CARRY THE KETTLE
NAKOTA
FIRST NATION

Historical and Current Traditional
Land Use Study

JIM TANNER, PhD., DAVID R. MILLER, PhD.,
TRACEY TANNER, M.A., AND PEGGY MARTIN MCGUIRE, PhD.
On the cover

Carry the Kettle Nakota First Nation
Historical and Current Traditional Land Use Study

Authors: Jim Tanner, PhD., David R. Miller, PhD., Tracey Tanner, M.A., and Peggy Martin McGuire, PhD.
Published by: Nicomacian Press

Copyright @ 2017 by Carry the Kettle Nakota First Nation

This publication has been produced for informational and educational purposes only. It is part of the consultation and reconciliation process for Aboriginal and Treaty rights in Canada and is not for profit or other commercial purposes. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatever without the written permission of the Carry the Kettle First Nation, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in reviews.

Layout and design by Muse Design Inc., Calgary, Alberta.
Printing by XL Print and Design, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Figures</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter From Carry the Kettle First Nation Chief</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter From Carry the Kettle First Nation Councillor Kurt Adams</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder and Land User Interviewees</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART 1: THE HISTORY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1: EARLY LAND USE OF THE NAKOTA PEOPLES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation Legend</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeological Evidence</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Traditions in the Region</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2: ASSINIBOINE AT CONTACT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assiniboine Land Use Habitats and Cycles</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Fur Trade Implications</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3: UPPER MISSOURI COUNTY AND THE ASSINIBOINE 1799-1855</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early 1800s – The Fur Trade and Fort Union</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disease, Population Decline, And Reconfiguration</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4: THE WILD WEST</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disease and Alcohol</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of the American Northwest</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sioux Conflicts</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk River Agency</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Peck And Fort Belknap Agencies</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assiniboine Traditional Boundaries</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Whoop-Up Trail</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massacres</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 5: TREATY 4 AND RESERVE FARMING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starvation Crisis in 1880</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Border Crisis</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 6: THE ASSINIBOINE REMOVAL FROM CYPRESS HILLS AND THE 'CANADIAN' TRAIL OF TEARS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 7: LIFE AND DEATH ON THE NEW RESERVE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Supervision and Starvation at New Reserve</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peasant Farming Policy</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve Farming Policies</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common or Individual Ownership</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Wages and Cottage Industry</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditures by the Band or from the Government?</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 8: PROPOSAL OF LAND SURRENDER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of the Debt</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust Funds</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust Funds</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>Carry the Kettle Historical Traditional Lands</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>Carry the Kettle Current Traditional Land Use</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>The Besant Phase</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>The Geographical Range of the Black Duck Phase</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5</td>
<td>Pre-Contact Assiniboine Map</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6</td>
<td>Western Fur Trade Ca. 1700–1720</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7</td>
<td>Assiniboine Westward Movements</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8</td>
<td>Assiniboine Early Annual Rounds</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9</td>
<td>Annual Hunting Cycle of Assiniboine Ca. 1821</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10</td>
<td>United States Treaties</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11</td>
<td>Traditional Territory - 'Whoop-Up' Trail and Trail of Tears</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 12</td>
<td>Original Indian Head Reserve Map</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 13</td>
<td>Assiniboine Historical Lands – 1929 Testimony</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 14</td>
<td>Surrendered Lands and Band Amalgamation</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 15</td>
<td>1905 Surrendered Land</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 16</td>
<td>Original Cypress Hills Reserve and Current Reserve</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 17</td>
<td>Carry the Kettle Sacred Sites and Burial Grounds</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 18</td>
<td>Big Game Hunting</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 19</td>
<td>Crown Lands and Traditional Use</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 20</td>
<td>Trapping, Snaring, and Fishing</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 21</td>
<td>Fishing and Waterfowl</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 22</td>
<td>Medicines, Plants and Berries</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 23</td>
<td>Surrendered Lands and Pipelines</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Carry the Kettle First Nation is a large band of Nakota people (2826 registered members) with a residential reserve located southeast of the town of Indian Head, Saskatchewan. There are currently 940 registered members of CTK on reserves and 1,886 members living off reserve. Over the past few years, as a result of the successful TLE claim the First Nation has been able to recover small portions of their land throughout the province of Saskatchewan. These lands are located within their traditional hunting and gathering territory as shown in Figure 1 of this study.

Both anthropological and historical evidence show that the Nakota (Assiniboine) people occupied the area in what is now mid and southern Manitoba, northern Minnesota and lands stretching into both Ontario and Saskatchewan. It appears that the Nakota occupied the parklands, the boreal forest and the adjacent prairies to sustain their livelihood during different times of the year. The Province of Manitoba has acknowledged this original occupation by retaining the name of the Assiniboine River and other important Assiniboine namesakes. However, upon the advent of the fur trade and the effects of contact with the Europeans, the Nakota people began a migration westward. This migration is described in the following chapters and coincides with a more intensive reliance upon the bison as a source of livelihood.

The destruction of the bison, the devastating effects of diseases, the imposition of borders, reserves and other governmental regulation has significantly changed the lives of the Nakota people. This book contains a description of the historical events and the adaptations of the Nakota, specifically those ancestors of Carry the Kettle First Nation. The effects of disease upon the Assiniboine people were extreme, partially because of their friendly commercial relationship with the white traders who brought with them the diseases. After particularly devastating losses from smallpox, some Assiniboine people merged with others, often with similar language and culture such as the Gros Ventre. Also, during their long-term friendship with the Cree Nation, they assisted the many Cree peoples in adapting to a plains livelihood (the Plains Cree).

Carry the Kettle ancestors have endured many hardships during their exposure to settler society. Many of the victims of the Cypress Hills Massacre were ancestors of the Carry the Kettle First Nation. The Carry the Kettle First Nation was forced to endure a forced relocation from
their preferred lands in the Cypress Hills to the bald prairie of Indian Head in 1882 and 1883. This is referred to within the CTK community as the Canadian Trail of Tears. This study also discusses the early reserve life and livelihood on the prairie where treaty lands were taken from the First Nation. The struggles and challenges through which the First Nation has survived are truly amazing.

Currently Carry the Kettle First Nation is resolving some of the claims that have developed as a result of the inappropriate treatment they have received over the years. This has allowed them to obtain additional lands but they have at least two additional outstanding land claims remaining. The First Nation is dedicated to preserving their language and culture despite the assaults of the past and is pursuing programs to promote their traditional livelihood, language programs and cultural preservation. The First Nation is pursuing infrastructure projects to support its membership both on and off reserve. This document is part of the efforts to promote and understand the history and land use of the First Nation and hopefully, will assist in the consultation which must take place with respect to industrial and commercial development on the traditional land of the Carry the Kettle peoples.
Figure 4: The Geographical Range of the Black Duck Phase
Figure 5: Pre-Contact Assiniboine Map
Figure 8: Assiniboine Early Annual Rounds

25 Reproduced Figure 13, Ray, 1974: 33.
INITIAL FUR TRADE IMPLICATIONS

From the last half of the eighteenth century to the first decades of the nineteenth, the implications of the fur trade brought further changes to the livelihood of the Assiniboine people. Smaller fur bearing animals were continuously exploited to accommodate the increasing demands of the fur trade. Larger game animals were also exploited, since animal grease could be extracted; and the meat could be dried, pounded and mixed with berries to make pemmican for the ever-growing provisions trade. The bison herds of the grasslands were a major source of the meat and grease that was transformed into pemmican - the provisions being traded as a commodity (Colpitts, 2014: 1-5). Only later would the robe trade become profitable enough to transport robes because of the later demand (Ibid).

The 1770s were marked by other changes. The Assiniboines abandoned their role as middlemen and in these same years, groups of Cree came out of the lands north of the parklands to become Plains Cree. The Canadians (Pedlars) had brought excessive amounts of liquor into the trade. Even though their trade goods were expensive, the profit was extracted by the liberal use of alcohol in their trade exchanges. A number of posts for the Canadians and the HBC were situated to encourage the provisions trade. The flow of liquor also was accompanied by the increase in sexually transmitted diseases as relations with Indigenous women increased (Daschuk, 2013: 33-34). Consequently the violence and hardship in Indigenous communities increased and by the end of the decade, abuses and retribution were out of control. By the spring of 1779 the incidents of violence caused a number of relocations and flight from areas that were considered too dangerous. Some Canadians began shipping furs at night.

The fur trade also brought widespread hunger. The HBC at Hudson’s House sent dozens of its servants to spend the winter with Indigenous families. Periodic infusions of meat from occasional successful hunts did little to counter the effects of long term malnutrition. By October 1781 reports came that smallpox had spread from the Snakes (Shoshoni) and that it was widespread along the Saskatchewan River. “As had been the case decades earlier, disease spread along the Indigenous trade network that funneled horses to the northern plains” (Daschuk, 2013: 36). The epidemic with origins in Mexico City was continental in proportions, influencing even the outcome of the American revolutionary war (Daschuk, 2013: 36; Fenn, 2001). The demographic upheaval that this represented must be understood regionally, as well as beyond “Mortality from [this] disease unleashed an unprecedented period of territorial and demographic change” (Daschuk, 2013: 36; see Fenn, 2001).

The Shoshoni presence in southwestern Alberta ended and they were pushed back to south of the Missouri, allowing territorial expansion by the Blackfoot Confederacy. Along the North Saskatchewan River the Assiniboines were hard hit and survivors were few. Neighbouring Cree groups (Basquia, Pegogamy, and Cowinetow) in the vicinity of Cumberland House were completely destroyed “the epidemic largely
depopulated the lower Saskatchewan valley” (Daschuk, 2013: 36-37). The demise of these groups “opened the lower Saskatchewan to immigrant groups closely attached to the fur trade, in particular the Muskego Cree and Anishinaabe” (Daschuk, 2013: 37). By the summer of 1782, portions of Anishinaabe began their shift west to the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. “Equestrianism spread the disease quickly through the open country of the plains and parklands, but in the boreal forest, the contagion lingered for as long as two years” (Daschuk, 2013: 37). The epidemic followed the networks and reached York Factory in 1782 when it was brought by Bungi hunters, all of whom succumbed. The smallpox spread through much of northern Ontario “significantly depopulating the Rainy River corridor and traveling the length of Albany River to James Bay” (Daschuk, 2013: 38).

The end of the decade of the 1780s changed the “Indigenous occupation of western Canada” resulting from the changes introduced by smallpox. As many “cultural entities … ceased to exist” groups of survivors reorganized to create new communities reconstituting themselves as families and new groups, often characterized as a process of ethnogenesis (Daschuk, 2013: 40). Many newcomers were drawn to the region marked by so many vacated spaces. The impact of the epidemic upon the extent and distribution of the region’s fauna was not clear, however, the fur resources apparently were still considered bountiful “the Muskego Cree and the Anishinaabe along with the Ottawa and Iroquois, came 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” (Ibid). A succession of territorial realignments occurred in response that “permanently changed the ethnic composition of western Canada” (Daschuk, 2013: 41):

In the north, high mortality among the Cree, a consequence of their close relationship with traders, forced their retreat from land
they had dominated in their role as fur trade middlemen. In Athabasca, the Dunneza (Beaver) people regained control of the region, and the Chipewyan Dene pushed the Cree south to the Churchill River. Muskego Cree trappers came west from the boreal forest of central Canada to exploit fur resources, as did several groups from the woodlands of the Great Lakes, including the Anishinaabe, Ottawa, and Iroquois (Daschuk, 2013: 41).

The forging of new social formations resulting in many ‘new community identities’ meant newcomers joined with survivors to become new social formations. Responding to the labor shortages, many outsiders were recruited and encouraged to come into the region. While many came, some did not care for the trade, and returned to their home communities. However, others came and found a new life in the region and either became part of the existing social formations or founded their own.

South on the northern plains, the newcomers had obliterated the region of game and fur animals - much of this within a decade, especially along the Saskatchewan River. “Extirpation of the species and adoption of equestrianism marked the end of an ecological relationship between humans and their environment that was thousands of years old” (Daschuk, 2013: 42). Climate variability in the period from 1780 to 1820 was marked by extreme summers and winters that “reduced game populations and threatened the humans who relied on them” (Ibid). Many horses did not survive the cold winter weather. Throughout the 1790s drought, the worst in 500 years, prevailed. Water-borne illness reduced human and animal populations. Many groups were under severe stress (Ibid). The Assiniboine were among these remnant groups, slowly reconstituting themselves, intermarrying and constituting new alliances. The pandemic meant a reconstitution of the fur trade as well. So many clients of the trade, including so many Indian producers, were swept away by the contagion.

The direct impact upon the Assiniboine was a diminishment of the estimated population of 10,000 persons prior to the 1780-1 epidemic to less than a third (Ray, 1974: 107). However, based upon a redirected focus to their economic life, many of the surviving Assiniboine were drawn geographically to the south and the potential offered by the Missouri River country, initially for winter seasons, and then for some of the bands, more permanent residence. With the Assiniboine homeland shifting (after a drift to the northwest until the epidemic) the survivors were predominantly part of what is known as ‘the southern-most bands’. During 1808-1821, NWC employee Alexander Henry the Younger, made observations of summer and winter camping locations for many of the bands including the seasonal movements to the Missouri River.26 Over half of the tribe’s population continued to be concentrated in the Souris-Qu’Appelle valleys region. Another portion were located in territory between the South Saskatchewan River and the lower Battle River (Ray, 1974: 94-96).

26 See maps in figures 30 and 31 based on Henry in Ray, 1974: 95 and 87.
In 1821 the merger of the interests of the HBC and its buyout of the NWC reduced what had become a duopoly to a monopoly. The rising American trade was also a factor that made the Assiniboine groups and their potential contribution once again in demand. Much as their early role as middlemen was critical to the trade, once again, they were positioned to play important new roles. Besides being a vector for diseases, the trade also delivered negative influences. The use of firewater/liquor in the trade was controversial and destructive; the credits/debts system shaped the role of labour in the trade; and dependency was also fostered in a number of practices. The Assiniboine were in the thick of the involvements in the new formulations of the fur trade.

Figure 9: Annual Hunting Cycle of Assiniboine Ca. 1821
ASSINIBOINE TRADITIONAL BOUNDARIES

In spite of ‘White Mans’ law, treaty’s, and the ‘international line’ the Assiniboine territory had always been vast and at the time when the Border became an issue the Assiniboine Traditional Lands included a large portion of the north-western plains of the United States and the south-western plains of Canada. This included major portions of the American states of Montana and North Dakota, and the Canadian provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. The Assiniboine peoples continued their traditional livelihood for as long as they were able. In interviews conducted in 1929 at Wolf Point Montana,33 the Assiniboine Tribe of Indians – ancestors and relatives of Carry the Kettle – outlined their seasonal activities and traditional territory boundaries that were harvested by their grandfathers and themselves, clearly including Canada as an important harvesting region:

The east boundary is White Earth Creek, Minnesota and goes up to the Yellowstone,34 clear to the mouth of the Powder River on the south and I myself joined in 10 different hunting expeditions across the Missouri River … The west boundary was the Musselshell River.36 I was present at one time when other Assiniboine’s were over there. (Northwest) a little beyond Little Rocky Mountains,37 north of the Missouri, and due north from there to the Cypress Hills38… We would go clear into Canada, clear up to the mountains into Canada (The Man, September 12th, 1929).

When I was a boy I remember the Assiniboine’s roamed around White Earth country in North Dakota … our territory was bounded by the White Earth Creek on the east, up to Turtle Mountain39 on the north,

---

33All Assiniboine Elders’ quotes dated 1929 throughout this study were taken from interviews of the Assiniboine Tribe of Indians conducted at Wolf Point Montana for the ‘Court of Claims of the United States: The Assiniboine Indian Tribe, Plaintiff v. The United States, Defendant, No.J-31, 1929’.
34The Yellowstone River (Assiniboine:ȟeȟága wakpá, įǧų́ ǧa wakpá, į́yąǧi wákpa) is a tributary of the Missouri River in the western United States. Considered the principal tributary of the Upper Missouri, the river and its tributaries drain a wide area stretching from the Rocky Mountains in the vicinity of the Yellowstone National Park across the mountains and high plains of southern Montana and northern Wyoming. The Yellowstone River had long been an important artery of transportation for Native Americans. With the Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1868, the U.S. granted the territory of the Black Hills and the Powder River country to the Lakota people (Yellowstone, History and Culture. National Park Service).
36The Musselshell River (Assiniboine: Tugí wakpá, Tugíska wakpá) is a 341.9 mile tributary of the Missouri River. It is located east of the Continental Divide and is entirely within Montana in the United States. The Musselshell region is where the last surviving herds of wild American buffalo lived (Musselshell River. Geographic Names Information System. United States Geological Survey).
37The Little Rocky Mountains, also known as the Little Rockies (Assiniboine: :į́yąȟejasina [older terms, į́yąȟewidána, į́yąȟewidiwa]) are a group of buttes, roughly 765 km2 in area, located towards the southern end of the Fort Belknap Agency in north-central Montana (Little Rocky Mountains. Geographic Names Information System. United States Geological Survey).
38The Cypress Hills (Assiniboine: wažiške) are a geographical region of hills in southwestern Saskatchewan and southeastern Alberta, Canada. Historically the Cypress Hills were a meeting and conflict area for various Native American and First Nations peoples including the Assiniboine, Sioux, Atsina, Blackfoot, Crow, Saulteaux and Cree (Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park. Government of Saskatchewan, 2006).
39Turtle Mountain, or the Turtle Mountains, is an area located in the north-central portion of the United States state of North Dakota and southwestern portion of the Canadian province of Manitoba (Turtle Mountain Provincial Parks. Manitoba Natural Resources, 1985).
and west from there. Cypress Hills, that was the north boundary, then on the south boundary, on the Yellowstone from its mouth west to the mouth of Powder River and up to the headwaters of Musselshell, following that stream down to its mouth, and from there to the Bears Paws\(^{40}\) west, and north there to the Cypress Hills (Bear Cub, September 12\(^{th}\), 1929).

