accidentally saw his violent, abusive father killed in a fire (Larry was also badly burned). While he is haunted both by guilt and the physical and sexual abuse by his father, his mother Verna (Tamara Podemski) is also struggling to show her love for Jed (Benjamin Bratt), who Larry wants in his life as a father figure. Larry, tall, thin, and quiet, a bit of a misfit, is bullied at school by Darcy (Adam Butcher) and his side-kicks. He also harbours a secret love for the promiscuous Juliet Hope (Chloe Rose). A good-looking but troubled new boy Johny Beck (Kiowa Gordon) moves to town, with his mom and his little brother Donny (Lucas Hoyos). Johnny befriends Larry and protects him from the bullies, but also seduces Larry’s dream love, Juliet. Darcy introduces Larry to the drug scene, and although Larry does not wish to get involved, he gets pulled in. Darcy gets even with Larry for having punched him (Darcy) while sticking up for himself, injuring Larry badly. In the hospital Larry finds his voice as a storyteller, and his story pulls his Mom out of her protective shell. When he comes out of the hospital, the first person to come and see him is actually Darcy. Larry learns from Darcy, that he – Darcy – is going to a group home for having beaten Larry, that Juliet is pregnant by Johnny, and that Johnny is deserting her. On the sly Larry goes to see Juliet, and they make love. Larry is able to openly disrobe his torso and reveal the deep scars from the fire. In so doing, he is able to begin to heal from his traumatic childhood experiences. Juliet too now knows what it is to make love—not just have sex—with a boy who loves her deeply, and not someone who is just interested in a sexual ‘conquest’. The movie involves non-graphic sex scenes with no nudity. (SY, Adult)

The movie follows the book fairly closely. The book is more frequent and graphic with the sex scenes, however, and needs to be cleared with school administration and parents before being used in a school class. It is regrettable that such an approach was used by the author, as it constrains the acceptability of this novel for school use. While one realizes that teens are
experiencing sexual awakening with all its inherent challenges, the wisdom of portraying frequent sex among teens in a coming-of-age novel is questionable. Unfortunately then, the use of the movie may also be constrained in schools as it will lead students to want to read a book that the school may not wish to recommend. Having said that, the movie is certainly valuable for adults (e.g., teachers, parents) as it does communicate the struggles of northern teens in contemporary times, which may be quite different from the challenges faced when contemporary adults were teens themselves in different times and/or in different locales and circumstances. (Adult)

Duckworth, Martin (Director), Vallée, Jacques (Co-producer), & MacDonald, Joe (Co-producer). (1996). *Riel country* [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (49 running minutes)

The Métis in Canada have a distinct culture, connected to yet unique from both that of their European, largely French, fathers, and their Aboriginal mothers. This film is produced in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in the province that came into being because of the resistance of Louis Riel and the Métis to the manner in which their rights were being disregarded. Even so, in the city of Winnipeg, there exists a large Aboriginal population, largely in the north end, and a French-speaking population, largely in the St. Boniface area, who know little about each other. Because the Red River and two different school divisions separate the two areas, the students have little opportunity to mix. However, in the film students from these two areas came together to create a play about Louis Riel, and in so doing to celebrate their common connections and Riel’s dream of a healthy, multi-cultural society. As well as working with the students to produce the play, the filmmakers also include footage from the Festival du Voyageur, an annual Winnipeg celebration of the French voyageur heritage. In the making of the film, the students explore issues of racism, intolerance, and discrimination that happened historically and that still happen today. In the process, the students make new friends and come to new understandings about their responsibility to engage in positive change. (MY, SY, Adult)

Eastwood, Clint (Director/Co-producer), Lorenz, Robert (Co-producer), & Spielberg, Steven (Co-producer). *Flags of our fathers* [Motion picture]. US: Paramount Pictures (US distributor); Warner Bros. Pictures (International distributor). (132 running minutes) (SY, Adult)


The movie recounts the story of the raising of the American flag on the Japanese island of Iwo Jima during World War II. While the movie centers around seven marines, including the confusion of who was actually in the picture of the flag raising, the moral plot has more to do with honesty and with the horrors of war, including post-traumatic stress syndrome. Ira Hayes (Adam Beach), a First Nations marine upon whom much of the film focusses, and who is
subsequently chosen with two others to promote the sale of war bonds, is torn by his part in the war and the dishonesty around the photograph. He and the others also suffer from survivor’s guilt, as so many marines were killed in the invasion of Iwo Jima. Ira begins to drink heavily, casting himself, and the marines as a whole, into disrespect. The movie can be used to study the incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among military personnel, and the lack of support provided for soldiers and war veterans suffering from the trauma of war. Bradley’s book (376 pages) tells the story in text form. As there are several sections that tell about Ira Hayes—photos are also included—the book might be studied, at least in part, to accompany the movie. Having said that, the book does focus on one marine, John Bradley, who was the author’s father. The illustrated book entitled *Quiet Hero* tells about Ira Hayes’ life, more at a upper early years to early middle years’ level.


While the title of the film suggests a biased approach, it does not prepare the viewer for the racist narration that accompanies this film. Because of that, a review of the film is included here primarily to recommend against its use. Based on the book, *Native Grace: Prints of the New World, 1590-1876* by Thomasson Grant, the film provides an overview of the work of several artists: Theodore de Bry, Jacques Le Moyne, John White, Mark Catesby, John James Audubon, Colonel Thomas McKenny, George Caitlin, Karl Bodner, and Thomas Moran. While the work of those artists could have been approached critically, it was not. Rather, the accompanying narration notes the founding of an entire new world, alien to the newcomers, and the exotic subjects of the paintings—that is, the native people—whose customs were “outrageous and fascinating,” and who largely disappeared in the “unstoppable rush of time,” a rather unique way to describe death and desecration due to disease and slaughter. According to the narration, in the ‘new world’, “the women led a degrading existence. Their spirits were crushed and they were little more than child bearers and slaves.” The entire film is laced with narration that reflects the concept of American manifest destiny obviously still in evidence in 2006 when the film was released.

That initial segment of the documentary is 30 minutes. Other ‘bonus features’ include 1) an American Indian timeline; 2) an historic photo gallery; 3) information about the artists; 4) an ‘art symphony’; 5) a section on cultural traditions that features Grand Canyon Hopi dancers, Lakota hoop dancing, Navajo rug weaving, Navajo traditional dress, sheep shearing, sand painting, and the cooking of fry bread; 6) a section on National Parks and Native Americans that includes a Hopi ranger at Wupatki, archeologists at Walnut Canyon and at Mesa Verde, rangers at Jamestown and at Mammoth Caves, and flintknapping with Bruce Bradley; and finally 7) a section on related places, which include the Mesa Verde, Hovenweep, Monument Valley, Wupatki, Walnut Canyon, Canyon de Chelly, Navajo, Chaco, and Crazy Horse Memorial. This listing is provided for the mature researcher who may wish to access certain aspects while keeping the film away from a larger viewing audience. As well, those who are studying how
Aboriginal people are portrayed in film might have considered that most racist treatments belong
to a bygone age, and are reviewing only older films. This film should be included in that
package. Unfortunately, the narration in the production destroys what could have been a critical
look at early non-Aboriginal artists in North America, several of whom left a magnificent legacy
of great work, for example Audubon with his stunning renderings of so many bird species. As a
larger project, mature students might view the film without sound and attempt to write a new,
critical narration.

Ellsworth, Lena (Co-director), Ellsworth, Qajgaq (Co-director), Mark, Evie (Co-director),
L’isle/Aquaniiit Productions/Ellsworth Productions. (52 running minutes)

This film follows the four directors as they speak of their lives as the children of
residential school survivors. The directors also include interviews with Elders and with
adolescents. Interviewees include Inuit people both in Nunavut and in Nunavik (northern
Quebec). The underlying focus of the film involves the efforts to sustain the Inuit culture and the
Inuktitut language amidst the modern world of technology and contemporary transportation (e.g.,
skidoo, four wheelers/ATVs). In particular, interviewees focus on the need to sustain the Inuit
culture for their children, also noting that all their leaders should be Inuit. The film includes
extensive home visit and land-based interviews that give the viewer an understanding of the
contemporary culture and lives of the Inuit who were involved in the film, and helps the viewer
feel like they are included on a visit with the film’s participants. As well as the directors and their
families, other participants in the film include Geroge Berthe, Jeannie May, Pauloosie Tucasie,
Monica Ittusardjuat, and Leona Marie Ipeelee. The film is well done, with excellent
accompanying music by Robert M. Lepage. (MY, SY)

Evans, Michael Robert (2010). The fast runner: Filming the legend of Atanarjuat. Lincoln,
NE: University of Nebraska Press. ISBN: 978-0-8032-2208-3

Christopher, Neil, McDermott, Noel, & Flaherty, Louise (Eds.). 2011). Unikkaaqtuat: An
introduction to traditional Inuit myths and legends (pp. 133-150). Iqaluit, NU: Inhabit
Media Inc. ISBN: 978-1-926569-16-1

Kanuk, Zacharias (Director & Co-producer), Cohn, Norman (Co-producer &
Cinematography), Apak Angilirq, Paul (Co-producer), Wong, Germaine
(Co-producer), & Bochner, Sally (Exec. producer). (2001). Atanarjuat: The fast
runner [Motion picture]. CA: Igoolik Isuma/National Film Board of Canada (NFB).
(172 running minutes)

Kanuk, Zacharias (Co-director & Co-producer), & Cohn, Norman (Co-director &
Igoolik Isuma Productions. (112 running minutes)

Cousineau, Marie-Hélène (Co-director), & Ivalu, Madeline (Co-director). (2008). Before
tomorrow [Motion picture]. CA: Igloolik Isuma Productions & Kunuk Cohn
Productions. (93 running minutes)
Unusual in the listings, this trio of films is preceded with book references for the viewer. Evans’ excellent resource provides crucial background material for all three movies in this Inuit collection. It also includes photographs. Reading the book prior to watching the films will help the viewer to understand what is happening in the rather complex films, although that route would destroy the joy of discovering the film’s intricacies on one’s own. Evans describes the creation and work of Isuma Productions, while focusing on the roles of the four principals: Zacharias Kanuk, Norman Cohn, Pauloosie Qulitalik, and Paul Apek Angilirq. As well, the reader becomes familiar with the Igloolik Island, the setting for both Isuma Productions and the legend of Atanarjuat. Isuma also produced The Journals of Knut Rasmussen. Norman Cohn’s partner Marie-Hélène Cousineau formed the Tariagsuk Video Centre, also in Igloolik, to give community people an opportunity to become familiar with video. A women’s group evolving from that Centre—Arnait Productions—was involved in producing the film Before Tomorrow. Evans sums up Isuma’s approach to their films: The filmmakers do not spend time building connections, creating analogues, or building bridges that might help viewers understand the Arctic in terms of their own cultures. One point of the films is that “viewers should understand the Arctic on Inuit terms” (p. 92). One small distraction with the book is that Evans, an American, does have the puzzling habit of referring to pressures on the Inuit people as coming from influences from Europe and the United States, forgetting it seems that the main pressures on the Inuit people come from within their own country, which is Canada. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

The second included book, Unikkaaqtuat, is a compilation of traditional Inuit myths and legends, including a story of Atanarjuat, which is similar to the story within the film except in this instance Atanarjuat kills those who attacked him and his brother Aamarjuaq. He then looks after their surviving wives and children, partly by enforcing their labour to sustain the community. This publication is an essential part of a library on Inuit stories. Because of the violent nature of many of the Inuit stories, their contemporary use must be tempered by good judgment. (MY, SY, Adult)

All three of the following movies in this Inuit collection, along with many other films, newscasts, and interviews, can be viewed on-line at http://www.isuma.tv/isuma-productions. Together, the three movies can support a study of Inuit film and actors. The story of how the film Atanarjuat came into being, from the idea of Paul Apak Angilirq to the compilation of Elders’ stories of the original legend to the creation of the film itself, is instructive for Aboriginal filmmakers of any culture (see http://www.isuma.tv/lo/en/video/Atanarjuat). Because the reviews of these three movies are more lengthy, the full references will be included a second time.

Kanuk, Zacharias (Director & Co-producer), Cohn, Norman (Co-producer & Cinematography), Apak Angilirq, Paul (Co-producer), Wong, Germaine (Co-producer), & Bochner, Sally (Exec. producer). (2001). Atanarjuat: The fast runner [Motion picture]. CA: Igoolik Isuma/National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (172 running minutes)

This first film Atanarjuat (Inuktitut with English subtitles) is set in pre-contact times, and is based on a traditional Inuit story about the jealousy and intrigue within an Inuit community of families. The beginning of the film is complex as there is the influence of a bad shaman, a fight,
one person’s death, and a further confrontation. Many years later, two young men, one of them Oki (Peter Henry Arnatsiaq) and the other Atanarjuat (Natar Ungalaaq), compete for the young woman Atuat (Sylvia Ivalu) who, while promised to Oki, loves Atanarjuat, the latter who wins the contest and her hand. Oki continues to be resentful of Atanarjuat, and plots against him, along with his sister Puja (Lucy Tulugarjuk) and two other men. Part of the plot involves offering his sister to Atanarjuat as his second wife. While Puja is not trusted by Atuat, she is accepted in the family. However, Puja’s and Oki’s plots turn ever darker, and Puja helps to set up an attack on Atanarjuat and his brother Amaqjuaq (Pakak Innuksuk) by Oki and his accomplices. Amaqjuaq is killed but Atanarjuat escapes, although not without injury. He is harboured by the elder Qulitalik (Pauloosie Qulitalik), his wife, and adopted granddaughter until he recovers and returns to the community. The intrigue of Oki, his sister, and their two accomplices is uncovered, but Atanarjuat refuses to complete his revenge, saying that the killing must stop. However, Oki’s grandmother Panikpak (sister of Qulitalik, played by Madeline Ivalu), an Elder in the community, declares that Oki (who has also killed his own father Sauri and now leads the community), his sister Puja, the accomplices, and their families, while forgiven, must leave the community. Panikpak and Qulitalik also defeat the power of the bad shaman.

Atanarjuat is excellent, both on its own merits as well as for the background story of its being made. The movie may be suitable for mature Grade 12 students; however, it does depict full frontal male nudity and a (fully clothed) rape scene. An initial study of the legend and the story of the film-making may assist in addressing some of the confusion that might accompany an uninitiated first viewing. The story of the intrigue is complex. The film might serve as a springboard for student work on traditional beliefs of the Inuit or another First People, including traditional governance structures, as well as legends and stories that served to provide lessons for good living that guide the lives of the people. (Adult)


Set in the 1920s, this film (Inuktitut with English subtitles) presents events during the time when the Inuit are being encouraged to leave their own cultural ways, particularly shamanism, and adopt Christianity. Knud Rasmussen and his two companions Therkel Mathiassen and Peter Freuchen come onto an Inuit camp that includes Aua (Pakak Innuksuk), who is a shaman, his wife, and their family, including his daughter Apak (Leah Angutimarik). The movie depicts some of the traditional Inuit cultural celebrations, which include much laughter and gaiety. While headstrong Apak is newly married she refuses to accept her husband, instead dreaming about having sexual relations (nudity in movie) with her former husband, who is dead. Aua’s son Natar (Peter-Henry Arnatsiag) offers to take Rasmussen and his companions to Iglulik, the home community of the family. The entire family makes the arduous trip, and nearly starves along the way. It is only when the group reaches the community that the viewer realizes that Aua and his family may have broken away from the home community because it has become Christianized. There is little gaiety among the Christians, just rote recitation of Bible verses and endless singing of hymns. The travelers are offered a place with the community,
however, but only if they accept Christianity. The group refuses, although they are weakened with hunger, and they make their igloos close by. The wish to study the Christianized community, along with the hunger of the group (who have been eating their sled dogs), first leads to Rasmussen and his colleagues leaving to join the hymn singers. Then Apak the daughter, who also has some insights of a shaman, leaves the igloo, walks to the colonized Inuit camp, and lines up dutifully with the other hymn singers. The viewer, although never ‘included’, begs for her to change her mind before she turns away from the Spirit People and eats the forbidden meat, but she does not. In a final scene, in order to save his family from starvation, Aua walks out on the ice to banish the shamans’ Spirit People in preparation to join the Christianized Inuit. Again, the viewer begs him to change his mind, but he too does not.

This film is suitable for a mature Grade 11 or 12 class, as well as adult learners. While there is nudity, as well as sex scenes, the view of a female breast is veiled to indicate that Apek is dreaming. The pervasiveness of the pressure from outside influences on the Inuit, including Christianity and the white visitors (one who can speak Inuktitut), is worthy of study. In particular, the use of the Inuit themselves in the colonizing process, which includes the use of Christian hymn and prayer books in the Inuktitut language, will encourage dialogue and student projects. Students may research other examples of missionary work that involved the learning of Aboriginal languages and the translation of Christian materials into those Aboriginal languages. As well, students can study how the manipulation and withholding of food supplies, both traditional and introduced, have worked to force Aboriginal leaders into submission in order to save their families and communities from starvation.


This tragic and beautiful movie is based on For Morgendaggen by Jorn Riel (For an interview see http://www.isuma.tv/en/arnaitvideo/interview-jorn-riel-author-morgendagen-tomorrow), a book that is difficult to access in English. The love between the grandmother and the grandson undergirds this third in the collection of Inuit movies by Isuma Productions. Again, the setting is post-contact, around 1840, and one of the two Inuit communities that have met on the shores has been trading for what seems to be goods that make their lives easier, like steel knives, pots, and needles. But for the needles the white traders are exchanging sexual favours from the community’s women, one needle for one night. The non-trading community has been successful in their summer harvest of meat and grandmother Ningiuq (Madeline Ivalu) offers to go to a nearby island that is uninhabited by animals (who would eat the meat) to dry the meat for the winter’s food supply. Her grandson Maniq (Paul-Dylan Ivalu) asks his father (Peter Henry Arnatsiaq) if he might go with her. Ningiuq’s old friend Kutuguk (Mary Qulitalik), knowing that she is near the end of her time, also wants to join them. Ningiuq and Maniq set up camp and take good care of Kutuguk until she passes. As the summer days turn into fall, Maniq plays an increasingly important role in food gathering and in hunting, but is also watched over and guided by his loving grandmother. When the community people do not return for Ningiuq and Maniq,
the two finally row over to the community, only to find that everyone has died of smallpox. Fearful, Ningiq turns Maniq away from the scene and they return to the island, taking refuge in a cave for the winter. The days pass and Ningiq works hard to keep Maniq cheerful in their isolation, while trying to hide her own worry. One day, while away from their cave, wolves are seen running to attack them. Maniq is unhurt but Ningiq is bitten. While Maniq succeeds in returning with her to their cave, Ningiq is increasingly worried as she senses that she will soon pass. The nearest settlement is far south, and it is still too cold to travel that distance. Ningiq does not know what will happen to Maniq when she passes. She worries that he is too young to survive all alone. For a summary of the movie, see http://www.isuma.tv/lo/en/beforcetomorrow/synopsis

This film is suitable for senior years’ classes, Grades 10 through 12. First to be watched for the tragedy and the beauty of the film itself, it could then be viewed a second time for students to consider what aspect of the film might serve as a springboard for their own projects. The important role of Elders is lovingly portrayed in the movie, and students might do an interview project with the Elders from their family and/or from their community. In particular, youth might reflect on the love that is shared by Ningiuq and Maniq and think of how they might show their own love and concern by helping Elders and others in their community. Students might research the way in which trade relations devastated the Aboriginal communities. As well, the effects of the diseases introduced by Europeans can be studied. (SY, Adult)


Although an older movie, this film interpretation of the Billy Mills story is still exciting to watch. Filmed in Alberta in collaboration with the Ermineskin First Nation, the movie tells the story of Oglala Lakota long distance runner Billy Mills, from Pine Ridge, South Dakota, who defied the odds at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics to win the gold medal in the 10,000 metre race. With an athletic scholarship, Billy (Robby Bensen, non-Aboriginal actor) leaves his reserve with memories of his boxing father (August Schellenberg) who has passed and dreams of running. His time at the University of Kansas was spent under the tutelage of Coach Bill Easton (Pat Hingle), who is well played in the movie. While Billy’s running improved and he won races, he eventually tired of the corporate pressure to succeed, and he goes home, leaving his girlfriend Pat (Claudia Cron) behind, as well as the plans that others have for his life. His relatives Eddie (Graham Green) and Frank (Denis Lacroix) as well as his sister Catherine (Margo Cane) are still in the community. The youth of the community look up to Billy, and Catherine encourages him to continue with his running and achieve his dreams. When Frank takes his own life, Billy leaves the community and joins the marines. He goes to see Pat, they reunite and marry, and Billy continues to train, now for the Olympics. While he goes to the 1964 Olympic Games at Tokyo, he is not considered a serious contender. In spite of that, he wins the gold medal and returns to great accolades, including from his friend Dennis Riley (Jeff McCracken) who stood by him when he was experiencing racist treatment at the University of Kansas. This movie is inspiring,
and should be used to encourage youth as they work to achieve what may seem like unreachable goals at first. Several websites and books can assist with research projects on Billy Mills, who continues to work with youth to encourage and support them. See http://indianyouth.org/. Especially see http://indianyouth.org/about-us/about-billy-mills for a great You-tube video of the actual footage of Billy Mills winning the race. (upper MY, SY, Adult)


The movie is taken from the screenplay, which is based on the short story “This is what it means to say Phoenix, Arizona” from Sherman Alexie’s collection *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*, as well as some aspects from other stories within the collection. The movie opens with a house fire scene, and with Arnold Joseph (Gary Farmer) saving baby Thomas Builds-the-Fire (Evan Adams). Arnold and his wife Arlene (Tantoo Cardinal) are drinkers, with Arnold abusing his wife and neglecting his child, basketball-loving Victor (Adam Beach as older Victor; Cody Lightning as young Victor). Eventually, Arlene asks Arnold to leave, and they hear nothing from him until Arnold’s friend Susy Song (Irene Bedard) from Arizona phones to say that Arnold has died. Victor plans to go and get his father’s ashes, as well as his truck and some money he had in a bank there. However, Victor has little money for the trip, so Thomas offers to help him with his jar full of coins, if Victor will take him along. The two have always had an uneasy relationship, but Victor agrees, as he sees little choice. Victor bears resentment toward his father who has abused and deserted him, but Thomas sees Victor’s father as a hero. While in Arizona, Susy tells Victor about his father’s secret, that he had unwittingly set the house fire that had killed Thomas’ parents. Victor comes to understand his father’s behavior, and makes some progress in forgiving him. The two young men return home, and Victor shares his father’s ashes with Thomas.

Thomas’ propensity for storytelling is amusing, and he looks amazingly like his movie grandmother (Monique Mojica) who raised him. Other excellent roles are played by Cody Lightning as young Victor and Simon Baker as young Thomas. The scene with the old car driving in reverse, with Velma (Michelle St. John) and Lucy (Elaine Miles) is hilarious. John Trudell plays the DJ Randy Peone, and Leonard George plays the reporter Lester Falls-Apart on the van rooftop. This movie, with Aboriginal writer, director, and actors, paved the way for many more Aboriginal films. (SY, Adult)

**Eyre, Chris (Director), & Kilik, Jon (Producer). (2002). *Skins* [Motion picture]. US: Grandview Pictures/First Look Pictures (Distributor). (87 running minutes)**


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Based on the novel of the same name by Adrian C. Louis, the movie revolves around two brothers, Rudy (Eric Schweig) and Mogie (Graham Greene), and is set on Beaver Creek Indian Reservation in South Dakota (the book notes that Pine Ridge Reservation is the community, and that is where the movie was filmed). Rudy and Mogie, raised in a home fueled by the hopelessness, poverty, and the alcoholism rampant in the community, have drifted apart. Both brothers have served in the Viet Nam war, but Mogie, in particular, saw more violent action, is struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and has turned to alcohol, along with his friend Verdell (Gary Farmer). While he loves his father, Mogie’s son Herbie (Noah Watts) is able to separate himself from his father’s negative influence and, raised by his grandmother and mentored by Rudy, Herbie is a great athlete and a good student. Rudy is a college educated reservation policeman who, becoming discouraged with the hopelessness in his community, begins to play the role of vigilante (with the help of, or taking on the role of, Iktomi, the trickster). While the reserve is ‘dry,’ the surrounding non-Aboriginal communities have many liquor stores that continue to feed the cycle of poverty and hopelessness on the reserve. One night, after yet another evening dealing with the drunkenness and related spousal abuse in his community, Rudy decides to torch a liquor store, not knowing that his brother Mogie is inside stealing liquor. While Mogie survives his burns, the years have taken their toll as the doctors discover that Mogie is terminally ill with cirrhosis of the liver. Rudy tells Mogie what he has done, Mogie forgives him, and the situation actually pulls the brothers closer together. As he is dying, Mogie extracts a promise of revenge from Rudy for the desecration of the Lakota sacred Black Hills with the carving of the likenesses of white presidents into Mount Rushmore. That revenge is the last scene in the movie.

While the book Skins is suitable for only a mature, older readership, given its frequent graphic sex scenes, the movie takes a more subdued approach (there is only one suggestion of a sex scene to come, but no enactment and no nudity) and could be suitable for a mature Grade twelve class. In particular, the movie lends itself to a study of systemic discrimination against the Lakota and Dakota, and against all First Nations. The relentless efforts of both the American and the Canadian governments to destroy First Peoples while repeatedly breaking treaty promises is well documented in many sources. This film can open the dialogue for a project by students that addresses their own First Nation, Inuit, or Métis community, and/or a community or tribal group that interests them. As well, students may dialogue with Elders and other community members, as well as governments at all levels, concerning how to break the pattern of poverty in their communities that is the enduring legacy of centuries of racist policies, practices, and laws. As such, the young people can learn how to take an active role in lobbying for and playing a part in needed change. (SY, Adult)

Eyre, Chris (Director), & Bratt, Benjamin (Narrator). (2009a). After the Mayflower. Episode # 1 from We shall remain: America through Native eyes [Documentary]. US: Native American Public Telecommunications for The American Experience, PBS Broadcast. (77 running minutes)
This first episode in the *We Shall Remain* series addresses events that unfolded with the coming of the Pilgrims on the Mayflower in 1621 to settle in what is now the New England area of the United States. This excellent film combines interviews with Native Americans and historians, as well as narrations and re-enactment. The language spoken in the re-enactment is Nipmuc, which is an Algonquin dialect. All tribes in that geographical area spoke dialects of the Algonquin language.

Prior to 1621, there had been few ships landing in upper eastern area of North America. Those that did often killed the Native people and/or captured some of them to take with them. Even though they did not settle in the area however, they left deadly disease germs, primarily smallpox, that killed whole villages or that ravaged the population of many of the Native communities in the area that did survive. The Wampanoag numbers were thus greatly reduced by the time that the 102 Pilgrims arrived in the eastern seaboard area. Chief Massasoit was additionally compromised as he was paying heavy tribute to the Narragansett. Being suspicious, Chief Massasoit did not approach the colonists until after their first winter, when the colony’s numbers had been reduced by 45 deaths. He thought that an alliance would help both sides, and it did for some time, as long as Massasoit and Edward Winslow from the Pilgrim’s side were the key players. Saving the Pilgrims’ lives, and sharing a thanksgiving meal, as well as Massasoit’s gift of land, did not ease the Pilgrims’ suspicions of the Wampanoag however, and in 1623, the military protector of the Pilgrims, Miles Standish, led an attack against them. In spite of that, Massasoit was able to ease tensions and increase the trading relationship for some time. However, more colonists arrived, swelling the population from 300 to 20,000 in just a generation. At the same time, the Wampanoag had been reduced to 1000 with the European diseases. Their allies’ numbers were likewise reduced. Massasoit no longer could bargain, as the colonists now had the power to take whatever they wanted from the Native peoples, primarily their land. Josiah Winslow, Edward’s hard-hearted son, had taken over as the Governor of the Plymouth Colony. Massasoit’s son Metacomet (who became known as King Phillip), who had become Chief after his father’s death in 1662, and many other Native tribes in the area, struck back against the English in 1675, with the English being joined by their Native American allies. The Wampanoag and their own allies were defeated in what became known as King Phillip’s War. Phillip’s body was dismembered, with body parts sent to Native villages as a reminder of what would happen to them if they continued to resist. The Christian newcomers kept Phillip’s head on display in their community for two decades. Many captured Native Americans, including Phillip’s wife and son, were sold into slavery in Bermuda. This war, like many others, was fought to try to keep the newcomers from taking over lands belonging to the Native peoples in the area. This film can be used to support the study of Aboriginal land appropriation that became widespread in Turtle Island/North America. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

Eyre, Chris (Director), & Bratt, Benjamin (Narrator). (2009b). *Tecumseh’s vision*. Episode # 2 from *We shall remain: America through Native eyes* [Documentary]. US: Native American Public Telecommunications for The American Experience, PBS Broadcast. (85 running minutes)
This film recounts the work of Shawnee leader Tecumseh (Michael Greyeyes) as he tried to join all Indian tribes in a pan-Indian alliance to resist the take-over of Indian lands by the United States (U.S.) government. The film includes re-enactment, many interviews primarily with Shawnee people and historians, as well as photographs (none were ever taken of Tecumseh), maps, and computer graphics. Born in 1768, Tecumseh had a younger brother Lalawethika (Billy Merasty), also known as Tenskwatawa then as The Prophet, who while a struggling and troubled man for much of his life, later had a powerful vision and subsequently became a religious and political leader alongside Tecumseh. The struggle to unite all Indian peoples against the American expansion took place over many decades. During the American Revolution (1775-1783), with the British loss, many Indian lands fell victim to United States plans for imperialist expansion and control. The British left their Indian allies stranded, and with many having actively fought for the British, they were thus doubly identified for U.S. retaliation. The ensuing encroachment of the United States onto Indian lands led to immediate resistance by the Indians and continued British betrayal. At the 1794 Battle of Fallen Timbers in what is now northern Ohio, the British refused fort entry to their Indian allies, who were then slaughtered by the United States forces. Afterwards, the Indians were forced to sign the Treaty of Greenville by which they gave up much of their land in what is now Ohio. Tecumseh refused to sign the treaty. President Thomas Jefferson, intent on taking Indian lands, sent William Henry Harrison (Dwier Brown) as his commander. Part of the plan involved setting up trade with the Indians, enticing them to purchase excessive goods for which they could not pay, then taking their land in payment. Finally the Shawnee were left with just a small land base, too small to sustain them.

In 1805, with The Prophet’s vision and the increasing numbers of people going to see him, Tecumseh used the support to work for an alliance to resist further encroachment of the United States onto Indian lands. To press the issue, Tecumseh moved their village of Prophetstown inside the boundaries of the Treaty of Greenville. The 1809 Treaty of Fort Wayne saw an additional three million acres of Indian land taken, and Tecumseh stepped up efforts to unite the Indian peoples. In November of 1811 when Tecumseh was away garnering support The Prophet bent to pressure to attack the United States army, and they were defeated by the U.S. in what became known at the Battle of Tippecanoe. Again, Tecumseh tried to rebuild. In 1812, with the British American war, Tecumseh thought that their time had come. He and the British General Isaac Brock forged an alliance, which worked well for both sides. However, when Isaac Brock was killed his replacement General Proctor cared little for the concerns of his Indian allies. Tecumseh even had to goad the incompetent Proctor into fighting, but on October 5, 1813, the British retreated to Canada and left their Indian allies stranded with nowhere to go. They fought valiantly but were defeated. Tecumseh’s body was so badly mutilated that he could not be positively identified. Tecumseh’s death put an end to the Indian resistance in the area, and the United States claimed conquest. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

Eyre, Chris (Director), & Bratt, Benjamin (Narrator). (2009c). Trail of Tears. Episode # 3 from We shall remain: America through Native eyes [Documentary]. US: Native
American Public Telecommunications for The American Experience, PBS Broadcast. (76 running minutes)

This exceptional film addresses the enforced removal of the Cherokee from their homelands in what is now the southeastern United States. The episode is enriched by re-enactment, by included photographs, and by many interviews with descendants of those Cherokee who were removed, as well as with historians. In particular, the appearance of Cherokee actor Wes Studi (as Major Ridge), and his narrative contribution in fluent Cherokee, add to this film.

The Cherokee, as well as their neighbours (Choctaw, Seminoles, Creeks, Muskogees, and Chickasaws) were on the wrong side in the American Civil War. Following that war, they experienced increasing pressure from United States to relocate west of the Mississippi, in response to the desire for their land from settlers, and then from miners as well. The Cherokee were resourceful, and had adopted much of the life ways of the newcomers. Although land was owned by the tribe in common, Major Ridge, for example, had a plantation, owned slaves, and lived in a fine home. His son John and cousin Elias Boudinot were both sent to New England to school and both married White wives. Major Ridge also mentored John Ross, the son of a Scots store owner in the community and his Cherokee wife, giving him 20 slaves as a wedding gift. About 8% of the Cherokee owned slaves, but a vast majority were poor subsistence farmers. The Cherokee also had their own written syllabary, invented by Sequoia.

John Ross rose to become the community’s leader, and he authored a new constitution for the Cherokee people that would see them as entirely independent. Georgia retaliated as did President Andrew Jackson, who initiated the Indian Removal Act, which intended to ‘trade’ current desirable Indian lands for other lands west of the Mississippi, where (at the time at least) Indians would be out of the way of settlement and mining operations in the eastern states. John Ross took Georgia’s infractions on Cherokee land to the Supreme Court, where he won. However, that did not stop either the Georgians or the federal government from continuing the violations. Finally, seeing the writing on the wall, Major Ridge, his son John, Elias Bodinot, and some others signed the Treaty of Echota (1835) ceding all land east of the Mississippi River. They then moved to the new lands. John Ross, who remained as principal chief, was tasked with assisting in the removal of his people with the May, 1838, deadline arriving for their leaving of their traditional lands. Federal troops and state militia rounded up the people, incarcerating them for months before they could leave. Many died even before beginning the journey. The trek to what is now Oklahoma, much of it in winter, was called the Trail of Tears. Over 4000 people died in an initiative now referred to as ethnic cleansing. For their betrayal, Major Ridge, his son John, and Elias Boudinot were killed by their own people in 1939. Although hard feelings continued for years, John Ross, who was chief for 40 years, was able to reunite the community in Oklahoma. It flourished with many businesses and the best public education system in the country, all while keeping many of the traditional Cherokee ways. There are many websites for further research on all the men featured within the film, as well as on Cherokee history in general. (upper MY, SY, Adult).
Few, Laurie (Producer), Dartis, Maria (Associate producer), & Lapalme, André (Editor). (2009). City of gangs: Regina grapples with Native gang problem [Documentary]. CA: CTV/ McIntyre Media (Distributor). (20 running minutes)

This made-for-television W-5 documentary addresses the issue of Aboriginal gangs in Regina, Saskatchewan. The narrator, Sandy Reynaldo, notes the estimation that in Canada one in every five murders is a gang hit. Even that initial statistic should acquaint aspiring gang members of the danger of gang involvement. Several interviewees talk of the gang situation. First Nation Chief Kevin Daniels works hard to acquaint audiences and to discourage gang ties, travelling and speaking to many groups. He is joined in the film by his son Kevin Kowalsky, who he got to know as an adult, who had been heavily involved in gangs and was stabbed nine different times, and who, at the time of the filming, was trying to establish a career as a hip hop artist. Harold Lavalle of Piapot First Nation talked of his three sons going to live in Regina to go to school, and their house being broken into and all three being stabbed, with son Willie dying from his wounds. The Native Syndicate Killers claimed responsibility for the hit. Both the Chief of Police for Regina and the mayor emphasize that their city is safe for what they call the ‘ordinary citizen’. Apparently, those ‘ordinary citizens’ do not live in the impoverished north-central area of Regina. That is where many parents, often with no other affordable housing, are trying to raise their families. In such an unsafe environment many of the youth might feel pressured to join a gang. Interviewees include a drama and music teacher from Scott Collegiate, a high school in the area, as well as with Corey Matthews, a coach at the same school. Viewers should be aware, that subsequent to this film, Mr. Matthews was charged with a sexual offence by a student, tried, and acquitted (See http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/regina-teacher-corey-matthews-not-guilty-of-sex-assault-1.2504544). That aspect may or may not take away from the focus of the film, but teachers should be aware of the situation, and that Mr. Matthews lost his career as a result of the charges. (upper MY, SY, Adult)


Starowicz, Mark (Writer, Director, Co-producer, & Host), Softly, Pat (Co-producer), Sweeney, Michael (Principal photographer), & Huculak, Maggie (Narrator). (2004). Year of the hunter: The story of Nanook [Documentary, The Canadian Experience series]. CA: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). (51 running minutes)


The early work of Robert J. Flaherty for Nanook of the North, filmed in the Ungava Peninsula of northern Quebec at the community of Inukjuaq, brought the Inuit culture to the
attention of people around the world. Often considered the founder of the contemporary documentary, Flaherty set out to re-enact the details of the daily life of an Inuit family. In that process, he included Inuit as crew members of the film project, with many of the ideas for the filming (e.g., the walrus hunt) coming from them. The lead character Allakariallak (Nanook or ‘The Bear’) is joined by others who play his family members (It seems not to have been communicated at the time that not all members of the cast were Nanook’s family, and that some scenes were staged). The silent film, digitally re-mastered in 1999, is accompanied by text and voice narration, and in the contemporary version, a music score (by Timothy Brock). The film shows Nanook hunting; eating a fresh kill with his family; making an igloo, a kayak, a fire, and toys for his child, as well as playing with his child; and preparing for bed with his family (made with the igloo cut away, not communicated in this first film). In an initial scene with Nanook in his kayak reaching shore, Nanook assists several people from the depths of his kayak out and onto the shore: Nyla (the smiling one, his wife) with a baby in her hood; Allee (his child); Cunayou (his other wife), and Comock (the puppy). The scenes of the walrus hunt and the seal hunt are both exciting, with the viewer wanting to cheer for the hunters. For the time, the scenes of the landscape would have brought a view of the North to millions of people. The film is prefaced by significant text that acquaints the viewer with aspects of the North and Inuit life. Even after more than 70 years, this film is astounding. The documentary includes a later, excellent interview with Flaherty’s widow Francis, who assisted in the editing of the film, and who was instrumental in encouraging the project. [It is not known if she was aware that Nyla in the film was Flaherty’s partner during the filmmaking, or that he had fathered a child with her; in fact, Flaherty left the North before his child Josephie Flaherty was born and it is not communicated if even Flaherty was aware, when he left, that he was an expectant father (See review of the film Martha of the North)]. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

The superb film Year of the Hunter by Mark Starowitz tells the story of the making of the original 1922 Nanook documentary. The film is exceptional in its past and present footage from the North, and the archival pictures from the 1920s, including from the original film and from the records of Jim Flaherty himself. The film explores Flaherty’s film work, including his first trip to the north with those film records later being destroyed by a fire. It took several years before Flaherty could secure funding, from a fur trading company (Ravillon Fréres), to return for more filming, this time in his opinion with a much more refined plan and with a much better final product. The entire time and process of his filming, and the production of the film itself in the north at Fort Harrison, is exceptionally re-enacted and narrated. The people gave the film, and the filming, the nickname Aggie, which was name of the camera. There is a recounting of the efforts to film a polar bear hunt, where the hunting party, including Nanook and Flaherty, nearly lost their lives. The year following Flaherty’s return south, Nanook did lose his life from starvation while on a hunting party, according to reports sent to Flaherty (he says), but according to historical records Nanook died at home. Flaherty became known as the leading father of the modern documentary. The re-enactment in this film stars Adacie Inukpuk, Nanook’s great grandson, as Nanook. There is much to learn from this excellent film, which should be shown prior to the watching of the original film Nanook. (upper MY, SY, Adult)
The third film, *Great North*, is included here both because it revisits many of the scenes and places from *Nanook* and includes original footage, but also because the host and co-narrator of the film is Nanook’s grandson, Adamie Inukpuk (who often returns to the north, but who lives in Montreal and worked, at the time of the film, for an Inuit-run school board). As the film begins he says, “My name is Adamie Inukpuk. I have listened to the voices of this land for over 5000 years.” Bonus features with the DVD include an interactive map of the Ungava peninsula region, showing the contemporary communities (14 Inuit, 6 Innu, 4 Cree, and one Naskapi) in the area (map provided by the Caribou Quebec Foundation). The documentary also includes filming of the Saami, indigenous people from northern Sweden. John E. Utai is the Saami Elder who is featured in and who narrates this segment. The film focuses on the landscape, the lives of the Inuit and the Saami, and particularly on the importance of the caribou to the Inuit, and the reindeer to the Saami. According to Adamie Inukpuk, “The Inuit have more stories about the caribou than any other animal. They are everything to us, our meat, and our magic.” The film shows the birth of a caribou, noting that the calf must be ready to run with the herd in 48 hours, and that only one-quarter of the calves will survive the migration to the winter feeding grounds. Eagles, bears, wolves, and mosquitos are the primary predators (This film might be used in collaboration with *Being Caribou*, also reviewed in this document). Adamie Inukput assists with the collaring of a tranquilized caribou so that their migration can be tracked. He communicates that the caribou are recent in the area, that even his father did not see one until he was an old man; thus, we assume that they were unknown in the area in the time of the original Nanook film. In Sweden, unlike in Canada with the caribou, the reindeer have been domesticated by the Saami. The herders round up the reindeer every year, harvesting some and keeping some to domesticate while then letting the majority go free. The Saami also have their stories of the reindeer, most of which are sung, as illustrated by the Saami Elder. They believe that the reindeer belong to the sun and the moon, and are only on loan to human beings. The Canadian segment of the film shows the sites for the filming of Nanook, and communicates the nature of the contemporary community, with all the amenities of the south, including skidoos. Adamie gathers mussels under the ice with his son when the tide goes out, and shows him how to build an igloo. Just as his grandfather did in *Nanook*, Adamie carves a polar bear out of snow. He says, “Patience is everything for us. To wait is not a waste of time.” The film is very well done, moving smoothly from past to present, and from Canada to Sweden. Sheelagh Rogers shares the narration of the film. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

**Florio, Maria (Co-director & Co-producer), & Mudd, Victoria (Co-director & Co-producer).** (1985). *Broken rainbow* [Documentary]. US: Earthworks Productions (Distributor). (70 running minutes)


The film and the book recount two enforced relocations of the Navajo people of the southern United States. The book addresses the 1860s relocation, and the film focuses on the
1970s relocation. The book provides a history of the Navajo, and should be read prior to watching the film. During the 1860s, after several treaties that saw Navajo land continually diminish, the Navajo were forced to surrender when their homes, livestock, food stocks, and orchards were destroyed. Subsequently, they were also forced to relocate, in several parties over three years, to Fort Sumner and the Bosque Redondo, 470 miles away from their homeland. In 1868 after accepting that the relocation was a failure, the United States government provided wagons and supplies for the Navajo to return to their homeland. The film also addresses the relocation of the 1970s, which was intended to make way for mineral exploration. Joined by the American Indian Movement (AIM), the Navajo presented their situation to Congress. This film, narrated by Martin Sheen, won an Academy Award for best documentary feature. (Film: upper MY, SY, Adult) (Book: MY, SY)

Francis, Brian J. (Director & Writer), & Martin, Kent (Producer). (2008). *The sacred Sundance: The transfer of a ceremony* [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (69 running minutes)

This film, from Elsipogtog First Nation in New Brunswick, focusses on the importance of the Sundance ceremony in the various communities of the Maritimes, noting the transfer of that ceremony from the West to the eastern Mi’kmaq communities, as well as to other First Nations in the area. Elder William Nevin, the Sundance Chief from Elsipogtog, is responsible for many of the teachings within this film. He is joined by many other interviewees, including some from the west who assisted in the transfer of the ceremony to the Mi’kmaq, including Keith Chiefmoon, Sundance Chief from the Kainai First Nation in Alberta, as well as some people from the United States. Although the Sundance was outlawed in the early 20th Century, it was practiced in secret and continues to ground many First Nations’ people in their walk through life. Ceremonies addressed in the film include the Pipe, the Sweat Lodge, the Tree of Life, and the Four Gates, the latter two of which are part of the Sundance ceremony. For many interviewees, the ceremonies helped them toward leaving self-destructive lifestyles and commit to walking the Good Red Road. The film includes a relay in which the Sundance ceremony is passed from one community to another. Note that the actual Sundance ceremony is not filmed. (upper MY, SY, Adult)


The movie comes from the book of the same name, written by Asa Earl Carter under the pen-name Forrest Carter. When originally published, the author claimed that the story was autobiographical. However, not only was Asa Carter non-Aboriginal, he had been heavily involved with segregation, was a Ku Klux Klan leader, and was considered so rabid in his beliefs that even Alabama Governor George Wallace eventually distanced himself from this man who had served as his speech writer. (See
The book *The Education of Little Tree*, selling over one million copies, and lauded and supported even by Oprah Winfrey, was removed from recommended lists when Carter’s identity was revealed. It is difficult to get past the author’s background, but if one can suspend one’s disapproval of the book’s author, the movie might be considered for use.

In the movie *Little Tree* (Joseph Ashton), when orphaned by the death of his parents, is taken home to the mountains by his Grandpa (James Cromwell), and Grandma (Tantoo Cardinal), despite the objections of his Aunt Martha (Leni Parker). In the movie, Grandpa is depicted as non-Aboriginal (he is half-Cherokee in the book), and his Grandma, as well as Willow John (Graham Greene), are depicted as Cherokee, descendants of those who escaped removal from their homelands during the Trail of Tears by retreating to the mountains. These three adults help to teach Little Tree the Cherokee ways. There may be some mature aspects of the movie, as Grandpa has a still and sells illicit whiskey; he also has a propensity for swearing (but not a lot nor really awful cuss words). Little Tree is sent away to residential school, where he and the other children including Wilburn (Chris Fennell) are mistreated. His grandfather eventually rescues him. Scenes of racism provide teaching opportunities. In particular, the impoverished but racist father of a white girl who has befriended Little Tree will not let her accept the moccasins given her by Little Tree, even though she has no shoes at all. Using this movie as a springboard, students might also explore the enforced relocation of the Cherokee and other tribal groups (e.g., Navajo). The movie is funny, touching, and sad in places, and thus also provides opportunities for students to explore those emotions. As well, students might study the examples of other non-Aboriginal people who have posed as Aboriginal. (MY, SY, Adult)


This movie, filmed entirely on Vancouver’s downtown eastside, is a highly engaging and deeply upsetting look at the world of drug addiction, alcoholism, and prostitution. April Henry (Alex Rice), along with her friend Stacey Lee (Katherine Isabelle), is a drug-addicted prostitute. Both live in a seedy hotel. Stacey’s boyfriend Cliffie (J. R. Bourne), also addicted, is a small time drug dealer. Floyd (Gordon Tootoosis) also lives in the hotel, and spends his days searching dumpsters for recyclables and selling them. Bernie (L. Harvey Good) manages the run-down hotel where they all live. Sixteen-year old Randy Henry (Simon Baker) comes to the city looking for his sister April, and for purpose in his life. Instead, in spite of Floyd’s best efforts, he gets caught up in a negative lifestyle with help from Cliffie and begins to deal drugs. When he fails to pay his total cost of the drugs to his supplier Wade (Brent Strait), his life is in danger, as is Wade’s because in turn he cannot pay his suppliers. April and Randy’s Mom Charlotte (Tina Keeper), a recovering alcoholic, comes to town, trying to find Randy, pledging that she will get him back from foster care. She and April have a big argument. As well, Cliffie fights with Stacey when he finds that she plans to leave him, then knocks April down the stairs in his haste to get away. April is taken to the hospital in an ambulance, but she recovers. When she gets out, she
goes to see Wade, who beats her up and tells her to find her brother Randy for the money he owes him. When Randy runs into Cliffie in a restaurant, he follows him into the bathroom and stabs him, because as well as getting him addicted Cliffie had told Randy that his father was a homosexual who had overdosed and died. Randy then panics and runs. April finds Randy on the street, but she doesn’t know that he has stabbed Cliffie. However, when confronted by Randy about their past, she admits that it was her who called 911 when they were still in the community, as she feared for their lives when their parents were drinking and drugging. That reporting led to Randy being taken away from the family. Randy rejects April’s efforts for reconciliation, pushes her down to the street, and takes off. Wade is also looking for Randy so that he can recover his money, and Randy has to flee from him as he has no money to pay him. Stacey too has disappeared; it looks like she is the fatal victim of a bad john. In the final scenes, Randy sits down, takes off his roller blades, and shoots up. A short ways away, April stands in the middle of the street with her bag crying, struggling with the decision to leave the downtown eastside and Randy in her efforts to turn her life around. And there the movie ends.

Given its deeply disturbing content, this film must be used with discretion and sensitivity. This movie might be used with at-risk youth to acquaint them with the dangers of drinking and drugging, and how, in order to change negative lifestyles, they may have to leave behind those they love. There should be counsellors and Elders available during and after the viewing of the film, and on a regular basis thereafter. As well, both school administration and parents should be notified about the nature of the film and permission should be granted from both for its use with students. (upper MY, SY, Adult)


This film explores the controversial issue of the killing of Inuit sled dogs from the 1950s to the 1970s. According to the Inuit, there was a deliberate policy of extermination of sled dogs practiced to force them off the land and into the settlements. On the other hand, the government and the R.C.M.P. deny such a policy. On their own initiative, the Inuit created and funded a Truth Commission, as the Canadian government did not want to be involved, and the R.C.M.P. denied any wrongdoing. As the commissioner of the Truth Commission, James Igloliorte travelled to many communities so that people could recount their experiences; he heard from over 300 people. Of those included in the film, the Inuit all recounted experiences of the Mounties shooting the sled dogs. While a former mayor of Iqualuit called the suggested policy a fabrication, he also admitted that his own dog had been shot when he was away when its caregivers let it out to urinate. For that short period of time it hadn’t been chained, which was against the town’s regulation. The interviewers also travelled to the Okanagon, where many retired Mounties lived, including many who worked in the north. All denied such a policy of extermination of sled dogs.

There does seem to be more than one truth with reference to the killing of the dogs. In fact, there may be several truths. While it seems that there were Mounties who were more
aggressive, or ‘trigger-happy’, in the shooting of dogs, it also seems that when the Inuit increasingly moved into the settlements, there arose the problem of too many dogs that were not now being used for their intended purpose, and that were also not kept chained up. Veterinary facilities for the neutering of the dogs would not have existed, and there was an increasing danger from the dogs as they began to run in packs. Thus, the R.C.M.P. may have been given permission to shoot loose dogs. In fact, the former mayor of Iqualuit says that there were more dogs killed as the result of village ordinances than from any policy of intended extermination. As well, with the dogs in closer quarters, there was also the report of losing many dogs to outbreaks of distemper. There is no doubt that the change in lifestyle of the Inuit would have led to the more limited use of the dogs; however, the shooting of the dogs also forced an abrupt end to the lifestyle of hunting and living off the land. Interviewee Dr. Frank Tester notes that during the 1960s the use of skidoos was increasing in the north, replacing the use of the sled dog for hunting. By the end of the film, the viewer is still unsure of what to believe. The Truth Commission concluded, however, that there was no formal policy to destroy the Inuit way of life. There may be many opportunities for more research by students on this topic. (upper MY, SY, Adult)


This is a very bad movie, with virtually nothing to recommend it. A film with the theme of gang turf wars (in this one between Indian Posse and the Asian Bomb Squad), and the bad side of gang life, could have been made so that young people would be informed. However, the scenes of nudity, sex, drugs, and violence, with an overlay of just terrible acting (other than for the transvestite Daisy played by Joseph Mesiano), should keep this movie out of classrooms and community groups. The boy Stryker (Kyle Henry; term means a prospective gang member) sets fires, but says nothing during the entire film. Omar (Ryan Black) has severe personality disorder. The movie communicates the impression that gang members, and their leaders, are incompetent, stupid, impulsive, mentally unbalanced, poorly organized, highly sexed druggies, which may not be the situation in real life.

