GICHI BIZHIKI (GRANDFATHER BUFFALO): ANISHINAABE SOVEREIGNTY, THE SEASONAL ROUND, AND RESISTANCE TO THE COLONIZATION OF THE WEB OF LIFE, 1780-1890

by

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to Anishinaabeg everywhere as an act of cultural knowledge recovery and to the Land to which we belong. I dedicate this work to the ancestors who have left these good footprints for us to follow, who have sacrificed and resisted colonization so that we may hold this knowledge of mino bimaadiiziwin (good life), who have practiced and protected our ceremonies, who have passed our food ways for good health and taught generation after generation so that we may stand in our ancestral knowledge. The ancestors dreamt of us, a generation who would come back to ourselves, pick up our bundles, language, and way of life, and put the pieces of our world back together to repair the fractionation of colonization. In this way, we are coming home to the Land who, like us, is in much need of healing. With the Land, we will heal and through our shared work, living by Anishinaabe natural law, we will prepare a path for the new life that is coming. As a mother, I dedicate this work to my children, and their children's children (the seven generations), and to the web of life to which they belong. Finally, I dedicate this work to Gichi Bizhiki, our Grandfather, who still stands for us and as a sovereign of this Land invites us home.

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VITA, AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE

Anishinaabekwe (Anishinaabe woman), Bishkane Mistadim Ikwe (Flaming Horse Woman), Jill Falcon Ramaker, is a descendant of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa (Ojibwe). She is a member of the makwa dodem (bear clan.) She is a Midewiwin woman and member of Minweyweywingaan (Good Sounding Lodge) Midewiwin Lodge, Roseau River First Nation, Manitoba, and Mikanak Wajiw (Turtle Mountain) Midewiwin Lodge, Turtle Mountain Chippewa Nation, North Dakota. She descends from the Falcons, Turcottes, Laroques, LeVeilles, Grants, and Mackenzies who in the timeframe of this story belonged to bands who frequented the areas of Pembina, Red Lake, the White Horse Plain, Spirit Lake, Turtle Mountain, the Qu'Appelle River Valley, the Cypress Hills, Wood Mountain, the convergence of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers, the Rocky Mountain foothills along the Medicine or Sun River and all the places in between as they moved with the bizhikiwag (the buffalo).

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GLOSSARY

amikwaag: hide straps

anaamitaawangaang: bear's earthen den

anepemin(an): pembina(s), summer berries, high bush cranberries, now called squash berries

aniimikiig: thunderbeings

Anishinaabe enawedawin: our original way of relating

Anishinaabe gidakiminaan: our way of connecting to the Land

Anishinaabe gikendaasowin: our original way of knowing

Anishinaabe inaadiziwin: our original way of being

Anishinaabe inendamowin: our original way of thinking

Anishinaabe ishichigewin: our original way of doing things

Anishinaabe(g): our name for ourselves (pl.)

Anishinaabegkwe(wag): Anishinaabe woman(pl.)

Anishinaabemowin: Anishinaabe language

asema: tobacco, our first medicine and sacred gift

baatig endanwewejiwaninig: the sound of the rapids

baawtitig: rapids

bawazigaywin: dream

biskaabiiyang: returning to ourselves

bizhiki(wag): buffalo(es)

che-ba-kun-ah: the road of souls

chi bizhiki: the great buffalo, an earlier larger buffalo, or dinosaur buffalo

GLOSSARY CONTINUED

chi miigwech: big thanks, thank you very much

chibimoodaywin: migration

da-na-me-na-gaw-wun-zheen: vines

doodem: clan

gae-kikauhn(uk): elder(s)

Gi-chi-gu-mee: Lake Superior

gi-ti-gay'wi-nin-wug: keepers of the Creator's garden

Gichi: great or old

Gichi Bizhiki: Grandfather Buffalo, the spirit presence of buffalo

gichi inendamowin: respect, first grandfather teaching

Gichi-Anishinaabeg: the council of head persons

giizis: moon

ginew: golden eagle

gitch-mah-nish-tah-nish: Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep

Gitchi Manidoo: the Great Kind Spirit

gitigaan(ig): garden(s)

hindaani koobijigan: ancestor

ikwe(wag): woman (pl.)

indoodemaag: clan system, also doodems

ininaatig: sugar maple tree

inindawemagaanidoog: all my relations

GLOSSARY CONTINUED

ishkode: to burn

jimaan(ag): canoe(s)

ke-wa-kun-ah: homeward road

kookum: term of endearment for grandmother, also kokum or gookum

makuk: birchbark container

mandaamin(ag): corn (pl.)

manidoog: spirits

manoomin: wild rice

mashkode(ng): plain(s)

mashkodesim(in): bean (s)

may-gway-yawk: forests

me-tush-koo-se-min: prairie turnips

megis: a small shell considered sacred by its connection to our migration story

Michi-gaan: Michigan

Michi-ziibi: Mississippi River

Mide-ahki: Mother Earth

Midekwe: Midewiwin woman

Midewiigan: Mide lodge

Mikanaak Wajiw: Turtle Mountain

minii goowiiziwin: "that which is given to us" or "all that has been given for living well together"

GLOSSARY CONTINUED

minis-a-wak: common property

Minweyweywingaan: Good Sounding Lodge

mishtadim(aag): horse(s)

miskomin(ag): raspberry(ies)

Missabe/Michi-sabe/Sabe: Sasquatch/Big Foot

Mitigwatci or Ninantakau or Me-nach-tah-kak: names for the Cypress Hills

Moos: moose

muk-kud-da-ka-win: blacking or fasting

Nanabush, Nanaboozhoo, Nanaboso, Waynaboozhoo: original human and teacher

Nayaano-nibiimaang gichigamiin: Great Lakes/Five Seas

Nehiyaw(ak): Cree(s)

Nig-gabe-un-noong: West

niikaniganaag: shortened for of “all my relations”

nindaan koobijigan-ikwe: ancestral grandmother, great-great-great and so on

nindaan koobijigan-inini: ancestral grandfather, great-great-great and so on

Ningaabii'an: West

Nishinaabeg: shortened form of Anishinaabeg, our name for ourselves

numaag: sturgeon

Odawaag: Ottawas, also Ottawag

ode'imin(an): strawberry(ies)

odinawemaaganan: kin

GLOSSARY CONTINUED

ogima: head man

ogima-ikwe: head woman

Ogima-ikwe Ziibi: Head Woman River or the Missouri

ogimaag: head persons, Anishinaabe leadership

Ojibweg: Ojibwe plural

okosimaan(an): pumpkin or squash (pl.)

ongwamazin: stay awake/be cautious/watch out

opin(iig): potato(es)

Owaycepee: Qu'Appelle

pawahgan: spirit helper

pawaugin or opwaagun: pipe, makes a covenant

Pe-gan-o ziibi: Piikani River/Blackfoot River/the Missouri, also called Gitcheepeeganoweceepee and Ogima-ikwe ziibi (Head Woman River)

skabewis: spiritual worker

skode: fire

waakaa'iganan: houses

waawaate: the northern lights or aurora borealis

wiigwaas wiigwaam: birchbark lodges/houses

Zhaawanong: South

zhabboondawaan: lodges

zhawaendumoowin: to sympathize, feel solicitude, pity, compassion, to express consolation

GLOSSARY CONTINUED

Zhi-kaa-go: Chicago

ziibi: river

ziibiikaa: there are many rivers

ziigwan: spring

ABSTRACT

Gichi Bizhiki (Grandfather Buffalo): Anishinaabe Sovereignty, the Seasonal Round, and Resistance to the Colonization of the Web of Life is an Indigenous environmental history of the years 1780 through 1890, in which many Anishinaabeg departed the wild rice-centered food system and fanned out across the Northwestern Plains from the Red River Valley to the Rocky Mountains, as they adapted to buffalo culture. The Anishinaabeg practiced the seasonal round, a highly complex pattern of movements on the land to hunt, harvest, cultivate, and trade foods as part of a holistic way of life, patterned on ancestral reciprocal obligations to place. From the 1600s forward, Euro-American colonizers, in support of industrial and capital development in Europe and eastern North America, extracted natural resources from Turtle Island including animal furs and robes, minerals, forests, and overtook land for monocropping. Euro-American colonization of the web of life to which Anishinaabe people belonged rendered the Anishinaabe seasonal round way of life unsustainable. Further, colonial policies attempted to suppress all aspects of Anishinaabe life including language, knowledge, and spiritual life. In response to colonial persecution, Anishinaabeg "ran with the archives," (their ceremonies) as it was unsafe for their children to be identified as Anishinaabeg. Following Anishinaabe western movement, this study tells the story of how Anishinaabe resisted colonization.

Research methods included drawing on archival sources from Canada and the United States, and culturally-congruent sources including ceremony, traditional stories, ancestral knowledge of cultural leaders, language, and time spent on the land. This history is presented as one Indigenous view contributing to the field of History.

This dissertation concludes that Grandfather Buffalo, the one that has stood for Anishinaabeg and their kin for millennia, is a central source of Anishinaabe sovereignty and the center of the Anishinaabe economy, the kinship network of exchange. Further, the Anishinaabe food system, the seasonal round, was sustainable for millennia because it was critically embedded in the holistic Anishinaabe way of life. Worldview is an essential factor in lifeway sustainability. Finally, by their words, deeds, and movement, Anishinaabeg resisted colonization of the web of life, or what Anishinaabeg refer to as "all our relations."

CHAPTER ONE

ANISHINAABE FOUNDATIONS

Acknowledgment of People and Place

Aniin indiinamaymaganadog, Bishkane Mishtadim in daaga. Makwa in doodem. Mikinaak wajiw-ininwag in dow. Anishinaabe-kwe, Midewin-kwe in dow. Hello, all my relatives. The name the spirits call me by is Flaming Horse. I am a member of the Bear Clan. I belong to the Turtle Mountain Band of Ojibwe. I am an Anishinaabe woman and a Midewiwin woman. I am a descendant of mixed heritage—my grandmothers were Ojibwe, Dakota, Cree, Inuit, and English. My grandfathers were French, Scottish, English, and Dutch.[1]

I come from a stunning and beautifully diverse place of people and other-than-human relatives, the Land where the Grandmothers, the Rocky Mountains, look out over the Northwestern Plains rolling eastward towards the heart of Turtle Island where all our relatives are scattered. Clear pale blue-green streams flow out of those mountains and cross a series of

[1] As Dr. Kim Tall Bear states, "Mixing is predicated on the notion of purity." The perpetuation of the notion of purity runs deep through colonial law and policy and has been long used to perpetuate violence. Therefore, I reject the notion of purity in favor of indigenous ideals of belonging based on kinship, practice, relational presence, responsibility and belonging to place. Kimberly TallBear, *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), https://muse.jhu.edu/book/26427. Purity is a notion that has been sold to native people through the colonial system. I met a Crow woman who works in the local hardware store who, as she introduced herself, said she was, "5/16's Crow" and then quickly said, "I am from the Crow Nation." I could feel the damage that thinking was doing in her own identity. It's a trap that leads us to wonder who is enough, to doubt one another and ourselves, to doubt our own integrity. By finding new--or are they old--measures of belonging, we free ourselves from a measuring system that was always aimed at eliminating or terminating Indians, our very selves.

ancient pathways used by our ancestors for thousands of years, now called the Old North Trail. If you have ever journeyed north of Helena, Montana, and turned off on Highway 287 just past Wolf Creek, you would find yourself following that trail system. As you emerge from the Dearborn River bottoms following the gullies of this once marine and then glacial landscape, you will suddenly see what the Piikani call the "backbone of the world" rising from the rolling foothills.[2] For longer than memory, they have been doing their work with the wind and the water to create a distinctive borderline ecosystem, conducive to a rich biocultural diversity--a buffalo home. This place close to the mountains, owing to the strength of the buffalo herds that dwelt there for millennia, is the ancestral homeland of Niitsitapi (the Blackfeet Confederacy), and my relatives, the Nehiyawak (Cree) and Anishinaabeg (Ojibwe) and Métis of the Turtle Mountain, Rocky Boy's, and the Little Shell Bands, and many other ancestral relatives whose names we do not know. Chi bizhiki (The Buffalo) has stood and still stands with his teaching of respect in what we call the Western doorway. This homeland marks the western edge of Anishinaabewaki since our most recent migration. My home, too, where I was born and raised, is in that place where our people followed the gift of life offered by the buffalo. As I share here, I hold the knowledge that flows from our ancestors, the Land--these mountains, these waters, and all the living things they support--with respect.

[2] James Willard Schultz, "Ancient Buffalo Piskans" (Bozeman, MT, 1932), Collection 10, Box 4, File 1, Merrill G. Burlingame Special Collections, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT, USA.

History as the Work of Remembrance and Continuance

> "From centuries past comes a path. On this path the grandfathers walked as did their grandfathers before them. Each in his time carried the history of their people, their identity and a way of life."[3]
>
> -Alexander Wolfe *Earth Elder Stories*

Anishinaabe history is found in the footprints of our elders. The continuity of our way of life and our identity is found in each of us, alive in our spiritual relationship with our relatives—the ones who came before, the ones we walk with, and that new life that is coming. We carry this history in our very being. As our ceremonial song reminds us, we are the ones our grandmothers and grandfathers have been praying for—the new life coming—and we pray in turn for the new life that comes after us. This way of life is our right and our heritage. We must put it on. We are the Spring.

Anishinaabeg hold seven grandfather teachings that comprise our natural law. We believe that when we follow those teachings, we are walking the road of mino bimaadiziwin (good life). The first grandfather teaching is gichi inendamowin (respect) and is symbolized by the Buffalo.[4] For us, as for the Buffalo, to respect is to give. The Buffalo is the one who stands on guard in the Western doorway to remind us of the teaching of respect. By giving his life, the Buffalo shares every part of its being, shows respect. To follow the teaching of the Buffalo is to live with

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[3] Alexander Wolfe, *Earth Elder Stories: The Pinayzitt Path* (Calgary, AB: Fifth House Ltd., 1988), xi.

[4] In general, Indigenous peoples of North America tend to use the term "buffalo" in reference to plains bison or the species known as *bison bison.* I will primarily use "buffalo" in my writing of this Indigenous environmental history of buffalo culture with a preference for "buffalo" in relationship to the people for whom he has been known as a relative, or an older brother. Capitalization of buffalo indicates the spirit-being of the Buffalo, or Gichi Bizhiki (Grandfather Buffalo), who has stood for Anishinaabeg for millennia.

respect for all life, for Mother Earth, for the elders and ancestors, and people of all races. It is by giving and sharing that we show respect.[5]

I research and write from a place of respect, standing with the one who has stood for us, as I participate in a communal act of cultural knowledge recovery. My objectives here are to: 1) illustrate the Anishinaabeg way of life and seasonal round food system in transition from the place of the Great Lakes and Red River Valley to the Old North Trail Corridor, 2) examine changes in the web of relationship across time precipitated by settler-colonial arrival and Anishinaabeg adaptation and resistance, and 3) to elevate Anishinaabe way of life, foodways, and cultural values working with my relatives for a vital Indigenous food system that honors new life.

Anishinaabe Worldview

People and Place. The Ojibwe (also called Ojibwa, Ojibway, Chippewa, Saulteaux, Saulteur, Bungee) belong to the people who call themselves Anishinaabe or, in the plural, Anishinaabeg, the people, the original people, spontaneous people, or the ones who were lowered down.[6] Six hundred years ago, the Anishinaabe people, including the Ottawa (Odawa, or traders) and Potawatomi (keepers of the perpetual fire) and the Ojibwe lived on or near the Atlantic Ocean near the mouth of St. Lawrence River. From there, they began a westward migration to the Straits of Michilimacinac (where Lake Michigan converges with Lake Huron)

[5] David Courchene, "Anishinaabe Sacred Teachings | Onjisay Aki," accessed September 17, 2020, http://onjisay-aki.org/anishinabe-sacred-teachings.
[6] William W. Warren in Gerald Robert Vizenor, ed., *Touchwood: A Collection of Ojibway Prose* (Moorehead, MN: New Rivers Press, 1987), 12.

where the three peoples diverged.[7] The Ojibwe continued northward and westward and settled in places now called Ontario, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Manitoba, North Dakota, and Montana. Our migration stories have been passed in complex glyphic recordings on birch bark scrolls which were cached underground, maintained through ritual skills, and passed generation after generation from one ceremonial leader to another. The scrolls map Anishinaabe movement over land and water. The stories relayed in the scrolls are held and interpreted by the Midewiwin Society, the spiritual society of the Ojibwe (also known as The Way of the Heart), of which I am a member, and are shared as teaching tools in ceremonies conducted in our medicine lodges to this day.

As the Ojibwe moved westward, they wove a close kinship network with the Assiniboine and Cree, who together through intermarriage and alliance formed the Nehiyaw-Pwat Confederacy, along with the Métis (Pembina people of the Red River Valley whose Indigenous culture emerged from the marriages of Native women and European men who were engaged in the North American fur trade). Understanding the complex identity of the subjects of this story requires setting aside colonial definitions of who Indigenous people are by what they are not.[8] There is an illusion of purity in our constructed notions of race that makes this a stretch of the imagination for most. However, imagining peoples by their kinship networks, or relations, is a fitting and more accurate way of following the story of these peoples, and indeed for

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[7] Thomas Peacock and Marlene Wisuri, *Waasa Inaabidaa (We Look In All Directions)* (Afton, MN: Afton Historical Society Press, 2002), 25.

[8] "Without 'settlers,' we could not have 'Indians' or 'Native Americans'—a pan-racial group defined strictly in opposition to the settlers who encountered them. Instead, we would have many thousands of smaller groups of peoples defined within their own languages, as Diné, Anishinaabeg, or Oceti Sakowin, for example." TallBear, *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science*, 5.

understanding the reality of the métissage of the entire colonial Western hemisphere.[9] The Anishinaabeg see through a lens of relationality.

Our Way of Knowing. Our world unfolds in circles. Whatever the story, the Anishinaabeg believe that our stories mirror or echo our sacred stories.[10] Our aandisokaanan (traditional sacred stories) are in a dynamic relationship with dibaajimowinan (our personal stories). The line is blurred between the personal and the collective, between past and present. The physical is interwoven with the metaphysical. Here again, the Anishinaabeg worldview or way of seeing is relational as time and space are integrated in a circular fashion. As an example, our "calendar" is circular, acknowledging an ancient rhythm of movement of relatives across the Land in harmony with the seasons and the elements of the web of life.

Discerning the "truth" about the past and the role of the oral tradition is an opportunity to build cross-cultural understanding and respect. Mary Siisip Geniusz, well-known Ojibwe maskikiiwikwe (medicine woman) and teacher, describes the importance of stories in the healing process as "the highest possible degree of credible information." Through the use of stories, she teaches from her own experience of using the medicines. By centering our experience in using

[9] Métisage is a term of French origin used to discuss cultural and ethnic/racial mixing indicative of the integration of different (non-white) groups in the French national identity. It is now used more broadly to describe the mixing of races/ethnicities or miscegenation.
[10] Laura Horton, in conversation with the author, October 18, 2018; Leanne Betasamoke Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2011), 41.

our Anishinaabe stories, a traditional source of knowledge, we center ourselves in "a knowledge base of authentic Indian history and philosophy."[11]

In Ojibwemowin, the word for "truth," debwewin (day-bway-win), broken down in parts as understood for their collective meaning, illustrates the difference between the Anishinaabe way of seeing the world and the Western concept of objectivity. *De* (day) is derivative of *ode,* meaning heart, *bwe* (bway) is the action of expanding and contracting (just as our lungs do the work of drawing in the air around us) *wi* is life energy, and connected to that *win* (win) is the physical form of life energy. Each day our heart is expanding and contracting, taking in that physical form of life energy. In this way, understanding is arrived at drop by drop, like sap being gathered from a tree. You cannot know truth; it is too big. *I can only speak to the extent that my spirit knows.*[12] Amongst Anishinaabe, "personal experience is just valued more than so-called 'objective' or 'depersonalized' testimony.[13] Yet, as already acknowledged, our personal stories are always in conversation with our traditional stories, the ones that "describe more than reality."

This immersion of the personal in the collective is at the heart of Anishinaabeg theory, an embodied space of collective truth. For Anishinaabeg, all things are seen through the lens of relationship, for example, we begin and end our prayer with acknowledgment of our own place within inindawemagaanidoog (all my relations.) Leanne Betasmoke Simpson acknowledges,

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[11] Wolfe, *Earth Elder Stories: The Pinayzitt Path*, 17; Waziyatawin Angela Wilson, "Indigneous Knowledge Recovery Is Indigenous Empowerment," *The American Indian Quarterly* 28:3-4, no. Summer-Fall (2004): 359–66; Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, and Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto* (London: Oxford University Press, 2009).
[12] Robert and Laura Horton, in conversation with the author, February 24, 2017.
[13] Mary Siisip Geniusz and Ann Marie Geniusz, *Plants Have So Much to Give Us, All We Have to Do Is Ask*, ed. Wendy Makoons Geniusz (St. Paul: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

"We can access this vast body of knowledge through our cultures by singing, dancing, fasting, dreaming, visioning, participating in ceremony, apprenticing with Elders, practicing our lifeways and living our knowledge, by watching, listening and reflecting in a good way." Reminding us with the words of our precious elders, Jim Dumont and Edna Manitowabi, Simpson emphasizes that our access to knowledge comes down to the quality of our relationships and the *personalized* contexts we *collectively* create.[14] There is always a 'me' and a 'we' in our path to knowledge.

Our knowledge is relational. In the words of Waaseyaa'sin Christine Sy, "They *tell history* (and some tell of origins, where origin may mean various things) where history is not a construction only about the past but also about the present and the future."[15] With eloquence, Leanne Betasamoke Simpson points to the concrete relevance of our stories, "We need to rebuild our culturally inherent philosophical contexts for governance, education, healthcare, and economy."[16] As understanding of how this applies to the work at hand, the stories orient us towards our health, by reuniting us with foods and the teachings that go with them, we live mino bimaadiziwin, a way of life that nurtured our well-being since ever there was an us.

Leaving our colonized minds, we come to the Story--stories lowered down, spoken to the spirit of this one and that one. Stories with many meanings and even conflicting details. Stories passed round to shape and be shaped by biota and culture ever-changing, never static. Can a story be lowered down to more than one spirit? In more than one time and place? Can different

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[14] Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence*, 42–46.
[15] Waaseyaa'sin Christine Sy, "Following Ininaahtigoog Home: Anishinaabeg Womxn Iskigamiziganing" (Nogojiwanong Peterborough, Ontario: Trent University, 2018).
[16] Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence*, 17.

stories addressing the same topic from different angles be complementary? True? Useful? Has this phenomenon of multiple stories and evolving stories ever happened in the colonial world? In the history of History? Of course, I say to myself, there is nothing we could be made of that is not changing—water, wind, earth, or fire. The stories are meant to live.[17]

Language. Our language profoundly holds our worldview. I use many Ojibwemowin (our language) words in the text with the English given immediately after. The use of Ojibwemowin terms serves to privilege our knowledge and de-center Western knowledge, and as such is an act of decolonization. The depth of expression of Ojibwemowin, a language strong in verbs and particularly expressive of relationships, cannot be expeditiously translated to English. In Basil E. Johnston's *Anishinaubae Thesaurus*, there are lists of dozens of words under "air" describing it by "direction, nature and character of the wind;" and equally many for "the character and nature of a forest"; and "the flow of a river; the current; the character, nature, quality, rate of flow or current of a river, stream.[18] While reading with the presence of a language that may not be your own may be distractive, know that you are participating in cultural knowledge recovery, a story of continuance, re-diversification, and breathing life into a language more poetic and expressive of the natural world than today's English.

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[17] As an oral tradition, the stories live through the listener. Active engagement in carrying the history of the people is the important work of the listening. As each person uses memory to carry the story, the significance of the story may shift as it is shaped by the context and lived experience of the carrier. So, the stories come alive, moving, traveling, and sitting with the people, as organic as the ones who carry them.

[18] Basil H. Johnston, *Anishinaubae Thesaurus* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2007).

Situatedness: Knowing Your Place. Every person's story engages a process of finding one's place, one's responsibility to the collective, according to one's gifts, talents, and relationships (clan, family, place on the Land, teachers). For Anishinaabeg, as with many Indigenous peoples, it is considered necessary to fast in engaging the Spirit World as a way of "seeking our place," in doing so we give up something in order to receive something. We live reciprocally.

Writing an Indigenous history, one from an Anishinaabe perspective, demands acknowledgement of the situated-ness of the story—who is speaking, who my teachers are, and to whom this story belongs.[19] This history is situated from my own place, as an Anishinaabe *ikwe* (woman), who lives in and grew up on this land that is "The Old North Trail Corridor" where the high mountain snows are gathered by the grandmothers we now call the Rocky Mountains, whose rivers flow out in all directions across Turtle Island, whose foothills, river bottoms, and island mountain ranges were home to the camps of my ancestors as they moved in the seasonal cycle with the plants and animals; whose grandmothers are Ojibwe, Cree, Inuit and Dakota. I am a member of the Makwa Doodem (bear clan); our responsibilities are to protect the people and carry knowledge of the plant nations. I am a Midewiwin ikwe— a member of Minweyweywingan (Good Sounding Lodge) in Roseau River, Manitoba. We practice the Way of

[19] The concept of situated knowledges as theorized by Donna Haraway acknowledges the positionality of the author as one who inquires from a community with a shared epistemology (a sort of creative tension) and in inquiring, is both the object and agent of their inquiry. Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 575–99, https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066; Kim TallBear, "Standing With and Speaking as Faith: A Feminist-Indigenous Approach to Inquiry," *Journal of Research Practice*, N17, 10, no. 2 (2014).

the Heart and the principles of mino bimaadiziwin (good life). Our responsibility to knowledge is personal.

To write from an Anishinaabe perspective means to include spirituality. In an integrated Indigenous worldview, Spirit is always part of the story. The settler colonial states recognized the power of the Spirit in the lives of Indigenous peoples when they made Indigenous spiritual practices in both the United States and Canada illegal, forcing the spiritual practices of all nations underground for almost a century. The Department of Interior's 1883 *Code of Indian Offenses* made the practice of ceremonies, feasts, and dances punishable by imprisonment or the withholding of food rations. Spirituality is a key interpretative lens, that as Rosalyn LaPier (Blackfeet/Métis) observes "helps us understand the primary way that native people are motivated."[20] To add to this line of thinking, I believe that historians, anthropologists, and archaeologists have generally failed to understand Indigenous ways of being because they either did not delve into spiritual beliefs or did not have access to those structures of understanding or Indigenous ways of knowing.[21] In most cases, it was not their story to tell.

Anishinaabe history, the story, seen from the holistic lens of our own worldview, is key to understanding major tenets of our knowledge system: power, knowledge, and relationship (love). An example is found in the structures of Ojibwe leadership. The Ogimaag and councils of Gichi-Anishinaabeg (elder men), warriors, and women working within a clan structure of governance and following the Midewiwin "path of the heart" were responsible for resource

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[20] Rosalyn R. LaPier, *Invisible Reality: Storytellers, Storytakers, and the Supernatural World of the Blackfeet* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, American Philosophical Society, 2017).
[21] As fields of specialization, anthropology, archeology, and sociology were disciplines born in the 19th century, when the work of colonization was at its apex. These disciplines worked for and with Europeans' colonization process, both inside and outside of Europe.

distribution, dispute resolution, and comprehensive stewardship of the relationship between people and place. Ojibwe-kwe historian Cary Miller has made an eloquent argument on this topic in her book, *Ogimaag: Anishinaabeg Leadership 1760-1845*, in which she illustrates that without understanding power in the Anishinaabeg world we cannot understand worldview or ways of being, knowing, and doing. This includes understanding of Anishinaabe foodways which are critically embedded in our way of life. Our knowledge is holistic.

Colonization and the Balance of All Things

Mino bimaadiziwin (living a good life) Anishinaabe well-being is measured by relationship with the web of life. It is a response to the gifts that have been given to us; as a standard for how life is to be lived, it is embodied in a beautiful canon of stories, songs, and ceremonies which nurture consciousness of the web of life; and it is practiced in many ways, such as rising with the sun and resting with it as well, gift offerings, and fasting. Mino bimaadiiziwin is also our natural law that governs respect for all life and the balance of all things—male and female, young and old, seasons and directions, body, mind, and spirit.[22] All of the stories that the Grandmothers and Grandfathers told spoke of that natural law—"the sanctity of all things in creation, and how they were given to be used in a proper and just manner." [23]

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[22] This explanation of *mino bimaadiziwin* is based on the author's own understanding through lived and ceremonial experience. It is also informed by the work of the *Seven Generations Education Institution*, http://www.7generations.org/?page_id=104 as an explicit framework for Anishinaabeg immersion education; Kathy Absolon, "Indigenous Wholistic Theory: A Knowledge Set for Practice," *First Peoples Child & Family Review* 5, no. 2 (2010): 74–87; Alannah Earl Young, "Indigenous Elders' Pedagogy for Land-Based Health Education Programs: Gee-Zhee-Kan-Dug Cedar Pedagogical Pathways" (Doctoral disseration, University of British Columbia (Vancouver), 2015).

[23] Wolfe, *Earth Elder Stories: The Pinayzitt Path*, xviii.

Being so, whenever a story is told, time is marked by relationships, "It was the time when the bear cubs were born," "berry time," "or ricing time."[24]

In a time when we had left the buffalo, a warm late summer day in 1932, one of my great great-grandfathers, Job Falcon, sat under a cottonwood tree near his cabin at the confluence of two mighty rivers—the Elk River (as the Yellowstone is known by the Apsáalooke) and Ogima-ikwe zibi (the Princess of All Rivers as the Missouri is known by Anishinaabe). His house built of cottonwoods cut from the river bottoms and stacked seven logs high, was plastered and chinked with gray mud from the river. The sod roof was producing a good crop of pigweed on that day when a reporter from the *Great Falls Tribune* engaged him and his old friend, Joe Renville, in reflection on the changes in their lifetime. Falcon, Ojibwe and Cree, and Renville, a Dakota relative, had in their lifetimes lived through a radical change in lifeways.[25] Grandpa Falcon was born in 1854 on the White Horse Plains in the heart of the Red River Settlement along the Assiniboine River (Manitoba). He and Renville, childhood friends, spent their lives, often together, traveling with the herds. The reporter summed up the shift that had occurred saying, "Now the virgin soil of the prairies has been turned under and the buffalo ranges cultivated for grain." Reflecting on what that change meant, Grandpa Falcon said:

> We never ate nothing but meat in those days. The Indians used to eat nothing but meat and fish, though sometimes they ate corn, which they grew, and a white turnip that grew wild here…Joe and me is starving to death now because meat is too expensive. When things got hard and there was no wild game, we had to eat our dogs and sometimes our horses. I would die first before I would kill my horse.

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[24] Wolfe, xix.

[25] This is what White Earth Ojibwe scholar, Lawrence Barkwell, and Sidner Larson before him, call an "apocalypse" meaning "the lifeway of a culture has come to an end." Lawrence W. Gross, *Anishinaabe Ways of Knowing and Being* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishers, 2014), 3; Sidner Larson, *Captured in the Middle: Tradition and Experience in Contemporary Native American Writing* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 18–19.

Indeed, all had changed and the movement of the people over the Land had ceased. In lamenting the change and describing its emotional toll, the two old timers talked about a dear friend of theirs, Chief Sitting Bull: "Bull was a great talker and a famous storyteller in his earlier days. When he got old and was forced to the reservation, he became quiet."[26]

The disruption of settler colonial arrival unsettled the spirit of the people and silenced many aspects of life as it had been known. The history told here is that of my own people, the Ojibwe of the Northwestern Plains, and our buffalo culture relatives—the Cree, Dakota, Assiniboine, and Métis. It is the story of how a buffalo culture people went from a cyclical way of life in which movements on the Land were prompted by the nuances of changing seasons to a static life, isolated from familiar human and other-than-human relatives, and dictated by rigid boundaries and the endless contingencies of a new economy, culture, and way of knowing. The change to the food system from buffalo to grain indeed meant upending the soil, but more so it upended the world and brought change to the land, the water, and other-than-human relatives. In the current era, under the same dominant system of industrial agriculture, capitalism, western science, and, as a tool of the state, Christianity—the world is still upside down, the balance is broken.

Survivance and Sustainability. With the advent of colonial fur trade in the 17th century, the world began to shift—names changed, the way time was spent changed, lifeways and foodways changed, even the way that time was marked changed. All the while, names were retained, ceremonies were taken underground, foods were still harvested, prepared, and shared,

[26] FW Compton, "Stirring Events at Old Fort Buford near Montana Boundary Related," *Great Falls Tribune*, September 4, 1932.

and seasonal rhythms of time were followed. The language, the knowledge, and relatives still exist and, so, our world unfolds in circles. Change, resistance, and evolution are key aspects of cultural and natural existence—and are built into the adaptive lifeway of the seasonal round in which relationship guides behaviors. This concept is articulated here from an outsider perspective:

> Our study found that the tribal understandings of time are defined by cues and patterns observed in the natural world. As such, time is then relied on, operated in, and based on a 3D construction rather than the westernized linear time system. Their concepts of time are important not least because they indicate when certain traditional behaviors should begin, for example, hunting, fishing, and gathering. They are also strikingly relational, so that seasonal patterns are observed as an intricate system of connectivity and integration among plant, animal, insect, and human experience.[27]

The seasonal round was a highly sophisticated, methodical, annual series of movements on the land to tend wild plots, cultivate, hunt, harvest, and trade. It was also a cycle following the path laid by the ancestors who, honoring reciprocal obligations to place, sought to maintain the sacred balance amongst all relations. The life circle that was then, continues even now, though interrupted by straight lines--linear time, linear thought, plowed furrows, rail lines, and roadways. And though the lifeway of the culture, the seasonal round has come to an end: "Native Americans are in the process of building new worlds, worlds that are true to their past history, but cognizant of present realities.[28] This story is an attempt at recovery of cultural knowledge which bears importance to sustainability in the 21st century and the survivance of Anishinaabeg and arguably all relatives human and other-than-human.

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[27] Samantha Chisholm Hatfield et al., "Indian Time: Time, Seasonality, and Culture in Traditional Ecological Knowledge of Climate Change," *Ecological Processes* 7, no. 1 (December 2018): 25, https://doi.org/10.1186/s13717-018-0136-6.
[28] Gross, *Anishinaabe Ways of Knowing and Being*, 33.

Ziigwan Again (Spring Again): Rebirth

Looking back as we look forward

Looking back to understand how Anishinaabe food sovereignty functioned in the days when we had it is a vitally important act of decolonization today. By asking the question, "what brought us to this point?" each one of us--each family, band, and community--confronts the stories of the bundles that were not passed, the drums that were lost, the language that is holding on by a thread, the state of the lands we are caring for, and the foods that are poisoning our bodies. We have to ask "why" with compassion for the difficult circumstances that our ancestors faced and with consideration for the broad and sweeping scope of settler colonial change in all its forms. By looking deeply at the reasons our knowledges are tattered, we can discover the wealth that is there and the warrior's way of protecting it for future generations.

Confronting Colonization: Reclaiming our Food System

The work of taking back the food system is currently a top priority of virtually every Indigenous nation. Coming home to our ancestral foods is a process of re-indigenizing our bodies. The field of epigenetics has demonstrated that by eating culturally-congruent foods, ones with which we have co-evolved, we are disposed to health.[29] The process of taking back the food system however, is much broader than merely eating Indigenous foods. Food sovereignty

[29] Mustapha U. Imam and Maznah Ismail, "The Impact of Traditional Food and Lifestyle Behavior on Epigenetic Burden of Chronic Disease," *Global Challlenges* 1, no. 8 (November 16, 2017); Wade Paul, "Epigenetics a Decolonizing Science" (Master's Thesis, London, ON, The University of Western Ontario, 2020); Sang-Woon Choi and Simonetta Friso, "Epigenetics: A New Bridge between Nutrition and Health," *Advances in Nutrition* 1, no. 1 (November 20108-16).

involves both food independence and the ability to eat culturally appropriate and sustainably produced foods. Food sovereignty is a holistic project requiring control over land that has been fractionated by allotment/trust land policies, sovereignty over water, the development of food system infrastructure, education and training programs, and much more. Further, Indigenous food sovereignty is dynamic within our culture or way of life, and therefore our cultural sovereignty. As Vine Deloria acknowledges, we are sovereign, not through political autonomy, but when our culture, the way of life from which food is just an end product, can continue.[30] Deloria ties cultural integrity to cultural identity. It follows that food sovereignty is both a communal and personal and involves identity work--the work of coming home to ourselves. Decolonization is at the heart of sovereignty and food sovereignty.[31] Therefore, it is vitally important that we understand the process of colonization, the creation of the system that has impaired Indigenous food sovereignty. Reclaiming our own foods, food ways, and cultural values will guide innovations in development of 21st century Indigenous food systems.

Native nations everywhere are making strides in building infrastructure in support of their own food systems. By my estimate, around one hundred nations on Turtle Island currently care for buffalo herds on their homelands. Rematriation of ancestral seeds, seed cooperatives, and

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[30] Vine Deloria, "Self-Determination and the Concept of Sovereignty," in *Economic Development in American Indian Reservations*, ed. Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1979); Leroy Little Bear, *Buffalo Nations Food System Initiative Council Meeting* (Montana State University, Bozeman, MT, 2021). The notion that "food is just the end product of our way of life" is attributed to Dr. Little Bear.

[31] Sean Sherman and Beth Dooley, *The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017); Gideon A. Mailer and Nicola E. Hale, *Decolonizing the Diet: Nutrition, Immunity, and the Warning From Early America* (London & New York: Anthem Press, 2018); Luz Calvo and Catrióna Rueda Esquibel, *Decolonize Your Diet : Plant-Based Mexican-American Recipes for Health and Healing* (Vancouver, B.C.: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2015).

ambitious community-wide gardening programs have Indigenous people tending the plants that sustained them for millennia while producing healthy and culturally appropriate foods in what are often rural food deserts. Regenerative agriculture, hydroponics, organic food production, and hemp grown for textiles, are just some of the 21st century strategies aligned with Indigenous cultural values. Decolonizing our food systems is a project that is drawing Native nations together in an effort to restore the health of the People and the Land.

This historical examination seeks to build understanding of the nature of colonization, patterns of oppression and disenfranchisement, while also recovering knowledge of who we, Anishinaabeg, are, where we come from, and the teaching of our lands and our ancestors. This work of understanding is a step towards sovereignty aimed at survival.[32] Anishinaabe prophecies attest that our teachings hold special bearing in the current era and the work we must do in Onjisay-ahki (changing earth time).

Colonization of our lands, people, foods, and the web of life as a whole are ongoing. Perhaps the clearest way we can identify colonization is to say that *colonization and extraction go hand-in-hand*. As the industrialization of Europe wiped clean the Italian forests for the building of ships and the skies of London grew black with factory smoke, European explorers moved out to find more natural and human resources to feed the industrial economy. Whether reading the journals of Alexander Von Humboldt, a Prussian explorer famous for his gaze upon

[32] Lower Brule Sioux historian, Nick Estes, acknowledges, "While traditional historians merely interpret the past, radical Indigenous historians and Indigenous knowledge-keepers aim to change the colonial present, and to imagine a decolonial future by reconnecting to Indigenous places and histories. For this to occur, those suppressed practices must make a crack in history." Nick Estes, *Our History Is the Future: Standing Rock versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance* (London & New York: Verso, 2019), 18.

the natural world, or those of the surveyors of the 49th parallel delineating the boundary of the US & Canada, the evidence is there: "explorers" were really prospectors seeking resources for the taking--forests, coal veins, or arable land for agricultural development.[33]

The capitalist frontline of development was the British Hudson's Bay Company, the French North West Company, the American Fur Company, and other entrepreneurial frontrunners. Following the Greek model of colonization, the second wave of colonization, or nation-building as it is called by the settler-colonialists, involved "civilizing"—moving from the rugged fur trade culture to one in which cities--infrastructure for a more sophisticated delivery of European foods and goods, and the support of European wives and families--were built. Ultimately, this meant infrastructure to fully command the landscape for extractive purposes—rail lines for the removal of natural materials (our more-than-human relatives) and for the delivery of manufactured goods which, in turn, significantly impacted Indigenous' means and methods of existence.

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[33] Alexander Von Humboldt, a Prussian who explored most of South and Central American, (and a friend of President Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of State James Madison and Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin) is known as an explorer, geographer, and naturalist, even as a potential first 'environmentalist' amongst Europeans. Born in 1769, Von Humboldt grew-up in the time in which Europe was expanding with industrialization—manufacturing centers were growing into cities, agriculture was changing with crop rotation and irrigation innovations, and the steam engine was bringing fossil fuel power to factories and transportation. Though he was fascinated with the interrelationship of humanity and the natural world, Von Humboldt was also well-known for his gaze across the landscape—an observant view across the landscape that inventoried the natural world by categories and subtypes. Jefferson, who had already deployed Lewis and Clark on their inventory of the West, invited Von Humboldt to the US for a visit because he was interested in gaining the newest cartographical and statistical information on New Spain. Capitalism was making its march across the continent, with colonialism and Science as its tools. The steam engine had been around for almost a hundred years and the industrialization of Europe was well underway. The fossil fuel economy was coming into existence at a global level. Andrea Wulf, *The Invention of Nature: Alexander Von Humboldt's New World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015).

As British North Americans advanced their model of colonization, sites of exchange, such as The Forks (modern day Winnipeg) and nearby Portage La Prairie, came under scrutiny for their roughneck atmosphere rooted in the fur trade. Such reports coincided with the land being "trapped out" and a move to reduce the right of the HBC to that of "a commercial corporation, and to transfer the Territories to the new Dominion."[34] The British came to see these sites of exchange as lacking in civic order. So went the imperial march of economic expansion. The Dominion's claim, transferring the "District of Assiniboia" (known too as part of Rupert's Land, a vast expanse of the interior of the continent covering the entire Hudson's Bay watershed) to Lord Thomas the fifth Earl of Selkirk, read like this:

> As the said Tract or Parcel of Land hereby granted or intended so to be is more particularly described and distinguished…Together with all mines, minerals and metals and delfs and quarries of stone and lime already discovered or hereafter to be discovered within the limits of the land hereby granted and enfeoffed or otherwise assured or expressed and intended so to be.
>
> And also all and singular, houses, edifices, buildings, forests, woods, springs, woodlands, and underwoods and the ground and soil thereof respectively. Trees, timber and timber like trees, quays, wharfs, landings and landing places, lakes ponds, rivers, pools, dams and streams of water, fishings and fishing places and rights of fishery, moats, moors, marshes, wastes, waste grounds, commons, common of pasture and common of turbary, furzes, heaths, mounds, hedges, fences, ditches, roads, feus, fue-grounds, ways, paths, passages, easements, waters, liberties, customs, profits, commodities, emoluments, benefits, advantages, members, hereditaments and appurtenances whatsoever to all and singular the said lands and premises hereby granted and enfeoffed or otherwise assured or expressed and in anywise appertaining to or with the same held used possessed or enjoyed or accepted, reputed, adjudged, esteemed, deemed, taken or know as part parcel or member thereof, or of any part thereof or as appurtenant thereunto and the reversion and reversions, remainder and remainders yearly and other profits of the said land, hereditaments and premises hereby granted and enfeoffed or otherwise assured or expressed and intended so to be, or any part or parcel thereof and all the estate, right, title, interest, use, trust, inheritance,

[34] Professor E.H. Oliver, ed., *The Canadian North-West, It's Early Development and Legislative Records: Minutes of the Councils of the Red River Colongy and the Northern Department of Rupert's Land.*, vol. 1 (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1914), 23–24.

> property, possession, benefit, claim and demand whatsoever at law and in equity or otherwise howsoever of them the said Governor an Company of in to or out of the land, hereditaments, and premises herby granted and enfeoffed or otherwise assured or expressed and intended so to be and every part and parcel of the same. Saving and reserving nevertheless to the said Governor and Company and their successors all rights of jurisdiction whatsoever granted to said Company by their Charter.[35]

From springs to "timber like trees" to wastes to liberties and customs, the British claimed it *all* to be theirs. And in effect, what they colonized is *all our relations*--the trees, soil, the ones below, and the buffalo, whose hides became the belts for the factories and bones became the china in the *civilized* homes of settler colonists.[36]

In considering whether or not we are in a post-colonial era, we have only to ask the question, has this pattern of colonial extractive expansion ceased. Indian people would tell you "no" as they continue to hold ground for the land, water, other-than-human species, and their very livelihood. Ask the Aaniiih-Nakoda Nation at Fort Belknap, Montana, who have spent the last several years waging a legal battle to stop the XL pipeline from coming across the Missouri River right above their water supply (what is a relatively newly established secondary source of water after the original water source for their communities, the Little Rockies watershed, was

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[35] Professor E.H. Oliver, ed., *The Canadian North-West, It's Early Development and Legislative Records: Minutes of the Councils of the Red River Colony and the Northern Department of Rupert's Land.*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1914),155-156.

[36] Colonization has been theorized in several forms, exploitation colonization in which a few colonizers travel, dominate local labor forces, and harvest desired resources, and settler colonization in which settlers come to the new land and claim it as their own. In the later, this creates an insidious problem in which "settler colonial states refuse to recognize themselves as such, requiring continual disavowal of history, Indigenous peoples' resistance to settlement, Indigenous peoples' claims to stolen land, and how settler colonialism is indeed ongoing, not an event contained in the past." from Eve Tuck and Marcia McKenzie, *Place in Research : Theory, Methodology, and Methods* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 59–71; Andrew C. Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison: An Environmental History, 1750-1920* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

destroyed by gold mines). Ask the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, whose natural resources department is perpetually situated towards the next round of litigation to protect treaty rights and defend against further encroachment on waters, sturgeon, wolves, and wild rice.[37] A defensive posture is part of the ongoing legacy of colonization throughout Indian Country and, for Native people, there is no escape from the role of activists, defenders of the land, water, and all our relatives. As Native peoples do this work of protecting land and water, they are, Kari Norgaard states, at a disadvantage in these settings "due to many reasons, including a lack of broader social understanding of their unique cultural perspectives, the marginalization of traditional knowledge as opposed to 'real' science, and a lack of acknowledgment of the violent history perpetuated against them—much less the continuing effects of history."[38] Life is inherently political in a colonial world and this is a constant demand on Indigenous resources—effort and money spent on legal and political matters rather than on building quality of life for all. It is only when we tie the notion of *extraction*, as a near synonym to *colonization*, that we begin to understand the physical embodiment and the deeper motivating forces of the sometimes seemingly abstract concept of colonization.

Privilege, in the settler colonial construct, is defined as being free of the urgency of having to act in a defensive posture on behalf of yourself, your relatives, and your homeland. The ongoing reality of the colonial world is found in the example of the Iñupiat community of Shishmareff, Alaska, slated to be moved due to the threats associated with climate change. It is

[37] Tom Howes, Natural Resource Manager, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, in conversation with author, August 22, 2018.
[38] Kari Marie Norgaard, *Salmon and Acorns Feed Our People* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2019), 70–71.

one community without privilege in the long legacy of colonization and its ongoing advancement.[39] Shishmareff is a community above the Arctic Circle, built on a barrier island. Prior to colonization, the Iñupiat people lived a mobile lifeway which sustained them for millennia. When the people were forced to settle, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and missioning church were built where Shishmareff currently stands and is threatened by coastal surges and losing ten feet of coastline per year.

Colonization, driven by extractive tendencies, has not stopped and will not stop without a revolution of values, changes to the very economic structure, and a rise in societal consciousness of the historical and structural reality of colonization and the violence that is perpetuated through colonization. Understanding colonization as an ongoing undertaking of the capitalist state is important to the current moment—looking back at this story and how we arrived here will help us to understand the way forward. This is why history matters.