My experiences I know, in North Dakota near the Fort Berthold Reservation,\(^{41}\) a place we called Deep Water – now Little Missouri Creek. From there north over to Devils Lake\(^{42}\) and then out north into Canada. That is as far as I know in that section as to the eastern boundaries. On the west side, I remember one time when we roamed up the Yellowstone River, clear up west near its source, clear up to Great Falls of the Missouri River and then up to the Sweet Grass Hills and to the Cypress Hills. That is what I know from my experiences (Blue Cloud, September 12\(^{th}\), 1929).

Gabriel Beauchman, member of the Assiniboine Tribe of Indians stated that the Assiniboine’s usually stayed on the north side of the Missouri River and traveled upward from Fort Union out toward the Cypress Hills: “By personal experience. I have been over this ground and know about half of it myself. I traveled east here from the Turtle Mountain to Moose Mountain\(^{43}\).

\(^{40}\)The Bears Paw Mountains (Assiniboine: Wanį́be) aka Bear Paw Mountains, Bear’s Paw Mountains, Bearpaw Mountains or ‘the Bearpaws’ is a mountain range located in north-central Montana that extends in a 45-mile arc between the Missouri River and Rocky Boy’s Indian Reservation south of Havre Montana (U.S. Board on Geographic Names. GNIS, 2016).

\(^{41}\)The Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in western North Dakota is located on the Missouri River in the counties of McLean, Mountrail, Dunn, McKenzie, Mercer and Ward. Created in 1870, it is home for the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation, also known as the Three Affiliated Tribes. It is a small part of the lands originally reserved to them by the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851 (North Dakota Studies, 2016).

\(^{42}\)Devils Lake is the largest natural body of water in North Dakota. ‘Devils Lake’ is an approximate translation of its Lakota name, Ble Wiaka Sica (blay wah-kahn shee-chah) which means ‘Lake of the Spirits.’ This lake naturally flows into the Sheyenne River which is a tributary to the Red River, which flows into Canada, with eventual exit into the Hudson Bay (Devils Lake Basin Joint Water Resource Board. North Dakota State Water Commission, 2006).

\(^{43}\)The Moose Mountains are located in southeastern Saskatchewan, 24 km north of the town of Carlyle.
over into Canada, and going west from there to the Cypress Hills, to the Sweet Grass Hills\textsuperscript{44} (Red Feather, September 13\textsuperscript{th}, 1929). “When I was about 8 years old we went up to the Sweet Grass Hills and over into Canada” (Bear Cub, September 12\textsuperscript{th}, 1929).

These Canadian traditional use boundaries were further expanded upon by Iron Horn, of the Assiniboine Tribe of Indians: “… Following the Missouri up west and then opposite the Little Rockies it leads out and west around the Little Rockies clear around to the Sweet Grass Hills; then it runs due north clear up to Battleford\textsuperscript{45} in Canada and it goes up into Canada over in the timberlands there; then goes east from there to the Turtle Mountains; from there it goes to the Missouri River. That is the boundary that my grandfather told me belonged to the Assiniboine’s” (Iron Horn, September 13\textsuperscript{th}, 1929).

Talks Different also explained the Assiniboine boundaries he harvested within: “… and from there to Sweet Grass Hills and from there to the Canadian border to a place they call Medicine Hat\textsuperscript{46} and from there along the limits of the wooded country back to the place of beginning” (Talks Differently, September 14\textsuperscript{th}, 1929):

\begin{quote}
… also up to Sweetgrass Hills, and to Cypress Hills in the north and back along the same route, going back east … they roamed far east of Fort Union, up around White Earth and also farther east. People lived down there, the Assiniboine’s, and they died of old age and the new generation still used the
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{44}The Sweet Grass Hills are a small group of low mountains rising more than 3,000 feet above the surrounding plains southwest of Witlash, Montana. The tallest point in the hills is West Butte at 6,983 feet. Quite prominent in the local area and clearly visible from U.S. Highway 2 to the south and can sometimes be seen as far north as the Crowsnest Highway. Medicine Hat Alberta. They are a sacred site for Aboriginal people who live on both sides of the 49\textdegree parallel north which forms the Canada - United States border. The Hills were the site of a battle between Native people and wolfers in 1872 (Sweet Grass Hills. Geographic Names Information System. United States Geological Survey).

\textsuperscript{45}Battleford (Assiniboine: Ogíciza Wakpá) is located across the North Saskatchewan River from North Battleford in Saskatchewan, Canada. The town was founded in 1875 as a fur trading post and North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) fort (‘Battleford’. Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan. Canadian Plains Research Center, Univ. of Regina. 2006).

\textsuperscript{46}Medicine Hat is in southeast Alberta, Canada, approximately 100 miles east of Lethbridge and 180 miles south-east of Calgary. The Cypress Hills a relatively short distance to the southeast of the city. Before Europeans arrived, the Blackfoot, Cree and Assiniboine nations used the area for hundreds of years. The gently sloping valley with its converging waterways and hardy native cottonwood trees attracted humans and the migratory bison herds which passed through the area (Alberta Municipal Affairs, Municipal Profile-City of Medicine Hat, 2010).
same territory (Mrs. Medicine Bear/Iron Cradle, September 18th, 1929). … and up west along the river to Earth House, they called Fort Benton the Earth House in those days. And from there to Cypress Hills and from there is a place they called Big Lake, and on the other side of Big Lake there was the Assiniboine territory, and up into the Cypress Hills, and then to the limits of a wooded country, back east to the place of beginning … My grandfathers. The real old Indians told me that (Speaks Thunder, September 18th, 1929).

When I was a boy I recollect that I traveled with my grandfather over Woody Mountains, beginning at Woody Mountains along the line over into North Dakota; east into the Gros Ventres territory; then going back into Canada, out north clear over into the timberlands, and traveled west over to Cypress Hills and west clear up to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. I traveled in a travois when I was small and traveled all over that country. I saw these territories with my own eyes (Night, September 14th, 1929).

I remember the Assiniboine's roamed at the Mouse River, from there south to Fort Berthold, and up the river, following the Yellowstone, up the Yellowstone River, up the mouth of Powder River, and from there north to the headwaters of the Musselshell, down its mouth. From there, in a circular route around to the Little Rocky Mountains. From there to the Sweet Grass Hills and up to the Cypress Hills into Canada, crossing over the Swift Current River. Within that territory the Assiniboine's roamed … this I know. I have been all in that territory and I have been told by my grandfathers (Last, September 14th, 1929).

Mrs. Medicine Bear/Iron Cradle was born in Canada near White Earth: “I was born north of Fort Union at a place they call a ridge or bench land … it was north of the place where they always received annuities, Fort Union. My mother didn’t know any better, she never told me just the very spot where I was born … I was married to an Indian and went up north and stayed around Woody Mountain. I was married to another man by the name of Medicine Bear, and we were roaming around all that time; roamed around Cypress Hills and up around Bear Paw mountains, traveling back and forth at that time … I occupied and roamed all the western part of the Assiniboine territory and my children were brought up and raised there and I never had a chance to even go down as far as where the Canoe Indians are now at Fort Peck Reservation” (Mrs. Medicine Bear/Iron Cradle, September 18th, 1929).
THE WHOOP-UP TRAIL

The immigration of the Sioux to Fort Benton; the creation of the ‘liquor trade’ and Whoop-Up Trail; the destabilizing effects of disease; and the starvation brought on through the destruction of the bison; all combined to create unchecked forms of chaos for the tribal groups close to the international boundary.

Historian Hugh Dempsey related what the new traders witnessed as the Blackfoot, Cree and Assiniboine engaged in intertribal warfare – fighting for the last of the buffalo in “the last great Indian battle on the Canadian frontier” (Dempsey, 2002: 67):

The trouble arose because of a fight six months earlier, in which Peigans had roundly defeated a large group of Assiniboines near the Cypress Hills. When it was over, seventy Assiniboines had been slain while the Peigans lost only one man.

Later in the season the Assiniboines called their allies together to attack the Blackfoot tribes in a force. Piapot, leader of the Young Dogs (a group of mixed Assiniboine-Cree warriors), and Cree chiefs Big Bear and Little Pine joined Little Mountain and set out from Fort Qu’Appelle Valley for Blackfoot country. They gathered at the Red Ochre Hills on the South Saskatchewan River in late October, then traveled westward, passing the Cypress Hills and making a war camp at the mouth of the Little Bow River. From there, scouts were sent out to find their enemies somewhere in the vicinity of Fort Whoop-Up. They expected to locate a few Blood camps and had no way of knowing that Mountain Chief and the other south Peigans were wintering near the fort. After discovering a Blood camp on the river bottom about 3 miles upstream from Whoop-Up, the scouts reported that it would be an easy prey and an appropriate target for their revenge.

Just before dawn on or about 1 November 1870, the Assiniboines and Crees arrived at the brow of the hill overlooking the river. Below them, in the semi-darkness, was a camp of eleven Blood teepees under the leadership of Chief Mountain. When the attack began, a larger camp across the river heard the gunfire and quickly raced to the defence of their beleaguered comrades. At dawn, each side made a discovery: the Bloods became aware of the huge size of the revenge party they were facing, and the Assiniboines and Crees saw that their enemies were not in the numbers they had expected. . . . As soon as the fight began, a Blood messenger was sent to the south Peigans for help. . . . The south Peigans were quickly roused to action when they heard of the big fight. . . .

When the Assiniboines and Crees saw how they had misjudged their enemy’s strength, they tried to flee. They moved out of the valley onto the tableland that stretched four miles across a wide bend in the Oldman River. They retreated to the northeast, fighting a rear guard ac-
tion against the Bloods, who were now streaming up from their camps along the river, and fleeing from the Peigans, who were coming from the south. The Assiniboines and Crees finally reached a long coulee that extended out from the Oldman River and each group took up a strong defensive position. Some of the Bloods occupied a short coulee to the south of the Crees, and these two coulees became the main focus of the battle for the next four hours (Dempsey, 2002: 67-68).

As the Assiniboine and Crees began to slip away, the Blackfoot charged the coulees and the “withdrawal became a rout.” “The Assiniboines and Crees rushed into the river by the score, and the Peigans and Bloods stood on the banks, firing on them with their Winchester and Spencer repeating rifles until the river ran red with their blood. The battle had become a slaughter” (Dempsey, 2002: 68-69):

Although many of the fleeing Indians reached the opposite band of the river, they did not escape the fury of their enemies. Warriors rode across the stream and continued the slaughter. During the melee, a party of Assiniboines and Crees tried to make a stand but they were surrounded and about fifty of them were killed. Another group of ten took refuge in a grove of trees where they dug trenches; they would have been annihilated except that Chief Mountain said there had been enough killing and it was time to go home (Dempsey, 2002: 69).

The role of traders and smugglers in this kind of warfare was being scrutinized by both American and Canadian authorities, since this type of battle was made more serious by the crowding of tribes, and their immigration and displacement from other regions.

MASSACRES

The “devastating traffic” that was the influx of Whoop-Up perpetrators penetrated the Indian country of the transborder region. This escalation was reaching a new intensity the winter of 1871-72, when mostly Montana-based wolfers joined the whiskey traders, paying no attention to the international boundary. One group of wolfers was led by Thomas Hartwick, a Civil War rebel who had already fought against a Sioux and Lower Assiniboine war party near the Little Rocky Mountains in October 1870. In the fall of 1871, they went on to tangle with Crow and Peigans, and operated in the vicinity of the Sweet Grass Hills which straddles the border.

Hartwick had lost a number of horses to Sioux raids, and while many of these were restored to him by Agent Simmons, the concern for horse stealing and the punishment of perpetrators was front and centre for Hartwick. With this, in April of 1872, a party of Indians was spotted near the Sweet Grass Hills whiskey fort of Abel Farwell. Mistaken to be Blackfoot, they were fired upon, and four Assiniboines were killed. This incident came to be called the Sweet Grass Hills Massacre (Dempsey, 2002: 114-116).
The next season, a new whiskey fort was built by Able Farwell in the Cypress Hills. In the first days of June 1873, Hartwick and his group, seeking another group of Indian horse thieves, fell indiscriminately upon a band of Assiniboines lead by Little Soldier. They were camped nearby, and although they knew nothing about the missing horses, having fewer guns and limited amounts of ammunition than their attackers - many Assiniboines lay dead after the shooting had finally stopped. This incident was soon known as the Cypress Hills Massacre (Dempsey, 2002: 116-123).

Carry the Kettle Elders had a difficult time sharing the details of this event, passed down to them through generations: “They talked about being in Cypress Hills and coming from Cypress Hills. But a lot of them didn’t want to talk about it because you know, a lot of them had bad experiences. Like these wolfers coming and attacking them … their parents and their brothers getting slaughtered out there. So a lot of them just didn’t want to talk about it. It’s just too painful for them” (Elder Myrtle Hassler, 2015). Elder Nancy Eashappie relayed what she was told by her grandfather, a little boy at the time who was witness to this massacre, and explained that it was not even their people who stole the horses that caused this brutal retaliation from the ‘wolfers’:

Well, it’s all this way. There’s what you call group here – Little Chief, and on the other side is my grandfather’s group. So together, some they have horses … these other groups here, Crees and Blackfoot, they wanted them, and they told them ‘go and look for some’. So they went across, on the south side, and that’s where they stole the horses from – what you call – wolfers – they stole horses from them and took them across to their camp. So these came out to look for them and they saw these Assiniboine horses and they thought they were the ones that they had. They told them, their spokesman – well they sort of have a hard time because they can’t really communicate – these are Nakota – these are English – They somehow told them that this is theirs, the others must be taken somewhere else. But they didn’t believe it. So the only way to get them back is through fighting.

So that one early morning – this is not right after – but a few days after – that’s when they came with a barrel of whiskey and then they had it out there and they invite some of the people … about 3 or 4 from this group, Assiniboine, went over and had the whisky with them. From there, the leaders went to see what their people are doing. And they saw them all in a circle having whisky … He sat down with them … And as every one of them are getting drunk, some of the people – the wolfers – were looking over the hill … His little son, my grandfather … told his dad ‘you better stop drinking,’ because look, there’s some guys peeping out there. That means there’s trouble … so he got up and he told his friend not to bring his group, keep them back ‘Let’s go home’ he said, because these ones are already drunk and so were the others, ‘there’s somebody out there that’s going to come and hurt the people.’

So they went back to their group and they told them ‘Take all your belongings, what is important to you and go down east – down that
way - because there's gonna be trouble over the horses' he said ... They brought their horses up with them, but just then, when they got back, the battle was on already. Clubbing them. They were trying to fight back, but they couldn't do it. So my grandfather took some of the boys - their sober - and they went back and that's when they returned to the bitting battle and they chased them out. But already ... they killed Rattle Snake's father, and Rattle Snake is from here. He's just a little boy, he was from the camp with his mom when his dad got killed by those wolfers ... And already they knew, 3 or 4 of theirs was killed ... they tried to sober those other people ... so they told their boss to come and look after them ... So they took the bodies from there and they buried them, while the others were running away ... and that's how it happened ... The whole story was in history as told by my grandfather how it was. How it all went that day (Elder Nancy Eashappie, 2015).

My great grandmother – my mom's grandma – she was stabbed in the massacre area ... My mom told us this story, her grandmother's name was 'Stabbed Many Times'. She was out in the massacre area ... she had a dream. In this dream she was told she was going to be attacked 'you have to go tell the grandmothers, tell the aunties to go prepare the medicines and get everything ready because this is what's going to happen to you'. This was her dream. So she goes and tells the grandmas, aunties and her mother that she dreamt this ... so they had the medicines ready, but she was down by the massacre area getting kindling wood for the campfire ... all the men were out hunting, this was her job to go get the wood so they could have the fire to cook ... and when she was doing that she was attacked, and she was stabbed 13 times in her body. And then somehow, somebody found her and had taken her back to the camp. So when they arrived at the camp, already the grandmother, the aunties and her mother knew that was her dream. So they got the medicines ready and looked after her. And they said her kidney was sticking out, so what they did was sew it up with sinew – long ago that's what they had – and then they gave her all this medicine that they had prepared to give her ... she survived and lived.

So then from there they were moved from Cypress Hills to CTK, and my mom and her sisters ... there were three of them – their grandma showed them the stab wounds in her body and she let them count them. Mom said there were 13 stabs. They were all the scars ... from where she was stabbed ... She was just a little girl (at that time), so she was able to share that story with us ... She's buried there on CTK – Stabbed Many Times. (Elder Bernice Saulteaux, CHGI, 52 2015).

By 1873 the Nakota people had experienced the effects of a genocide of neglect. Most of the hunting territories below the new border were crowded by other Native groups or under siege by the American military. They fought for remaining lands north of the border and were attacked by disease, whiskey traders and wolfers from the south. Their game was

52 CHGI – Cypress Hills Group Interview. Please refer to bibliography for participant names.
almost depleted by commercial impacts and they had retreated to the Cypress Hills for refuge. Even here they were massacred.

