

WHO KILLED THE PRAIRIE BEAVER? AN ENVIRONMENTAL CASE FOR EIGHTEENTH CENTURY MIGRATION IN WESTERN CANADA

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Abstract

Scholars have long argued about the westward migration of indigenous people during the fur trade. The prevailing interpretation is that the Cree were long-standing inhabitants of the eastern plains before the arrival of the modern world system to the region. Archaeological studies indicate that an important prehistoric adaptation to the grasslands was a prohibition on the killing of beaver as a means to manage water supplies in a region prone to drought. By the end of the eighteenth century, beaver were largely extirpated from the prairies because of commercial hunting. The loss of the species meant the end of an ancient and efficient strategy for drought mitigation on the northern Great Plains. This paper examines the participation of First Nations producers in the short-lived beaver trade along the northern margins of the prairies and argues that the species was depleted by newcomers to the region.

Sommaire

Il existe depuis longtemps un débat sur la migration vers l'ouest des populations autochtones à l'époque du commerce des fourrures. Selon l'interprétation dominante, les Cris habitaient l'est des plaines longtemps avant l'arrivée du monde moderne dans cette région. Les études archéologiques indiquent que l'interdiction de tuer le castor constituait une importante adaptation préhistorique à la prairie : on pouvait ainsi gérer l'approvisionnement en eau dans une région sujette à la sécheresse. À la fin du dix-huitième siècle, le castor se trouva en grande partie extirpé des prairies à cause de la chasse commerciale. La perte de cette espèce marqua la fin d'une stratégie ancienne et efficace pour

atténuer la sécheresse dans les Grandes Plaines du nord. Le présent article examine la participation des producteurs autochtones au bref commerce du castor à la limite nord des plaines, et maintient que l'espèce a été décimée par les nouveaux-venus dans la région.

Introduction

One of the most enduring issues in the history of the northern Great Plains is the question of whether or not the Cree were indigenous to the region or economic migrants who moved west with the fur trade. Early chroniclers of western Canada, including Alexander Mackenzie and David Thompson were firm in their belief that the Cree moved west as agents of the fur trade. In his memoir, Thompson stressed the point, stating,

[B]y the Southern Indians retiring to the South They have for the last fifty years possessed the Country to about the parallel of fifty degrees. There can be not dispute that their migrations have been from east to west since the western and southern part have taken place within the memory of the Fur Traders.¹

A century after Thompson, professional scholars most notably David Mandelbaum² and Arthur Ray enscinded the belief that the Cree and other Algonkian speaking groups moved west from their ancestral homes in the northern forests making their way eventually to the grasslands, a process driven by the complex interaction of market forces, inter-tribal conflict, game depletion and disease. Ray's classic *Indians in the Fur Trade*,³ published in 1974; was the high water mark for the interpretation that the Cree were historic arrivals to the plains. Within a decade, Ray's view came under increasing attack by scholars advocating not only for a longstanding historic occupation of the region by the Cree but that they were prehistoric stewards over much of western Canada. This shift took place in the context of significant political conflict over the meaning of Aboriginal rights enshrined in the Canadian *Constitution Act* of 1982. James G.E. Smith's "Western Woods Cree: Anthropological Myth and Historical Reality"⁴ was written in support of the Lubicon Cree Nation of Alberta in their struggle for the recognition of their rights in the late 1980s. In 1991, the publication of Dale Russell's *Eighteenth Century Western Cree and their Neighbours*⁵ was a tipping point marking the ascendancy of the "In situ" interpretation of Cree history in western Canada. Soon, the migration thesis was considered all but dead, one writer calling it "historiographically out of date."⁶ By the late 1990s, proponents of the migration thesis were in

the minority. Ray's introduction to the 25th anniversary republication of *Indians in the Fur Trade* in 1999 acknowledged the growing body of criticism of his interpretation but stressed the veracity of migration owing to what he called the "overwhelming evidence in the documentary record to support my conclusion that significant population relocations took place before the early nineteenth century."⁷

The question over the origins of the Plains Cree is certainly politically charged and one that might be furthered by investigation into the environmental history of the region. This paper considers the relationship of Indigenous nations on the northern Great Plains to the species most responsible for the extension of global trade into the Canadian hinterland, the beaver. Most highly prized of furs of the northern and eastern woodlands, the species was once also ubiquitous on the waterways of the northern Great Plains. By the turn of the nineteenth century though, the species was all but extirpated from the Canadian Prairies. In the 1790s, the fur trader at Fort George on the North Saskatchewan River complained over-hunting had "entirely ruined" the country forcing traders to the Rocky Mountains in search of beaver.⁸ By 1800, the trade in skins from plains was soon eclipsed by the provision hunt—the resource that literally fed the expansion of Euroamericans to the ends of the continent in their quest for furs. While short-lived, the beaver trade from the northern Great Plains provides insights into the prehistoric occupation of the region.

My argument is simple; the overwhelming majority of those who killed beaver and traded them at the posts scattered along the northern fringes of the Great Plains in the late eighteenth century were newcomers, those who refused to do so (and they did refuse)⁹ were the truly indigenous people of the region. It is based on Grace Morgan's brilliant but largely overlooked dissertation that considered the role of beaver ecology in the human history of the region. Acknowledging that the bison were the staff of life, Morgan asserted that *Castor Canadensis* was "at the core of a profound ideological framework which prized the role of the beaver in the stabilization of water resources."¹⁰ The key to understanding the role of the species in the human history of the region was the beaver's place in the management of water on the dry landscape of the northern grasslands. Morgan argued that the purposeful non-exploitation of beaver, a species that would have been easy to kill especially during the summer, was used as an effective means to manage water supplies in prairie waterways that were unstable because of their vulnerability to drought. A single beaver dam could retain enough water for the needs of large human communities, even while unmodified streambeds regularly ran dry. In southern Saskatchewan, it is not unusual for weeks, if not months to pass in late summer and autumn without any

significant rainfall. In a recent article in *World Archaeology*, Dale Walde argued that prehistoric communities on the northern Great Plains were substantially bigger than has been acknowledged.¹¹ Communities in valley complexes, such as those modified by beaver dams, could have been as large as a thousand people or more. Clearly in such an arid region, large numbers of people could not have succeeded as they did without a dependable supply of water. I have argued elsewhere that pedestrian bison hunting and the proscription of beaver hunting made the northern Great Plains “A Dry Oasis” in late prehistory, despite the fact that the region was drier then than it is now.¹²

