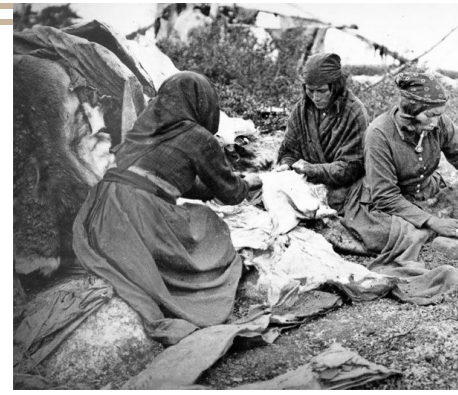


INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD NEWSLETTER

Issue 1, 2023 | Natasha Veith | C3376436@uon.edu.au



<https://tribalcollegejournal.org/animal-master-innu-hunting-life/innu-women/>



Unidentified Innu Woman and Children' Fred C. Sears, Library and Archives Canada

<https://www.heritage.nf.ca/articles/indigenous/innu-impacts.php>

The Innu

Welcome to this week's edition of Indigenous People in the contemporary world. Following the response from our previous edition of the newsletter, we are beginning a regular feature article that allows our readers to learn about issues that face Indigenous groups around the world in contemporary society. This week's newsletter features the Innu of Quebec and Labrador, an Indigenous group native to the northern regions of Canada.

Colonisation has affected almost every part of the globe, with its effects being devastating for Indigenous communities ([Paradies 2016](#)). The implications of colonisation have lasting implications that create injustices within communities, this week's article will provide a spotlight for the Innu of Quebec and Labrador and point out the shortcomings of previously implemented healing strategies that attempt to remedy indigenous issues with westernisation.

The Innu fostered a nomadic lifestyle for hundreds of years, allowing for an intrinsic relationship between the Innu and the land on which they live ([Fletcher 2003](#)). The change in seasons allowed for social gatherings and celebrations in the summer and hunting of the culturally significant caribou in secluded bands in the winter ([Samson & Pretty 2006](#)).

As the natural resources the northern Canadian landscape had to offer began to attract the attention of previously uninterested settlers, trading posts began to emerge in the early 20th century ([Samson 2003](#)). Shortly after this, the Innu began hunting furs for trading, rather than for survival purposes ([Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage 2023](#)). In 1948 Davis Inlet was created as a forced settlement for Mushuau Innu, a community with poor infrastructure that inhibited Innu from continuing their nomadic lifestyle ([Fletcher 2003](#)). It was not long before both health and social issues became prevalent within Innu settlements, catching the attention of the media was the Davis Inlet Gas Sniffing incident of 1982 where six children were found intoxicated on gasoline fumes ([Press 1995](#)). The rapid forced settlement of the Innu had other implications, mandatory schooling within Davis Inlet only taught about United States society, leading to a loss of connection with culture for Innu children ([Leger n.d.](#)).

A promising proposal was made in 2014; the Innu Healing Strategy outlined remedial action that takes a community-based approach, allowing for the Innu to be the leaders of their own healing, contrasting to the previously imposed strategies used allowing for Indigenous self-determination ([The Innu Healing Strategy 2014](#)).

The Canadian government has made little to no effort to ensure its indigenous peoples have self-determination and land rights, with industrial developments, such as the Upper Churchill Falls Hydroelectric Project, being detrimental to Innu land and peoples being carried out without consulting the Innu ([Samson 2003](#)). To combat these developments and fight for land rights, Innu Nation was established, an organisation that continues to lobby for Innu rights today ([Leger n.d.](#)).

As of 2014, the rate of suicide for Sheshatshiu First Nations is four to six times higher than that of the general Canadian population, illustrating the disparities endured by the Innu in contemporary society (FNIHB 2012). Furthermore, Long term psychological trauma resulted from military flights that produced ear-shattering noise in 1992 (Helwig 1993).