

## Stolen Continents: The "New World" Through Indian Eyes Since 1492

It is an epic story of violence, genocide, pestilence, greed and treachery that probably has no parallel in history and continues to this day, both blatantly and quietly in large and small pockets throughout the Americas. It is also a story of amazing courage, tenacity and faithfulness. We discover the richness, beauty and brilliance of a civilization that can still teach us much about community and sustainable living.

Wright chronicles five nations: The Aztecs, Incas, Mayas, Cherokee and Iroquois. Their stories are both unique and similar: invasion, resistance, rebirth.

We were always taught that while the Indians were here, there was lots of empty land with plenty of room for all. What we were not taught was why there was so much room: diseases had ravaged the eastern Americas before a white person ever set foot ashore, killing nine out of 10 people. Whole villages lay empty. Survivors were no match for the new settlers, who craved land to call their own and who were assured that the European monarchies held unimpeded and God-given claim to it.

While the Native nations were as different as Spain is from Scotland, there was one common thread: all land was held communally. The 'Commonweal' had a strength in the New World that far outstripped its limited significance in the old. For Europe's rugged individualists, the battle was on from the start to abolish this archaic, inconvenient custom, for it is very difficult to buy or trade land that belongs to everyone. We still see evidence of this in present-day land claims struggles and in the Oka crisis.

You can't help but see the Constitution and Ovide Mercredi's mission in a new light after reading this book. We have met courage and patience, counted in generations, and perhaps for the first time, understood who our First Nations are and why they persist and insist that they are in every way co-founders of this nation.