
“THE DIRTY OLD INDIAN”

MIKE MOUNTAIN HORSE ... A CANADIAN HERO



- 1. APARTHEID — CANADIAN STYLE***
- 2. OIL — PISSING IT AWAY, AGAIN***
- 3. CANADA — TEN LITTLE COUNTRIES***



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**Sample Of Two Chapters From The Manuscript
For The University of Alberta**

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Mike Mountain Horse (1889 – 1964)



1 Mike Mountain Horse
(Glenbow Museum)

Mike Mountain Horse was employed as a Wiper¹for coal-fired steam engines. He came home from work filthy, his traditional gray railway bib overalls covered in coal dust. His face was covered too, but it was not noticeable because he was the darkest skinned Indian I ever saw.

He was confident and well liked by his fellow workers. After work he went with them from the engine roundhouse to the small beer parlour² across the street. But he could not

sit with them because it was then against the law for Indians to go into beer parlours or to buy liquor.

¹ The Wiper's job was to work a 12-hour shift in the roundhouse, where he packed the internal moving parts of the engine with wads of greasy waste. The pay was \$1.75 a day. This was the bottom rung on the ladder that rose to the train engineer's seat.

² The law at the time strictly limited liquor sales. The provincial government had a monopoly on retail liquor sales, for which the customer required a "permit"; and Indians were not allowed permits. Nor were they allowed inside beer parlours, rooms that had to be associated with hotels. The size of the parlours was related to the number of rooms in the hotel. Therefore, small hotels, small beer parlours; large hotels, large beer parlours.

The beer parlours were divided into two – one half for men, and the other half for "ladies and escorts". Women were not allowed to go alone into beer parlours.

Mike sat alone in the corner of the beer parlour. The bartender turned a blind eye because the railway workers who brought him in were regular customers, and the bartender did not want to risk losing business.

Mike took much pleasure describing, many times, the scene to me, jabbing his finger vigorously into the air, he would mimic the non-Indians in the bar who would point at him and say, “look at that dirty old Indian”. He was the dirty old Indian, and every time he told the story, he would laugh loudly. Mike would laugh loudly when he told the story, because *he was dirty he was old and he called himself an Indian.* He was saying he was proud of himself and the things he had done. And that is more than enough for anybody.

Mike Mountain Horse, before he was a “dirty, old Indian”, was a scout and interpreter for the Northwest Mounted Police; and then during the First World War, he served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force³, fighting at Vimy Ridge, Hill 70, Cambrai, and Amiens.

He was awarded a Distinguished Conduct Medal and at the end of the War was demobilized as an acting Sergeant⁴. If Mike had been Caucasian, he would have been an officer and awarded a medal of valour for his service, which is illustrated by his *Story Robe* in The Military Museums in Calgary.

³ Canadian Expeditionary Force, 10th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 4th Division, 50th Battalion.

⁴ L. JAMES DEMPSEY, *Alberta History 50th Anniversary Issue, A Warrior's Robe*: “he came home with battle scars, along with rank of acting sergeant ...”

Mike missed the comradeship of his fellow veterans. He visited veterans at hospitals, taking gifts to them. He was on the executive of the Disabled Ex-Service Men’s Association⁵ and was elected president of the “first all-Indian Legion .”⁶

Saturday mornings in the library at Galt Gardens in Lethbridge, he would mesmerize children with stories from his ancestors’ past, or simply read stories to them. He was a spell-binding storyteller.

Mike Mountain Horse Elementary School in West Lethbridge has his name in honour of the work that he did with young children.

⁵ THE LETHBRIDGE HERALD, *Disabled Veterans Hold General Meeting*, November 20, 1935.

⁶ THE EDMONTON JOURNAL, *Indian Vets Organize*, June 21, 1957.



