



Grace Ratt of Sucker River making a birch bark basket, 1974.  
Northern Saskatchewan Archives, DNS Academic Education  
Branch Collection, binder 16.

## Introduction

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This collection of essays grew out of a digital project intended to make materials relating to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, found in Saskatchewan's archival, library and other heritage collections, more accessible.

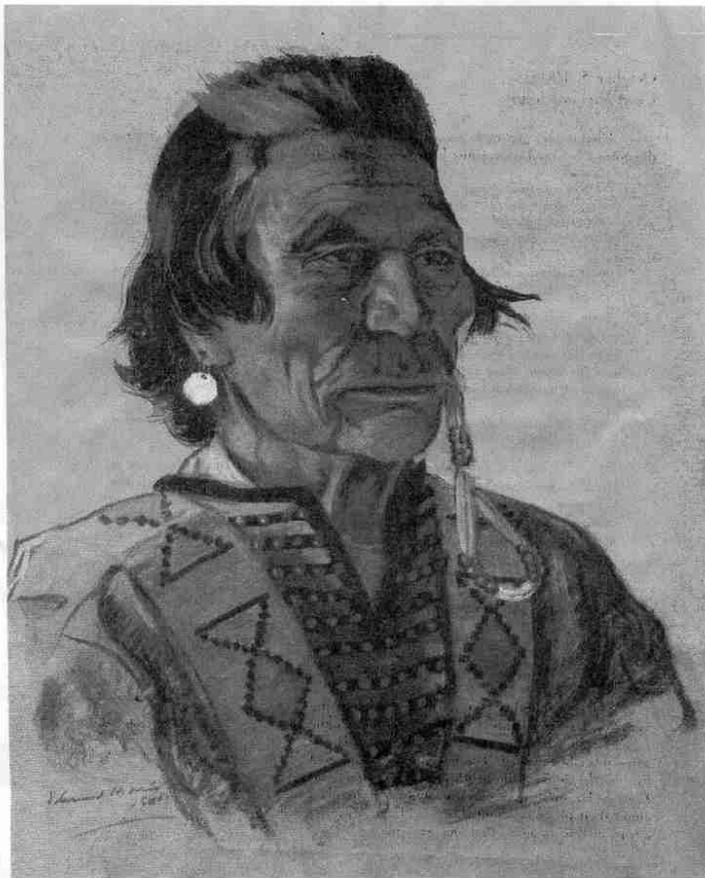
“Discovery” was the primary impetus behind the *kā-ki-pē-isi-nakatamākawiyahk / Our Legacy* site. It was our hope that the project would help researchers locate those resources often “hidden” within larger archival collections. The site was designed to support independent research. Our aim, therefore, was to be both as inclusive as possible when surveying collections for relevant materials, and to objectively present the material we found. In addition to self-directed research, however, another route to encourage discovery and exploration is available – the “interpretive exhibit,” material presented within the context of a storyline or thesis. For this component of the *Our Legacy* site we issued a call for graduate students interested in writing exhibits.

The response to our call and the resulting interpretive exhibits exceeded our expectations. Because the institutions initially surveyed for the site were not specifically Aboriginal archives, we were aware much of the material we presented would be external representations or views of the Aboriginal experience. Therefore we were particularly pleased that many of the students who responded not only had a keen interest and relevant scholarly experience, but also were First Nations or Métis. We suggested a list of topics we believed could be illustrated from the material on the site; suggested a word limit to ensure the effort didn't exceed our budget for compensation;

and requested that standard academic processes for properly citing any quotes or other works be followed. Other than that, the students were left to interpret the topics as they chose.

We had anticipated academically sound essays; but what we received were also often personal and sometimes passionate explorations of the topics. We were so impressed with the range, diversity and quality of the students' work we were determined to highlight it beyond the project website; hence this publication. Editorial changes have been kept to a minimum; the work remains that of each student.

The essays are informally arranged to first, highlight the differences between reality and perception; next, identify the impact of policy on Native communities (and Canada as a whole); then provide reflections on culture; and finally, offer the hope of reconciliation.



Portrait identified as Chakikum (Splashing Water) of the  
Willow Cree Band,  
Prince Albert Historical Society, H-395a