Government of Manitoba, etc. (2010). Mother Nature’s pantry: Food from the forest (Program #1; 62 min); Open your eyes (Program #2; 4 parts; 97 min); Harvesting hope in northern Manitoba communities (Program #3; 37 min), & “…And this is my garden” (Program #4; 58 min). [Documentary]. CA: Author etc., including Solnes Productions & Samtronics (Post-production). (254 running minutes)

This excellent group of documentaries is part of Manitoba’s Northern Healthy Food Initiative (NHFI). The narrator for the films is Lee Friesen-Alfred. A major contributor to the films is Brenda Gaudry, owner of Creative Spirit of Barrows, Manitoba. In the first program Mother Nature’s Pantry: Food from the Forest, Brenda illustrates how to tap maple and birch trees, and how to find and harvest fiddleheads, mushrooms, dandelions, cattails, rosebuds (or
rose hips), high bush cranberries, blueberries, and a variety of leaves, bark, and roots for teas. In each instance the plant is explained and its scientific name is provided. Brenda takes us into her kitchen where she shows us how to make bannock to go with the mushroom soup she is also making for a starter, to be followed by fiddlehead shrimp alfredo noodles. Brenda also makes rosehip juice and cranberry juice, as well as blueberry freezer jam. Viewers might suggest a few changes, for example the substitution of whole wheat flour for white flour for the bannock and the deletion of salt from the recipes.

In the second program, *Open your Eyes*, there are four parts. In the first part, *Open your Eyes to Nature: Wild Plants and Crafts* (20 min), Brenda again takes us outdoors for the harvesting of products from the forest. There is some repetition among the videos, but not so much as to cause disengagement. Again, Brenda gathers the leaves for Labrador tea, but also gathers Sweet flag roots, leaves from the black or balsam poplar, and pitch from white (trembling aspen) or white poplar. Yvette Bouvier shows several of her crafts made from products from the wild, as well as her birch bark biting. In the second part, *Open your Eyes to Opportunity* (20 min), the viewer is introduced to several people who are turning the forest products into economic opportunities for small businesses. Doug Eryou of Flin Flon makes birch sap wines; Shirley Leask of Dawson Bay makes a large variety of jams and jellies; Donna Barker of Barrows collects local clay for her pottery; Johnny Bilow of Barrows makes willow furniture; Kevin Bourassa of Barrows does soapstone carving; Doreen Hardy of Flin Flon makes personalized quilts; and Michelle Matthew of Flin Flon makes jewellery from collected items. In the third part, *Open your Eyes to your Future* (14 min), the viewer receives valuable information on both training and marketing, mostly from the previously featured people, but also from Wanda Wolf of Lone Wolf Native Plants and Herb Farm. Finally, in the fourth part, *Open your Eyes to the Living Forest* (42 min), Brenda Gaudry takes us into the forest to gather a variety of plants: Sweet flag, wild mint, white poplar leaves, black poplar leaves, cranberry tree bark, Jacob’s fungus (chaga), rabbit root, pitch from white and black poplar, giant blue hyssop, Labrador tea leaves, and sage. In each instance, Brenda instructs how to harvest the item and what it can be used for, as well providing hints on how to prepare some of the finished products that she makes. In each instance the scientific name of the harvested item is provided. Bonus features of this video include Brenda’s Store, Brenda’s Craft, and Brenda’s Start; in each Brenda Gaudry shows and explains her products, and provides excellent additional information.

In the third program of the collection, *Harvesting Hope in Northern Manitoba Communities*, the focus is on food security and its challenges in northern communities, particularly in selected Oji-Cree communities of the Island Lake region, as well as several Métis communities, for example Cormorant. Older participants Doris Shlachetka and Annie Spence spoke of former times when everyone was more inclined to grow gardens and raise their own animals (e.g., chickens, turkeys, pigs, cows) for food. Archival footage helps to inform the viewer of the effects of flooding caused by the building of dams in the north, and how the environment is changing and affecting the ability of those in the north to harvest foods from the wild. Lawyer Ovide Mercredi (former Chief of the Assembly of First Nations) speaks of the effects of the hydro projects, and poet Duncan Mercredi writes about those effects in his poetry.
The changes in diet have had a devastating effect on people’s health in the north, with escalating rates of diabetes for example. Initiatives to encourage the growth and consumption of healthy foods are introduced in the film, for example Eleanor Woitowicz’s gardening program in Wabowden, Ivan Myers’ greenhouse and gardening business in Cormorant, the country foods program in Nelson House, and various other farming and fishing initiatives. This program includes the following contributors to its production: Vanessa Lozeczenik (Co-producer & Co-director); Ryan Klatt (Co-director, Videographer, Editor, Graphic designer); Shirley Thompson (Co-producer & Co-director); Byron Beardy (Drummer & Singer); and Jackson Beardy III (Hoop Dancer); as well as listed animator, narrators, researchers, and photographers.

In the fourth program, “...And this is my garden,” the focus is on Wabowden’s garden projects that have been initiated with the collaboration of Frontier School Division. Teacher Eleanor Woitowicz grew up with gardening, so when the project was introduced she embraced it with enthusiasm. Many children in the school have their own garden patches at home, planted directly or with seeds started in their own school greenhouse. The greenhouse project includes the growing of vegetables and flowers for sale as well, and the proceeds help to fund the gardening program. At the time of the filming, there were 60 gardens in the community, all tended by students from the school. Many of those students participate in this film, with several introducing themselves in front of their vegetable patch, and then saying, “... and this is my garden.” The people from the community helped to build the many garden frames and prepare them with landscape sheeting and dirt hauled in to fill the boxes. Over the summer, Eleanor checks with the students every few days to see if all is going well. As each month passes, there are different tasks. In August there was collaboration with Fort Whyte in Winnipeg. Archival footage provides an historical look at the evolution of food production and consumption in the community. This film received assistance from the National Film Board Filmmakers’ Assistance Program. Specific credits for the film include: Katherina Stieffenhofer of Growing Local Productions in association with Buffalo Gals Pictures (Director, Producer, Narrator, & Co-writer) and John Gurdebeke (Co-writer, editor, & sound design).

This is an excellent group of films. For more on the Northern Healthy Foods Initiative, which helps to sponsor the gardening projects, see http://www.gov.mb.ca/ana/nhfi.html (EY, MY, SY, Adult)

Grant, Trevor (Director & Writer), Copeman, Don (Co-producer), Copeman, Lynne Beck (Co-producer), & MacDonald, Joe (Co-producer). (2007). Flight from darkness [Documentary]. CA: Eleventh Hour Pictures/National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (52 running minutes)

This powerful film follows Percy L. Paul as he struggles to cope with his bipolar illness. Originally from English River First Nation, or Patuanak, a Dene community in northern Saskatchewan, Percy was a brilliant student who excelled in mathematics and physics, particularly focussing on string theory. Having completed his undergraduate degree, he began work with FINTAAC, an intelligence company in Ottawa, married, and had children. But then he contracted what was later diagnosed as bipolar illness, his personality changed, and both his job
and his marriage disintegrated as he spiralled into drinking and increasingly erratic behaviour. When he disappeared from home, his now former wife Michelle Mackasey eventually found him on the street, saying that it seemed like “his spirit wasn’t with him anymore.”

The film follows Percy as he relocates to Saskatoon, is finally diagnosed and prescribed medication, and returns to university classes. He seems to be doing better as Michelle and the children move to the Saskatoon also, locating close-by. But his health situation is tenuous, and he stops his medication whenever he gets feeling better. Eventually he is both evicted from his boarding house and suspended from the university. As well, Michelle has to ask that he not come to her house as often. During this time, he also revisits his home community, but that is not a good experience, taking him even further into the darkness of his illness. After a period of homelessness, he finds another place to stay, and hopefully, is getting his life back on track.

The film is an emotional exploration of a brilliant man’s struggle with mental illness. Included are interviews with members of Percy’s family, psychiatrists, and a former university professor, as well as with his former wife Michelle. His children also feature in the film, although they are not interviewed. Percy courageously embraces the documentation of his ongoing struggle. (upper MY, SY, Adult)


This film’s focus is on interviews with three Inuit men who as youngsters in the 1960s were identified as intelligent 12 year-olds and taken south to Ottawa to attend school. The intent was that they would be trained then to take leadership positions within their own community. The experiment in social engineering had both positive and negative effects. On the positive side, Peter Ittinuar of Rankin Inlet became Canada’s first Inuit Member of Parliament; Zebedee Nungak of Saputilgait became president of the Inuit-owned Makivik, a major economic and political organization; and Eric Tagoona of Baker Lake became president of the Inuit Tapinisat of Canada (the Inuit equivalent of the Assembly of First Nations). Their activism was instrumental in the creation of Nunavut. But all three men (and the experiment seems to have targeted only males) lost touch, as youth, with their families, their communities, their language, and their culture. All three struggled with challenges in adulthood, including with personal and professional relationships. While Peter and Zebedee worked through those struggles more successfully, Eric turned to a reclusive life at Baker Lake. The extensive interviews with all three men are supplemented with archival footage (e.g., government documents and photographs) and family photographs.

The film raises the controversial issue, addressed more with contemporary educational opportunities provided in the north, of how or if one can both retain their traditional culture and become integrated and successful in the current world of business, commerce, technology, and education. As Zebedee Nungak says in the film, “I don’t regret the experience, but I have never recovered from it.” This powerful statement may prompt many discussions that address current
structural impediments to, and opportunities for, retaining Inuit culture and language. (upper MY, SY, Adult)


In the film, Eric, an athletic non-Aboriginal teenager from Montreal with many awards in soccer, skiing, and basketball, is heading north to Kangiqsualujjuaq, in the Nunavik region of Quebec (on the east coast of Ungava Bay at the mouth of the George River), for the Inuit Games. The film follows Eric as he trains for a week for four events: the arm pull, the knuckle hop, the one foot high kick, and the airplane. The only event that requires any equipment is the one foot high kick. Eric is challenged with these new sporting events or games. He tries his best and gets another medal to add to his collection, one for participation. Eric also completes photo-journals of his own experiences for the viewer. While the film is meant to build an appreciation for the various events of the Inuit Games, it seems that that message is presented at the expense of an uninitiated adolescent who has not grown up with those games. Even though Eric seems to be a good sport about the experience, the viewer wonders if there might have been a better way to communicate such appreciation. (MY, SY, Adult)

**Hammond, Arthur (Director & Writer), & Burwash, Cecily (Producer). (1968). This land [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (57 running minutes)**

This older film is important for any study of the history of Aboriginal land claims in Canada. It addresses the work of the Nishga of British Columbia to have their rights to their un-ceded, ancestral lands legally recognized. This film shows the initial lobbying work, as it is happening; as such, the film is an amazing historical record in itself. Leading the fight was the Nishga politician Frank Calder, who was the first status First Nation to be elected to any legislature in Canada in 1949 (eleven years prior to when Aboriginal people were granted the vote), and also a graduate of the Anglican Theological College of the University of British Columbia. The resultant 1973 case, Calder v. British Columbia (Attorney General), was heard before the Supreme Court and marked the first recognition that Aboriginal people had title to the land prior to the colonization of North America. That title is assumed with selected clauses of the Royal Proclamation of 1763. Obviously, if subsequent settlement of Canada depended on the legal negotiations allowed only by government and entered into by that same government, then the First Nations must have had title, or such a process would not have been necessary. There are several websites that elaborate the Calder case and its implications; for example, see 1) [http://www.sfu.ca/~palys/SCC-1973-Calder%20v.%20British%20Columbia%20AG.pdf](http://www.sfu.ca/~palys/SCC-1973-Calder%20v.%20British%20Columbia%20AG.pdf); 2) [http://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/5113/index.do](http://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/5113/index.do); and 3) [http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/land-rights/calder-case.html](http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/land-rights/calder-case.html). As well as footage of other important community members’ contributions in this crucial struggle, the film includes footage of the lands and Niasga life of the Ness Valley, at the time. Unfortunately, this film can
no longer be accessed directly from the website of the National Film Board (NFB). (upper MY, SY, Adult)

Harjo, Sterlin (Writer & Director). (2006). *Four sheets to the wind* [Motion picture]. US: Indion Entertainment Group, with Kish Productions and Dirt Road Productions; First Look Studio (Distributor). (84 running minutes)

This excellent coming-of-age film deals primarily with the struggles of Cufe Smallhill (Cody Lightning) and his sister Miri (Tamara Podemski). When Cody’s father takes his own life, Cody buries him in the fishing pond, according to his Dad’s wishes. Soon he decides to go and visit his sister in Tulsa, not initially knowing that his sister is struggling with her life there. He meets and falls in love with Miri’s more well-adjusted neighbor Francie (Laura Bailey), with whom he can talk and be his true self. Meanwhile, his Mom Cora (Jeri Arredondo) is trying to carry on with her life, and forms a deeper friendship with Sonny (Mike Randelman). When Miri is caught stealing money from her workplace, she is fired, soon receives an eviction notice, and takes an overdose of sleeping pills in response. Francie finds her and phones Cufe, who had gone home. Miri recovers in hospital, then goes back home and reconciles with her Mom with whom she has had a tension-filled relationship. Cufe leaves to go travelling with Miri. There is a film narration in Creek by the father, it would seem. This is a good movie, one that could be used to generate dialogue with adolescents. Both Cody Lightning and Tamara Podemski are excellent in their roles, as are the other actors. (upper MY, SY)


This is a moving film with the ailing Frankie (Richard Ray Whitman) coming to terms with his impending death. He has hurt many people in his life, and he wants to make his final peace with several of his family members. His former lover Irene (Casey Camp Harinek), one of those he has deeply hurt, agrees to take him on a road trip to visit several family members, among them his daughter and new grandson. Frankie is released from the hospital for the trip, and Irene supports him during their travels even though she has very little money for the trip. They meet others along the way: church evangelists; a strange reclusive young man upon whose land they rest and who gives Frankie marijuana to relieve his discomfort; as well as a young couple whose car broke down who, when Irene leaves them off at their parents’ home, offers a music tape that Frankie plays repeatedly. As they near Wewoka, or Barking Water, where Frankie’s daughter and grandson live, Frankie becomes increasingly ill. He asks Irene if she would agree to hold his hand when he dies, and if he doesn’t make it to his daughter’s house, if she will hug his grandchild for him and give him a kiss. He dies just before they reach the community. Harinek plays an excellent role as the wronged ex-lover submitting to her former partner’s dying request. Whitman is absolutely superb in his role, very convincingly a severely ill man. The movie would be excellent for a dialogue around how we treat people, and when and how we seek forgiveness for past wrongs we have done to others, and also if and/or how we can forgive others who have wronged us. The movie is as much about Irene’s process of forgiving
Frankie for deserting her, as it is about Frankie’s seeking for forgiveness. This movie stays with you. (SY, Adult)

Hoedeman, Co (Director x 1), Leaf, Caroline (Director x 1), & Hartman, Françoise (Director x 1). (1973, 1974, & 1986). Native legends: The owl and the raven; The owl who married a goose; & Summer legend [Animated films]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (23 running minutes)

This compilation of older films includes two Inuit stories and one Mi’kmaq legend. As older films, the credits use the word ‘Eskimo’ and an outdated spelling of Mi’kmaq, both usages which have to be overlooked. The films themselves are unique and diverse. In the first film, the Inuit story The Owl and the Raven (6 min, 39 sec), Co Hoedman uses wonderful seal fur puppets to depict the activities of Owl and Raven as they tried to paint each other to improve their looks, as they were both totally light greyish brown in colour. Owl stood still for Raven’s painting and got new streaks on his feathers to add to his good looks. But when it came Raven’s turn, he would not stand still for Owl, who became annoyed and dumped all the paint over Raven’s head, which is why Raven is black to this day. This film is available on the NFB website: https://www.nfb.ca/film/owl_raven_eskimo_legend. In the second film, the Inuit story The Owl who Married a Goose (7 min, 38 sec), Caroline Leaf uses black and white shadow animation to tell the story of Owl’s attraction to Goose, who laid five eggs and then took her babies to the water. That challenged Owl, as he could not swim and had to be rescued. Perhaps there are lessons here about how to choose a partner who is compatible. This film, totally in the Inuktitut language (but with the animation depicting the activities for easy understanding by anyone), is available on the NFB website: http://www3.nfb.ca/animation/objanim/en/filmmakers/Caroline-Leaf/film.php?id=9468&idfilm=10510. In the third film, the Mi’kmaq story Summer Legend (8 min, 19 sec), Françoise Hartman uses beautifully animated artistic drawings to tell the story of how Glooscap released the Mi’kmaq from perpetual winter by bringing Summer to the north, but for only six months of each year. Summer is depicted as an attractive maiden from the land to which Glooscap travels as he looks for a release from Winter for his people. This film is available on the NFB website: https://www.nfb.ca/film/summer_legend. The films can be used for different purposes for students of varying ages. (EY, MY, SY, Adult)


The movie tells the story of the enforced removal of the Nez Perce from their ancestral lands, and the role of Chief Joseph in resisting that removal of his band from the Wallowa Valley.
in what is now northeastern Oregon. That valley was opened to white settlement in 1877 by then U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant, and the Nez Perce were given 30 days to relocate to the Lapwai Reservation. As in several other instances with other tribal groups (e.g., Cherokee), there was a ‘treaty party’ who agreed to the violation of the original treaty with the Nez Perce, with the subsequent agreement to the relocation and to a much smaller territory in order to accommodate settlers and gold rush prospectors. While Chief Joseph did finally also agree to move to a reservation, the tense peace was upset when a younger tribal man killed the white man, along with several others, who had killed his father on a trumped up charge of horse theft. That action initiated a long flight of nearly 2000 kilometres over three months by the Nez Perce as they sought refuge from the pursuing United States army under the command of General Oliver O. Howard (James Whitmore). The movie follows that story. As well as Chief Joseph (Ned Romero), in the movie the key players of the Nez Perce were his wife Toma (Linda Redfearn); his brother Ollokot (Emilio Delgrado), the tribe’s war leader; Wahlitits (John Kaufman); Rainbow (Nick Ramus); White Bird (Frank Salsedo); Chief Looking Glass (Vincent St. Cyr); and Yellow Wolf (Charles Ynfante). James Whitmore gives a convincing portrayal of a tough but empathetic General Howard, as does Sam Elliott as the more troubled Captain Wood. As is well-known, the United States Army caught up with the Nez Perce just one-day’s ride from Canada, where they would have reached safety. That led to Chief Joseph’s famous words of surrender:

Tell General Howard I know his heart. What he told me before I have in my heart. I am tired of fighting, Looking Glass is dead. Too-Hul-hul-sote is dead. The old men are all dead. It is the young men who say yes or no. He who led on the young men is dead. It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them have run away to the hills, and have no blankets, no food; no one knows where they are—perhaps freezing to death. I want to have time to look for my children and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs. I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever.

This film should not be bypassed because of its date, as the producers do employ Aboriginal actors for many of the key roles, with tribal affiliations listed in the credits. Ned Romero, of Chitimacha background (as well as French and Spanish), plays Chief Joseph. Viewers do have to get past the bad wigs and make-up, however, to focus on the subject of the movie. The film can become part of a study of Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce, as well as part of an elaborated research work on enforced relocations of indigenous people. Other entries in this document review other films about Chief Joseph. This film will also lead to opportunities for an analysis of the leadership approaches of the various people involved in the conflict. Interestingly, the American population reserved their greatest respect, it seems, for those Aboriginal tribes that most stubbornly resisted the take-over of their lands by the United States. That did not mean, as in Chief Joseph’s case, that they got to keep their lands, or were treated any better than those who quickly took reserves, however. That aspect—the admiration of those who resist domination—can also be studied. (upper MY, SY, Adult)
The speech (SY, Adult) written by Chief Joseph is essential reading for his analysis of the conflict. There are many websites that include parts of the speech, as well as analyses of it (e.g., http://unitedstateshistory2.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/chief-joseph-an-indians-view-of-indian-affairs-william-graham-sumner-social-darwinism1.pdf). The speech contains this famous quote: In the treaty councils the commissioners have claimed that our country had been sold to the Government. Suppose a white man should come to me and say, “Joseph, I like your horses, and I want to buy them.” I say to him, “No, my horses suit me, I will not sell them.” Then he goes to my neighbor, and says to him: “Joseph has some good horses. I want to buy them, but he refuses to sell.” My neighbor answers, “Pay me the money, and I will sell you Joseph’s horses.” The white man returns to me and says, “Joseph, I have bought your horses, and you must let me have them.” If we sold our lands to the Government, this is the way they were bought. (p. 7)

Scott O’Dell’s historical novel, completed after his death by his widow Elizabeth Hall, is based on the life of Chief Joseph and the story of the Nez Perce, as seen through the eyes of Chief Joseph’s daughter. While considered a work for adolescent readers, because of the concentration on battle scenes, including the killing of women and children, it is advised that the book be used only at the Senior Years and Adult levels. The book is still valuable as it clearly traces the revenge extracted on the Nez Perce by the United States when they fought back against the theft of their lands and their poor treatment by the newcomers. Given the context of its writing, this book does not equal Scott O’Dell’s other literature; however, Elizabeth Hall is to be commended for her commitment to completing this work. (SY, Adult)


These movies are listed under the book author’s name in order to situate all of them as Tony Hillerman mysteries, with the same lead characters in the final three movies: Lt. Joe Leaphorn (Wes Studi), Officer Jim Chee (Adam Beach), lawyer Janet Pete (Alex Rice, female), and Emma Leaphorn (Sheila Tousey). In the first movie listed—The Dark Wind—the actors are different, with Lou Diamond Phillips as Officer Chee, Fred Ward as Lt. Joe Leaphorn, Gary Farmer as Cowboy Albert Dashee (as a Hopi police officer), and John Karlen as Jake West, the owner of the trading store. Additional actors are involved in each drama. All the action takes
place on a Navajo reservation and involves the integration of the Navajo culture. Although non-Aboriginal, Tony Hillerman (1925-2008) received a Special Friend of the Dineh award from the Navajo.

In *The Dark Wind*, Officer Chee has returned to his Navajo community from formal college training. He is also training as a healer in his culture. He is initially tasked with protecting a windmill that is pumping water, previously of joint-use between the Navajo and Hopi, but now exclusively for Hopi use. The windmill has been sabotaged several times. In the meantime, a decaying body is also found in the nearby hills, and there is a suspicion that it may be connected to a theft at the trading post store. The store’s owner, Jake West, thinks that the killer is the same person he suspected of robbing his store, Joe Musket, a Navajo drug dealer. There is also a mysterious plane crash in the area, a big drug shipment, and more deaths that all seem to be linked. Officer Jim Chee gets involved in the investigation. This is a good episode. Students might compare it with the episodes from a decade later. The book is engaging even more so than the movie, with a much stronger plot development than many ‘generic’ mysteries. In this initial book, the story centres more on Jim Chee and the manner in which he solves the mysteries; the supporting role is played by Hopi policeman ‘Cowboy’ Albert Dashee, and Joe Leaphorn has a more minor part. The book is rich with description of the Navajo and the Hopi cultures. Chee’s and Dashee’s understanding of their respective cultures and the country itself helps to solve the several mysteries.

In *Skinwalkers*, Leaphorn (Wes Studi)—returning to the community with his wife Emma who is recovering from cancer—quickly becomes involved in an investigation with Jim Chee (Adam Beach). That work is layered with Leaphorn’s care of his wife, who has a visit at the local hospital with the young Dr. Stone (Michael Greyeyes), also returning to the community. The movie begins with the murder of a medicine man Roman George (Harrison Lowe). While investigating, Chee finds that another of the contemporaries, Lonnie Mack, has recently died in Phoenix. Sure that the killer is targeting medicine men in particular, Chee, who is learning to be a medicine man, quickly moves to protect his mentor Wilson Sam (Saginaw Grant) by moving him to a motel for safety. But Wilson decides to go home, and he too is killed. Also involved in the plot is young Tommy (Nicholas Bartolo) and a group of gangsters that is trying to pull him into the group. When Tommy is taken to the hospital, he runs away, but not before breaking into Dr. Stone’s locker and stealing some of his belongings. Chee finds Tommy, and discovers that one of the items he stole from Dr. Stone is a necklace that belonged to another community medicine man, one who had a falling out with the other three many years back, and who then left the community. Chee also finds an article that links Dr. Stone to that man, as his surviving son who was adopted out when his father died and when his mother was unable to care for him. Chee then tracks down Dr. Stone, who has gone fishing, and confronts him with the evidence that it is he—Dr. Stone—who has killed all three men in revenge for his father’s banishment. Dr. Stone tries to kill Chee but Leaphorn arrives just in time. The movie is good, but not realistic to police work, lawyer practice, or court proceedings, in contemporary times at least. The viewer has to suspend disbelief and just enjoy the mystery. Director Chris Eyre has a small part as Judge Amadeus Pinto. The music by BC Smith and the scenery (the movie was shot in New Mexico) are both
exceptional. (SY, Adult) The movie follows the book quite closely. However, in the novel, Leaphorn’s adored wife Emma is struggling with memory loss, the issue at first being considered Alzheimers but which then is diagnosed as an operable brain tumour, to Leaphorn’s relief. As well, the book involves some changes in characters and some difference in motive of the villain. Dr. Yellowhorse (rather than Dr. Stone) is faking his billing in order to pull in more money to operate the medical centre; as well, he is posing as one who can identify skinwalkers, those who can target others for death or harm. That leads to several deaths, and ultimately when he is discovered, to his own.

In *Coyote Waits* the plot involves conjecture that the infamous Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid escaped to the mountains within the Navajo community. As Chee (Adam Beach) gives teenager Jen (Candice Costello) a ride to work, his police partner Delbert Nez phones for backup. Chee is tardy in getting there, and when he does, finds his partner dead and his police car in flames. As Chee drives away from the murder site, he comes across old Ashie Pinto (Jimmie Herman) with a gun tucked into his belt and drinking a bottle of expensive whiskey. Ashie says he is not guilty, but the case against him is strong, and he is jailed. When Joe Leaphorn’s (Wes Studi) wife Emma (Sheila Tousey), as well as Ashie’s niece, insist that Ashie could not have committed such a crime, they and Joe begin to dig deeper. So does Chee even though he is supposed to be on medical leave. There are several suspicious characters, like the keeper of the trading store John McGinnis (Keith Carradine); Huan Ji (Long Nguyen) and/or his son Taka Ji (Joseph Tran), who own the white vehicle Chee saw leaving the scene of the murder; and Professor Tagert (Tom Briggs) and his research assistant Odell Redd (Bodhi Elfman). Chee goes looking in the mountains again, stumbles and falls, and slides into a cave where lies the dead Professor Tagert, along with the bones and gear of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid. Odell Redd surprises Chee who accuses Redd of the murders (there are three, with another archeologist being killed as well). Redd gets away, but not before being bit by a rattlesnake. He dies, but the mystery is not over. It turns out that Ashie Pinto did actually kill both Professor Taggart and Delbert Nez. The movie includes Gary Farmer as Captain Largo, and an absolutely hilarious Graham Greene as Slick Nakai. The music and landscape scenes are stunning. Again, while the police, lawyer, and court work may not be realistic, the movie is entertaining. All of these movies can generate dialogue concerning the difficulty of policing in one’s own community. (SY, Adult) The book elaborates some other characters and some additional aspects of the story. In particular, in the movie another Professor Louisa Bourebonette, as well Tagert, is interested in the plight of Ashie Pinto, but she for more sincere reasons. Leaphorn’s wife Emma has died during surgery, and he is devastated; however, he begins to become fond of Professor Bourebonette. We realize that Mr. Pinto’s motive in killing Tagert is that Tagert, knowing Mr. Pinto’s weakness for alcohol, has repeatedly plied him with whiskey to extricate cultural knowledge. The killing of Nez happens only because he is in the wrong place at the wrong time, when Mr. Pinto is inebriated. It is noted that, in Mr. Pinto’s stories, Coyote is depicted as our dark side, rather than the bumbling trickster more common in children’s stories, and that Coyote can infiltrate each of us and affect our decisions in evil ways.
The movie *A Thief of Time* deals with a complex mystery around the thievery of pots from Aboriginal burial grounds. To introduce the viewer, there is an additional 26 minute video called *Thieves of Time* that addresses the early widespread practice of digging in and stealing from Aboriginal graves, and the initiation of federal and state legislation to prevent such thievery. In the movie, Dr. Friedman-Bernal is treading on a thin path of legality, but others are blatantly breaking the law as stealers and sellers of ancient artifacts, in this case pots. The professor is tracing the path of the pots of one particular female Anasazi potter, hoping to solve the mystery of what happened to the Anasazi, whose culture and people seem to have just disappeared. She goes missing, and Joe Leaphorn (Wes Studi) is trying to find her. As well, a backhoe is stolen from a compound that Jim Chee (Adam Beach) was supposed to be guarding. Captain Largo (Gary Farmer) is the infuriating boss. In trying to track the whereabouts of Dr. Friedman-Bernal, Leaphorn meets her colleagues Maxie Davis (Dawn Lewis) and Randy Elliott (Lee Tergesen), also archeologists, as well as Pete Etcitty (Kenneth White Eagle Wings) and Slick Nakai (Graham Greene) whom he already knows. The path of the pots is traced to Harrison Houk (Peter Fonda) who lives with his housekeeper Irene Musket (Tantoo Cardinal) after his mentally ill son Brigham (Daryl Hury) killed his wife and two other children. Leaphorn was involved in that situation, and with pleading from Harrison, silently allowed Brigham to escape to the mountains. The mystery deepens throughout the movie as Chee finds the backhoe by a burial ground, but with Etcitty and another man killed; as well, Harrison Houk is also killed. As the Leaphorn and Chee, in separate ways, move to solving the mystery, Leaphorn gives a message to Irene Musket as he leaves to kayak toward the mountain where he feels that Dr. Friedman-Bernal has disappeared. He finds her injured, as he also meets up with Brigham. Randy Elliott mysteriously arrives to assist in bringing his injured colleague, and Leaphorn suddenly realizes that Elliott is the murderer. With a gun on Leaphorn, who is recounting his conclusion, Elliott admits what he has done, noting that he wants to prove that the Anasazi disappeared because of disease. Just as he is preparing to shoot Leaphorn, Elliott is killed by an arrow from Brigham who was in hiding but overheard the conversation. Just then Chee also arrives, having received Leaphorn’s message and also having come to the conclusion that Elliott is the culprit. The movie follows the book quite closely; however, in the movie Emma (Sheila Tousey) is ill with cancer and taking treatments whereas in the movie she has recently died. For school or university use, the book should be read prior to viewing the movie. (SY, Adult)

There are 18 mysteries in the Hillerman’s Joe Leaphorn series; the first few do not feature Jim Chee. Several have been released in audio book format, and others in large print format. Only four—those reviewed here—have been released as television movies.

Houston, John (Director), d’Entremont, Peter (Exec. producer), & Ejesiak, Kirt (Producer). (2006). *Kiviuq* [Documentary]. CA: Triad Films, Kiviuk Films, & drumsong production; McNabb Connolly (Distributors). (70 running minutes)


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This engaging ‘minimalist’ film (Inuktitut with English subtitles) tells the story of Kiviuq, the Inuit perpetual traveler whose stories were constrained by missionaries. As one of the three Inuit Elder narrators, Samson Quinangnaq (1924-2006) states that the stories are the “secret Bible of the Inuit. Kiviuq was a prophet, and these stories are his parables” (film jacket). Filmed in a school gym, with several of the scenes with an audience in attendance, the stories are acted out by Inuit youth and young adults, with Lemech Kadloo as Kiviuk; Taila Hansen as Goose Woman/Wolf Mother; June Shappa as Wolf Woman/Favorite Wife; and Annie Peterboosie as Bee Woman, and also an Elder narrator. The third Elder narrator was Henry Evaluardjuk. The film also includes youth Inuit dancers Kakak (Jerilyn) Kaniak, Kayla Aknavigak, Quentin Crockatt, Pudjak (Jason) Avoluk, and Leon Haniliak. The stories include 1) The Grandmother seeks revenge against Kiviuk’s people (as they mistreat the orphan boy); 2) The boy and his Grandmother trick the mean people; 3) Bee Woman; 4) The jealous wolf mother; 5) Kiviuq’s homecoming; 6) Kiviuq’s favourite wife comes back as a fox; 7) Kiviuk joins the family of animals; 8) Grizzly and the creation of fog; 9) Kiviuk finds his goose family; and 10) Kiviuq’s song. This excellent film could be viewed several times so that students might understand the stories in more detail. As well, it can serve as a model for young people to engage in their own filmmaking projects around their traditional culture. The film includes interviews with the director, with storyteller Kira Van Deusen, and with the Inuktitut translator, Philip Paneak. For more information on the film and related resources see http://www.unipka.ca/ (MY, SY, Adult)

The included book is a compilation of traditional Inuit myths and legends, including two stories about the traveller Kiviuq, which are similar to but with some significant differences from a combination of similar stories within the film. As well, another story in the compilation is similar in nature to the Kiviuq story about the wild geese; it is entitled The Man Who Took a Wife from among the Wild Geese. Still another story entitled The Man who Took a Fox for a Wife bears some similarities to a Kiviuq story. This publication is an essential part of a library on Inuit stories. Because of the violent nature of many of the Inuit myths and legends, their contemporary use may be restricted. (MY, SY, Adult)

Howe, Doug (Director & Writer), Meeches, Lisa (Co-producer & Host), & Irving, Kyle (Co-producer). (2006). Crooked Music: ‘John Arcand, the master of the Métis Fiddle’ [Documentary, from The Sharing Circle, Season 14, Show 1]. Winnipeg, MB: The Sharing Circle/Meeches Video Production. (24 running minutes)

This program is all about Métis fiddling, and is focused on the master of the Métis fiddle, John Arcand. Filming takes place at the annual festival that is held every year at John and Vicki Arcand’s acreage south of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and includes interviews with John himself, and his wife Vicki, and also with many other notable guests and some family members, including Mr. Arcand’s daughter Michelle and his brother Ralph. There is music all around the grounds, both formally and with impromptu jam sessions. The festival began in 1998 with a $750 budget, and at the time of this 2006 film grown to include $84,000 in budget funds, with the event also having achieved charitable, non-profit status. Métis fiddling, called ‘crooked music’ because of its unpredictable changes in time and rhythm, is synonymous with dancing and jigging, also
prevalent at the festival. People now attend the annual John Arcand festival from all over North America. (MY, SY, Adult)

Hrynchuk, Antonio (Director & Producer), Silliphant, Craig (Writer), & Tate, Angie (Narrator). (1995). *Stolen sisters* [Documentary]. CA: Fahrenheit Films. (43 running minutes)


The selections within this section all focus on missing and murdered Aboriginal women. As the numbers of these women have increased, these films and books lend voice to a crisis in Canada. See http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/new-list-of-missing-murdered-aboriginal-women-gives-families-hope-1.2510650

The film *Stolen Sisters*, which was inspired by Amnesty International’s report about violence against women, includes many interviews with family members of missing Aboriginal women. We accompany young Dana Muskego as he travels all over the country trying to find his sister Daleen Kay Bosse (Muskego), putting up posters, asking if someone has seen her, following even the most frail of leads in hope that he will find her. Daleen’s Aunt also joins that search, travelling to Dauphin, Manitoba, when someone reported seeing her there. Daleen’s parents, her husband Jeremiah, her extended family, and her friends all voice their frustration that so little was done by the police to try to find Daleen. Even her car, when it was found, did not undergo a forensic search. Every year, Daleen’s family and their supporters walked from Onion Lake First Nation to Saskatoon to raise awareness until such time, in 2008, that Daleen was found. She had been murdered. The film also introduces us to Amber Redman who is also missing, and to her mother Gwenda Yuzicappi and her Aunt Glendice. Gwenda becomes a strong advocate for Amber and other missing women, attending an international Missing Women’s Forum, and holding spring feasts for Amber. The filmmakers take us to Vancouver, to the infamous downtown eastside, from where many women have disappeared, and also to the Highway of Tears in northern B.C, a stretch of highway where many women have also gone missing. The film includes several interviews with police from Saskatchewan and from British Columbia who give their reports on the cases. At one point the police even go to visit Daleen’s parents at Onion Lake; however, it is felt that their time would better have been spent focussing on Daleen’s disappearance as soon as she had gone missing. The film also includes an interview with Warren Goulding, the author of *Just Another Indian*, about serial killer John Martin.
Crawford. In that book Goulding talks of how other serial killers of children and women receive much more attention than Crawford did because Crawford’s victims were all Aboriginal women. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

The title of the award-winning film Finding Dawn refers to Dawn Crey, an Aboriginal woman who disappeared from Vancouver’s downtown east side, and whose DNA was eventually found on the pig farm of killer Willie Pickton, however not enough to positively identify her and to charge Pickton with the murder. For years, her family had tried to find her, with no success. Interviews with Dawn’s siblings Lorraine and Ernie show a picture of Dawn as a loving person who got trapped in the drug life, and who then turned to prostitution. As youngsters, their father had died young, and then the children were placed in foster homes. Although Dawn was in a loving foster home with people who cared for her as their own, it was not enough to save her from yearning for her own lost family, or from the streets. Ernie Crey became an advocate for the missing women from Vancouver’s downtown east side, noting that while they were not all Aboriginal, they were all poor and had likely all turned to drugs, and then to prostitution, as a way of trying to cope.

The film then focusses on Ramona Wilson, who went missing on BC’s infamous Highway of Tears. She was discovered ten months later in dense forest adjoining the highway. Because the stretch of Highway #16 from Prince Rupert to Prince George is so long and so desolate, it is particularly dangerous for the female hitchhiker whose financial situation provides few options for travel. Each year, the family holds a commemorative walk for Ramona, honouring her life and the lives of others who have been lost along the highway.

The third story in Finding Dawn is about Daleen Kay Bosse (Muskego), originally from Onion Lake First Nation, but living in Saskatoon, married, a mother, and a university teacher candidate at the time of her disappearance in 2004. Although she had not been found at the time of the film, her body was later found in 2008 north of Saskatoon, and Douglas Hales was charged with her murder. The film includes interviews with Daleen’s parents, Herb and Pauline Muskego, as they try to deal with Daleen’s disappearance, and addresses their repeated efforts to try to get the police to take their daughter’s disappearance seriously. For a teaching guide to the film, see http://www.onf-nfb.gc.ca/sg/100567.pdf (upper MY, SY, Adult)

The book Torn from our Midst includes proceedings from a Regina conference, and also the stories of several of the missing women, including Daleen, as told by family members. In all, the book includes 22 contributions under the following sections that follow introductory contributions: Family Stories; The Violent Erasure of Women; Resisting with All the Senses: Art and Activism; Organizational Resistance: Action from Within; and Self-Care and the Healing Journey. The book is accompanied by a DVD that includes videos of three speakers from the conference: Maria Campbell, Marta Perez, and Morningstar Mercredi. The opening address by Métis author and activist Maria Campbell is moving and elegant; she is a powerful speaker. (SY, Adult) Both the book and the DVD are excellent resources.

Warren Goulding’s book Just Another Indian details the case of John Martin Crawford, who killed three Aboriginal women in Saskatoon in the early 1990s, as well as another Aboriginal woman in Alberta. Crawford was convicted of manslaughter for the killing of Mary
Jane Sirloin in Lethbridge, Alberta, in 1981. After release he moved to Saskatoon, where, in the early 1990s, he killed Eva Taysup, Shelley Napope, and Calinda Waterhen. He was convicted of those murders, and is currently imprisoned. Goulding’s book is excellent, as the reader gets to know about all these women as real people with caring families. As such, we are encouraged to become more vocal and active about the violence perpetrated against Aboriginal women. At the time of Crawford’s crimes, it seemed that there was little interest either in the victims or in the murderer. For more information see http://www.danielnpaul.com/SerialKiller-JohnMartinCrawford.html.

For information on a more recent case of a murdered Aboriginal woman, see news websites (e.g., CBC; Globe and Mail) about Loretta Saunders. In this instance, the public is acting with more care and concern. Loretta Saunders, an Inuk university student in Nova Scotia, but from Labrador, had written her honour’s thesis proposal around the subject of missing and murdered Aboriginal women.


This is an introductory documentary on the treaties, particularly the numbered treaties of Saskatchewan. Available in its entirety on Youtube (See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VhwZQdaPdo0), this excellent introduction is accessible to youth and adults alike. As well as the excellent narration of Bernelda Wheeler, the film involves the participation of several interviewees, along with archival photographs, maps, and documents. The maps show the areas for each of Saskatchewan’s numbered treaties. Judge David Arnot speaks the words of then Lieutenant Governor Alexander Morris who was instrumental in negotiating several of the numbered treaties. The producers stress the importance of the 1763 Royal Proclamation which laid out the necessity to negotiate with Aboriginal peoples with the treaty process. While Canada gained control over much of the lands belonging to the Aboriginal people, the people retained reserve communities, hunting, fishing, and trapping rights, as well as education, health care, and farming assistance. The treaty process is described as pipe and paper ceremonies. Initially and in the final scenes, an Elder talks to several young people about treaties and their importance. As she says, “We are all treaty Canadians. The treaties are a legacy for all of us.” As such, we all need to learn more about the treaty process and the ongoing commitment to our First Peoples, for, in Alexander Morris’ words, “As long as the sun shines.” We need to examine how we are living out that commitment, given the contributions of one young interviewee, Anita Large, who communicated her childhood and adolescent shame about her own culture. It was not until she was attending university that she gained pride in her identity and her culture. Families need support for their healing journey, and schools need the strength, also with support, to embrace their role in the process. (MY, SY, Adult)


The first film, "Sweetness in Life," with four programs (#10, #11, #12, & #13) contained in the video and herein reviewed, involves the cross-Canada work from a group in Saskatchewan with hosts Lorne Duquette and Monica Goulet, and interviewer Tasha Hubbard. The title refers to the need for Aboriginal people to return to the ‘sweetness of life’ with foods coming directly from the land and with exercise while living a good life with attention to emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual elements. In program #10, Tasha travels to Prince Albert, to Winnipeg to R. B. Russell School for their diabetes awareness play, and then back to Saskatoon for an interview with Gordon Tootoosis, who also provides the final ‘living message’ in Cree. In program #11, Lorne is featured at a powwow, where he dances and makes healthy food choices. Tasha also travels to Edmonton to interview Kathleen Cardinal, a diabetes nurse, and to Siksika First Nation where Elder Ann McMaster talks about diabetes history and its incidence in her family. She provides the ‘living message’ in Blackfoot. In program #12, Tasha is on Vancouver Island, interviewing a diabetes educator and a dietician from the T’Souke First Nation. There Tasha learns how to make cedar roses, after being gifted one, and she adopts the cedar rose as a symbol of their diabetes work. She also visits Lonnox Island First Nation in Prince Edward Island. David Levi from Lennox Island and Freda Shaughnessy, Chief of Namgis First Nation in British Columbia, provide the ‘living message’. Program #13 features a workshop sponsored by the Rolling River First Nation at Riding Mountain National Park in Manitoba. Elder Margaret Lavallee and Dr. Marlyn Cook provide the workshop and the interviews for the program. Monica Goulet also hosts a session, where she and her children participate with Tae Kwon Do instructors Dean Head and Blanche Cowley Head. The ‘living words’ message, in Anishnabe, is given by Elder Margaret Lavallee.

The second film, "The Gift of Diabetes," is about Brion Whitford, and his journey to try to cope with and control his diabetes. Originally from Sandy Bay First Nation in Manitoba, an Anishnabe (Ojibway) community, Brion visits that community, as well as other First Nations across Canada and the United States as he journeys toward an understanding of his identity, including becoming more conversant with the effects of residential schools and the abuse of alcohol and drugs in his family. Brion was born after his Mom got pregnant in residential school. For a few years, until he was four, his grandparents looked after him. Then he moved to the city of Winnipeg with his parents, becoming immersed in what was then a multi-cultural North End, with many Ukrainian and Jewish families. The little contact he had with First Nations was negative, and he came to feel a self-loathing and resentment toward his own people. When Brion goes to see Elder Solomon Awashish, he is guided by Solomon’s stories of his own experience.
When Solomon tried to blame his mother for leaving him at the residential school, she basically said, “I did the best I could with what I had. Deal with it.” With visits to Mohawk communities in Quebec, Brion is encouraged to take responsibility for his health. When travelling to Peguis First Nation in Manitoba, Elder Carl Bird offers prayers for Brion’s grandfather, whose death Brion has still not come to terms with. With a scare that he is having a heart attack, and the on-going support from his partner Hyan-Jung Kim, Brion commits to changing the pattern of life habits, to eating the right foods, to exercising, and to stopping his smoking habit. He is encouraged, in spite of the past, to take responsibility for his own well-being. In that, he sees diabetes as having been the gift that has led to an understanding of himself, and to a life that is now not marred by hatred and blame. With the high incidence of Type 2 diabetes in First Nations, this will be an appropriate film to initiate dialogue and programs for improvements toward a healthy lifestyle. (MY, SY, Adult)

Gilles Pinette’s excellent 28-page book, *Diabetes and Diet: Ivan’s Story*, is part of Ningwakwe’s Healthy Life Series. In the book, Ivan has contracted Type 2 diabetes, and the doctor helps him to understand the disease and how he can control it. Included in the book are several charts that provide information, for example on the risks for as well as the symptoms and complications of the disease. The keys to success are listed, along with Ivan’s personal list of his keys to success. As well as his physical health, Ivan needs to take care of his intellectual, emotional, and spiritual health. In order to guide healthy food choices, a copy of Canada’s Food Guide is included. The book is a good storied approach to helping readers develop their own success guide to healthy living. (MY, SY, Adult)

* Hubbard, Tasha (Director & Writer), & Thompson, Bonnie (Producer). (2004). *Two worlds colliding* [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (49 running minutes)

The film *Two Worlds Colliding* focusses on the freezing deaths of several Aboriginal men near the city of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. While 17 year old Neil Stonechild’s death was in November, 1990, the freezing deaths of Rodney Naistus (body discovered Jan. 29, 2000) and Lawrence Wegner (body discovered Feb. 3, 2000) happened ten years later, with their bodies discovered in the same desolate area where Darrell Night was dropped off by police on January 28, 2000. Unlike the other men, Darrell Night survives, walking to a nearby power station and summoning help from a security guard. Night does not keep quiet about his experience and the situation with the other men; rather, he takes his complaints forward. A major police
investigation involves the R.C.M.P. and results in convictions and eight-month prison terms for the two policemen (Ken Munson & Dan Hatchen) who dropped Night off into the cold winter night. The film includes interviews with Darrell Night, and with Lawrence Wegner’s family, as well as with lawyer Don Worme and retired Aboriginal R.C.M.P. office Oliver Williams (brought in by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations), and Jason Roy (last person to see Neil Stonechild), among others. While the then Saskatoon Police Chief Dave Scott insists that each instance is an isolated case, when he is replaced by Russell Sabo in 2003, the matter is further investigated and connections are drawn among the several deaths. Sabo’s community policing style leads to more relationships with the community, and the opening, for example, of the Little Chief Station in the inner city, with Constable Larry Hartwig in charge. During the inquiry into Neil Stonechild’s death, initiated by the provincial government, it was found that the same Constable Larry Hartwig, as well as Constable Brad Senger, had picked up Neil Stonechild on the night of his death. While they were not charged, they both lost their jobs. Inquests into the deaths of Rodney Naistus and Lawrence Wenger did not reach conclusive results concerning the causes of their deaths, with Wenger’s death attributed to hypothermia but with the cause of that exposure undetermined. Two later deaths, those of Lloyd Dustyhorn and D’Arcy Dean Ironchild, were also later investigated, with the conclusion that Dustyhorn also died of hypothermia, but that Ironchild had died of a drug overdose.

The film Out in the Cold is a stunning visual commentary on the ‘starlight tours’. In the film two men, Soft as Snow (Gordon Tootoosis) and Cold as Ice (Erroll Kinistino), are sitting out on the prairie by a power generator. They are talking with each other when a police car drives by on the nearby road and the police officer (Dan MacDonald) pulls the young Aboriginal man Thomas (Mathew Strongeagle) from his car and dumps him on the side of the road, then drives away even though he sees that Thomas has collapsed in the snow. Cold as Ice goes over and brings Thomas to where he and Soft as Snow have been sitting. They warm him up, building a fire and giving him their gloves and winter boots (from Soft as Snow), as well as a toque and winter parka (from Cold as Ice). When removing his gloves and boots, it is discovered that Soft as Snow has neither hands nor feet. It is then evident that both men have died, seemingly from being dumped outside of the city, and they now have come back to rescue the people who continue to be dropped off and to make sure that they make it back to the city alive. This is a stirring and well done re-enactment, essential viewing for a more mature audience given the disturbing content being brought so much closer with the skilled portrayal by these talented actors. (SY, Adult)

Joy Desjarlais’ book, A Night to Remember, primarily looks at the Darrell Night story from a family perspective, as the author is related to Night. Coming as it does from a beginning writer, the book is a little disjointed and in need of additional editorial revisions; however, it is still important in this collection as it gives us the human side of Darrell Night, and we meet the family who loves him. The author also provides a brief profile of the families of other victims of freezing deaths, Rodney Hank Naistus and Lawrence Kim Wagner. To her credit, the author also details the great work of some of the policemen she has met, regretting that “this whole incident is being used as a defence for people to justify their hatred towards cops” (p. 41). She also
expresses disappointment that there were no native leaders that came to the trial for the policemen who dropped Darrell off in order to offer their support (p. 97, p. 152). (SY, Adult)

The book *Starlight Tour* (SY, Adult) is exceptional, addressing not only the Neil Stonechild case, but many of the other freezing deaths, as well. Rather than it being a “then this happened, then that happened” sort of chronological account, the authors communicate an understanding of Neil Stonechild, his family, and his life. In an exceptional storied manner, we become involved, and feel a part of what happened. In that way, we come to understand more deeply, and know that this boy and these men who lost their lives, as well as their families, are human and hurting, as we would have been. If we are put here to give each other a leg up, we also question how it is that we, and the police service that represents us, could have lost our way so profoundly. For the report on the Commission on Inquiry into Matters Relating to the Death of Neil Stonechild see http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/stonechild/finalreport/default.shtml

For a positive perspective from the Saskatoon City Police, including a chapter on the Stonechild case, see Ernie Louttit’s *Indian Ernie* (SY, Adult). This book was Saskatoon’s McNally Robinson’s 2013 bestseller, even though it was not released until late November. Louttit is also mentioned in *Starlight Tour*.