Based upon the reports of Lieutenant William Butler and others, the government of Sir John A. Macdonald introduced legislation on 23 May 1873 to bring order to the Canadian west. This initiative was given political momentum once the news was received of the massacres that occurred in Whoop-Up country and the desperate need for immediate law and order (Dempsey, 2002: 127-134). The force was recruited, trained, and mobilized by the summer of 1874 when a substantial contingent was dispatched to Whoop-Up country after an overland march. The initial force of the North West Mounted Police (NWMP) arrived and built Fort Walsh in the same valley near the site of the Cypress Hills massacre raising a Union Jack flag above the post to symbolize the beginning of a new regime. Meanwhile other posts were built strategically to interdict and end the alcohol based trade (Smith, 2012: 109-123; ICC Cypress Hills Inquiry Report, 2000: 12-16).

Figure 11: Traditional Territory - 'Whoop-Up' Trail and Trail of Tears

![Map of traditional territory showing 'Whoop-Up' Trail and Trail of Tears.](image-url)
After 1867, the Canadian government was immediately challenged with the task of nation building which included: obtaining proper title to Hudson’s Bay Company lands; obtaining title to Native lands; and protecting the border from the expansionist inclinations of the United States. In the 1870s, soon after Confederation, the government began the numbered treaties.

In September 1874 at Fort Qu’Appelle, not long after the Cypress Hills Massacre, a meeting with Aboriginal people was held to negotiate Treaty 4 - but no Assiniboine leaders were present. The boundaries chosen for Treaty 4 included Assiniboine, Saulteaux and Cree territories and consisted of 194,000 square kilometers (75,000 square miles). However, this area was not defined with a clear understanding of all the lands used by these groups. Besides leaving out large areas of Assiniboine land, Treaty 4 included many other bands and peoples who had fairly recently migrated into primarily Assiniboine lands and whose claims to the lands were tenuous, relative to the history of the Assiniboine people.53

The previous chapters in this study have thoroughly reviewed the pre-historical and historical information on the land use of the Nakota peoples which can be compared to treaty boundaries. The Nakota people who eventually became Carry the Kettle First Nation were Nakota peoples who roamed across the territorial/U.S. border moving as far north as the Battlefords area of north Saskatchewan. The two bands, Man Who Took the Coat and Long Lodge, had close ties with the Milk River, Montana Nakota who eventually settled around Fort Belknap and Fort Peck Agencies. Together with these and other bands, the Nakota people used the Cypress Hills as a winter camp and spiritual center which was part of a northern cycle including Wood Mountain and the wooded areas of Saskatchewan and then they would hunt Bison to the south on both sides of the eventual border down to the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers.

By the 1870s, their cycles of life were increasingly disrupted as the Sioux moved further into the American west and the bison declined. As

53ICC report 20; The Indian Claims Commission defines Treaty 4 as “encompassing most of the Assiniboine’s traditional territories on the Canadian side of the border” which showed a lack of understanding of the importance and extent of Assiniboine traditional lands. The Nakota (Assiniboine) lands take in much of what was Treaty 2 and Treaty 6, as well as most of Treaty 4. It appears that the government methodology for matching bands and treaty lands was at best ad hoc and based on incomplete information and did not match the homelands of the Aboriginal peoples.
American military occupation, settlement, and trade increased, conflict also increased, and the buffalo herds were further diminished. By 1874 the buffalo were gone from the Souris plains and scarce even in southern Saskatchewan:

After 1873, no large numbers of buffalo were seen in the Wood Mountain District. In 1875-76, only straggling herds were found east of the Cypress Hills. For the Aboriginal peoples of the area, traveling from southwestern Saskatchewan to hunt buffalo in Montana around the Milk River was a necessary and often futile search for food.54

The herds in Montana were completely eliminated by 1883, but north of the border they were eliminated by 1879.55 By 1877, with the impact of fires intended to stop the bison and the first railway lines in North Dakota, bison hunts into the U.S. were becoming futile. By 1877 Indian peoples of the plains were beginning to starve (Daschuk, 2013: 99-126). First Nations people began to congregate in areas where they felt they would have the easiest access to game and wild foods as well as trade items. The Natives would visit the posts in Milk River, U.S., or Maple Creek “when in distress for food.”

On September 12, 1876 Inspector J.M. Walsh reported from the new Fort Walsh post that he told the Assiniboine Indians that only British Indians, who had never signed treaty in the U.S., would be allowed to take payments and adhere to Treaty 4. Treaty 4 had been negotiated and signed in Qu’Appelle in 1874, and annuity payments were made at Fort Walsh or at nearby Maple Creek starting the following year. After he completed payments, he learned that 90 more lodges were on their way from the U.S., where they had been hunting, but claimed they were from the area between the Assiniboine and South Saskatchewan Rivers. But Walsh was out of money, so he sent word that they would be paid next year.56

Most of them did return the next fall. The payment of annuities to the ‘Assiniboine Band’ was made from 1877 to 1882. Long Lodge was paid annuity for 1876, a year in which Walsh had refused to allow him to take his adhesion without seeking permission of the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs.57

Inspector Walsh reported on May 27, 1877, that there were 250 Assiniboine lodges camped at Cypress, led by Little Chief, Shell, King, and Long Lodge, all “British” Indians. Little Child’s Saulteaux band was nearby, and these various bands began to assert an active interest in remaining in that area. On October 28, 1877, Walsh wrote a long report to the Deputy Minister of the Interior about the situation at Fort Walsh. There were 145 Assiniboine lodges there, who had never adhered to treaty or received payment. He believed that most were entitled to be paid as

54 ICC report 16, 17.
55ICC report 16-17.
56Annual Reports, Sessional Papers no. 11, 1877, letter from J.M. Walsh, NWMP, to the Minister of the Interior, September 12, 1876.
57ICC Report 16-17.
British Indians. It was his task to sort out who belonged to that group: Two years ago when Long Lodge, Little Mountain, and the Poor Man refused to go to the Agency [Belknap] to receive annuities, both Little Chief and Shell went. Little Chief, Shell, and King numbered from 80 to 90 lodges, all originally British Indians.”

Walsh got the books from the Belknap Agency and sent Indian Agent Edwin Allen to Wolf Point to see who had been paid there. He determined that Little Chief, the Poor Man, and Long Lodge all should be paid annuities, although various members of these bands appear to have deserted to the other side of the border or were refused payment for that reason, leaving the bands much smaller. The Man Who Took the Coat, a young man of 22 in Little Black Bear’s band, was chosen as chief by the Assiniboine of Little Black Bear, and he formed his own band with forty-four lodges from that band and 69 lodges of non-treaty Indians. Most of the bands signed a formal adhesion to Treaty 4 in 1877, but Little Chief apparently did not. He and his people appear to have first been paid in 1879, in a group with Long Lodge, The Man Who Took the Coat, and Poor Man. Many of the followers of Long Lodge and Poor Man were rejected because of an American annuity affiliation; the insertion of the international border was strange to the Assiniboine, and they would continue to cross it for many years. Walsh said also of the Assiniboine, in the same October letter: “The Assiniboines must be paid here, this being their country, and the majority of them could not be induced to go elsewhere.”

After some discussion of the content of the treaty, Assiniboine leaders made adhesion to Treaty 4 in September 25, 1877 at Fort Walsh in the Cypress Hills where most of the Assiniboine were then staying. The leaders who signed the adhesions were Man Who Took the Coat, Long Lodge, Wich-a-wos-taka, and Poor Man. The adhesion was taken by NWMP Inspector Major James Walsh and other officers. A census was taken between September 19 and 23, 1877 that named the bands that had assembled at Fort Walsh. In total there were 296 lodges “189 Assiniboine, 60 Saulteaux, and 47 Cree at Fort Walsh that September.” In a letter to the Deputy Minister of the Interior, Major Walsh provided context for how the leadership of the Assiniboine bands were constituted, with insight he had clearly learned from them:

After Mr. Allen had completed taking the census I found more treaty Indians divided into three bands, sixty-nine (69) lodges under the ‘Man Who Took the Coat,’ forty-two (42) under ‘Long Lodge,’ and thirty-four (34) lodges under the ‘Poorman.’ The ‘Man Who Took the Coat’ has been a treaty Indian since 1875, and a head soldier to the

---

59Ibid.
60Treaty No. 4 between Her Majesty the Queen and the Cree and Saulteaux Tribes of Indians as Fort Qu’Appelle and Fort Ellice, Adhesion with Assiniboine, 1966: 13-14.
‘Little Black Bear’ (Cree). He is a young man of twenty-two (22) years of age, and at the present time the most influential Indian in this section. He is an exceedingly good man and very obedient to the law.

The forty-four (44) lodges of Assiniboine who had drawn annuities previously with the ‘Little Black Bear’ told me they wanted a chief of their tribe added to this number: there were sixty-nine (69) lodges of non-treaty Indians who made a similar request. At the solicitation of such a large number of persons I consented to allow the Assiniboine who had formerly gone with ‘Little Black Bear’ to withdraw from the latter’s band, and knowing the ‘Man Who Took the Coat’ to be a good man, and one on whom the government could depend, I consented to their request, and allowed them to elect him their chief. I then allowed him to appoint two (2) headmen. ‘Long Lodge,’ an old and recognized chief of the Assiniboine for a great many years had only forty-two (42) lodges. This number said they did not want to see him thrown to one side and not admitted by the ‘White Mother’ as a chief, that he was now getting old and had always been a good friend to his people and the whites.

Since my arrival here ‘Long Lodge’ and camp (altogether considered notorious before the arrival of the police) have been most obedient to the law. The ‘Poor Man’ much the same as ‘Long Lodge’s’ camp, is very much reduced owing to the objections that many of his followers were American Indians; he has at present thirty-four (34) lodges; he is a good man and very friendly to the whites; his people said they would not join any other chief, and if I could not admit him as such, to pay them by themselves. As the Act states that every band composed of thirty (30) Indians was entitled to a chief, I allowed them to elect him as such.62

---

In 1877 on treaty adhesion, there were 550 people paid from Man Who Took the Coat Band and Long Lodge, with Headman Little Mountain had 133 people which totaled 683 people.

1879

An affidavit that was included in the Assiniboine land claim taken to the U.S. Court of Claims in 1929 declared that Long Lodge, while he was alive in his later years, was considered the paramount Chief of the entire Assiniboine Nation.63 This naturally brings up the question of how to assign a nationality (American or Canadian) to a native group which seasonally used both sides of this new border line. If Long Lodge was considered the paramount chief of the Assiniboine it leads one to understand that they were one people living on lands through which settlers had drawn an imaginary line. Clearly, having such a boundary was foreign to their land use practices and culture and that even the divisions between different Indigenous groups’ lands included broad overlapping areas.

The bands were not paid at Fort Walsh in 1878, but appeared again in 1879. Most likely they were hunting during this period, roaming down to Milk River and east to Wood Mountain in search of game. There are references in the diary of J.S. McIlree regarding Little Chief and Little Black Bear, with Jack, being in the area in the spring.64

The year 1879 was pivotal, considered to be the year when the bison herds were finally eliminated from the southern part of the British territories, primarily because they were kept south of the line by the American military, and guarded by U.S. Indians. Only occasional herd sightings were made north of the boundary after that, with the bulk of the remaining buffalo down at the Bear Paw Mountains. Prairie fires were used to control their movement and prevent a migration north (Turner, 1950:1: 431). The Cypress Hills, where the Fort Walsh Mounted Police post was located, was a place where people gathered for hunts into the Milk River area. When hunts failed, they asked the Mounted Police for food, or showed up for annuities. Deputy Superintendent General L. Vankoughnet wrote at the end of that year:

The scarcity of buffalo in the Territories reduced the Indians to great straits, and a number of deaths from actual starvation ensued … The suffering was principally confined to the Indians of the southwestern portion of the Territories; although, even as far east as Qu'Appelle, much suffering was endured. The Indians were reduced to such extremities that they eat mice, their dogs, and some of them even their buffalo skins, and they greedily devoured meat raw when given to them.65

---

63U.S. Court of Claims, Docket J-31, Assiniboine Tribe v. the United States, Plaintiff’s Request for Findings of Fact, and Brief, 1929.
64Diary of J.W. McIlree, N.W. M.P., Regina, RCMP Museum and Archives
It was clear that starvation had become an issue before 1877 when the Assiniboine adhered to treaty. In 1876 Treaty 6 included a famine and pestilence clause as well as a provision for a medicine chest on new reserves, both based on the feelings of insecurity most Indian groups were having as there were no more buffalo. But the signing of Treaties did not alleviate the hunger and starvation that was to follow:

By the time of Dewdney’s appointment (1879) Indians had already starved to death at Fort Qu’Appelle, Fort Walsh, Fort Macleod, Battleford, Carlton, Fort Pitt, Fort Saskatchewan, Edmonton, Touchwood Hills, Fort Ellice, Moose Mountain, Fort Calgary, and elsewhere. Despite the Indians’ perilous circumstances, relief was meted out by the DSGIA, Lawrence Vankoughnet, on the condition that his Indian agents ‘require labor from able-bodied Indians for any supplies given them’ so they would learn ‘they must give something in return of what they receive.’

Internal government correspondence of the day supports a Eurocentric based policy aimed at destroying the Indigenous culture and practices and forcing them to adopt farming to survive. By limiting rations, this policy resulted in genocidal conditions which forced the Native people to search for buffalo south of the border naturally pursuing their right to survive. It was the government’s rations policy, contradicting their insistence that the Assiniboine people to remain in the Cypress Hills that forced them to search for food across the border.

Changes in policy towards treaty Indians were embodied by the appointment of Edgar Dewdney as Indian Commissioner of the Northwest Territories in May 1879. He communicated directly with Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald, who was also the Minister of the Interior and consequently had considerable discretionary powers administering Indian matters in the west, especially the establishment of “farming agencies” designed to discourage Indians from hunting and encouraging them to settle on their reserves accepting an agricultural way of life. The latter policy seemed ineffective and expensive and was put aside after several years of attempted implementation.

Upon Dewdney’s arrival at Fort Walsh in the last days of June 1879, he found that the earlier assessment of destitution was not an exaggeration. Some groups were begging for provisions to carry them south to the boundary line to search for buffalo. Dewdney met with leaders of bands to explain the need for them to select lands and settle there so that crops could be planted and raised. Fields would need to be prepared so the relocation should be planned and implemented as soon as feasible. The chiefs ‘Man Who Took the Coat’ (Assiniboine) and ‘Cowessess’ (Little Child, Cree) immediately requested to select their land and settle down.

---

75ICC report 29.  
76ICC Report 30.  
Almost 6000 Indians were camped near the police post. Chief Piapot had drawn people from other bands, and had 1400 members at the July payments at Fort Walsh. There were almost 1000 people under Little Pine and Lucky Man, many of whom had come from other bands; some new adherents had come from the ‘Missouri’ in the U.S. Another 800 people, leaderless, were paid as stragglers. Foremost Man, or Nekaneet, was gathering a band drawn from Qu’Appelle and Battleford reserves. Some of the stragglers were Assiniboine, but mostly from the more easterly Pheasant Rump Band (Duck’s Head Necklace); they wanted to settle at Wood Mountain. Some of the Little Black Bear people were with Little Child and Muscowequan and various stragglers at the Maple Creek reserve, a total of 330 people, considerably fewer than in 1880. However, Piapot chose a reserve site 10 miles north of the Maple Creek farm (Hildebrant and Hubner, 1994: 142).

The Assiniboine continued with farming, fishing and hunting. The reporter from The Globe, however, said that English’s farm at the Head of the Mountain was closed and only one was kept viable, probably the Setter farm where the Cree were, 30 miles east of the Fort. He reported in May that there were only 3 to 4 hundred Indians combined working at the farm, but it is not clear whether the reserve at the Head of the Mountain, as opposed to the farm, was also ‘closed.’ The farms were set up only partially to grow food, but also to ‘demonstrate’ farming to the Indians. There is further evidence that the Assiniboine were in Maple Creek in the summer report of George Kennedy, surgeon. He treated two Assiniboine for scrofula and Long Lodge for a tumour.

Poor Man (138) and Bear’s Head (286) were there, and a few from Duck’s Head Necklace (13). The Man Who Took the Coat had 46 adult men, 76 women, and 135 children, totalling 278. This was very consistent with the year before, suggesting little movement. There were four headmen: Not a Young Man, Grunting Calf, Yellow Leg, and Bend the Stick. Five deaths were recorded in the notes. Long Lodge had 123, with 17 men, 33 women, and 52 children. He had three Headmen in that year, Crooked Arm, Little Mountain, and Bisobbe. His membership had grown slightly over the period.

