

Shared with permission of Jessica Gordon, Indigenous Relations Director/ Accountability Partner at YWCA and a Co-Founder of Idle No More.

“If Regina really wanted to rebrand and have people actually “experience Regina” correctly, they need to take a look at their own colonial history. The area prior to its naming of Regina was known as Oskana ka-asastēki, which translates to pile of bones.

Looking through some of the historical articles and websites, it is said that the Cree word was used as a place name because of the pile of bison bones that were stacked upon each other along Wascana Creek. There’s a couple articles and write ups that mention that some of these bones were from Indian hunters who stacked them there. As soon as I read Indian hunters I thought bullshit because we’ve always taken care of our sacred Buffalo, used every single part of it and would never disrespect it in such a way.

What happened is that settlers and those alike had killed off and massacred the Buffalo to make make way for themselves and to get rid of the Indian problem. In turn, the selling of these bones were used as an economic supplement at the time. Settlers would go out to the Prairie, collect as much of the Buffalo bones as they could and bring them to the nearest port or train station to sell and be transported to facilities in the states to make things such as fertilizer. So even after they killed all the buffalo they used these animal parts for their own gain and continue to blame the Indians.

So if you want true reconciliation, Regina I would urge you to do a deep dive into your history and take a critical look at your historians, their accounts as well as consider Traditional Indigenous Knowledge as facts before you go and try rebrand your city.

It was known as Oskana ka-asastēki because of colonialism and genocide.

If you want to “lean into a name” about an old outdated joke that wasn’t even of your own creation, - “the city that rhymes with fun”, why don’t you reclaim the fact that this city was built upon the bones of my ancestors, the Buffalo, and the children who are buried at the Regina industrial school? Start there.

You are all responsible.”