

# TARRAGON



## Cottagers and Indians

by Drew Hayden Taylor

directed by Patti Shaughnessy

Feb 13, 2018 – Mar 25, 2018 in the **Extraspace**

Opens Wednesday, February 21, 2018

Education Resource Guide by EmmaRose MacDonald

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## About the Play

### Synopsis

*Cottagers and Indians* is about an Anishnaabe man who cultivates manoomin, or wild rice, on a lake system in the land now known as Ontario. For him, manoomin holds cultural significance, environmental importance, nutrition, and his livelihood. For the nearby cottagers the plant is seen as a disruption to their use of the lakes. Conflict ensues bringing up questions of ownership, equity, tradition, health, colonization, and reconciliation.

### About the Playwright

Drew Hayden Taylor is an Ojibway from the Curve Lake First Nations in Ontario. An award winning playwright, some of his works include *In a World Created by a Drunken God*, *Toronto at Dreamer's Rock*, *Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth*, *Spirit Horse*, and *The Bootlegger Blues*. He was the Artistic Director of Native Earth Performing Arts from 1994-1997. Additionally he works as a journalist, a novelist, and wrote and directed the documentary *Redskins, Tricksters and Puppy Stew* for the National Film Board of Canada.

For more information visit <http://www.drewhaydentaylor.com>

# Resources

## Manoomin

### **Manoomin: Food that Grows on the Water**

<http://theways.org/story/manoomin>

This site offers an under 5 minute documentary on the history, harvest, and preparation of wild rice as told by Fred Ackley Jr. from the Sokaogon Chippewa Community of Mole Lake. The site includes an interactive map, learning questions and resources on manoomin.

### **Manoomin: Wild Rice**

<http://thekawarthas.ca/manoomin-wild-rice/>

James Whetung, the man who *Cottagers and Indians* is loosely inspired by, writes about the cultural importance, growing stages, and preparation of wild rice. Whetung grew up at Curve Lake Indian Reserve on the south shore of Chemong Lake, near Peterborough, Ontario.

## Land Acknowledgements

### **Toronto District School Board Land Acknowledgement**

<http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/Elementary/Treaty%20AcknowledgementFINAL.pdf>

This document is a copy of the land acknowledgements prepared by the Toronto District School Board. The document also contains links to maps of the treaties in Ontario.

### **What is the significance of acknowledging the Indigenous land we stand on?**

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/territorial-acknowledgements-indigenous-1.4175136>

This CBC article from July 2017 explains the purpose and meaning of land acknowledgements for both Indigenous people and settlers.

## Treaties

### **Treaties:**

**Learn more about the treaties, treaty relationships and treaty rights that shape Ontario.**

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/treaties>

This Ontario Government website explains what treaties are and provides maps and information on the treaties in Ontario. Written in accessible language with the goal of education, this website contains many resources, videos, and links.

### **The Two Row Times:**

**A paper serving the dish with one spoon territory – Great Lakes Region**

<https://tworowtimes.com/editorial/the-two-row-times-a-paper-serving-the-dish-with-one-spoon-territory-great-lakes-region/>

The Two Row Times is an Indigenous newspaper serving the Great Lakes Region. This editorial explains the Dish with One Spoon Treaty.

### **The Dish with One Spoon**

<http://www.indiantime.net/story/2010/08/05/cultural-corner/the-dish-with-one-spoon/7510.html>

This website explains the Dish With One Spoon Treaty and includes quotes from relevant primary documents.

### **Toronto Aka Tkaronto Passes New City Council Protocol**

<http://muskratmagazine.com/toronto-aka-tkaronto-passes-new-city-council-protocol/>

This article discusses when the City of Toronto passed the protocol for the Speaker to acknowledge that Toronto is traditional Indigenous territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit. The article provides information on the history of Indigenous people in the area now known as Toronto.

### **The Indigenous History of Toronto**

<http://guides.library.utoronto.ca/Toronto>

This site, prepared by the University of Toronto, offers links and information on the Indigenous History of Toronto.

## **Media Coverage of “Wild Rice Wars”**

Cottagers and Indians is inspired by real events around the area of Pigeon Lake. This conflict was named by the media as the “Wild Rice Wars.”

### **Wild rice fight: cottagers versus Indians**

<https://nowtoronto.com/news/wild-rice-fight-cottagers-versus-indians/>

This article written by Drew Hayden Taylor discuss the conflict at Pigeon Lake over the cultivation of wild rice.

### **For the love of Manoominikewin**

<http://anishinabeknews.ca/2015/11/18/for-the-love-of-manoominikewin/>

This article from Anishnabek News discusses a forum held in the Kawarthas area on “The challenges of reconciliation: Manoomin.” Speakers address the significance of Manoomin and the controversy surrounding how the land and lakes that wild rice grow on have been used and governed.

### **Canada's wild rice wars: How a conflict over wild ricing on Pigeon Lake is drawing attention to Indigenous rights and traditional foods.**

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2016/02/canada-wild-rice-wars-160217083126970.html>

This extensive article discusses a situation on Pigeon Lake where an Indigenous man was cultivating manoomin and the cottagers were concerned about their access to the lake. The article includes quotes from cottagers and James Whetung, the man harvesting the wild rice. The article discusses health, traditional foods, land rights, and the tension around selling wild rice.

