



WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT BRYCE

Courageous Conversations with Bobby Henry and Guests

- EPISODE #1 -

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EPISODE

HOST: BOBBY HENRY

Stanley (Bobby) Henry, OCT, is of the Ball Deer Clan. He is a member of the Cayuga Nation, a nation of the Six Nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. He is a community member of Six Nations of the Grand River Territory and has spent 15+ years of his life in K-12 Cayuga language immersion education. He is a Ph.D. student in Trent University's Ph.D. program in Indigenous Studies and holds a Master of Education degree in Indigenous Education from Lakehead University. Bobby is an Assistant Professor in Brock University's Faculty of Education. His research interests are issues in Indigenous education, Indigenous language pedagogies and regeneration, and decolonizing and Indigenizing PK-12 education.

GUESTS: AMANDA MERPAW AND MILES MORRISSEAU

Amanda Merpaw (she/elle) is the Bryce@100 Project Coordinator at Defining Moments Canada. She is a queer and disabled Franco-Ontarian writer, editor, researcher, and educator. Originally from Ottawa, she is currently based in Tkaronto (Toronto), Dish With One Spoon Territory. Amanda has taught history and English in Ontario classrooms for nearly a decade, and has worked as an educational coach in justice-based practices and pedagogies. She is also an artist-educator and producer creating and supporting a range of performance projects and installations, including in documentary theater. She is currently a doctoral student at the University of Toronto, where she explores the intersections of queerness, disability, writing, community, and the body.

Miles Morrisseau is a Métis writer, journalist and multimedia producer from the Métis Homeland in Manitoba. He began his career as a writer/broadcaster for CBC Radio in Winnipeg. He produced documentaries

on Sunday Morning, CBC radio's flagship documentary program. As a national Native Affairs broadcaster, he covered the Mohawk Gambling War in Akwesasne, the Death of the Meech Lake Accord and was one of only mainstream journalists who had access behind the barricades during the Oka Crisis, entering on one of a handful of boats that smuggled in food and medicine. He was Editor-in-Chief of Nativebeat, the Beat of a Different Drum, which was chosen best Native American Monthly by the Native American Journalists Association (NAJA). He was Editor-in-Chief of Aboriginal Voices Magazine and Indian Country Today. He produced Buffalo Tracks with Evan Adams for APTN. As program manager for NCI-FM, Manitoba's Indigenous Radio Network, he helped launch Streetz FM the first radio station by and for Indigenous youth in Winnipeg, MB. He has six children and seven grandchildren and has been with his partner Shelly Bressette for over 35 years. He lives in Grand Rapids, Manitoba on one of the last pieces of Métis land still in the hands of Métis people.

THE STORY OF A NATIONAL CRIME

BEING A

Record of the Health Conditions of the
Indians of Canada from 1904 to 1921

-BY-

DR. P. H. BRYCE, M. A., M. O.

Chief Medical Officer of the Indian Department

I. By Order in Council dated Jan. 22nd, 1904, the writer was appointed Medical Inspector to the Department of the Interior and of Indian Affairs, and was entrusted with the health interests of the Indians of Canada. The Order in Council recites :

"The undersigned has the honour to report that there is urgent necessity for the appointment of a medical inspector to represent the Department of the Interior and Department of Indian Affairs. The undersigned believes that the qualifications for the position above mentioned are possessed in an eminent degree by Mr. Peter Henderson Bryce, M. D. at present and for a number of years past Secretary for the Provincial Board of Health of Ontario, and who has had large experience in connection with the public health of the province."

(Signed)

CLIFFORD SIFTON,

Minister of the Interior and
Superintendent General of Indian Affairs.

