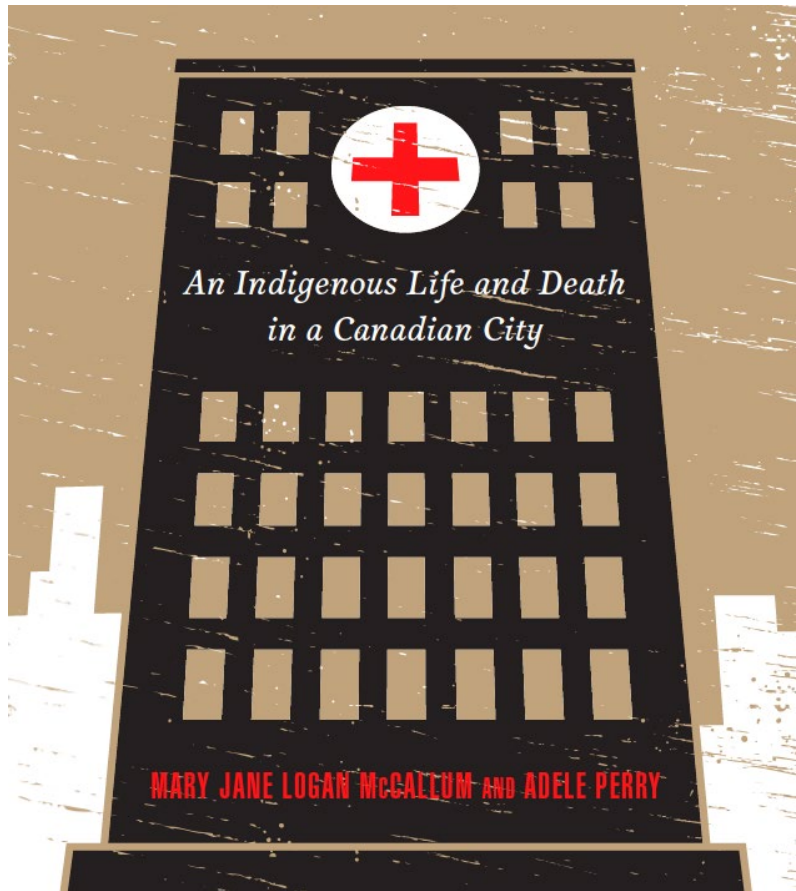


Structures of Indifference: An Indigenous Life and Death in a Canadian City



Dr. Mary Jane Logan McCallum,
University of Winnipeg

Dr. Adele Perry,
University of Manitoba

Overview of the next hour

- The presenters
- Tools for thinking about difficult histories
- Introductory questions and open discussion about them
- Brian Sinclair's last day and a half
- Putting 34 hours in history
 - The city
 - The hospital
 - Brian Sinclair
- Structures of indifference and Indigenous life and death
- Resources and acknowledgements
- A concluding exercise

Mary Jane McCallum & Adele Perry: A Little Background



- <https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/history/faculty-staff/mary-jane-mccallum.html>
- <http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/departments/history/members/perry.html>

Tools for Thinking about Difficult Histories

- activist scholarship
- settler colonial studies: Ann Laura Stoler, Audra Simpson, Patrick Wolfe, Sherene Razack
- Indigenous studies and scholarship: Kim Tallbear, Philip Deloria, Sarah Hunt, Chris Andersen, Jean O'Brien, Chelsea Vowel, Zoe Todd, Jesse Thistle, and more
- History of Indigenous people in and around Manitoba: Norma Hall, Brenda Macdougall, Sarah Carter, Maureen Lux, Owen Toews, Ryan Eyford
- Theories of intersectionality developed by Black feminist scholar Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw
- Resources: Indian Residential School Health Support Programme 24 Hour Crisis Line: 1-866-925-4419 and Klinik 24 hour crisis line: 1-888-322-3019.

Some Questions to begin with:

- Where are you joining us from?
- Have you heard of Brian Sinclair (1963-2008)?
- If you have heard of Brian Sinclair, how did you hear of him? Via the media/internet, or by colleagues and community?
- Are you familiar with what we might call 'Other Brian Sinclair' stories?

34 Hours: A Barebones Timeline

- 19 September 2008, 2:53pm: Brian Sinclair arrived at the Health Sciences Centre Emergency Department experiencing pain and needed assistance with the catheter bag.
- 20 September 2008, early morning: Sinclair spoke to two nurses, the first noted problems with his speech and demeanor but did not ask how he was feeling or if had seen a doctor. The other checked Sinclair for a wristband; he was not wearing one and the nurse assumed he had been discharged and was waiting, or that he was homeless and seeking shelter, or brought in under the Intoxicated Persons' Detention Act.



