

This week's question to consider:

I recently heard of the practice of redlining. (*Redlining is the discriminatory practice of refusing to offer loans to certain people based on race and where they want to rent or buy a home, effectively segregating neighbourhoods across racial and socioeconomic lines. Named redlining because of drawn lines on a map... usually in red.*) Terrible! But that happened long ago, so why are we talking about it today? And it happened in the United States, but not here, right? We didn't have this practice in Canada, let alone New Brunswick, or in this *district*... right? Right??

Pro tip: Wrong. It happened in Canada, too. In New Brunswick. In this school district. It happened, and we need to acknowledge that it did, because the foundation of how things *were* shape how things *are*. We must face our history to gain a full understanding of where we stand. It's the only way we can move forward; with the knowledge of the building blocks that comprise our collective past in this place.

Since we are talking about land, it's only appropriate to acknowledge the following:

The land on which we live, learn, and play in Anglophone South School District is the traditional unceded territory of the Wolastoqiyik (*pronunciation: [wool-US-too-gweeg]*), Peskotomuhkati (Passamaquoddy) and Mi'kmaq (*pronunciation: [meeg-mah]*) Peoples.

This territory and the relationships within it are bound by the Treaties of Peace and Friendship which the Wabanaki Peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1725. These treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources but in fact recognized Wolastoqey (*pronunciation: [wool-US-took-way]*), Mi'kmaq, and Peskotomuhkati title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing respectful relationship between nations.

Have a look at the above map that indicates both the settler names as well as the Indigenous territory names and demarcation, for a bit more context. You may notice that there is overlap in the Indigenous territory nomenclature, rather than the delineation typical of settler maps.

NOTE: For more information, please have a look at ASD-South's First Nation Newsletter (in an email from Laura Taylor dated Monday, September 13th, 2022) that offers context. I encourage you to explore that resource, it's important to present this knowledge to our students in context, whenever we can.

There's a lot to think about when we talk about land.

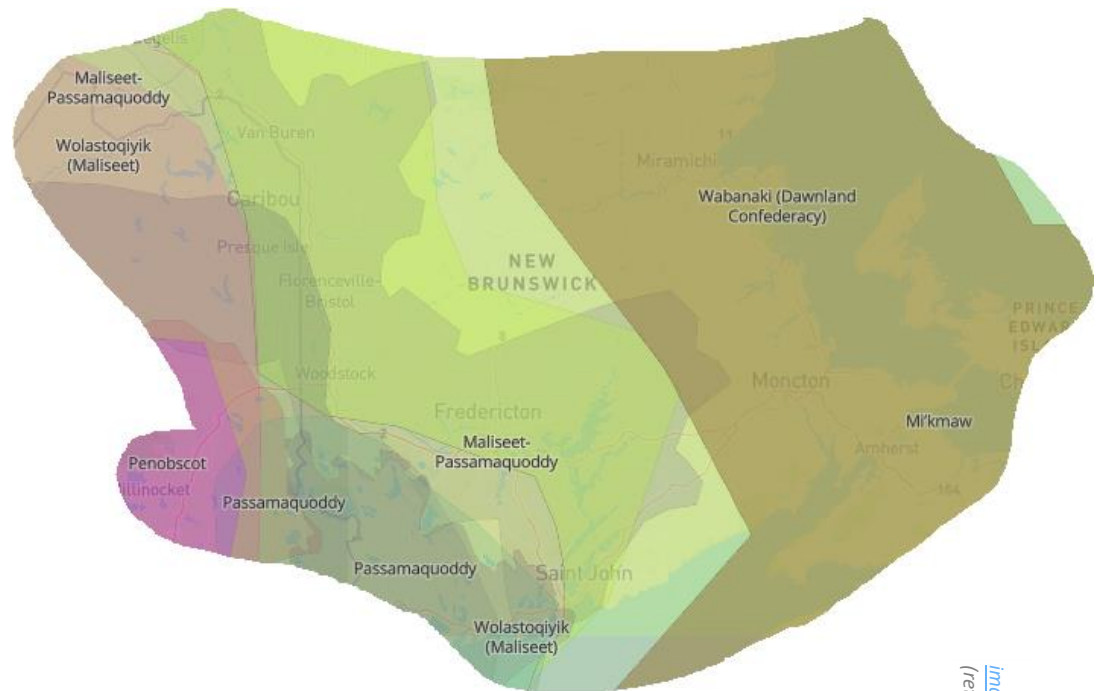


Image source: www.native-land.ca
(retrieved 12/09/2022)

Now that we have the land acknowledgement at the forefront of mind, let's move forward in time. So now came the colonizers. And with colonizers, enslaving people was an established practice; this means that there were unconscious beliefs around race, by default.

redline \red·līn\
Illegal discriminatory practice in which a mortgage lender denies loans, or an insurance provider restricts services, to certain areas of a community, often because of the racial characteristics of the applicant's neighbourhood.

source: britannica.com (retrieved 12/09/2022)

redline verb
red·line | \ˈred·līn\
redlined; redlining; redlines

Definition of redline
intransitive verb
: to withhold home-loan funds or insurance from neighborhoods considered poor economic risks

transitive verb
: to discriminate against in housing or insurance

source: Merriam-Webster dictionary online (retrieved 12/09/2022)

It makes sense, then, that these ideologies, as terrible as they are to consider now with an antiracist lens, would have formed the foundation of how things were done here. It's an important premise to understand, because again, moving forward doesn't happen without context.

