

# Historic and Current Context

Papaschase First Nation has a long history in the area on the outskirts of Edmonton, Alberta. Papaschase self-identifies as a First Nation, but is not currently a band registered under the Indian Act, nor is it considered a “Treaty First Nation” by the Crown. The community does not have reserve lands or other official land base. It does have a relationship with the Crown, as federal departments are encouraged to engage with Indigenous groups in the spirit of reconciliation with a view to building positive relationships.

Papaschase First Nation relayed that their history began in the region as Chief Papaschase, his six brothers and their families moved to the Edmonton area in the late 1850's from the Lesser Slave Lake area. They travelled and hunted in the Fort Edmonton, Fort Assiniboia and Lesser Slave Lake areas for some time before making Edmonton their home. The band settled and traded with the Hudson Bay Company (HBC), and the band's members were employed with HBC at times.

On August 21, 1877, Chief Papaschase (also known as Passpasschase, Papastew, Pahpastayo, and John Gladieu-Quinn) and his brother Tahkoots, a Headman, signed adhesion to Treaty 6 on behalf of Papaschase at Fort Edmonton. Papaschase Indian Reserve (IR) 136 was set aside for Chief Papaschase and his band, following their signing of Treaty 6. The reserve was approximately four miles south of the North Saskatchewan River, directly across the river from the original site of Fort Edmonton. By 1879, the buffalo had become virtually extinct and the Indigenous peoples in the Edmonton area were suffering from severe starvation. When the Half Breed Scrip<sup>1</sup> Commission came to Edmonton in 1886, the Papaschase Band, motivated by starvation, poverty and general discord over Canada's failure to honour the terms of Treaty 6, requested scrip. The Papaschase Band were reduced to 82 members.

1 Scrip is any document used in place of legal tender, for example a certificate or voucher, where the bearer is entitled to certain rights. In 1870, the Canadian government devised a system of scrip — referred to as Métis (or “half-breed”) scrip — that issued documents redeemable for land or money. Scrip was given to Métis people living in the West in exchange for their land rights. Source: <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/metis-scrip-in-canada>

After receiving scrip, Chief Papaschase and other members of the band continued in the belief they could use and occupy Papaschase IR 136 because the Federal Government allowed the band to harvest their crops in the fall of 1886. In January 1887, Commissioner Dewdney was directed by Indian Affairs to remove Papaschase members with their consent and to obtain a formal surrender of Papaschase IR 136 so the land could be sold for their benefit. Accordingly, the Papaschase Indian Band no longer existed within the meaning of the Indian Act and all of its members were dispersed.

Many members of the Papaschase Band moved to Enoch Reserve where they remained, but a few joined other Bands or took scrip. Most of the discharged Papaschase members relocated to locations such as Elinor Lake, Lac La Biche, Beaver Lake and Kikino.

In 1973, Enoch First Nation submitted a specific claim with respect to the unlawful surrender of Papaschase IR 136 on behalf of those descendants living at the Enoch Reserve, but Indian and Northern Affairs Canada rejected the claim.

The Papaschase First Nation was formed in 1995 to bring together the descendants who were scattered in the late 1800s in an effort to receive band status, recognition as a distinct group, and to reestablish treaty rights.

Members of the group are descendants of Chief Papaschase and include Metis, Bill C-31 status members, non-status, and status who are members of other First Nation Bands. The group estimates that there are several

hundred descendants of Papaschase IR 136 alive today.

The historic traditional territory of Papaschase First Nation extends from Edmonton to Fort Saskatchewan in

the north and through Elk Island National Park to Beaverhills Lake in the east. However, given that Papaschase

members are now scattered throughout the province of Alberta, the traditional territory is seen as being province-wide. The Project's proposed right-of-way (RoW) intersects with the western side of Treaty 6 territory

and is located approximately 175 km from the historic Papaschase IR 136.