Edmonton, *Amiskwaciy*: Suburbs for Settlers

Rob Shields, Dianne Gillespie, Kieran Moran
City Region Studies Centre, Faculty of Extension
University of Alberta (Nov. 2015)

The first suburb of Edmonton, the capital of the oil-rich western Canadian prairie province of Alberta, was arguably an Indian reservation. Situated inconveniently close to the settlement that had grown up around a Hudson's Bay trading fort, the reservation was eliminated as its starving populace one-by-one 'took scrip' in the mid-to-late 1800s, and accepted payment to cede their Aboriginal rights to reservation land.[1] Almost a century later around 1970, parts of the area of the reservation of the Papaschase Cree became the site of an idealistic project to create an affordable suburb, "Mill Woods". The way in which Edmonton is cast as a place and region or "spatialized", is one in which this past is "flattened, shifted, reimagined, and elided in spectacular and spectral settler imaginaries" (Baloy 2015:19-21). The effect is to render the aboriginal past barely present. We explore the intersection of the social ideals of the 1960s and 1970s and the subsequent influx of migrants from all over the world with colonial oppressions that are an unacknowledged legacy of settler society.

"Mill Woods will be a new urban community housing over 120,000 people, in its own right - a new city in a suburban environment" proclaimed the Edmonton City Planning Department (City of Edmonton, 1971:1). No doubt Edmonton's Chief Commissioner P.F. Bargen and the Executive Director of the Alberta Housing Commission, B.R. Orysiuk were proud of their plans for this new suburb. An ambitious development to encompass over 6000 acres, Mill Woods began as a publicly sponsored land assembly initiated in 1969, the first of its kind in North America (See Fig. 1).

Canada is a suburban country. More than two-thirds of Canadians now live in suburbs and a full 98% of growth in Edmonton between 2006 and 2011 occurred in suburban developments (Gordon and Janzen, 2014). There are numerous approaches to defining suburbs and no fewer choices in deciding which definition to use in a specific context. The question arises, what kind of suburb is Mill Woods? Forsyth lists several definitions offered by various authors (2012). For example, suburbs have been defined by their peri-urban location relative to the urban core and the rural periphery or as mainly residential developments with segregated uses. Mill Woods falls within these two definitions of suburbia since it is spatially located between Edmonton's urban core and the rural areas of southeast Edmonton. It is mainly a residential development with segregated services. But with a hyper-diverse population of over 80,000, Mill Woods defies the image of white, nuclear families that represent the stereotypes of the twentieth century North American suburb (see Figure 1).

---

1 For the purposes of this chapter, "Aboriginal" denotes those who fall under treaties and administrative categories of entitlement and are thus defined with the Canada's nineteenth century *Indian Act*. "Indigenous" covers a wider group, including all those with a claims to an Aboriginal heritage. While "Native" is colloquially used, it is imprecise and is confused and contested by those born in or with long family histories in the area as in "a native of Edmonton". "Indian" refers to a colonial and governmental discourse such as in the Federal Government of Canada's *Indian Act* (R.S.C. 1876; 1985; 2015; see also R.S.C. 1857). For a more complete history see Dickason 2002.

Figure 1. Portrait of Mill Woods today. Top Left: Edmonton Public Library, Seniors & Multicultural Centre. Top Right: Mill Woods Town Centre Transit Hub. Bottom Left: Gurdwara Siri Guru Singh Sabha Sikh temple. Bottom Right: Example of original (1970s) Townhouses (Photo by Kieran Moran)

Ultimately however, Forsyth suggests that we abandon the word suburb all together in understanding these spaces and focus on more context-specific definitions of space (Forsyth, 2012). One of the more predominant ways of understanding suburbs is by examining the transport habits of the residents. Along these lines, Gordon and Janzen's (2014) Canadian study delimited suburbs according to the relative intensity of use of public transit, walking/cycling, and automobile commuting. First, they sort census tracts by their potential for public transit service based on population density. Second, they classify these areas by the dominant mode of transportation used to travel to work. However, we have serious reservations. Census data is notoriously unhelpful because it disregards seasonal differences in transportation modes, allowing for only the one mode that is used most frequently throughout the year. That is, mode-share is often ignored. Five-month-a-year, seasonal bicycle commuters who drive in the winter are counted as automobile commuters. In addition, mixed transportation options are coded as the mode with the greatest distance, so someone who drives to a "park-and ride" and then boards public transit may easily be classified as driving to work. For many cities such as Edmonton with light rail transit communities, on the one hand, and automobile oriented suburbs such as Mill Woods (Filion, 2001), on the other, census transportation data are unreliable bases for defining suburbia. Mill Woods, following Gordon and Janzen's classification scheme, is essentially a hybrid suburb. In the early planning stages of Mill Woods, a relatively dense population was intended. Not surprisingly, the older, western and northern segments of Mill Woods are classified as a transit suburb, where a higher proportion of commuters use public transit. The remaining segments of Mill Woods are considered auto suburbs, where almost all people commute by car (Gordon and Janzen, 2014). The densest areas of Mill Woods, such as the Mill Woods Town Centre area (MWTC – includes a bus transit hub and is the site of a major enclosed shopping mall), is characterized not by large families but by almost 55% single occupancy high rise apartments. This concentration of high rise apartments is double the city's overall average. Of the residents in this area, 73% drive to work while only 18% take public transit (compared to the city average of 78% driving and 15% taking public transit) despite the bus transit hub at their doorstep. It is possible that more people use public transit both from an economic necessity and also because Mill Woods is amongst the best served suburbs for bus links to areas closer to the downtown. While a light rail link from Mill Woods to downtown is under construction, popular commuting patterns reveal destinations that are only accessible by car-based commuting. Car based commuting from Mill Woods is directed not towards downtown, but to work destinations in light industrial suburbs to the south or to the northeast of Mill Woods (see Figure 2).

Edmonton's central business district white collar employment is not the destination for the majority of Mill Woods commuters. Industrial parks, supported by Alberta's major oil and gas industry, are major employers in Edmonton, with large industrial parks bordering Mill Woods. The Leduc-Nisku Business Park for instance, located just south of Edmonton, is the second largest industrial park in North America, employs thousands, and is largely inaccessible by public transit. As Australian studies indicate, commuting patterns often occur from one suburban location to another suburban location (Brennan-Horsely 2010). Forsyth (2012) cautioned that it is often problematic to think of the suburb as a singular entity. As such, even when a highly selective definition of a suburb is applied to a suburb like Mill Woods, it has many internal differences and does not have a stereotypical city-suburb relation to the downtown core.

