

COVENANT CHAIN OF TREATIES SUMMARY

The Covenant Chain of Treaties is a group of interconnected treaties, whereby the British Crown and Atlantic First Nations created a chain of related commitments to each other. There are other treaties and alliances signed before, during and after those listed here. These were selected because they figure prominently in recent cases that have been decided upon by the Supreme Court of Canada. Teachers can find more information at the Atlantic Policy Congress website, <http://www.apcfc.ca/about-apc/treaties/>

1725-26-28 One of the first proposed treaties between the Mi'kmaq and the European settlers was negotiated initially in Boston in 1725 with a representative from Cape Sable attending the ratification. This treaty, between the British, Mi'kmaq and Maliseet, was then ratified by many of the Mi'kmaw and Maliseet villages at Annapolis Royal in 1726 and again in 1728. It was the first of what are now known as treaties of peace and friendship with the British Crown in the Maritime Provinces.

1749 Treaty signed at Chebucto and St. John renewing the Treaty of 1725. In the continuing campaign for Chignecto, Governor Cornwallis' instructions included a reward of ten guineas for the scalps of Mi'kmaw men, women and children. The Lords of Trade disagreed with this "extermination" policy.

1752 The Treaty of 1752, signed by Jean Baptiste Cope, described as the Chief Sachem of the Mi'kmaq inhabiting the eastern part of Nova Scotia, and Governor Hopson of Nova Scotia, made peace and promised hunting, fishing and trading rights. Le Have and Cape Sable joined in 1753.

1760-61 Treaties of Peace and Friendship were made by the Governor of Nova Scotia with the Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and Passamaquoddy. These are the same treaties that were upheld and interpreted by the Supreme Court in the Donald Marshall Jr. case. They include the right to harvest fish, wildlife, wild fruit and berries to support a moderate livelihood for the treaty beneficiaries. While the Mi'kmaq promised not to bother the British in their settlements, the Mi'kmaq did not cede or give up their land title and other rights.

1762 Triggered by Royal Instructions in 1761, Belcher's Proclamation described the British intention to protect the just rights of the Mi'kmaq to their land.

1763 The Royal Proclamation of 1763 is a complicated document that reserved large areas of land in North America as Indian hunting grounds and set out a process for cession and purchase of Indian lands.

1776 The treaty of 1776, signed in Watertown, MA, USA, established relations with the newly-created United States. The Americans promised to approach their relationship with the Mi'kmaq in the manner of the French rather than the British.

1779 The final treaty between the Mi'kmaq and the British was signed. The military threat from the Mi'kmaq was diminished significantly by this treaty.