The very large numbers of people, and their poor condition, reflected the loss of the buffalo-based economy. Those who remained on the two reserves and set about farming may have received more rations than those in hunting camps, simply because there was now a need for the labour on the farms. In late 1880 Commissioner Dewdney recommended that Indians be hired as labour on the CPR, cutting ties and other basic labour; apparently this was not accepted. Certainly the game in the hills was quickly obliterated; at best, fish and beef rations provided some protein. After the late summer treaty payments many left for the hunt, but soon returned (Turner, 1950: 527, 529). Mounted police and

---

113 The Globe, June 17, 1881.
There was clearly tension building between the police and the department. The cost-cutting measures that made sense to officials in the east had to be carried out by the force, and they understood the consequences. In his journal Colonel Irvine wrote about the unsettled conditions prevailing at Fort Walsh. On July 23 he wrote:

The Indians here are in a very unsettled state. I am afraid I will not be able to leave this place at present much as I should like to meet His Excellency [Governor General]. It is really too bad. It is a great mistake ever taking the management of Indians out of the hands of the police. The Inspector of Indian Agencies [T.P. Wadsworth] is here now and he had found things in a beautiful mess. The Indian Agent here is a son of Dr. Allen of Cornwall and a great friend of Major Walsh. He and Walsh are both tarred with the same brush. The Inspector is now staying with me. I have made him go fully into the inspection of the Indian Agency here, for if we ever have trouble with the Indians it will be through the mismanagement of these agents. The head chief of the Indians came to me yesterday. He said, I hear of you going away to meet with the big chief that is coming up to Canada. I have come to tell you that if you go away there will be trouble. There is no use my telling you, you know you are the only man that keeps us from having trouble.123

Irvine went on to state on July 28, 1881, that the Indians had no trust in the Indian agents, and that the Inspector himself talked too much and had no tact.124 Meanwhile, Galt was directing that Indians that did not ‘belong’ at Cypress were not to be paid at Cypress – or supported:125

… it is the policy of the government to keep the Indians on their reservations as much as possible, and to that end to feed there only – and if they choose to roam about the country they must not be permitted to think that they can go to any post and receive a similar ration to those Indians who belong there … Before you leave Walsh, establish a fixed ration for those who are settled on their reservations and also a meagre ration for those who don’t belong to the district and who won’t go home. Stop the issuing of anything but flour and bacon or beef as the case may be, except when it is considered advisable to issue a little tea now and again to sick people or to Indians who are really doing well on their reserves – and even then in lieu of a certain portion of the staples. You must use your discretion in these matters, keeping down the expenditure as much as possible, while at the same time making sure that peace and order will be preserved.125

---

123 Ibid.
124 Letter, Galt to Wadsworth, July 13, 1881.
125 Ibid.
Wadsworth wrote a private missive:

I cannot see what particular good I would be here at the treaty. These Indians have been in the habit of being fed and no one man can introduce a policy of non-feeding. I cannot take the responsibility of feeding them in the fact of these instructions. I therefore think that as I telegraphed – that the commissioner himself should come here and put the whole matter on a working basis.\(^{126}\)

According to historian James Daschuk, once Commissioner Dewdney did investigate the matter of the relationship between contractor I.G. Baker and Allen’s friends, and Allen was discovered to have double billed the Department by issuing invoices for twice the quantity received. He had fed carrion to people, and inflated the rations. Soon after this exchange, Agent Edwin Allen was suspended by Wadsworth for alleged theft, mismanaging the delivery of rations to Walsh and for double billing. He was fired in September, an act confirmed by Order in Council in November, 1881 (Daschuk, 2013: 140).\(^{127}\)

Those in Cypress Hills were not receiving the rations paid for and E. T. Galt, Assistant Commissioner continued to recommend the withholding of rations to those without reserves. Meanwhile Inspector Wadsworth restated his concerns about the policy of withholding rations expressing concern about his safety and recommended abandoning the Fort. Another complication to this volatile situation was the complacency of I. G. Baker from Montana with the food scams of Allen. Not only was Baker fraudulent but also was making efforts to continue supplying rations to the area forts by meddling with the tribes.

Allan was replaced by C. E. Denny who continued the meager rations policies. He was also asked to attempt to persuade the Assiniboine to move north. It is interesting to note that Agent Allen was a relative of Vankoughnet and Galt was the son of the prominent Galt of Canadian Confederation. Both Galt and Allen were suspected of over-billing and worse and both left the service of the government during this crisis.

Essentially the meager rations policy had created an enormous crisis. Out of desperation and fear various civil servants recommended closing Fort Walsh. Irving was concerned that: ‘the issuance of firearms and ammunition should be strictly prohibited, even for hunting, on the grounds that the Indians would be all the more dangerous if armed; however, as long as there were buffalo, this would have to be implemented slowly.’ It is clear that the authorities could not agree on whether to issue ammunition or not, neither could they agree on the

\(^{126}\)Sir John A. Macdonald Papers, July 1, 1881, Vol. 210, Reel C1596, 89.473-89.476, MG26A.

\(^{127}\)See Letter to the Editor, The Globe, by William Allen, September 5, 1881, defending the agent against allegations of theft. See also letter from D.L. McPherson to Sir John A. Macdonald stating that Allen and Baker were invoicing for 800 lbs. when the cattle delivered weighed only 400. This letter of September 2, 1881, is in the Sir John A. Macdonald Papers, LAC, MG26A, vol. 248. The matter made the Toronto Globe on March 30, 1882, p. 10, “Supplies to Indians.” In the article, a telegram from Allen to Vankoughnet shortly after his July suspension was quoted, wherein Allen asked the DSGIA directly to reverse the decision, saying that Wadsworth would vouch for him.
level of rations or whether or not the fort should be closed or open. In the midst of this indecision the Agent and contractors were fraudulently bilking the government for supplying poor quality foods. The result of all this incompetence was the starvation of those Aboriginal people whose lives were in the hands of those who had destroyed the bison and taken their lands.

The agent at Fort Belknap reported that same summer, in 1881, there was still some movement of Assiniboine from that post to Wolf Point, and back to Cypress to “take their money, thus becoming British Indians.” [There is no indication from the pay sheets for the Man Who Took the Coat or Long Lodge that their numbers increased, but these people could have been paid as stragglers.] He went on to blame the half-breeds, most of whom were also traders, and allegedly from Canada, for keeping the Indians away from the buffalo by “falsehoods, threats, and by forming combinations to drive the buffalo away from this part of the country. Buffalo are now within 50 miles of this post, but the half-breeds and northern Indians are moving in such numbers that they will soon be slaughtered and driven out.”

As 1881 passed, the government continued to plan to move Indians out of the Cypress Hills. Farming results had not been great, timber was scarce in some areas, and game virtually hunted out. In the fall, Wadsworth continued to try to convince the bands to settle elsewhere, but concluded that people were leaving reserves to return to Fort Walsh because there was no work for them to do, leading them to conclude that they would not have to work for rations, as they did on reserves. As winter came, all four of the Assiniboine bands were leaving the reserve periodically to hunt, and some came in to Fort Walsh so that the old and sick could get rations while the rest were away. They had few horses, and also asked for ammunition for the hunt.

The Cypress Hills farm was considered closed and farm instructor English was transferred to the Maple Creek farm to replace farm instructor Setter, who was transferred to the Crooked Lake Agency. Confusion prevailed upon the part of the DIA authorities regarding the rivalry between Piapot and the leaders of the Assiniboine Band and the selection of reserve sites for the groups since the 1881 report declared that “all of the members of the bands of Man Who Took the Coat (278), Long Lodge (123), Poor Man (137), Chic-ne-na-bais (286), and Duck Head Necklace (13), plus 74 ‘Stragglers,’ are shown as absent and ‘Hunting Buffalo, Fort Walsh District.’” In the fall of 1881, Indian Agent Cecil E. Denny, who had replaced at Fort Walsh, reported that “I succeeded after tedious negotiations in persuading them to their different reservations, the Crees to the north and the Assiniboine to the east”

---

128Report of W. L. Lincoln, United States Indian Agent, to The Commissioner of Indian Affairs, August 20, 1881.
130Agent C.E. Denny to Dewdney, November 9, 1881.
131ICC Report 54.
132ICC Report 55.
Directions were received from Ottawa in July 1881 to prepare from the abandonment of Fort Walsh.

In an evaluation of the Maple Creek reserve location Inspector Wadsworth and Colonel Irvine agreed that it was too far from timber needed to develop the reserve. However, Mr. English had paid some Indians to help him, and had a successful potato crop at Maple Creek with 10,000 lbs. set aside for seed, and the remaining 60,000 lbs. turned over to the police. Denny reported that the Cree and Assiniboine who had gone south to hunt along the Missouri River in late summer 1881, had returned starving and some without horses (Denny, 1939: 169).

Denny increased the amount of rations being issued. The majority of the bands of Man Who Took the Coat, Poor Man, and Long Lodge were toward the foot of the mountain and were expected to come to the fort. He gave ammunition to the most able among the destitute and encouraged them to continue hunting. Meanwhile he continued to address the problem of how to get the Assiniboine to relocate:

I have been talking to Bear’s Head and the Poor Man (Assiniboine chiefs) about their moving to Qu’Appelle but can get no answer out of them as yet. Mr. English seems to be liked by the Assiniboines and I think that if he could go with them in the spring to Qu’Appelle, it would be hard to get them off. With your permission I would speak to Mr. English about going with them.

---

133 ICC report 64-65.
134 Denny to recipient unknown, November 9, 1881, NA [sic LAC], RG10, vol. 3744, file 29,506-1.
135 Agent Denny, Fort Walsh, to Indian Commissioner, Winnipeg, November 16, 1881, NA [sic LAC], RG10, vol. 3744, file 29,506-1.
He received a long answer on February 15, 1882. McIlree met with the Man Who Took the Coat, Bear’s Head and Poor Man. Long Lodge was still south of the line. The chiefs listened to McIlree’s argument, and returned two days later to say that they wished to stay and settle permanently on their reserve. They said they had been brought up in that country, and although they had given up their country to the Queen, she had promised to give them a reserve where they wished. They did not want to live with the northern Indians. Dewdney responded to McIlree by saying the Assiniboine could stay where they were as long as they agreed to farm individual gardens. This promise would not last. A food shortage was created as an incentive to get groups to move on to their new reserves.

Long Lodge was reported to have been south of the line all this time, but there is a NWMP requisition for food and other supplies on record from Fort Qu’Appelle in February, 1882, with a note from a J.A. Fraser. Major Walsh ordered the release of supplies from the Qu’Appelle detachment after meeting Long Lodge and his people on the ‘trail’ near Fort Qu’Appelle. Because Agent McDonald was away at the time, no supplies were released. Fraser later left the Force and joined the Indian Department, where he was finally able to release provisions. Long Lodge and his people were described as destitute, nearly starving, but it is not clear if the encounter with Walsh took place in the fall of 1881 or in fact during the harsh winter.

Commissioner Dewdney sent Metis trader Peter Erasmus to the hills to talk to the Indians and provide intelligence, particularly of Indians not with their proper bands. Erasmus was to explain to them that they must move out of the area. This was affirmed in a letter to Colonel Irvine, Commissioner of the NWMP. Indians were to be told that when they came in from their hunts they must immediately go to reserves, as they would not get assistance at Fort Walsh. On March 2, 1882, Inspector McIlree met with the Man Who Took the Coat ‘about leaving the place, followed by one on March 3 where the chief said he would go to Battleford but not Qu’Appelle. On March 4 they were rewarded - received rations of flour and meat.

The next day, the Man Who Took the Coat’s brother poisoned himself, and, on March 6, after a five-hour discussion, the chief agreed to go to Qu’Appelle. Long Lodge did not agree until April 20, 1882. An interview with Elder Charles Rider of Carry the Kettle adds to this account. Elder Rider spoke about the incident, saying that the man in question was a nephew, Runner. He had shot a man over a love dispute,
then poisoned himself with meat laced with coyote poison. He did not die, however, and was later tried in court and sentenced to hang; he survived that as well. Elder Rider said that the incident propelled the chief to make the move, although it is not entirely clear why from his comments.147

In April, 1882, Man Who Took the Coat and his camp were prepared to leave for Fort Qu’Appelle. On May 7th, after transport had finally been arranged, the bands were ready to begin their journey. With great regret, the chiefs and their bands Long Lodge, Jack, Little Child, Sparrow Hawk and “some independent bodies of Indians going to join their respective chiefs” left the Cypress Hills.148 Carry the Kettle Elder Delmar Runs explained this event as relayed to him through his ancestors:

> When they were forced to move they already gathered all the people at Fort Walsh. They were all gathered there, and that’s where they had their rations … And when they told them to move – they said ‘No. We don’t want to move. Cypress Hills is our homeland. And all our loved ones that have gone are buried here. Why should we move?’ … Before that move, they were cut off on rations. It was one of the government’s policies, so they went to Maple Creek on the reserve there, but they needed lodging. They wanted to go back to their homeland. But the first move they walked to Indian Head. And dad said there were many who were sick and many of them died on the road. Because when they came back they numbered the people and there was a little over 336 I think. On that map it is written on the map – the population. So we lost what, 1200 people, 1100 and something, just traveling back and forth. That was the government’s policy – to remove Indians, but the reserve is still there yet. And that reserve was surveyed under ‘Take the Coat’ (Elder Delmar runs, 2015).

Thus the spring of 1882 was the time of forced marches and transport to these new sites. A telegram to Captain McIree on March 14, 1882, commanded him to move Indians out of the hills as ‘economically’ as possible. Able bodied people were to walk, and carts could be provided for lodges and provisions.149 Colonel Irvine met with the Assiniboine to negotiate a transfer, in April, 1882, only a few months after they had stated their interest in staying. Irvine’s letter to his superior, Fred White, of May 20, 1882, is quoted at length because of the significance of the message in the context of the times. According to a marginal note, the letter was forwarded to Commissioner Dewdney:

> I have the honour to inform you, that I will have the treaty Indians at present in the Cypress Hills systematically divided into separate camps. These Indians are now ready, in fact, anxious to move Northward, the only cause of delay is want of provisions and transport. I cannot understand why I.G. Baker and Co. have failed to supply provisions ordered by the acting Indian Agent some time ago.…

---

147 Elder Charles Rider, interview.
Now that the Indians have fully agreed to go North, I venture, most respectfully to impress upon the Government the importance of their being well received in the North, also the fulfilling of treaty obligations. It should be borne in mind that in many cases the mode of lie, and particularly the surroundings will be some different, for that, to which the Indians have been accustomed, for this some little allowance should be made and the treatment they receive, particularly on arrival, should be kind. If these recommendations are not acted on, I feel that I am not far astray in predicting a general stampede Southwards, should this once occur, the final settlement of the Indians on allotted reservations will be materially retarded. The experience of our neighbours the Americans, cannot be without its lesson to us, in their case the non-fulfilment of treaty obligations gave rise to much of the trouble, and expense they have been put to in the governance of their Indians. It is worthy of note, that even with a very strong force at their command, it has not been found practical to force Indians to remain on a particular reservation. Already several of ‘Big Bear’s’ followers, non-treaty Indians, was here, have surreptitiously stated to our treaty chiefs that they will find on going North, that a disregard will be paid to the conditions set forth in the treaties with the government...¹⁵⁰

Colonel Irvine had met with the Assiniboine to negotiate the transfer only a few months after they had clearly stated their interest in staying. Poor Man (Lean Man) and Grizzly Bear’s Head went north to new reserves beside that of Mosquito, in the Eagle Hills. The Man Who Took the Coat and Long Lodge journeyed east to the Skull Mountains, near the railway settlement of Indian Head. Instructor English went with them, and the journey took from May 8, 1882, to June 9 of that season. The people departed from the Maple Creek farm, and the trip was made on foot, by wagon and horseback, with dogs in tow. Other Qu’Appelle Indians were with them, a party of 453, of which only 254 were Assiniboine. A few were headed to Ocean Man at Moose Mountain. Agent McDonald wrote a detailed account of their arrival, and noted that there were no ‘incidents’ on the way; Corporal Hamilton of the police traveled with them, he said, and looked after the young and old.¹⁵¹ There were Indians from Little Child, Kakewistahaw, and Peepeekesis.

Piapot left the Cypress Hills in June, with 500 people in ‘wretched’ condition and without horses. The police used their own horses and wagons for transport. Colonel Irvine opined that it had been most difficult to get everyone out of Cypress, especially since the American traders were sending emissaries to the Indian camps to persuade them to stay, hopeful of annuity spending. Further, he had learned that 200 troops were amassed at the Big Bend of the Milk River, ready to attack any British Indians coming in search of the buffalo.¹⁵² The herds would be gone by 1883.

¹⁵²Col. A.G. Irvine, Fort Walsh, to E. Dewdney, Indian Commissioner, Glenbow Archives NA 4035143 M320 Series 17.
Dewdney made plans to be present at Fort Qu'Appelle to greet the arriving Indians and he reassured Macdonald in a communication dated April 26, 1882, that he would make sure the Indians were satisfied with their relocation. Dewdney instructed the Indian Agent at Qu’Appelle, Alan McDonald, that sod was broken and plowed on two reserves, one of them at the location of the new Assiniboine Agency near Indian Head. Irvine warned of the importance of a proper reception at Fort Qu’Appelle, or there might be a “stampede southward” with those who might be dissatisfied. The American experience of reactions by Indians not satisfied with the fulfillment of treaties had proved expensive in many ways.

Access to adequate amounts of food may have seemed a proper incentive, but the challenge remained to be able to fulfill promises at the new agencies and reserves. Having the proper amounts distributed to all the necessary locations was far from accomplished. Commissioner Dewdney and Major Walsh met them, and promised the chiefs oxen and wagons if they would at least view their new reserve. The following day, Dewdney and McDonald provided them three days rations of flour and bacon “together with some tea, tobacco, pemmican as presents from the commissioner.” On June 12, 1882, a meeting was held with Dewdney in Major Walsh’s tent, with Agent McDonald noting “signs of discontent” and a general “unwillingness to go to their reserve.” At subsequent meetings, the commissioner and the agent read the terms of Treaty 4 to the chiefs and headmen explaining the contents.

Before they arrived, Qu’Appelle Agent McDonald had engaged men to plant potatoes and turnips on the Assiniboine reserve site, and had secured rations of bacon and flour. This was to be the new diet of the buffalo hunters. Agent McDonald planned to get the Indians immediately engaged in cutting wood for housing and fencing. He expected that, given their close proximity to settlers, they would quickly learn to farm and no longer be a burden on the government.

The two bands did go to see the reserve surveyed by John Nelson; the land area was big enough to accommodate Piapot, who, with his people, were denied their choice of a reserve near Maple Creek.

Piapot and 358 band members arrived on July 29, 1882. They showed considerable disdain for the site and later chose one northwest of there, along the Qu’Appelle Valley.