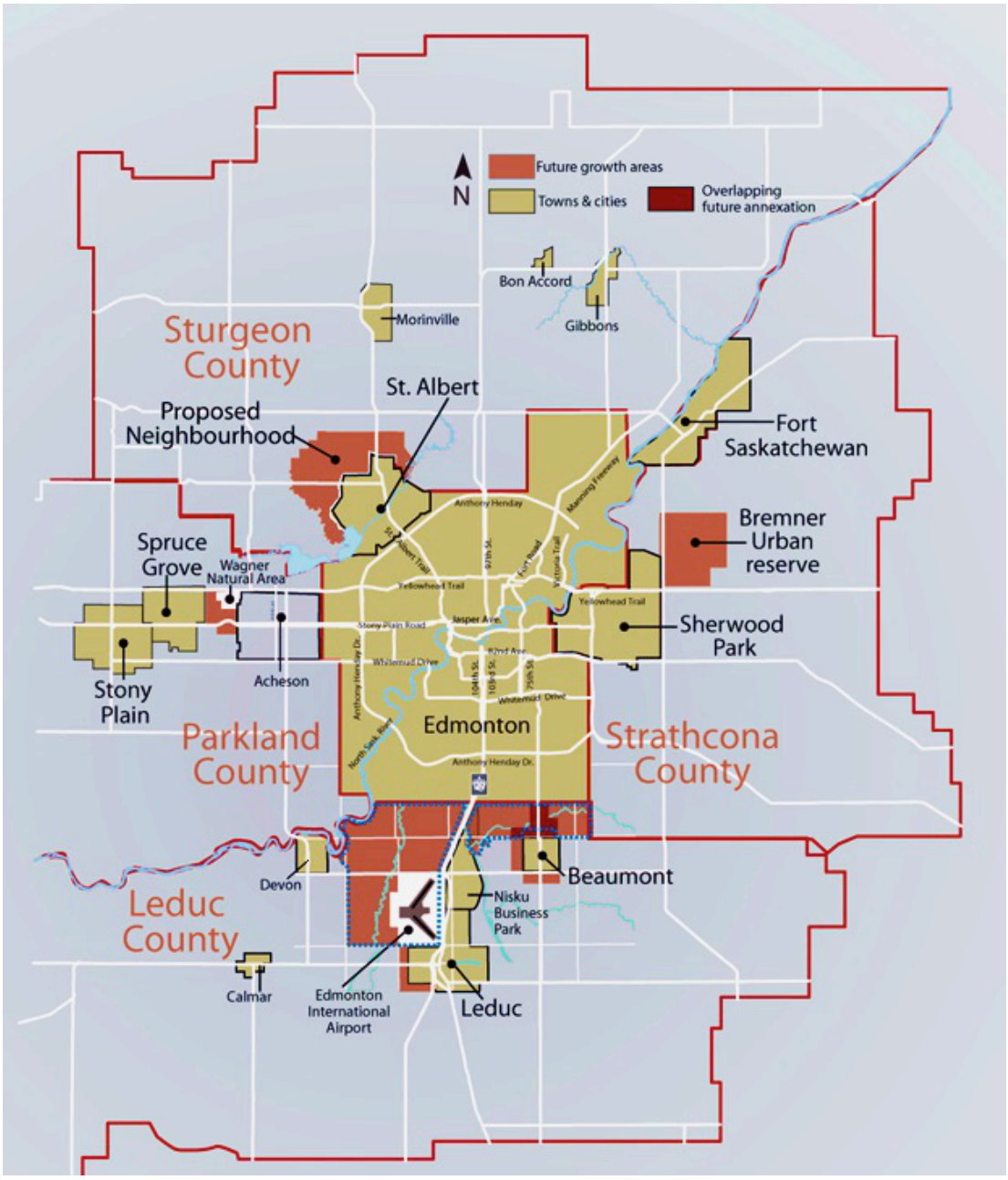

Figure 2. The Alberta Capital Region with future growth plans showing Edmonton at the centre and proposed annexations of surrounding rural lands in the city-region where rapid housing development is occurring. (Map by Kieran Moran)

Edmonton and Mill Woods Today

The Edmonton Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), is now the 5th largest metropolitan area in Canada (2014 CMA pop. 1,328,290). In 2011, it was comparable in size to Raleigh, NC, Buffalo, NY or Hartford, Conn. and similar in metropolitan area to Helsinki or Liverpool. Located in central Alberta, at 53 degrees North, Edmonton is the most northerly, large Canadian capital city. It is currently a hub for the northwest, with an oil and gas services economy. Edmonton has the second fastest metropolitan in-migration in Canada (Edmonton, n.d.) and, during the decade 2005-2015, it was the 3rd fastest growing metropolitan area in Canada and the US, ranking amongst sunbelt destinations including Austin Texas and Myrtle Beach South Carolina (United States Census Bureau 2015). Between 2012 and 2014 Edmonton's population increased an average of 30,200 per year or 3.7% (Nichols Applied Management, 2014). Edmonton has a relatively young population compared to the rest of the country (71.3% between the ages of 15 and 64 (Pratap, 2015 online) with more residents of working age.

Edmonton is significant among Canada's major cities because it has a high proportion of First Nations and other Aboriginal groups residing within it. 2011 statistics indicate Edmonton has the second largest Aboriginal population, at 61,765 people, behind Winnipeg's Aboriginal population, at 78,415 residents. 26,945 of Edmonton's Aboriginal residents self-identify as First Nations, 31,780 identify as Métis, 1,115 identify as Inuit, 975 report multiple Aboriginal identities, and 955 otherwise identify as status Indians (Statistics Canada, 2011). Using 2011 figures, Edmonton's Aboriginal population is significantly greater than larger metropolitan areas (CMAs) in Canada such as Vancouver or Toronto. Edmonton's Aboriginal population is a very significant differentiator from Calgary (33,375), the other large metropolitan centre in Alberta, which is approximately 250km south of Edmonton. The Aboriginal population in Edmonton is also young when compared to the Canadian average - 57.5% of the Aboriginal population in Edmonton is under the age of 29, compared to 40.2% of the larger Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2011). Most strikingly, the local Aboriginal population has doubled over the past 10 years. This demographic trend has intensified already simmering tensions between the Aboriginal and larger Edmontonian populations. 78% of Aboriginal people living in Edmonton report experiencing some form of discrimination in their lifetime (Edmonton Community Foundation, 2015). Moreover, the Aboriginal unemployment rate in Edmonton, 8.9% in 2013, is persistently twice as high as the average for non-Aboriginal citizens (VitalSigns, 2015). A caveat is necessary, however, for there is a lack of geographically specific data in general for suburbs and in particular for the period 2001-2016, census questions were reduced and thus the census for this period yields less information and is less comparable to other censuses. The City of Edmonton cites federal 2001 census data in its 2011 migrant population statistics leading to further ambiguities, especially in a boom-bust regional hydrocarbon resource economy where population across Edmonton's metropolitan city-region expanded by almost one third just between 2005 and 2015.