A Mike Mountain Horse Vision of Canada

**Embrace this Canadian home,
take it to your heart.**

**It is your home,
my home.
Our home.**

**It is a home *rich* with
magnificent mountains,
wild horses, and
hunting hawks.**

**Our home represents our *values*:
tolerance and respect,
rights and responsibilities.**

**We share these *riches* and *values*,
and then leave a little of ourselves
for future generations,
just as others before did for us.**

**Embrace this Canadian home,
take it to your heart.**

**And its riches and values
will make your heart: ...**

**strong like a mountain ...
spirited like a horse ...
and soar like a hawk.**

I didn't know much. I was just a kid. The stories Mike Mountain Horse told me, like an enemy soldier eating his lunch while sitting on the debris around him after he was mostly buried by a shell explosion, I believed.

Or that the German soldiers did not like the enemy Indian soldiers because at night they crept inside German trenches and scalped them⁷; or English ladies liked Indian soldiers but there was no place to go, so they did it standing up in doorways.

He lived a life that as far as I could tell or that he would reveal to me, was normal and responsible. It was integrated into society, away from the Canadian apartheid we call "reserves" and young Indians simply call the "res".

In a book he wrote, Mountain Horse spoke about his time in a residential school⁸, which he attended with James Gladstone, Canada's first Treaty Indian in the Senate. In his book *My People the Bloods* Mike talks about his experience in the school, the voice of a witness to Alberta's early history. He does not cite people, but instead directs his comments at policies or actions. It is the person's "civilization" that he faults, not the non-Indian.

⁷ Corroborated in *The Battle of Vimy Ridge*, NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA, Written by Richard Nielson and James Wallen, narrated by Paul Gross, 1994.

Movies, once the great art form of our time; now the archives.

Academics will snub their noses at the movies as a research resource, just as writers did to cave paintings and stage actors did to movies and movies actors did to television. What is next, snubbing the internet and streaming. Only backward walking people will do that.

⁸ The issue of residential schools is beyond this book. It would be interesting to analyze if the schools would have happened had there been a Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The richness of Mike Mountain Horse’s intellectual range is apparent in how he successfully melded his aboriginal culture with the modern world, not letting either detract from the other. For example:

“I sometimes wonder how long it will be before your so called civilization extinguishes my people from the face of the earth.”⁹



Indians.”

Mike’s reference to the non-Indian “so-called civilization” is a challenge to those who ridicule the Indians’ culture. He is saying *what makes you think that your way of life is better than ours?*¹⁰ He later answers this question by saying that non-Indian society should “stay in your own pasture”, and we will stay in ours.

Mike laments the inevitable demise of the Indians:

“Where are the numberless thousands of Indians who once roamed the plains, valleys and mountains of this continent? Their hordes are now represented by a small and ever diminishing number of

Realistically, or perhaps fatalistically, he concludes:

⁹ MIKE MOUNTAIN HORSE, *My People the Bloods*, Glenbow Museum, 1989.

The manuscript for this book was probably a collection of Mike’s essays written before and during the Second World War. Some of the flowery or more eloquent language, I believe, represents the efforts of the book’s non-Indian editor, an acknowledged Alberta aboriginal historian, who is well known as a champion of Indian culture.

¹⁰ In a discussion with a young honours sociologist at Mount Royal University on her way to graduate school, she said to me essentially the same thing by asserting, not asking, “*what makes you think [the Indians] want to be like us?*”. My conceit was laid bare.

“We are not looking forward to the time the buffalo shall return¹¹. Nor are we anticipating a time when the white man shall disappear from the continent. But we are scanning the horizon for further chances of advancement and further opportunities.”

When he was twenty-six, Mike rode in a buckboard from the Blood Reserve to Fort McLeod and joined the *Canadian Expeditionary Force* to fight in the First World War. Why I do not know, and I doubt anyone ever knew. I read that he wanted to avenge a brother¹² who died returning from the War, but that’s romantic writing from a white man who knows less than I.

Mike’s older brother Albert had survived three German gas attacks in Europe. He was hospitalized in England until it was determined that he was well enough to convalesce at home. His relatives on the Blood Reserve were jubilant and were planning, with the tribe, celebrations for his return within two days.

