

# Talking Treaties Keep Talking Exchange

These activities are starting points, suggesting possible directions for lines of questioning and investigation. Arts-based research is a quick way to start the conversation. Take what you've done here and use it. Teach others. We'd like to keep the conversation going through programming to share treaty guide exercise outcomes and art. To find out more and join future conversations, visit [talkingtreaties.ca](http://talkingtreaties.ca)

Figure 1, 2. Loft, Ange, Jill Carter, Martha Stiegman, Victoria Freeman.  
A Treaty Guide for Torontonians. Toronto: Art Metropole, 2022.  
Illustration by Karis Jones-Pard and Alaska B.

TORONTO BIENNIAL OF ART

Your

Tkaron:to

Companion

Guide

BOOKLET 3:  
Day Trip to The  
Waterfront Boundaries  
of the 1787 Toronto  
Purchase (Treaty 13)

## Mobile Arts Curriculum

Travelling through Toronto/Tkaron:to, revisit all your favourite places through the living history of the city.

"Your Tkaron:to Companion Guide" is a passport to place- and arts-based explorations of the complex and contested ways the city of Toronto was established. The activities in this guide will take you on field trips that

invite hands-on learning and inspire critical reflection through embodied understandings of land-based relationships; learners will explore Indigenous geographies and how colonialism has impacted both human and non-human connection.

Toronto/Tkaron:to roughly translates from Mohawk to "over there is the place of the submerged tree" or "tree in the water."

# Location:

Visit your favourite waterways and parks along the western boundaries of the Toronto Purchase (Treaty 13).

The Mississaugas established fishing camps and occasional seasonal villages at the outlets of the rivers in the Toronto area and along the western end of Lake Ontario. In between the first attempt to solidify the boundaries in 1787 and the confirmation of 1805, the population of Mississaugas had decreased dramatically. In this booklet, learn about the payments, cessions, and petitions made to protect the waterways of the Greater Toronto Area.

Anishnaabeg/Anishnabek has been variously translated to “I am a person of good intent or worth”, “the good humans”, “spontaneous people”, and “the spirit that is lowered down from above”.

Anishnaabe territory stretches across the Great Lakes with Algonquian-speaking peoples fully surrounding the pockets of Iroquoian speakers who had lived north of Lake Ontario.

Anishnaabe nations include:

- Mississaugas; Misizaagiinniwig;
- Algonquin/Omàmiwininiwak;
- Oji-Cree/Anishininiwig;
- Nippising/Odishkwaagamiig;
- Menominee/Mamaceqtaw;
- The Confederation of the Three Fires/Niswii-mishkodewin, which consists of:
  - Objibwe/Ojibweg, keepers of the trade, and
  - Potawatomi/Bodéwadmik, keepers/maintainers of the fire for their alliance.

Marker trees were made by bending and shaping a sapling to form a distinctive shape. When you find a marker tree they can indicate trails, shelter, caves, spiritual access points, hunting camps, and significant events.

#### ACTIVITY 4:

## Day Trip to Ontario Place

Trillium Park is on the eastside of Ontario Place. Here, the city has collaborated with Moccasin Identifier on a design that includes large Indigenous mural etchings, signage and plantings. Spend some time here, taking in the view of the city. A new marker tree is planted at Trillium Park. Search for this tree. Envision its use as a marker.

What does it point to?

How can this be a way-finding device for future generations?

Free write an imagined future for you and the tree.