For the first months after the writer's appointment he was much engaged in organizing the medical inspection of immigrants at the sea ports; but he early began the systematic collection of health statistics of the several hundred Indian Bands scattered over Canada. For each year up to 1914 he wrote an annual report on the health of the Indians, published in the Departmental report, and on instructions from the minister made in 1907 a special inspection of thirty-five Indian schools in the three prairie provinces. This report was published separately; but the recommendations contained in the report were never published and the public knows nothing of them. It contained a brief history of the origin of the Indian Schools, of the sanitary condition of the schools and statistics of the health of the pupils, during the 15 years of their existence. Regarding the health of the pupils, the report states that 24 percent of all the pupils which had been in the schools were known to be dead, while of one school on the File Hills reserve, which gave a complete return to date, 75 per cent were dead at the end of the 16 years since the school opened.

KEY THEMES DISCUSSED:

Canadian Identity

Dr. Bryce's 1922 report raises conversations about Canadian history that continue to be relevant 100 years after its publication. In *The Story of a National Crime*, Dr. Bryce reports information about the health conditions in residential schools and the resulting rates of death amongst Indigenous children attending the schools. This information is still sometimes denied by Canadians, or is not fully absorbed into a national consciousness about Canadian history and identities. Some conversations in Canada remain stagnantly the same as they did in 1922. And yet—truth must come before and as part of the process of reconciliation.

If Canadians continue to position themselves as the "perfect stranger"(Dion, 2009) in relation to these truths, then how can we move forward with reconciliation? In listening to and telling these truths, Canadians must also begin to reflect on what it means to be "Canadian": what makes up Canadian history and a Canadian identity? This will often involve challenging what might be a pre-existing assumption that Canada is, and always has been, a welcoming and peace-oriented place for all. Only once we engage in these truths can we participate wholly in an ongoing process of reconciliation, which includes developing a more nuanced understanding of the nation of Canada and what it means to be Canadian.

Engaging with Information and Truth

We live in a time of rapidly growing access and exposure to information, where the living histories of residential schools and the ongoing issues that persists as a result of the schools are widely available. Documents such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Final Report* and *Calls to Action*, archives and survivor testimonies from the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, and reliable reporting on contemporary, ongoing issues are all publicly available and accessible across a variety of mediums.

Engaging with this information—with the truths found there—is an important part of reconciliation. Non-Indigenous Canadians have a responsibility to engage with this information in order to develop a more thorough understanding of Canada's past and present relationship with Indigenous peoples and Indigenous sovereignty. Reflecting on such information also helps us consider how these histories are still alive today in the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, and between Indigenous peoples and systems of Canadian governance.

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. What does it mean to have a national identity (like being Canadian)? What elements might form a shared national identity?
2. How can Canadians engage thoughtfully with the history of residential schools and the ongoing legacies of harm that still exist today?
3. How have conversations about these truths changed since the publication of Dr. Bryce's report in 1922? How have they stayed the same? What kind of conversations are most needed next?

Suggested Activities Before Listening

Ask students to jot down 1-3 things they already know about residential schools and/or Truth and Reconciliation. If students find this challenging:

- Prompt them with references to Every Child Matters/ Orange Shirt Day.
- Prompt them to think about what the words “truth” and “reconciliation” mean to them.

Suggested Activities While Listening

Ask students to engage in a reflection journal, either in a notebook you are already using in your classroom or one dedicated to the experience of listening to this podcast and learning about Dr. Bryce, residential schools, and Truth and Reconciliation.

When listening to this first episode, students could include:

- Jot notes of 2-3 key ideas in the discussion,
- Questions you have about what the speakers have said,
- Personal reflections, feelings, and wonderings (i.e. “How has it been almost 100 years and there is not a bigger change in how we understand our history?”),
- Connections to prior learning, current events, media they've encountered, and/or
- Visual journals (using images to represent their thinking).

Suggested Activities After Listening

After listening to the podcast, discuss the key themes and/or questions from above. As a whole class or in small groups, draw connections between the themes and questions and the information presented in the podcast.

- **TEACHER NOTE:** this is a great opportunity to make cross-curricular connections to literacy curriculum expectations.

Discuss how to locate information about residential schools.

- As the educator, you might discuss the many accommodating factors available to help all people

become involved in the conversation and learning process. For example, have students explore podcasts, videos, and written documents in both English and/or French.

