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## **Raven Steals the Sun**

From [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raven\\_in\\_mythology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raven_in_mythology)

This is an ancient story told on the Queen Charlotte Islands and includes how Raven helped to bring the Sun, Moon, Stars, Fresh Water, and Fire to the world.

*Long ago, near the beginning of the world, Gray Eagle was the guardian of the Sun, Moon and Stars, of fresh water, and of fire. Gray Eagle hated people so much that he kept these things hidden. People lived in darkness, without fire and without fresh water. Gray Eagle had a beautiful daughter, and Raven fell in love with her. In the beginning, Raven was a snow-white bird, and as a such, he pleased Gray Eagle's daughter. She invited him to her father's longhouse.*

*When Raven saw the Sun, Moon and stars, and fresh water hanging on the sides of Eagle's lodge, he knew what he should do. He watched for his chance to seize them when no one was looking. He stole all of them, and a brand of fire also, and flew out of the longhouse through the smoke hole. As soon as Raven got outside he hung the Sun up in the sky. It made so much light that he was able to fly far out to an island in the middle of the ocean. When the Sun set, he fastened the Moon up in the sky and hung the stars around in different places. By this new light he kept on flying, carrying with*



## Raven Steals the Sun

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*him the fresh water and the brand of fire he had stolen.*

*He flew back over the land. When he had reached the right place, he dropped all the water he had stolen. It fell to the ground and there became the source of all the fresh-water streams and lakes in the world. Then Raven flew on, holding the brand of fire in his bill. The smoke from the fire blew back over his white feathers and made them black. When his bill began to burn, he had to drop the firebrand. It struck rocks and hid itself within them. That is why, if you strike two stones together, sparks of fire will drop out.*

*Raven's feathers never became white again after they were blackened by the smoke from the firebrand. That is why Raven is now a black bird.*



## Potlatch

From <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Potlatch>

Edward Curtis photo of a [Kwakwaka'wakw](#) potlatch with dancers and singers.

A potlatch is a festival ceremony practiced by indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast. This includes Haida, Nuxalk, Tlingit, Tsimshian, Nuu-chah-nulth, Kwakwaka'wakw, and Coast Salish cultures. The word means "to give away" or "a gift". It went through a history of rigorous ban by both the Canadian and United States' federal governments.

At potlatch gatherings, a family or hereditary leader hosts guests in their family's house and holds a feast for their guests. The main purpose of the potlatch is the re-distribution and reciprocity of wealth.

Different events take place during a potlatch, like either singing and dances, sometimes with masks or regalia, such as Chilkat blankets, the barter of wealth through gifts, such as dried foods, sugar, flour, or other



## Thinking of Buying a Totem Pole?

Check out:

[http://www.zimporter.com/Totem\\_Poles\\_s/20.htm](http://www.zimporter.com/Totem_Poles_s/20.htm)



## Potlatch (Continued from Page 2)

material things, and sometimes money. For many potlatches, spiritual ceremonies take place for different occasions. This is either through material wealth such as foods and goods or non-material things such as songs and dances. For some cultures, such as Kwakwaka'wakw, elaborate and theatrical dances are performed reflecting the hosts' genealogy and cultural wealth they possess. Many of these dances are also sacred ceremonies of secret societies like the hamatsa, or display of family origin from supernatural creatures such as the dzunukwa. Typically the potlatching is practiced more in the winter seasons as historically the warmer months were for procuring wealth for the family, clan, or village, then coming home and sharing that with neighbors and friends.

Within it, hierarchical relations within and between clans, villages, and nations, are observed and reinforced through the distribution or sometimes destruction of wealth, dance performances, and other ceremonies. The status of any given family is raised not by who has the most resources, but by who distributes the most resources. The hosts demonstrate their wealth and prominence through giving away goods.

