



MENDING THE CHASM

BUILDING INCLUSIVE CULTURES FROM THE INSIDE OUT.

Session 1: A Curated History of Structural Oppression in Canada

**The Stratford City Centre Business Improvement Area
September 12, 2023**

Facilitator: Leena Sharma Seth, Founder, Mending the Chasm

Acknowledging the Land

“We acknowledge that Stratford is positioned on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe and the Neutral (Attawandaron) peoples. As we gather, we are reminded that the City of Stratford is situated on treaty land that is steeped in rich Indigenous history and home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples today. We acknowledge that Stratford is situated on land that was shared between the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe and the Neutral (Attawandaron) peoples. We are grateful to have the opportunity to live, work, and play on this land.”

- City of Stratford

Meet your Facilitator

Meet Leena Sharma Seth. Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

Settler with the following Superpowers:

- Lived and intersectional experience as a child of Hindu, Punjabi and Brahmin immigrants
- Inclusive Process Design approach to designing and holding space
- Conflict Transformation Specialist and trained Community Mediator
- Community-builder at heart who works with communities and leaders to build collective capacity to engage meaningfully with difference and across difference.



Why DEI?

"It's a question of impact. As a racialized woman in this work, at some point it occurred to me that I could facilitate transformational culture shifts more effectively outside of systems, rather than inside them. Our community needs these changes now, not in 5 years, not in 10 years. Now."

Setting the Container



Ingredients for Culture-Building



Embodiment Practice



Community Assumptions

The purpose of naming community assumptions in our work together is to make transparent what is often invisible and to ground ourselves in postures that will help us to embody a more equitable, inclusive, and accountable learning, reflection and transformational space.

- Oppression [racism] is systemic and structural, first and foremost, and interpersonal and personal in expression.
- It's all of us versus whatever the problem/oppression is.
- There is no neutral. Every decision and every choice has the potential to include or exclude, or to create deeper connection/disconnection.
- Our roles and responsibilities are different based on our social location.
- Racism, white supremacy and oppression cause trauma.
- Our mutual liberation and well-being are bound together.
- Binaries are bullshit. We recognize that there are a spectrum of responses and solutions, and oftentimes it's a BOTH/AND, not OR conversation.
- We honour the full complexity and messiness of this work. We accept and expect non-closure.

Community Agreements

Please familiarize yourself with Mending the Chasm's community agreements. These agreements are the rules of engagement that support us to hold safe and accountable space for what can be difficult, vulnerable and potentially emotional conversations. Our agreements are as follows:

- Ask for what you need, offer what you can.
- Listen with curiosity and compassion.
- Our impact is more important than our intent; we move with good intentions and remain committed to repairing any harm we may unintentionally cause.
- We avoid making assumptions about other people, including assumptions about their history, race, or lived experience.
- We are committed to progress over perfection.
- We center lived experience in equity, inclusion and anti-racism work because we recognize it as valuable insight and wisdom.
- We expect conflict and value it as an opportunity to deepen understanding, prioritize relationships, and to build common ground.
- We each work to decenter ourselves and make space for others. Especially if we identify as someone who holds dominant privilege because of our social location. Our roles, our accountability, and our work is informed by our social location.
- This is a no shame no blame space. Our focus is on accountability and how we will intentionally use our power, privilege and platform to build a more equitable and inclusive culture in our community.

Agenda

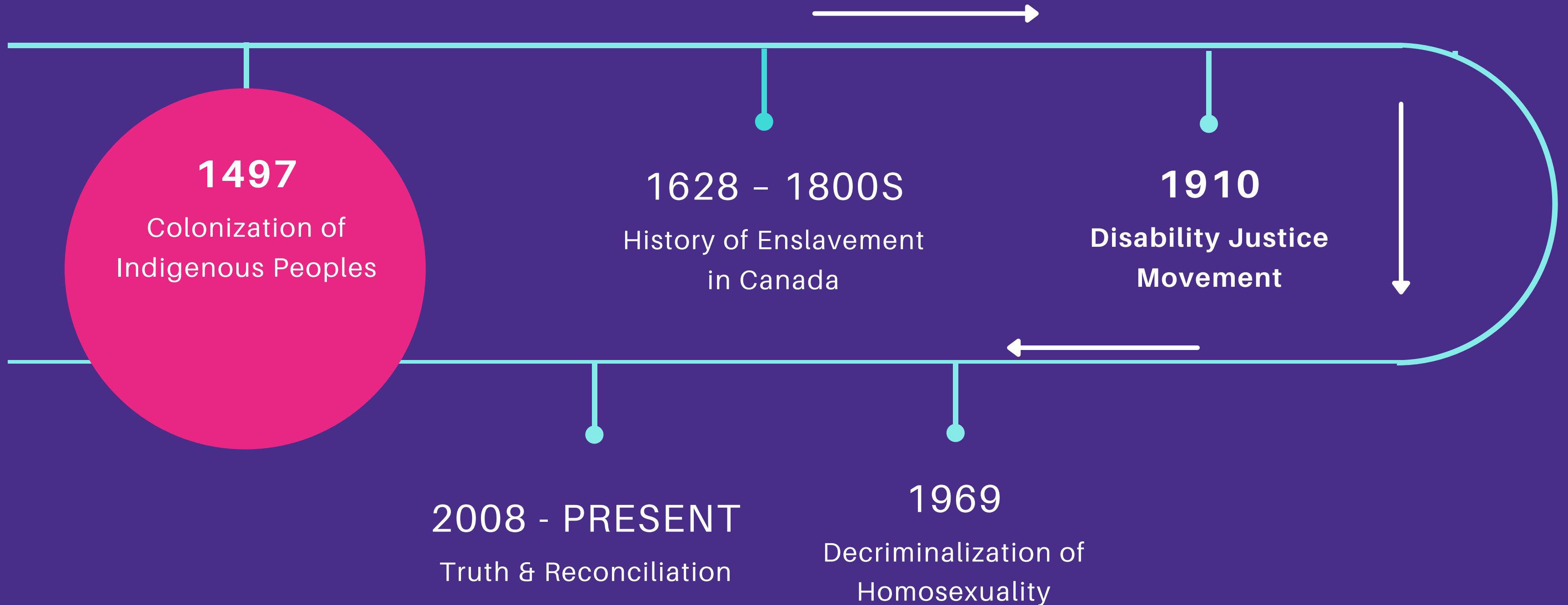
- Welcome and Land Acknowledgement
- Setting the Container
- Checking In
- Historical Timeline of Structural Oppression in Canada
 - Pause and Reflection
- Questions?
- Checking Out
- Close of Session

Checking In

What is your why for equity work?



Timeline of Structural Oppression in Canada



North

Repudiation of Doctrine of Discovery 'symbolic step' with opportunity for change, Northerners say



Repudiation creates an opportunity for change — but doesn't change Canadian law

CBC News - Posted: Mar 31, 2023 7:56 AM EDT | Last Updated: March 31



François Paulette says that the repudiation is a positive symbolic step, but that the onus is on leaders and chiefs to use it as a stepping stone for real change. (Pat Kane/CBC)

François Paulette says the Vatican's repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery is a symbolic move that can lead to positive change if Indigenous leaders carry forward the momentum.



RELIGION

The Vatican repudiates 'Doctrine of Discovery,' which was used to justify colonialism