The archaeological evidence for the prohibition on beaver hunting came from excavations of sites attributed to Avonlea tradition, found across the Canadian plains from the southern Alberta to Manitoba beginning almost two thousand years ago. Because of the vast geographical spread of Avonlea, Walde concluded that they were not a single ethnic group or “people” but rather numerous communities that shared technology such as pottery and the bow and arrow.¹³

The Old Woman’s Phase, widely accepted as the prehistoric manifestation of the Niisitapi or Blackfoot-Speaking peoples developed as a regional variant of Avonlea about a thousand years ago. Until about 1300, the occupation of the Canadian plains was stable, when Avonlea occupations of the eastern plains quickly recoiled and were replaced by the Mortlach Phase. Walde identified the makers of Mortlach as the ancestors of the Assiniboine Nation who headed west from the Siouan heartland of the Minnesota woodlands. So, at least some Assiniboine people were present in the northern plains prehistorically. Other Assiniboine communities came west as agents of the middleman fur trade. On his journey to the plains in 1738, La Vérendyre was told by his own Assiniboine guides that there were others of their nation on the grasslands who did not know how to trap beaver and should be instructed in the practice.¹⁴ English traders at Hudson Bay had long distinguished between the Assiniboine of the parklands who were major participants in the middleman trade in furs and their compatriots who lived on the plains who did not hunt beaver.

By the 1750s, game depletion in the northern forests was propelling the beaver hunt westward toward the northern Great Plains. Lamenting the decline in his trade in 1753, James Isham, the Chief at York Factory wrote “there are few Beaver to be had unless the Indians go to the Assinipoits and Archithinue Country.”¹⁵ At the time, Archithinue was a generic term for any First Nations beyond the woodlands who were not Cree or Assiniboine, the nations with a trading relationship with the HBC. It included those who came to be known as the “Snakes” an enigmatic group made up of

the Shoshone and their allies whose occupation of the southern Canadian plains pushed the members of the Niitsitapi (the Blackfoot) alliance to the northern fringes of the Great Plains for much of the eighteenth century.

It was in this environment of declining trade, game depletion and competition from the French, that Anthony Henday made his remarkable journey inland over the winter of 1754-55. His Pegogamow Cree guides were from the parklands but they were able to take the young Englishman to a large multi-ethnic camp of "Archithinues" on the Red Deer River in the fall of 1754. There, his equestrian hosts listened politely to his invitation to trap furs and trade them at Hudson Bay but they quickly dispelled any illusions Henday may have had about their intentions, stressing that they could not live without the bison and that they would never abandon their horses to undertake such a perilous journey. Henday knew they did not commercially exploit the beaver. He wrote that twenty times as many of the animals could be harvested if the Archithinue chose to do so.¹⁶ What few that were taken from "creeks and ponds ... full of beaver houses" were used for clothing and what he described as "Beaver feasting."¹⁷

Although Henday's encouragements to trap beaver were, in his words, "to no purpose"¹⁸ he managed to secure some trade from the Archithinue. On May 12, 1756 for example, the young Englishman traded for as many as 500 wolf skins in a single day.¹⁹ Wolves shadowed what must have seemed like inexhaustible bison herds and they would have been easy prey for human hunters on the grasslands. It has been argued that the close relationship between wolves and bison in ancient times may have served as a model for late prehistoric hunting among the Niitsitapi, as human communities emulated the strategies of their fellow predators in the management of their prey.²⁰

By the mid-eighteenth century, the Archithinue were aware of the value of the animals in their territory. The Cree told Henday they would be killed if they took animals for profit on Archithinue land.²¹ Henday's trade in wolves with the Archithinue established a pattern that endured for almost a century.

As their communal identities became clear, the overwhelming majority of those identified early on as Archithinue continued to bring in wolves—even as their exchange value declined in the late eighteenth century. For some, the choice to continue the wolf hunt in the new economic order that was being stamped on the plains, spelled the loss of life, territory and their eventual exile from the land above the 49th parallel.

Until the turn of the nineteenth century, most Archithinue were content to be marginal participants in the trade with Europeans. This was not the case with many communities in the northern forests who were much

more integrated with the European trade. In 1754, communities such as the Missinipe Cree and the “Esinipoet” of the northern woodlands were reported to be waging war in the west at least partly because of the “Great Scarcity of Beaver” in their home territories.²² The demand for beaver continued to fuel violence as trappers moved west in search of prey. In 1767, William Pink of the HBC decried the scarcity of the species on the lower Saskatchewan River and reported that some of the Cree were “far to the west to wage war on people who lived in a region rich with beaver.”²³ In doing so, they drove a “wedge” between the Athapaskan speaking Beaver People (Dunne Za) and their kin, the Tsuu T’ina (Sarcee) in the woodlands northwest.²⁴ Pushed onto the plains, the latter eventually adopted the equestrian lifestyle and became members of the Niitsitapi or Blackfoot alliance.

The Cree pushed their way into the forests of Alberta but were more reticent to expand into the grasslands in their search for beaver. While near the Eagle Hills at the present Saskatchewan-Alberta border, Pink was told by Cree his Cree guides that the land to the west was rich in wolves and beaver but they would not take them for fear of the equestrian Archithinues.²⁵ Though confined to the Hills for fear of attack, Pink did his best to encourage local communities begin commercial relations with the HBC. In December 1769, the trader sent gifts of tobacco to several Niitsitapi encampments, including a group of Kainai (Bloods) “for encouragement to Snare Wouolves for the[y] trap none.”²⁶

Two years later, another HBC servant, Matthew Cocking, again ventured to the Eagle Hills to drum up business for the English firm. His journal provides the best information on the region to that point, including the first reference to the individual nations that were until that time lumped into the general term Archithinue. He included the Water-Fall (the A’aninin or Gros Ventre), the Bloody (the Kainai), the Blackfooted (the Siksika), the Pegonow or Muddy River (the Piikani-Peigan) as well as the people he called the Sessawuck or Woody Country (the Tsuu T’ina). Their enemies, the Snakes (probably the Shoshone), the Vault Indians (the Hidatsa and maybe Crows), the Kutenai and the Flat Heads had also been identified as Archithinue until that time. Cocking’s journal described many facets of traditional life on the plains, including the use of pottery and “a tobacco plantation belonging to the Archithinue Indians.”²⁷ The much anticipated meeting between Cocking and his Cree guides with a mounted group of Water Fall Indians near the Eagle Hills in early December 1772 clearly demonstrated the difference between the two groups with regard to bison pounding—a key hunting strategy in the open country of the northern plains. Although Cocking and the Cree arrived at a bison pound some time before they met with the Fall people, they could not operate it without the

expertise of the new arrivals. After a week of pounding together, the Fall people informed the Cree that the time for hunting there was past and that they were heading south to war against the Snakes. On his return to Hudson Bay in the spring of 1773, Cocking reported another feature of plains communities, that they were unfamiliar with the use of canoes.²⁸ David Smyth argued that the people of the plains were largely unfamiliar with canoes and that only a handful of Archithinue individuals ever ventured to the establishments at Hudson Bay.²⁹

