

Status is an important social value in First Nation communities. Aboriginal people with status qualify for rights and benefits, such as non-insured health benefits and post secondary education funding.

“Indian” is a legal term. A person whose name was on a band list or a central Indian registry in Ottawa was a “status Indian”. At times, many persons were arbitrarily struck off that list by Indian Affairs Department officials, and women lost their status under the Indian Act if they married non-Indians.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation is a political territorial organization representing 49 First Nation communities within James Bay Treaty 9 territory and the Ontario portions of Treaty 5. Matachewan First Nation is one of NAN’s communities.

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