As Anishinaabe people, how can we talk about our past without talking about our present? Our way of seeing looks backwards seven generations--seeking the wisdom, guidance, and companionship of our ancestors--and forward seven generations, seeking the well-being of

[39] Due to global climate change caused by the use of fossil fuels in all matters of industry, transportation, and heating, the sea ice has melted and caused higher ocean levels. The community of Shishmaref is now exposed to storm surges, which are doing constant damage to fisheries, structures, and infrastructure; the permafrost in the area is also melting, providing exposure to erosion—the combined result of storm surges and disappearing permafrost contribute to an annual loss of 7.5 feet of shoreline on an island only a quarter mile wide. The community has been considering their move since the 1970s but lacks the funds and a suitable site to move to. As a traditionally mobile people, the reason the community is now settled on an instable barrier island is due to the placement of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Catholic mission in the process of colonizing the Iñupiat. "An Alaskan Village Is Falling into the Sea. Washington Is Looking the Other Way.," Public Radio International, accessed October 24, 2019, https://www.pri.org/stories/2018-10-22/alaskan-village-falling-sea-washington-looking-other-way.

that new life that is coming, our children and our children's children far into the future. To tell an Anishinaabe history is to complexify the Western notion of history, by including the impact of decisions made seven generations ago, and to consider how the telling of this story—cultural knowledge recovery—will affect our relatives seven generations from now.[40]

By considering the effects of an extractive and fossil fuel-based Western economy on the present, we make connections to change over time and have an opportunity to radically contemplate the impact as it is playing out into the future. Writing an Indigenous history involves seeing from the present and considering the future in the tradition of our stories unfolding as circles. In the deepest sense of our past, we know ourselves through our relationships embedded in the deep past in knowledge which makes us who we are as Indigenous people—knowledge from the land and the ancestors. As ancestral knowledge teaches, we consider our action through a far-seeing lens that ties together all our relatives in a circle of the past, present, and future. This Indigenous sense of time emerges from the natural world.

The work of reclaiming our food system and re-establishing Indigenous food sovereignty is holistic in nature, meaning it must address broad elements of land, food, and cultural recovery. It is also work that is anti-colonial by nature. This is not meant to create a false binary which

[40] As an Anishinaabe-kwe, Minogiizhigokwe (Kathleen E. Absolon,) uses the words "search" and "gather" in lieu of research. She acknowledges "terms that reflect Indigenous ways of collecting and finding out are searching, harvesting, picking, gathering, hunting and trapping." And when she uses the word research (an activity with a colonial past) hyphenates it. Re-search, meaning to *look again*, as we are looking again at our own ways as Anisinaabeg—"this is the process of how we come to know as we re-search, re-write, and re-story ourselves." I could not agree more with Minogiizhigokwe, and I have often said my work feels like that of constructing a star quilt, placing one diamond next to the next, piecing the story together in a process of re-clamation and re-storation of our ways of knowing. Kathleen E. (Minogiizhigokwe) Absolon, *Kaandossiwin: How We Come to Know*, (Black Point, N.S.: Fernwood Publishing, 2011), 21.

implies that we are interested in returning to an 18th century food system. The challenge is to stand solidly in the priorities and values of our own communities, to address ongoing issues of colonial expansion and extraction, which negatively impact our well-being and use our creativity to move forward for health of the Land and the People.

Methodologies and Methods

It is important to me that I write this story from an Anishinaabe perspective, as an act of re-Indigenization of History, to honor my ancestors, and to acknowledge, as a work of reconciliation, the historical reality of colonization from which all people, native and non-native, need healing. Nonetheless, with humility, I also recognize that I am a product of a colonized life and education. Further, as members of my Mide lodge and cultural advisory board have taught me, I cannot tell that which is not mine to tell. I have been careful to bear this in mind, and I acknowledge that any transgression is my own and bear responsibility for my own mistakes. Yet, I have also been encouraged by my elders to stand in that right that was acknowledged by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, "to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons," among others.[41] From a position of strength and humility, I come to this work and engagement within Anishinaabe methods of knowledge production.

Anishinaabemowin (language), our original way of speaking which allows us to communicate our thoughts with Creation, the Spirit, and with one another;

[41] United Nations, "The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" (The United Nations General Assembly, September 13, 2007), https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf.

Anishinaabe Inaadiziwin (being) is our original behavior, our original values and way of living our life and being Anishinaabe in the fullest sense. From this way of being, I am connected to the Spirit, Creation, and my community. I am not merely a thinker, but a being who is also spirit and connected to the web of all our relatives.

Anishinaabe Inendamowin (thinking) is our original way of thinking, our way of perceiving and formulating thought, resonating from our Anishinaabe beliefs—our foundational truths. This is our philosophy or worldview.

Anishinaabe Gikendaasowin (knowing) is our original knowledge and ways of knowing. It is the body of knowledge that informs us of our origins, our way of life, our way of being, and our worldview. It includes our stories, ceremonies, and relationships with the land and all our relatives.

Anishinaabe Izhichigewin (doing) is our original way of doing things. By taking action with Anishinaabe life skills, I seek to contribute to building quality of living and quality of community. It is my intention in writing to honor my community and contribute to *mino bimaadiziwin* (good life.)

Anishinaabe Enawedawin (relating) is our original way of relating to the Spirit, to each other and to all of Creation, an all-inclusive relationship that honors the interconnectedness of all our relations. I come to my creative work with recognition and honor for my place and responsibility within the family of Creation.

Anishinaabe Gidakiiminaan (connecting to the Land) is our original connection and relationship to the Land and all of Creation. It is the experience of knowing and understanding the relationships that exist throughout Creation. This connection is the primary shaper of Anishinaabe identity and it is this total relationship with Creation that informs us of our environmental ethic.[42]

Leanne Betasmoke Simpson summarizes the work saying, "In order to access knowledge from a Nishnaabeg perspective, we have to engage our entire bodies: our physical beings, emotional self, our spiritual energy and our intellect."i[43] Therefore, in an attempt to Indigenize the

[42] This explanation of Anishinaabeg ways of knowing, seeing, and being was developed by the Seven Generations Education Institution as an explicit framework for Anishinaabe immersion education, "Mino Bimaadiziwin," Seven Generations Education Institution, accessed December 9, 2021, https://www.7generations.org/.

[43] Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence*, 42.

academic discipline of History, this story breaks from certain historical methods that may or may not be still in effect in mainstream historical writing.[44] Indigenizing the field is not concerned with working against the voices that have come before or being contrary, it is the work of diversifying the field, sharing with generosity the richness of Anishinaabe ways of knowing, being, and doing, in order to expand our understanding of the past, bring about cross-cultural understanding and encourage societal healing. At the same time, is about acknowledging the injustices which have disrupted Anishinaabe and Indigenous lives. Healing is the primary life work of the *Midewiwin* path of the Anishinaabe which I follow, and a necessary aim in a world affected by colonization. Understanding is necessary to build a collective effort that will bind the wounds of the past and dismantle the ongoing and institutionalized legacies of colonization.

In my effort to build understanding, I share Anishinaabe culture and belief, yet I withhold knowledge with consideration for the responsibility that comes with knowledge. Some knowledge, as we understand it, is given with responsibilities, therefore that knowledge resides with the knowledge-holder whose bears responsibility to it and the relationships related to it. There are limits to what is meant to be shared and understood. As I discern the appropriateness of sharing, I am guided by many good teachers: my Midewin lodge, Minweyweywingaan (Rouseau River First Nation), led by Ogimaa Charles Nelson and Ogimaa-ikwe Edna Manitowabi, as well as the members of my cultural advisory board—Maureen Manitowabi,

[44] Many of the historical methods which I cite as part of indigenous research methodologies--time spent on the Land, ceremony, and traditional indigenous stories--were employed by Elizabeth Fenn in her Pulitzer Prize winning monograph, Elizabeth A. (Elizabeth Anne) Fenn, *Encounters at the Heart of the World : A History of the Mandan People* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2015). Fenn's use of such methods, as a non-Indigenous scholar, represent an arrival in the effort to Indigenize the academy, specifically, the field of History.

Alannah Earl Young, Laura Horton, Dale Missyabit, and Jazz Comegan. I am also guided by conversations with teachers Jim O'Chiese and Jay Eagleman, and members of the Buffalo Nations Food System Initiative Council, Dr. Leroy Little Bear, Shelly Fyant, Paulette Fox, Major Robinson, Jason Baldes, and Helen Augare Carlson.

To research and write from an Anishinaabeg perspective requires a specific set of research methods—time spent on the Land, ceremony, songs, language, and contemplation of the connection between the story and the Stories.[45] Yet, I am also writing in the academic discipline of History, which requires an additional set of research methods—documents, newspapers, photographs, cultural items—physical evidence created in the era of the story's origin and belonging to the archival canon. [46] What is in the canon has been limited by who held agency in the past. Colonization has favored a canon of non-Indigenous, mainly male, sources. My choice of methods is a corrective to the limitations of the current canon and to bring a view of the past that is broadly informed. By expanding the methods I use, I am embracing what Linda Tuhiwai

[45] Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair (Peguis First Nation) states, "Anishinaabeg stories are about generation and re-generation." We have two kinds of stories *aadizookaanag* (sacred stories with as many versions as there are tellers—they are considered animate) and *dibaajimowin* ("histories" or "news" ranging from family genealogies, geographies, and historical experiences—they are considered inanimate.) Leanne Simpson refers to these two types of stories as "interrelated forces, echoes, and parts of a greater whole." Quoted in Jill Doerfler, Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark, *Centering Anishinaabeg Studies: Understanding the World Through Stories* (East Lansing, UNITED STATES: Michigan State University Press, 2013), xvii–xix, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/montana/detail.action?docID=3338298.

[46] "Putting Aboriginal peoples at the centre of scholarly inquiry has challenged the traditional techniques of historical research, leading to increasingly sophisticated theoretical and methodological approaches to historical sources." Laura Peers & Carolyn Podruchny, "Introduction: Complex Subjectivities, Multiple Ways of Knowing," in Carolyn Podruchny and Laura Peers, *Gathering Places: Aboriginal and Fur Trade Histories* (Vancouver, B.C.: University of British Columbia Press, 2010), 1.

Smith (Maori), Margaret Kovach (Cree-Saulteaux), and Shaun Wilson (Cree), have termed Indigenous Research Methodologies.[47] What Smith called decolonizing methodologies are meant to revolutionize thinking with consideration "for the roles that knowledge, knowledge production, knowledge hierarchies and knowledge institutions play in decolonization and social transformation."[48] Indigenous Research Methods are an intentional attempt to change the vantage point in History.[49]

An Indigenous Environmental History

As an Indigenous environmental history of the Indigenous food system, this work acknowledges the integrated reality of people and place or the native notion, "We are the Land." Indigenous peoples were always active agents of their environment. At the heart of Native agency is the dynamic process of knowledge, practice, and belief that we refer to as traditional ecological knowledge. From the standpoint of Indigenous agency and traditional ecological knowledge, I am concerned with how collective changes within the web of relations occurred in the process of settler-colonial arrival. My examination of the past is through a complex lens

[47] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (New York: Zed Books, Ltd., 1999); Margaret Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations and Contexts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); Shawn Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (Black Point, N.S.: Fernwood Publishing, 2008).
[48] Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, x.
[49] "Methods become the means and procedures through which the central problems of the research are addressed. Indigenous methodologies are often a mix of existing methodological approaches and indigenous practices. The mix reflects the training of indigenous researchers, which continues to be within the academy, and the parameters and common sense understandings of research which govern how indigenous communities and researchers define their activities." Smith, 144.

which engages multiple ways of seeing or pedagogies—Indigenous research methodologies and Western historical methodologies.

Why is Indigenous foodways knowledge important? In his 1990 article, "Transformations of the Earth: Toward an Agroecological Perspective in History," environmental historian Donald Worster made a strong statement for the importance of research and writing on food systems, saying that "food production in the most vital, constant, and concrete way to the natural world. "We are inextricably tied to the land through food. The impact of the food systems we employ are significant and bear importance for the well-being of the Land and the People. We are not sovereign unless we have access to food in *a good way*.[50] Indigenous food sovereignty is not about *control over* the food system, which is a colonial-capitalist relational concept, rather it is about having the freedom to exercise our lifeways and embedded beliefs expressed through relationships within the food system. Pointing to Native food systems, Worster said, "The landscapes that resulted from such traditional practices were carefully integrated, functional mosaics that retained much of the wisdom of nature; they were based on close observation and imitation of the natural order."[51] As our esteemed Piikani uncle, Dr. Leroy Little Bear says, "Food is just the outcome of our way of life."[52]

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[50] Indigenous people use the term "in a good way" to connote doing things in balance with the web of life, in right relationship. In the language of environmentalism, one might say "in a good way" could also mean "sustainably."

[51] Donald Worster, *The Wealth of Nature: Environmental History and the Ecological Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 55.

[52] Dr. Leroy Little Bear (Kanai) in conversation with the author and members of the Montana State University Buffalo Nations Food System Initiative Advisory Council, April 21, 2021.

Purpose of Study

There are, therefore, two reasons to study Indigenous food systems--for the health of the Land and the health of the People; these are not two separate entities. We are talking about an intimately woven web of relations. Since colonization took a sudden and unceasing grip on buffalo nations' food system, roughly between 1860 and 1880, we have been hooked on an unsustainable fossil-fuel based delivery of food centered in a capitalist endeavor in which relative is pitted against relative and extractive processes empty out the creative life energy of soil, water, plants, and people by order of their privilege in the system. The web of life is deeply fractured and suffering. Indigenous peoples in the US are likely to die five and half years earlier than non-native people as the health disparities proliferated by this extractive arrangement lay siege on the life of many for the advantage of the few.[53]

Knowing the history of our food system opens the door to coming back into relationship with plant and animal relatives that have supported our well-being for millennia. As the field of epigenetics affirms, when we eat the foods that we co-evolved with over the course of time, we are aligned with foods which support our health. However, merely bringing back these foods in our diet does not solve the dilemma of the extractive dominant system. By simply bringing back buffalo, fiddlehead ferns, prairie turnips, ancestral squash, beans, and corn, to our plates, we are not necessarily restructuring the system. If we stop short of returning to our Indigenous knowledge of place, ceremonies, songs, teachings, and land practices, we are at risk of only

[53] "Disparities Factsheet," Indian Health Service: The Federal Health Program for American Indians and Alaska Natives (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), accessed November 29, 2021, https://www.ihs.gov/newsroom/factsheets/disparities/.

becoming "Indigenous foodies" who do not know how to live a sustainable lifeway that protects the web relationship and the very plants and animals who hold the gift of health out to us.[54]

It is not by bringing back the foods alone that we will restore the balance. It is by picking up our bundles—knowing our foodways and the embedded ancestral knowledge handed down for millennia which will restore balance in individuals and the whole. For this reason, my research embeds archival knowledge of the past in the Indigenous knowledge which sustained our people. Knowing the past, what broke the Indigenous food system, is essential--we study colonization to undo it. Yet if we do not recover the knowledge torn away by colonization, we have a void, and imbalance will persist.

This story is particularly situated from an Anishinaabe perspective and focused on the lifeways of the buffalo culture people whose movement over the land in a seasonal rhythm was sustained for millennia, more than 13,000 years. Many others have written on various aspects of this story.

My Community of Inquiry

My academic kinship network includes authors who have written on the history of the Anishinaabeg (Brenda Child, Anton Treuer, & Michael Witigen), Anishinaabe land practices (Alannah Earl Young, Nancy J. Turner), the history of the Plains Ojibwe (Laura Peers, Pat Albers, Nicolas Vrooman), the Anishinaabe knowledge system (Alannah Earl Young, Kathy Absolon, Leanne Betasmoke Simpson, Cary Miller), Indigenous food systems (George Colpitts, Joshua Reed, Charlotte Cote, Elizabeth Hoover, Winona LaDuke), Indigenous agriculture (Sarah

[54] Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* (Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions, 2013).

Carter), the environmental history of the northern Great Plains (Ted Binnema, Geoff Cunfer, Douglas Bamforth), Indigenous inscriptions on the land (Maria Zedeńo), settler inscriptions on the land (Kathryn Yusoff), and settler-colonial and Indigenous relationships of méttisage (Sarah Carter, Sylvia VanKirk, Brenda McDougall, Nichole St-Onge, & Carolyn Podruchny, Anne Hyde). Further, I am building on the work of the following authors and themes: settler-colonial disruptions to the Indigenous food system resulted in the disruption of the Indigenous knowledge systems (Fikret Berkes), a decline in the health of the people (James Daschuk), and the health of the Land (Geoff Cunfer, Ted Binnema), or stated more powerfully, a corresponding decline in cultural diversity and biodiversity (Winona LaDuke, Gerald Oetelaar, Luisa Maffi). Many of the people in the story, namely those known as the Métis or Pembina people, because of their mixed heritage, occupied an important liminal space between cultures and were also significantly caught in the middle of the hardening boundaries of the project of colonial nation-building (Nicholas Vrooman, Delia Lee Hagen, Michel Hogue, Brendan Resnick).

Following these relatives with respect and humility, I hope to deliver a culturally articulated view of Anishinaabe life from 1780-1890 as we moved with the bizhikiwag (the buffalo) across the Northwestern Plains fanning out to the eastern front of the Rocky Mountains including, how Gichi Bizhiki (Grandfather Buffalo) stood for us as our source of sovereignty; a view of the complexity and sophistication of the Anishinaabe seasonal round; and how, as colonization impacted the balance of the web of life, Anishinaabeg drew upon skills of adaptation and powers of resistance and resiliency to meet these challenges. Standing in Anishinaaabe worldview, I hope to contribute an alternative perspective on colonial expansion

and the cost to the web of relations of which humans, Anishinaabeg, are the youngest members—a history told from a view in which there is no separation of culture and nature.

Chapter Summary

The chapters that follow build a relational view of the biocultural region in question, beginning in Chapter 2, with a deep history of the Old North Trail Corridor or what is now the western edge of Anishinaabewaki, and continuing in Chapter 3 with an examination of the deep connection between land, food, and Anishinaabe identity, followed by four chapters which blend a view of Anishinaabe seasonal food and land practices with segments of a linear progression of time through the years 1780-1920. The final chapter or epilogue will return to Ziigwan, Spring—the new spring in which Anishinaabeg along with other Indigenous relatives are working for sovereignty in the areas of food, land practices, health, and the return of the balance in the great network of all of our relations.

Rather than a bioregional history, as the field of Environmental History might name it, I present a biocultural regional history reflecting the Anishinaabe way of seeing or an Indigenous environmental history.[55] In that the view shared here is an Indigenous one, the term biocultural is an imperative meant to acknowledge the way in which Indigeneity has never separated nature

[55] Dan Flores has argued for more bioregional environmental histories that examine "the particularism of distinctive places fashioned by human culture's peculiar and fascinating interpenetration with all the vagaries of topography, climate, and evolving ecology that define landscapes ought to cause environmental historians to realize that one of their most crucial tasks is to write well what might be called bioregional histories."Dan Flores, "Place: An Argument for Bioregional History," *Environmental History Review* 18 (Winter 1994): 2–3; Kirkpatrick Sale, "Dwellers in the Land: The Bioregional Vision," in *A Companion to American Environmental History*, ed. Douglas Cazaux Sackman, Blackwell Companions to American History (West Sussex, UK: A John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2010), 1.

from culture. This history is also regional in that it is the history that belongs to a particular place--the web of life that we know to be *the Land.*

Chapter Two begins with an important story related by our ancestors, that of *Chi Bizhiki* (Grandfather Buffalo), followed by a deep view of *the Land* in the place where the bison stands for us to this day, the Western doorway. For the Anishinaabeg, as with most Indigenous Peoples, the Land is our first teacher.[56] When we speak about "the Land," we are not talking about acreage, terra firma, or merely a place, we are talking about the place where we live with all our relations (human and other-than-human). We are acknowledging a web of relationship more expansive than that which ecologists call "habitat" or "the environment," because we are also acknowledging "ourselves in relationship" to the Land and with all who dwell there, have dwelt there, and will dwell there. My method of putting the voices of the ancestors and the Land first is intentional to doing Indigenous History. This chapter explains the depth and breadth of the buffalo nations seasonal round as it can be understood in deep history.

Chapter Three, "Anishinaabe Land, Food, and Identity," presents the ones who have migrated from west to east and again west, as they existed in a culturally constituted relationship of people and place. This chapter is an exploration of the workings of culture in relationship to the food. It is meant as orientation to the reader as well as cultural knowledge recovery of our origins and relationships amongst people and place.

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[56] Late "Yup'ik elder Oscar Kwaagley wrote: The cold defines my place. Mamterilleq (now known as Bethel, Alaska) made me who I am. The cold made my language, my worldview, my culture, and my technology…I grew up as an inseparable part of Nature. It was not my place to "own" land, nor to domesticate plants or animals that often have more power than I as a human being." Tuck and McKenzie, *Place in Research : Theory, Methodology, and Methods*, 56.

Chapters Four through Seven follow an unconventional mix of Anishinaabeg time as defined by relationship with the Land in the seasonal round and Western linear markings of time during the height of colonization as experienced in western Anishinaabewaki. Following the sequence of the natural order of the seasonal round, Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter, I explore the movement of the People over the Land, the practices of tending Mother Earth, hunting, harvesting, and trading. Here my methodology departs from the linear tradition of the discipline of History. Instead, change over time is interspersed in a pattern of weaving the story of seasonal lifeways with evidence of how settler-colonial arrival impacted Indigenous reality and the well-being of the web of relations.

Chapter Four, "Ziigwan (Spring)," begins with Anishinaabeg life on the land in the spring of the year as it was lived in the area of north and west of the Great Lakes and the Red River Valley. The story follows the ancestors' long trips westward to the Upper Missouri and mountain foothills as they felt the pull of Grandfather Buffalo from 1780 to 1820. Ziigwan, a time of cleansing and renewal, also tells the story of Anishinaabe adaptation to life in two economies and two food systems as they built their life in the woodlands and the prairies.

Chapter Five, "Niibin (Summer)," a time when Anishinaabeg vigorously lay their hands on the work in embrace the abundance of the season, also follows the years 1821 to 1850. Faced with the increased dominance of the settler economy and accompanying strategies of assimilation, Anishinaabeg deepen the connections in the kinship network and with bizhikiwaag (buffalo) as they persevere in their way of life.

In Chapter Six, "Dagwaagin (Fall)," the years 1851-70, the Anishinaabeg were more reliant on the buffalo food system of the Northwestern Plains and Rocky Mountains. As they

traveled to the fall buffalo hunts in mixed bands with their Cree, Assiniboine, and Métis relatives, comprising the Nehiyaw Pwat Confederacy, they experienced more chaos as an increasing number of Nations began to rely on fewer and fewer resources. The US government was winning the expansion game in the West with Canada and were first to move to making treaties with Plains Nations. Colonial economic and industrial development depleted the buffalo economy. Anishinaabe resilience was expressed through their kinship relationships, land practices, and persistence of their ceremonies, but particularly through the gifts given by Grandfather Buffalo.

In Chapter Seven, "Biboon (Winter)," the years 1871-1890, Anishinaabeg and their buffalo nations kin faced the near extinction of the buffalo. With shocking rapidity, the settler colonial system rolled across the prairies devouring the Indigenous food system to make way for large-scale agricultural settlement. Resistance to the loss of the seasonal round was fought with an alliance of like-minded spiritual leaders and band of relatives. As the reservation era developed, the mixed bands were sorted and cleared from the Land. With limited alternatives, the means of subsistence became replacement foods, provided by the colonial governments on the basis of Indigenous cooperation and logistical availability. Yet even then Indigenous foodways persisted and Anishinaabeg protected their sacred source of knowledge, their ceremonies.

Situating Ourselves within this Knowledge

As you come to this work, I would like to conclude with a note on your engagement with this story. In these pages we will wrestle with colonialism, an ongoing force of subjugation of people, lands, animals, birds, water, soil, and air. What comes with this discussion is emotion

whose heavy presence should be acknowledged. Investigating the emotion around stories of colonial conquest and continued domination, we see questions that are not necessarily productive: What guilt or victimhood have I inherited? Am I culpable through the actions of my ancestors? Am I a victim of the colonial past? Inherited roles and accompanying emotions do not necessarily serve the present. Although historical violence has clearly fallen on some much more than others, colonialism, in the historical sense, is not the fault of anyone presently living. It is not necessarily an inherited value. Establishing binaries rarely serves the process of healing. Colonialism, as a legacy of the past and a reality in the present, is, however, the burden of everyone on this continent and others. The violence of the past, including the personal burden of historical trauma, continues in the present as long as we do not collectively contend with colonialism. As Larissa Behrendt, Aboriginal Australian legal academic, observes, "It is about acknowledging the truth, and with that acknowledgement will come reconciliation, healing, empowerment and pride...it is a mistake to think of Indigenous rights and well-being as merely an 'Indigenous issue' or ‘Indigenous problem’."[57] You are invited to come to this story from your own place and to open yourself to the possibilities of the future that this story implies. I encourage you to discuss this story at a personal level with your relatives and within your learning communities. Chi miigwech.

[57] Walter L Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism: A History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 200.

CHAPTER TWO

THE OLD NORTH TRAIL CORRIDOR: A DEEP HISTORY OF A BUFFALO HOMELAND

Ancestral Inscriptions

The land itself bears inscriptions of ancient relationships between people and place.[58] In 1806, on their return trip from the Pacific Coast, colonial explorers Lewis & Clark followed the Qoq'aalx 'Iskit (Salish meaning Buffalo Trail Road), a well-worn path over the mountains, which had been used for centuries by Columbia Plateau Indians to access shared buffalo hunting grounds east of the Continental Divide.[59] It was marked by peeled trees/blaze marks, rock cairns, and campsites for those who traveled it for thousands of years for the purposes of hunting, trade, visiting and harvesting. On June 30, 1806, the party reached Traveler's Rest in the Bitterroot Valley near present-day Lolo, Montana. After three days' rest the ones who called themselves the "Corps of Discovery" split into two parties. William Clark's group left to explore the Yellowstone River, while Captain Meriwether Lewis and his men set out to explore the northernmost reaches of the Marias River, "hoping to exert further territorial claim to the Louisiana Purchase."[60]

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[58] Geoff Cunfer, "The Decline and Fall of the Bison Empire," in *Bison and People on the North American Great Plains: A Deep Environmental History*, ed. Geoff Cunfer and Bill Waiser (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2016), 1.
[59] Sara A. Scott, "Indian Forts and Religious Icons: The Buffalo Road (Qoq'aalx 'Iskit) Trail Before and After the Lewis and Clark Expedition," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 19, no. 2 (June 2015): 384–415, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10761-015-0293-6.
[60] G.E. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Volume 8, June 10-September 26, 1806.*, vol. 8 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993).

On July 8, Lewis and his party having traversed the mountains along the North Fork of the Blackfoot River, turned north along the eastern front of the Rockies following the Old North Trail, which Lewis referred to as "the road," and which Highway 287 now follows. Once they crossed the Dearborn River, Lewis observed Shishequaw mountain (Haystack Butte) in view, "a high, insulated mountain of a conic form, standing several miles in advance of the eastern range of the Rocky Mountains, here about eight miles from us and immediately on *our road***,** which was in a northwest direction." He writes that their key objective was "to strike Medicine (Sun) river, and hunt down to its mouth to procure skins for the food and gear necessary for the three men who are to be left at the falls, none of whom are hunters, we determined to leave *the road*." Upon reaching Shishequaw creek he continued, "we halted and dined, and now felt, by the luxury of our food, that we were approaching once more the plains of the Missouri, so rich in game. We saw a great number of deer, antelope, goats, wolves, and some barking-squirrels, and for the first time caught a distant prospect of two buffaloes."[61] This team of explorers, hired by President Jefferson to document the course of the Missouri River as a potential transcontinental pathway for commerce, recognized an abundance in this place that is no longer present.[62]

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[61] Moulton,. , July 8, 1806. Emphasis added to the words "road" here are the author's and meant to note that this "road" was not laid by the "Corps of Discovery," rather they were aided by it, an ancient road, the Old North Trial, which was well-traveled for thousands of years prior to the arrival of the Lewis and Clark expedition which sought to discover the resources which might be extracted from this territory previously unknown to the US Government and its leaders.

[62] President Jefferson's instructions to the team were more expansive than exploration of commercial transports routes, but included a mandate to record a matter of animals, plants, land, climate, and minerals, as well as the disposition of all peoples encountered, towards the ends of commerce and doing business in the places and with the people who resided there. Their record keeping would serve as an analysis of resources for the exploits of colonial expansion. Thomas Jefferson, "Letter to Meriwether Lewis, Esquire Captain of the 1st Regiment of Infantry of the United States of America," June 20, 1803, Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/lewisandclark/transcript57.html.

Lewis and his men were on their return journey from the West Coast, and upon reaching the eastern side of the mountains, they found refuge in the bounty of the landscape. They were back in the land of plenty. In today's landscape, reshaped by settler colonial presence and industrial agriculture--where buffalo are absent--we may find the Corps of Discovery's rejoicing a surprise. In Montana, the western side of the Rockies is generally seen as the verdant one—more wet with a longer growing season, good for crops and orchards. But as Meriwether Lewis came over the mountains to the more arid eastern slope, he was clearly thinking about his stomach. He was traveling in a different landscape, a different food system from the one we know today, one rich with foods he appreciated.

Fur trader David Thompson, in 1810, having returned from his trek to the western side of the Rocky Mountains where he had nearly starved to death, emerged onto the Plains and proclaimed, "As we are now in the land of the Bison we hope no more to be in want of Provisions."Mo[63] Similarly, Daniel Harmon, when exploring western Canada early in the nineteenth century, stated, "In fact, those Indians, who reside in the large plains or prairies, are the most independent, appear to be the most contented and happy people upon the face of the earth. They subsist upon the flesh of the buffaloe."[64]

For the Indigenous historian, the descriptions of our relatives found in the archives, filled mostly with settler-colonial interpretations, are not often positive. Fur trader Daniel Harmon's

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[63] William E. Moreau, *The Writings of David Thompson, Volume 2: The Travels, 1848 Version, and Associated Texts* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 2015).
[64] Daniel Williams Harmon, *A Journal of Voyages and Travels in the Interior of North America, between the 47th and 58th Degrees of N. Lat., Extending from Montreal Nearly to the Pacific, a Distance of about 5,000 Miles: Including an Account of the Principal Occurrences during a Residence of Nineteen Years in Different Parts of the Country* (Ontario: G.N. Morang, 1903), 6.

description represents an infrequent outlier in the archive. The story of our buffalo culture food system has long been unduly influenced by the dominant narratives of newcomers--journals of missionaries, explorers, surveyors, and traders--whose voices tell a different story, one which frequently attaches condescending or misunderstood views of Indigenous people, their lifeways and food system, as backward and savage. These narratives have been cataloged in the archives, almost to complete exclusion of other views. The ones who have told these stories were newcomers, mostly "fish out of water" in their experience of the Northwestern Plains. They arrived without context for their new territory and had not yet integrated in the food system or the place. Settler-colonial narratives were representative of European worldview, knowledge and belief systems. As reports from a new world delivered back to European homelands, served as tools to help justify colonization of people and place as comparison studies of lifeways and foodways which favored the European extractive food system as the pinnacle of human civilization.[65]

Western academics—historians, anthropologists, and archeologists--have long used the term "hunter-gatherer" to describe my Native ancestors in reference to their means of subsistence and society. The academic and social discussion of this lifeway has not always supported

[65] Historian, Elizabeth Vibert, makes a strong case for how food was used as a tool of national identity in the colonial nation-building project of British Canada and how the concepts of the barbarism and savagery of indigenous peoples were tools in the process. She brings to light the "four stages" theory that was in play amongst Scottish thinkers in the late 18th century. "Stage of civilization refers to the influential set of theories of this period that held that societies developed through four distinct stages, defined broadly as hunting and gathering, pastoral, agricultural, and commercial. The commercial stage was viewed as the apex of human social development, and the commercially minded and hard-working British middle class was its highest expression." Elizabeth Vibert, "The Contours of Everyday Life: Food and Identity in the Plateau Fur Trade," in *Gathering Places: Aboriginal and Fur Trade Histories*, ed. Carolyn Podruchny and Laura Peers (Vancouver, B.C.: University of British Columbia Press, 2010), 119–48.

Harmon's observation of an independent and contented lifeway. Rather hunter-gatherer societies have often been portrayed as *primitive*, with the implication of something that came before something, namely *civilization*. Even when the term is not directly used, socialization around the term "hunter-gatherer" often evokes the idea of "savages" living a hand-to-mouth existence. Authors Maria Nieves Zedeño, Jesse Ballenger, and John Murray (Blackfeet) observed the flatness of the portrayal of big game hunters, mainly focused on "behavior & technology to the exclusion of the rich pursuits of life that are economic, reproductive, political, and future-oriented."[66] Their words are an invitation to revisit the bison culture food system.

The "road" on which Meriwether Lewis and his party traveled along the eastern front of the Rockies has long been known as the Old North Trail. The feet of our ancestors sculpted that ground. The timeworn grooves of their movement--sometimes accompanied by dogs and then horses, both with travois of different widths and weights, and then with the two-wheeled Red River Cart—are a brilliant line of hope. It allows us to feel their presence and understand the parts of this story that were stripped away and misconstrued by the historical record. In returning to the trail, we are returning to the place, the land, our first teacher.

A Buffalo Homeland

"We are the land." -Jim O'Chiese (O'Chiese First Nation, Alberta)[67]

[66] Maria Nieves Zedeño, Jesse A. M. Ballenger, and John R. Murray, "Landscape Engineering and Organizational Complexity among Late Prehistoric Bison Hunters of the Northwestern Plains," *Current Anthropology* 55, no. 1 (February 2014): 23, https://doi.org/10.1086/674535.
[67] Jim O'Chiese, "Let's Talk Ojibway" (Let's Talk Ojibway, Box Elder Schools, Chippewa Cree Tribe of Rocky Boy Montana, October 14, 2020).

The messages of the historical record are conflicted and rarely come in the voice of Indigenous people. So how do we go about understanding the buffalo culture lifeway? Jim O'Chiese, a teacher and relative from north of the Medicine Line asked in a recent Anishinaabemowin language class, "how can we know ourselves if we take our information from the ones who are still studying us?" Our ceremonies are our archives; they tell us "we are the land."[68] Understanding Anishinaabe lifeways and food systems therefore begins with understanding the land to which they belong. So, we look to the land of this buffalo home for understanding.

I begin with the deep history of place in order to allow, as is our protocol, the land and the oldest relatives to speak first. The deep history of the Old North Trail Corridor reveals a complex relationship between people and place which supported the buffalo culture way of life for millennia. The Corridor was what anthropologist Luisa Maffi describes as a place of biocultural diversity: "diversity of life in all its manifestations--biological, cultural, and linguistic, which are interrelated (possibly co-evolved) within a complex socio-ecological adaptive system."[69] Through understanding the web of life and the role of the various relatives

[68] Anishinaabeg have been called by many names and affiliations which at times can make the historical record hard to understand. Colonial names for our people included Ojibwe, Cree, & Assiniboine, and also, the Métis, mixed heritage Euro-Native American people who followed Indigenous lifeways. Though these names have been given to various groups amongst us, ceremony, which is our system of education, rejoins all of us with our true identity as Anishinaabeg. These names were also a colonial tool meant to extract Indigenous identity and separate kin relations, ultimately stemming from a fear of other and desire to extract much more from the web of life to which Anishinaabe belong. In spite of such efforts, we know ourselves. Through our ceremonies, songs, stories, kin and most directly through our relationship with the land we know we are Anishinaabeg. O'Chiese.

[69] Luisa Maffi, "Linguistic, Cultural, and Biological Diversity," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34 (2005): 599–617.

who comprised it we can better understand sustainable sustenance—the relationships of reciprocity that comprised this adaptive food system and the Anishinaabe way of life. Anishinaabeg know themselves in this Corridor, where our names are written on the stones.[70] Following the deep history of people and place in the Old North Corridor, I will pick up with a deeper look at Anishinaabe identity as connected to the land and foodways, followed by an examination of our seasonal round and the most recent journey of Anishinaabe to this buffalo home.

Chi Bizhiki

Our explanations for how things came to be, are always reflective of where we stand. Anishinaabe have their own story of what happened to the buffalo. This is our late Uncle Eddie Benton-Banai's telling of the story of Chi Bizhiki:

Waynaboozhoo, the first person and great teacher of the Anishinaabe, both human and spirit, wanted to understand the wonders he experienced as he walked the Earth. He asked many questions of the Creator to satisfy his hunger for knowledge. Finally growing tired of his questions, Creator sent Waynaboozhoo to live with his Grandmother. She was not of the world he knew. She held the wisdom of the spirits, what the elders hold and Waynaboozhoo desired. He grew and experienced many things, but one day it was clear to him that he had to leave his Kokom (grandma) and find his father. He had never seen his own mother and father. He had many unanswered questions about his family. So, he returned to earth and continued his journey. He started from where a great body of salt water seemed to stretch out forever to the East. He knew that in the land of the Nig-ga'be-un-noong (West) he would find his father. As he traveled

[70] O'Chiese, "Let's Talk Ojibway."

westward, he came to the great may-gway-yawk (forests), beautiful rivers and deep blue lakes. He stopped at a huge waterfall, Kitchika'be-kong (Great Falls) he called it. From the roar of the great falls he gained strength. Leaving the powerful falls, he continued and found that the going was hard as he met the great lakes and Gi-chi-gu'-mee, the huge fresh water sea, and navigated around and across many rivers and lakes. Finally, he came to the grandfather river, the biggest he had ever seen. He knew that this river gave life to the land in all directions and must always be respected and even appeased because it held great power. The river seemed impossible to cross. Its waters were deep and fast. All at once, the waters of the river spoke to Waynaboozhooo. "I am Michi-zee-bee, the greatest river. What brings you to my shore?"

Waynaboozhooo told him about his journey to his father and that he needed to cross over, but the river just flowed on. Finally, Waynaboozhooo thought of his asema (tobacco), this first gift. He offered his asema, sprinkling it in the water, as an offering to the river. "I can sense that you are determined to continue your journey no matter what I tell you. I can see that you are sincere in your purpose. I will show you a place to cross my waters." After Waynaboozhooo safely crossed the river spoke again to warn him, "You will soon meet another the princess of all rivers. She is O-gi-ma-kway'zee-bee. Together we are the main arteries of Mother Earth. We help to drain and purify her blood. You must speak with her as a boy might speak to his aunt or grandmother." Waynaboozhooo continued walking to the West.

The land flattened into a huge mashkode (plain). One especially hot day on the prairie, he heard great rumbling like thunder and saw a huge cloud hanging close to the Earth. Soon the Earth began to tremble, and it was not long until he realized the many animals running at him were Mashkode-Bizhiki (buffalo) he had seen once on a journey long before he had found the

lodge of his Grandmother. Those buffalo gathered up forming a wall and would not let Waynaboozhoo go on. He waited for days, until finally a mighty buffalo, Chi Bizhiki came forward and said, "We have tried to dissuade you from your journey but you seem determined, so I will walk with you a ways and guide you. Sometimes the winds bring snow that covers the Earth and can cause you to become blind and lost forever. Only I am able to survive. If this happens stand at my side and I shall protect you. I will do this because I am one of your oldest brothers."

As they traveled Chi Bizhiki told Waynaboozhoo many more things. He told him how each being on the Earth has a purpose to fulfill in life and that we as brothers and sisters must seek to understand and respect that purpose. Then he explained to him what he should do when he approached the land of his father. Finally, as they were approaching the high mountains, the giant buffalo said, "I must leave you now, but I will give you a gift. In the future if you ever need me, I will help you as an older brother should. I will be waiting in the land of the West." Waynaboozhooo did not understand all of what the buffalo had said to him but he kept the conversation with him as he continued in search of his father.

Chi Bizhiki waited, standing in that western land with his legs grounded in the earth like solid tree trunks. Waynaboozhoo went on his way and found his father.[71]

This story belongs to the collective memory of the Anishinaabeg and, as such has been interpreted by elder-knowledge holders over the years. Revered Anishinaabe teacher, Eddie-baa Benton Banai, relayed the story of what followed these events:

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[71] The story told here is the author's version of the one shared by Ogima Eddie-baa Benton Banai. Edward Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway* (Minneapolis, MN: The University of Minnesota, 1988).

> It is sometimes related by the Ojibwe elders of how Chi Bizhiki has stood at the western doorway looking this way over the lives of the Native people of this land. He is said to be the spirit of the buffalo that guided Waynaboozhooo across the Great Plains. He is a guardian to Indian people everywhere. When life was good for the Native people of this continent and brotherhood, sisterhood, and respect ruled over this land, this buffalo was very powerful. With all his might the buffalo pledged to stand firm in his protection to the natural people.
>
> As time passed, the Black Coats (Christian missionaries) came and divided the people from their original instructions and Chi Bizhiki lost one of his legs. He sacrificed it so that the Native people could go on living. Still Chi Bizhiki stood strong for the people with only three legs to support him.
>
> Then the armies of the light-skinned race came and began to remove the people from their homelands, to wipe out entire tribes of the people, and to turn nations against each other, Chi Bizhiki sacrificed yet another of his legs. Still he stood tall as best he could, determined not to fall. But, soon the granddaughters and grandsons of the Native people began to turn their backs on the teachings of their elders. The elders lost their reasons for living and Chi Bizhiki lost one more of his legs.
>
> Only one leg remained so that he could balance and hold his position in the western doorway. The buffalo knew that if he failed in his task of guardianship, there would be no hope for Indian people to survive. He gathered all his remaining strength and stood fast to his ground.
>
> Yet even now, Chi Bizhiki still stands as he has for so long, resting on his remaining leg. He knows if he fails in his job of protecting the people, there will be no hope for Indian people to survive.[72]

<u>The Western Doorway & the Old North Trail</u>

Chi Bizhiki planted himself and remained strong for the natural people in that place where the Old North Trail is carved along the Rocky Mountain Front, a rich home for both the Buffalo and the people related to him.[73] There the web of relationship, including humans, fed the

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[72] Adapted from Benton-Banai, 35–40, 112–13.

[73] The term "natural people" is that used by our Anishinaabe uncle Eddie-baa Benton-Banai in his telling of the story of Chi Bizhiki. It is useful as it connects the people to the ecosystem in inextricable ways--acknowledging the presence of people in a natural system. Ecological thinking struggles with the placement of humans in the biome, whereas Indigenous knowledge

vitality of the food system and the bison culture lifeway. In this place, the ancient Grandmothers mountains stood tall reaching to the sky and gathering snow. Nibi (the water) did her work as ancient glacial flows spilled out of the spaces in between the mountains and carved an undulating prairie landscape at their feet, protected spaces for plants, animals, and people. The grass sprang from the moistened earth in tender nutritious shoots and sustained the bison and other hooved ones, the crawling ones, and flying ones. The people fed the grass with fire and their handwork as they tended the wild plots they harvested. The beavers engineered the landscape, building quiet side pools along the rivers, where water plants were filter systems to clean the water along its journey. The wind uncovered the grass in the winter for the bison who provided sustenance for the wolves and the people. All these many relatives, and many more, participated in and made possible a lifeway which sprang from our elder brother, the buffalo--together they comprised *buffalo culture*.

The Land Tells the Story

The Old North Trail, one of the most ancient and well-used travel corridors in North America, tells the story of how movement over the land and engagement in a much larger web of relationship supported the bison culture lifeway. The Old North Trail connected the furthest Arctic communities of the north to warm desert communities of the south in a web of relationship in which the buffalo culture people hunted, prayed, cultivated, harvested, and traded.

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systems imagine an integrated reality amongst all beings. Benton-Banai refers to Grandfather Buffalo as Chi Bizhiki. According to elder Jim O'Chiese to not be confused with chi bizhiki, the ancient dinosaur buffalo or giant buffalo as Benton-Banai describes him, we use the term Gichi Bizhiki to refer to that spirit, Grandfather Buffalo. Jim O'Chiese in personal conversation with the author, November 22, 2021.

The trail may also have connected the native peoples of Eurasia and Central and South America.[74]

The Old North Trail ran north-south through a buffalo biome marked by the Rocky Mountains on its western edge. This biome of prime buffalo territory arched eastward encompassing the Northern Mixed Prairie and many island mountain ranges including the Little Rockies and the Cypress Hills. It included the river basins of the North and South Saskatchewan, the Missouri and the Yellowstone rivers. These veins of Mide-aki (Mother Earth) were also pathways of exchange tying people and materials together on an east-west axis. The convergence of the waters of the Yellowstone and the Missouri mark a longstanding place of Indigenous exchange, the place where the Mandan of the Missouri River Villages ran their Indigenous weigh station.[75] The southern edge of the biome was the Yellowstone River (known by the Apsaálooke as the Elk River). The northern perimeter of the biome was marked by the parklands and tundra

[74] One Ancestor, the Clovis Child, disturbed from his final resting place on what is now the Anzick family ranch, held in a museum for decades, and subjected to scientific tests of his DNA, has supported the stories of the oral tradition. When cells were extracted, his DNA showed Science what Indigenous Knowledge has always held—this is home. We have long been here, living a sophisticated lifeway in a vast web of relationship. The Ancestor's DNA affirmed that he was descended from both Natives of Central & South America as well as Natives of Eastern Asia and that he lived in this place around 12,700 years ago. DNA evidence does not reflect the most recent levels of relational interweaving but rather the bedrock level connections of relationships. What this means is our Ancestor, the Clovis Child, was part of a very longline of Native ancestry that wove three continents together much earlier than 13,000 years ago, prior to the melting of the giant ice fields to the north of the previous Ice Age. This Ancestor's resting place is near present day Wilsall, MT, in the Shields River Valley in the southernmost part of the Old North Trail bison biome, the geographic focus of this research. The Native communities of this region have laid the Ancestor at rest again and tried to build an assemblage of understanding around the disturbance of ancestral remains and the respect that the Old Ones deserve.

[75] The place where the Yellowstone and the Missouri meet was a long-standing hub of Indigenous exchange—a meeting place for visiting, trading, and Indigenous agriculture which supported the hosting of visitors long before Lewis and Clark acquired approximately two tons of "surplus" corn to supply their westward mission.

ecosystem beyond the arc of the North Saskatchewan River. The more we understand the trail and its uses the more we understand the complexity of the bison culture lifeway.

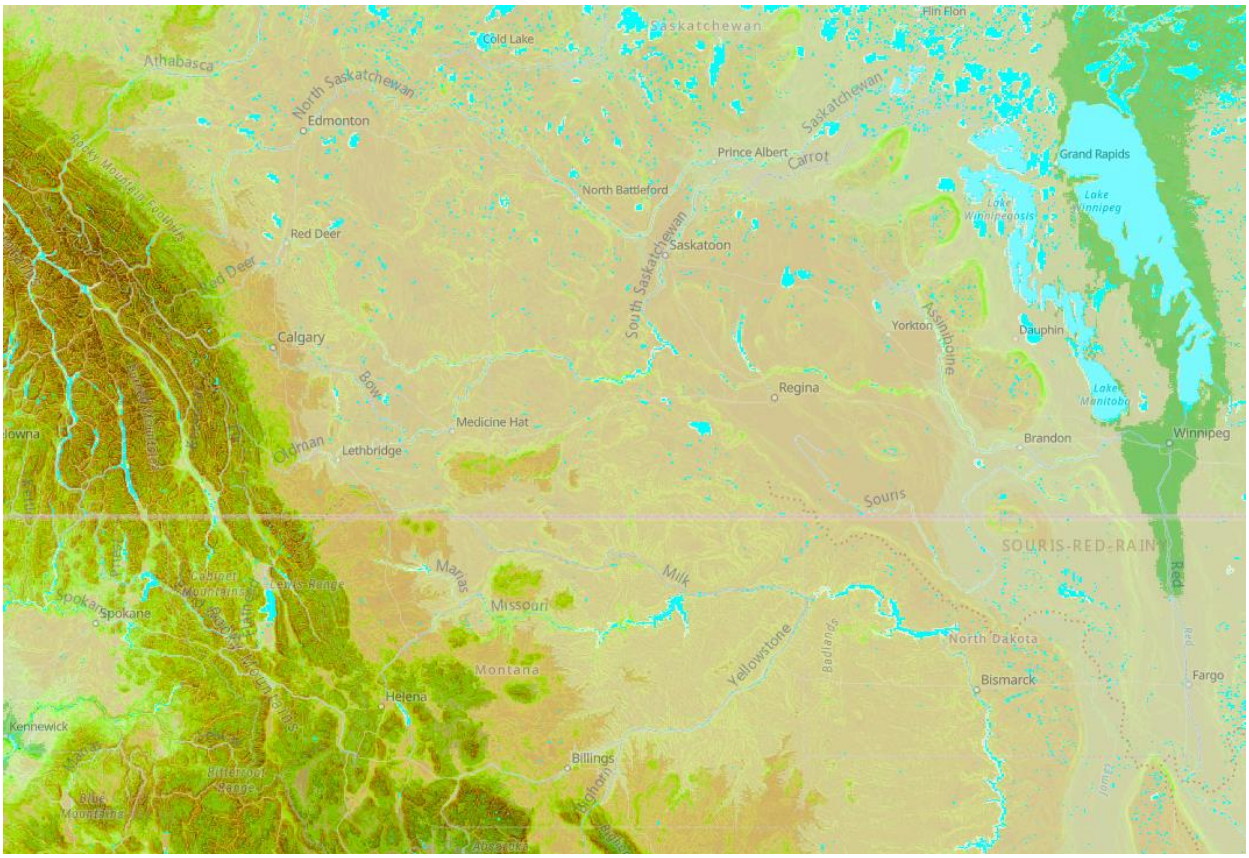


Figure 1. Map of The Old North Trail Corridor Biocultural Region, J.F. Ramaker

If you walked the Old North Trail today, you would find a series of braided trails running along the eastern front of the Rocky Mountains, marked by stone cairns, effigies, and camp sites. Part of the trail hugs the mountains, while other channels meander to medicine wheels and buffalo harvest sites. In the early 20th century after the natural peoples' movement with the buffalo had stopped, Natosin Nepe-e (Brings-Down-The-Sun), a noted Piikani (Blackfeet)

medicine person, reported that travois tracks and horse trails were still plainly visible from the movement of many generations of travelers on the Old North Trail.[76]

The relationship between buffalo and people can be traced back to the time when continental ice sheets on the Northwestern Plains melted and opened an ice-free corridor extending from the Mexican desert to the Canadian Shield.[77] This opening was the start of emerging conditions in which bison culture would develop and thrive. Bison culture existed here for at least 13,000 years. It is the "longest-lasting human lifeway in Great Plains history."[78] The people used stone quarries in the north and south of the Old North Trail corridor throughout those 13,000 years. There is evidence from oral histories, DNA, lithic scatter, and food remnants in ancient sites that demonstrate a constant and culturally complex existence in the Corridor.[79] Our movement over the landscape in the bison culture lifeway followed a pattern we call the seasonal round.

