

# Feathers In The Wind

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## The Quilt of Belonging - Gitxsan

Copied from: <http://www.invitationproject.ca/listing.php?Listing=1085#desc>



This block was created by Valerie Morgan, whose Gitxsan-language name is *Stem gem gi pikxw*. Valerie's husband Ken, a Native artist and carver, assisted in its design using traditional "methods, colours and materials passed down from the grandparents." Backed by navy cashmere wool, a Welcome Dancer with Raven headdress and Frog cape is appliquéd in tan moose hide. Turquoise leather strips depict water and a red Spring Salmon is outlined in white buttons symbolizing fish eggs. Treasured heirloom dentallium shells decorate the headdress, while twelve fringes on the cape include matte teal beads, iridescent teardrop beads, and copper bugles that represent the historic shields of Gitxsan warriors.

Since time immemorial, rugged Mount Rocher de Boule and the Seven Sisters Mountain Range have stood like sentinels of the Gitxsan people along northwestern British Columbia's Skeena and Bulkley rivers. 70 percent of the Gitxsan Nation live in the traditional territories in five villages (Gitwangak, Gitsegukla, Gitanmaax, Glen Vowell, Kispiox) and the two provincial municipalities of Hazelton and New Hazelton. This largely youthful population exhibits a strong cultural vitality. The Gitxsan language is Tsimshianic.

Each spring when the Skeena River swells, the Gitxsan ready themselves for the returning salmon. As the river recedes, the Salmon People (a race of people from the sea) begin their journey upriver to spawn. In the villages, the ritual of the *First Salmon* is performed with welcome dances, feasting and the return of complete salmon bones to the river. These traditions guarantee abundant salmon harvests for generations to come. Salmon has long been the mainstay of the Gitxsan people, who developed many fishing methods, including traps, fences, spearing, weirs, and dip nets. When the salmon population dwindled each fall, the people honed their hunting and trapping skills on the Pine Marten, Wolverine, Mountain Goat, Black Bear and Marmot.

Gitxsan oral histories, or *adwaak*, date back ten thousand years and validate the people's connection to the land. In recent decades they have been on a journey of gathering these histories from the elders, resulting in an archival collection of cultural identity that includes over ten thousand items. These histories, legends and folklore provide invaluable information about genealogy and historical changes affecting weather patterns, local geology, and wildlife. The Gitxsan did not simply occupy their traditional territories; they were a part of the land.



## Living History



As we go about just living we treat the news as a distraction rather than a reflection of living history. The Internet is literally changing the world. In the next twenty years society and the world will change beyond recognition.

Knowledge is becoming increasingly available to everyone. Social networking is changing the very fabric of society and how people interact with each other. The Arab Spring is spreading across the world bringing democracy.

Voting will be next. The party system is a failure. The next evolution in society will be the public's ability to vote on every issue. The role of politicians will become one of distributing information to inform the public and to put the issues before them.

Borders will become increasingly irrelevant. National pride will become less important as various issues unite peoples regardless of where they live. Racism will go the same route as the melting pot of humanity creates a new human race. It will become increasingly important to honour our heritage and ensure traditions are maintained.



## Aboriginal Travels Guatemala

Copied from  
<http://www.invitati.onproject.ca/listing.php?Listing=6020>

Guatemala, roughly the size of Newfoundland, is known as the 'land of eternal spring' because of its climate. Its inhabitants can be split into two main groups: *Mestizos* or *ladinos* (people of mixed Mayan and European ancestry) and *indigenas* (indigenous Mayan). The official language is Spanish, although over 20 Mayan languages are recognized as well.

Much of Guatemalan life revolves around the family. Children are considered to reach adulthood at 15, when the *quinceaños* celebrates this important event. This and other special occasions often feature *piñatas*, hanging paper mâché figures stuffed with treats that are suspended above blindfolded guests, who attempt to break them open with a bat. *Padrinos* (godparents) play an integral part of family life, but Guatemalans also believe that parents are *espejos* (mirrors) through whom the young learn who they are and what they

can become. In a society where men and women tend to socialize with their own gender, men value the companionship of their other male friends.

Guatemala produces and exports some of the world's finest coffee enjoyed in many countries including Canada. Its national crafts include beautiful ceramics, paintings, jewelry and baskets, but the country is most famous for its weavings, produced with brilliantly coloured, hand-spun wool. The intricate and vibrantly woven designs express aspects of spirituality and community, and the patterns, dating back to pre-Conquest times, are associated with specific villages or groups, thus serving as a form of identification for the wearers. Weaving is highly respected in Guatemalan culture and is strongly supported and encouraged by the family.