¹¹ Mike is being sarcastic here.

¹² Albert’s “Attestation Paper”, Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force, No. 30396 shows his birth date as December 25, 1892; while Mike’s Attestation Paper shows his birth date as November 1, 1887, which makes Mike the older brother. Albert goes on to state that his next of kin is Mrs. Mountain Horse, meaning his mother I think, since he also states he is not married. This, plus the age discrepancy between the brothers, is either sloppy record keeping or disrespect for the two Indians enlisting, or both. Or more likely, they did not care what they told the White man.

Unfortunately, Albert died in Montreal while enroute home, a consequence of being gassed three times¹³. His body was returned two days later by train to McLeod from where his warrior journey had begun, sadly met by family and tribal members, boy scouts, young cadets, and many of the people (non-Indian) of the town.¹⁴ A ceremony was held in the local Anglican church for which tickets had to be issued to control the large number of people expected to attend.

After the church ceremony, Albert's body was carried by buckboard to St Paul's cemetery on the reserve. Mike and two brothers sat beside the coffin.. It was the first week in December, and one can imagine the journey of thirty kilometers, Mike wrapped in a blanket, perhaps Hudson Bay blankets or buffalo robes. It was just as cold in their three-room house, the wood-burning stove unlit while they were away. Before the horses could be watered, the ice on the water trough had to be broken. There was no running water.

Later, in the Spring with purple prairie crocuses and yellow buffalo beans¹⁵ making the trip appear festive, Mike rode in the back of the same buckboard, back to McLeod where he enlisted, with his bother Joe alongside. The prairie flowers may have been festive, but one can imagine how Mike's mother felt, having already lost one son and now two others were leaving to fight¹⁶.



¹³ THE MCLEOD SPECTATOR Newspaper, December 2, 1915, Department of Indian Affairs, Headquarters Central Registry System: First Series: C-8510 "... this gallant boy who gave his life willingly for his King and Empire, although not called upon to do so.". I doubt that Albert knew what the Empire was, and he probably cared even less.

¹⁴ Albert's name is inscribed on the cenotaph in Fort McLeod.

¹⁵ Picture by Bob Sindlinger who can be seen in Calgary as a child with his grandmother Mary Mountain Horse on page 38.

¹⁶ The award-winning movie *Saving Private Ryan*, starring Tom Hanks in 1999, was about the American Army's response to the loss of three brothers in the Second World War.

The culture shocks this Indian from southwest Alberta, a dry isolated corner of the world, went through must have been of earthquake size. But that shock was nothing compared to the shock of the trenches in World War One.

He led a machine gun section of his battalion¹⁷ behind enemy defenses. He was wounded and buried when an enemy shell demolished their shelter. It was four days before he was discovered.

After the War, he worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway, walking three kilometers year-round to work. He did not drive and there was no bus service; he did not smoke or drink.

Between his workplace and home was treeless prairie with a deep, narrow twenty-meter-wide ravine in the middle of the path where I would meet him. Rattlesnake Gulch he called it. If a snake wanted to shake your hand he said, first chew some prairie grass and then rub it on your hand. The snake would not bite you. What five-year-old would not believe that.

¹⁷ Canadian Expeditionary Force, 50th Battalion, Mike Mountain Horse, Form R. 149, 7106 – 25 Om – 7/2/17.

Mike spent two years of his youth in a church operated government funded "residential school". The purpose of these residential schools was to assimilate Indians into non-Indian society, but the result was alienation.

Near the end of his life, he was a leader in his community. He was a Tribal Councillor and later an honorary chief.

Mike and Mary Mountain Horse successfully raised five children, three of whom served during World War II. My Mother, his stepdaughter was in residential school for a year and a half and later off the reserve successfully raised five children. Two of her sisters served in the Canadian forces during World War II. One of them was at a residential school for eight years. She became a royal nurse during World War II. I asked her about abuse at the residential schools. Her quick answer was "The only abuse I ever saw was Indians abusing Indians".