The duration of this lifeway has to do with the complexity and adaptive nature of the web of relationship--the way in which humans and other-than-human relatives worked together to sustain the web of life. Environmental scientists and others have often excluded humans from the

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[76] Walter McClintock, *The Old North Trail; or, Life, Legends and Religion of the Blackfeet Indians,* Western Americana, Frontier History of the Trans-Mississippi West, 1550-1900 ; Reel 340, No. 3356 (London: Macmillan and Co, Ltd, Macmillan, 1910), 435, http://www.archive.org/details/oldnorthtrailorl00mccluoft.

[77] Cunfer, "The Decline and Fall of the Bison Empire," 3.

[78] Cunfer, 7.

[79] I agree with Jace Weaver who makes the case, building on the work of Vine Deloria and anthropologist, Larry Zimmerman, that deeper understanding of human movement over the land demands new methods that draw Indigenous ways of knowing together with Western ways of knowing. Battles over human origins have often served as a forum for marginalizing Indigenous peoples and belittling their own knowledge of their past. Jace Weaver, "Indian Presence with No Indians Present: NAGPRA and Its Discontents," *Wicazo Sa Review* 12, no. 2 (1997): 13, https://doi.org/10.2307/1409204.

web by benchmarking ecological homeostasis in a time before humans. The perpetuation of the idea of what some call a human-nature divide does not serve us in searching for sustainability unless we are interested in working ourselves out of a job, out of existence. It is more productive to consider the nuances of the longest sustained lifeway in this bioregion as a benchmark for sustainable human participation in the web of life and the ways of being of the natural people whose worldview maintained a special place for humans.[80] University of Calgary archeologist Gerald Oetelaar sees humans as "integral components of the ecosystem and important agents of disturbance and change."[81] He and other researchers challenge the notion of a natural or pristine environment in North America at the time of contact and argue for the presence of a *managed landscape.*[82]

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[80] Bruno LaTour, working in the field of human geography, presents actor-network theory as a a theoretical and methodological approach to social theory where everything in the social and natural worlds exists in constantly shifting networks of relationships. Environmental historian Paul Sutter calls for an actor-network theory that rejects the categorical dualism of nature and humanity allowing for the agency of the nonhuman environment. Paul S Sutter, "Nature's Agents or Agents of Empire? Entomological Workers and Environmental Change during the Construction of the Panama Canal," *Isis* 98, no. 4 (December 2007): 724–54.This is an important pushback in the field of Environmental History and the environmentalist community that have both at times been obsessed with a notion of purity, in which nature is at its best without humanity. His point is supported by Indigenous ways of knowing in general, and Anishinaabe ontology specifically. Anishinaabe teachings have always given other-than-human beings agency.

[81] Gerald Anthony Oetelaar, "Better Homes and Pastures: Human Agency and the Construction of Place in Communal Bison Hunting on the Northern Plains," *Plains Anthropologist* 59, no. 229 (February 1, 2014): 10, https://doi.org/10.1179/2052546X13Y.0000000004.

[82] William Denevan, "The Pristine Myth: The Lanscape of the Americas in 1492," *Annals of the Association of Americna Geographers* 82 (September 1992): 369–85; W.R. Dickinson, "The Times Are Always Changing: The Holocene Saga," *Geological Society of America Bulletin* 107 (n.d.): 1–7; Gerald A. Oetelaar and D. Joy Oetelaar, "The New Ecology and Landscape Archaeology: Incorporating the Anthropogenic Factor in Models of Settlement Systems in the Canadian Prairie Ecozone," *Canadian Journal of Archaeology / Journal Canadien d'Archéologie* 31, no. 3 (2007): 10.

Environmental conditions in the Old North Trail Corridor were the backdrop of a managed landscape. By examining the nuances of people and place we can see the way in which human and other-than-human actors created a sustainable existence of interrelationship in support of life. Fikret Berkes and Ian J. Davidson Hunt challenge the long-held notion in the environmental community that associates biodiversity conservation with protected areas by acknowledging that "most of the world's biodiversity is in areas used by people."[83] The biome along the eastern front of the Rocky Mountains, this buffalo home, was not only a place of human movement along an ancient trail stretching the length of the continent, but also an edge environment where the prairies meet the mountains. As E.P. Odum, an American ecosystem biologist, states:

> In ecological terms, edges are zones of transition from one ecosystem to another, areas where two different types of habitat, or successional stages, meet and integrate. A well-known characteristic of ecosystems is that these edges often exhibit high levels of productivity and species richness or biodiversity.[84]

The relationship between people and place hinged on the location of the buffalo and this was especially important in the winter. Where the plains and the eastern front of the mountains meet was a place where for millennia buffalo herds moved in during the winter.[85] The natural people hunted all year long but the gift of robes given by buffalo in winter with its thick fur was important for use in making clothing and bedding. These wintering herds were important to the

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[83] Fikret Berkes and Iain J. Davidson-Hunt, "Biodiversity, Traditional Management Systems, and Cultural Landscapes: Examples from the Boreal Forest of Canada," *International Social Science Journal* 58, no. 187 (March 2006): 35, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2451.2006.00605.x.
[84] E.P. Odum, *Fundmentals of Ecology*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia, PA: W.B. Saunders, 1971), 440; Nancy J Turner, Ian J Davidson-Hunt, and Michael O'Flaherty, "Living on the Edge: Ecological and Cultural Edges as Sources of Diversity for Social–Ecological Resilience," *Human Ecology* 31, no. 3 (2003): 440.
[85] While some buffalo migrated out of the area in the winter, smaller localized herds wintered over due to favorable conditions.

people as long as the two co-existed.[86] Conditions, such as the availability of water and the work of the wind to create open grazing opportunities, encouraged herds to winter along the northern Rocky Mountain foothills. This edge zone was not merely of biodiversity, but of biocultural diversity.

Buffalo culture flexed and shifted in its relational composition over time.[87] In the time of climate warming called the Altithermal, from 8,000 to 5,000 years ago, the gigantic bison, known in Western classification as *Bison antiquas*, died off and a smaller species, *Bison,* emerged. In the web of existence, nature and culture are never static—species, people, language, land, and culture are all constantly changing. The food system surely flexed during this time, as co-evolution of buffalo and human species occurred. Adaptation, or the notion of being flexible to *that which is given to us,* is and has always been at the heart of ancestral Indigenous foodways. It is a teaching we take from relationship with the land. From season to season and year to year, the diet varied and the people adapted to the food that was available.

As the natural people followed the instinctive pathway along the mountains from the North to the South, they participated in a large reciprocal network of exchange with human and other-than-human relatives.[88] New customs, technologies, foods, and ceremonies were

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[86] Brian O. K. Reeves, "Old North Trail MPD," Application to National Register of Historic Places, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, E. Statement of Historic Contents (Helena, MT: Montana State Historic Preservation Office, 1992).

[87] This date is based on what the field of Archaeology calls calibrated radiocarbon dates, which take into account environmental fluctuations that affect radiocarbon decay rates, increasing their accuracy. For further explanation see: Douglas H. MacDonald, *Montana Before History: 11,000 Years of Hunter-Gatherers in the Rockies and Plains* (Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 2012), 2.

[88] Genetic evidence gathered from the Clovis child ancestor, who lived in the Shields River Valley of, what is now, south central Montana indicates that by his time, 12,700BP, the

integrated, as were new microbes, genes, and people.[89] The exchange of knowledge, too, was a constant—knowledge gleaned from place, transferred from ancestors, handed from relatives (human and other-than-human)--what we now refer to as Indigenous Knowledge or Traditional Ecological Knowledge.[90] The Old North Trail, like any transportation route, was a conduit for change, reducing relative isolation and the limitations of what the biome of home was able to produce and experience.

Movement over the landscape supported life. In addition to the waterways, the natural people followed the contours of the land to the four directions. The Old North Trail marked

méttisage of Native Asians of Siberia with the Natives of the Western Hemisphere (Central and South America) was already well-established. Morten Rasmussen et al., "The Genome of a Late Pleistocene Human from a Clovis Burial Site in Western Montana," *Nature* 506, no. 7487 (February 13, 2014): 225–29, https://doi.org/10.1038/nature13025; Charles C. Mann, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus*, 1st ed.. (New York: Knopf, 2005). Evidence for the mixing of the peoples of these two parts of the world is supported by archaeological evidence of human habitation at Monte Verde, Chile, some 32,000 years ago, and supported by physical evidence of similarities between ancestors in Baja California and Aborigines of Australia. The curiosity and methods of Western Science (genetics, geology, archaeology, and anthropology) have not yet arrived at evidence that supports a theory satisfactory to all Western academic fields, or even within fields. Charles C. Mann, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus*, 1st ed.. (New York: Knopf, 2005). Native Peoples hold stories, knowledge and beliefs which to tie them to the natural world and make testament to their enduring presence on the land. For most Indigenous people, the idea of being imposters or even newcomers to place is not only foreign but incongruent with their origin stories and integrated worldviews.

[89] Alfred W. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*, 30th anniversary ed. (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2003); William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*, 1st rev. ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003).

[90] Nancy Turner et al. state that "cultural edges, rather than being border zones between discrete social entities, are zones of social interaction, cross-fertilization, and synergy wherein people not only exchange material goods but also learn from one another." Cultural edges are places where "exchanges of locally developed knowledge and practice appropriate to diverse ecosystems in which the different societies are based" take place. Turner, Davidson-Hunt, and O'Flaherty, "Living on the Edge: Ecological and Cultural Edges as Sources of Diversity for Social–Ecological Resilience."

north-south movement alongside and through mountain passageways, like its intersection with the Buffalo Hunt Trail. Natosin Nepe-e's (Brings down the Sun, Piikani) father once told him, the trail "originated in the migration of a great tribe of Indians from the distant north to the south, and all the tribes have, ever since continued to follow in their tracks."[91] The Dine (or Navajo) migrated from the far north to the desert Southwest during the Little Ice Age or sometime between 1200 and 1400.[92] This may have been the group to which Natosin Nepe-e's father referred. Surveyor James Doty reported that in the 1840s the Piikani were using the trail to travel to Taos and beyond probably to acquire horses.[93]

In addition to oral histories like that of Brings Down the Sun, we also have the story from other *old ones*. The natural people look to the grandfathers, our relatives who have been here much longer than us, to teach us. We call the stones and the trees grandfathers. In the case of the Old North Trail Corridor, much of the story is told through the stones—the stone tools which helped the People in securing and preparing food, the stones which were piled in cairns to mark the way and arranged in images of spiritual beings to remind the People to acknowledge the Spirits. There were also grandfathers arranged or carved to form celestial clocks and ones whose faces are painted with shield figures and winter counts, marking the passing of time and relationships with all that is. Many ceremonial sites of great significance, similarity, and

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[91] McClintock, 434.
[92] Clyde A. Milner, Carol A. O'Connor, and Martha A. Sandweiss, *The Oxford History of the American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 11; Reeves, "Old North Trail MPD."
[93] David Louter, "When Trails Fade into Memory: A Look at the History and Legacy of the Old North Trail of the Blackfeet" (April 1983), 19, Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena, MT, U.S.A.

difference are spread throughout the Corridor and beyond. The stones are medicine, tools, and storytellers.

In the farthest southwest corner of the Old North Trail Corridor is a place called Mammoth Meadow in the Horse Prairie Valley. It lies on the border of the present-day states of Montana and Idaho. Here water and stone (representing a balance of female and male energy in Anishinaabe ways of knowing) worked together in deep time to form siliceous veins of stone altered by the hydrothermal Yellowstone hotspot. In time water and stone worked together again through glacial movement which uncovered these veins and distributed their contents southward down the valley. This repetitive work of water and stone produced chert, a highly useful hard stone made of quartz crystals, essential to buffalo culture people who fashioned it into scrapers, knives, spears, and arrowheads.[94] The ancient quarries at Horse Prairie, like many others, were in use 13,000 years ago.[95] The Old North Trail and the East-West waterways, which it crossed, were essential paths to and from quarries where the grandfathers were gathered and carried away as material to be crafted and processed into tools. The excavated, radiocarbon-dated, and interpreted archaeological record points to the existence of this ancient transportation route along the Rockies long before the Dine headed for warmer climes.[96]

Like chert, obsidian is a storyteller. Obsidian, a volcanic glass stone, can be black, gray, red-brown, and many other colors. Ten times sharper than surgical steel, it was used to make

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[94] Thomas L. Carr and Mort D. Turner, "Investigating Regional Lithic Procurement Using Multi-Spectral Imagery and Geophysical Exploration," *Archaeological Prospection* 3, no. 3 (September 1, 1996): 109–27, https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-0763(199609)3:3<109::AID-ARP52>3.0.CO;2-P.
[95] Carr and Turner, 109.
[96] Robson Bonnichsen and Alan L. Schneider, "Roots," *Sciences* 35, no. 3 (June 5, 1995): 26.

precision knives and spear points. Used in healing procedures, it was honored for the medicinal work it did.[97] Obsidian was highly prized by Indigenous Peoples from coast-to-coast.[98] In recent years, Western scientists have been able to develop methods of tracing the chemical composition of obsidian and other stone tools.[99] These kinds of archaeological understandings support the knowledge Indigenous peoples hold of the complexity and sophistication of their cultures, teachings, and practices.[100] Yurok and Wintu People of present-day California hold ancient stories that detail personal journeys of great sacrifice made for obsidian. Their stories drive home respect for the power of the stone and the fire that made it while connecting the stone with great hunting and medicinal abilities.

The natural people who lived in the Ohio River Valley between 200BC and 600AD were ancestral Anishinaabe people, known in the field of archaeology as the Hopewell People. They built elaborate earthen work mound structures aligned with astronomical movements. They also created exquisite artwork related to their complex ceremonial life, which they traded over all of

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[97] MacDonald, *Montana Before History: 11,000 Years of Hunter-Gatherers in the Rockies and Plains*.

[98] Susan Fox Hodgson, "'Obsidian Spirits Just Speak Once'—California Indians in a Geothermal Land," *Proceedings of the World Geothermal Congress*, April 24, 2005, 10.

[99] Richard Hughes (Geochemical Research Laboratory, California)—one of the world's leading authorities on obsidian sourcing—tested Obsidian found in Hopewell structures using energy dispersive S-ray fluorescence(XRF) which examines the unique chemical "fingerprint" of obsidian comparing it to all geologic sources of obsidian, matching the stone to its geographic source. Hughes and his team determined that most obsidian found in Hopewell culture structures to Obsidian Cliff in Yellowstone National Park and that some came from Bear Gulch, in southeast Idaho. There is a trail of obsidian from the Yellowstone region that was dispersed during the Hopewell era across Turtle Island (Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, and Indiana.) Robert L. & David Hurst Thomas Kelly, *Archaeology*, Seventh, Social Science (Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2016), 240–41.

[100] Susan C. Vehik, "Late Prehistoric Plains Trade and Economic Specialization," *Plains Anthropologist* 35, no. 128 (May 1990): 125–45, https://doi.org/10.1080/2052546.1990.11909565.

North America. When their relatives passed, they built complex burial mounds for them. As is the Anishinaabe tradition, they placed cultural items with them to prepare them for their work in the next world. In the burials mounds, they placed Yellowstone obsidian points, and other tools made of precious western materials.[101] Among the items uncovered in the disturbance of a burial mound, on the Sciotto River south of present-day Columbus, Ohio, was a copper cast horn of a gitche-mah-nish-tah-nish (Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep) believed to have been used in Midewiwin ceremony and a substantial deposit of Yellowstone Obsidian Cliff obsidian.[102] It was theorized that those who delivered these items to the mound builders, perhaps mound builders themselves, would have traveled the well-worn copper routes and overland trails used by Woodlands peoples.[103] Then in 2009, on the shore of Yellowstone Lake in the furthest southern range of the Old North Trail Corridor, a large obsidian projectile point carved from Obsidian Cliff obsidian was discovered. Given the proximity of thirteen obsidian quarry sites in the Greater Yellowstone Area, this may have been a relatively unremarkable finding, except for the fact that its carving resembled that of Hopewell points that come from the Ohio River

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[101] Joni L. Manson, "Transmississippi Trade and Travel: The Buffalo Plains and Beyond," *Plains Anthropologist* 43, no. 166 (November 1998): 385–400, https://doi.org/10.1080/2052546.1998.11931909; Mark F. Seeman, *The Hopewell Interaction Sphere: The Evidence for Interregional Trade and Structural Complexity.* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1979); Warren R. DeBoer, "Little Bighorn on the Scioto: The Rocky Mountain Connection to Ohio Hopewell," *American Antiquity* 69, no. 01 (January 2004): 85–107, https://doi.org/10.2307/4128349.

[102] Ojibwe word for Rocky Mountain sheep found in the ethnographic contributions of Shaw-shaw-wase-na-se (The Falcon), John Tanner, in Edwin James, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner (U.S. Interpreter at the Sault de Ste. Marie) during Thirty Years Residence Among the Indians in the Interior of North America* (New York: G & C & H Carvill, 1830), 301.

[103] Frances Clark, "Knife River Flint and Interregional Exchange," *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology* 9, no. 2 (1984): 173–98; DeBoer, "Little Bighorn on the Scioto."

Valley.[104] The stones tell the story of a complex system of exchange, common ceremonial practices, and far-reaching travels to harvest and trade valued materials.

Those sacred items traveled ancient and well-used roads that existed long before European arrival. As strangers began to infiltrate the Western hemisphere, they followed the Native roads often with Native guides whose knowledge of place was essential to the strangers' exploration and survival, as Lewis and Clark did. This expansive system of roads was, as geographer Carl Sauer wrote, "as direct as the terrain, the need of food and drink en route, and reasonable security permitted, and were fixed by long experience as the best way of traversing a particular stretch of country."[105]

Connections to the Web of Relationship

Natosin Nepe-e (Brings down the Sun, Piikani) explained the reach of the roads leaving the Old North Trail Corridor:

> the trail forked where the city of Calgary now stands. The right fork ran north into the Barren Lands as far as people live. The main trail ran south along the eastern side of the Rockies, at a uniform distance from the mountain, keeping clear of the forest, and outside of the foothills. It ran close to where the city of Helena now stands, and extended south into the country, inhabited by a people with dark skins, and long hair falling over their faces (Mexico).

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[104] MacDonald, *Montana Before History: 11,000 Years of Hunter-Gatherers in the Rockies and Plains*.

[105] "In the New World the routes of the great explorations usually have become historic highways and thus has been forged a link connecting the distant past with the modern present. For the explorers followed main trails beaten by many generations of Indian travel. There was, in varying degree, intercommunication and exchange of goods between Indian villages or tribes. The resultant trails were as direct as the terrain, the need of food and drink en route, and reasonable security permitted, and were fixed by long experience as the best way of traversing a particular stretch of country. Explorers, being sensible men if their explorations succeeded, used Indian guides who took them over Indian roads." Carl Ortwin Sauer, *The Road to Cíbola*, Ibero-Americana. 3 (Berkeley: University of Calilfornia Press, 1932).

Brings down the Sun's father once told him of an expedition from the Piikani (Blackfeet) that went south by the Old Trail, to visit the people with dark skins. They were absent four years. Twelve moons of steady travel allowed them to reach the country of the dark-skinned people, and eighteen moons brought them north again. These Piikani people returned by a longer route through the "High Tree" or Bitter Root country, where they could travel without danger of being seen. [106]

At times there would have been great incentives to make this long and arduous journey, for example, to conduct trade with the Ancient Sonoran Desert People, farmers, ancestors of the O'Odoham, Hopi, and Zuni, who with their elegant irrigation systems in the Phoenix basin, cultivated diverse crops including corn, beans, and squash, cotton and tobacco. Called the Hohokam culture by archaeologists, these ancestors created a point of exchange for people who traveled great distances by foot and sometimes with dogs from all directions. The Ancient Sonoran Desert People were water engineers who, around 400-500 C.E. began to build canals to bring river water to their crops. The canals were on average twenty feet deep, seventy-five feet wide, and fifteen to twenty miles long. The construction of over 120 miles of canals, watering somewhere between 30,000 to 60,000 acres of land, is estimated to have required 25,000 person days.[107]

Moving as the Athapaskan-speaking Dine did, down the Old North Trail, the Northwestern Plains peoples may have made their way to southern desert and beyond, partaking

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[106] McClintock, *The Old North Trail; or, Life, Legends and Religion of the Blackfeet Indians,* 435.

[107] Jerry B. Howard, "Hohokam Legacy: Desert Canals," *Pueblo Grande Museum Profiles*, accessed May 13, 2019, http://www.waterhistory.org/histories/hohokam2/; James Earl Sherow, *The Grasslands of the United States: An Environmental History* (ABC-CLIO, 2007), 22.

in a much broader food system, returning with diverse ceremonial experiences, woven corn husk ceremonial bags, beans, and corn.[108] Such travel is evidenced by the presence of Alberta pipestone found in Chaco canyon where the ancestral Puebloan peoples built elaborate ceremonial facilities, great houses for hosting visitors from afar, and an immense marketplace.[109] Clearly trade of raw materials, foodstuffs, and ritual knowledge took place here. Historians and Indigenous knowledge holders agree that "the influence of historical processes associated with multiethnic interaction cannot be overstated."[110]

The complexity of Hohokam agricultural practices was representative of ancestral lifeways across Turtle Island. Like the mound builders to the east, the old ones of the desert created elaborate houses and ceremonies and drew people and the exchange of goods to their communities. In the same vein, the bison culture people of the Northwestern Plains lived a lifeway of highly ritualized and regulated hunt as suggested by an association between, for example, communal hunting sites, ceremonial structures, and rock art in the Sun River Valley of Montana in the southern part of the Old North Trail Corridor. [111] There was a connection between ceremonial life, the food system, and sustainability. Researchers examining conditions

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[108] Daniel K Richter, *Before the Revolution : America's Ancient Pasts* (Cambridge, MA & London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), 30–31; Jake Page, *In the Hands of the Great Spirit: The 20,000 Year History of American Indians* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 88.
[109] Sherow, *The Grasslands of the United States*, 22–23.
[110] Zedeño, Ballenger, and Murray, "Landscape Engineering and Organizational Complexity among Late Prehistoric Bison Hunters of the Northwestern Plains," 23–58.
[111] William Bloys Fawcett Jr., "Communal Hunts, Human Aggregations, Social Variation, and Climatic Change: Bisonutilization by Prehistoric Inhabitants of the Great Plains" (PhD dissertation, Amherst, University of Massachusetts, 1987); Zedeño, Ballenger, and Murray, "Landscape Engineering and Organizational Complexity among Late Prehistoric Bison Hunters of the Northwestern Plains," 27.

between people and place along the northern Rocky Mountain foothills during the Late Prehistoric era hypothesize that the ceremonies connected to the hunt served to hold the community together in the work and kept the people working together with other hunting bands in a good way. People organized ceremonial practices by seasons, worked together according to the responsibilities of kinship, clan or societal status (division of labor), and saw that food was distributed throughout the band or community.[112]

Inscriptions of Time and Space

The Northwestern Plains is known as medicine wheel country. Their prominence in the Old North Corridor is testimony to the sophistication of buffalo culture lifeways, Indigenous science, and ceremonial life. This map shows the ones who are still intact enough to be identified. Some of the medicine wheels are laid out with tremendous precision so that they function as celestial clocks. These stone structures, like effigies and rib stones, were places on the landscape for gathering, teaching, and commemorating the connections between place and time.

[112] Judith Cooper, "Bison Hunting and Late Prehistoric Subsistence Economies in the Great Plains" (PhD dissertation, Dallas, TX, Southern Methodist University, 2008); Fawcett, "Communal Hunts, Human Aggregations, Social Variation, and Climatic Change: Bisonutilization by Prehistoric Inhabitants of the Great Plains"; Zedeño, Ballenger, and Murray, "Landscape Engineering and Organizational Complexity among Late Prehistoric Bison Hunters of the Northwestern Plains," 27.

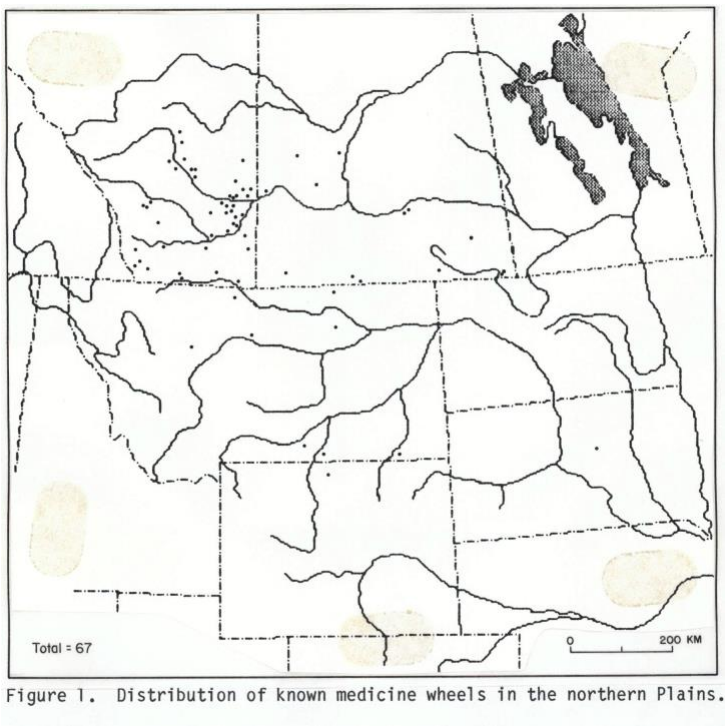


Figure 1. Distribution of known medicine wheels in the northern Plains.

Figure 2. Medicine Wheels on the Northern Plains, A Summary and Appraisal, Archaeological Survey of Alberta, dots represent medicine wheel areas, John H. Brumley.[113]

The natural people were connected to one another and to the land. Their movement brought life in all its forms. Studies of Native American maps of the Northwestern Plains have shown that place names, for example, names of rivers, did not reveal their navigability but rather described the resources available in their proximity, such as the presence of a buffalo pound nearby or the absence of vegetation along a river's bottom lands.[114] Julie Cruikshank has observed that the natural people, in general, "use the landscape for ordering the events in their

[113] John H. Brumley, "Medicine Wheels on the Northern Plains: A Summary and Appraisal," Archaeological Survey of Alberta (Edmonton, AB: Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism: Historical Resources Division, 1988), 4.
[114] Gerald A. Oetelaar and David Meyer, "Movement and Native American Landscapes: A Comparative Approach," *Plains Anthropologist* 51, no. 199 (2006): 365–67.

lives and those in the history of the group."[115] Beyond movement over the landscape for sustenance, we know that the stones tell the story of movement through a sacred landscape--effigies, rock art, and stone structures such as fasting sites and medicine wheels reflect a highly sophisticated ceremonial life.

Through ceremonial structures, spiritual societies emerged and ritual land practices developed, such as the regulation of buffalo hunting according to spiritual beliefs and for the good of the web of life.[116] Archaeologists Oetelaar and Meyer observed that:

> Human groups humanize an environment by mapping themselves onto the landscape using their knowledge of specific landforms and waterways, resources including minerals, plants and animals, and human settlements. Once established, the human imprint transforms the natural landscape into a cultural landscape and establishes a pattern of land use which can persist for generations, if not millennia.[117]

Relationship with the Land shapes the People and the People shape the Land. This is precisely what is meant by calling us the *natural people*, and in describing a worldview in which Mother Earth is the first teacher. Nature and culture are one, not separated as in the way of the settler colonial worldview with its origins in the European philosophical and religious concepts of Manifest Destiny and Dominion Theory, and Enlightenment thought including the scientific application of Linnean classification of species. The integration of nature and culture, part of the Anishinaabe holistic way of thinking, is the critical shift in understanding the worldview of the

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[115] Julie Cruikshank, "Getting the Words Right: Perspective on Naming and Places in Athapaskan Oral History.," *Arctic Anthropology* 27, no. 1 (1990): 52–65.
[116] Zedeño, Ballenger, and Murray, "Landscape Engineering and Organizational Complexity among Late Prehistoric Bison Hunters of the Northwestern Plains."
[117] Oetelaar and Meyer, "Movement and Native American Landscapes."

natural people.[118] Anishinaabeg, guided by their relationship with the Land, see things through a reciprocal lens. Ceremonies, including daily practices of ritual, are all a part of maintaining the sacred balance in the web of life.

The Buffalo Culture Seasonal Round

The Old North Trail was used for movement through a sacred landscape and as part of a highly sophisticated far-reaching Indigenous food system and trade network. In both the pedestrian and equestrian times, large scale communal hunts, which utilized buffalo jumps, were organized primarily in late fall or early spring and procured large quantities of meat, fat, bone, and hides that had to be obtained and processed in a short time. "The magnitude of this task and its facilities demanded organized labor from most or all members of the hunting community—here, millennial knowledge of landscape and prey were put to practice daily."[119] The buffalo harvest was just one part of the annual cycle of life, and it shifted with time, according to the best animals available in each season and the technology that was used in each era, particularly once horses were integrated in the hunt. Building on knowledge handed from generation to generation for millennia, buffalo culture peoples "developed patterned behaviors that maximized their

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[118] "The concept of an external "environment" analytically separate from human society can be traced to post-Enlightenment thought in the West (Glacken 1967). It is the basis of the Cartesian dualism of mind versus matter, and hence humans versus environment (Bateson 1972: 337). "Man's dominion over nature," the official ideology of conventional Western science that aims to control the environment, has its philosophical background in Cartesian dualism. By contrast traditional belief systems of many indigenous groups incorporate the idea that humans are part of the natural environment."Fikret Berkes, *Sacred Ecology*, Third Edition (New York: Routledge, 2012), 51.

[119] Zedeño, Ballenger, and Murray, "Landscape Engineering and Organizational Complexity among Late Prehistoric Bison Hunters of the Northwestern Plains."

efficiency or success within the grassland ecosystem."[120] The culmination of knowledge of place was the seasonal round and all its facets.

Through my research I have come to define the seasonal round as this: *a highly sophisticated, methodical, annual series of movements on the land to tend wild plots, cultivate, hunt, harvest, and trade; a cycle following the path laid by the ancestors who, honoring reciprocal obligations to place, sought to maintain the sacred balance amongst all relations.* The Northwestern Plains supported a vast array of animal and plant relatives who in turn supported the life of the natural people: elk, deer, antelope, bighorn sheep, bears, moose, trout, ground squirrels, prairie chickens, geese, ducks, prairie turnips, biscuit root, numerous species of berries, wild plums, cattails, milkweed, and prickly pear, just to name a few.[121] However, the buffalo, as the dominant generalist foragers, were at the core of an elaborate ecosystem.[122]

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[120] Oetelaar, "Better Homes and Pastures," 26.
[121] In addition to the food system knowledge that is still passed within our families and communities, there are many ethnobotanical books on the traditional food sources of the buffalo culture; one that will give a closer look is Melvin R. Gilmore, *Uses of Plants by the Indians of the Missouri River Region* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1977); Theodore Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground: A Human and Environmental History of the Northwestern Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001).
[122] Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground: A Human and Environmental History of the Northwestern Plains*, 37.

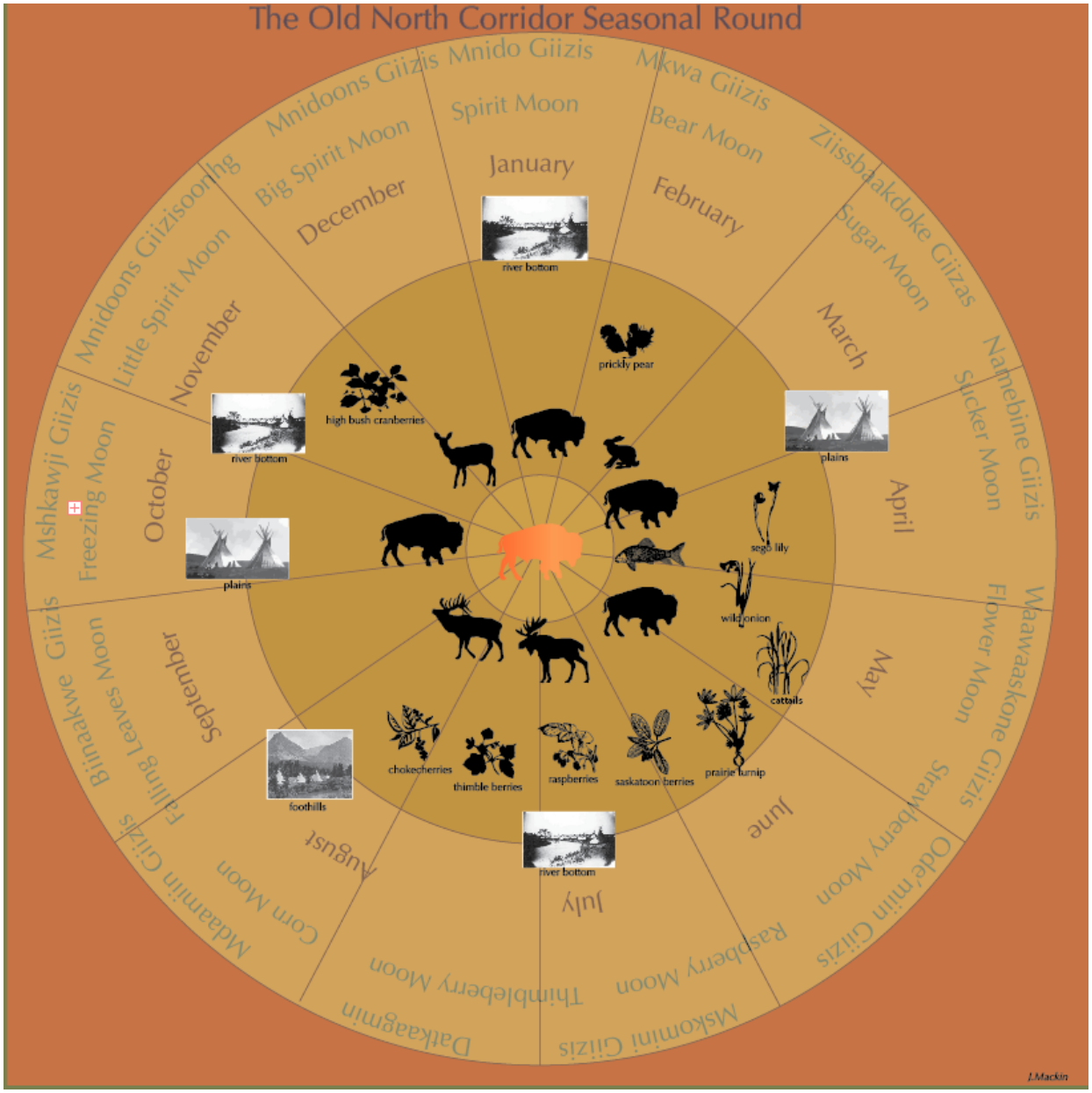


Figure 3. The Buffalo Cultural Seasonal Round, Northwestern Plains and Rockies, J.F. Ramaker, 2018, draft. This graphic of the bison culture seasonal round is a partial representation of the plant and animal relatives that supported the People of the Old North Trail Corridor. The third layer from the center uses photographs to denote places seasonal camp locations—river bottoms, plains, and foothills.

Organizing a community according to the times when various foods are ready to harvest takes a great deal of leadership, a strong division of labor, flexibility, and an abundance of ecological knowledge handed down over generations. The photos in the middle layer of the graphic, are beginning to demonstrate the movement of the people over the landscape. Canadian environmental historian Ted Binnema observed that the "end of the last ice age, left a sculpted landscape conducive for bison culture." Indigenous bands moved through the annual cycle according to the work that was in season—for example, hunting, wild harvesting, and cultivation of gardens. The river bottomlands provided not only a safe harbor from the wind and harshness of the climate, but a fertile place for wild harvest and cultivation of food.[123] Natural features and Indigenous tending of the Land or what some call "landscape engineering", were the keys to bison culture prosperity.

One plant relative of defining importance in the Old North Trail Corridor was grass. The northern mixed prairie held both cool season grasses, which began growing earlier in the spring and often entered a second growth in the fall, and warm-season grasses. The area of the Corridor is divided by xeric (dry) mixed grasslands and mesic (moist) mixed grasslands and then surrounded on three sides by the relatively luxuriant fescue prairie.[124] The mixed nature of the available forage was a key support for the endurance of the bison lifeway.[125]

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[123] Binnema, 49.
[124] Binnema, 23.
[125] Bison culture specialist, Jack Brink, reminds us that ecologists argue that maximum opportunities for species success and survival lies "at the junction of several different environments" where there is the greatest biodiversity. Jack Brink, *Imagining Head-Smashed-In: Aboriginal Buffalo Hunting on the Northern Plains*, Canadian Electronic Library. Books Collection (Edmonton, AB: Athabasca University Press, 2008); Turner, Davidson-Hunt, and O'Flaherty, "Living on the Edge: Ecological and Cultural Edges as Sources of Diversity for Social–Ecological Resilience," 24.

In the island ranges, along the mountain foothills, and in the river and stream valleys a symbiotic relationship between shade, water, grass, and wind existed and nurtured bison herds for millennia. Archaeologist Douglas Bamforth brought forward a view of this complex system.[126] He observed that the magic of this place was not in the total annual carrying capacity of the grasslands in providing forage for the bison throughout the year. Instead, the key was the quality of forage available to bison in the critical transition from winter to spring, the hungry time of year. Following Bamforth's work, historian Ted Binnema developed a model which demonstrates the narrow passage of the hungry time when early forage is the key to carrying capacity: the bison hourglass.[127] In order to understand the neck of the hourglass, it is important to examine the total nutrients, not the total forage, available to bison at the leanest time of year. Forage abundance can differ significantly from forage quality, particularly in late winter and early spring, when the grasses have not grown for about seven months. The little tender shoots of early-growing cool-season grasses were high in protein and so dominated the moist prairie that such places had twice the carrying capacity as the dry prairie. Though the Northeastern Plains produced more forage than other areas of the Great Plains, owing to the cool-season grasses, forage on the Northwestern Plains was of considerably higher quality during the critical period of the year.[128] Places like the Milk River Ridge, Sweetgrass Hills, Cypress Hills, and Bears Paw Mountains supported rough fescue and were consequently favored camp sites for the people who lived in deep relationship with bison.

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[126] Douglas B Bamforth, *Ecology and Human Organization on the Great Plains* (New York: Plenum Press, 1988).
[127] Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground: A Human and Environmental History of the Northwestern Plains*, 17–36.
[128] Binnema, 20.

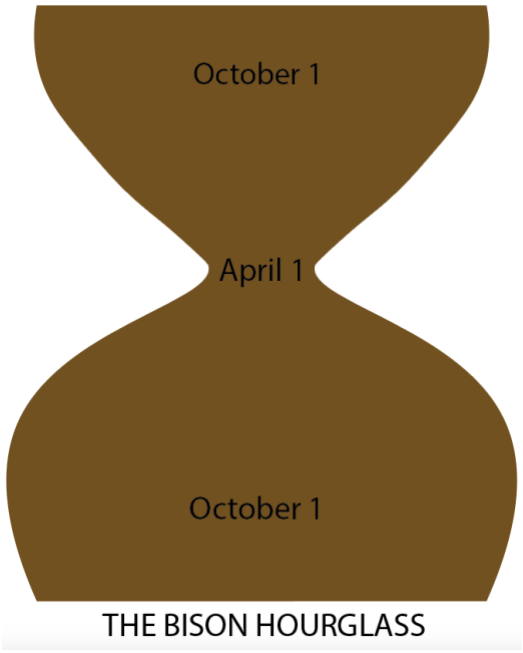


Figure 4. The Bison Hourglass, a common understanding and illustration by Ted Binnema, in Common and Contested Ground, and described by Douglas Bamforth in Ecology and human Organization on the Great Plains.[129]

The natural people anticipated where the buffalo would be during the hungry time when those rich tender grasses emerged. The knowledge and experience of their ancestors helped them to "move deliberately from place to place; they did not wander aimlessly looking for the bison."[130]

A balance of moisture and evaporation, water and wind, supported what is classified as the "moist prairie habitat." [131] The foehn winds or chinook winds of the region dried and cured the grasses, a process that maintained high nutritive content for grazers. Reciprocally, the shape of the land, the contact between air and landforms shaped the temperature, direction, and speed

[129] Binnema, 19; Bamforth, *Ecology and Human Organization on the Great Plains*, 53–84.
[130] Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground: A Human and Environmental History of the Northwestern Plains*, 39.
[131] The moist prairie habitat existed under optimal conditions during the Little Ice Age, roughly 1300-mid-1800s, yet the conditions of slope, water, and wind that define this habitat favoring buffalo culture still exists today.

of the winds. A chinook can melt many feet of snow overnight, as temperatures often shift in a range of 40 to 100 degrees. In the southwest part of the Old North Corridor, known as "the chinook belt, these winds kept the area generally snow free and relatively warmer throughout the winter."[132]

The energy that drives these warm winds comes from a cycle of warm moist air lifting over the Rocky Mountains and then cooling and condensing.[133] It is the work of heat and moisture, fire and water, sun and moon, and the grandfathers--the ancient stone mountains--that allowed the wind to do its work to cure the grasses which fed the bison and the people. From the Anishinaabe worldview these elements represent the balance of male and female energy that makes all life happen.[134]

Land Practices

The Old North Corridor, prior to European arrival, was a space occupied by a web of relations human and other-than-human. It was a place, as historian Geoff Cunfer has stated, "already inscribed with multiple, complex, and overlapping cultural signatures of deep antiquity."[135] One inscription was that of Native land practices. These practices are chronicled in the landscape, in the memory of Anishinaabeg and other buffalo culture peoples, and have been documented by archaeologists and Western scientists. They are also outlined in the journals of

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[132] Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground: A Human and Environmental History of the Northwestern Plains*, 21–35.
[133] Binnema, 29–30.
[134] Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway*; Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence*; Basil Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1976).
[135] Cunfer, "The Decline and Fall of the Bison Empire," 1.

early Euro-American capitalist adventurers and explorers. A sampling of bison culture land practices included 1) movement over the land which served to disburse impact in anyone site, 2) tending wild plots through transplanting, pruning, and seed distribution, 3) selective culling and limits on hunting, 4) the strategic use of fire, and 5) spiritual practices of reciprocity and respect.

The use of fire was a land practice which married the people and the buffalo together in the hungry time. The Ojibwemowin word for burning is ishkode. Strategic burning improved forage for bison and elk and created ideal conditions for key plant elements of the diet, such as fire hardy saskatoon berries and prairie turnips, and broke the hungry season by feeding the bison early. By burning in the fall (or even winter) cool-season fescue grasses were encouraged to sprout earlier in the spring and buffalo could be directed toward their late winter ground. Beyond encouraging early season growth, fire significantly maintained a bison habitat because without it, forests tended to invade the most productive fescue grasslands first.[136] Whether fires were set by the elements—lightening and wind-- or humans, their contribution was to increase the nutritive value of the grasslands and the human-nature landscape. Like the wind, fire shaped the land and conversely, the land shaped the direction and intensity of the fire. Reciprocity is the foundation of the web of relationship.

Anishinaabeg recognize that all elements have their work to do. The work of fire is to cleanse Mother Earth, and, as such, fire resets the environment with vital nutrients and an abundance of plant growth. Walter Red Sky, Anishinaabe from Shoal Lake, explains the work of skode (fire):

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[136] Bison, too, worked to hold down woody growth when they took shelter from winter in stands of aspens and willows, as they wallowed, browsed, and trampled saplings.

> Across the lake in the river there was a big fire…here it was burnt black…After the fire, that was when the berries came. There were berries all over. There were about three seasons after the fire that is when the berries grew. After that fire they didn't have to go to other places. They could pick all the berries here on Shoal Lake.[137]

If grass burned in summer, fall, or winter, it would come back one or two weeks earlier in the spring than unburned grasses, and, as Walter Red Sky observes, the effect of burning lasted for several seasons. As with berries, for most all grass, burning increased productivity.[138] Encouraging the tender shoots of protein-rich grass to emerge two weeks earlier than they would have without fire was a practice that fed the bison early. In turn, the bison fed the people as they both congregated in the areas where cool-season grasses lived, such as on the northside of the Cypress Hills.

Fire was just one traditional land practice which worked to maintain the balance in the web of life. Walter McClintock, ethnographer and adopted Blackfeet tribal member wrote:

> Tribal regulations for hunting buffalo were not characteristic of the Blackfeet alone, but were used by the other plains-tribes as a necessary protection for their common interests . . . According to the journal of Alexander Henry (a partner in the North-Western Company of Montreal, 1806), the tribal policy of the Mandans, in the matter of hunting buffalo, was one of comity towards neighbouring tribes at peace with them, of provident conservation in hunting them, and of humane consideration of the poorest and helpless in the distribution of the meat.

The Piikani society-men were solely responsible for preventing exploitation of the buffalo, the heart of life.[139] Amongst the Piikani bands, consecrated space for symbolic enactments of the hunt, esoteric societies and bundle groups were powerful regulatory practices of the bison culture

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[137] Berkes and Davidson-Hunt, "Biodiversity, Traditional Management Systems, and Cultural Landscapes," 38.
[138] Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground: A Human and Environmental History of the Northwestern Plains*, 32–33.
[139] Binnema, 32–33.

lifeway. Other Plains groups similarly employed spiritual practices in the preservation of the balance of life.[140]

Conclusion

The bison culture seasonal round of the Northwestern Plains was more than a means of sustenance to Indigenous peoples. The annual series of movements through the environment which involved tending wild plots, trading, hunting, and harvesting, also honored relationships to ancestral and spiritual beings through rituals of respect and reciprocity. The seasonal round was both a highly-developed and enduring food system and a ritual practice of relationship with sacred landscape. From the Anishinaabe worldview, and those of other bands of the inter-ethnic bison society, humans were an integral part of the place to which they belonged. As archaeologist Gerald Oetelaar stated:

> Over long periods of time, the decisions and actions of the Blackfoot people, guided by their specific worldview, created the very ecosystem in which they lived. That is, the people created the fescue pastures in the foothills, managed the biologically diverse resource patches scattered across the landscape.[141]

The nuances of how this biome functioned as a buffalo home--the way in which all of our relations worked together to support the buffalo's strong and persistent presence in the Old North Trail Corridor, the health of the land and the health of the people--are worthy of reconsideration. The Old North Trail is the greatest clue to this web of life because movement across the land represented the pathway of life, the way in which Indigenous ways of knowing and being functioned in an interdependent web of life that was the Indigenous food system. Buffalo culture

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[140] Zedeño, Ballenger, and Murray, "Landscape Engineering and Organizational Complexity among Late Prehistoric Bison Hunters of the Northwestern Plains," 27.
[141] Oetelaar, "Better Homes and Pastures," 26.

endured for at least 13,000 years.[142] It was "the longest-sustained human lifeway in North American history," and thus has much to teach us with regards to sustainability.[143] The enduring strength of the buffalo, the work of the wind, water, plant nations, fire, earth, people, and many other species together sustained life. It was by the nuanced work of each member of the web of relationship that an enduring and vital food system--the buffalo culture food system existed. As a teacher and a relative, Chi bizhiki still stands in the Western Doorway and holds our first teaching for us, respect, for the gift of life.