## *I Remember*



I remember my father who fought in World War II. His regiment was at Dieppe and suffered ninety percent casualties. I remember my mother's father who fought in both World Wars and was wounded a number of times. I never knew my father's father, he was killed in France a month before my father was born. As a result of his death my father ended up in an orphanage and was sent to Canada as a British Home Child. Every family has similar stories. Share them with your children. The freedom we enjoy was earned by every man and woman who served in our armed forces.





## Ben "Nighthorse" Campbell - The Calm that Started with a Storm.

Ben Nighthorse Campbell can be described as many things: Olympian three time national champion, Pan American Games Gold Medalist, renowned artist and last but not least, three term United States senator. It is my belief that many would have been proud to have completed only one of the above feats. Mr. Campbell's unrelenting determination lead him from a difficult situation that he could have allowed to define his life, to defining it for himself over and over again.

Ben Campbell was brought into this world on April 13th, 1933, the son of Albert Campbell, a member of the northern Cheyenne tribe and Marry Vierra of Portuguese descent. His parents met under what many would consider to be fairly odd circumstances: in a hospital while both were seeking treatment, Mary for tuberculosis and Albert for alcoholism. It was these two diseases and the time it made them spend in the hospital that lead to their relationship.

It was also these two conditions that would define and shape his young life. Despite rehabilitation, his father would combat alcoholism for much of Ben's life, frequently disappearing for weeks or even months at a time. Tuberculosis, the disease that afflicted Mary, would render her unable to properly care for her children or herself. As a result of the absence of both parents, Ben spent half of his life under the care of the St. Patrick's Catholic Orphanage.

Not surprisingly, Ben's teenage years were defined by criminal acts and absenteeism from school. He was involved with numerous crimes varying from theft of guns, cars and gasoline, to drunk driving. Having been arrested twice and having spent time in jail, it did not look as though there was much hope for young Ben. However, all of this changed while teenaged Ben was working as a fruit picker and was introduced to Judo by several Japanese coworkers.

Judo, a Japanese martial art, brought Ben the will, love and determination that he identified as what "kept [him] off the streets and out of jail". Ben would later enlist in the United States Air Force and would be stationed in South Korea for two years during the Korean War. Even while performing his duties as an officer, he continued to focus on his education and judo training in any spare time. This eventually led to him earning his high school equivalency diploma and a brown belt in judo.

After returning home from the military, he enrolled at San Jose State University. Upon completion of his bachelor's degree in 1957, he moved to Tokyo where he continued his studies at Meiji University, while furthering his Judo instruction. Ben's dedication and passion for Judo lead him to many notable successes in the sport. He won a gold medal at the 1963 Pan-American Games and would eventually serve as the Captain of the 1964 United States Olympic Judo team.

His passion for Judo was actually the driving force that led Ben Campbell to move his life across the Pacific Ocean. There he was exposed not only to Judo but to many different things. One of those being, metal working, would act as the means to bring a new perspective to traditional ways. In the book "Ben Nighthorse Campbell: An American Warrior", by Herman Viola, Campbell tells of learning to make jewellery from his father and flattening silver dollars on train tracks for the materials. Ben was exposed to the world renowned metal working done by swordsmiths in Japan. By combining the traditional art of Native American jewellery-making with the refined metal working techniques of the Japanese swordsmiths, he began creating jewellery that would eventually lead to him win over two hundred design awards for his unique jewellery.

Almost serendipitously, one day when Campbell was scheduled to deliver jewellery (via his single engine airplane) he was prohibited from doing so due to weather concerns. Having some sudden free time, he decided to attend a meeting of the Colorado Democrats who happened to be looking for someone to run for the 59th House District. Campbell was persuaded to become that candidate and eventually won. After serving for four years in the State Senate, Campbell was elected as a candidate for the United States House of Representatives. Doing this was an extraordinary feat, as he beat the incumbent in a close race and became the first Native American to hold a seat in the House of Representatives in over twenty years.

Ben would go on to accomplish many extraordinary feats including being involved in legislation that would settle water disputes involving Native American water rights. He also successfully fought to have the Custer Battlefield monument in Montana renamed as Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument in honour of the Native Americans who lost their lives there in the battle of 1876. Besides that accomplishment, Campbell was also instrumental in establishing the National Museum of the American Indian within the Smithsonian. Another very notable act was Ben's choice to successfully switch from the Democratic to the Republican Party, continuing to win with the Republicans in subsequent re-elections. His reasoning in making the switch is thought to have been his belief that fiscally conservative behaviour and a desire to see the budget balanced fit better with the Republican Party.