Indians refer to those Indians, and their descendants, who went to residential school as "survivors" who along with all their descendants have been traumatized *forever*.

It is hard not to conclude that there is a sadness underlying Mike's book, that although he accepts change, he does not agree with it, hanging, perhaps clinging, to the old ways of doing things and the harmony he believes Indians have with nature. He gives credit to the "nobly exemplified" aspects of missionaries and the Police, but at the same time laments the collateral damage:

"I am not, of course speaking of those aspects of civilization so nobly exemplified by the missionaries and the Northwest Mounted Police, but rather the chicanery, drunkenness, greed and deception, which made their appearances in conjunction with the finer phases¹⁸ of the white man's code

"Where are the tall handsome healthy bronzed Aborigines of yesterday?"¹⁹

"My people are becoming extinguished rapidly enough without an unprofitable and miserable fusion with another race. The very thought is abhorrent to the right-thinking man of either race, for who as yet has discovered a truly happy union between white and red? The better white men do not marry Indian girls²⁰, and our higher class of female youth, through instruction in racial hygiene, have no desire to intermarry."²¹

So, take that you white supremacist.

¹⁸ I think he is talking about components, as opposed to time periods.

¹⁹ As illustrated, perhaps, by the cover of his book (page 26).

²⁰ The reason why "better" White men do not marry Indian girls is not given and it is left for the reader to draw inferences, like with the movie *Earth Girls Are Easy*. It does, however, imply discrimination, that White men think they are too good to marry an Indian.

²¹ This is interesting. It is difficult to understand what it means, but difficult not to conclude using today's standards that it is extremely racist. During the first half of the last century, it referred to keeping a race homogenous by preventing inter-racial sexual intercourse. It was taken to an extreme by Nazi Germany. But given the meagre education Mike had, I think he was just saying that we (the Indians) do not like you (non-Indians) any more than you like us, so let's stay "in our own pastures".

However, just asking, what if a non-Indian were to say this today. Would the non-Indian be a racist and given sanctions? (please see "vaguely offensive", page 38)

The last time I saw Mike was in the old two story, wood frame hospital building on the north edge Cardston. I had been visiting him, knowing his life was ending.



2 There is nothing to indicate this a cemetery

While walking away down the narrow hallway, I felt his eyes on me, so I stopped, and turned to look at him. He was sitting on the edge of his bed, wearing only a snow-white hospital gown, his black legs dangling. A long look exchanged, and then a smile from him that seemed to create an ephemeral glow around him. At that moment, I thought of all the changes in the world he had experienced, from a kid growing up in a teepee to a world war survivor to a solid Canadian citizen and writer and public speaker. He was a heroic example of integration without cultural assimilation.

Seeing his smile, I hoped that I could be like Mike Mountain Horse, laughing like he did when he was called a dirty old Indian. I hoped to smile at the end and see, enjoy and understand, the big changes that occurred during my lifetime, as he had in his.



Summary

This book is high, unequivocal praise for an admirable, courageous Indian compared to two extraordinary politicians.

First, why the word *Indian*? Because Indians insist on living with a Canadian law titled *The Indian Act*.

***The Indian Act* is a racist law. It is archaic, condescending, and patronizing. It is a legislated barrier that separates Indians from the modern world and other Canadians. “The native people have suffered for 130 years under a federal government policy regime that has made them wards of the state”²².**

Indians, fearing they would lose their “fiduciary rights”, have stopped the Canadian Government from abolishing the Act. However, the Government unilaterally created the Act, so it can unilaterally repeal the Act; there is nothing to negotiate. Then Indians can be

²² MELVIN H. SMITH, *Aboriginal Land Claims in British Columbia: Serious Concerns About the Nisga’a Deal*, A Fraser Institute Occasional Paper, 1998.