Chief O'wax̱alagalis of the Kwagu'ł describes the potlatch in his famous speech to anthropologist Franz Boas,

We will dance when our laws command us to dance, and we will feast when our hearts desire to feast. Do we ask the white man, 'Do as the Indian does?' It is a strict law that bids us dance. It is a strict law that bids us distribute our property among our friends and neighbors. It is a good law. Let the white man observe his law; we shall observe ours. And now, if you come to forbid us dance, be gone. If not, you will be welcome to us."

Celebration of births, rites of passages, weddings, funerals, namings, and honoring of the deceased are some of the many forms the potlatch occurs under. Although protocol differs among the Indigenous nations, the potlatch will usually involve a feast, with music, dance, theatricality and spiritual ceremonies. The most sacred ceremonies are usually observed in the winter.

It is important to note the differences and uniqueness among the different cultural groups and nations along the coast. Each nation, tribe, and sometimes clan has its own way of practicing the potlatch so as to present a very diverse presentation and meaning. The potlatch, as an overarching term, is quite general, since some cultures have many words in their language for all different specific types of gatherings. Nonetheless, the main purpose has been and still is the redistribution of wealth procured by families.



## Potlatch (Continued from Page 3)

Before the arrival of the Europeans, gifts included storable food (oolichan [candle fish] oil or dried food), canoes, and slaves among the very wealthy, but otherwise not income-generating assets such as resource rights. The influx of manufactured trade goods such as blankets and sheet copper into the Pacific Northwest caused inflation in the potlatch in the late eighteenth and earlier nineteenth centuries. Some groups, such as the Kwakwaka'wakw, used the potlatch as an arena in which highly competitive contests of status took place. In some cases, goods were actually destroyed after being received, or instead of being given away. The catastrophic mortalities due to introduced diseases laid many inherited ranks vacant or open to remote or dubious claim—providing they could be validated—with a suitable potlatch.

The potlatch was a cultural practice much studied by ethnographers. Sponsors of a potlatch give away many useful items such as food, blankets, worked ornamental mediums of exchange called "coppers", and many other various items. In return, they earned prestige. To give a potlatch enhanced one's reputation and validated social rank, the rank and requisite potlatch being proportional, both for the host and for the recipients by the gifts exchanged. Prestige increased with the lavishness of the potlatch, the value of the goods given away in it.

Potlatching was made illegal in Canada in 1885 and the United States in the late nineteenth century, largely at the urging of missionaries and government agents who considered it "a worse than useless custom" that was seen as wasteful, unproductive, and contrary to "civilized" values.

The potlatch was seen as a key target in assimilation policies and agendas. Missionary William Duncan wrote in 1875 that the potlatch was "by far the most formidable of all obstacles in the way of Indians becoming Christians, or even civilized." Thus in 1885, the Indian Act [1](#) was revised to include clauses banning the Potlatch and making it illegal to practice. The official legislation read,

"Every Indian or other person who engages in or assists in celebrating the Indian festival known as the "Potlatch" or the Indian dance known as the "Tamanawas" is guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not more than six nor less than two months in a jail or other place of confinement; and, any Indian or other person who encourages, either directly or indirectly an Indian or Indians to get up such a festival or dance, or to celebrate the same, or who shall assist in the celebration of same is guilty of a like offence, and shall be liable to the same punishment."

Eventually the potlatch law, as it became known, was amended to be more inclusive and address technicalities that had led to dismissals of prosecutions by the court. Legislation included guests



### Potlatch

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who participated in the ceremony. The indigenous people were too large to police and the law too difficult to enforce. Duncan Campbell Scott convinced Parliament to change the offense from criminal to summary, which meant ‘the agents, as justice of the peace, could try a case, convict, and sentence.’ Even so, except in a few small areas, the law was generally perceived as harsh and untenable. Even the Indian agents employed to enforce the legislation considered it unnecessary to prosecute, convinced instead that the potlatch would diminish as younger, educated, and more "advanced" Indians took over from the older Indians, who clung tenaciously to the custom.

Sustaining the customs and culture of their ancestors, indigenous people now openly hold potlatch to commit to the restoring of their ancestors' ways. The ban was only repealed in 1951.