Jackson, Dennis (Co-producer), Jackson, Melanie (Co-producer), Ramayya, Anand (Co-producer), & Scott, Michael (Co-producer). (2005-2010). *Wapos Bay* [Animated film series]. CA: Dark Thunder Productions & the National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (Each episode/program approx. 24 running minutes)


The book, although listed second, provides the initial basis for the animated children’s series. In the story, the family has gathered near Wapos Bay at Mushom’s (different spelling used in the films) and Kohkum’s cabin. The children—six-year-old Raven, her nine-year-old brother Talon, and their ten-year-old cousin T-Bear, who lives in the city with his father Jacob—are already with their grandparents. While the boys check the trapline with Mushom, Raven goes with Uncle Peter to his and Aunt Anne’s (Mushom’s sister) cabin. Christmas is near, and the families are hoping that they will be able to spend it together. But they will need more food, and with a forest fire recently going through the area, there are few animals to hunt. There are also few fish in the nets and no animals in the traps. Mushom, with his failing eyesight and his growing weakness due to hunger, misses when he tries to shoot a deer. Everyone does make it back to the cabin, joining Sarah (Mushom’s and Kohkum’s daughter) and her husband Alphonse (Raven’s and Talon’s parents), and Jacob (Mushom’s and Kokum’s son; T-Bear’s Dad), who have recently arrived. While everyone is happy to be reunited, there is still worry over Mushom, who is put to bed with a fever, as well as concern over the lack of food. T-Bear decides that he should go hunting, and both Talon and Raven join him, leaving early in the morning with Mushom’s dog sled. They do not prepare properly, and a storm comes up. While they make it to a protected place to make camp, the lead dog Freedom is hurt. When the adults realize in the morning that the children are gone, Mushom, being the best tracker, sets out to find them. He does, but then
falls increasingly ill and weak with fever. They all manage to survive and begin to return home. Mushom spots moose tracks, but his eyes are too weak to shoot, whereupon the three children collaborate, with T-Bear making the successful shot. The children make some food for Mushom, and he is beginning to recover where they have made camp when Jacob and Alphonse find the group. They all return to the cabin safely, and Mushom recovers. Everyone is happy that they will have enough food to be able to spend Christmas together, and the reluctant Jacob accepts that his son T-Bear wants to learn the ways of the land from his Mushom. For a teacher’s guide see http://coteaubooks.com/assets/HTML/pdfs/teacher_resources/resource_35.pdf. For more information also see http://www3.nfb.ca/sg/100484.pdf. (EY , early MY)

The *Wapos Bay* films are stop motion animated films of the three Cree children in northern Saskatchewan, along with their extended family. Well-known actors are the voices for the characters. There is six-old Raven (Raven Brass), her nine-year old brother Talon (Eric Jackson), and their ten-year old cousin, Thomas or T-Bear (Taylor Cook). Mooshom (Grandfather, Gordon Tootoosis) and Kokhum (Grandmother, Andrea Menard) live with or near the children, along their daughter Sarah (Andrea Menard) and her husband Alphonse (Raven’s and Talon’s parents), as well as their son Jacob (Lorne Cardinal; T-Bear’s Dad) who lives nearby in the community. Each episode has various other characters. As well, each episode teaches the young viewers about respectful behaviour. All episodes are produced in English and in Cree, with the Cree versions including English subtitles. (pre-K, K, EY)

In the first episode, *There is no “I” in Hockey* (Dennis Jackson, writer & director), T-Bear and Talon are competing for the attention of Melanie, who has come to play hockey at the community tournament. T-Bear has turned into a puck hog, but eventually learns that hockey is a team sport. Raven, who is supposed to be helping her Kokhum with the bannock-making contest, gets side-tracked with the events of the festival before learning that she should follow through with commitments made to others.

In the second episode, *Journey through Fear* (Elizabeth Denny, co-writer; Melanie Jackson, co-writer & director), T-Bear, his Dad Jacob, and Raven all have to work through their fear. T-Bear climbs up the fire tower and is afraid to come down. His Dad Jacob goes after him, only to realize that he also is afraid to come down. Embarrassed, they claim to be on a protest for more fire towers in the north. Raven is afraid of the water, and so makes excuses not to go fishing with her Mom Sarah and her Kokhum. When the adults realize Raven’s fear, they help her to overcome it.

In the third episode, *They Dance at Night* (Dennis Jackson, director; Trevor Cameron & Jordon Wheeler, co-writers), the three children forget to honour their traditions. Raven is just learning to whistle. Although she has been told not to whistle when the Northern Lights are out, she forgets and practices her new-found skill outside at night. T-Bear goes out to pick sweet grass but forgets to offer tobacco in thanks. Their Elders help all three children to set things right. This episode is also reviewed under the Northern Lights collection of films and books.

In the fourth episode, *Something to Remember* (Dennis Jackson, director; Trevor Cameron, writer), T-Bear doesn’t want to decorate the hall for the Remembrance Day service, so his teacher asks him to write an essay commemorating the veterans from Wapos Bay. T-Bear
struggles with the task. While interviewing Mrs. Poitras for the essay, he learns that her husband died in the war, and that Mr. Boulanger from the community and his own Mooshum were in the war with Mr. Poitras, and that his Mooshum had carried Mr. Poitras from the battlefield. In the meantime, Raven is sad to hear that her teacher Ms. Chalmers is leaving the community. When she tries to express her appreciation to her teacher, Ms. Chalmers at first misunderstands her gestures; however, Raven helps Ms. Chalmers to understand her culture. This film can be included within an Indigenous Inquiry Kit on the roles of Aboriginal people in the wars.

In the fifth episode, A Time to Learn (Dennis Jackson, writer & director), Talon wants to go with his father Alphonse for a week on the trapline. While his teacher and principal at first are reluctant to give permission, they acquiesce if Talon will complete all his homework before he leaves. Talon agrees, but then struggles to get everything done in time. In the meantime, T-Bear is supposed to help his Mooshum with the sled dogs, and with some errands, but his Dad Jacob happens along and he gets him to do the work instead. The dogs, improperly tied, escape and Alphonse and Mooshum have to go on the skidoos to find them. Everyone learns what it means to accept responsibility.

In the sixth episode, The Elements (Elizabeth Denny, co-writer; Melanie Jackson, co-writer & director), Mooshum is concerned that youngsters these days want to take short cuts rather than learn traditional ways. With that in mind, he gets T-Bear, Raven, and Talon to go with him to Elders Island to set up a cultural camp. T-Bear is careless and spills the gas needed for the generator. Unaware of the accident, he uses up the available power in the generator by playing his games on his little portable television. As well, the ATV breaks down. Mooshum goes for help, but falls and sprains his ankle. He is able to build a fire to stay warm, and when the children hike out in the morning they find him. The other adults have become concerned and they set out to find the group. All ends well, and the children learn valuable lessons. Discussions can also involve the way to treat fire respectfully, given that T-Bear’s actions around fire could be life-threatening. This episode should be used with caution, given the rash nature of T-Bear’s behaviour.

In the seventh episode, Playing Fair (Melanie Jackson, writer & director), a new boy, Elue Wetaluk (Quinn Wilson; Ray Villebrun, Cree) from Nunavut joins T-Bear’s and Talon’s class. T-Bear is upset because Elue is better than him at some sports, including hockey, and even more envious when Elue’s cousin, Jordin Tootoo, makes a surprise visit to the community. Jordin goes out to check trap lines with Talon and his father Alphonse, who is teaching Talon traditional ways. When a wolverine spooks the dogs and they get away, the three create a traditional shelter and stay there until the rest come for them in the morning. All the children learn that cooperation is more important than competition.

In the eighth episode, As the Bannock Browns (Trevor Cameron, writer; Cam Lizotte, director), a carnival comes to town and T-Bear is smitten by Evelyn, the daughter of the carnival owner, who doesn’t return his feelings, but does use him to do a lot of the work for the carnival set-up. Meanwhile, Raven misses the carnival when she contracts a severe case of chicken pox. She is nursed by Kokhum Mary, and develops an active imagination when watching some television soap operas with Kokhum Mary. In trying to rescue his son from hurt, Jacob exposes
many of the carnival games as being rigged. T-Bear realizes that his affection for Evelyn are not as strong as he thought it was. As well, Raven discovers that her imagination of Uncle Jacob’s ‘alter-ego, bad twin’ is really just the real Uncle Jacob with a patch over his bruised eye. This episode should be used with caution as it paints a poor picture of carnival/fair workers that may be adopted as a generalized view by impressionable children.

In the ninth episode, Guardians (Dennis Jackson, writer & director), the troubles begin when T-Bear videos a ‘Bigfoot’ with Talon’s camera while waiting in the canoe for his Dad Jacob, his Mooshom, and Talon. The excitement escalates, interested people come in from outside, and there is an offer of huge money for the video from Steve (Lee Majors) from Austin, Texas. Arguments ensue around who really owns the video, and who can speak for its sell. The bush around the community is crowded with Sasquatch hunters. Then Alphonse and another man arrive all black from cleaning out chimneys for elderly folks in the community. Everyone realizes that the two men were the ‘Sasquatches’. The offer of big money evaporates and all the visitors leave the community. It is only then that everyone realizes that they have acted inappropriately, and that the Sasquatches need to be protected as they are considered the guardians of the community.

In the tenth episode, All Access (Cam Lizotte, director; Trevor Cameron, writer), cousin Betty comes to visit the children in the community. Betty has a brittle bone disease, and she is in a wheelchair as she has broken her legs when jumping off the swings. Betty is looking forward to visiting with her cousins, but T-Bear avoids her because he is afraid of injuring her. Betty’s feelings are hurt, but when she tries to approach the boys, she is rejected. All the children are also preparing for a talent show in the community. Raven and Betty get Raven’s Mom Sarah to help them. T-Bear’s Dad Jacob helps him come to terms with Betty’s illness, and he goes to apologize. Betty is angry because T-Bear is still reluctant to play with her. Eventually T-Bear confesses that he wants to protect Betty from his own roughness, and they reconcile. All the children, as well as some adults, compete in the Wapos Bay Talent Contest, and with a chance to become Chief for a day. As the winner, T-Bear’s only order is that Wapos Bay becomes a full access community for all those who struggle with steps, including many Elders.

In the eleventh episode, As Long as the River Flows (Dennis Jackson, writer & director), Elders Kokhum Mary and Aunt Anne are struggling with their groceries at the Wapos Bay Gas Bar. Talon and T-Bear help them out, along with Hector (Angus Vincent). Afterwards Talon talks about the need for more Elder programs in the community. He, T-Bear, and Devon (DerRic Starlight) later play Scrabble where they elaborate Talon’s idea. Jacob comes along to get his son T-Bear and soon pressures him into taking full credit for the ideas and into running for the President of the Aboriginal Youth Council. T-Bear goes along with his Dad, remaining silent until the nomination event being held at the All Chiefs Conference in the community. Then he confesses that the ideas originally came from Talon. How can children respond to pressure from adults to personally take the limelight for themselves?

In the twelfth episode, Tricks ‘N’ Treats (Melanie Jackson, writer & director), the children are preparing for Hallowe’en in their small community of Wapos Bay. Given that the community is so small, they are not thinking that they will have much fun. However, they get prepared.
T-Bear dresses as a ghost, Talon as an eagle, Raven as a kitty, and their friend Devon dresses as Raven, with T-Bear’s Dad Jacob also getting into the spirit as Arachnid Man. This year, the elders decide to spice up the evening for the children by telling them a story in three parts, with one part told at Aunt Anne’s house, one part told at Kohkum Mary’s, and the last part told at Kohkum’s and Mushom’s house. The story The Woman in the Woods turns out to be a lot scarier than anyone anticipated, even the Elders! This is a great episode!

In the thirteenth episode, The Hunt (Melanie & Dennis Jackson, writers & directors), Kohkum Mary is being honoured with a National Accomplishment Award. The family decides to go hunting for a moose for a community feast. Old Man Gabriel is also out hunting for his family, and mistakenly injures a mother moose with a calf. Everyone cooperates to track and tranquilize the moose, whereupon the bullet is removed. The mother moose is fine, and will recover. Unfortunately, this episode depicts unsafe hunting and tranquilizing practices, with Jacob being accidentally shot twice with the tranquilizing gun. As such, it should not be used in the classroom.

In the fourteenth episode, A Mother’s Earth (Dennis Jackson, director & writer), Raven’s teacher gives the class an assignment to write an essay on their identity. Raven struggles with that concept, but sees that she is different than her blond doll, and defines herself not only with reference to her status First Nation and Métis heritage, but also with reference to being a daughter, sister, and granddaughter. Although Uncle Jacob and Chief Big Sky went into a detailed explanation of all the federal legislation, the more down-to-earth family definitions suit Raven best at her age. Even exploring the Morin and Merasty family backgrounds are too complicated for her at her age. At the same time, Talon and T-Bear are helping old Mr. Gabriel with the preparations for the sweat lodge and are looking forward to receiving their traditional names.

In the fifteenth episode, Going for the Gold (Dennis Jackson, director; Trevor Cameron, writer), Talon has a dream that he will bring back a gold medal for Wapos Bay in the North American Indigenous Games. A spirit dog gives him the message. T-Bear and Devon help Talon train for archery and shot put, but the practice sessions do not go well. Then the spirit dog appears with a gold golf club in his mouth; Talon takes up the challenge and Uncle Jacob begins to coach him in the sport. That causes T-Bear to become jealous as his Dad is spending more time with Talon than with him. However, he comes to understand and support Talon and cheers him on to win a gold medal.

In the sixteenth episode, Raven Power (Cam Lizotte, director; Trevor Cameron, writer), Raven is annoyed because the women and girls of Wapos Bay are being taken for granted. It is just assumed that they will do so much of the work, and there seems to be little appreciation or gratitude. All the women and girls in the community decide to go on a week’s retreat camping in the outdoors. They have a good time; however, back at Wapos Bay, the men are struggling. Only Jacob seems capable of making coffee and cooking meals. Soon he is overwhelmed as all the men congregate at the rink for meals and support. Raven and Chief Big Sky negotiate for the women’s return, to joyous reunions and, hopefully, more appreciation of the roles of the community’s girls and women in the future.
In the seventeenth episode, *Lights, Camera, Action* (Melanie Jackson, director & writer), the children in T-Bear and Talon’s class are tasked with creating videos to celebrate Treaty Days. Adam Beach is visiting the community and lends his support to both T-Bear and Talon’s team. T-Bear wants a video with action to demonstrate the significance of the treaties, and Talon wants to interview the community’s Elders about the treaty process. When they find that T-Bear has only action in his production, and that Talon has only interviewing, Adam helps the boys to combine their videos into one production, thereby leading to the same cooperation among the children that is communicated in the treaty process itself.

In the nineteenth episode, *Raiders of the Lost Art* (Dennis Jackson, director & writer), the children, with their teacher, discover some ancient rock paintings or petroglyphs. They are anxious to protect the site, and are worried that some people from Wapos Bay who are painting graffiti on many community buildings might destroy the ancient paintings. Once they discover who the graffiti artists are, they come to realize that graffiti painting is also art. While the boys doing the graffiti commit to the clean-up of the buildings that they should not have painted, they are also respected by being given a mural to paint on the wall of the school. How can children learn to turn negative behaviour into positive channels for achievement? In the meantime, Raven is struggling with plans for her birthday; she wants a party with her friends, and her Mom wants a family gathering. Raven learns that the two celebrations can be combined so that she, her friends, and her family can all enjoy a special birthday celebration.


The animated film, based on an oral story from Kitty Smith, sees an Elder recounting for the village children a story of how Crow brought fire to the people. The listed books provide a number of stories from different tribal groups on the same topic, except that in McDermott’s and McLellan’s books it is the sun rather than fire that is taken. *Beaver Steals Fire* (EY to MY) includes Salish words for the animals in the story, as well as additional information at the back of the book on the history of the Salish people and the language, as well as suggestions for teachers. London’s book *Fire Race* involves Coyote stealing fire from the bees, who, while they do not
trust Coyote, are tricked into allowing him to come into their home to paint their bodies with black stripes (and thus make them prettier, as they were previously just yellow). McDermott’s book sees Raven disguised as a pine needle and being swallowed by the daughter of the chief, who has the sun secured in his home. Raven, once born as a Raven-child, begs his grandfather to show him the sun, whereupon he turns back into Raven and flies away with the sun. McLellan’s book sees Nanabosho turning into rabbit, being taken into the lodge by the chief’s daughters, and then stealing the sun; the people cannot follow him across the ice as it is too thin for anyone heavier than the rabbit. In Van Laan’s book, Rainbow Crow is chosen to go and get fire when the earth has been cold and covered with snow for a long time. As he returns to earth, his feathers turn black from the torch he is carrying, and his voice turns from being a melodious song to ‘Caw, caw’; however, because of Rainbow Crow’s unselfishness, he will also be protected by the Creator, and his black feathers will still reflect all of the rainbow’s colorful hues. This is a good collection for an Indigenous Inquiry Kit. (EY to early MY)


This is an adult-themed, restricted movie that is absolutely hilarious. While the underlying themes are serious—for example William Blake (Johnny Depp) is dying—the manner in which Blake’s final journey is taken up by Nobody (The Man who Talks a Lot, but Says Nothing; played by Gary Farmer) is tongue-in-cheek, knee slapping funny. With so many of the Aboriginal films so deeply emotional in their rendering, such a comic relief is appreciated. The guitar music of Neil Young adds to the ambiance of the movie.

A naïve young man William Blake is heading to a frontier town to take an accountant’s job that he has been promised. However, when he gets there, the job has been given to another person and he is driven from the office at gunpoint by the owner John Dickinson (Robert Mitchum). Bereft, he spends his last coins on cheap liquor, and is sitting outside a saloon when a prostitute Thel (Mili Avital) is knocked to the ground by a rough passer-by. He walks her home, spends the night, and is interrupted by Thel’s past lover, Charlie Dickinson (Gabriel Byrne). When Charlie goes to shoot William, Thel moves to protect him, and she is killed, whereupon William shoots and kills Charlie, but not before he is shot in the chest himself. William then escapes. Charlie’s father, John Dickinson, hires three gunmen to track down and kill William and bring back his valuable pinto upon which William escaped. In the meantime, William has been rescued by Nobody (a reference to Homer’s *Odyssey* where Odysseus tells the blinded Cyclops Polyphemus that his name is Nobody), who mistakes him for the English poet William Blake, and recites poetry to him, none of which this William Blake understands. (Nobody had been captured as a child, sent to England as a side-show exhibit, but then eventually educated in English schools; his tribe rejected him upon his return to America, dubbing him with the new name The Man who Talks a Lot, but Says Nothing, whereupon he decides that Odysseus’ name Nobody would be more fitting for himself.) In fact, poor naïve William Blake really has no idea what is going on. Nobody decides that he will take William on his second journey to the spirit
world, the first one being when the real poet William Blake died. The rest of the movie is about that journey. Much to Nobody’s delight, naïve William Blake morphs into a killer of the white men sent to pursue him for the bounty on his head. The escapades, the making fun of the old wild west genre, and the absolute success of Gary Farmer in his role as Nobody, all make this a memorable movie, one to watch more than once just for the gallows humour, and the thinly-veiled references to white pretension. The most educated man is Nobody, while the white people are all poorly educated and/or vicious. Nobody is grounded in traditions and in the land, while other than for the prostitute Thel, all the white people, including William Blake, are floundering for direction and/or any vestige of life purpose that involves caring for others. (Adult)

Keller, Dominique (Co-director, Co-producer, & Writer), Thompson, Bonnie (Co-producer), Gies, Daniel (Animator), Jackson, Tom (Co-director), & Arcand, Dallas (Dancer). (2007). Aboriginality [Animated film]. CA: Electric Juice Productions/National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (Film, 5 running minutes; Dallas Arcand interview, 9 running minutes)

In this exceptional animated film, an Aboriginal boy, raised in the city, reconnects with his traditional culture through dance. In that way, he stays on the Good Red Road. This is an excellent film as it follows the work of Dallas Arcand in both his arenas of success: traditional hoop dancing and hip hop/rap artist. In other words, youth can have ties to both worlds for a healthy and positive lifestyle. The interview with Dallas is excellent as he communicates his own search for identity as a mixed-race Cree member of the Alexander (Kipohtakaw) Plains Cree First Nation from Alberta, and his work to support youth to connect with positive ways of living within both new and traditional aspects of First Nations culture. In the production, Dan Gies directs the animated aspect of the film with the boy in front of the television then being transported to a prairie scene with a hoop dancer, the latter aspects which are directed by Tom Jackson. This excellent short film and the accompanying interview could be used for students of varying ages as they too create projects around how they create and live a positive life. For more on Dallas Arcand see http://www.aboriginalentertainment.com/dallas-bio.htm There is also an excellent You Tube video at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=95il49jOk4E (EY, MY, SY, Adult)

Kendall, Emma (Co-director, Researcher, & Interviewer), Kendall, Nicholas (Co-director, Co-producer, & Cinematographer), & Neville, Keet (Co-director & Production sound). (2010). Glimpses of light: Conversations towards effective mental health care [Documentary]. CA: Orca Productions Inc. (17 running minutes)

This excellent short film involves interviewees of a variety of ages and cultural backgrounds, including Aboriginal people, who tell of their own journeys with mental illness. As such, the film will validate all those who watch it and give them hope that they can sustain their own journey, either as someone with mental illness or as a family member and/or loved one. In including people, young and old, from a number of backgrounds, viewers can also see that
mental illness is part of the lives of many people. The interviewees talked about what has helped them in their journey, and what approaches have not helped in spite of the best intentions of the professionals who often depend on the biomedical model and who sometimes lose sight of each person as a human being. Each person spoke of those who helped them by first seeing their heart and their humanity, of that person(s) treating them as human beings and not just as someone with a mental illness. Included in the film are Richard Chernier, Arthur Krumins, Patrick McKernan, Glida Morgan, Jade Morgan, Roberta Price, Anne Schretlen, and Denise Taylor. This film brings the subject of mental illness into the open. While produced by Orca, the film’s credits note that it was a collaborative “initiative of the Cultural Safety Working Group of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Advisory Committee of the Mental Health Commission in coordination with the Mood Disorders Association of Canada and the Native Mental Health Association.” The intention was that the film would serve as a “catalyst for ongoing discussion to deepen our understanding of the needs and resilience of people who experience mental illness and in particular Aboriginal people and their families” (Film insert). The film includes an insert that provides: “A) Reflection Questions During Viewing; B) Individual Journal Reflection Questions; and a C) Group Discussion Guide – Post Viewing Questions.” (upper MY, SY, Adult)

Kenuajuak, Bobby (Director, Research, Script, Co-narrator, & Co-camera), Lamothe, Nicole (Producer), Thibault, Stéphane (Co-camera), Leblanc, Martin F. (Co-camera), Watt, Robert (Co-narrator), & Goma, Karina (Text of narration). (1999). My village in Nunavik [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (47 running minutes)

This excellent film was the winner of the 1998 Aboriginal filmmakers contest. Shot over three seasons, Bobby Kenuajuak provides an excellent view of the life in his village of Puvirnituq, located on the shores of Hudson Bay in northern Quebec. While the 1300 people in his community enjoy many amenities brought in from the south, they are still deeply connected to the land. Footage in the community shows the standard government housing, with people driving quads/ATVs in the summer and skidoos in the winter. People are wearing southern style clothing and the local store carries many goods from the south. The local radio station ties the community together, giving local news and sometimes even telling young people that they are supposed to go home for supper. Yet, everyone looks forward to spring when they can get out on the water travelling up the shore to the summer camp and hunting geese. Over two-thirds of the community’s food still comes from the wild, with the radio station communicating when someone has returned from a hunt and has surplus meat to give away. The film follows the hunters to the summer camp on Qikirsitarvik Island where the people continue to communicate with their CB radio, where the large tent is made of canvas, and where the hunters have motorized boats and modern guns. However, young people still hunt some of the geese by chasing them down on the land. The group has to locate fresh water for their needs and also has to wait out a three day storm at sea. The community and its neighbours loves to get together. A major event is the music festival, held the year of the filmmaking at Akulivik. People of all ages have learned jigging; as well, a past visitor to the community taught Scottish highland dancing,
which continues to be passed down from mother to daughter. The music includes both hip hop
and country style genres. Sports are crucial with hockey, baseball, and basketball being playing
in the community’s arena and gymnasium. The arts are also important, and several soapstone
carvers are filmed at their work. The Anglican Church plays a crucial role in the community as
people gather there for worship and social interaction. The film includes voice-over narration in
English; however, most of the many community people contributing to the film speak in their
own Inuktitut language. Footage includes great sunsets and landscape shots. This is a great film.
Students might follow up and learn more about Puvirnituq now, as well as about Bobby
Kenuajuak. Students might also work together to create their own documentary about their
community. This entire film can be viewed on the National Film Board website at
https://www.nfb.ca/film/my_village_in_nunavik (upper MY, SY, Adult)

King, Thomas (Director & Writer). (2007). *I’m not the Indian you had in mind* [Spoken
word short]. CA: Big Soul Productions with Bravo!Fact. (7 running minutes)
While catchy in its poetry and cleverly rendered by speakers Thomas King, Tara Beagan,
and Lorne Cardinal, this piece is both dated and racist. In a poem written by Thomas King (with
the title coming from one of his short stories), the three presenters communicate an early 20th
Century picture (complete with archival photos and early film footage) that was created of
Aboriginal people and suggest that people in our contemporary society still believe those images.
In current times, the majority of educated people are aware of the accomplishments and work of
a great many people around them, including Aboriginal people. Given that each one of the
presenters is of mixed race, the production is even more puzzling. While not recommended to
impressionable youth, this film might be used effectively with older students as an opportunity
for critique. In the healing journey, does it help to ascribe offensive beliefs to people we have not
met, regardless of who they are, and to make accusations against them? Does couching those
accusations in a cleverly rendered poem make a wrong into a right? Can students write a
different poem that encourages everyone to learn about others and embrace them for their unique
gifts? (upper MY, SY, Adult)

Koller, Xavier (Co-director), Stoia, Christopher (Co-director), & Craviato, Darlene
Pictures/Buena Vista Pictures (Distributor). (102 running minutes)
Squanto, first friend to the Pilgrims*. Milwaukee, WI: Gareth Stevens Publishing.
ISBN: 0-8368-1474-6
The movie tells the story (not totally historically accurate) of Squanto (Adam Beach), a Patuxet (part of the Wampanoag Confederacy) man kidnapped by the English and sent to England. On the ship is another captured First Nations man, Epanow (Eric Schweig) of the Nauset. Squanto is desperate to return to his wife Nakooma (Irene Bedard), and with Epanow tries to escape from the clutches of Sir George (Michael Gambon), who considers the men his slaves. While Epanow is recaptured, Squanto finds a small boat and gets away, only to meet high seas and get washed ashore near a monastery. He is discovered and taken in by the monks. In particular, Brother Daniel (Mandy Patinkin) and Squanto become friends, and even the more stubborn Brother Paul (Donal Donnelly) is eventually won over, protecting Squanto when Sir George’s men invade the monastery. Knowing Squanto’s wish to return home, Brother Daniel helps him to find passage on another ship, but Squanto is recaptured. In a desperate run for freedom, Squanto manages to escape and board the ship just as it is leaving for North America. He returns home to find that all the people of his village have died of the white man’s diseases. Remembering the teachings of his Elders, particularly Mooshawset (Sheldon Peters Wolfchild), Squanto decides to try to make peace between the newly arrived Pilgrims and Epanow’s people. They all share the first Thanksgiving meal. The movie was entirely shot on Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia, with the use of the Mi’kmaq language, which is spoken in that province but not by the Patuxet in what is now Massachusetts.

In actuality, Squanto was captured in 1614 by Thomas Hunt, one of John Smith’s lieutenants, and was taken to Spain to be sold as a slave. The monks discovered the plan and took Squanto in. Wishing to return to North America, the monks arranged for Squanto’s travel, first to England. There Squanto lived with John Slany, who was a shipbuilder, for a few years. When they did sail to North America, they landed in Newfoundland. He returned from there to England in 1618, then went back to North America in 1619. He found then that his people had all died of an epidemic, likely smallpox. Sometime later, he did begin to help the Pilgrims and worked as a liaison between them and the First Nations people, also helping the Pilgrims to survive in their new homes. Eventually, it seems, he came to be distrusted by both sides, particularly by the First Nations. The cause of his death in 1622 is unclear.

There are several books about Squanto. Bruchac’s well-illustrated book (EY, early MY) tells the story of Squanto as honestly as perhaps might be introduced to children. Not addressed is the ultimate result, the English take-over of the land belonging to the Aboriginal people. The book includes an ‘author’s note’ and a short glossary. Bulla’s book (MY, SY, Adult), written in 1954, is an interesting historical fiction piece, written as it was by an American with some sympathy for Squanto, but with a philosophy of manifest destiny. The friendship aspect is the focus of the book, rather than the complete truth of the story of Squanto, including the diseases that destroyed his village and the theft of his tribe’s lands. Dubowski’s 1997 book (MY) is not recommended, as it brushes over the devastation of the Aboriginal tribes in what is now known as the New England area, calls the people ‘Indians’ and repeats the term ‘savages’ used at the time; as well, it makes Squanto out to have turned into a jealous person, ultimately bringing his
own undoing, as it were. It is more likely that it became increasingly difficult to serve as a mediator, and Squanto came to be distrusted by both sides, especially as the English became more aggressive in taking over lands belonging to the Aboriginal people. It is astonishing that this book would have made it to publication in the year 1997. Metaxas’ well-illustrated children’s book (upper EY, early MY) is a more recent and much better book. It does elaborate the well-established, settled, agrarian economy of the Patuxet (spelled Pawtuxet in this book), as well as Squanto’s capture and enslavement by the nefarious Captain Hunt. While the book articulates Squanto’s return, it brushes over the reality that his village was destroyed by European diseases, and that after returning from his enslavement and helping the Pilgrims to survive, the repayment was increased English settlement and the complete take-over of the lands formerly belonging to the tribes of what is now the area of New England. The reality of that history may discourage the use of the Squanto story with younger children, but will allow its use with older students who are more able to engage in critique. For that purpose see After the Mayflower in the We Shall Remain series, reviewed in this document.

Kroll, Kate (Director & Co-writer), & Thomas, Marilyn (Producer & Writer). (2009). She-shi-etko [Documentary]. CA: Monkey Ink Media. (12 running minutes)

This excellent short film communicates the experiences of a small girl Shi-shi-etko (Ta’Kalya Blaney) as she is preparing to go to residential school. While her Mom (Inez Jasper), Dad (Lee Provost), and Yayah (Grandmother) cannot prevent her from being taken, they are spending her last few days at home by showing her their love and teaching her about the important aspects of her life and her culture that they hope will sustain her in residential school. As a small girl, Shi-shi-etko does grasp the solemnity of these last few days, but she is also excited about going to school and counts down the ‘sleeps’ each night. The film is enacted with the voice-over of the reader of the story. Shi-shi-etko is part of a loving family in a comfortable home by the waterways. The forested setting is idyllic. She is well cared for and loved. With this small film, the viewer anticipates the pending gut-retching separation and is able to more fully understand the deep scarring impacts of the residential school experience. Somewhat different from the book where a cattle truck picks up the small children, this story ends with a farmer (Dennis Fridgulin) coming with a little truck, with two other children (Kecia Provost and Darwin Douglas Jr.) already in the back. One can only imagine the lonely life of Shi-ski-etko as she discovers what residential school is really like and how long she must wait to return home. Her parents and Yayah will experience the same sense of deep loss. While the book is intended more for upper early years and early middle years, teachers will have to consider whether to introduce the book, and especially the accompanying emotional film, to young children, given the disturbing subject matter. The questions are posed: Can you imagine a community without children? Can you imagine children without parents? The second book Shin-chi’s Canoe sees
Shi-shi-etko’s younger brother Shin-chi now also going to the same residential school. To keep him strong, his father carves him a little canoe to take with him. (upper EY & MY with advisement, Adult)

Lafond, Harry (Host & Moderator), & McAdam, Sylvia (Moderator). (2012). *Traditional teachings* [Documentary]. CA: Saskatchewan Prevention Institute. (Disc #1, 103 running minutes; Disc #2, 113 running minutes)

This excellent program is meant to help guide young people into healthy choices as they are moving into puberty, as well as serving as a guide for their parents. However, all those who work with First Nations youth and communities would benefit from the wisdom of these Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Storytellers. Created with an aim at cultural appropriateness for Saskatchewan’s First Nations youth, the production includes interviewees from the Plains Cree, the Dené, the Nakawe/Saulteaux, as well as the Nakota and Dakota. Each interviewee was posed the same general group of twelve questions, which, the producers suggest, could also be used as a guide if a community wished to interview Elders and Knowledge Keepers from their own community. In this production, the questions are posed to the men by Harry Lafond (Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, Exec. Director of the Saskatchewan Office of the Treaty Commission, board member of the Saskatchewan Prevention Institute), and to the women by Sylvia McAdam (Storyteller). There are two discs with the following listed participants. Rather than including a synopsis of all the interviewees’ gifted teachings, communities and educators are advised to watch each disc in its entirety and then select which interviews might work best for their classroom situation. To guide that selection, the questions posed to the interviewees are included after the listing of the participants.

Disc #1 Saulteaux and Cree First Nations Traditions and the Story of the Creator’s Flame
Introduction (10 min.)
Chapter one: Sylvia McAdam shares the story of The Creator’s Flame (3 min.)
Chapter two: Elder Daniel Musqua, Keeseekoose Saulteaux First Nation (37 min.)
Chapter three: Elder Thelma Musqua, Keeseekoose Saulteaux First Nation (21 min.)
Chapter four: Elder Francis McAdam (male), Big River Cree First Nation (12 min.)
Chapter five: Elder Juliette McAdam, Big River Cree First Nation (20 min.)

Disc #2 Dené, Nakota, and Dakota Traditions and the Story of the Sacred Tree of Life
Introduction (10 min.; same intro. as with Disc #1);
Chapter six: Elder James Sylvestre, Buffalo River Dené Nation (24 min.)
Chapter seven: Knowledge Keeper Jessie Sylvestre, Buffalo River Dené Nation (12 min.)
Chapter eight: Elder Joe O’Watch, Carry the Kettle Nakota First Nation (25 min.)
Chapter nine: Elder Velma Goodfeather, Standing Buffalo Dakota First Nation (22 min.)
Chapter ten: Barry Ahenakew shares the story of the Sacred Tree of Life (22 min.)
The questions posed (and included within the discs’ accompanying insert) are as follows:
1) In Cree, ohpikinawasowin is the word used to describe childbirth and the concept of child rearing. In your First Nation culture, what words do you use when talking about child rearing and the parent-child relationship?

2) If the main purpose of child rearing is to make sure that children experience and maintain a balanced life and know who they are, what do we expect from parents in the process of raising their children?

3) What are the most important teachings that guide a child through the various stages of childhood? Are there special ceremonies that a family and community hold to celebrate the stages of childhood?

4) What do First Nations parents expect from their children?

5) What marks the time when a girl becomes a young woman? When a boy becomes a young man? Are there teachings and practices that guide a girl or a boy as they become a young woman or man?

6) Are there ceremonies that a family and community hold to celebrate a girl’s transition to woman and a boy’s to man?

7) Who in the community is responsible for teaching girls and boys and young men and women about their sexuality and maturing into young adulthood? What and how are the children taught about becoming young adults in a family and community?

8) If you had the opportunity to teach parents about raising their boys and girls to young men and women, what advice would you give them?

9) Growing from a little boy or girl to a young man or woman is discovering that your body changes and you begin to think differently. What are the teachings that help young men and women have a healthy view of themselves as sexual persons?

10) What are the values, traditions, and laws that young men and women need to learn about sexual maturation and responsibilities?

11) When do you teach a young man or woman about being a father or mother? What do you teach a young man about becoming a father and a young woman about becoming a mother?

12) If the young people are abusing drugs and alcohol, how do they learn that it is not healthy for them or their families? What advice do you give them when they ask for guidance?

As well as this fine production, the Saskatchewan Prevention Institute has many other excellent programs and resources, although not all of them are geared directly toward First Nations’ culture and heritage (See http://www.skprevention.ca/). (MY, SY, Adult)


While this older book has somewhat fallen out of favour, a re-publication with an introduction by noted Aboriginal author Joseph Bruchac may lead to a more open re-assessment of the novel and the subsequent movie. At the root, however, the novel and the movie are about a white family whose homestead is on Aboriginal land, and thus the movie is both controversial as well as being defined as a ‘white man’s Indian movie’.

In this coming-of-age story, 13-year old Matt Hallowell (Brendan Fletcher) travels with his father Will (Keith Carradine) to a newly claimed homestead in Maine. There they build a cabin for the family, and then Will leaves Matt to hold the claim while he travels back to Massachusetts to get Matt’s mother Anne (Annette O’Toole), his sister Sarah (Allegra Denton), and his baby brother. Matt is both young and a greenhorn to wilderness living and he soon meets challenges. The priceless rifle left for him by his father is stolen by a visiting stranger Ben Loomis (Maury Chaykin), and he is distraught as he can no longer hunt for his food nor protect himself. As well, he has injured his leg in his haste to try and catch the fleeing thief. However, a nearby Aboriginal leader, Saknis (Gordon Tootoosis), comes to his aid, along with his reluctant grandson Attean (William Lightning). When Matt gives Sakniss his beloved copy of Robinson Crusoe in payment, Saknis returns with the book asking Matt to teach his grandson Attean to read. Given that the white people have stolen their land with words, Saknis wants Attean to learn the white man’s language. Matt’s fear that he does not know how to teach someone to read is compounded by Attean’s resentment of him. Slowly, after much time, the two become friends. In the meantime, Matt’s father and the family have run into many challenges and the weeks turn into months and still they have not returned. The movie turns to those scenes, as it elaborates how the fever stalls their voyage and ultimately takes the life of Matt’s baby brother. As the time progresses and winter sets in, Saknis and Attean invite Matt to go with their tribe inland to hunt, as there are no hunting areas left where they are with the encroaching white settlements, and they say that Matt’s family might not come. Torn, Matt decides to stay at the cabin, as he promised his father. His family finally struggles to the cabin, but not before being saved and then guided by the same hunter who had stolen Matt’s rifle. Seeking atonement for his act of thievery, Ben Loomis has decided to help the destitute family, who would have frozen and/or starved to death without his assistance. He leaves as the family reunites. The family, now snug in the cabin, enjoys the bounty of food raised by Matt but also much of which Attean and his people have taught Matt how to harvest.

Mature students might be encouraged to enjoy the movie and critique it at the same time. Even while knowing its shortcomings, the author of the novel and the producers of the movie do communicate that the homestead lands claimed by the Holliwell family were taken from Aboriginal people. (upper MY, SY, Adult)


The Australian movie Jindabyne is based on American author Raymond Carver’s short story So Much Water So Close to Home, which addresses the decisions of four men, and ultimately, their wives. While on their annual fishing trip at a secluded lake, Stuart (Gabriel Byrne) discovers the body of a young Aboriginal woman in the river. While initially stunned by the discovery, the men cannot inform anyone where they are because there is no cell phone reception. It being late in the evening, the men decide to hike out the next day. But then Stuart begins the next day by fishing and, rather than hike out, the men secure the body so that it will not float away and continue with their fishing. When they return home, their actions are criticized by the police, as well as by the victim’s family and Aboriginal community. The turmoil tears apart the friendships and the families of the three men. In particular, Stuart’s wife (Laura Linney) is traumatized by her husband’s actions, further endangering her mental health (she had suffered severe post-partum depression after the birth of her son). She tries to make connection with the victim’s family and is rebuffed, but eventually attends the funeral service for the young woman, as do the men. The murderer is never caught. (SY, Adult)

The adult movie Short Cuts combines all the short stories and the poem from the book, and adds an additional story of Altman’s creation. All the stories play out in California, and while the story So Much Water So Close to Home is addressed, there is no Aboriginal element; thus, there is no reason to include this film in a study of Aboriginal issues, as excellent as it is in its own right. (Adult-R)


This film delves into the relocation of Inuit families to the far North in the early 1950s, with the intent of securing Canadian sovereignty in the area at a time when it was being threatened, as it still is to this day. Eight families were relocated to Resolute Bay, and even further north to Grise Fiord on Ellsmere Island, which was 200 kilometers north of their home in Inukjuak on the Ungava Peninsula in northern Quebec. While the families were assured that there was abundant game, that there would be houses provided, and that they could return after a year if they did not like the area, in fact none of those assurances were affirmed. The land was inhospitable, the game scare, no homes were provided, and the people were not allowed to return home.

Martha Flaherty was five when the family moved to Grise Fiord, leaving her former home at Unukjuak in the Ungava peninsula. Her father, Josephie Flaherty, was the son of the Robert J. Flaherty who filmed Nanook of the North (reviewed in this document), and Nyla who appeared in the film as Nanook’s wife. Nyla’s future husband Paddie adopted Josephie and, even after the death of Nyla and Paddie had remarried, he and Josephie were very close. Paddie and his family were among the first to be sent to Grise Fiord, but he was lonely for Josephie and his family so he sent for them to join them. With ships making the trip only once a year, by the time
Josephie and his family arrived in Grise Fiord, Paddie had died. Life was very difficult for the family and for the others sent to live in Grise Fiord. There was never enough food and never enough protection from the cold. Josephie became a sullen and angry man. It was years later that the people found out the real reason why they were sent north; they have since received financial compensation and in 2008 an apology from the Government of Canada. Although Martha moved down south, returning to Grise Fiord for the filming for the first time since 1983, in fact many of the original families and their children remain at Grise Fiord, as the community is now their home. Interviewees for the film included members of Martha’s immediate and extended family, for example Rynee (her Mom); Mary (her sister, separated from the family when diagnosed with tuberculosis); Peter (her brother); Larry Audlaluk (her uncle, Paddy’s son); John Amagoalik (her cousin); and Minnie Killiktee (Paddy’s daughter); as well as Martha’s friend Dora Palluk. Younger members of the community are also included, with 20 participants in all. This is an excellent film that can be used to initiate student research projects. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

Leustig, Jack (Director & Co-writer), Costner, Kevin (Host), & Harrison, Gregory (Narrator). (1995). *500 nations* [Documentary]. US: Tig Production/Warner Home Video. (Discs #1 to #4 with Episodes #1 to #8: 94 running minutes x 4)


The four-disc, eight-episode program entitled *500 Nations* concentrates on selective aspects of the history of Turtle Island’s (North America’s) First Peoples, with the focus on the Native American tribes in what is now the United States and, in Disc #1, Mexico and Central America. Other than a quick ‘tour’ to the north and the Inuit, there is limited reference to tribal groups specific to what is now Canada. While that may limit the use of this program, there is attention paid to tribal groups whose lands extended into Canada (e.g., Haudenosaune, Huron, Weban-aki). The historical devastation of the Native North American tribes and the theft of their lands are chronicled. While the core of contributors remains the same throughout the programs, there are some changes and additions, primarily to the voice-over actors who speak the words of the Native American leaders of the past. Those contributors include Castulo Gueria, Eric Schweig, Patrick Stewart, Robert Robinson, Lorenzo Caccialanza, Floyd Red Crow Westerman, Gary Farmer, Gordon Tootooosis, Ken Danzinger, Tom Jackson, Frank Salsedo, Sheldon Wolfchild, Kurtwood Smith, Dante Basco, and Tantoo Cardinal. All episodes include Gregory Harrison as the narrator, and all episodes include archival documents and/or photographs, maps, artist renderings, and natural scenery, as well as interviews with living descendants of many tribal groups. The program included a research team. Notably, the program deals candidly with the devastation of the Native American tribes, while it still lends a distinctly American slant to its international conflicts; for example, the American Revolution and the War of 1812, the latter which is presented as an American victory for example.

The series begins with Kevin Costner relating his connection, as he starred in the movie *Dances with Wolves* about the Lakota. Thus, the Prologue, Wounded Knee: The Darkest Hour addresses the 1890 massacre of Big Foot’s band of unarmed men, women, and children by the 7th
Calvary, the final pin in the defeat of the Lakota, and long considered retaliation for the defeat of Custer at the Little Big Horn. At the time, however, the most immediate threat was presented as the revival of the Ghost Dance, which was supposed to bring back all deceased Lakota people and the game animals, and rid their lands of the white people. That dance was considered threatening to the power of the United States government. Not until three days after the massacre was a convoy sent to bury the dead in a mass grave. The wounded, taken to a nearby church, stunned even a doctor at the brutality of an army that would victimize people who were unarmed, who were flying a white flag, and where the majority was women and children. Interviews included descendants of the survivors of the massacre.

The first episode (Disc #1), *The Ancestors: Early Cultures of North America*, explores the ancient cultures of what are now parts of the United States. The history is detailed and complex, with sub-sections including the Anasazi; Chaco Canyon; Cliff Palace; Eagle and the Sun; Cahokia and the Great Sun; Other Mound Builders; The Maya: Palenque; and Pacal: Mayan Expansion and Decline. This episode includes many interviews, as well as photographs and computer graphics that show, for example, what the ancient cities would have looked like. The structures of Pueblo Bonito had 500 rooms, with some sections five stories high. In Chaco Canyon, turquoise was the most valued gem. In Cahokia (near modern day St. Louis), 20,000 people lived in well-made homes; the people were linked by trade to one-third of the continent. The Mayan had many capital cities in their expansive territories. All of these ancient cultures were sedentary, with well-established agricultural economies.

The second episode (Disc #1), *Mexico: The Rise and Fall of the Aztecs*, addresses the history of the indigenous peoples in what is now Mexico and Central America. Sub-sections include: Introduction: Motechzoma; Teotihuacan; The Toltecs and the Tollan; The Mexica and Tenochtitlán; Aztec Conquests and Culture; Cortez – Motechuzoma’s emissaries; Cortez Advances; Cortez: Arrival at Tenochtitlán; Motechzoma Held Hostage; Attacks, Death of Motechzoma; Cortez Retreats, Smallpox; and Cortez Returns. Again, interviewees, photographs, and commuter animation add to the program. Interestingly, many of the ancient cultures, including accompanying cities within those cultures, rose and fell. Teotihuacan was destroyed at its height, for example. The leader Motechzoma had a premonition of disaster approaching. The Aztec empire stretched through much of what is now Mexico and Central America, and was supported by trade, taxes levied on the conquered, and alliances. The culture was rich with advanced architecture, weaving, and precious metals. When the Spanish Ferdinand Cortez and his soldiers landed in 1519, with their horses and advanced weapons, they succeeded in defeating the Aztecs by making their own alliances with the Aztecs’ enemies, as well as by decimating the people with their diseases, particularly smallpox. This detailed episode is rich in information, much more than can be grasped in one viewing. (SY, Adult)

The third episode (Disc #2), *Clash of Cultures*, addresses the first contact of Columbus with the Taino people of the Caribbean in 1492 (Costner relates that everyone knows about this event, and the names of Columbus’ three ships, the latter which may be a stretch), and his return the next year with a flotilla of ships with soldiers that proceeded to go on a conquering and ravaging journey—first by his men and then followed up by De Soto—within the what is now
the Caribbean, Mexico, and the southern United States, killing and/or enslaving the native peoples. To add to the military slaughter and pillage, the Spanish introduced many diseases toward which the native peoples had no immunity, killing hundreds of thousands more people. Included is the story of the betrayal of the Anacona, and the rise of the Anacona leader Enrique, whose successful resistance led to a treaty that ‘guaranteed’ some rights for the survivors of his people.

The fourth episode (Disc #2), *Invasion of the Coast*, begins with the program heading north to Inuit lands, an unexplained diversion given that no other First Peoples from the north half of North America receive any attention. At any rate, the program notes the British attempt to find a northwest passage to the orient, but address only some details of Frobisher’s two trips. Returning to the south, to the eastern seaboard area of what is now the United States, the program addresses some details of the Powhatan Confederacy, and their interaction with the first struggling community of Jamestown, established by the British in 1607, a relationship, that (like most) started on better terms than it ended. The program tells about Pocahontas and the nature of her interaction with Capt. John Smith, and her later marriage to John Rolfe, as well as about Tisquantum (also known as Squantum) and his assistance to the Pilgrims after having been captured and finding, upon his return home several years later, that all his people had died. Once the English population expanded, they no longer needed the help and the protection of the First Peoples in the area. In particular, after the great peacekeeper Massasoit died, the now 50,000 strong English moved increasingly onto Native lands, while also forcing Christianity on the peoples within their ‘praying towns.’ Open warfare broke out, with the Aboriginal peoples led by Massasoit’s son, known as King Philip. The people were finally defeated, and King Philip was killed and his family sold into slavery.

The fifth episode (Disc #3), *The Cauldron of War*, focuses on the intrusion of France and Britain into North American, and how the First Peoples were drawn into taking sides during conflicts between Britain and its colonies, and then Britain and France. An overview of the fur trade illustrates its expansion and its inherent encouragement of First Peoples to change their relationship with animals, going from harvesting only what they needed for survival and inter-tribal trade to over harvesting animals (e.g., beaver) for commercial purposes, which became even more devastating with the introduction of guns and steel traps. Efforts by the Sewee to set up direct trade relations with Britain ended tragically. In the more northern areas, the French fur traders were seen in a better light than the British; they mixed and often intermarried with the First Peoples with whom they traded. With the French and English conflict in North America, Pontiac developed an alliance among the First Peoples mostly south of the Great Lakes, in support of the French. When the French were defeated, signing the Treaty of Paris on February 10, 1763, and giving up any claim to North America, Pontiac and his allies were stranded, deserted. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 established provisions for obtaining Native lands. This episode also addresses details of the Haudenosaunee democratic confederacy, with its original five nations: Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca. Having found peace after warring against each other for many years, the Haudenosaunee decided to maintain neutrality when the American colonies went to war against Britain for their independence.
However, Joseph Brant interrupted that decision, convincing some of the people to side with Britain, while some sided with the American colonies, and some still tried to maintain neutrality. The program does not address the exodus of some of the Haudenaunee to Canada after the American Revolution resulted in the British abandonment of the Haudensaunee and the subsequent theft of their lands by the United States.

The sixth episode (Disc #3), *Removal*, focuses on the tribes in the Ohio valley, and in particular, on the Shawnee and their leader Tecumseh and his brother Tenskwatawawa (The Prophet). As he worked to establish a broad alliance from the southern tribes to the Great Lakes, Tecumseh eventually could not hold the resistance together against the combined forces of the United States military. As he established an alliance with Britain, in particular General Isaac Brock, Tecumseh stood poised to realize the promise of a separate, independent Native nation. This is not addressed in the program; in fact, Brock and the military successes of the British and their Indian allies are not even mentioned. The focus is on Brock’s incompetent successor Proctor, with a statement that the United States won the war, with no mention of Canada at all, or that the United States had declared war on Canada and had invaded the country. These errors of omission and commission will allow for a critique of this portrayal of ‘history’, that the important stories are decided by the perspective of the teller. Students might watch the Canadian production, *The War of 1812* (reviewed in this document), for a different perspective. The second part of this episode addresses the enforced relocation of the First Peoples from what is now the southeastern United States, in particular the Choctaw, Creek, Chickasaw, and Cherokee. While Tecumseh worked for their inclusion in an alliance to resist the Americans, many influential members of the southern tribes had adopted aspects of the white economy, and owned large farms, some even with slaves. That did not prevent their enforced location however, which was set in motion when the Indian Removal Act of May 28, 1830, made legal the theft of their lands. When some the Cherokee resisted, supported by Principal Chief John Ross, staying on their lands beyond the deadline for their leaving, they were rounded up, imprisoned in stockades, and then removed over the Trail of Tears to ‘Indian Territory’ in Oklahoma, which the whites did not want at the time. The terms of their removal were even more controversial given that the Treaty of Echota was signed only by a few Cherokee men who became known as the Treaty Party. In Cherokee law, no one could sign away any of their lands without the consensus of everyone. If they did, they could be put to death, which is what happened to several members of the Treaty Party later in Oklahoma. A few Cherokee, primarily the descendants of Tsali, who favoured alliance with Tecumseh, never left their homelands, as they escaped into hiding in the mountains.

