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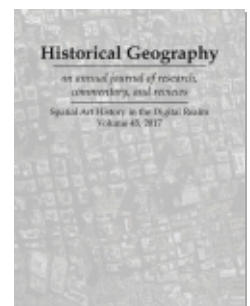
Mapping Indigenous Canada

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5. This plate might stand as a poster child for “settler colonialism,” the dominant negative refrain across these roundtable sessions. For a different take on that term, see S. Max Edelson, *The New Map of Empire: How Britain Imagined America Before Independence* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).
6. Co-editor Don Kerr, still teaching his courses on Canadian regionalism, had his office in the Geography Department further up St. George Street in Sidney Smith Hall. He came down to the Coach House for regular meetings with myself, assistant editor Susan Laskin and research associate Murdo MacPherson.



Mapping Indigenous Canada

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I propose that it would be useful to produce an Indigenous historical reference atlas of Canada, or at least select historical maps reference maps of Indigenous Canada. By an historical reference atlas I mean an atlas that has maps on demography, economic geography, and transportation that provide basic background information on the Indigenous population of Canada since Confederation. The time period is somewhat arbitrary, but basically it covers the period when substantial census information across Canada becomes available, although the information will vary in quality. I start with two examples from outside Canada of how such maps might be useful.

Susan Schulten in her excellent book on U.S. mapping in the nineteenth century, describes a painting of 1864 that hangs in the U.S. Senate. Titled, “Final Reading of Emancipation Proclamation,” it depicts Abraham Lincoln and seven members of his cabinet. In the lower right hand corner of the painting is a map propped against a chair. It can clearly be identified as a map produced by the US Coast Guard Survey (the foremost US mapping agency of the time) in 1861, “Distribution of Slave Population.” It is an elegant choropleth map of the U.S. South, showing by county the proportion of blacks to a county’s total population. The higher the proportion the darker the tint. The map becomes particularly compelling when you see that in some counties over 85% of the population was slave. Schulten discusses how it is known that Lincoln used the map to follow the progress of his armies, and she also emphasizes the moral and symbolic power of the map. The map provided a deeper understanding of human circumstances underlying the great emancipation struggle. Schulten also makes the important point that “The map not only conveyed the extent of slavery, but also translated the vast data of the census into a compelling and comprehensive picture.”¹

Last January (2017), Rosa Orblinski, our map librarian at York University, showed me a small, full-color atlas of Syria produced in 2015. At first sight, I thought it was a United Nations atlas, but it turned out that a relatively small country, Austria, had decided to invest in this atlas to show the recent mass migrations of refugee Syrians into Europe. The library’s version is published in English. There are 14 full-page maps showing distribution of religious, ethnic, and linguistic groups in Syria, camps by country for Syrian refugees in Europe and Turkey, and location of Syrians in European countries. In their Forewords, the ministers of two Austrian government departments explain why the atlas was produced. I will extract only three

quotations: "The explicitly selected combination of subject maps helps us to better understand the circumstances of the Syria crisis, the outcome of which greatly will influence our everyday lives in terms of economy, politics and security."; "Geo-related information, such as this Atlas, is at the core of every decision-making process at both the strategic and interdisciplinary levels...."; and "The Atlas in combination with other supporting products provides the crucial background information about Syria for the decision makers."²

In these two examples we see the practical importance of maps in helping comprehend the reality of human circumstances and to provide essential background information for making policy decisions. Effective maps can convincingly convey the magnitude of a problem, instill an awareness that something must be done to bring change, and even provide justification to take action.

