

# RECONCILING EDMONTON

A project of  
**RISE - Reconciliation in Solidarity Edmonton**

**#ReconcilingYEG**

Reconciling Edmonton brought together two Indigenous women—Miranda Jimmy and AnnaMarie Sewell—and two settler women—Danielle Metcalfe-Chenail and Jennie Vegt.

This group, inspired by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), set out to find seven moments shared by Indigenous people and settlers during the seven generations since the signing of Treaty Six. That treaty created the framework for developing Edmonton, but much of this history is unknown.

The plan was simple: first, find seven photos. Then, Jennie would render them into paintings while Miranda coordinated community and cultural input. Finally, Danielle and Anna Marie would compose poems for each image, weaving together the community responses with historical research and their own words.

Finding the images turned out to be harder than expected, and revealed a surprising fact: Indigenous people are largely absent from the City of Edmonton Archives. Searching under Cree yielded next to nothing. Forget Blackfoot, Dene, Inuit, Métis, or even Aboriginal or Indigenous. The images that did exist, were usually filed under the generic out-of-date term, “Indians”. Even more troubling, while settlers were often named in the photos, Indigenous people rarely were afforded that same respect.

Eventually, the project widened its net. The group found a photo of Lt. Governor Ralph Steinhauer of Saddle Lake First Nation at the Provincial Archives of Alberta. From there, the group consulted the archives of Windspeaker, the Aboriginal Multi-Media Society of Alberta’s newspaper, and found a cover photo from May 1983 showing Métis leaders Sam Sinclair and Cliff Gladue crossing the finish line of the first Alex Decoteau Fun Run.

The images in this project provoked thoughtful reactions from the community via social media. These undocumented images then served as a way for people to express their grief and sense of historical injustice, as well as a jumpstart for new knowledge.

For the poetry that followed, Anna Marie and Danielle used real names where they are known, and included public questions as well as artistic, yet historically accurate, answers where possible.

Throughout, the writing enhances a central message of the visual images: Indigenous people have always been part of Edmonton’s life, despite their absence in much of the official record.