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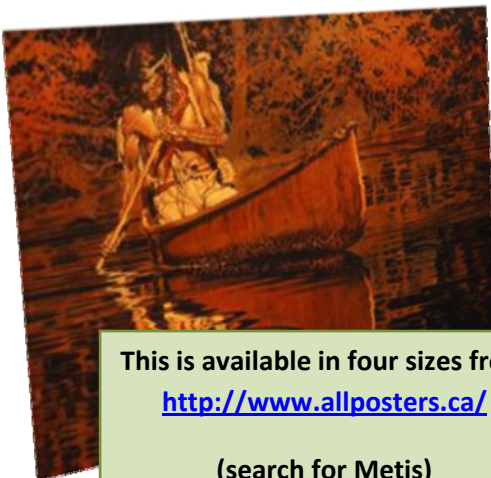


Réparation & Fabrication / Repairs & Fabric  
 Cuir, Nylon & Granite / Leather, Nylon & Granite

### HARNAIS JD HARNESS

We often feature short articles on businesses run by our members. It is our hope that our membership will support each other by patronizing these businesses. **Harnais JD Harness** is one such enterprise. As you enter the workshop of Jean-Denis Campeau, you are greeted by the soft odour of leather, as Jean-Denis specializes in the repair and fabrication of custom harnesses. The shop was previously owned by Mr., Barratt.

Jean-Denis and his wife Linda have had horses for sixteen years, used for both work and pleasure. Whether hauling firewood or pulling a sleigh, horses are a large part of their lives. The couple regularly go on sleigh rides up to Ste. Justine, Quebec with friends. Jean-Denis manufactures his own buggies and sleigh. A talented man.



This is available in four sizes from <http://www.allposters.ca/>

(search for Metis)



### Divorce

 Copied from the Ripple Effects newsletter

Provincial divorce laws do not apply on reserves. As a result, women on reserve do not have the same legal options in such disputes as women who live off reserve, leaving them to plead their case to the local band council.



### Harnais (Continued from Page 5)

hesitated, and the opportunity was lost. As fate would have it, the original sale fell through and Jean-Denis was quick to act. He has now been operating the business for eight years and he is as much a designer as a craftsman.

Although the shop smells of leather, it is actually used for only certain pieces. Most pieces are created with granite and nylon, as these materials are far more durable. The client can choose which materials they want to be used. It is his custom work that distinguishes his work from the Amish community of Waterloo, Ontario.

With its many traditional instruments, which furnish the walls as well as panoply of accessories, the shop offers an amusing sight. Customers come here for repairs and confection of harnesses as well as for the large assortment of accessories such as harness collars and bells of all shapes and sizes. Even motorcyclists visit to embellish their satchels.



### A Member Writes

Today I am filled with emotions, and tears are running down my face, for today the QUESTION of WHO I AM no longer haunts me. I was born 48 years ago, I was adopted. I knew I was adopted as far as I can remember, who I was as an individual however always plagued me.... my beliefs, what was taught to me, history of their genealogy... somehow I really did not just fit into that .. I knew in the back in my mind, that my ancestral background was more, what I mean is that most people have called me strange names like earth lady , bird lady, humanitarian to animals and bushwhacker lol. I LOVE the outdoors, I feel things that some tell me I am crazy, I feel the earth's energy , the smell of the air and I could go on .. but with all the unanswered questions, I have found out I am native and to me that explains what I have felt most of my life, the things I did or felt as a child, is now validated, to meet my biological family... I have felt reborn again, THIS IS WHO I REALLY AM.

I could tell you lots about my childhood, but that is not why I wrote this, it's about WHO WHAT WHERE WHY HOW NO WAY OMG I CANT BELIEVE IT, I HAVE GOOSE BUMPS, AND CHILLS

AND THE QUESTION HAS BEEN ANSWERED; THIS IS WHO I AM.....

It was very weird hearing those words on the phone when i inquired about Indian status... and the answers to the questions I was lost on ... but in the end, my life has come to be at peace with my child hood identity of who I am.