Cocking's was the last of the significant inland sojourns mounted by the HBC before the establishment of their first permanent inland post—Cumberland House in 1774. Although the post was still well inside the boreal forest on the lower Saskatchewan River, its goal was to capture a portion of the upriver trade dominated by myriad of itinerant traders from Canada. Even during its first season of operation, the traders at Cumberland could barely feed themselves because of the paucity of the boreal forest environment. Within months, servants at the post were on reduced rations, a condition that became common before supply lines were established to the buffalo country to the west. The local Basquia Cree population was already gravitating to the parklands up the Saskatchewan River and toward the bison herds. By the end of the decade, few if any Basquia were left in their home territory near The Pas, Manitoba, having reoriented themselves hundreds of miles to the west. Before the establishment of a secure trade in bison meat from the west, maintaining Cumberland House stretched the HBC to its limits.

While the establishment of Cumberland House, the first inland settlement in western Canada, was a significant innovation for the HBC, the region above it on the Saskatchewan was already overrun with small trading concerns origination in Canada, spreading alcohol and violence to producers soon after their arrival in the region. Because of the HBC's focus on its operation at Cumberland House, discussions of the Archithinue virtually disappear from their records for the rest of the 1770s. By 1775, the Pegogamow Cree were summering in the Eagle Hills. Ten canoes from the area arrived at Cumberland in the fall of 1775 with provisions and a few furs they wished to trade for tobacco and brandy—a sign the Canadian-trade-based largely on liquor—was having an effect on the trading habits of the local population on the upper North Saskatchewan.³⁰ On his passing by the HBC House in March 1776, Alexander Henry reported that the bison pounds were productive during the winter and while few beaver were taken; his crew secured “fifty bundles of Wolves of fifty skins each.”³¹ He complained that the Thick Woody Mountain Assiniboine-middlemen were not building canoes for the annual journey to the bay but rather were “going directly to

war.” Between 1776 and 1779, the number of traders on the Saskatchewan River above Cumberland grew from one to three hundred. With that many suppliers competing for their business, indigenous producers quickly abandoned the arduous journey downstream and focussed their attention toward the plains bison hunt. Another consequence of so many traders inland was that the HBC trade was essentially cut off at its source with only a few loyal customers, such as the Pegogamow and the Beaver River Cree, bothering to make the trip to Cumberland to exchange their furs.³² By the end of the decade, Cumberland House was described by Philip Turnor as “nothing more than a warehouse... as no Indians reside nigh unto it but are much higher in the country.”³³ Canadians continued moving up river, establishing a new post three days upstream beyond the westernmost of their establishments in the summer of 1776, further eroding the HBC share of the trade.³⁴ By the winter of 1776-77, the HBC recognized that building a settlement upstream should be “their first object.”³⁵ The new post, Hudson House, was still in the wooded country of the parklands, but close enough to the bison herds for the local Assiniboine population to provide a dependable source of food for the traders. In addition, it was close to the rich fur grounds to the north on the Beaver River. By 1780, the demand for food (and to a lesser extent furs) drew Cree groups such as the Cowanitow and the Basquia away from their territories in the woodlands east of the plains to undertake the lucrative new trade in meat and furs. Even with its upper post, the HBC was seriously undermined by the Canadians, Philip Turnor, complained that the inability of the English to compete in the liquor trade at Hudson House cost the firm “not less than 500 Made Beaver in Wolves, Beaver and Foxes by this one gang of (Stone) Indians for want of goods.”³⁶

While the expansion of trading posts up the North Saskatchewan River pulled many westward, it also drew the Archithinue communities of the open plains north to the posts. On November 11, 1779, the Hudson House journal reported the arrival of two tents of Fall Indians. Historian David Smyth asserted their arrival was the first documented instance “of any member of the Blackfoot alliance, positively identified as such, visiting a trading post.”³⁷ Niitsitapi people had probably been trading sporadically with Euroamericans for decades but Smyth was adamant that this was the first confirmed visit of members of the group to a trading post and that there was no substantive trade between any Niitsitapi and Euroamericans until the winter of 1781.

Over the course of that winter there were widespread food shortages along the upper Saskatchewan because of fires deliberately set, including some from trappers who were “far from the beaver country on purpose that they might get a great price for provisions but the greater part of them has

paid for it since by hunger..."³⁸ Hunger played a part in the arrival of two parties of Fall Indians at Hudson House—the first by that group since 1779. The Fall people described as “only lately brought to kill furs” traded foxes and wolves.³⁹

Within months of these tentative exchanges, the entire region fell into chaos when smallpox erupted. In the wake of the epidemic, William Tomison wrote of the Pegogamaw and Assinipoet of the Saskatchewan River, “not one in fifty have survived.”⁴⁰ The Pegogamow, the Cowanitow and the Basquia Cree ceased to exist as discrete communities in the aftermath of the outbreak.⁴¹ Some accounts of mortality in the immediate wake of the carnage may have been overblown. This was the case of the Assiniboine from Touchwood Hills returning to the Hudson House after “squander(ing) far off into the Barren Grounds for more than a year after the outbreak of disease and reports that “the whole gang was dead.” The experience of the Touchwood Assiniboine was probably the exception among the Assiniboine who experience a precipitous decline after the epidemic. Dale Russell wrote they “were the most numerous group on the north-eastern plains and parklands in the eighteenth century” but are largely absent from discussions after the 1780s.⁴² Because the uppermost posts on the Saskatchewan, including Hudson House were in Assiniboine territory, the death toll from the epidemic led to a significant level of migration to the region. New groups moved into the northwest to fill the demographic and economic vacuum caused by the wholesale loss of life. The Ottawa, the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), and particularly the Muskego Cree and Anishnabee (Ojibwa) came moved west as part of the ever intensifying fur trade which continued to grow despite the turmoil brought on by the loss of such a large portion of the Indigenous workforce.⁴³ To a great extent, it was these newcomers, many of whom had overhunted furbearers in their home territory to the east, who denuded the northern Great Plains of its beaver population.

