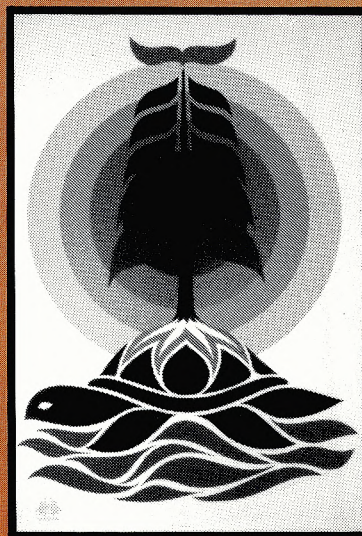
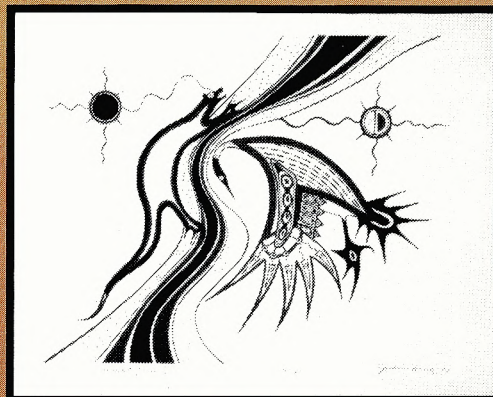




Indian and Northern
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et du Nord Canada



10-482 (1-88)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
ALEXIS BAND EDUCATION EVALUATION

1983

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Canada

About the Illustrations

The Westcoasters

(Bottom)

The Indians who now live along the west coast of Canada are direct descendants of skillful mariners who navigated the open ocean of the North Pacific in hand-hewn cedar canoes long before the arrival of the European. To attain their livelihood these people daily braved the perils of an area frequently referred to as the "Graveyard of the Pacific." The "Westcoasters" is a graphic visual tribute to the courageous and indomitable spirit of the west coast people.

Creation

(Middle)

To use the artist's words "... meaningful traditions are governed by the works of the Creator, and are believed to be sacred. It is from nature that the Native peoples adopt symbolism." Thus the "Creation" became the first of his Iroquois paintings. It is a work that portrays in physical symbols a vision of ancient Iroquoian spiritual concepts: the Turtle Island — the Earth, the Great Tree of Peace — Brotherhood and Unity, the Guardian Eagle — the Creator's watch-care, and the Sun — our Elder Brother.

The Goose and the Mink

(Top right)

The Northern Goose and Mink serve as a vivid portrayal symbolizing the unending and universal struggle between good and evil, the forces of life and death. In both the animate and the inanimate creation — in the prey and in its predator and in the variations between the lightened and the darkened suns — we see an emphasis on the continuing conflict between these forces and the pathway of division between them.

and the Artists ...

Roy Henry Vickers

Roy Vickers is a Coast Tsimshian who spent his early youth at Kitkatla, an ancient Indian village on an Island at the mouth of the Skeena River, British Columbia. Later his family settled in the Victoria area. While there, in art classes at school he was unable to relate to the European painters and the "great masters" and turned instead to the art of his Tsimshian heritage; it was here that he found himself.

It wasn't long before his artwork showed considerable promise and he was admitted to the Gitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian Art at Ksan in Hazelton, B.C. In two years of intense study at Gitanmax, Roy matured into a highly skilled artist with a marked ability to sensitively blend traditionalist and contemporary forms. (Roy's other talents include University lecturing and television acting.) His carvings and paintings may be found in major public and private collections in Canada, the United States and Japan.

Arnold Jacobs

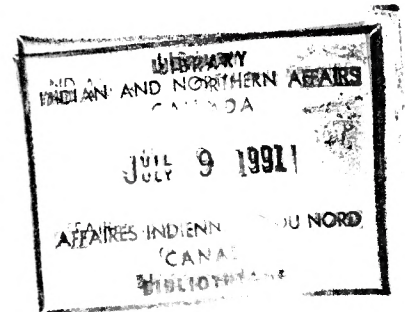
Arnold Jacobs is a Six Nations' Iroquois artist who is emerging as a visual interpreter and historian of the rich culture of his people. After studying in the Special Arts Program at Toronto's Central Technical School, Arnold went on to develop his distinctive techniques through thirteen years of experience in the commercial arts field. His works have brought him international recognition.

Central to Arnold's creative expression are symbols of the earth and sky — such as the waters, the four winds, thunder and the sun. For him these supporters of life are also spiritual forces that should inspire within us true thankfulness to the Creator.

Jackson Beardy

Jackson Beardy was born as the fifth son of a family of 13 in the isolated Indian community of Island Lake, about 600 kilometres north of Winnipeg, Manitoba. Deprived of his home and language at the age of 7, he spent 12 disorienting and traumatic years in residential school life. Thus Jackson's early manhood found him in the struggle to reconcile the two worlds of white and Indian society. It was at this time that he returned north in a quest to again learn the ways and teachings of his people.

