

PRE-EMPTION CERTIFICATES & TREATIES

MIDDLE GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES



11255 Okanagan Centre Rd. W.
Lake Country, BC V4V 2J7

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW:

1. Students will learn about the history of the Commonage in relation to Indigenous land claims, then engage in a discussion on whether the Canadian acted ethically when claiming/selling land and how we should address these issues today



BIG IDEA: Systems of government vary in their respect for human rights & freedoms; Increasingly complex societies required new systems of laws & government; Exploration, expansion, & colonization had varying consequences for different groups.

COMPETENCY:

Inquiry, evidence, historical perspectives, ethical judgement

CONTENT:

Economic policies & resource management, including effects on indigenous peoples; exploration, expansion, & colonization

WHAT WILL WE KNOW:

- History of the Commonage and land claims in the Okanagan and B.C.
- Exploration of ideas on how to address past wrongs

FURTHER INQUIRY:

Field Trip Suggestions

1. Sncewips Museum
2. Lake Country Museum and Archives



We respectfully acknowledge that the land on which the Lake Country Museum is situated, where this lesson was developed, is on the unceded territory of the Syilx (Okanagan) Peoples.

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Lake Country Heritage and Cultural Society

11255 Okanagan Center Road West

Lake Country, BC V4V 2J7

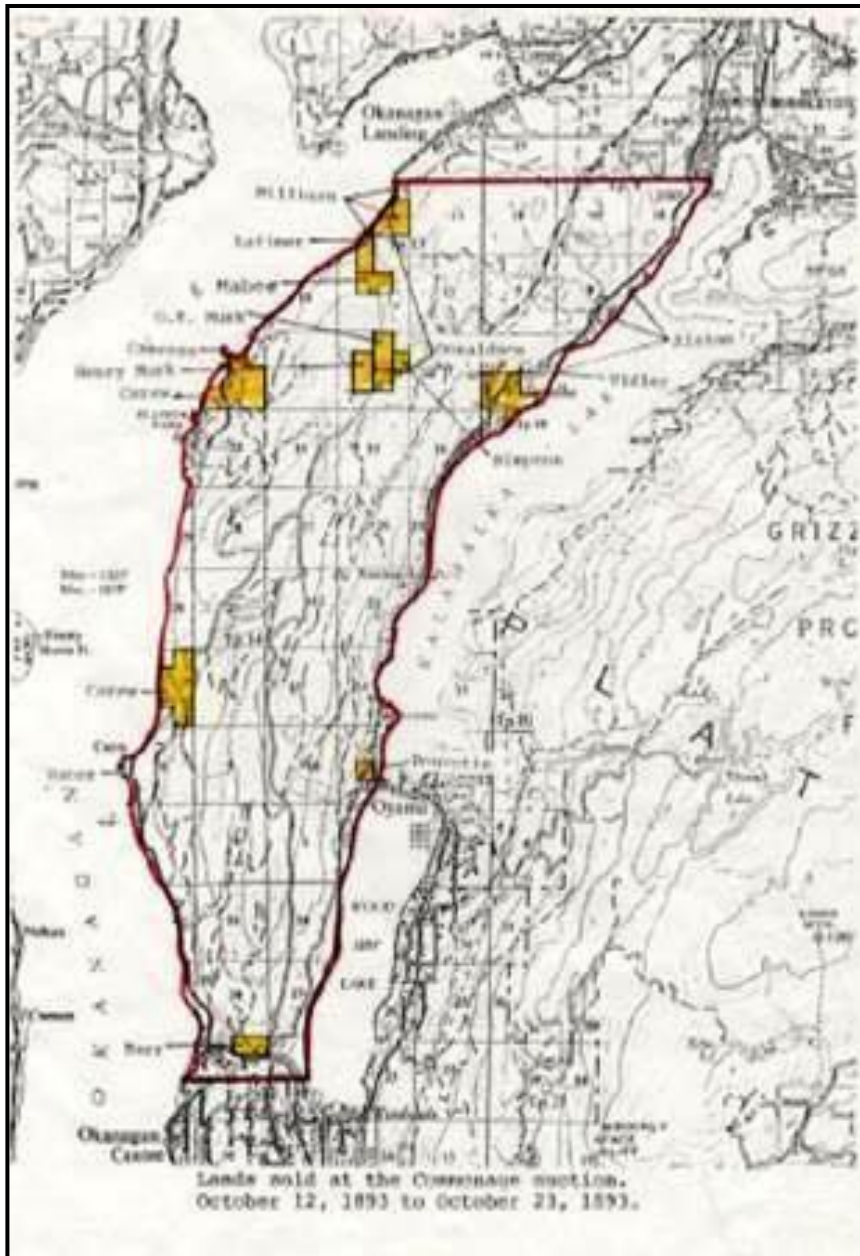
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Pre-Emption Certificates & Treaties