34 Hours: A Barebones Timeline

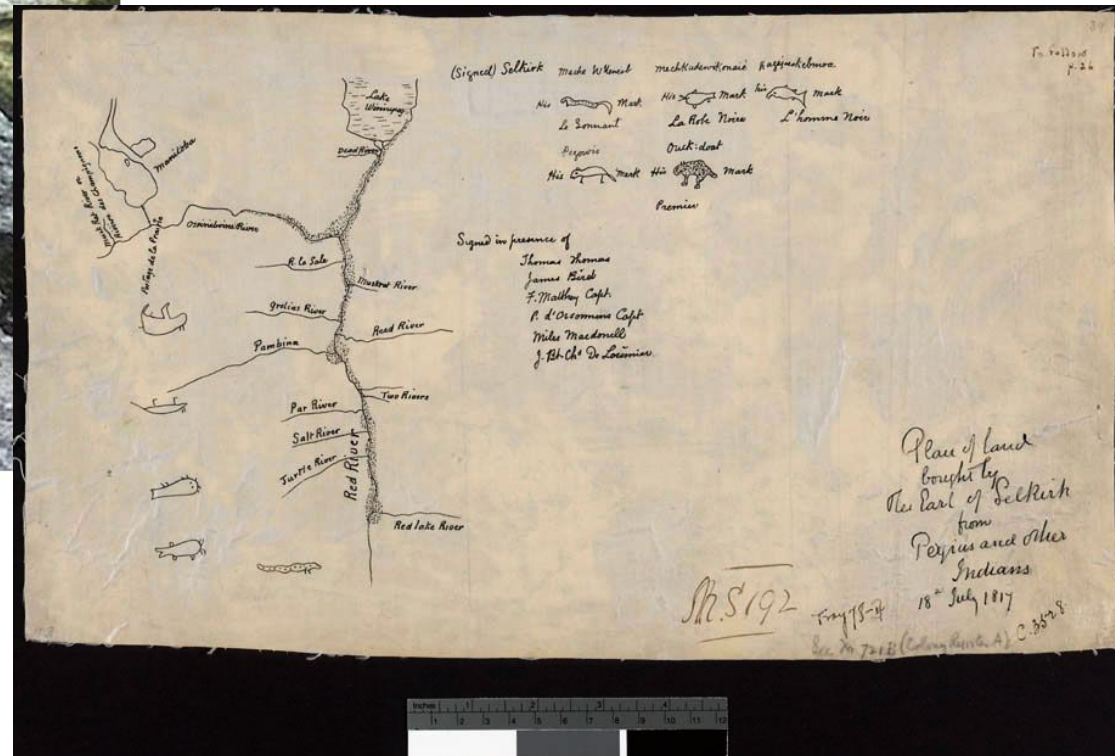
- 20 September 2008, afternoon: Sinclair vomited twice. Twice, a member of the public alerted a security guard, who alerted housekeeping but not medical staff. Sinclair was motionless and had his eyes closed and the guard assumed he was intoxicated and “sleeping it off.”
- 20 September 2008, evening: Members of the public who had seen Sinclair the evening before were alarmed to see him ill in the same position and alerted a student nurse, who replied that people stay in the waiting room because they have nowhere else to go and that homeless people use the ER to sleep and stay warm.
- 21 September 2008, early morning: Just after midnight, the same woman approached the security guard concerned that Sinclair had not moved and was perhaps dead. The guard replied that Brian was probably just intoxicated, but when she insisted something was wrong, he went over and tried to wake him. The guard realized Sinclair was dead and wheeled him to nursing staff. Sinclair was pronounced dead at 12:51 a.m. on 21 September 2008.

Putting 34 hours in History: The City



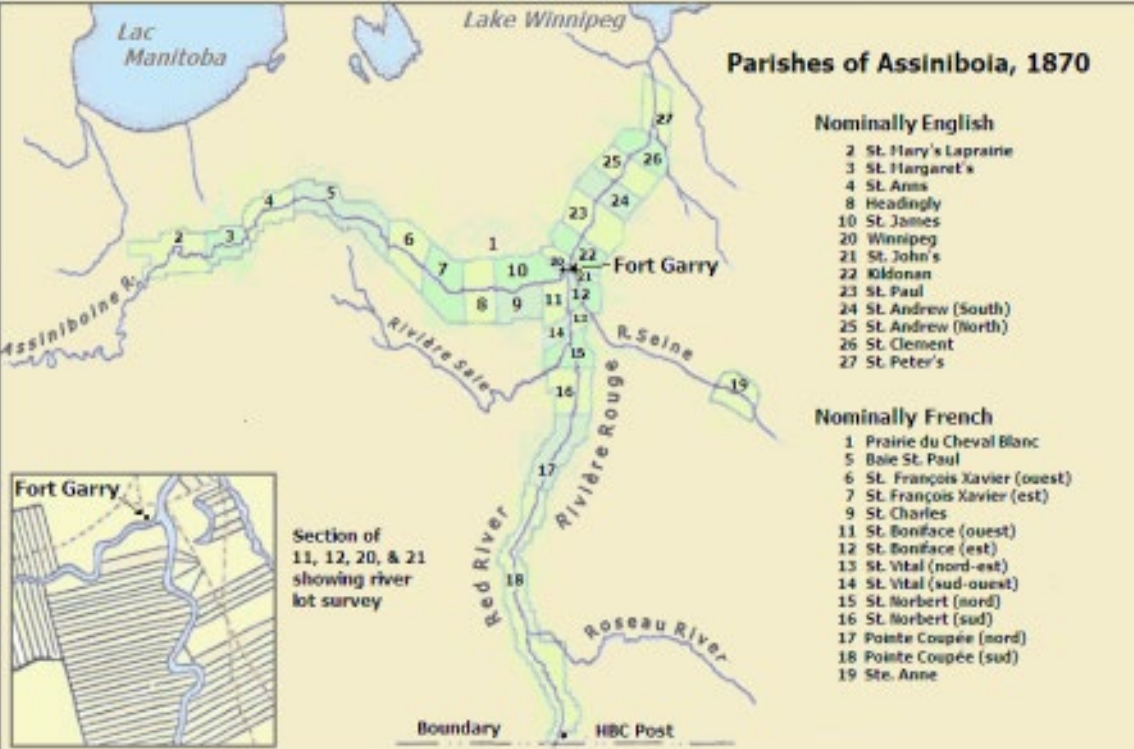
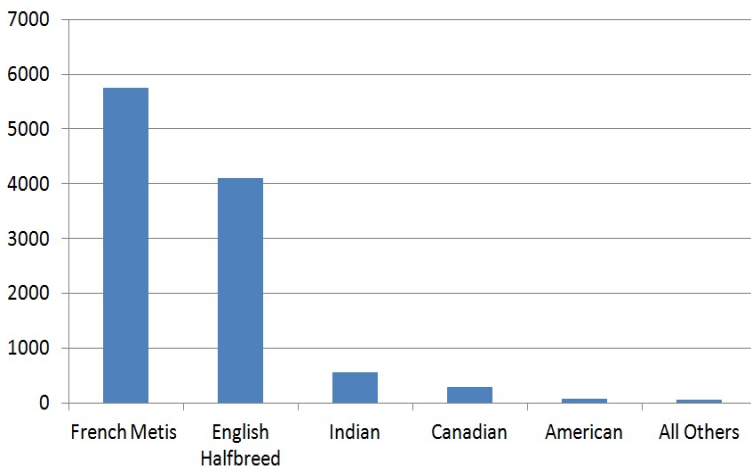
Bannock Point Petroforms,
Manitoba Historic Resources
Branch.