[142] As the Cordilleran ice sheet retreated, "a rolling country with scattered lakes, boulder erratics were left behind at the base of the mountains" was formed, so that even the glaciated river bottoms could have been used by the ancestors know by archaeologists as the Clovis.Mavis and John Greer Greer, "Sun River Pictographs in Central Montana," 25, accessed January 28, 2019, http://www.greerservices.com/Assets/publications_pdfs/1994_Greer_AIRAvol20_SunRiverPictos.pdf.

[143] Douglas H. MacDonald, *Montana before History: 11,000 Years of Hunter-Gatherers in the Rockies and Plains* (Missoula, Mont.: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 2012), 18–19; Dan Flores, "Reviewing an Iconic Story: Environmental History and the Demise of the Bison," in *Bison and People on the North American Great Plains: A Deep Environmental History*, ed. Geoff Cunfer and Bill Waiser (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2016); Brink, *Imagining Head-Smashed-In*, 11.

CHAPTER THREE

ANISHINAABE LAND, FOOD, & IDENTITY

Running with our Ceremonies

"For a long time, we couldn't practice any ceremonies. And the reason why we ran is we wanted to protect our ceremonies, our belief system, our education, and our own governance." [144]

-Jim O'Chiese, O'Chiese First Nation

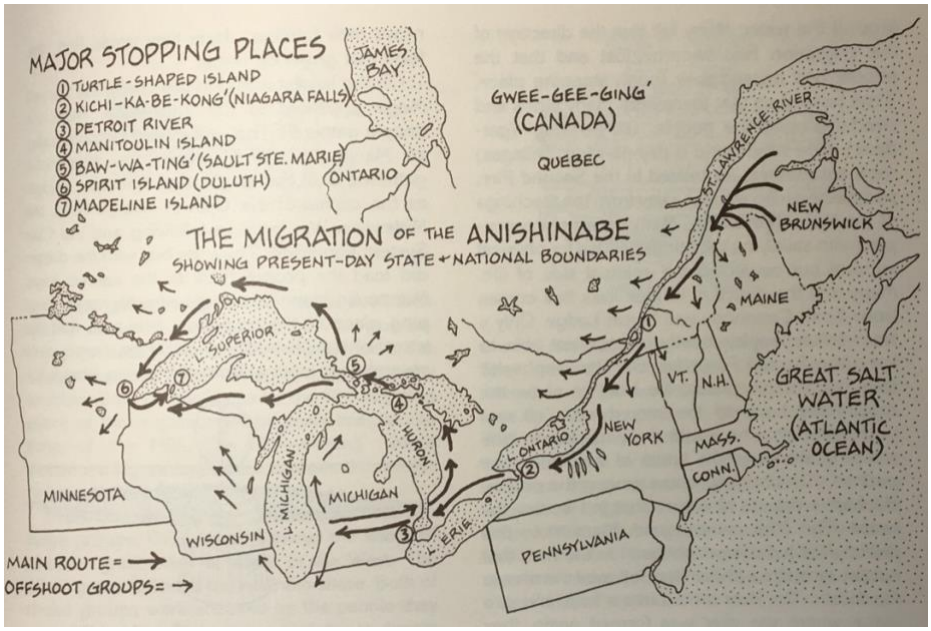


Figure 5. Map of Anishinaabe Migration, Eddie Benton-Banai, The Mishomis Book.[145]

For hundreds of years, Anishinaabeg had been moving in a westerly direction. We were always moving according to our relationships with the manidoog (spirits), the Land (including animals, plants, water, and all elements of the natural world), and our human relatives (Ottawa,

[144] O'Chiese, "Let's Talk Ojibway."
[145] Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway*.

Potawatomi, Dakota, Cree, Assiniboine--to name a few). It was through movement that the relationship between the Land and the People was kept vital and lifegiving for all our relatives. The Anishinaabe natural law and way of life emphasizes relationships and seeks balance through reciprocity. It was our relationships that led us to spread out across Turtle Island. As archaeologist Gerald Oetelaar observes, "humans play an essential and reciprocal role in helping to maintain an orderly balance in nature through their proper conduct in daily practice, rituals, and ceremonies."[146] Our way of life is always about maintaining balance.

This chapter relates the story of our ancient migrations from east to west, and an even more ancient migration from the west to the east before that. The recordings of our movements were put down on our ancient form of written records, our birchbark scrolls and through the knowledge carried by the Midewiwin, those who follow the path of the heart--spiritual knowledge which permits the interpretation of the scrolls to this day. Through meditation on the scrolls we reach into the old knowledge, our ways of knowing and believing, which inform our relationship with the web of life—the way of life of which food is only one outcome.

By turning to Anishinaabe sources of knowledge and cultural authority, I explore our connection to the Land (our teacher,) our identity relayed through our own communication of ourselves, and how that shapes our way of life by which we produce food. I share this chapter on land, food, and identity as a preface to our most recent history and with a wider lens on who we are than many outsiders have previously offered. To this point, though outsiders such as Monroe

[146] Oetelaar, "Better Homes and Pastures," 11. As Oetelaar also observes in this work, Indigenous ways of being are rooted in a way of seeing the natural world that has real outcomes for the land practices, "the Blackfoot practiced conservation management strategies to fulfill their spiritual and reciprocal obligations in a world of animate beings not to satisfy some western ecological imperative (see Oetelaar and Oetelaar 2008)." So it is in the Anishinaabe world.

Killy and Selwyn Dewdney have collected and studied our scrolls and viewed what, to them, are the oldest parts of our stories as "origin scrolls," Anishinaabeg are quite clear about where our origins lie. In the words of one of elders, James Dumont, Onaubinisay (Walks Above the Ground), from Shawanaga First Nation:

> The Anishinaabe person is inseparable from the land; identity, sense of place and history is intimately related to the land. We originated here. The North American Indigenous person did not migrate from anywhere else, nor originate from any other peoples. The Creator took four parts of Earth and molded the form of the first human person. Since then, all of humankind has been related to the Earth in a very intimate way -- the Earth, in fact, is our Mother. The human person is a relative to all other persons of the Earth, and, along with all creatures call the Earth, Mother.[147]

No matter how far we have traveled, or whether we have been in one place so long we cannot remember where we were before, we know this: We come from Mother Earth—water, fire, earth, and wind—this is our origin.

Western Anishinaabewaki (the western Anishinaabeg homeland) is the heart of Turtle Island and includes the area extending from the edge of the woodlands around the Great Lakes north to Hudson's Bay and west to the Rocky Mountains. Many people have called us the Plains Ojibwe, referring to the Anishinaabeg who became at home in places such as the Turtle Mountains, Wood Mountain, the Bear's Paw Mountains, and in the canyons and foothills of the Rocky Mountains, and the plains in between these mountains. I remember a blustery spring day on the Rocky Mountain Front when I was out walking in my hometown, Choteau, Montana, and ran into Dr. Leroy Little Bear (Kanai). After I introduced myself, he said in his loving, teasing way, "Oh, you are a Plains Chip!" (short for Chippewa.) There have been many names given to

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[147] Lea Foushee and Renee Gourneau, *Sacred Water: Water for Life.* (Lake Elmo, MN: North American Water Office, 2010), 37.

us—Ojibwe, Chippewa, Saulteaux, Bunji—but our elders remind us that these are just names others gave us -- we are Anishinaabe.[148] The knowledge of who we are has been impacted by the ones from whom we ran: the Black Robes or missionaries, and the settler authorities who made our ceremonies, the place where we educate our youth and share our identity, illegal.

The chapters that proceed this one, four through seven, pick up from our great migration and tell our most recent journey to what is now considered Western Anishinaabewaki (the western Anishinaabe homeland), our movement over the land in our seasonal rhythm and how it changed with time, movement, and adaptation between the years of 1780 and 1890. While this is the story of a very short period of Anishinaabe history, it is one marked by tremendous change and one that allows us to see all our relatives as they are spread out across Turtle Island, for at each place in our movement some stayed behind.

Migration

Around six hundred years ago, our Anishinaabe ancestors reluctantly, but quite purposefully left our home near 'the Great Salt Water towards the rising sun' (the Atlantic Ocean) and began a long chibimoodaywin (migration) following an important prophecy. When the story of chibimoodaywin is told, it is clear it was not merely a migration, but an intentional movement of sacrifice and resistance.[149] Seven prophets emerged amongst the people and made

[148] O'Chiese, "Let's Talk Ojibway."
[149] In the Midewin lodge, the *chibimoodaywin* story can take a full week in telling as it is used to teach *mino bimaadiziwiin*, our way of life, through the rich stories of our ancestors' movement over the land. Thomas Vennum, "Ojibwa Origin-Migration Songs of the Mitewiwin," *The Journal of American Folklore* 91, no. 361 (July 1978): 753, https://doi.org/10.2307/538673; Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence*, 67.

predictions of seven fires (seven stopping places) to which we would move one to the next. This prophecy came at a time when life was balanced and abundant for the people—the clan system of governance was robust with each one doing their part to support mino biimaadiziiwin (good life) for all. Bands and clans were spread across the land along the eastern shores with ample food from the land and the sea for everyone.

Naturally, this fullness of life made the people reluctant to leave. With community discernment, they decided to give their unselfish support to what they felt was a plan the Great Kind Spirit had brought to them, one which would help them resist coming forces of destruction.[150] Amongst them, the Wabanaki (People of the First Light), made a selfless sacrifice as they pledged to remain at the eastern doorway and keep the sacred fire burning in that homeland. The prophet of the First Fire had spoken of a coming destruction if the people did not move and this came to pass for the Wabanaki who remained and were badly affected by the arrival of settlers.[151]

Those who left carried with them the coals of the Sacred Fire, and carefully tended them so that for the hundreds of years of movement and resistance that would follow, the Sacred Fire centered and guided the people. Each stopping place along the path of migration is referred to as

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[150] The Prophecy Song, still sung in our lodges, reminds us of the deep intention we must hold in our hearts for the continuation of our way of life. It is sung, "*aambe maajaadaa*." As our Ogima-ikwe Edna Manitowabi reminds us, the Prophecy of the Seven Fires tells us, "we must get up, it's time to act," just like those who came before us who had to hide our way of life to be safe, yet practiced it in the bush and under the cover of night. Our Ogima-ikwe teaches that "we must put on those teachings--our inheritance and wear it." It is by going back to the past that we fulfill the work of bringing forward our ways of knowing, being, and doing. It is important to do this for *mino bimaadiziwin* (good life) to occur—that we live into those teachings seeking balance for our Mother *Ahki* and protection for all life. Edna Manitowabi, conversation with Mide Birch Bark Scroll Research Team, Calgary, AB, July 26, 2019.

[151] Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway*, 95.

a fire, connoting the relationship of people and place as we are gathered together in relationship around the sacred fire. The first stopping place, according to the prophet of the First Fire, would be a turtle-shaped island. The people searched and searched. At last a woman carrying a child in her womb was gifted with a bawazigaywin (dream) in which she saw the island with the turtle's tail pointing to the rising Sun and his head facing West. The turtle was in a river that ran into the setting Sun. This dream gave important geographic clues, which were told to the Midewiwin (Medicine Society) elders, who then instructed the people to search the rivers for this island. It was located in the St. Lawrence River in what is now the Canadian Province of Quebec.[152]

Time passed at each fire until the manidoog (spirits) visited again and led the people to the next fire. At each place the people made feast offerings, fasted, practiced ceremonies, and maintained their way of life as they adapted to new places and faced the adversities of colonial change. At the Second Fire, they stayed close to a powerful place where the thunder and the water reside, the same place Nanaboozhoo visited when he went in search of his father, Gichi-gakaabikaang (the Great Falls) or Niagara Falls. It was during this time, that Anishinaabeg began to organize themselves according to tasks necessary to protect Anishinaabeg way of life. Three groups emerged—the Ishkodaywatomi (Odaywatomi later Potawatomi) or keepers of the Sacred fire; The Odawwahg (Ottawa) or trader people who hunted and traded to acquire food and supplies for all the people; and the Ojibway who were the faith keepers of the nation entrusted with the sacred scrolls and the waterdrum of the Midewiwin Society. The Ojibway name is derived from nind on ji bi wah meaning, "I draw some living thing," referring to our ancient

[152] Benton-Banai, 95.

way of recording our history, ceremonies, and songs by inscribing scrolls of birchbark.[153] In 1825, Odawa leader Chambler acknowledged, "We three nations, Chippewas, Potowotomies [sic], and Ottawas have but one council fire."[154] These three nations of one council fire have a kinship relationship that is strong to this day. Historian Cary Miller's research makes it clear that there was no central leader: "decisions to act collectively or independently remained on the conscience of each village leader and council." Their kinship ties bound them to trading subsistence products gathered during the seasonal activities of Anishinaabeg families utilizing village territories. Their kinship committed them to caring for one another. Their kinship relationships assured that all were provided for. The Three Fires was not a military alliance, but a commitment emerging from a shared worldview and an orientation that strengthened one another.[155]

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[153] This interpretation of the Ojibwe name comes from Thomas Shingboe from the Mille Lacs Community in Minnesota. At age sixty-eight, Shingobe was the principal informant of Fred K. Blessing, "The Birch Bark Mide Scroll," The Minnesota Archaeologist, XXV, no. 3 (July 1963): 142.

[154] William Clark, August 9, 1825, Journal of the Proceedings of the Treaty of Prairie du Chien, August 1825, under Wiliam and Louis Cass, Clark Papers. quoted in Cary Miller, *Ogimaag: Anishinaabeg Leadership, 1760-1845* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 46.

[155] Miller, 98.



Figure 6. The Great Lakes, section from l'Amerique septenrionale, 1700, Guillaume de L'Isle et Nicholas Guérard.[156]

At the third fire, along the Detroit River, between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron, or what some elders speak of as the area of Zhi-kaa-go, we stayed a very long time.[157] From there the people continued to find their way West going around and across the many bodies of water in that territory. At last they found their way to Manitoulin Island in what is now known as Lake Huron, the fourth fire, where according to the prophecy they found manoomin (wild rice), the food that grows on water.[158] The fifth fire was at Baw-wa-ting (Sault St. Marie) where the waters were abundant with white fish and the people were involved in a "deep trading relationship with the light-skinned race."[159] Here, at the Straits of Michilimackinac (where Lake Huron and Lake

[156] Guillaume de L'Isle and Nicholas Guérard, *L'Amerique Septentrionale. Dressée Sur Les Observations de Mrs. de l'Academie Royale Des Sciences & Quelques Autres, & Sur Les Memoires Les plus Recens.* (Paris, 1700).
[157] Zhigaagawanzh (skunk plant or wild onion) may be the origin of the place name Zhi-kaa-go where our ancestors were referring to the plants which grew along the rivers in this area. Our elder, Jim O'Chiese, tells the story of how we ran to Zhi-kaa-go, the third fire, and translates the word to mean skunk. O'Chiese, "Let's Talk Ojibway."
[158] This important place in our history is still thought of as the capital of the Ojibwe nation. Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway*, 100.
[159] Benton-Banai, 101.

Michigan converge) we separated from our relatives the Potawatomi, who went south into the area that is now Michigan, and the Ottawa, who remained near the Straits.[160] The fifth and the sixth fires (Madeline Island in Gichi-gamig, Lake Superior) were particularly difficult times in which the darkness of conquest and colonial-settler occupation led the people to hide their ways in order to protect them—scrolls were buried underground, ceremonies were done in the bush and under the cover of night as seeds of resurgence and acts of resistance to the dominant culture.[161]

Significantly, elder Jim O'Chiese reminds us that our movement from one fire to the next was intentional resistance to colonization. In his words, "We were running from the 'black robes,'…we could not practice our ceremonies so we ran with them." We ran from Michi-gaan, we ran to Zhii-kaa-go, we ran to Manitoulin, "and we continued to run across those territories now called Manito-ba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Montana. O'Chiese calls our ceremonies, "our archives" and "our education." They are the way that we know ourselves. We ran with our ceremonies because it had become too dangerous to teach our children or to say that we were Anishinaabe.[162] Our movement over the land was not merely about subsistence, our deeply evolved coexistence with the land, but about an intent to remain Anishinaabeg, to hold onto the essence of who we are which is held in the stories, songs, and ceremonies that comprise our archives.

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[160] William W. Warren, *History of the Ojibways, Based Upon Traditions and Oral Statements* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society, 1885), 82.
[161] Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence*, 66.
[162] O'Chiese, "Let's Talk Ojibway."

Anishinaabeg and the West

Our movement is ever westward, both historically and metaphysically. When one of our relatives dies it is believed that they make a homeward journey on the Ke-wa-kun-ah (homeward road), more often called Che-ba-kun-ah (the road of souls), which leads westward across prairie country and is traveled by the spirit for four days until that spirit concludes the journey by reaching a beautiful and bountiful country where the spirit is united with all our relatives. Ojibwe historian William Warren in his 1885 *History of the Ojibways* wondered, "if it was not probable from these beliefs that ages ago the Ojibways resided westward, and occupied a country 'flowing in milk and honey.'"[163] In support of this theory there is an epic story of migration *from* the west, known as the Wallum Olum, written on bark tablets and song sticks by our ancient ancestors, the Lenni Lenape.[164] "The Wallum Olum describes a journey from the west to the Atlantic Ocean and of the eventual dispersion of the people as they branched out and became their own nations, took on new names, and evolved into the tribes we know today."[165] The story ties us to many of

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[163] Warren, *History of the Ojibways, Based Upon Traditions and Oral Statements*, 74.

[164] "The journey has our ancestors as far west as California, the home of our Lenape relatives, the Yuroks and Wiyots. Amelia LeGarde, a highly respected Ojibwe storyteller, noted that at one time our people were in the west, 'as far as California.' The Wallum Olum tells of the encounters as they journeyed east and came upon the indigenous people of the Rockies and Great Plains, the great mound builders of the Mississippi, and eventually our traditional enemies the Iroquois. Other tribes with Lenape roots, including the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Cree, Blackfeet, Shawnee, and Miami may have settled as others made their eastward journey, or like the Ojibwe moved east only to move westward in another migration. Eventually, the Lenni Lenape reached the Atlantic Ocean and settled along the Delaware River. From there, some of them branched out to the north to New England, to become our relatives, the Montauk, Wampanoag, Pequot, Narraganset, Nipmuc, Penobscot, Passamaquaddy, and others. Others, including the Ojibwe, moved north to the St. Lawrence River area in what is now Newfoundland, and then west. The last entry of the Wallum Olum was written in 1638 to announce the arrival of a boat load of European settlers. The statement is both chilling and prophetic, saying simply, "Who are they?" Peacock and Wisuri, *Waasa Inaabidaa (We Look In All Directions)*, 23–24.

[165] Peacock and Wisuri, 23.

our relatives who shared commonalities of language (Algonquin), ceremonies, and clan structures. Some of our relatives in the east are the Montauk, Wampanoag, Pequot, Narraganset, Nipmuc, Penobscot, Passamaquaddy, and others whose homelands lie farther to the west--the Miami, Shawnee, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Cree, and Blackfeet.

Our earlier history in the West is also explained on one of our sacred birchbark scrolls last held by the Bois Forte Ojibwe community of Nett Lake, Minnesota.[166] This scroll was collected by Monroe Killy in 1954. Killy was a photographer and early filmmaker who held an interest in Ojibwe lifeways. He sold the scroll to Selwyn Dewdney, who added it to his collection, which is now archived in the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Dewdney, an artist and activist, dedicated a great deal of his time to studying scrolls and working with his primary Anishinaabe informant James Red Sky to compile one of the only books written on the scrolls.[167] Birch bark scrolls are complex glyphic recordings that have been used by the Anishinaabe to transfer knowledge generation after generation through careful and complex inscriptions on rolls of bark from birch trees. The scrolls are tended by families of the Midewiwin Society and re-inscribed on fresh bark as necessary to ensure that there is continuity in teaching throughout time.[168] Killy's Anishinaabe informant at Nett Lake told him that the scroll of inquiry depicts a megis shell which emerged from a primordial whirlpool. The sacred

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[166] Richard Nelson, "Inscribed Birch Bark Scrolls and Other Objects of the Midewiwin," in *Papers of the Fourteenth Algonquian Conference*, ed. William Cowan (Ottawa: Carleton University, 1982), 219–35.

[167] Selwyn Dewdney, *The Sacred Scrolls of the Southern Ojibway* (Calgary, Alberta, Canada: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1975).

[168] The scrolls were held by members of the Midewiwin Society who were responsible for the care and upkeep of the scrolls. Cached underground, the scrolls were dug up every fifteen years and examined for their condition and rewritten on fresh bark if necessary and again cached.

Midemegis has long been a spirit teacher of the Anishinaabe and has appeared in our history to lead us in our movement, both physical and spiritual. The story told by the scroll reports that the Anishinaabeg long ago moved in the direction of the morning" in search of a Land of Abundance. After many years of travel, they at last found it on the shores of the great ocean whose waters were salt. They remained there so many years that they forgot their origin.

The connection to our Lenni Lenape ancestors may even explain the deep historical connections between the Ojibwe and the West alluded to in the headdress of the Midewin Society (Anishinaabe medicine society), with Rocky Mountain big horn sheep features found in the Hopewell mound (Woodlands Algonquin people of the Ohio River Valley), and the Hopewell style obsidian point found on the shore of Yellowstone Lake. Our aadizookaanan (traditional stories, ceremonies) laid down on the birchbark scrolls, our dibaajimowinan (teachings, stories, histories) and izhitwaawin (culture, teachings, customs, history) passed down in written and oral form through generations, tell of our home in the West and how we began our return to that place where Gichi Bizhiki stills stands in the Western doorway for us.[169]

The story of our journey to Western Anishinaabewaki begins in the region that is the heart of Turtle Island where the Anishinaabe arrived upon reaching the Seventh Fire. With colonial settler arrival, this place also came to be known by Europeans as Rupert's Land, a geographic name rarely understood by modern readers, also known as the Hudson's Bay territories. Named after British Prince Rupert (1691-1782) founder of the HBC and a nephew of King Charles I, the territory covered what are now four US states and six Canadian provinces

[169] For a more extensive explanation of these terms see Wendy Djinn Geniusz, *Our Knowledge Is Not Primitive: Decolonizing Botanical Anishinaabe Teachings* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2009).

and territories.[170] In 1670, the English crown granted the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) dominion over the entire central interior, or heart, of the North American continent for the express purpose of "the sole Trade and Commerce of all those Seas, Streights, Bays, Rivers, Lakes, Creeks, and Sounds."[171] To fuel the global demand for fine furs, the company set up a massive trade network over the interior of the continent with the flow of furs following the water ways which rolled north to what is now called Hudson's Bay, from which furs were then carried by ship to Britain and beyond. The Hudson's Bay Company held this charter up to 1870 and during their dominion as a chartered monopoly were allowed to "rule this territory" through the privileges granted by the Crown, or so goes the story. In reality, agents of the HBC, its main rival, the Northwest Company, active from 1761 and incorporated in 1784, and others that followed, relied upon, intermixed, and "procreated with" the Anishinaabeg and the other Indigenous people of this massive territory.

The invasion of the fur trade marks the first significant wave of settler presence in the heart of Turtle Island. The written documents left by traders provide one lens through which we can construct a picture of our ancestors and their experiences. In many cases, the fur traders are also our ancestors.

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[170] Jennifer S. H. Brown, *An Ethnohistorian in Rupert's Land: Unfinished Conversations* (Edmonton, Alberta: AU Press, 2017), 23. The colonial process of naming land after an individual represent a political act of claiming territory or human possession of land, whereas the names Indigenous peoples use represented the land itself, for example Misi-ziibi (the Great River).

[171] "HBC Heritage — Text of HBC's Royal Charter," accessed July 17, 2020, https://www.hbcheritage.ca/things/artifacts/the-charter-and-text.

My fifth great grandfather, Peter Grant, became a clerk--then partner--in the Northwest Company, came to know Anishinaabewaki through his wife, my grandmother, Songab (Standing Strong). He arrived in Songab's country in 1784 by Montreal canoe from Quebec to Grand Portage, and then by light canoe into what was then the western edge of Anishinaabewaki. Some years later in his ethnographic account of Songab's people he described the extent and nature of their territory in the 18th century:

> The immense territories possessed, at present, by the different tribes of Sauteax in the North-West extend from Sault Ste Marie, in a north-west course, to Lac Ouinipique (Lake Winnipeg), a computed tract of about 1770 miles, bounded, on the north-east, by Nipigon and the limits of Hudson's Bay, on the south-west, by the south side of Lake Superior, in a line to the head of the Mississippi, from thence, in a westerly course, to the Red River, at about one hundred and fifty miles from where it empties in Lac Ounipique. The frequent emigration of several of their tribes to the country of Assiniboines and Crees make it difficult to ascertain the real boundaries of their present possessions.[172]

His description of Anishinaabewaki shifts from boundaries of place to those of relationships, noting the deep connections amongst tribes. It also demonstrates the way in which settler-colonial maps and descriptions of Native territories enforced a settler notion of private ownership. Peter Grant, a Highlander, recognized the complexity of intertribal relationships perhaps owing to his own clanship upbringing.

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[172] Here my fifth great grandfather, Peter Grant, by my estimate was writing in 1802. His ethnography titled "The Sauteux Indians", is included in: Louis Rodrigue Masson, *Les Bourgeois de La Compagnie Du Nord-Ouest; Récits de Voyages, Lettres et Rapports Inédits Relatifs Au Nord-Ouest Canadien : 1833-1903*, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Québec: De L'imprimerie Générale A. Cote2 et Cie, 1890). At the time that collection of writings by the North-West Company was published, Grandpa Grant's "sketch of the Saulteux Indians" was considered "the most complete and elaborate of all those furnished to Mr. Roderic MacKenzie, [it] proves him to have been a man of considerable attainments, a good writer and one of the keenest observers which the North-West Company had among its members."

Peter Grant left Scotland following the Highland clearances, came to North America and was hired on as a clerk for the Northwest Company in 1784. While Grant shared an ethnographic view of Indigenous people as "other," he also had much in common with Songab and the Anishinaabeg. Prior to their persecution and the taking of their lands for the expansion of the global market economy, Highlanders also lived a culturally integrated way of life in which humans were closely connected to the Land, and values of generosity, reciprocity, and community were emphasized through clan responsibilities. My grandmother Songab was the Grand Nokomis (chief) of the Ahdik Clan from the area of Red Lake. She was born in approximately 1776, the daughter of an Ojibwe woman and a Dakota man who was a captive of her mother's band. Peter Grant, through his intimate and allied relationship with Songab, her family and band, rose to the status of partner in the NW Company and was successful in adapting to life on the land far from his Scottish Highlands home.[173] Perhaps some of Grant's success can

[173] Peter Grant and Songab appear in the writings of traders including: Masson, *Les Bourgeois de La Compagnie Du Nord-Ouest; Récits de Voyages, Lettres et Rapports Inédits Relatifs Au Nord-Ouest Canadien*; Thomas Connor et al., *Five Fur Traders of the Northwest: Being the Narrative of Peter Pond and the Diaries of John Macdonell. Archibald N. McLeod, Hugh Faries, and Thomas Connor*, ed. Charles M. Gates (Minneapolis: Published for the Minnesota Society of the Colonial Dames of America. The University of Minnesota Press, 1933), https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001874502; Alexander Henry and David Thompson, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest. The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and of David Thompson, 1799-1814. Exploration and Adventure among the Indians on the Red, Saskatchewan, Missouri and Columbia Rivers*, ed. Elliott Coues, vol. 1, 3 vols. (New York, F. P. Harper, 1897), http://archive.org/details/newlightonearlyh01henr; Lawrence Barkwell, "Biographical Notes on Peter Grant: 1764-1848" (Scribd, August 7, 2017), https://www.scribd.com/document/355725372/Grant-Peter-1764-1848; Gail Morin, *Country Wives: Marguerite Ahdik Songab Wife of Pe-Wah-Ah-Kum (O-Kit-Chi-Ta) a Chippewa, Peter Grant, and Charles Bottineau*, Kindle, vol. 3 (Printed by the Author, 2018); Swan, "The Crucible: Pembina and the Origins of the Red River Valley Metis."

be attributed to his knowledge of the economic structures of both European and Indigenous culture.

While Songab and Grant may have had some common understandings, Grant came without knowledge of the land and that was a critical difference in terms of dependence. What Songab had that he did not was knowledge of the food system, traditional ecological knowledge, handed down as gift generation after generation. This knowledge led the people to organize themselves in kinship networks and in harmony with the seasons of the year to earn their living from the land using principles of relationship, reciprocity, and respect. Anishinaabe-kweg (women) who came into relationship with European men, brought these men, like my ancestor Peter Grant, into their kinship network and folded them into the work of the seasonal round, or Indigenous lifeways.[174] George Nelson, a fur trader in the early 19th century, acknowledged his dependency on the Ojibwa, "we were living with them, depending entirely upon them alone for our very existence, & still were so blind that we could not understand." Nelson openly admitted that his Ojibwa father-in-law "had to hunt & fish for us."[175]

The seasonal round was the cumulative work of seasons and generations which supported the well-being of the people. Newcomers were knowledge and community poor in comparison. This was an essential handicap in the face of adaptation, which made relationships like Peter and

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[174] Nicholas P. Vrooman, *"The Whole Country Was...'One Robe'": The Little Shell Tribe's America* (Helena, MT: Drumlummon Institute, 2012); Laura Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada: 1780 to 1870* (Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press, 1994); Sarah Carter, "The Importance of Being Monogamous Marriage and Nation Building in Western Canada in 1915," *West Unbound*, 2008.

[175] Sorel Journal 1836, fos. 49-36, quoted in Laura Peers and Theresa Schenck, *My First Years in the Fur Trade: The Journals of 1802-1804: George Nelson* (Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2002), 17.

Songab's important to settler survival.[176] Conversely, the changing economic structure in the land, with the settler introduction of a market economy, gave Songab incentive to form alliances that would serve her own people's interests in surviving a changing world.

By 1760, in the midst of the "French and Indian War," Anishinaabeg were resisting the threat of settler colonial encroachment on the Anishinaabe way of life and food system. While lifting the pipe with British representatives at Michilimackinac, Ogima (head man or chief) Minweywey, made a significant proclamation. Minweywey, estimated by Alexander Henry (the elder) to be about fifty years old and standing six feet tall, stood holding wampum beads in his hands while he spoke. The wampum, a string of purple and white shell beads, represented the balance of all things—darkness and light, male and female, sun and moon, life and death—all elements which when balanced perpetuated the life Minweywey spoke of:

> Englishman, although you have conquered the French, you have not yet conquered us! We are not your slaves. These lakes, these woods and mountains were left to us by our ancestors. They are our inheritance; and we will part with them to none. Your nation supposes that we, like the white people, cannot live without bread—and pork—and beef! But you ought to know that He, the Great Spirit and Master of Life, has provided food for us in these spacious lakes and on these woody mountains.[177]

Rejecting the replacement foods of bread, pork, and beef, Minweywey honored the source of life for the people—the Creator, the land, and the ancestors. His declaration is an acknowledgement

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[176] The food they brought with them made the settler-trader diet rather sparse. The Northmen or Hudson's Bay Company men had a nickname for the voyageurs, "mangeurs de lard" or porkeater. The Montreal voyageurs, mostly NW Company men, did not "live on a diet of hulled corn and tallow, as did the Northmen, but included pork in their rations." Without Native communities offering their surplus of wild rice, sugar, and other foods, or Native wives to harvest, grow, and process food for them, fur traders would have had a much harder life. Connor et al., *Five Fur Traders of the Northwest*.

[177] Alexander Henry, *Alexander Henry's Travels and Adventures in the Years 1760-1776* (Chicago: The Lakeside Press, R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company, 1921), 43–45, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015008043724.

of authority, sovereignty, and the enduring gift of life that flowed from the web of relations. The food system to which the Anishinaabeg belonged, whether they were near the Great Lakes, on the western edge of the lakes, or moving further west out onto the prairies, was one comprised of an intimate relationship of people and place. The intricacies of knowledge generated by relationship with place determined the well-being of both people and place—humans and the Land (or all other-than-human relatives.)[178]

Minweywey's declaration ties the notion of being conquered to the food system, saying "you have not conquered us"; we can live without your food. Minweywey's resistance statement serves now as a call to biskaabiiyang (returning to ourselves.) Ginew Ikwe, Laura Horton, describes biskaabiiyang as a process by which we evaluate the effects of colonization—physical, emotional, and spiritual--and return to our ancestral traditions to claim part of ourselves, our inheritance. By returning to ourselves we are embodying what it means to be Anishinaabeg and that "we are still here." Anishinaabeg foodways are part of our lifeways which are part of our very selves—both our identity and our physical composition. The stories, teachings, and traditions that follow herein are an act of cultural knowledge recovery. That recovery is an act of survivance, of continuance as we look back to reinterpret Anishinaabeg foodways in a contemporary context in ways that "bring meaning to our practices and illuminate our lifeways" in the present. [179]

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[178] Indigenous people often talk about the land as synonymous with "the web of relations." As in, "the Land is our first teacher." The use of capitalization in speaking of the land here is meant to connote the larger web of being to which we as human relatives belong.

[179] See also Geniusz, *Our Knowledge Is Not Primitive: Decolonizing Botanical Anishinaabe Teachings*, 9; Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence*. The term 'survivance' was originally coined by Anishinaabe

The Anishinaabe way of life, of which food is just an end product, followed a chronology dictated by the movement of Mother Earth in relationship to sun and moon and all celestial beings, along with the variables of a grandiose web of relations including climate. The seasonal round rhythm of life embodies both a quality of timelessness and an urgency of time, felt in our blood memory, and experienced in our place in the web of life. The chapters that follow share the rhythm of the seasons, some of our foods and our land practices which resulted in sustenance in the annual round, as well as a linear view of time in the years 1780-1890. This mixed chronological approach is meant to give a view of two ways of knowing time and place, while carrying the reader through change and continuity in Anishinaabe life in just a little over one century. With close observation, the reader will experience what the Anishinaabeg did in this period of linear time, a loosening of their connection to the seasonal rhythm and the domination of colonial chronology and presence.

historian Gerald Vizenor. A combination of the concepts of resistance and survival the term is immensely useful in communicating the Indigenous path through the settler-colonial presence and persecution. For this reason, Vizenor's term 'survivance' has become mainstream in Indigenous writing, particularly in the academic discipline of Indigenous Studies.

CHAPTER FOUR

ZIIGWAN (SPRING), 1780-1820

Ziigwan, Spring, is the first season in the seasonal round.[180] Anishinaabe roots in the land of maple syrup, the area between the Great Lakes and the Red River Valley, began to sever as colonial forces of change shifted the balance in the web of life. Key food sources that were part of the Anishinaabe way of life became increasingly scarce. Following Anishinaabeg life in the years of 1780-1820, this chapter chronicles the people's movement towards the buffalo, their resistance to colonial change, and the influence of multiple social, economic, and environmental forces that structured Anishinaabe adaptation and alliances with other relatives on the Northwestern Plains.

Ziissbaakdoke-Giizis (Sugar Moon)

Ziigwan (spring) began with the makwa (bear) turning around in her den.[181] Resting in the womb of our Mother, nestled down in an anaamitaawangaang (earthen den), she grew increasingly restless. Spring opening again, her body opening—emergence. Her time of waiting was coming to an end. In the previous moon, Manidoo-giizhis (Great Spirit Moon), the Anishinaabeg made a feast offering to her and all makwas and, now, they looked for the signs of the birth of makwa cubs--a day when they would awaken, during this Makwa-giizis (Bear

[180] Johnston, *Anishinaubae Thesaurus*, 8.
[181] Edna Manitowabi, conversation with author, September 20, 2019. This happens during what some of our relatives call Makwa-giizis, typically in the month of February on the Roman calendar.

Moon), and be met with a fog hanging low to the ground.[182] This is what generations upon generations have known as the day of bear birthing. That blanket of fog happens in the quiet of winter, in the stillness before the ice moves, when very little moves—a time when everyone is stingy with their energy, anticipating what comes next.

As Makwa-giizis (bear moon) progresses, another feast is set out—a feast for the crane, the first one who returns from zhaawanong (south) in spring and is accompanied by the animikiig (thunder beings).[183] In that time, the Anishinaabeg have their asema (tobacco) ready as they await the first sound of the animikiig. We await the sound of their voices and when we hear them, we set our tobacco to honor their work of cleansing Mother Earth with fire and water. They are fierce in their work of maintaining the balance of all things with fire and water. Shaw-shaw-wa-be-na-se recorded, "The ojibbeways and Ottawwaws believe that thunder is the voice of living beings, which they call An-nim-mo-koog."[184] The thunderbirds' sounding marks the shifting of our Mother in seasonal awakening.

What comes before the "flow of sap" is a precious, even precarious, time of waiting. It marks the end of biboon (winter), the time when the children often beckoned the old ones to tell stories—stories to entertain, to remember, to teach, to pass the time, to fill us up when we are far from the abundance that comes up from zhaawanong (the South) in the summer—the abundance that keeps us busy, well-fed, and prepared for another cycle.[185] In the quiet of biboon, awareness

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[182] Jazz Comegan, conversation with author, September 27, 2019.
[183] Comegan, September 27, 2019. Note: The thunder beings are also referred to as the thunderbirds.
[184] John Tanner, *The Falcon*, ed. Louise Erdrich (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 123–24.
[185] Many of our grandmothers were experts in the art of storytelling. In the winter, the grandmothers and grandfathers told stories to entertain and to teach. Some of the stories could

and anticipation are the work, as time is marked with arrivals, gift offerings—the work of acknowledging the arrival of our relatives and helping them to new life.

In such precarious times, there are moments we face when we look for the bridge where we will cross over, when we look out to Creation and ask, "what are we going to do?" This is how our elder, Porky White, described ziigwan when the Spirit of the Man Tree first spoke. A man, faced with his family's starvation and his own weakness from hunger, thought he might die, and so he offered his asema, tobacco, and begged the Creator for help. He looked out to the lake, Nibi—the sacred water, and said, "What are we going to do?" In reply, he heard a voice behind him saying, "I'll give you the nourishment you need that will get you through." "Looking, he saw a tall, hairy being that the Ojibwe called misaabe," known to the Ojibwe as a pawahgun, a spirit helper. "The misaabe held a large knife and used it to cut his own leg. As the wound started to bleed, the misaabe transformed into a giant tree and his blood turned into maple sap, which began to flow from the tree trunk." The hungry man tasted the sweet liquid. The gift of the Man Tree worked like mashkiki, medicine, and he felt strong again. He showed the sacred gift of maple sap to his relatives and it brought an end to the hungry times of winter and marked the beginning of the season of new life.[186]

This gift of life came in a powerful way to the Anishinaabe, marking a new season, a new life in a cyclical pattern of life and the long-awaited arrival of Ziissbaakdoke-giizis (Sugar

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only be told in biboon, winter. Frances Densmore, *Chippewa Customs*, Bulletin 86 (Smithsonian Institution. Bureau of American Ethnology) (Washington: US General Printing Office, 1929), 29.

[186] Porky White, *The Spirit of the Man Tree* (Maple Plain, MN: Beau Mac Production, 1993), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aScvwsTbD8I; Anton Treuer, "Ojibwe Lifeways," *Minnesota Conservation Volunteer Magazine*, 2012.

Moon.) Maple sap—holding 1,600 calories per pound—*was* mashkiki, medicine, full of plant minerals that cleansed the blood and provided a jump start of energy in a time of busyness and reinvigoration.[187]

The gift came when the Anishinaabe most needed it, but the teaching gifts of the Man Tree were not complete. One day, Nanaboozhoo, first man and teacher to the Anishinaabe, came to visit them in their camps. When he arrived, he found that no one was out hunting, fishing, making their nets or gathering medicines. No one was tending their responsibilities. He went into the forest to look for them. There he saw them lying down at the base of the trees using their mouths to catch the sweet medicine that was dripping from the sugar trees. Nanaboozhoo

[187] Maple sugar is an unrefined sugar and as such retains its antioxidant properties and minerals (potassium, calcium, magnesium, sodium, zinc, manganese, phosphorus, iron, and selenium.) These are important in the spring when the diet has few plant-based foods. The antioxidant qualities of maple syrup are nearly that of eating a raw carrot or about the amount of a serving of nuts or berries. Antioxidants neutralize free-radicals, reducing risks of inflammatory disease, such as cancer and autoimmune diseases. Today's nutritional understandings note that maple syrup has a glycemic index of 54, making it a low-glycemic sugar or one that affects the blood sugar to a lesser degree than refined beet sugar. As the main source of sweetening in the Anishinaabe diet, maple sugar was a source of health rather than detrimental to health as today's refined sugars are. Katherine M. Phillips, Monica H. Carlsen, and Rune Blomhoff, "Total Antioxidant Content of Alternatives to Refined Sugar," *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 109, no. 1 (January 2009): 64–71, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jada.2008.10.014; Wu Bi et al., "Traditional Uses, Phytochemistry, and Pharmacology of the Genus Acer (Maple): A Review," *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* 189 (August 2, 2016): 31–60, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jep.2016.04.021. Maple sugar is an unrefined sugar and as such retains its antioxidant properties and minerals (potassium, calcium, magnesium, sodium, zinc, manganese, phosphorus, iron, and selenium.) These are important in the spring when the diet has few plant-based foods. The antioxidant qualities of maple syrup are nearly that of eating a raw carrot or about the amount of a serving of nuts or berries. Antioxidants neutralize free-radicals, reducing risks of inflammatory disease, such as cancer and autoimmune diseases. Today's nutritional understandings note that maple syrup has a glycemic index of 54, making it a low-glycemic sugar or one that affects the blood sugar to a lesser degree than refined beet sugar. As the main source of sweetening in the Anishinaabe diet, maple sugar was a source of health rather than detrimental to health as today's refined sugars are.

decided that this was a dangerous situation. The Anishinaabe were getting fat and lazy from the sugar. He went to work and made a makuk (birchbark container). He ran down to the river, filled it with water, and climbed to the highest ininaatig (sugar maple tree) and poured water in its trunk. Soon the sap was moving quicker and what came out was hardly sweet. From then on, the Anishinaabe would have to work hard boiling down the sap to make the medicine of maple syrup and sugar.[188] It takes on average forty gallons of maple sap to make one gallon of maple syrup.

The Manufacture.

Truly the work of a sugar bush camp is staggering. In March 1763, while traveling with the Wawatum family and an Ojibwe trader Michel Cadot, Alexander Henry (the elder), a partner in the North-West company, reported on the sparseness of their provisions and their decision to retreat with the family to the sugar bush, "to the place at which we were to perform the manufacture."[189] On the first day a birchbark house, twenty-by-fourteen feet, was erected to comfortably accommodate eight persons and their belongings. On the second day, the bark of white birch trees was gathered and many makuks were made to catch the sap.[190] The trees were then tapped and as the bark vessels filled, the sap was:

> conveyed into reservoirs or vats of moose-skin, each vat containing a hundred gallons. From these, we supplied the boilers, of which we had twelve, of from

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[188] See Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac, *Native American Stories.* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1991); Geniusz, *Our Knowledge Is Not Primitive: Decolonizing Botanical Anishinaabe Teachings*.

[189] Alexander Henry, *Travels and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories between the Years 1760 and 1776* (Toronto G.N. Morang, 1809), 69; Frances Densmore, *Chippewa Customs*, Bulletin (Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology); 86 (Washington: U.S. GPO, 1929,) 39.

[190] *Makuks* are containers and storage vessels made of birch back, sewed with boiled basswood fiber or the core of the Jack Pine root, then rendered waterproof by the application of pitch secured by boiling Jack Pine cones. Huron H. Smith, *Ethnobotany of the Ojibwe Indians*, (Milwaukee, Wis., 1932), 395, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/coo.31924001760515.

> twelve to twenty gallons each, with fires constantly under them, day and night. While the woman collected the sap, boiled it, and completed the sugar, the men were not less busy in cutting wood, making fires, and in hunting and fishing, in part of our supply of food.
>
> On the twenty-fifth of April, our labor ended and we returned to the fort, carrying with us, as we found by the scales, sixteen hundred weight of sugar. We had, besides, thirty-six gallons of syrup; and during our stay in the woods, we certainly consumed three hundred weight. Though as I have said, we hunted and fished, yet sugar was our principal food, during the whole month of April. I have known Indians to live wholly upon the same, and become fat.[191]

While some of the sap was retained to be drunk "as is," the process of "sugaring off" or boiling the sap down to syrup and then preparing it as sugar, granulated, "hard sugar," or "gum sugar," made the gift abundantly useful—portable, light, and stable. People used it for flavoring nearly everything--meat, berries, wild rice, and fish. As a seasoning, the grained sugar was used even more liberally than Euro-Americans settlers used salt.[192] When fish or dried berries were prepared for the cache, they were placed in a makuk, a birchbark container, with a lid (one side higher than the other to form a flap), maple sugar was sprinkled over the food before the flap was sealed tight, and the food was stored or cached. Sap left to sour became vinegar also used to tenderize and flavor meat.[193] The hard and gum sugar, a softer solid sugar made by adding deer tallow in the sugaring process, was eaten as a delicacy by itself. Tiny cone shaped makuks were hung from babies' cradle boards and larger ones were filled as gifts for children. Even larger funnels, made of heavy bark and sewed with split roots, held greater quantities to be stored for
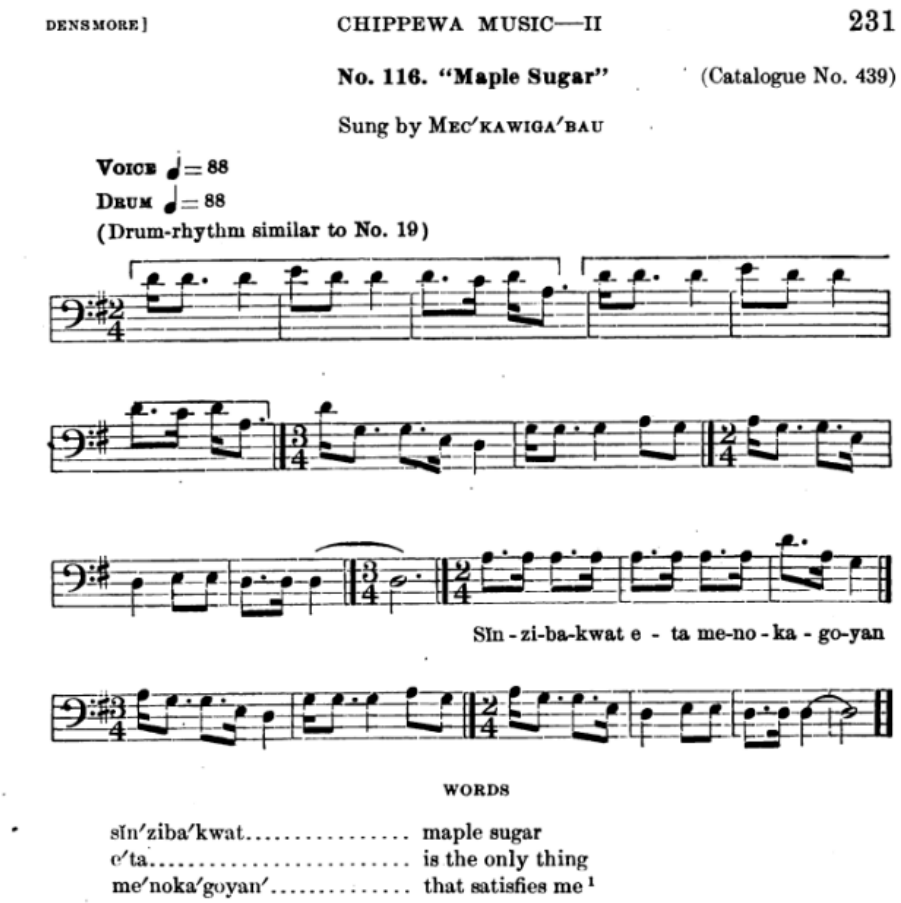
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[191] Alexander Henry, *Travels and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories between the Years 1760 and 1776* (Toronto G.N. Morang, 1809), 70–71, http://archive.org/details/travelsadventur00henr.

[192] Smith, *Ethnobotany of the Ojibwe Indians,* 394–96; Densmore, *Chippewa Customs*, 1929, 123.

[193] Huron H. Smith, *Ethnobotany of the Ojibwe Indians*, 395.

use throughout the year.[194] The importance of maple sugar to the Anishinaabe, the impact of that spirit gift, cannot be understated.