March 30, 2023 - 1:38 PM ET

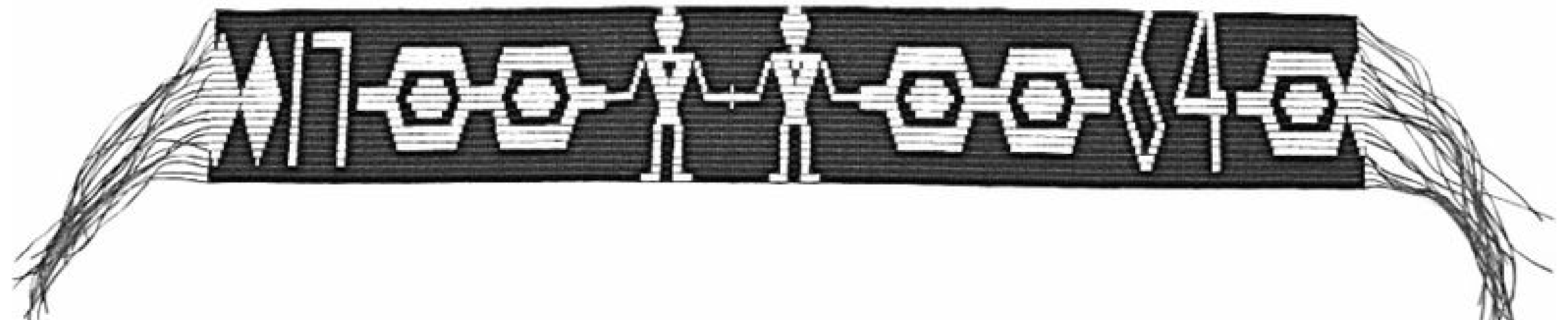
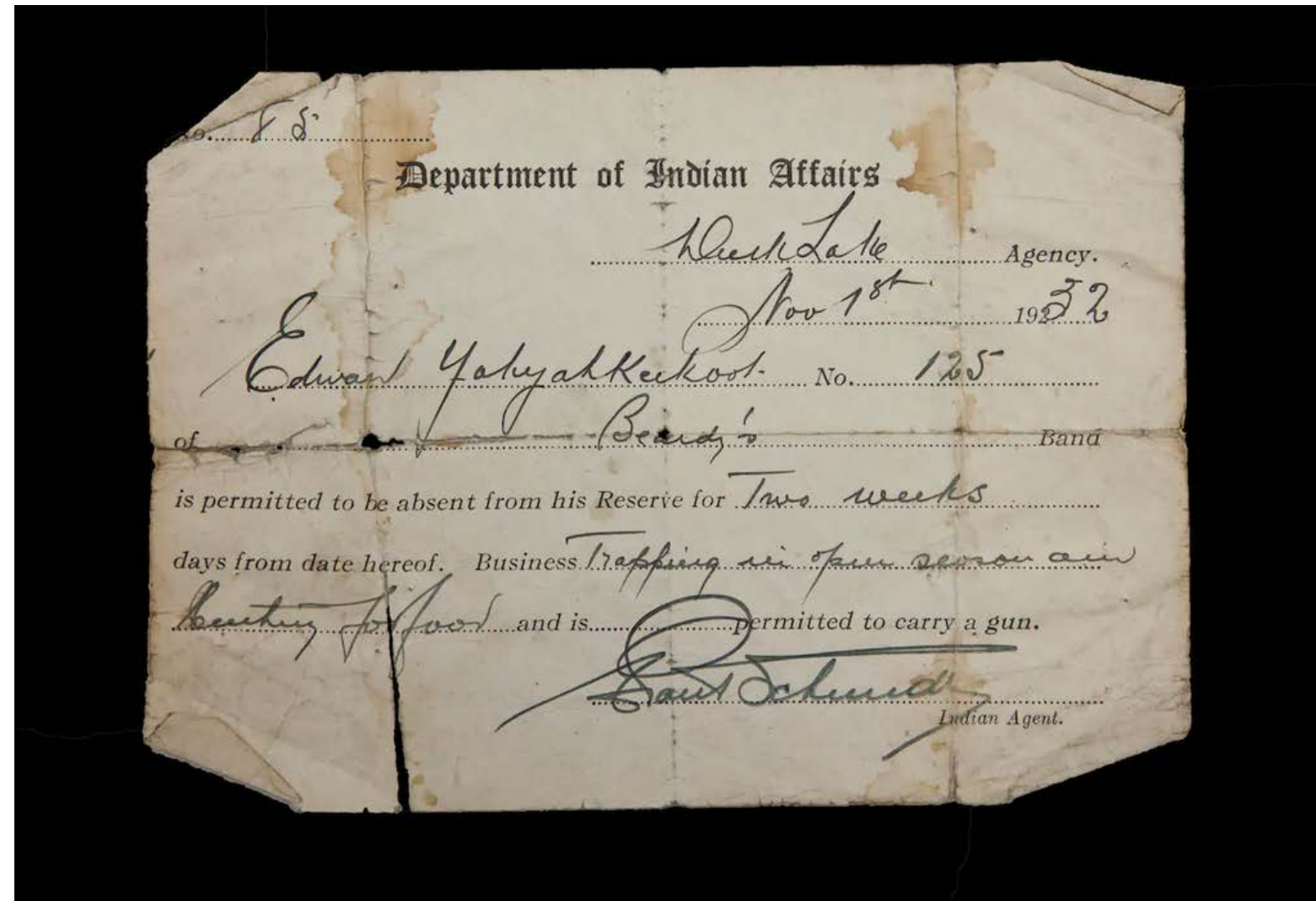
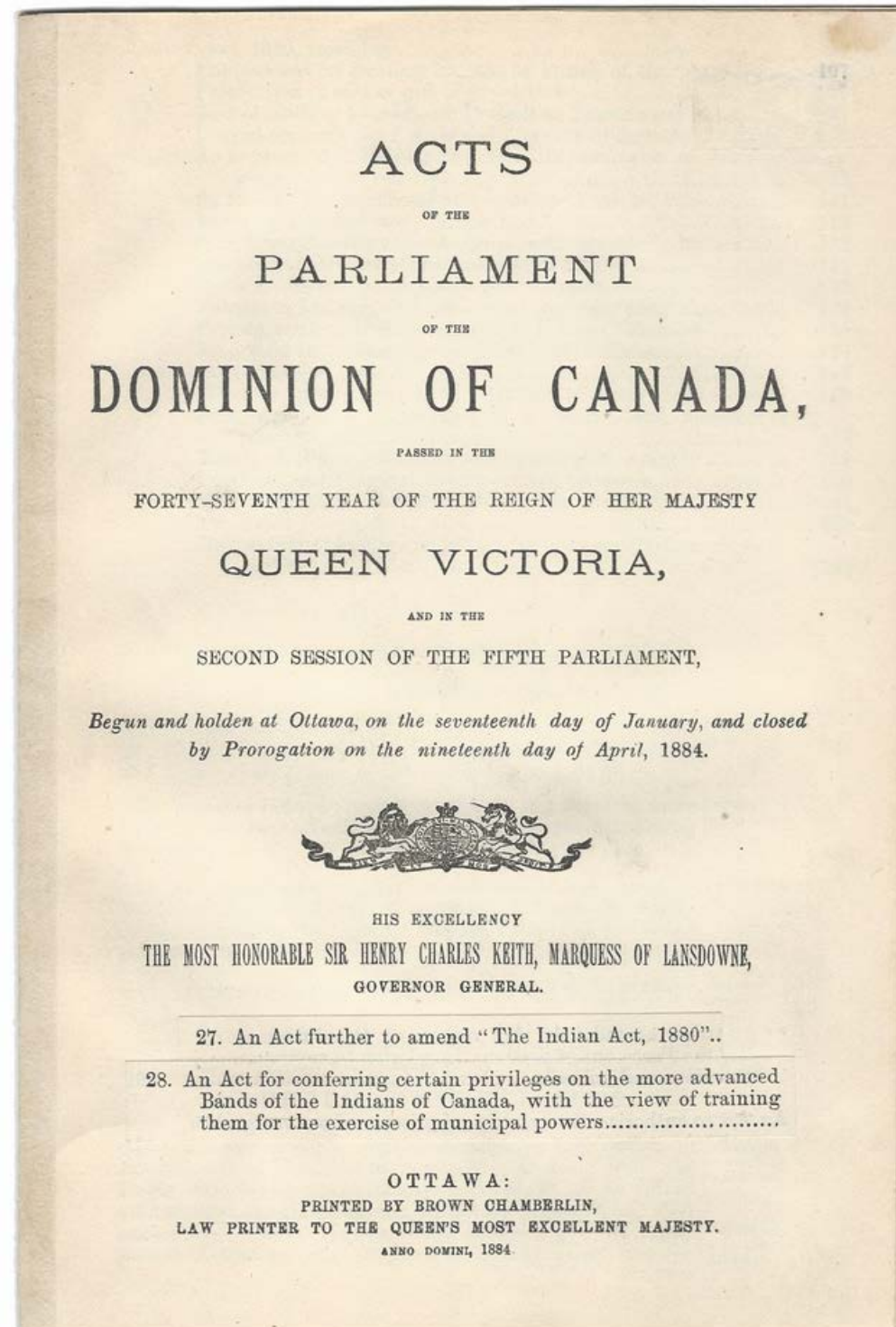
By Bill Chappell



People protest as Pope Francis meets young people and elders at Nakasuk Elementary School Square in Iqaluit, Canada, last July. The Vatican on Thursday formally repudiated the "Doctrine of Discovery." The theory is backed by 15th century papal decrees that legitimized the colonial-era seizure of Native lands and form the basis of some property laws today. Gregorio Borgia/AP

Nearly 500 years after papal decrees were used to rationalize Europe's colonial conquests, the Vatican repudiated those decrees on Thursday, saying the "Doctrine of Discovery" that was used to justify snuffing out Indigenous people's culture and livelihoods is not part of the Catholic faith.