Selkirk Treaty, 18 July 1817. Source: Library
and Archives Canada, MIKAN no. 4149347



Putting 34 hours in History: The City

Red River Population 1870



From Norma Hall, <http://www.legislativeassemblyofassiniboia.ca/en/page/85/basic-stats-red-river-1869-1870> and <https://hallnjean2.files.wordpress.com/2011/07/parish-map-with-town-of-wpg-1870.png>

Putting 34 hours in History: The City

Between 1881 and 1916, between 0.3 and 1.6 of Winnipeg's population was described as Indian or Metis.



A Group of Indian Chiefs, Winnipeg Stampede, 1913, Library and Archives Canada, PA-030060

PA-030060

Putting 34 hours in History: The City



WINNIPEG, FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 1958



Discussing the fourth annual conference on Indians and Metis here Friday are Gilbert Abraham of Winnipeg, Miss Beatrice Bridgen, chairman of the conference, Jim Starr of Fort Alexander and Bernard Grafton of the Winnipeg planning committee for the conference.

Growth Of Numbers Forcing Indians Into Towns, Cities

Canada's Indian population — long on the decline — is making a dramatic comeback, and the pressure of numbers on reservations is forcing more Indians into the towns and cities of the country.

A picture of present day Indians marching in increasing numbers out of the reservations to which their forefathers retreated was shown in Winnipeg Thursday by J. H. Gordon, welfare superintendent of the federal Indian affairs branch.

'First Inhabitants Are Lone Modern Pioneers'

Indians of North America stand today as "lone modern pioneers" the fourth annual conference on Indians and Metis was held in Winnipeg Friday.

Rev. Gradius C. Asiberts, of Minneapolis, observed that Indians are coming to the cities, and said it is the people facing a new world in modern cities who are the present day pioneers.

Mr. Asiberts described the "community responsibility" resulting from the influx of Indians into cities.

In labor and employment, he said, Indians often cannot understand why there should be deductions from their pay checks. In this area, considerable work is being required.

As Indians coming to work in the city often lack the time and experience necessary to get good jobs. This problem, Mr. Asiberts said, can only be overcome by time and years of consistent service.

A LITTLE DISCRIMINATION

There have been few signs of racial discrimination against Indians in labor, and when discrimination does exist, it is often of their own making. Many lack a work pattern and fail to reckon with the element of punctuality.

"But, of course, is due to a lack of preparation for city life."

Speaking at the opening session of the annual conference on Indians and Metis, he said that Canada's Indian population had doubled more than 18 per cent in the past 10 years — from 258,000 to about 500,000.

What's more, the march to the cities and towns is going to speed up in the years ahead, said Mr. Gordon.

HE NEEDS HELP

He warned that if the Indian does not learn to survive in his new way of life, he would have to receive the help of the white man whose community he joined.

Mr. Gordon listed the code of conduct for white men in their relations with the Indians:

- Avoid social or job discrimination.
- Grant the Indian equal educational and vocational opportunities.
- Grant the Indian equal wages and other benefits.
- Recognize that he has a different background and culture and make allowances for it.
- Avoid a patronizing or condescending attitude toward him.
- Give him total physical freedom in the community.
- Give him a part in any program designed to aid him.
- Get to know the Indian by studying his history, background and culture.
- Don't be impatient with the Indian, and don't do anything for him that he can do himself.
- Don't expect too much from him too quickly in his new environment.
- Place community resources behind his assimilation.
- Avoid setting up special agencies to help him. Instead, greet him as one of the community by letting him enjoy the same services open to everyone else.

