

Spirit of the Island: Manitoulin's People  
Stories of Indigenous-Settler Historical Dynamics

*Ezhi-minidoowang Minis: Minidoo-wining Bemaadizijig Wiin E-zhi-kendaang  
gaa-zhiwebizid nji Anishinaabewid-Gaa-bi-daajig gaa-bi-zhi-gigdoowaad*

Gathering Nine – ‘Forgotten Children – Author’s Notes’



by Dr. Rhonda L. Paulsen

with Anishinaabemowin Translators Elder Shirley I. Williams-Pheasant and Isadore Toulouse



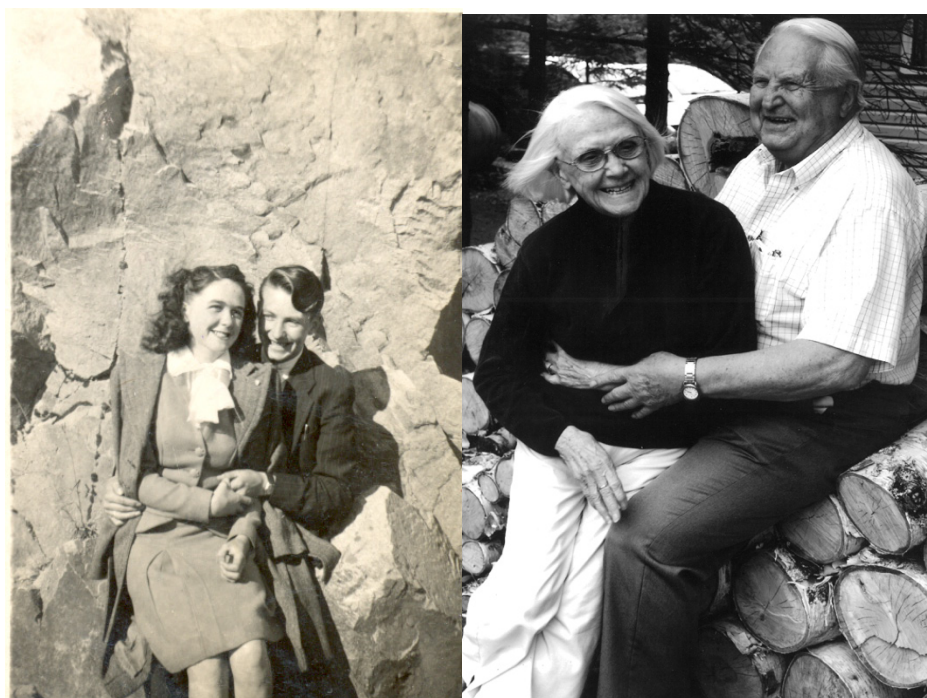
*Lovingly dedicated to my mom and dad,  
Ronald Oscar and Elizabeth Patricia Paulsen*



*Ezhi-zaagigwaa ndoo-minaajaak Ngashi miiniwaa noos,  
Ronald Oscar miiniwaa Elizabeth Patricia Paulsen*



*Affectueusement dédié à ma mère et à mon père,  
Ronald Oscar et Elizabeth Patricia Paulsen*



1947 - Terrace, British Columbia      2010 - Manitoulin Island, Ontario

To honour the life of my most amazing dad, 1930-2014  
and in loving memory of my dear son Joey, 1982.



*Wii-mnaadendamong noos-ba bemaadiziwinim gaa-moonji gchi-twaawid, 1930-2014  
miiniwaa wii-menjimenmog ngwisen-ba gaa-zhi-gchi-twaawendamog Joey-ba, 1982.*



*Pour rendre hommage à la vie de mon père, un être exceptionnel, 1930-2014  
et à la mémoire de mon cher fils Joey, 1982.*



*First Nations, Metis, and Inuit pedagogy aim to create a safe and respectful learning environment for all students and teachers alike. Due to the nature of the material shared in this book, you may encounter information and perspectives that are new and that challenge views of community, society, spirituality, history, and contemporary situations.*