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| Learning Objective(s) | Students will further their knowledge about the loss of Indigenous lands in B.C. to the government through the use of pre-emption certificates that were issued to settlers. |
| Suggested Grades | Middle Grade |
| ACTIVITY | |
| Materials | <p>No specific materials are required, though you may choose to print out some of the provided photographs to incorporate into your class discussion.</p> <p>If you decide to extend the activity into a research assignment, you may need to give students access to research materials (internet, library) and writing tools (paper, pen, computer).</p> |
| Class Discussion | <p>During and after the historical lesson component, ask your students the following questions as prompts for further discussion. You may also consider utilizing some of the provided photographs alongside your lesson and/or discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the government have the right to give away this land? • No treaties were signed regarding land in Lake Country or in most areas of B.C. What difficulties do you think this created at the time and in the present day? • When the second agreement for the Commonage was signed, the land claim stated: <i>“I do not anticipate being able to satisfy the requirements of these Indians (they requested the Commonage become reserve land) in as so much there is but little land of value to choose from in the neighbourhood.”</i> Why do you think the Canadian government felt entitled to more ‘valuable’ land than the Syilx? • What are treaties? Why were they signed? • Why are treaties only now being negotiated in B.C.? • Do you think these negotiations are effective? |
| Extension | <p>This activity is a great introduction to learning about how land was dealt with early on in Canada’s history, as well as to get students to consider how we should deal with land claims today. There are various directions you can move in with this topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay/paragraph writing • Presentation on land claims/treaties |

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| <p>Historical Context</p> | <p>When European settlers were first arriving in the Okanagan Valley, ‘the Commonage’ was established. The Commonage (meaning <i>common pasturage</i>) was vacant land of over 25,000 acres that was shared between European settlers and the Syilx people to pasture their livestock. It extended from Okanagan Lake to Long Lake.</p> <p>In 1876, an agreement was made that the Commonage was to be formally reserve from pre-emption (purchased land that has not been fully surveyed) for the use of both settlers and Syilx people. However, in 1889, a new agreement was reached between British Columbia’s Chief Commissioner of Land and Works, and the Indian Reserve Commissioner. This agreement stated that the provincial government would take over the Commonage and, in return to the Syilx people, establish an Indian Reserve on the west side of Okanagan Lake.</p> <p>When B.C. joined the Canadian Confederation in 1871, only 14 treaties on Vancouver Island had been signed and Indigenous title to the rest of the province was left unresolved. It was not until 1970 that Canada’s Indigenous peoples were able to pursue Indigenous rights in the Supreme Court of Canada. With the exception of Treaty 8 and negotiations with the Nisga’a Nation, most First Nations had to wait until 1993 to pursue their Indigenous rights through the B.C. treaty process.</p> |
| <p>Further Inquiry</p> | <p><u>Field Trip Suggestions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sncewips Museum ● The Lake Country Museum and Archives has a wide range of exhibits and activities for your class to take advantage of. There may be the opportunity for a guest lecturer to visit your classroom or be present at the museum with the knowledge of more local history stories. If interested, please contact the Museum ahead of time. <p><u>Suggested Resources:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LCMA website resources: <i>Northern Okanagan Commonage, History Index</i> ● Okanagan Nation Alliance website’s map of traditional Syilx territory) ● <i>Where the Grass is Always Browner on the Other Side of the Fence: A History of the Okanagan Common- age</i> by, Dr. D. John Price ● <i>British Columbia Crown Land Pre-emption Registers, 1860-1971:</i> https://familysearch.org/search/collection/2053657 |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● BC Treaty Commission: http://www.bctreaty.net/● BC Archives Research Guide: <i>Pre-emption and homestead claims</i> |
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Map of lands sold at the Commonage auction, 1893. Reproduced from LCMA manuscript North- ern Okanagan Commonage

DUPLICATE.

No. in District Register

British Columbia.

LAND ACT, 1884.

CERTIFICATE OF PRE-EMPTION RECORD.

District of Osoyoos

Name of Settler (in full) Jeremiah Clark

Date of Record June 5th 1899

Number of Acres 320

Where situated Twp. 21. Sect. 7. Twp. 15. 3. 6

Description of boundaries of land 24 July 1917

North West 1/4 Sec. 7

South West 1/4 Sec 18

Township 21:
S. 1/4. 15 33

Not paid and given 60 days to show cause why this pre-emption record should not be cancelled, 13 June, 1917.

*L of A
157
4 mms from 1-5 Dec 1902
L of A
4 mms from 8/99 8682 5-1-21
H476
L of A
mms from Jan 1902
Gas 28 May 1908*

Pre-Emption Certificate