The doctrine was invoked as a legal and religious standing by Europeans who "discovered" new lands and violently seized it from people who had been living there for generations. It has been cited in different arenas for centuries, including by the U.S. Supreme Court — as early as 1823 and as recently as 2005.

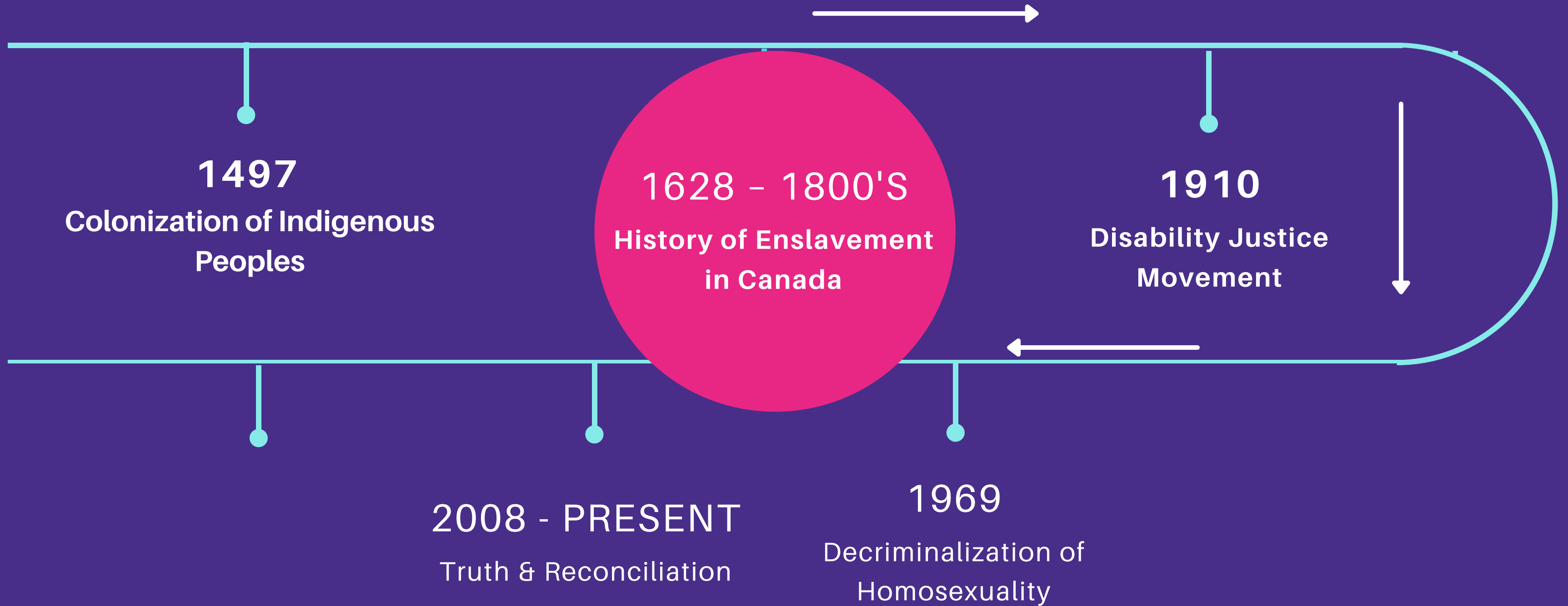


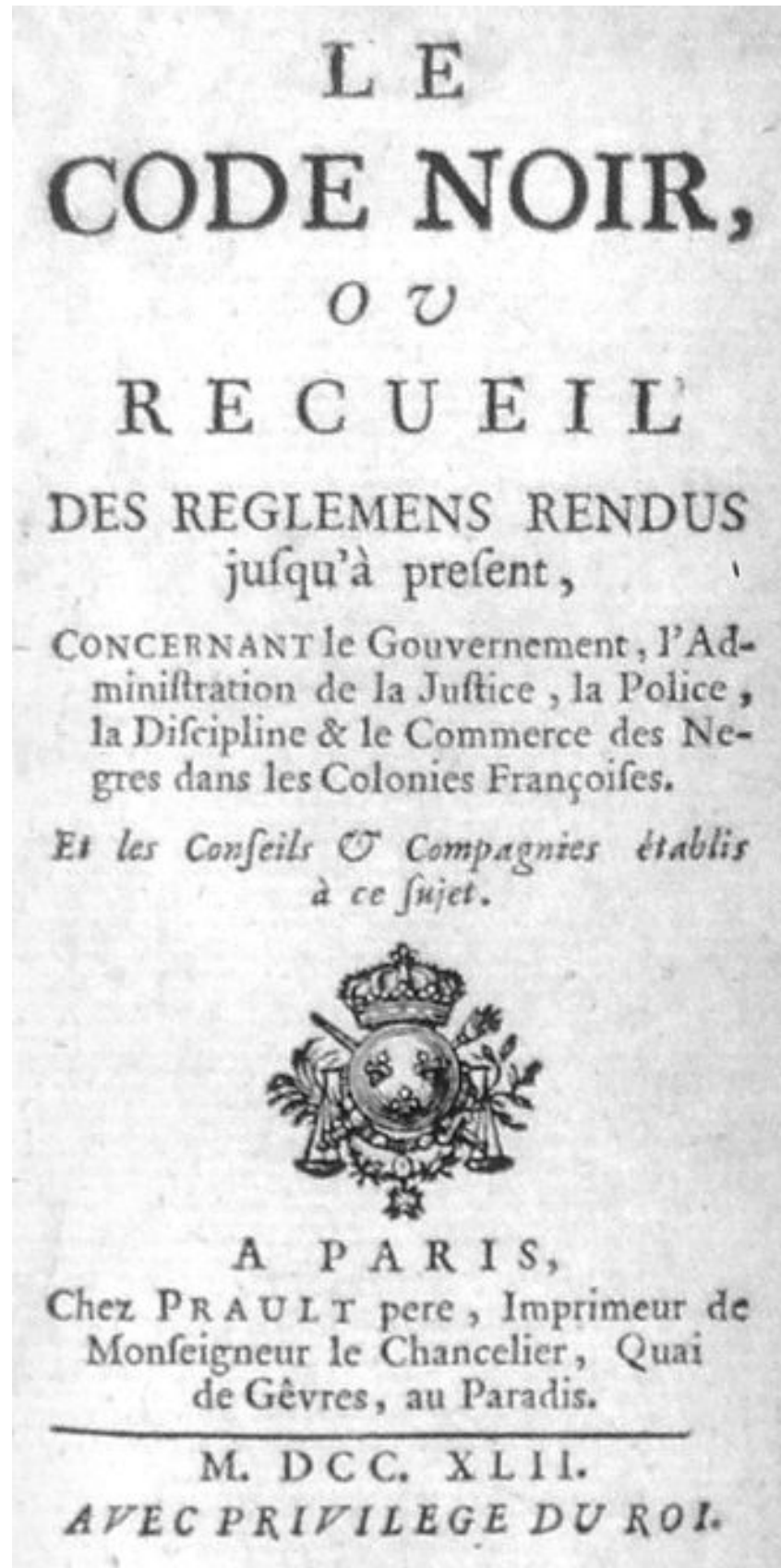
Images Source: "Canada's Dark Side: Indigenous Peoples and Canada's 150th Celebration"