*This may create a sense of confusion, discomfort, or pain. As you proceed through reading our stories and the supportive data, we encourage you to contact the teacher, counsellor, or First Nations, Metis, Inuit representative at your school or district school board.*

*Please do not think you need to cope with reactions on your own.*



## STUDENT CENTER – GATHERING NINE



photo by R. L. Paulsen

*“What is life?  
It is the flash of a firefly in the night.  
It is the breath of a buffalo in winter.  
It is the little shadow that runs across the grass.  
And loses itself in the sunset.”*

*author unknown*

### Learning Outcomes ~ upon completion of this gathering, the student will be able to...

1. Realize the importance of maintaining a strong knowledge base of historical and current issues concerning First Nations, Inuit, and Metis societies.
2. Ethically and morally discuss historical and contemporary events in the context of Indigenous-Settler dynamics/experiences.
3. Assess meanings embedded in public statements; be socially responsible.

## **Child Welfare and the 60's Scoop**

The time known as the 60's Scoop is similar to the residential school system era in Canada in that assimilation policies are reflected in the strategy. During the 60's Scoop the Children's Aid Society and social workers were employed by the government to conduct assessments of homes on reserves. The evaluations itemized specific living conditions to be assessed, such as: "Was there indoor plumbing?"; "What were the number of rooms in relation to the number of people living in the dwelling?"; and "Was there any evidence of abuse?"

The difference between the two eras of residential schooling and the 60's Scoop is that during the 1960's children were removed out of their homes to either live in boarding residences or foster homes outside of their communities, or they were adopted into non-Indigenous families, most often to European countries. When the adoptions took place, there were no records kept that connected these children to their family of origin. There were also circumstances, such as with Zoey, when the decision for relocation was based on whether or not there was a school on the reserve. Whatever the reason the outcome was the same: forced removal from one's family, community, heritage, and culture.

As with Zoey's experiences of displacement while living in a dominant society, trying to return home after years of separation and feeling a loss of connection, or receiving negative feedback from teachers in mainstream schools, Manitoulin secondary school students reflect on similar events. Memories of labeling and stereotyping for these Anishinabek students include:

- *"When it was finally time to make my decision to go into high school, the teacher was one of the people who set the impression on me that I couldn't handle the advanced level. By the time I made all my decisions I finally chose general, but I was still under the impression that I would barely be able to handle that."*

- *“In the high school I went to off the island, I was the only Native in the class... In the city people say that: ‘They come from a reserve, they’re not going to know as much as we do in the city’.”*

Other Anishinabek students reflect on returning home to Manitoulin Island after being away, and then attending the cultural secondary school:

- *“Before I came here I seemed lost. At the other school, I didn’t learn anything about what it was like to be Native. I had a status card – that was my identity. But when I came here, there is a greater Native population so I’ve found out more of my identity. I’ve found out who I am, what it means to be an Indian. Now I’m a calmer person, happier, because I’ve found out who I am.”*
- *“When I moved here I became more aware of the cultural aspects of being a Native person... and that’s how I found out who I am, that it’s not just a status card that means I’m an Indian.”*



## **Church and Government Apologies**

Residential schools continued to operate in Canada until the last Federally run school closed in 1996. It was during this time of school closures that church and government apologies were made for the residential school system.

- 1986 (and again on October 27, 1998) the United Church of Canada offered their apology
- 1991 brought the apology from the Catholic Church
- 1993 the Anglican Church of Canada delivered its apology
- 1994 the Presbyterian Church offered its apology, called ‘Our Confession’
- January 7, 1998 Canada’s Statement of Reconciliation offered an apology to residential school survivors
- June 11, 2008 the Statement of Apology was offered by the Canadian government to Inuit, Metis, and First Nations peoples

- November 24, 2017 Prime Minister Justin Trudeau apologized on behalf of the Canadian government to Inuit residential school survivors.



