

1974 – 1987

nwt history

1974-77

Northern Homeland, Northern Frontier

- Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry and Berger Report.

During the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, Justice Thomas Berger visited 35 communities in the western Arctic, to hear Northerners' views about the construction of a gas pipeline from Alaska to the Mackenzie River Delta, and south along the Mackenzie Valley. After listening to almost 1000 people, Justice Berger recommended that no major pipeline should be built along the Mackenzie Valley for ten years, to give time to settle Aboriginal land claims. Plans for the pipeline were put on hold.



photo provided by: NWT Archives

1975

From Ottawa to Yellowknife

- First fully elected NWT council.

In 1870 the Hudson's Bay Company cedes its territories (Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territories) to the new government of Canada. This vast area is renamed the Northwest Territories, and governed by leaders appointed in Ottawa. The capital of the NWT has moved from The Battlefords (1880) to Regina (1883) to Ottawa (1905) to Yellowknife (1967). It was not until 1975 that the first council was fully elected by Northerners. This marked the coming of responsible government to the NWT.



photo provided by: NWT Archives

1984

Land Claim Settlements in the NWT

- Inuvialuit sign first comprehensive Aboriginal rights agreement in the NWT.

Land claims have been called "modern treaties". In many cases, promises made in treaties were misunderstood or unmet and therefore needed to be renegotiated between Aboriginal groups and the government of Canada. In 1984, the Inuvialuit, under the Committee for Original Peoples' Entitlement (COPE), were the first group in the NWT to settle their land claim. This claim was followed by the Gwich'in (1992), Sahtu Dene/Metis (1994), and Dogrib (2002).



photo provided by: Hans Buhm/NWT Archives



▶ Dene issue the "Dene Declaration" calling for the right to be regarded as a nation.

▶ European boycott of sealing, and international animal rights movement, reduce Aboriginal incomes by up to 90% in some communities. Indigenous Survival International is formed to lobby against fur boycotts, especially in Europe.

▶ Many NWT communities begin the process of reclaiming their Aboriginal names.

▶ Plebiscite on division of NWT: 56% vote in favour of two separate territories.

▶ NWT Official Languages Act is passed, giving official status to 8 Aboriginal languages.

▶ Arctic College is established.

▶ Pope John Paul II visits Fort Simpson.

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1975

1975

1980s

1980s

1982

1984

1984

1986

1987