

**STORIES FROM
INDIAN WIGWAMS
AND NORTHERN
CAMPFIRES**



HOW I MISSED MY FIRST BEAR

STORIES FROM INDIAN WIGWAMS AND NORTHERN CAMPFIRES

By EGERTON RYERSON YOUNG

The flowers will spring up in the hunter's trail,
and the birds will sing in the branches.

Lighthouse Trails Publishing
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Stories from Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires
by Egerton Ryerson Young
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Note from the Publisher

The stories you are about to read took place a long time ago, and we have attempted to preserve the writing style and language of the author. However, some of the terms used in this book would be considered out-dated and incorrect usage in today's society. We chose to keep Young's terminology for we knew of his great love and respect for the Native people he so diligently worked and lived with.

A note from Nanci Des Gerlaise (who wrote the foreword to this book): Many people today prefer to be called "First Nations" or "First Nations people" instead of "Indians." In Canada, generally, "First Nations people" is used to describe both Status (registered with the government) and Non-Status (not registered) Indian people. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada rarely uses a synonym for "Aboriginal peoples" because it usually doesn't include Inuit or Métis people.

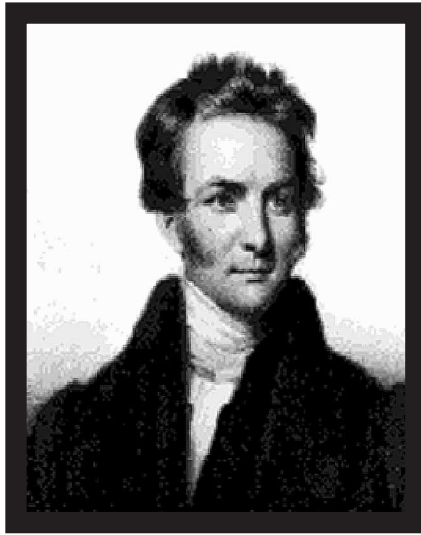
There are three groups of aboriginal people in Canada who are recognized in the Constitution Act, 1982; they consist of Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

Those described as "Indian" describe indigenous people in Canada which include: Status Indians, Non-Status Indians, and Treaty Indians.

Inuit are aboriginal people who live mainly in the most Northern arctic parts of Canada. Inuit means "the people" in the Inuktitut language. The singular of Inuit is Inuk.

Métis is the term for the people of mixed First Nations and European Ancestry.

About the Author



EGERTON RYERSON YOUNG
1840-1909

Egerton Ryerson Young, a biography written while he was still alive. [The following must have been written about 1905, because Mr. Young is no longer with us. He died 5th May 1909. Ed.] Canadian Methodist Episcopalian; born at Smith's Falls, Ontario, April 7, 1840. He was educated at the Normal School of the Province of Ontario, after having taught for several years, and in 1863 entered the ministry. Four years later he was ordained, and, after being stationed at the First Methodist Episcopal Church, Hamilton, Ontario, in 1867-68, was sent as a missionary to Norway House, Northwest Territory. There he worked among the Indians for five years, and in 1873 went in a similar capacity to Beren's River, Northwest Territory, where he remained three years (1873-76). In 1876 he returned to Ontario and was stationed successively at Port Perry (1876-79), Colborne (1879-82), Bowmanville (1882-85), Medford (1885-87), and St.

Paul's, Brampton (1887-88). Since 1888 he has been prominent as a lecturer on work among the American Indians, and in this cause has made repeated tours of the world. He wrote:

1. *By Canoe and Dog Train among the Cree and Saulteaux Indians* (New York, 1890);
2. *Stories from Indian Wigwams and Northern Camp-Fires* (1893);
3. *Oowikapun: or, How the Gospel reached Nelson River Indians* (1894);
4. *Three Boys in the Wild North Land* (1896);
5. *On the Indian Trail: Stories of Missionary Work among the Cree and Saulteaux Indians* (1897);
6. *Winter Adventures of Three Boys in the Great Lone Land* (1899);
7. *The Apostle of the North, James Evans* (1899);
8. *My Dogs in the Northland* (1902);
9. *Algonquin Indian Tales* (1903);
10. *Children of the Forest* (1904);
11. *Hector my Dog* (Boston, 1905);
12. *Battle of the Bears* (1907)

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Foreword

IT is more than a small coincidence how it came to be that I was asked to write the foreword to *Stories from Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires* by Canadian missionary Egerton Ryerson Young. I had recently signed a contract with Lighthouse Trails Publishing for my own book, *Muddy Waters: An Insider's View of North American Native Spirituality*. Because my book shows how Native spirituality is becoming increasingly popular, weaving its way into many facets of mainstream society particularly through the Emergent Church, Lighthouse Trails was interested in my book. What I did not know at the time was that Lighthouse Trails was about to publish this book by Young who ministered primarily to the Cree Indians in Northeastern Canada in the mid to late eighteen hundreds. What Lighthouse Trails did not know when they signed a contract with me was that I am a Cree Indian whose ancestors are from the very region Young was ministering at. Thus, the “coincidence” that led to writing the foreword to the *Wigwam* book.