DENSMORE] CHIPPEWA MUSIC—II 231

No. 116. "Maple Sugar" (Catalogue No. 439)

Sung by MEC'KAWIGA'BAU

VOICE ♩ = 88

DRUM ♩ = 88

(Drum-rhythm similar to No. 19)

SIn - zi-ba-kwat e - ta me-no - ka - go-yan

WORDS

sIn'ziba'kwat..... maple sugar
e'ta..... is the only thing
me'noka'goyan'..... that satisfies me [1]

Figure 7. Musical Score for Chippewa "Maple Sugar" Song, 1913, Mec'ka wiga-bau with Francis Densmore.[195]

[194] Frances Densmore, *How Indians Use Wild Plants for Food, Medicine, and Crafts.* (New York: Dover, 1974,) 389.

[195] Frances Densmore, *Chippewa Music,* Bulletin (Smithsonian Institution. Bureau of American Ethnology) 45, 53 (Washington: U.S. GPO, 1910), 230.

Preparation, Coordination, & Generational Knowledge

Much coordination and advanced planning went into the success of sugar harvesting. Nodinens, a kookum from Mille Lacs interviewed by Frances Densmore in the early 20th century, remembered her family's sugar bush camp: "A food cache was always near the sugar camp. We opened that and had all kinds of nice food that we had stored in the fall, such as cedar-bark bags of rice, makuks full of cranberries, and long strings of dried potatoes and apples."[196] When such a cache was available it gave much needed energy to the work, as:

> [t]he men repair[ed] the camps and the storage vats of hollowed logs, and cut firewood, the women s[aw] that the sap buckets and [makuks] [were] scrupulously clean and watertight. If some [could] not be repaired, rolls of birchbark [were] there to make new ones. The whole family then moved to the camp and lived in the large wigwam, while they [made] sugar for a month.[197]

When there was no food cache left in the camp from the year before and the snow was still heavy making hunting difficult, sugar became the primary food. During these times, sweet flag, a root whose bitter flavor is "opposite to sugar as anything can be" was eaten to balance the palate.[198] This was not often the case, as reported by Alexander Henry the Elder and many others. Hunting and fishing usually continued and a cache of food from the previous fall was generally left at the camp as a safeguard to supply or "power-up" the ambitious wave of ziigwan, spring work.

Women managed the sugar camps and their families had rights to particular groves of trees for sugaring. Like hunting and fishing grounds, sugar camps were apportioned through the

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[196] Densmore, *Chippewa Customs*, 1929, 122.
[197] Smith, *Ethnobotany of the Ojibwe Indians,* 394–96.
[198] Peers and Schenck, *My First Years in the Fur Trade: The Journals of 1802-1804: George Nelson*, 154.

clan structure of governance, held by families and respected by the community as such.[199] Families returned to the same camps each year, unless the community leaders, the ogimaag and the three councils that composed the body politic of Anishinaabeg communities—gichi-anishinaabeg, warriors, and women, felt that the family was not taking good care of their camp or the place needed to rest from use. Through their close examination of the land, Anishinaabeg leaders "apportioned the land among the doodem lineages annually to make the best use of whichever resources were at peak productivity in a given year."[200] They oversaw families harvesting in given areas. They were responsible for settling disputes and looking out for the new life that would come in the future, ones who would also need maple sugar and foods of all sorts. Consideration for mino bimaadiziwin (good life) for all (the community, the family, the "new life coming") was in the forefront of decision making in the coordination of the seasonal round.

Knowledge of the trees was also important to the Anishinaabeg success in harvesting. This knowledge was gathered over lifetimes and then handed down for generations. In order for sugar maple trees (*acer sacchrum*) to be tapped, they must first reach maturity of about forty years. Tapping the trees, by driving a hollowed-out spike into them, allows the sap to ooze from that wound, but does not damage that grandfather, that standing one. The magnitude of each

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[199] Densmore, *Chippewa Customs*, 1929, 122; Miller, *Ogimaag: Anishinaabeg Leadership, 1760-1845*, 93–95; Brenda J. Child, *Holding Our World Together: Ojibwe Women and the Survival of Community* (New York: Viking, 2012), 20–22.

[200] Miller, *Ogimaag: Anishinaabeg Leadership, 1760-1845*, 93; Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada: 1780 to 1870*, 56; Warren, *History of the Ojibways, Based Upon Traditions and Oral Statements*; Heidi Bohaker, "'Nindoodemag': The Significance of Algonquian Kinship Networks in the Eastern Great Lakes Region, 1600-1701," *William and Mary Quarterly* 63, no. 1 (January 1, 2006): 23–52, https://doi.org/10.2307/3491724; Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage*, 61; Child, *Holding Our World Together: Ojibwe Women and the Survival of Community*, 29.

camp was not measured by the number of grandfathers or trees in the families' camp, but by the number of taps.[201] Each tap was placed with respect, acknowledging that it was a request for the gift of sustenance. The sweetness of the sap depends on the amount of sunlight the tops of the trees receive, the moisture in that year, and the coldness of the preceding winter.[202] The balance of heat (or lack thereof) and water determines the quality and amount of the gift that comes from the sugar bush. There is always the balance to consider.

Movement through a Spiritual Landscape.

The Anishinaabe did all this work of tapping trees, working with the gifts of the Creator, with ceremony--tobacco in hand, songs and feasts marking the movement over the land, the moments of asking, the reception of gifts from our Mother, followed by the responsible use of the gifts. Throughout the year, as the people moved across the land, whenever they received a gift, such as that of maple sugar, a feast offering of first fruits was made. Gaa-minigooyang (that which was given to us) or the gift, was recognized in the sanctity of all things in creation or nindinawemaganidog (all my relations). With that gift came a reciprocal responsibility to use it "in a proper and just manner."[203] With prayer, songs, and often a kettle reserved just for first fruits, a ceremony was done to honor the spirits that had made the gift possible and to give thanks. Everyone was given a little of the first fruit gift, including the ones who had passed, on whose graves a portion was placed.[204] When acknowledging the gifts through ceremony, the

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[201] Frances Densmore, *How Indians Use Wild Plants for Food, Medicine, and Crafts.* (New York: Dover Publications, 1974), 309.
[202] A good cold winter in which the ground froze deeply resulted in sweeter maple syrup. Child Child, *Holding Our World Together: Ojibwe Women and the Survival of Community*, 20.
[203] Wolfe, *Earth Elder Stories: The Pinayzitt Path*, xviii.
[204] Densmore, *Chippewa Customs*, 1929, 124.

Anishinaabe honored their place in the world with humility—as a collective body who are all in need and completely dependent on the natural world for the gifts which sustain life. It was as historian Laura Peers observed, "The Ojibwa seasonal round was not simply a movement of humans over a natural landscape. As did other Natives peoples, the Ojibwa moved within a world that was at once spiritual and physical."[205]

Though Anishinaabe recognized their dependence, they also knew their responsibility. Nanaboozhoo's teaching in adding water to the sap meant the Anishinaabe must be co-creators of their food by putting their work into it--cutting wood, building the fire, staying with the work day and night for up to six weeks or as long as the balance of cold freezing nights and warm days lasts and the sap flows. The workday or work period is determined by the balance of the elements, not by the workers. The work is done when the work is done—when it all works out. And so, there is an element of vulnerability in the process of gathering food that transforms not only the sap, but the workers. The maple sugar built up the blood of the Anishinaabeg with revitalizing plant nutrients; the work built their bodies through lifting, chopping, and walking. From the dormancy of winter, the Anishinaabeg came to life with all their relations around them. Ice melted, the lifeblood of the trees circulated again, birds moved, plants emerged through the forest mulch, human bodies strengthened, and new life burst forth. The teaching gift of the maple tree is that participation is key. We are co-creators working for the food.

Anishinaabe recognize that, as an element of creation, we were the last ones to arrive on our earthly home and so we are dependent on our relatives--the trees, plants, and animals and so

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[205] Laura Peers and Jennifer S. H. Brown, "'There Is No End to Relationship among the Indians,'" *The History of the Family* 4, no. 4 (1999): 25, https://doi.org/10.1016/S1081-602X(99)00023-8.

many other relatives--for teaching and gifts of sustenance.[206] This is all a part of humans' needy and pitiful state as the youngest in creation.[207] We recognize this condition with our gratitude in our prayer before eating, when we ask the Creator with humility for compassion, "zha-waen anishanam Gitchi Manidoo."[208]

Anishinaabeg traditional stories, aandisokaanan, remind us of the humility and cooperation necessary for subsistence and mino bimaadiziwin, good life/life lived well. Historian Jennifer Brown summarized bimaadiziwin through the lens of a series of conversations that took place between Ojibwe elder Adam Bigmouth (Sturgeon clan) and anthropologist A. Irving Hallowell during the years 1938 to 1940. Summarizing, Brown acknowledged, "Navigating one's way toward bimaadiziwin involved learning and practical skills, caution, restraint, control, and a sense of direction and purpose that came from observation, experience, and listening." [209] Anishinaabe author Cary Miller explains it this way:

> The only way to ensure mino-bimaadiziwin in all seasons was through establishing relationships of interdependency as widely as possible, including extended family in neighboring communities and manidoog [spirits]. Anishinaabeg individuals approached both human and manidoog beings with requests for pity to receive a blessing: 'to be pitiable…seems to be the correct state for a person who wishes to receive a gift of power—a promise of help in getting through life…Such gifts consisted of specific powers, abilities to perform

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[206] Geniusz and Geniusz, *Plants Have So Much to Give Us, All We Have to Do Is Ask*.
[207] As A. Irving Hallowell wrote of the Anishinaabeg, "Human beings are conceived of as being in constant need of help, from birth to death. So essential is such help that no performance of any kind is interpreted as due to an individual's own abilities or efforts." A. Irving (Alfred Irving) Hallowell, *Culture and Experience* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1955); A. Irving Hallowell, "Myth, Culture, and Personality," *American Anthropologist* 49, no. 1947 (n.d.): 551.
[208] Zhawaendumoowin: to sympathize; to feel solicitude, pity, compassion; to express consolation. Johnston, *Anishinaubae Thesaurus*, 92.
[209] Jennifer S.H Brown, ed., *Ojibwe Stories from the Upper Berens Rivers: A. Irving Hallowell and Adam Bigmouth in Conversation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press & The American Philosophical Society, 2018), 171.

> life's jobs both great and small; in short, they consisted of the requisite 'necessaries' in order…to survive."[210]

A relational way of life was at the heart of Anishinaabe lifeways and was carried out in everyday activities such as hunting, harvesting, and trading, as well as in leadership and the spiritual practice which permeated all aspects of life.

Namebine-Giizis (Sucker Moon)

Gender and the Balance of All Things.

Ojibwe women of the Great Lakes Region guided the work of the camp in what was both an industrious and a domestic space. "Although men increasingly assisted women after the decline of the fur trade, they apparently did not have rights to determine the outcome of the production as the sugar bushes were generally stewarded and managed by women."[211] In Ojibwe *ways of being*, work roles amongst men and women are defined by Ojibwe *ways of seeing*, a worldview built on knowledge shared by the web of relations—literally taught to us by our human and other-than-human relatives and collected through careful observation of the world around us as long as there ever was an "us." This knowledge is widely spoken of today as "traditional ecological knowledge."[212] Reducing such a vast accumulation to these three words

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[210] Miller, *Ogimaag: Anishinaabeg Leadership, 1760-1845*, 24; Mary Black-Rogers, "Varieties of 'Starving': Semantics and Survival in the Subarctic Fur Trade, 1750-1850," *Ethnohistory* 33, no. 4 (Autumn 1986): 367.

[211] Patricia Albers, "Provisioning and the Importance of Riparian Areas" (Course-American Indian Women: Ethnographic and Ethnohistorical Perspectives, University of Minnesota, 2017), 12.

[212] Gregory Cajete, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence*, 1st ed.. (Santa Fe, N.M.: Clear Light Publishers, 2000); Melissa K. Nelson and Daniel Shiling, *Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Learning from Indigenous Pracices for Environmental Sustainability* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Leroy Little Bear, "Naturalizing Indigenous Knowledge: A

sometimes diminishes the expansive measure of this knowledge as it was honed from generation to generation for millennia in deep relationship with place. This knowledge was polished through the pressure of what equated to life or death circumstances, comfort, adaptation, and survivance.

Applied ecologist Fikret Berkes has wrestled with native ecological knowledges worldwide and developed the following definition of traditional ecological knowledge: "A cumulative body of knowledge, practice and belief, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission."[213] The ways of being and doing we see embodied in the Anishinaabe life flow from such knowledge of place. Like the land, such knowledge has been tattered and torn through the settler-colonial disruption. In *Kaandossiwin: How We Come to Know,* Anishinaabe author, Kathleen E. Absolon (Minogiizhigokwe) describes Indigenous ways of knowledge creation as inseparable from lifeways and actions: "[W]e journey, we search, we converse, we process, we gather, we harvest, we make meaning, we do, we create, we transform, and we share what we know. Our Spirit walks with us on these journeys. Our ancestors accompany us."[214] From this holistic way of coming to know, we learn our place and our role in the web of creation--a particularly engendered way of seeing in which each relative has gender whether human or other-than-human.

In Anishinaabe belief there are complementary, but not rigid, gender roles, which are grounded in a view of the web of relations. Anishinaabeg women are water keepers and men are fire keepers or tenders. The Sun is known as Mishomis, our grandfather who shares heat energy

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Synthesis Paper" (Canadian Council on Learning, July 2009), https://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education/21._2009_july_ccl-alkc_leroy_littlebear_naturalizing_indigenous_knowledge-report.pdf.

[213] Berkes, *Sacred Ecology,* 8.

[214] Absolon, *Kaandossiwin: How We Come to Know,* 168.

with all our relatives, making all life possible. He brings the spring and the abundance of summer. He stirs the waters--his warmth generates ocean currents and the movement of water in its cycle. We call the moon, Nokomis, our grandmother. She controls all the waters of Mother Earth and the life cycles of the females of all species. Her nurturing gift makes all life possible. Ojibwe spiritual practices involve work to maintain the balance between male and female energy, between fire and water. Male and female conduct ceremony and the work of life, such as the harvesting of food "side by side in mutually dependent roles."[215] The division of labor along gender lines is complementary but also adaptable and practical--in sync with the environment—never rigid.[216]

By 1780, the balance of life was beginning to shift. For one hundred and twenty years, or four generations, the Hudson's Bay Company and others who followed had been in the country seeking furs. As a result, the people, spoken of mostly as the Sauteaux or Saulteaux in the company journals, were moving differently than they had prior to settler colonial arrival. The pattern of harvesting was shifting. Traditionally, women organized and controlled the sugar camps, while everyone contributed to the work. In the fur trade economy, however, men needed to be on their traplines at the time the sap was flowing in March.[217] As an example, trader Hugh Faries' entry for March 28, 1805, reads, "Mr. Grant's Girl (Songab, my 5th great grandmother)

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[215] Priscilla Buffalohead, "Farmers, Warriors, Traders: A Fresh Look at Ojibway Women," *Minnesota History*, Summer 1983, 238.
[216] Patricia C. Albers, "From Illusion to Illumination: Anthropological Studies of American Indian Women," in *Gender and Anthropology: Critical Reviews for Research and Teaching, Ed. Sandra Morgen* (Washington, DC: American Anthropology Association, 1989), 123–48.
[217] Patricia C. Albers, "Lecture 7b: Division of Labor" (Course: American Indian Woman, University of Minnesota, Fall 2011), 11; Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada: 1780 to 1870*, 22.

set off to make Sugar. The men at the usual work."[218] Age-old patterns of families going to the sugar bush together were altered, yet life carried on. Women, traveling on snowshoes, moved the family to the camp carrying necessary materials according to "their knowledge of what had been left in the storing shed the year before."[219] They set up the camp, built or repaired zhaaboondawaan (lodges) for sleeping and sap boiling, sewed and repaired hide sap vats, shoveled snow, cut firewood, set taps, boiled sap, cooked meals, and took care of children.[220] The adaptive nature of the Anishinaabe division of labor continued to serve the community as men and women simply did the work even as the world began to change and new economic dynamics were at play.

Anishinaabeg women's control over the domestic economy extended into the settler economy as it developed. Net-no-kwa (Anishinaabe: Odawa) was principal Chief of the Odawas and highly regarded by both her own people and the newcomers of the fur posts in the late eighteenth century. Her canoe was marked by a flag, a trade good which denoted social status, and its presence on her craft drew a rifle fire salute when she arrived at fur trading posts such as Mackinaw, one of the forts where she conducted her business each spring.[221] Net-no-kwa was

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[218] Connor et al., *Five Fur Traders of the Northwest*, 234.

[219] Frances Densmore, *Strength of the Earth: The Classic Guide to Ojibwe Uses of Native Plants* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2005), 310. Permanent structures at camps included a small birchbark lodge and/or an underground cache used to store makuks for collecting sap, rolls of birchbark used to make containers and cover wigwams for sleeping, and tools used in syrup and sugar production.

[220] Peers and Brown, "'There Is No End to Relationship among the Indians,'" 534.

[221] James, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner (U.S. Interpreter at the Sault de Ste. Marie) during Thirty Years Residence Among the Indians in the Interior of North America*; Bruce M. White, "The Woman Who Married a Beaver: Trade Patterns and Gender Roles in the Ojibwa Fur Trade," *Ethnohistory; Durham* 46, no. 1 (Winter 1999): 109–47; for explanation of flags as a trade good connoting social status see, Peers and Schenck, *My First Years in the Fur Trade: The Journals of 1802-1804: George Nelson*, 13.

also the adoptive mother of a white son, Shaw-shaw-wa-be-na-se, the Falcon, (John Tanner), who grew up Anishinaabe.[222] In his life's story, Shaw-shaw-wa-be-na-se gave great respect to Net-no-kwa for her distinguished role in the family, which included Net-no-kwa's other sons and his adoptive father, Ta-ga-we-minne, an Ojibwe from Red River whom Shaw-wa-ba-na-se described as "of secondary importance in the family, as every thing belonged to Net-no-kwa and she had the direction in all affairs of any moment."[223] Net-no-kwa, as the one who conducted

[222] John Tanner, whose Anishinaabeg name was Shaw-shaw-wa-be-na-se, was taken captive in an area called "The Glaize," in now northern Indiana. The Glaize has been described by historian Helen Tanner as a multi-tribal area of significance for its buffalo hunting and biodiversity in the convergence of several rivers, and an area shared by many tribes. It was also a place of settler encroachment as the American government's forefathers, including George Washington, his brothers, and Thomas Jefferson, formed land holding companies and made land grabs in the area. These speculative grabs required the forefathers to "prove up" their claims which they did by luring settlers to establish farms and villages. Nine-year old John Tanner and his family were some of those settlers who came to make good on the forefathers' land speculation. They arrived in a particularly embittered time. Young Tanner was taken by Ottawag men of suspect character in Tanner's description of them. He was treated quite poorly until he was traded to a relative of these men, Net-no-kwa, who had lost her own son and was looking for an adoptive son. Net-no-kwa's treatment of Shaw-shaw-wa-be-na-se was respectful and nurturing--she treated him like one of her own. See Helen Hornbeck Tanner, "The Glaize in 1792: A Composite Indian Community," *Ethnohistory* 25, no. 1 (1978): 322, https://doi.org/10.2307/481163.

[223] James, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner (U.S. Interpreter at the Sault de Ste. Marie) during Thirty Years Residence Among the Indians in the Interior of North America*, 37; Shaw-shaw-wa-be-na-se, lived thirty years with the Ojibwa and an Odawa mother. In 1830, Shaw-shaw-wa-be-na-se worked as an interpreter in Saulte Ste. Marie on various projects with Dr. Edwin James. James assisted Shaw-shaw-wa-be-na-se in writing his story of Ojibwe life during the fur trade era. Louise Erdrich (Turtle Mountain Ojibwe) reminds us in her introduction to the 1994 reprint of The Falcon's 1830 memoir, what earlier biographers had noted, though The Falcon forgot how to speak English and even his birth name, he spent his whole life trying to find his own people yet was "never able to accommodate himself to a non-Indian life." He spoke Ojibwe, lived as an Ojibwe, married an Ojibwe woman, and was a devoted father to his children who were raised in the Ojibwe community. His life's story is a curious reversal of what many Native people have experienced by having their culture, language, beliefs, and homes impacted by the upheaval of colonization. Just as The Falcon searched for his own people, many Native people are still searching for their homes, languages, and cultural practices. Their blood memories are guiding them. Louise Erdrich in introduction to Tanner,

trade for their family, participated in the settler economy. Recognizing that resources were shifting and subsistence methods changing, it is likely she felt she had no choice but to participate in the exchange that would benefit herself, her family and people. Anishinaabegkwewag (women) had maintained control over the distribution of the food and materials that they harvested and processed, such as wild rice, sugar, basswood fiber, tanned hides, and pelts. Now they used those goods for trade in the settler colonial economy.

Historian Laura Peers asserts that the exchange of material culture or trade goods was a two-way street in which the mixing of cultures represented adaptation on both parts: Europeans using skin footwear in North America and Indigenous Americans using metal cookware obtained through trade.[224] The mixing of material culture seems benign on the surface; utility seemed to guide why my ancestors abandoned hide cooking vessels and my fur trader European grandfathers wore moccasins. However, there was more at play to consider. My Anishinaabe ancestors also began to depend on trade goods because they did not have access to the materials

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John. *The Falcon: A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner*. New York: Penguin Books, 1994. Shaw-shaw-wa-ba-na-se's story is also a precious first-hand view of Ojibwe life in the process of change in the early 19th century, recorded in a cross-cultural collaboration with Dr. Edwin James. The product of their work, the narrative of Shaw-shaw-wa-be-na-se's life story, favors the native worldview not only in point-of-view but also in worldview.

Kyhl Lyndgaard, "Landscapes of Removal and Resistance: Edwin James's Nineteenth-Century Cross-Cultural Collaborations," *Great Plains Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 37–52.

[224] Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada: 1780 to 1870*, 10–11; Here Peers is responding to an argument by Shepherd Krech III and others who have stated that Indigenous use of European trade was not a simple matter of growing dependent on European trade goods with the racist undertone of superiority that has been and continues to be implied. As historian Richard White observed in *Roots of Dependency,* there is a reciprocal influence when cultures mix and the causes of dependency are complex and rooted in real circumstances of "culture, politics, economics, and the environment." Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), xv.

they had harvested and to places where they harvested those materials. The cyclical pattern of life that supported their ways of being independent of European manufactured goods, ultimately shifted to one driven by the demands of the workaday life in the colonial market economy. The arguably sustainable and more localized economy was carefully organized around the availability of resources in their season of arrival. Furthermore, the time in between harvesting events was carefully organized throughout the year to accomplish the processing of food and materials into tools, clothing, and all other matter of life goods. In the course of time, trade goods, such as metal cooking pots, became a convenience for a life that had turned from self-sufficiency and reciprocal trade to one that relied on the materials delivered by the colonial market.

Becoming enmeshed in this economy affected every aspect of life, including gender roles. Prior to European cultural dominance and the development of the settler-colonial food system (agriculture, cities, trains, and ships), European traders were dependent on Native traders to supply them food. As historian Bruce M. White observes:

> the fur trade was never simply an exchange of furs for trade goods. It included a variety of other kinds of transactions. Traders needed to get food from native people; without it, they could not survive the winter in the western Great Lakes. They simply could not bring in or collect enough food to feed themselves, while at the same time carrying on the fur business. [225]

In this way, my fifth great grandfather, Peter, and grandmother, Songab, exchanged more than love (presumably) and genes and knowledge of each other's ways of life. They had an interdependent life. As White goes on, "it is only by considering all the available Ojibwa models of women's roles … that one can hope to understand the role of Ojibwa women in the fur

[225] White, "The Woman Who Married a Beaver," 120.

trade."[226] Cultural differences in men's and women's roles often puzzled the newcomers. Witnessing the industrious and very physical work of Native women, fur traders' journals generally portrayed native women as "virtual slaves." Anthropologist Priscilla Buffalohead counters this idea noting that, "women clearly managed and directed their own activities. The men who helped did not oversee the women but played assisting roles."[227] In the numerous mentions of Songab in trader Hugh Faries' journal, she is acting independently—she travels on her own to harvest food and materials, to trade, and to visit her family. She is maintaining her own Indigenous way of life. Songab and Peter Grant's relationship was complex. It did not involve a complete reversal of gender roles, but an adaptation to the changing world. At once it represented interdependence, commonalities, and the upheaval of worldviews and economic structures, much like the European and North American tectonic plates pushing against each other.

Trade and Conflicting Messages.

Participation in trade was an integral part of the seasonal round way of life, as was demonstrated in the millennia long use of trading over land and water throughout Turtle Island. Key differences in ways of seeing relationships are central to understanding Anishinaabe trade. Kinship was at the heart of trade--reciprocity and relationships were critical to the Indigenous way of being. Gifting others to establish relationships of understanding, cooperation, social and ceremonial ties/obligations were standard practices. Indigenous trade networks existed within lifeway practices that considered reciprocity and relationships as necessary covenants of mino

[226] White, 137.
[227] Buffalohead, "Farmers, Warriors, Traders: A Fresh Look at Ojibway Women."

bimaadiziwin, a life well-lived. It was just how things were done. Reciprocity in relationships of exchange was extended to other-than-human relatives. Asema, tobacco, our first medicine and gift was offered before harvesting plants or animals. In the case of a larger gift, say that of a makwa, bear, a feast was held to share that gift of life with family and band members.[228] In contrast, settler colonial trade practices were based primarily on market exchange, a quid pro quo system that favored comparative advantage and currency exchange while maintaining a focus on the rights and welfare of the individual rather than the community.

The market economy that the Europeans established on Turtle Island in the 17th century shifted life in myriad ways. Time itself changed, the precious rhythm of life of the seasonal round had pockets of time for taking harvested materials, such as maple sap, birch bark, or the many usable parts of a buffalo, and processing them into useful items. The more rapid pace of the competitive market lifeway crowded out time for the cyclical rhythm and the opportunity to produce useful items. At the same time it had its own insidious way of changing gender roles. Trade that favored intensive production in order to accumulate and then exchange surplus goods was fundamentally different from the Anishinaabe reciprocal or gift economy.[229]

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[228] Net-no-kwa threw such a feast when her son, Shaw-shaw-wa-be-na-se, followed the instructions she was given by the manidoog, spirits, which led him to a bear sleeping in its den. To relieve the suffering of the relatives Shaw-shaw-wa-be-na-se then harvested the bear. As he was too young to bring the bear in himself, "The bear was sent for, and, as being the first I had killed, was cooked all together, and the hunters of the whole band invited to feast with us, as was the custom of the Indians." John Tanner, *The Falcon: A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner* (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), 34.

[229] Mercantilism, trade that built wealth by expanding exports and minimizing imports, was losing favor in the 18th century. Mercantilism had driven colonization and warring for several hundred years, however, Scottish Enlightenment thought lead by the writings of Adam Smith was moving economic thinking in a new direction—free trade capitalism. With its emphasis on rational self-interest and competition as drivers of wealth, the new economics of the late 18th

When Net-no-kwa went to trade at the fur posts, she was participating in a settler-colonial system which had its own agenda. First, the system operated on a structure of credit cleverly initiated through gifting. The trade year began in the autumn with traders "gifting" items such as cloth, guns, hatchets, kettles, and clothing and other goods meant to confer status on native community members. But these "gifts" had to be repaid. They became debts that needed to be settled in the Spring with the delivery of pelts and other items of value to fur traders, such as food stuffs, moccasins, and snowshoes. Secondly, the status which was conferred to male community leaders through trade items such as extravagant "scarlet laced coats, laced hats, and red feathers" was meant to disrupt the status earned and established through native governance structures such as the clan system.[230] Further, the items given were delineated by gender with the intention of enabling Natives to produce the materials that traders wanted--guns and traps for men to harvest more furs; awls and scrapers for women to produce moccasins and hides. Even children received hatchet to cut firewood. The "gifts," while cloaked in the language of the Native gifting economy, were a tool in a credit system meant to intentionally indebt Natives, who in turn had to deliver furs, foods, and other items the companies demanded. The most lethal trade item, of course, was alcohol—a trickster tool meant to manipulate unfair trade arrangements and incapacitate individual and collective Indigenous authority. Even Net-no-kwa, with all her strength and intelligence, allowed alcohol to shadow her exchange.

It was nothing out of the ordinary that Net-no-kwa, or anyone conducting trade at the settler fur posts, was greeted with alcohol. Reporting a typical exchange, Shaw-shaw-wa-be-na-

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century would spur fur trade competition and a new wave of overheated extraction of 'natural resources' on Turtle Island.

[230] Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada: 1780 to 1870*, 36.

se said, "we stopped at the trading house one mile from the lake, and remained here drinking until our peltries were all sold."[231] Alcohol brought chaos into the lives of those participating in this kind of exchange. The scenes at the fur posts were like that of any place of imbibement—a disintegration in personal and collective moral strengths amongst relatives and partners. The loosening of inhibitions generated immediate dramas in which disputes with relatives and traders were often settled with violence. Trading done under the influence impoverished Indigenous families. As Shaw-shaw-wa-be-na-se said, "In the course of this drunken frolic, they stole from us all our corn and grease, leaving us quite destitute of provisions."[232] Fur traders often reported acquiring their own provisions through a direct trade of alcohol, as Nor'Wester John McDonnell traveling south of the Forks along the Red River in 1797 reported, "On these plains we generally find some straggling Sauteaux or *Pilleurs* from Lake Rouge, who generally have provisions to barter for liquor, *en passant.*"[233] To the great detriment of Native families and communities, alcohol became a normalized element of exchange in the fur trade culture.

Net-no-kwa, her husband, and her sons, for the most part, lived a life that was close to the land, though in her lifetime things changed rapidly. French fur traders had been in the area west of Lake Michigan since 1654.[234] By 1804 Duncan Cameron, a North West company employee and a contemporary of my great grandfather Peter Grant, reported:

> I am, however, sorry to remark that this part of the country is now very much impoverished since beaver is getting very scarce, but I have nevertheless managed

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[231] Tanner, *The Falcon: A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner*, 81.
[232] Tanner, 61.
[233] John McDonnell, "The Red River by John McDonnell of the North West Company (about 1797)," in *Les Bourgeois de La Compagnie Du Nort-Ouest*, ed. Louis Rodrigue Masson, vol. 1 (New York: Antiquarian Press, 1960), 268.
[234] James W. (James William) Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life* (Regina, SK: University of Regina Press, 2013), 13.

> to keep up the average of returns by shifting from place to place every year and increasing the number of posts, which of course, augmented the expenses and made the trade dearer, but that cannot be helped at present, and we must conform to circumstances and hope to see a reform soon.[235]

The toll of the extractive pressure on the land was beginning to make the life of the seasonal round less sustainable. Following the death of Ta-ga-we-minne, Net-no-kwa's husband, and her son, Ke-wa-tin, the family came to the Forks, the convergence of the Assiniboine and Red Rivers, where they came across a great number of Ojibweg and Odawaag camps. Hearing the news of the family's losses, the chiefs met to discuss the situation of Net-no-kwa and her young sons.[236] It was the practice of the Anishinaabeg to leave none of their relatives hungry.[237] The group then moved about ten days up the Assiniboine onto the prairies in search of buffalo as food and beaver for trapping.[238] Their quest for both food and furs illustrates well how, by the 19th century, Anishinaabeg were clearly working in two economies while their movement across the land in search of all that they needed was becoming more far reaching.

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[235] Duncan Cameron, "The Nipigon Country, 1804, with Extracts From His Journal," in *Les Bourgeois de La Compagine Du Nord-Ouest: Recits de Voyages, Lettres et Rapports Inédit Relatifs Au Nord-Ouest Canadien*, ed. Louis Rodrigue Masson, vol. 2 (Québec: De L'Imprimerie Générale A. Coté et Cie, 1890), 245.

[236] In our communal and seasonal round way of life, everyone's contribution mattered. The loss of a husband and older sons was the loss of hunters. Just as the loss of an ikwe, meant the loss of all her contributions to the family through her work. Because we worked for the good of our family and people, losing one or more made life very difficult and so our Ogimaag would then call upon the larger community to help us. This is how we got by. See also Laura Peers on this topic in Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada: 1780 to 1870*, 20.

[237] In contrasting the traditional First Nation's socio-economic system to that of Europe, Sagard, a French Missionary to North America in the early 1600s wrote, "Those of their Nation…offer Hospitality, and help each other so much that they provide for the needs of all so that there is no poor beggar at all in their towns, bourgs, and villages…., so that they found it very bad hearing that there were in France a great number of needy and beggars." Rosemary E. Ommer and Nancy J. Turner, "Informal Rural Economies in History," *Labour / Le Travail* 53 (2004): 137, https://doi.org/10.2307/25149448.

[238] Tanner, *The Falcon: A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner*, 31.

Traveling up the Assiniboine River in 1797, Nor'Wester John McDonnell described both a place of great abundance and a place of great conflict. There were buffalo and many varieties of fish, including whitefish, "so common here that I have seen them catch 30 or 40 per man while smoking their pipes."[239] McDonnell also reported on the "vestiges of many commercial (fur trading) settlements, several of which claim an ancient date"-–Blondishe's Fort, Fort la Reine, Adhemar's Fort, Portage La Prairie, Fort Dauphin, and Le Fort des Trembles, aka Poplar Fort.

At the last, so named for the quaking aspen trees whose leaves tremble in the breeze, McDonnell described an uprising, which occurred in the year 1780 or 1781, reporting, "the Indians made an attempt to pillage the traders, Messrs. Bruce and Boyer." Settler colonial extraction of Indigenous food sources and coercive pressure on Indigenous production in the growing competition of the fur trade were to blame. According to McDonnell, "two Frenchmen and seven Indians were killed upon the spot." The traders, like others before them whose forts were abandoned, then left and holed up at the Forks for the winter.[240]

This particular incident at Fort Tremblant is reported so widely amongst fur traders who recorded their own histories that it is safe to assume it was an event of significance. Indigenous

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[239] McDonnell, "The Red River by John McDonnell of the North West Company (about 1797)," 270.

[240] The main story line of these events agree though some details, such as the number of dead, differ in the written accounts by fur traders, including that of my fifth great grandfather. Alexander Mackenzie, *Voyages from Montreal through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans, in 1789 and 1793, Etc. [With an Introduction by R. Waite.].*, vol. 1 (New York: A.S Barnes and Company, 1903), xxxvii–xxxix, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uiug.30112046999105.

resistance was a matter of concern.[241] In fact, Alexander Henry the Younger, stated, "This unfortunate affair appeared to be the opening of a plan for the destruction of the whites throughout the North West." What is recorded next by McDonnell indicates the relief that traders felt when this resistance subsided, as well as what stopped it: "The small pox seizing the Natives and sweeping off three fourths of them, compelled them to lay aside their intention of cutting off all the white men in the interior country."[242] Henry described with more detail the departure of the traders for the Forks and perhaps the onset of this particular epidemic wave, "At the moment of their departure two Indian lads arrived from toward Fort Dauphin; being strangers, they requested permission to embark, which was granted. At this time there was no mention of the smallpox, but the first day they embarked one of the lads complained of being unwell."[243]

The Assiniboine River was just one pathway into Indigenous territory on which disease was delivered as animal pelts were exported. By 1781, waves of disease brought by settler-colonial presence had been ongoing for hundreds of years with heart-wrenchingly typical losses

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[241] Henry and Thompson, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest. The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and of David Thompson, 1799-1814. Exploration and Adventure among the Indians on the Red, Saskatchewan, Missouri and Columbia Rivers*, 1:292–94; Mackenzie, *Voyages from Montreal through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans, in 1789 and 1793, Etc. [With an Introduction by R. Waite.]*, 1:xxxvii–xxxix; McDonnell, "The Red River by John McDonnell of the North West Company (about 1797)," 270–71; Georges-Henri-Victor Collot, *Map of the Missouri, of the Higher Parts of the Mississippi and of the Elevated Plain Where the Waters Divide Which Run Eastward into the River St. Lawrence, North East into Hudson's Bay, North North West into the Frozen Sea, and South into the Gulf of Mexico: To Which Is Added Mackenzie's Track in 1789, When He Discovered the Frozen Sea.*, 1789, 1789, M8.2.40, New York Historical Society.

[242] McDonnell, "The Red River by John McDonnell of the North West Company (about 1797)," 270.

[243] Henry and Thompson, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest. The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and of David Thompson, 1799-1814. Exploration and Adventure among the Indians on the Red, Saskatchewan, Missouri and Columbia Rivers*, 1:294.

of seventy-five to ninety percent of Native communities.[244] The smallpox wave that swept across Turtle Island, from 1775 to 1782, as historian Elizabeth Fenn observes, served the purposes of the settler-colonial endeavor:

> In a New World environment where acquired immunity was rare, Variola was a virus of empire. It made winners and losers, at once serving the conquerors and determining whom they would be. Smallpox reshaped political and military relations across the continent, even as the Revolution reshaped such relations around the world.[245]

The outbreak of the disease reported at Fort Tremblante in 1781 had the effect of squashing Native resistance to the overheated competition for furs. Further, with such tremendous loss of life, Native band and family groups struggled to maintain their way of life, economy, and ancient patterns of procuring food. With every relative who was lost their lifeways knowledge and contributions to communal and reciprocal living was also lost.

The Great Gathering of Spring.

In the Anishinaabeg way of life each season was marked by a series of events, the work of life. Where people were not catastrophically affected by the effects of newcomers, and as the people adapted to these often dramatic effects, this way of life was diligently, and sometimes painstakingly, maintained.

Fueled by the vigor of sugar camp, Anishinaabeg ordinarily moved on to the sturgeon weirs where they needed great strength to spear fish and also drag in their nets full of numaag

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[244] Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*; Elizabeth Fenn, *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-82* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001).
[245] Fenn, *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-82*, 275–76.

(sturgeon).[246] Each fish weighed about one hundred and twenty-five pounds. The ikwewag gii-kabeshiwaad (women made the camp near the rapids) put up the wiigwaas wiigwaam, birchbark houses, and built drying racks for the fish. It would have been so nice to camp on those banks and hear the baawitig endanwewejiwaninig (the sound of the rapids), and be gathered again with our odinawemaaganan (kin) after the long wintertime when we were alone with our own family or just a few others. Depending on the year and the place, there may have been hundreds or even more than a thousand families gathered at the baawitig (rapids). The ancient relatives, the sturgeon, made their annual spawning run lasting about three or four weeks in the middle of each spring as they ran out of the lakes and followed the rivers throughout Anishinaabewaki.[247]

In the fish camps, our people visited with one another, shared news of travels, the weather, the animals, and all the good and the bad we had experienced in our time apart. The People worked together and taught one another about medicines, snowshoe making, recipes, beadwork, skinning--any number of things that we shared in our way of life. Most importantly,

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[246] Our nets were made by sewing tree root fibers and babiche, rawhide, was used for the web, and when it was scarce strips of sturgeon skin or even bark was used. All was sewn together using a bone needleAlanson Skinner, *Notes on the Eastern Cree and Northern Saulteaux*, ed. Clark Wissler, vol. IX, Part 1, Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History (New York: American Museum of Natural Hisotry, by Order of the Trustees, 1912), 128–29; Warren, *History of the Ojibways, Based Upon Traditions and Oral Statements*, 97; Women typically set the nets each night and brought them in each morning to process the fish. Mashkiki, or medicine, a decoction of sumac leaves was used to clean the nets so that they did not retain the smell of fish which would make them useless in attracting more fish. Fish traps known as a "sturgeon rack" were also used to catch bigger sturgeon that would come up river from Gichi Gummi. As soon as the ice went out, the racks, big enough for Anishinaabeg to sit on, were set in the river. When the sturgeon, measuring 5-6 feet long, came up the river, the people caught them with hooks and killed them with clubs. Densmore, *Chippewa Customs*, 1929, 125–26.

[247] "Under some circumstances the people moved directly from the sugar camp to their gardens, but more frequently they went from the sugar camp to a place where they could fish." Densmore, *Chippewa Customs*, 1929, 124.

we celebrated our spring Midewiwin ceremonies. While we visited and celebrated, we also worked. As the women constructed the birch bark waakaa'iganan (houses) in the camp they also built drying racks. The sturgeon meat was dried, pounded, and combined with its oil to make fish pemmican. Extra sturgeon oil was stored in fish skin "jars."[248] Sturgeon were just one fish that Anishinaabeg relied upon to enrich their diet—trout, suckers, walleye, whitefish, perch and others sustained us as well.[249] Fishing with spears, seines, hooks, traps, bait, and trolling was done throughout the seasonal round.[250]

The foods and medicines we gathered in the spring were varied—some were big events involving the entire community, others were quietly and routinely gathered in the midst of other activities. Small but key elements for rounding out our diet and sustaining the health of our relatives included spring roots, such as onions (Allium stellatum Ker.), wild potatoes (Sagittaria latiflolia), and wild ginger (Asarum canadense), and spring tree buds, such as maanazaadi, balsam poplar buds (Populus balsamifera), which were added to bear grease to make a healing salve. While moving over the land and returning to seasonal camps, women constantly connected with wild plots--familiar places and plant relatives. I imagine that they felt the same joy that I do when I see those relatives after missing their bright faces for several seasons.

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[248] Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada: 1780 to 1870*, 23.
[249] "In the spring, when the hunting season is over, they generally assemble in small villages, either at the trader's establishment, or in places where fish or wild fowl abound; sturgeon and white fish are most common. Though they have abundance of pike, trout, suckers, and pickerel." Peter Grant, "The Sauteux Indians," 330.
[250] Densmore, *Chippewa Customs*, 122–25.

Waawaaskone-Giizis (Flower Moon)

Spring Mide ceremonies brought the same kind of joy of reunion with relatives and were vitally important to the continuation of the work of the Anishinaabeg. The ceremonies included the initiation of Mide to new levels of teaching and responsibility in the shared life of mino bimaadiziwin. Initiated members received songs, teachings, stories, knowledge of medicines and healing work that carried the life of Anishinaabeg forward in a good way. The sounding of the drum, the heartbeat of the Anishinaabeg, did special work to draw the energy of the collected community together with Gichi Manido (the Great Kind Spirit), the spirit helpers, the ancestors, and the new life that was coming. Mide practices are all centered on new life—the transference of knowledge to new members and the young, healing for individuals, the community, and Mide Ahki (our Mother Earth).[251]

While gathered in large numbers at the baawatig, the Ogimaag (head men and women) gathered spiritual wisdom and spoke in ceremony to guide the people and their relationship with the land. Ogimaag consulted with one another and prayerfully discerned the movement of the people and provided guidance so that all might work together with one another and our other-than-human relatives in a good way.[252] To reduce pressure on the animals and the land in general, Anishinaabeg, although very social and wanting to be together, lived most of the year in small hunting bands or villages of just a few families.[253] Anishinaabekwe historian Cary Miller

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[251] See also Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway*; Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada: 1780 to 1870*; Densmore, *Chippewa Customs*; Basil Johnston, *Ojibway Ceremonies*, (Lincoln: Lincoln : University of Nebraska Press, 1990).
[252] Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada: 1780 to 1870*, 23.
[253] Anishinaabeg villages are distinct from the way villages are thought of in the settler-colonial context. It was more like the old moniker, “Home is where your family is.” Anishinaabeg were

describes the structure of governance as it pertained to caring for the people and the land, as one in which the gichi-anishinaabeg (the council of headmen and women) representing each hunting group along with the ogimaag, allocated to families areas available for hunting, ricing, gardening, making sugar, and fishing.[254] The relationship with the land was bound in "collective identities…grounded not in continuous possession, occupation, and defense of a tightly bounded geographic space, but in shared descent from other-than-human progenitors, in spiritual practices, and in origin stories."[255] This is why decisions regarding land practices, and the Anishinaabe food system, were made in the context of ceremonies. Spring was a time for reconciliation when political discussions regarding disputes over sugarbush, hunting, and ricing claims were addressed. The relationship with the landscape was both physical and spiritual. "The ceremonies were acts related to subsistence and life-renewal" or the heart of Anishinaabeg belief.[256]

New Movements over the Land.

When we lived in the area around Nayaano-nibiimaang Gichigamiin (the Five Freshwater Sea or Great Lakes) we moved swiftly in our jimaanag (canoes) through the water highways which flowed throughout our territory. Our movement was with Nibi, that beautiful source of all

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always mobile but moved together in small family groups. Their village was wherever they were when they were together.

[254] Miller, *Ogimaag: Anishinaabeg Leadership, 1760-1845*, 41. Here Miller is citing Harold Hickerson, *The Southwestern Chippewa; an Ethnohistorical Study*, Memoir (American Anthropological Association); No. 92 (Menasha, Wis.: American Anthropological Association, 1962), 41; and Heidi Bohaker, "'Nindoodemag': The Significance of Algonquian Kinship Networks in the Eastern Great Lakes Region, 1600-1701," *William and Mary Quarterly* 63, no. 1 (January 1, 2006): 23–52, https://doi.org/10.2307/3491724, 41-44.

[255] Bohaker, "Nindoodemag," 44.

[256] Miller, *Ogimaag: Anishinaabeg Leadership, 1760-1845*, 12.

life. We were water people. As we began to feel the pull of the buffalo standing for us out on the prairies' grasslands we moved longer distances by foot and with the help of dogs. Toboggans and snowshoes were important tools that made movement possible in biboon, winter. Constructed from the pelts and skins gifted us by the animals and the roots and wood of those standing ones, they were decorated with quillwork and carvings of our spirit animal helpers who aided our travels. Our movement was a physical and spiritual practice animated by spirit helpers and the gifts of the standing ones.[257] When our moccasins were wearing out, we began to receive the help of mishtadimoog, horses. At first, we only had a few mishtadimoog with us and the journey across the prairies was long.

Throughout the 18th century, Anishinaabeg increasingly made sweeping western movements along the waterways of Anishinaabewaki--from the Berens River to Lake Winnipeg, from the Great Lakes to the Red River, onward to the Interlake Region, traveling north and west to fur posts including Cumberland House and Edmonton House, and following the Assiniboine River westward onto the great expanse of prairie. In this time, according to another fifth great grandfather of mine Sir Alexander McKenzie, Anishinaabeg were not yet permanent residents to these places, but generally returned home for significant events in the seasonal round, such as sugar camp, the great gathering of relatives in Ziigwan, and wild ricing.[258]

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[257] "Animal skin, wood, and birchbark were symbols of human relationships with the animate beings who had animal and tree forms. When formed into ordinary objects, these materials did not lose their powers; thus, snowshoes and canoes are animate objects in Ojibwe language." Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada: 1780 to 1870*, 25.

[258] Mackenzie, *Voyages from Montreal through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans, in 1789 and 1793, Etc. [With an Introduction by R. Waite.]*, 73.

In his journal of 1691, Hudson's Bay Company trader Henry Kelsey while moving up the Saskatchewan river, noted that it appeared to be a regular route of the woodland Indians to the Buffalo Plains. Kelsey interpreted his encounters there with the Nehiyawak (Cree) and Assiniboine (Mountain Poets), but it is likely that Anishinaabe Ojibwe people were with them as well. The intimate relationship of these three peoples is described by many who traveled amongst them. My fifth great grandfather, Nor'Wester, Peter Grant noted the relationship like this:

> The frequent emigration of several of their tribes to the country of Assiniboines and Crees make it difficult to ascertain the real boundaries of their present possessions.
>
> Though no people are more attached to their native soil, yet the abundance of game, the ease and facility with which they live and procure the friendship of those nations, who are remarkable for the gentleness of their manners, are powerful motives for many of the Sauteux families to settle among them, preferring those fruitful countries to their own, yet too tenacious to the customs to their own nation to conform to the manners of the others.[259]

We were 'mixed with,' 'related to' the Assiniboines and Crees, and, no doubt, 'indistinguishable from' them except to those who knew us best.

Anishinaabeg, along with their Nehiyawak and Assiniboine relatives, were likely trading with Piikani (Blackfeet) around 1730 or earlier.[260] William Whipple Warren, early Anishinaabe historian who wrote in the first half of the 19th century, documented the Anishinaabemowin name for the Piikani as Pe-gan-o and noted we called the Missouri River by the same name, Pe-

[259] Grant, "The Sauteux Indians," 303.
[260] John S. Milloy, *The Plains Cree: Trade, Diplomacy, and War, 1790 to 1870*, Manitoba Studies in Native History 4 (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1988), 24-25.

gan-o zibi, Piikani river.[261] By foot and horse, Anishinaabeg traveled to the Mandan villages on the Missouri sometime in the mid 1700s. As ethnohistorian Susan Sharrock concluded:

> [B]y the late 1780s at least, and probably before that time, it can be documented that the Crees [and their mixed relatives] were inhabiting…the area downstream from the elbow of the South Saskatchewan [ie., the Saskatchewan/Montana border region]. They occupied this land jointly with Assiniboines, Blackfeet, Atsina, Piegans and Bloods.[262]

In this same place, described here by Sharrock, nindaanikoobijigan (my fourth great grandfather) Pierre Falcon II (1766-1807), a widower after the passing of his Nehiyaw wife Clear Sky Woman, was living at the turn of the 18th century.

