



Lower Canada, trade silver brooch, 1765-1819

National Currency Collection 1973.39.8





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This brooch is an example of trade silver, the name for ornaments that were gifted from Europeans to Indigenous leaders during trade or as part of diplomatic relationship building. This practice was similar to the tradition of gifting silver medals (such as peace medals or treaty medals). Trade silver circulated widely during the fur trade period, but by the 1830s to 1850s, with British colonial power firmly rooted on the continent, the need to keep up alliances waned, and colonial officials tried to end the practice of diplomatic gift giving.

By the time the Numbered Treaties were being signed, cash payments and annuities had become the preferred method of compensation.



Dominion of Canada, treaty medal, 1873-1899

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This medal was commissioned by the Canadian government in 1873 to give to Indigenous chiefs on the agreement of Treaties 3 to 8.

A medal was given to each chief who signed these Treaties.

The inscription reads "INDIAN TREATY N°. _ / 187_," with two blank spaces so that the Treaty number and year could be stamped on.

The medal shows a handshake between an Indigenous leader and a British officer. Medals were an important part of Treaty negotiation as a symbol of good faith.

Choose one of these three objects to examine closely.

In each of the following sections, circle TWO questions to answer. Your answers should be hypotheses or inferences (e.g. "I think...").



Dominion of Canada,
2-dollar bank note, 1870
National Currency Collection, 1963.14.111



Dominion of Canada,
5-dollar bank note, 1912
National Currency Collection, 1971.53.5



Lac Seul, ON (Treaty 3), Treaty payment,
between 1900 and 1976

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FRANK SHEBAGEGET

Free Ride

Framed 5-dollar bank notes
2022

National Currency Collection 2022.36.1
Image credit: Bank of Canada Museum
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Answer Key



Dominion of Canada,
2-dollar bank note, 1870

This is a paper bank note, printed in 1870 by the British American Bank Note Company and issued by the Dominion of Canada. It shows wear from its use as a circulated currency since it was used by people and businesses from 1870 until around 1878 when it was replaced with a new 1-dollar note. Bank notes are printed, in this case an engraved metal plate would print 4 notes at a time, which were cut by hand afterwards. It is not unique - over 2 million bank notes like this were produced. It was worth \$2 in Canada at the time. The design includes the portraits of General Wolfe (left) and General Montcalm (right). The image in the middle is a vignette called "Civilization" or "Nor-West" and shows a stereotypically dressed Indigenous person looking at a passing train. The 2-dollar denomination is printed several times on the note with guilloché patterns around it. It is signed by the Inspector General, William Dickenson and the Deputy Receiver General, T.D. Harington.



Dominion of Canada,
5-dollar bank note, 1912

This is a paper bank note, printed in 1912 by the American Bank Note Company. It shows wear from its use as a circulated currency since it was used by people and businesses from 1912 until the 1930s. Bank notes are printed, in this case an engraved metal plate would print 4 or 8 notes at a time, which were cut by hand afterwards. It is not unique - millions of bank notes like this were produced. It was worth \$5 in Canada at the time. The design includes an image of the passenger train "Ocean Limited" traveling through Wentworth Valley in Nova Scotia. The 5-dollar denomination is printed several times on the note with guilloché patterns around it. It is signed on the right by the Minister of Finance, T.C. Boville and has an unknown signature on the left.



Lac Seul, ON (Treaty 3),
Treaty payment, between
1900 and 1976

This is a black and white photograph taken between 1900 and 1976 by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (now the departments of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, and Indigenous Services Canada). The photograph shows an elderly Indigenous woman waiting to receive her treaty annuity payment. She is seated at a table with an RCMP officer and two government officials who have paperwork and stacks of bank notes in front of them. A man and a Councillor from Lac Seul stand waiting behind the woman. The photograph was taken in a Treaty 3 Anishinaabe (Ojibway) community in Northern Ontario, possibly near Lac Seul. Though most treaty annuity payments are now made remotely, either by direct deposit or mailed cheque, First Nations treaty signatories used to have to travel—great distances, in some cases—to receive their payment in person.