The seventh episode (Disc #4), *Roads across the Plains*, addresses the devastation of Native American tribes in the west, and the theft of their lands. To begin, the program centres on the missionary work among the Chumash, including their conversion by force that involved the breakup of families with the incarceration of children. The effects of settlement by ranchers and farmers are elaborated, as well as the gold rush in California, which resulted in the legalized enslavement of the First Peoples of the area. With increased settlement, some Native American leaders, like the Cheyenne Black Kettle and White Antelope, worked toward peaceful solutions. Both leaders were betrayed repeatedly, culminating in the Sand Creek massacre of November 29,
1864. News of Black Kettle’s repeated betrayals by the United States government fueled resistance by the Kiowa and the Sioux, the latter who were allies of the Cheyenne. Both of those peoples were also eventually crushed, but the Sioux, under the leadership of Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, fought back an attack from General George Armstrong Custer at the Battle of the Little Big Horn.

The final, eighth episode (Disc #4), *Attack on Culture*, addresses the struggles of the Nez Perce and of the Apache to protect their homelands. The Nez Perce, under Chief Joseph, had been pushed out of their homeland, the Wallowa Valley. After responding to the killing and rape of some of their people by settlers with revenge killings, the Nez Perce were marked for attack by the United States. Over three months and 1,800 miles, the Nez Perce were pursued. Thinking that they were far ahead of General Oliver Howard’s soldiers, they stopped to rest just one day’s journey from Canada; however, unbeknownst to them, a force under General Nelson Miles was also approaching. The Nez Perce were attacked and forced to surrender, with the United States then betraying the terms of surrender. Further south the Apache were friendly with the settlers at first, allowing them to cross their lands. But with increased settlement and the California gold rush, the Apache lands also became desirable to the United States. Esteemed Chief Cochise, who desired peace, was also betrayed after which he led a guerilla resistance. The Apache, also forced onto a reservation, where relocated to the desolate San Carlos area. The medicine man Geronimo continued to resist reservation settlement, surrendering then escaping several times. In a final surrender, those terms were broken and Geronimo and many of his people were incarcerated in Florida. They were then relocated to Oklahoma, but Geronimo and many of his people remained prisoners of war until their deaths. With the enforced relocation of Native Americans onto reservations, and the subsequent distribution of rations to them, an ‘Indian Ring’ led to widespread corruption in the supply of those rations. As a result, people were often near starvation. In 1887, the passage of the General Allotment Act resulted in the loss of approximately two-thirds of the meagre reservation lands set aside for the Native American tribes. To add to the loss of their lands, the subsequent practice of the boarding or residential schools separated children from their families, and tried to destroy the languages and cultures of the people. But First Peoples survived, and while challenges continue, the work to keep traditions alive strengthens contemporary First Peoples in their cultures and languages.

The book by Josephy is an essential addition if the films are purchased. Although large (468 pages, sized 9x11), the book can be used in many ways. There are side inclusions of interviewees from the various film episodes that include their pictures and quotes. There are countless archival photographs, paintings, and drawings. The sections are well laid out so that short pieces can be read, if desired; as such, this ready access would lead to students picking up the book for short reads when time allows. As well as supporting the study of the films, the book will serve as an excellent reference for other projects. Its reading in small segments is facilitated by the index. (SY, Adult)

This exceptional film tells a story—using a play within the film—of racism, residential schools, athletics, and pride of heritage. It is the story of nine teenage Aboriginal male youths, now adults, who were chosen to relay the torch 800 kilometres to Winnipeg when Canada held the Pan-American Games in 1967. All but one of the boys was attending residential school. After running the entire distance, the boys were stopped short at the stadium, where a white teenager carried the torch into the stadium. Prior to the 1999 Pan-American Games, also in Winnipeg, the province of Manitoba issued an apology to the surviving seven First Nations athletes, and they entered the stadium in war canoes. The film re-enacts the experiences of two of the original youth, Thomas Ross (Ron Desmoulins) and Michael Moose (Derek George Jr.), but according to the narrator Mishomis/Grandfather Patrick Bruyere, who was one of the original runners, one of the men – Thomas Ross – must complete his own journey first. While in school, Thomas was forced by the principal (Darren M. Feihel) to spy on the other children in the school, and to tell the principal about their infractions. When Rose (Lori Lewis) runs away, Thomas is forced to go and find her and bring her back. She is severely beaten and sexually assaulted by the principal, and then disappears. Thomas thought that she had been killed and he has never forgiven himself. When Rose comes up to his hotel room now as an adult, Thomas faces her, and Rose tells him that although badly hurt and unable to have children, what happened was not his fault, and that he must forgive himself and come to participate with the others. He finally comes to terms with the past, and joins the others at the opening event of the Pan-American Games. While the film addresses the abuses of the residential schools, the adults now move forward with forgiveness and hope. The ten youth who ran the original 1967 relay were Russell Abraham, Charles Bittern, Patrick Bruyere, William Chippeway, Fred Harper, Milton Mallett, William Merasty, John Nazzie, Charles Nelson, and Dave Courchene Jr. The film was based on the original play by Laura Robinson. For the film’s description, see http://www.endabusenow.ca/files/FrontRunners%20-%20press%20kit.pdf (upper MY, SY, Adult)


A stunning film about residential schools, this movie is written and directed by Georgina Lightning and also stars her as Rain, the daughter whose mother is confined to an institution after being abused in residential school. Mysterious flashbacks haunt Rain. The local priest Father Bartoli (Steve Yoakum) conspires with Rain’s aunt (Tantoo Cardinal) to cover up the past and to institutionalize Rain. A while geologist (Bradley Cooper), having come to the community to research the epicenter of former earthquake, which was at the site of the old residential school that is still standing, prompts more questions amid mysterious events and cover-ups. Adam Beach stars as Rain’s fiancé as well as being listed as one of the executive producers, and Wes Studi stars as the local DJ who has his own dark past with the local mayor (Chris Mulkey).
This astounding movie communicates the devastating effects of residential schools. Viewing of the film by senior years’ students should be preceded by the study of residential schools and their effects, as well as by visits from speakers who have attended residential school. The movie may be upsetting in its emotional effects for all viewers, and especially for those who have attended residential school and/or who have had family members who have attended. Counselling should be made available, as well as opportunities to dialogue and debrief. For an excellent trailer see http://www.olderthanamerica.com/. There are many books on residential schools that might accompany this film. (SY, Adult)

Lixey, Bruce (Co-director & Co-producer), Hercules, Robert (Co-director & Co-producer), Roszell, Steve (Co-writer), Johnson, Julie (Co-writer), & LeBeau, Barry (Narrator). (1994). *Great Indian leaders and nations* [Documentary, Part 1 & 2]. US: Questar Inc. (110 running minutes, 55 x 2)

This two part award-winning documentary provides, in the first episode, a biographical profile for four great Native American leaders: Crazy Horse, Chief Joseph, Geronimo, and Quanah Parker. In the second program, five great tribal groups are profiled: Iroquois, Seminole, Navajo, Cheyenne, and Lakota. Both programs involve entire narration (rather than any interviews, for example) with accompanying archival photos and footage, as well as re-enactment. Along with several other films reviewed, this documentary provides a resource that acquaints the viewer with a history of the devastation visited upon the indigenous tribes of North America, as well as their courageous resistance. All of the tribes were victims of diseases, the destruction of the wildlife upon which they depended and its habitat, encroachment by white settlement and prospectors, and attack by bounty hunters and government armies, as well as constant government dishonesty and betrayal, including with reference to the terms of treaties that the government itself had negotiated.

In Part 1, with the first featured leader *Crazy Horse*, the narrator also speaks of the great leaders Red Cloud and Sitting Bull as well as Crazy Horse. The program reviews the Sioux resistance to encroachment (including the Fetterman fight and the Battle of the Little Bighorn), with the successes of the Sioux and the negotiation and granting by treaty of the Great Sioux Reservation, which included all the Powder River country and the sacred Black Hills. With Sitting Bull going to Canada, Crazy Horse and his group were finally starved into submission, and when he surrendered at Fort Robinson he was killed by a bayonet to the side in May, 1877. After Sitting Bull’s return to the United States, he too was killed, much later, in the fall of 1890, with his death followed by the massacre at Wounded Knee, in December, 1890, which essentially ended the Sioux resistance.

Secondly, the program (Part 1) features *Chief Joseph* of the Nez Perce, a people who were forcibly removed from their homelands in the Wallowa Valley in what is now northwestern United States. The program follows the story of their resistance and their subsequent flight of hundreds of miles over three months as they sought refuge in Canada. They were repeatedly attacked and, finally with a surprise morning raid, Chief Joseph was forced to surrender just 45
miles from the Canadian border. As with other episodes, the recounting of the numerous times that the Nez Perce experienced the treachery of the United States army will anger the viewer.

Third, the program (Part 1) addresses the famous medicine man Geronimo, and the resistance he and the Chiricahua Apache sustained against both the Mexicans and the United States. After the murder of his mother, wife, and children, Geronimo was steadfast in his revenge and his resistance. Facing overwhelming odds (at one point, 5000 troops of the United States army were pursuing only 39 Apaches), over the years he surrendered four different times—the program provides the details—with the final surrender on September 3, 1866, seeing him and many of his people removed from their homeland and imprisoned in Florida, then in Oklahoma. In fact, in spite of becoming somewhat of a folk hero, Geronimo spent the rest of his life as a prisoner of war, never being allowed to return home.

The final leader featured in Part 1 of the documentary is the Comanche Quanah Parker. He had a foot in both worlds, with his white mother having been captured as a child and later having married into the tribe. She was later recaptured. Although she wanted to return to her Comanche family, she was not allowed to. Quanah became a leader, one of the last left in the resistance as he did not sign the 1867 Medicine Lodge treaty. Eventually his resistance ended, however, and he was appointed as a chief of all his people by the United States, which was not the Comanche way. However, he continued to be highly influential, acquiring a sizable ranch with many cattle and horses and a large house. In that, he was controversial among his own people. Indeed, he did have a foot in both worlds. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

The second part of the documentary provides an overview of five Native American tribes, beginning with the Iroquois confederacy of the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca, to be later joined by the Tuscarora. The Iroquois became more competitive and warlike with nearby tribes as the fur trade was introduced, eventually devastating the Wendat/Hurons. With the American Revolution, and the influence of Joseph Brant, the Iroquois split their allegiance between the United States and England, and ended up losing much of their land in the United States. Ely Parker was a notable Seneca, and served as secretary for General Ulysses Grant, who became President (1869-1877) after the American Civil War (1861-1865).

Secondly, the program (Part 2) provides an overview of the Seminoles, who fought three wars against the United States, and whose final group of 700 left in Florida never surrendered. Coming from a Creek word, Seminole mean those who ran away, which refers to the nature of the Seminoles as run-away or ‘wild’ Creeks and slaves, those who refused to surrender, fleeing south to what was then still colonized Spanish land. The narration recounts the three Seminole Wars: 1) 1814-1819, with, among other events, the invasion of Florida by U.S. forces under General Andrew Jackson, and the destruction of the ‘Negro Fort’, culminating in the Treaty of Moultrie Creek and the Treaty of Payne’s Landing; 2) 1835-1842, with the Seminole attack on the ‘Indian Key’, a small island in upper Florida Keys, and widespread use of capture and coercion of the Seminole leaders through treachery and bribes; 3) 1855-1858, with war resulting from increased army presence on Seminole land and subsequent resistance.

The third tribal group addressed in Part 2 of the documentary, the Navajo, were living in what is now southwestern United States in a larger area with Canyon de Chelly as the hub. A
settled people, they had become livestock herders (particularly sheep), as well as farmers/gardeners/orchard keepers, weavers, and the makers of turquoise jewellery. Because they were not nomadic, they were easier for the United States to attack. The army persistently destroyed their livestock, crops, and orchards, finally forcing the Navajo to leave their homeland and walk to the bleak and desolate Bosque Redondo, in several separate journeys between 1864 and 1866. Following a public outcry, the 1868 Treaty of Bosque Redondo allowed the Navajo to return to their homeland.

The fourth tribal group addressed in Part 2, the Cheyenne, originally lived a more settled life as farmers and potters. Later becoming nomadic plains hunters, they were known for their spiritual beliefs and ceremonies, particularly the Sundance. The Cheyenne also fought against white encroachment, and were likewise attacked and killed by the United States army. The Sand Creek or Chivington massacre of November 29, 1864, resulted in around 200 people being killed in an attack by the Colorado territory militia. Leader Black Kettle, who worked for peace, survived that attack, but upon resisting further with the aid of an alliance of his people, he was killed by a U.S. army attack at the Battle of Washita River. Afterwards, the Cheyenne were forced onto reservations and provided with rations.

Finally, the program (Part 2) addresses the Lakota, with particular focus on their nomadic lifestyle, stressing the importance of the horse and the buffalo, as well as their sacred lands of the Black Hills of Pahá Sápa. By the 1860s, when the United States wanted to build the Bozeman Trail, the Lakota had lost much of their lands. When the United States broke their agreement around the Bozeman Trail, Red Cloud resisted and attacked. Finally the forts along the trail were abandoned, and were subsequently burned by the Lakota, after which a treaty gave the Sioux tribes the Great Sioux Reservation. After the American Civil War, and with the country in recession, gold was discovered in the Black Hills. That led to a betrayal of the treaty, the takeover of Sioux land, and the resistance by the tribe. The program covers that resistance, including several notable battles (e.g., Little Big Horn) and the role of important leaders, for example Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull, neither of whom had signed treaty. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

Loewen, Vanessa (Series Co-producer, APTN), MacDonald, Joe (Series Co-producer, NFB), Mazur, Derek (Series Exec. co-producer, NFB), & Strutt, Peter (Series Exec. co-producer, APTN). (2010). *Vistas: Aboriginal expressions, 13 short films on the theme of “nationhood”* [Documentary shorts]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB) & Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN). (43.5 running minutes)

This wonderful collection of short films is entirely available on the website of the National Film Board of Canada (See https://www.nfb.ca/playlist/vistas/). In each instance a one-sentence descriptor provides information about the film. Several of the filmmakers are seasoned professionals. The films are as follows:
1) Melanie Jackson’s film *Dancers of the Grass* (2 min., 17 sec.) presents a stop-motion animation of a hoop dancer who celebrates the interweaving of all nations;
2) Zoe Hopkins’ film *Button Blanket* (3 min., 29 sec.) combines the making of the button blanket with the art of the West coast Heiltsuk people;
3) Tracy Deer’s film *Crossing the Line* (3 min., 18 sec.) presents the sandbox play between two children—one Aboriginal and one non-Aboriginal—showing how the drawing of the line leads to separation and isolation rather than to understanding relationships;

4) Nancy Ackerman’s and Alan Syliboy’s animated film *Little Thunder* (3 min., 10 sec.) utilizes Syliboy’s art in its enactment of the Mi’kmaq legend The Stone Canoe, which humorously recounts a boy’s journey into manhood;

5) Marie Burke’s *Carrying Fire* (3 min., 46 sec.) combines live enactment and animation to illustrate how our spirit’s fire is carried from one generation to the next;

6) Doug Smarch’s computer-generated, animated film *Ignition* (3 min., 20 sec.) recreates a journey along a dark winding highway in the winter, showing how our ‘lights’ can only illuminate part of what lies ahead;

7) Lisa Jackson’s animated film *The Visit* (3 min., 46 sec.) tells the true story of one family’s encounter with a UFO, and their quiet reflection of its potential meaning;

8) Jobie Weetaluktuk’s film *InukShop* (2 min., 37 sec.) combines archival scenes of the life ways of the Inuit, with photos of Inuit inspired works of art that appear in a shop in the city but that have been appropriated rather than having been made by Inuit people;

9) Jerry Evans’ film *Red Ochre* (3 min., 26 sec.) combines archival footage with newer family photos in communicating the challenges in finding the path of one’s Newfoundland Mi’kmaq culture in contemporary times;

10) Shane Belcourt’s film *Boxed In* (4 min., 6 sec.) uses professional actors to illustrate the conundrum of a young woman of mixed ancestry as she is filling out an Equal Opportunity Form; she solves her dilemma by creating a new box entitled All of the Above, then checks it and signs her form;

11) Diane Obomsawin’s animated film *Walk-in-the-Forest* (3 min., 12 sec.) shows a man as he walks in the forest and discovers a whole new secret world, a world that we suspect might be there for anyone who chooses to open their hearts to the outdoors;

12) Shannon Latendre’s (male) film *Trapper* (2 min., 49 sec.) provides an insightful look at the life in the woods of a Northern trapper; and

13) Adam Garnet Jones’ film *Wave a Red Flag* (4 min., 7 sec.) shows a grandmother giving her granddaughter a red flag to carry as she goes to school; when confronted by racism, she is hurt, but her flag takes her in hand and she is carried down the street where along the way she gains strength and pride in her Native culture as she is joined by many others who also carry red flags.

There are many ways to use these superb short films. For example, students might create their own films, drawings, poems, or stories on the same topic or on topics of their own choosing. It may be a good idea to introduce the films without saying what the filmmaker intended with their film. In that way, students might create their own meanings from their experience of watching the films. (MY, SY, Adult)

Long, Jack (Director), Jacques, Penni (Co-producer), & Johnson, George (Co-producer). (1979). *Bill Reid* [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (28 running minutes)

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This older film focuses on the carving of a totem pole by the Haida artist Bill Reid (1920-1998). That totem pole was created for his mother’s home village of Skidegate, New Clew, or historically known as Tanu on Haida Gwaii (formerly known as the Queen Charlotte Islands). The film shows the creation of the totem pole from its original state as a harvested cedar tree, now a log, and follows its carving work by Bill Reid and an apprentice, and finally its installation in the community. As well as that work, Bill Reid gives an overview of his own background, his early work as a radio announcer, and his concurrent evolving interest as an artist, both as a maker of fine jewellery in several metals (e.g., gold, silver, argillite) and as a sculptor in bronze and cedar. Many of his creations are shown in the film. During his work Bill Reid became increasingly informed about the artistic traditions of the Haida and incorporated many of those traditions into his art. In his later life, he also became involved as an activist for native rights, including environmental conservation of the forests of Haida Gwaii. Many websites will allow for further study of Bill Reid and his artistic contributions; for example, see http://theravenscall.ca/en/art. (MY, SY, Adult)

Luhrmann, Baz (Director, Co-producer, Co-screenplay, & Story). (2008). *Australia* [Motion picture]. AU: 20th Century Fox (Distributor). (165 running minutes)

Overall, the story involves the efforts of Lady Sarah Ashley (Nicole Kidman) to protect her former husband’s cattle station, Faraway Downs, with the help of Drover (Hugh Jackson). The setting is between 1938 and 1942 and includes a Japanese attack on Darwin. The real story, for our purposes, focuses on the racist treatment of Australian Aboriginal people, with particular attention to the Stolen Generations and especially Nullah (Brendan Walters) in this instance, and the enforced removal of these mixed race children to residential schools (Also see *Rabbit Proof Fence*, reviewed in this document). David Gupilil stars as King George, Nullah’s grandfather and a tribal elder with the gift of magic. The movie has several plot lines, but, as a whole, it focuses on the complicated relationships of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. While the film is recommended, its length will constrict opportunities for classroom viewing. Because the film setting takes place in the 1930s and 1940s, there are issues of embedded social racism that should be analyzed at a deeper level. (SY, Adult)

MacDonald, Joe (Producer), Scott, Michael (Co-exec. producer), & Mazur, Derek (Co-exec. producer). (2006). *Aboriginal filmmakers tell their First Stories* [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (67 running minutes)

This collection of four films embraces the experiences of young Aboriginal filmmakers. Each film also includes an interview with the filmmaker.

Chartrand, Ervin (Director & Writer), & Savard, Claude (Cinematographer). (2006). *Patrick Ross* [Documentary]. From *Aboriginal filmmakers tell their First Stories*. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (6 running minutes)

Ervin Chartrand’s film about painter Patrick Ross and his art is exceptional in approach. Chartrand has been able to project Patrick Ross as intense and real, as he is interviewed while painting in his studio. The camera work for this film was superb. Like Chartrand himself, Patrick
Ross spent time in prisons, and also like Chartrand, has found that his art helps him to walk the Good Red Road. This film should be longer! (upper MY, SY, Adult)

Letandre, Shannon (Director & Writer), Savard, Claude (Co-cinematographer), & Danchuk, Linda (Co-cinematographer). (2006). Nganawendaanan Nde’ing (I keep them in my heart) [Documentary]. From Aboriginal filmmakers tell their First Stories. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (6.5 running minutes)

In this film, Shannon Letandre talks of how she grew up on the small reserve of Dauphin River First Nation with her grandparents, Alex and Marina Letandre. She sometimes struggles to feel connected to the traditional knowledge passed to her by her grandparents when she is in the city, so she often returns to the community to spend time with them. In this film, she goes to the muskeg with her grandfather to pick wickay root (bitterroot or wild ginger). They prepare it together, and hang it to dry. When she returns to the city, she can make tea from the root and drink it, which helps her remain grounded in the teachings of her culture. (MY, SY, Adult)

Nepinak, Daryl (Director & Writer), Savard, Claude (Co-cinematographer), & Parenteau, Sean (Co-cinematographer). (2006). My Indian name [Documentary]. From Aboriginal filmmakers tell their First Stories. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (6.5 running minutes)

This film relates Daryl’s story, and that of his sister, as they get their Indian names as adults. Born and raised in Winnipeg, the siblings were not closely connected to their culture growing up. However, now they are preparing for a trip to see Elder Dennis Morrison from Bird’s Hill Park, who will give them their Indian names in a ceremony. The two prepare nervously, but they are joyful when they receive their names. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

Olson, Lorne (Director & Writer), Savard, Claude (Co-cinematographer), & Munoe, Reil (Co-cinematographer). (2006). Apples and Indians [Documentary]. From Aboriginal filmmakers tell their First Stories. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (5 running minutes)

This marvellous film is both hilarious and poignant. With reference to the apple, Olson refers to a teacher telling him that while he was red like an apple, on the inside he was white like everyone else. In particular, Olson, in being of mixed race, and light haired and blue eyed, is trying to figure out who he is amidst all the various terms for an Aboriginal person. He presents his quandary around the terms with a variety of amusing dramatizations of each term. What is his identity? Finally, an Elder tells him that he is Anishinabe, which means human beings lowered down here from the stars, and, he thinks, that works best for him. This is an exceptional film for classroom use. (MY, SY, Adult)

MacDonald, Joe (Producer), & Scott, Stephanie (Associate producer). (2007). Aboriginal filmmakers tell their First Stories: Volume II [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (34 running minutes, including interviews)

Following the first successful mentoring of young Aboriginal filmmakers, the National Film Board of Canada followed up with a second similar project. Again, this second collection of four
films embraces the experiences of young Aboriginal filmmakers. Each episode also includes an interview with the filmmaker.

Desnomie, Tessa (Director & Writer). (2007). *Ati-wîhcasin (It’s getting easier)* [Documentary]. From *Aboriginal filmmakers tell their First Stories: Volume II*. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (6.5 running minutes)

This great short film, all shot in the bush up north, involves a story from Tessa’s grandmother, spoken to a small child, about how her cleaning of the cabin became easier as life went along. While the grandmother is showing the child how to make a broom from branches, she tells how she learned that there were manufactured brooms, and got one of those; then a mop, and she got one of those; and finally a vacuum, which she also acquired. In each instance as she tells of acquiring the new item, she is shown standing on the riverbank suddenly holding the new article. The effect is both funny and surprising, as within the natural surroundings, the manufactured item looks out of place. This film can initiate many such projects with students. (MY, SY, Adult)


This film begins with a very aggressive approach, with the filmmaker claiming his pride of heritage, but also speaking against white people. Everything about white people is bad. But then he happens to stop at a field with many horses running around. One comes up to him for a pat. He then realizes that the horse, introduced by whites, was embraced into many Aboriginal cultures, and that is good. As well, he recognizes too that the horse does not see colour, either among other horses, or with reference to the human who relates with them. He then also realizes that he too is a part of the white society as well, as his grandfather is white. He goes to visit him, and his grandfather embraces him with love. He is his grandfather’s grandson, and that is what is important. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

Swiderski, Paul John. (Director & Writer). (2007). *O Mother, were art thou?* [Documentary]. From *Aboriginal filmmakers tell their First Stories: Volume II*. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (5 running minutes)

Adopted into a non-Aboriginal family, Paul John (P. J.) has been raised with love. He is secure in his place, he had a good growing up experience, and he did not experience racism in his small town or at school. At a large family gathering, an unthinking cousin remarks about his Aboriginal heritage, and wonders aloud to him, if he was ever curious about his birth mother. That comment seems cruel in the film, and it set P. J. back on his heels. But then the same cousin brings him a plate of food—interestingly he is sitting in a room alone though—and tells him that he can always go find his mom if he wants to. That sets him to thinking that perhaps he should do that. And there the film ends. The viewer wonders if he followed through, as Gil Cardinal did (See review of *Foster Child* in this document). (upper MY, SY, Adult)

This film is part of the healing journey for Janine Windolph. Now pregnant with her third child, she is still mourning her daughter that she miscarried at the end of the fourth month of a previous pregnancy. The film documents her process of letting her daughter Heaven rest comfortably with the Elders who have also gone before, and letting herself be happy about the upcoming birth of her second son. Her family helps her with the healing journey. This is a moving film for others who are struggling to let a loved one go. It also validates the experience of other mothers who mourn a miscarriage. There are several children’s books that might accompany this film (e.g., Michael Kusagak’s *Northern Lights the Soccer Trails*). (upper MY, SY, Adult)


US: Milestone Films. (72 running minutes)

This is an incredible film. In the late 1950s Kent MacKenzie became friends with several Native American people who had left their reservations and were living in the Bunker Hill neighbourhood of Los Angeles. A student at UCLA—it is not clear if this movie was actually part of his thesis work—MacKenzie asked his friends if they would create a film of their lives, and they agreed. During this time in the United States, there was a policy of urban relocation of Native Americans to cities with the stated purpose of employment, but with more insidious underlying motives (See http://www.museumca.org/picturethis/timeline/homogenization-protests-outright-rebellion-1950s/native-americans-move-city-urban-relocat-0 Also see http://www.pbs.org/indiancountry/history/relocate.html)

Both the main two people in the movie, Yvonne Williams and her boyfriend Homer Nish, write and narrate their own stories, which are told in voice-overs. The film includes shots of their day-to-day lives, with Yvonne shopping for food at a busy market and coming home to cook it for Homer and his friends, none of whom seem to be working. Yvonne is pregnant, and has hopes for her unborn child, that she will love it and that it will have more opportunities than she has had. She is obviously deeply lonely, as she is not really a part of the life of Homer and his friends. But Homer too seems to be living on the surface, hanging out with his friends but not really there with them. He too is lonely, but he has not found his solace or his purpose with Yvonne, nor she with him. Along with his friends, all in a nice convertible, they leave Yvonne off by herself to attend a movie while they go out partying to the ‘Indian bar’. During the evening, Homer goes with his friend to his tiny apartment where the friend’s wife and children are all huddled on a bed watching television. The friend talks his wife out of money to play poker. The film follows the poker game, where neither man does well and they leave. Going into another bar, Homer is given a letter from home. He reads it later while waiting for a friend to buy more booze from a liquor store. The scene moves to his home, a setting far removed from his life now in the city. When they get their cheap liquor, the two friends walk along drinking, going through a tunnel and then meeting up with others. They all go to a hang-out up on a hill, outside of the city, but looking down on it. The drinking continues, even while someone brings out a drum and several gather around to drum. A fight breaks out as Homer defends a girl who is being attacked
by one of the men. Some of the group, including Homer, stay there until daylight. After attending
her movie, Yvonne goes to a friend’s house, and stays with her for the night. In the morning,
through the open window, she can hear the shouting of the partiers. Looking out, she sees Homer,
along with two other men and two women, walking down the street. Where they veer off into a
home, or to another street, the movie ends.

The movie is utterly successful in communicating the feeling of these people being exiled
in the city, as they all seem to live on the surface, creating their own superficial sub-culture of a
partying, care-free life. The loneliness of Homer and Yvonne is palpable. The city offers little of
the promise that they had longed for, or been promised, in moving there. The movie, having been
made, was not released nor viewed by many people. Discovered over fifty years later and
restored, it now provides an important snapshot of the lives of those Native Americans who went
to the city hoping for a better life. As well as Yvonne Williams and Homer Nish, the other main
participants in the film are Tommy Reynolds, Rico Rodriguez, Clifford Roy Sam, Clydean
Parker, and Mary Donahue. There are also 26 other listed film participants. Several bonus
features are included. There is separate commentary from Sherman Alexis and Sean Axmaker
that runs the full length of the film, and contributes to an understanding of the film’s characters,
including their clothing, hair styles, voices, and tribal affiliations, as well as the settings for the
film, and the actions of the characters. Students, and people from community groups, might
compare life now for people going to the cities from the reserves, hoping to make a better life
there for themselves and their families. Are they, too, often similarly exiled to the fringes of the
‘good life’ and opportunities in the city? How can that situation be addressed? (upper SY, Adult)

MacLeod, Alec (Director), & Zannis, Mark (Producer & Writer). (1992). *Acts of defiance*
[Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (105 running minutes)
Obomsawin, Alanis (Director, Script, Research, Narrator, & Co-producer), Koenig, Wolf
(Co-producer), & Luhovy, Yurij (Editor). (1993). *Kanehsatake: 270 years of resistance*
[Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (120 running minutes)
Obomsawin, Alanis (Director, Script, Research, Narrator, & Producer), & Dennis
Film Board of Canada (NFB). (30 running minutes)
Obomsawin, Alanis (Director, Script, Research, Narrator, & Producer), & Read, Donna
Board of Canada (NFB). (58 running minutes)
Obomsawin, Alanis (Director, Script, Research, Narrator, & Producer), & Luhovy, Yurij
of Canada (NFB). (105 running minutes)
Hornung, Rick. (1991). *One nation under the gun: Inside the Mohawk civil war.* Toronto:
The films and books in this collection focus on the Oka situation of 1990 near Kanesatake, often termed the ‘Mohawk crisis,’ as well as connected situations in Kahnawake and Akwesasne, with tensions in the latter community predating the 1990 Oka crisis. The situation in Kanesatake arose when the town of Oka, initiated by the mayor’s office, decided to expand an eight-hole members-only golf club to 18 holes, and also include a condominium project, on the site of what was contested land of the Mohawks at Kanesatake, land which included a Mohawk gravesite, and which had been claimed as Mohawk land even when the initial golf course was built. Barricades were set up. The people were joined in their protest by many other First Nations people (e.g., communities of Kahnawake and Akwesasne), and also by many non-Aboriginal people. One policeman, SQ (Quebec provincial police Sureté du Québec) Corporal Marcel Lemay was killed in the standoff on July 11; no charges were ever laid for his death. The nearby community of Kahnawake, adjacent to Montreal, joined the protest and blocked the Mercier Bridge and thus heavy traffic going to and from Montreal, along with other important routes for commuting workers and business people. The people of nearby Chateauguay became inflamed in response. The situation continued to escalate, and the R.C.M.P. were called in to try to quell what had now become mobs. The R.C.M.P. were eventually joined by army personnel. Many people were evacuated from Kahnawake, and while crossing the bridge, their cars were stoned. That barbaric act brought the attention of the world to the situation. With the presence of the armed forces, the community of Kahnawake negotiated for the reopening of the Mercier Bridge, and for the end of their protests, at the end of August. That was followed with an end to the stand-off at Kanesatake as well, but not until the end of September. The golf course expansion was cancelled, and the land was purchased by the federal government, but not transferred to Kanesatake.

The film Acts of Defiance gives some background to the causes for the confrontation. It is presented that as sovereign nations, the First Nations communities considered that they did not have to attend to some federal and provincial laws and regulations. The issue was pushed with reference to bingos, for example, which resulted in the seizing of bingo prizes, including a vehicle. As the situation escalated around the issues of the First Nation’s internal ability to make laws and regulations, as well as outstanding land claims, the community of Kahnawake invited important national spokespeople to their events, for example Elijah Harper. As well, a delegation from the European Parliament visited the community. The film includes much raw footage from the time of the Oka crisis concerning the land claim issue. It is frightening to watch, as both sides often displayed the worst attributes of human behaviour. From the Aboriginal side, a woman says...
that the SQ members are like Hitler’s army, and that they all should be exterminated. The elderly curse at the police. Little children in a wagon, no older than three or four, are holding up the middle finger. The film also includes the footage of uninterrupted mob members stoning the vehicles evacuating the community of Kahnawake. During some interviewing, people from the non-Aboriginal communities are screaming into the cameras. Their faces are twisted, misshapen with anger and hatred. They burn effigies of Mohawk people. Why did Canadians display such behaviour to one another? While the situation did bring home that the land claims of Canada’s First Nations must be taken seriously, lasting questions linger about how to develop better ways to address conflicts. (SY, Adult)

Alanis Obomsawin’s four films are available as a package with an accompanying book. Together they are entitled Alanis Obomsawin: The Collection – 270 years of Resistance: Essays, Articles, and Documentation. As well as a listing of the credits from the four films, the 55-page book, following the Forward and Introduction, contains the following articles: 1) Obomsawin: Singer, Storyteller, Filmmaker, Poet by Robert Verrall; 2) Portrait of the Artist as Ogima: Film and the Cause of the First Nations by André Dudeamine; 3) A Woman of our Times by Merata Mita; 4) The Oka Crisis: The Power of a Woman with a Movie Camera by Audra Simpson and Faye Ginsburg; 5) Cutting through the Razor Wire at Mohawk Barricades by Ronald Wright; 6) Kanehsatake documentary shows shameful way Canadian government treats Aboriginal people by John Griffin; 7) About Alanis Obomsawin: Biography, Filmography, Film Awards, Personal Achievement Awards, Awards Presented in Honour of Alanis Obomsawin; and 8) Film Credits (for the four included films). The first three films in the collection are available in their entirety from the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) website.

Obomsawin’s 1993 film Kanehsatake 270 Years of Resistance is exceptional in its coverage of the events during the Oka crisis, but also because of the background history lesson that Obomsawin presents on the manner in which the people from Kanehsatake had been removed from Hochelaga, at the location of what is now Montreal, to their present location. Much of the tract of land that they were granted at their new location was taken from them from the Sulpician Order of the Catholic Church. When it was discovered by the community that the Supicians had actually transferred the land into their own name, the work to claim back that land began. Thus, the events of the Oka situation had a long history. That contested land now included the town of Oka, and a nearby golf course, where the mayor of Oka planned to expand that golf course further onto the contested land, and include high-end housing. Interestingly, the project was also opposed by many of the Oka people. As soon as the events began in the summer of 1990 at Oka, Obomsawin followed the situation, filming and interviewing as the crisis unfolded. In that, this is an exceptional record of the events that played out within both Kanehsatake and Kahnawake as the latter community immediately came to the support of the people at Kanehsatake. The name of the editor is included in the citation for this film, as it took six months just to view all the raw camera footage to select aspects for the two-hour film. Many interviews allow the viewer to see how various people within and outside the community, including politicians and police, viewed the situation. Attention is given to the supplying of food and medicine to the protesters; that aspect, while seen by the protesters as controversial,
communicated that the situation was not a ‘war’. While it might be claimed that this film shows a biased view, evidence is included of the support for the Mohawks by John Ciaccia, the then provincial Aboriginal affairs minister, as well as others, and includes many filmed instances of bad behaviour on both sides. Again, because this film includes footage of adults behaving despicably, its use with students is sensitive. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

Obomsawin’s 1995 film *My Name is Kahentiiosta* documents the participation of the young Kahnawake woman as she joins the people at Kanehsatake to fight for the land at Oka. As the narrator, Kahentiiosta relates how the land has changed since the settler invasion. In her own community of Kahnawake, she tells of the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway and the huge ships going by their door, about the building of the railway with its clear cutting across trap lines, and of the Mercier Bridge with its huge traffic flow. In each instance, the film shows the manner in which increased intrusion on Aboriginal lands has crowded the life ways of those in the communities. With the town of Oka planning to take over the Pines, and build more holes to a golf course as well as luxury housing, Kahentiiosta felt obligated to join the resistance. Filming includes footage from the 78-day stand-off, including the arrest of many of those resisting. Kahentiiosta was held longer than the other women arrested because she refused to provide an English name. Interviews and narration with the vibrant Kahentiiosta provide an excellent portrayal of one woman’s fight to support her people.

Obomsawin’s 1997 film *Spudwrench: Kahnawake Man* tells the story of Randy Horne, or Spudwrench, one of the participants in the Oka resistance of 1990. This film, like *My Name is Kanentiiosta*, is intended to provide a humanizing biographical portrait of some of those people involved in the resistance. In this instance, Obomsawin chronicles the work of the Mohawk iron workers, not only Randy Horne, but also many others who have worked in the business, and contributed to the economic growth and development of both Canada and the United States. Many of the men are interviewed, and archival footage provides a frightening look at the work of those who know no fear of heights. Walking on beams high above the ground—at times 64 stories—or hanging from the spider networks of cables, many Mohawk men travelled to the United States for work on high rises and bridges, taking the long trip home every Friday night, at times driving for more than six hours. Footage also includes the participation of Randy Horne in the 1990 resistance, including his serious injuries from being beaten by soldiers. The film includes interviews with Randy and his wife Stephanie in their home and with their family. With the many other interviews and the filming of life in Kahnawake, this film provides a picture of the Mohawk communities that resisted the takeover of their traditional lands, and thus deepens our understanding.

Obomsawin’s 2000 film *Rocks at Whiskey Trench* focuses on the Kahnawake situation and includes extensive footage of the crisis in that community, as well as interviews with numerous people from the community and from the surrounding area, particularly Chateauguay, both from the time of the crisis and a few years later. When the blockades came down from the Mercier Bridge, there was an assurance that the Canadian army would not go into Kahnawake; however, that assurance was reneged and, in fear of army intrusion into the community, on August 28, 1990, 75 cars of people from the community evacuated over the Mercier Bridge and
then along a stretch of highway called Whiskey Trench because there used to be distilleries and breweries beside the highway. Rather than being allowed to evacuate quickly, the cavalcade was held up for hours and even when they left, car searches delayed them for an even longer period. That allowed time for a mob to assemble along where the vehicles would be driving, at the Lasalle exit of the Mercier Bridge. The police had orders not to arrest anyone, and while they did prevent the mob from directly swarming the cavalcade and attacking the people, they did not prevent the stoning of the vehicles that carried mostly the elderly, women, and children. The film also includes the story of the military subsequently landing on nearby Tekakwitha Island, which precipitated an aggressive response from Kahnawake and their supporters. Years later, the community still tries to heal from the acts of violence and the trauma from the events. The film includes historical background of the community of Kahnawake, which had also seen their land base shrink from 65 square miles to little over 19. As well, there is archival footage showing the building of the Mercier Bridge itself, and the heavy involvement of the people from Kahnawake, with many having had long careers as iron workers. The film merits focussed attention, as the filmmakers also include interviewees and footage from Kanehsatake, flipping back and forth several times, which can confuse the viewer about just where the referenced events are happening. Fortunately, every interviewee is ‘introduced’ with their name and their role/position.

Obsomsawin’s four films are the essential resources for a study of the Oka crisis that shook Canada, and woke up its indigenous communities and the nation as a whole regarding the importance of outstanding land claims from many First Nations. (MY, SY, Adult)

Most books addressing the Oka crisis are written at an adult level. While there are many books written on the Oka events and their background, those included here should provide a good overview. This Land is Our Land is an essential resource as it consists entirely of the time line of events, day by day, and numerous photographs. This 121-page book also includes The Great Law of Peace, which is the Constitution of the Iroquois Confederacy, as well as many informative inserts about the history of the Mohawk and about various key figures in the Oka crisis. Harry Swain’s book Oka looks at the crisis from his perspective as the then Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs. He elaborates the roles of other political players at the time, including Quebec Native Affairs Minister John Ciaccia who tried to broker an agreement at the time for the federal government to buy the land and turn it over to Kanehsatake (See http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/oka-crisis-legacy-questioned-1.891154). Swain concludes that there is still much work to be done, given the struggles Canada’s Aboriginal peoples continue to experience. Winegard’s book Oka is an excellent, inclusive treatment, readable while more academic in nature. If time allows for the read of only one book, Winegard’s would be a good choice, as he has referenced numerous other sources in his work, which will lead the interested student to further study. For example, he refers to the more inclusive treatment of the situation in Akwesasne provided by Rick Hornung’s One Nation under the Gun, and by Bruce E. Johansen’s Life and Death in Mohawk Country. Written seventeen and fifteen years earlier, respectively, than Winegard’s Oka, these two earlier books provide viewpoints of the events as they happened, which will complement Winegard’s book of 2008, as this later book is able to provide a perspective that only the passage of time might allow. Similarly, York and
Pindera’s book *People of the Pines* is an academic volume more likely to be used at the college or university level. This collection of films and books would make a great Indigenous Inquiry Kit, with a collaborative team of students each focusing on various aspects, but pulling their work together for a cohesive project. (SY, Adult)


This is a very interesting documentary about the role that Native Americans played in the American Civil War (1861-1865). Re-enactment adds to the contributions, by interview, of notable historians, particularly Laurence E. Hauptman and Thom Hatch, but also several others. Originally termed a white man’s war, Native Americans were not allowed to sign up as soldiers on either the Union or the Confederate side in what at least the Union side thought would be a conflict of only a few months. As time wore on, however, and casualties were high, Native Americans were accepted into the ranks of both sides, and were heavily recruited. It is estimated that from 20,000 to 30,000 Native Americans served in the American Civil War. In particular, the roles of Ely Parker, Stand Waite, and Henry Barry Lowry are examined in this documentary. A Seneca, Ely Parker was educated as a civil engineer and as a lawyer, although he was not accepted to the bar because of his race. While he continually lobbied to be able to serve, his requests were refused until he was given a role by his friend Ulysses S. Grant. As Grant’s secretary, Ely Parker was the writer for the terms of surrender by Robert E. Lee of the Confederate Army. The Cherokee Stand Waite served on the Confederate side of the war, achieving the rank of Brigadier-General and becoming known as the Red Fox. The film explores the conflict within the Cherokee nation itself, between those in the Treaty party who signed the Treaty of Echota in 1835 that agreed to Cherokee removal from what is now the Carolinas to what was known then as Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, and the majority who refused to sign and who were then forcibly removed, headed by Principal Chief John Ross. The Treaty group, headed by Stand Waite, joined the side of the Confederates, while those forcibly removed and who had walked the Trail of Tears sided with the Union. In other words, the American Civil War resulted in a civil war within the Cherokee nation. Finally, the film explores the contribution of Henry Barry Lowry of the Lumbee tribe. As a smaller tribal group, the Lumbees had avoided enforced relocation to the west by retreating into the swamplands of what became the Carolinas, only to then see their land taken over by southern plantation owners. Lowry, a youngster in hiding, had witnessed his father and uncle being made to dig their own graves, then being shot and pushed into them. During the Civil War, many Lumbee were used as enforced labor by the Confederates, with many dying in the extreme conditions. Lowry and the Lumbee people fought back. In his daring raids, which included the theft of supplies to sustain those who were in need, Lowry was seen as a Robin Hood figure by both his own people and by many others in need who he assisted. Because of their knowledge of the terrain, Lowry and the Lumbee were able to guide
Union troops to the south for battles, as well as to hide runaway slaves and escaped Union prisoners.

What was then known as Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, was the stage for many battles during the Civil War, as it was considered crucial by both sides in the struggle. After the surrender of the Confederate Army, life returned to much the same situation for the Native Americans, with their contributions being forgotten and their lands continuing to be taken whenever the United States government wanted those previously-promised lands for more western expansion. That included Oklahoma, the Indian Territory where the Cherokee and many other tribes had been forcibly relocated. Between 1889 and 1906, three million acres of Indian Territory were sold to white settlers and developers.

This excellent film might support a diverse number of studies, for example projects exploring the lives of Ely Parker, Stand Waite, and/or Henry Barry Lowry, as well as other Native Americans who played a role in the American Civil War and other conflicts in which the United States was engaged. Students may also be interested in the history of the Seneca, the Cherokee, the Lumbee, and/or other tribal groups. Other programs about Native American history by The History Channel are also available, and can be researched. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

Mankiewicz, Francis (Director), & Couture, Suzanne (Screenplay). (1994). *Conspiracy of silence* [Motion picture]. CA: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). (183 running minutes)


On November 13, 1971, 19-year-old Aboriginal teenager Helen Betty Osborne was brutally murdered by four young white men: Lee Colgan, Jim Houghton, Dwayne Johnston, and Norm Manger in The Pas, Manitoba. Although the townspeople knew who committed the crime, as Lee Colgan repeatedly told of the murder, the townspeople circled the boys in a conspiracy of silence. With a less-than-determined approach by police, the murderers were not charged for nearly 17 years, not until a new policeman Bob Urbanoski was assigned to the case. Even then, with an immunity deal arranged for Lee Colgan if he testified, only one of the men—Dwayne Johnston—ever served time for the crime, a total of ten years before being released on parole. Houghton was acquitted and Manger was never charged. The Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission, in a follow-up investigation, concluded that racism, sexism, and indifference played roles in length of time taken for the case. For their report see http://www.ajic.mb.ca/ Accompanying an official apology by the province of Manitoba in 2000, a scholarship was created in Helen Betty Osborne’s name.

Journalist Lisa Priest provides a detailed account of the case, including biographical information about Helen Betty Osborne and her family, and for all four of the young men involved and their families, but particularly for Lee Colgan (SY, Adult). As well, a description is
provided of the community of The Pas, which was also considered to have been on trial for their complicity in the crime. Copies of the book should be available in public libraries even though it is now out of print. The movie, also hard to find, may not have good picture quality depending upon the source. It stars Michelle St. John as Helen Betty Osborne; Jennifer Podemski as Helen’s mother; Monique Mojica as Helen’s sister Justine; Mike Mahonen as Lee Colgan; Ian Tracey as Dwayne Johnston; Jonathan Potts as Jim Houghten; Diego Chambers as Norm Manger; Jani Lauzon as Marie; Stephen Ouimette as Bob Urbanski (named Steve Frishbilski in film); and Dawn Greenhalgh as Lee Colgan’s overly-protective mother. Both the book and the movie are intended for older audiences. The movie is very long, and that, accompanied by the poor picture quality and the deeply disturbing content, presents challenges. Even after so many years, there may need to be emotional support for students who address the details of this crime.

The excellent graphic novel recounts the story for younger readers; a teacher candidate has used the novel successfully for a largely non-Aboriginal Grade 5 class (MY, SY; see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OqkT3BCXL54).

For additional information on the Helen Betty Osborne case see http://www.ammsa.com/node/22019, as well as http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/osborne-murder-investigation-officially-closed-1.184565

Marcuse, Gary (Director, Writer, & Co-producer), Eriksen, Svend-Erik (Co-producer), & Williams, Lorna (Co-producer). (1995). *The mind of a child* [Documentary]. CA: Face to Face Media/National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (60 running minutes)

This film is particularly interesting as it underscores the importance of instilling in children a belief in their own capacity as valuable and capable human beings. For some children, particularly those raised in poverty and/or in a situation of systemic discrimination, such a belief in their own capacity may not have been instilled within their environmental experience and/or that belief in themselves may have been severely eroded. That, according to Lorna Williams, has been the experience of many Aboriginal children. When she began working in the Vancouver school system in 1985 only two Aboriginal students had ever graduated from high school. Some were dropping out as early as Grade 5. It was Lorna’s responsibility to try to turn the situation around for the more than 2000 Aboriginal students in the school division. The film takes us to Washington, DC, where many of the young African-American students were also struggling with the school system. We see a teacher working with her students, getting their ideas of how their self-esteem has been eroded. In particular, Lorna begins to work with Reuben Feuerstein, an Israeli psychologist who had working with children who had survived the Holocaust. For many of these children, they had lost their parents at a very young age, subsequently living by their own wits on the street. But they were also deeply scarred, and many could not achieve at school even when they did get the opportunity. With his approach, Mr. Feuerstein is able to find the connection for each child, their gifts and their insights. When he finds aspects at which the child can achieve, it is like being shown a window of opportunity that then he and the child explore, continually taking that child to more and more success in that area. As they do, then the child also begins to open up, and they start to engage in and take responsibility for their own learning.
This approach is termed “mediated learning theory” and the methods had been recommended, at least at the time, by the Canadian Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. This engaging film is primarily for professional development use. (Adult)

Markham, Monte (Co-director & Co-producer), Friedman, Adam (Co-director & Co-producer), Rekant, Stuart B. (Exec. producer), Bankler-Jukes, Stephen (Co-writer), Fulkerson, Lee (Co-writer), & Perkins, Jack (Host). (1994). Biography: Pocahontas; Ambassador of the New World [Documentary]. US: A & E Television Networks. (47 running minutes)

Like Sacagawea, Pocahontas became an American heroine because she unwittingly assisted England’s imperialistic, colonizing ambitions. That becomes clearly evident in this paternalistic production, with its insistence on refuting stereotypes all the while repeating and thus perpetuating those stereotypes. The film, like the productions about Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, also by A & E Television Networks and reviewed in this document, includes patronizing host Jack Perkins (who may not have written the script). Although all of these aspects work against watching this and the other referenced films, those studying the colonizing tactics of the European powers, as well as the American attitude of manifest destiny, would do well to study the documentaries noted.

There is increasingly more information coming forward about the English settlement in Jamestown, in what is now New England, including the widespread starvation in the colony and the subsequent cannibalism among the settlers (See http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/13/130501-jamestown-cannibalism-archeology-science/). Pocahontas (1595-1617) was the daughter of a chief of the nearby Powhatan people who has been reported to have saved the life of John Smith, the head of the Jamestown colony and to have worked as an ally to the English, living with them in the colony after having been captured by them and eventually marrying another of the colonists, John Rolfe, changing her name to Rebecca Rolfe and bearing Rolfe’s son. While in England on display as what could be accomplished when the Indians became ‘civilized’, she took ill and died. While only around 22 years of age, by the time of her death the English had used her and her people to achieve their purposes, so she could be comfortably raised to heroine status and dubbed a princess and her father a king. While a fuller review of the documentary would add details, suffice it to say that the film’s interviewees (one of which is the film’s writer) provide their opinions of the details of Pocahontas’ life, all which could be considered in a research study by mature students educated to critique what they see and hear. For a synopsis and a trailer of the film see http://www.biography.com/people/pocahontas-9443116#awesm=~oFGPIVztxz1YBZ (upper MY, SY, Adult)

Martin, Catherine Anne (Director), Martin, Kent (Producer), & Baker, Angela (Writer). (2002). The spirit of Annie Mae [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (73 running minutes)
This 2002 film was released prior to the conviction of Arlo Looking Cloud and John Graham, formerly of the American Indian Movement (AIM), for Annie Mae Aquash’s murder. What seems to be unknown, even yet, is who ordered the killing of Aquash, although there are several suggestions. Even though the film is dated, it is still valuable as an account and an honouring of Aquash’s life, as well as a history of the American Indian Movement (AIM) and its activities and key people.