Ben epitomizes the thought that even from humble and misguided beginnings; amazing things are possible if we make the right choices to achieve them. I believe that is perfectly summarized in the following quote:

**"Nobody can go back and start a new beginning but anyone can start today and make a new ending."** -Maria Robinson

Submitted by Mattison Chinneck



## August, 2011 What is being said?

"After centuries of abuse and discrimination, their cultural and physical survival is at stake because there is insufficient political will to acknowledge, respect and protect Indigenous Peoples' rights when these rights are seen as obstacles to economic-growth."

"The ongoing human rights violations against tens of millions of indigenous people across the Americas are alarming".

Susan Lee, Americas Director at Amnesty International.

This article is reprinted from the newsletter of Ripple Effects Ltd. The Aboriginal (First Nations, Métis & Inuit) Awareness Training Company. [www.ripplefx.ca](http://www.ripplefx.ca)

## Native Soldiers



## Employment Opportunity

Part time secretarial position. Ideally, the successful applicant

will have experience with general office procedures and a working knowledge of computers. Bilingual in English and French would be a definite asset. Flexible hours and the potential to work from home. Possibility of eventually working full time.



## Welcome

We are pleased to welcome two new genealogy researchers, Todd Young and David Thomson. With enough volunteers we may be able to catch up on the backlog of family tree research.

## re: Aboriginal Studies Programs



The OMFRC has two primary objectives:

- Document Métis and First Nations family history (in both Canada and the United States)

- Promote pride in aboriginal ancestry

In keeping with our second objective, we fully support Aboriginal Studies programs. In response to

various requests from a number of instructors we are offering the following:

We have created a new website [www.aboriginalliving.com](http://www.aboriginalliving.com) (not yet online) which is basically an encyclopaedia of all things aboriginal. New articles will be added to the site every month.

We would be pleased to include course materials relating to any Aboriginal Studies program on the website. Fleming College is the first to take advantage of this offer.

We will also consider including essays, etc. created by students.

We will undertake research to add any specific topic to the website to meet the needs of the course instructors. We would also be pleased to consider any other suggestions you may have that would enhance the student's experience.

There is no charge for any of these services. If you know of anyone who might be interested in participating, please contact us at [omfrcinfo@gmail.com](mailto:omfrcinfo@gmail.com)

Art Haines,  
Director



The Elders say we move towards what we think about.



## Indian Cookies



My name is James Timmins, and I am Métis of Mohawk descent and am a new member to OMFRC. I am a cook by trade.

I will start by sharing a bit about myself. As I already mentioned I am Métis. I am living in and grew-up in the traditional territory of the Attawandaron people (London, Ont). I remember as a young boy hunting for squirrel in the surrounding forest with my Father and Grandfather. My Grandmother who was from the Allegany region of New York State, would make squirrel pie. Also I remember eating Turtle, Rabbit, and Deer. Today I prefer Moose or Caribou as opposed to Deer as my wife is a Cree woman from the James Bay Coast. We have 2 Daughters a Son and 3 Grandchildren.

The recipe I want to share with you today is from an Oneida Elder who also is Clan Mother of the Turtle Clan". When I was the Aboriginal Homeless Diversion Cook at an organization here in London, we'd share some ideas on recipes and this is one.

### "Indian Cookies"

8 cups of flour  
1 1/2 caps of vanilla extract  
1 1/2 caps of vinegar  
6 eggs  
1 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon into dry ingredients  
1 1/2 tablespoon of melted butter into liquid ingredients  
1 1/2 cup brown sugar and Add 2 cups of milk into the egg mixture  
4 tablespoons of Magic Baking Powder

Add to the flour 1 cup of raisins or mix only 1/2 cup to half the mixture

Add liquid to the flour and start to mix.

Flour the working area with flour and put half the dough mixture out, gradually add flour to make the dough mixture easy to handle, get your rolling pin out and roll into about 1 1/2 in., get a cookie cutter or use a small medium size can to form a circle. Start to cut out the cookies, oil your pan with vegetable oil or lard.

Bake in pre heated oven at 380 for about 20 minutes until golden brown.

Until next time, live well, and eat well.

## Will You Be Métis?

I'm convinced that the government will soon impose a very limited definition of Métis. Basically it will include only the descendants of those associated with the Prairie Provinces and a few other isolated areas. I strongly disagree with this. Look up Métis in the dictionary and see what the definition is. The Indian Act was intended to eliminate the Indian by assimilation. By limiting who would be classed as Métis, the government is continuing that policy.

## How's this for a Pumpkin?







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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)

## 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.*

### 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.



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