WHERE THEY GO

In their march from the reservations, Indians were heading for major centres like Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver — but also to new industrial towns in the north. These towns offered some of the best prospects for them, for they offered jobs in areas where the Indian felt more at home than in the cities to the south.

Mr. Gordon reviewed a new federal government program to train Indians for the adjustment to the white man's way of life. The program has been in operation about a year but had already accomplished "much."

Although the pressure of population was the main reason for the exodus from the reservations, other factors were a drop in fur prices, higher prices of goods and supplies needed for life on the

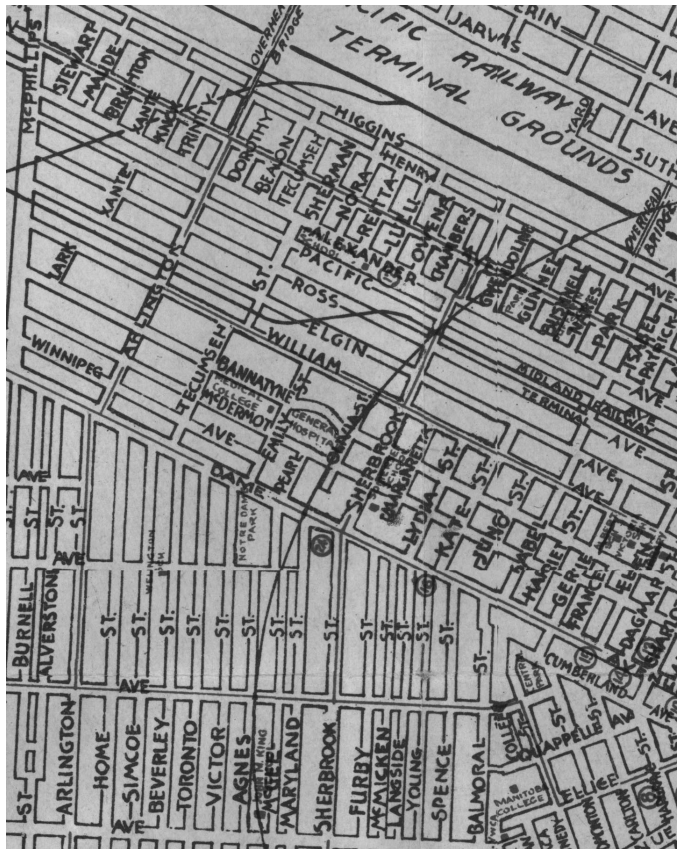
In 1951, the Department of Indian Affairs identified 210 status Indians in Winnipeg; in 1961, 1, 082; in 1971, 4, 940; and in 1981, 16, 757.

Winnipeg Free Press, 24 January 1958; Manitoba Metis Federation picket, 1979, University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections, Winnipeg Tribune Photo Collection, PC 18/4642/18-3834-012.

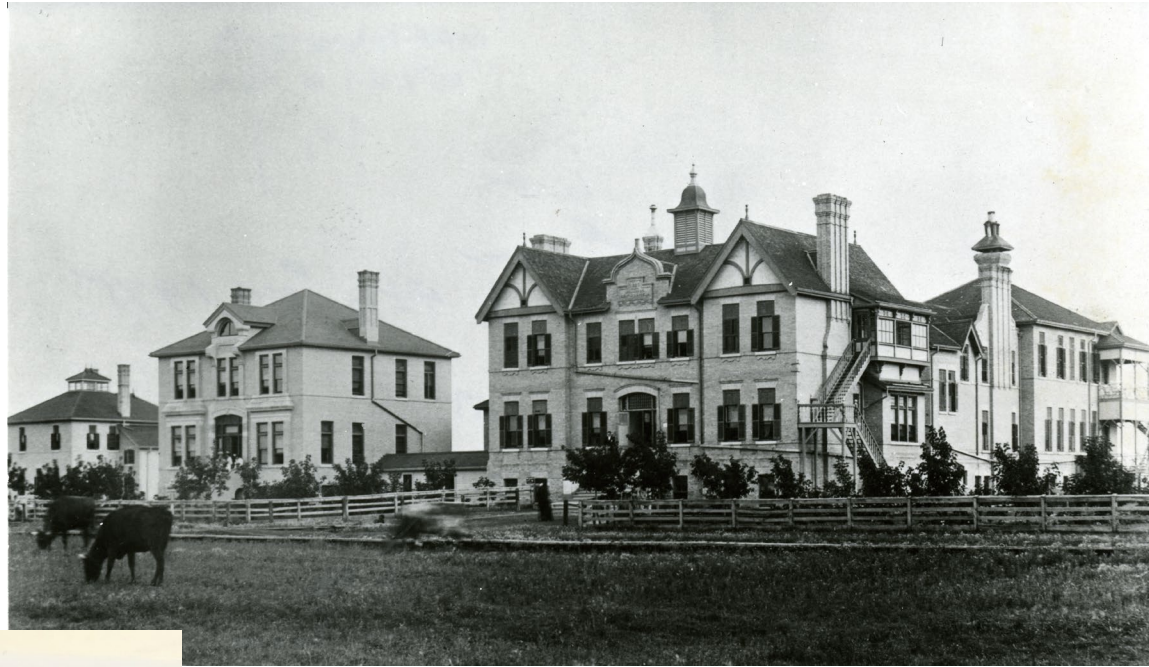
Putting 34 hours in History: The Hospital

C.C. Chataway's
Map of Winnipeg
(Western Map
Company, 1919).
North East
Winnipeg Historical
Society.