“Melvin H. Smith, QC, spent 31 years in the public service of British Columbia from 1967 until 1987 he was the ranking official on constitutional law and constitutional reform issues for four successive provincial administrations. He was a key player in the patriation of the Constitution in 1981 and served as a Deputy Minister for 13 years in various ministries He is the author of the Canadian best-seller, *Our Home or Native Land?*”

whatever they want — like Afro-Canadian, Italian-Canadian, Ukrainian-Canadian, French-Canadian, Indian-Canadian — or just plain Canadian.

Calling Indians “First Nations” is a poor description because it implies special status, like first class, and therefore different privileges and rights; and begs the question of who was second, third, etcetera. There is no tolerable class structure in Canada.

Canada was settled at different times by different peoples, including Indians.. If settlers must be categorized according to when they arrived, then let it be under the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, with the same laws and social responsibilities for everyone. It is time for Indians to be Canadians.

The issue is more than the name. It is the imagery, mostly in the minds of non-Indians, behind the name. Changing the name will accomplish nothing: “a rose by any other name”²³ would smell the same. The same stigma associated with the name Indian will stick to the new name unless the new name earns a new image.

But it will take more than a name change to change the image. Indians will have “to walk the talk”. For example, a group of young bucks, all feathers and paint and drums, entered the charity Dragon Boat races on Henderson Lake in Lethbridge. Halfway through their first sprint, they gave up, one of them vomiting over the boat’s gunwales. The other three dragon boats in the sprint finished the race, all of them crewed by breast cancer survivors.

If you want to remove the stigma behind the name Indian — finish the race!

²³ SHAKESPEARE, *Romeo and Juliet*.

In any case, most Indians do not care what non-Indians call them. Just ask any young Indian boy laughing at Calgarians while he is urinating in the Elbow River just above Calgary’s drinking water in the Glenmore Reservoir.

It is non-Indians who have the biggest problem with the word “Indian”²⁴. To them, it is the connotation or social baggage the word has accumulated over the years.²⁵ A good example of the development of this image is how American movies used to portray Indians. Indians were seldom good and were in the background on horseback. John Wayne, an American movie icon, used it in at least one of his cowboy movies, saying that “the only good Indian is a dead Indian”²⁶.

There was the popular Saturday morning matinee idol Hopalong Cassidy and his 50 western films, one of which has him mouthing the line “I’d have gotten a better deal from any sidwinding half-breed in the country”²⁷ (which would have had my half-breed mother seething and simmering) from which the listener is to assume the deal was so bad it was worse than what one could have gotten from a full-blooded Indian. Makes one wonder how bad the

²⁵ The Alberta Government is a revealing example of official confusion over what to call Indians. In 2016, the Government took the brave new step of changing the name of the Department of *Aboriginal* Relations to Department of *Indigenous* Relations. This “grand” gesture was no doubt done to appease the political correctness active ists, not because Indians were clamoring for a name change.

Before the most recent change, the Indians were referred by the Alberta Government as Indians, Natives, First Nations People, Others; and programs were designed specifically for Indian economic, social, and community projects, each of which were part of various relevant government ministries making it impossible to say just how much Government was budgeting for them, never mind answering the question of why when Indians and their reserves are a federal creation.

²⁶ “There are ‘white folk’ in this country [America] to this day that still believe ‘the only good Indian is a dead Indian,’ a phrase which The Duke [John Wayne] helped to perpetuate.” [From Dana Parsons, columnist in the Los Angeles Times, October 9, 1994.]

The phrase was first uttered in 1869 by an American General (Sheridan) after the Civil War and reiterated by Theodore Roosevelt when speaking before being elected President in 1901.

The Only Good Indians is a book advertised in the NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW, December 6, 2020, page 5.

²⁷ Lesley Selande Director, *Riders of the Deadline*, 1943.

deal would be from a quarter breed or a “one drop”²⁸ Indian. In another movie, it is said that a politician’s chance of being elected was improved by “wingin [shooting] Injin Joe”²⁹.

