

***At the Forks: Where Indigenous and Human Rights Intersect***

Volume 2

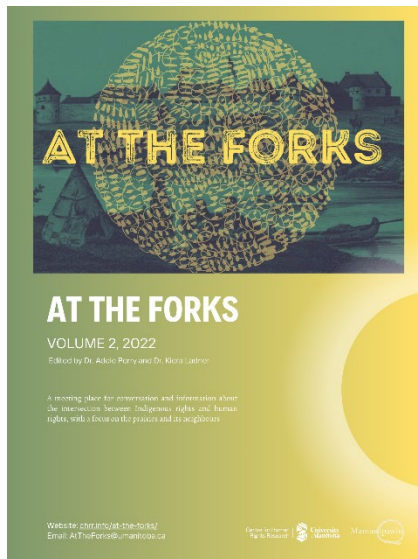
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## Introduction

Adele Perry



In this volume:

1. Vernon's The Black Prairie Archives: A Discussion
2. Present is the Past: Flowing into New Waters
3. More than entertainment: Indigenous women are teaching through filmmaking
4. Putting Emergency in Context

It has been an eventful couple of years where the two ancient rivers meet. The COVID 19 pandemic that began early in 2020 profoundly marked the two years that followed and continues to shape our lives and communities. At the University of Manitoba, we spent two years teaching remotely, and a third academic year with a full mask mandate. Halfway through 2023, we are beginning to do more things in person, but we are not who we were before.

By 2021, it was clear that the [pandemic was disproportionately effecting Indigenous and racialized people in Manitoba](#), and around the world. Indigenous and racialized people made up about 35 per cent of the population, but more than half of those who tested positive for the virus. First Nations people account for about 12 percent of Manitoba's population, but [early in 2022](#) they made up a quarter of COVID-19 hospitalizations, and 40 percent of cases in ICUs. We all may live in this place, but we do so with different opportunities, restrictions, and experiences.

## *At The Forks*

The contributions to this second volume of *At the Forks* chart the contours of some of these axes of difference, and document some of the ways that people and communities speak back to them. The forum on Karina Vernon’s game-changing volume, *The Black Prairie Archive*, reminds us of the long and distinct histories that Black communities have in the prairies. Vernon’s book documents a wide range of Black prairie histories, and in this forum, historian Barrington Walker, writer and activist Erica Violet Lee, Justice4BlackLives activist Betel Belachew, and literary scholar Sonja Boon all provide critical insight about what these histories mean for those they are connected to, and for the present. This forum originally appeared in *Prairie History*.

In her evocative “Present is the Past,” Carlie Kane traces the history of her family in Treaty Three territory. This includes many of the historical experiences that readers of *At the Forks* Volume 1 will be familiar with, including residential schooling. Kane’s essay is a story of reclamation of history, language, and Anishinaabeg identity, and a powerful discussion of where water fits in it all.

In “More than Entertainment,” Kaila Johnson and Jocelyn Thorpe show how Indigenous women are using film to change the story. They survey a range of films and argue that filmmaking is a part of creating a “more just future in which respect for Indigenous territories and rights and responsibilities are fundamental to how we all live.” This article originally appeared in *The Conversation Canada*.

Kiera Ladner and Adele Perry’s “Putting “emergency” in context” reproduces the speech that Winnipeg Centre MP, Leah Gazan made in the House of Commons in February 2022 in support of the passage of The Emergency Act. A recent commission of inquiry has addressed the politics of the federal and provincial (especially Ontario) governments to the self-styled ‘Freedom Convoys’ that set up in Canadian cities in the winter of 2021-22, and no doubt people will debate the appropriateness of different forms of state response for some time. Here Ladner and Perry suggest that Gazan’s speech was a revealing response to the pandemic and to the rise of white supremacist organizing. It is also an important chapter in the history of Winnipeg, and Indigenous politicise and leadership.

### About the Author

## *At The Forks*



[Dr. Adele Perry](#) is director of the Centre for Human Rights Research and distinguished professor of history and women's and gender studies. She is a historian of colonialism, gender, race and western Canada in the 19th and 20th centuries. From 2003 to 2014, Perry held a Tier 2 Canada Research Chair and she is a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and past president of the Canadian Historical Association.