Annie Mae Aquash was a Mi’kmaq woman, originally from Nova Scotia, who had moved to Boston as a young woman. She married Jake Maloney from her community back home, and had two daughters Denise and Deborah. She and Jake separated, however, and Annie Mae became involved more in Native activism. Jake moved back to Nova Scotia with his daughters, all of whom are involved as interviewees in the film, with Denise and Deborah now adults with children of their own. Also taking a significant role in the film is Minnie Two Shoes, a journalist and friend of Annie Mae’s, and to a lesser extent Buffy St. Marie, also a friend, as well as others, but notably no former AIM leaders. As time went on, Annie Mae became more involved as a leader in AIM, participating in the occupation and ransacking of the offices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1972, as well as the Wounded Knee occupation in 1973. Over the years, the problems within AIM itself preoccupied the organization. There were internal power struggles and fear of FBI infiltration. That fear was realized when a top AIM member, their Head of Security Douglass Durham, announced in March, 1975, that he was an FBI informant. Because Annie Mae Aquash had worked with him, she also came under suspicion within the organization. She was last heard from in December, 1975, with her body being found on Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota on February 24, 1976. A first autopsy was bungled, but a second examination showed that she had been shot in the head. Even with the convictions, there are various claims about who ordered the killing, and if her rape had been ordered as well. Mature students might do further research on Annie Mae Aquash’s life and on the American Indian Movement. This excellent documentary would be essential viewing for those projects. (SY, Adult)

Mason, Bill (Director & Videographer), Jackson, Stanley (Writer), & Biggs, Julian (Producer). (1966). *Paddle to the sea* [Film]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (30 running minutes)


This book (Caldecott medal winner) and the accompanying film will continue to intrigue readers and viewers, young and old. However, there are terms and expressions in the book that are now dated and/or are considered racist; these, rather than being reasons to reject the book outright, can lead to deeper teachings. The story is about a young First Nations boy who, during long winter days, carves a canoe with a man in it, then lays it out on the frozen ground to await the spring. On the bottom he has carved the name of the boat and the request: Please put me back
in the water. When spring comes, the canoe slips down the hill into the water, and is on its way.

At the late early years and early middle years levels, the 27 one-page chapters, each accompanied by an illustration, will ease young readers into chapter books, and allow them to follow the long voyage of the little canoe named Paddle-to-the-Sea. The book allows for cross-curricular connections as students can study the route of Paddle-to-the-Sea along rivers, through the Great Lakes, and to the ocean. Little maps are provided in the margins of the book. The film is very well narrated, with fantastic natural videography by Bill Mason (also the director). It covers only certain aspects of the text, but is excellent in its potential for a multitude of classroom usages. Teachers may be interested in accessing some of Holling’s other books.

Although dated, and containing what is now judged as inappropriate and/or racist terminology, at the time his work communicated respect for Aboriginal people, and he made efforts to get to know the culture. He illustrated his own books, even carving Paddle-to-the-Sea. He became particularly well known for books whose stories involved learning about the geography, peoples, and/or work of the people of early- to mid-20th Century North America (e.g., Tree in the Trail, 1942, Seabird, 1948). The one-hour audio book is well-read, with expression and measured tones; as such, it will serve as a great accompaniment for the text. The chapters are separated on the disc (just like songs is a music CD); thus, select chapters can be chosen and/or the reading can be easily stopped and started. Not only will the audio book aid struggling readers, it also demonstrates how to read a story well. Accessing You-tube will also be helpful, with a different, excellent reader (Eric Bentley) for a five-minute clip, as well as many segments from the National Film Board production. For the audio version see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XOdSwdCrad0. As well, several lesson plans within teacher guides are available by searching the book’s name on google for a selection. (EY, MY)

**Masuda, Greg (Producer & Director). (2011).** *Surviving in the cracks: A true story about a play with a purpose* [Documentary]. CA: Masuda Media Ltd. (48 running minutes)

This film was initiated in response to the cancellation of funding in 2004 by the province of British Columbia for Safe Houses for street youth. The Underage Safe House had been funded for ten years under the provincial government’s Vancouver Action Plan, mainly with the purpose of protecting homeless, sexually-exploited youth. When the program was cancelled a group of the youth, along with researcher Dr. Jeff Masuda, and Ph.D. student (drama in education focus) Amanda Wagner, decided to create a play that would draw attention to their needs and, hopefully, secure funding for the reopening of the safe houses. Some financial support ($10,000) was acquired for the play, and the group worked for eight months to mount and present the production, which they did on June 19, 2009 (at which time their funding was exhausted). The play resulted in some life changes for the people involved but it did not garner the support of the British Columbia provincial government for the reopening of the safe houses. The film is engaging, and it can stimulate dialogue on how best to help youth who are struggling and homeless, and with reference to the education system, well before they reach the stage where they are on the street. (SY, Adult)

This excellent film looks at the effects of the development of the Alberta tar sands on the nearby Aboriginal communities, as well as those downstream from the development. Aerial videography, maps, and photographs help to educate the viewer about the tar sands and the effects of the development on the environment. While we all use fossil fuels, as we drive cars, take planes (as the filmmakers do), heat our homes, and use countless products that utilize fossil fuels in their manufacture, still this film sets the viewer back on their heels. The effects of the development, the stripping of the ‘overburden’, the huge use of water resources, which then result in contaminated trailing ponds, are shocking in their immensity.

Warren Cariou travels to two communities in Saskatchewan to interview the residents about their opinions of the tar sands development as it comes closer to their communities: 1) La Loche, a Cree and Dene community, and 2) Buffalo Narrows, a Métis community. As well, Cariou travels to two communities in Alberta to ascertain the views of the people about the development that daily affects their lives: 1) Fort Mackay, a Cree, Dene, and Métis community within the development, and 2) Fort Chipewyan, again a Cree, Dene, and Métis community, but 300 kilometres downstream from the development. As an introduction, Cariou walks through the muskeg lands of his heritage and talks about the biodiversity of the area. Most of the interviewees from both Saskatchewan communities talk about the importance of protecting the land and animals at the same time that they support the creation of jobs for their people. How can one blame them, but are the two goals compatible in this instance? Again, the interviewees at Fort Makay in Alberta are seeing great financial benefits for their community, with almost everyone being employed and making significant salaries. At the same time, there is recognition of the environmental price that is being paid, not only that which is evident as you look at the land and the obliteration of plant and animal habitat, but also in the huge use of water with the resultant contaminated trailing ponds. Traditional lifestyles have disappeared. Downstream, at Fort Chipewyan, folks are more collectively angry, as they are experiencing the effects of the water contamination on their traditional lifestyles, but none of the economic benefits. There is fear that their land will be totally stripped of its ability to sustain their community.

In an accompanying but separate 15-minute film, entitled Overburden, the filmmakers speak of the top soil, trees, and all other vegetation that is stripped from the land as the ‘overburden,’ peeled back in preparation for the mining and development of the tar sands below. In that special feature the filmmakers focus on the communities of Fort Mackay and Fort Chipewyan, while using some of the footage that is also used in the longer production.

This is an excellent film for use with many science projects. For more information about the film, as well as some suggestions for its educational use, see http://landofoil.com/Home.html (MY, SY, Adult)
McBreaty, Don (Director), & Stewart, Elizabeth (Writer). (2007). *Luna: Spirit of the whale* [Motion picture]. CA: Screen Siren Pictures/Peace Arch Entertainment (Distributor)/CTV Television. (93 running minutes)

This movie is based on a true story, both as publicly known and as told by Mike Maquinna. In the film recovering alcoholic Mike Maquinna (Adam Beach) returns home for his father’s funeral after having been away from his community of Gold River on Vancouver Island for several years. Mike’s father Ambrose had been chief, and now, according to hereditary tradition, Mike should be the next chief. However, Mike does not want the position, instead intending to return to his job as a logger in Bella Coola, saying that one of the councillors Bill Louis (Graham Greene) can be chief. When a highly social orca whale, named Luna by the public/media, appears in the bay, Mike’s plans to return to Bella Coola are delayed. As well, there is the issue with Adam Ross (Aaron Miko), the struggling adolescent that Ambrose had taken under his wing, and who lives in the house, now with Mike’s Mom Gloria (Tantoo Cardinal) and Mike. Adam is not doing well after Ambrose’s death; he is acting out, and he accuses Mike of being afraid to be chief. With the issues from his past and Adam to attend to, as well as the community’s belief that the whale is the spirit of their former Chief Ambrose, Mike becomes increasingly more involved, including becoming more connected with his cultural traditions. To add to the challenges, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) has plans to capture and relocate Luna to his pod. Mike butts heads with Ted Jeffries (Jason Priestly) of the DFO, in spite of Ted’s colleague Jill’s (Erin Karpluk) efforts to diffuse the situation and advocate for the community. The media is also a current presence, and reporter Jane Kimball (Michelle Harrison) becomes aware of other outstanding issues between the DFO and the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation. In the end, Mike, Bill, the community’s youth, and some other adults are able to lure Luna away from the capturing pen and back into the bay. Mike stays on in his community, becoming chief. Luna remains in the bay until he dies four years later. (MY, SY, Adult)

McDonald, Bruce (Director, Co-producer, & Co-writer). (1994). *Dance me outside* [Motion picture]. CA: Apex Entertainment/Cineplex Odeon Films/Shadow Shows Distribution. (84 running minutes)


The movie’s title is based on Kinsella’s short story collection of the same name, and particularly on the same-titled story within that collection, although elements of the following four (and other) stories are also included: Illianna Comes Home, The Inaugural Meeting, Longhouse, and Gooch. Silas Crow (Ryan Black) is the storyteller and the movie opens with he and his friend Frank Fencepost (Adam Beach) waiting for Gooch (Michael Greyeyes) who is just getting out of jail. Early in the movie, while at a dance a community hall, white redneck Clarence (Hugh Dillon) puts the moves on Little Margaret (Tamara Podemski), and she is later found dead by Silas and Frank. Clarence admits to the crime but gets off with a short jail sentence. When he gets out of prison, the young men plot to kill him in revenge. Silas’ girlfriend Sadie (Jennifer
Podemski), and Frank’s girlfriend Poppy (Sandrine Holt), get wind of the plot. When Clarence is killed, the young men, oblivious to what has happened to him, are hauled into the police station. Once they are released with no charges, and on the way home, it dawns on Silas what has really happened. He goes to Sadie’s house to find her blood-smeared and crying. He helps her to destroy the evidence by burning her bloodied clothing. In the last scene they have moved in together, and Silas, always a storyteller and writer, has applied for mechanics school, along with Frank. In part of the movie, Illianna (Lisa La Croix) has come home with her new white husband Robert (Kevin Hicks), and the community’s young people take over his new car. On a later trip, Illianna, who wants a child, arranges a tryst with Gooch, her old boyfriend, as her husband has a low sperm count and she has not been able to become pregnant. The lovemaking scene between Illiana and Gooch, although it shows no nudity, is prolonged and leaves little to the imagination. That aspect of the movie—both the lovemaking and the fact that Illiana was married—may compromise its use at the school level. Otherwise, for more mature groups of students, there is much in the movie to recommend it. In particular, the racist treatment of Aboriginal people can serve as a springboard for dialogue into real-life cases where such treatment has occurred.

Kinsella’s collections of short stories follow two themes: *Aboriginal* with the characters from the Ermineskin Reserve, and *sports/baseball* (e.g., Field of Dreams). Given that Kinsella is non-Aboriginal, his stories of life in an Aboriginal community have, in current times, fallen out of favor. In 1977 when the stories were written however, they were not only accepted but embraced as articulating Aboriginal people’s experience with honesty. In most stories, the non-Aboriginal protagonists are cast as those committing indecencies and crimes against the residents of the Aboriginal community, and in most cases revenge is extracted. As well, such early stories and movies encouraged Aboriginal writers, filmmakers, and actors to create and produce their own empowered works in literature and film. (SY, Adult)

McKenna, Brian (Director & Co-writer), McKenna, Terrance (Co-writer), Gelbart, Arnie (Co-producer), Nemtin, Andrea (Co-producer), Nitoslawski, Stephan (Director of Photography), & Walsh, Kenneth (Narrator). (1998). *The War of 1812* [Documentary]. CA: Galafilm Inc., PTV Film, & National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (184 running minutes)

This excellent award-winning documentary addresses the only conflict where Canada was invaded on its own soil by a foreign power. The four-part film includes superb re-enactment, maps, paintings, archival journals and documents, and excellent narration. The first two parts of the film include more direct re-enactment and the history of the participation of Native Americans and First Nations; however, the second two parts are also essential watching as the result of the war spelled an end to the dream of an independent Native nation.

Part 1, “When I meet my doom…” provides the setting. In Europe, Britain and its allies were at war with France and its allies. Britain was stopping and searching all ocean-going vessels, including those of the United States. In retaliation, the United States (7½ million pop.) decided to invade Canada (80,000 pop.). With only 1,700 troops in Upper Canada (now Ontario), General Isaac Brock (Karl Pruner) forges an alliance with the Aboriginal tribes, including the
Mohawk and their leader John Norton (Billy Merasty), and particularly with the Shawnee, their leader Tecumseh (Raoul Trujillo), and their allies, many whose lands, communities, and people had been decimated by the United States. On June 18, 1812, the United States declared war against Canada. The film details the invasions from the Americans, as well as the initiative taken by Brock against the American Fort Mackinaw in direct contravention from his orders from Governor General Sir George Prevost (Dennis O’Conner). Fort Mackinaw immediately surrendered to a force half its size. Brock’s heroics were answered with more American invasions, with the Battle of Queenston Heights near Niagara Falls resulting in Brock’s death and the American surrender. The death of Brock was especially devastating to Tecumseh and his allies, given Brock’s promise to Tecumseh of an independent homeland.

Part 2, “Or leave our bones upon them…” addresses the importance of the Shawnee leader Tecumseh, noting that but for him and his Aboriginal allies, the result for the British and Canadians would have been different. The episode details the manner in which the United States military, under the command of General William Henry Harrison (Michael Dyson), moved into Shawnee territory, as well as other Native lands. After the defeats at Detroit and Queenston Heights, the American army rebuilt and attacked Canada once again, to be stymied this time by winter and the splitting of their forces. Again, they were driven back, to rebuild at Fort Meigs, there to be besieged but not defeated by the British allied forces in May, 1813. The Americans responded with a victory on the Great Lakes, the essential waterway for all traffic, thus causing consternation in Canada. General George Proctor had replaced Brock, but he was weak and indecisive and had to be goaded by Tecumseh to stand and fight, which he finally did on October 5, 1813. In face of the heavy American charge, Proctor retreated (he was later court-marchalled), leaving Tecumseh and the Aboriginal allies stranded. Tecumseh was killed in fierce fighting before the Aboriginal allies could launch a retreat. The American General Harrison was also replaced, but rather than being disgraced he later become the President of the United States.

In Part 3 “So awful a night…” the film notes the growing opposition in the United States to the war. Even so, the war continued with an American plan to attack the undefended Kingston. In response the British moved men from the post at Fredricton, New Brunswick, with the men marching over 1000 miles to Kingston in Upper Canada under the leadership of John le Couteur (Art Kitching). The American threat was relieved, as the allies attacked at Sacket’s Harbour, forcing the Americans to burn their own shipyard while forcing back the attackers. The New England states pressured for an end to the war, as they depended on Canadian and American trade business, and they began to threaten secession. U. S. President James Madison (Richard Fitz) was worried, but supported a move to strike Canada at Montreal where the Americans were again driven back. A U.S. victory was badly needed, and they attacked again at Fort Erie, which fell, then moved onto Chippewa, where they also took the battle. The U.S. army was near the Niagara Falls in July, 1814, and there they attacked at Lundy’s Lane on July 25. There were huge casualties on both sides. U.S. commander Winfield Scott (Nigel Bennett) prepared for a coup de gras, but his troops began to be fired on by other American soldiers mistaking them in the dark for the British. The Americans were able to withdraw, and the battle was called a victory in Washington. The war continued, but the United States did not invade Canada again.
Part 4 “The rocket’s red glare…” addresses British retaliation attacks on the United States, and the final peace with the Treaty of Ghent. In the summer of 1814, with the British defeat of Napoleon, their soldiers were freed up to join the war in North America. Diversionary attacks were planned and carried out on both Washington, which was successful with President Madison and his cabinet fleeing the city, and on Baltimore, which was better prepared for the onslaught (and from which rose the inspiration for the American national anthem). The British retreated; as well, they sustained a defeat of their ships in Plattsbury Bay. Commander Governor General George Prevost, always cautious, retreated prematurely and returned to Canada, astounding the Americans, who then claimed victory. Peace negotiations in Europe were simultaneously underway, resulting in the signing of the Treaty of Ghent on December 24, 1814. That treaty affirmed the status quo as far as North America was concerned with both Canada and the United States keeping the lands they had claimed prior to the war. Unfortunately, news of the peace treaty did not arrive in North America until an attacking British army had suffered a defeat in New Orleans that cost them thousands of casualties. The Treaty of Ghent spelled the end of the dream of an independent homeland for the Aboriginal tribes who had fought with the British and Canadians at the cost of 15,000 casualties among their people. (MY, SY, Adult)

McKenna, Brian (Director & Writer), Elson, Richard (Co-producer), Gelbart, Arnie (Co-producer), & Trujillo, Raoul (Narrator). (2002a). Chiefs: Sitting Bull [Documentary, Parts 1 & 2], CA: Galafilm Inc. & National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (94 running minutes)

Part of the Chiefs series from the National Film Board (NFB), this program focuses on the life of the great Lakota chief Sitting Bull. The film involves dramatization and interviews, with much of the story being told by the great grandson of Sitting Bull, Ronald McNeil (President of Sitting Bull Community College), to his children as they visit the various sites with their father. As well, grandchildren of a survivor of Sitting Bull’s band contribute.

The history of the Sioux is told, noting their plains culture of buffalo hunting and their warring with their traditional enemies. Sitting Bull, like other young men, learned to hunt and fight early, with his first counting coup at the age of 14. Born in 1841, Sitting Bull became a chief at the young age of 26. While the first trickle of settlers coming over the Oregon Trail, and thus through Sioux lands, did not alarm Sitting Bull’s people, by 1850 the trickle had become an exodus. The United States army, first in the person of William Tecumseh Sherman, were determined that the Sioux would give way for the settlers. While the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie created a huge Sioux reservation, including the entire Black Hills, it was not honoured for long by the United States. With the stock market crash in 1873, the promise not to encroach on the Sioux Reservation was forgotten. Needing money, the United States encouraged the gold rush to the Black Hills. The Sioux resistance to the treachery was met with the dispatching of Colonel George Armstrong Custer to defeat the Sioux and their Cheyenne allies. Underestimating the strength of the Sioux, Custer was defeated and he and his soldiers were all killed. Sitting Bull was unaware that this defeat would initiate plans for revenge. General Nelson Miles was sent to hunt down the fleeing Sioux. Driven by hunger and cold, and with the disappearance of the
buffalo, Crazy Horse and some of his followers surrendered in early 1877; subsequently Crazy Horse was killed while in captivity. Sitting Bull and his small remaining band fled to Canada, where he was befriended and protected by James Walsh of the North-West Mounted Police. Unlike Walsh, however, the Canadian government found the presence of Sitting Bull upsetting. To try to starve him back to the United States, his band was provided with few rations. Walsh came to their aid as much as possible. General Alfred Terry came from the United States, with support from the Canadian government, to try to convince Sitting Bull to return to the United States, but he was rebuffed. When Walsh wrote a letter to Ottawa in support of Sitting Bull and his people, he was seen as part of the problem and was removed from his post and sent back to Ontario. On July 20, 1881, Sitting Bull returned to the United States, surrendered, and was imprisoned. He was released however and toured with Buffalo Bill Cody’s Wild West show. As he became more famous, and was still refusing to relocate to allotted land, he came to be seen as too much of a threat to be allowed to continue to live. The army sent Indian soldiers to his home during the night on December 15, 1890, and he was shot and killed. When Walsh heard of his death, he wrote, “History will tell us that a greater leader than Bull never lived.” The final defeat for the Sioux came on December 29, 1890. Disturbed by the return of the Ghost Dance, the army, again the 7th Calvary, finally got their revenge for the Battle of the Little Big Horn by massacring over 300 (the exact number is unknown and estimates vary) Lakota, mostly women and children, where they were camped at Wounded Knee.

This film’s dramatization is excellent, with August Schellenberg as Sitting Bull, Ted Whittall as Walsh, Tom Rack as Sherman, and Christopher Heyerdahl as Custer. As well, the interviewees add to our understanding of all those who played a part in the great Sioux Resistance. (MY, SY, Adult)


Part of the Chiefs series from the National Film Board, The Black Hawk War heads south into what is now the United States and documents the efforts of Chief Black Hawk (played by Bill Merasty) to resist the relocation of his Sauk people to what is now Oklahoma. In their fierce efforts to resist their removal from their homelands, the Sauk were almost wiped out. What is now termed the Black Hawk War was more of a massacre of Sauk men, women, and children than a war. Once a solid agrarian peoples, masters of the upper Mississippi basin area that takes in most of four contemporary states, the Sauk grew corn, beans, squash, and pumpkins. While a few of the men from the Sauk tribe, with no official capacity, had been tricked into signing off their land in what was called the Harrison Treaty, the main force of the tribe resisted their continued illegal removal from their lands and paid with their lives.

Like the leaders of other Aboriginal nations, Black Hawk discovered that British allies were faithless. After the war of 1812, where many fought on the side of the British against the Americans, the Aboriginal allies of the British who were on the ‘wrong side of the border’ were abandoned. Black Hawk was convinced to sign a new treaty, only to find out later that that treaty
included the relinquishing of his own village of Saukenak. In the autumn of 1828, when he and his band left to go hunting, they came back to find that white squatters had taken over their homes. The U.S. army came to evict Black Hawk’s people, who retreated across the river. Under the terms of the subsequent enforced Corn Treaty, the remaining people were to receive rations, but they got little. Hunger and desperation drove their return, and the first skirmish resulted in the defeat of the largely volunteer, poorly trained United States militia. Winfield Scott amassed a large army force of 1000s of soldiers that eventually attacked and were victorious over the four dozen Sauk warriors defending their women and children, most of whom were killed. The young Abraham Lincoln was a member of the militia forces that attacked the Sauk; for his service he received $250 and 160 acres of land that belonged to the Sauk people.

In the film, several of Black Hawk’s descendants travel to the traditional territories of their people only to find it having succumbed to contemporary development, including a golf course. Between the 16th and 17th holes, they find an ancestral burial ground. (See http://www.galafilm.com/chiefs/htmlen/series/index.html.) The use of this film can be accompanied by additional research into this and other examples of enforced relocation of First Peoples (See entries noting the enforced relocation of the Cherokee and of the Navajo; as well selected Inuit people were forced to relocate in the 1950s to northern Canada, as noted in Martha of the North). (upper MY, SY, Adult)


This film addresses what has been called the Pontiac rebellion or the Pontiac war. Including re-enactment and interviews with Pontiac’s descendants, the film instructs the viewer about the background to the rebellion led by Pontiac (played by Pierre Chagnon) and with a confederacy of Algonquin peoples. The situation takes place in the area south of the Great Lakes in what is now the United States; Aboriginal nations in that area included not only Pontiac’s Ottawa tribe, but also the Chippawa, Wea, Manu, Wyandot, Shawnee, Delaware, Potawatomi, and Kickapoo. Most of the tribes had had a long friendly association with the French, including the French traders. Thus, when France and Britain were fighting for control of North America (among other world arenas) during the Seven Years War (1756-1763), most of the Aboriginal nations were allied with France. Following France’s defeat, and the 1763 Treaty of Paris, the British moved into the area, building forts and taking over the fur trade, providing only half the profits for the Aboriginal people that they had enjoyed with the French. Determined to resist, and to pave the way for the return of the French, Pontiac and his allies raided many of the British forts, defeating most of them to the surprise of the British who had greatly underestimated them. The Pontiac rebellion cost the British war chest millions, and resulted in the deaths of many soldiers and civilians. As well, it left a lasting legacy with the strategy used by the British army of sending blankets infected with the smallpox virus among Pontiac’s allies, the Delaware, reportedly the first recorded instance of biological warfare. General Jeffrey Amherst was recalled
to Britain, but not before the rebellion had come to an end with Pontiac and his allies finally realizing, with the signing of the 1763 Treaty of Paris, that the French were not going to return. Similar to other great Indian leaders, Pontiac was killed by one of his own people (a Priorian Indian however not an Ottawa) on April 20, 1769. It has been long suspected that such acts were encouraged by the United States as that avenue allowed for the American government to be absolved of responsibility.

Pontiac’s rebellion is seen to have had two major results. First, it led the way for the British creation of a vast area of Indian country south of the Great Lakes, where settlement would, supposedly, not be allowed. The rebellion resulted in Britain attending much more closely to the articles of the 1763 Treaty of Paris that addressed their commitment toward North America’s Aboriginal peoples. Secondly, in showing that Britain was not invincible, Pontiac’s rebellion is seen as having also paved the way for the American Revolution of 1775 to 1783. In that war, and the subsequent ambitions of the new United States to move west under the philosophy of ‘manifest destiny’, the First Peoples did not fare well. (MY, SY, Adult)


This film was made to honour the filmmaker’s grandmother, a residential school survivor who had passed away, by giving voice to the experiences of other living residential school survivors. There were many interviewees, but among those included in the film were Roy Thomas, Garnet Angeconeb, Ralph Johnson, Alice Littledeer, Eulalia Michano, and Delaney Sharpe. Each interviewee is uniquely individual in character and story, and the film is put together very well, with interspersed scenes of nature to give the viewer some relief from the heaviness of the interviewees’ storied experiences. Each interviewee struggled as an adult and each found their own way to heal, some with more success than others. Roy Thomas became a successful artist; Garnet Angeconeb worked for the Aboriginal Healing Foundation; Ralph Johnson became a Traditional Healer; and Delaney Sharpe walked across Canada to bring attention to the survivors of residential schools and their experiences. Alice Littledeer talked openly about her life, with an ‘it was what it was’ honesty. Eulalia found it difficult to talk about her experiences, still thinking that God would punish her for talking badly about people. The aunt of the filmmaker, she encouraged everyone to tell the truth and be kind to people. The title of the film refers to a story from the filmmaker’s grandmother that the white children at her school (the nature of this school is not elaborated) were allowed muffins, but that the Aboriginal children were not. In the film, the making of muffins is occasionally interspersed with the interviewees’ stories, with nicely baked muffins coming out of the oven near the end of the film. This is a good film to include in an Indigenous Inquiry Kit about residential schools. (upper MY, SY, Adult)
McLeod, Christopher (Director & Co-producer), & Maynor, Malinda (Co-producer) (2001). *In the light of reverence* [Documentary]. US: Bullfrog Films/Netflix/Native American Public Communications. (73 running minutes)

This film reviews the struggles of three Native American tribes to protect their sacred lands: Devil’s Tower (Mato Tiplila or the Lodge of the Bear) for the Lakota; the Colorado Plateau for the Hopi; and Mount Shasta for the Wintu. Unlike many Western religions that build churches for the practicing of formal religion, many of the First Peoples found their spiritual connection within nature, and particularly with attention to certain special landmarks or places. The hosts of the film are Tantoo Cardinal and Peter Coyote.

With the Lakota, the Black Hills—never ceded to the United States—were always a spiritual place. Relay runs are completed each year to honour the area. However, the peak of Devil’s Tower, while special to the Lakota, has been taken over for recreational purposes, especially by rock climbers. One of the many interviewees within this documentary is the noted Lakota scholar Vine Deloria Jr., who stresses that Devil’s Tower needs time alone and to be ministered to by the Lakota (See http://www.sacredland.org/in-the-light-of-reverence/).

Interestingly, while the United States government exercises no control over the climbing of Devil’s Tower, no climbing is permitted at all of the faces on Mount Rushmore.

For the Hopi, the Colorado Plateau is being destroyed by coal mining, which also saps three millions gallons of drinkable water from the aqueduct each day for the mining and the transportation of the coal. Leigh Kuwanwisiwma, Cultural Preservation Officer of the Hopi tribe, tours the viewer around the sacred sites, showing how even ancient petroglyphs are being destroyed. The film, as well as the accompanying website, documents the systematic stripping, as well, of the participation and influence of the Hopi in the control of their sacred sites. While the 1978 American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) mandated the respect and accommodation of native religious practices, a subsequent 1988 court case noted that the proven benefit for a greater number of people trumped the rights of the Native Americans for the respect of their lands.

The Wintu of northern California do not have treaty and thus who do not have treaty land; from first contact estimations of a population of 14,000, they were reduced to a population of 395 by 1910. The Wintu consider Mount Shasta as a sacred place. Their practices are interrupted by ‘New Age’ religion people who use the site for their own worship. Interviewees include Florence Jones, the elder top doctor of the Wintu, and her niece Caleen Sisk-Franco, to whom Florence is passing on the Wintu teachings. Given that this area is also public land, there are limits to what even the Forest Service supervisor, Kathy Hammond, says that she can do. Having said that, in 1998 the Forest Service decided against the construction of a huge ski resort on Mount Shasta, citing consideration of the Native American perspective of the mountain’s sacredness.

This film raises important considerations about the respect for Native American spiritual and religious places. Anytime a visit is considered, for example to a Medicine Wheel site, potential visitors need to follow protocol of the First Nations in their area. At issue is the right of First Peoples who practiced land-based spiritual practices. Profound guiding questions are
included on the website (http://www.sacredland.org/in-the-light-of-reverence/). As well, there are connections to earlier films made by Sacred Land that support In Light of Reverence. (MY, SY, Adult)


This ‘documentary’ is a stunningly racist, imperialist view of the theft of Indian lands and the killing of Native Americans. That it was released in 2009 as a compilation, and that the filmmakers actually found ‘historians’ that would participate, make the production even more shocking. The only place for this film, other than the garbage, is within a course that studies the continued whitewashing of such atrocities by imperial powers. As such, it might be used in contemporary classes that address government mandated genocide that, because of its source, then becomes acceptable as ‘the way it is’ with the progress of ‘civilization’. The film provides details how, one by one, Native American tribes were subdued and their land stolen (although that term is not used). The program traces the evolution of the United States army into a fighting machine that would be able to more efficiently kill Native Americans. Included is a detailed demonstration of the breech loading rifle that could kill people at a much faster rate; as well, the program notes the use of cannons and gatling guns against Native American villages with elderly, women, and children. Army massacres are dismissed or excused, and the Native leaders who accommodated the whites by settling quickly on reserves are lauded as great and visionary. Murders of Native leaders (e.g., Mangus Coloradus, Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse) committed and/or arranged by the American army are addressed, if at all, only by noting that the leader died, or that he was killed by his own people. Even the Sand Creek and Wounded Knee massacres are excused, with former really a battle and the latter being brought on by the people themselves by daring to participate in the Ghost Dance. The mutilation of killed Native Americans by the army and American bounty hunters, including the scalping of female genitalia (widely known even at the time), is never addressed, while stories of Native American atrocities are constantly repeated. The entire film unabashedly lauds the ‘might is right’ approach, that because the United States government wanted the land and they were stronger, it was right to fight the Native Americans and deprive them of their homelands and their lives. Throughout the lengthy production—mostly narrated with just a few ‘interviews’ and with support from archival footage, paintings, and photos—the approach never changes, even when showing the photos of the frozen bodies from the Wounded Knee Massacre. Those whose mature classes use the film should provide ongoing opportunities for debriefing. The viewing of this film will be emotional, and the resultant anger should be addressed, particularly as the film, which presents its view as ‘history’, is still in circulation. Opportunities for positive activist responses might include dialogue and activities around what can and will be done about this and other instances of such biased viewpoints and representations. Should the students write to Mill Creek Entertainment with their opinions and boycott Mill Creek’s productions?
Mill Creek Entertainment (Distributor). (2010). *Native America: Voices from the land [Documentary].* US: Author. (9 hours, 48 minutes running time)

This is a 32-film collection of older American films and documentaries, digitized and collected in three discs for sale by Mill Creek Entertainment. Most of the films are very old, with many having poor picture and sound quality, as well as outdated terms and treatment. Although there are some useful, even good titles (e.g., *I will Fight no more Forever*) that might be used, the collection would likely be purchased only by someone looking at the historical evolution of Aboriginal documentaries, whether that be mature students or teachers. There are many current documentaries created for, by, and about Aboriginal people that are preferable to this collection for contemporary classroom use. Having said that, for informational purposes, the collection includes the following films: 1) Corndancers; 2) The Desert People; 3) Do you want us to? 4) Earthshapers; 5) Eskimos Winter in Western Alaska; 6) The Excavation of Mound 7; 7) I will fight no more forever; 8) An Indian for a Change; 9) Indian Pottery of San Ildefonso; 10) Indian to Indian; 11) Lesson in Archeology; 12) Lewis and Clark; 13) Maxidiwia; 14) Miracle on the Mesa; 15) Canyon Voices; 16) Native American Art; 17) Navajo Canyon Country; 18) Nez Perce: Portrait of a People; 19) Pablita Velarde – An Artist and her People; 20) Pecos; 21) People of the Macon Plateau; 22) Pueblo Heritage; 23) Sante Fe; 24) Seminoles of the Everglades; 25) Spanish Empire in the New World; 26) Spirit of the Earth; 27) Tahtonka – Plains Indian Culture; 28) Voyage of Discovery; 29) We Belong to the Land; 30) White Fawn’s Devotion; 31) After the White Man Came; and 32) Catlooche – Centre of the World. (SY, Adult)


This powerful film hosted by Tantoo Cardinal looks at the nature of lateral violence and its links to colonization. As well as experiencing lateral violence herself, and describing that experience, the film includes many other interviewees ho have had similar experiences, as well as a re-enactment of an episode of workplace lateral violence. With reference to the Aboriginal connection, it is offered that lateral violence “is a learned behaviour as a result of colonialism and patriarchal methods of governing and developing a society” (http://www.nwac.ca/files/reports/AboriginalLateralViolence%20-%20web%20version.pdf). While that may be true, it might also be considered that lateral violence is becoming more a learned behaviour for many people, occurring in workplaces and especially in schools. The capacity and incidences of lateral violence among adolescent girls is pervasive. The film will springboard into dialogue about lateral violence, including the importance of taking personal responsibility for how one treats other people. Taking personal responsibility for one’s own behaviour is the first step toward making changes in that behaviour. (MY, SY, Adult)

This dramatic series features Jonathon Bearclaw (Landon Montour), who, it seems initially, is trying to turn his life around after a history of pimping and drug dealing. He has reunited with his girlfriend Tar (Sarah Podemski) and young son Ethan (Griffin Powell-Arcand) and has started a vitamin company. He is supported by the workers at the Centre: Laura (Michelle Thrush, his probation worker); Joe Redsky (Gordon Tootoosis), and Betty Merasty (Tantoo Cardinal). Betty has raised her nephew Matthew Merasty (Mathew Strongeagle), who also works at the Centre and who has had past conflicts with Jonathon. Jonathon is struggling with money management, the bills begin to pile up, and he decides to use his vitamin business to front a crystal meth lab and dealing. While getting youngsters hooked on the destructive drug, he is also courting dangerous run-ins with the established drug dealers in the area. While the series may have been able to have been used within schools, regretfully the creators of the series decided to include full frontal female nudity within graphic lesbian sex scenes that are entirely superfluous to the deeper story, and that provide a negative view of the promiscuous probations officer. That inclusion is troubling as the series would have had much to recommend it otherwise. (Not recommended)


This film includes the story of residential schools with many archival photos and with excellent narration that includes the written text so that viewers may also read along. There are many interviews with residential school survivors and their descendants. Part of the video includes footage from a canoe trip taken by residential school survivors and their families. One survivor’s descendent, Carol Nolan, speaks of trying to develop a relationship with her sister, and that older sister, who had also gone to residential school, telling her that she did not know her, that they were strangers. Another interviewee told of being of non-treaty status, and not understanding why she could not go to residential school (as non-treaty children were not allowed to attend), but wanting to go, wanting to wear the uniforms, and not understanding, as a child, what attendance would mean in terms of family separation and institutionalization. The interviewee B.G. also talked of the bullying of the littler boys from the bigger boys who would make the smaller children steal food for them. In his situation, his mother came to know that they were not being fed enough and ‘raised a stink’ that resulted in the children getting a slice of bread and butter every evening before they went to bed. Many of the survivors’ descendants talked of not understanding, as a child, why their parents treated them as they did, not realizing that their parents had never had the positive parenting role modelled to them as they were raised in an institution. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

Monnet, Caroline (Director, Researcher, & Writer), Rocher, Anne-Marie (Producer), & Lavalette, Philippe (Camera). (2007). 360 degrees [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (18 running minutes)

This production, according to the film jacket, was “produced by the National Film Board of Canada as part of the TREMPLIN contest, with financial support of Canadian Heritage via the
Interdepartments Partnership with the Official-Language Communities (POLC).” In the film, French-speaking teenager Sébastien Aubin from the Manitoba northern community of Opaskwayak Cree Nation (OCN) is learning about traditional medicines from Mark Thompson, an elder and healer from the community. Together they go and pick medicines as Mark teaches Sébastien about their use. Unfortunately, we are not told how Sébastien came to learn French as his spoken language while living in this area of the province. It seems that he also lives in the city, as we see him at work at his computer in a bigger building, then leaving to walk around, finding a homeless youth and buying him a meal. That confusion is exacerbated as there are several scenes with Sébastien smoking a cigarette, certainly not a practice that would be encouraged by traditional Elders and knowledge keepers. This film might be used by students able to dialogue about the best ways to follow a positive life style. (upper MY, ST, Adult)

Davis, Daryl (Director), Kuffner, Lori (Co-producer), & Torrance, Jennifer (Co-producer). (1999). *Remembering Tom* [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (24 running minutes)

This collection addresses the issue of suicide. Given the topic, and the nature of the films, support should be available for all participants during and after viewing the films and completing the reading.

The first film *For John* concerns the suicide of Dale Montour’s nephew, John Diabo, at the age of 31. Family gatherings at their community of Kahnawake offer support as John’s family still tries to come to terms with his death. John’s mother April takes a big role in the film, as well as his sister Jody and his children, especially son Lance, and both his first wife Karen Jacobs and second wife Trina Skye. April talks about her son’s descent into the use of drugs, going from marijuana (called a ‘gateway’ drug by one of John’s cousins) to harder drugs like cocaine and crack. Trina speaks of a wonderful man who seemed powerless to stop his drug use, regardless of having gone for treatment several times. Several of the adults speak of their own feelings of guilt and remorse, that there may have been something that they could have done that they did not do, or something that they did do that they should not have done. John’s son Lance has good memories of times spent with his father by the river. It is evident that the family has
worked to ensure that the children have positive remembrances of their father. The family stresses that the community needs to do more work with drug awareness, prevention of drug abuse, and support for addicts and recovering addicts. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

The film about Richard Cardinal (also reviewed in section on fostering/adoption) is upsetting in that he became a victim of Social Services and their policies. He had 28 placements in foster and group homes before he took his own life at the age of 17. The film is based on a diary that he left but also includes interviews with some of the foster families with whom he stayed, as well as with his brother Charlie. All of the children from the family were taken from the parents, with some placed in homes together. Even Richard was placed with Charlie and his sister a couple of times, but his bedwetting problem seemed to be too much for either the foster parents or Social Services to address, and he was often moved largely because of that one issue, it would seem. It was finally just too much for him and he ended his own life. How could this tragedy have ended differently? Why was Richard so poorly served by the system? The siblings were finally brought together, but for Richard’s funeral. (SY, Adult)

The film With and Without You, involving an adult suicide within a non-Aboriginal family, is included here because of its subject. An excellent film by Maryse Chartrand, it follows the year’s long world trip that she, her husband Samuel, and their three children took, while she is then also trying to deal with Samuel’s suicide a year after their return. Their three children also participate, talking about their own journeys toward understanding and carrying on with their lives. Various medical professionals are interviewed by Maryse, as well as friends. This film would be excellent for those working through the aftermath of a parent’s or partner’s suicide. (MY, SY, Adult)

The film Remembering Tom, also involving a non-Aboriginal family, is included as it involves the story of another family as it copes with the suicide of their son and brother at age 18. Mother Pat, father John, and siblings Josh and Rachel talk of their emotions; frustration, anger, confusion, guilt, and profound sorrow. Tom seems to have been a well-adjusted child who fell into difficult times as he grew to be a teenager, lived on the street for a while, and was into drugs, as well. Even when he returned home, he struggled, eventually leaving a message for his family, then taking his own life by jumping from a bridge. John stresses the importance of opening up the topic of suicide for discussion with young people. The film ends with a listing of supports for those considering suicide and/or for families of suicide victims. (MY, SY, Adult)

The two books are both excellent. Choosing Life (MY, SY, Adult) is part of publisher Ningwakwe’s Healthy Life series. It involves a re-enactment story of a teen boy who is trying to cope with his friend’s suicide, and thinking of taking that route himself. His Mom, who had once contemplated suicide herself, recognizes that Bobby is depressed. She takes him to spend time with his Uncle Levi, who helps him become grounded again with traditional teachings. The book is written to help adolescents and educators, and includes several charts that include, for example, the warning signs of suicide and what to do if you know someone who is suicidal (even if that is you, of course). The graphic novel Darkness Calls (MY, SY, Adult) is part of the Healthy Aboriginal Network series. In this story, Kyle is being tormented at school and harassed at home. All that he has are his drawings, which his teacher thinks are just distracting him. But
an Elder comes to the school, someone who is actually Kyle’s uncle, and he helps Kyle to recognize his own worth and internal strength. He can now be the Cree trickster Wesakecak (other spellings often used) and repel the evil force Wihtiko (other spellings also often used). The authors include websites for many helpful resources.


This movie is about a female prisoner trying to come to terms with her past, present, and future. Johnny Greyeyes (Gail Maurice) is serving a sentence for the killing of her abusive father (shown in the movie in flashbacks) as he was beating her younger brother Clay (Jonathan Fisher). Her mother Leona (Gloria May Eshkibok) also bears scars of those beatings. In prison Johnny worries about her brother, a mixed up young man who wishes to be a musician but is turning to crime. When Lana (Columpa C. Bobb) arrives at the same prison, Johnny falls in love with her, and the two begin a relationship. But they are troubled by events in the prison, including abusive prison guards, and Johnny’s impending release. Lana’s frustration boils over and she attacks two prison guards. After being confined to solitary for many weeks, Lana takes her own life. Johnny then also attempts suicide. She survives, however, and returns home to her mother to face their past with their abusive father and husband. Clay also returns to the community, and meets up with his mother and sister at his father’s gravesite. They come to terms what has happened in the past, while still being able to love their abusive father and husband. The film includes other well-known Aboriginal actors, including Georgina Lightning as the prison counsellor, Herbie Barnes as Clay’s friend Lenny, and Tamara Podemski as Clay’s girlfriend Rox and the mother of his child. There is a sex scene in the movie between Clay and Rox (top torso nudity), as well as several tender love scenes between Johnny and Lana. While thus being a movie for mature audiences, much dialogue can be generated around many of the issues addressed in this excellent production. Gail Maurice is superb in her role as Johnny Greyeyes, as is Columba Bobb in her role as Lana. (Adult)


This film involves Dennis Banks engaging in an introspective look at his life’s work within the American Indian Movement (AIM). Interestingly in both this and other films focussing on AIM leaders (e.g., Russell Means, John Trudell), only selective other leaders are included, with only Clyde Belcourt contributing in this film for example. That aspect may, or may not, relate to continued tensions among former AIM leaders. At any rate, as well as Banks and Belcourt, the film involves a wide range of interviewees, 19 in all, some of whom as non-AIM people, were on the ‘other side’ of AIM’s activities, at least at the time. Banks’ life story is chronicled, including his attendance at residential school and his time in the military,
which Banks says was a good experience. It was during his military posting in Japan in 1956 that he first experienced the aspect of demonstrations, when the Japanese successfully protested the extended use of their land for a U.S. military base. He returned to the United States and became involved with political activity. His life was not without its challenges, however, and he served jail time, during which he learned more about his native heritage. Banks’ first political confrontation happened with the 1969-1971 occupation of Alcatraz. In early 1972, he along with others in the AIM community protested the light sentences given to two white men for killing Raymond Yellow Thunder. The November 1972 occupation and ransacking of the offices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs followed, then the 1973 occupation of Wounded Knee, which was prompted by the tactics of Pine Ridge Tribal Chairman Dick Wilson and his GOONS (Guardians of the Oglala Nation) with their reign of terror in the community. As well as wanting a review of Dick Wilson, AIM was asking for oversight hearings on the treaties of 1851 and 1868, as well as a U.S. Senate investigation on the treatment of Native Americans. The siege lasted for 71 days, and resulted in much more public awareness going forward of the issues of Native Americans. At the time, however, although not noted in the film, it did not solve much for the community of Pine Ridge as Dick Wilson remained in office and the murders within the community continued. As well, internal struggles within AIM persisted. Banks’ right-hand man, Douglas Durham, turned out to be an FBI infiltrator, leading to paranoia within AIM that saw at least one AIM member the subject of an internal AIM hit, Annie Mae Aquash (see review of the film Annie Mae within this document), although that factor is also not noted in the film. In this documentary, the work of Dennis Banks is presented, and while many aspects that might cast some of his work in a negative light are not elaborated, still he comes across now at this later stage in his life as human, as someone who did his best with what he had to work with for the rights of Native Americans. This film is important for student projects that involve research into indigenous activist movements. (SY, Adult)

Nakagawa, Anne Marie (Director & Writer), & Thompson, Bonnie (Producer). (2005). Between: Living in the hyphen [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (42 running minutes)

Canada is a multicultural country. Although that reality now is a ‘given’ what is less explored are the effects of multi-culturalism, or multi- or bi-racialism, within the individual experience. In this exceptional film, seven engaging interviewees articulate their experiences being born into a family where each parent is of a different race. Fred Wah’s poem recounting his experiences is as stunning as his presentation of it. His Chinese heritage has resulted in discrimination, especially as he tried to cross into the United States for graduate study. However, when he was in China, and said that he was Chinese, the people there just laughed. Shannon Waters, light-skinned and blue-eyed, has had to explain why she wants to take Native Studies courses. Suzette Mayr is Carribean and German, and is left feeling without a country. Tinu Sinha, part east-Indian, felt that his uncertain racial identity left him particularly exposed during the tough adolescent years. Charlene Hellson recounts watching cowboys and Indian shows, and wondering which side she would be on. Would she get hit by a bullet from one side, and by an
Karina Vernon is seen in Canada as ‘coloured’ but as the white kid when she was living in Zimbabwe when her Mom was teaching there. In each situation, the parents of the interviewees could not identify with their children’s struggles, because their backgrounds were, in most instances, of only one race. Karina spoke of protecting her Mom from the challenges she had because she thought that her Mom would be shocked. She also talked of ‘acting more black’ when she was with black people, ostensibly to underline her identity as a black person. Perhaps, as Lawrence Hill and some of his interviewees discuss in *Black Berry, Sweet Juice*, there may have even been a resentment of the parents who by marrying and having children, would expose those children to many challenges regarding their identity, as well as issues with racism.

The film is exceptional, with art and music interweaving, and the repeated return to Fred Wah walking between two tall buildings. Rather than being challenged by the ‘hyphen’ of his mixed race, he has embraced it, but only as an adult. When he was growing up, he did not want to be Chinese, and he identified as white, but lower-class white because he was ‘contaminated’ with Chinese blood. An animated painting shows that contamination. The challenge for educators is to create the space and place for all students to explore the multiplicities that make up who they are. This film can help to initiate that work, perhaps with a ‘Celebrating the Hyphen’ project. Because the names of the interviewees are included only the first time they appear, the viewer should pause the film to note the names, getting to know each person by creating a separate note page for each one. (MY, SY, Adult)

**National Film Board of Canada (NFB), in collaboration. (2011). *Unikkausivut: Sharing our Stories [Documentary & Animated Short collection]*. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB), in collaboration. (approx. 8 running hours)**

This excellent 24-film compilation collects 70 years of National Film Board (NFB) documentaries and animated shorts by and about the Inuit, with films from the four Canadian Inuit regions, as illustrated on the map enclosed with the collection: Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, Nunavut, and Inuvialuit. Some of the included films are in Inuktitut, and all are in English as well as French. The films are collected under three themes, which are listed below, along with the titles under each theme. Most of the films can be watched in their entirety on the National Film Board website: https://www.nfb.ca/playlist/unikkausivut-sharing-our-stories/ Although the website notes 100 documentaries and animated shorts having been produced by the NFB, with 60 being selected and included on the website itself, the boxed set includes only 24 of those selections. Schools with ease of internet access to the NFB website will have a unique opportunity to include more of these films in their classrooms. (various titles suitable for EY, MY, SY, Adult)

**Disc 1: Ethnographic Films, the Flaherty Influence – Tales and Legends**

1. *How to Build an Igloo* (10 min., 27 sec.)
2. *The Living Stone* (34 min., 14 sec.)
3. *Eskimo Summer* (15 min, 31 sec.)
4. *The Annanacks* (29 min., 12 sec.)
5. Stalking Seals on the Ice, Part 1 (24 min., 31 sec.)
6. Stalking Seals on the Ice, Part 2 (33 min., 45 sec.)
7. The Owl and the Lemming: An Eskimo Legend (5 min., 59 sec.)
8. The Owl and the Raven: An Eskimo Legend (6 min., 39 sec.)
9. The Owl who Married a Goose: An Eskimo Legend (7 min., 38 sec.)

Disc 2: The Rumblings of a New Inuit Activist Cinema
10. Labrador North (37 min., 30 sec.)
11. Pictures out of my Life (13 min., 9 sec.)
12. Lumaaq: An Eskimo Legend (7 min., 55 sec.)
13. Natsik Hunting (7 min., 52 sec.)
14. Canada Vignettes: Vignettes from Labrador North (4 min.)
15. Canada Vignettes: June in Povungnituk – Quebec Arctic (1 min.)
16. The Last Days of Okak (23 min., 48 sec.)
17. Between Two Worlds (57 min., 50 sec.)

Disc 3: The Growth of Inuit Filmmaking
18. If the Weather Permits (27 min., 51 sec.)
19. I, Nuligak: An Inuit History of First Contact (69 min., 44 sec.)
20. Martha of the North (47 min., 39 sec.)
21. Nunavut Animation Lab
   a) I Am but a Little Woman (4 min., 39 sec.)
   b) The Bear Facts (3 min., 58 sec.)
   c) Qalupalik (Qallupilluk) (5 min., 34 sec.)
   d) Lumajuuq (7 min., 36 sec.)

Nelson, Stanley (Director & Producer), & Bratt, Benjamin (Narrator). (2009). Wounded Knee, Episode #5 from We shall remain: American through Native eyes [Documentary]. US: Native American Public Telecommunications for The American Experience; PBS Broadcast. (80 running minutes)

This documentary focuses on the 1973 occupation (February 27 to May 8) of Wounded Knee by members of the urban American Indian Movement (AIM) and their supporters from within the community of Pine Ridge Reservation. The film includes much footage from the 1973 occupation, as well as interviews with many of those participating, both from the community and among AIM, as well as people from the government side.

At the time of the occupation, the United States government was preoccupied with the Watergate scandal, and paid little attention to the growing concern at Pine Ridge Reservation and the complaints about Tribal Chairman Dick Wilson and his Guardians of the Oglala Nation (GOONs), who victimized all those who did not support him, and particularly the more traditional of the Oglalas, including the traditional Lakota leader Frank Fool’s Crow (nephew of Black Elk. There are additional works on and by Frank Fools Crow). Finally, after unsuccessful impeachment proceedings against Dick Wilson, the people agreed to invite AIM into the community. Following that initiative, the U.S. government did become involved, setting up roadblocks and sending in paramilitary men, as well as armored personnel carriers. The
occupation garnered much publicity and much support from non-Natives. In particular, the event led to the public refusal of Marlon Brandon of an Academy Award for his role in The Godfather, citing his objections to the way Native Americans had been treated, both in contemporary times and historically. Finally, the Department of Justice, under Kent Frizell, cut off power and food supplies and prevented the media from attending the site. The siege lasted for 71 days, and resulted in the wounding of a U. S. Marshall, and the deaths of two Native Americans, Frank Clearwater, a Cherokee man from North Carolina, and Buddy Lamont, a member of the Pine Ridge community, who was buried next to the victims of the 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee. The occupation at Wounded Knee was called off two days after the funeral for Buddy Lamont on May 6. Following the occupation Tribal Chairman Dick Wilson and his GOONs retaliated against members of their own community with over 60 former occupiers and/or AIM supporters being killed in three years. As well, the United States government went after AIM activists, and many of its members were arrested and charged. In spite of these setbacks, the Wounded Knee occupation drew attention to the plight of Native Americans and First Nations people. In years to follow, many activists worked for recognition of Native claims and grievances, and many role models emerged from the Native communities.

