

WHAT is a TREATY?

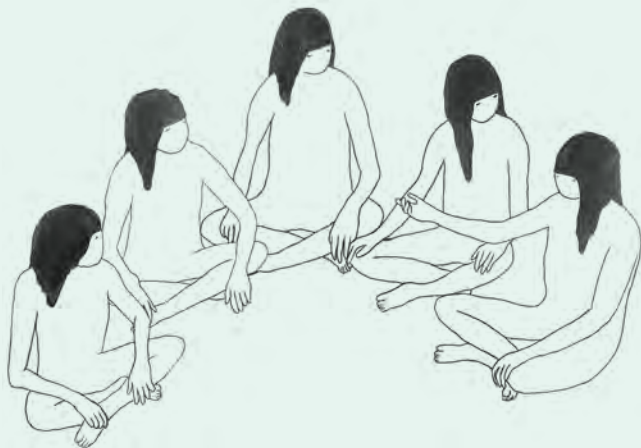


First Nations people had Treaties with each other long before European people came. These agreements were used to make peace, set out who used what areas for hunting and fishing, confirm trading relationships and more.

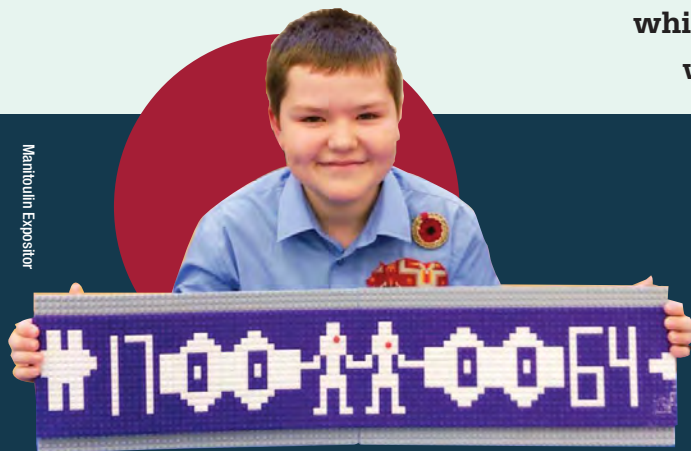
For First Nations people, land is a gift from the Creator. They did not own the land. The Creator gave them teachings on how to respect it and look after it. This would ensure that all Creation would benefit from it. Europeans did not understand this way of thinking. For them, land was not to be shared — it was to be divided up and each part owned by different people.



The British and French noted important information using words written on paper. First Nations recorded important events in their oral tradition through stories passed down to future generations by Elders and Knowledge Keepers.



A Treaty is much more than a piece of paper with words on it—that's why we talk about **making** Treaties, rather than just *signing* them. A Treaty includes all the spoken words the First Nations and government people used to make promises. These words were about the land, how it would be shared and for what purposes. The Treaty was then sealed through a pipe ceremony which invited the Creator to witness the promises.



Manitoulin Expositor

Alex Hebert, an Anishinaabe from Dokis Nation in Ontario, made this Lego™ version of the Treaty of Niagara wampum belt to show that Treaties are still important today.