The “dead Indian” phrase is still with us in movies today. In 2020, in Quentin Tarantino’s Best Picture nominated movie *Once upon a time in Hollywood*, Leonardo DiCaprio’s (who was nominated for Best Actor) character touts the racist catchphrase ‘The only good Indian is a dead Indian.’³⁰

The “dead Indian” label became part of the Canadian milieu as well: “*The only good Indian: essays by Canadian Indians*”³¹ keeps the description and the undesirable and now bothersome imagery alive.

For my part, I love my grandparents, who called themselves Indians. They evoke the modern equivalent of the romanticized *Noble Savage*. To me, Mike Mountain Horse will always be an Indian, independent and proud.³²

²⁸ The one drop rule was an American practice, legal in many states, of classifying people for segregation purposes. Its primary target was Black people. One drop of blood meant that one was a Black person.

²⁹ *Rogue of the Range*, 1936, directed by S. Roy Luby and starring Johnny Mack Brown.

³⁰ THE ATLANTIC, Quentin Tarantino’s Ultimate Statement on Movie Violence, August 2, 2019.

³¹ WAUTAGESHIG, New Press, 1970.

³² The cover for Mike’s book Published in 1979 by the Glenbow Alberta Institute and The Blood Tribal Council, has a painting by Gerald Tailfeathers, a Blood Artist titled “Sighting an Enemy Camp”.

To whomever, Indian or non-Indian, who protest about the use of the word Indian and the social or cultural stigma associated with it, blame it on *The Indian Act* which defines the term Indian. Don't like it, abolish the Indian Act.

Finally, what is a hero? Simply, it is an ordinary person who in the face of daunting circumstances does extraordinary things of great benefit to others.

Considering his starting point in society and measured against two successful politicians, Mike Mountain Horse was a hero. His starting point in Canadian society was near the bottom, whereas the starting point for Premier Peter Lougheed and Pierre Trudeau was near the top.

The manuscript is high and unequivocal praise for an admirable and courageous Indian compared to two extraordinary politicians. The title of the book explicitly exposes the absurdity of discrimination:

*Mike Mountain Horse fought at Vimy Ridge
for the heart and soul of a Nation.*

*Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau fought
for a united, centralized country.*

*Premier Peter Lougheed fought
for oil money and ten little countries.*

Many Albertans remember Peter Lougheed as "standing up to Ottawa", an election promise of Alberta political parties since the province was created in 1905. For Lougheed's Government, standing up meant stopping Ottawa from taxing Alberta's oil revenue. To stop

Ottawa, he leveraged oil supply in the negotiations for patriation of the Constitution and successfully neutered its *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* by championing a notwithstanding clause (the same clause that is in his first provincial piece of legislation, *The Alberta Bill of Rights*). The notwithstanding clause gives each province the right to opt out of crucial parts of the *Charter* (the *Alberta Bill of Rights* gives the Government the right to ignore its *Bill*), thus setting the stage for a checkerboard of rights across the country and ten little countries.

Conversely, Pierre Trudeau was “old school”, believing that a strong centralized government could save CANADA from the threat of national dissolution posed by Quebec separation referendums (the most recent one failed by a mere 0.58%). He also believed that Alberta’s revenue windfall from oil should be shared across the country, and for this he held the hammer. The division of powers between the federal and provincial governments gave the federal government the authority to control inter-provincial commerce and to tax however, and how much, it wanted.

As an Indian, Mike Mountain Horse did not have to go to war, but he chose to do so. He was not aware of the geopolitical networks that made war the ultimate tool of politicians, but he was aware of the threat to his people and his country. He believed so strongly in protecting them, he, along with thousands of other ordinary Canadians, did not speak of oil money or constitutions — they spoke with their lives. For this, they are great Canadian heroes!

Peter Lougheed was a self assured, straight ahead kind of person, like ... what is for dinner. Pierre Trudeau, on the other hand, would debate dinner, looking for the most exotic experience ... and the perfect wine.