In an afterward or inter-title, it is noted that in 1980 that the United States Supreme Court ruled that the government had taken Lakota land illegally and awarded them $100 million. The payment was refused as the Lakota demanded their land back instead. The judgment continues to grow. For access to a wide variety of information about the We Shall Remain documentaries, including transcripts from the films, see http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/weshallremain/ (upper MY, SY, Adult)


The movie, set in the 1930s, comes from the book of the same name, which was written by the daughter of one (Molly, played by Everlyn Sampi) of the three girls (Molly, Gracie, and Daisy). All mixed-race children, the girls were targeted for removal from their families. After they were captured by government authorities, the girls escaped from the residential school in Moore River Native Settlement near Perth, Australia, and walked hundreds of miles back to their home in Jigalong. They followed the rabbit-proof fence, a structure that was originally built to try to keep rabbits from invading Western Australia. In the movie, the girls are helped along the way, but they are also being followed by an Aboriginal tracker (David Gulpilil), who knows the location of the girls at several times, but says nothing. His knowing looks indicate his empathy for the girls and his complicity in their escape. Gracie is recaptured when she is tricked into diverting to meet her mother, who the white administrator Neville (Kenneth Branagh) has spread word will be in Wiluna. The other two girls continue, and they find their way home. The final scenes are emotional.
Final footage in the movie includes an interview with Molly, as she recounts that both she and her two daughters were captured a second time and returned to Moore River. She escaped with her daughter Annabelle and walked back home again, but Annabelle was recaptured and she never saw her again. The other daughter, Doris Pilkington, is the author of the book. The movie will support a research study of the practices of governments in Australia, Canada, and the United States as they forcibly removed Aboriginal children from their families, their languages, and their cultures. In this movie, the focus is on what were called ‘half-castes’ at the time, children of Aboriginal mothers and white fathers; they became known as the Stolen Generation. The book includes biographical ‘where are they now’ entries for each of the girls, a map of the original travels of the girls, a glossary of Mardujara words, and a short but useful reference list.

[Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (25 running minutes)

Todd, Loretta (Director & Writer), Geddes, Carol (Co-producer), Doxtater, Michael (Co-producer), & Krepakevich, Jerry (Co-producer). (1997). Forgotten warriors
[Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (51 running minutes)

These two films focus on the role of Aboriginal people in the wars, as do the films and books that highlight the roles of the code talkers, included in another listing in this document.

The film Gene Boy tells the story of Eugene Benedict, who narrates the film of his life story. He began his life as a child of a child, as his 14-year old mother had gotten pregnant while in residential school. His grandparents took him in to raise him, and he recalls their life as being poor, but, as he says, so was everyone else in those days. In spite of having little money, Gene recalls his childhood as being good. As he grew older, he left his home reserve in Quebec, as he did not see a future there, and went to work on construction and on high rises. When he started getting into what he calls the regular teenager troubles, his stepfather encouraged him to join the Marines. He was just seventeen. With the aid of archival footage and dramatization, Gene recalls the harshness of Marine boot camp, then being shipped to the Viet Nam war. He speaks bluntly about what he had to do in the war as a scout sniper, the war’s brutality, and the necessity of just becoming numb in order to cope with the situation. He also speaks of the American use of Agent Orange that defoliated the jungle so that they could see the enemy, but which also adversely affected the health of everyone on the ground, including civilians and of course the soldiers. Of that time in Viet Nam, Gene says, “I am sure to go to heaven, because I’ve spent my time in hell.” Upon returning home, like many other soldiers, he had little ability to cope with civilian life and to reintegrate. He noted that getting a job was not hard, but keeping it was impossible. He was struggling with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In addition to that struggle, with the mentality at home in the United States against the Viet Nam war, veterans did not return as heroes; rather, they were often treated as the enemy. He discovered sixteen years after returning that he could have collected unemployment insurance for a while, and that he also would have qualified for a pension. He had never been told that when he returned. Finally, with his struggles becoming so heavy, he knew he had to go home to his roots. So he boarded a bus to Montreal,
and hitch hiked the rest of the way to his home community of Wanban-Aki, near Odabak in Quebec. He began to heal, learning more about PTSD and finding medication that would help him. He began to drive a school bus, and with it came the feeling that he was giving back to his community for all they had done for him in helping him find purpose in his life. This short autobiographical film helps the viewer to understand the trauma of war and the difficulty of reintegration. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

The film *Forgotten Warriors* focusses on the contributions of Aboriginal peoples during Canada’s wars, and the neglect by Canada to honour those contributions upon the soldiers’ return home. Gordon Tootoosis narrates the film, and interviewees include many veterans of WWII. Archival footage and photographs are integrated, including photos of WWI veteran and Olympic athlete, Tom Longboat, as well as of Sargent Tommy Prince, the most decorated Aboriginal soldier of WWII. Even though Aboriginal people did not receive the vote in Canada until 1960, hundreds of Aboriginal men and women from across the country enlisted for the wars long before that time and fought alongside non-Native comrades. Interviewees include Glen Douglas, Leroy Littlebear (giving historical background and statement of position), Mary Greeyes-Reid (the first Aboriginal woman to enlist), George Doxtator, Gordon Ahenakew, Wilfred Brass, John Bradley, Harry Lavalle, Bernelda Wheeler (giving historical background and statement of position), Lloyd King, George Munroe, Senator Len Marchand (giving historical background and statement of position), Fred L’Herondelle, Sam Sinclair, Clifford George (uncle of Dudley George killed during the Ipperwash crisis), and Al Thomas, as well as Nora Apsassin, Chief Gerry Attachie, Chief Joe Apsassin, Carol Lafond, and Chief Harry Lafond. While the Native veterans were not told about what they were entitled to when they returned from the wars, the non-Native veterans had access to finances for continued education, as well as cheap land under the Veterans Land Act (VLA). Some of that land was actually taken from reserve lands, a double insult for the First Nations veterans. The returning Aboriginal war veterans found that, once out of uniform, they experienced the racist treatment of the past, including being segregated in movie theatres and restaurants. For example, while he has now been honoured by his home community of Brokenhead First Nation in Manitoba, with a school named after him, Tommy Prince died at the age of 62 on skid row in Winnipeg. Tired of the decades of neglect and mistreatment, a group of the veterans finally got together and began to spearhead a path towards more recognition. Eventually, fifty years after the conclusion of WW II, they were invited to lay a wreath in the Ottawa Remembrance Day services. Several veterans also travelled to the beaches of Normandy, and formed a sacred circle there to remember the comrades whose lives were lost while fighting for Canada during the wars. (MY, SY, Adult)

*Obomsawin, Alanis (Director, Producer, Writer, & Narrator), Burns, Alison (Editor), Amiquet, Philippe (Co-camera), Cart, Yoan (Co-camera), La Veaux, Michel (Co-camera), & Grandmont, Francis (Original music composer). (2002). Is the Crown at war with us? [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (97 running minutes)*
This film, available in its entirety on the National Film Board website (https://www.nfb.ca/film/is_the_crown_at_war_with_us), recounts the struggles for traditional fishing rights by the Mi’kmaq people of Esgenoopetitj, or Burnt Church, in New Brunswick. Providing an excellent historical background to the conflict, filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin also interviews many people from the community about the outstanding issues that came to a head in 2000. As non-Aboriginal fishermen applied for fishing permits and eventually overfished the lobster areas in Miramichi Bay, the Mi’kmaq fishermen saw their traditional rights to fish being restricted. They refused to accept that they could not fish out of season. In fact, a 1999 Supreme Court ruling in R. v Marshall confirmed that, according to stated treaties, Donald Marshall Jr. did have a right to learn a moderate living from catching eels out of season. Despite that decision, the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans became involved in trying to police the Mi’kmaq fishermen out of the area. Stunning footage shows the federal zodiac boats ramming the boats of the fishermen, sending them and their gear into the water. Traps were repeatedly seized, as the R.C.M.P. also became involved on the federal side. Tensions grew between native and non-native people in the area. Eventually, on August 1, 2002, Chief Wilbur Dedom and the Council of the community signed an Agreement in Principle with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. “In addition to a substantial cash settlement, the agreement grants the Espenoopetitj First Nation 21 new commercial fishing licences—for a total of 34—and limits their traditional fall fishing to food and commercial purposes only, with no sale of the catch allowed” (film quote). This is an exceptional film, with expansive historical details, wonderful original music, and the inclusion of paintings and archival photos, as well as footage of the actual events of the Burnt Church crisis, including the news conferences with federal representatives, for example the then minister of Fisheries and Oceans Herb Dhaliwal and then Prime Minister Jean Chretien. See the Espenoopetitj First Nation website at http://www.esgenoopetitjfirstnation.org/. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

**Obomsawin, Alanis (Director, Producer, & Writer), Burns, Alison (Editor), & Amiquet, Philippe (Camera). (2006). Waban-aki: People from where the sun rises [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (104 running minutes)**

This excellent, feature length documentary traces the history of Obomsawin’s Waban-aki people. As a return to her ancestral roots, this well-researched film is essential viewing for anyone wanting to know more about the Aboriginal people who dwelt in what is now the New England states and further north into what is now the Canadian maritime provinces and Quebec. The Waban-aki Confederacy consisted of five primary nations, the Mi’kmaq, Maliseet, Passamaquoddy, Abenaki, and Penobscot. Numbering around 50,000 people at the time of European contact, it is estimated that there were only around 1,000 people remaining in what is now the United States after the American Revolution. In the film, as well as integrating the history of her people Obomsawin includes the contributions of many interviewees both in what is now Canada and the United States. The people were skilled basket makers, and the film begins with two men hammering a log to separate the growth rings for their preparation for the making of the baskets; throughout the film various stages of that preparation are shared. Various basket
makers illustrate their technique. While many baskets are utilitarian, all are works of art, with some just stunning in their complexity, design, and colour. Additional articles are made with other natural materials as well, materials that range from various kinds of wood to sweetgrass. During the film, we also see Aaron York at work restoring a birch bark canoe. He takes us from his shop to the forest where throughout the film we get to share in his work to remove from a standing tree a lengthy complete circumference of the bark, enough to cover his entire canoe.

Several women in the film, and some of their children, talk of their marriages with white men, and how, prior to 1985, they lost their rights as Aboriginal women, including the right to live in their home communities, as they became ‘enfranchised.’ Many of those who married regretted that decision, wishing they had done like some of their sisters and not married so that their children could retain their status. The (previously named) Department of Indian and Northern Affairs of Canada (INAC) decided who was a status Indian and who was not. One white father talks of the difficulty of writing ‘father unknown’ on his children’s birth certificates so that, given INAC’s rules, their children would remain Abanaki. Even under the 1985 Bill C-31, as Obomsawin explains, the grandchildren of women who married non-Aboriginal men might still lose their status depending on who the grandchildren marry.

Obomsawin details the struggles that the Canadian Waban-aki have experienced in securing home communities, or reserves, from what was their ancestral lands. In particular, she documents how the Catholic Church and its priests played a role in controlling the people, including destroying their culture and language and taking their lands. Part of that effort included trying to instil the fear of going to hell, and thus to the devil. But then she goes south to the United States where she said that the Abanaki were not even recognized as existing as a people prior to May 3, 2006, when Vermont’s Governor Jim Douglas signed a bill recognizing them.

Near the end of the film Aaron York launches his finished canoe and rows on the river. It is a magnificent celebration. For more information, and for before- and after-viewing questions, as well as project suggestions, see the DVD jacket at http://www3.onf.ca/sg/100475.pdf. This is an excellent documentary, and can be used not only to learn about the Waban-aki, but also to inspire projects about one’s own people. Over a career spanning several decades, Obomsawin has become one of Canada’s leading filmmakers. Surely, this is one of her best films. (MY, SY, Adult)

Obomsawin, Alanis (Director & Producer), Burns, Alison (Editor), Ayer, Dion (Sound), & Din, Ravida (Exec. Producer). (2009). L’ÍL’WATA [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (57 running minutes)

This excellent film is a digitally re-mastered release of Alanis Obomsawin’s 1975 work in the L’il’wata community of B.C.’s Dr. Lorna Williams, who Obomsawin had recently met at the time. In this work, Obomsawin combines film strip with the voice-overs of people from the community. As each short film begins, with each production in the people’s first language (with translations for the first two films), the opening title reads “The people of L’il’wata present” followed by the title of the film. The entire work includes the following titles: 1) Puberty, Part 1 (14 min, 20 sec) where the narrator Marie Leo (also with Mary Louise Williams) speaks of her
childhood as an adopted baby from another Salish community; 2) Puberty, Part 2 (17 min, 25 sec) where the narrator Marie Leo (also with Mary Louise Williams) speaks of her puberty rites; 3) Basket (7 min, 30 sec) where elder Mathilda Jim (also with Julianna Williams and Mary Louise Williams) demonstrates the making of a basket; and 4) Mount Currie Summer Camp (5 min, 15 sec) where children (there are many excellent pictures of the children themselves) are filmed at their summer camp playing games, swimming, and riding horses. There are three shorter films as well: 5) Xúsum, which demonstrates Cora Wells’ making of a traditional dish with salmonberries; 6) Salmon, where Cora and Daniel Wells demonstrate the smoking of salmon; and 7) Farming, which shows a family working in the fields and harvesting many different vegetables and fruits. This re-mastered edition also includes a small booklet that gives information on L’il’wata. This early Obomsawin work is considered as having laid the foundation for her long career in Aboriginal filmmaking for the National Film Board, a career that has lent voice to the Canadian Aboriginal experience from the perspective of the people themselves. For an excellent teachers’ resource see http://www3.nfb.ca/sg/100576.pdf (MY, SY, Adult)

Obomsawin, Alanis (Director, Producer, & Writer), & Amiquet, Philippe (Camera). (2010). 
*When all the leaves are gone* [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (17 running minutes)

The excellent short autobiographical film is a reflection on Alanis Obomsawin’s experience in school as the only Aboriginal student in her class. In the 1940s, most textbooks, if they did mention Aboriginal people at all, were derogatory in their references. For the child Wato (Rosalie Dumas), those terrible comments lead to her being even more bullied by her classmates. A kind woman rescues her when she is attacked by two girls, but Wato is still very sad. Her feelings of isolation are exacerbated by her father’s serious illness, by being told that “When all the leaves are gone, if your father is still here, it means we will have him for another year.” In her loneliness, Wato turns to her dream world. In that escape world, there are horses that are friendly (played by Yves Nolin Allaire & Jean-Claude Cloutier), and they dance with her, and she can be happy. The film involves both black and white (Wato’s real world) and colour (Wato’s dream world) sequences. This is an excellent film for professional development, and also to engage children in dialogue on how to think critically about what they read in books and how to treat others well. (EY, MY, SY, Adult)


This film, with the title meaning “I love you” in Cree, honours Shannen Koostachin and her work to advocate for a new elementary school for the First Nations community of Attawapiskat, and then further to work for equitable and culturally-appropriate education for all First Nations children. Her work became known as Shannen’s Dream. Obomsawin follows the evolution of Shannen’s work as many other communities, schools, political leaders, and individuals joined in the advocacy for equitable education in First Nations’ communities, even
after Shannen’s life was taken at the age of 15 in a car accident. Shannen’s parents, her sister
Serena, and New Democrat Member of Parliament (M.P.) for Timmins-James Bay Charles
(Chuck) Angus are interviewed, as well as teachers and school administrators. The film includes
footage of school children from Attawapiskat and other schools.

The issue of education, and Shannen’s work, came to the spotlight when Attawapiskat
was struggling to get approval for a new elementary school. When the old school was
condemned because of diesel fuel contamination, the school’s replacement classrooms were
housed in portable buildings for many years as the federal government turned down repeated
requests for a new school. The struggles came to the attention of Chuck Angus, the M.P. for the
area, and he too began to lobby, also writing a song Diamonds in the Snow to support the
movement. Although there was a high school in the community, Shannen and her sister Serena
went to stay with Chuck Angus and his family for one year to attend school. Part of the
challenge, according to current teachers and administrators, was retaining teachers in their
community, as many left after only one or two years, and some after only a few months.
Although the community is relatively isolated, better facilities might serve to attract and retain
teachers and connect them more to the community. With that, there might be more commitment
toward culturally-based education with the inclusion of community members. To draw attention
to the issue, Chuck Angus introduces a private member’s bill entitled Shannen’s Dream, which
receives the full support of parliament. Shannen’s family travels to Ottawa to witness the vote. At
the time of filming the building of the new elementary school in Attawapiskat had been approved
and construction was underway. This film serves to highlight the need for educational
opportunities for First Nations’ children that are equitable and culturally-appropriate, while
recognizing the unique challenges of isolated communities. The film is highly political, given the
large role of NDP M.P. Chuck Angus, and the controversial use of young children as
spokespersons; however, those aspects can serve to engage more dialogue around the film. (MY,
SY, Adult)

Odenbach, Dan (Coordinator). (2004). *Reclaiming our children* [Documentary]. CA: First
Nations Films. (20 running minutes)

This documentary includes two films. The first longer (16 min.) film, entitled *Reclaiming
our Children*, addresses the creation and work of British Columbia’s Aboriginal People’s Family
Accord (APFA), and the second shorter (4 min.) film, entitled *Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder*
(FASD), addresses the condition and its prevention. For the first film, those involved in the
creation of APRA and those currently working with APRA are interviewed. As well, other
interviews include two young women who, as children, were fostered and/or adopted into
non-Aboriginal homes that did not put them in touch with their Native identity. In taking over the
child welfare system for the Aboriginal population in British Columbia, the APRA’s intention is
to care for Aboriginal children and their families in a culturally appropriate manner, and with
access to programs that work best for their population. With reference to the second film, an
initial part that gives information about FASD is followed by a segment about a young pregnant
mother who is practicing a healthy life style. Unfortunately, in the segment where Mom Crystal
Prince reads to her young daughter, rather than a culturally appropriate story, the filmmakers chose Walt Disney’s *Cinderella*. While that aspect does not obliterate the worth of this or the first film, it certainly compromises the message of cultural relevance intended by both films, particularly as it is included as the final filming segment of the production package. (upper MY, SY, Adult)


During the Christmas season homeless Ben (Gary Farmer) tries unsuccessfully to find a place to stay. He goes to a shelter where he meets another homeless man, simply called The Man (Stephen Ouimette). This man, while struggling with physical and mental health issues, is ingenious. He tries to steal purchased items from shoppers and then return them for the refund. Currently, he has a long space heater, still new in its box with the receipt taped to it. Ben joins up with him to walk from the inner city to St. Vital mall (the entire movie is filmed in Winnipeg), to return the heater to Eaton’s where it was purchased. Most of the movie involves that walk, and the situation is by turns poignant, tragic, and hilarious. When they get to the mall, Ben returns the heater for his friend, only to find that it was purchased with a credit card, and that the original owner will be credited on their statement. In frustration, Ben picks up another identical heater on the way out of the store (just at closing time), but leaves it there, and his friend has to talk his way into the now-locked store to get it. In the meantime, the friend had also lifted another person’s purchase of CDs, which this time, were bought with cash. They return the CDs and buy some food and cigarettes with the money they get. Ben leaves his friend, but still has nowhere to go; however, his friend sneaks into a bank lobby when another person goes to use the bank machine, and sits down on the floor. When he tries to light a cigarette, his only match goes out. He rips open the new heater in frustration and plugs it into an electrical outlet. He lights his cigarette from the heater’s element and now he is also toasty warm. He inhales on his cigarette in rapture, as if that is and will be his only pleasure this wintery Christmas season. The movie, while very slow-moving, is stirring in its depiction of the homeless. Ouimette plays an astounding role; however, the Ben character needed some work with costuming. Ben wears new and immaculate clothing, including a warm winter jacket with his name engraved. He stands in stark contrast to his down-and-out new friend, and seems out of place. Perhaps the message is that not all homeless people look alike, that some are well dressed, clean, and recently shaven, with no physical or mental challenges, and in fact look like they are just heading for the office. Gary Farmer plays the harmonica in the movie. In ‘real life’ he has a blues band called Gary Farmer and the Troublemakers (Google for several websites, including a Youtube video). Tina Keeper stars as the nurse, with Mauralea Austin as the welfare worker. (SY, Adult)

The full movie can be watched on Youtube: http://www.ovguide.com/heater-9202a8c04000641f80000000090158b4
Oz, Frank (Director), Kennedy, Kathleen (Co-producer), Marshall, Frank (Co-producer), & Startz, Jane (Co-producer). (1995). *Indian in the cupboard* [Motion picture]. US: Columbia & Paramount Pictures. (96 running minutes)

For the makers of *Indian in the Cupboard* (based on the book of the same name by Lynne Reid Banks), hopefully the movie now falls into the “I’m so embarrassed I did that” category. Not a box office success even at the time, the passage of years makes the film, which is supposed to be for children, quite shocking in its lack of taste and it outright discriminatory approach, that despite the frail attempt to rescue that aspect by giving nine-year old Omri (Hal Scardino) an East Indian best friend Patrick (Rishi Bhat), albeit with an English name. Omri’s birthday present of an old cupboard, combined with a magic key that belonged to his great grandmother, has the effect of bringing his toys to life, but as miniatures. First the Aboriginal man Little Bear (Litefoot), then the foul talking cowboy Boone (David Keith), and then army medic Tommy (Steve Coogan) are brought to life and have a variety of experiences before finally deciding to return to the plastic toys that they once were. While ‘alive’ they are treated paternalistically by the children, who must provide for them and save them, even though the live toys are actually the adults. Omri even decides he should find a wife for Little Bear. To top off the tastelessness of the movie, Omri’s and Patrick’s choices for television viewing are not monitored by the parents, and the two are seen watching first a strip show and then an old Western movie where Aboriginal women and children are being slaughtered. While the title of the film may be enough to warn away prospective viewers, it should be emphasized that *Indian in the Cupboard* is a very bad movie. Mature viewers might look at the participation of Aboriginal actors—in this case Litefoot—in such films. Was there a time during the earlier productions where, in order to make a living, Aboriginal actors had to accept such roles?

Parker, Marley (Director, Photographer, & Editor). (2009). *First voices music: Connecting Aboriginal youth in the north and the south* [Documentary]. CA: Visual Education Centre Ltd./ACIC Productions. (37 running minutes)

This film follows six youth who are sharing their cultures through music, three from Canada and three from Botswana. The project was funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). As well as the sharing of the music and dance, there are interviews with each of the young adult participants. The two males (Ntirelang Berman, Dirkson “Captain Dirá” Mahepela) and one female (Keletlhekile Sedumago) from Botswana primarily share traditional songs and dances. Of the Canadian participants, Kayla Larkin (Mi’kmaq, PEI) shares more contemporary approaches to singing about her people; Brandon Arnold (Mi’kmaq, NB) is a rapper; and Gavin Evans (Labrador Inuit) shares his drumming. The group shares good times while travelling in the Maritimes. The film follows them on some of their outings. While the film is excellent in providing an overview of the CIDA program and its participants, the sound quality of the video is not good (at least on my copy). For that reason, it would more likely be viewed by those wanting more information on such projects. Part of the proceeds from this video was being directed to a First Voices, Phase II where participants were being sent to Guatemala for an exposure tour. (SY, Adult)

The small community (approx. 300 pop.) of Old Crow is the Yukon’s northernmost community, a Gwich’in fly-in community three hours north by air from Whitehorse (A winter was road built in 2014; see http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/old-crow-winter-road-challenges-truckers-1.2558469). The community is the home of the Vuntut Gwich’in First Nation (VGFN). While inside the Arctic Circle, it is not within the tundra; thus it is very well treed, as the film illustrates. The cinematography for this documentary is excellent, with great landscape and wildlife shots. The film follows the work of some of Old Crow’s people to improve the health of their children, as some adults in the community had become worried about rising rates of inactivity, obesity, and diabetes, as well as school absenteeism and acting out. Community leader Glenna Tetlichi remembered a program in the community from her youth, where Father Jean-Marie Mouchet, an Oblate missionary from France, initiated a cross-country ski program in which she and many other youth were involved. The film includes footage from that earlier time as Father Mouchet was an amateur videographer. With the help of Father Mouchet, who was then 85, Glenna and others worked to bring back the program and help the children get in shape. They run, snowshoe, cross-country ski, and work out on indoor machines when they cannot go outside. There are many challenges that threaten the program, however. Not all parents accompany and support their children, and the school is resisting involvement. While not clarified in the film, part of the issue seems to be that only the most fit of the children get to participate in the special Teslin Training Camp. Again, it seems that once the program is more inclusive of all the children, the school does become involved. All during the program the children have trainers who also measure their progress. The last scene of the film is of 85-year-old Father Mouchet skiing away into the trees. His comments within the film are insightful, as he extols the land and the culture as ‘schools’.

The student activity program seems excellent. The children can ski so well, and they seem to be having so much fun as they participate in their various physical activities. Indeed, the work done by the people of Old Crow is very inspiring. Both students and teachers will benefit from viewing this film, coming up with many ideas for similar initiatives that may work for their school. Sustaining the initiatives for the long term will always be the challenge. In the situation with Old Crow, it does not seem, in accessing the community’s website, that the program is still in operation (See http://www.vgfn.ca/index.php; as well see http://www.oldcrow.ca/). In fact, it seems that the woman spearheading the program, Glenna Tetlichi, is now an educational social worker, working for the band but in Whitehorse. This film can be viewed in its entirety on the National Film Board website (See https://www.nfb.ca/film/challenge_in_old_crow). (MY, SY, Adult)

This film features five Saskatchewan women who have been prostitutes, but who have since left the streets: Donna Lynn Gamble; Donna’s sister, Gail Gamble; Donna’s and Gail’s Mom Sylvia Petit; Cindy Caron; and Karen Louise Trottier. Although not communicated in this particular film, another reviewed film in this document, *Donna’s Story*, features Donna Lynn Gamble and also includes her mother Sylvia Petit’s story. This film *Hookers* provides the stories from these five women, what got them introduced to the streets, all of them at a very young age, and what prompted them to leave that life. In most instances, the women had been sexually abused as girls, and prostitution was the next step in that life of abuse. Donna talked about being abused by ‘uncles’ and receiving treats to bribe her from telling anyone. Some were sold by their family members, as was Sylvia. Karen said that her family was heavily involved in pimping and prostitution, a factor that has also added to her inability to completely leave the legacy of her former life behind. While Donna spoke of dreams of becoming a millionaire, her younger sister Gail talked of how she thought that Donna lived a glamorous life where she got all dressed up every day and went out. Gail wanted that life for herself. Gail also talked of not being believed when she told the story of her victimization by a predator. While Cindy said that she chose the life, she also noted that she was getting beat up all the time, but that she almost accepted that as part of the territory.

With reference to leaving the streets, the initiative for Donna to get out of prostitution was when she was taken outside of Regina, and was pulled out of the car and beaten by a john. While eventually rescued, the first driver to come along simply drove around her into the ditch and back onto the highway, not stopping to help her. She decided that she did not want to die that way, as a hooker with her kids knowing what she did and how she met her end. Donna also talked of seeing a couple with a young child on the street, and so wishing that that could be her experience. After walking on, the couple stopped, the woman talked to her husband, and then she walked back to Donna. She asked her, “May I give you a hug?” Donna says that she can still remember that woman’s arms around her. With that comment, the viewer learns how important it is to reach out to these victimized women and to treat them with humanity. Sylvia told of how she just got sick of sleeping with ‘all those pigs’ and decided to become a drunk that no one would want. Karen said that she came to a point where she recognized that this was not the life that the Creator intended for her. Gail said that she got a job at a bingo hall and friends and family made sure she stayed with it so that she would not be tempted back onto the streets. Cindy said that her strength came from returning to her native culture. For all of the women, their life situations simultaneously led them into drinking and drugs, so they had to come clean from those habits as well as leaving prostitution. Because of that, leaving the streets has been difficult for most of the women. Karen Trottier, for one, has coped by becoming reclusive. Cindy spoke of the temptation, even now, to cope with challenges by going for a drink or ‘scoring’. Each of the women offers advice to their sisters who are still on the street on how and where to get help, and
to stand strong that they can change their lives. Each woman also talked of the importance of support, and that they are human too, that they have just walked down a different road.

This is a powerful film for use with appropriate audiences. Given its subject, if the film is used within a school setting, permission from school administration must be obtained. It is important not to ignore this film because of its focus. Many girls and young women need to see the film and know where they might seek help if they are being threatened by and/or are living in these life situations that might lead to prostitution. Because the film does not provide a listing of organizations and websites for help, teachers should provide these resources. As well, counselling should be regularly and readily available. Teachers should be aware that viewing the film may prompt disclosure of sexual abuse. All such disclosures must be reported to authorities and the teacher needs to be aware of that process for reporting. Particularly they must know that they cannot promise a student to keep secret such disclosures of sexual abuse, while also explaining the reporting process to the student and assuring continued support. In the entire process, the teacher may also need support, as sometimes students may be removed from their families for their own protection. At such times, the student may resent the teacher, especially if their family then turns against the student for disclosing their family secrets and the student is left isolated. However, our paramount purpose is to protect the child or adolescent, if abuse is happening to them, and to reach out to the adult in these situations, whether or not they are ready or able to leave the street. In doing that, we also cannot ignore our own needs for support as educators. (MY, SY, Adult)


This program focusses on the 8th Fire teachings as understood by Mr. Dave Courchene Jr./Neeghani Aki Innini, of the Anishnabe Nation, Eagle Clan. Leaving behind a life as an educator, Mr. Courchene has travelled extensively to communicate the message of balance and respect for each other and for the earth. One of the First Nations youth selected to carry the torch for the Pan-American Games in 1967, he was the runner from whom the flag was taken at the stadium gates so that a non-Aboriginal young person would carry the flag into and around the stadium (See review of Frontrunner in this document). Rather than live a life of anger and resentment, the Elders taught him to walk in a good way, and to work with others for worldwide understanding, harmony, and environmental awareness. Within that work, he found his own purpose in life, including speaking to many and varied audiences. He is shown speaking to youth about finding their own gifts, and about everyone’s responsibility to perform acts of love. Mr. Courchane tells of how his visions, first of the buffalo and secondly of the turtle, have helped to guide his work. His Igniting the Fire gatherings have drawn many people from around the world, as he includes all cultures and races. Besides Mr. Courchane, some of those attendees whose cultures also focus on the drum provide their understandings. This program might be used in several ways, and particularly when working with youth and adults who are struggling to find their life purpose. (MY, SY, Adult)
Pierson, Frank (Director), Berner, Fred (Producer), & Kirby, Bill (Writer). (1994). *Lakota woman: Siege at Wounded Knee* [Television motion picture]. US: Turner Pictures/A Fonda Film Production. (113 running minutes)

This movie is based on the 1990 autobiography written by Mary Crow Dog entitled *Lakota Woman* (A later, 1993 follow-up autobiography is entitled *Ohitika Woman*). Having been raised mostly by her aunt Elsie Flood (Casey Camp-Horinek) and grandfather Fool Bull (Floyd Red Crow Westerman) while her mother Emily (Tantoo Cardinal) was going to nursing school and working, Mary (Irene Bedard) was sent to a residential school where she was taught to leave her culture behind. Finally being expelled, she returned home to find her mother having adopted the white ways, busy with her nursing, and married to a white man. Mary became involved with drugs and drinking, leading a negative lifestyle along with her friends that finally took the life of her boyfriend Webster (Richard Swallow). Afterwards, Mary fell increasingly into a self-destructive lifestyle, finally becoming pregnant. When she heard of the work of the American Indian Movement (AIM) she became involved, and participated in the 1973 siege at Wounded Knee. There she met other AIM people including the leaders Russell Means (Lawrence Bayne), Dennis Banks (Michael Horse), Clyde Belcourt (Norman Roach), and the medicine man Leonard Crow Dog (Joseph Runningfox) who had first inspired her to become involved. The movie follows the 1973 siege at Wounded Knee from the perspective of Mary Crow Dog, who later married Leonard Crow Dog. Mary’s son Pedro was born during the siege. The activities of members of the United States government and of the Pine Ridge tribal chairman at the time, Dick Wilson (August Schellenberg), are elaborated. While not a great movie, the film does provide another perspective on the 1973 events at Wounded Knee. (SY, Adult)

Pilon, Benoît (Director), Émond, Bernard (Writer), Chénier, René (Co-producer), & Payeur, Bernadette (Co-producer). (2008). *Ce qu’il faut pour vivre (The necessities of life)* [Motion picture]. CA: Seville Pictures (Distributor). (102 running minutes)

This absolutely incredible, award-winning film tells a story of the tuberculosis (TB) epidemic in the far north in the 1950s. Tivii (Natar Ungalaaq) is diagnosed with TB and immediately leaves for a sanatorium in Quebec, leaving his wife and two daughters behind. Speaking only Inuktitut and in a climate, geography, and situation foreign to his understanding, he finds himself isolated and lonely. He is placed in a room with several other men, and experiences some cruel taunting. Joseph (Vincent-Guillaume Otis), his near-by bedmate, helps him to adjust a little, but when Joseph is cleared to go home, Tivii decides that he will also leave and he just walks away. He is brought back to the hospital in bad condition, having wandered in the winter weather for several days. He refuses to eat, wanting to die. His nurse Carole (Éveline Gélinas) is desperate for a solution and finally convinces the hospital administration to transfer an Inuit orphan boy named Kaki (Paul-André Brasseur) from another sanatorium. Tivii’s hope begins to be restored. The two develop a close relationship, with Tivii offering to adopt Kaki and take him home with him to Baffin Island. Kaki agrees, and the adoption is approved by the Catholic Church, but Kaki must wait until he is better before he can join Tivii and his family.
Tiivi also begins to develop a closer bond with some of his roommates, with an older man teaching him how to repair clocks and watches. Shortly before Tivii is to leave for home, Kaki has an attack and dies. Both Tiivi and Carole are devastated, but Tivii’s life must go on, and he returns to his home with keepsakes of the young boy who has become his son in his heart. This is a superb film. It does have one scene of sexual connotation where Tivii asks Carole, through a translation by Kaki, to sleep with him. Carole refuses and they are able to continue with their friendship. There may be tears shed during the film. Teachers should be prepared to handle these emotions, and to counter any teasing from those who do not cry. There should be ample time to talk about the film, as it might ‘stay’ with the viewer for a long time. How could the Canadian government have handled the tuberculosis epidemic in a different manner? (MY, SY, Adult)


This short documentary provides some background of Sitting Bull (1831-1890) and his struggle for the Dakota people. In particular, it focusses on the time that Sitting Bull spent in Canada near Wood Mountain and Willow Bunch in southwestern Saskatchewan, illustrated in the film with a map. Through narration by Old Medicine Crow (Lorne Noni Dormstauder, Mankota) and voice-over for Sitting Bull (Itonka/White Weasel/Leonard Lethbridge, Wood Mountain Reserve), events are related that tell of Sitting Bull’s youth and his evolution as a leader of his people. The vision referenced in the film was experienced by Sitting Bull leading up to the Battle of the Little Big Horn (or Greasy Grass, as known to the Aboriginal people). In that vision, Sitting Bull saw soldiers falling into their midst; thus, he knew that they would win the battle. However, he warned the warriors to take nothing from the fallen soldiers, a warning that was not heeded. Sitting Bull knew that his people would be pursued so he went north to Canada. There he was initially welcomed by Superintendent James Walsh of the North-West Mounted Police (N.W.M.P.), but in time the presence of Sitting Bull and his people became an inconvenience to the Canadian government, and, having removed Walsh from his post, food was continually withheld from Sitting Bull and his people until they returned to the United States in 1881 and surrendered. In 1890 Sitting Bull was killed by agency police at the Standing Rock Agency. This production, while not expertly rendered, will provide a short introduction to Sitting Bull and his legacy. (upper MY, SY, Adult)


John Trudell is a Native American activist for indigenous and environmental rights. This film follows his work from when he became actively involved to the present (at the time of the filming). Born in 1946 in Omaha, Nebraska, John left school to join the navy and served in Viet Nam. As a young adult, he became involved in the American Indian Movement (AIM), participating in the occupation of Alcatraz in 1971 and the offices of the United States Bureau of
Indian Affairs (BIA) in 1972. As well, he was involved in the Wounded Knee occupation in 1973. He was also connected with the situation around the 1975 killing of two F.B.I. agents on the Pine Ridge Reservation (He was not charged, but Dino Butler and Bob Robideau were. While they were acquitted, Leonard Peltier was also charged, found guilty, and is still serving two life sentences. See review of Incident at Oglala in this document). In 1979, shortly after Trudell burned an American flag on the steps of the F.B.I. headquarters in Washington, D. C., he lost his wife, three children, and mother-in-law to a house fire, the origins which still remain unknown. Trudell’s continued activist work is documented, which includes his evolution as a poet and the delivery of his poetry through spoken word CDs, with individual artists and with his band Bad Dog. The documentary, which took ten years to complete, includes many interviews with family, friends, and those who have worked with and/or been inspired by John Trudell.

While an award winning film, this production is a glowing testimony to John Trudell as an activist and an inspiring speaker, and offers little critique or historical background to his work or that of American Indian Movement (AIM). All interviewees speak of him only in the most reverent of terms. A more considered approach would require that a student of the work of John Trudell, as well as AIM, conduct more extensive research than those productions and publications that have as their purpose either to raise him, and other AIM leaders, to the stature of larger-than-life visionaries or, on the other hand, to reduce them to a rhetorical figures full only of sound and fury. With this wider research, students might be taught how to critique all resources they access. (SY, Adult)

Redroad, Randy (Director & Writer), Vozza, Anthony J. (Producer), & Eyre, Chris (Executive producer). (2000). Doe boy [Motion picture]. US: Easton LTD Partnership/Curb Entertainment; Wellspring (Distributor). (87 running minutes)

This coming-of-age, award-winning movie would provide an exceptional springboard for dialogue with youth. Hunter (James Duvall; young Hunter is Andrew J. Ferchland) is struggling with many aspects of growing up. Although his family lives on the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma, his Dad Hank Kirk (Kevin Anderson) is white. His mother Maggie (Jeri Arredondo) is a nurse at the community. Hunter struggles with his mixed race identity, and that issue is exacerbated by a serious health challenge: Hunter is a hemophiliac, drawing attention to issues of blood and of blood identity. Hank wants his son to be a great hunter, to bag a big buck. The young Hunter does not really want to go hunting with his Dad, but he does, and he mistakenly shoots a doe rather than a trophy buck, thereafter earning him the nickname, Doe Boy. Hunter does not get along with his Dad, who is a macho man, and there are many conflicts between the two, culminating with Hank hitting Hunter across the face. Upon graduation and his 18th birthday, Hunter moves out of the house. Hunter’s young friends also affect Hunter’s decisions; thus there is an aspect of peer pressure. Hunter and his father do reconcile, and it becomes apparent, although they struggle with differences, that there is a deep love between father and son. Hunter begins a love interest but backs off because he is afraid to tell the girl Geri (Judy Herrera) about his health condition. Father Hank is killed while out hunting by the two of his friends’ fathers, who mistake him for a deer. In his grief Hunter, with the help of his grandfather
Marvin (Gordon Tootoosis), makes a bow and arrows and goes out once again to hunt the deer, but in the old way. But he finds that he just cannot kill the deer. Grandfather Marvin is the moral centre of the film, also bringing the focus on the conflict between traditional ways and the ways of the contemporary world. Respected community elders might engage this conversation in school classrooms and in community groups. (upper MY, SY, Adult)


This collection includes the following four films: *The Trail of Tears: Cherokee Legacy* (115 minutes); *Black Indians: An American Story* (60 minutes); *Native Healing in the 21st Century* (40 minutes); and *Our Spirits Don’t Speak English: Indian Boarding School* (80 minutes).

The *Trail of Tears* film includes four chapters in the first part: 1) Removal, 2) Cherokee Nation, 3) Unjust Laws, and 4) The Treaty Party. The second part also includes a chapter entitled 5) Removal, as well as 6) Forced Out, 7) Dangerous Conditions, and 8) End of Trail. The production is very well done, with Wes Studi presenting the story in the Cherokee language; James Earl Jones narrating; and many interviews with Cherokee people, many of them relatives of the major players in the Cherokee Nation in the 19th Century. As well, there is re-enactment, with actors both portraying the story and reading the actual words of many of the key people in the struggle. Archival documents and photographs also add to the film. The Cherokee people were unique in that many adapted to the white culture, owning plantations and slaves, and living in luxurious houses. On the other hand, however, the majority were subsistence farmers and had very little. Like other Native American nations’ lands in what is now southeastern United States (e.g., Creeks, Chickasaws, Choctaws), the Cherokee land was coveted by the United States. As well, like other Native American nations, the Cherokee resisted the take-over. Their resistance continued until they were forcibly removed from their lands, imprisoned in stockades, and then made to travel the 800 miles to land in what is now Oklahoma, land which was not coveted, at that time, by white settlers and miners.

A significant part of the story addresses the major figures in the struggle. Principal Chief John Ross led the struggle for the keeping of the Cherokee lands against President Andrew Jackson’s Indian Removal Act of 1830. Although they initially agreed with John Ross, Major John Ridge, his son John, and Elias Boudinot came to believe that the writing was on the wall, and the only way to save their people was to move west. They, with some others, formed the Treaty Party, and on December 29, 1835, signed the Treaty of Echota, agreeing to the move and to the new land in the west, even though they had no authorization to do so. It was what Ross called “one of the most consummate acts of treachery toward their country that the annals of any nation affords” (film quote). The Cherokee were given two years to move, but in the meantime, many of the Treaty Party had already left and white settlers were moving onto Cherokee lands. When the deadline for moving neared, approximately 16,000 people were apprehended, jailed, and finally sent west. Many died in the stockade prior to departure, and many more died en route. When the survivors arrived, there was much friction with those who had arrived before them and
had set up their own governance system, in spite of the fact that John Ross was still the Principal Chief. It had been the law among the Cherokee that the punishment for anyone signing away Cherokee land was death, and Major Ridge, John Ridge, and Elias Boudinot were all killed in separate incidents on June 22, 1839. Eventually, the Cherokee rebuilt their nation in Oklahoma, only to have those lands greatly reduced when white settlement began to move west and those lands were, once again, coveted by the United States government for white settlement. (SY, Adult)

The second in the series, Black Indians: An American Story, recounts the experiences of mixed-race Native American and African Americans, some with white ancestry as well. The writer is Daniel Blake Smith, and the narrator is James Earl Jones, himself a Black Indian. The accompanying music, written by Ron Dilulio, is exceptional. An excellent introduction leads into many interviews with descendants of those who initially intermarried. Archival data and photographs are included. From the beginning, both Native Americans and African Americans had experienced white people as the oppressor with the colonizers stealing Indian lands and the freedom of the African slaves; their relationships were thus founded on common experience. However, similar to how Indians were used against one another—as scouts against other Indians, for example—Indians were also used against African Americans, for example to track and capture runaway slaves. The Seminoles of Florida, however, were instrumental in hiding runaway slaves. In what is now the northeastern United States, many African Americans were also assisted and they intermarried with the Narragansetts and the Pequoit. Interviews with mixed-race people illustrate countless struggles with identity, where the people found they were accepted by neither the Native American community—they were too black—nor by the African American community—they were too white (See Between: Living in the Hyphen, reviewed in this document). In the civil rights era, for example, many Black Indians found themselves shut out of participating. The interviewees talked about ‘pencil genocide’, where with a stroke of a pencil, your race could be decided, with some members of a family down as black, some as Indian, and some as white, a practice according to one of the interviewees, of “erasing the ancestors” of that person. With reference to the 1887 Dawes Act and its resultant Commission, the law enabling the practice of allotting lands to individual Cherokee for example (and thus the government-initiated practice of ‘taking back’ the treaty lands that were not allotted individually), if one was not down as Cherokee, they were totally disenfranchised, even though other members of their families may have been allotted lands. In spite of their challenges, however, all interviewees talked of their pride in their mixed-race ancestry. (SY, Adult)

The documentary Native Healing in the 21st Century includes many interviews with Native American healers who are connecting their traditional medicines with modern medicine. The documentary is written by Howard Fisher and is well narrated by Gregg Howard (Cherokee/Powhatan). Four chapters address 1) Herbs and Leaves, 2) Power of Tea, 3) Medicine Men, and 4) Healing Spirit. Traditional healers tend to pay more attention to the body, mind, emotions, and spirit, which is a more holistic approach that emphasizes balance. In contemporary times, especially with the stress and pressure of fast-paced lives, many are seeking out traditional Native American approaches to health. Medical doctor Ron J. Anderson (Cherokee) notes that 14
billion dollars is spent each year in the United States on alternative medicines. Healers demonstrate and talk about the following traditional medicines: osha; yerba de burro; willow; corta; garlic; yerba del manzo; yerba buena; confrey; bee balm or wild oregano; ephedra; cedar; pinion sap; mesquite bean; mullen; St. John’s wort; and Echinacea. Those interested in traditional medicines will find this documentary essential viewing. Such approaches to healing need the guidance of those with knowledge in the area, as is noted by the traditional healers in the film. As well, some traditional medicines may react with contemporary prescriptions; thus, a medical doctor should know of any traditional medicines that a patient is taking. (SY, Adult)

The final documentary in the series, Our Spirits Don’t Speak English: Indian Boarding School, is a compelling look at Native American residential schools in the United States. The narrator Gayle Ross (Cherokee historian/storyteller) talks about the traditional way of teaching children through story, and through respect for the land and its life. Similar to the approach with alternative medicines, we are now realizing that the patterning of stories helps children to learn and to make sense of their world. We have also learned of the devastation of our planet though lack of respect for the environment. Many interviewees recount their experiences in residential schools. The documentary also makes use of re-enactment, as well as archival documents and photographs. For the first 300 years in the history of the United States, similar to Canada, schooling of Native American children was dominated by the church. Of the 400 treaties negotiated in the United States, 120 promised the provision of schools and teachers. In 1693 the College of William and Mary had as one of its mandates the conversion of Native American people to Christianity. It was not until 1840, however, that newspaper man John O’Sullivan coined the phrase ‘manifest destiny’ that came to rationalize government policies relating to Aboriginal people. Three solutions were devised for the ‘Indian problem’: geographic removal; military subjugation and/or genocide; and education. Civil war veteran Captain William Henry Pratt led the education and pacification movement, convincing the government that boarding schools were necessary. The education provided was intended to prepare the Native American children for work as domestics and tradespeople, not as professionals. In the schools the children worked to support the school itself, learned a trade, and received a rudimentary education. Most of the schools, like the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, became military- and/or prison-like settings, with the children’s days strictly regimented by bells. The children were taken away from their homes for many months of the year. Their hair was cut, their clothes changed to English-type clothes, their language and spiritual ways forbidden, and all aspects of their culture erased. The child was, in most cases, not nurtured, as they received no parenting. As a result, many suffered emotional, psychological, and mental scarring, and their trauma was passed on to succeeding generations. As well, many of the personnel at the schools were not supervised and children were often abused physically and sexually. Some children even thought that they must be bad children, sent away by their parents who did not love them. They did not understand that their parents had no choice but to send them, and that their parents did not know what was happening at the school. This film is a good addition to a themed unit or Indigenous Inquiry Kit on residential schools. (SY, Adult)
This excellent documentary acquaints the viewer with many contemporary examples of Aboriginal architecture, all of which are patterned after traditional structures used by each particular featured First Peoples. The production features the Pueblo with their newly constructed Culture Centre being patterned after ancient structures in Chaco Canyon, particularly Pueblo Benito. At the Six Nations community in Ontario, Mohawk architect Brian Porter explains the designs of elementary schools in the community, as well as the Great Opportunity Business Centre, which resembles a long house. In the north, the Inuit have created several buildings with the shape of an igloo inside. The Crow of the Great Plains lived in teepees, and many of the new buildings, like the Seven Stars Learning Centre at the Little Big Horn College, incorporate the teepee design. Interestingly, the Crow teepees used very long lodgepole pines that extended far above the teepee, thus creating an hourglass shape that is also incorporated. The Navajo lived in the rounded hogans; as well as the hogan design, the corn stalk symbol and the rug designs are incorporated into contemporary Navajo buildings. For the Coast Salish, the pit house has been reconstructed as a contemporary place of gathering. Much of the building material is cedar, an important wood for the Coast Salish. For the Haida, the home and its accompanying totem pole introduced the family and told the person approaching by water who lived in each home. Many people are now building Haida homes, dwellings that clearly identify the homeowner as Haida. The film includes a teaching guide. Students might do research into the buildings of their own and nearby communities, as well as their province, to see what buildings in their area are designed to incorporate First Peoples’ traditional building designs and cultural aspects. (upper MY, SY, Adult)


This well-researched documentary, along with the books, tells the tragic story of Ishi, whose Yahi people were hunted to extinction by American bounty hunters. In 1911 Ishi, emaciated and the last of his people still alive, walked into a white settlement. He became a much studied living artifact, a source of information to be mined by anthropologists and archeologists. However, he was also protected and befriended by Alfred Kroeber who detested the manner in which Aboriginal people had been treated in the United States, with bounties offered for their heads ($5.00) and scalps (50 cents). By the 1840s, diseases and massacres had
reduced the number of Yahi people to 400. The California Gold Rush prompted continued killings, with documented massacres in 1866, 1867, and 1871. Finally, only 40 Yahi people remained, hidden in a forested enclave. While Kroeber learned from Yahi how his people had died, he also wanted to learn more about how they had lived. Yahi reluctantly returned to his home territory, the scene of so much brutality, and helped with that research. Kroeber also solicited the help of noted linguist Edward Sapir to become conversant with Ishi’s language. After three months of intense work with Sapir, Ishi fell ill with tuberculosis and died in 1915.