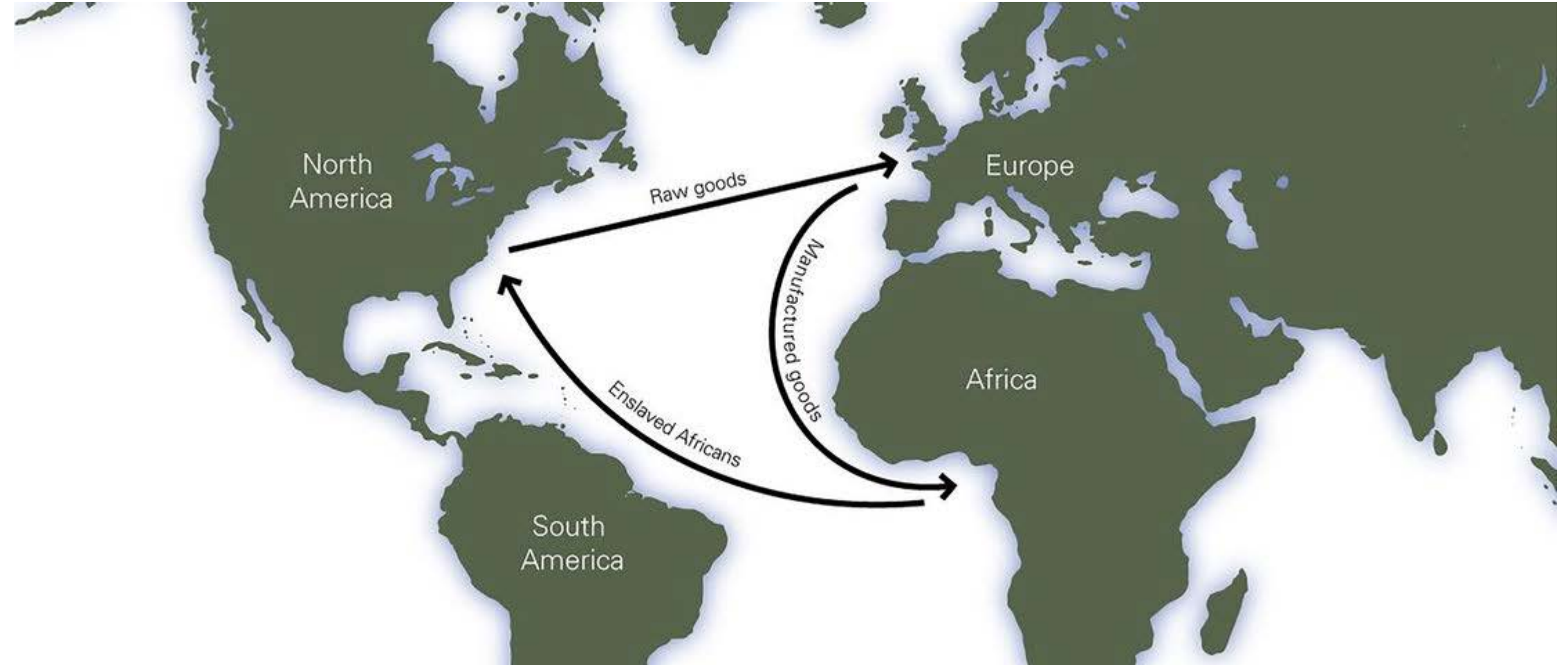
Images Source: "Canada's Dark Side: Indigenous Peoples and Canada's 150th Celebration"