Archithinue groups were also hit by smallpox but their tenuous connection to the posts and their previous experience with the disease buffered them from the full force of the epidemic. In his report on survivors in August 1782, William Walker reported that along with portions of Southern (Cree) and Stone Indians and “different tribes of Ea chi thinnues, a good many which I dare say, will be at the Settlements next winter.”⁴⁴

After the epidemic, members of the Niitsitapi alliance began to trade regularly at Hudson House. By spring 1783, many parties of Fall Indians, two of Siksika (Blackfoot) as well as the first visits by Tsuu T’ina and Kainai had taken place.⁴⁵ In the post epidemic period, the only Niitsitapi who seem to have brought beaver to Hudson House were a group of Sarcee (Tsu

T'ina) who along with a group of Cree travelled to the beaver territory to the north with the encouragement of the HBC in December 1783.⁴⁶ Despite their origins in the boreal forest, the Tsuu T'ina were, by 1770s, described as plains dwelling "Equestrian Indians"⁴⁷ The circumstances that led them to abandon their ancestral home in the forest may have been unusual but the general shift of woodland peoples toward the grasslands of the South Saskatchewan River Basin may have been the defining cultural trend in western Canada during the early historic period. References to conflict between the Tsuu T'ina, other Niitsitapi groups and even among themselves during the 1780s is an indication of the difficulty they endured as they found their place, geographically and politically, on the northern plains.⁴⁸

Just days before the joint Cree-Sarcee encampment headed to the beaver grounds in the fall of 1783, a large band of "Eachethinues" including Fall Indians arrived at Hudson House with provisions and between eight and nine hundred wolf skins.⁴⁹ The vast majority of them went to the Canadians because the HBC had neither tobacco nor brandy. By the mid 1780s, the only Niitsitapi nation that had yet to venture to the posts were the Peekenows or Piikani, whose territory near the foothills of Southern Alberta reportedly "abounds with beaver ... these Indians know not the use of a Canoe in their country abounding with horses."

The trade on the Upper North Saskatchewan remained fairly quiet in the years after the epidemic. For the HBC, it was especially moribund because the loss of its indigenous producers was compounded by the destruction of York Factory by the French Navy in 1783. By the spring of 1785 though, the Canadian move upstream to the Battle River signalled the beginning of a major escalation in trade to the region. Complaining about his burgeoning competition on the Saskatchewan, veteran HBC trader William Tomison reported "there is in this River near 200 Canadians, which Is more then there is of Southern Indians..."⁵⁰ Although meant to be a comment about his rivals, the statement points to the severity of depopulation experienced by the Cree in what was their Virgin Soil Epidemic. The North Saskatchewan Valley was about to undergo a significant influx of Cree, Ojibwa and other newcomers from its post epidemic nadir. In the spring of 1785, traders at Cumberland House were told "that all the Indians from the East end of the great Lake (Lake Winnipeg) to the South Branch of the Saskatchewan River, is to meet at the Touchwood Mountains to go to war in the summer."⁵¹ Soon, violence initiated by the newcomers, especially the Cree, would change the face of the northern Great Plains forever.

As the Cree prepared for what became an all out invasion of the northern territory of the Archithinue; traders redoubled their efforts to augment the trade from the grasslands to the south. In 1785, after a six year hiatus, men

were sent to live with Indigenous communities to establish relationships, learn languages and generally encourage the commercial production of food and fur.⁵² HBC Servant James Gaddy spent eleven months with the Piikani in southern Alberta and reported on their almost constant struggle over equestrian stock with their Snake enemies.⁵³

In 1786, contact with the Archithinue—or Slaves as the Niitsitapi and their allies the Sarcee and Gros Ventre became known in this period⁵⁴ increased significantly with the construction of the Pine River Posts fifty miles upstream from the present location of Battleford, Saskatchewan. This cluster of small buildings was the first intended to trade specifically with the Niitsitapi people.⁵⁵ The small collection of rivals on a small island in the North Saskatchewan River, subject to seasonal flooding and soon stripped of its wood supply but defensible in case of trouble with local and potentially hostile producers, was a sign of the danger of building so far up river.

Though trouble would no be long in coming, the construction of the new up river posts, including South Branch 40 miles up the South Saskatchewan, and HBC men trading “en derouine” at the encampments of fur producers quickly produced a significant increase in trade. In the spring of 1787, Tomison wrote that the trade at Manchester House (on Pine Island) produced 5000 Made Beaver (MB), South Branch 2000 MB, 1000 MB from Hudson House and another 1000 MB that would be placed on the next years accounts. This was despite competition from the Canadians who were reportedly “going through the barren Ground with Rum like so many ravenous wolves, seeking whom they can devour.”⁵⁶

The expanding trade soon brought violence to the western outposts. In July 1787, a group of Cree killed a number of Kainai and Tsuu T’ina near Pine Island, then fled to the relative sanctuary of the eastern forest.⁵⁷ The Tsuu T’ina, relative newcomers to the northern Great Plains experienced conflicted loyalties in the 1780s. Though some joined the Kainai in pursuing the Cree to the east after the violence of 1787, a large band of Tsuu T’ina earlier attacked a band of Kainai, evidence of their close relationship to the Cree according to Edward Umfreville a trader on the Upper Saskatchewan.⁵⁸ The complexity of inter-tribal relations was marked by the arrival of the Piikani at Manchester in the summer of 1787 to broker a peace between the Tsuu T’ina and the Kainai. A year later, William Tomison reported a “great Quarrel amongst [the Tsuu T’ina] themselves and that 4 men is killed and several more wounded, one of those killed was the best amongst them and used to trade with me formerly.”⁵⁹ The spike in violence may have been a consequence of the region-wide territorial alignment that was underway.⁶⁰ Before the end of April, 1788, some South Branch Cree attacked a band of A’aninin (Gros Ventres) on the Battle River, killing their leader and

talking their horses and furs.⁶¹ The attack was more than a simple horse raid after a harsh winter—it marked the beginning of the Cree invasion of Gros Ventre territory.⁶²