A team of contemporary anthropologists are interviewed for the documentary as they retrace the Kroeber’s research, and the area where Ishi lived and where he and Kroeber and their team returned to learn more about the Yahi’s way of life. The film, while excellent, is difficult to watch, as one also must revisit that time in history when the Yahi people, and other North American Aboriginal people, were deprived of their lands, their culture, and their lives. The brutality of that process is not glossed over in the documentary. The film is based on the two books by Theodora Kroeber, the widow of Alfred Kroeber. The book *Ishi in Two Worlds* includes a forward by Alfred Kroeber’s son Karl. The second book *Ishi: Last of his Tribe* is an enjoyable, highly accessible historical novel, essential to one’s appreciation of Ishi and his Yahi tribe of the Yana people. As included in author Theodora Kroeber’s note, “This book tries to look back on Ishi’s life, on the old Yahi World, and the world of the white man seen through Ishi’s eyes” (p. 209). (upper MY, SY, Adult)

Roeg, Nicholas (Director). (1971). *Walkabout* [Motion picture]. AU/UK: 20th Century Fox (Distributor). (100 running minutes)


The movie *Walkabout* is loosely based on the novel by James Vance Marshall, with the screenplay written by Edward Bond. The movie story begins with the white father, who seems to be a geologist, taking his teenage daughter (Jenny Agutter) and small son (Luc Roeg, the director’s youngest son) for a picnic excursion into the outback. They become stranded, the father goes berserk, and while he fails in his attempt to shoot his children who have wandered off, he does set fire to the car and shoots himself. The girl salvages what she can, and protecting her little brother from the truth, they head out to try to find their way back. They are suffering from lack of water and heat exposure when an Aboriginal boy (David Gulpilil, in his first film) comes along. He is on his walkabout, the transition ceremony of a boy into manhood. He takes the children along with him, and over the next several days, the three bond into a sort of family. The young boy is especially adaptable, and chatters all the time to the older Aboriginal boy. In ‘extensions’ to the film white researchers, souvenir makers, as well as hunters, appear one after the other, but none ‘see’ the children. The Aboriginal boy does know, however, that the children are nearing the white world. He and the younger boy have found a road. While the little boy does not seem overly excited about the road, the girl is thrilled. Soon after, rather than understanding the Aboriginal boy when he performs an elaborate courtship dance for her, she becomes alarmed and runs from him. The Aboriginal boy dances for her for hours, and when he is unsuccessful, he
takes his own life. The two children leave and walk down the road that the two boys had earlier discovered and they finally find a settlement. At the end of the movie, the girl, now married, wistfully thinks back on that time, and recognizes only then the budding love that was. As well as the two suicides, and a violent scene of animals being brutally killed, the movie also involves nudity, with two swimming scenes, one with just the girl, and one with all three children. Teachers should preview the film for classroom acceptance in their context. The movie package includes a second DVD that involves interviews, as adults, with all three stars in the movie. The interviews with David Gulpilil are within the included one-hour documentary entitled *Gulpilil: One Red Blood*, from 2002. (SY, Adult)

The short book (126 pages) begins with the marooned children, the only survivors of a plane crash. There are many scenes that teach of the topography and animals of Australia, as well as the culture of young Aboriginal boy who saves the two children from death. In the book, the girl is repulsed by the nudity of the Aboriginal boy, and he mistakes her reaction when he gets closer to her, thinking that she has seen the Spirit of Death within him. Subsequently he loses the will to live and dies, but not before directing the boy to the way out of the wilderness. While travelling they meet another Aboriginal family, and this time both children are non-pulsed by both their own nudity and that of the family. They have both adapted, and are more comfortable in their surroundings. The book includes what are now considered racist terms (e.g., darkie), which, rather than being a reason for the book to be rejected, provide opportunities for classroom dialogue about respectful ways to address and relate to others, and how terms and attitudes might change from one time in history to another (e.g., Martin Luther King, Jr., used the term ‘Negro’, but we would not reject his ‘I have a dream’ speech because of that). (MY)

Roque, Sara (Writer & Director), & Morin, Lea (Producer). (2010). *Six miles deep* [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (43 running minutes)


This film addresses the 2006 confrontation at Caledonia, Ontario, where members of the Six Nations First Nation of the Iroquois Confederacy blockaded a highway to prevent the continuation of a housing development on the Douglas Creek Estates, land that they claimed was within their traditional territories. The title of the film refers to the granting, to the people, of the land six miles on both sides from the source to the mouth of the Grand River. There is significant filming of the confrontation itself, and many interviews with the spokespeople and the clan mothers. What is missing is instruction about the source of the trouble, which is the land dispute. The filmmakers should have included a history lesson, as the uninformed viewer is left without
that crucial information. As it stands, the film concentrates more on the importance of the women in the Haudenosaunee culture, that it was a matriarchal society. With that focus, the film is illustrative, but it does less to address the title of the film and the underlying reasons for the conflict. With the footage included, other than the calmer interviews with many of the clan mothers, the viewer sees the worst of the behaviour from both sides of the conflict. With that focus, there is little to instruct the viewer in how this or other such conflicts might be successfully addressed. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

With reference to the included books, Laura De Vries’ (2011) exceptional book Conflict in Caledonia (SY, Adult) is the essential reference about the Caledonia issues. De Vries begins with an accessible seven-page introduction (including a map) that provides an overview of the entire matter, including the history of the land upon which the town of Caledonia sits. The author, who grew up in the area, then expands on the introduction, with chapters entitled Rule of Law; Places to Grow; “Us” and “Them”; A History of Sovereignty; In Search of Justice; and Constitutional Territory, as well as a Conclusion. Also included are two appendices, one noting the Key Persons, and the other a Timeline of Events. An excellent bibliography provides references for the student who wants to do broader research.

The controversial Blatchford’s Helpless (SY, Adult) is a look at the conflict from the point of view of the non-Aboriginal people in the area (in her opinion), whose businesses, property, and lives were threatened, and who received no or inadequate protection from the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP). As well, according to Blatchford, the OPP did little to either stop or charge those involved in criminal activities during the stand-off over the issue of the land being developed as the Douglas Creek Estates. Blatchford’s book will give rise to dialogue about or if how Aboriginal land claims can be addressed without terrorizing and injuring people, and about how police can protect everyone involved in such disputes. While this is a controversial book, it does provide a story from the ‘other’ side that should not be dismissed in a critical study of land disputes.

Goleman’s academic essay (SY, Adult) provides a critical analysis of the Caledonia situation, which adds that lens for students wishing to research the manner in which contemporary land claims seek to address historic and continued efforts to displace indigenous peoples from rightful title to their lands. In particular, Goleman refers to the understandings recorded within the Haudenosaunee Two Row Wampum of the Six Nations.

Safron, Henri (Director), & Carroll, Matt (Producer). (1976). Storm Boy [Motion picture]. AU: South Australian Film Corporation. (88 running minutes)


The story, both within the book and the film, is about Mike (Greg Rowe), who is given the name Storm Boy by Fingerbone Bill (David Gulpilil). Storm Boy and his father (Peter Cummins), nicknamed Hide-Away by the townspeople because of his reclusive lifestyle after the death of his wife (after leaving his wife in the movie), live in a shack near the beach, far from the nearest town. Fingerbone Bill, who is Storm Boy’s Aboriginal teacher and mentor, lives close by.
Fingerbone Biill, in his own story, communicates that he has been rejected from his community because of a cultural transgression, but he does not tell what he did. The presence of the three is allowed in the wildlife sanctuary where they live, but there are many poachers who come to hunt the wildlife. One day, Storm Boy rescues three baby pelicans whose parents have been killed by hunters. Henames them Mr. Percival, Mr. Proud, and Mr. Ponder. His father makes him release the birds when they get older, but Mr. Percival returns. One day Mr. Percival and his three human friends save six people whose boat is being smashed by the storm, and in return the captain offers to finance Storm Boy’s education in a city school. Storm Boy refuses to leave Mr. Percival, but when the pelican is also shot by poachers and dies, the heartbroken Storm Boy reluctantly agrees to leave and attend school in the city. On a visit home, Fingerbone helps Storm Boy to see that life carries on, that Mr. Percival is still with them each year as new baby pelicans are born.

The newer edition of the book includes photographs taken during the filming of the movie. Both the movie and the book are difficult to access, although both won awards. Several parts of the movie are available on You Tube, enough to piece together the story, as well as being available as a ‘free’ download, which is more cumbersome to access. Even after this many years, both the movie and the book can be recommended for use in schools. (MY)

Sandiford, Mark (Writer, Director, & Co-producer), Nungak, Zebedee (Collaborator), & Martin, Kent (Co-producer). (2006). Qallunaat: Why white people are funny [Documentary]. CA: Beachwalker Films & National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (52 running minutes)

In Inuit, the word for white people is Qallunaat. In this film, the producers attempt to communicate the differences between the white culture and the Inuit culture. Zebedee Nungak talks of his experiences being sent south to white schools. He is joined by other Inuit interviewees. The film includes archival footage, including some from a 1970 R.C.M.P. training film. The filmmakers do not succeed in producing a funny film; rather, what is displayed is a tendency of the Inuit interviewees to generalize some of their experiences with selected white people to all white people. As well, dramatizations show depictions of racism, white people depicted as fools. The Dick and Jane readers are illustrated, and it is noted that the experiences of that family are strange to the Inuit students, and that Inuit do not talk in those types of repetitive simple sentences. In fact, no one talks in real life in that way, and the experiences of Dick, Jane, and Sally were unusual to many Canadian children, especially those who lived in rural areas, and/or those who were from lower socio-economic backgrounds. However, it is still interesting to note that people from the far north would not experience settings with trees, nor would they, in former times, likely have had a dog for a pet. This film can be used as a springboard for dialogue. As adults, the well-educated interviewees generalized their experiences to an entire race, and the producers and the National Film Board of Canada obviously thought it was acceptable to present a film that displays racism. Do two wrongs make a right? Is it right to be unkind to a white male adolescent because your race, whatever it is, was previously mistreated by governments who were dominated by adult white males? Has racism toward white people
become acceptable? If so, why and what can we do about that situation, as educators? (SY, Adult)


Although now an older film and book, both works are powerful and deeply unsettling. Both are recommended for adult audiences. The events are based on a true story about ‘half-caste’ Jimmy Governor at the turn of the 20th Century. Jimmie (Tommy Lewis, sometimes spelled Tom E.) is raised in the missionary school environment, and because he is ‘part white’ he is encouraged to set his goals for a higher place than is allowed the full-blood Aboriginal people. He becomes a ‘deputy’ and turns in one of his own people who is subsequently sadistically sodomized by the Sherriff Farrell (Ray Barrett). When the young man hangs himself, Jimmie is given the task to cut him down. He then leaves his home community. However, he is constantly thwarted by the white people he works for, who regularly cheat him out of his hard-earned wages, thus preventing his getting ahead. He is tricked into marrying a poor, simple-minded, white girl Gilda (Angela Punch McGregor), who he thinks will improve his standing. She is expecting; he thinks the child is his, but it is that of a white man as he learns when the child is born. He becomes increasingly frustrated while still trying to turn his back on his full-blood Aboriginal relatives, as he has been encouraged by whites to do. He finds that he cannot do that, and he accepts his uncle Tabidgi (Steve Dodd) and his half-brother Mort (Freddy Reynolds) at his shack home on the farm of the Newbys. Finally, when Mr. Newby refuses to take the grocery order from Gilda, saying that they are owed no money for groceries, Jimmy snaps and becomes horribly violent. With his uncle Tabidgi, who does not suspect Jimmie’s intent but thinks they are just going to scare the Newbys, they attack and kill the two Newby daughters, as well as the boarding teacher Petra Graf (Elizabeth Alexander). Mrs. Newby is also attacked but lives for two days in which time she relates the details. The baby daughter is not harmed and in fact Jimmie gives her a banana she stands in her crib.

Jimmie, Mort, Gilda and the baby, and Uncle Tabidgi go on the run, with the pursuers including the fiancé of Petra, Dowie Steed (Peter Sumner), and his friend Dud Edmonds (Ray Meagher). Tabidgi cannot keep up, and he is captured and sentenced to hang. Gilda and the baby stay back at one point and they are also taken in, with the baby taken away and Gilda confined to a nunnery. Jimmie and Mort continue, and take the frail schoolteacher Mr. McCreadie (Peter Carroll) as a hostage. The three increasingly become closer, with McCreadie understanding why Jimmie and Mort have taken revenge. McCreadie talks Jimmie into letting Mort go, to just leaving the camp and abandoning Mort, telling him that Mort will do better without him as he (Mort) is full Aborigine. But Mort is devastated; he cannot cope without Jimmie, and he prepares himself for death, sitting out on the plain until he is discovered by the men hunting for them and gunned down. Jimmie takes the sick Mr. McCreadie on his back to a settlement home and leaves
him there to be administered and rescued. Having had his location thus discovered, the hunters close in on him, shooting him in the jaw as he tries to swim towards another getaway. He finds his way to the same nunnery where Gilda is staying, and she turns him in. He is taken to prison and prepares for his hanging. Administering to him is the Rev. Neville, the original minister who planted seeds of discontent in Jimmie with his Aboriginal culture, as well as aspirations for the life of whites. The minister now struggles with the path upon which he encouraged Jimmie because, separated from his Aboriginal culture, Jimmie was also rejected by the white culture.

The award-winning movie follows the book closely, as author Thomas Keneally was involved with the movie. Although he communicated years later that he realized that a white person could no longer write such a book in which they communicated the experiences of an Aboriginal protagonist, still the book and the movie should be critiqued for their inherent value as a study of racial relationships and tensions in Australia at that time, also serving as a springboard for dialogue of contemporary systems of structural and cultural discrimination. At the time, and over the next several decades, half-caste children were often those first targeted for removal from their homes and sent to residential school with the aim of training them away from their full-blood relatives, including their own mothers, and for service as domestics and labourers to white society. Their white fathers had little to do with these children, for the most part not accepting them as their own at all and abandoning them to whatever the white system had planned for them. Several websites will add to the film; see, for example http://www.biff.com.au/festival/film.php?id=fi3643, where the reviewer states that “Schepisi’s . . . film is a potent treatise on colonial brutality and Aboriginal subjugation.” The director of photography Ian Baker has provided stunning views of the Australian landscape; as well, the music by Bruce Smeaton richly complements the film. (Adult)


Although dated now, this is a good film about a young teenager from northern Alberta who is being taught by his parents to follow the traditional ways of his ancestors. Thirteen-year old Robert Grandjambe Jr. participates with his father, Robert Grandjambe Sr., in hunting moose and birds, in trapping, and in fishing. The film includes excellent outdoors scenes of the hunting, trapping, and fishing expeditions, in all seasons. As well, young Robert is shown skinning his catch, and preparing the furs for sale. He also takes some of his catch to others, especially Elders, to give them for food. Both of young Robert’s parents are interviewed. They stress the importance of being there for their children, and of helping them create a positive identity of who they are, as well as expanded choices for their future where they can decide to do whatever they aspire to do. There are many scenes of the family working together. It would be interesting to follow up with the family now and see what Robert is doing as an adult. Did he stay and work in his community? Did he choose a career away from his community? If so, does he return often to his home and to the bush? This film can be viewed with reference to many aspects, including
encouraging healthy adolescent activities, parental support and role modelling, and traditional values. (MY, SY, Adult)


The movie is based on the book by Farley Mowat. Jamie (Nicholas Sparks), whose parents have died, is attending an exclusive boys’ school, but the money runs out and he is sent to stay with his Uncle Angus (Lee J. Campbell), who lives in a secluded cabin in northern Canada. On the train ride north to The Pas, there is also an angry young Aboriginal boy Awasis (Evan Adams). He has been at residential school and he is returning to the home of his father Mewasin (Graham Greene) and his Aunt Lenore (Marianne Jones), who is Uncle Angus’ love interest. Jamie is soon also angry as he discovers his uncle’s modest living arrangements, and he wants to return south to ‘civilization’ as soon as possible. Jamie has little choice but to stay, however. He goes on a hunting trip with Awasis, his father, and the hunting group. (Adam Beach makes his first movie appearance in this film as a member of the hunting party.) Mewasin leaves his son Awasis with Jamie at a camp along the way as he and the other adults leave to hunt. Awasis is angry at being left with Jamie as he had anticipated making his first kill and thus becoming a man. Over the next few days, the boys begin to get along a little better; however, Jamie, in his wish to explore, leads the pair down dangerous waters and they are stranded when the canoe crashes in the rapids. They set out to walk back, striking out across the tundra to another fork in the river where Awasis thinks his father will be. They miss the hunting party, however, and Awasis now realizes that they will be ‘lost in the barrens’ over winter. They make camp and begin their preparations. Just as all seems hopeless, they come across a sort of ravine where there are trees. The boys construct a makeshift cabin and are doing well, but then they decide to strike out for home as the muskeg is now frozen. They run into trouble. Forgetting that they must shield their eyes against the winter sun reflecting from the snow, they become snow blind. While holed up for their eyes to heal, wolves steal their food. They decide to walk back to their cabin, but they collapse on the ice. An Inuit hunting party saves them, nurses them back to health, and then returns them home to their families. By this time, Jamie has adapted to the life of the north and is happy with his surroundings.

The book differs somewhat from the movie. In the book there is a deserted cabin not far from where Angus lives, once inhabited by a red-haired fur trader who disappeared. As well, the territory where Angus’ cabin is built belongs to the Cree. Their previous enemies, the Chipeweyans (Dene), and their leader Denikazi, arrive at the Cree camp hungry and lacking in guns and ammunition. While the Cree still do not totally trust the Chipeweyans, they also cannot refuse their request for assistance. However, to be sure they are not being tricked, Awasis and Jamie go back to Denikazi’s camp to assess the situation before agreeing to give over the guns and ammunition, which are also needed by the Cree. The people there are indeed starving. The
men decide to go north to hunt, but with trepidation as the north is the traditional territory of the Inuit, the enemies of the Chipeweyans. They take the boys as they have the only two reliable guns. The hunting party goes on ahead without the boys, but then scrambles quickly out of the area when they think that their Inuit enemies are nearby. They miss Awasis and Jamie whose fire they have seen but have mistaken as their enemies—as the boys were supposed to be on the other fork of the river waiting for them—rowing right by the boys in the early morning darkness. While trekking out of the north the two boys have the help of two captured sled dogs, which in a storm lead them to what seems like an isolated igloo. The boys collapse in the igloo and are discovered by Peetyuk, whose igloo it is, and whose escaped dogs the boys have captured. Peetyuk and his Inuit people nurse the boys back to health. Peetyuk is the son of the red-haired fur trader, who has died but not before having Peetyuk’s mother promise to send the boy south to school. When the three boys return to Meewasin, and to Angus, Peetyuk is embraced as part of that community, as well. There are several times in the novel when different protagonists are assisted, their lives even saved, by those people who were once considered enemies. This aspect can serve as great springboard for dialogue. For questions to accompany the novel see http://www.nt.net/~torino/two.html (MY, early SY)


The movie is loosely based on the book by Farley Mowat. In this sequel to *Lost in the Barrens*, Jamie (Nicholas Sparks) has sent a carbon (shaded with pencil) copy of the Viking arrowhead that he removed from the gravesite to his old schoolmaster who shares it with archeologist Mr. Connoly (Cedric Smith). Although he shares the information with an academic, Connoly begins to plot for individual access to what he thinks might be the site of a very valuable Viking cross. He travels to northern Manitoba, arriving just as the wedding between Jamie’s Uncle Angus (Lee J. Campbell) and Lenore (Marianne Jones) is over and they are leaving on a honeymoon. Jamie also becomes enticed by promises of riches and eventually, with Big Nose (Jay Brazeau), agrees to take Connoly to the gravesite. In the meantime, Jamie’s friend Awasis (Evan Adams) has had a dream about a white wolf, and both he and his sister Angeline (Michelle St. John) believe that Jamie is in trouble and they head out after him with the help of the bush pilot Flapjack (Wayne Robson). Angeline and Jamie have already had eyes for each other. The rest of the movie involves the rescue of Jamie; the recapture of the three friends by Connoly and Big Nose and their taking of the Viking cross; Jamie and Awasis being entombed alive in the Viking grave by Connoly and Big Nose, followed by their escape and the rescue of Angeline; the turning of Big Nose against Connoly and his helping to save the teens; Connoly’s fleeing with the Viking Cross and the attack on him by the white wolves; Connoly’s capture by the police; and finally the return of the Viking cross to the gravesite by the three friends. This engaging movie also includes Gordon Tootoosis as Mewasin, Angeline’s and Awasis’ father.
In the book, Jamie and Awasis, along with Angeline and their new friend Peetyuk, travel north to visit the Viking gravesite again. In the book, part of the motivation for the trip is for Jamie to escape being sent down south as a ward of Child and Family Services. That situation has arisen when his Uncle Angus, on a trip to The Pas, became ill, and because he had no money, became a welfare patient. Jamie is determined to avoid being sent south and to find a way to pay for his uncle’s care by finding and selling the Viking artifacts. In the book, it is Angeline and Peetyuk who begin to become sweet on each other. The teens do arrive at the gravesite, and they do collect more artifacts. They run into trouble and stay for some time with Peetyuk’s Inuit community. The people there do not support them in what they have done, however, as they do not believe that it is right to take things from a gravesite. Neither does Awasis. They leave the village with the artifacts though, and make a long trek to a settlement north of Churchill. There they meet Joshua Fudge, a good man who has traded for years in the area. He has a small ship and takes the four teens south to Churchill. There a real and honest archeologist from the Dominion Museum in Ottawa meets them and assesses the artifacts, and they are put into safe keeping with the police, who now will not apprehend Jamie as his Uncle Angus is being discharged from the hospital. The teens are cared for and sent on south to The Pas to meet Uncle Angus. The book and movie would be particularly good for upper middle years. There are guiding questions included that allow students to engage with the moral dilemmas facing Jamie; they focus on learning (e.g., responsibility, respect, reverence, and honour), as well as struggle (e.g., pressure, deception, obligation, and fear). As well, students might discuss the various reasons why the book plot would have been changed for the movie. (MY, SY, Adult)


The book by Collura addresses the struggles of Jordy ThreeBears (Herbie Barnes in the movie, with Jesse as his movie name) as he comes back to the reserve to live with his gruff and quiet grandfather Joe (Gordon Tootoosis), who has just been released from prison for a manslaughter conviction and who Jordy scarcely knows. Jordy has been in many foster homes, and he is angry and withdrawn. The story eventually surfaces that Jordy’s father had been killed in a rodeo accident and his mother attacked and violated by a group of white men, dying shortly after. Jordy’s grandfather Joe then killed one of the men who had attacked and violated his daughter. Joe and his friends present Jordy with a horse for his first Christmas back; the rest of the novel follows Jordy as he comes out of his shell and discovers his love for his horse and for riding. He eventually enters an endurance race with Horse.

The movie also stars Graham Greene (Vern, a DJ), Tom Jackson (Albert, the shopkeeper), Tantoo Cardinal (Marilyn, teacher on the reserve and Albert’s wife), Michelle St. John (Camilla, Albert & Marilyn’s daughter), and Adam Beach (Paul, Vern’s nephew). The plot of the movie is different from the book, with Jesse’s (named Jordy in the book) mother having died in a fire started when Joe, in his drunkenness, knocked over a lamp and then stumbled out of the house,
not knowing what he had done. Paul’s father saw the fire, raced in and saved Jesse, but the roof collapsed when he returned to get Jesse’s mother and he died along with her. Joe has served ten years in jail (it is not clear why, unless he was charged with manslaughter in their deaths), and after having lived in several foster homes, Jesse now returns to live with him. Both Jesse and Paul, the latter who also has recently returned to the reserve, are angry teenagers. Paul, in particular, blames Joe and Jesse for his father’s death. Paul also resents Jesse as Camilla, who he likes, has shifted her affections to Jesse. While Jesse hates his new surroundings, he begins to soften when he discovers that he can win $5000 in a horse race. Joe goes out with Jesse and captures his former rodeo horse that has reverted to the wild. Together, with Camilla’s help as well, Jesse learns to ride. Paul attempts to sabotage Jesse in the race, but ends up in a quicksand bog. Jesse tries to save him, but he also falls into the muck. When the adults see Paul’s horse return without a rider, they hurry back to find the boys. Joe saves them, and with a new understanding and appreciation, Jesse and Paul complete the race together. This older movie shows the star-studded cast as younger actors. Herbie Barnes is excellent in his role as Jesse Three Bears. Students might analyze the strengths of the plot in both the book and the movie, and create their own screenplay framework for a movie that does follow the same plot as the book. (MY)

The website for the series (http://aptn.ca/blackstone/) provides the following description: Intense, compelling and confrontational, Blackstone is an unmuted exploration of First Nations’ power and politics, unfolding over nine one-hour episodes. This raw, authentic drama tells the story of the fictional Blackstone First Nation, suffering disintegration by its own hand – the result of the corruption of its Chief and Council. From within the community, a new generation of leaders rise up and fight to create lasting and substantial change.

Intended for an adult audience, the series is deep and unsettling. It may cut very close in some Aboriginal communities, with its use thus being very sensitive. In non-Aboriginal settings, the use of this series is also cautioned, as it may seem to encourage or support stereotypical, skewed responses by students. See the website for a list of characters (http://aptn.ca/blackstone/about/cast-characters/), and for a description of the episodes not only for Season #1 (http://aptn.ca/blackstone/about/episode-guide-season-1/), but for Season #2. As well as being able to purchase past series in DVD format, past episodes can also be watched online. Some episodes of the series might be used to encourage dialogue around how one might engage in positive change. (upper SY, Adult)

This short informative documentary gives an overview of the treaty relationship that evolved with the First Nations, in general, and with Saskatchewan’s First Nations and their numbered treaties, in particular. Available in its entirety on line (See http://www.otc.ca/LEARNING_RESOURCES/Videos/; see also http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CH6G0I4Bz_k), this excellent video, while older now, still provides an excellent overview of the evolving relationship of First Peoples with the newcomers. Well narrated by Cynthia Block, and including interviews with Elders, historians, and a voice-over (by Judge David Arnot) of the words of Alexander Morris, who was instrumental as the government’s treaty negotiator, the film also includes information about residential schools and systemic racist policies, all made legal by the 1876 Indian Act. Later amendments to the Indian Act are noted, and the film ends positively with a reminder that “We are all part of Treaty.” (MY, SY, Adult)

Sen, Ivan (Director & Writer). (2002). *Beneath clouds* [Motion picture]. AU: Dendy Films (Distributor). (90 running minutes)

Lena (Dannielle Hall) and Vaughan (Damian Pitt) meet up on the road on the way to Sydney. Light-skinned, blond-haired Lena is running from her Aboriginal mother, whom she dislikes; in Sydney she wants to find her absent Irish father, whom she does not know. Vaughan, an Aboriginal teenager in and out of jail most of his life, is likewise travelling to Sydney to visit his dying mother, who has had little contact with him for years. The two begin to travel together, although each loathes what they think the other stands for. Along the way, mostly walking but with some rides, the two confront racism and hatred by travellers, shopkeepers, and police. Interestingly however, one of the few people who shows kindness, and who gives them a long ride, is white; however, that older man stops short of providing any food or a place to stay (as he is shown turning into his lane as the two teenagers exit his car). The teenagers begin to grow together and love one another, but having reached Sydney, their worlds split apart. This award-winning emotional film could work well, given the context, for studying the effects of colonization and racism. The repeated use of the ‘F’ word, as well as some violence, might discourage its use with high school students; however, teachers are encouraged to preview the film and judge its acceptance in the school/community where they teach, and to communicate with school administration and parents beforehand. The movie has a study guide: http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/secondary/hsie/aboriginal6/assets/pdf/beneathclouds.pdf (SY, Adult)

Shannon, Kathleen (Director), & Johansson, Signe (Producer). (1990). *Through ignorance or design: A discussion of stereotypes* [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (53 running minutes)
Although this is a non-Aboriginal film, albeit with some Native American participants, it is included here because of its topic focus. As a film that explores stereotypes, in this instance with reference specifically to religion and spirituality, the film might stimulate dialogue among students about the various kinds of stereotypes that impact their own thinking and their actions. How did their thinking become affected by family and friends, by media, and by historical and cultural misrepresentations? What can they do about it? How can they become more open-minded and encourage that attitude among their peers? This film is Part 6 of the Faithful Women series that emerged out of the six-day conference entitled Women’s Interfaith Dialogue. See http://onf-nfb.gc.ca/sg/98034.pdf (MY, SY, Adult)


This movie and The Song of Hiawatha might be considered as companion family films, or as satires or spoofs. The Pathfinder may be the somewhat better movie. Based on James Fenimore Cooper’s series of the Leatherstocking tales (published from 1823 to 1841), the portrayal of Aboriginal people leaves challenges to be addressed. This movie, or at least the flashbacks that are the bulk of the movie, take place during the French and English war, with North America being one of their sites for conflict. Grandmother, who we soon realize is Mabel Dunham, tells her grandchildren the story of Pathfinder while putting them to bed. As a young man, Pathfinder (Kevin Dillon), part white, has been adopted by Chingachgook (Graham Greene). They live within nature, away from white settlements. While on the land they find a party of English travellers. They lead young Mabel Dunham (Laurie Holden) and her Uncle Cap (Michael Hogan), along with Ensign Jasper Western (Jaimz Woolvett), to the safety of the British fort, and to Mabel’s father Sargent Dunham (Dan McDonald). Unbeknownst at the time, the French plan to attack the fort with their Indian allies and with the help of a spy within the British ranks. The attack from the French is finally rebuffed. During all the preparations for the conflict, both Jasper Western and Pathfinder (also known as Deerslayer or his English name Nathaniel) fall in love with Mabel. Mabel loves the Pathfinder, however, while being fond of Jasper. Regardless of the mutual but unspoken love between Pathfinder and Mabel, Pathfinder realizes that he cannot change from the life he leads, and he relinquishes Mabel’s hand so that she might marry Jasper instead. Over the years, however, he would often come and leave a bundle of furs for Mabel. While the movie includes romantic literary notions of the time, it still might be viewed as entertainment, while also preparing students with an initial history lesson on how early writers portrayed Aboriginal people. There are certainly better movies, however. There is a redeeming quote from Grandma (aka Mabel Dunham) at the beginning of the movie: “A long time ago when the world was younger, there was a great war between two kings from across the seas, who fought to have control over a land that didn’t belong to either of them.” (upper MY, SY, Adult)
Shell, Tom (Director & Screen Adaptation), & Burke, Kenneth (Producer). (2000). *Wind River* [Motion picture]. US: Mad Dog Films/Wolf Creek Partners/Lions Gate Films (Distributor). (98 running minutes)


The film *Wind River* is adapted from the book that recounts the life of Nicholas Wilson, one of the first Pony Express riders who also ran away from home as a boy and lived for a time with the Shoshone. In the movie, Nicholas’ (Blake Herron) father is away working and the family has to tend the farm in his absence. Nicholas hates the farm work, his mother Martha’s (Karen Allen) scolding, and his brother Sylvester’s (Devon Gummersall) pressure to carry his weight on the farm. He longs for an adventurous life with his Aboriginal friend Pantsuk (Brandon Baker). When his young friend is killed saving Nicholas’s life as Nicholas is being pulled along by a runaway work mule, Nicolas reaches the breaking point. He recognizes that he was responsible for the runaway work mule and for not being able to escape from the reins, and thus for Pantsuk losing his life. Feeling guilty and wanting to escape, he agrees to go with three Shoshones to their camp, among them Morogonai (A. Martinez) who takes Nicholas under his wing and teaches him the ways of his people. Answering her vision, Nicholas is then adopted by Anuba (Patricia Van Ingen), along with her grown son and the Chief of the community, Washakie (Russell Means). It takes some time for Nicholas, now named Yagaichi (Crier), to mature and to learn the ways of the Shoshone. He also learns of the warrior Pocatello (Wes Studi), also Shoshone but leader of a break-away group that are fighting against white American expansionism. Nicholas saves Washakie from an attack by Pocatello (rather than the other male adults in the village, which is unusual), and he also witnesses but does not participated in a battle between two Native American tribes, where Morogonai is killed, to Nicholas’ great sadness. Eventually, knowing that he is being sought by white society, Nicholas decides to leave the Shoshones and return to his family. He runs across an Aboriginal man pursuing a white man and he gives chase, rescuing the white man who turns out to be his brother Sylvester who has been hunting for him for the last two years. They return to the farm.

As an adult, Nicholas becomes a rider for the Pony Express. He also returns to the Shoshone village when his adoptive mother Anuba dies. This is an entertaining film, and it can be watched from several vantages for critique. For example, while Washakie is portrayed as the peace-loving leader, it is Pocatello who is more aware of the threats from white expansion. Wes Studi is excellent in his role as Pocatello. Nicholas works to change some of the ways of the Shoshone. Is that right? Nicholas is portrayed as being very immature for his age compared to the Shoshone boys of the same age. Why would there be such a difference? Even in his natural family, Nicholas is portrayed as childish and irresponsible, especially for a boy at that time. What do you think of Nicholas? The ways of the Shoshone, as portrayed in the film, might be analyzed for authenticity. (MY, SY, Adult)
Shibasaki, Takashi (Co-director, NHK), Nishida, Atushi (Co-director, NHK), Longul, Wally (Co-director & Producer, NFB), & Feiertag, Karen (Narrator). (2009). *Arctic circle: On thin ice* (Episode #1) & *Battle for the Pole* (Episode #2) [Documentary]. JP/CA: NHK Japan/ National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (80 running minutes)

This two episode film is not directly about Indigenous peoples, but does address the invasion and destruction of their lands by industry and by global warming. As such, while now a somewhat dated production, these films address how worldwide use of fossil fuels is destroying the habitat for animals and people in areas where the worst users of those fossil fuels do not live or may not have even visited. The first episode, *On Thin Ice* (41 min., 16 sec.), addresses the effects of the rapidly thinning Arctic ice cap. The film includes footage from the Arctic, including video of polar bears, as well as scientific explorations combined with computer graphics that communicate the dangerous thinning of the ice. The film shows the effects of the melting on the huge polar glacier, how the water cascades down to the ground level, then forms a smooth, lake-like surface that allows the glacier to move faster over it, and thus which rapidly promotes the breaking off of huge ice shelves as the glacier reaches the sea. Over the past several years, the ice cap has seriously decreased in size, with the rate of the melting now on a trajectory that cannot be turned back, with most efforts toward the slowing of fossil fuel use, and the resultant carbon dioxide emissions, being seen as ‘too little, too late.’ The polar bears struggle to survive in areas of open water that were once totally ice covered. While their food supply is dwindling, the effects are being felt by all levels of the food chain, right down to the lowly plankton upon which the fish feed that then feed the seals that then feed the polar bears. This film, well narrated by Karen Feiertag, is essential viewing for environmental science classes (upper MY, SY, Adult). For a recent report of pollution on the Arctic ice cap see http://www.alaskadispatch.com/article/20140525/arctic-sea-ice-littered-tiny-bits-microplastic-pollution

The second episode, *Battle for the Pole* (39 min., 47 sec.), addresses the oil and gas exploration that is now possible in the far north with the disintegrating Arctic ice cap. That exploration, which further threatens the ice cap, has led to competitive ventures by Norway and Russia. In particular, Russia is claiming sovereignty over part of the area, saying that the continental shelf, which extends from Russia into the Arctic area, allows them to lay claim. Huge oil tanker ice breakers, manufactured in Korea, use a different construction design and allow for the removal of huge volumes of oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) from under the earth of the Arctic seabed. In Norway, the exploration has attracted scores of young professional people who see the exploration as a huge opportunity, the opening of a great frontier. As well as interviews with scientists and with personnel from Norway’s giant oil company StatoilHydro, and visits to Norway’s Spitsbergen area, Barents Sea, Svalbard, Hammerfest, and Fram Strait, this episode again includes scientific information within computer graphic displays, as well as time lapse photography that demonstrates the rapid thawing of the Arctic ice cap. This film, along with the first episode, is essential watching. Student projects might involve research into the current state of oil and gas exploration in the Arctic region, as well as study of the current state of the Arctic ice cap and the flora and fauna of the north. (upper MY, SY, Adult)


This movie, based on Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s epic 1855 poem of the same name, might be considered a family movie, a spoof or satire, or, perhaps, just a bad film. Hopefully, it is intended as a combination of family movie and the poking of fun at the way Aboriginal people have been portrayed in the past (See the book *The Imaginary Indian* by Daniel Francis).

In the film, a very cursory story of Hiawatha’s (Adrian Jamieson as 10-yr. old Hiawatha) growing up brings us to the time when he (Litefoot as adult Hiawatha) is an adult, and is revered among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike. O Kagh (Graham Greene, with hilarious costuming, complete with a skunk hat) accompanies the renegade trader Bertrand (Michael Rooker) and the priest/Black Robe Father Marcel (David Strathairn) to seek Hiawatha. Bertrand is hoping for profitable trade, while Father Marcel is hoping for converts to Christianity. While they do find Hiawatha’s Nokomis/grandmother (Sheila Tousey, with hilariously bad makeup), and the elder Iagoo (Gordon Tootoosis), they do not find the elusive Hiawatha. However, Nokomis tells them about her grandson, how he was born to Winona, who soon died, and Mudjekewis (Russell Means) the West Wind, who had deserted Winona. Hiawatha, angry at his father, sought him out and killed him. Even so, he was then granted everlasting life by his father. Hiawatha chooses to relinquish that gift, however, for the love of Minihaha (Irene Bedard, hilariously flirtatious, and whose name means Laughing Water), a Dakota woman, and so that he might bring peace to all the First Peoples’ tribes in the area. His only enemy (Raoul Trujillo), it seems, is within his own tribe. His new friend Chibiabos (Adam Beach), who he rescued from drowning in a puddle of water, accompanies Hiawatha on his journeys. While he is gone, he loses his beloved Minihaha, thereafter to continue his journeys forever returning only occasionally to his village. Father Marcel comes to believe that Hiawatha is actually the second coming of Christ. This film might be viewed for light entertainment by adults, or as a study of satire. Graham Greene is joyously outrageous in his role. For impressionable children the satire might not be realized, resulting in mistaken ideas. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

Even at the time of its publication, Longfellow’s lengthy poem (164 pages) *The Song of Hiawatha* was widely critiqued. Since that time, many spoofs have been written. Suffice it to say that, regardless of the poetic merits of Longfellow’s poem—and it is an engaging piece to read—his narrative is a fiction of what was the acceptable portrayal of an Aboriginal person in the year 1855. While taking pieces from many stories that he had heard, some from Native Americans and some from ethnologist Henry Rowe Schoolcraft and his mixed-race Ojibway wife Jane, he embellished as he went along. For example, Wadsworth’s Hiawatha is not the Iroquois leader of
the same name, although there are some references as if he were the great peacemaker. Also note that the false and jealous friend in Wadworth’s poem is named Iagoo, as was Shakepeare’s Othello’s false friend (but spelled Iago). There certainly are sections of the poem that are ‘quotable’. For example, with reference to Iagoo, we may all know such people:

Very boastful was Iagoo,
Never heard he an adventure
But himself had met a greater;
Never any dead of daring
But himself had done a bolder;
Never any marvellous story
But himself could tell a stranger. (p. 93)

As well as Wadsworth’s poem, another study of a similarly dated approach, although written more than a century later, is Voight’s 1969 book about Hiawatha. It also covers the gift of maize to the people (See Basil Johnston’s work for a more authentically cultural story). The illustrations are intriguing. Neither author nor illustrator is Aboriginal; as well, the word ‘Indian’ is used (Adult, for critique; not recommended for classrooms).


This film revolves around Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). It begins with Jenny (Krystal Pederson), a divorce lawyer, taking her daughter Ashley (Ariel Yurach) to a farm to spend the summer with her Kokum (Julie Janzen) and Moshum (Joseph Naytowhow). It is unclear whether there has been much contact. It seems that there has been, as Jenny’s sister Bev (Jennifer Bishop) arrives for a visit and Jenny, and Ashley welcome her. Yet later in the film it is disclosed that Jenny had not been back to the farm for twelve years. At any rate, daughter Ashley is a rebellious teen, smokes, is plugged into her music and cell phone, and does not want to have much to do with her grandparents. Overall, she comes across as a nasty, impolite teen. Jenny is quick to leave her childhood home and return to the city. Over the (film) space of the next few weeks, Ashley softens to her grandparents in spite of Moshum’s strict rules. She also begins to discover more about her family and asks difficult questions. There is her grandparents’ foster son Aaron, who she had spent most of her time with until she was four and she and her Mom moved to the city. She begins to ask more questions about Aaron, who is currently in a youth correctional facility. Aaron breaks out of the correctional, and sneaks back into his home when only Ashley is there where he takes a gun and is then involved in an altercation with a neighbour. Although it seems that Aaron has been killed, he survives, only to subsequently die in the hospital of an unrelated complication a short time later. It is then that it is revealed to Ashley, who has also just discovered the truth on her own with some digging, that she and Aaron are twins, and that while she also struggles with the effects of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder, Aaron’s struggles were much worse. That is what had led to her Mom Jenny fleeing the responsibility of raising him and the guilt of drinking during her pregnancy.
Viewers need to look past the more amateur, small-budget nature of the production to the deeper worth of this film. There are many gaps in the movie, many aspects that don’t add up. But those aspects also communicate the accessibility of filmmaking for interested older students. Overall, the movie is a valuable addition for an Indigenous Inquiry Kit on FASD, as it explores, through Aaron and Ashley, the effects of drinking while pregnant, the life sentence that it imposes on one’s unborn child. (upper MY, SY, Adult)


A subtitle of the film is ‘From the raven comes the day. Inuit proverb’. The film documents the experiences of several Inuit people who have left their communities and gone south to work. While some 55,000 Inuit (at the time of the film) live in Canada, with the most of them in the north, several thousand are living in the south. Originally from Iqaluit, Marie Veevee, for example, is living in Ottawa and studying to be a lawyer. The film follows her on a visit home, to the airport reunion with her Mom, followed by striking footage from her home community, and then back to her apartment in downtown Ottawa. Joey Flowers, a Montreal lawyer, is from Labrador. Sculptor David Reuben Piqtoukun lives in Toronto. For each interviewee, the film shows them in their work world, with Marie with class colleagues, Joey advocating for the Inuit in his city, and David sculpting and taking his work to be exhibited at the Museum of Inuit Art. As well, the film shows the participants with other Inuit people, connecting with their culture even though they are in the south. Interviewees also include Mary Simon, National Leader of the Inuit of Canada. The film depicts positive role models for other young Inuit and provides a window into their career opportunities and possibilities that contradict the dysfunction that is often presented in the media. As well, it acquaints the non-Inuit viewer with the Inuit culture and the successes of Inuit people. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

Simoneau, Yves (Director), Thayer, Tom (Co-producer), Wolf, Dick (Co-producer), & Giat, Daniel (Writer). (2007). *Bury my heart at Wounded Knee* [Motion picture]. US: HBO Films. (132 running minutes)


The movie *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* is based on selected and elaborated aspects of the book of the same name. With a cast of many notable Aboriginal actors, the story focuses on four characters: Charles Eastman (or Ohiyesa, Adam Beach), U.S. Senator Henry L. Dawes (Aidan Quinn); Sitting Bull (August Schellenberg); and Red Cloud (Gordon Tootoosis). The young Ohiyesa was sent to a boarding school by his Christian father, who had returned to the community to get his son. Although raised thus far in the traditional ways of his people, Ohiyesa was forced to change, and to take a Christian name, choosing Charles Eastman. He was educated
as a doctor, and held up as an excellent example of successful assimilation. Having been away from his community for a long time, he lost sight of what is really happening, and agreed to work with Senator Henry L. Dawes, who at first appeared to be championing the Indian cause, but who actually was supporting assimilation. What later became the Dawes Act of 1887 would see each current household male adult receiving 160 acres, for the Sioux for example from the Great Sioux Reservation, which included the sacred Black Hills, with the remainder, including the Black Hills where gold had been discovered, reverting to the United States government for sale to individual white Americans or for government use. Unaware that the United States had violated every treaty with the Native Americans, Eastman supported Dawes. When he moved to the Sioux reservation as a doctor, and joined his teacher fiancé then wife Elaine Goodale (Anna Paquin) who was working as a superintendent of schools, he slowly came to realize that his people, the Sioux, have been cheated, and that he has facilitated the process that has led to their current devastation and hopelessness. He then began to resist the work of Senator Dawes, along with his own portrayal as a successfully assimilated Indian.

Integrated with the story of Charles Eastman’s role, the story of Sitting Bull is told, with his move to Canada, the initial welcome, the starvation policies there that forced him back to the United States, his continuing resistance even when on the reservation, and his final betrayal and murder. As well, Red Cloud, who after initial resistance had spoken for accommodation and taken a reserve early on, came to realize that his trust of the U.S. government had been misplaced. He stood with Sitting Bull in refusing the offer of the ‘sale’ of millions of acres of the Great Sioux Reservation, as did Gall (Eric Schweig) and Young Man Afraid of His Horses (Billy Merasty). While the struggles continued, the people in their desperation turn to the prophet Wovoka (Wes Studi) and the Ghost Dance, which promised to return the Aboriginal people who have passed away, bring back the buffalo, and obliterate the whites. Shortly after Sitting Bull was killed in early December, a group of fleeing people, camped at Wounded Knee, are attacked and massacred by the United States army on December 29, 1890. That experience devastated Charles Eastman, who resigned his medical position, but who later, in financial difficulties, aided in the processing of applications for the individual Dawes Act land parcels. All the while, he struggled with his complicity in a situation that was destroying his people. Of Adam Beach’s many acting roles, his portrayal of Charles Eastman stands out as his most mature, and arguably, his best.

As a final inter-title, it is noted that the Dawes Act of 1887 transferred over 90 million acres of treaty land back to the United States government, most of which was then sold to non-Aboriginal people. While a 1980 court case concluded that the land of the Great Sioux Reservation, including the Black Hills, was taken illegally, the judgment did not require the land to be returned to the Sioux, but instead paid out. That decision has been refused by the Sioux.

The book by Dee Brown was, and still is, a remarkable contribution toward an understanding of what really happened to Aboriginal lands. Brown’s work paved the way for many other studies, and for Native American voices and scholars, to illuminate the real history of Turtle Island (North America). The book, completely unabridged (12 CDs, 14.5 hours), is exceptionally read by Grover Gardner. Given the complicated history, with its many details, the
book can be read and/or listened to several times. Many books and websites are available to continue the research in this area. (MY, SY, Adult)

Smith, Charles Martin (Director & Writer). (2003). *The snow walker* [Motion picture]. CA: Snow Walker/Walk Well Productions; Infinity Media/Lions Gate Films (Distributors). (103 running minutes)


The award-winning movie, based on the short story by Farley Mowat, sees returned WWII fighter pilot Charlie Halliday (Barry Pepper) now flying as a bush pilot in northern Canada. On one trip, with the payment of valuable walrus tusks, he gets talked into bringing sick Kanaalq (Annabella Piugattuk) back with him to Yellowknife for medical care. However, on the way back Charlie makes a diversion in his flight plan, the plane develops trouble, and they crash land miles from any settlement and with both the plane and radio gear damaged beyond repair. Charlie, both arrogant and struggling with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, is enraged but also fearful, as he knows that no one will look for them where they went down. He sets off for help, leaving the sick Kanaalq behind. He soon runs into trouble as he has no idea how to survive in the environment. Kanaalq rescues him and nurses him back to health despite her own advancing tuberculosis. They return to the downed plane, and again Charlie is distraught that no one has found the plane in the meantime. The two set up a camp in the area, and Kanaalq teaches Charlie how to survive on the land. Charlie loses his arrogant, hot-tempered nature, becoming more human and likable. He also grows to love Kanaalq as he works to understand her and communicate with her. They leave once again to trek to Kanaalq’s people, but Kanaalq succumbs to her illness. As a last gift, she gives boots she has made to Charlie, tells him how to make it to her people, and says, finally, “Walk well, my brother.” In the morning, she has gone from the tent, and died in the snow. Charlie buries her, and includes in her burial mound the valuable walrus tusks for her travels to the afterlife. He succeeds in walking to her people, his arrival being both the opening and the closing scene of the movie.

The movie also includes scenes with Charlie’s colleagues from the air base, which add to the richness of the story; however, it is Pepper’s and Piugattuk’s superb acting that carries the movie. Writer-director Smith played Farley Mowat in *Never Cry Wolf*, and co-producer Houston grew up in an Inuit community. While the film might still be termed a ‘white man’s Indian movie’, it is nevertheless engaging to watch, and can lead students to deeper character analyses of Pepper and Piugattuk as one example of film critique. (SY, Adult)

Smith, Stephen A. (Co-director, Co-writer, & Co-director of photography), Szucs, Julia (Co-director, Co-writer, & Co-director of photography), & Sorensen, Navarana K’avigak’ (Narrator). (2012). *Vanishing point* [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (82 running minutes)

This exceptional, award-winning film features Navarana K’avigak’ Sorensen’s story of the two communities, one from Greenland, and one from Baffin Island, that are linked by the

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travels of Qitlarssuaq, a great shaman. As well as that story, there is a second, interrelated story of global warming, with the devastating changes that the melting Arctic ice cap is having for the people of the north. Navarana joins hunts in both villages, for fish and for the narwhale in both communities, and for auk gathering in her home community in the area of Avanersuaq in Greenland. In her community, the people still focus on the use of sled dogs. The decrease in the ice cap and the open water crevasses make sled travel much more dangerous. The auk gathering is fascinating, with the footage of the thousands of birds. On Baffin Island, in the community of Qikiqtarjuaq on the Canadian side, the sled dog is seldom used anymore. As well, the boats for the hunting of the narwhale are much bigger, and there are few kayaks used. The use of the narwhale is different in each community, with the Greenland village still using much more of the animal. The life of the people in Baffin Island included many more products from outside, available in the community store that looked much like a small supermarket in the south. However, Navarana pointedly comments that, “Just like at home, more and more life runs on gasoline and sugar.” She also says that, “Today parents want their children to get a good education. But part of our education is just being together, going out on the land.”

The photography in this film is stunningly exceptional. The filmmakers acquaint the viewer with the landscape, the culture, and the history of the north. This documentary is highly recommended, and could serve to initiate many study projects, including perhaps a connection with Navarana herself. For the most part, the film is in Inuktun (Greenland) and Inuktitut (Canada), with English (or French) subtitles. To accommodate the languages there are two discs in the package. (MY, SY, Adult)

Southam, Tim (Director); Graham, Hugh (Co-writer), & Wreggitt, Andrew (Co-writer). (2006). One dead Indian [Motion picture/Documentary]. CA: CTV/APTN. (120 running minutes)


The movie, based on the book of the same name, addresses the killing of Dudley George during the Ipperwash crisis of September 1995. The site of the Ontario’s Ipperwash Provincial Park was First Nations land that had been taken over by the federal government during WWII (citing the War Measures Act) for a military camp. Following the war, the Stoney Point First Nations people repeatedly asked for the return of the land with no effect. In particular, they were concerned about a burial ground on the land. Finally, a number of protestors moved into the park just after it was closed down for the summer season, on September 4, 1995. The movie begins with the occupation, and stars Dakota House (Dudley George), Eric Schweig (Sam George), Pamela Matthews (Carolyn George), Gordon Tootoosis (Clifford George), Gary Farmer (Judah George), and Ben Cardinal (Slippery George), along with Bruce Ramsey (Kenneth Deane), Gabrielle Miller (Premier & Cabinet Aide), and Stephen McHattie (Police Field Commander).
The film, which goes back and forth from the actual events to the trial of Kenneth Deane, is exceptional, allowing for character development of all roles.

To contend with the 35 unarmed First Nations protestors, trained Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) were ordered in. An initial altercation kept the police from moving into the Park; instead, they set up near the gates. There was pressure on the Progressive Conservative provincial government at the time, led by Mike Harris, to remove the protestors. As a few protestors spilled outside of the park, the OPP forces were strengthened to include a Crowd Management Unit (CMU) and a Tactical Response Unit (TRU). As the protestors returned to the Park, Slippery George (he was within the Park in the movie) approached the police. He was taken down by them (severely beaten in the movie), which caused the rest of the protestors to react by trying to protect him. In the unfolding situation, a car and a school bus left the Park. A riot ensued, with many police shots fired. A member of the TRU, Kenneth Deane, shot and killed unarmed Dudley George (he had a stick in his hand). When his siblings tried to get him to the hospital they were detained by police (during the trip in the book; at the hospital in the movie). At the trial, Kenneth Deane was found guilty of criminal negligence and sentenced to a conditional sentence of two years less a day to be served with community service. After the Conservative government of Mike Harris was defeated by Dalton McGinty’s Liberals in 2003, a public inquiry was launched. Kenneth Deane died in a car accident on his way to testify at the inquiry. For a full report of the Ipperwash Inquiry see http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/inquiries/ipperwash/index.html. On May 28, 2009, control of Ipperwash Park was officially signed over to the Stoney Point and Kettle First Nations.

