



# 300 YEARS

## THE PEACE & FRIENDSHIP TREATIES

4 JUNE 1726 – 4 JUNE 2026

### FIRST & FOUNDATIONAL

In 1725/26 the first and foundational treaty in the Covenant Chain of treaties, the Peace and Friendship Treaties, was signed between the nations of the Wabanaki Confederacy (the Mi'kmaq, the Wolastoqiyik, Peskotomuhkati, and Penobscot), and the British. It was the first treaty any of these nations had entered with a European nation.

### THE NEGOTIATION

The Penobscot negotiated the terms on behalf of their Indigenous allies in December 1725 in Boston.

### 4 JUNE 1726

Representatives of Mi'kmaw communities then first ratified the treaty on 4 June 1726 at Fort Anne, Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia. Some Indigenous representatives ratified later that year and up to 1728.

### RECIPROCAL TERMS

The terms of the treaty were reciprocal and meant to allow for a peaceful co-existence of Indigenous nations and British settlers. Its terms formed the basis for subsequent treaties in 1749, 1752, 1760-61, and 1777-79, when the original terms were renewed and reaffirmed.

### NO LAND CESSION

The Indigenous nations did not cede lands as part of these treaties.

### BUILDING BLOCKS OF CANADA

The Treaty of 1726 and the Peace and Friendship Treaties that followed, were solemn agreements between Nations and became critical building blocks in the formation of Canada.

### STILL VALID TODAY

The Supreme Court of Canada has affirmed that the Peace and Friendship Treaties remain valid.

### WE ARE ALL TREATY PEOPLE

“We are all Treaty People” means that all Canadians are descended from - and part of - this ongoing treaty relationship.

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## BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The 1726 Treaty, the first in what became known as the Peace and Friendship treaties ended years of conflict which had culminated in a three-year war between the Mi'kmaq and their Indigenous allies and the British. The war was ignited by the New Englanders' exploitation of Indigenous fishing grounds off Nova Scotia and the expansion of British settlement into Indigenous lands in New England. There were very few British settlers then in Nova Scotia, it was still a predominantly Indigenous space. New England, however, was already home to settlers numbering in the tens of thousands. The British were looking to expand settlement northward.

In the background was the longstanding conflict between the British and the French, which had spilled over from Europe into northeastern North America and continued in various forms until 1763 and British victory. The Mi'kmaq were allies of the French. The British sought to disrupt this alliance.

One part of this treaty saw the Indigenous adherents agree to not interfere with British settlements "already made or lawfully to be made." In a second part, the British made "reciprocal promises" to respect Indigenous fishing, hunting, and planting activities. Out of the 77 Indigenous leaders who eventually ratified the treaty at Annapolis Royal, 50 were Mi'kmaq. The British signatories at Annapolis were the Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia Lawrence Armstrong and the Lieutenant-Governor of Annapolis Royal, John Doucett.

The peace did not last. Periods of conflict and war over the next fifty-plus years produced a need for regular renewal of the treaty terms, which generally remained the same but with some additions, for example relating to trade.

After the era of treaty-making at the end of the eighteenth century, British and then Canadian authorities ignored their obligations and responsibilities as laid out in the treaty terms. But the Mi'kmaq and their Indigenous allies did not forget and regularly reminded authorities of their treaty rights. In the twentieth century the Supreme Court of Canada affirmed that the Peace and Friendship Treaties remain valid.

In 2026, we celebrate and acknowledge the 300th anniversary of the foundational 1726 Peace and Friendship Treaty. That Treaty, and those that followed in the Covenant Chain, helped to build this country. The relationship it represents between nations remains important to all Islanders – all Epekwitnewaq, both Mi'kmaq, and non-Indigenous.

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