After the assault, the perpetrators again retreated to the safety of eastern woodlands. By the turn of the century, the A'aninin were all but exiled from above the 49th parallel. The violence sparked anxiety across the west and Manchester was abandoned for the summer of 1788 for fear of further trouble. After the 1788 attack, the aggrieved A'aninin retreated south to the plains, not returning to the North Saskatchewan until 1790.⁶³

Over the next six years, the Cree were able to attack the outgunned A'aninin at will. Because of their marginal position in the trade, Euroamericans were never sent to overwinter with the A'aninin, so we have no direct account of their life apart from the fleeting glances provided during their brief visits to the trading posts. The actions of other members of the Niisitapi alliance must serve as analogies for their behaviour. Peter Fidler's account of his journey from Buckingham House on the North Saskatchewan to the foothills of southern Alberta in the winter of 1792–93 provides us with insights into the different relationship the Cree and the Piikani had with both the beaver and the environment of the western plains. From his departure from Buckingham House, Fidler wrote of passing by numerous small lakes teeming with beaver, some with as many as three beaver houses in them.⁶⁴ His party, consisting mostly of Piikani people included a Cree band led by Chief White Owl who were “going to hunt Beaver near the Rocky Mountains.” On their journey, the Cree fell back from the main party numerous times to work beaver houses.⁶⁵ After little more than two weeks on the trail, Fidler described his frustration with the Piikani:

These Indians are very little acquainted with killing beaver in their houses. What few they have to trade is generally shott by them when the rivers are open... Several of them are so superstitious as even not to touch one, and a great many of them will neither eat of them or suffer one to be brought into their tents.⁶⁶

Soon, Fidler described the accommodations his party was required to make as they made their way to the dry country in the south, “some journeys are long & some short, entirely owing to the places where water is to be had.”⁶⁷ Fidler recognized the skill of his guides in finding springs in otherwise dry expanses of grass, “it is very surprising how straight the Indians go to them although there is no woods to direct their way.”⁶⁸ Fidler's description of the behaviour of his Cree and Piikani companions indicates that different Nations were practicing quite different economic and environmental strategies on the

same landscape. The account of his trip also provided a picture of remarkable harmony between the people of the northern Great Plains; even the dreaded Snakes were temporarily at peace with their long-time adversaries in southern Alberta.

Soon after Fidler's return to the North Saskatchewan violence erupted across the west in what has been described as the peak of aggression against traders over the next year. As was becoming the norm, tension was ignited when a joint Cree-Assiniboine party attacked sixteen A'aninin lodges, killing as many as 150 women and children near South Branch House in the summer of 1793.⁶⁹ At Buckingham House on the North Saskatchewan, a group of Siksika band fled after one of them was killed by a Cree in October 1793. Within days, a large party of Siksika and A'aninin pillaged the Pine Island posts downriver, taking horses and trade goods. The attack on Pine Island was a form of protest rather than simple theft as liquor cats were destroyed without their contents being consumed. Though the traders managed to avoid fatalities, several of the attackers were killed.⁷⁰ Traders were stunned at the violence perpetrated by the A'aninin who many considered the "most rational and inoffensive in this part of the country, and who 'tho intraged by the South Indians were not capable of such daring villainy."⁷¹ In January 1794, a large and hostile group of Siksika travelled to Buckingham House, west of Pine Island with clothing and guns taken during the attack.⁷² After trading 1200 wolf skins, they stole more than fifty horses belonging to the traders.⁷³

Plans were made to withdraw traders from the outposts of Buckingham and South Branch to avoid further bloodshed during 1794 but mistrust between rivals scuttled their cooperative retreat. Had they done so, they might have avoided the one of the bloodiest incidents between natives and newcomers in the history of the region. In July 1794, one hundred and fifty A'aninin and Siksika fighters attacked the trading posts on the South Branch of the Saskatchewan River. Three HBC servants were killed. Canadian traders, reinforced with a number of Cree, managed to repel the assault.⁷⁴ The traders abandoned the South Branch posts, as well as those on Pine Island, soon after the confrontation. The Cree continued to raid the A'aninin through the winter of 1794-95.⁷⁵ By this time, the beleaguered group began their retreat to the relative safety of the Missouri basin. In the fall of 1796, four hundred of them travelled en-mass to the new posts of Forts Edmonton and Augustus in after being away two and a half years and traded at least 1500 wolves.⁷⁶ On his journey to the Mandan villages in the winter of 1797-98, David Thompson wrote that many of exiled A'aninin had recently taken up residence there.⁷⁷ The Missouri villages were important trading centres, but their inhabitants were frustrated by the encroachment

of the fur trade. The sentiment may have been shared by other long-standing inhabitants of the grasslands. A Mandan Chief berated Canadian trader Charles Mackenzie:

What is the use of the beaver? Do they make gun-powder of them? Do they preserve them from sickness. Do they serve them beyond the grave? ... The white people came, they brought with them some good, but they brought the small pox, and they brought evil liquors; the Indians since diminish and they are no longer happy.⁷⁸

Why did the A'aninin and their allies attack the posts? Writers have attributed their animosity toward traders to the devaluation of wolf pelts by fifty percent at the post beginning in 1789.⁷⁹ Until that time, a single prime wolf hide was valued at 2 prime (or Made) beaver.⁸⁰ There is no question that the vast majority of plains people, Archithinue in the early days, the Niitsitapi and their allies later in the eighteenth century brought wolves, foxes and other dry-land mammals to trade. David Smyth has argued that only a single band of Piikani, consisting of thirty or forty tents, ever brought beaver to the posts before the 1820s.⁸¹ Because beavers were the most highly prized furs, traders soon began to discriminate between producers who brought in provisions and wolves and those who could bring in both food and beaver pelts. Duncan M'Gillivray, a Nor'Wester, wrote that beaver producers were provided with everything they needed including tobacco, ammunition and liquor any time they needed it—in contrast to:

The *Gens du large*, consisting of the Blackfeet, Gros Ventres, Blood Indians, Piedgans &c. [who] are treated less liberally, their commodities being chiefly horses, Wolves, Fat & Pounded meat which are not sought after with such eagerness as the beaver.⁸²

Perhaps the most important trade item available to the producers of prime furs were firearms—the technology that made it possible to eventually overrun the Gros Ventre. By remaining “second class customers” plains people such as the A'aninin must surely have recognized that holding to their practice of trading only wolves and other low-value furs was weakening their position in an increasingly precarious situation. In his dissertation, David Smyth forcefully argued that the Niitsitapi and their allies—including the A'aninin did not kill beaver as a consequence of the scarcity of the species in the open country but rather because they *chose* not to exploit the species.⁸³ By the end of the eighteenth century, the choice not to exploit beaver cost hundreds of

A'aninin their lives and led ultimately to the loss of their territory above the 49th parallel.