Edward’s book, upon which the movie is based, is very detailed. However, everyone would benefit from a complete read of this carefully researched work, and the book is readily accessible (i.e., easily read, without a lot of esoteric legal language). Along with a detailed background of the Ipperwash land claim, it includes some photos and family histories. The book was written prior to the inquiry. The Ipperwash crisis happened five years after the Oka crisis. Edwards includes a long quote from the Toronto Star edition of September 12, 1995:

There was an obvious key difference between the crisis at Oka and the incident at Ipperwash. At Oka it was a white police officer that was shot dead, while at Ipperwash, the victim was an Aboriginal protestors. While no one liked to pose the question, just how much did the public care about one dead Indian? (Walkom, as cited in Edwards, 2003, p. 123)

This is one quote that might be critiqued given that no one was ever charged with the killing of Corporal Lemay, a member not of the police but of the military, while the killing of Dudley George and the Ipperwash crisis resulted in not only criminal charges but also in a public inquiry. (SY, Adult)

Tamahori, Lee (Director), Scholes, Robin (Producer), & Brown, Rivia (Screenplay). (1994). Once were warriors [Motion picture]. NZ: Communicado Productions/New Zealand Film Commission. (102 running minutes)
This is an excellent, award-winning, adult movie that traces the violent life of a Maori family in the ghetto of Auckland, in New Zealand. Beth Heke (Rena Owen) has gone against her family’s wishes and married the violent Jake ‘the Muss’ Heke (Temuera Morrison). She still loves him, as he can be charming, but mostly he drinks and is violent. Their lives are now lived in a day-to-day existence that involves drinking parties, fighting, and lack of employment (Jake loses his job early in the movie, but he is not concerned). Together they have had five children. The oldest Nig (Julian Arahanga) hates his father; he leaves home and join a Maori gang (there is a violent scene of him getting beat into the gang). The next boy Boogie (Taungaroa Emile) is involved in petty crimes and is taken from the family, but in his foster placement he gets in touch with his Maori culture. Grace (Mamaengaroa Kerr-Bell) is a thoughtful 13 year old girl who writes stories that she reads to her younger siblings Polly (Rachael Morris Jr.) and Huata (Joseph Kairu).

Particularly when Jake is drinking, his violent side comes out, with the parties in the home often disintegrating into fights. During one of these, he violently beats Beth to the point that she cannot go to court with Boogie the next day (the children huddle together upstairs). Given that he has no obvious parental support, Boogie is then taken from the family. When the family plans a trip to go and visit Boogie, Jake gets sidetracked in the bar, and they never make it. During one of the drunken parties in their home, Jake’s friend ‘Uncle’ Bully (Cliff Curtis) sneaks upstairs and rapes Grace. She reacts by vigorously bathing the next morning, then going to seek comfort with her friend Toot (Shannen Williams) who lives in an old car under the bridge. They smoke up, but then when Toot tries to kiss Grace, she reacts badly thinking that he is just like all other males. She runs from him. Meanwhile, Beth is out looking for Grace. She cannot find her, and goes home, only to find that Grace has come home, and that Jake has tried to beat her because she would not give ‘Uncle’ Bully a kiss. Jake grabs Grace’s journal and rips it in two and kicks her out of the house. Grace then kills herself by hanging from a rope tied to a tree in the back yard. When Beth comes home, Jake says he sent Grace out back, whereupon Beth finds her daughter dead. She goes into hysterics, and Jake and his drunken friends all rush outside. While Beth and the family take Grace home to be buried in a traditional Maori funeral, Jake goes to the pub and continues his drinking with his friends. When the family—still minus Jake—settles back at home, Beth is lovingly mending Grace’s journal when she begins to read it, and finds out that Uncle Bully has raped Grace. She and son Nig go to the bar—the rest of the family is waiting outside in a car—and confront Jake and Bully. When Jake calls Beth a liar and threatens her, Nig intervenes and shows his father Grace’s journal. Jake goes wild, and beats Bully, culminating in his breaking a bottle and stabbing him. But when he follows Beth and Nig outside, Beth, now with newfound courage, finally tells Jake that she is leaving and going back to her family home, that her family ‘once were warriors’ but in a different, more honorable way.

This is a disturbing movie that should be introduced only to a mature group, and then with immediate and follow-up counselling available. Particularly if some of the adult students have been perpetrators or victims of family violence, this use of this film would require sensitivity. (Adult)
The movie is based on Alan Duff’s (difficult to acquire) book by the same name, with some differences between the book and the film. There was also a follow-up book and film entitled *What Becomes of the Broken-Hearted* (both also difficult to acquire), which was not as well-received as *Once were Warriors*. As well, a third book *Jake’s Long Shadow* completed the trilogy; it was not made into a movie.


This film looks at the role of humour in the Aboriginal culture. Taylor travels to visit and interview several Aboriginal people involved in comedy, whose work also explores Native identity, politics, and the history of the treatment of Aboriginal people. Don Kelly is a young stand-up comedian who talks about his work; the film includes some clips of his act. As well, Don Burnstick is interviewed, and some of his act is also included. Drew Hayden Taylor, in some of his writings, has lamented that non-Aboriginal people do not get some of the jokes told by Aboriginal people; however, it must be noted that, particularly for Don Burnstick, the jokes take advantage of negative stereotypes of Aboriginal people and thus could be termed racist. As such, many may not find his brand of humour particularly amusing. More gently funny and very poignant are the routines of Jackie Bear and Sharon Shorty, who dress as two older Aboriginal ladies. They come on stage, sit down, and talk together of their interests and interact with the audience. They are wonderful. Also included is Thomas King and others participating in the radio show *The Dead Dog Café*. Finally, Taylor spends time with actor Herbie Barnes as he, Herbie, talks about and participates in his work with the film company AlterNative. The film is interesting, and an essential inclusion within a project on Aboriginal humour. As use of humour is one way Aboriginal people have coped with historical mistreatment, that aspect—that is, coping strategies in the face of adversity—can also be addressed. The entire film can be viewed on the website of the National Film Board at https://www.nfb.ca/film/redskins_tricksters_puppy_stew  (SY, Adult)

**Thakur, Shanti (Director), Zannis, Mark (Producer), & Tougas, Kirk (Cinematography). (1997). *Circles* [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (58 running minutes)**

Although an older film, this documentary still serves as an introduction to circle sentencing, an alternative approach to Aboriginal justice that is being used in several places across Canada. According to the film’s narrator, “Circle sentencing is a form of community justice which focusses on healing the offender, the victim, and the community.” Circle justice involves the community in the process. The film focusses on the work of Judge Barry Stuart who was instrumental in creating Canada’s first sentencing circle in the Yukon in 1981. As well as his film interview, there are extensive interviews with men involved in the sentencing circles, as offenders then with some serving later as facilitators, as well as with others working with sentencing circles, primarily Rose Couch and Rose Wilson. Brothers Harold and Phil Gatensby
and Mark Wedge also take crucial interviewee roles in the documentary. At the time of the film, the primary interviewees were involved in helping to set up sentencing circles in other parts of the country. The viewing of this documentary might be used as an initiating activity for a research project on sentencing circles, including the progress of that form of justice across the country since the making of this film. (upper MY, SY, Adult)

Thomas, Dan (Narrator). (2005). *Elders Treaty video series: Elder Victor Courchene, Sagkeeng First Nation; Elder Betsy “Granny” Anderson, Sayisi Dene; Elder Elijah Mayham, Split Lake First Nation; Elder Gideon McKay, Cross Lake First Nation* [Four program documentary]. CA: Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, with production services provided by Strongfront. (approx. 120 running minutes)

Thomas, Dan (Narrator). (2010). *Treaty 4 [Documentary].* CA: Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, with production services provided by Strongfront. (27 running minutes)

The first four-program series focusses on Elder interviews that provide understandings of the treaties that were signed by each of their First Nation communities, with Treaty #1 pertaining to Sagkeeng First Nation, and with Treaty #5 (including its adhesions) pertaining to the other three First Nations. Introduced with a backdrop of inter-titles as well as a summary of the treaty process by narrator Dan Thomas, each of the films includes maps and a collection of archival photographs and some footage from each of the communities where the interviewed Elder lives. As well, narrator Dan Thomas concludes each program with a summary of the Elder’s contribution, and some additional details of the Treaty process that pertained to that particular community. In each instance the Elder is asked a variety of questions to which they elaborate their response. In that way, each Elder contributes their understanding of the treaty that was signed by their community. In each episode, the interviewer and the Elder speak in their own language, with subtitled translations provided. The interviewer for Elder Victor Courchene is Olga McIvor; the interviewer for Elder Betsy “Granny” Anderson is Sarah Yassie; the interviewer for Elder Elijah Mayham is Martha Spence; and the interviewer for Elder Gideon McKay is Nick Halcrow.

While there are some small difference in the questions over the four interviews, overall they follow the same pattern, and will be included here as a guide for schools that wish to undertake similar student projects with their community Elders:

1) What is your name and how old are you?
2) During the treaty process, did anyone in your community speak English?
3) During the treaty process, did the Treaty Commissioner speak your language?
4) Was there a translator or interpreter for the Treaty process with your people?
5) Did your parents, grandparents, or the Elders talk about the Treaty?
6) Did your people understand the Treaty?
7) How did they deal with resources such as the land?
8) Why did the people from your community sign the Treaty?
9) How did the original Treaty change? (This question addresses the issue of ‘outside promises’ that were later integrated into Treaty #1)
10) What are your recollections of Treaty Day events?
11) What is your understanding of the Treaty?
12) Do you feel it mean to you to be a Treaty Indian?
13) Do you think your ancestors should have signed the Treaty?
14) Do you think the Government has kept their Treaty promises to the people of your community?
15) Do you think the Government is honest and honourable in addressing the treaty process?
16) If you were to teach young people about the Treaty, what would you teach them?

These programs are most suitable for middle years’ students and older (MY, SY, Adult).

The second 2010 program outlines the specific processes and territory that pertain to Treaty #4, which originally included 13 separate Cree and Saulteaux First Nations, with adhesions signed by an additional 23 First Nations, all from areas of what are now Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Following a similar format to the 2005 interview programs with the four Elders, this production also includes contributions to the above-listed questions from Elders, in this instance Elder James Cote from Waywayseecappo First Nation, Elder Francis Nepinak from Pine Creek First Nation, and Elder Stanley Opecappo from Sapotawayak Cree Nation. In this program, Olga McIvor serves as the Ojibway interviewer, Sandy Robinson serves as the Cree interviewer, and Garry Abigosis serves as the translator. (MY, SY, Adult)


This film, created (it seems, as there are few credits listed) by Nuu-chah-nulth artist Ivan Thomas (see http://www.ivanthomas.ca/Biography.html), shows many wonderful examples of Native art, particularly focusing on Pacific West Coast art. The film includes photographs of the artistic creations to a musical background, but no explanatory narration. Works include many carvings of totem poles, masks, and other sculptures, but also dream catchers, jewellery, paintings (again mostly in the Pacific West Coast tradition), and some Inuit sculptures. The viewer develops an appreciation particularly for the Native art of one of Canada’s regions. For Hills Native Art, see http://www.hills.ca/ Students may be inspired to research and create projects about the Native art in their area of the country. (EY, MY, SY, Adult)


This excellent film chronicles the work of teacher Joe Clouthier in the inner city of Edmonton, and focuses on the stories of Marilyn Bighteyes and Lance Marty. Both youth, and most of the others who came to work with Joe in the drama and alternative education project, had experienced lives of poverty and abuse that had driven them onto the streets and into lives of prostitution, drug using and/or dealing, pimping, and stealing. The story traces the lives of Marilyn and Lance, and Joe’s work in the inner city for several years in the early 1990s. There
were many challenges, both with the funding for the school, first developed as a private school, and with the youth themselves as they struggled to change their lives in a good way. As well, during the time when the school was struggling with its many challenges, and when Joe had worked so hard for so long, even he had to take time to recover and regroup. But Joe returned, and the school came to be embraced and supported as a public school. Marty graduated, Marilyn became a mature parent, and Joe received his Ph.D. The school continues to this day as Inner City High and can be contacted through their website. This is an exceptional film that will inspire all those working in the field of education as well as struggling youth themselves. We come to realize the devastating effects of poverty, and of systemic or structural discrimination, and what we need to do to assist youth coming from impoverished backgrounds, including how to make changes in the system, and how to persevere in such challenging work. (MY, SY, Adult)

Thornton, Warwick (Director), & Shelper, Kath (Producer). (2009). *Samson and Delilah* [Motion picture]. AU: Madman Entertainment (Distributor). (97 running minutes)

This award-winning movie follows Samson (Rowan McNamara) and Delilah (Marissa Gibson), two 14 year olds who live near Alice Springs in Australia. Their lives are repetitive, with Samson listening to his brother and his band playing the same reggae music every day outside his window. He has taken to gas sniffing. Delilah, on the other hand, cares for her grandmother every day, making sure that she takes her medication and wheeling her to the Health Centre. Her grandmother is an artist, and with Delilah’s help, she completes paintings that are sold to a white man for market for $200 each. We later see these paintings on sale for $200,000 each in an art store. Samson finally sickens of the music, and he breaks his brother’s guitar and trashes the band’s set-up. In retaliation, his brother beats him. Delilah’s beloved grandmother dies, and Delilah cuts her hair in mourning. However, the village women beat her, telling her she has neglected her grandmother. The two teenagers steal the only car in the village and run away to Alice Springs. They live under a bridge with Gonzo (Scott Thornton). Samson continues to sniff gas, and he is unaware when Delilah is taken by a group of white boys in a car and is beaten and raped. She returns and begins to sniff as well, and she is later hit by a car when crossing the street while high. Samson eventually realizes she has been hit, thinks she is dead, cuts his hair, and sinks further as even Gonzo leaves him for rehab. Delilah returns however, and finally gets in touch with Samson’s brother who comes for them. They cannot live in their village as the people are still angry that they stole the car. Samson’s brother takes them to a hut in the hills where Delilah eventually nurses Samson back to some semblance of his former self. It is suspected, however, that Samson has suffered brain damage from his sniffing. The movie moves slowly as do Samson and Delilah’s lives, and it involves very little dialogue. However, the film is powerful in its depiction of the love between the teenagers, the deeply entrenched racism (although Gonzo is white, also homeless, and is their only friend in the city), and the hopelessness of the teenagers’ situation both inside and outside of their own village. This film may be combined with *The Exiles* (see review included in this document) for study. (SY, Adult)
_Powwow trail_ [Eleven program television documentary series & teacher’s resource].
CA: I.C.E. Productions/Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN). (47 running minutes per episode)

The _Powwow Trail_ television series includes the following titles: Episode 1: The Gift of the Drum; Episode 2: The Songs; Episode 3: The Dances; Episode 4: The Grand Entry; Episode 5: Grass Dance & Men’s Traditional; Episode 6: The Fancy Dance; Episode 7: Powwow Rock [music]; Episode 8: Women; Episode 9: The Grand Exhibition; Episode 10: The White Man’s Indian; and Episode 11: Powwow Fever.

This tenth episode of the _Pow wow Trail_ series, _White Man’s Indian_, explores the images that white people have created of First Peoples, which have largely been communicated through films and movies. Along with archival footage of early movies, as well as later John Wayne movies for example, Aboriginal people were portrayed either as the ‘noble savages’ or as aggressive, bloodthirsty savages. Invariably, the depiction was of horse-riding, buffalo-hunting, tipi-dwelling peoples. Buffalo Bill Cody’s Wild West show, which was a huge success all over the world, served to reinforce those images given that Cody preferred hiring plains people, particularly the Sioux. That show has been rejuvenated and has played in Europe even in more recent years. In some countries, for example Germany, many people idolize the First Peoples, putting them and their cultures on pedestals. There are many First Nations interviewees in the film, all of whom address the manner in which First Peoples have been ‘othered’ through their presentation in films by people not from their culture. In current times, filmmakers like Chris Eyre are telling the stories of Native peoples from the inside out. While Eyre is not against non-Aboriginal people making movies about Aboriginal people (e.g., Dances with Wolves, Last of the Mohicans, Windtalkers), he says that it has to be remembered that those movies do not communicate the stories as told by First Peoples themselves. Eyre notes that “We’re all here together, and part of being together is sharing each other’s stories, and understanding one another better, and that’s where I come in.” Other interviewees include Tina Keeper, Leroy Littlebear, Winona Stevenson, and Eric Schweig. The film is excellent, but it also can be critiqued for the stereotypical manner in which some interviewees present all white people. We can honour all diversities of people in positive ways, even while recognizing that as individuals and society, there is still much that we can all do to help others. This film might be reviewed in collaboration with the film _Reel Injun_ (see review included in this document). (MY, SY, Adult)

Towstego (Director, Producer, & Edit supervisor), Gresham, Gwendolyn (Director, Writer, Offline editor, Production assistant, & Coordinator), Cuthand, Doug (Cultural consultant), Pelletier, Terrence (Cultural consultant), & Menard, Andrea (Host). (2008). _Sacred children_ [Documentary]. CA: Saskatchewan Prevention Institute with Thomega Entertainment Inc. (22 running minutes)


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This excellent short production, along with its accompanying more extensive print document, is a parent education program. The print document is a resource for facilitators; as such, it begins with sections on a) The Facilitator’s Role; b) Starting a Program; c) How to Conduct a Session; and d) Tools and Activities. Following that initial section, the print document addresses the five aspects that are also addressed in the supportive film: 1) Self-esteem; 2) Communication; 3) Nutrition; 4) Discipline; and 5) Bullying. Throughout the film, the excellent host Andrea Menard is joined by other contributors. In each section, each term is initially defined and explained with an inter-title. Self-esteem is “faith in ourselves, a belief that we are capable, lovable human beings who can succeed.” Andrea suggests helpful parenting practices. She is joined by two residential school survivors who talk about the particular importance of building self-esteem after that experience, and not only with just those who attended but also with their families. Communication “includes listening, as well as speaking, understanding, and respect.” Elders talk of the importance of communicating with attention to the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects of the whole child. The importance of proper nutrition for the growth of a healthy child is stressed. Contributors talk about claiming inherent Aboriginal food sovereignty by eating nutritious local foods rather than processed foods and/or fast foods high in sugar and fat content. An example of a gardening project is provided. Challenges with ready access to the more healthy goods, particularly by many living in inner city areas and the north, are not addressed. With reference to discipline, the program stresses its “aim to protect, socialize, and guide children toward self-control, independence, and respect for oneself and others while keeping the child’s dignity intact.” Interviewees talk about the importance for parents to talk with their children, to spend time with them, suggesting that such an approach to parenting will allow for gentle guidance rather than intrusive discipline. Bullying is defined as “a form of verbal, physical, or psychological abuse that threatens a child’s well-being and/or their safety.” Here the producers are talking of the bullying behaviours of parents toward their children, what one elder calls the “misuse of power and control.” Parents are provided with helpful advice on how to accept and embrace their children.

This excellent production, while created in Saskatchewan, also included interviewees in Arviat, Nuvavut; Calgary, Alberta; and Halifax, Nova Scotia, all filmed on location; as well as the Saskatchewan filming locations of Batoche, Whitecap Dakota First Nation, Wanuskewin Heritage Park, and Saskatoon. Again, while the film is a great production, the accompanying book provides much additional information with reference to facilitator support and activities that can be used in a workshop. As such, the two resources should be used as companions. (SY, Adult)

Trebbi, Christina (Director & Author). (2009). America before Columbus [Documentary]. US: National Geographic. (90 running minutes)

This film depicts not only the Americas before Columbus but also the effects of what became known as the Columbian exchange, particularly on the Americas. There is some recognition of the importance of the foods introduced to Europe from the Americas, including corn, potatoes, tomatoes, and squash, as well as many fruits. However, the major change
happened in the other direction. With the introduction of different *crops* to the Americas (particularly commercialized production; e.g., sugar cane, cotton); *animals* (particularly the five big domestic animals: horse, cow, sheep, goat, and pig); and *diseases* (particularly small pox, measles, and influenza), the landscape, the livelihood, and the very existence of the indigenous peoples of America was forever changed. Upwards to 90% of all the Aboriginal peoples were killed by the introduced diseases alone, with many of those people never having seen a European. Along with that situation, as many as ten million African people were captured and sent to the Americas to work as slaves. This film should be viewed by all students as part of their study into the cultures and ways of life of Aboriginal peoples of the Americas and the devastating effects of European encroachment. The film should also be critiqued, as there is a distinct element of the American theme of ‘manifest destiny’ integrated within the film, despite the recognition of the devastating effects of European biological, economic, and cultural imperialism on the Americas. The computer work, particularly the simulations of topographical changes, is superb. (MY, SY, Adult)


This film visits the Native American community of Pine Ridge, in particular focussing on its challenges but also including extensive interviewing with Jay Red Hawk who works to nourish the traditional culture of the Lakota. Of all the reservations in the United States, Pine Ridge consistently struggles with the deepest poverty, which is accompanied by high unemployment, lack of adequate health care, substance abuse, and domestic violence. There are many interviewees in the film who provide considered voices about the struggles of the community, which is excellent. The contributions by Russell Means, however, communicate hatred and viciousness. Interestingly, Russell Means contradicts his own aggressive approach when he talks, still in a confrontational manner, about the importance in his culture of balance and relationships, and when he says that “The worst you can do is to kill because it’s the easiest thing to do.” He also says that “Every American is a racist” and “I can’t make Americans understand because they have no culture.” Those comments can be discussed, but by a more mature audience that knows not to take on that hatred as their own, and that includes conversations about the contributions of others within the film whose approach is more considered regarding how the challenges in their community might be alleviated. With reference to the challenges of systemic racism, how does one engage as a positive change agent? (SY, Adult)

**Unwin, Paul** (Co-director), **Meeches, Lisa** (Co-director), & **Corbet, Blake** (Writer). (2007). *Elijah* [Motion picture]. CA: Anagram Pictures/Eagle Vision; CTV & Mongrel Media (Distributors). (88 running minutes)


The excellent movie *Elijah* is a spirited and funny look at a serious event in Canadian history, and at a very important man who highlighted the importance of Aboriginal issues and consultation with the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. While Elijah Harper does do a cameo appearance at the end of the movie, the lead role (as adult Elijah) is exceptionally played by Billy Merasty, with Tina Louise Bomberly as (adult) Elizabeth Harper, Glen Gould as Phil Fontaine, Lorne Cardinal as Chief Archie, and Maury Chaykin as a funny Howard Pawley. In 1990 all eyes were on Manitoba (and on Newfoundland) as the Meech Lake Accord had to be brought to a vote and then ratified in each provincial legislature. The Meech Lake Accord (named after the location of the meetings) had been developed as an amendment to the constitution that would gain Quebec’s acceptance of the 1982 Constitution Act. Canadian’s Aboriginal population had not been consulted on the Accord, and, in fact, were not recognized as one of Canada’s founding peoples, with only the English and the French being given that recognition. A shy man, Elijah Harper, the MLA for Rupertsland and the first treaty First Nations MLA in Manitoba, received support and encouragement from many in the Aboriginal community, and some non-Aboriginal people as well. When the matter came to the legislature—that is, if the House would allow a vote on the Meech Lake Accord—NDP Elijah Harper, holding an eagle feather, responded “No” to the Conservative government’s motion.

Harper resigned from the Manitoba Legislature in 1992, and subsequently ran successfully for the federal Liberals in 1993, after having been turned down as a federal candidate by the NDP. He served one term as a Member of Parliament, but continued thereafter to work to improve the lives of Aboriginal people. Both included books provide a biography of Elijah Harper. Szulhan’s book includes some background information on how government works, notes on some other important Canadian Aboriginal leaders, and some suggestions on how to write a standard biography. Both books provide background information to the Meech Lake Accord, including reasons why Aboriginal people stood against it. Elijah Harper passed away on May 17, 2013, from complications of diabetes. (Movie: SY, Adult; Books: MY, SY)

Van Denzen, Steve (Director), Taylor, Drew Hayden (Writer), Roy, John (Co-producer), Flahive, Gerry (Co-producer), & Deleary, Dave (Co-producer). (1999). *The strange case of Bunny Weequod* [Documentary]. CA: Cool Native Productions/National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (24 running minutes)

This short film combines several teaching aspects. Filmed in the Anishinabe language (Ojibway), with English subtitles, it can be used for language classes for youth, as well as for becoming acquainted with some traditional stories of the Anishinabe. Given that it focusses on environmental degradation as a result of human intervention, a primary use can be within science classes. Bunny Weequod (a young Lorne Cardinal) is disturbed with the lowering water level in the lake and with the increasing number of dead fish being washed ashore. His neighbour Elder Esther (Bernelda Wheeler), also disturbed, watches Bunny from her window. When Bunny’s wife Janine (Kateri Walker) goes to work, Bunny goes out fishing, but the weeds catch in the
propeller of his boat motor and his frustrations mount. On the way back to shore he is mysteriously thrown out of his boat. Everyone, including friend Fred (Vince Manitowabi), look for him, but they cannot find him. Bunny crawls ashore the next day however, but he has changed. He now has a beard and his behaviours are strange. He also is increasingly concerned about the situation with the lake, and he becomes angry with Fred when he sees him spilling oil into the water. Esther helps Bunny and Janine to understand that the little people have come with a message, that their people must look after the lake and give tobacco for the good things that nature provides, while also practicing sustainable approaches to the treatment of the waters and land. Although an older film now, this production is still valuable for use in classrooms. (MY, SY, Adult)

Wacks, Jonathan (Director), Heaney, Janet (Co-screenplay), & Stawarz, Jean (Co-screenplay). (1989). *Powwow highway* [Motion picture]. US: Handmade Films/Anchor Bay (Distributor). (87 running minutes)


The movie is based on the book of the same name, with a few changes. Both are adult rated, particularly the novel, as drug use (both movie and novel) and sex scenes (novel) are rampant. In the Cheyenne community of Lame Deer, Montana, Philbert Bono (Gary Farmer) has just acquired Protector, an old beat-up car (acquired from a friend in the novel, but from an auto-wrecker in the movie). Buddy Red Bow (A. Martinez; Buddy Red Bird in the novel) has just received a call from his long-lost sister Bonnie (Joannelle Nadine Romero) that she is in jail in Sante Fe, New Mexico, and she needs his help. In the movie, drugs have been planted in her car; in the book, that is also the case but in the novel she is an established drug dealer with connections to the Mafia, as well as having many sexual liaisons. Her two children Jane (Chrissie McDonald) and Sky (Sky Seals, who is David Seal’s son) also call Bonnie’s friend Rabbit (Amanda Wyss) for help. Most of the movie is about the road trip, with Philbert following traditional ways, much to the annoyance of Buddy. When Buddy falls asleep, Philbert takes an initial detour to South Dakota, to Pine Ridge Reservation, and from there a family of Buddy’s friends from the American Indian Movement (AIM) join them on their trip. Some of the movie’s scenes from that road trip are hilarious, but even more so, the novel details much of the trip with great flair. Philbert and Buddy leave their friends at a relative’s home along the way. When Philbert and Buddy arrive in Sante Fe, there is a challenge to get Bonnie freed from jail. However, Philbert decides to break her out by attaching a rope to the ancient jail’s outside bars and pulling a hole in the wall. They all get away in Protector, but with the police in hot pursuit. Protector’s brakes fail on a hill and everyone bails out except Philbert, or so it seems. The car crashes on the bottom of the ravine, and bursts into flames. Buddy, Bonnie, Jane, Sky, and Rabbit, are all sitting on the side of the bank crying when Philbert scrambles over the hill, declaring, “My pony threw me. And now it’s dead.” Everyone hugs and walks down the road, to be picked up by Chief Joseph (Sam Vlahos) from Lame Deer, who has travelled down to assist
the young people. Wes Studi (Buff) and Graham Greene (Viet Nam vet) play small, but excellent roles in the film. Gary Farmer as Philbert is priceless! (Adult)

While the novel is an adult read, it is also highly entertaining while being down-to-earth, poignant, and amusingly detailed in description. The events, and the description, are also intensely political, and the novel could be studied in that context. The author David Seals was a member of the American Indian Movement (AIM), and both the novel and movie scenes at Pine Ridge harken back to the 1973 siege at Wounded Knee. The Chief, Bull Miller (Adam Taylor, who is meant to portray Dick Wilson), has had his GOONs (Guardians of the Oglala Nation) destroy the business of Buddy’s AIM friend Wolf Tooth (Wayne Waterman) and his wife Imogene (Margot Kane), which drives them to make the decision to finally leave the community. (Adult)

The second of Seals’ books, *Sweet Medicine*, is a sequel to *Powwow Highway*. Again, it is detailed in description (sometimes too much so, as the reader gets mired at times), hilarious, and political. This is a return ‘road trip’ after the prison escape, but by horse and visiting many sites along the way of the massacre of Aboriginal peoples, particularly the Cheyenne in this case. Philbert, who becomes Chief Whirlwind, and Bonnie Red Bird (who becomes known simply as Red Bird) are assisted by the southern tribes in their trek. Both Chief Whirlwind (Philbert) and the Storyteller (the narrator of this book) are contrarians. In this more modern story, the Indians are still stopped short of reaching their goal of Bear Butte by thousands of U.S. military. The ‘storyteller’ references the earlier book and the movie, stating that neither one were any good. While fleeing from the law, Philbert and many of the others go to a movie theatre. They have a chance to see *Powwow Highway*, but they decide to go see *The Son of King Kong* instead. While a sequel movie would seem like a good idea, the original actors are now too old and different actors would not be the same. Anyone but Gary Farmer as Philbert would just not seem to work. (Adult)

Walker, John (Director, Writer, & Co-producer), Nemtin, Andrea (Co-producer), & Martin, Kent (Co-producer). (2008). *Passage* [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (113 running minutes)


This documentary, with extensive re-enactment, traces the fatal voyage of Sir John Franklin for the Northwest Passage, and the work of Dr. John Rae, whose discovery of what happened to the men of that voyage raised so much controversy. Based on the book *Fatal Passage*, the film tells the story of Franklin’s expedition, including his encouragement by his ambitious wife, Lady Franklin (Geraldine Alexander). When the ships did not return, other expeditions were sent to find them, but all failed. Dr. John Rae (Rick Roberts) was a doctor who practiced at Moose Factory in the James Bay region. Originally from the Orkney area, he had lived in the James Bay area for many years, and was well known for his stamina, and for his respect for the Inuit and their way of life. With their help, rather than rejecting them in haughty disdain as did many other whites, he had learned to live off the land. He had also learned to
survey, and he was sent north on several occasions for that purpose. When sent north to see if he could discover what had happened to the Franklin expedition, he eventually came upon many Inuit who told him stories of the ship being caught in the ice, of the men refusing help, and afterwards of several dying on the ship and the remaining men, disoriented and mumbling, leaving the ship and dying stretched across quite a large area of land. As well, the Inuit reported that the men in the final stages of desperation had turned to cannibalism. When Dr. Rae’s report reached England, a firestorm erupted and Rae was discredited. Franklin, even though he had died in a location unknown to the English, was credited with finding the Northwest Passage. It was claimed, given that Dr. Rae did not continue to the actual sites of the final ruins of the ship or the deaths, that it was actually the Inuit who had killed and eaten the crew, even though such action was firmly against the Inuit culture and there would have been no need for them to do so anyway, as they could and did live off the land.

The film is very well done, with two lines or direction, the actual re-enactment with the story of the Franklin expedition and Dr. Rae’s participation, and the story behind the making of the film, the latter which includes participation of all the film’s crew, including the actors and a descendent of Charles Dickens (who had fuelled the firestorm even though he knew nothing of the actual situation), as well as Inuit Elder Togak Curley. Thus the film includes not only a documentary about the Franklin expedition, but a documentary about the making of that documentary. The latter direction gives the viewer a unique insight into how this film was made, which can be instructive for everyone and particularly for aspiring filmmakers. The book is an engrossing and accessible read, with the author communicating an unabashed admiration for Dr. John Rae. A serious student of Canadian history would want this book in their library. (upper MY, SY, Adult)


This collection of works addresses the contributions of the Navajo code talkers of World War II. The United States entered WWII on December 8, 1941, after Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor the previous day. Their forces were initially engaged primarily against Japan in the south Pacific. During the war effort, it was found that the messages among the different points were constantly being intercepted and interpreted by the Japanese. Apparently, it was Phillip Johnston, a civilian, who suggested using the Navajo language in code. He had been raised in a Navajo community where his father had been a missionary. The original 29 Navajo Marine recruits expanded to between 350 and 400 before the war was over. The code talkers had to keep their work a secret until the operation was declassified in 1968. After that time, the code talkers finally received recognition from the United States government.

The documentary from The History Channel is the best film of the two listed, as it focusses on factual information, and includes interviews with several of the original code talkers (e.g., Sam Billison, John Brown, Jr., Keith Little, Tom Begay, Wilfred Belley), as well as with Zonnie Gorman, a code talker historian and the daughter of code talker Carl Gorman. Some history of the Navajo is provided, including the way they had been treated by the Unites States government (e.g., enforced relocation, called the Navajo Long Walk; residential schools where Navajo language and culture was forbidden), how they signed up for the war effort nonetheless, and details about the nature of their language and why it could be used for a code (e.g., it was complex, making it extremely difficult to learn for someone not raised with the language). The film is essential watching for a study of the code talkers. (MY, SY, Adult)

The movie *Windtalkers* does provide some background on the code talkers and their work, and on the Navajo culture, with movie characters Private Ben Yahzee (Adam Beach), and Private Charlie Whitehorse (Roger Willie), but it primarily focusses on the character of Sergeant Joe Enders (Nicholas Cage). Enders is suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), as well as loss of hearing, after all of his former troops were killed by the Japanese. Faking a greater degree of hearing, he is sent back to the field, and is reassigned to guard Yahzee. Sargeant Anderson (Christian Slater) is assigned to guard Yahzee’s friend Charlie Whitehorse. It is suggested that the two sergeants are to kill the code talkers rather than let them be captured by the Japanese. The movie is full of graphic, violent war scenes, making this an adult film. When Anderson is killed and Whitehorse is captured and being taken away, Enders throws a grenade that kills both Whitehorse and his captors. Yahzee is furious at Enders, but then responds by attacking the Japanese. Enders goes to save him, both are shot, and before Enders dies, he tells Yahzee that his orders were to protect the code, even more than the code talker. Yahzee forgives him, and pays respect to him when he returns to his home. There are some factual events, including the incident where the Navajo code talkers saved their unit from ‘friendly’ fire from their own American forces. Overall, however, the film is too violent, and too focused on the
Enders (Nicholas Cage) role (and can therefore be called a ‘white man’s Indian movie’) to warrant its use in most classroom settings. (Adult)

With reference to the texts, Aaseng’s (114 pages), Gilbert’s (64 pages), and Santella’s (48 pages) books are all factual stories about the code talkers. While all are accessible to middle and senior years’ readers, Santella’s attractive book is part of the We the People series and is geared for easy reading with many short sections, lots of photographs, a map of contemporary Navajo land, and suggestions for further reading. Gilbert’s excellent book, also with photographs, is geared for older readers, with its smaller print and greater detail. Aaseng’s book (also with photographs), although factual, is set up more like a novel with distinct chapters. Chester Nez’s engaging 310 page book (MY, SY, Adult), well read in its audio edition, is also a crucial addition to this theme. As well as Nez’ autobiography, the book includes many details of the American war effort in the south Pacific, numerous photographs, and some maps. The book includes an appendix with the Navajo code talkers’ dictionary. Mr. Nez has just recently passed; see http://www.cnn.com/2014/06/06/living/code-talker-chester-nez-native-american-language/ Bruchac’s excellent adolescent (MY, SY) novel is an accessible historical look at the code talkers. The narrator is Kii Yázhí, who recounts his life as a youngster, including at residential school, his recruitment and training as a code talker, and his war experiences.


The Wapikoni Mobile is a travelling production unit that goes to various communities in Quebec and provides opportunities for young people to create their own short films. The communities for this production include the following First Nations tribal groups: Algonquin, Atakamekw, Cris, Huron-Wendat, and Innu. The film-making experience expands the learning of the youth and introduces their communities to others, those who will view the films. In this DVD, there are fifteen films under three categories: Culture and Traditions, Family and Society, and Language and Identity.

Under Culture and Traditions, there are five films:

1) *Masko nimiwin (The Bear Dance)* comes from Manawan (Atikamekw), and is directed by Marie-Christine Petiquay. It documents the community powwow, with Gilles Moar (Marie-Christine’s father) passing on the culture of the bear dance. (6 min., 22 sec.)

2) *Netshishkatutau (The Encounter)* comes from Lac John/Matimekush (Innu), and is directed by Marie-Éve Aster, with the voice of François Pinashue Aster. It is a shadow box animation that relates an encounter between the Sept-Îles and Caniaspiscau people during a time of starvation. (4 min., 3 sec.)

3) *Ka unian uass (The Lost Child)* comes from Uashat-Maliotenam (Innu), and is directed by Tshiuetin Volland. The shadow box animated story is about a boy, neglected by his parents, who has been taken by the Blue Ogre who cares for him. His friend misses him, finally finds him, and brings him back. (6 min., 23 sec.)
4) *Anikininik (The Trappers)* comes from Lac Simon (Algonquin), and is directed by Lennon Poucachiche. The film follows Lennon and his father as they hunt and trap beaver, and as they prepare the furs once they get home. The film includes great shots of the land and waterways in the area. (6 min., 34 sec.)

5) *Still Alive* comes from Kitchiakik (Algonquin), and is directed by Cherilyn Papatie (in collaboration with Teicky Penosway, Roderick Papatie, and Victor Penosway). The young people plant trees and, in so doing, they also plant hope for their future. They converse with the film’s director while planting. (5 min., 42 sec.)

Under Family and Society, there are six films:

1) *The Water Lover* comes from Kitcisakik (Algonquin), and is directed by Délia Gunn, Sonia Brazeau, Bradley Brazeau, Gracy Brazeau, and Frank Penosway. This exceptional film is a storied and very moving tribute in poetry and song to Roland Papatie (1984-2008), a brother and friend of the young people, who drowned below the Dezois Dam at Abitibi. (4 min., 34 sec.)

2) *Alone in the Abyss* comes from Manawan (Atikamekw), and is directed by Claudie Ottawa. The powerful film is about drugs, how they slide into your life, first as an experiment, and then how they become your whole life as you fall all alone into the abyss and rest of the world continues on without you. (5 min., 1 sec.)

3) *Something Right* comes from Winniway (Algonquin), and is directed by Tracy McLaren. It tells the story of the young adult Daniel, related in his own words. Too much into drugs, he lost his rights to see his children, but he gives them the gift and legacy of his painting so that they will know him in a good way. (4 min., 52 sec.)

4) *Kir otci ncotco (For you Mom)* comes from Wendake (Huron-Wendat), and is directed by Mariana Niquay-Ottawa. In this incredibly moving film, written as a letter and spoken by Mariana, she tries to reconnect with her mother after a difficult time of separation. (5 min., 10 sec.)

5) *Kamitshikaut* comes from Uashat-Malotanem (Innu), and is directed by Shaushiss Fontaine (male). A great singer, Shaushiss communicates in song and film about the devastating effects of taking drugs, saying that, “Drugs destroy us.” (4 min., 23 sec.)

6) *Two and Two* comes from Kitigan Zibi (Algonquin), and is directed by Abraham Cote. The amusing yet powerful film shows how each every act that requires paper means that, taken together, a tree will have to be sacrificed. With each act of paper use shown in the film, we hear a chain saw and see a tree being felled. Original music adds to the film’s impact. (3 min., 43 sec.)

Under Language and Identity, there are four films:

1) *Tshitashun (Number)* comes from Betsiamites (Innu), and is directed by James Picard. The film relates, very amusingly, why French, rather than Innu, is used for counting in their community, and why no there is rich! (3 min., 43 sec.)

2) *Between Two Worlds* comes from Kitcisakik (Algonquin), and is directed by Kevin Papatie. Kevin finds his identity between the communicating nature and city environments. The film is unique, and powerfully visual and musical (original music by
Justin St.-Pierre). With collaborators, Kevin also is responsible for the screenplay, the camera work, the picture editing, and the special effects. (3 min., 40 sec.)

3) From the Forests of Kitcisakik to the Forests of Xingù comes from Kitcisakik (Algonquin), and is directed by Evelyne Papatie. Having travelled to Brazil, visited the Mato Grosso forests, and been introduced to the Ikegengs and their culture, upon her return Evelyne connects more deeply with her own Anishnabe culture. The documentary follows her on this journey, including her own filming from her trip to Brazil. (6 min., 9 sec.)

4) Innu-Aimun (The Innu Language) comes from Uashat-Maliotenam (Innu), and is directed by Carl Grégoire and Spencer St. Onge. This excellent music video, featuring the young male group Uashtushkuau, communicates the importance of sustaining Aboriginal languages through the use of the group’s own original song. Interestingly, the video is shot on a railway passenger car. (4 min., 28 sec.)

Warriner, Gray (Producer, Director, Co-writer, Cinematography, & Editor), Helland, Mary (Exec. producer & Co-writer). (2009). In the land of the Assiniboine [Documentary]. US: Camera One, with Valley County Historical Society. (55 running minutes)

With interviews with Assiniboine (now often spelled Assiniboin) people, archival photos, re-enactment of important events, contemporary dance, and voice-overs of historical contributions by past Assiniboine leaders, this American film is an important contribution. The film follows the migration of the Assiniboine from the eastern woodlands and their split with their relatives, the Yankton Sioux. While some came north to Canada, some also migrated to the current state of Montana, where they have two reserves: Fort Peck and Fort Belknap. The Assiniboine received their name from the Anishinabe (Ojibway), the work meaning ‘stone boilers’ which referred to the practice of cooking food with heated stones dropped in water. Currently, Assiniboine often refer to themselves as Nakoda.

By the 1800s the Assiniboine had become a horse culture and hunters following the great herds of buffalo. From messages from Lewis and Clark’s Corps of Discovery, they found that their lands were part of the United States. Accompanying contact with the white culture were years of disease epidemics, particularly small pox, and the purposeful slaughter of the buffalo, as the Assiniboine were forced onto reserves with the starvation policies of the United States government. In 1929 the Assiniboine tribe pressed a case against the United States, outlined in the film, concerning the loss of their lands and the starvation policies. It is estimated that close to 60 million buffalo were killed in just four years. The film is detailed in its history; as such, it is very informative for research projects. Students might study the history of the Assiniboine who came to Canada, comparing it to the experiences of those people remaining in the United States. For example, see the entry in the Canadian Encyclopedia at http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/assiniboine/. A six-minute trailer of the film is available on You tube (see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLOxZCHY4J0) (upper MY, SY, Adult) An important companion for this film is The invisible nation: The story of the Algonquin, also reviewed in this document.
Weir, Ian. (2012). *Arctic Air* [Television series; Complete first season]. CA: Omni Film Productions & CBC. (450 running minutes)

The complete first season of *Arctic Air* is available on DVD, as well as on the CBC website (http://www.cbc.ca/arcticair/). The website also includes related games and other aspects. The series is set in Yellowknife, the capital of the Northwest Territories, and focuses on the work of bush pilots in the fictitious *Arctic Air* company. While the series does include Adam Beach as Bobby Martin, as well as other Aboriginal actors, the series themes are not always strictly Aboriginal. In fact, the Bobby Martin character is cast as being somewhat arrogant, impetuous, and foolhardy, and is particularly prone to making ill-informed decisions that put others in harm’s way, and from which he and others with him need constant rescue. The series was cancelled by CBC in March, 2014.

The story line has to do with Bobby Martin (Adam Beach) returning to Yellowknife for his niece’s wedding, and deciding to stay to work with Arctic Air. His father Silas and Mel Iverson (Kevin McNulty) had co-owned the company before Silas was lost in a plane crash, and Bobby still owns 25% of the company. Mel’s daughter Krista (Pascale Hutton) features heavily in the day-to-day operations of the company as do most of the employees, all of whom are ‘characters’. The individual personalities of Mel and the employees help to add substance to the various episodes. Mel is a lovable jerk; Dev (Stephen Lobo) is a naïve sweetheart; Blake (John Reardon) loves Krista, who really can’t decide if she wants him; Kirby (Adam DiMarco) faces moral dilemmas as he tries to keep his sister safe; Ronnie Dearman (Brian Markinson) is the outside developer who everyone loves to hate. The three discs include the following episodes: Disc one: Out of a Clear Blue Sky, All In, Hijacked, All the Vital Things; Disc two: Northern Lights, C-Tvak, Vancouver is Such a Screwed-up City, and The Professions; and Disc three: New North, Drop in for Lunch, and Special Features. The Special Features include Promos, and Behind-the-Scenes, as well as ‘webisodes’ with Dev (Stephen Lobo) that are hilarious. The frequent reference to, focus on, and scenes of sexual trysts (no nude scenes), bar activity, and physical violence make this series recommended for adults. It is amusing to watch, overall, but crises happen and are resolved with a frequency that seldom happens in real life. (Adult)

Welsh, Christine (Director & Writer). (1994). *Keepers of the fire* [Documentary]. CA: Omni Films & National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (54 running minutes)

This film addresses the importance of women in the Aboriginal culture. There are interviews with women from several tribal groups who have been on the front lines of some of Canada’s most well-known Aboriginal struggles for voice, sovereignty, and land. As well, there is extensive use of archival photographs and footage. Interviewees from the Mohawk communities who were active in the Oka crisis of 1990 include Denise Tolley, Selma Delisle, and Linda Cree. When talking about the meaning of the term ‘warrior,’ Linda notes that a warrior is one who bears the burden of peace. In British Columbia, women from the Haida Gwaii communities speak of their role at Mile Island, when they put themselves between the loggers.
and the trees those loggers intended to harvest. Ana Yovanovitch notes that they were successful in halting the logging. In Tobique, New Brunswick interviewees include Sandra Lovelace, Carolene Ennis, Bet-te Paul, and Shirley Bear. They talk about the lack of rights for Aboriginal women, that those marrying a non-Aboriginal man lost their status. As well, even on the reserve Aboriginal husbands could evict their wives from their own homes. Their lobbying work helped to bring the 1985 Bill C-31 into being, a bill that, while not addressing all outstanding issues, began to address the inequities faced by Aboriginal women in their own communities and in the broader society. The women also note that sometimes a battleground is not a place, but instead is a state of mind. Finally, in Prince Edward Island, Emily Louttit and Julie Penassie talk about their work to reclaim their lives, go back to school, secure good jobs, and raise their children in a positive environment. This film, although older now and more difficult to access, provides a focus on excellent role models for girls and young women of all cultures. (MY, SY, Adult)

Wesley-Esquimaux, Cynthia (Director of Journey to Oz), Fradkin, David (Director of Shielded minds), Berkel, David (Co-producer), & MacParland Ronan (Co-producer). (2009). Journey to Oz and Shielded minds [Documentary]. CA: Abalach Productions with Canadian Roots. (Journey to Oz, 36 running minutes; Shielded minds, 32 running minutes) The first film in this duo, Journey to Oz, introduces the Canadian Roots Exchange, which began in October of 2008. The purpose was to provide opportunities for First Nations and non-First Nations youth to learn from each other, while providing leadership development for all the participating youth. This film involves 12 young people who travelled to and learned from the northern Ontario Anishinaabe community of Mishkeegogamang First Nation. Most of the participants were young Canadian adults attending college or university, with one participant from Zimbabwe. The participants were included in the life of the community, and they interviewed many community members including the current and former chiefs, Connie Gray-McKay, and Ronald Roundhead, as well as being interviewed themselves about their experiences. Everyone was very positive about their involvement with the program. Teachers might enquire about current opportunities with the Canadian Roots Exchange Program. (MY, SY, Adult)

The second film, Shielded Minds, follows 20 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth in the Canadian Roots Exchange program as they set out to find out more about Canadian Aboriginal culture and history. Along the way, the participants visit many First Nations, including schools in the communities, and talk with school teachers, principals, and community leaders. They are accompanied by Canadian Roots Cultural Guides. All participants become much more knowledgeable about Canadian Aboriginal culture and history, and spearhead a critique of the Residential School exhibit at Ottawa’s Canadian Museum of Civilization. For more information about Canadian Roots exchanges see: http://www.canadianroots.ca/. (MY, SY, Adult)

Wolochatiuk, Tim (Director), & Sherman, Jason (Writer). (2012). We were children [Documentary]. CA: National Film Board of Canada (NFB). (93 running minutes)
This film focuses on the residential school experience of two survivors, Lyna Hart and Glen Anaquod. As well as interviews with both people as older adults, the film uses re-enactment scenes. This film is difficult to watch, as both Lyna and Glen were emotionally, physically, and sexually abused at residential school. Both tried to draw attention to their treatment, telling family members, but both were told that they were not telling the truth, that such things would not happen. For Lyna, she was just a very small child when she went to the school. Her hair was covered in insecticide for 24 hours, and then she was showered a second time and her hair cut. She became known as number 99. For Glen—number 119—he was an orphan being raised by his grandfather and a little older when he went to residential school. At first, he refused to speak English, but eventually after repeated beatings, he began to use the language. When he stated that he wanted to go home and visit his grandfather, he was instead locked away in a dark basement for several days. There he could hear another student, a girl, being raped repeatedly by two of the priests. He was finally discovered and rescued by a nun, who threatened the priest to leave the children alone. Soon she was transferred out of their school. The priest who had locked him in the room was also later transferred. It was obvious that it was known what that priest was doing, because another man told Glen that the priest would never hurt him again, that he was being transferred to another school. Lyna too had an experience with a kindly nun. When that nun discovered that Lyna was stealing food to feed the other hungry children at night, the nun gathered the children together and they all snuck downstairs for bread and peanut butter. For Lyna, relief from her abuser came only when he died. After recovering physically from his ordeal in the dark basement, Glen and another boy ran away from school and went to Glen’s Aunt’s place, but she turned them in. When Glen, his friend, and other boys who had run away not only resisted the beating by the priest, but also attacked him, they in turn were beaten so severely by several priests that they were in the infirmary for several days. Both Lyna and Glen stayed in the residential school until their teens. Glen, especially, had difficulty coping outside of the school, both with the newfound freedom and with the haunting memories. Like many others, he turned to alcohol and contemplated suicide. But he thought of how he had felt being an orphan and he changed his mind. Glen passed away on May 31, 2011, while Lyna works as a First Nations Learning Officer. The stories in this film are difficult to hear. The re-enactment is superbly done, giving the viewer a deeper understanding of the abuses of these schools. Counselling support should be available for viewers. If the film is to be used in high schools, both administrative and parental support should be sought. (SY, Adult)


This film is included because of its Aboriginal actors and a secondary theme of the movie around the mistreatment of Aboriginal people. Coming out in 1994, there was often still not an advanced treatment of Aboriginal issues, and the movie, although a financial success at the box office, was critiqued on a number of levels.
One Stab (Gordon Tootoosis) has accompanied Colonel Ludlow (Anthony Hopkins) to the western ranch to which he retreated after becoming disillusioned with the way in which the United States government was treating Aboriginal people, stealing their lands, depriving them of their food sources, and often slaughtering whole villages. Also Ludlow ranch hands are Decker (Paul Desmond), his wife Pat (Tantoo Cardinal), and their daughter, who is called Isabel Two (Karina Lombard as an adult Isabel). The first Isabel (Christina Pickles) is Ludlow’s wife, who soon deserts the family to go back east. There are three sons, the eldest Alfred (Aidan Quinn), the middle Tristan (Brad Pitt), and the youngest Samuel (Henry Thomas). Samuel brings his fiancé Suzanna (Julia Ormond) home, who immediately falls in love with Tristan. Soon the three brothers decide to enlist in the First World War, where Samuel is killed. The rest of the movie recounts the unfolding lives of the remaining family members, with a focus on the much loved prodigal son, the troubled Tristan. While his character is dominant within the movie, and all the others support his role, still the part played by Gordon Tootoosis and his overall narration within the movie is compelling. Despite the movie’s shortcomings, which are many, it is still somewhat engaging to watch if the viewer takes a critical bent. (SY, Adult)