# Mississauga

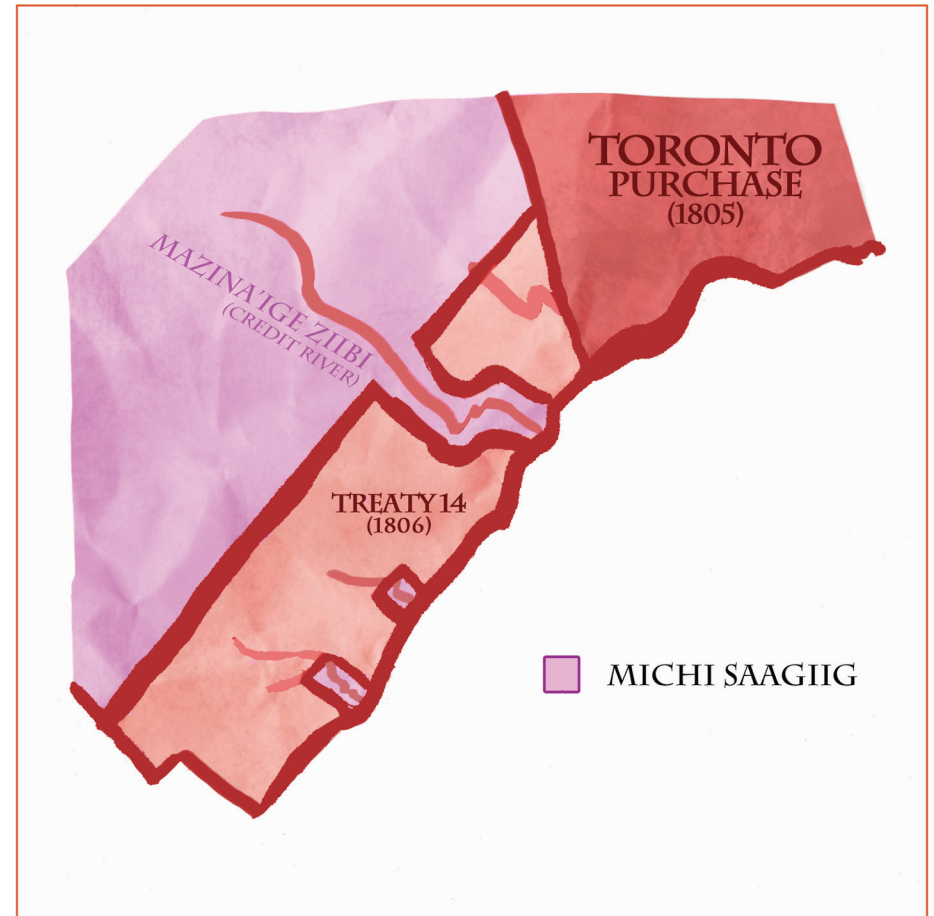


Figure 1. Reserved Lands of the Michi Saagiig (Mississauga Anishinaabeg) on the Mazina'ige Ziibi (Credit River) and Other Rivers, 1806.



## ACTIVITY 1:

# Gifts for the Purchase

The Mississaugas of the Credit are part of a larger Nation of Mississaugas, including the Mississaugas of Alderville and of the Mississauga First Nation.

In and around 1787, the British Crown gave the Mississaugas of the Credit the following gifts. Spend some time calculating/estimating the value of these gifts in today's currency.

ITEM	VALUE
6 bale strouds (coarse woollen cloth)	
4 bales moltons (linen cloth)	
44 kegs hoes (containers of farming tools)	
44 8 half barrels powder	
5 boxes guns	
3 cases shott (cases of bullets)	
24 brass kettles	
10 kegs of ball (gun piece)	
200 lbs. tobacco	
1 cask containing 3 gro knives	
1 dozen looking glasses	
10 dozen 4 trunks linen	
1 hogshead (a large barrel) containing 18 pieces gartering (clothing)	
24 laced hats	
30 pieces ribbon	
3 groups fish hooks	
200 gun flints	
1 box of 60 hats	
1 bale flowered flannel	
5 bales blankets	
1 bale broad cloth	
5 pcs. embroidered serge (fabric)	
1 case barley corn beads	
96 gallons rum	
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED VALUE</b>	

These gifts were later accounted for as payment for the lands of the Toronto Purchase of 1787.

Now compare this to the following 1829 petition from the Mississaugas. Try to find three to four gestures or movements to replace words or ideas. String together a movement sequence by combining these gestures.