Notably, "Aboriginal urbanization is largely a function of historical conditions" (Place, 2012). Because Edmonton is located where Aboriginal people had historically settled and gathered (Fromhold, 2015), Aboriginal urbanization patterns, First Nations as well as Métis, are linked to colonial actions that removed Aboriginal people from urban areas (Peters, 2004). "Colonial" here has at least two meanings: it refers to the historical period of European colonization under the British and French, when Canada was a colony. "Colonial" also refers to the ongoing pattern of marginalization of economic and cultural activities to increasingly distant

sub-centres, which has also been challenged and reversed in postcolonial discourse. Many Aboriginal people living in Edmonton are in fact residing in their traditional territories (Peters, 2004). Ultimately, patterns of urbanization for Aboriginal people differ from migration patterns of other people who have come from other parts of Canada or from abroad to Canadian cities (Brown, McDonald and Elliott, 2009). Today, over 1600 Métis Edmontonians live in Mill Woods (Anderson, 2009), but few, First Nations Edmontonians reside there. Indeed, most First Nations Edmontonians live near the city centre and are in turn stereotyped as dependent on welfare services that are concentrated there.

The legacy of the Canadian Federal Government's treatment of Aboriginal people is emblematically reflected in the nature of all Canadian suburbs as settler enclaves. Colonial strategies of displacement of Aboriginal peoples have created spaces of Canadian suburbia, in which few Aboriginal people reside. In its current form, Canadian suburbia is a spatial expression of what has come to be called "settler society" (Frew, 2013). Aboriginal responses in the form of First Nations land title claims, civil unrest, and violence reflect the ongoing "discursive management" of the "indigene" or Aboriginal people by settler cultures (Goldie, 1989). In recent years Western Vancouver, Edmonton and Central Canadian suburbs such as Caledonia (west of Toronto) and Oka (near Montreal) have all experienced land title claims in the courts as well as civil unrest and barricades on their streets and golf courses resulting in disruption as well as death (Doucette, 2014). The entrenchment of land claims struggles in Canadian culture indicates an ongoing challenge of justification by settler societies of the "dispossession, oppression, and effacement" (Goldie, 1989) of First Nations Canadians and a certain blindness to difference in urban and suburban research and planning historically. The acceptance of the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report by the Government of Canada may infer a change in the cultural presuppositions underlying peri-urban land development in the country.

1800s Amiskwaciy

Amiskwaciy means "Beaver Hills House", and was the Cree name for the late eighteenth century Hudson's Bay Company Fort Edmonton (Fromhold, 2015). The "flats" in the river valley below the Fort were a popular meeting place and river-crossing site. Furs were Edmonton's earliest commodity and were shipped east along the North Saskatchewan River on to European markets, inaugurating its continuing role as a site of both commodity trade on the peripheries of imperial economic systems and as a regional centre of political coordination and governance.[2] Later, in 1891, Edmonton became the northern terminus of the Edmonton Yukon & Pacific Railroad, a city in 1904 and the capital of the new province of Alberta in 1905. The lands to the southeast of Edmonton, however, were home to the Papaschase Cree people. The Papaschase Reservation -

2 In effect, the place has long been seized by colonial and global empires and today participates in contemporary military adventures globally: less visible but significant is a military economy. Today, nearby bases are staging points and training bases for NATO air and troop deployments. The University of Alberta is part of an unacknowledged colonial legacy, established as the first act of the new Province by its English settler-elite who saw European pedagogy as essential. Despite its distance from other centres, both global oil prices and global politics, including the invasion of Afghanistan and the Coalition action against Islamic States in Iraq and Syria, have impacted the city-region viscerally over the last two decades.

136, proposed in the 1880s, lay just outside the boundaries of the Hudson Bay Company settlement (see Figure 3).

Although initially established, the Papaschase reservation (Indian Reservation 136) was annulled and the Indigenous members of the band induced or forced to surrender their rights and the land. Under pressure from local settlers, the reservation was sold off by the Government of Canada. In January 1887, the Indian Agent and Assistant Commissioner were directed to remove the Papaschase without their consent and obtain a formal surrender of the reserve. The descendants of the Papaschase argue that:

> the purported surrender is invalid and void ab nitio because it did not comply with the strict procedures governing the surrender of Indian reserves as set out in section 39 of the Indian Act, R.S.C. 1886.
>
> According to the terms of the surrender instrument, all lands within IR 136 were surrendered in trust to the Crown to be disposed of "upon such terms as the Government of the Dominion of Canada may deem most conducive to our welfare and that of our people." The Govt. also undertook to collect all monies received from the sale or lease of IR 136 lands and to deposit the net proceeds after deducting management expenses into an interest bearing account to be held in trust. The surrender instrument expressly states that only the interest accruing from such monies shall be paid annually or semi-annually to the Papaschase Band and to "our descendants forever."
>
> From 1890 to 1930, the Govt. of Canada sold all of IR 136 lands to third parties and received monies as a trustee and fiduciary on behalf of the Papaschase Band and their descendants as per the terms of the surrender instrument. The Papaschase descendants allege that Canada has acted contrary to the express terms of the surrender and its trust and fiduciary obligations to the Papaschase Band by:
> a) failing to hold the principle amount collected on account of the sale of IR 136 lands in trust for the exclusive benefit of the Papaschase Band and their descendants forever,
> b) failing to distribute the interest generated from the sale of IR 136 land to the Papaschase Band and their descendants on an annual or semi-annual basis and,
> c) distributing any portion of the proceeds of sale, whether it is principal or interest, to any person who was not a member of the Papaschase Band or a direct descendant. (Papaschase nd)

The Papaschase Reservation symbolizes the changing spatial and social relationships between “inner” and “outer” urbanisms. Suburbia is not only a “mix of different classes, races, and ethnicities” (Teaford in Hanlon, 2009:221) located at ever increasing distances from the urban core. The Papaschase show us that there is a root and a core to a place that remains while the identity of this place changes over time. History books focus on the story of the Hudson’s Bay Company, but the Papaschase and other indigenous people were recognized by the Crown as earlier occupants in 1763 and in this sense, they are founding architects of the place identity of the area. Despite the shifting identity of the area up to and including its development as the planned community of Mill Woods in the 1970s, these earlier identities return in court cases, in the names of streets, and in media stories. The effect is one of erased layers, a palimpsest and *pentimento* as Donald (2004) and others have observed (Seed 2001; Shields 1991):