Timeline of Structural Oppression in Canada

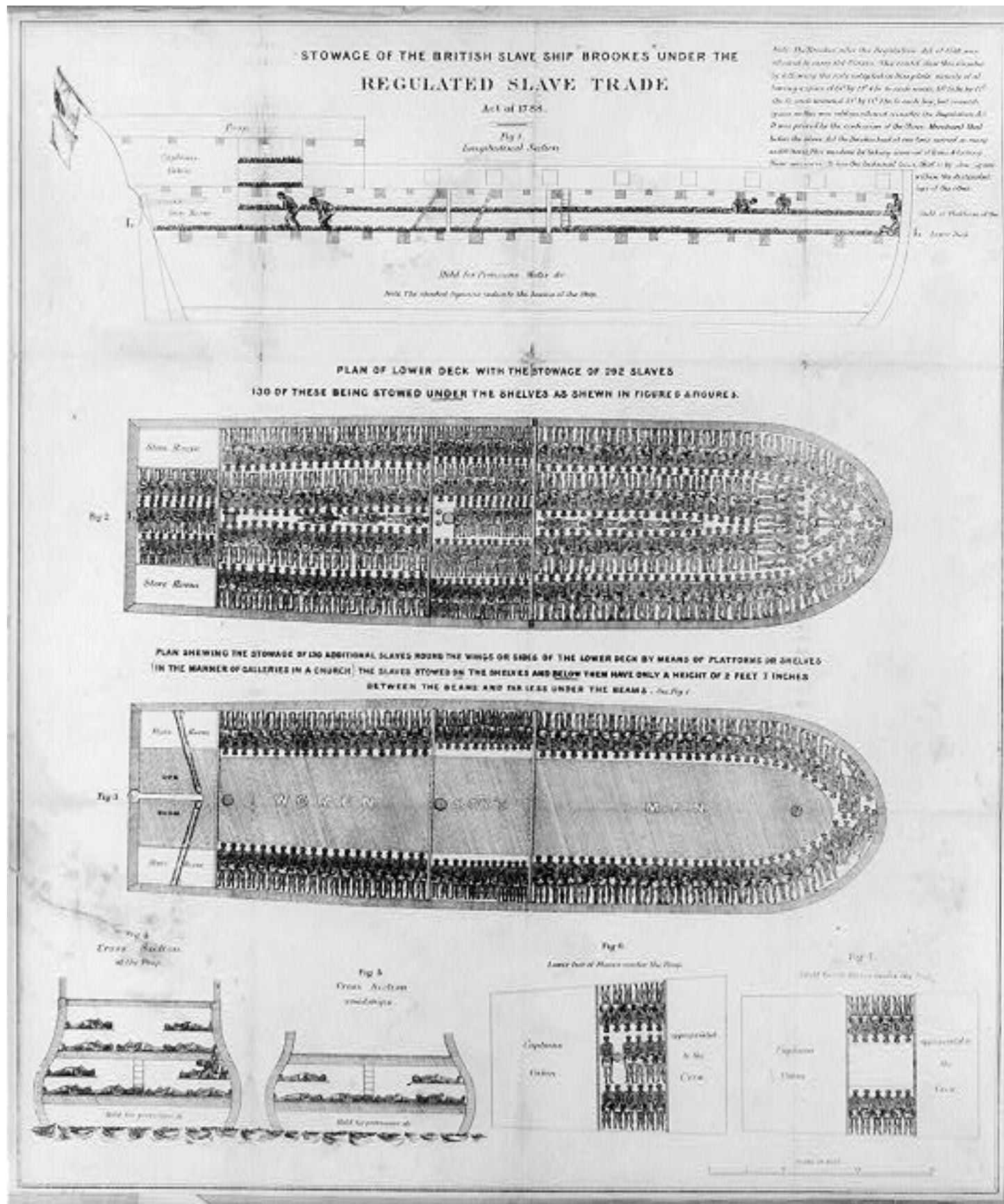




https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Code_Noir

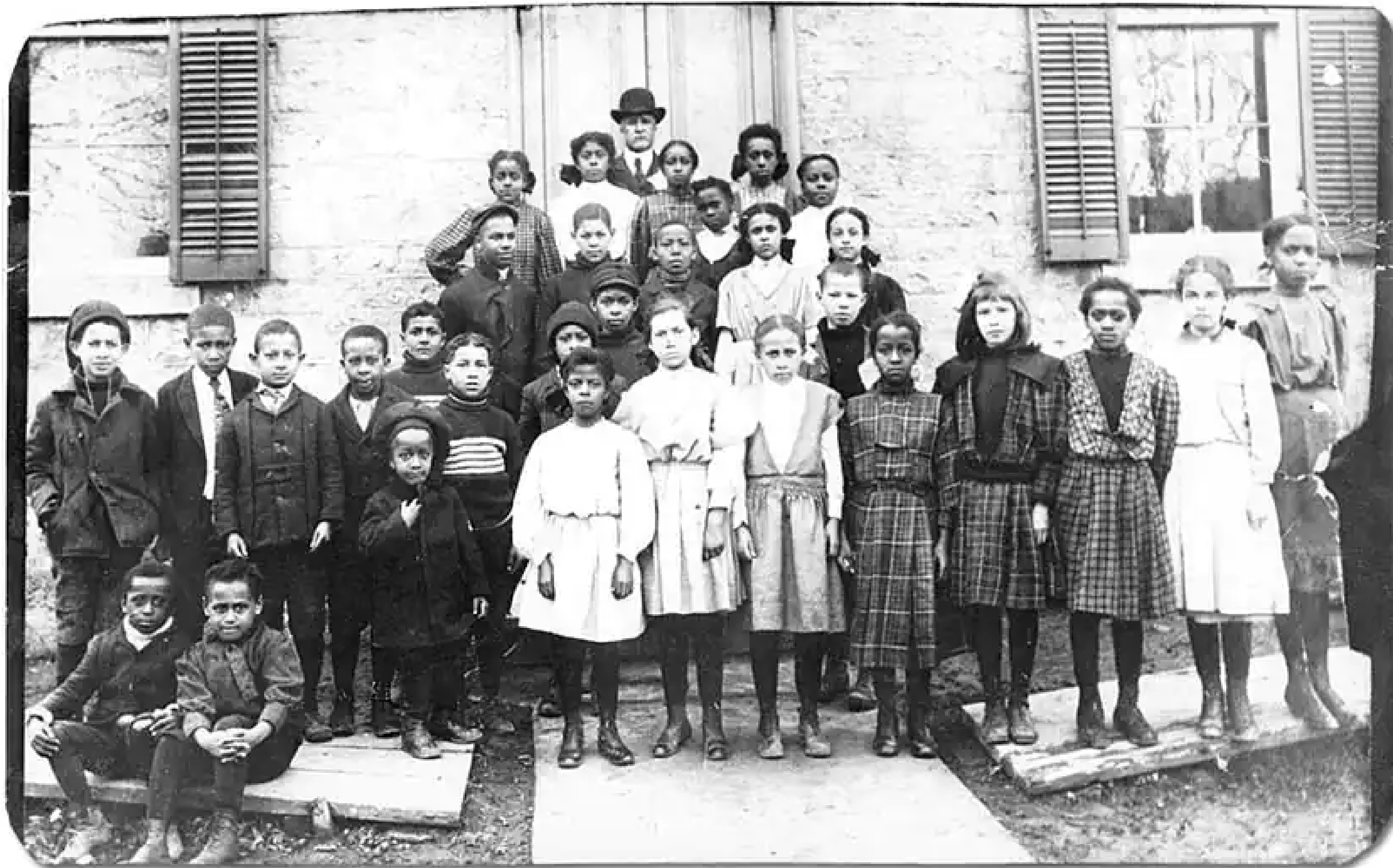


<https://humanrights.ca/story/the-story-of-slavery-in-canadian-history>



<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/lincolns-underground-railroad/>

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/black-enslavement>



Students of King Street School in Amherstburg, Ontario with their teacher, J. H. Alexander, [ca. 1890s], F 2076-16-7-4, Archives of Ontario, I0027815



Viola Desmond - Canadian Ten Dollar Bill (2018)
Source: The Globe and Mail



Lincoln Alexander (left) during WWII -
Source: Spectator Staff



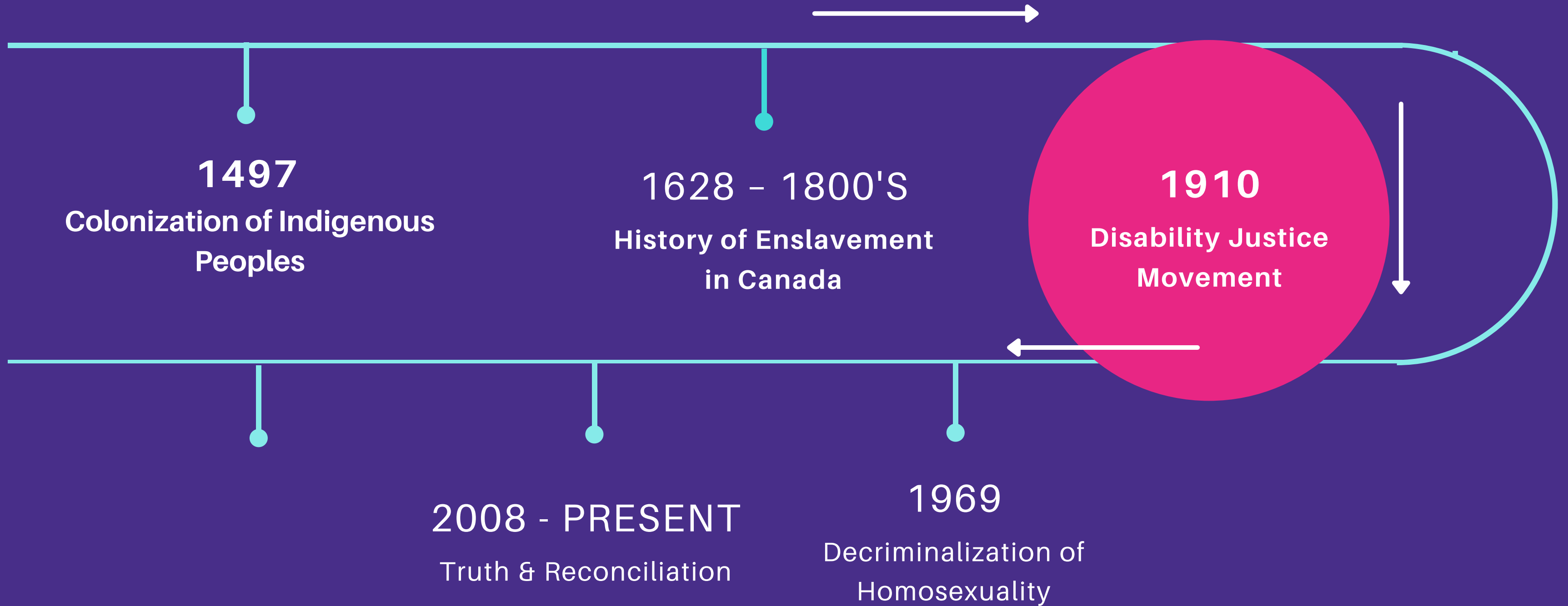
Rosemary Brown

Source: The Canadian Press/John Goddard

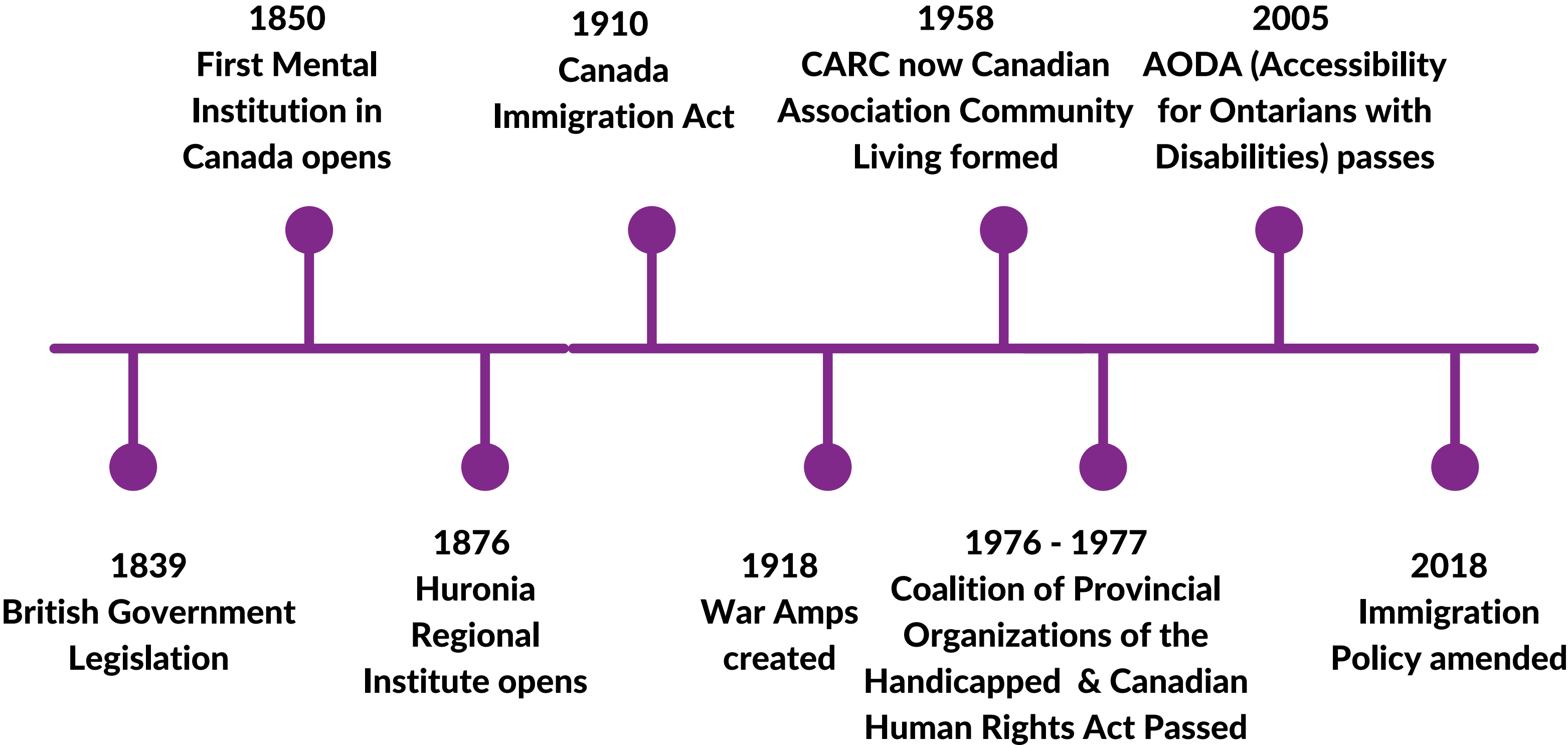


Measha Brueggergosman
Source: The Feldman Agency

Timeline of Structural Oppression in Canada



Timeline of Progress in the Movement for Disability Justice



Exclusion and Institutionalization



Provincial Lunatic Asylum, 1850 (CAMH today)



