

Never to Feel Safe on this Continent: The Aboriginal thinking in North America in the 1800s till 2003

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Major stories have been written regarding the actions of tribal leaders in the period of the 1700s as two major world powers made good on their promise on the total conquest of the North American continent.

Researchers in the latter part of the twentieth century began piecing together what they thought was the obscure evidence that some dedicated and well educated Native Americans had thought out in real terms of what was possible for their peoples to live in peace and relative comfort.

In 1990, during the Kanesatake incident, the Canadian Army was mobilized in a very curious standoff with some Native Americans in Mohawk territory.

At the time, Native journalists covering the unfolding events were hard pressed to relive some tense times retold over seven generations in their home villages, reserves and home regions. Young men and women, especially those who were now urban Indians, said to themselves and others for the first time in their lives: "If the conflict spreads, I am going back home and helping out there." Tribal affiliations were figured out. These were sane and well established individuals who saw themselves at home in the urban areas of Canadian cities. Within two months of the emerging conflicts, as the first barricades and the first appearance of the Canadian Army came into daily focus, feeling safe on the continent was not a sure thing.

People older than forty-years old have vivid memories of encountering white men who wanted to harm them. Protecting yourself was a major theme in survival techniques and strategies in an urban setting.

One hundred years before that, no corner of Indian Country was safe from marauding bands of hooligans either wearing an army uniform or simply wild people looking for free land.

Into that atmosphere of no protection except by one's own wish to stay alive, two men in the northern regions of the two countries come to represent an educated class of self-identified Indian and mixed blood. Both men wrote extensively, including letters, essays, and position papers, and took action directly to make actions from those words to define policy. Both men could read documents of several disciplines.

Ely S. Parker was a Union general and Seneca Chief. He displayed great patience and forbearance. Though he studied law for the American courts, he was not allowed to practice because he was not considered an American citizen. He turned right around and studied engineering. He became employable in that field. He was also a Sachem among his people. This is a duty he never gave up.

Louis Riel was educated as far as the post-secondary level in French. Leaving home at the age of fourteen from the Red River area, his rural education and exposure to other Native Americans seemed well rounded. His subsequent education allowed him to clerk in a law office, probably in French civil law. As a young man about town, his home was in the Mile End area of Montreal. It is apparent he could not help but be exposed to the turbulent politics of the time. At the same time, there was a sharpness in his ability to see what measures for economic stability had to be made so that the next seven generations would have a homeland. His generous spirit spoke of at least two other nations, those of French Catholics and Irish Catholics—at that time hard pressed to exit with some hope for a peaceful and fruitful future.

Louis Riel was executed in 1885 in Canada. The purpose for this essay is to further explore what could have been possible. The bond issues that Louis Riel wrote extensively about would have resembled Israel Bonds which were sold in North America after the formation of Israel as a modern state. Since Great Britain was a sponsor, the money had to come from one of the super powers. The British did the partitioning; they must have put up the money. A homeland for the Métis people was a

farsighted option which would have made sense in any century, now it has become critical at the beginning of this 21st century.

The possible collapse of the agri-business looms as it is structured financially now though it has never been farsighted. In times of economic downturns from many varieties of reasons, the land is lost to the very people who have farmed it for what seems generations. In actual fact, only four or three generations have been linked to the land. ...