Growing up, I lived a life full of darkness, steeped in Native spirituality. My grandfather was a medicine man, and later after I was grown, my father became a medicine man also. Later in my life, I began a search for answers because of a missing void I felt in my heart. In my search, I become involved in substance abuse and idolatry, among other things, believing that I would find this missing piece through these avenues. God's truth would later set me free from these chains. I became a born-again Christian after being convicted by the Holy Spirit when someone shared with me that Jesus Christ died on the Cross for my sins, so that I would have eternal life.

My childhood, living in a North American native community, certainly had its difficult challenges, humor, close familial bonds, and a culture intertwined with spiritual mysticism as spoken of in *Stories from Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires*.

Reading this book has brought back a flood of memories of life at home and community.

Part of what is amiss from the culture today is the language, which is attributable to the Residential Schools forbidding the children to speak their native tongue. As well, the Cree language has changed somewhat from the old Cree. Much of the loving, sharing, and caring aspects of the culture are awash with substance abuse to numb the pain of atrocities suffered at the Residential Schools or the rejection suffered from parents when these young people no longer fit into the family mold following their return home from these institutions. These children, in turn, pass on to their children learned behaviors such as neglect and substance abuse.

This is perhaps why I was so thrilled to read Egerton Ryerson Young's book. It is very encouraging for me to learn that the Gospel was shared with Natives, including medicine men, which so often resulted in decisions being made for Jesus Christ. Psalm 16:28 states: "There is a way that seems right to man, but in the end it leads to death." This verse paints a very powerful warning to non-Christian cultures.

Mr. Young shares thrilling and entertaining stories regarding his experiences with native people both in Canada and the United States, and shares very extraordinary events as he journeys to the remotest parts of Canada sharing the Gospel to the lost. He describes witnessing boldly to medicine men regarding their pagan beliefs with very encouraging and positive results achieved by no other than the Holy Spirit.

As I read the *Wigwam* book recently, for the first time, I was very surprised to read about one lost Indian named Maske-pe-toon, (Crooked Arm). Why surprised? Because I knew the name Maske-pe-toon. From research I had done years ago, I collected documentation and learned that my great, great grandfather Chief Kehiwin was Maske-pe-toon's best friend. This, of course, has made Young's book all the more meaningful to me.

Maske-pe-toon was the most powerful chief among the

Cree tribes and also a medicine man. His son was killed by an Indian of another tribe. When Maske-pe-toon was on his way to seek revenge, at the last moment he had an incredible change of heart electing to forgive his enemy instead, after hearing the missionary speak about forgiveness the previous night. When Maske-pe-toon came face to face with the one who had killed his son, he forgave him and did not seek revenge. As you will read about it in the coming pages, Maske-pe-toon went on to serve the Lord, until his life ended in a most dramatic heart-rending manner.

Young tells another story of an old Chief who was taught the truth by a missionary regarding his belief in paganism. The missionary urged him to renounce this pagan, mystical spirituality and become a Christian. The old Chief was aware that he was a great sinner and needed a Savior. What an illustration this story is to show that God has placed in each of our hearts a conscience to know right from wrong.

Stories from Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires answers a myriad of questions, especially one that I would frequently ask myself, "If the Lord wants everyone to hear the Gospel, how could a loving God allow our people to pass on prior to learning that the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross for their sins?"

This book is testimony that the Gospel is indeed for everyone, and a loving God desires that none should perish without hearing about the Gospel (2 Peter 3:9). God does not accept the diverse spirituality of all cultures as being locked into truth. For Him to accept false and contradictory spirituality, while the Gospel calls all to repentance and belief in the Savior, would make God a liar—because there can only be one truth. And God cannot tell a lie because He is just and holy.

I have noticed that many of the Cree believers today are returning to Native spirituality while others are syncretizing Christianity with Native spirituality and/or Roman Catholicism with a smaller population remaining in true Christianity. If you have ever wondered about Native spirituality, you will learn

the truth about it in *Stories from Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires* through the thrilling accounts of error corrected by God's Holy Word, the Bible.

Prior to my receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord, I tried to fight it but realized that Roman Catholicism and Native Spirituality could never assure me of entering the Kingdom of God. These paths do not lead to salvation. Today, I have inner peace, joy, and love that could come only through Jesus Christ.

This book is for all audiences and age groups. It will educate the reader in the ways of the early North American Indian, ways that included astounding and highly intelligent practices for survival in conditions, such as sub-zero temperatures and little to eat. It will also show the faithfulness of God, that He is looking throughout the earth to find those who are seeking truth, sending missionaries with the Gospel message for those who have ears to hear. And finally, because Native spirituality is becoming more and more popular in our society and in the church today, this book will unveil a Native spirituality that is not at all as is described in much of Hollywood and now the emerging church; rather you will see the Indians are in as much need of a Savior as anyone else. And a spirituality without Jesus Christ at the foundation is a false and futile belief system. This book is a must-read.

Nanci Des Gerlaise

Author of *Muddy Waters: An Insider's View of North American Native Spirituality*