The A'aninin were not the only casualties in the fight over the beaver. In 1802, an attempt to establish trade in Niitsitapi territory on the South Saskatchewan River abruptly ended with the killing of a dozen Iroquois trappers and two Canadians in the Cypress Hills near Chesterfield House.⁸⁴ This time, the killers were A'aninin and the violence represented their last gasp of resistance north of the forty-ninth parallel.⁸⁵

To those who saw the beaver as the lynchpin in the ecological balance of the region, the arrival of commercial hunters such as those killed in the Cypress Hills would surely have been perceived as a significant threat. Iroquois trappers were first brought to the west in 1794 but by 1800 over three hundred of them were trapping for several Canadian enterprises above Cumberland House where they quickly denuded the country of fur bearers.⁸⁶ An HBC officer, Angus Shaw, compared them to the "Locusts of Egypt bring(ing) Devestation & Ruin along with them wherever they Winter."⁸⁷ The valley complexes of the Cypress Hills being worked by the Iroquois that were killed in 1802 may have been among the final sanctuaries for both the beaver and the beleaguered A'aninin in the region. The role of the beaver in the preservation of water resources in the Cypress Hills at the time may have been especially important. Climate reconstructions from there indicate that the area had endured ten years of almost continuous drought; the worst of the past five hundred years.⁸⁸

The commodification and commercial extraction of the beaver in the Cypress Hills, though unknown to the newcomers, may have been the final straw in the destruction of what had been an Indigenous landscape maintained for centuries by the purposeful avoidance of beaver hunting. Elsewhere on the plains, the impact of the drought was felt as water levels dropped, resulting in a widespread outbreak of Tularaemia—first reported at Edmonton House in the spring of 1796 when large numbers of beaver were found floating downstream after breakup.⁸⁹ The sudden decline in furs stocks was so severe that one producer in the Swan River was convinced the plague had been sent to the area by the Creator as a punishment for over hunting.⁹⁰

By the turn of the nineteenth century, beaver populations were all but exterminated on the northern Plains from the combined forces of overhunting and disease. The A'aninin were the first victims of Cree aggression. Other members of the Niitsitapi alliance chose to refrain from the commercial killing of beaver at their peril rather than simply not being able to hunt the species in their arid home territory. Some writers, especially Morgan and Smyth have argued that the strategy was a conscious choice

on the part of the people known in early times as the Archithinue. In his analysis of the economic models and Niitsitapi ideology, Gerald Conaty stressed that what would appear to be an economic decision, like the refusal to commercially harvest beaver, cannot be fully understood without an acknowledgement of the interconnectedness of a wide range of spheres from the economic to the religious and beyond, that may have led 18th century hunters make the choices they did.⁹¹

In her study of the role of the beaver in the ecology of prehistoric people of the northern plains, Grace Morgan wrote that the proscription on beaver hunting was rendered obsolete by the great increase in mobility afforded by the adoption of equestrianism. Smyth argued that the vast majority of Niitsitapi refused to hunt beaver commercially until the 1830s, when the practice was dropped because of military and economic pressure. The spike in resulting beaver production briefly made the Saskatchewan District the most profitable in the entire HBC domain.

In the early twentieth century, the memoir of forester turned writer Walter McClintock, *Old Indian Trails*⁹² described his acceptance into Blackfoot society in Northern Montana. The most important event in this was his initiation into the “Beaver Bundle Ceremony” considered the most ancient and powerful of Blackfoot spiritual practices. Closely linked with the growth of tobacco (a crop requiring irrigation), the bundles were ceremoniously opened at planting and the crops left under the care of “dwarf people” for the summer.⁹³ To the practitioners of the ceremonies, Beaver bundles could predict weather, control the movement of bison and heal the sick. In McClintock’s words, the owner of the bundle, “has power over the water, and must never fear water.” As part of the oldest Niitsitapi ceremonial tradition, those who held Beaver bundles were profoundly aware of the relationship between the availability and variability of water resources and its influence on the movement of the herds.⁹⁴

In a study of Gros Ventre religion published in 1956, an Edler called The Boy claimed that the Beaver bundle ceremony originated with the A’aninin and was later transferred to the Piikani.⁹⁵ Adolf Hungry Wolf’s encyclopaedic *The Blackfoot Papers* published in 2006 devoted an entire section of the volume on Pikunni Ceremonial life to Beaver bundles, the largest, most complex and “considered to be the most ancient of Peigan spiritual traditions.”⁹⁶ He noted that all the nations of the Niitsitapi maintained Beaver bundles well into the twentieth century, although by the 1950s only the very old still knew or cared about the power of the bundles. After the last of the “old time ceremonies” some bundles were transferred to the provincial of Alberta for safe keeping. By the 1980s however, the cultural resurgence of Piikani spiritual practices have led to the revival of

the ceremonies and the repatriation of some of the Bundles. Today, there are more than a dozen functioning bundles and hundreds practitioners of the Beaver Bundle ceremony across Niitsitapi territory.⁹⁷ The revival of Beaver Bundle Ceremonies in the twenty-first century does not prove a link to the ancient Avonlea prohibition of beaver hunting. The esteemed place of the beaver in Niitsitapi spirituality illustrates that the humble species has long played a key role in the lives of the indigenous people of the northern Great Plains.

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Endnotes

- 1 University of Toronto, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Room, David Thompson Papers MS 21 -“The Natives of North America,” 4.
- 2 *The Plains Cree: An Ethnographic, Historical, and Comparative Study* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1979). Originally published New York: American Museum of natural History, 1940.
- 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974). See also, John Milloy, *The Plains Cree: Trade, Diplomacy and War, 1790 to 1870*. (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1988).
- 4 *American Ethnologist* 14(1987): 434-448.
- 5 Mercury Series, Archaeological Survey of Canada Paper 143. Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1991.
- 6 Davis Smyth, “Opportunity Missed: John Milloy’s *The Plains Cree*” *Prairie Forum* 17 (1992): 337-354.
- 7 “Reflections on *Indians in the Fur Trade*” In *Indians in the Fur Trade: Their Role as Trappers Hunters, and Middlemen in the Lands West of Hudson Bay, 1660-1870*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), xxi.
- 8 A.S Morton, *The Journal of Duncan M’Gillivray of the North West Company at Fort George on the Saskatchewan, 1774-5*. (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1927), 166; Theodore Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground: A Human and Environmental History of the Northwestern Plains*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001, 165.
- 9 David Smyth, *The Niitsitapi Trade” Euroamericans and the Blackfoot Speaking Peoples to the mid-1830s* (Ottawa: Ph.D. Diss, Carleton University 2001), iii.