The two Assiniboine bands camped there, allegedly satisfied with the location, large and timbered, but also littered with skulls from an epidemic disaster, years before. Long Lodge tried to get annuities so his...
people could go to Wood Mountain to trade, but McDonald told them that annuities would not be paid until September. Agent McDonald told them they would get ¾ lb. of flour and ¼ lb. of bacon at each issuance, and they asked for more. They argued that if they were paid for working, they would like clothing, tobacco, and tea. The agent also agreed to pay them for building two government buildings, and 24 houses for The Man Who Took the Coat and 18 for Long Lodge, at the rate of $10 a house plus additions. Tea would be issued for shingling. McDonald continued, “I however have no doubt that time will heal all old wounds, and they will turn out as well for roofing and thatching, paid in clothing and tea.” But McDonald’s actions were questioned in a letter from DSGIA Vankoughnet to E.T. Galt, presumably the doubts were to be passed on: able bodied people were to receive as little as possible in the way of rations, and McDonald was told he had no authority to pay people to build houses. Thus they were to have no food nor money to feed, house and clothe themselves in the new location.

People soon were unhappy with the rations, and the root crops, and continued to try to hunt. The agent reported quickly that the change from fresh meat on their previous reserve to bacon rations led to outbreaks of diarrhea, with some deaths. He said that Chief The Man Who Took the Coat, or Jack, was very cooperative, but Long Lodge’s people were not:

I regret to say that in the case of Long Lodge and his band, they do not, with the exception of two families, appear to be as contented as their neighbours, Jack and his band. This, is no doubt due to the loss of several of their numbers by death, immediately to their departure north to here. I however, have no doubt that time will heal all old wounds, and that they will turn out as well as those under Jack. Of course you are fully acquainted with the veneration and love that Indians all exhibit towards the spots where their parents or relations lie buried, as there is some excuse for Long Lodge’s party not appearing as contented as might be desired by us …

McDonald went on to say that the building of storehouses was delayed by want of nails, and that the dogs were eating the bacon. In a letter of July 29, the agent, in describing a speech by the newly arrived Chief Piapot, referred to ‘lies’ about starvation at Qu’Appelle being spread by Chief Cha-ca-chas. He also spoke of diet and starvation, with reference to a conversation with Chief Piapot:

I told him that it was needless all this display of eloquence in asking for fresh meat, as all that I had power to give my Indians was flour and bacon and of this they would have daily rations as heretofore, but that the commissioner when here had purchased and set aside

---

159 See July 12 letter.
162 Letter, Agent McDonald to Assistant Commissioner Galt July 18, 1882, LAC, RG10, vol. 3744, file 29,506-2.
163 Agent McDonald’s letter to Assistant Commissioner Galt on July 29, 1882, LAC, RG10, vol. 3733, file 29,506-2.
a few bags of pemmican and dried meat for him when he arrived – and that would be given him – power to buy fresh meat or anything whatsoever were denied me so I could not consider the request for a change of diet. That I was sorry to hear of the death of the old woman that morning …

The days later McDonald wrote to Galt again saying that Long Lodge was getting ready to return to the plains in search of fresh meat, dissatisfied, as were the other chiefs, with bacon. The agent made a desperate plea for beef, to prevent the Indians from returning to Fort Walsh for it, but it appears not to have been heeded:

Mr. Provost arrived in from Indian Head with Chief ‘Jack’ and reported the out of Long Lodge’s party and the reasons. There is no doubt that an alarming amount of sickness of the type of diarrhoea has been prevailing among these Assiniboines and which, there is also no doubt has arisen from the change from fresh meat to that of bacon. The same unfortunate state of things is met within Piepot’s [sic] camp where some deaths have occurred. Added to this is the suicide of an old blind man of Piepot’s [sic] band whose granddaughter had died two days ago from diarrhoea …

McDonald killed one of his own oxen to feed people and criticized restrictive government policies – a rare action for an agent during those times.

The replacement for Galt, Assistant Commissioner Hayter Reed and NWMP Colonel Irvine toured the reserves near Indian Head where they urged Man Who Took the Coat to remain on his new reserve. However, Irvine reported that both Piapot and Long Lodge with their bands had “grievances” which resulted in their being off their reserves.

Long Lodge and his followers were also full of discontent. They complained of the lack of fresh meat and vegetables which had resulted in illness. This contributed to the overall morale of a place that would have to be literally built from the ground up and McDonald still had instructions to further reduce rations to individuals who did not do the development work. McDonald was well aware that the restrictions upon his purchasing power and his capability to provide quality rations “could jeopardize the efforts to settle the Indians on the northern reserves.”

Long Lodge (18 lodges) was the first to leave the Indian Head reserve in August 1882 dissatisfied and his group departed for Wood Mountain and was reported to have spent the winter of 1882-83 south of the border.

---

164Ibid.
165Letter of July 31, same file.
166Ibid
167McDonald to Galt, July 18, 1882, NA [sic LAC], RG10, vol. 3744, file 29,506-2.
168Dewdney to SGIA, August 5, 1882, NA [sic LAC], RG10, vol. 3744, file 29,506-2.
169ICC Report 80.
Subsequently, the Man Who Took the Coat reflecting the sentiment of his band, made apologies and departed in an attempt to return to the Cypress Hills where his group really wanted to have a reserve. They could not live on bacon when they preferred fresh beef. CTK Elder Delmar Runs explained that the government never really followed through on promises made at the time of treaty and the minimal rations they did provide were not enough to help the Assiniboine live healthy lives as before:

_They got some rations, they said it was pork – salted pork. But when they ate the salted pork, many of the people died because they were not used to that. They were used to fresh meat. That was their diet. That’s how they lived (Elder Delmar Runs, 2015)._ 

Some left before the September annuity payments; 200 were paid but later 140 received arrears for 1882 for the two bands combined. Only 37 men and 56 women were paid in September as The Man Who Took the Coat Band, with 77 children – a loss of 30 adults from 1881, some or all of whom were paid later at Fort Walsh. With the ‘other person’ category, 177 people were paid. Three deaths of children were recorded. A few people had come into the band, from Piapot, Little Child, and Bear’s Head. Comments around arrears, however, indicate the band was very unsettled, with numbers of people south of the line.

Meanwhile, many Indians remained at Fort Walsh. Colonel Irvine wrote to the Police Headquarters on September 20, 1882, saying that there were 2000 starving Indians still at Walsh, and he had supplies for only three weeks. Frank Norman, a police inspector, had taken over from McIlree as acting Agent. He confirmed that they had little food left. Comptroller Fred White of the R.N.W.M.P. came west, and wrote to Dewdney on October 17:

_I arrived here on the night of the 14th inst. And since then have devoted myself closely to the Indian situation. There are about 260 lodges in this vicinity, and a more wretched half-starved camp could not be imagined. The provisions issued to them have averaged about 4 oz. of flour and 2 oz. of dried meat per day … They are huddled together two or three families to a lodge; the lodges are old and dilapidated and the women and children are suffering from want of food and clothing, in fact many of the children are quite naked. It has snowed every day since I arrived and unless something is done for them without delay the old people and young children who are now lying prostrate from starvation must succumb. Moving north or east is out of the question as many of them have sold their ponies for provisions. Dr. Jukes accompanied me through the camp and the enclosed letter from him speaks for itself. Of course they have asked again to have reservations here and say they may as well starve to death [at Fort Walsh] as on the reservations north and east, but many of them are in such a desperate condition that I fear hunger may impel them to commit illegal acts, and as large working parties_
The next removal from the Cypress Hills was facilitated by the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks that then ran from Maple Creek eastward, which theoretically enabled the bands of Man Who Took the Coat, Long Lodge, and Piapot to be transported more efficiently. However, there was a derailment enroute to Qu’Appelle that left some Assiniboine injured.\(^\text{182}\)

The Indian Commissioner reporting to Ottawa on May 25, 1883, gave a progress report about the relocation of various Indians:

\[G]\text{reat difficulty has been experienced in inducing the Walsh Indians to go to their various reserves, influence from many sources were strongly bearing upon those who were deciding to go north to change their minds, and not go. The railway accident which happened to those who were on their way to Qu’Appelle did a great deal towards upsetting their minds and it was with great persuasion that they were induced to go further, nothing would encourage them to take the cars again, so cart (sic carts) had to be engaged to do the carrying of those unable to walk.}\(^\text{183}\)

CTK Elder James O’Watch recounted the devastation his people endured during these times of uncertainty:

\[I\text{ think that was the last year they brought them back – by railcar – and the story is that they (the government) did stage a derailment, or they planned a derailment … of our Assiniboine people. And it did happen. Bernice talks about her grandmother, she had a broken arm … And Wilma Kennedy … she’s got stories about someone else getting injured during that derailment. One of her relatives (Elder James O’Watch, 2015).}\]

Agent McDonald wrote:

\[The\text{ Assiniboines are located at the Indian Head reserve, under the charge of Instructor Provost. They went on their reserve last summer, but owing to the lateness of the season, only a few bushels of potatoes were planted. Long Lodge and his followers set out immediately after receiving their annuities for the Wood Mountains, and from there went south of the line, where, I believe, they now are. The Man Who Took the Coat left shortly after; he went to Fort Walsh at which place he wintered. He and eighty of his followers, and Little Mountain, one of Long Lodge’s head men, came east this spring and are now on the reserve. We have managed to put thirty-seven acres under crop for them.}\(^\text{184}\)

Upon their return to Indian Head the bands set up camps and began to cultivate root crops to keep them alive. A local doctor attending the camps reported consumption and starvation and reported the loss of 33 people over the winter. “\text{Many of those who have died this winter have died from}
absolute starvation. They were ill and could not eat the bacon and flour and having nothing else died.” The pay sheets reveal that some had gone to Milk River to stay with family there. Two families had moved in from Poor Man’s band. There remained 46 men, 68 women, 61 boys, and 72 girls with The Man Who Took the Coat, or 247, but there are notes of eight children having died. Long Lodge’s band had seven deaths, mostly children. There were 18 men, 21 women, and 37 children paid, totaling 76:

We all talk about this land (Cypress Hills) being ours. They took us and moved us three times. Took us over there, came back, took us over there, came back, the third time we stayed. And everything was forced on us as Assiniboine people. Everything that was done to us was forced, we never agreed to do anything. We never agreed to give this land up, we never agreed to move … Lots of devastation. We went through lots. We went through hell as Assiniboine people (Elder James O’Watch, CHGI, 2015).

The 1884 pay sheets, prepared in August, reveal a dramatic loss in The Man Who Took the Coat’s Band, down to 231 people, with 21 recorded deaths of children. Long Lodge’s band, 91 people, included the chief, who was perhaps back for a time from the south, but who would leave again.

We were all young then … Charlie Ryder, he said sit down, and I want tea and some bannock and I want to tell you’ … he pointed at all of us and he said someday, if you want to, you go back to Cypress Hills. That’s your land, you go down there and live over there’ … That’s where we signed treaties and that’s where we come from. ‘You go back there’ he told us … we were small, but I remember that, I’ll never forget that. All the old people said that. ‘Go back there. That’s your land’ (Elders Victoria, Joyce and Gladys Prettyshield, 2015).

The documentation provided above describes one of the most repugnant periods in Canadian history as Indigenous people are subjected to purposeful neglect, forced labour, genocidal ration policies and forced relocation to unfavourable locations. This period in the history of the Nakota people is prefaced by two massacres; one at the Sweetgrass Hills and one known as the Cypress Hills Massacre where Nakota people were murdered by American wolfers and liquor traders. These massacres however, were minor compared to the anguish and devastation created through government rations and forced relocation policies.

According to some information the basis of the Nakota livelihood, the buffalo, were entirely annihilated from southwestern Canada around 1877, which is the year Man Who Took the Coat and Long Lodge signed treaty. Before this time there were still bison remaining which gave hope and some opportunity to the various tribes who traditionally relied upon the bison for their livelihoods. But once the buffalo were

gone it placed great pressures on these Indigenous peoples to survive and created increased incentive to sign treaties where they were promised that the Queen would take care of them. People cannot survive long without eating and it was not long before great masses of people congregated in areas where they hoped they could find buffalo or other game and plants to eat or receive rations and support from agencies or posts.

The Canadian government seemed to be concerned about the effects of intrusions on their territory by American wolfers and liquor traders and concerned with the possibility of American military intervention on to Canadian soil. They were not as concerned when the bison were unable to migrate to Canada to feed the starving Natives nor were they interested in adequately feeding the Natives who had no more game to support them. To the contrary; the Canadian government acquiesced to American threats by attempting to move all the Indigenous people north of the CP Railway to reduce the potential for international incidents.

The government proceeded to starve the Indians out of the Cypress Hills, even the ones who belonged there like the Nakota. The starvation policies were deliberate rather than being neglectful. Even when they were told that people were starving they did very little. Instead they continued to pursue a work for rations policy even when there was no work to be had. Then when the Assiniboine refused to leave they cut rations further and approached the Chief at a weak moment to coerce them into moving. The people were weak from a starvation diet and some of the people died during the trip – a fact that was not recorded except in one report explaining why the Assiniboine were reluctant to stay at the new reserve. While at the new reserve despite other attempts at encouraging the Assiniboine, the cost cutting, ration reducing bureaucrats feed them bacon and flour, which not only made them sick but caused several deaths.

This action forced Indians to flee, desperately looking for game they moved south and west towards possible game locations. Their possessions, physical and mental health had been ravaged by the government’s ration policies for at least two years and they were forced to re-locate. They were ill equipped to survive another winter for which they had little time to prepare. Rations continued to be meager when they returned to the Cypress Hills and Dewdney told them it was their own fault for leaving the bald prairie reserves he had designated. More starvation and goading followed and the chiefs grudgingly agreed to move back to the prairie. More deaths followed and when the next census was taken the band population had declined significantly. According to an attending doctor many of the deaths were caused directly from the bacon and their weakened condition.

These issues raise the question of the validity of the treaty itself. As a result of the slaughter of bison and other important species, the exposure to massacres, starvation, waves of disease, the signing of treaties by the Assiniboine and other Indigenous peoples must have involved a certain amount of panic and desperation. Furthermore, if rations were withheld
once the bison were eliminated, signing likely involved coercion which would be entirely contrary to the provisions of the proclamation under which the treaties were required.

In 1874 information provided with respect to the signing of Treaty 4 by the Cree that year identified the impetus for the initial Cree bands to take the treaty at Fort Qu’Appelle in 1874 was because of the shortages of game, most particularly bison, and the treaty promises made to care for them. This also contributed to the incentive for the Assiniboine to sign treaty. They were very aware of the possible treachery of the whiteman. Within the lifetime of those Nakota (Assiniboine) who were asked to sign Treaty 4, they had witnessed or were told of the Sioux and Cheyenne Wars in the U.S. and had experienced several waves of devastating diseases. They directly experienced several massacres at the hands of lawless white men who were not punished for their murders of Assiniboine people. They were well aware that their way of life and their very existence was threatened; and would be even more if they did not agree to submit to the onslaught of European will.

Figure 13: Assiniboine Historical Lands – 1929 Testimony
The final movement of the Carry the Kettle First Nation ancestors from Cypress Hills to the reserve south of Sintaluta (southeast of Indian Head) marked the beginning of the era of reserve life. The reserve lands had been surveyed and a few buildings were erected the year before 1883, but upon arrival, most had to continue to live in tipis. Prior to the relocation of 1882 to this new reserve, some initial ground had been plowed and a small amount of potatoes were planted.

POLICE SUPERVISION AND STARVATION AT NEW RESERVE

Government correspondence indicates that Commissioner A. Irvine reported that police were present and conspicuous in the areas of the new reserves and among the new settlers taking up land in the vicinity of the reserves. The government was conscious of preventing any difficulties from arising. Agent McDonald reported that there were eighty-six in the band of Man Who Took the Coat, and the headman of Long Lodge, Little Mountain was with him. By the end of the summer, the agent’s office was relocated from Qu’Appelle to Indian Head. McDonald made his report: “Since spring, Indians have been coming from the vicinity of Cypress Hills and going on their reserve.” Piapot and his band were among the returnees. Dewdney felt he had accomplished the relocation of the Assiniboine by October of 1883.

---

187 Agent McDonald to SGIA, August 31, 1883, Canada, Annual Report for the Department of Indian Affairs for Year Ending 31st December 1883 (Ottawa, 1884), 73-76.
188 Dewdney to SGIA, October 24, 1883, NA [sic LAC], RG10, vol. 3744, file 29,506-3.
The relocation may have been accomplished, but the treatment of the new residents on these Indian Head reserves was characterized by “neglect, illness, and starvation.” A medical physician was sent to the reserves in February, 1884, to visit the encampments of Piapot, Long Lodge, and Man Who Took the Coat and he reported scurvy running rampant observing that this condition “persisted owning to the absence of fresh food and vegetables from their diet.” In his assessment issuing ammunition for hunting was futile because ducks and prairie chickens were few in the vicinity. In 1884, in present-day southeast Saskatchewan near the town of Grenfell, 30 armed warriors from the Sakimay Band, led by Chief Yellow Calf, occupied a federal warehouse in an attempt to secure food. Violence was averted after extensive negotiation by Chief Louis O'Soup. In the Battleford region, chiefs petitioned federal officials at the decrease in food rations and the failure of the government to provide the promised medicine, agricultural tools and other items.

Famine in the spring and summer of 1884 at the Indian Head Assiniboine reserves was not taken seriously by Assistant Commissioner Hayter Reed. In his correspondence with Prime Minister MacDonald, Reed blamed the Assiniboine for their own misfortune:

[N]o doubt the death rate is large but it must be borne in mind that the first seeds of their complaints were sown during the sojourning of the Indians in the Fort Walsh District, owing to immoral habits, and were it not for this fact the use of [unreadable] would not have such a hurtful effect.