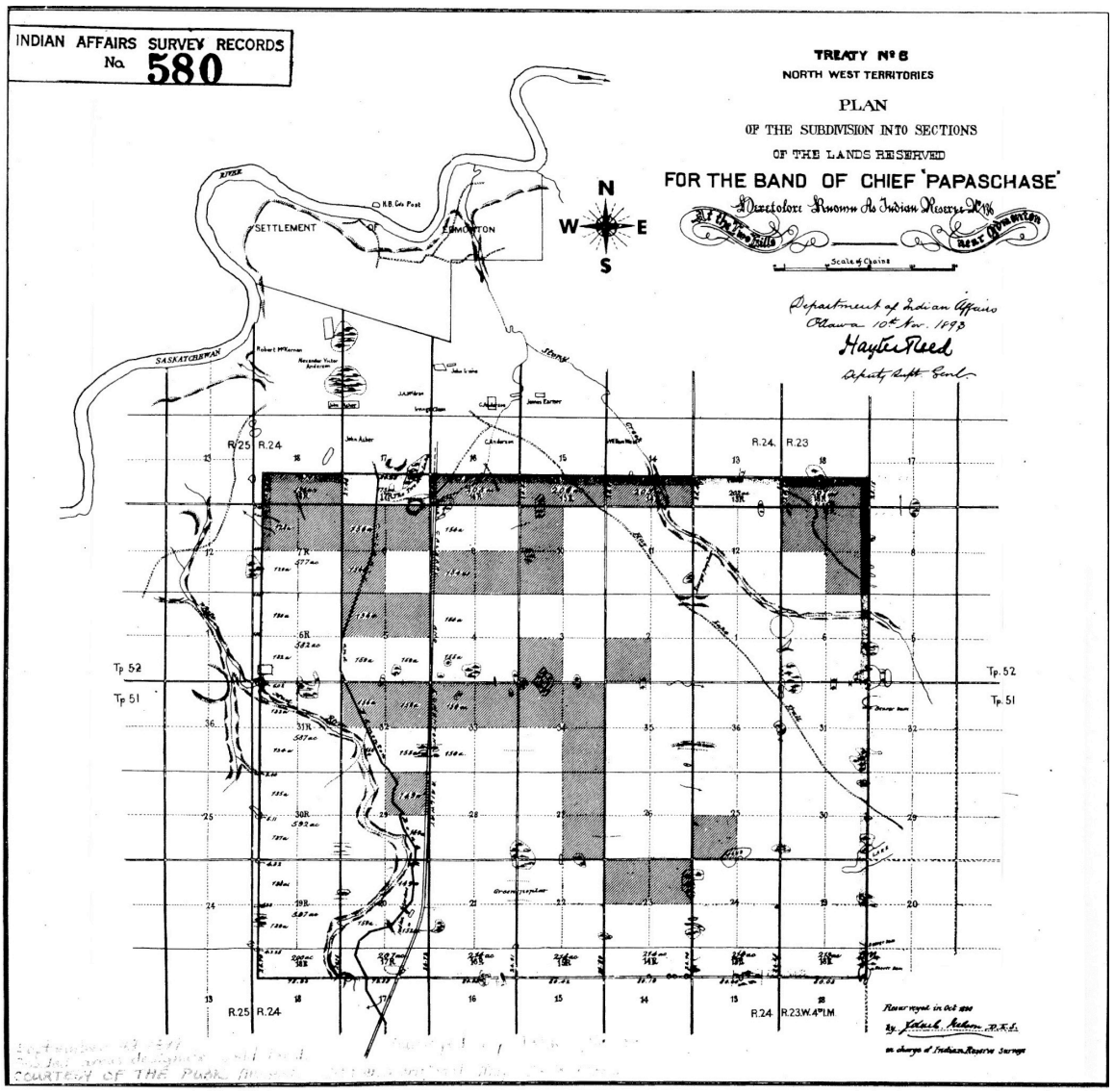

Figure 3. Papaschase First Nations Reserve as proposed. The current city of Edmonton extends north and south of the river and the historic settlement and trading post (marked H.B. Co's Post).

> *Pentimento* is a concept borrowed from the study of painting that I have chosen as a metaphor for the problem of historicism. The history of Aboriginal people before and after contact with Europeans has been "painted over" by mainstream interpretations of official history. In that sense, we can say that an attempt was made to displace or replace Aboriginal history and memory (as the history of Canada) with a new "painting" of a new civilization. The Aboriginal "painting" was not considered to be a useful or viable portrayal of the new brand of Canadian society that was emerging. It became a separate and distinct item in an isolated part of the museum of Canadian history. However, Aboriginal history and memory has begun to show through in the official history of Canada, conceptual holes in the historical narratives have become obvious, and this has caused many to look more closely to see what has been missed. (Donald, 2004:23).

The north-south railway line remains and marks the approximate centre line of the present-day city-region while the north edge of the proposed reservation marks the approximate east-west centre line. Mill Woods was developed from the 1970s overlapping the southeast quarter of the proposed reservation (South Edmonton Saga, 1984; map courtesy Provincial Archives of Alberta).

Histories of previous Aboriginal occupation do feature in some urban histories (Doucette, 2014). However, in contrast to Australian studies (O'Reilly, 2012; Potter, 2012; Flew, 2011; Morris, 2014), original Aboriginal presence is largely absent in Canadian suburban literature. The story of the Papaschase Cree began with Chief Papaschase, his brothers and their families, who moved to the Edmonton area in the late 1850's from the Lesser Slave Lake region to the north. This small band of Cree people hunted in the Fort Edmonton, Fort Assiniboine and Lesser Slave Lake areas for some time before making the Edmonton area their home. In 1876, commissioners for Canada met with Chiefs and Headmen at Fort Carlton and Fort Pitt to negotiate the terms for Treaty Six (Indian Reserves - Western Canada, 2007). Chief Papaschase and his brother Tahkoots, signed an adhesion to Treaty 6 in August of 1877 subdividing "into sections of the lands reserved for the band of Chief Papaschase, heretofore known as Indian Reserve No. 136, at the Two Hills near Edmonton" (Library and Archives Canada, 2007).

Ambitious white settlers such as local newspaper publisher and later Canadian Minister of the Interior, Frank Oliver, vociferously denounced the Papaschase reservation proposal:

> *"If the Indians take the reserve as at presently surveyed, a lasting injury will be done to this settlement, without any corresponding benefit accruing to them. Now is the time for the Government to declare the Reserve open and show whether this country is to be run in the interests of the settlers or the Indians"* (Oliver *The Bulletin,* Edmonton, Jan. 17 1881 cited in Donald, 2004:38).

The logic of the reserves was neither benign nor beneficial. The reservation system represented a spatial logic of domination (Weizman 2007:196) and assimilation that would today be categorized as cultural genocide (Woolford et al 2014). By 1885 the Papaschase people were forced by starvation and impoverishment to either settle on other reserves or to accept scrip payment which would extinguish both their legal entitlements as Indians and their land claims

(Daschuk, 2013). Thus, the 1880's and 90's saw the steady erosion of the Papaschase Reserve as settlers from Eastern Europe and Britain purchased large allotments of the land.

> *Under Section 41 of the Indian Act they (the Papaschase) be given the sale of the lands comprised in the reserve without any restrictions as regards to occupation and cultivation and the terms of payment to be one-tenth of the purchase money at the date of sale, and the balance in nine equal annual installments with six per cent interest* (cited in South Edmonton Saga, 1984).

On November 19, 1888, the remaining Papaschase Indian Reserve comprising forty sections of land was "surrendered" for sale (South Edmonton Saga, 1984).

> *This reserve, (signed by the Crown) which is five miles south of the flourishing Town of Edmonton, contains some fine agricultural land: the soil throughout is rich in herbage, and in a greater portion of it there is a plentiful supply of wood and water* (cited in South Edmonton Saga, 1984).