- 10 R. Grace Morgan, "Beaver Ecology/Beaver Mythology" (Edmonton: Ph.D. Diss., University of Alberta, 1991), 27.
- 11 Dale Walde, "Sedentism and Precontact Tribal Social Organization on the Northern Plains: Colonial Imposition or Indigenous development?" *World Archaeology* 38(2006), 296-297.
- 12 James Daschuk, "A Dry Oasis: The Canadian Plains in Late Prehistory," *Prairie Forum* 34 (2009): 1-31.
- 13 Dale Walde, "Avonlea and Athabaskan Migrations: A Reconsideration," *Plains Anthropologist* 51(2006), 193. This sharing of technologies and cultural traits was, according to Walde, a regional response to pressure from groups from outside the region during the Woodland period.
- 14 Flandreau (1925), 90; Smith and Wood (1980), 44.
- 15 Smyth, *The Niitsitapi Trade*, 109.
- 16 Barbara Belyea, ed. *A Year Inland: The Journal of a Hudson's Bay Company Winterer* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2000), 105-112.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Ibid., 182.
- 19 Ibid., 179.
- 20 Russel L. Barsh and Chantelle Marlor, "Driving Bison and Blackfoot Science" *Human Ecology* 31 (2003), 581.
- 21 Smyth, *The Niitsitapi Trade*, 117.
- 22 Belyea, *A Year Inland*, 238.
- 23 Smyth, *The Niitsitapi Trade*, 139.
- 24 "Sarcee." In *Handbook of North American Indians, Plains*. Volume 13, Part 1, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie, 629-637. (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 629.
- 25 Smyth, *The Niitsitapi Trade*, 144. These Archithinue may have been the Snakes. Smyth suggested they were Shoshone.
- 26 Russell, *Eighteenth Century Western Cree and their Neighbours*, 103.
- 27 J.L. Burpee, "An Adventurer from Hudson Bay. The Journal of Matthew Cocking from York Factory to the Blackfoot Country." *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada*, Series 3, Section 2 (1908): 108-109.
- 28 Ibid., 116.
- 29 Smyth, *The Niitsitapi Trade*, 67-68.

- 30 HBCA Reel 1M38 B.49/a/3 Cumberland House Post Journal 1775-76, Oct. 6, 1775.
- 31 HBCA reel 1M38 B.49/a/3 Cumberland House Post Journal 1775-76, Mar. 10, 1776.
- 32 HBCA Reel 1M38 B.49/a/3 Cumberland House Post Journal 1775-76, May 15, 1776.
- 33 HBCA Reel 1M38 B.49/a/8 Cumberland House Post Journal 1778-79, July 15, 1779.
- 34 HBCA Reel 1M38 B.49/a/5 Cumberland House Post Journal 1776-77, May 24, 1776. The new house built by the “Frenchmen” was strategically located on tracks leading north to the Beaver Cree to the north and the Snakes to the south.
- 35 HBCA Reel 1M38 B.49/a/4 Cumberland House Post Journal 1776-77, Jan. 24, 1777.
- 36 HBCA Reel 1M38 B.49/a/8 Cumberland House Post Journal 1778-79, April 4, 1779.
- 37 Smyth, *The Niitsitapi Trade*, 159.
- 38 Smyth, *The Niitsitapi Trade*, 179-80, Letter from Robert Longmore to William Tomison, Jan. 17, 1781.
- 39 Smyth, *The Niitsitapi Trade*, 160.
- 40 E.E. Rich, Ed., *Cumberland House Journals and Inland Journals 1779-1782. Second Series*, Hudson’s Bay Record Society Publications No. 15. (London: Hudson’s Bay Record Society, 1952), 298.
- 41 David Meyer and Dale Russell, “Lives and Lands of the Pegogamow Crees.” *Plains Anthropologist* 49(2004), 246.
- 42 Russell, *Eighteenth Century Western Cree and their Neighbours*, 172.
- 43 James Daschuk, *The Political Economy of Indian Health and Disease in the Canadian Northwest* (Winnipeg: PhD. Diss. University of Manitoba, 2002), 122-123.
- 44 HBCA Reel 1M38 B.49/a/13 Cumberland House Post Journal, letter from William Walker to William Hudson(?) Aug. 12, 1782. On Feb. 9, 1783 Tomison estimated that as many of 120 tents of “Assinipoet, Blackfoots, Fall and Blood Indians” survived the epidemic.
- 45 Smyth, *The Niitsitapi Trade*, 174-176.
- 46 Smyth, *The Niitsitapi Trade*, 182. HBCA Reel 1M38, B.49/a/14 Cumberland House Post Journal, Longmore to Tomison, Dec. 1783.
- 47 Hugh Dempsey, “Sarcee.” In *Handbook of North American Indians, Plains*. Volume 13, Part 1, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie, 629-637. (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 629.
- 48 Smyth, *The Niitsitapi Trade*, 215.
- 49 HBCA Reel 1M38, B.49/a/14 Cumberland House Post Journal 1783-84, Nov. 29, 1783.
- 50 HBCA Reel 1M 39 B.49/a/16 Cumberland House Post Journal, 1785-86, Tomison to Geo. Hudson, Jan. 11, 1786.