These statements by Reed are clearly racist and an attempt at disguising deliberate genocidal actions. The comment about immoral habits confirms he ignored any of their cultural rights. He admits that their death rate is high and then blames it on their reliance on wild food. He continues his folly: “When the doctor speaks of starvation the same does not mean that the quantities issued were not sufficient but that the Indians were unable to eat the bacon.”

In his reports and correspondence Reed attempts to deflect his responsibility for continuing starvation practices claiming their inability to survive on bacon was in fact the Natives own fault. This also reflects the racist mentality of John A. MacDonald who did not respond indignantly to such foolish excuses. Apparently Reed did send “a small quantity of meat and potatoes” to the reserves after these reports were sent.

---

189 ICC report 92.
190 D. C. Edwards to Agent McDonald, May 13, 1884, NA [sic LAC], RG10, vol. 3745, file 29,506-4.
191 "There appears to be no good reason not to issue ammunition to the Assiniboine at this time even if the chance to shoot game was low. It is likely that fear of armed and starving men was more the motivation for refusing to issue ammunition.
193 Hayter Reed, Indian Commissioner, to SGIA, May 20, 1884, NA [sic LAC], RG10, vol. 3745, file 29,506-4.
194 ICC report 92.
On Christmas Eve 1884, Long Lodge died apparently while south of the Border visiting relatives. After a spring and summer of scurvy and malnutrition/starvation the elderly Chief was no longer able to continue. It appears that the government’s grip finally tightened around the neck of this band. The pervious hardships they endured in the Cypress Hills are spectacular, and the forced movement out of that diverse ecosystem caused many Assiniboine to die of starvation and exposure. Now they come to a bald prairie setting under threats of punishment and starvation yet the starvation continues.

The role of a chief is described by the Elders:

*They had their chiefs, but like I said ... the chiefs can’t look after everyone. They kind of had little groups. You know my grandfather Eashappie, if there is a family that cannot hunt, or can’t feed themselves, he will go hunting. Like he’s the one that will stand up and gather all the young men and they will go hunting. He was the head hunting party’s leader. So then he’ll bring back all the meat and he’ll distribute it, and make sure that this family that cannot hunt anymore, does have enough food. He does things like that ... That’s what she means when she says a leader. Not as a chief. He doesn’t do political decisions, but he does lead the people – his people (CTK Member Terri Prettyshield, 2015).*

*They made me sit alongside of Little Chief and he told me that there were some things that he wanted to tell me. He said that he was a leader of the tribe and always remembered things and did things for his people, and not only him, but there were some other of his friends, meaning the old people at the time, they were the leaders at that time (Many Coos, September 19th, 1929).*

*You know that massacre that took place out there in the Cypress Hills, that’s when there were group bosses. My great grandfather, he brought his group out here along with his friend. They both had a group like that. You know, they look after them. It’s just like, you don’t call them chiefs, but they’re leaders. So they brought them out here ... Leaders - They called them watchmen. They watched them. They had groups, there’s 2 Assiniboine. Like my great grandfather and his friend and I think his name is Little Chief, anyway they both look after 2 groups of Assiniboine. They belong together, but you know they cut it in half so it wasn’t that many to look after (Elder Nancy Eashappie, 2015).*

But the government was unrelenting. As soon as Dewdney got word of the Chief’s death, he immediately recommended an amalgamation of Long Lodge’s band with that of the Man Who Took the Coat. Early in March Agent McDonald was able to convince Long Lodge’s band members to accept this proposal, and later in March the department approved of this decision. Dewdney lost no time in communication with
Surveyor Nelson to order a new survey of the reserves at Indian Head to reflect the population of the new amalgamated single band. This was done on June 5, 1885. By this time Piapot had abandoned the reserve previously surveyed for him at Indian Head preferring a reserve in the Qu’Appelle Valley. This left a single reserve in the Assiniboine Agency. Nelson reported his discussion of the boundaries with Man Who Took the Coat and Indian Agent McDonald:

I left Indian Head, accompanied by Colonel McDonald, Indian Agent, to consult with Chief Jack in regard to the boundaries of his reserve. He said since talking with Colonel McDonald in the spring, he had carefully examined the block of land set apart for the Assiniboine Indians, and would like to obtain that part of it which had been abandoned by Pie-pot [sic], for he found both land and timber good, and preferred it to any farther west. Seeing no objection to this, it was decided between us that the tract which he desired should form part of the reserve for his band and that of the late Chief Long Lodge. The reserve was finally laid out nine miles from east to west by eight from north to south.

The resulting reserve that would become IR 76 was in area 73.2 square miles, approximately 46,854 acres, and this land was declared to be the Assiniboine Reserve on May 17th, 1889, by Order in Council 1151-1889. Following the terms of Treaty 4, the amount of land to be set aside per person was 128 acres. The amount of reserve lands in the new survey represented land for 366 individuals. The Annual Report as of December 31, 1884 indicated a total population for the new band of 339 persons, and this consisted of the population of the bands of Man Who Took the Coat of 251 and Long Lodge with 88. This is in contrast with the estimate of the population of the two bands in 1882 by the Farm Instructor of over 500 people with almost 75 additional “stragglers.” It appears that the population had declined by nearly ½ (according to these estimates) since the signing of treaty in the Cypress Hills. This decline was worse than any massacre and comparable to a smallpox epidemic. It was not however, a disease, but rather it was government policy.

The formal withdrawal of IR 76 from the operation of the Dominion Lands Act was instituted on June 12, 1893, by Order in Council 1694-1893.

---

195 ICC report 93.
197 Federal Order in Council. May 17, 1889.
198 ICC report 94.
200 Order in Council PC 1694-1893, June 12, 1893, NA [sic LAC], RG 2, Series 1.
Elder Delmar Runs told us that these reserve lands – that were forced upon them – had to be shared by many people “well when they got here, they never chose this reserve. This was chosen by the government … they said there was a lot of elk and the deer but see, half of this is ‘Mountain Lodge’ and the other half is ‘Take the Coat’. It was 200 or 300 some square miles. And this reserve was for three chiefs. The Piapot chief, ‘Take the Coat’ and ‘Mountain Lodge’ (Elder Delmar Runs, 2015):

When they first got over here there was three reserves here. There was Carry the Coat and his people; Mountain Lodge and his people; and Chief Piapot and his people. And during that time Chief Man Who Took the Coat was at Mountain Lodge, and passed away. So when the treaty process came along, they amalgamated these people and they went under Mountain Lodge from Man Who Took the Coat. During that period of time when they were amalgamated and taking treaty, he passed away, and Carry the Kettle, his brother was next in line to be chief. So Carry the Kettle became chief and our band name stayed that under treaty (Elder James O’Watch, 2015).
RESERVE FARMING POLICIES

Within the Saskatchewan treaties, there were clauses as well as oral promises made that assured these First Nations the necessary government assistance to establish an alternative ‘farming’ economy following the disappearance of the buffalo. Government officials however, were reluctant to distribute what had been promised in the treaties and the few implements that were given, were inadequate at best - Ten families, for example, were to share one plough – Ontario-made ploughs unsuitable for prairie conditions; seed grain in the earliest years arrived damaged and too late for sowing; carts and oxen sent provided were the cheapest that could be found and altogether unfit for use; and wild Montana cattle were sent to many reserves.

These first Aboriginal farmers of the 1870s to early 1880s laboured under many disadvantages—including the permit system that stated they could not sell any of their grain or other produce without permission, and after 1885, the pass system was enforced that controlled and confined their every movement off the reserve. Still, non-aboriginal settlers had the misconception that reserve farmers were lavishly provided with livestock, equipment and rations, and did not have to worry about the price they sold their products. The solemn promises of assistance made to them in the treaties, in exchange for sharing the land that permitted the settlers to acquire their farms, were regarded as charity.

As a result, the Federal Government imposed the Pheasant Farming Policy whereby Aboriginal farmers were to reduce their acreages dramatically and to grow only root crops – no wheat. They were also only permitted to use the most rudimentary implements; sowing their seed by hand; harvesting with scythes; binding by hand with straw; and grinding their grain with hand mills. Any items they required were to be manufactured themselves at home. Aboriginal farmers were profoundly discouraged by the new rules, and many had given up farming altogether.

Beginning in 1889, Indian reserves were to be divided approximately in two: one-half would be surveyed into 40-acre lots upon which individual families were to farm; the other half was to be held in common as hay and timber land. Reed’s belief was that an Indian farmer was to become self-sufficient, but was not to compete in the marketplace. This was but another means of restricting how successful Aboriginal farmers could be and ultimately contributed to the failure of agriculture on First Nations reserves. Although this policy was shelved after 1896, Aboriginal farmers gained little ground in the early 20th century, as large tracts of arable land were forcibly ‘surrendered’ to non-Aboriginal interests (Carter, 1990).

The history to our 1905 claim talks about, we had a bunch of horses and people had cattle, so we needed money to make a community pasture… They needed twine, fence posts, fences, all those, and when they went to the Indian agent, rather than exercising their treaty, be told them, you guys don’t have no money so why don’t you sell some land or lease it out. So, they talked about it - They didn’t want to sell their land. But ended up selling some land in 1905 to purchase a thrashing machine, fence posts, wire and nails, and twine and stuff they needed to make a community pasture with (Elder James O’Watch, 2015).
Elder Vincent Ryder explained that one of the seven sacred rights and the most prevalent of ceremonies given to the people was the sacred Sundance.

After contact with European colonists, and with the formation of Canada and the United States, governments in both countries created laws banning the practice of their cultural beliefs and spiritual ceremonies. Indian agents, based on directives from their superiors, routinely interfered with and disallowed Sundances on reserves from 1882 until the 1940s (Pettipas, 1994). Those that continued to practice their culture were imprisoned or even killed for doing so. As a result, and in order to preserve Indigenous culture for future generations, most ceremonies went underground and were practiced in secret:

Albert, he had a Sundance twice, and two times by Charlie Rider … The land is actually out there … out past the pow wow grounds a bit … not too far from there, that’s where Albert had his Sundance … He had one and then a couple years later, and that was the last time … around the 40s (Elder Nancy Eashappie and Terri Prettyshield, 2015).

Somehow they let him do it … I was told it was outlawed then finally one-day Old Man Charlie put one on. And then, that’s where I first knew about it. Then they had one the next year, and next year. Then somebody else had one (Elder Leroy Hassler, 2015).

Years ago our grandfather was a medicine man and he used to do a Sundance down there. It’s in the old pasture. That was the last Sundance here, for that area … around the west here, there’s some high hills over there, they call that sacred land … people go up there and they fast up there and they pray – Sharp Hills. It’s called the Sharp Hills (Elder Garry Whitecap, 2015).

Some of them that could do things like that will have ceremonies. Like Tim Eashappie, I see that he make a raindance, and then they’ll have these round dance, and pow wow … things like that they do now and then (Elder Nancy Eashappie, 2015).

As with medicines, Carry the Kettle Elders are reluctant to discuss the Sundance in any great detail, for fear their traditional ways may be abused, misused, or not passed on in the right ways. In general terms however, the object of this ceremony is to offer personal sacrifice as a prayer for the benefit of one’s family and community. Dances and songs passed down through generations are celebrated with the use of a traditional drum, sacred fire, ceremonial pipe, fasting, natural medicines, and prayer:
them so much to take them … some of our relatives came from Montana (Elder Bernice Saulleaux, 2015).

All over, wherever the pow wow is they’d go. If it was in the States they’d go – Montana, Manitoba … It used to be just around here – Fort Kipp. A lot of them used to go to Poplar, Fort Kipp because there’s Assiniboine there too, that’s just across the border. But now they go down to Albuquerque, New Mexico. They travel all over Canada and the United States for pow wows (Elder James O’Watch, 2015).

Because Carry the Kettle members have so many relatives from Standing Buffalo, they often attend their ceremonies, celebrations and pow wows. Elder Rena Ryder recalls going to pow wows with her family as a child “once in a while. They go in a wagon for a few days … Just the ones that are close around – like Standing Buffalo, around here” (Elder Rena Ryder, 2015). “Standing Buffalo was a big pow wow here. It was the pow wow that belonged to the Sioux and Assiniboine. Crees never had pow wow. They only have it now. They learned everything from the Assiniboine and Sioux” (Elder James O’Watch, 2015).

**LANGUAGE AND RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS**

The Residential School System dates back to the 1870s. The policy behind the government funded, church-run schools attempted to “kill the Indian in the child”. Over 130 residential schools were located across the country, with the last one closing in 1996. More than 150,000 First Nations, Métis and Inuit children were taken from their families and placed in these schools – forbidden to speak their language and practice their culture (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). The children of Carry the Kettle were no exception.

Elders interviewed recounted their experiences of being forcibly removed from their homes and the confusion and trauma that prevailed. “They took me to school and just a couple of weeks after that I was seven years old … The R.C.M.P. had to come and get me because they didn’t want to let me go” (Elder Vincent Ryder, 2015). “The priest kept coming and coming, and they handcuffed us and – gone” (Elder Tony Ashdohonk, 2015):

One day a truck came by and there was a lady in there … and they picked us up. My dad wasn’t home … he was a workaholic – always busy in the fields or chopping wood and this truck had come. But as kids, we didn’t know what was going on – we were always supposed to obey adults’ right. They load us up in the truck and took us, and I remember just a long, long trip … and they took my brothers because we were holding hands and they just pulled us apart. And I remember just screaming – my brother just screaming. It was a nightmare (Elder Myrtle Hassler, 2015).

Elder Myrtle Hassler told us of the fear her father had of imprisonment if he did not allow his children to be taken away to school:
He said when he first found out that we were taken from that house … when he got home my sister said that somebody had taken the kids … it was nighttime and he ran to the agency and that’s what he was told. We were all taken to boarding school. They didn’t ask him or anything and he didn’t know … His hands were tied ‘I can’t do anything’ he said. If I do anything they’re going to lock him up in jail and he’ll get no rations (Elder Myrtle Hassler, 2015).

The children stayed at these schools for ten months out of the year, allowed to return home only in the summer:

At that time we drove in the back of the truck – the farm truck … I remember when they took us back in August, in the summertime before school, because they would pick up people from here, Fort Qu’Appelle, Broadview, White Bear … we would pick up people as we went. I think they all met in Broadview at that time because they had a bench all around back of the truck and we had our suitcases underneath, or bags, whatever we were taking, and we had some kind of a tarp, only for the top … but we got the dust anyways (Elder Wanda Prettyshield, 2015).

The Canadian Residential School system, as with the other legislation policies discussed in this study, was all about assimilating the native into the white-man’s way of living, speaking and believing – forbidding the children to acknowledge their Aboriginal heritage, culture and language (Hanson, 2009).

Carry the Kettle Elders suffered insurmountable emotional and physical abuse at the hands of the Maitres’ in charge of these schools. They recounted how they were starved and in some cases, how family members actually died at the hands of these authority figures:

Oh we were tortured. Had to take food out to other boys – little boys that were starving. We lost a lot of weight and they had to give us – there was
a group of us that were all underweight – they had to give us around 3:00 in the afternoon – cocoa and peanut butter sandwich – bread … They starved so much that they used to sneak to Brandon City Dump and eat what we could find. Burnt oranges or apples, or packages of, I don't know what it was, something sweet I guess … Or even the farms around there, we had to go through their garbage, look around their piles, maybe sometimes they throw stuff away and we'd eat what they didn't eat up. Bread, oranges and apples. Stuff like that. Sometimes they get to know you, sometimes they chase you. We used to go to the experimental farm and steal crab apples. It's a long way (Elders Duncan Thomson and Roswell Saulteaux, 2015).

He was older than I was, he was seven, I might have been about three or four … and my sister had seen him … the girls had pulled her over and said 'there's your little brother', and she just remembered a Maître grab-bing and pulling him, and he was crying for mom, and there was blood all over his head, all over his nose, all over his face, his ears. She doesn't know what happened but the story goes – he went to File Hills - they hear this little boy crying every night. He must have lasted two, three days, and after that, that's it, they didn't hear a little boy crying anymore. And my parents say they didn't tell my parents at all … she (my mother) found out he was buried at the school and she didn't know about it (Elder Myrtle Hassler, 2015).

She (Elder Rena Ryder) left for residential school when she was five years old (or seven) and didn't get back until she was fourteen … She doesn't speak Nakota because that's why she's deaf - the nun Maître beat her up. But she understands it … That's why she's deaf, because every time they spoke it they would hit her … She's very fluent in Nakota but she won't speak it. Like, grandpa used to speak it to her all the time and she would understand it, but she won't speak it at all (Elder Rena Ryder and Stacey Hotomani, 2015).

With the children banned from communicating in their native tongue, many lost the ability to speak Assiniboine; understand Assiniboine; or both. This has carried on through generations of Carry the Kettle people, with residential school survivors unable to pass on their traditional language to their children “I speak some words but I don't know the whole language” (Lyle Spencer, 2015). “I didn't catch on to any of that. I wish I would … I always wanted to speak my own language” (Elder Art Adams, 2015). “I'm just learning the things now – the language … Assiniboine” (Elder Derrick Saulteaux, 2015). Darryl Jacks grandparents and parents spoke both Assiniboine and Sioux “fluently, they understood it very well because they grew up around it” (Darryl Jack, 2015). He unfortunately can only speak a few words “a little bit, not too much. Just words pretty well. I can't speak it though” (Darryl Jack, 2015):

My mom and dad were the last ones who spoke it frequently. After that, there was a lot of mixed marriages, and there was assimilation. They sent us all out to residential school … sending us to white schools where they never spoke our language (Elder James O'Watch, 2015).
Elder James O’Watch explained that there is another sacred site in need of protection around St. Victors. “That’s just south-east of Assiniboine. There’s a great big flat rock over there. You climb up, its way up on kind of a hill … right on top there is a rock with a bunch of writings on it … I was there two years ago. I sat on the board of the Saskatchewan Native Cultural College and they took a group of us over there to look at it and see – make our recommendations on what we wanted to see happen … There’s all kinds of writing on there – bear feet” (Elder James O’Watch, 2015).