Red River daughter
and Winnipeg
philanthropist and
community
organizer Annie
McDermot
Bannatyne (ca.
1830–1908) in
1882.
Notman &
Sandham Studio
Collection, McCord
Museum, no.
77678.



Putting 34 Hours in History: the Hospital



Above: Winnipeg General Hospital, ca. 1893 University of Manitoba College of Medicine Archives CA 046A



Left: Fort Alexander Indian Hospital, Pine Falls (1938-1965) courtesy of Bella Malo (nee Guimond) from Shirley Lavalley's album

Putting 34 Hours in History: the Hospital

Maureen K. Lux, *Separate
Beds: Indian Hospitals in
Canada, 1920s-1980s*
(Toronto: University of
Toronto Press, 2016).



Putting 34 Hours in History: the Hospital



Above Right: Nurse Ann Thomas Callahan at work at the Winnipeg General Hospital, 1960. Library and Archives Canada, acc. 1976-281 NPC, item 3138, PA-202475.

Above Left: Graduates of a Medical Interpreters course at the HSC Native Services Department, 1986. Rob Mathieson, Margaret Smith, Aboriginal Services/Native Services, University of Manitoba College of Medicine Archives.

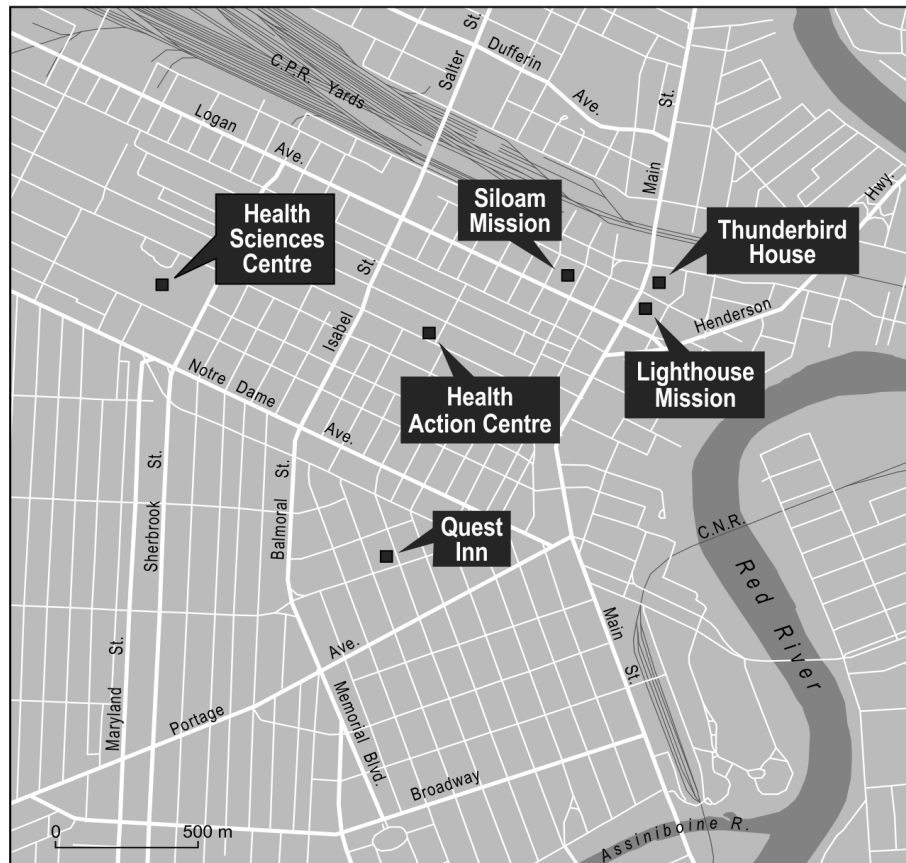
Brian Sinclair 1963-2008

- Most of what we know about Sinclair comes from his sister, Esther Joyce Grant.
- Born to Veronique Goosehead and Albert Sinclair, one of nine children, in Fort Alexander, now known as Sagkeeng, and raised around there.
- Goosehead, a residential school survivor, lost status when she married Sinclair, a non-status man.
- In the early 1970s, the family moved to Winnipeg's North End and had experience with child welfare.



Brian Sinclair at a semi-wilderness camp north of Winnipeg, in 1977. Brian is 14 in the photo. He is fourth from the left, sitting to the right of teacher Karl Gomph. Credit: Karl Gomph, with thanks to Vilko Zbogar.