On the morning of October 18th, 1805, Nor'Wester Francois Antoine LaRocque who was returning to the Red River from the Yellowstone, stopped along the Souris River northwest of Turtle Mountain to visit and smoke pipe with some Assiniboines. From them, he heard news that "Mr. Falcon was building a home fifteen miles north of Montagne á la Bosse Fort." Larocque left his party for two days to go visit him, perhaps to gather further news of the conditions out on the prairies. LaRocque counted the news from Grandpa Falcon as significant enough to go two days

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[261] The Blackfeet name for themselves, Piikani, and the Anishinaabemowin work, Pe-gan-o, as reported by Warren, are very similar. The languages of both peoples are Algonquin. Warren, *History of the Ojibways, Based Upon Traditions and Oral Statements*, 34.

[262] Susan Sharrock's work as an ethnohistorian was ground-breaking in that she looked to material evidence of historical presence and found new evidence through archaeology. Both cultural history and archaeology are frustrating in that they can give a very random view at the whim of who kept records and where, and which archaeological digs were funded and where. Corroboration of these two fields takes a diverse skillset and dedication to deep understanding. I am grateful to the field of ethnohistory for broadening historical methods. For a nuanced discussion of cultural and material history see, Patricia C. Albers, "History and Idealism in Plains Indian Ethnography," *Reviews in Anthropology* 7, no. 2 (March 1980): 215–28. Indigenous historians bring yet a further understanding of history held in our own archive—our ceremonies (including the teachings, songs, birchbark scrolls, bundles, ethos, and lifeway practices).

out of his way to visit with him, and it was. The fort at Montagne á la Bosse had been evacuated. Grandpa Falcon had been a clerk there for years, and prior to that at Souris River where he was respected for his service by John McDonald, charge of the Red River Department of the North West Company. Daniel Harmon reported in April 1805 that Fort Montagne á la Bosse was surrounded by Nehiyaw and Assiniboine lodges and they were clearly unhappy. By this time my grandmother, Clear Sky, a Nehiyaw woman was no longer alive, but had she been, her presence may have been an asset in settling the dispute which was likely related to the overheated trade wars that were in play at the time.[263] By all evidence we know that Anishinaabeg were moving west throughout the 18th century and by its end were settled inside the Old North Trail Corridor.[264]

The reasons for this movement are complex. Cutthroat competition between the Hudson's Bay Company and anyone who tried to rival them brought increasing pressure on the land to the point of exhausting game supplies and removing animals, such as the beaver, altogether. As early

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[263] Pierre Falcon's son, Pierre Falcon III (1793-1876), who would later be at Seven Oaks and participate in the Métis resistance put the family in allegiance with settler-colonial resistance. L.J. Burpee, *Journal of Larocque from the Assiniboine to the Yellowstone, 1805* (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1910), 54; John McDonald, "Autobiographical Notes" in Masson, *Les Bourgeois de La Compagnie Du Nord-Ouest; Récits de Voyages, Lettres et Rapports Inédits Relatifs Au Nord-Ouest Canadien*, 36 ; Entry of 10 April 1805, Daniel Williams Harmon, *A Journal of Voyages and Travels in the Interior of North America, between the 17th and 18th Degrees of N. Lat., Extending from Montreal Nearly to the Pacific, a Distance of about 5,000 Miles: Including an Account of the Principal Occurrences during a Residence of Nineteen Years in Different Parts of the Country,* (New York, 1903); Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*, 52.

[264] Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780 to 1870*, 29-32. We know that we were always mobile people and that we moved with our relatives, the Nehiyaw (Cree) and Assiniboine in the late 18th and early 19th century and moved with an innate relationship with the land as it guided us towards life. To trace the historical record of our presence in place and time, we look to fur trade journals and post records. Here we see that Anishinaabeg were moving in north and westward directions to and from the Red River and Great Lakes area.

as the fall of 1805, Alexander Henry reported that the Ojibwes trading at his Pembina post were "dispersed in a place where a few skins were still to be had," and by 1807, he described the Red River Department as being "of an exhausted state."[265] Searching for both pelts and food we spread out. Extractive economic forces brought pressure on Native peoples who were paddling hard to coexist in a space between two lifeways. Relatives, the Dakota and Anishinaabeg, like so many other relatives torn by the pressures of colonization, were embattled for decades.[266] Canadian historian James Daschuk claims that this frenzied competition essentially redrew the Indigenous map.[267]

Following the smallpox epidemic (1780-82) in which fifty to seventy percent of Anishinaabeg relatives in the Great Lakes and Red River Valley were lost, the Ojibwes came into a deeper alliance with the Nehiyaw and the Assiniboine. "The Saulteaux found the Assiniboines and the Crees encamped at the Pembina Mountain…," Ojibwa Chief Peguis recounted. They held ceremony and, "after smoking and feasting for two or three days, the children of the forest were formally invited to dwell on the plains--to eat out of the same dish, to warm ourselves at the same fire, and to make common cause with them against their enemies the Sioux…" "Your presence," they said, "will remove the cloud of sorrow that is in our minds and

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[265] Henry and Thompson, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest. The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and of David Thompson, 1799-1814. Exploration and Adventure among the Indians on the Red, Saskatchewan, Missouri and Columbia Rivers*, 1:268, 422.

[266] The long battle between the Dakota and the Anishinaabeg has been said to be a result of this pressure, settler-colonial pressure on the land and the people that caused a domino effect of cascading movement of Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island. See, Anton Treuer, *Warrior Nation: A History of the Red Lake Ojibwe*, History of the Red Lake Ojibwe (St. Paul, MN : Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2015).

[267] Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*, 42.

strengthen us against our enemies."[268] This remedy of alliance amongst relatives speaks strongly of the Native way of healing through relationship. It shows continuity with the cultural principles we know today and provides another view of intertribal relationships that counters the dominant historical narrative, which portrayed "savage warring tribes" in contested spaces and erased stories of generosity, relationship, and shared work in healing.

The pressure produced by the colonial system--social and economic interference, introduction of disease and violence--undermined the stability of the seasonal round way of life, even with its built-in features of adaptability and strength in kinship ties. Misery in the period 1780-1820 intensified with extreme climate variability, something that on its own may have been manageable. A catastrophic ten-year drought, in the last decade of the century, impacted the plant nations and the wild rice harvest.[269] Fluctuating water levels and killing frosts continued to impact the plant and animal nations in various locations up until 1820.[270] This left Anishinaabeg in a situation of having to adapt, turning from wild rice to buffalo, as they sought sustenance in an ever-widening circle of the seasonal round.[271] Anishinaabeg were becoming more and more reliant upon mishtadimaag (horses) to conduct their hunting. However, under severe winter conditions, horse herds perished in many places. As the people were stretched between two economic systems—sustenance and the fur trade—Anishinaabeg had to withdraw from the work

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[268] Warren, *History of the Ojibways, Based Upon Traditions and Oral Statements*, 262; Donald Gunn, "Peguis Vindicated," Nor-Wester, 28 April 1860. See also Provincial Archives of Manitoba (PAM) MG12 A1, Archibald Papers, #780, n.d., "Draft Notes, " For a similar explanation repeated "dozens of times" by Peguis. See, Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780 to 1870*, 20-21.
[269] Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*, 42.
[270] Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780 to 1870*, 65.
[271] Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780 to 1870*, 72.

of the trade at times. This withdrawal, or periods of time when Natives were not delivering furs to fur posts, were described in post journals as times when "the Indians were starving," meaning they were occupied with matters of sustenance.[272]

Adding to the struggles *on* the land, there was a new struggle *for* the land that began in earnest in 1811 when Thomas Douglas, 5th Earl of Selkirk (Scotland), was granted a claim from the Crown for 116,000 square miles. He established a fort in his name, Fort Douglas, at the Forks, the convergence of Red and Assiniboine rivers and an ancient Native center of exchange.[273] The Earl's mission was to establish an agricultural colony on behalf of the Crown. The land he claimed was significant not only in that it overtook an important place of Indigenous exchange, but it was in one of the most fertile valleys in the world.

The Red and Assiniboine Rivers are in the footprint of an ancient glacier bed, which covered the entire interior of Turtle Island. Massive glaciers melted at the end of the last glacial period or about 11,000 years ago and formed Lake Agassiz. In time the climate became more arid causing Lake Agassiz to recede. The great northward watershed that was formed through this movement of Nibi in all its forms reveals the power of Nibi to distribute life energy. The watershed includes the Sheyenne River, which flows to the Red River, which flows north to Lake Winnipeg, feeding the Hays River which finally empties into Hudson's Bay–all formed by the handiwork of glaciers.[274] Ziibiikaa (there are many rivers) flowing through an expansive

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[272] Mary Black-Rogers, "Varieties of 'Starving': Semantics and Survival in the Subarctic Fur Trade, 1750-1850," *Ethnohistory* 33, no. 4 (Autumn 1986): 353–83.
[273] Archaeological evidence traces the importance of this Native meeting place back at least 6,000 years.
[274] Lake Agassiz also drained eastward through what is now Lake Superior and southward through the Minnesota River.

alluvial plain, comprised lacustrine or lake soils--remaining glacial materials which carried essential nutrients for plant growth. European newcomers, such as the English who had been traveling the world surveying colonial prospects, saw the potential for agricultural wealth in the valley's qualities.

Earl Selkirk, though perhaps without awareness, was following the example of the Highland clearances in which English invaders dismantled the Scottish clan system and its tenant farming network to make way for large-scale sheep farms and a restructuring of the population to work in other industries. The way of life that was lost in the Highlands was one of communal principles and connection to the land not unlike that of the Anishnaabeg. Ironically, Selkirk saw himself as a humanitarian when he brought displaced Highlanders to settle in the series of colonies that he created from Prince Edward Island to the Red River Valley, where his land grant was known as the "District of Assiniboia." It extended from Lake Winnipeg south to the divide between the Red River and Mississippi Basins, and from the Lake of the Woods on the east to the source of the Assiniboine River on the west.[275]

It is clear that Selkirk had more than "humanitarian" ambitions. His family was well-vested in the Hudson's Bay Company, and Selkirk had his ambitions in land development. In his own words, it was the ambition of the Hudson's Bay Company, relative to competition with the

[275] "The District of Assiniboia," in E.H. Oliver, ed., *The Canadian North-West: Its Early Development and Legislative Records* (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1914), 154-56. See also, Joseph Kinsey Howard, *Strange Empire: The Story of Louis Riel, the Métis People, and Their Struggle for a Homeland on the Plains of the United States-Canada Border* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1994).

North West Company, to "push the trade to the full extent it was capable."[276] He arrived at the claim of the Assiniboia through his control of shares in HBC at a time when the company was weakened by losses following the Napoleonic Wars. The strategic placement of the claim not only disrupted the Anishinaabeg and Nehiyaw who lived, hunted, and traded there, but also the fur traders who counted the Forks as an important place of commerce. Factions formed a hostile debate around the Selkirk colony--Métis and the North West Company on one side, Nehiyaw on another. Anishinaabeg under Chief Peguis tried to maintain peace, and Hudson's Bay employees factionalized among themselves and everyone else. The battle was for buffalo, as both gift of life and source of robes to feed the fur trade against the new colonial agricultural enterprise.

Then, on April 5, 1815, after thirty-five years of climate variability, outbreaks of disease, and living in the midst of an overheated extractive fur trade society, an event happened halfway around the world which would further impact Anishinaabeg well-being—the explosion of Mount Tambora in Indonesia. The volcano cast an ash plume which circled the globe and was powerful enough to change the seasons. It brought extreme cold and diminished the bounty of the land for a sustained period of several years. Starvation was widely reported amongst the Hudson Bay posts in the winter of 1815-16. 1816 was known as "the year without a summer," as sunlight was unable to penetrate airborne layers of volcanic ash. Some have called the results "the last great subsistence crisis in the Western world." Failing harvests had a global economic impact.[277]

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[276] Earl Thomas Douglas Selkirk, *A Sketch of the British Fur Trade in North America; with Observations Relative to the North-West Company of Montreal* (New York: Printed for James Eastburn and Co. by Clayton & Kingsland, 1818), 23.
[277] Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life,* 54.; John D. Post, *The Last Great Subsistence Crisis in the Western World* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).

Exacerbating the battle for subsistence in the Red River Valley, the volcanic explosion and its climatic impact followed the 1814 Pemmican Proclamation in which the Governor of the Red River (Selkirk) Colony, Miles MacDonnell, announced a prohibition on the export of pemmican from the District of Assiniboia. North West Company (NWC) employees, mainly Métis or men of mixed heritage whose fathers were often French and Scottish and mothers were Native, saw this as a threat to the voyageur boat brigades that relied on pemmican to fuel their movement between posts. MacDonnell's effort to control foodstuffs was no small threat to the trade as historian George Colpitts attests, "Game and fur 'deserts' stretched across portions of the subarctic in this commercial expansion, and once denuding territories of furbearers and animal life, traders moved farther westward or northward in a continual zero-sum game of commercial expansion."[278] Colpitts judges that a low estimate of 430 bags of pemmican were coming out of the Red River area annually at this time, a bag constituting 90 pounds of dried meat and buffalo fat, in equal portions, sewn in a bull's hide. Additional areas of Assiniboia would have had the pemmican production of the area in the thousands of bags per year. When Miles Macdonell began seizing pemmican produced in the area to support the subsistence needs of the settlers, what has been called the "Pemmican War" was ignited. This was an attempt by the Hudson's Bay Company to prevent the North West Company from procuring "country provisions" and forcing them to import their supplies from Montreal.

On June 19, 1816, after the HBC employees seized a NWC supply of pemmican and several subsequent skirmishes between colony Governor Macdonell's men and the Métis of the

[278] George Colpitts, *Pemmican Empire: Food, Trade, and the Last Bison Hunts in the North American Plains, 1780-1882* (New York : Cambridge University Press, 2015), 101.

North West Company, Cuthbert Grant, the 23-year old son of Peter Grant and Songab, led a Métis army into battle with the HBC Governor Robert Semple and some of the settlers at Seven Oaks just north of the Forks. The war between them had been brewing with attacks by both sides. The HBC had burned down the NWC Fort Gibraltar at the Forks just a few months earlier. Grant organized his army at Fort Qu'Appelle some 250 miles west of the Forks. It included Métis, Ojibwa, Cree, and my fourth great grandfather Pierre Falcon, who married Marie Grant, Cuthbert's sister. Twenty-two settlers, including HBC governor Semple, and one Métis died in the battle.

Many conclusions have been drawn about the Battle of Seven Oaks. Some have said that at the heart of it the volcanic eruption was the precipitating event. Others have declared it the birth of the Métis nation in standing their ground for land and water, and yet others have declared it a brutal massacre of farmer settlers. In any case the much memorialized song my grandfather Pierre Falcon wrote in tribute to the event, *La Chanson de la Grenouillère,* gives clues to the Métis interpretation of what it meant.[279] He wrote of the men they met that day, "men who'd come from over the sea. Come for to steal our fair country." Throughout the song, Falcon refers to the ones he is with as not the Métis but the Bois-Brulés, the "burnt woods." Their identity was tied to their mothers' skin color and their connection to the land. Further, though they were significant participants in the fur trade settler economy, their identity was tied to the buffalo way of life. This is something that has been driven home to me in the study of my own family and that I will give further evidence of as the story continues. The pemmican war, the battle at Seven

[279] La Chanson de la Grenouillère, the "Song of Frog Plain," refers to what the Métis called the place also known as Seven Oaks. It has also been called "Falcon's Song."

Oaks, and resistance to the Selkirk agricultural colony were a tipping point in the lifeways of Turtle Island. People were mixing, food systems were shifting, and the tides of economic and environmental change were rolling across the continent.

Conclusion

The changes in the weather for this forty-year duration, 1780 to 1820, were one factor which made life harder, but can in no way account for the suffering that came upon Anishinaabeg. It was the newcomers' arrival that brought deadly microbes and, significantly, a way of life built on an economic structure of extraction, individuation, and ruthless competition that brought misery and loss of life and spread our relatives across the prairies. What carried us westward was the pull of life, our instinct for survivance, and our intimate relationship with the land lived through the seasonal round.

Nokomis, Grandmother Moon, holds connections to the tides of the oceans and the rhythms of life in all our female relatives, the ones who carry life. There are thirteen moons in each seasonal round and the Anishinaabeg have names for these moons and the teachings that come from each moon time. The names of the moons are different in the different places we live. Tied to each moon are activities that are both physical and spiritual. The spring moons in the area between Lake Winnipeg and Gichi Gummi area have sometimes been called, Ziissbaakdoke-giizas (Sugar Moon), Namebine-giizis (Sucker Moon), Waawaaskone-giizis (Flower Moon). In Ziisbaakdoke-giizas, we work hard and renew our bodies and we receive the gift of maple syrup which in turn does the work of cleansing our blood and healing us. In Nambine-giizis (Sucker Moon) travels to the Spirit World to receive cleansing powers for this world. On his return he

purifies the path for the Spirits and for all our water beings.[280] During this time, Nibi, the water, begins to flow again with great energy and its cleansing power must be heeded as it makes its way to its destination. This is a time when we can learn to become healed healers, equipped through our own wholeness to do the work of healing. In the third moon of the new year, Waawaaskone-giizis (flower moon), the plants show their spirit energy, the most powerful healing medicine. We are encouraged by our plant relatives to know our spirits.

Ziigwan is a time of renewal for Mide Ahki (our mother) and our selves. It is also the time when we hold our Mide initiation ceremonies, which celebrate that new life that is coming in the members and the gifts brought by the transference of knowledge through the Mide teachings. The work that is done in these ceremonies includes reconciliation, reflection, and renewal in our shared spiritual practices.[281] Ziigwan is a time of cleansing from the first moment that the thunder beings return—a time for knowing our spirits and a time for reconciliation. Our ceremonies, stories, and songs remind us of this way of being.[282] Just as we begin again each

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[280] Another way that the teachings of sucker come down is with the availability of suckers to Anishinaabe in the second moon, called in some places Sucker Moon rather than Makwa-giizis, bear moon. Suckers are easier to catch at that time (February) and help us through the hungry time of late winter.

[281] Dawn Zinga and Sandra Styres, "Coming Full Circle: Looking to Grandmother Moon," *Canadian Journal of Education* 36, no. 2 (2013): 313–17.

[282] Understanding the differences between Anishinaabe and mainstream worldviews is about taking a holistic approach. While this explanation begins to get at some of the differences in ways of thinking of time, it is missing a critical element: "Our study found that the tribal understandings of time are defined by cues and patterns observed in the natural world. As such, time is then relied on, operated in, and based on a 3D construction rather than the westernized linear time system. Their concepts of time are important not least because they indicate when certain traditional behaviors should begin, for example, hunting, fishing, and gathering. They are also strikingly relational, so that seasonal patterns are observed as an intricate system of connectivity and integration among plant, animal, insect, and human experience." Samantha Chisholm Hatfield et al., "Indian Time: Time, Seasonality, and Culture in Traditional Ecological

Ziigwan, Anishinaabeg renewed themselves by adapting to new places and foods as they moved westward holding fast with their ceremonies and way of life.

Knowledge of Climate Change," *Ecological Processes* 7, no. 1 (December 2018): 25, https://doi.org/10.1186/s13717-018-0136-6. Relationality is integrated into Anishinaabeg ways of being in our sense of time as defined by the world/web of life around us. What scientists have overlooked, however, is the dimension of Spirit, which guides our relationships with the land and all life around us—the ethical driver of our "ecological processes."

CHAPTER FIVE

NIIBIN (SUMMER), 1821-1850

Between 1821 and 1850, Anishinaabe life in the valleys of the Red River and upper Michi-ziibi (Mississippi) changed dramatically. In this period, settler colonial forces including a newly formed fur trade monopoly, economic and technical infrastructures, and Christian missionaries impacted Anishinaabe lifeways. Bizhiki offered his care, as an older brother would, and supported Anishinaabeg as they ran with their archives, their ceremony, ever westward across the Northwestern Plains. Anishinaabeg and their close relatives—the Nehiyawak (Cree), Assiniboine, and Métis—maintained a close kinship alliance that lent them strength and resilience. During this period of cultural shifting, the Anishinaabeg and their kin made adaptations, some compatible to their lifeway, and some that forced them to participate in a world other than their own.

I start this story with the season of niibin, summer, in the Anishinaabeg seasonal round. Niibin is the time when the web of life awakens to the abundance of life supplied by Mishomis, Grandfather Sun, and when Anishinaabeg vigorously lay their hands on the work--fishing, hunting, tending and harvesting wild plots of medicines and foods, and cultivating gardens.

Summer solstice, niibin begins at that moment when Turtle Island, our home on Mide-Ahki (Mother Earth) most directly faces Mishomis (Grandfather Sun). Our ancestors recognized precise commencement of the season when they built a giant celestial clock in what is now the Ohio River Valley. In approximately the year 321 BCE, Aristotle's time, our Algonquin-speaking ancestors, who would have used some derivative of the word niibin as we do, built a

giant mounded serpent that would remind them exactly when the season of planting, harvesting, and abundance, Niibin, began. At the time of sunset on the first day of summer, the serpent appears to be eating the sun. Each bend in the serpent aligns with other significant dates in the rhythms of the seasonal round.[283]

"Indian time" is a very precise measurement of the passing of days and seasons in which we align ourselves with the movements of the natural world. This alignment, both physical and spiritual, is a teaching our ancestors have handed us that we might have life. This is Indigenous knowledge which has been handed from one generation to the next for millennia that we may find our way. The wisdom of the serpent clock is knowledge which the ancestors left on the land to guide following generations to a path of abundance in which we live in cooperation with the movements of the sun, the planet, the seasons, and plant and animal relatives. Similar Indigenous inscriptions on the land, for example, shield figures on rock faces and medicine wheels, can be found throughout Turtle Island.[284]

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[283] Edward W. Herrmann et al., "A New Multistage Construction Chronology for the Great Serpent Mound, USA," *Journal of Archaeological Science* 50 (October 2014): 117–25, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jas.2014.07.004; James Vukelich, "Niibin," Facebook, *Ojibwe Word of the Day* (blog), June 20, 2019, https://www.facebook.com/profile/100063542258449/search/?q=niibin.

[284] Indigenous inscriptions are everywhere throughout Turtle Island, including the Great Lakes, Red River Corridor, and Old North Trail Corridor. Only a very few have been protected and understood for their importance to Indigenous ways of life. Many operate as celestial clocks. Ivy Merriot, *Exploratory Research of the Big Horn Medicine Wheel: Acting as an Indigenous Place-Based Pedagogical Instrument for Learning Sky-Earth Relationships, Skywatching Fundamentals and Celestial Mechanics*, 1st ed. (Three Forks, MT: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014).

Ode'imin-Giizis (Strawberry Moon)

On a warm Manito-ba summer afternoon in 2017, I heard my bear clan brother shout, "Skabewis!" indicating that our sleepy time of resting on the ceremonial grounds and visiting with one another was done. He had beckoned us back to the work.[285] A surge of excitement went through the midewiigan (Mide lodge) as we entered and took our places. Our young sisters' berry fast was ending and we were about to feast that young one as she ascended the hill of womanhood. This one wore the jacket of her hockey team and a beautiful ribbon skirt. Her feet in moccasins caressed Mother Earth, the floor of the midewiigan, where she stood with her grandmother, mother, and aunties surrounding her. As our ancestors had done for the generations before us, the lodge held that young woman, and spiritually carried her up that hill that marks the second hill in life in which she looks to the new life that is coming--the ones she will care for as a mother.

In the open woods and meadows of Anishinaabewaki, following along a vast system of o-da-na-me-na-gaw-wun-zheen (vines, roots, and runners,) the first gift of the warming sun appeared—ode'iminan (heart berries, strawberries). Mishomis (Grandfather Sun), with his great warmth, ignited the fragrance of this gift to lead Anishinaabeg to it. This tiny fruit, loaded with vitamin C and a sunny burst of red juice, is niibin mashkiki (summer medicine) that appears in the sixth moon of Creation, Ode'imin-giizis, Strawberry Moon.

As the first fruit of the season, the ode'imin (strawberry) is an honored gift celebrated by Anishinaabeg with offerings recognizing the sacred cycle of life and death. When members of the Midewiwin society greet the new day with sunrise ceremony, a bowl of ode'iminan

[285] Skabewis means "spiritual workers" in Ojibwemowin.

(strawberries) is lifted and shared to break the overnight fast with the gift of new life. Midewin are said to follow the "path of the heart," a practice of healing work. Their ceremonial connection to heart berries is as strong as is the medicine of the strawberry itself.

Ode'iminan (strawberries), like all things in the Anishinaabe world, have their own work to do.[286] Above all, ode'imin's work is to bring reconciliation through the release of disharmony—setting things right for new life. When girls make the transition from one hill in life to the next, a transition to a time when their bodies may bear fruit, a special yearlong ceremony, the berry fast, is done. The fast is a time for knowledge transference and a celebration of the gift ikwe-wag (women) are given in their ability to carry new life. As the girl comes of age, she fasts from all berries for one year and at the end of that year the ikwe-wag in her life put her out on the land for four days of fasting and prayer. Her aunties, kookums (grandmothers), and mother visit her during those days to encourage her and share guidance for the next passage in life when she may take a life partner and enter motherhood. After four days, the young woman is brought home and the community holds a feast to honor her and to look to new life.

Ode'iminan are there again at the end of life, when Anishinaabeg begin their walk from this world to the next, a journey on a path that leads them through the Western doorway into the Spirit World and a place of abundance where we remain held in a beautiful web of kinship. It is said by the dreamers and teachers that on that path, before we reach the river and pass over it, we will come to a giant ode'imin (heart berry), that marks the path.[287] In the Anishinaabeg

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[286] Wolfe, *Earth Elder Stories: The Pinayzitt Path*, xviii.
[287] Edwin James, M.D., ed., *Narrative of The Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner (U.S. Interpreter at the Saut de Ste. Marie) During Thirty Years Residence Among the Indians in the Interior of North America* (New York: G. & C. & H. Carvill, 1830), 230.

worldview, life and abundance marks the way in the passage from this world to the next. This tiny berry found hiding in the early summer under the o-da-na-me-na-gaw-wun-zheen (vines, roots, and runners,) is a teacher whose message weaves us all together and shows us the path in life, the gift of new life, the road ahead, and our life-in-relation or very identity.

The Gifts of Fasting.

Fasting and feasting are essential elements of the Anishinaabe way of life and part of our relationship with "wun-ne-ge-nash mee-chum-mu-on-gash—Mo-zhe-ka ko-mah-jink" (every kind of food.)[288] Ode'iminan (strawberries) are another gift in the annual cycle which mark a moment in the seasonal rhythm--a movement into summer's abundance. The natural world teaches us to flow with the gift that is given to us—prepare in the seasons of abundance for coming times of scarcity and manage with wisdom throughout the energetic ebbs and flows of the natural world.

Muk-kud-da ka-win (blacking or fasting) is an Anishinaabe practice intended to bring the one who fasts into mental, spiritual, physical, and emotional alignment with the rhythm of the natural world. In this way fasting is a land practice. We fast because we are hungry for spiritual knowledge that will guide us through life. In mid-1700s, when Net-no-kwa, Ogimaa (Head Chief) of the Otawaag (Otawas) and mother of Shaw-shaw-wa-be-na-se, the Falcon, was just twelve years old, she fasted for ten successive days. From her effort, she received a visit in a dream from a man who came before her and spoke to her of many things. He gifted her with two

[288] This Anishinaabemowin expression for "every kind of food" comes from the ethnohistory related by Anishinaabeg-inini, Shaw-shaw-wa-be-na-se, in James, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner (U.S. Interpreter at the Sault de Ste. Marie) during Thirty Years Residence Among the Indians in the Interior of North America,* 400.

sticks and said, “I give you these to crawl upon and I give your hair to be like snow.” Throughout her life from that time on she had the mashkiki (medicine) from that dream to give her confident assurance. No matter the distress and challenges before her she could “crawl upon those sticks” with the knowledge that she would live to the day that her hair was white like the snow.[289]

Shaw-shaw-wa-ba-na-se (the Falcon) recognized the force his adoptive mother’s fasting lent her throughout her life, “I have never met with an Indian, either man or woman, who had so much authority as Net-no-kwa. She could accomplish whatever she pleased with the traders or the Indians; probably, in some measure, because she never attempted to do any thing which was not right or just.”[290] An example of her spiritual strength was recounted in a story of a winter in the 1790s when game was scarce, and she and her family were suffering from hunger. Shaw-shaw-wa-ba-na-se remembered going to bed at the early hour assigned to the younger part of the family and throughout the night awakening to the sounds of Net-no-kwa praying and singing to the Great Spirit. Early the next morning, she gave him very detailed instructions that came to her through a dream in which a spiritual visitor told her of “a small round meadow” and a path leading from it to a place where a makwa (bear) was resting nearby. Shaw-shaw-wa-ba-na-se, though very young for the task, followed the instructions given to his mother in her dream. When he came into that small meadow he fell through the snow into a hole that was the bear’s den. In

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[289] James, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner (U.S. Interpreter at the Sault de Ste. Marie) during Thirty Years Residence Among the Indians in the Interior of North America*, 289.

[290] James, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner (U.S. Interpreter at the Sault de Ste. Marie) during Thirty Years Residence Among the Indians in the Interior of North America*, 47.

fulfillment of his mother's dream, he killed the bear in its slumber and, with his family, brought bear meat to their small band—a much needed gift to relieve their suffering. Net-no-kwa in turn held a feast in honor of her young son's achievement as a hunter, a role Shaw-shaw-wa-ba-na-se would hold throughout his life.

Food was the product of a whole way of life.[291] Lifeways and foodways were highly integrated in the Anishinaabe world in which spiritual beliefs and practices were as essential to the food system as knowledge of hunting, harvesting, and processing food. Anishinaabe approached each season and each aspect of the work before them with respect for Spirit. The Ojibwemowin word niibin (summer) translates as "the season of bounty," reflecting the gift that is given when we lay our hands on the work in the process we know as our way of life.

[291] "Food is the end product of a whole system." These are the words of Dr. Leroy Little Bear (Kanai), and esteemed member of the Advisory Council of the Buffalo Nations Food System Initiative at Montana State University. In reflecting on the restoration of buffalo to the land, Dr. Little Bear has related that his Blackfeet elders have observed that "it is not the buffalo who went away but we who went away from the buffalo." All food systems reflect the culture to which they belong. In intact cultures, such as those of precontact Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island, the food system was highly integrated within the lifeways, spiritual beliefs, and consciousness of people. In the settler society of North America, the evolution of the market economy produced a food system that is removed from everyday life including the lifeways, spiritual beliefs, and consciousness of those consume the food.



Figure 8. Map of the Upper Mississippi, 1843, close-up subsection. Nicollet, Stone, and Frémont captured more Indigenous place names than most colonial maps did. This cutout of his map illustrates the relationship of people and place with the name of the foods and the spirits that were important to the People.[292]

Gi-ti-gay'-wi-nini-wug (keepers of the Creator's garden).

In the transitional time between Ziigwan (Spring) and Niibin (Summer), Anishinaabeg held their seasonal Midewin ceremonies and the highest ceremonies of the year in which new members to the Mide lodge were initiated. At this time, they were also entering a new beginning in the seasonal round and so included in their ceremonies their intentions of working with the gifts of life—seeds, soil, and water—asking for new life and abundance as they planted their gardens. It is a time for honoring the plant nations who are awakening and drawing up their

[292] Joseph Nicolas Nicollet, William James Stone, and John Charles Frémont, *Hydrographical Basin of the Upper Mississippi River from Astronomical and Barometrical Observations, Surveys, and Information*, 1:1,200,000 (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1843), Library of Congress Geography and Map Division, Washington, D.C., https://lccn.loc.gov/78692260.

energy that Anishinaabeg depend on.[293] The Anishinaabeg who do the work of cultivating are called gi-ti-gay'-wi-nini-wug (planters or keepers of the Creator's garden). The name indicates the reciprocal notion of the work that was done to raise food.[294] Planting took place in summer camps along lake shores and rivers where Nibi (water) shared the work of caring for those plant relatives as it created a microclimate that protected the crops from late and early frosts.[295]

[293] John Wesley Bond, *Minnesota and Its Resources: To Which Are Appended Camp-Fire Sketches, or, Notes of a Trip from St. Paul to Pembina and Selkirk Settlement on the Red River of the North* (New York: Redfield, 1853), 349–50; Miller, *Ogimaag: Anishinaabeg Leadership, 1760-1845*, 11.

[294] Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway*, 94. Academic M. Kat Anderson has described the Indigenous relationship with the land as "tending" what we call Ahki, Our Mother. Anderson explains tending as acting in a "complementary role of user, protector, and steward of the natural world." Kat Anderson, *Tending the Wild : Native American Knowledge and the Management of California's Natural Resources* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), xvi.

[295] Child, *Holding Our World Together: Ojibwe Women and the Survival of Community*, 23.



Figure 9. An illustration of Anishinaabe gardens located in a riparian habitat from Edmund Ely's sketch of Fond du Lac Anishinaabe community, 1837.[296]

Typically undervalued by European American observers, Indigenous agriculture was a significant and industrious endeavor which served not only the needs of our own people, but that of newcomers who traded for food raised by Anishinaabegkweg.[297] Mandaaminag (corn), mashkodesimin (beans), and okosimaanan (pumpkin and squash), were often planted together in

[296] Edmund F. Ely, *The Ojibwe Journals of Edmund F. Ely*, ed. Theresa M. Schenck (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 184.
[297] Child makes the connection that such denigration of Indigenous agriculture occurred because women were the main farmers, "which upset European and American sensibilities of the proper sexual division of labor." Child, *Holding Our World Together : Ojibwe Women and the Survival of Community*, 22.

the "three sisters" method. Opinii (potatoes) were also planted for as far back as anyone can remember and were essential parts of the winter diet. In 1832, Henry Schoolcraft, husband of Bamewawagezhikaquay, Jane Johnston, gave an outside-insider view of Indigenous agriculture.[298] He worked for the American government as part of an expedition sent by the War Department to report on the natural resources and conditions of the land in the Upper Mississippi basin to the river's headwaters at Itasca Lake. He reported that the Red Lake Anishinaabeg profitably produced corn in quantities adequate for trade, supplying the fur traders with a "considerable quantity, from that lake, to the posts on the Upper Mississippi, and even as far east as Fond du Lac."[299] According to 19th century Ojibwe historian William Warren, Ojibwe grew "the most extensive gardens," while they were hemmed in on Mon-ing-wun-a-kaun-ing (the place of the golden-breasted woodpecker.) As Native Nations were displaced, the colonial process crowded this ancient Anishinaabeg community, now known as Madeline Island, Wisconsin, and made it dangerous to hunt on the mainland.[300] Flexibly adapting to their island life in which opportunities to hunt were limited, the Ojibwe fished and grew massive gitigaaning

[298] Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, the husband of Bamewawageshikaquay, was an outsider in that he was of European descent and raised in the colonial school pedagogy/worldview. He was also an insider who understood the extent and importance of Anishinaabeg agriculture through his intimate connections as one accepted by the Ojibwe through his marriage and work.
[299] Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *Narrative of an Expedition through the Upper Mississippi to Itasca Lake, the Actual Source of This River : Embracing an Exploratory Trip through the St. Croix and Burntwood (or Broule) Rivers, in 1832* (New-York: Harper & Brothers, 1834), 30.
[300] The name Madeline Island comes from Henry Schoolcraft's grandmother, Madeline Cadotte, whose Anishinaabe name was Ikwesewe. She came from a powerful Ojibwe family who allied with the fur trade. When Ikwesewe, was baptized and confirmed in the Catholic Church, her saint's name was Madeline. Mon-ing-wun-a-kaun-ing is one island in a chain of twelve which were renamed the "Apostle Islands" by settler colonial missionaries. Madeline Island is an example of the Christianization of both people and place in the process of colonization.

(gardens) in which they raised large quantities of mandaaminag (corn) and okosimaanan (squash.)[301]

Gardens were one aspect of the food system which could be expanded or reduced according to necessity.[302] The Anishinaabe food system was governed by the seasons, but also "required numerous human decisions about land use, travel, and trade--decisions just as important to Anishinaabeg survival as those pertaining to war and peace."[303] Through countless generations, the ancestors gleaned knowledge of climate, terrain, cultivation, plant and animal relatives, and passed those to the following generations. This was the knowledge base that guided the food system. The Ogimaag worked with this knowledge to procure food.

Upon passing through an Anishinaabe village in 1832, Henry Schoolcraft visited with an Ojibwe headman who was living with his band on a stretch of river called Namai Kowagon (Sturgeon Dam). The ogima (headman) reported the number in his band, where the animals they relied upon were to be found at that time, and appeared adept at organizing the cultivation of food in his village. In describing the gardens and lodges he saw there, Schoolcraft stated, "It would seem to be no difficult effort to induce Indians, who had proceeded thus far in fixed industry, to labor on their lands more extensively and effectually." Corn and potato fields covered the surrounding grounds. The chief reported the absence of moose, once prominent in

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[301] Warren, *History of the Ojibways, Based Upon Traditions and Oral Statements*, 97.
[302] The observation that individual elements of the seasonal round, such as farming and fishing, are something that are either 'dialed up or dialed down' is a concept discussed with Dr. Rosalyn R. LaPier (Blackfeet/Métis) in conversation with the author, October 12, 2017, and in her book LaPier, *Invisible Reality: Storytellers, Storytakers, and the Supernatural World of the Blackfeet*.
[303] Miller, *Ogimaag: Anishinaabeg Leadership, 1760-1845*, 48.

the area, and the necessity of his people to travel a great distance to the north to find them.[304] Anishinaabe ogimaag (chiefs) bore responsibility for the well-being of their people and the land. They applied ancestral knowledge as they stewarded the food system.

Similarly, Anishinaabekwewag (women) maintained the spiritual landscape as they tended the Creator's garden. They made asema (tobacco) offerings and planted with the phases of Nokomis (Grandma Moon). They focused the work of the day with morning prayer in the gardens. Anishinaabekwewag also called on the spirits to help them tend their gardens. For example, with the use of a thunderbird song, they sang for sacred Nibi (water) to come in time of drought.[305] Seed saving, reliance on rainwater, and the planting of companion plants that grew well together were methods of making good on the gifts the Creator offered.[306] The Anishinaabe world was materially and spiritually integrated—a way of life held together by songs, spiritual teachings, and land practices.

Mskomini-Giizis (Raspberry Moon)

Niibin offers the gifts of many berries—strawberries, june berries, raspberries, gooseberries, thimbleberries, chokecherries--to name just a few. As the work of each summer season progressed and various types of berries ripened, women and older children sensibly folded berry harvesting into their other activities. Essential to both the Indigenous diet and economy, the time spent harvesting and processing berries each niibin (summer) was substantial.

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[304] Schoolcraft, *Narrative of an Expedition through the Upper Mississippi to Itasca Lake, the Actual Source of This River : Embracing an Exploratory Trip through the St. Croix and Burntwood (or Broule) Rivers, in 1832*, 118.
[305] Author's conversation with Midekwe Maureen Manitowabi of Wikwemikong First Nation, Ontario.
[306] Schoolcraft, 30.

With the commodification of pemmican--a mix of buffalo tallow, pounded dried meat, and berries--the berry harvest became an Anishinaabeg means of survivance within the settler economic system. Berries were dried whole or, like miskominag (raspberries), pounded and dried in little patties, and used for many purposes throughout the year—added for example to manoomin (wild rice), ground mandamin (corn) porridge, and stews. [307] Berries and maple sugar were some of the only sources of sweetness in the Anishinaabeg diet.

As the Ojibwe, Cree, Assiniboine, and Métis moved westward onto the prairies during the late 18th and 19th centuries, they lost access to some plant relatives, such as blueberries and sugar maple trees. Other berries became "the gift that was given," just as the People began to tap other trees in the maple family who grew on the river bottoms and island mountain ranges of the plains. In the 1810s, when Shaw-shaw-wa-ne-ba-se, John Tanner, was traveling on the plains, seeing an opportunity to collect sugar, he stopped at the Elk River between the Saskatchewan and Assiniboine Rivers, to harvest from the "river maples." These may have been silver maples.[308]

Once gardens were planted, it was not unusual for villages to leave their gardens to continue the work of the season, such as summer hunts and berry harvesting.[309] This practice of leaving the garden was typical of the Anishinaabeg who lived around the Great Lakes where the

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[307] Frances Densmore, *Chippewa Customs*, Bulletin (Smithsonian Institution. Bureau of American Ethnology) ; 86 (Washington: U.S. GPO, 1929), 127.
[308] James, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner (U.S. Interpreter at the Sault de Ste. Marie) during Thirty Years Residence Among the Indians in the Interior of North America*, 75-76.
[309] Harold Hickerson, *The Southwestern Chippewa; an Ethnohistorical Study*, Memoir 92 (Menasha, WI: American Anthropological Association, 1962), 34.
34. George F. (George Francis) Will, *Corn among the Indians of the Upper Missouri* (Lincoln: Lincoln : University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 115.

"food grew on water," maanomin (wild rice), and for those who became more and more connected to bizhikiwag (buffalo), on the mashkodeng (plains). Departure from the summer settlement generally occurred after the second hoeing of the garden, with a return sometime towards the end of Mskomini-giizis or part way through Datkaagmin-giizis, the seventh and eighth moons.

The Dance of Two Economies.

By 1821, the Anishinaabeg food system north and west of Lake Superior and in the Red River Valley was seriously impacted by the extractive footprint of settler colonial presence, the fur trade. The movement afoot was a dance between two economies, or two dramatically different ways of knowing, being, and doing. The establishment of the Selkirk Colony marked a watershed moment as the colonial economy advanced on the interior of the continent. Weathering the storm, Ojibwe, Cree, Assiniboine, and Métis, though participants in the fur trade, held onto their Indigenous way of life using measures to adapt to changing conditions--movement to new areas, reliance on the natural flexibility of the Indigenous diet, and the strength of kinship alliances. Adaptation was part of the wisdom which made the Anishinaabe food system sustainable. For millennia, adaptive measures were applied when climate and season dictated, and in negotiated spaces with other Indigenous communities with whom Anishinaabeg shared indistinct territorial boundaries. The presence of settler traders, farmers, and missionaries brought new challenges which required extraordinary responsiveness by those ones who lived in a seasonal relationship with the land. The influx of settlers, the insistence of the fur trade, and new infrastructures and laws, plagued the Indigenous food system and way of life—such was the dance of two economies, the European market economy and the Indigenous kinship network.

The colonial system of fur trading was distinctly different from the preexisting continental Indigenous trade system. Both systems were elements of two ways of life with separate philosophies, beliefs, and ways of knowing, and here is where their differences originated.

The settler economy, which commercialized hunting for fur extraction, emerged from the culture of European Enlightenment thought in which the whole is broken down into parts. The Linnean system of biological classification is a classic example of such thinking. The process of commodification of species in the market structure does not account for the importance of individual species as part of a whole. In the 18th century, the Enlightenment trend of compartmentalization of thought resulted in the development of specialized new fields of study which, by the early 19th century, were represented in legions of botanists, naturalists, geologists, and mapmakers fanning out across new frontiers to explore, study, and document the globe. Their expeditions were generally funded by colonial governments interested in knowing the locations of coal veins, copper deposits, arable land, and feasible transportation routes in support of expansion through material claims and extractive development. Edward Said observed that this process of knowledge production resulted in the "construction of the other" and the resulting manufactured image "is convenient to oneself done for the purpose of domination."[310] Following Said's analysis helps us gain an understanding of the settler colonial process of exploration, claiming, and domination.[311]

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[310] Edward W Said, *Orientalism*, 25th Anniversary ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 2003).
[311] Sebastian Conrad, "Enlightenment in Global History: A Historiographical Critique," *American Historical Review* 117, no. 4 (October 1, 2012): 999–1027, https://doi.org/10.1093/ahr/117.4.999.

The introduction of a new economic system based on differing cultural values and, therefore, different relational practices with the Land, directly impacted the People's way of life, the seasonal round.[312] The European economic machine had an insatiable appetite for new resource frontiers and extracted species after species on which Anishinaabeg relied. In 1823, fur trade packs in the reportedly nearly trapped out area of the Red River Valley included beaver, otter, fisher, minx, bear, red fox, muskrat, raccoon, martins, lynx, ermine, antelope, and buffalo.[313] Basically, the furs of all animals were in demand. Cutthroat competition and unchecked harvesting were indicative of the colonial system in relationship to the Land.

Trade, of course, was natural to the Indigenous way of life but had distinct political and social functions in Indigenous culture.[314] Reciprocity, relationship, and responsibility, with respect for all elements in the web of life, were common tenets of the Indigenous trade network.[315] As colonial presence shifted the web of life on which the Anishinaabeg depended, Anishinaabeg participation in European trade structures increasingly became a strategy of

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[312] The use of the word "Land" here is an Indigenous reference to "all our relations"—the winged ones, the four-leggeds, the swimming ones, and the crawling ones, the water, fire, sky, wind, and earth. Land practices in this context are concerned with the way in which the People *relate* to the Land with consideration for the web of life, or, more directly stated, Land practices are relational practices.

[313] William H. Keating, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Source of St. Peter's River, Lake Winnepeek, Lake of the Woods, Etc. Etc. Performed in the Year 1823, by Order of the Hon. J.C. Calhoun, Secretary of War; Under the Command of Stephen H. Long, Major U.S.T.E.*, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: U.S. GPO, 1824), https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/rbc/rbc0001/2019/2019gen01607v2/2019gen01607v2.pdf., 50.

[314] Laura L Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780 to 1870* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1994), 34.

[315] James, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner (U.S. Interpreter at the Sault de Ste. Marie) during Thirty Years Residence Among the Indians in the Interior of North America*. On norms in the trade network, see also Oetelaar and Meyer, "Movement and Native American Landscapes."

survivance.[316] Anishinaabeg thinker, Gerald Vizenor, coined the term "survivance" as an "active sense of presence over historical absence, deracination, and oblivion."[317] Survivance is an active way of staying, in essence, adaptation which reaches into the future nurturing life into coming generations. As they faced the waves of change, the Ancestors must have known well that turbulent feeling of being faced with a decision that goes against one's values but is perhaps necessary to go forward.

An example of the norms of the Indigenous trade network is found in the journal of Shaw-shaw-wa-be-na-se, the Falcon, who with his family came across a band of Cree with whom they wanted to trade. Shaw-shaw-wa-be-na-se reported that "Instead of relieving our wants, they treated us in an unfriendly manner…they would sell us nothing but a small badger." An old quarrel with another band of Ojibwe prevented the trade transaction, but clearly his expectation was for trade flowing from friendliness. His tone denotes the breaking of a moral code of the Plains where diverse bands traded with one another in a massive network of exchange. Shaw-shaw-wa-be-na-se demonstrates throughout his journal that in his time the scarcity created by settler extraction of furs was impacting relationships amongst aboriginal kin.

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[316] Jeanne Kay, "Native Americans in the Fur Trade and Wildlife Depletion," *Environmental Review* 9, no. 2 (Summer 1985): 118–30.

[317] "The nature of survivance is unmistakable in Native stories, natural reason, active traditions, customs, and narrative resistance and is clearly observable in personal attributes such as humor, spirit, cast of mind, and moral courage." From book abstract. Gerald Robert Vizenor, *Survivance : Narratives of Native Presence* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008). "Native survivance is an active sense of presence over historical absence, the dominance of cultural simulations, and manifest manners. Native survivance is a continuance of stories." Vizenor, Gerald. *Native Liberty : Natural Reason and Cultural Survivance* (University of Nebraska Press, 2009). *ProQuest Ebook Central*, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/montana/detail.action?docID=471755.

Alexander Wolfe reminds us that Anishinaabeg spiritual teachers had predicted this would happen, "Much confusion among Indian people caused by the habits and ways of an alien culture…would lead to a loss of identity and a neglect of the ways of respect."[318]

In 1821, the fur trade game shifted dramatically as the overwrought, sometimes homicidal, competition between the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company came to a sudden end with the merger of the two companies. After the retirement and passing of several key officials in the two companies, negotiations towards a middle ground resulted in the North West Company being subsumed by Hudson's Bay. A fur trade monopoly was established over all of Turtle Island.