War Amps, Canada, 1918



Immigration Act, Canada, 1910

Deinstitutionalization and Disability Justice/Rights Era

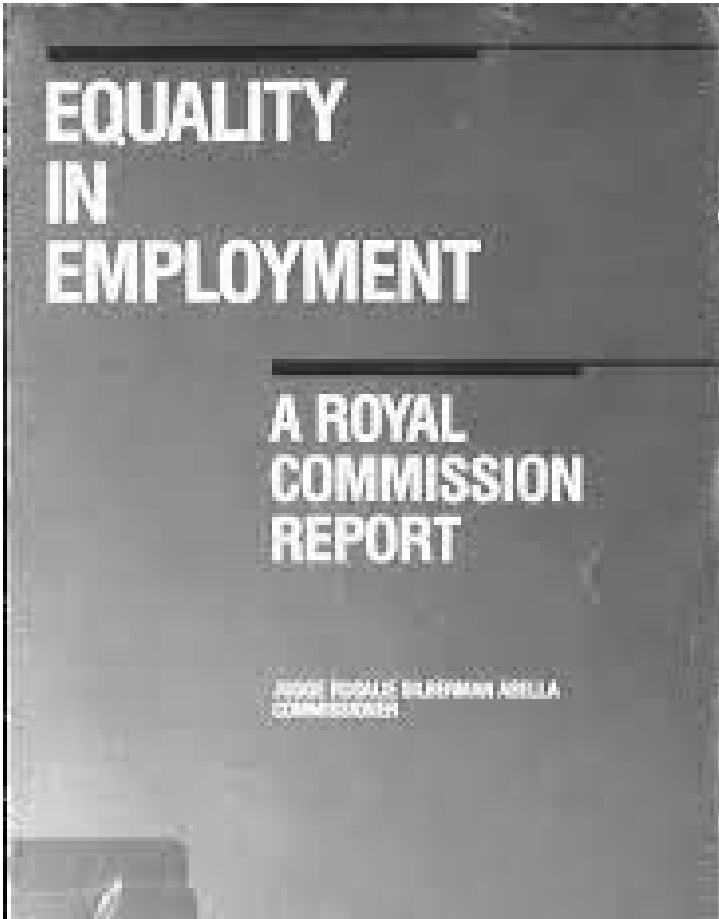


**Council of Canadians
with Disabilities**

A VOICE OF OUR OWN

**Conseil des Canadiens
avec déficiences**

CETTE VOIX QUI EST LA NOTRE



**Employment Equity Act,
Canada 1984**



Ontario

**ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS
WITH DISABILITIES ACT (AODA)**

AODA, 2005

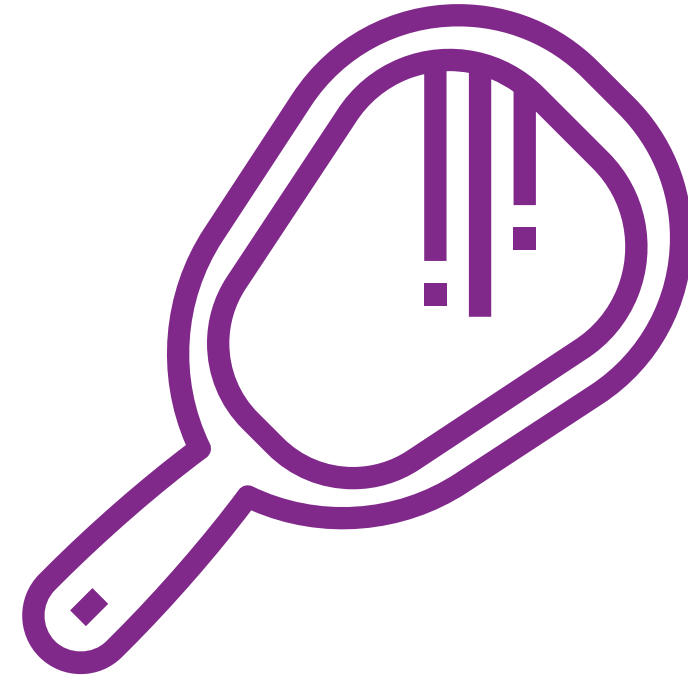
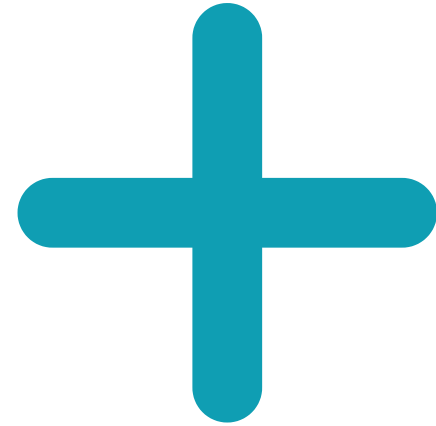
10 PRINCIPLES OF DISABILITY JUSTICE

- 1 INTERSECTIONALITY** *"We do not live single issue lives" --Audre Lorde*
Ableism, coupled with white supremacy, supported by capitalism, underscored by heteropatriarchy, has rendered the vast majority of the world "invalid."
- 2 LEADERSHIP OF THOSE MOST IMPACTED**
"We are led by those who most know these systems." --Aurora Levins Morales
- 3 ANTI-CAPITALIST POLITIC**
In an economy that sees land and humans as components of profit, we are anti-capitalist by the nature of having non-conforming body/minds.
- 4 COMMITMENT TO CROSS-MOVEMENT ORGANIZING**
Shifting how social justice movements understand disability and contextualize ableism, disability justice lends itself to politics of alliance.
- 5 RECOGNIZING WHOLENESS**
People have inherent worth outside of commodity relations and capitalist notions of productivity. Each person is full of history and life experience.
- 6 SUSTAINABILITY**
We pace ourselves, individually and collectively, to be sustained long term. Our embodied experiences guide us toward ongoing justice and liberation.
- 7 COMMITMENT TO CROSS-DISABILITY SOLIDARITY**
We honor the insights and participation of all of our community members, knowing that isolation undermines collective liberation.
- 8 INTERDEPENDENCE** We meet each others' needs as we build toward liberation, knowing that state solutions inevitably extend into further control over our lives.
- 9 COLLECTIVE ACCESS** As brown, black and queer-bodied disabled people we bring flexibility and creative nuance that go beyond able-bodied/minded normativity, to be in community with each other.
- 10 COLLECTIVE LIBERATION** No body or mind can be left behind -- only moving together can we accomplish the revolution we require.