Elder James O’Watch explained that the trail his people traveled from Cypress Hills to their current reserve should also be considered sacred, although there was no information about where that trail may have been. “They took them back from Cypress Hills … there is the reserve land … they say that’s where they moved us here with teams of horses … So all along there, there’s burials and all that stuff” (Elder James O’Watch, 2015). Elders expressed that the Cypress Hills region is a major burial site for their ancestors. Stone markers from Nakota camps dating back hundreds of years can be found there. “One thing they always said was that our loved ones are buried over at the Cypress Hills. This is our homeland and we want to go back” (Elder Delmar Runs, 2015):

The original Assiniboines had their burial grounds all over this section of the country … in the olden days, as far as the Assiniboine territory, within that boundary … the practice of the Indians in the old days, they didn’t usually put them on trestles; the Assiniboines didn’t use that method of burial. In those days – and I am pretty sure that all the Assiniboines here will vouch for that – they were buried up in the limbs of trees so that the wolves and coyotes and wild animals cannot reach them … I don’t know that they ever had any marks for them (Warren Carl/Brings Back, September 14th, 1929).

“I remember them saying … south over there – someone is buried. He died there and just buried him in the trees that way. Put them up above the ground. I think there was an old pow wow grounds there … Just about a mile south of here – two miles south – off the main road here” (Orval Spencer, 2015). “They used to bury their people up in trees. My mom used to say that” (Elder Joyce Prettyshield, 2015).

In later years when the community began to build their band office, the fact that their reserve was built on a previous burial ground became evident once again: “When they dig about here (2 feet) from there, it was all bones, lots of bones. And that guy with the CAT he told me ‘Tony, you know, this is a big graveyard’ … And skulls … we pushed all the dirt and all these bones, skulls” (Elder Tony Ashdohonk, 2015).

Like some other Carry the Kettle members, when Lyle Spencer was asked if he knew of any unmarked burials or sacred sites he said “yes”, but was unwilling to share their locations “I might say no to that because those areas are traditional and protected and not much people know where they are – traditional burial sites” (Lyle Spencer, 2015). Still, some of the interviewees shared some knowledge regarding known burials throughout their reserve.
After the move to the southwestern plains the Assiniboine people relied on the large herds of bison which formed the basis of their livelihood. As outlined in chapter 4, the Assiniboine did not recognize white man’s ‘international boundary line’ that divided the north-western plains of the United States and the south-western plains of Canada. After the depletion of the buffalo, the Assiniboine began to depend more on other large game species such as antelope, elk, moose and deer found throughout their traditional lands. This chapter discusses both historic and current locations frequented for large game hunting, along with the methods and uses for these harvests.

**HISTORICAL BIG GAME HUNTING**

In interviews conducted in 1929, the Assiniboine discussed their hunting excursions as well as those of their parents and grandparents. These discussions included the importance of Cypress Hills, where they traveled, how they harvested, and what their harvests were used for. “We followed the game everywhere it could be found. If we heard of any herd of buffaloes anywhere, we would break camp and follow it. We were just like wolves; we go wherever there is game” (Last, September 14th, 1929):

My grandfather told me that at one time there were 700 lodges of the Assiniboine’s, but because of the size of the tribe at that time, there was no herd of buffalo sufficient to keep the tribe going. So finally, in order to save themselves, the tribe scattered out into small bands throughout the country (Last, September 14th, 1929).

This is a very large tribe of Indians. These Assiniboine’s were scattered in different bands throughout this whole territory here, and these different expeditions that I enumerated do not include the entire tribe, just certain bands travelling on these different marches. While we were on these trips the bands would be scattered all over. They didn’t go in just one band (Red Feather, September 14th, 1929).

The Assiniboine’s did not have any permanent camps, but they were in the habit of moving about as indicated by the fact that, wherever the night overtook them, there they camped; the next day they moved, taking their entire belongings and families. When the winter came they were not camped anywhere—but just located there for a while through the winter. That was the custom of the Assiniboine’s (Warren Carl/Brings Back, September 13th, 1929).
The way the Indians treated their hides, if they are going to tan them they usually fold it together in a small pack, or if they are going to just dry it, they will leave it open; they usually spread it out or nail it down on the ground to dry (Warren Carl/Brings Back, September 14th, 1929).

As previously discussed, the demise of the buffalo was a tragic loss for the Assiniboine peoples. ‘Last’ from The Assiniboine Tribe of Indians recalled when the ‘whitemen’ began their extermination of the large buffalo herds. “Sometimes they would kill a whole herd and leave only a few calves that would be running all over the slaughtered ones” (Last, September 14th, 1929). “The whole country was filled with buffaloes. They started out toward the Little Rockies, and large herds were killed off there” (Looking, September 13th, 1929).

The country was thick with buffalo. I traveled with these Indians quite a bit … in 1881 we crossed the Missouri River here at Wolf Point … there was only a few buffalo. All we found indicated where they took the hides off all over the country. That fall we came across at old Fort Peck Agency and we wintered there … I saw the buffalo hunters coming across the river with buffalo hides loaded just like hay. That is the spring … and when the winter came we went there to hunt, we took the sleighs. We found no buffalo, but found the hides piled up … Between 1882 and 1883 these Indians went up the river on a hunt, all the tribe. We got near Glasgow. All we found was buffalo hides stacked up like haystacks … That was our last buffalo hunt. When we came back in 1883 – that is when the starvation started (Martin Mitchell, September 12th, 1929). The Indian is not in the habit of killing game for pleasure or the fun of it. Any time an Indian kills game, such as buffaloes or small game or rabbits, they kill them for the purpose of using the meat for their living (Warren Carl/Brings Back, September 13th, 1929).

Buffalo hunting excursions were but one aspect of the seasonal harvesting cycles that brought the Assiniboine into the Cypress Hills. Many other game animals – small and large – were harvested by these people and were an essential part of their traditional diet. Deer, elk, and antelope were important meat sources as well as smaller birds and animals. “Rabbits are good to eat, and also prairie dogs, sage hens and even deer” (Sam King, September 18th, 1929):

We go out hunting out north. I stated that I had been up on the Belknap Reservation and some of these times we hunted and we roamed over in Cypress Hills and Sweet Grass Hills, and over into Canada. We had a lot of hunting over there (Crazy Bull, September 13th, 1929).

They survived by rabbits too, there were so many of them, plenty … there was plenty of game. Plenty of elk, moose, deer, antelopes, buffalo, raccoons. All the wild animals you can name, they were all there in abundance in Cypress Hills … And there were bears in there too, cougars. That’s how they survived … wild turkeys … pheasants … ducks, geese (Elder Delmar Runs, 2015).

---

259 Glasgow is a city located in Valley County, Montana, just west of Fort Peck. The Nakoda, Lakota and Dakota peoples alternately inhabited and claimed the region from the 16th to the late 19th centuries, surviving on the extensive buffalo and pronghorn antelope herds.
Traditional life dramatically changed for the Carry the Kettle people when placed on one little plot of reserve land – not even an area they considered ‘home’. Because of restrictions and permits, they were not allowed to leave the reserve to hunt, trap, fish or gather. Not even allowed to visit relatives without permission. Because of this, their traditional use during this time was limited to reserve boundaries.

**RESERVE BIG GAME HUNTING**

From the time the Carry the Kettle reserve was implemented to when the government permit and pass systems were lifted in the 1940s, an Indian agent resided on the reserve, policing the activities of the Assiniboine people. “Down the hills here, on this side … where the school burned down, well just east … people needed to go to him for permission and would either walk, ride horse, or take the wagon to his home … they couldn't go out of the reserve because of the Indian agent. He always had to give the okay” (Elder Victoria Prettyshield, 2014):

They couldn't leave the reserve without the agent’s permission. If they did they'd be thrown in jail … So they were mostly confined to this reserve … that was the time when you needed to have permits to go off the reserve. When they implemented the reservations system – implemented the Indian Act to control Indians (Elder Garry Whitecap, 2015).

We have to stay inside the reserve to hunt and pick. They don't get out … we're not allowed to hunt off reserve … The laws state that we can't go off reserve … You can't hunt out. If you chase a deer on reserve land and it gets out off reserve, well, you don't bother (Elder Nancy Eashappie and Terri Prettyshield, 2015).

Early government policy for First Nations in Saskatchewan was administered under the Indian Act, with the goal of training First Nations people to become farmers and assimilating them into the greater Canadian society. Through the Indian Act and an assimilationist policy based on social Darwinism, attempts were made to dispossess First Nations of their land and identity: the rationale behind the reserve system was to place them on pieces of land isolated from white settlement, where policies could be more easily applied and monitored. Once reserves had been selected and surveyed, Indian agents were sent to administer them; they had sweeping powers ranging from control of First Nations’ movement to control of agricultural equipment and expenditures by the Band.

The pass system was at first to be issued only to “Rebel Indians”; however, Macdonald insisted that the system should be applied to all First Nations. In early 1886, books of passes were issued to Indian agents, and subsequently First Nations people could not leave their reserve unless they had a pass signed by the Indian agent – describing when they could leave, where they could go, and when they had to return. The pass system, however, was never passed into legislation and as a result was never legal—although it was enforced well into the 1940s (Nestor, 2014).
CURRENT BIG GAME HUNTING

With passes, permits, and restrictions lifted, the Carry the Kettle people were finally able to practice their traditional livelihood outside of reserve boundaries and expand their hunting, trapping, and gathering activities throughout the traditional lands of their ancestors. Current traditional hunters now harvest big game throughout Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

THE CYPRUS HILLS AND THE UNITED STATES

Carry the Kettle traditional land users have returned to the Cypress Hills area to hunt, fish and gather “Cypress Hills. They have lots of elk out there … They have moose, bears … they don’t hunt the bear, mostly moose, deer, elk” (Elders Darlene and Garry Whitecap, 2015). “Cypress Hills, down that way … that’s our old stomping grounds … We’d go for two or three days. Camp out” (Clayton and Delbert Thomson, 2015). Although Leroy Walker’s father died when in 1978 when he was only nine years old, he still remembers hunting and fishing with him, “my dad went to Carlyle actually and sometimes the Cypress. Only two places he went” (Leroy Walker, 2015):

Well, for years, prior to 1882 our ancestors have frequently done hunting and trapping and fishing and survived off the land there. And that’s where we call home yet today. According to the stories that I’ve been told from my parents and grandparents, it was just a regular way of life for them out in the Cypress Hills because of the abundance of wild game and the berries and all of the sustenance they can get off of the land. Because that’s what they made their living from — was off of the land itself … Where we are today there’s bush, but not as great as there is in the Cypress Hills area (Clint Haywahe, CHGI, 2015).

There always was talk about wanting to go back over there to hunt, but I don’t think my dad did and I don’t think my grandpa did, but my brothers — they went back there. My brothers started to go back there in the 70s — the 60s and the 70s. Every year they’d go over there to hunt, to Cypress Hills (Elder Bernice Saulteaux, 2015).

When I was working in Moose Jaw there, I used to go to Cypress Hills almost every fall … There was a few of us that would go and we would camp over there for a week … There was moose there too but we didn’t really bother the moose. Some of us did get moose, but we went for elk or deer. Lots of deer there too … We’d make sausage out of it and burgers (Elder Roswell Saulteaux, 2015).

I was listening to some of the chiefs talking and a bunch of the boys are going out hunting around Cypress Hills and going someplace else. So everybody’s still going there. Doing their wild game hunting wherever they can and when they can, and pass the meat around to people who can’t hunt (Elder James OWatch, 2015).
Throughout the entire province, and some people go and hunt in the United States, we also have band members that live in the United States, so it's a wide variety of land … but also into Alberta and Manitoba (Clint Haywahe, 2015).

I remember coming here (Cypress Hills) for years, and I was a bush pusher as a young boy. Now I brought my son with me and I'm going to be teaching him what I was taught. It's going to be a good hunt for us. On the way coming we saw a bald eagle, and we just left this morning from Maple Creek and a golden eagle flew right across from us. So I think we're going to have a good turnout … it's like an owl. Some people say it brings good luck or bad luck, it just depends. For an eagle though, its luck – there's a sign there (Darwin Saulteaux, CHGI, 2015).

Lyle explained there are different areas to harvest large game in Cypress Hills: “There’s different parks. A Provincial Park and what they call the ‘west block’ – that’s where you hunt … The only time we hunt outside the park is when it’s open season, like for whitetail deer. But you can still hunt if you ask the farmer. But if it says ‘no hunting’ – ‘no trespassing’, you can’t hunt – but if you ask you can” (Lyle Spencer, 2015):

We just went to the park part, that’s all where you were allowed to hunt. That's the only place we hunted in there. I never tried anywhere else, just the park, I stayed in the park. There’s other places, you go right to the Alberta border here, but you can’t hunt into the Alberta side. If you get caught in the Alberta side, you get charged … So what they do, is go around into the other side and chase them back. Don't take a gun though. Just chase them back (Darryl Jack, 2015).

Our lands that we had out there are for hunting and a lot of people hunt out there but it’s supposed to be for CTK hunters, but it’s a long ways to go up there to hunt … when they purchased the land its hunting territory for CTK or if you have a friend to go out there with. Its traditional lands where you can smoke your pipe on any areas there. They have the feast and that, sweats. But if you want to hunt, you get your animal one or two but, it’s just other hunters go in there and they don’t respect it, they drive all over … it’s always better to just walk in … Other than that they got the whole provincial park there you can hunt in (Lyle Spencer, 2015).

We went to three or four provincial parks. There was one in Carlyle, Cypress Hills of course … It was just so far away, because if you go over there and kill an elk, you almost have to come home right away unless you have a way to keep the meat cold. And you didn’t want to go over there just for one, you’d want a few of them (Elder James O’Watch, 2015).

THE QU’APPELLE VALLEY

The Qu’Appelle Valley with its close proximity to Carry the Kettle reserve and it’s lush landscape for animals, fish and plants is a much frequented
harvesting location for the Carry the Kettle people “I never did go off hunting off the reserve … the only place I would be off the reserve would be in the valley” (Orval Spencer, 2015). Delmar Runs hunted throughout this area with his grandparents, “there was a lot of wildlife around the area because there was not much hunters at that time. There was plenty of everything … a lot of deer. Get a deer and drag it home. In the wintertime you drag them home and skin them” (Elder Delmar Runs, 2015). Elder Vincent Ryder also hunted the Qu’Appelle Valley with his grandfather and outlined some of the places they would frequent:

The valleys, up and down the valleys. There's a valley running from Standing Buffalo north, runs quite a ways back north. I remember there used to be a road there, across from the town Lipton. There was a valley, and that was the reserve line just a ways from that town of Lipton. And we used to go hunting there. And they used to go hunt across the valley south from Standing Buffalo. Today there's a park there … The valley west, on the south, was the Pasqua reserve … We used to hunt as far as Pasqua (Elder Vincent Ryder, 2015).

There's a lot of creeks and stuff, walking through running water, rivers to go hunting, which I think was dangerous. That was when we were younger though. That was in the valley. The Qu’Appelle Valley, we hunted deer in there all the time, around Wolseley in there, back around the valley. A lot of deer in there (Darryl Jack, 2015).
PARKS, CROWN LANDS, AND OTHER WILDLIFE AREAS

It is not just the Cypress Hills and Qu’Appelle Valley regions that the Carry the Kettle people now use for traditional harvesting, but all the wildlife areas, Crown lands, and provincial and national parks they have access to – north, south, east and west of their reserve. “I can remember from long back when I was a kid … they hunted around here, just out here on the reserve … When we got to our age, we could go hunting all over the place. We go up to Moose Mountain … Carlyle area, Maple Creek, Hudson Bay … and Greenwater, in there too … and Cypress” (Darrell Jack, 2015). “I got a little older and started hunting elk in different parks, Greenwater or Carlyle and Cypress Hills (Clayton and Delbert Thomson, 2015). “I hunt all over … I’m totally different from my parents and grandparents. I hunt from basically Prince Albert all the way over, everyplace, Saskatoon, Manitoba … Elk, moose, deer” (Leroy Walker, 2015). Clint Haywahe knows that his parents and grandparents did not hunt and trap just within the perimeters of the reserve:

Throughout the territory here, in Saskatchewan, right from Cypress Hills to Manitoba … my family members have hunted from the park – Cypress Hills, up to Greenwater, and down in White Bear, and then Pipestone Valley … We grew up the same way … I started hunting when I was about fourteen and hunted throughout the province … me and my brothers would go out. So we’ve maintained that lifestyle throughout our lives – what we learned from them. That’s why I say, carry on traditions (Clint Haywahe, CHGI, 2015).

Nowadays, people go to Moose Mountain and down Carlyle, way over by Hudson … way up by Yorkton … the park, way over there on the border … they go all over … Greenwater, that’s another area. In modern times they amended the Indian act at certain times and nowadays – these modern times – you can hunt pretty well anywhere, as long as you have a hunting license. So they travel all over – Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba (Elders Darlene and Garry Whitecap, 2015).

Anywhere. Well this is the Assiniboine area – that’s where all the Nakota people hunt. And all this was a great place for Assiniboine to hunt. Even in Winnipeg Manitoba and close to the Rockies, that’s all hunting grounds for Assiniboine there (Elder Delmar Runs, 2015).