I now turn to Canada and the need for an indigenous historical reference atlas, or, as a minimum, selected indigenous historical reference maps. There is much to be learned through analytical historical mapping of Indigenous Canada. Such maps: (i) bring spatial order to much dispersed data; (ii) provide background information on what happened; (iii) lead to an understanding of processes; and (iv) assist in sound policy making. Demographic, social, economic and transportation data should be mapped. Concerning population, it is especially important to map changing Indigenous populations decade by decade since Confederation right across Canada. Once the data has been collected, it can be mapped in various ways: by province, ecological unit, Indigenous groups, and any other category and scale as needed. As well, Indigenous urbanization over the same period across the country should be mapped. Many other demographic aspects can be mapped. It will be more difficult to get economic and transportation data over long time periods than demographic data. Regarding economic matters, the relationship of reserves and other Indigenous communities to resource development over time as Canada industrialized is important. Innovative mapping in transportation is needed, taking into account the location of reserves and other communities, and changing modes and costs of travel of travel in different parts of the country over time. The possibilities in analytical historical mapping are endless, but time and money are always limited so it is essential to scrutinize very critically what is worth mapping.

How can a project like this be implemented? My hope is that there are Canadian geographers who will be interested in investigating the need for Indigenous mapping, and are prepared to investigate the practicality of doing this. They will have to believe in this project, and convince others that it has value. One geographer with this strong vision and some knowledge of cartography has to take the lead, and find two or three colleagues to work with her/him. These scholars can be in other disciplines than geography, and definitely at least one member of this exploratory group must be Indigenous.

All mapping takes talent, money, and time. The initiating committee will have to confer widely to explain the value of the project and find expertise and funding. They will have to recruit a cartographer with appropriate skills and imagination. Obviously, right from the beginning, and continuing through the project, Indigenous groups have to be consulted. New ideas are needed, and it is important that the venture be multi-disciplinary, both in deciding what is important to map and to enlist expertise in obtaining data and analysis. Every atlas is an intellectual adventure and there is an innate interest in finding out about ourselves through carefully conceived maps.

I think that a project such as this is part of the awakening of non-Indigenous Canada in the last quarter century to the rightful place of the Indigenous population in Canada. The new realization is exemplified in political scientist Peter Russell's fine new book, *Canada's Odyssey: A Country Based on Incomplete Conquests*, where he focuses on three vital pillars in our country's

development: Indigenous, French, and English Canada.³ This project will help in planning the way ahead. Change in Canada will require broad public knowledge and support. Maps help clarify thinking. An atlas such as this, clearly presented and accessible as a public document, will help in planning the way ahead.

I conclude with a heartening note. On June 9, 2017, just after this symposium was held, the Royal Canadian Geographical Society announced a new educational project, *The Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada*. The atlas content will be produced by the RCGS in partnership with the Assembly of First Nations, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Métis National Council, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, and Indspire. The atlas and accompanying educational resource material will be funded by the Government of Canada to mark Canada's 150th anniversary of Confederation, and will be available in 2018 to all Indigenous schools and to over 19,000 Canadian Geographic Education members, and to the general public. This cooperative project should offer some useful leads on how to proceed.

NOTES

1. Susan Schulten, *Mapping the Nation, History and Cartography in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2012), 120.
2. *Atlas Syria* (Vienna, Republic of Austria, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Federal Ministry of Defence and Sport 2015), 5-6.
3. Peter Russell, *Canada's Odyssey: A Country Based on Incomplete Conquests* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2017).



Thirty Years After: Some Unsettled Business on the Academic Frontier of Historical Geography in Canada

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"We have not yet realized that the Indian and his culture were fundamental to the growth of Canadian institutions" (Harold A. Innis, 1930).¹

The three volumes of the *Historical Atlas of Canada* (HAC) are a remarkable scholarly feat. Accordingly, this atlas received much international recognition and praise; in Alan Baker's appraisal: "The Historical Atlas of Canada stands as one the major achievements of Western historical geography during the twentieth century."² Similarly, D.W. Meinig positively assessed the first volume: "The work is breathtaking; in the care and beauty of its production, the range and detail of its coverage, the depth of its scholarship."³ A broader assessment of the atlas was provided by Anne B. Piternick:

The Atlas was a pioneering research project in two senses. It was pioneering in its multidisciplinary scope and in the number of people involved from across the country. But it was also pioneering in that the results of their research were