**Petition of the Mississauga Indians, settled at the River Credit, to our Great Father, Sir John Colborne, K.D.B. Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada**

"FATHER,

Your children who now petition to you are a remnant of the great nations who owned and inhabited this country in which you now live, and make laws; the ground on which you and your children stand, covers the bones of our fathers, of many generations. Then your fathers came over the great waters, we received them as friends, and gave them land to live upon. We have always been friends to our great father, The King, and his white children. When the white men came, they made us sick and drunken: and as they increased, we grew less and less, till we are now very small. We sold a great deal of land to our great father, the King, for very little, and we became poorer and poorer. We reserved all the hunting and fishing ground, but the white men soon grew so many that they took all; when all the rest was gone, we kept the (Auzahzhkewayyogk) Sixteen-mile-Creek, (Asquasingk) Twelve-mile-Creek, and the (Mahzenahkasepah) River Credit. The two first are gone from us, but we are wishing to keep the Credit. We reserved one mile on each side of the Credit, where we now live . . . We now want the fish in our River, that we may keep our children at home to go to School, and not to go many miles back to hunt for provisions.

Now, Father, once all the fish in those Rivers and those Lakes, all the deer in these woods were ours; but your red Children only ask you to cause laws to be made to keep these bad men away from our fishery at the River Credit . . . We will not fish on Saturday night, Sunday night, and Sundy, but will let the fish pass up to our white brothers up the river."



### ACTIVITY 3:

## Embodying Language

Explore the message of the “*Bad Bird*” through vocal recording.

In 1820, William Claus, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, arranged for the Mississaugas to sell more land at the mouth of the Credit, retaining only two hundred acres further up the Credit, across the river from their village. Promises were made that the proceeds would be used to educate their children, instruct the Mississaugas in Christianity, and build them a village on the remaining two hundred acres.

Standing at one of the locations of the Mississauga Place names listed in this booklet, record yourself reading the Mississaugas memory of commitments made by Councilman of Upper Canada William Claus.

*“The white people are getting thick around you and we are afraid they, or the Yankees will cheat you out of your land, you had better put it into the hands of your very great Father the king to keep for you till you want to settle, and he will appropriate it for your good and he will take good care of it, and will take you under his wing, and keep you under his arm, & give you schools, and build houses for you when you want to settle.”*

In 1829, Nawahjegezhegwabe (Joseph Sawyer) and Tyentenaged (John Jones) relayed what they had understood Claus to say: Be duplicitous, play with intent (friendly, threatening, oily, corporate, or spiritually superior). How do Claus’ words feel when reading the passage on the next page? How are they remembered, reinterpreted?

Consider the cost of these gifts in relation to the cost of purchasing a single home in Toronto today. How many homes would you be able to purchase if you exchanged the value of the gifts you calculated?