Later, unrecognized and being unaware of any other Indian artists in Canada, he began to pioneer his own art form — one portraying traditional legends and nature in uniquely colourful, creative and symbolic images. In time his paintings have found their place in established collections throughout North America and Europe. His recent death in December of 1984 was lamented as a great loss to Canada.



Prepared by:

Evaluation Branch
Corporate Policy
Department of Indian and
Northern Affairs Canada



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Indian & Northern Affairs
Executive summary: Alexis
Band education evaluation

10-482 (1-88)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
ALEXIS BAND EDUCATION EVALUATION

1983

Executive Summary
Alexis Band Education Evaluation

I INTRODUCTION

This evaluation study was initiated by the Alexis Band Chief and Council and School Committee with funding and advice from the Evaluation Branch of the department at headquarters. It was undertaken by the firm R & F Consulting and its associates over the period December 1982 to May 1983. An evaluation advisory committee developed the study Terms of Reference, selected the evaluation team, and directed the study throughout.

II STUDY SCOPE AND APPROACH

The Alexis reserve is situated fifty-eight miles northwest of Edmonton, Alberta. Some 530 Band members reside on the reserve. About 60 Alexis children attend the on-reserve school which houses Kindergarten classes and Grades 1 to 4. Approximately 110 Alexis young people attend schools of the provincial system, both elementary and high school. The evaluation study addressed the education programming provided to Alexis children both in the reserve school and in the provincial system.

The study approach included the following main elements: survey of community members, interviews with teachers and principals, observation in the classrooms, community workshops, analysis of achievement information, assessment of the school facilities, and administration of visual, hearing, and perceptual-motor tests.

III STUDY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The main study findings and conclusions, in summary form, are presented below:

- The children of the Alexis Reserve are in educational trouble and have been for a number of years. The evaluation indicates that there is no simple answer for this situation. A combination of cultural, bureaucratic, social and political conditions and events have hindered and frustrated the release of potential of the Alexis children.

- The main problem areas for Alexis students are language, vision, and hearing. Approximately 27% of Alexis children were found to have middle ear abnormalities which could well be affecting their hearing. This finding is in keeping with other studies conducted among Native children. Alexis children show well below normal skill levels in English language development. An abnormally high proportion of Alexis children are in need of glasses (many of them have a pair but don't wear them in classes) or some form of visual training, because of "lazy eye" and other perceptual-motor problems with the eyes.
- School drop-out is common and is as much an emotional and spiritual problem as it is academic. Students who remain enrolled have inadequate attendance rates.
- Parents do not think that education is important and do not see that their children get to school on time or attend school regularly.
- Bingo and alcohol are getting in the way of children getting the proper food and sleep.
- There is a need for the Alexis community to take a greater interest in and have more control over the education of its children.
- It is clear from the testing results derived from the Canadian Test of Basic Skills that neither the provincial schools nor the DIAND school are meeting the educational needs of Alexis children.
- There is a lack of programming to meet the recreational needs of the children and youth of the reserve.
- Curriculum materials, and equipment are insufficient. Many of them are out of date, culturally irrelevant or in poor repair and do not meet the diagnosed educational need.
- The language spoken in the home is different from the language of instruction spoken in the school, a problem not being addressed by the curriculum now in place.

- Provincial universities and training colleges are not training teachers to teach or turning out teachers who know how children learn. Teachers today are being trained to be technicians not educators.
- There is a lack of teachers trained in cross-cultural education.

IV MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE STUDY

The study report presents an extensive set of recommendations, both short-term and long-term, toward improving the education programming provided to Alexis children and developing community and parental support for education endeavours. Recommendations toward school program changes are directed toward each of the two school systems - federal and provincial. The recommendations presented include:

1. establishing a pre-school preparatory program such as Head Start;
2. hiring either Native teachers, or teachers specifically trained in cross-cultural education;
3. instituting a curriculum based on identified actual learning needs and one which is process rather than content-oriented;
4. taking steps to increase community involvement in the reserve school and to promote interaction between the Alexis community and the provincial schools attended by Alexis children;
5. carrying out a thorough re-testing of Alexis students' hearing;
6. ensuring that teachers have expertise in remedial teaching;
7. establishing a cultural exchange program which would ease the student's transition from the reserve school to the provincial school;
8. build a gymnasium facility on the reserve;
9. that the Band take steps to assume responsibility for education programming and make plans for the construction of a school facility capable of housing Grades Kindergarten to 8;

10. instituting the Stoney language as the main language of instruction in the reserve school, with English to be taught as a second language and that the language programs emphasize speech and the building of verbal language skills;
11. that the Indian culture be infused into the school as well through such mechanisms as hiring native teacher-aides and developing or purchasing curriculum materials which are culturally relevant.