"The immigration boom of the early twentieth century increased pressure on the newly-founded Indian reserves and the government began to actively encourage Indian land surrenders and moved to make 'excess' Indian reserve land available for non-Indian settlement" (Donald, 2004:38). By 1911, the Indian Act was amended by Parliament to allow for the expropriation of Indian lands for public works, and Minister Oliver announced the amendment by claiming that Indian reserves would no longer be able to impede the economic development of the nation (Donald, 2004:39). Most of the land was sold at that time to speculators who then resold the land as the value increased.

In 1949, oil was struck at the Leduc No. 1 Well, southwest of Edmonton, sparking an oil boom that transformed the largely agrarian economy of Alberta into one centered around the rapid growth of the resource extraction sector. The Edmonton region "enjoyed a certain amount of national publicity" (Noel, 1954:31) and emerged as an "oil centre" and "the fastest-growing urban area on this continent" (Noel, 1954:31). To accommodate unprecedented growth, Edmonton city council adopted a growth strategy which included Clarence Perry's "neighbourhood unit" design, which incorporated an elementary school, parks and nearby shopping. First proposed in 1929, Perry's design produced a "harmonious interplay of these three functions" (Patricios, 2002:4). Perry described four urban areas where the concept could be applied - new sites in the suburbs, vacant sites in the central area, apartment districts, and in areas in need of revitalization (Perry, 1933). Moreover, a decentralized pattern of growth emerged which accommodated "industrial growth in outlying areas within a radius of 20 miles from Edmonton" (Gertler, 1955:151). Devon, a new town southwest of the city was founded to accommodate oil workers. "In the mid-1960's the supply of serviced land for suburban housing was declining and the cost of land was increasing dramatically" (City of Edmonton, 1971:19).

Overall Edmonton is resolutely low density and horizontal in its land development and built form. The North Saskatchewan river valley cuts through the city resulting in a significant allocation of natural space within the city and even in the downtown core and CBD. Both French

and English dominant cultures in Canada have specified a strict binary divide between the "civilized" and the frontier or city and country. These "founding" Canadian cultures were uneasy about the vision of a settled and urbanized quasi-nature offered by suburban development (Laforest, 2013). The growth of suburbs from the 1920s onward, deviated from a more civilized urban lifestyle and intensified this "uneasiness". Low density, sprawling cities such as Edmonton failed to fit into the ideal "dual" narrative of Canadian urbanization as civilization. Edmonton, then, remains improper, non-conforming and ugly. It is habituated as a relatively insignificant Canadian city, despite its size, economic importance and attraction of migrants, rate of growth and alarming boom-bust cycles related to the petrochemical economy. Mill Woods is a suburb that epitomizes this abject status.

The city-region is seen by many as lacking charm, despite the initial quality of its prairie environment. It is a region where its government and high-tech research doesn't quite belong (Gow and Sandy, 2007). It is important not to underestimate the impact on both residents and investors of media representations of place and of rising or falling global economics and distant military coalitions. These external factors negate a sense of sustainability in the future, especially given ambivalent place-images (Shields, 1991) and the negative place-myth that has developed. That of Edmonton as a sprawled, blue-collar, "winter city". The relationship between the media's portrayal of Edmonton and residents' sense of livability correlates with a relatively low sense of investment in the place which was reported as the lowest among Canada's six largest metro areas (60.4% expressed a somewhat or very strong sense of belonging in a 2012 survey).

1970s Utopian Mill Woods

"Historically, Edmonton's growth pattern has followed the direction of the North Saskatchewan River Valley in a north easterly, south westerly orientation" (City Planning Department, 1971; see Figure 4). Heavy industry sites were established in the northwest and northeast sectors of the city which have further influenced and emphasized residential growth patterns along the river valley. Mill Woods represented a major departure from this trend "offering citizens the opportunity to reside in the southeast sector of the metropolitan area" (City Planning Department, 1971).

Early ad hoc, low density, rural development of the Papaschase reserve land followed the ousting of the Indigenous entitlements. Twentieth century cycles of rapid population growth and a concomitant lack of affordable housing pressured the City of Edmonton to undertake a huge project to transform the former Papaschase area into what would become the suburb of Mill Woods.

Land banking was used as a mechanism to assemble the land for a relatively self-contained suburb for which residential land would be released over time at below-market prices using a lottery system. Although it is considered rare in North America (Strong 1979), Eidelman notes a complex pattern of public land ownership and disposal (2014). In land banking, municipalities first acquired land, then utilities and at least major roadways were installed to prepare land for private sector-led residential construction.

Presented as a showpiece of urban expansion and planning principles, the Mill Woods Plan was ahead of its time in the early 1970s. Mill Woods was intended to house low to middle income families as a community unto itself. This attempt to lower land prices would provide affordable housing despite cycles of increased resource development, during which the population boomed, driving up housing demand and housing prices (Basford 1973:2258).

Demographic booms routinely contributed to rising house prices which were further inflated by speculative developers.

Following recommendations of a national task force, the Hellyer Commission (Canada 1969; Hellyer 1977), which studied the positive experience of Saskatoon, a city to the east of Edmonton, made amendments to the National Housing Act (R.C.S.1973) for the express purpose of supporting the assembly of lands. Residential construction in Mill Woods officially began in 1972. In the years after the Mill Woods land bank was established, in particular 1974-76, average land costs across Canada increased by 46.5%, almost five times the average annual inflation rate. This accompanied strong waves of housing starts which declined almost 20% annually in 1973-74, then jumped almost 15% in 1974-76 before slowly declining again by 6.4% over the next five years 1976-81 (CMHC 1983).[3] Since this time, continual national divestment of public assets and public land holdings, however, has transferred assets from various orders of government (municiapl, provincial and federal) to private speculators rather than citizens (Hellyer 1977; Eidelman 2014). Nonetheless, in other northern towns and cities surrounded by crown land, governments continue to act as primary land developers controlling the release and availability of land (Shields 2012).

