

Land Acknowledgement with history

“We wish to acknowledge this land on which the Church of St. Mary Magdalene stands. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, the Anishinaabe and the Mississaugas of the Credit. This land is part of the Dish with One spoon Treaty, and The Two Row Wampum Belt. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to care for the plants and creatures provided by the Creator, and to live and worship on this land.”

This is a brief history of treaty agreements and Wampum belts related to the land acknowledgement. There is a link is at the end of this article from which this text originated.

The Dish with One Spoon Treaty

Sewatokwat'shera't Belt-Great Law of Peace

In 1142 Indigenous people of the Americas had a law called “the Dish with One Spoon” to describe hunting territory to be shared by two or more nations. This treaty or agreement show us just how old such agreements were. Centuries later, this image was still vivid in the relationships entered into between Indigenous people. It had carried on from generation to generation.

In fact, in downtown Toronto today, the land acknowledgement declares that we are on the traditional lands of The Dish with One Spoon Treaty.

It recalls the treaty or agreement between the Anishinaabe and the Haudenosaunee made in Montreal in 1701 as part of the Great Peace of Montreal, which includes a good part of Southern Ontario. It is such a beautiful, intimate and powerful image of a relationship. The phrase signifies that those sharing the land share a hunting territory. They have the responsibility to take care of the land and the creatures within it. They must be sure that the dish is never empty; that is, they are expected to limit the game they take and leave enough for others. There is to be “no knife near our dish,” indicating that the sharing is to be without bloodshed.

This treaty is graphically illustrated by a wampum belt called **The Dish with One Spoon wampum belt**. This part of the Great Law of Peace was preserved on the wampum belt, as were many other crucial elements of the law. The belt is short, narrow and plain. It bears a round purple area---the dish with one spoon---on a field of white. Haudenosaunee and Anishinabe Treaty (circa 1142, and again in 1701)

Photo: <https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-Dish-with-One-Spoon-treaty-I-hear-it-frequently-referenced-at-indigenous-peoples-land-affirmations-in-Toronto-but-the-library-says-it-is-an-undocumented-treaty-What-do-we-know-about-it>

A Wampum is created from the shell of a clam. The bead is cut from the white and purple parts of the shell. The shell is thought of as a living record. A wampum belt is a series of these shells tied together like a necklace. Different colours on the belt as well as the shape of the image on the belt symbolize the event being



commemorated. It could be offered to a chief, to an outstanding warrior, it could be offered to a couple from two different tribes who were being united, it could be a form of currency, and it could symbolize a treaty between nations. It is part of recording the oral history of a Nation. While Wampum belts were very common in the East, weaving often illustrated the oral history in parts of the West. As recently as 1924, the RCMP, with approval from the federal cabinet, seized the Wampum that was used to sanction council proceedings of the Six Nations band within the Haudenosaunee Confederacy in Ontario and removed the chiefs from office. In the Great Law of Peace, it is stated that: "It will turn out well for us to do this: we will say, 'We promise to have only one dish among us; in it will be beaver tail and no knife will be there'... We will have one dish, which means that we will all have equal shares of the game roaming about in the hunting grounds and fields, and then everything will become peaceful among all of the people; and there will be no knife near our dish; which means that if there is a knife were there, someone might presently get cut, causing bloodshed, and this is troublesome, should it happen thus, and for this reason there should be no knife near our dish." There are references in early European records of dealings with the Haudenosaunee that the boundaries of the hunting grounds were sometimes marked with trees.

The Two Row Wampum Belt

The Haudenosaunee and the Dutch agreed to call this the Silver Covenant Chain of Friendship. Unlike the Dish with One Spoon which was a treaty between Indigenous Nations, the Two Row Wampum belt, created in 1613, represented the oldest recorded treaty between Indigenous people and new settlers from Europe, in this case, the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch.

The Haudenosaunee and the Dutch agreed on three principles to make this treaty last.

The first was friendship; the Haudenosaunee and their white brothers will live in friendship.

The second principle is peace; there will be peace between their two people.



The final principle is forever; that this agreement will last forever.

The belt has two purple rows running alongside each other representing two boats. One boat is the canoe with the Haudenosaunee way of life, laws, and people. The other is the Dutch ship with their laws, religion, and people in it. The boats will travel side by side down the river of life. Each nation will respect the ways of each other and will not interfere with the other. “Together we will travel in Friendship and in Peace Forever; as long as the grass is green, as long as the water runs downhill, as long as the sun rises in the East and sets in the West, and as long as our Mother Earth will last.”

For the complete article:

<https://circlesforreconciliation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Respect-Trust-Treaties-Reconciliation.pdf>