### **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW)**

The Highway of Tears refers to the stretch of Highway 16 that runs between Prince Rupert, Terrace, and Prince George in British Columbia, Canada. It was given this name after a significant number of Indigenous women went missing or were murdered in this area. Between 1969 and 2006 it has been reported that there were approximately six hundred Indigenous women missing or found murdered across Canada, with an estimated fifty being located on the Highway of Tears between 1988 and 1995. Many of these cases have never been investigated, while other investigations remain as cold cases.

Amnesty International, the Assembly of First Nations, and the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) have all helped raise awareness to this grisly situation, and have petitioned the government to end violence against Indigenous women in Canada. For example, NWAC has worked diligently to document cases and petition for MMIW. Their research was confirmed by the RCMP in 2013: there are 1,181 cases of missing and/or murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada, with the majority being in the area of the Highway of Tears ([nwac.ca](http://nwac.ca)).

The government of Canada launched a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women in December 2015 and October 4 has been allocated as a day set apart annually to honour and acknowledge the lives of these women and girls who are gone. Canadians are encouraged to take a moment of silence on this day or hold a Sisters in Spirit vigil. The

NWAC offers several suggestions for holding vigils, which has become an international movement for social change.



### Personal Inquiry

1. *The Forgotten Children* holds much positivity, even in her suffering. It is difficult to think about the horrific and challenging experiences that Zoey has had throughout her life. At the same time, she passes on her spirit of healing and personal growth through sharing her story with us. In the privacy of personal introspection, ponder the life lessons that you can absorb through hearing Zoey's story.

2. What ways do you think you could make a difference to some of the situations discussed in Zoey's story? For example, organizing vigils for missing and murdered Indigenous women or creating and sharing art.

3. I encourage you to take a moment to look up two or more of the Apologies listed above.

Analyze the wording, context, as well as the overall content: consider whether or not you think the Apologies are authentic and/or sufficient.

a) If yes, why?

b) If no, why not?



## Indigenous Art and Artists

*“My people will sleep for one hundred years.  
When they awake, it will be the artists  
that give them back their spirit.”*

*Louis Riel, 1885*

Indigenous artists from Manitoulin Island and area include the following:

### Bell, Leland (Bebaminojmat)

Anishinabe artist Leland Bell was born in 1953 in Wikwemikong, Manitoulin Island. He spent much of his youth at Cultural Art Camps on the island which influenced him through teachings, ceremonies, and art instruction. Bell, a university graduate in Native Studies, also enjoyed creative writing and music until he shifted his focus and began painting professionally in 1976. He has had exhibitions across Canada and in Switzerland.