For the previous two centuries, the competitive nature of the fur trade drove extraction and generated fear and hostility between peoples—the British and French, the Iroquis Confederacy (Mohawk, Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, and Oneida) and the Three Fires Confederacy (Ojibwe, Ottawa, Potawatomi), and many others. What followed the cloud of competition, extraction, and conflict was a continual cascade of pressure on Indigenous people and the Land, which disrupted Indigenous movement over the land. As European colonists moved westward across Turtle Island, relatives such as the Ojibwe and Dakota and many others, were pitted against each other in the narrative of growing scarcity.[319] This tension existed even among kin. A scarcity mindset ruled the settler trading culture and pressurized relations--among traders, between settlers and Natives, and Natives and Natives. Like a heavy blanket, the culture

[318] Wolfe, *Earth Elder Stories: The Pinayzitt Path*, 28–29.
[319] For a detailed analysis of this process of colonial change and its effects of intertribal relations see, Anton Treuer, *Warrior Nation: A History of the Red Lake Ojibwe*, History of the Red Lake Ojibwe (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2015), 347–65.

of scarcity pressed down on the web of relationship forcing Indigenous cultural and economic contingencies.

The settler notion of scarcity contrasted dramatically with the Anishinaabeg way of seeing through a lens of reciprocity or seeking the "gift that was given." In the Anishinaabeg lens each member of the web of life, no matter how small, is honored for the work it does, like the tiny ode'imin peeking out from under the leaves and vines, offering important minerals and vitamins, a sweet addition to the diet, and a blessing of new life. In this way, each relative, human or other-than-human, has work to do—work that must be allowed to continue with respect for the wisdom of the web of being and each one's responsibility in the balance of all things. The Anishinaabeg way of life holds respect for maintaining balance in the web of relationship without extinguishing the right of each relative to do its work. From the contributions that each one makes flows abundance and the capacity and necessity to tend the web of life.[320]

In contrast, the newcomers' worldview placed an emphasis on territory and property. As the 19th century unfolded, it became increasingly clear that the settler world saw the ones that Anishinaabeg knew as life sources as natural resources or materials necessary for industrial development. The abundance of each new place that settlers "discovered" equated to an opportunity for individual, corporate, and colonial gain within the context of the colonial market economy and Empire building. Furs and wealth flowed back to Europe, upsetting the balance on Turtle Island.[321]

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[320] Wolfe, *Earth Elder Stories: The Pinayzitt Path*, xiv.
[321] Jason W. Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life : Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital*, 2015.

"Without gifts and respect…". Initially, settlers entered into the Indigenous system of exchange. The Anishinaabe exchange network is based upon reciprocal kinship relationships. As European American traders and military officials learned the protocols of meeting with chief and council and presenting appropriate gifts, they entered into fictive kinship ties with their neighbors. Anishinaabeg considered kinship ties as necessary for peaceful coexistence. As Irving Hallowell acknowledged, "Reciprocity was necessary to keep the system functioning…without gifts and respect, the system would cease."[322] Within the system of reciprocity, Anishinaabe leaders, the Ogimaag, Chief and council, navigated relationships of exchange. They "did not claim coercive power but held important roles in mediating conflicts over the use of community resources." Anishinaabe leaders were tasked with stewarding resources and relationships with a focus on maintaining balance or as Anishinaabe teacher, Alexander Wolfe, states it, the "need to live in harmony with one another and with all creation." We live by our natural law.[323]

In the early days of the Selkirk colony, the newcomers, like all settler colonial arrivals, entered a cultural landscape in which their own vulnerabilities demanded cooperation with Native cultural norms including working within the Native kinship economy. They met and relied upon the power and generosity of Anishinaabe Chief Peguis. It had not been that long since the vulnerabilities of the Selkirk settlers meant that they had to turn to Indigenous people for help. Upon their arrival in the fall of 1811, the Scottish and Swiss settlers recruited to Lord Selkirk's Red River Colony found themselves heading into winter devoid of the provisions the Hudson's Bay Company had promised. That first winter as the settlers realized their situation,

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[322] Hallowell, *Culture and Experience*, 99; Miller, *Ogimaag: Anishinaabeg Leadership, 1760-1845*, 32.
[323] Wolfe, *Earth Elder Stories: The Pinayzitt Path*.

Peguis extended help and led them to *bois-brulés* buffalo hunters in Pembina who agreed to let them winter over and to hunt for them.[324] Peguis was acting on Native terms of alliance, kinship, and reciprocity. In exchange for his help, Peguis expected military aid and trade goods from the settlers at Red River but time would demonstrate that the settlers either did not understand the kinship network or did not intend to meet the terms of their relationship.[325]

Chief Peguis's status, and his corresponding ability to support relationships with newcomers, was directly tied to the abundance of the Netley Creek area at the mouth of the Red River where he and his Ottawag and Ojibweg kin lived—a place at the convergence of several ecozones where biocultural diversity thrives. Netley Creek included marshlands, the riparian area of the Red River, and the plains to the South, home of buffalo and elk. Peguis was wealthy in connection to the water, plants, and animals in an Anishinaabe way, meaning he did not possess those other-than-human beings but was supported by them and supported by the knowledge of living in relationship with them as it was passed from his ancestors. From his position of connection to the web of relationship at the place level, Chief Peguis nurtured strong relationships with his kin, Native and settlers, which in turn lent strength to his people.

The void of competition, a result of the 1821 HBC monopoly, brought new challenges for Indigenous peoples, as power shifted toward the Company, which no longer felt it needed the

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[324] Bois-brulés, meaning 'burnt wood' or 'half burnt wood', was a common term for the ancestors of those we now know as Métis. All are terms for the same group of people of mixed Indigenous and European heritage who lived an Indigenous way of life; Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780 to 1870*, 89.

[325] Aimée Craft, "Breathing Life Into the Stone Fort Treaty" (Thesis, Master of Laws, Victoria, BC, University of Victoria, 2011), 20–40; Leanne Betasamoke Simpson, "Looking after Gdoo-Naaganinaa: Precolonial Nishnaabeg Diplomatic and Treaty Relationships," *Wicazo Sa Review* 23, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 29–41; Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780 to 1870*, 91–92.

relationships of fictive kin. Anishinaabeg ability to leverage agency in the space between colonial companies also evaporated. As HBC power increased, colonial boundaries began to congeal.

The Landing of the "The Landworkers". Knowledge of and relationship with place were something the newcomers were sorely lacking and this created a natural dependency on local knowledge and Indigenous hosts at the onset of settler arrival. This was still the case when Anglican minister, John West, arrived in the Selkirk Red River Settlement in 1820. In his journals, he described the colonists' dog sled trips from the Forks to Pembina to procure buffalo meat as a "rambling and uncertain mode of obtaining subsistence." He criticized the settlers for neglecting their dwellings and their farms in favor of making such trips.[326] He was, in his way, acknowledging two very different ways of life, though he clearly did not understand the nuance and sophistication of the seasonal or Indigenous way of life that was built on limitless generations of accumulated knowledge of place.

Reverend West's words demonstrate the intent of the settlers to establish their own way of life in their new residence, but it did not come as quickly as they would have hoped. In the beginning the colony experienced constant setbacks which kept the settlers dependent on Native people for help—a significant flood combined with several consecutive years in which locusts destroyed settler crops. Even the Pemmican Proclamation of 1814, which banned the export of pemmican and other provisions from the colonial District of Assiniboia, did not stabilize their

[326] John West, *The Substance of a Journal During a Residence at the Red River Colony, British North America: And Frequent Excursions Among the North-West American Indians, in the Years 1820, 1821, 1822, 1823* (Fleet Street, London: L.B. Seeley, Weston Green, Thames Ditton, 1824), 23.

situation.[327] Instead, the prohibition threatened both the provisions of the North West Company and the well-being of Natives, who were also depending on trade. One of the Ojibwa Headmen of the Red River Valley, Grand Oreilles, reportedly said, "How dare the "Landworkers" (his term for the colonists) deprive the NWC of the provisions that they (the Indians) had traded?"[328] Through distance, the settlers were cut off from their own market economy food system. They lacked the knowledge and preparation necessary for success in the seasonal round or Indigenous food system. As Reverend West warned, the "landworkers" would have to find the means to break their dependency on the Indigenous buffalo hunters and tend their farms.

Lord Selkirk's colony along the Red River, also known as the District of Assiniboia, was the first colony anywhere in the interior of Turtle Island. The central part of his claim was prime river bottom land—key to environmental diversity and, potentially, agricultural development. It was my fifth great grandfather, Sir Alexander Mackenzie's book *Voyages,* detailing his exploration of the interior and Northwestern part of the continent, which aroused Selkirk's interest in the region. Ironically, once Mackenzie, a partner in the North West Company, understood the huge dimensions of Selkirk's agricultural scheme, he fought to stop the colony and lost. Following the HBC's grant to Selkirk in May 1811, Mackenzie, leaving behind my

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[327] The Pemmican Proclamation of 1814 was a desperate move by the Hudson's Bay Company in their battle with the Nor'Westers for a key energy source in the fur trade. Pemmican, a sometimes palatable, highly "shelf-stable" Indigenous recipe drew buffalo meat into a commodity culture. By attempting to shutdown access to the buffalo, the HBC was trying to cut the Nor'Wester's fuel supply, what the voyageurs ate as they paddled their canoe loads of furs to Montreal and the distant market.

[328] Quoted in Gerhard J. Ens, "The Battle of Seven Oaks and the Articulation of a Métis National Tradition, 1811-1849," in *Contours of a People: Metis Family, Mobility, and History,* ed. Brenda MacDougall, Nichole St-Onge, and Carolyn Podruchny (University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 99.

grandmother, Marie DesRoches and his daughter, Julie Mackenzie, in the Red River Valley, retired to Scotland in 1812.[329] The timing of Mackenzie's departure appears as a retreat. It was as though Mackenzie acknowledged the colonial economy in which he had such a role had just pivoted from that of the extractions of the fur trade to the era of European agriculture.

"All appurtenances thereof"

The 1817 Selkirk Treaty marked both the first formal written agreement recognizing Indigenous land rights in the British interior and the establishment of the first European agricultural colony in the interior. These antithetical objectives were a source of confusion and hostility. After years of trying to make peace with both the North West Company traders and the HBC, five chiefs, Ojibwe and Cree, signed the treaty. The treaty was terribly unclear. It is likely the Ojibwe and Cree chiefs understood that they were granting the newcomers' use of land around the Red River. The Treaty does not, however, state that the Ojibwe and Cree will cede the land to Lord Selkirk, rather that they would allow Selkirk the use of the land and "all appurtenances thereof." The concept of land as property was culturally foreign to the chiefs. The treaty goes on to state that upon signing the Ojibwe and Cree would receive a "quit rent" of one hundred pounds of tobacco annually, meaning they would no longer have access to the land. This final clause of British legal speak led Mache Wheseab, Mechkaddewikonaie, Kayajieskebinoa, Pegowis (Peguis), and Oukioat to dispute the terms of the treaty as the colony took up a larger and larger footprint on the land in the decades that followed.[330]

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[329] W. Kaye Lamb, "Sir Alexander Mackenzie," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/mackenzie_alexander_5E.html: University of Toronto/Université Laval, 1983).
[330] Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780 to 1870*, 92–93.



Figure 10. Map of the Selkirk Treaty, 1817, bearing the mark five Ojibwe and Cree headmen. Courtesy of The Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Winnipeg, MB.[331]

Systems of Control. By the 1820s settler-colonial systems were gaining control and increased independence through strategic alliances within the institutions of the British empire.

[331] Peter Fidler, *The Selkirk Treaty Map, July 18, 1817, Signed by the Undersigned Chiefs and Warriors of the Chippewa or Saulteaux Nation and of the Killistino or Cree Nation and the Rt. Hon. Thomas, Earl of Selkirk, for King George III*, 1817, 1817, E.8/1 fo. 11, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Winnipeg, MB.

Lord Selkirk was able to leverage power through the monopoly status of the HBC to move away from the connections Chief Peguis had established. The HBC monopoly under the leadership of the colonial governor George Simpson, British Viceroy for all of Rupert's Land, who assumed his position in 1821, established a new level of colonial control over the territory backed by the British Empire. The strength of the British Empire itself was built upon a triad of Capitalism, Science, and Christianity. Under HBC direction, the men and women who implemented these three ideologies marshalled native land, natural resources, and labor to feed the growth of British industry and nation.[332] The British formula for industrial expansion meant all matter of relations were beginning to change on Turtle Island. The days of settlers relying on Natives were dissolving and with them settler motivations for nurturing amicable relationships with Anishinaabeg and their kin.

By 1819-20, "the Hudson's Bay Company frequently traded only liquor for country produce and seldom traded goods such as cloth or blankets or sugar, although this was what the Ojibwa wished."[333] "Country produce" was a term used to describe foods that were products of the Indigenous way of life—such as corn, buffalo meat, wild rice, and potatoes. By trading only

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[332] To understand the complex relationship between colonial entities, consider the example of John West the Anglican minister invited by the Hudson's Bay Company to serve as chaplain in the Selkirk Settlement. The settlement itself was a parcel of land granted by the British Crown to the Hudson's Bay Company. West, as Chaplain, went to the Selkirk colony with financial support from the Church Missionary Society(CMS)--an interesting mix of Church, State, and commerce in itself--originally founded in 1799 by Scottish businessmen Charles Grant and George Uday of the East India Company. The CMS was comprised of evangelical Christians who engaged in the colonial project with missions in Africa, the Middle East, China, Japan, Madagascar, and North America.

[333] "Lake Manitoba Post Journals (Big Point House, Manitoba House)" (1820), B.51/e/1, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Winnipeg, MB; Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780 to 1870*, 81.

in liquor HBC created devastating dependencies that undermined Indigenous well-being and shifted the power differential in the settlers' favor. The depletion of game brought about by the extractive fur trade economy and coinciding harsh climatic conditions affected both settlers and the Anishinaabeg, but again the settlers created a system establishing a racialized structure within their economy which favored their own. In the Red River Corridor, as clothing and food became more difficult to acquire, settlers were given priority for settler-colonial market goods, such as blankets, woolen and calico fabric--using their economy to favor their own.[334]

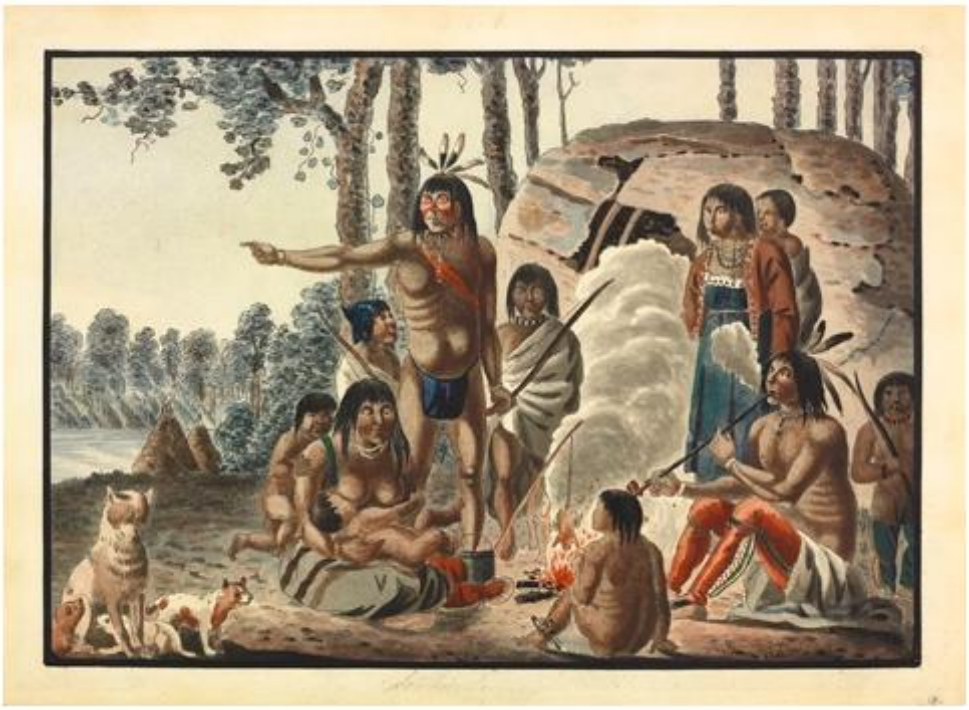


Figure 11. Painting of A Family from the Tribe of the Wild Sautaux Indians on the Red River, 1821-26, by Peter Rindisbacher, a Swiss Selkirk settler. Courtesy of Ottawa: Library and Archives Canada. The clothing seen in this painting is all made of trade clothes likely in part to

[334] Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780 to 1870*, 125.

the shortage of animal hides available. For example, the women's dresses and men's leggings pictured here are made of trade wool.[335]

In an effort to maintain their position, the HBC applied a variety of methods of control once areas were hunted and trapped out. Fur posts were closed in some regions to allow game to come back, an HBC policy that was frequently catastrophic to Indigenous bands who were effectively shut out of both economies, unable to make their living from the land or the settler system of trade. In peripheral areas to the HBC monopoly, where there was competition from free traders, HBC encouraged Indigenous trappers to trap bare the areas on the edge of HBC territory, "leaving a fur denuded buffer."[336] Simultaneously, the HBC created ever tightening measures of control on traders who were only allowed to trade at one post as HBC conducted censuses and set up a production quota system for each region, tracking pelt and buffalo meat production according to post populations. The corporation strongly opposed any migration of one Indigenous group from a "trapped out" area to other areas.[337] These measures of control—quotas for extracted resources, tracking of human population, and using natives as laborers in colonial industry--are all classic instruments of colonization that have been used the world over.[338]

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[335] Peter Rindisbacher, *A Family from the Tribe of the Wild Sautaux Indians on the Red River*, ca 1821, Box number: A164-01, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.
[336] Peers, 103.
[337] Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*, 62-64.
[338] The tools of colonization are the same the world over; quota systems are one of the tools. During the late 19th century Belgian colonization of the Congo led by King Leopold II, colonial authorities killed untold millions of people or amputated their hands when they did not deliver adequate quotas of rubber. Belgium used Congo's land and people to fuel its own development utilizing inhumane means of control over the labor force to extract "natural resources" required for industrialization. See Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998).

In this era, it was sometimes difficult to separate the movement of the HBC and that of British colonial rule, as the HBC was a monopoly chartered by the Crown. Collectively, they represented the growing empire pressing for control of Turtle Island. The expansion of empire instituted a "larger written and rule-based culture." This included a management accounting structure in which HBC district reports shortened the environmental and cultural distances to company and state centers of control. HBC Governor Sir George Simpson required sub-region accounting in the form of district reports that included descriptions of the conditions of the waterways, soil, forests and plant growth, as well as climate, the number of Indian families and hunters, names of Native chiefs and the range of their claims to hunting grounds, and the names of the hunters trading at the posts.[339] The Hudson Bay Company's numerical bureaucracy represented the use of science in the form of data collection and the mapping of people, place, and climate, to enable strategic responses in development of empire.[340] In short, the HBC, as a long arm of the British Government, was vying for control of the web of life on which Anishinaabeg and all Indigenous peoples depended.

HBC Governor Simpson threatened to rule the Indians with a "rod of iron" because he realized the Anishinaabeg and their allies were "independent of" the company and might refuse to deliver furs.[341] This was a realistic concern. Whenever the Anishinaabeg faced challenges,

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[339] George Colpitts, "Knowing Nature in the Business Records of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1670–1840," *Business History* 59, no. 7 (October 3, 2017): 1067.

[340] Environmental historian Theodore Binnema makes the claim, "Science is never just about science, knowledge never just about knowledge." Data gathering allowed the HBC, centered in London, to rule its territories from a distance, in the context of "scientific networks" shortening the distance from the center of control, the seat of Empire, to the periphery, the colonial claim. Theodore Binnema, *"Enlightened Zeal": The Hudson's Bay Company and Scientific Networks, 1670-1870* (Toronto, 2014).

[341] Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780 to 1870*, 100.

such as the outbreaks of whooping cough and measles in 1818, to the frustration of the traders, Anishinaabeg did not participate in the fur trade but stayed close to their own and relied on their seasonal round activities to provide for the People. Shifting from one economy or way of life was part of the Anishinaabeg adaptation to changing conditions and a strategic element of survivance in the midst of hardening colonial boundaries.

The potency of the economy of the British Empire was not to be underestimated. During the years 1770 to 1830, Britain began a process of rapid industrialization following the advancement of coal-powered steam engine technology. This fossil fuel advancement was initially applied to the development of cloth factories but was quickly expanded to many other sectors including transportation. With the advancement of coal-generated steam power, Britain became a fossil-fuel fired empire, an unstoppable economic and colonial machine more powerful and destructive than any empire before it.

The Blackrobes: a collaboration of Church, State, & Company. During the winter of 1822-23, Chief Peguis and his band of Anishinaabeg came to the Selkirk colony, now known as the Red River Colony, and visited with Reverend John West. As Chaplain to the Hudson's Bay Company, West, had arrived in the colony in 1820 with the mission "to establish the principle that the North-American Indian of these regions would part with his children, to be educated in white man's knowledge and religion." John West was a member of the Church Missionary Society, originally founded in 1787 by British Parliament at the bequest of the British West Indian Company. West, in other words, was a representative of another interesting formula of empire—the State, the Church, and capitalist ventures working in cooperation with one another. A similar component existed in the American process of colonization, the American Board of

Foreign Missionaries, also inspired by British Missionary work in India. West was well aware of the machinations of empire and approved of them, as this entry from his journal of 1853 demonstrates:

> There was a time when the Indians themselves had begun to collect into a kind of village towards the mouth of the Red River, had cultivated spots of ground, and had even erected something of a lodge for the purpose of performing some of their unmeaning ceremonies of ignorance and heathenism, and to which the Indians of all the surrounding country were accustomed at certain seasons to repair; but fears were entertained that the natives would be diverted from hunting furs to idle ceremonies, and an effectual stop was put to all further improvement, by the spirit of opposition that then existed in the country between the two rival Fur Companies.[342]

In order to maintain the productivity of Native hunters, the fur company and missionaries worked together to stop Midewin ceremonial preparations.

One of the Anishinaabeg children who West attempted to separate from his family in order to educate him in "the white man's knowledge and religion" was Chief Peguis' own nephew who, in seeking food, came under West's control.[343] When Peguis came with his sister to retrieve his nephew, West took away the clothes and blanket which the mission had provided for the young man. Then the Reverend West accused the young boy of using the mission which was "established to teach them what was for their happiness, merely for the purpose of getting them clothed and provided with blankets."[344] Happiness and clothing were not construed as one and the same.

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[342] West, *The Substance of a Journal During a Residence at the Red River Colony, British North America,* 130.
[343] Peguis' band came into destitute times in the winter of 1825-26 when a series of ecological events, combined with game shortages, to make life extremely difficult. Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780 to 1870,* 130.
[344] John West, *The Substance of a Journal During a Residence at the Red River Colony, British North America: And Frequent Excursions Among the North-West American Indians, in the Years*

The nuances of the relationships between the Hudson Bay Company and missionaries are key to understanding the eventual success of Lord's Selkirk agricultural colony in the Red River Valley. In the attempt to establish the colony, control of pemmican, a key source of food that fueled the fur trade, became the impetus of violent battle between the HBC and the North West Company. The first governor of the colony, Miles MacDonnell, made the Pemmican Proclamation of 1814--essentially a decree of control by the HBC over all pemmican in the Red River Colony. This precipitated the incident at Seven Oaks in which Ojibwe, Cree, and bois-brulés (Métis), including my great grandfathers, members of the North West Company, came together in defense of their ways of life, both Indigenous and fur trade, to fight the HBC and Colony leadership, with loss of life on both sides.[345] Craftily, Lord Selkirk devised a plan to bring Catholic priests to the colony to missionize the French, Scottish, and Irish traders of the North West Company and their Cree, Ojibwe, and Assiniboine families. As historian Grace Lee Nute surmised, "Selkirk calculated shrewdly that priests would be on the side of law and order. Therefore, he must have priests to tie the hands of his rivals." His appeal to the influential men in England who could send priests and a hierarchy of bishops to support them meant appealing to their reform-minded idealism and humanitarianism of the time. To seal the deal, it was established that the missionaries would be sent to first to Christianize and civilize the Indian tribes and, secondly, to reclaim the "lost" voyaguers and traders for the Faith. [346]

1820, 1821, 1822, 1823 (Fleet Street, London: L.B. Seeley, Weston Green, Thames Ditton, 1824), 118-120.

[345] For a nuanced view of the battle and Ens, "The Battle of Seven Oaks and the Articulation of a Métis National Tradition, 1811-1849," 93–119.

[346] Grace Lee Nute, *Documents Relating to Northwest Missions, 1815-1827* (Saint Paul, Published for the Clarence Walworth Alvord memorial commission by the Minnesota Historical Society, 1942), xiii, http://archive.org/details/documentsrelatin00nute.

The mission of Reverend West and his Christian counterparts did not stop with attacks on spiritual practices and removal of Anishinaabeg children from their families but extended to seeing advantage in the suffering of Anishinaabeg. West reported the dire circumstances of Anishinaabeg and others owing to "the exhausted state of animals in the neighbourhood of Red River."[347] Yet West saw the condition of native suffering as an asset to his own mission, "The cravings of hunger rouse them; and the scarcity of animals that now prevails in many parts of the country, is a favourable circumstance towards leading them to the cultivation of the soil; which would expand their minds, and prove of vast advantage, among other means, in aiding their comprehension of Christianity." The settler process of "civilizing," used food, clothes, education, and religion to try to manipulate Anishinaabeg and their Indigenous relatives to break with their ways of life for the purpose of colonial economic advancement. For West, missionizing meant transforming Indians into Christian farmers no matter how painful.

From Furs to Soil. Horticulture had always been a part of Indigenous food systems. There is an important distinction to be made between the kind of farmers that the new nation states and collaborating missionaries wanted Native people to become and the farmers they already were. The Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island had always incorporated farming into their food systems to the degree that it was suitable to their needs. In some cases, this meant becoming sedentary horticulturists; and in other cases it meant leaving gardens during the hunt and returning to them; and in yet other cases, it meant relying on kin to do the farming and trading with them for the foods they cultivated. The settler colonial vision of the kind of farming that was desirable for

[347] West, *The Substance of a Journal During a Residence at the Red River Colony, British North America*, 128.

Indigenous people was directly tied to the colonial drive for land and the desire to control the original residents of the land to make way for settlers. William Keating of Major Long's survey party of the 49th parallel said it most succinctly, "the whole of the British dominions lying contiguous to Hudson's Bay or its tributaries, has been claimed by [the HBC], not only as regards the monopoly of the fur trade, but also as respects the right to the soil."[348]

By 1829, Governor Simpson granted the Reverend William Cockran permission to begin an experimental farm "for the purpose of settling, civilizing, and converting" the Indians around the colony. Cockran had been pestering Peguis and his band to take up farming, though they had been raising substantial quantities of corn and potatoes at Netley Creek since at least 1805. Turning Indians into Christian farmers had a broad meaning, as historian Laura Peers concludes:

> What they wanted the Native people to learn was the growing of European crops (especially wheat), planting in the straight furrows used by European farmers, being 'industrious,' obeying the Biblical injunction to live by the sweat of one's brow, and the whole complex of work ethic, nuclear family, and European gender roles (men, no women, were to be the farmers) that was embodied in the concept of the experimental farm.[349]

The settler colonial system desired the removal of the Indians, who practiced a diversified and flexible food system that required movement over the land. This system envisioned a new future that placed Indians on reservations and reserved the territory for settler colonial extractive endeavors.

As Governor Simpson sought to make the Selkirk Colony self-sufficient, settlers established tracts of European crops in farm plots along the Red River and former enemies were

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[348] Keating, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Source of St. Peter's River, Lake Winnepeek, Lake of the Woods, Etc. Etc. Performed in the Year 1823, by Order of the Hon. J.C. Calhoun, Secretary of War; Under the Command of Stephen H. Long, Major U.S.T.E.*, 2:42.
[349] Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780 to 1870*, 134.

recruited to the task of "civilizing." In 1824, Simpson made a land grant to Cuthbert Grant Jr., my fourth great grand-uncle, son of Peter Grant and Songab (Standing Strong), and leader of the resistance at Seven Oaks, to head a Métis settlement on the White Horse Plain of the Assiniboine River. This settlement came to be called Grantown, now St. Francois Xavier. Between eighty and a hundred Métis families joined him. This was a move by the HBC to stabilize settlement and their relationship with the Métis. To grind the grain raised in the colony, Grant built the first grain mill in the Northwest Territories, at the convergence of the Sturgeon and Red Rivers. Although Simpson made every effort to convert the Ojibwe and their mixed heritage kin to work in support of his vision and grow in dependency on the HBC, they continued to make adaptations while maintaining their own Indigenous way of life. Many of my relatives who settled at Grantown later left to follow the buffalo. Selkirk himself admitted that he could not achieve his end of taking away their independence.[350]

The Selkirk Colony was a foothold for European-style agriculture in some of the richest agriculture land on Turtle Island. European landscape artist, Thomas Cole, who emigrated to America in the early 19th century, warned of the coming changes that industrialization had already delivered to England. In his rich oil paintings, he expressed his adoration of the beauty of the rivers, mountains, and valleys he encountered in America. Yet in many he painted a factory puffing away in the distant view—a warning of the dark clouds industrialization had brought to the blue skies of his London youth. Had Cole painted the Red River Valley he may have generated a similar warning.

[350] Peers, 135.

Resilience: Following Bizhikiwag (the buffalo)

The scarcity created by the settler economy was not new to the Anishinaabeg, who, for more than two hundred years, had been "running west" in an effort to protect their way of life.[351] Given the scarcity of game animals and access to settler trade goods, Ojibwe, Assiniboine, Cree, and Métis who began to form mixed bands, turned again to their own reciprocal economy and began leaving the Red River Corridor, traveling farther and farther to seek animals and sustenance.[352]

While the seasonal round of the Ojibwe, Cree, and Assiniboine had included the western prairies for over fifty years, the necessity of these trips grew stronger and the trips themselves grew longer. By 1830, the Red River Valley was nearly devoid of small game and, as this 1876 map illustrated, the early 1830s marked the extinction of the buffalo in the area.[353] The calendar entry for the American Fur Company for November 23, 1836, read, "Game has disappeared like snow before a summer's sun. The government in 1837 will complete the removal of the Indians to the west of the Mississippi. The Company will confine its trade to the Mississippi and Lake Superior. Fisheries appear to be best permanent resource of Lake Superior."[354] The westward pull of bizhikiwag (buffalo) is evident as their disappearance follows a longitudinal line along

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[351] Elder Jim O'Chiese of O'Chiese Anishinaabe First Nation in Alberta tells our migration story as "running with our songs and ceremonies" from the "black robes" and the ones who would not allow us to transfer knowledge to our children.

[352] George Colpitts, *Pemmican Empire : Food, Trade, and the Last Bison Hunts in the North American Plains, 1780-1882* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 177. Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780 to 1870*, 69; Patricia C. Albers, "Changing Patterns of Ethnicity in the Northeastern Plains, 1780-1870," in *History, Power, and Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Americas, 1492-1992*, ed. Jonathan D. Hill (University of Iowa Press, 1996).

[353] Harold Hickerson, *The Chippewa and Their Neighbors: A Study in Ethnohistory* (New York: Irvington Publishers Inc., 1985), 109.

[354] American Fur Company, *Calendar of the American Fur Company's Papers* (S.I.: s.n., 1925).

the map as they made their westward regression. Relying on bizhikiwag, the Anishinaabeg, along with their mixed heritage kin, continued to make long trips onto the prairies.

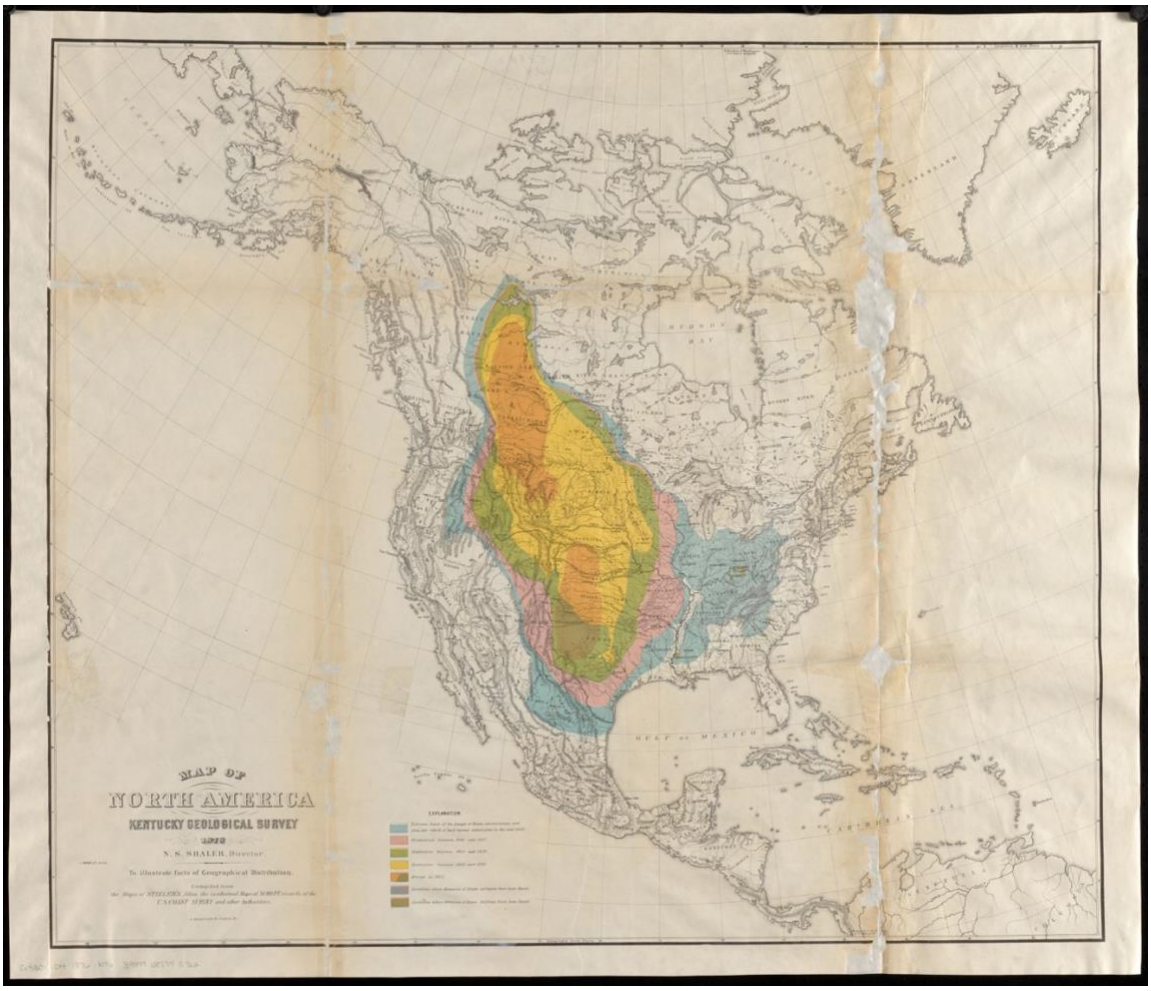


Figure 12. Map of North America to illustrate facts of geographical distribution of buffalo, Kentucky Geological Survey, 1876, J.A. Allen. Courtesy of Boston Public Library. This map illustrates a receding longitudinal stratum marking the impact of colonial extractive campaigns on buffalo and in turn the web of life, representing human and other-than-human relatives.[355]

[355] J.A. Allen, Kentucky Geological Survey, *Map of North America : To Illustrate Facts of Geographical Distribution* (Cambridge, Mass.: University Press, 1876).

The bands followed a well-worn road to the Pembina Hills, Turtle Mountain, the Mouse River, and beyond the Coteau du Missouri (the Missouri Plateau) to the Cypress Hills, Wood Mountain, and into the Old North Trail Corridor.

As the People departed the Red River Valley, they first made their way to the Pembina Hills to a butte known as Pinancewaywining or Buffalo Head (now called Calf Mountain) the highest mountain in the land where they began their journey in a good way. As they ascended Pinancewaywining they imprinted the red earth using the heads of buffalo bulls. At the summit, the People made offerings of tobacco, other gifts, and the bull heads left behind with their noses pointing east.[356] This ceremony honored bizhiki with a humble request for the gift of life he offered. They then continued onward to Nebogwawin Butte (Star Mound) to the west side of Turtle Mountain and then southwest to the Missouri.[357] As the buffalo moved the People also moved.

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[356] Pekka Hämäläinen, "The Western Comanche Trade Center: Rethinking the Plains Indian Trade System," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (1998): 512, https://doi.org/10.2307/970405.

[357] Lawrence Barkwell, "Buffalo Hunting Trails from Red River: Calf Mountain, Buffalo Head or 'Tete de Boeuf' and Star Mound Hill," Scribd, 2013, https://www.academia.edu/39344182/Buffalo_Hunting_Trails_from_Red_River_via_Calf_Mountain_Buffalo_Head_or_Tete_de_Boeuf_and_Star_Mound_Hill_.

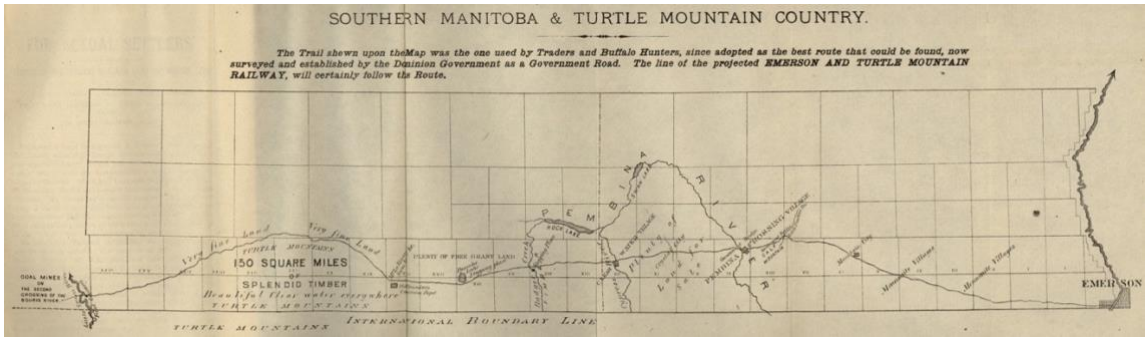


Figure 13. An Indigenous Road through Southern Manitoba & Turtle Mountain Country, 1880, L.O. Armstrong. Image Courtesy of University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections. [358] Map shows the Indigenous road traveled when going to the buffalo. Following colonization, this road became the government road and then the route for the railroad.

The colonial assault on the Indigenous food system moved at an even quicker clip as the extractive trade economy shifted westward. As in the Red River Valley, the small game fur trade came first to the Upper Missouri and Northwestern Plains. The process of removal of small animals went faster than any of the fur companies anticipated. Between the years 1800 and 1830, the area was stripped of small game. As the rivers, creeks, and prairies were trapped and hunted out of beaver, mink, fox, and other small animal furs, the fur trade companies and global economy set their sights on the sturdy, wooly hides of buffalo. The Ojibwe, Cree, and Assiniboine were visiting the earth lodge peoples on the Upper Missouri in 1832, the year the steamboat highway opened a transportation infrastructure for the next wave of the fur trade—the buffalo robe trade.[359] As Pekka Hämäleinen notes, "The tumultuous 1830s also witnessed the

[358] L.O. Armstrong, *Southern Manitoba & Turtle Mountain Country*, 1:506,880 (Montréal: Wm. Beach & Co., 1880) in John Warkentin and Richard I. Ruggles, *Historical Atlas of Manitoba A Selection of Facsimile Maps, Plans and Sketches from 1612 to 1969* (Winnipeg: Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, 1970), 406.
[359] Child, *Holding Our World Together: Ojibwe Women and the Survival of Community*, 75–77; Reuben Gold Thwaites, *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846: A Series of Annotated Reprints of Some of the Best and Rarest Contemporary Volumes of Travel, Descriptive of the Aborigines and*

collapse of the other Native trade centers of the Plains. The combined effects of smallpox and expansion of American fur companies up the Missouri River terminated the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara villages as a major trade center."[360] Beyond bringing disease, steamboats were able to take away buffalo robes at a rate much faster than any other means of transportation. The river we knew as the both Ogima-ikwe ziibi (the Head Woman River) and the Gitcheepeeganoweceepee (The Great Blackfeet River) became the pathway carrying the robes of our big brother, bizhiki, to the colonial centers of industry.

The depth of the connection the People had with the Buffalo cannot be overstated. Beginning with the physical level, historian George Colpitts describes the manufacture of buffalo fat and meat into pemmican, "Native people aligned their subsistence needs to the animal in its entirety, if not its very essence in hard and soft fats and its rich offerings of protein."[361] The importance of the buffalo is found in the first of the seven grandfather teachings *gichi inendamowin* – to respect is to give. One of the great spiritual practices of the Anishinaabeg is the "give away"– a ceremony in which we honor the community, our teachers, the new life that is coming by creating gifts that we then give away to all who have been gathered for the event. At a give away ceremony, one may receive beautiful and valuable gifts without having earned them. The process is a recognition and deep expression of the exchange network on which we all depend. It is an expression of mino bimaadiiziwin (living a good life). We live a good life by

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Social and Economic Conditions in the Middle and Far West, during the Period of Early American Settlement (Cleveland, Ohio: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1904), 189–92, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/nyp.33433081785697.

[360] Hämäläinen, "The Western Comanche Trade Center," 512.

[361] Colpitts, *Pemmican Empire: Food, Trade, and the Last Bison Hunts in the North American Plains, 1780-1882,* 11.

doing the work that we have been given to do—being a parent, hunting, sewing, teaching the medicines. Similarly, the buffalo does what he was given to do, acting as a big brother does, he gives away all that he has to give. Bizhiki, who gives all to us, is our economy.

Datkaagmin-Giizis (Blackberry or Thimble Berry Moon)

Anepeminan (Pembina) is an old Ojibwe settlement situated in the southern portion of Lord Selkirk's colonial claim. Anishinaabeg from the Red Lake area established the Pembina settlement in the late 1700s and in the fifty years that followed were joined by Cree, Assiniboine, and Ottawa who settled there along with the French and British trappers and traders.[362] From the 1820s on, "many of the [mixed descent] families wintered together with fullblood Pembina Chippewas in the Pembina Mountains or Turtle Mountain and later farther west at Wood Mountain and the Milk River."[363] The Pembina settlement sat about one mile below the place where the Anepeminan-ziibi (Pembina River,) flows into the Red River. The river flows from the mountain of the same name, both home to anepeminan (summer berries), high bush cranberries.[364] Just like our relatives, Anepeminan-ziibi dances across the invisible line that now marks the border between Canada and the US. In the summer of 1823, a group of my Pembina

[362] Treuer, *Warrior Nation: A History of the Red Lake Ojibwe*, 33.
[363] Albers, "Changing Patterns of Ethnicity in the Northeastern Plains, 1780-1870," 106–8; Vrooman, *"The Whole Country Was...'One Robe'": The Little Shell Tribe's America*, 49.
[364] Keating, who kept the journal of Major Stephen Long's 1823 military expedition, records anepeminan as the Ojibwemowin word which Europeans changed to pembina, adding the 'b'. He denotes that the "theme of the word is Nepin, summer, and minan, berry." Keating also gives the latin name as *viburnum oxycoccos*, which botanists consider synonymous to *viburnum opulus*. As of 2018, the botanical common name for high-bush cranberries is squashberries.

relatives returned from their summer buffalo hunt during the visit of a group of US military men sent to mark that invisible line, the 49th parallel.[365]

In the journals of Major Stephen Long's party, the description of the Pembina settlement reads as such:

> three hundred and fifty souls, residing in sixty log houses or cabins; they do not appear to possess the qualifications for good settlers; few of them are farmers; most of them are half-breeds, who have been educated by their Indian mothers, have imbibed the roving, unsettled, and indolent habits of Indians.

Lucky for the expedition party, whose scribe described it as "destitute" of provisions upon arrival at the settlement, a successful hunting party returned just in time. The party entered the settlement on August 5, 1823, having been away forty-five days or approximately since the second hoeing of their gardens. Led by twenty hunters who rode abreast in front of the caravan, my relatives appeared triumphant to the military expedition, who admired the quality of their horses, which numbered two hundred in total. Having already heard of the expedition's arrival, the Pembina hunters fired a salute as they passed the military encampment. In total there were

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[365] Long and his party were sent by the US Secretary of War to delineate the 49th parallel in fulfillment of the 1818 treaty agreement between Great Britain and the U.S. and to settle disputes regarding trading and colonial spaces, including the claim of the Selkirk Colony which extended well south of the line. Additionally, as with all survey parties sent by colonial governments, Long's party was not merely to establish the whereabouts of the boundary but to assess the resources and condition of the land with regards to the interests of the colonial government. Long, a topographical engineer himself, journeyed with a party of scientists and their instruments. William H. Keating who filed the report, or journal, of the expedition, was a professor of mineralogy and chemistry, geologist, and historian to the expedition. Others in the party were: Thomas Say, zoologist and antiquary, Samuel Seymour, landscape painter and designer (cartographer), and James E. Colhoun, astronomer and topographer. Major Long's report to the War Department, a collection of observations, was submitted in 1824 to "his excellency, James Monroe, President of the United States of America." This scientific data gathered was power in the hands of the State. Keating, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Source of St. Peter's River, Lake Winnepeek, Lake of the Woods, Etc. Etc. Performed in the Year 1823, by Order of the Hon. J.C. Calhoun, Secretary of War; Under the Command of Stephen H. Long, Major U.S.T.E,* 11-12.

three hundred men, women, and children, with one hundred and fifteen carts—each loaded with about "eight hundred pounds of the finest buffalo meat."[366]

This quantity of buffalo meat represents an immense amount of work done during the forty-five days of the party's absence. Exclusive of the head and other parts, cows generally yielded from two hundred and fifty to three hundred pounds of good meat, and a bull approximately twice that.[367] Anishinaabekweg would have dried the meat to save it from rotting and make it more easily transported. Drying reduces six pounds of fresh meat to one pound.[368] The hunting party brought home the meat of around thirteen hundred buffalo. Such an ambitious harvest would have required the work of all the members of the party throughout the long summer days on the northern prairies. This quantity of meat provided subsistence for their way of life as they dwelt in a position of hybridity within two economies—the newer colonial economy and the older exchange network. The meat that was brought in was important to feed their families and was also traded within the settler economy.

Negotiating on behalf of the "New Life that is Coming"

The Michi-ziibi (Mississippi River) flows through the heart of Anishinaabewaki. As the settler-colonial project advanced, the Great River, source of life, became a random "line of demarcation" of tremendous significance to the web of life By the early 1830s, a series of American laws had established a large swath of the land west of the Michi-ziibi, the interior of

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[366] Keating, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Source of St. Peter's River, Lake Winnepeek, Lake of the Woods, Etc. Etc. Performed in the Year 1823, by Order of the Hon. J.C. Calhoun, Secretary of War; Under the Command of Stephen H. Long, Major U.S.T.E.*, 2:43–44.
[367] Keating, 2:31.
[368] Colpitts, *Pemmican Empire: Food, Trade, and the Last Bison Hunts in the North American Plains, 1780-1882,* 269.

the continent, as Indian Territory or Indian Country.[369] The phenomenon of pushing Indigenous territory westward was not new to the colonial state--the American line for Indian Country had previously been drawn at the Appalachian Range. Each instance of redefining Indigenous territory shattered the kinship and lifegiving bonds of people and place or the relationships that comprised the food system.

By 1825, the American government had made territorial claims displacing Anishinaabeg--Odawa and Potawatomi, and Ojibwe--from the Ohio River Valley and throughout the Great Lakes Region. The Odawa, ones who came from the Ohio River Valley and whose ancestors have been called by archaeologists the Hopewell or mound builder peoples, were first removed from their lands to reserves, confined to small parcels of land within their original territory.[370] Then after 1830, when President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act authorizing the government to remove Indian nations east of the Mississippi River, the Odawa were moved to Iowa, then Kansas, and finally Oklahoma.[371] Similarly, the Potawatomi, the keepers of the fire, were forced west. And many tribes followed those painful paths. Removal from the kinship web of sustenance and support in such a dramatic fashion was absolutely devastating to the People.

For the Ojibwe of the Mississippi and Lake Superior, treaty negotiations with the US government persisted from 1825 to 1871. It was nearly an entire lifetime for the ogimaag

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[369] The Nonintercourse Act included six statutes passed by the U.S. Congress between 1790 and 1834 to restrict Indigenous peoples to reserves and regulate native participation in the settler economy.

