

VACANT LOT IN TORONTO

# Buried Stories

**Indigenous settlements and gathering places are everywhere. They're hard to find, though, buried under Canada's villages, cities and towns.**

**C**ertain things led Indigenous people to meet for trade and to build homes in particular spots. People who moved around, like the Stoney Nakoda, Cree, Siksika, Assiniboine and other nations of the plains came to the same places to fish and hunt at different times of the year. People who farmed some of their food, like the Haudenosaunee, Mi'kmaq, Ojibwe and others in eastern Canada, made their homes in villages on good land. Lakes and rivers were their highways.

When Indigenous peoples made treaties, the government usually moved them off these familiar territories. The government gave them limited lands so that settlers could have farms and build their own villages. Railways cut across everything, bringing more newcomers.

As settlers created bigger communities, they often simply built on top of Indigenous places. Sometimes they moved the traces of Indigenous settlements and trading places, or dug them up and kept them.

This 1893 illustration looks north from Lake Ontario to Toronto.





The recreated Turtle Clan longhouse shown above stands in a Wendat heritage site near Toronto. The image at far left shows where a group of longhouses once stood in what is now Scarborough, Ontario. The closer image shows an archaeologist marking the site of a Wendat longhouse in the same area.

## Wendat Toronto

Canada's biggest, busiest city doesn't have many traces of its Indigenous history left. But for at least 600 years, First Nations, mainly the Wendat, lived in nearly 100 villages scattered around what is now the Greater Toronto Area. They grew corn, moving their village sites as they used up the wood and the soil grew less fertile. Fighting with the Haudenosaunee drove the Wendat north to Georgian Bay and then east to Quebec. After

they left, the region that is now Toronto was home to the Seneca people and to an Anishinaabe nation, the Mississaugas of the New Credit. As Toronto grew and new sites for buildings were dug up, many First Nations items were uncovered. A century or more ago, it was common for people living in Toronto to just grab a shovel and dig around in what were the sites of former First Nations villages.

**Did Indigenous people have a community or gathering place where your village, town or city now stands? How can you find out?**



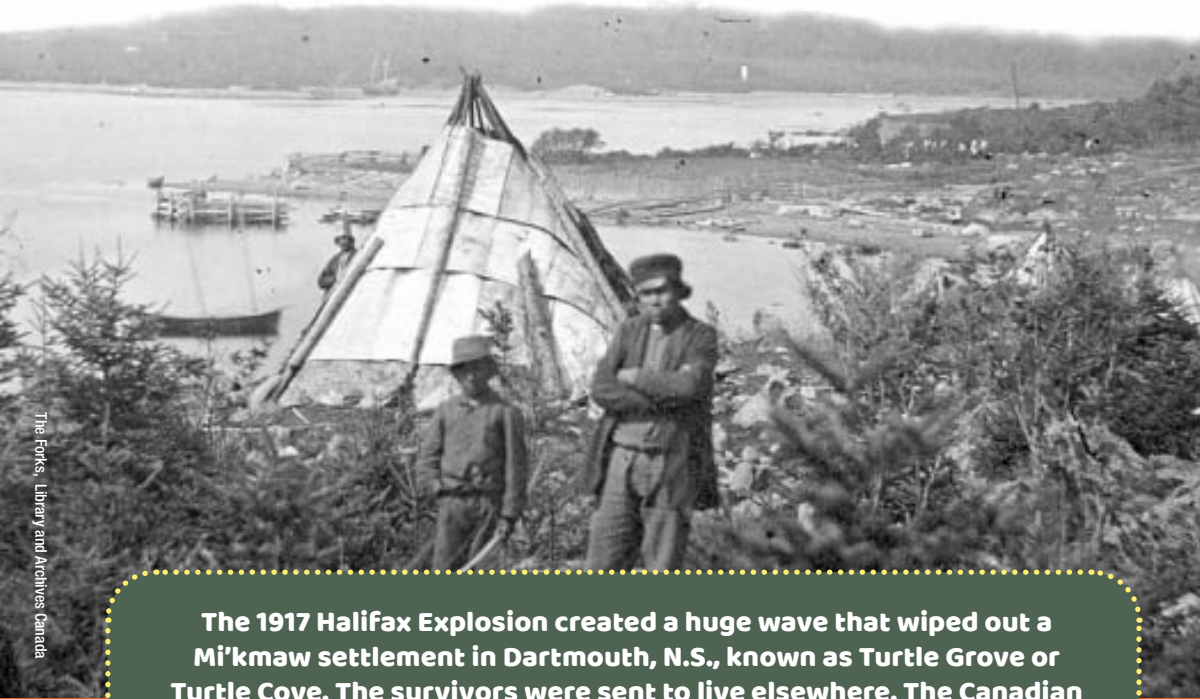


The Allandale bus and train station in Barrie, Ont., was built on top of a Wendat burial pit. Bones were discovered there as early as 1846, but construction of railway lines in the late 1880s and afterward went ahead anyway.



## Pile o' Bones

Cree hunters and their families followed the bison around southern Saskatchewan for thousands of years. In one place, they piled up mounds of bison bones and named the spot *Oskana kaasateki* which means "the bones that are piled together." That area became known as Pile o' Bones, Wascana and then Regina after Treaty 4 was agreed to in 1874.



**The 1917 Halifax Explosion created a huge wave that wiped out a Mi'kmaw settlement in Dartmouth, N.S., known as Turtle Grove or Turtle Cove. The survivors were sent to live elsewhere. The Canadian military built apartments, schools, stores and more on the site.**



## « Meeting Place

**T**he spot in Winnipeg where the Red and Assiniboine rivers come together is called The Forks. First Nations people started camping here at least 6,000 years ago. It's now home to a busy market, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, restaurants, a children's museum, festivals and more.

## Hochelaga »

**T**he French started the settlement that would become Montreal more than 375 years ago. But there was a Haudenosaunee farming community named Hochelaga there long before that. In 1535, explorer Jacques Cartier described seeing 50 longhouses inside a wooden fence. No other proof of the settlement has ever been found.