Brian Sinclair 1963-2008

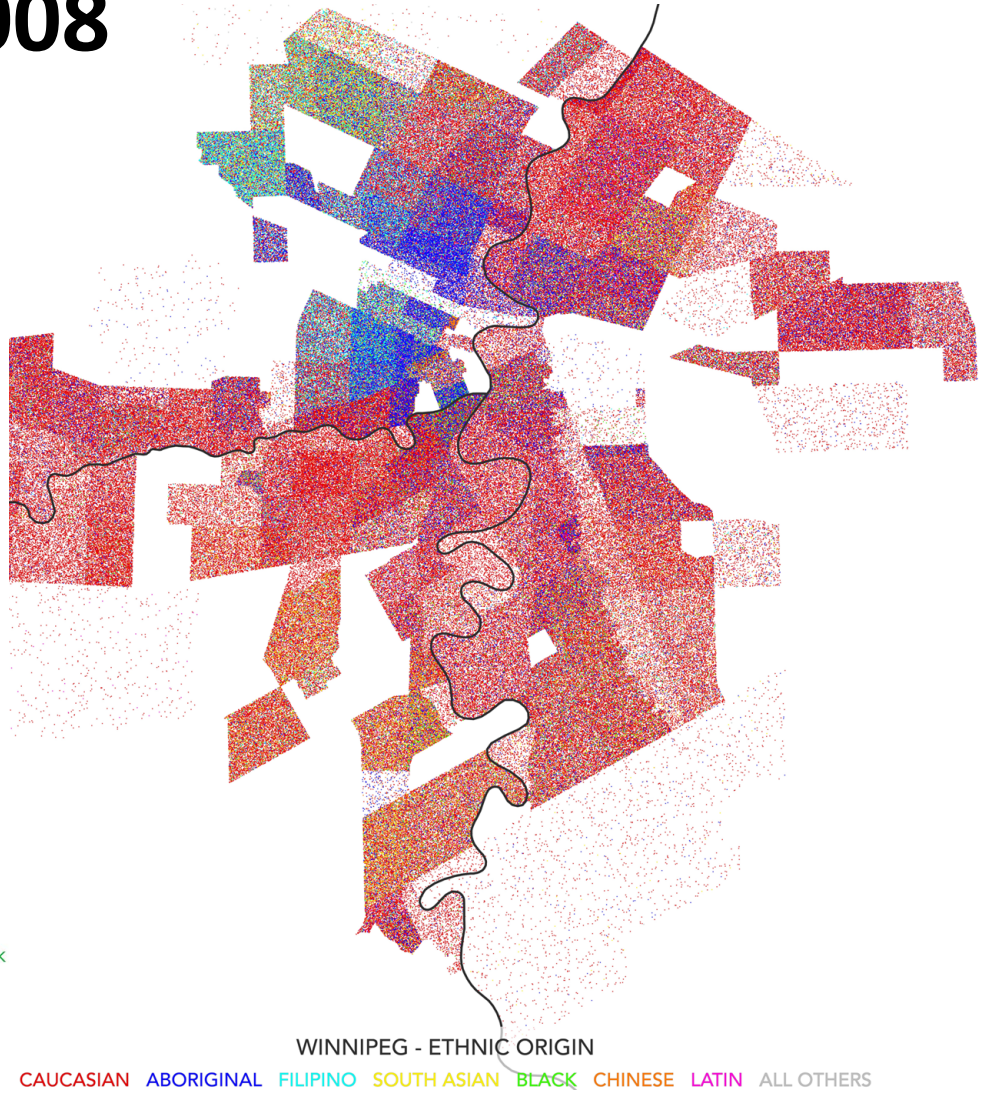
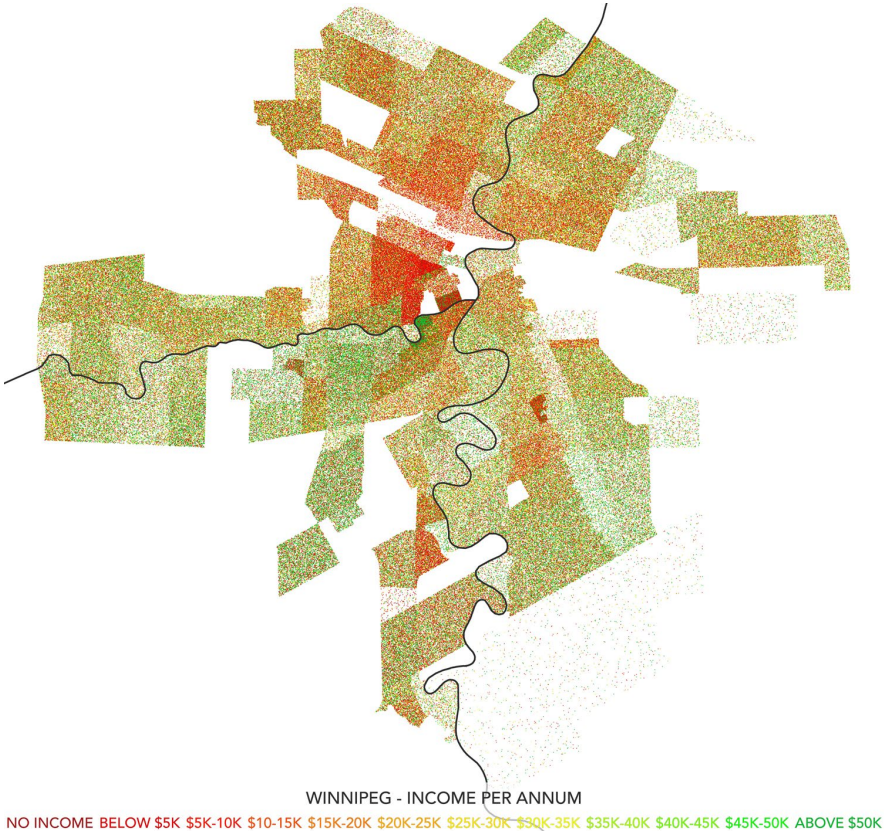


Above: Map highlighting where Brian spent most of his time in the last few years of his life. By Weldon Hiebert

Right: Brian Sinclair, 2013, photo courtesy Maurice Bruneau.