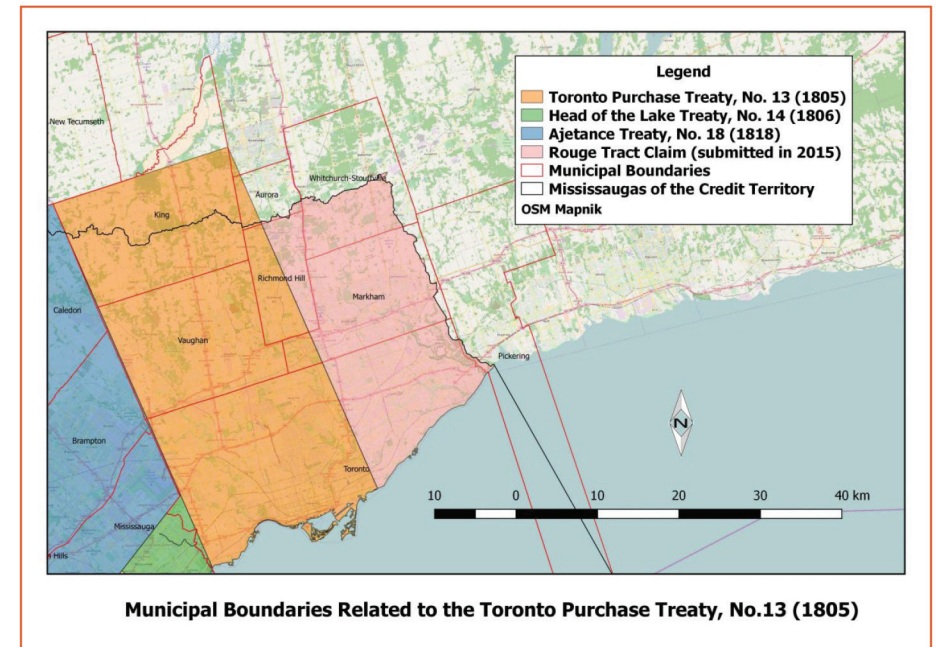


Figure 2. Municipal Boundaries Related to the Toronto Purchase Treaty, No. 13 (1805).

These gifts of 1787 were characterized as payment by the British. However, the deed was found to be obtuse and ethically problematic as there were no land descriptions found in it.

For the next twenty years, the British attempted to survey the lands they supposedly purchased to legitimize the sale. The Mississaugas believed that the agreement was not a purchase extinguishing their rights to the land, but a rental of the lands for British use in exchange for gifts and presents in perpetuity. Gift-giving was a normal exchange practice for shared land access and hunting rights, not payment.

## ACTIVITY 2:

# Day Trip to Explore the Western Boundaries of the 1787 Toronto Purchase (Treaty 13)

In 1788, Alexander Aitken was sent by the British to conduct a survey of the Toronto Purchase boundaries of the year prior. He was not successful, as the creeks and rivers cannot be moved; the Mississaugas claimed them as immutable boundaries.

**"They did not look upon a straight line as a proper boundary, the creek they said was a boundary that could not be altered or moved, but that a line in a few years unless always cut open and frequented would soon grow up with brush and trees."**

—Alexander Aitken,  
recounting Chief Wabakinine

**Walk, bike, or take transit along the waterfront boundaries. On a map of Toronto, follow along as Alexander Aitken tries to confirm the western boundaries.**

1. Start at the mouth of the Humber River at the east side of the Humber Bay Arch Bridge.
  2. Make your way over to Colonel Samuel Smith Park. Enjoy and observe the therapeutic landscape. Do some research to find out who he is and why this Indigenous shore and territory was named after him.
  3. Make your way west to Etobicoke Creek in Marie Curtis Park. Once there, do not cross the creek; try to recognize it as a natural boundary. Then do some research to find out how the Mississaugas were forced to give up Etobicoke Creek.
  4. Following along the Martin Goodman Trail, visit the Small Arms Inspection Building (a Toronto Biennial of Art 2022 site). Do some research on this site and its history.
  5. From there, make your way over to the Credit River in Mississauga. Enjoy the natural views, thinking on the importance of this river to the Mississaugas way of life. How did the Mississaugas' hold firm to this river as the western boundary of the Toronto Purchase? What did they have to give up?
- Total distance travelled: Approximately 17 km.

*How long did it take to travel the distance of this Western extension of the boundary from the Humber Bay Arch Bridge to the Credit River? How much would this amount of land be worth to your family today? Think of the ways in which you would survive on and steward this land, working with the landscape and waterways. Consider how the flats of a river were used by the Mississaugas.*

*Being careful not to disturb the natural habitat, get close to the water. Think through the use of this location. What types of harvesting, processing, and stewarding is possible along its waters? Draw, write or sketch out your ideas here:*



On August 1, 1805, the Crown purchased 250,880 acres of land for the sum of 10 shillings. The Mississaugas reserved for themselves the right to exclusively fish on Etobicoke Creek. Treaty 13 was signed by eight chiefs of the Mississaugas of the Credit and they were pressured to give up even more land. In between the first attempt to solidify the boundaries in 1787 and the confirmation of 1805, the population of Mississaugas had decreased.

In 2010, Canada agreed to pay CA\$145 million for the lands, based on the historic value extrapolated to current dollars. On January 8, 2019 the "Mississaugas of the New Credit" announced that they would rename as the "Mississaugas of the Credit".