Mike Mountain Horse provided the ingredients for both — from the morning dew on the camp grass to the grandeur of his Chief Mountain below which he was born and buried — the heart and soul of a country that both Trudeau and Lougheed sought.

The Lougheeds and the Trudeaus will come and go, but Mike Mountain Horse's spirit is timeless, in the land forever.



Conclusion

1. Apartheid — Canadian Style

Saying that Alberta's Indian reserves are equivalent to South African apartheid is an overstatement is probably right, but it does illustrate the reality. Reserves segregate, based on culture, a minority of the population. They are archaic, patronizing, condescending, and racist.

Whatever the original intent of the reserves, they have not kept up with changes in the world. Indeed, Indian leaders annually assert that more money is needed for education, health care, and economic development, among others, and support their claims by referring to measurements of their standard of living that are far below those of most Canadians.

Why is the standard of living on reserves lower than that of Canadians not living on reserves? The answer could be to just shrug and say *it's complicated*. But the social/economic gap has not been changed by throwing money at it for the last 100 years; and from that experience it is hard not to conclude that throwing money for another 100 years will do nothing to improve the status quo. It will only worsen it. If taken to the extreme future, those living within the reserve system will no longer be a segregated culture, they will be an extinct species.

What to do? Free the Indians, let them be responsible for their own success or failure. Let them be like other Canadians who move to where the jobs are or create jobs with what there is where they are. Free the Indians by abolishing that racist barrier that hold them held back — *The Indian Act*.

2. Oil — Pissing It Away Again

The glory days of oil booms and construction of oil sand plants are finished, and they are not coming back. Their base for jobs and government revenue will slowly deteriorate as reserves are depleted and consumers move away from fossil³³ fuel consumption. Facing this reality, the Alberta Government tried and failed to save for the future by creating the *Heritage Savings Trust Fund* and by diversifying the economy. However, as conventional oil production (the kind where a pipe is stuck into the ground and oil is sucked up) declined and opprobrium from covetous Canadians, both private and public, mounted, Premier Peter Lougheed of the Alberta Government decided to spend the *Fund*, thus depriving future generations from a share of the windfall profits from oil production. Diversification also failed as they were based on oil (petroleum), like petro-chemical plants.

An alternative to spending the savings was to gradually increase taxes to a level like that in other provinces but the politicians running the Government were afraid this would get them unelected. They were probably correct, but were they responsible? The answer to this question should have come from the Alberta Legislature whose members should have been representing those who elected them and thus holding the Government accountable.

³³ For example “G.M. rocked the auto industry when it revealed plans to phase out petroleum powered cars and trucks and move to zero-emission vehicles by 2035.” [MAUREEN DOWD, *Apocalypse Right Now*, THE NEW YORK TIMES July 25, 2021.]

The reason they did not is that the Premier and the Cabinet Members (the government) sits in the legislature and therefore represents its point of view and not that of electors. It is like students marking their own exam papers.

In order to hold the Government accountable, the Premier and his Cabinet should be outside the Legislature.

The Alberta Government’s cavalier attitude towards spending was contagious. The Calgary municipal government flirted with bankruptcy by trying to bid for another Olympic Games until it was stopped by a civic referendum that Councillors branded as *non-binding*. However, vox populi prevailed. But that did not stop Councillors from one day committing to a \$600 million National Hockey League hockey rink while the very next day reducing funding for police, fire, and transit, claiming they were short of money.

The Municipal Government Act should be amended. Now it reads eight Councillors can spend on things that “*in the opinion of council, are necessary or desirable*”.³⁴ This must be changed to “*in the opinion of citizens is desirable*”.

3. Canada — Ten Little Countries

Colonies are areas exploited for their wealth by foreign governments that had the might to force their will upon the inhabitants or to place their own nationals in the area colonized. In other words, large armed populations had their way with smaller unarmed populations. In our modern era, many of those ravaged smaller populations pointed out that they did not like being ravaged and therefore have or are separating from the colonizers.

