



Dakota Information Card

Development of the Dakota History Timeline for Chief Whitecap School

The development of the Dakota History Timeline for the Chief Whitecap School was a collaborative project that took many steps and the work of many people to complete.

1-Concept Development: As part of a project commemorating the 150th Anniversary of Canadian Confederation (“Canada 150”), Whitecap Dakota First Nation (WDFN) looked to acknowledge the overlooked role that the Dakota people played in the formation of Canada. The Canada 150 project was a collaboration between WDFN and Saskatoon Public Schools (SPS) in which Dakota history and reconciliation were to be featured. The project involved the development and design of the learning materials and interactive interpretive displays for the Chief Whitecap School.

2-Concept Design: Advisory committees were established to guide the development of the design and educational materials. These committees were comprised of WDFN Elders, WDFN and SPS educators, WDFN and SPS leaders, and WDFN and SPS staff. It was collectively decided that one interpretive wall should be a timeline featuring the history of the Dakota in Canada.

WDFN Elders and educators met to record the significant moments of Dakota history. From these meetings, questions arose on how to best represent:

- elements that are significant to the Dakota regardless of time;
- Dakota methods of recording history; and
- a timeline that is different from a standard timeline but is still understandable to the viewer.

3-Design Phase: After developing the initial concept, the timeline went to a professional graphic designer. This designer worked in close collaboration with the advisory groups. Many meetings were held to review and refine the design, which went through a variety of drafts before reaching the final format.

4-Final Design: The Dakota History Timeline divides precontact, and post-contact history. The precontact portion features items that are culturally significant to the Dakota. This includes the representation of a buffalo hide in the centre of the timeline, as images were recorded onto buffalo hides as a traditional method of historical record keeping. The symbols on the precontact portion of the timeline are shown without a specific time anchor to demonstrate that their significance persists regardless of time. The Dakota terms for the symbols are included.

The post-contact portion uses symbols similar to how symbols on buffalo hide were used as a method of traditional record keeping. In contrast to the precontact timeline, each symbol is anchored to a specific time, symbolizing the change in the way time is conceptualized and recorded after contact between the Dakota and European newcomers.