### **Decolonizing Cottage Country: Anishinaabe Art Intervenes in Canada’s Wild Rice War**

<https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/decolonizing-cottage-country-anishinaabe-art-intervenes-in-canadas-wild-ric>

This article discusses a billboard/art installation created by the Ogimaa Mikana (Reclaiming/Renaming) Project near Pigeon Lake. The billboard is meant to raise awareness on manoomin. The article includes an interview with Susan Blight who co-curated the project.

### **Wild rice harvesting causes uproar on Pigeon Lake, Ontario**

<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/as-it-happens-tuesday-edition-1.3203220/wild-rice-harvesting-causes-uproar-on-pigeon-lake-ontario-1.3203499>

This site contains an article and audio clip from CBC on James Whetung and the tensions on wild rice on Pigeon Lake. Some strong language.

## **Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

### **Education and the NCTR**

<http://nctr.ca/educators.php>

This site specifically addresses teaching about colonialism and reconciliation in Canada. Resources include videos, activities, readings, archives, and initiatives.

### **Truth and Reconciliation Commission Reports**

<http://nctr.ca/reports.php>

This website holds the reports from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as well as significant modern and historical reports on the lives of Aboriginal people, residential schools, and healing.

### **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action**

[http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

This document contains 94 Calls to Action as a result of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

## **Equity and Activism**

### **Distinguish between Equity and Equality**

<http://sgba-resource.ca/en/concepts/equity/distinguish-between-equity-and-equality/>

This site explains the difference between equity and equality, mainly that equity involves everyone receiving what they need to live a healthy life versus everyone receiving the same thing.

### **Ogimaa Mikana (Reclaiming/Renaming) Project**

<http://ogimaamikana.tumblr.com>

The Ogimaa Mikana (Reclaiming/Renaming) Project works to replace street signs and historical plaques in Toronto with Anishinaabe versions. This action is an example of reclaiming land and history, revitalizing language and reminding settler communities of the colonial history of their neighbourhoods.

## **4 Rs Youth Movement**

<http://4rsyouth.ca>

4 Rs Youth Movement is a collaborative youth led initiative working to change the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth in the land now known as Canada. The website offers blog posts, videos, resources, and frameworks as well as ways to get involved.

## **Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto: Youth Information & Programs**

<http://nwrct.ca/programs/youth/>

The Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto offers a youth drop-in and a youth council specifically for Toronto-based, self-identifying Aboriginal females, between the ages of 12 and 24.

## **Discussion Questions:**

### Pre Show Questions

1. Where do you feel most connected to the land?
2. Have you ever heard a land acknowledgement before? What do they say? What is the purpose of them?
3. How would you describe a cottage? What might you find at a cottage?
4. What does tradition mean to you?
5. What is the difference between everyone receiving the same thing (equality) versus everyone getting what they need to succeed (equity)?

### Post Show Questions

1. What part of the play stood out for you and why?
2. What do you think will happen next? Why?
3. How do the different characters view their relationship with the land?
4. Why is growing manoomin important to Arthur?
5. Why do the cottagers dislike manoomin?
6. Who do you think has more power in the story? Explain why.
7. How might this community resolve this conflict so that everyone gets what they need?
8. How does the style of the play contribute to the story?



# Activities

## Treaty Reflections: the Dish With One Spoon

The Dish With One Spoon Treaty is an agreement between the League of Five Nations and a confederacy of Anishinabek and allied nations. As people who live on or are visitors to this area we all have a responsibility to this agreement. In this agreement the land around the great lakes is described as one dish with one spoon which we all must share to eat. This symbolizes that we are all responsible to take care of the land and the resources and to make sure there is enough for everyone. Importantly there are no knives at the table, representing peace.

1. As a group explain the Dish With One Spoon Treaty. There are links in the resource section for your reference.
2. Ask participants to individually reflect on the Dish With One Spoon Treaty. What are three ways we can practice this treaty? What is an action we can take to peacefully share and care for the land we live on?
3. In pairs ask the students to discuss their ideas and to think of a way that the class could practice this Treaty.
4. As a whole class hear the different ideas and choose at least one action to practice as a class. Ideas might include learning more about the Indigenous history of your area, learning about local plants and the land around your school, or committing to being responsible about resource use (garbage, recycling, power, water).

## **I am From**

In this activity participants reflect on their own experience of home, ancestry, and identity as well as the history of the land through poetry.

1. As a group discuss the concept of land acknowledgements. Land acknowledgements are based in traditional practices that would both recognize whose territory the land is as well as the identity and background of the visitor. Who has traditionally cared for this land? What are the treaties in the area? How did we each arrive in this place? What histories and places do we come from?

2. Ask the students to finish the following sentences using the five senses. These prompts both discuss where the students are from (geography, beliefs, family, sense of home) and the land they are on now.

I am from \_\_\_\_\_ (taste)

I am from \_\_\_\_\_ (sight)

I am from \_\_\_\_\_ (sound)

I am from \_\_\_\_\_ (smell)

I am from \_\_\_\_\_ (touch)

In this place I can taste \_\_\_\_\_

In this place I can see \_\_\_\_\_

In this place I can hear \_\_\_\_\_

In this place I can smell \_\_\_\_\_

In this place I can feel \_\_\_\_\_

3. Once students have finished the prompts ask them to pick an order for the sentences.

4. Split the whole group into three sections. The first section is in charge of creating a rhythm or a beat. After that is established ask the second group to create a simple melody to layer on top. Ask the third group to add in a simple harmony. Repeat these sounds into a loop. Depending on the comfort of your class students can add further variations.

5. Have volunteers read their poems with the soundscape as a background.

6. Discuss as a class any observations from the process.