- Have students collectively create a curation bank of resources that they can explore. Ensure that students work to include various styles of recourse all relating to the same main topic.

Have students look up treaties covering the land you and your students live on. Become familiar with what treaties are and how they impact our understanding of relationships with Indigenous people and the land we reside on.

- Read the treaty documents as a whole class or independent activity depending on the age and needs of your students.
- Reflect on the treaty documents that you have examined. Ask students to generate and record questions they have about the treaty documents under examination. Use these questions as a stimulus for further classroom discussions.
- Check out these resources to assist in locating treaties and treaty information for your area:
 - Native Land
 - Map of Ontario treaties and reserves
- **TEACHER NOTE:** there are some areas that are not covered by a formal treaty. In these cases, it is important to broaden your search to include accounts, both oral and written, from local Indigenous peoples and communities.

Spend time reading the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, especially the section entitled “Education for Reconciliation” (p.7). As a class or in small groups, students could research and discuss ways that these Calls to Action are and are not being actively engaged with and responded to. What ideas do they have for how students, teachers, administrators, schools, communities, and governments might engage in the ongoing process of telling the truth and of reconciling via these Calls?

- You might create a visual space to house these suggestions, and students could write, draw, or otherwise create multimedia responses and projects within the school to respond.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Have students read the article titled “Peter Bryce, doctor who exposed residential school conditions, gets own mailbox in advance of first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation.” Discuss with students why Dr. Bryce’s gravestone would have a mailbox and the historical significance of Dr. Bryce himself. Allow students to wonder and ask questions.

Following the discussion, invite the students to write a letter to Dr. Peter Bryce. Use the example included in the article to help students understand the task. Allow students time to brainstorm, share ideas, and structure the letter.

Connections to historical thinking concepts:

1. Continuity and Change
2. Primary Source Evidence
3. Historical Perspectives

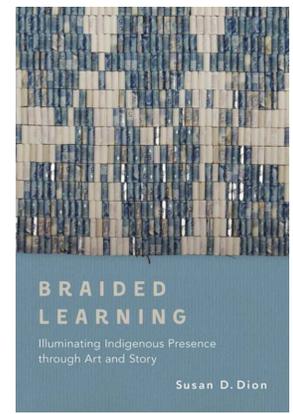
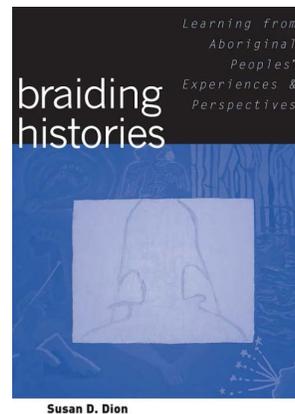
Suggestions for reading:*

Dr. Peter Henderson Bryce Information Sheet,
First Nations Child and Family Caring Society

- *Suggested grades: Grades 6-12+*

What We Have Learned. Principles of Truth and Reconciliation

- *Suggested grades: Grades 6-12+*
- Note: this is a large, but informational document. Using excerpts might be an effective instructional approach for your students.



Susan Dion's Braiding Histories

- *Suggested grades: College/University Students/Educators*

Accessible and FREE copy of the Peter Bryce: A National Crime

- *Suggested grades: Grades 6-12+*

*Please note that the suggested grade level recommendation is a guide. We encourage you to review all information and make decisions based on what you know about your classroom and your students before engaging with these resources in your classroom.

Suggestions for watching and listening:

- Peter Bryce and The Story of a National Crime
- Reconciliation Book Club with Pam Palmater: A National Crime
- Listen to Miles Morrisseau's audio recording of The Story of a National Crime

RESOURCES REFERENCED IN THE EPISODE:

Dion, S. D., Dion, M. R., & Dion, M. R. (2009). Braiding histories : Learning from Aboriginal peoples' experiences and perspectives : including the Braiding histories stories co-written with Michael R. Dion. UBC Press.

Dion, S. D., Dion, M. R., & Dion, M. R. (2022). Braided Learning: Illuminating Indigenous Presence through Art and Story. UBC Press.