I AM MAY LOUISE GAGNE {MARRIED NAME, DIVORCED}

I AM MAY LOUISE KNAPP {ADOPTED NAME}

I AM MAY LOUISE BAUMHOUR {BIRTH NAME}

I may have 3 different names but I know who I am now and that makes my life so complete.

May



## Aboriginal Travels - Nicaragua

Copied from <http://www.invitationproject.ca/listing.php?Listing=6035>

Nicaragua, Central America's largest nation, was named for one of its original inhabitants, Chief Nicarao. The country is divided into three distinct geographical regions: the Pacific lowlands, the north-central mountains, and the Caribbean lowlands, also known as the Mosquito Coast or *Mosquitía*. Sometimes called the 'Land of Lakes and Volcanoes,' Nicaragua is the site of 11 major volcanoes—the ash of which has enriched the soil for farming—and two of Central America's largest lakes; *Lago de Managua* and *Lago de Nicaragua*, which is home to the world's only freshwater sharks. The nation's rich avian life includes the quetzal (holy bird of the Maya) and its jungles contain trees that grow up to 60 metres (200 ft) high.



Nicaragua's population is comprised primarily of *mestizos* (people of mixed European and Native American descent) but includes ethnic minorities of Native American, African and European background. The official language is Spanish, which although similar to that spoken in other Central American countries, is enriched with unique Nicaraguan slang. English and a number of indigenous tongues are spoken on the Caribbean coast.

Like most Central American countries, the basis of family structure is formed by the nuclear family. However, the system of *compadrazgo* (sets of relationships between a child and his or her

godparents, and between parents and their child's godparents) is extremely important. The culture is a blend of Hispanic and Native American elements. Music, which is a vital part of the country's many festivals, includes such instruments as *chirimias* (wind instruments) marimbas, guitars, *zuls* (traditional flutes) and maracas. Poetry is one of the countries most treasured arts and includes the works of Rubén Darío who is known as the 'Prince of Spanish-American literature.' Traditional crafts include gold- and silverware and the making of guitars, mandolins and violins, straw mats, and hammocks. People living on the Solentiname Islands are well-known for a colourful and unusual style of paintings known as '*Solentiname School*,' which has achieved international acclaim.



### Bamoseda

Bamoseda is an Aboriginal news magazine radio program which features national Aboriginal news, current affairs, features on community and culture. Bamosedá means “Walking together” in the Anishinabe language. The program is a positive vehicle to showcase Aboriginal issues, arts, culture and community as well as fair and balanced hard-hitting stories to a mainstream audience. It’s important to have a place in mainstream media because Aboriginal news should be integrated into the fabric of the society we live in.....this is why the program was named Bamosedá.

Bamoseda airs on the following Rogers Radio stations:

- The River Lethbridge (CFRV-FM)
- The River Lethbridge (CFRV-FM)
- Mountain FM Canmore (CHMN-FM)
- Mountain FM Squamish (CISQ-FM)
- Country 107.1 Abbotsford (CKQC-FM)
- World FM Edmonton (CKER-FM)
- The Kat North Bay (CKAT-AM)
- EZ Rock Timmins (CKGB-FM)
- Oldies 1310 Ottawa (CIWW-AM)



### International Women’s Day March 8th

In 1975, during International Women's Year, the United Nations began celebrating 8 March as International Women's Day. Two years later, in December 1977, the General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace to be observed on any day of the year by Member States, in accordance with their historical and national traditions. For the United Nations, International Women's Day has been observed on 8 March since 1975. The Day is traditionally marked with a message from the Secretary-General.

Women in Traditional Aboriginal Society - Women traditionally played a central role within the Aboriginal family, within Aboriginal government and in spiritual ceremonies. Men and women enjoyed considerable personal autonomy and both performed functions vital to the survival of Aboriginal communities. The men were responsible for providing food, shelter and clothing. Women were responsible for the domestic sphere and were viewed as both life-givers and the caretakers of life. As a result, women were responsible for the early socialization of children.