SINS INVALID 2015 www.sinsinvalid.org

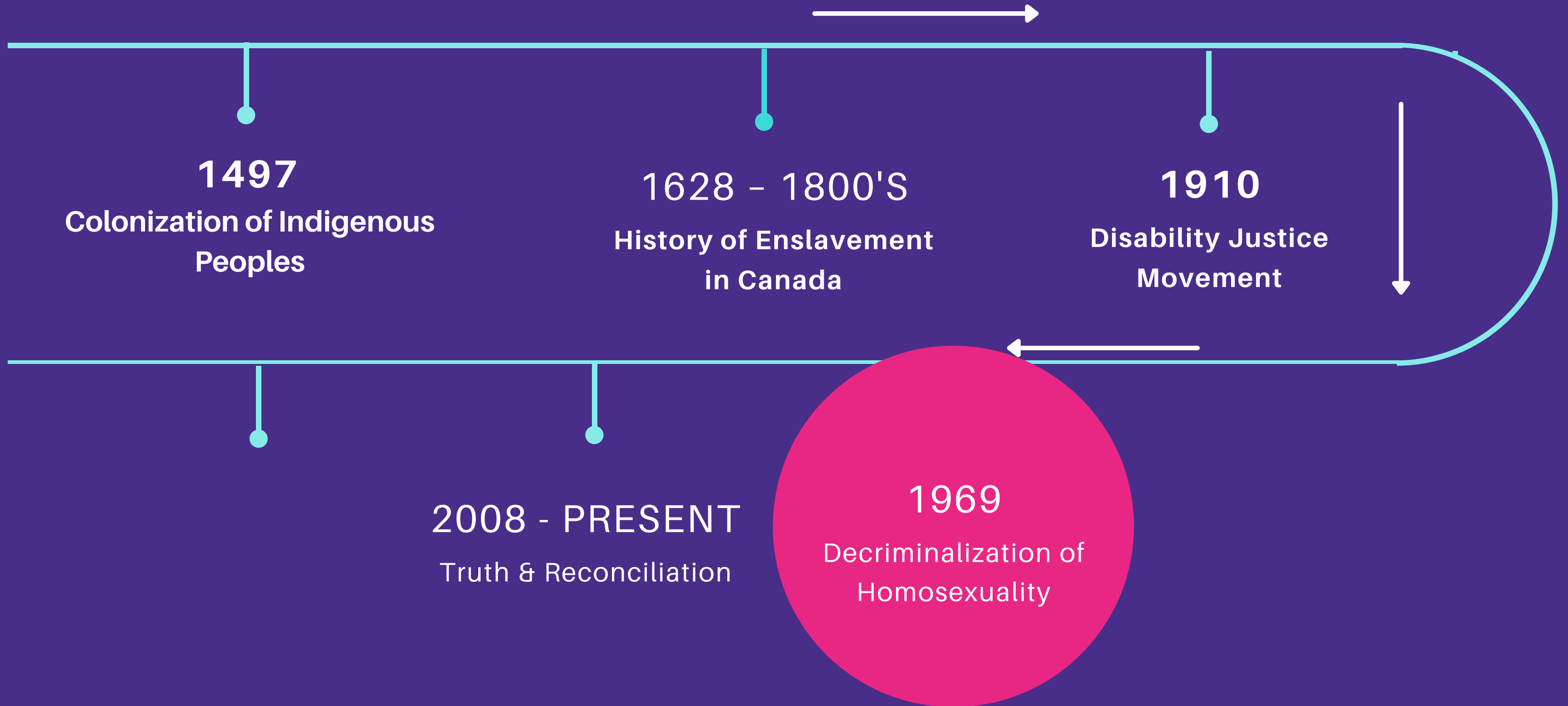
Sins Invalid, 2005

Pause, Reflect, and Discuss



- How are you feeling about what you've heard so far?
- Where are you noticing energy or activation in your body?
- How do you think the past continues to play a part in the inequity and injustice that people who hold marginalized identities experience?

Timeline of Structural Oppression in Canada





George Everett Klippert
Source: [The Canadian Encyclopedia](#)



Source of Images: [Xtra Magazine](#)



Source: [Now Toronto - Brunswick House](#)



Dr. Jill Andrew

Source: [Global News](#)



The Brunswick Four

Source: [Ellie Anglin Blogspot](#)



Vivek Shraya

Source: [Vanessa Heins, 2020](#)