*Leland Bell*

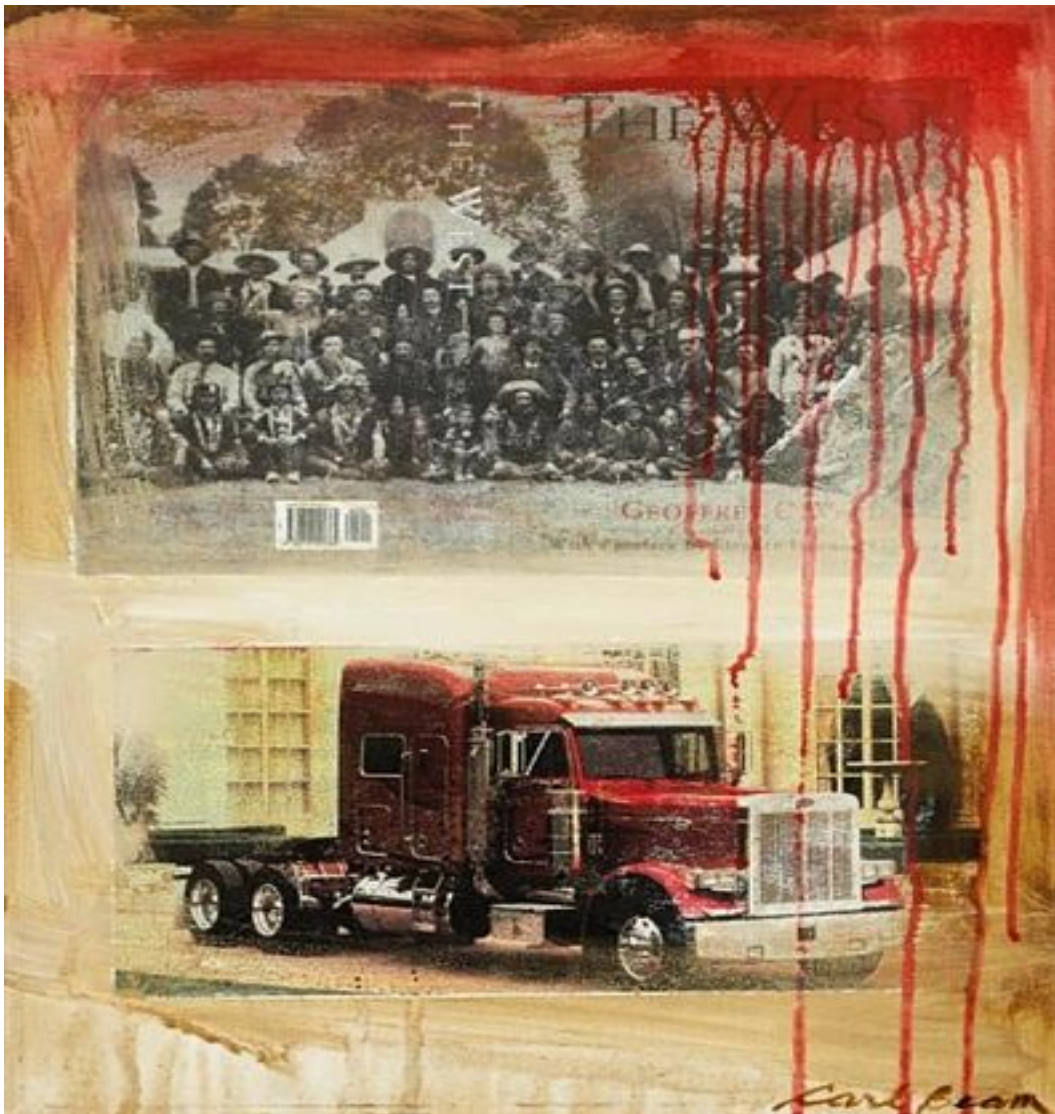
Madahbee, Melvin is a prominent member of the Manitoulin School of Art and has been chronicling the beauty and spirit of the northern Ontario wilderness since the age of ten. His inspiration for painting 'Manitoulin Ghost Deer' came from stories his father told him about the sacred nature of the white buffalo and the white moose. The painting presents artistic styles that have become associated with Indigenous art: the x-ray motif (a style that depicts the Spirit World seen from within), bold black out-lines, and brilliant colours.



*Manitoulin Ghost Deer*

*oil on canvas, by Melvin Madahbee*

Migwans (Beam), Carl (1943-2005) A contemporary Ojibwe artist from M'Chigeeng, Beam was the first Indigenous artist to have their work purchased by the National Gallery of Canada. Beam has lived in New Mexico and Peterborough, Ontario, where his 'Columbus Project' was first exhibited. He has been recognized as one of Canada's most important artists and has worked in a variety of mediums, including canvas, stone, wood, and lithography.



*The West*

*Carl Beam*

Morrisseau, Norval (1931-2007) whose Anishinabe name is Copper Thunderbird, was an Ojibwe artist from northwest Ontario near Thunder Bay. He started drawing on rocks and wet sand; later his painting emerged into the style prominently associated with and influential on Indigenous art today, evident in Madahbee's painting above. Morrisseau's style introduced using predominant black lines to distinguish features (rather than shading), bright colours, x-ray motif, two-dimensionality, and linear interconnections.