Brian Sinclair 1963-2008



Income Distribution (Left) and Ethnic Origin (Right) in Winnipeg, Ed Manley, via <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/maps-of-winnipeg-show-spread-of-income-ethnicity-and-languages-1.3050780>

Structures of indifference and Indigenous life and death

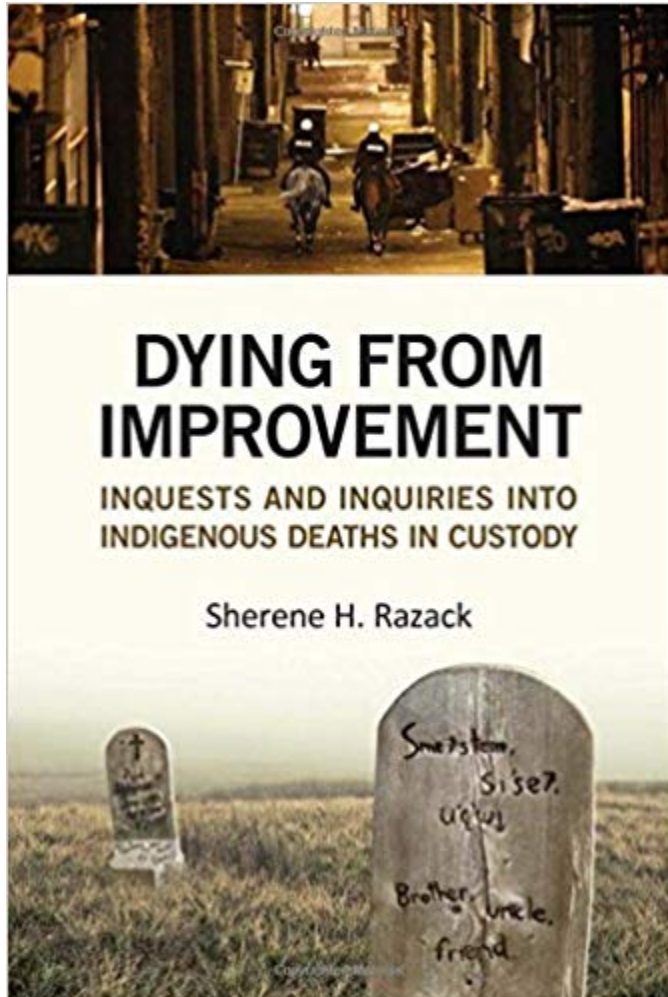
Misrecognitions

- Sinclair was misrecognized as drunk.
- Sinclair was misrecognized as homeless.
- Sinclair was misrecognized as “medically vulnerable” and therefore unable to “fight harder” to stay alive.
- These all served to make his death seem predictable and inevitable.

Structures of indifference and Indigenous life and death

The inquest replicates the “logic of the ‘vanishing Indian,’ the construct, that is, of a pathologically fragile individual belonging to a race for whom death is always imminent.”

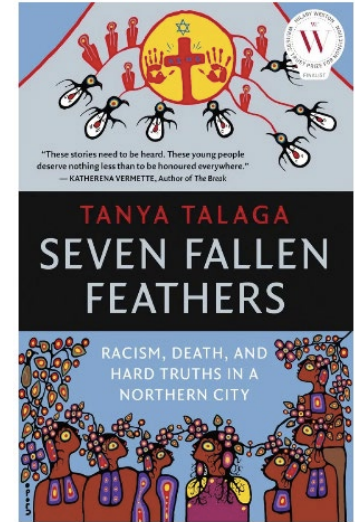
Sherene Razack, *Dying From Improvement: Inquests and Inquiries into Indigenous Deaths in Custody* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2015) 139.



Structures of indifference and Indigenous life and death

- The 2014 Inquest report raised the histories of colonialism and anti-Indigenous racism, but ultimately elided these histories and focused on the process of triage.
- Sinclair's death was characterized as "Once-Off" or a "Perfect Storm"
- No one was held responsible, and even Sinclair was depicted as in part to blame for not "fighting harder to stay alive."
- Brian's cause of death was acute peritonitis resulting from severe infection of the bladder. Had Brian received the care he needed, he would not have died.
- Brian died because no medical personnel recognized Brian as a patient in distress.
- This is one chapter in the revealing and devastating histories of dispossession and colonial violence.

Structures of indifference and Indigenous life and death



- Recalling the “Brian Sinclair Stories” from Across Canada: Tania Dick, president of Association of Registered Nurses or British Columbia:
<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1175096899710>
- Colten Boushie (1993-2015), Tina Fontaine (1999-2014), and Errol Green (1984-2016) and the seven youth who have died in Thunder Bay since 2000: Jethro Anderson, Curran Strang, Paul Panacheese, Robyn Harper, Reggie Bushie, Kyle Morriseau, and Jordan Wabasse.