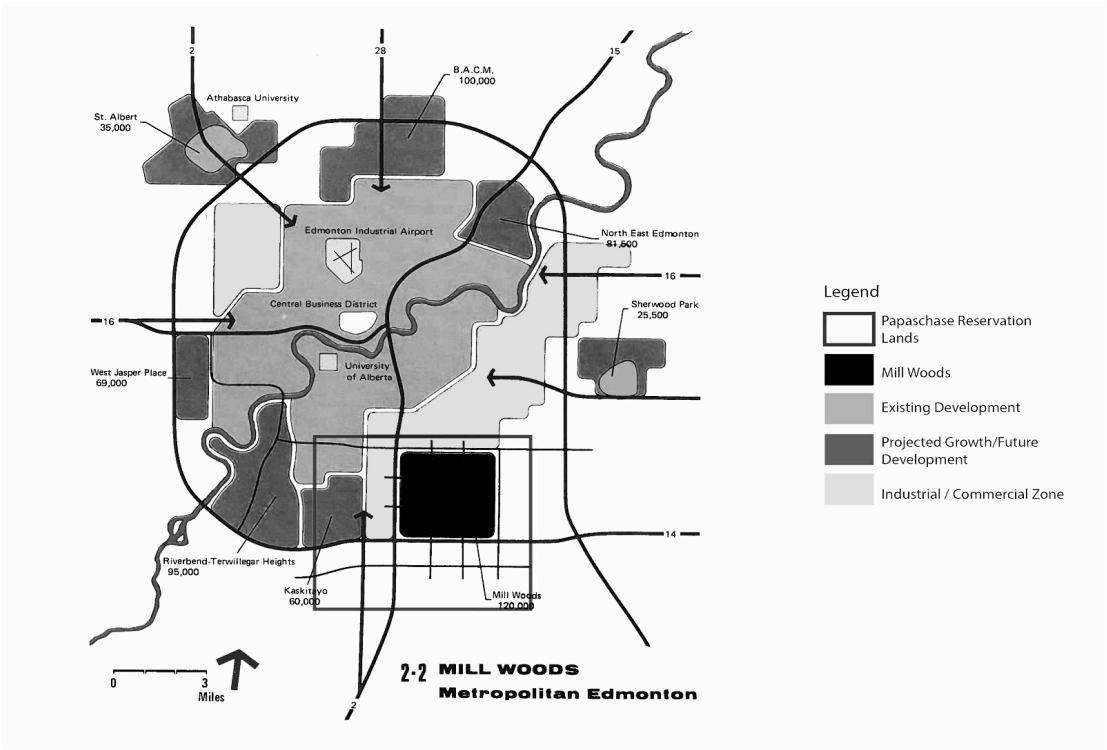

Figure 4. Mill Woods Development Concept, 1971 with Overlap of Papaschase Reserve Lands (City of Edmonton 1971 and Kieran Moran)

3 Nationally, during the postwar period, average annual changes in housing starts saw a strong jump in 1952-53 (26.6%), followed by steady increase of 10.3% over five years until a slump in 1958-60 (-18.5%) which recovered over the next four years (+18.6%). increasingly steadily over 7 years until the 1973-74 slump (-19.9%) followed by the 1974-76 rise (14.8%) (CMHC 1983).

Mill Woods - Next Wave

Today Mill Woods' population of over 80,000 people is hyper-diverse. Mill Woods residents represent 85% of the world's cultures and languages (Kuban, 2005). Over 40% of Mill Woods residents identify as a visible minority and roughly 30% of the population is immigrant (National Household Survey, 2011). With ethnic origins predominantly in India, Pakistan, the Philippines, and China, Mill Woods represents an "ethnoburbia" (Li, 1998). Canadian ethnoburbias emerged with the federal government's merit-based immigration policy in 1967 and the subsequent waves of non-European immigration. The White European immigrants who "settled" first in the Mill Woods suburbia, have been replaced by an increasingly ethnically diverse immigrant population who in turn have cemented Mill Woods' character as a settler community. Mill Woods epitomizes mobility, in terms of diasporic "shifts" and it embodies a spirit of "migrancy" (Chambers 1994).

> The 1972 expulsion of Ugandans of Indian origin, the 1973 coup in Chile, the emigration of Sikhs from Punjab, and of other South Asians from Pakistan in the early 1970s, and the arrival of ethnic Chinese "boat people" from Vietnam in 1979-1980 combined to shape the neighbourhood. Some landed in Mill Woods because of the affordable housing available; others followed friends and countrymen. By 1989, the population of Mill Woods was 30% people from visible minorities…(as cited in "Cultural Diversity." Mill Woods Living Heritage).

While wave after wave of immigrants came to Mill Woods, the Indigenous Peoples that were the first inhabitants in the area are no longer a significant population. Like many other Canadian cities, there are very few areas outside of low-rent inner-city neighbourhoods that are understood to be "Aboriginal" today (see Costa and Clark 2015). Despite a rapidly growing Indigenous population in Edmonton, as of 2011 Indigenous Peoples living in Mill Woods, including Metis and First Nations, make up only 5.5% of the population in Mill Woods. (Statistics Canada - Census Profile, 2011). Additionally, a study commissioned by the City of Edmonton based on 2006 census data shows that the Aboriginal population of Mill Woods accounts for only 7.9% of the total Aboriginal population in Edmonton. This ranks the Mill Woods district with the sixth highest Aboriginal population in Edmonton, the third highest outside of the downtown core and South of the North Saskatchewan River. However this population level is not significantly different than in other parts of the city except for the downtown core. Yet looking forward, 27% of Edmonton households with children under the age of 15 are Aboriginal and nearly 40% of that population is located in Mill Woods. That is to say that relative to other parts of the city, Mill Woods has a concentration of Metis and First Nation *children*. This is significant, because it is not clear that there are culturally-appropriate services for these youth in Mill Woods n any other Edmonton suburb. In addition, the Aboriginal population in Mill Woods may thus grow in the coming years (Andersen, 2009:3). Notwithstanding its probable growth, the Aboriginal population of Mill Woods remains a minority segment of the population and an Indigenous presence is largely missing in the popular conception of the suburb as an immigrant community.

The Papschase presence is effectively erased, persisting only in a few street names and the occasional historical exhibit in the mall. How will the aboriginal population, drawn from mixed indigenous groups and traditions, manifest in the future? How will new waves of migration and ethnically diverse youth populations intermix and inflect Indigenous identity in these places? Such questions put peripheral Canadian suburbs such as Mill Woods at the forefront and centre of grassroots social and cultural change in North America.

The land tells a story of transformation and does connect new Canadians to the First peoples. Whereas Donald states that "the history of Aboriginal people before and after contact with Europeans has been 'painted over' by mainstream interpretations of official history" (2004:23), there remains some translation or resonance of First Nations' experiences through the evolving experience of living on the land in the place. Specifically, the process of attachment to place imbues subsequent inhabitants with at least an appreciation of the experiences of people who came before them if not acknowledgement. Numerous factors influence attachment to place (Lokocz, Ryan and Sadler, 2010), including personal memory of a place (Measham, 2006). The legacy of the Papaschase and other indigenous people of the area is not only articulated in the enshrinement of traditional paths as roadways or in signs but is embedded in the collective memory. The recent revival of land-claims court cases locally, restates the Papaschase spatialisation of *Amiskwaciy* as a river-crossing and meeting place and the nineteenth century colonial spatialisation of the Papaschase Reserve influences the material contours of Mill Woods today. Moreover, while people's homes and localities may be biographical products of their creation of space (Knox, 2005), the past contextualizes this spatialisation despite its suburban architecture and veneer of twentieth century suburban planning and material culture.