BEYOND THE RAINBOW: YOUR ULTIMATE GUIDE TO PRIDE FLAGS



The Pride Flag
That Started It All



The 6-Color Pride Flag



The Philadelphia
Pride Flag



The Transgender Flag



The Nonbinary Pride Flag



The Intersex Flag



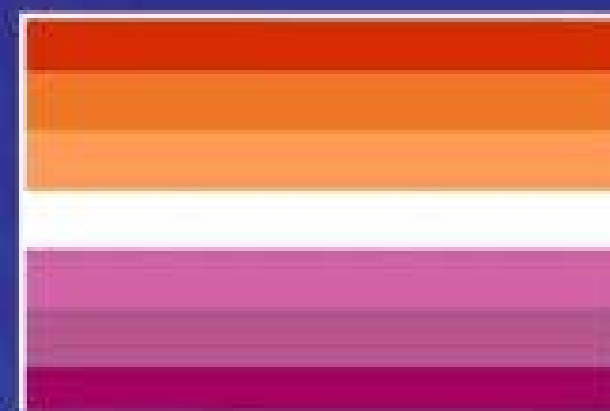
The Flag for the
Asexual Community



The Bisexual Pride Flag



The Pansexual Flag



The Flag for the
Lesbian Community



The Gay Men Pride Flag

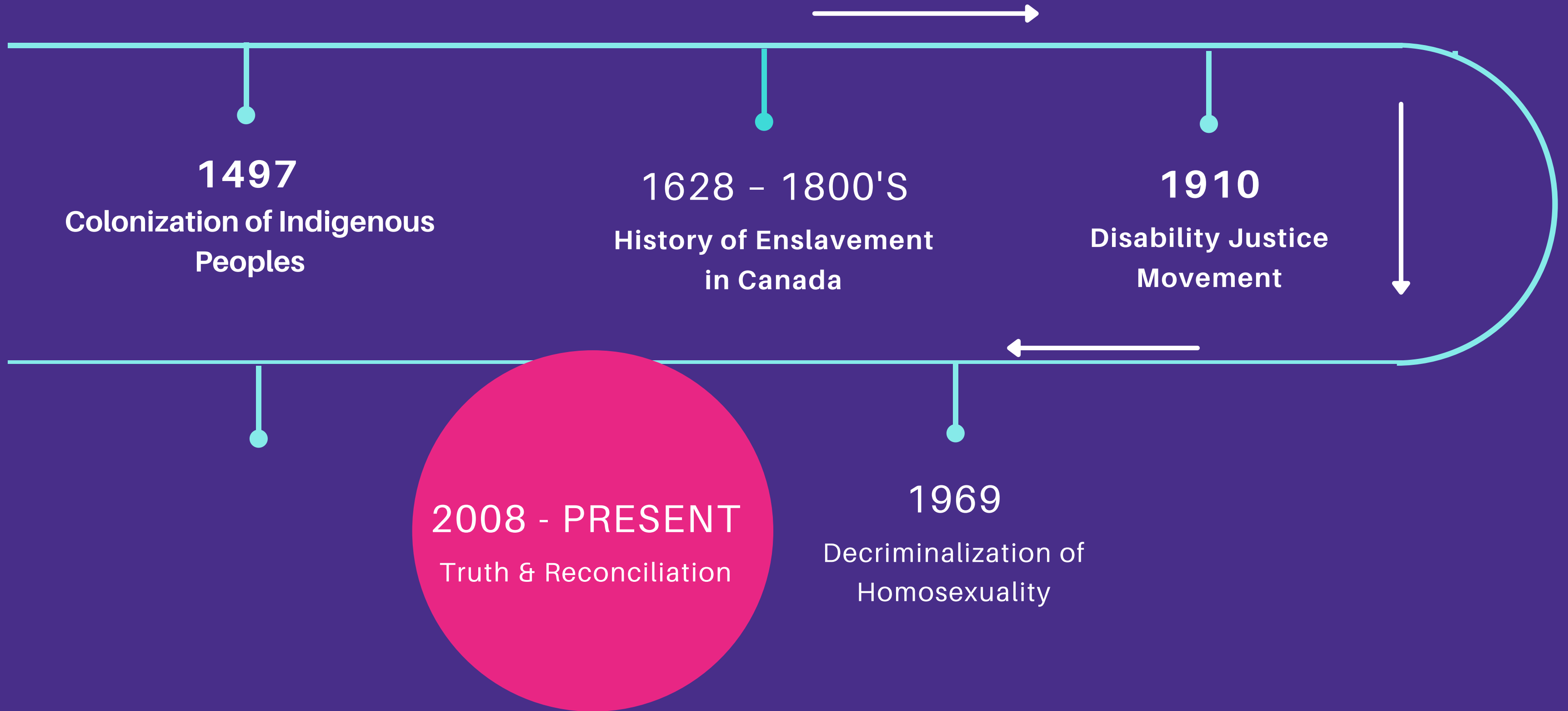


The Modern Pride Flag



Source: <https://cadehildreth.com/pride-flags/>

Timeline of Structural Oppression in Canada





Truth and Reconciliation

Commission of Canada

Canada's Residential Schools:
The Inuit and Northern Experience

The Final Report of the
Truth and Reconciliation
Commission of Canada

Volume 2

The Survivors Speak

A Report of the
Truth and Reconciliation
Commission of Canada

Canada's Residential Schools:
**Missing Children and
Unmarked Burials**

The Final Report of the
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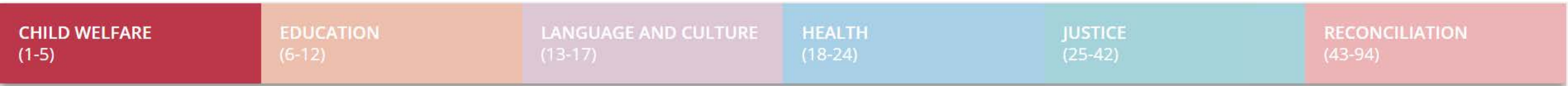
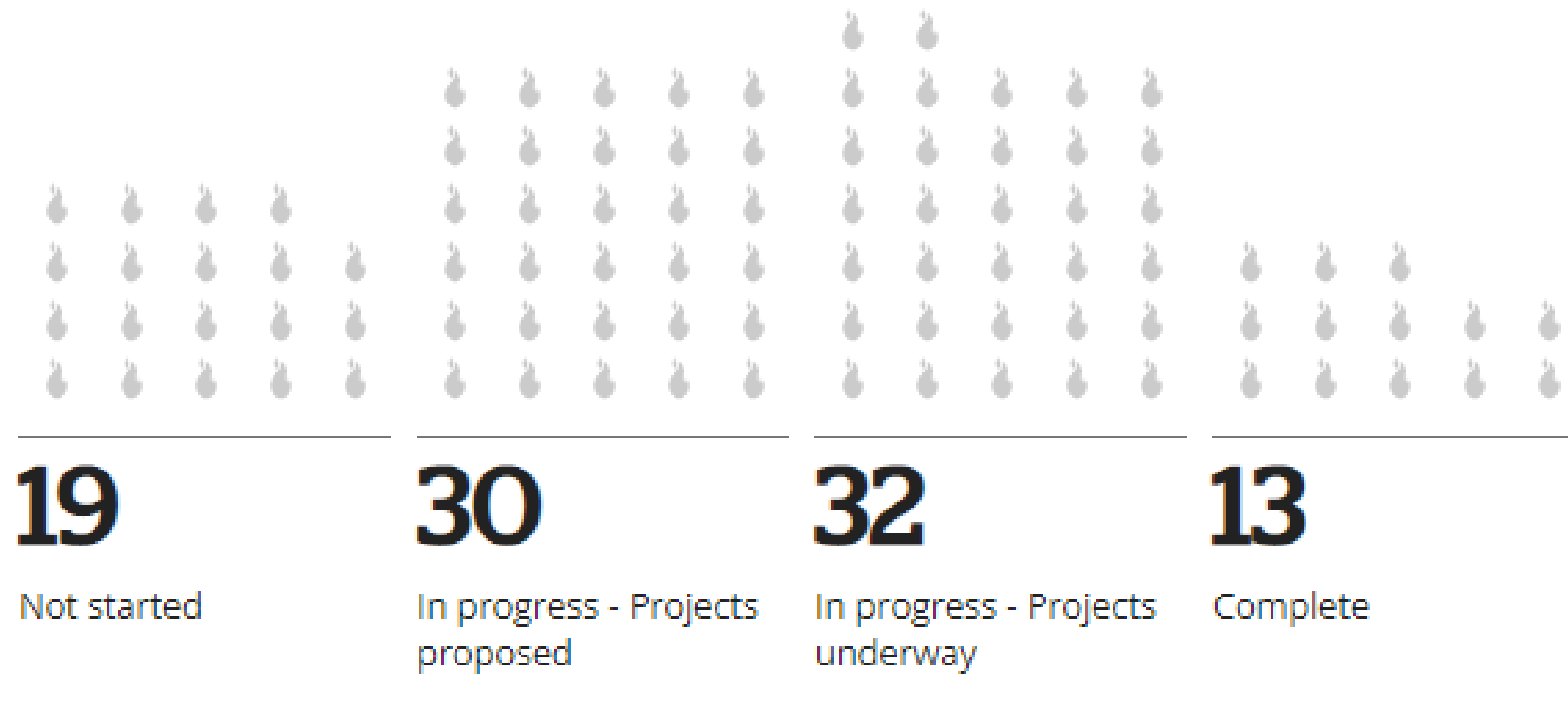
Volume 4

<https://web.archive.org/web/20200513112354/https://trc.ca/index-main.html>

Beyond 94 - CBC News - Truth and Reconciliation in Canada

👉 Click each flame icon to explore progress made

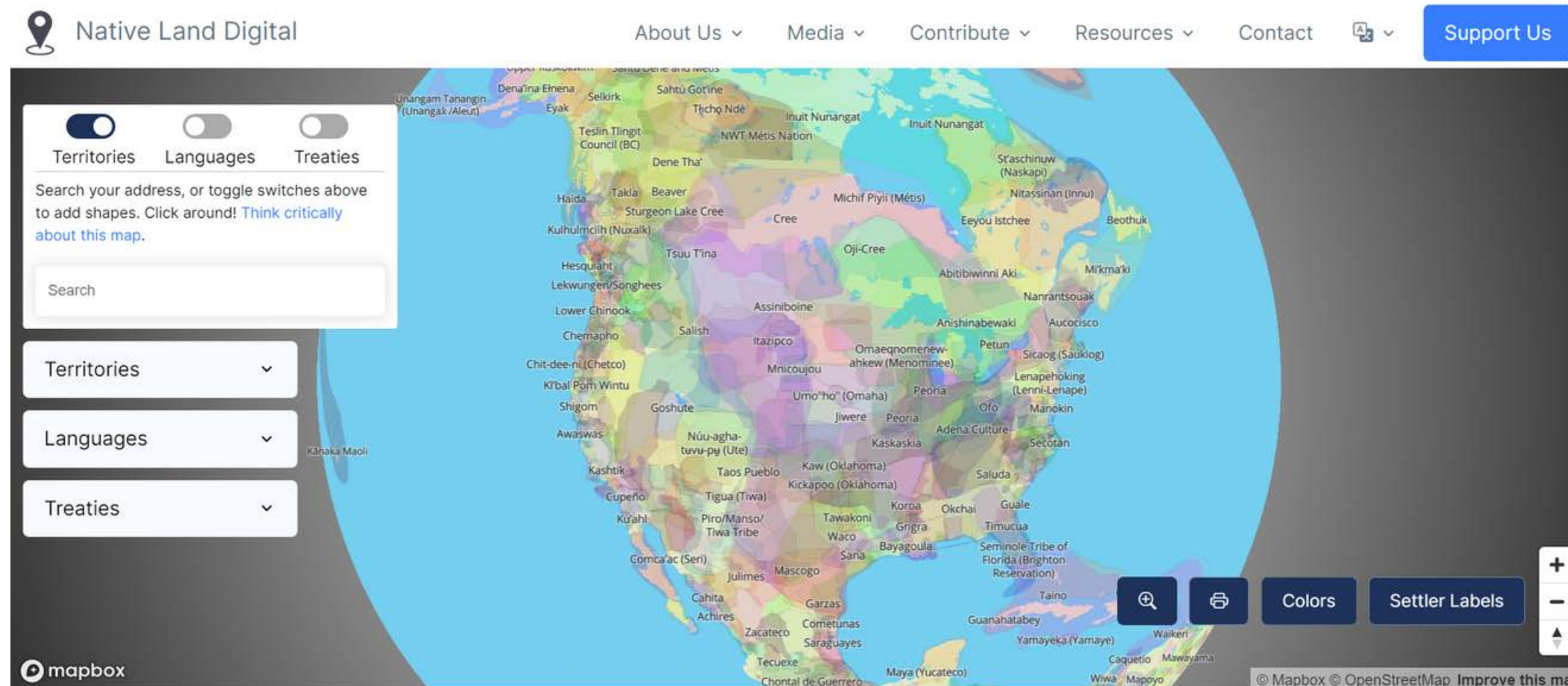
Last updated: July 26, 2022





Dr. Cindy Blackstock

Source: [University Alberta Law](#)



[Native-Land.ca](#)



Kent Monkman

Source: [Kent Monkman Website](#)



Louis Riel

Source: [The Canadian Encyclopedia](#)



James Jones - Notorious Cree

Source: [Jones Dancer website](#)

Your Turn!

What moment in Canadian history, where communities of people experienced oppression and exclusion, are you reflecting on that was not included in this timeline?

Questions?

Checking Out:

What is one new learning or insight you're taking away from today's session?

Resources

Web Links

[Legislation around "Unfit" People in Canada - Disability Justice Network of Ontario](#)

[The History of Canadian slavery goes back 400 years, except we're blind to it - Global News, June 2020](#)

[The Skin We're In - CBC Documentary - Desmond Cole](#)

[Women in Canadian History: Rosemary Brown](#)

Books

21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act - Bob Joseph, 2019

Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice - Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018

Until We Are Free: Reflections on Black Lives Matter in Canada, Rodney Diverlus, Sandy Hudson, Syrus Marcus Ware, University of Regina Press, 2020

Thank you!

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