- 51 HBCA Reel 1M 39 B.49/a/15 Cumberland House Post Journal, 1784-85, April 26, 1785.
- 52 Smyth, *The Niitsitapi Trade*, 184. HBCA Reel 1M 39 B.49/a/15 Cumberland House Post Journal, 1784-85, May 15, 1785.
- 53 Smyth, *The Niitsitapi Trade*, 188.
- 54 Smyth, *The Niitsitapi Trade*, 189-190.
- 55 John Nicks, *The Pine Island Posts, 1786-1794: A Study of Competition in the Fur Trade* (Edmonton: M.A. Thesis, University of Alberta, 1975), iv.
- 56 HBCA, Reel 1M39 B. 49/a/17 Cumberland house Post Journal 1786-87, Tomison to Geo. Hudson, May 13, 1787.
- 57 Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground*, 142-143. HBCA 1M43 B.205/a/1 South Branch Post Journal, Aug. 19, 1787. Mitchell Oman described the arrival of “9 tents of Southern Indians belonging to the Upper Settlements but having kilt some of the Blood Indians made them fly down this way.”
- 58 Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground*, 143; Smyth, *The Niitsitapi Trade*, 217.
- 59 HBCA reel 1M73B.121/a/2 Manchester House-Post Journals 1787-1788, April 13, 1788.
- 60 The shift in populations can be seen from the Parklands to the western frontier of trading posts. At the former, the trader at South Branch reported the first visit of a Cree trapper with 3700 MB in furs who formerly trader at the Swan River post to the east. HBCA Reel M B.205/a/2 South Branch House Post Journal 1787-1788, Mar. 1, 1788. Two weeks later at Pine Island, a Bungee (Ojibwa) trapper brought 5000 MB in furs to the Canadian House. *Ibid.*, Tomison to Wm. Walker, Mar. 16, 1788.
- 61 HBCA reel 1M73B.121/a/2 Manchester House-Post Journals 1787-1788, April 26, 1788.
- 62 Nicks, *The Pine Island Posts*.
- 63 HBCA Reel 1M 43 B.121/a/4 Manchester House Post Journal, 1789-1790, May 12, 1790.
- 64 Bruce Haig, ed. Peter Fidler, *Journal of a Journey over Land from Buckingham House to the Rocky Mountains in 1792 & 93*. (Lethbridge: Lethbridge Historical Society, 1992), 10-15, Nov. 10, Nov. 15, 1792.
- 65 *Ibid.*, 18-28, Nov. 19, 1792, Nov. 27, 1792, Dec. 7, 1792.
- 66 *Ibid.*, 21, Nov. 27, 1792. One source of the aversion to contact with beaver was presented later in Fidler’s description of the death of Saukamappee. He died from an infected beaver bite. *Ibid.*, 41-42. The general aversion to beaver meat as a food may have been fostered by a diet that was heavily reliant on lean bison meat. Fatty foods such as fish and perhaps beaver would have been indigestible to those whose staple was bison. M.E. Malainey, R. Przybylski, and B.L. Sherriff, “One Person’s Food: How and Why Fish Avoidance May Affect the Settlement and Subsistence Patterns of Hunter-Gatherers” *American Antiquity* 66 (2001): 141-161.
- 67 *Ibid.*, 25, Dec. 5, 1792.

- 68 Ibid., 28, Dec. 7, 1792.
- 69 Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground*, 153-154. HBCA reel 1M144 B.205/a/8 South Branch House Post Journal 1793-1794, Mar. 14, 1794. James Bird reported the return of his men “with five Tents of Indians who appear to be well gooded. These Indians traded, last fall at a Canadian House situated north of red Deers Lake, to which place they flew for fear of being pursued by the Friends of those, they so barbarously Murdered last Summer, and have been afraid, till now to venture to come to this House.”
- 70 Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground*, 155.
- 71 HBCA, Reel 1M 144 B.205/a/8 South Branch House Post Journal 1793-1794, James Bird to Tomison, Nov. 8, 1793.
- 72 HBCA Reel 1M 144, B.205/a/8 South Branch House Post Journal, Tomison to Bird, Jan. 27, 1794.
- 73 Smyth, “*The Niitsitapi Trade*,” 219.
- 74 Smyth, “*The Niitsitapi Trade*,” 225.
- 75 Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground*, 160.
- 76 Smyth, “*The Niitsitapi Trade*,” 229.
- 77 University of Toronto, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Room, David Thompson Papers,, Thompson Narrative MSS III, Reel 1264,167.
- 78 Charles Mackenzie, “The Missouri Indians: A Narrative of Four Trading Expeditions to the Missouri, 1804, 1805, 1806 for the North West Company, First Expedition,” in *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest Volume 1*, ed. L.R. Masson (New York: Antiquarian Press, 1960), 331-332.
- 79 Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground*, 149.
- 80 Smyth, *The Niitsitapi Trade*, 207.
- 81 Smyth, *The Niitsitapi Trade*, 205.
- 82 A.S. Morton, ed. *The Journal of Duncan M’Gillivray of the North West Company at Fort George on the Saskatchewan, 1794-95* (1929), 31.
- 83 Smyth, *The Niitsitapi Trade*, iii.
- 84 John Foster, “Wintering, The Outsider Adult Male and the Ethnogenesis of the Western Plains Métis,” *Prairie Forum* 19 (1994), 7.
- 85 Alice Johnston, ed., *Saskatchewan Journals and Correspondence: Edmonton House 1795-1800, Chesterfield House, 1800-1802*, 266, 311-316; MacGregor, *Peter Fidler: Canada’s Forgotten Surveyor*, 140-141.
- 86 Smyth, *The Niitsitapi Trade*, 237.

- 87 Angus Shaw to Joseph Colen, Fort Augustus, May 10, 1797. *Saskatchewan Journals and Correspondence: Edmonton House, 1795-1800, Chesterfield House, 1800-1802*, xxxii-xxxiii.
- 88 David Sauchyn and Walter Skinner, "A Proxy Record of Drought Severity for the Southwestern Canadian Plains." *Canadian water Resources Journal*
- 89 *Saskatchewan Journals and Correspondence, 1795-1802: Edmonton House, 1795-1800, Chesterfield House, 1800-1802*, 92. May 3, 1797.
- 90 Brightman, "Conservation and Resource Depletion: The Case of the Boreal Forest Algonquians," 133.
- 91 Gerald T. Conaty, "Economic Models and Blackfoot Ideology" *American Ethnologist* 22 (1995), 408.
- 92 Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1923.
- 93 McClintock, *Old Indian Trails*, 44-45.
- 94 Barsh and Marlor, "Driving Bison and Blackfoot Science," 580.
- 95 John M. Cooper, *The Gros Ventres of Montana: Part II Religion and Ritual*. (Washington: The catholic University of America Press, 1956), 166-167, fn. 12.
- 96 Adolf Hungry Wolf, *The Blackfoot Papers—Volume Two: Pikunni Ceremonial Life* (Skookumchuck, B.C.: The Good Medicine Cultural Foundation, 2006), 477.
- 97 *Ibid.*, 502-503.