Veracini states that suburbia "re-enacts settlement" by mirroring an anxious "escape" from threatening environments (2012:341-2). Combined with the forced "standardizing ideals of whiteness, masculinity, and Britishness" (Frew, 2013:281), the settlement process of suburbia takes on the spatial and social forms of separation. Consequently, the sociocultural "status" of people in Canada, forced into three broad categories "Canadians, Indians and Immigrants" (Thobani, 2007:24-8), is played out in suburbia as "settlers" move in and displace previous groups. Can we speculate that "ethnoburbia" be seen as a recent expression and manifestation of settler society in an ongoing historical pattern? In this case, is suburban "ethnoburbia" not only a residential pattern but a "domesticating" consumption environment which initiates immigrant New Canadians into the relations and lessons of settler-society as echos of colonial relations? Post-colonial relationships between transnational migrants, indigenous First Nations and a dominant Canadian culture moulded in the image of its British colonial past can be detected in the material landscape, planning history and the statistical trends over time. However, this latest state of suburban 'over-painting', finds neocolonial, rather than postcolonial, accents to the suburban process.

The history of the Papaschase Cree, who once lived on the lands that are now Mill Woods, helps to re-imagine the notion of the 'suburb' and the analysis of suburbia. We focused on this suburb of a sprawling 'suburban' city, to highlight the significance of indigeneity, migrancy and ethnicity for Canadian suburbs as social spaces. Our contention is that this is poorly captured by the transportation, density and infrastructural categories conventionally used as indicators of 'suburbaneity'. Rather than being free of history, the case of Mill Woods suggests that researchers pay more attention to the temporalities and historical legacies that underlie the dominance of the 'new' as suburbs continually expand. This expansion makes

suburbia literally a moving target which needs qualification. However, ethnicity and indigeneity are not well understood through the technocratic planning categories most often used by suburban historian and theorists, such as the 'street-car-suburb' or 'transit suburb'. This leads to the neglect of the force that previous occupations instill. Rather than buried layers, previous occupations and settlements intersect with and peek through the arrangements of the present – even *pentimento* over-simplifies the situation. Cultural differences make suburbs more complex than a mere playing-out of the logic of the economy and infrastructure of a given time. This case suggests that the neglect of these aspects of the North American suburb contributes to a neocolonial pattern of resettlement and ultimately creates barriers to cross-cultural and self-understanding.

Bibliography

Andersen, C. (2009). *Aboriginal Edmonton : A Statistical story - 2009*. Edmonton, AB: Aboriginal Relations Office, City of Edmonton.

Auger, Josephine (1999). Walking Through Fire and Surviving: Resiliency among Aboriginal peoples with diabetes. M.Sc. Public Heath. Edmonton: University of Alberta.

Baloy, N. J. K. (2015). Spectacles and spectres: settler colonial spaces in Vancouver. *Settler Colonial Studies*, 1–26.

Basford, R., Rt. Hon. (1973). Speech to the Annual Conference of the Housing and Urban Development Association of Canada, Toronto, January 29.

Brennan-Horley, C. (2010). Multiple Work Sites and City-wide Networks: a topological approach to understanding creative work. *Australian Geographer*, *41*(1), 39–56.

Browne, A.J., McDonald, H. & Elliott, D. (2009). First Nations Urban Aboriginal Health Research Discussion Paper. A Report for the First Nations Centre, National Aboriginal Health Organization.

Canada, Task Force on Housing and Urban Development (1969). *Report of the Federal Task Force on Housing and Urban Development.* Ottawa: Task Force on Housing and Urban Development.

Chambers, I. (1994). *Migrancy, culture, identity*. London: Routledge.

City of Edmonton (1971) Mill Woods : a development concept report prepared on behalf of the civic administration by the City Planning Department, March. Edmonton: City of Edmonton.

CMHC, Canada Mortgage and Housing Commission (1983). *Canadian Housing Statistics*, *1983*, Ottawa: Government of Canada.

Dant, Noel. 1954. Edmonton: Practical Results of Planning Measures Since 1950. *Community planning review. revue canadienne d'urbanisme*(1951). Ottawa, Community Planning Association of Canada, 4, pp. 31-40.

Daschuk, J. W. (2013). Clearing the Plains: Disease, politics of starvation, and the loss of Aboriginal life. Regina, SK, CAN: University of Regina Press. Retrieved from http://www.ebrary.com

Dikason, O. (2002). *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding People form the Earliest Times*. Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press.

Donald, Dwayne. 2004. Edmonton *Pentimento*: Re-Reading History in the Case of the Papaschase Cree. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies* 2(1) Spring. 21-54.

Doucette, J. (2014) Pigs Flowers and Bricks: A History of Leslieville. Retrieved from leslievillehistory.com
Edmonton Community Foundation and Edmonton Social Planning Council. (2013). *Edmonton vital signs 2013*. Retrieved from http://edmontonsocialplanning.ca/index.php/resources/digital-resources/n-food-security/48-vital-signs-a-report-on-food-security-in-edmonton/file
Edmonton Community Foundation and Edmonton Social Planning Council. (2015). *Vital Signs - 2015*. Retrieved from http://www.ecfoundation.org/uploads/FINAL-VS2015.pdf
Edmonton. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmonton
Eidelman, G. (2014). Rethinking Public Land Ownership. Presented at the Canadian Political Science Association, St. Catherines, ON. Retrieved from ftp://host-209-183-10-27.static.dsl.primus.ca/cpsa-acsp/2014event/Eidelman.pdf
Filion, P. (2001). Suburban mixed-use centres and urban dispersion: what difference do they make? *Environment and Planning A*, 33(1), 141-160.
Flew, T. (2011). Right to the City, Desire for the Suburb? *M/C Journal*, *14*(4). Retrieved from http://www.journal.media-culture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/view/368
Forsyth, A. (2012). Defining suburbs. *Journal of Planning Literature, 27*(3), 270-281.
Frew, L. (2013). Settler Nationalism and the Foreign: the Representation of the Exogene in Ernest Thompson Seton's "Two Little Savages" and Dionne Brand's "What we all long for". *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 82(2), 278-297.
Fromhold, J. (2015). *A researcher's guide to historic trading posts and forts of the west*. Canada: First Nations Publishing
Gertler, Leonard. 1955. Why control the growth of cities. *Community planning review. revue canadienne d'urbanisme*(1951). Ottawa, Community Planning Association of Canada, Vol 5, pp. 151-154.
Goldie, T. (1989). Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian,Australian, and New Zealand Literatures. Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press. Retrieved from http://www.ebrary.com
Gordon, D., & Janzen, M. (2013). Suburban nation? Estimating the size of Canada's suburban population. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, *30*(3), 197–220.
Gordon, M. (1985). *Urban Land Policy and Provision of Housing in Canada, 1900-1985* (M.Sc.). University of British Columbia: Vancouver.
Hellyer, P. (1977). How they killed public land banking: a political memoir, *City Magazine* 3(2), December, pp. 31-38.
Kim, Jaymelee Jane, They Made Us Unrecognizable to Each Other: Human Rights, Truth, and Reconciliation in Canada. PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 2014.
Knox, P. L. (2005). Creating ordinary places: Slow cities in a fast world. *Journal of Urban Design, 10*(1), 1-11.
Kuban, R. (2005). Edmonton's urban villages. (electronic resource) : the community league movement. Edmonton, Alta : University of Alberta Press, c2005.
Laforest, D. (2013). La Banlieue dans l'ImaginairQuébécois: Problèmes Originels et Avenir Critique. *Temps Zéro*, (6). Retrieved from http://tempszero.contemporain.info/document945
Leger Research (2015). Survey of Edmontonians 2015. Edmonton: Edmonton Community Foundation. June. Retrieved from: http://www.ecfoundation.org/uploads/Report-ECF-

