**Chapter Outline**

to accompany

*Indigenous Peoples within Canada: A Concise History*, Fifth Edition

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**Chapter 2: At the Beginning**

Chapter 2 serves as a point of departure to discuss the complex history of First Peoples in Canada from different perspectives. The chapter can be divided into five main themes: migration patterns and settlement; cultural adaptations related to resource management (plant domestication and animal resource management); the role of geography and adaptation (e.g. watercraft technology); social organization; and patterns of trade and warfare. The chapter begins with an overview of migration patterns, which flowed from east to west and north to south. There is a brief overview of the development and sophistication of early technology such as the fluted points and the marvel of early engineering projects in the Americas.

Additionally, the chapter traces the development of plant and animal domestication and, in the process, identifies plant and animal life unique to the Americas. Indigenous Peoples of the Americas had a very extensive knowledge of plant domestication, and their uses are exemplified by the medical application of these plants, which account for more than 500 present-day drugs. This chapter also stresses the uniqueness and diversity of cultures that existed at the time of contact, demonstrating how the geography of the land and the resources available from the land directly influenced the cultures that would develop within specific geographic areas. In addition to the variations in economic and geographic influences, social development across the Americas also varied. This social development resulted in societies that were either egalitarian or hierarchical, although some societies had aspects of both. The makeup of the society highly influenced the selection of leaders and the political organization of societies. This provides clear evidence of the diversity of Indigenous societies at the time of contact.

The chapter concludes by discussing the roles of trade and gift diplomacy in various types of interactions such as alliances and treaties. In this context, the significance of access to natural resources as a central factor in facilitating trade, and also contributing to warfare, is an important perspective underlying these types of interaction between groups.