Images courtesy of Christi Belcourt, Idle No More, Justice for Errol facebook page, House of Anansi.

Some Resources

- Out of Sight: Interim Report of the Sinclair Working Group:
<http://ignoredtodeathmanitoba.ca/index.php/2017/09/15/out-of-sight-interim-report-of-the-sinclair-working-group/>
- University of Manitoba Libraries LibGuides: Indigenous Health: For Brian Sinclair:
<https://libguides.lib.umanitoba.ca/indigenoushealth/ForBrian>
- Adele Perry and Mary Jane Logan McCallum, *Structures of Indifference: An Indigenous Life and Death in a Canadian City*:
<https://uofmpress.ca/books/detail/structures-of-indifference>



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Structures of Indifference

An Indigenous Life and Death in a Canadian City

Mary Jane Logan McCallum (Author), Adele Perry (Author)



Structures of Indifference examines an Indigenous life and death in a Canadian city and what it reveals about the ongoing history of colonialism. At the heart of this story is a thirty-four-hour period in September 2008. During that day and half Brian Sinclair, a middle-aged, non-Status Anishinaabeg resident of Manitoba's capital city, arrived in the emergency room of the Health Sciences Centre, Winnipeg's major downtown hospital, was left untreated and unattended to, and ultimately died from an easily treatable infection. His death reflects a particular structure of indifference born of and maintained by colonialism.

McCallum and Perry present the ways in which Sinclair, once erased and ignored, came to represent diffuse, yet singular and largely dehumanized ideas about Indigenous people, modernity, and decline in cities. This story tells us about ordinary indigeneity in the city of Winnipeg through Sinclair's experience and restores the complex humanity denied him in his interactions with Canadian health and legal systems, both before and after his death.

Structures of Indifference completes the story left untold by the inquiry into Sinclair's death, the 2014 report of which omitted any consideration of underlying factors, including racism and systemic discrimination.

PURCHASE ONLINE

Paper (\$17.95)

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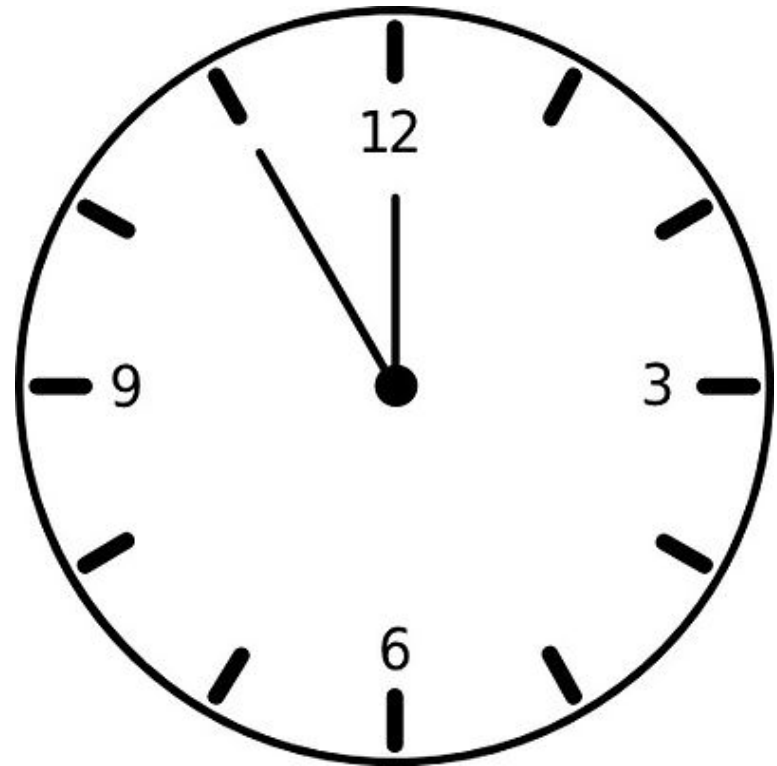
[s://uofmpress.ca](https://uofmpress.ca) THE AUTHORS

Acknowledgements

- **Brian Sinclair Working Group:** Dr. Barry Lavallee (Physician and Educator), Emily Hill, (lawyer with Aboriginal Legal Services, Toronto), Dr. Annette Browne, (Professor, School of Nursing, University of British Columbia), Dr. Josee Lavoie, professor in Community Health Sciences, University of Manitoba and many others
- **University of Manitoba Press**
- **University of Winnipeg,** Indigenous Scholar Award
- **Roberta Stout** National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health and the Centre de collaboration nationale sur les politiques publiques et la santé (CCNPPS)/National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy (NCCHPP)
- **Proceeds** from the book go to Ka Ni Kanichihk, a non profit that provides Indigenous identified programs and services in Winnipeg

34 hours in History

- To conclude, we ask webinar participants to set their phones, watches, or computers to let them know when 34 hours has passed, or to set an event to remind them when it is 34 hours from the start of the webinar.





- Pacific T: Set to 8:00pm, Saturday September 22, 2018
- Mountain T: Set to 9:00pm, Saturday September 22, 2018
- Central T: Set to 10:00pm, Saturday September 22, 2018
- Eastern: Set to 11:00pm, Saturday September 22, 2018
- Atlantic: Set to 12:00am, Sunday September 23, 2018
- NFLD: Set to 12:30am, Sunday September 23, 2018