Morrisseau is referred to as an Eastern Woodlands artist and is considered the founder of contemporary Indigenous art. He became the target of much debate when he was the first to take the pictography of his ancestral beliefs to the general public. His major themes include Indigenous spirituality and teachings, which later evolved to include Christian themes as well.



*Mishibizhiw (Water Spirit)*

*Morrisseau*

Odjig, Daphne (1919-2016) of Potawatomi, Odawa, and English heritage, grew up in Wikwemikong on Manitoulin Island. Odjig was a self-taught artist whose paintings were inspired by her grandparents' stories of their ancestors. Although influenced by realism, cubism, and abstract expressionism, she has become referred to as a Woodlands artist. Odjig is considered to be the most important contemporary Indigenous woman painter in Canada and has received the Order of Canada and Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts.



*Listening (Homage to Grandfather Series)*

*Daphne Odjig*

## Birch Bark Biting

Birch bark biting is a traditional Anishinabek art form also referred to as ‘birch bark transparencies’. It is a process of using the eyeteeth to bite down on small pieces of birch bark that have been folded. Depending on the pressure of the bite, a design can include textured differentiations from surface markings to light passing through the bark. Birch bark biting is used in storytelling and for beadwork patterns.



*Birch Bark Biting* *personal gift*  
*Annabel Eyres, Snow Lake, Manitoba*

## Resources

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Wood-Salomon, Zoey (2006) Healing Through Art. Owen Sound, ON: Ningwakwe Learning Press.

Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) online resources

Faceless Dolls Project: Each Statistic Tells A Story

[https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Faceless\\_Dolls\\_Project\\_Each\\_Statistic\\_Tells\\_A\\_Story](https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Faceless_Dolls_Project_Each_Statistic_Tells_A_Story)

Paper Doll Template Blue Dress (girl)

[https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2013\\_Paper\\_Doll\\_Template\\_Blue\\_Dress\\_girl](https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2013_Paper_Doll_Template_Blue_Dress_girl)

Paper Doll Template Blue Dress (woman)

[https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2013\\_Paper\\_Doll\\_Template\\_Blue\\_Dress\\_woman](https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2013_Paper_Doll_Template_Blue_Dress_woman)

Paper Doll Template Green Dress (woman)

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Paper Doll Template Pink Dress (girl)

[https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2013\\_Paper\\_Doll\\_Template\\_Pink\\_Dress\\_girl](https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2013_Paper_Doll_Template_Pink_Dress_girl)

Paper Doll Template Yellow Dress (woman)

[https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2013\\_Paper\\_Doll\\_Template\\_Yellow\\_Dress\\_woman](https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2013_Paper_Doll_Template_Yellow_Dress_woman)

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Voices of Our Sisters in Spirit: A Report to Families and Communities

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## Gathering Nine:

### ‘Forgotten Children’ ~ ‘Gaa-nenjigaazjig Binoojiinyag’

#### Video Credits

Contributor’s personal experience story: Zoey Wood-Salomon

Author’s Notes: Dr. Rhonda L. Paulsen

Anishinaabemowin Translators:

Elder Shirley I. Williams-Pheasant and Isadore Toulouse

‘Daisy and the White Butterfly for Missing Sisters’, oil on canvas: Zoey Wood-Salomon

Oil on canvas ‘Walking in Birches’ banner: Laura L. Thippahwong

Cover canoe photo: Elizabeth Thippahwong

Videographers: Daniel Wood-Salomon and Evan Brockest

Closed Captioning: GrassRootsDesign



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*Spirit of the Island: Manitoulin’s People ~ Stories of Indigenous – Settler Historical Dynamics*

and/or accompanying Instructor’s Guidebook, please visit [www.pallasedu.com](http://www.pallasedu.com)

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English version: ISBN 978-0-9938026-2-1

French version: ISBN 978-0-9938026-4-5

Anishinaabemowin/English: ISBN 978-0-9938026-6-9

#### Accompanying Instructor’s Guidebook:

English version: ISBN 978-0-9938026-3-8

French version: ISBN 978-0-9938026-5-2