July-6-2015.pdf
Li, W. (1998). Anatomy of a new ethnic settlement: The Chinese Ethnoburb in Los Angeles. *Urban Studies, 35*(3), 479-501.
Library and Archives Canada. (2007, January 17). Indian Reserves - Western Canada. Retrieved from http://www.lac-bac.gc.ca/databases/indian-reserves/001004-119.01-e.php?isn_id_nbr=1902&interval=50&PHPSESSID=t517cjd0faa8lvonqqvi6kdnf6.
Lokocz, E., Ryan, R. L., & Sadler, A. J. (2011). Motivations for land protection and stewardship: Exploring place attachment and rural landscape character in Massachusetts. *Landscape and Urban Planning, 99*(2), 65-76.
MD: Johns Hopkins University Press
Measham, T. G. (2006). Learning about environments: The significance of primal landscapes. *Environmental Management, 38*(3), 426-434.
Mill Woods Living Heritage. n.d. Retrieved from http://www.millwoodshistory.org/cultural-diversity.html.
Morris, B. (2014). *Protests, Land Rights, and Riots: Postcolonial Struggles in Australia in the 1980s*. Berghahn Books.
Nichols Applied Management. (2014). *City of Edmonton Growth Study* Edmonton.
Norris, M. J., et al (2003). Registered Indian mobility and migration in Canada. Ch. 7. In M. Bell & J. Taylor (Eds.), *Population Mobility and Indigenous Peoples in Australasia and North America*. New York: Routledge. 136–160.
O'Reilly, N. (2012). *Exploring Suburbia: The Suburbs in the Contemporary Australian Novel*. Sydney: Teneo Press.
Oster, Richard, Jeffrey A. Johnson, Brenda R. Hemmelgarn, Malcolm King, Stephanie U. Balko, Lawrence W. Svenson, Lindsay Crowshoe, Ellen L. Toth. (2011). Recent epidemiological trends of diabetes mellitus among status Aboriginal adults. *CMAJ Canadian Medical Association Journal* 183(12) (6 Sept): E803-8.
Papaschase First Nation (nd). *Papaschase Proposal for the Settlement of the Unlawful Surrender of Papaschase I.R. #136 Submitted by Chief Calvin Bruneau.*
Papaschase First Nations Reserve. Mill Woods Living Heritage. Retrieved from http://www.millwoodshistory.org/papaschase-first-nations-reserve.htm
Papaschase Historical Society (Ed.). (1984). *South Edmonton Saga* (1st ed.). Edmonton, Alberta: Papaschase Historical Society.
Parsons, P., et al 2015. (n.d.). Edmonton living wage $17.36, according to report. Retrieved August 10, 2015, from http://www.edmontonjournal.com/Edmonton+living+wage+according+report/11179729/story.html
Patricios, Nicholas. (2002). The neighborhood concept: a retrospective of physical design and social interaction. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 19(1) Spring: 70-90.
Perry, C. A. (1933). *The rebuilding of blighted areas; a study of the neighborhood unit in replanning and plot assemblage,*. New York: Regional Plan Association.
Peters, E.J. (2004). Three myths about Aboriginals in cities: Breakfast on the Hill Presentation, Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences. Retrieved 4 November 2015 from http://caepr.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/Seminars/presentations/Three%20Myths.pdf
Place, J. (2012). The Health of Aboriginal People Residing in Urban Areas. Prince George, BC, CAN: National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health.

Potter, E. (2012). Introduction: making Indigenous place in the Australian city. *Postcolonial Studies*, *15*(2), 131–142.
Pratap, V. (2015, February 11). Edmonton region has Canada's 2nd-highest population growth: stats. Global News. Retrieved from globalnews.ca
R.S.C. (1857). *Act for the gradual civilization of Indian tribes in the Canada*. 20 Victoria Ch. 2.
R.S.C. (1876) *An Act to amend and consolidate the laws respecting Indians*. 39 Victoria Ch. 18
R.S.C. (1973) *National Housing Act Amendment*.
R.S.C. (1985) *Indian Act* c. I-5.
R.S.C. (2015) *Indian Act. An Act Respecting Indians* RSC 1985 C I-5. Government of Canada. http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/I-5/
Shields, R. (2012). Feral Suburbs. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, *15*(3), 205–215.
Statistics Canada (2011). Population and Dwelling Counts. Catalogue no. 98-310-XWE2011002. Ottawa. Released February 8, 2012. Retrieved from: http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/hltfst/pd-pl/index-eng.cfm**.**
Statistics Canada. 2013. Edmonton Mill Woods, Alberta (Code 48017) (table). National Household Survey (NHS) Profile. 2011 National Household Survey. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-004-XWE. Ottawa. Released September 11, 2013.http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E (accessed October 24, 2015)
Statistics Canada. 2012. Edmonton Mill Woods, Alberta (Code 48017) and Canada (Code 01) (table). Census Profile. 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa. Released October 24, 2012. http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E (accessed October 24, 2015).
Statistics Canada. 2013. Edmonton - Mill Woods - Beaumont, Alberta (Code 48011) (table). National Household Survey (NHS) Profile. 2011 National Household Survey. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-004-XWE. Ottawa. Released September 11, 2013. http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E (accessed March 28, 2016).
Strong, Ann. 1979. *Land Banking: European Reality, American Prospect.* Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press
Thobani, S. (2007). *Exalted subjects : Studies in the making of race and nation in canada* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Honouring the truth, reconciling for the future: summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.* Retrieved from http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/301/weekly_acquisition_lists/2015/w15-24-F-E.html/collections/collection_2015/trc/IR4-7-2015-eng.pdf (accessed Feb. 8 2016)
Wynne, A. and Currie, C. (2011). Social Exclusion as an Underlying Determinant of Sexually Transmitted Infections among Canadian Aboriginals. *Pímatísíwín: A Journal of Aboriginal and Indigenous Community Health.* 9(1): 113-127.
United States Census Bureau (2015). New Census Bureau Population Estimates Reveal Metro Areas and Counties that Propelled Growth in Florida and the Nation. Release CB15-56 (Mar 26). https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2015/cb15-56.html (accessed Feb 8, 2016).
Veracini, L. (2012). Suburbia, settler colonialism and the world turned inside out. *Housing,*

Theory and Society, 29(4), 339-357.