To bring things back to the notion of redlining, then, we must know what a covenant is, generally speaking.

Any kind of covenant can be attached to a property, at any stage. When the land is in development, once there is a house plan, when there is a completed building, doesn't matter. A covenant restricts what can be done on the property. Zoning laws, and the ability to operate a business on the premises, limiting how many animals can live there, an easement, the right to access a power line... these are all things that can be baked into a covenant.

And so, restricting access to neighbourhoods to live in or own property in based on race is known as a racial covenant. These tie into redlining because they were what made redlining enforceable. Rather than just delineating property, these covenants were legal restrictions on who could live where.

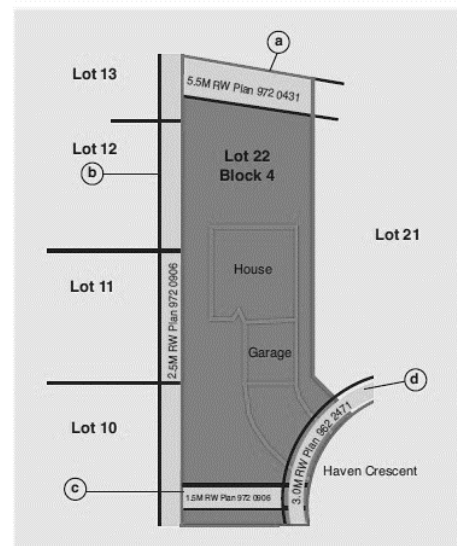
Racial covenants were covenants that restricted the use of a property based on the race of the occupants. A covenant, once attached to a property, can remain in effect in perpetuity, and don't have an expiry.

To fully understand what redlining can do to a place, consider Minneapolis, and the work of Kevin Ehrman-Solberg as it relates to mapping racial covenants. The following TED Talk gives a detailed overview (transcript available on the site): [The Geography of Inequality \[14:56\]](#).

I truly cannot recommend that talk enough.

It's important to note that racial covenants, if they do remain or exist still somewhere, are now illegal. They are clearly a human rights violation, and in Canada, we have laws that specifically render them illegal, thereby unenforceable. But their foundation has had an effect on the descendants of those who lived with them while they were enforced. And that's the part we don't generally acknowledge or fully understand.

Example Urban Lot Easement/Right-of-Way; Lot 22 Block 4



- (a) High Pressure Gas Line
- (b) Drainage Swale
- (c) Drainage Swale
- (d) Utilities (Gas, etc.)

Note: The red line marks the property boundary. RW Plan means Right-of-Way Plan.

source: Alberta Land Surveyors' Association (retrieved 13/09/2022)

It is undeniable that redlining was practiced here, in Canada. And it was, in Anglophone South School District. Spar Cove Road in Saint John was one such designated area. (For more information on what that looked like, please get in touch with NB Black Historical Society to book a tour or go in to see the center, if you can.)

“ The biggest difference between discriminatory practices in the United States and Canada is that here in Canada, we tend to think it didn't happen here. That we somehow escaped this reality. While New Brunswick's history of slavery may not have been as widespread as in the United States and the Caribbean, it was real enough for the individuals who lived through it.

[Afua] Cooper said having the United States next door, which had a much more public history of slavery, has led to some in Canada ignoring truths in their own country.

"Oftentimes as Canadians we project onto the United States, and 'oh they're bad, they have racism and they do this and they do that bad stuff,' but we also have that history," said Cooper.

"The difference is that our history has been covered up."

Excerpted from [CBC News Article](#) (21 Feb. 2018)

The danger in this, of course, is that when we have no ownership to what has happened here, we have no understanding of the extent to which structural, systemic, *legal* racism has played a part in shaping the world we live in. And we can't address what we can't even see.

Our responsibility lies in acknowledging our past and staring it right in the face. To know is to begin.

Recommended Resources:

Indigenous Territories Land Map (accessed 12 Sept. 2022) | <https://native-land.ca>
The Canadian Encyclopedia Article by Natasha Henry (Sept. 2018) | [Racial Segregation of Black People in Canada](#)
TEd Talk by Kevin Ehrman-Solberg (Nov. 2018) [14:56] | [The Geography of Inequality](#)
CBC Article by J. Gill (Feb. 2018) | ['Our history has been covered up': Facing New Brunswick's past on slavery](#)
TEd Talk by Kevin Ehrman-Solberg and Kirsten Delegrad (Mar. 2022) [5:45] | [The Dark History of the Suburbs](#)
New Brunswick Black History Society Website (NBBHS) | <https://www.nbblackhistorysociety.org/>

Anti-red-pen,

Your friendly neighbourhood Anti-Racism & Equity Coach
Therese Trofimencoff (*she/they, elle/iel*)



Image taken at Willow Cove Black Burial Ground.
Near Saint John, New Brunswick
(T. R. Trofimencoff, Aug. 2022)

This site, which is maintained by the NBBHS, highlights the struggle of Black people in this area.

The grounds, though devoid of grave markers, commemorate the lives of Black people whose resilience in the face of extraordinary struggle echoes throughout time.

The care, the reverence, the respect of this reality is tangible in how beautifully the grounds are kept. The commemorative stones add something profound. *If you can, visit.*

For more information, click here