Kurt Ryder’s father provided for his family by hunting “we used to go up north hunting long ago. We used to go way up to … Hudson Bay … Yorkton … and Porcupine Plains, Greenwater … mostly walk for moose. And we’d go to White Bear … just in the park” (Kurt Ryder, 2015):

My dad would go hunt in Hudson Bay with his friends. That’s where they used to go hunt. They’d go for a week, week and a half … and then … Greenwater … that’s where he’d take hunting trips. Down to the park and Cypress was like two day hunting … camp out there … Mainly elk and moose because they were rare around here (Clint Haywahe, 2015).
The one up north in Kamsack area, it’s called Hudson Bay I think … I went one year and north of Kamsack in the forest there … Elk, moose were the main targets. Deer we had over here, rabbits. It was the big game that we didn’t have over here. And bring it back, cut it up, pass it around, put it into storage. Pass it around, especially to the old people – people with large families (Elder James O’Watch, 2015).

We go to Moose Mountain Provincial Park or Cypress Hills, or in the north here – Greenwater … Well actually it’s everywhere when hunting season opens up – there’s seasons for the ‘white guy’ hunters. For that season, it opens up the third week in November and you can hunt anywhere (Keith Prettyshield, 2015).

The Provincial parks surrounding the Carry the Kettle reserve are all hunting grounds for Carry the Kettle members. Darrel Jack explained that, when harvesting elk he would travel to “Moose Mountain provincial area, then you go up to Riding Mountain National Park, Duck Mountain” (Darryl Jack, 2015). Elder Rena Ryder’s son Lyle provides wild meat for her and the family and hunts quite often in many of the park areas “He goes to the park in Cypress Hills. Him and Art and them. They go on a big trip … They go to Greenwater it’s called” (Elder Rena Ryder, 2015). “Elk, deer, moose … There’s some on CTK. There’s moose and elk out here, with deer. Otherwise we go to Moose Mountain Provincial Park or Cypress Hills, or in the north here – Greenwater … Partridge in Moose Mountain, there’s lots of them all over” (Lyle Spencer, 2015).

The Prettyshield sisters said that most people did not hunt around Moose Mountain until later years “it was too far to go” (Elders Victoria, Joyce and Gladys Prettyshield, 2015). Still, some made the trek. Elder Bernice Saulteaux’s father hunted Moose Mountain “They went to Moose Mountain, but not often, like whenever they could get there” (Elder Bernice Saulteaux, 2015) and Elder Art Adams grandparents also traveled to the Moose Mountains to harvest big game for their families: “They hunted moose and mostly elk and deer. It wasn’t around here. Some of the time they would talk about going to the Moose Mountain area whenever they had to, to look for moose and elk. The most thing they had around here was deer” (Elder Art Adams, 2015).

In later years, with vehicles, Moose Mountain became much more assessable. That’s when the Prettyshield brothers began going to Moose Mountain for elk quite a bit “I hunted in Moose Mountain too for elk or deer … just for the day. Close by, it’s only an hour’s drive” (Elder Roswell Saulteaux, 2015). “The last time I went to Moose Mountain, me and a group of guys … I plan to go hunting, me and my friends here this fall (Elder Garry Whitecap, 2015). “Carlyle … Moose Mountain. Just that it’s close to home, but it’s a little tougher hunting grounds … It’s more like quad and bush and things like that… There’s no bear over there” (Leroy Walker, 2015).

Both Leroy Walker and Keith Prettyshield hunt the entire area of Porcupine Provincial Park, Greenwater, and all the wildlife areas in between, including Crown lands and farmers’ fields when permitted:
There’s some wildlife parks over here, two of them, we go in there once in a while … the CFRAs … I usually just go for two and that should do me for the winter … We went to Greenwater and we got twelve (elk) in one day – one night. And then my brother in law came back with a truck and loaded them all out … We passed them all out (Elders Delbert and Clayton Thomson, 2015).

Greenwater – that’s north of Fort Qu’Appelle … it’s a provincial park … Same thing there (as with Cypress Hills), lots of posted land, but if you ask, then you may get permission. But sometimes you won’t because of the crops and that. We go for elk, deer and moose there as well … its wood – flat land (Lyle Spencer, 2015).

I hunted – where’s north. Here’s porcupine – I hunt in this whole area right here. That vicinity. That’s where I go. I go up to that park, this park here and plus I know a lot of farmers in this particular area (Porcupine Provincial Forest; White Fish Provincial Park). Greenwater. And right between … this is all forest in here too … It’s all forest in here and wildlife lands (Leroy Walker, 2015).

Keith Prettyshield’s family knew many of the farmers in surrounding areas. Because of that, it was never difficult to get permission to hunt on their lands: “My grandparents they knew quite a bit of farmers so, all over – south of the reserve here. East, west … Kendal, Odessa, Gilmore … and down to Perceville, Ocean Man … elk, deer … they had to hunt … Like all around these little areas, these local areas, we hunt around there” (Keith Prettyshield, 2015). Leroy Walker often gets permission from farmers to help cull animals that are over populated in their area, “sometimes there’s guys, our friends, like our non-native friends, say there’s a moose population that’s overgrown and they’re bothering the farmers. They’ll call us to do some killing for them” (Leroy Walker, 2015):

Our daddies tell us that if you’re going to go hunt on farmers’ land, go and get permission, so that’s what we practiced. Because at one time there was a lot of wild game in the area, this was probably I’d say mid-80s. There was one farmer where deer was getting into his granaries and that so he contacted us and we went out. But before we went to his place, we got his permission … then I went to the R.C.M.P to let them know. So there was people who phoned in … and reported it, but nothing happened because the R.C.M.P knew and the owner gave us permission (Clint Haywahe, 2015).

Around … Yellow Quill. Yellow Quill and Fishing Lake, they have lands around this area and I got a lot of friends in this area so we hunt up on their lands. And there’s a lot of crown land that belongs to the government which we’re allowed to hunt on, and wildlife lands … all the way down to Kelvington, across to Preeceville, up to here – the border – back … That’s all forest, bush, wild life lands and everything (Leroy Walker, 2015).
We have land down around the valley so we hunt there. We have land by Indian Head so we hunt there … I used to hunt south of Candiac, right up to south of Glenavon … around Pheasant Rump territory. Never hunted on their reserve lands, but there's lots more land there. Sometimes on the way going down, we'll like zig-zag going up and zig-zag coming back (Keith Prettyshield, 2015).

Sometimes I go up here by Lloydminster with my buddies … lots of elk, moose, deer in those areas too … Just south of Lloyd … There's a couple of reserves there … they have a bunch of treaty land entitlements so we go on their lands. And same with the Prince Albert area, and same with Melfort and that area, and same with Saskatoon area. There's a couple of areas we're allowed to hunt … so we hunt. Like I said, I kind of hunt all over the place … Wherever there's wildlife lands, that's where we hunt (Leroy Walker, 2015).

Historically, Carry the Kettle people harvested bison as an important part of their plains culture. They traveled continuously, far and wide, to obtain this important source of meat and supplies. Big game has always been a necessity for the Assiniboine people in this region. Although some of the species harvested have changed due to loss of populations and government interference, the need for these animals for subsistence and cultural continuity is still alive today. The next chapter will discuss smaller game hunted by the Carry the Kettle people and the importance of these activities to their traditional way of life.
Figure 18: Big Game Hunting
Figure 19: Crown Lands and Traditional Use
Harvesting Smaller Game, Birds, Fishing and Trapping

Smaller game animals were always a mainstay of the Carry the Kettle diet. They added diversity to big game harvests, and were particularly important in times of scarcity. Originally being a Woodland culture, the Assiniboine adapted well to fishing and snaring smaller game to supplement their diet after the demise of the buffalo. After being placed on their new reserve lands, fishing was not an option, but harvesting smaller game became more of a necessity to feed their families. This chapter discusses the continuation and adaptation of these seasonal activities after their removal from their Cypress Hills homelands including species harvested, their locations, methods, and uses. It also outlines their minimal fishing activities – since their ‘new’ reserve had no lake or rivers to harvest this essential aspect of their diet also discussed are the traditional trapping activities that the Carry the Kettle members partook in - long after the fur trade had ended.

**SMALLER GAME, BIRDS AND WATERFOWL**

Smaller game animals were a definite mainstay for Carry the Kettle families, “they (grandparents) lived off the land … on reserve here. There used to be lots of bush here where they hunted and trapped” (Elder James O’Watch, 2015). “Oh, we had prairie chickens, rabbits, grouse and partridge” (Elder Darlene Whitecap, 2015). “Rabbits, gopher … For the birds - I hunt ducks, geese, prairies chicken and what they call bush grouse” (Lyle Spencer, 2015). “I used to go hunt rabbits, partridges, deer … skinned them, gutted them, cooked them up … That’s all when I was younger” (Elder Derrick Saulteaux, 2015). “Yes, rabbits, prairies chickens, partridge … when we were younger … and today yet, my brother and I still go out hunting” (Clint Haywabe, 2015). “Sometimes maybe geese, grouse, rabbits … and it depends if somebody wants muskrat, beavers anything like that, I shoot them for them” (Leroy Walker, 2015):

Porcupines, cougars, rabbits. Mainly rabbits were in abundance here (on reserve) … Porcupine, and sometimes there’s skunk – but you need to know how to eat skunk. Partridges, prairie chickens, there were plenty of them … geese and ducks … That’s how they survived, by the rabbits, prairie chickens, ducks, geese, they were all here – but their soul and their heart wasn’t (Elder Delmar Runs, 2015).

Elder Delmar Run’s father harvested many rabbits on reserve “oh yeah. All we did was snare rabbits. We lived on rabbits” (Elder Delmar Runs, 2015).

Elder Wanda Prettyshield recalls her dogs chasing rabbits away from her
house as a child “that’s how plentiful they were. You see rabbits everywhere you go. You go for a walk you see rabbits and prairie chickens – when you’re riding … as kids we rode horses, that’s what we did and we talked about the hunting (Elder Wanda Prettyshield, 2015). “There were plenty of rabbits in the area … they’d go out in the field and hunt them … We lived more in the southwest … they hunted all over” (Elder Darlene Whitecap, 2015):

We snared rabbits … Everybody knew how to snare animals – rabbits – just put a snare in the bush and go back in half an hour you had one … My neighbour, he was teaching all his nephews. They’re young. He’s younger than me, only 30. Keith was teaching his sister’s children to snare rabbits behind the house (Elders Garry and Darlene Whitecap, 2015).

We checked the sloughs, rabbit snares we checked at the same time as trapping. We had to check our rabbit snares. If you didn’t do it in the morning the magpies got them. You had to be out there early morning … when it’s getting dark, you check them again (Darryl Jack, 2015).

Rabbits … there was lots in them days … everywhere you went. You went inside a house and all you smelled was rabbits and deer meat … Wherever you went, they would offer you a cup of tea and a chunk of meat … Back when I was 16, 17 … there was lots of eating rabbits … there’s still lots, but it declined (Elder Art Adams, 2015).

Prairie chickens and partridge could be found all around the reserve “it was nothing for the boys or my dad to go out and get a prairie chicken … Prairie chickens were kind of all over the place at that time” (Elder Wanda Prettyshield, 2015). “We lived on prairie chicken and ducks” (Kurt Ryder, 2015). “Prairie chickens anywhere on the reserve … and the ‘bush grouse’ what we call out here – partridge” (Lyle Spencer, 2015). “Rabbits, partridge, prairie chickens. We’d bring them home and I’d help skin them and all that” (Elder Art Adams, 2015):

Prairie chickens, yes, we used to shoot a lot of those too. I’d snare them … There’s some here and there … Used to just set a tree up made of willow – grey willow or something – stuck them in the ground and put a snare wire there. And so, where they dance on the trails, you would snare them. And otherwise, just sit and watch them dance too. It was fun growing up (Darryl Jack, 2015).

Prairie chickens. My dad used to take us to watch them dance – chicken dance … Out in the prairies you used to see them. You could hear them. They looked so nice. They had their own place to dance. That’s when they’re mating (Elders Victoria, Joyce and Gladys Prettyshield, 2015).

Waterfowl was always harvested annually around the many sloughs throughout the reserve, “the most common ones to eat is geese and ducks” (Lyle Spencer, 2015). Elder Leroy Hassler always had duck as part of his diet “we have ducks right in our front yard right now. We have beaver in our front yard” (Elder Leroy Hassler, 2015). “I shoot, like in the spring. I hunt ducks and dog goose, but mostly ducks … on the reserve here” (Keith Prettyshield, 2015).
Gathering Medicines, Herbs, Berries, and Wild Vegetables

Gathering itself has always been an intricate aspect of Assiniboine culture. Harvesting berries, herbs and wild vegetables provides a nutritious and essential balance to the Assiniboine traditional diet, but these fruits and roots are also used in principal feasts and spiritual ceremonies. Although gathering activities were continuous throughout millennium, after being confined to reserves, gardens played an important role in balancing Carry the Kettle’s traditional dietary needs. This chapter discusses some of the plant harvesting locations and uses. Also discussed is the relevance of medicinal plants to these very spiritual peoples and the need to protect them for future generations.

MEDICINES

Traditionally the Assiniboine had healers – medicine men and women that knew what herbs to find, where to find them and how to use them. These ‘Medicine Elders’ are not only traditional healers but spiritual leaders within the community that embody traditional approaches to healing that are holistic and consider the mind, body and spirit (National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2008). Darlene Whitecap’s grandfather symbolized these attributes “I know he was a medicine man and he helped people” (Elder Darlene Whitecap, 2015). “I know some people were using them. Like Charlie Ryder Senior, he was … people will go to him when they’re sick, and he cures them with what he has” (Elder Nancy Eashappie, 2015):

*Every grandparent, the old people, knew the medicine because they used to pass it on, and a lot of them had grandchildren, so, all the old women and old men, they all knew medicine – some of them made it. But there was always one or two that … were kind of holier I guess you could say. They’re the ones that people would go to because they had a gift of healing* (Elder James O’Watch, 2015).

*My grandmother … my step grandmother, she was blind and she was a medicine woman. In fact, she raised all of us. We never went to see a white doctor too much, she gave us herbs. And they knew where to pick them, in the spring – other ones at certain times of the year. They knew when to harvest anyway … She had a blanket she had over her shoulder coming back* (Elder James O’Watch, 2015).

*My doctor was my grandma – herbs. My great grandfather is the one that used to sit up in the hill. And my mom said ‘your great grandfather
used to sit up on the hill there – fast – four days – he’ll get his answer up there and he’d come down the hill’. And he knew what medication – what plants to get. And he would go out someplace and go and dig out his roots. He’ll come home and he’ll make it. And that’s how we all got better. Anything that’s wrong with us he’ll fix us up … because my grandmother … and Bertha OWatch used to know all those herbs. Used to have them all in those bags … Anyway, we used to go to her place and if there was anything wrong with us, if we were sick or whatever, my mom used to take us out there and she used to treat us. But she got them from my grandpa (Elders Victoria, Joyce and Gladys Prettyshield, 2015).

There is a certain protocol that goes along with collecting medicines, and not everyone knew where they were or what they were used for. To be recognized as the one who performs this function an individual must be validated in this role by the community. This knowledge is sacred and often passed on through family members and taught by one individual healer. “Right to this day we still have some medicines that was handed down to my mom and dad – how to go find it, where to go find it. So we still have some today that’s been handed down from generation to generation” (Clint Haywahe, 2015). “Of course you can’t just go ahead and use it like that … if you see one out there, you can’t take it and use it because those things are given through medicine men. So if you’re going to dig one … it’s got to be given to you to use it” (Elder Nancy Eashapple, 2015):

You have to take tobacco with you to dig up herbs. But it’s got to be given to you. I can’t go around and start digging around for medication and herbs like that, it’s got to be given to me … In order to do that, I have to give that person tobacco in order to give me the okay to go. It’s a very spiritual thing … It comes to us and that’s the way it goes … We did a lot of praying back then too (Elders Victoria, Joyce and Gladys Prettyshield, 2015).

The funny little thing, when you take the plants – you stuff them into the ground so they will grow again. Superstitious … that’s what his grandmother did … You pray for it … And you take just what you need and put the rest back. And you pray for that. You give thanks for that. And what you’re going to use you keep and in fact, you don’t take all of it, you always take a little piece and put it back in the ground (Elders Leroy and Myrtle Hassler, 2015).
Before contact the Nakota people used corn and fashioned pottery like some of the eastern more sedentary tribes. It is suggested that they evolved from a more agricultural society to a more hunter gatherer society around Lake Winnipeg and traded for corn with those peoples further east and south. Agriculture was therefore not as foreign to their culture as the Whiteman may have thought. In modern times agriculture was supported by the Nakota in the Cypress Hills. Then again in the Indian Head Reserve, although there were problems introduced by the government over ownership and distribution of the crops. Many Carry the Kettle people planted small gardens and continued to work their small farms to supplement their traditional diet of wild meat and berries. Within this chapter, Elders share their stories of family gardens, and outline what their ‘traditional diet’ consists of. Also discussed are the various traditional activities, now a necessity of life, such as hauling water, firewood, and log home repair. Also discussed here are the outside ‘income earning’ activities the Carry the Kettle had to pursue in order to supplement their traditional economy and livelihood.

FARMS AND GARDENS

Many of the Elders interviewed remembered their grandparents and parents having small farms and farm animals used for daily activities and food supplements. “When I remember growing up we had cows, horses, chickens, goats, sheep, geese, everything you can think of. That was my grandma and grandpa’s … Chicken eggs, oh yeah, that’s what we had them for, use them for the eggs” (Darrell Jack, 2015):
END OF BOOK GLIMPSE.

For more information about Traditional Land Use Studies, please contact us:

Jim Tanner:  
1-252-269-8424  
jim@twinriverconsulting.ca

Tracey Tanner:  
1-403-860-4437  
tracey@twinriverconsulting.ca

TWIN RIVER CONSULTING