Traditional Aboriginal society experienced very little family breakdown. Husbands and wives were expected to respect and honour one another, and to care for one another with honesty and kindness. In





## International Women's Day (Continued from Page 8)

matriarchal societies, such as of the Mohawk, women were honoured for their wisdom and vision. Aboriginal men also respected women for the sacred gifts which they believed the Creator had given to them.

In Aboriginal teachings, passed on through the oral histories of the Aboriginal people of this province from generation to generation, Aboriginal men and women were equal in power and each had autonomy within their personal lives.

Today, society has almost caught up with what the aboriginal peoples enjoyed so long ago!!

## Quilt of Belonging – Eastern Cree



Cree artist and print-maker, Virginia Pésémapéo Bordeleau, drew on her peoples' spiritual relationship with the land and animals of the North for inspiration when creating the East Cree block. She has created her tribute to *L'ours chasseur des étoiles* ("The Star-chasing Bear") on white-tanned moose-hide. The backdrop is a hand-painted, navy sky beaded with planets, moon and stars. They are being liberally tossed into the heavens by embroidered bear from the stores upon his shoulders. In traditional Cree mythology, the bear united with the first human woman sent down from the skies, and henceforth became known as "grandfather."

The Cree's traditional territory borders onto eastern James Bay and southeastern Hudson Bay, stretching westward to the plains. This area, the Cree call *Iiyiyuuschi* (land of the people), is approximately two-thirds the size of France. The people speak five dialects, all related to the Algonquian linguistic family. They call themselves *Ayisiniwok* (true men) or *Iynu* (the people) and are Canada's largest First Nations group. The name Cree is the shortened version of "Kristenaux", given to them by French fur traders.

The East Cree have also been known as the East-Main Cree, James Bay Cree, and Moose Cree. The various bands often view their own identity as quite distinct from each other. Still, they share many of the same cultural values and social mores. Hunting is a major part of their traditional practices, filled with meaning, beliefs and rituals. It is believed that as much skill as the hunter may have, it is the animal who gives itself to be killed. The process is a relationship between hunter and hunted, and success a mutual effort on behalf of both man and environment.

Once small nomadic groups, the Cree first came into contact with Europeans in 1610, during the explorations of Henry Hudson. Traders sought the highly prized fur pelts the Cree collected,

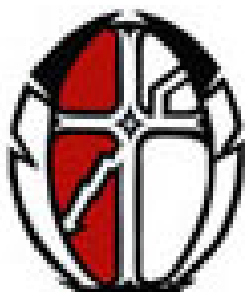


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We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.omfrc.org](http://www.omfrc.org)

[www.aboriginalstatus.org](http://www.aboriginalstatus.org)

## Quilt of Belonging – Eastern Cree (Continued from Page 9)

providing a new way for them to earn a living. In modern times, the incursion of mining, forestry and hydroelectric projects (such as the James Bay project) has drastically affected their way of life and resulted in the forced relocation of entire villages. Yet to this day, the territory provides many Cree with their traditional livelihood from wild game such as moose, caribou, geese, and fish.

### Sponsors:

Forrest and Jane Rietze

The photo and text are from:

<http://www.invitationproject.ca/region.php>

## A Member Writes:

I was just looking at an older issue of one of your newsletter and found some info about my people! The Pee Dee Indians!!!! Also how they mixed with the Africans that escaped into the Low Country!!!! This is before I knew anything about your organization. I came across it today while going through some of the old issues. This is so awesome!!! This is very accurate and part of my mixed ancestral heritage exactly. I will send you a photo of my Native ancestor who is Pee Dee/ Chowanoc Indian.

<http://www.omfrc.org/newsletter/jan10.pdf> page 3

## New Submissions!

We are always looking for new interesting submissions to add to upcoming issues of the OMFRC Newsletter. If you have something you would like to add to the newsletter please call or email us! We'd be happy to consider it for an upcoming issue.

**Is Your Membership  
Coming Up for  
Renewal?**



If it is, call 1-613-332-4789 and you can do it right over the phone in just a couple of minutes.