³⁴ ALBERTA MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT ACT, Chapter M-26, Part I, Section 3, subsections (a) and (b).

Canada was a colony that completely separated from its colonizer when Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau patriated its constitution (*The British North America Act*) from England in 1980. Patriation had unintended consequences as the individual colonies that made up the former larger Canadian colony started to question the existing nation state concept of one strong central government. Indeed, one of those colonies (Quebec) went as far as asking its citizens to give its government the authority to separate from Canada. The request failed by a mere 0.58%. Whew, Canada survives for the short term by a whisker!

For what? Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, attempting to give a heart and soul to the country, attached a *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* to the Constitution, essentially an administrative document. The provinces balked and took the opportunity to constrain the federal government. Led by provincial Premier Peter Lougheed, they sniped at Trudeau’s soft spot — his coveted *Charter*. Facing the end of his political life, Trudeau compromised by agreeing to a notwithstanding clause in the *Charter* in return for unopposed patriation of the constitution. The clause gives the provinces the right to opt out of essential parts of the *Charter*, thus neutering it. Lougheed had inserted the same clause in his first provincial legislation the *Alberta Bill of Rights*, which gave the government the power to ignore its own *Bill*.

Opting out of the *Charter* will result in a checkerboard of rights across the country. It will also give provinces the confidence to thumb their noses at federal authority, like British Columbia did in obstructing construction of the Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion. The Canadian Government had the authority in the national interest to enable the construction but failed to take the responsibility.

From checkerboard rights and impasses like B.C. defying federal authority, it is a slippery slope to ten little countries. Starting his long-term slide will be Peter Lougheed's legacy.

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Quarter breed author — full disclosure



In the Crossroads Market in Calgary there is a reward poster for the Sundance Kid. He is described as having black eyes and Grecian features which is, I suppose, related to things Greek. The most outstanding feature

however, is the line that says he "LOOKS LIKE QUARTER BREED INDIAN".

Well, the drawing of the Sundance Kid is rather nondescript, so to help the reader in visualizing what a quarter-breed Indian looks like, I refer to the picture below of this book's author.

The author's mother was half-breed and her mother, Mary Mountain Horse, was full-



*1 Wolf Moccasin and Double Gun Woman
[Provincial Archives of Alberta]*

breed, daughter of Wolf Moccasin (aka Flying Chief aka Joe Healy) and Double Gun Woman. Mom said he was a scary looking dude but her grandma who never learned English was a very kind gentle woman.

This makes the author a quarter-breed, which is obvious from his Grecian features as seen in the photograph.



Tom Sindlinger spent much time with his sociological grandfather Mike Mountain Horse and his biological grandmother Mary Mountain Horse, daughter of Double Gun Woman, from their unpainted clapboard house in the displaced persons' neighborhood of Lethbridge to the teepees just inside the *Calgary Stampede* main gate to the *Sun Dance* at Belly Flats.

He served as a *Select Committee Member of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund*, a multibillion-dollar provincial bucket of money representing the economic and political blooming of Alberta. It was a unique vantage point to a short-lived national political transformation.

He was the only *Member of the Alberta Legislative Assembly* to vocally support the patriation of the *Canadian Constitution*. His support came after informed consultation and with concern about the consequences for his country if it did not have its destiny in its own hands (keeping in mind a 0.58% survival of a separation referendum in Qubec). His Party gave him a choice: support the Party’s anti-patriation position or else. This was an easy decision, given his Canadian loyalty, and he was thus kicked out of the Party’s caucus.

Tom Sindlinger is a Senior Economic Analyst with a focus on marketing and transportation of natural resources, and governance.

He has successfully completed 19 international projects in 12 countries for both private and public entities.

***The Alberta and The Lethbridge Sports Halls of Fame* inducted him in recognition of his Alberta and Canadian basketball championships**