[370] The term "reserves" was the official term used by the US Government in the removal era.

[371] See my reference to the ancient Odawa or Hopewell people in Chapter 2. There is evidence in a copper Midewin headdress found in one of the mound excavations that the people not only practiced Anishinaabeg Mide ceremonies, but they traveled or traded with peoples from the Rocky Mountains. The copper headdress was formed in the shape of the horns of a Rocky Mountain Big Horn Sheep.

involved in these deliberations—agonizing negotiations for the future of Ojibwe generations. They knew that the well-being of the People depended on access to the kinship web or the Land and yet, they could not negotiate those certainties. The outcome of many of the early treaties were the cession of mineral and logging rights in exchange for annuities—a fixed sum of money and goods that the US government agreed to deliver on an annual basis for a fixed term of time.

Rather than relying on the promise of annuities, the ogimaag sought to reserve a connection to the Land in perpetuity for the "new life that was coming." The 1837 treaty negotiated with the Ojibwe at the confluence of the St. Peter's and Mississippi Rivers established that "the privilege of hunting, fishing, and gathering the wild rice, upon the lands, the rivers and the lakes included in the territory ceded, is guaranteed to the Indians, during the pleasure of the President of the United States."[372] The language leaves room for interpretation. What pleases the President? The language of the treaty of 1842 negotiated at La Pointe on Mon-ing-wun-a-kaun-ing made motivations and terms clearer:

> The Indians stipulate the right of hunting on the ceded territory, with the other usual privileges of occupancy, until required to remove by the President of the United States, and that the laws of the United States shall be continued in force, in respect to their trade and intercourse with the whites, until otherwise ordered by Congress.[373]

As the treaties between the Ojibwe and the US progressed, the Ojibwe were allowed to stay and hunt and harvest so that they could continue to feed the settler economy with labor and products,

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[372] Charles Joseph Kappler, ed., "Article 5: Treaty with the Chippewa, 1837. July 29, 1837. 7 Stat., 536. Proclamation, June 15, 1838Artic," in *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties.*, vol. II, VII vols. (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1904).

[373] Charles Joseph Kappler, ed., "Article 2: Treaty with the Chippewa, 1842. October 4, 1842. 7 Stat., 591. Proclamation, Mar. 23, 1843.," in *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, vol. II (Treaties), VII vols. (Washington: U.S. GPO, 1904). Ten bands of Chippewa of the Mississippi and Lake Superior were named in this treaty.

at least until their area was hunted out and/or was needed for other settler purposes. Afterall, Native contributions to the settler economy to this point had been as fur traders and suppliers of country produce so it follows those Native rights to maintain their contribution to the settler economy were protected as long as necessary. This is what would "please the President." Things began to change when local demands for non-Indian settlement combined with the backdrop of a general frenzy to take Western lands following the 1849 gold rush. On February 6, 1850, President Zachary Taylor made an Executive Order to remove Ojibwe from their ceded lands.

In the opening line of his 1853 work, *Minnesota and Its Resources*, J. Wesley Bond summarized well the cultural construct at work in the policies of the day, "A very few years ago, and the present territory of Minnesota was a waste of woodland and of prairie, uninhabited save by the different hordes of savage tribes from time immemorial scattered through its expanse, with of later years a few white traders only intermingled."[374] Bond's introduction illustrates an important difference in worldview. Settlers and the Anishinaabeg had very different cultural views of what made land "profitable" or "valuable." As historian Bruce M. White reiterates:

> The Removal Order was a direct response to petitions and lobbying by politicians and businessmen in Minnesota Territory, who were motivated in part by a desire to increase the flow of money into the territory. The profit motive was never given in written public statements calling for the removal of Ojibwe from the 1837 and 1842 ceded areas. Instead, the argument was made that the Ojibwe in Minnesota caused difficulties for white settlers in this sparsely settled region, an implicit recognition that a demonstration of this kind was necessary to provide a rationale for removal.

Indians as ones who do not know how to make the land profitable. Indians as troublemakers for the whites. These are the stories that were told in settler-colonial society as the policies and practices of advancement of settler domination of land and people and concurrent

[374] Bond, *Minnesota and Its Resources*, 1.

industrialization ensued. The motivations for the treaties are inscribed in the documents--copper, forests, Native trade (furs and produce), and land, lots of land.[375]

Following the removal order in the fall of 1850, Minnesota Governor and superintendent of Indian Affairs, Alexander Ramsey, working with Indian agent J. S. Watrous and others, ordered ten bands of Mississippi and Lake Superior Ojibwe to remove to Sandy Lake on the Upper Mississippi in order to redeem their annuities rather than at La Pointe where Ojibwe were promised they would receive payment for twenty-five years.[376] They were told to expect payment at Sandy Lake on October 25, 1850. Approximately 3,000 Ojibwe traveled by canoe and foot to Sandy Lake. This was an effort on the part of the Indian agents to concentrate Ojibwe in proximity to the Michi-ziibi, line of demarcation.

The Ojibwe perspective on these events is found in an undated letter to Alexander Ramsey, superintendent of Indian Affairs, signed by twenty-eight Ojibwe chiefs who explained:

> This is what our agent told us; "Come my children, come to Sandy Lake and you shall have plenty to eat and be fat, and I will make your payment quick." We went, but did not find him there. His secretary and Mr. Warren were there to take care of the goods, but he had gone down the river to get the money. Instead of having a good supply of provisions to eat, we had but little, and the pork and flour furnished us had been soaked in the water and was so much damaged that we could not eat it. It was this that caused so much sickness among us. After being kept there two months waiting for our payment, the Agent arrived and paid us our goods, but our money we did not get at all. By this time the rivers had frozen and we had to throw away our canoes and go to our distant homes with our families on foot. As the Agent did not supply us with provisions, we were obliged to sell our blankets and buy on credit of the traders, that our children might be kept from

[375] For more on the extractive interests of the US Government, copper mining opportunities and forests, see Child, *Holding Our World Together: Ojibwe Women and the Survival of Community*, 52–53.

[376] The designation of certain bands as "Mississippi" and others as "Lake Superior" marked the beginning of the US Government's initiative in sorting Ojibwe on the land in order to designate reservation placement. This pattern of sorting was inaccurate and destructive to kinship relationships, see Child, 60.

> starving, and that we have something to eat during our journey home. When we left for home, we saw the ground covered with the graves of our children and relatives. One hundred and seventy had died during the payment. Many too, of our young men and women fell by the way and when we had reached home and made a careful estimate of our losses of life, we found that two hundred and thirty more had died on their way home. This is what makes us so sad to think that the payment should be removed to that place.[377]

The Ogimaag were desperate to secure a better situation for their relatives. In the conclusion of the letter, there is a request for a delegation to travel to Washington, DC, to meet with the President. The delegation was led by Ogima Bizhiki (Buffalo) of Mon-ing-wun-a-kaun-ing in his advanced age of ninety years, a testimony to his commitment mino bimaadiziiwin (good life) and his responsibility to resist removal or change that was taking life. Ogimaag were leaders whose position originated from responsibilities, both hereditary and related to their personal gifts or charisma. They were not direct representatives who spoke on behalf of their band but ones who facilitated consensus amongst their people, including the women, the warriors, and the old men. When Ogimaag gathered themselves in prayerful discernment, they followed Midewewin practices beginning by relating the history of the Anishinaabeg, and reminders that they were only the "latest carriers of tradition" and "their decisions would impact the next seven generations—as their fathers' decision to follow the prophecies westward had shaped their own."[378] The well-being of the "new life that was coming" was so important that in the spring of 1852, Chief Bizhiki made a two-month journey by canoe, steamboat, and rail, with his delegation to Washington to petition that the Ojibwe bands of the Upper Mississippi and

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[377] "United States Bureau of Indian Affairs Documents: Petition from Cyrus Mendenhall to President Taylor, May 9, 1850, Opposing Removal of the Ojibwe across the Mississippi" (Wisconsin Historical Society, 1850).
[378] Miller, *Ogimaag: Anishinaabeg Leadership, 1760-1845*, 108–9.

Lake Superior be allowed to stay on reservations in their original territories.[379] Like many Anishinaabeg, Chief Bizhiki applied his gifts to resisting the changes that the settler colonial system brought to the Anishinaabeg way of life and food system.

Manoomin-Giizis (Ricing Moon) or Mandaamin-Giizis (Corn Moon)[380]

The ninth moon is a time when Anishinaabeg picked up their knocking sticks used to gently fold the tall grasses of the lakes and rivers over the sides of their canoes--knocking precious seeds of manoomin into their boats. According to our stories, Anishinaabeg were instructed to leave their home on the great salt water, the Atlantic, and go to the place where "the food grows on water." Manoomin (the good berry), wild rice, is the seed of four grasses of the species Zizania that grows in rivers and lakes in around the Great Lakes. That food that grows in water is more than twelve percent protein and is and has been an important source of carbohydrates in the Anishinaabeg diet in the place where it grows. For the Anishinaabeg who live and lived in the portion of Anishinaabewaki around the Great Lakes, manoomin was and is an essential and central part of the food system. As the People sought to maintain balance in their world and in their diets, they moved towards bizhikiwag (the buffalo) leaving some relatives, human and other-than-human behind. Manoomin, which sat in the center of their seasonal round for many generations, was one of those relatives.

Anishinaabe moons are always named according to the activity of the physical and spiritual world and are unique to place. As Anishinaabeg have moved across Turtle Island the

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[379] Child, *Holding Our World Together: Ojibwe Women and the Survival of Community*, 75–77.
[380] Anishinaabeg moon names are taken from our relationship with place, therefore, wherever you go you will hear the moons called differently according to relationships the People had with Spirit, plant, and animal relatives in each moon of the annual cycle of movement across the land.

names of the moons have changed. Mandaamin-giizis (Corn Moon) was what our Otawaag relatives called this moon. As the journey to bizhiki stretched out, we found new complements to our diet—trading for corn with the earth lodge peoples on the Upper Gitcheepeeganoweceepee (Missouri) or harvesting roots on the prairies. Both sources of carbohydrates were essential to balancing our nutrition. From our prairie relatives, Crees and the Assiniboines, we learned to harvest me-tush-koo-se-min, called the apple of the prairie by our Métis relatives, or prairie turnips, *psoralea esculenta*.[381] Like corn and wild rice, prairie turnips are rich in protein and starch. The many names of the moons illustrate Anishinaabeg flexibility in our food system that was key to our resistance to the changes that occurred between 1820 and 1850.

Conclusion

Niibin is the season in which Mishomis (Grandfather Sun) lends his strength to all our relatives—aiding the work that they are given to do—a partnership that leads to abundance in the food system. Mishomis feeds all the relatives on Turtle Island, just as the earth-mound serpent eats the sun at the beginning of the season.

Scarcity, a lens of motivation in competition in the colonial economy, contrasts significantly with the Anishinaabeg philosophy of abundance or looking for miniigoowiiziwin (that which is given to us). Key differences in the two economies marked the years of the 1820s–1850s, as the Anishinaabeg relied upon the strengths of their own kinship system of exchange in the midst of the growing strength and dominance of the settler colonial capitalist economy. The

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[381] James, M.D., *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner (U.S. Interpreter at the Sault de Ste. Marie) during Thirty Years Residence Among the Indians in the Interior of North America,* 298.

line beyond which buffalo could be found continued to move west, as did the People and the settler colonial system of extraction, the fur trade. With the scarcity shift, the settler extractive machine began to tip the sacred balance of all things, yet the Anishinaabeg resisted, holding on to their natural law, kinship alliances, and foodways wherever possible.

A common expression of the settler economic system's view of and effects on the Anishnaabeg way of life is found in the voice of William Keating of the Long Expedition. In speaking of the disappearing buffalo in the Red River region, Keating reports that hunters were traveling five days, "in a north-west direction from Lake Travers until they fell in with the game."[382] Of the "constant subtraction …of his (buffalo) numbers," Keating wrote, "Civilization in its steady march destroys the larger gregarious animals, and even drives back the hunting man, unless he change his mode of life."[383] The settler colonial State with its cooperative elements of Capitalism, Church, and Science was bent on changing the ways of all who stood in their way.

Though few written sources exist, our ancestors no doubt had much to say about the change that settler colonial pursuits brought to the web of relations during this time. Bamewawagezhikaquay (Woman of the Sound the Stars Make Rushing Through the Sky), Jane Johnson Schoolcraft, in her poem "The Contrast," gives us one such glimpse, capturing a sentiment of resentment for the settler systems that assaulted the Anishinaabeg world. Likely writing in the 1820s, she contrasts "the present moments with the past":

To gain one sordid bit of gold

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[382] Lake Traverse lies on what is now the boundary between the states of South Dakota and Minnesota. Five days travel to the north-west would have had the party of hunters somewhere in the territory that is now central North Dakota.

[383] Keating, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Source of St. Peter's River, Lake Winnepeek, Lake of the Woods, Etc. Etc. Performed in the Year 1823, by Order of the Hon. J.C. Calhoun, Secretary of War; Under the Command of Stephen H. Long, Major U.S.T.E.*, 2:30.

By trade's o'er done plethoric moil,
And lawsuits, meetings, courts and toil.[384]
(44–47)

[384] An excerpt from the poem *Contrast, Schoolcraft reflects on the simplicity of the life she knew in youth and the life of the changing world. In her lifetime, Schoolcraft saw tremendous change in the context of the contrasting lifeways and economies of the Anishinaabe and settler colonial worlds.* Jane Johnston Schoolcraft and Robert Dale Parker, *The Sound the Stars Make Rushing Through the Sky: The Writings of Jane Johnston Schoolcraft* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

CHAPTER SIX

DAGWAAGIN (FALL), 1851-1869

Dagwaagin is a time for looking cautiously to the future, preparing for winter by processing the harvest that the work of summer delivered and continuing the hunt with anticipation of your relatives' needs. The good intentions and hard work of fall will bring strength and comfort until the snow recedes and the land is open again. In the years 1780-1870, Anishinaabeg fanned out over the prairies and began to refer to themselves as Nakáwsnsnièk (those who speak differently-from the Ojibwe) or Mus-co-tay'o (Prairie People). Each generation learned new languages, foodways, and landscapes at an impressive pace. Leaving behind their woodlands lifeway in which maanoomin (wild rice), moos (moose), fish, elk, and caribou were key aspects of their annual round, they moved to the buffalo. At first their prairie life was primarily within the Red River Corridor. In time, they followed the buffalo along the Assiniboine, Saskatchewan, and Missouri Rivers. The mixed bands of Ojibwe, Cree, Assiniboine, and Métis took their names from those of new places, Owaycepee (Qu'Appelle), Mikanaak Wajiw (Turtle Mountain,) Mitigwatci or Ninantakau (Cypress Hills).[385]

From 1851 to 1870, a storm swept across the Plains as the colonial machine literally gained steam and militarized to make a claim on more species, water, metals, and land. The Indigenous peoples of the Northwestern Plains were geographically compressed in this era of

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[385] James H. Howard, *The Plains-Ojibwa or Bungi, Hunters and Warriors of the Northern Prairie, with Special Reference to the Turtle Mountain Band* (Vermillion, SD: South Dakota Museum, University of South Dakota, 1965), 8–9. Howard explains that the term Nakáwsnsnièk/Nakawiniuk was used by both the Ojibwa and the Plains-Cree. Historian Nicholas Vrooman uses this term only in reference to Wilkie's Band of Plains-Ojibwa, Cree, & Métis. The Woodland Ojibwe refer to this group as Muskodeng Anishinaabe.

treaty making and disappearance of life sources. Like the fall departures of the winged ones, many of our relatives, afflicted by sickness, hunger, and battle began their journeys to the next world. For the ones who remained, their resilience was in their relationships, land practices, ceremonies, and, most of all, in the buffalo.

Waatebagaa-giizis (Leaves Turning Moon)

The last beat that sounded, after the drums and our shakers stopped, was that of our collective acknowledgement "Niikaniganaag," "all my relations." Leaving the warmth and laughter of the lodge, we were met with the fluttering sound of the cold wind dancing the leaves to the ground. We met the darkness that now swallowed us up with the strong scent of cedar and sage in our hair and clothing. That scent swirled about now with the leaves. I could also smell the snow in the air. There was a storm coming, it was unmistakable.

We traveled from all over Turtle Island to pick up this work. Cars warming, then one by one trickling out of the parking lot, our headlights pointed off in the four directions to the places where we would lay our heads that night—Morrison, Letellier, Emerson, Neubergthal, and beyond. As we pointed our car west on highway 421, the first big wet snowflakes hit the windshield. When we awoke the next morning, the leaves were buried under a foot and half of heavy wet snow. The roads were glazed with ice and the ditches full of several feet of ice water, the ice-encrusted power lines severed from their poles. Travel in any direction was perilous.

Some relatives from the east tried that day to make it to the lodge but found themselves stranded on the Selkirk Highway where they spent five hours trapped in their car until helpers came. Others stayed right where they were in their hotel rooms and shared with one another what food they had. We abandoned our car at the cottage, where we stayed with my clan sister and

brother, and went with them in their big truck. The heater blasting, we inched our way past the road closed sign and down the road east again. When we reached the lodge, we discovered there was power, and so we cooked walleye, manoomin, and berries for our Ogima Charlie, his family, and the few of us who made it there. Our Ogima then gifted us with a song whose words and energy remind us to be persevering for our ceremonies, for our relatives, our way of life. With the ceremonial bundles lying open, waiting for our teachers and healers to return for them, we sang more songs. That night as we left the lodge again to make our way back to the cottage, Charlie gave us a reminder. "Ongwamazin!" he said, "stay awake/watch out!"

It snowed for several more days, as all our relatives stayed hunkered down in their own safe places. The storm finally subsided just as fall Midewiwin ceremonies were scheduled to end. Some of the People had to leave right away to catch flights or begin their long drives home, but a handful made it back to the lodge to collect their bundles before they continued on their way. Dagwaagin on the Northwest prairies can come with a shock, stopping you in your tracks until it's safe to continue on again. And though this happens, we know that we must get up and move across the land again and the ceremonies must continue.[386]

[386] This is a true story of one of our recent experiences at our medicine lodge. In the last few years, we have experienced storms of increasing intensity, which have interrupted our ceremonies. Owing to the long federal suppression of Indigenous ceremonies on both sides of the 49th parallel, we now travel great distances to attend ceremonies, as we return to pick up our medicine bundles and do the work of ceremony and the continuation of our way of life. The storms, in this time we call Onjisay-ahki (Changing Earth) time, are an obstacle brought about by the extractive economy and the greed that drives it, robbing Mother Earth of her resiliency. We persevere with our ceremonial way of life because it represents the healing of the web of life beginning with ourselves. As Mother Earth works to right the balance, we too are working for balance.

Our Journey on the Plains

The storm of colonization persists, but so do our stories, our songs, and our connectedness. In the telling of this story, there are many circles of leaving places and people and coming back together again, division and reunion. I tell this story of my Midewiwin lodge to acknowledge that the healing of the way of the circle continues, in spite of what has passed.

Anishinaabeg of the Northwestern Plains made the transition to horse and buffalo culture between 1730 and 1850. Each generation in this timeframe experienced tremendous change in a fierce storm generated by the arrival of European settlers and the accompanying introduction of their extractive economy. Like the leaves of fall dancing to the ground, Anishinaabeg moved across the land within their kinship network until the wind of that storm subsided and dropped them in new places. With the support of the Land and their kin, Anishinaabeg persevered in their identity and ways of being, including food ways, ceremonies, and land practices. Holding on to what they knew they endured the storm.

A story passed from Earth Elder to Standing Through the Earth and then to Alexander Wolfe comes from the time "when Indian people lived in this land in accordance with the laws of nature, and spiritual direction was necessary for survival." In that time, there were two children, a boy and his younger sister, who being hungry, wandered from their relatives in search of food. Initially they found berries and roots, but as their food supply diminished, they strayed, further and further from their home. They traveled and continued to gather berries and roots, until one day they ran into a playful colt. He was easy to approach and allowed them to pet him. They took him as their own and the little girl rode on him. The boy, the girl, and the colt spent their days traveling, searching for food, and learning the ways of survival together.

Then one day an incident happened that would change their lives. On a hill in front of them, they spotted a man, on a horse, watching them. He was the chief of a band of Indians who lived to the west. Feeling compassion for them, he sent other mounted members of his band to bring the children to him. The boy and the girl were taken as the chief's own children, raised in his wiigwaam where they "learned the habits and ways of all the animals and the signs in nature as they related to survival." The chief and his wife shared spiritual teachings and taught them to work with their hands, to hunt, and ride the colt as he became a beautiful horse.

When they were no longer children, the chief explained to the young man and woman that the time had come for them to return to their own people who had since suffered much and were scattered. "You must now return to your own, to teach and lead your people," he instructed. "When you find them they will be afraid of you, but in time they will come to know you." He concluded, "In time to come, when you are in need, you will ride your horse to the west, singing the song I will give you. My children will hear you and will follow you to a place you will choose. In this way they will meet your needs. I have spoken. I am Grandfather Buffalo."[387]

After loving preparations, the young man and woman were sent on their way. When at last they found their people and they recognized themselves in one another, it was clear that the people had suffered over many winters due to starvation and sickness. "The young man knew their needs were many, but he knew Grandfather Buffalo could provide. A day's journey to the west he had noted a cliff, and he knew that this was where he would lead the children of Grandfather Buffalo."[388] With the use of the song and prayer ritual that Grandfather Buffalo had

[387] Wolfe, *Earth Elder Stories: The Pinayzitt Path*, 8.
[388] Wolfe, 9.

given him, he proceeded to ride in the direction of the cliff. Soon he was followed by a young bull buffalo and then many more came. He led them to the cliff, swung his horse to the side, and let the animals fall. His people were waiting to process those gifts. Over time, the young man and his sister continued to share the knowledge they carried, and the people grew in physical and spiritual strength, and in numbers, because of the gifts of Grandfather Buffalo.[389]

Anishinaabe Reorientation

Just as the boy and girl left their relatives when food was scarce and began to move across the land, the Anishinaabeg braved a long process of reorientation in geographic and relational terms. By the middle of the nineteenth century, many Anishinaabeg had left behind relatives, the lakes, rivers, and lands they knew, and the places they hunted and harvested. Relying on their relationships with their Cree, Métis, and Assiniboine relatives they were strengthened as together they moved with the buffalo into a new landscape.

Métissage or mixing, was one part of Anishinaabe reorientation in the relational sense through the inclusion of newcomers who married into their kinship network. Métissage in the broader biocultural view during the first half of the nineteenth century, influenced a new wave of mixing in the second half of the century. The devastation of disease amongst relatives and enemies marked life on the prairies in the first half of the 19th century. Three factors influenced the new rapid spread of disease once it found its way onto the Northwestern Plains. First, as Indigenous and Métis bands sought sustenance in the context of the kinship network and the colonial economy, they were more and more mobile and compressed into one another's territory. Increasingly, they used horses and Red River carts to move greater distances to and with the

[389] Wolfe, 5–9.

buffalo for purposes of sustenance and trade.[390] Secondly, more and more colonial explorers, prospectors, traders, and entrepreneurs were perusing the interior of the continent to glean knowledge and economic opportunities. Thanks to the likes of George Catlin and James J. Audubon, word was getting out. As historian Elizabeth Fenn remarked, "Another year, another painter."[391] Third, the new colonial transportation structure, steamboat service on the Mississippi and the Missouri Rivers, brought speed and ease to overland travel and to bio-cultural mixing.[392] All of these factors of change in the first half of the century began to compound after 1850.

The smallpox epidemic that was believed to have entered the Northwest Plains at Fort Union via steamboat travelers in the fall of 1837, killed an estimated 17,000 Indigenous people. It had two lasting effects on the Ojibwa and their mixed-heritage kin.[393] The immediate loss was of life itself, including all the gifts, knowledge, songs, stories, and skills those individuals held. The extended family was the primary unit of economic production within Ojibwa culture. As relatives were lost to disease, significant members of the kinship network of economic

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[390] Red River carts were the ingenuity of the Métis. A light-weight cart with two high wheels made of wood and rawhide. As the carts were refined, they could carry up to 1,000 lbs. The high wheels made them adept on the rutted prairie. They could be taken apart and used as a raft across streams, and when covered with a waterproof hide used as a boat, with the wheels lashed to the underside of the raft. With a hide covering they were used for shelter at night. With the entire cart train, sometimes up to 1,200 carts, they were drawn in a circle to form a portable corral for livestock. In the winter the cart frame could be used as a horse-drawn sled. Verne Dusenberry, "Verne Dusenberry Papers" (1966 1885), Box 6, File 6, Accession 85015, Merrill G. Burlingame Special Collections, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT, USA; Lawrence Barkwell, "Red River Cart," *Louis Riel Institute*, January 6, 2010, 9.

[391] Elizabeth A. Fenn, *Encounters at the Heart of the World : A History of the Mandan People*, first paperback edition. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2015), 296.

[392] Bio-cultural mixing refers broadly to the méttisage of people, biota, plants, and animals in acknowledgement of the perpetual process of biocultural evolution, which is, as demonstrated in this case, affected by cultural and environmental conditions.

[393] Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*, 67.

importance, along with their skills and knowledge, disappeared. Secondly, the resulting loss of life compelled a deepening of the kinship bond and strategic alliance, sometimes called the Nehiyaw Pwat or Iron Alliance, amongst the Cree, Assiniboine, Ojibwa, and Métis, as they helped each other with the tasks of life on the land.[394] Of course, the people, knowledge, and skills that were lost to wave after wave of disease is still felt, but the world was also rebuilt, and life continued with new relationships in the perpetual process of biocultural evolution. Banding together to fill labor and leadership roles in the seasonal round lifeway was a norm in Anishinaabe culture in which family had always been defined with flexibility.[395]

Just as mixing and banding together were happening across the Indigenous communities of the Northwestern Plains, the Selkirk colonists were taking a different approach of segregation. Ojibwe who remained in the Red River Colony in the mid-nineteenth century were now pushed to its edges. Their Métis relatives, who were seen by HBC leadership as a caste above Ojibwe, were now the primary suppliers of "country produce," specifically massive quantities of meat. The Ojibwe who had been displaced from the key role they played during the fur trade, were relegated to the edges of the settler economy. As settler and missionary populations increased, their legal and social institutions inscribed Victorian concepts of racism.[396] Ojibwe who

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[394] Rudolph Kurz explained the composition of Native nations as that of bands "separated into smaller camps for the sake of moving from place to place with more rapidity and of feeling more secure about provisions." Kurz, *On the Upper Missouri: The Journal of Rudolph Friedrich Kurz, 1851-52*, 116. Robert Alexander Innes, "The Importance of Family Ties to Cowesses First Nation" (Tuscon, AZ, The University of Arizona, 2007), 46-75.

[395] Peers and Brown, "'There Is No End to Relationship among the Indians.'"

[396] Historians have followed the connection between Victorian science and racism. Victorian Science was born in the 18th century and nurtured through a process of the professionalization of science in the first half of the 19th century. In the mid-18th century, two important publications tracked the course of scientific thought with regard to race—the 1850 publication of Scottish

remained in the Red River Corridor were segregated primarily to two communities, St. Peter's in the North near Netley Creek, and Baie St. Paul, on the Assiniboine River between St. Francois Xavier and Portage la Prairie.

Although settler colonial society attempted to redefine the order of human relationships, in both Ojibwe communities, the missionaries recorded Ojibwe resistance to assimilation. The vitality of the Midewiwin society ceremonies and other traditional Ojibwe healing and divination ceremonies remained strong in these communities and with bands throughout the Interlake Region, Rainy River, and Netley Creek. Ojibwe knowledge was carried across the prairies to Fort Pelly, Fort Ellice, the Qu'Appelle Lakes, Fort Carlton and beyond.[397]

Even isolated in these distinct locations, Anishinaabeg remained committed to maintaining their way of life. This despite the fact that Christian missionaries persisted with attempts to alter spiritual beliefs. Nonetheless, life was changing. As the settler colonial economy grew in dominance and Anishinaabeg access to land and life sources diminished, westward movement, not just seasonally but permanently, was necessary. This was one aspect of

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anatomist Robert Know, *The Races of Man,* in which he "classified races as distinct biological types with separate origins and unequal abilities," and Charles Darwin's 1858 *Origin of Species,* which modeled evolution that the scientific community then applied to humans in development of the theory of Social Darwinism with its "hierarchical conclusions that explain differences in societal progression and development." In the 1880s, , as race-based science and the eugenics movement were becoming mainstream in settler colonial dominance, anthropologist Franz Boas actively sought to prove that race was a social construct, not a biological fact. Douglas A. Lorimer, "Nature, Racism, and Late Victorian Science.: EBSCOhost," *Canadian Journal of History* 25, no. 3 (December 1990): 369–86. Peter H. Conlin, "Victorian Racism: An Explication of Scientific Knowledge, Its Social Character, and Its Relation to Victorian Popular Culture," *Inquiries Journal* 10, no. 01 (2018), http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/1719/victorian-racism-an-explication-of-scientific-knowledge-its-social-character-and-its-relation-to-victorian-popular-culture.

[397] Laura L Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780 to 1870* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1994), 163-175.

survivance, a strategy of integrity to the Land and the life sources it offers. As one Anglican minister reported, Anishinaabeg believed that "the Master of Life intended them to live by hunting and fishing, but the white man were to live by the plough being a more degrading occupation."[398] For Anishinaabe the integration of foodways and spiritual practices, or life on the land and ways of seeing, was part of living in what Irving Hallowell described as a "culturally constituted world."[399] In other words, our movement from the Red River Corridor across the prairies and into the mountains was a matter of resistance and survival beyond merely seeking sustenance. We were as our elder Jim O'Chiese states, "running with our archives, our ceremonies."

Some of our relatives, like my Ojibwe, Dakota, and Cree grandmothers, married settler fur traders. This created new bonds in the larger web of relationship and reciprocity in the constantly evolving biocultural framework. From the 18th to the early 20th century, the ones we now know as the Métis were commonly called halfbreeds or in an even more derogatory version, breeds, referring to their mixed heritage. Although they may have been a caste above Indians in the eyes of early settlers, they were in a precarious place in society. Today's term Métis, a French word meaning mixed, is a recognition of their ethnogenesis, or evolution into a culture of their own, not merely of mixed Native-European ancestry or métis. *Métis* or one's self-consciousness of their own Peoplehood becomes distinct from that of others. In the 19th century,

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[398] Peers, 162. Peers is quoting the Church Missionary Society Anglican Minister, John Smithurst, from his 1840 journal while he was assigned to the Netley Creek Anishinaabe community.

[399] Jennifer S.H Brown, ed., *Ojibwe Stories from the Upper Berens Rivers: A. Irving Hallowell and Adam Bigmouth in Conversation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press & The American Philosophical Society, 2018), 161.

the Métis were emerging in key ways--distinguished as liminal actors in the diversity of Plains life and culturally distinct in their hybridized lifeways. The Métis, owing to their mixed settler and Native parentage, more often embraced Christianity, were more engaged in the settler economy, and were more frequently hired by surveyors, military expeditions, and other settler operations. They were also fiercely committed to life on the land, the buffalo lifeway, and dwelt in band structures of multiple families who moved together across the land. Their foods, tradition of dancing, rhythmic music, Michif language, medicine ways, and spiritual beliefs were and are unique and contain elements of two worlds. Their situatedness brings complexity to the story and, in the 19th century, found the Métis as both friend and foe to the settler project and the Native resistance.[400] A great example of the irony and complexity of their relational and geographic situatedness is their significant role in the survey and marking of the 49th parallel,

[400] Situatedness is "The dependence of meaning (and/or identity) on the specifics of particular sociohistorical, geographical, and cultural contexts, social and power relations, and philosophical and ideological frameworks, within which the multiple perspectives of social actors are dynamically constructed, negotiated, and contested." "Situatedness," Oxford Reference, accessed October 23, 2021, https://doi.org/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100509181. For a deeper understanding of Métis history, society, culture, and identity, please see: Maria Campbell, *Halfbreed* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1983); Michel Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line : Creating a Border and Dividing a People* (Regina, SK: University of Regina Press, 2015); Delia Lee Hagen, "Northern Plains Borders and the People in between, 1860-1940" (Ph.D., United States -- California, University of California, Berkeley), accessed September 8, 2021, http://www.proquest.com/docview/1917485390/abstract/EBFF6E1DA7504657PQ/1. Nicholas P. Vrooman, *"The Whole Country Was...'One Robe'": The Little Shell Tribe's America* (Helena, MT: Drumlummon Institute, 2012); Brenda MacDougall, Nichole St-Onge, and Carolyn Podruchny, *Contours of a People: Metis Family, Mobility, and History* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2012); Chris Andersen, *"Métis": Race, Recognition, and the Struggle for Indigenous Peoplehood* (Vancouver, B.C.: University of British Columbia Press, 2014).Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line : Creating a Border and Dividing a People*; MacDougall, St-Onge, and Podruchny, *Contours of a People*; Andersen, *"Métis": Race, Recognition, and the Struggle for Indigenous Peoplehood*; Vrooman, *"The Whole Country Was...'One Robe'": The Little Shell Tribe's America*.

known as the Medicine Line. That boundary would later be a line of demarcation of their own persecution in the settler system.

For many Anishinaabeg, their survival and resistance to the life that was unfolding in the Red River Valley meant moving with the buffalo to places unknown or those they had previously only visited. Like any family or web of relationship when pressurized, Anishinaabeg relational ties with their Métis, Cree, and Assiniboine relatives grew both deeper and at times more contentious. Intermarriage occurred within the web creating intimate new bonds that makes referencing or defining the bands more difficult. It was as ethnohistorians have observed, a complex interethnic society on the Northern Plains in this time.[401] Henry Youle Hind acknowledged this movement towards new people and places in the 1850s:

> The Crees of the Plains and the Ojibways and Swampys of the Woods, although speaking different languages, are often found hunting the buffalo in company, and not unfrequently form family connections. The Ojibways of Lake Winnipeg may now be discovered, summer and winter, near the Grand Forks of the Saskatchewan, having emigrated 400 miles west of Red River, where they have permanently established themselves.[402]

He goes on to say, they, "being no longer dependent upon the forest for food and clothing, many of them, on the banks of the Assiniboine, Red River, Lake Manitobah, and Dauphin Lake, possess horses, and join the half-breeds in their annual spring and fall hunts."[403] This large band

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[401] Susan Sharrock outlines a continuum of relationship within the interethnic societies of the Cree, Assiniboine, Saulteaux, & Metis which ranged from alliance, to intermarriage and poly-ethnic co-residence, to fused ethnicity. Susan R. Sharrock, "Crees, Cree-Assiniboines, and Assiniboines: Interethnic Social Organization on the Far Northern Plains," *Ethnohistory* 21, no. 2 (1974): 95–122, https://doi.org/10.2307/480946.

[402] Henry Youle Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857: And of the Assinniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition of 1858*, vol. 2 (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1860), 122, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/002706077.

[403] Hind, 2:122.

of relatives had effectively left one food system, the one where manoomin (wild rice) sat at the middle, to the one where bizhiki (buffalo) resided.

"Hunting the Buffalo in Company"

In the warm days of autumn, the prairie road was dry and dusty and the hours for traveling fewer as daylight waned. Anishinaabeg traveling the road west to the buffalo hunts of dagwaagin (fall), could see Mikanaak Wajiw (Turtle Mountain), like an island oasis, long before they reached it. The rise of the land presented the familiarity of the standing ones with their golden foliage, an indication of a relative abundance of water. Small lakes that covered the mountain, offered the gifts of nibi (water), and fed the standing ones and the medicines around them. Familiarity made the Anishinaabeg feel at home. Like the Pembina Hills, the Cypress Hills, and the Bear Paw Mountains, Turtle Mountain was an important place in the seasonal round of the Anishinaabeg and their relatives. Called island ranges for the ocean of prairies that surround them, they were bursting with biodiversity and offered important contributions to balancing life in the seasonal round—waterfowl, fish, plant and tree medicines, firewood, building materials, and precious water. These hills and mountains became the touch stones of the Anishinaabe and their kin as the Northwestern Plains became their permanent home.

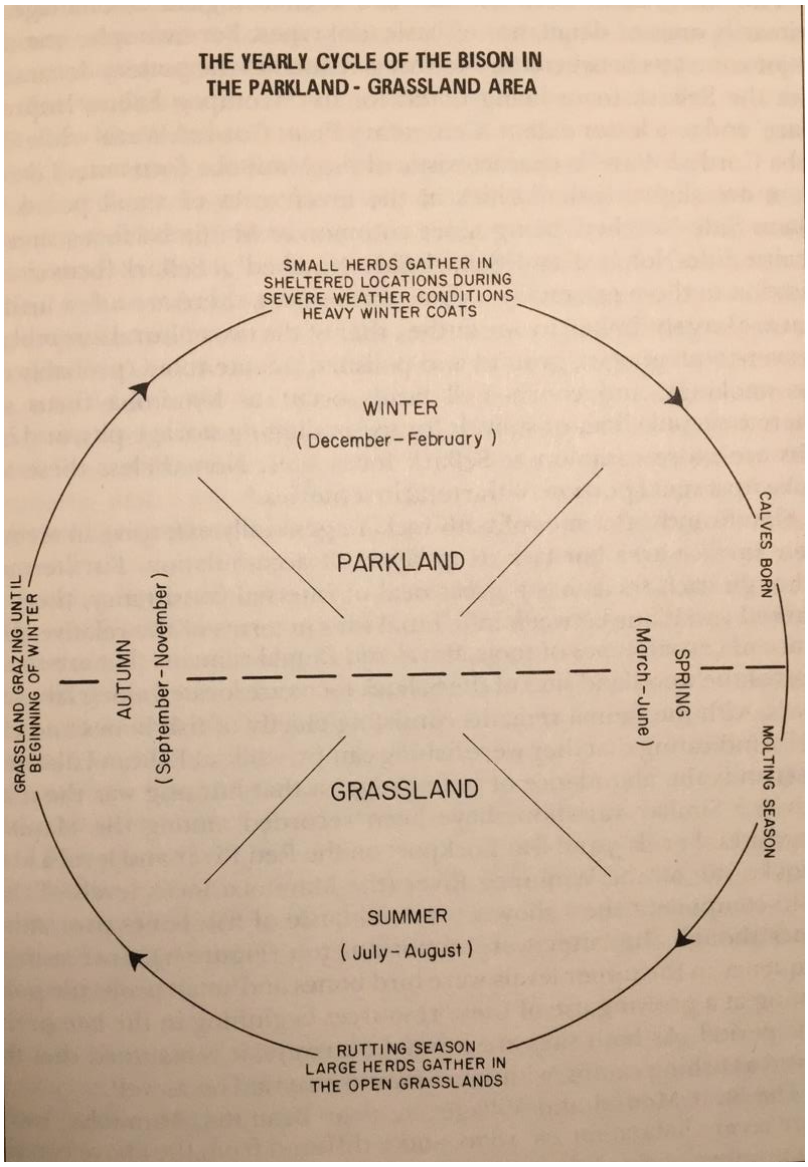


Figure 14. The Yearly Cycle of the Bison in the Parkland-Grassland Area, Arthur J. Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade.* The pattern of movement of buffalo and people illustrated here demonstrates the relationship of season, reciprocity, and responsibility in the Medicine Wheel Country. The Old North Trail Corridor can also be called Medicine Wheel Country where medicine wheels, Indigenous inscriptions on the land are both sacred sites of ceremony and astronomical clocks

which integrate understandings of both space and time. The movement of the buffalo on the land and through the seasons follows this sacred pattern.[404]



Figure 15. Map of the pattern of the great herd of buffalo in the 1850s, J.F. Ramaker. The buffalo inscribed a large medicine wheel on the land which was the Old North Trail Corridor.

Making their way beyond Turtle Mountain, the People fell in with the buffalo in the pattern of movement of the great western herd as recorded in the 1850s. Henry Youle Hind described the inscriptions of the buffalo on the land about the west side of Turtle Mountain at a crossing of the Little Souris River, "as if deep parallel ruts had been artificially cut down the hill-sides. These ruts, often one foot deep and sixteen inches broad, would converge from the prairie for many miles to a favourite crossing or drinking place."[405] Continuing westward, the buffalo

[404] Arthur J. Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade: Their Role as Trappers, Hunters, and Middlemen in the Lands Southwest of Hudson Bay 1660-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 33.
[405] Hind, 2:108.

moved toward the Grand Couteau of the Missouri, a plateau that runs hundreds of miles along the eastern side of the river, carved by Gitchipeeganoweceepee (the Upper Missouri River) itself. It is said that once the buffalo began their march, part of an annual systematic migration, there was nothing but want of food or the threat of fire that could dissuade them. In the fall, the People would have followed the buffalo over the Grand Couteau, across the Missouri, up the Yellowstone and then northward along the foothills of Rockies. The great herd wintered in this time between the north and south branches of the Saskatchewan and in the spring wandered again eastward towards the Owaycepee (Qu'Appelle Valley) and south again towards Mikanaak Wajiw (Turtle Mountain).[406] Significantly, the movement of the great western herd that Hind described flowed in a clockwise circle through the Old North Trail Corridor inscribing the land with the medicine wheel, the spiritual symbol of balance, and ancient time-telling rock formations that cover the Old North Trail Corridor and make this "Medicine Wheel Country."

If the weather was calm, the People could hear the low rumbling sound of the great herd by putting an ear to a badger hole.[407] As summer turned to fall, camped on a still night, the Anishinaabeg and their buffalo nations' kin would have heard the rutting bulls bellowing from a great distance. The Plains Cree named the ninth moon, the one that bridges summer and autumn

[406] Isaac Cowie, *The Company of Adventurers: A Narrative of Seven Years in the Service of the Hudson's Bay Company during 1867-1874, on the Great Buffalo Plains, with Historical and Biographical Notes and Comments* (Toronto: W. Briggs, 1913), 301, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000238086.
[407] Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857*, 2:110.

and that the Anishinaabeg knew as Wild Rice or Corn Moon, "No-tchitopici" (Breeding Moon), an indication of the importance of the buffalo in the Plains way of life.[408]

Binaakwe-Giizis (Falling Leaves Moon)

Binaakwe-giizis is a time when Mother Earth shows her glory in a rainbow of changing colors on the Land—the grasses, the standing ones (trees)--all the plant nations making their transition to a time of resting. This time in the cycle of seasons can bring about a feeling of melancholy as the leaves fade and fall to the ground. Ancestors living in the 19th century, who experienced colonial disruption of the seasonal rhythms of life, felt the sorrow of loss as their lives dramatically changed.

By 1850, Anishinaabeg had not only fanned out across the Northwestern Plains, but they were also in the Rocky Mountains in the furthest west part of the Old North Trail Corridor. Their connection to the buffalo energized their mobility, as it did for so many other tribes. Swiss artist and fur trade clerk, Rudolph Kurz, lived at the confluence of the Yellowstone and the Missouri at Fort Union, an epicenter of Indigenous and then settler trade. Kurz inventoried the nations living and trading in the region when he assessed the effects of an 1851 cholera outbreak:

> The Blackfeet tribe on this side of the Rocky Mountains is estimated to have 1,500 tents and approximately 4,000 warriors; Crows, 440 tents and 1,200 braves; Assiniboin in this vicinity, 420 tents and as many as 1,050 braves; those farther north on Winnipeg Lake, from 200 to 300 tents. Cree, or Knistenaux, who trade here occupy 150 tents, but the entire tribe is said to amount to 800 tents. Arikara are reckoned to have 600 warriors in 300 tents; Chippewa, 3,000 tents; and Sioux, 4,000.

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[408] David G. Mandelbaum, *The Plains Cree: An Ethnographic, Historical and Comparative Study* (Regina, SK: University of Regina Press, 1979), 359.

He also mentions the Pawnee, Arikara, Mandan, and Herantsa (Hidatsa). The diversity of the region made, as historian Delia Hagen describes it, "a mixed, mobile, indigenous society," "an integrated and entangled indigenous society."[409]

In October 1851, Kurz reported the arrival of eight Chippewa Métis from the Upper Red River who came to Fort Union seeking winter employment. Their land, an area between the Pembina and St. Peter's River, was not particularly productive. Kurz explained:

> They still prefer the products of the chase to agriculture, for which tendencies their Indian and French blood is chiefly responsible. They have time for the summer hunt while their crops are growing; after the harvest, for hunting in the fall. In the winter season, the men try to earn money as engagés, scouts, and interpreters in the service of fur traders.[410]

Pressure on the buffalo was getting more extreme; it was not merely a matter of buffalo being in their blood, but a matter of necessity that drove them to seek a diversified means of making a living.

During their stay at Fort Union, the "metifs," or Métis, relayed a story to Kurz of a recent encounter with a Sioux party of 800 tents and 2,500 warriors that greatly outnumbered their fall hunting expedition of 60 families.[411] Three of the Métis were taken prisoner by the Sioux. As was the protocol of the Métis when threatened, their carts were drawn in a tight circle with animals and people inside their barricade. As the Sioux marched the three captives still mounted on their horses in the direction of their own band, the three Métis, not trusting the Sioux'

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[409] Delia Lee Hagen, "Northern Plains Borders and the People In Between, 1860-1940" (Ph.D., United States -- California, University of California, Berkeley, 2015), http://www.proquest.com/docview/1917485390/abstract/EBFF6E1DA7504657PQ/1.

[410] Rudolph Friedrich Kurz, *On the Upper Missouri: The Journal of Rudolph Friedrich Kurz, 1851-52*, ed. Carla Kelly (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005), 120–21.

[411] Kurz' term "metifs" is another word for the Métis, or as they were mostly commonly called in the 19th century, halfbreeds. Their language, a mix of primarily Ojibwe (Chippewa) verbs and French nouns, is called michif.

intentions, tried to escape and shot four Sioux. Only two Métis got away alive. From behind their Red River cart barricade the metifs shot a number of the Sioux who surrounded their barricade. For two days the Sioux continued to circle firing upon cattle within the barricade. As the harassment continued, it was reported that there was "a Chippewa woman …beside herself to do battle" who constantly ran out in an attempt to fight at close quarters with the Sioux. She became "extremely angry when her relatives restrained her. Finally, she took off all her clothes and, standing naked, waved her skirt at the enemy with jeering words. She sang and whooped at such a rate that three other women were induced to make similar demonstrations." In the end, neither side could prevail on the other. The Métis rifles effectively kept the Sioux back, although they stayed far enough out that the lead balls they shot could not harm them. Nor could Sioux arrows reach the Métis. The long battle eventually drew the attention of other Métis whose caravan came and joined the fight driving off the Sioux. [412] One wonders if the women just grew irritated with the armed standoff and the loss of precious autumn time that could have been spent in the industry of the season procuring food.

The battle between the Métis and the Sioux could have been due to competition over increasingly scarce buffalo. The Métis were significant suppliers in the pemmican trade. As the availability of buffalo declined, they were often resented by those who thought they over harvested the animals to make pemmican, a highly desired commodity in the settler fur trade.[413]

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[412] Kurz, *On the Upper Missouri: The Journal of Rudolph Friedrich Kurz, 1851-52*, 122–23.
[413] Fur Trade historian, Arthur Ray, has followed the numbers to demonstrate the process of commodification and extraction of buffalo on the Northern Plains, "pemmican, once a staple of the fur trade, became very expensive rising from 3¢/pound in the 1830s to between 9.5 and 10¢/pound in the late 1870s." Arthur J Ray, "The Northern Great Plains: Pantry of the Northwestern Fur Trade, 1774-1885," *Prairie Forum* 9, no. 2 (Fall 1984): 55–73, 71.

In 1865, as the buffalo continued to disappear, relationships among allies and enemies were stretched. Even the ties between closer relatives, the Ojibwe and Red River Métis (halfbreeds), were strained to the point of violence. Recounting an incident at Otamonsacagun (Strawberry Lakes), Louis Shambow reported that when met by Ojibwe hostility, the Métis leadership informed them that they "were going to follow the buffalo." A fight ensued in which forty Ojibwe and six Métis were killed. It was one of many "Indian fights" that Shambow experienced while traveling with the Métis, of which he stated, "no gentleman would try to interfere with a person when he was trying to make an honest living. Don't you think so?"[414] The battle and his statement illustrate the deterioration of the web of relationship across the Plains as the People of the land suffered to "make a living."

In the context of Indigenous life of the prairies, the taking of buffalo in order to supply meat and pemmican for the newcomers was a known burden and necessary evil. The labor-intensive extraction of soft fat from buffalo bones, drying and pounding of meat, mixing and storing of the fat, dried meat fines, and sometimes berries, mainly fell on the women and significantly re-shaped the course of their days, diminishing their availability to complete subsistence tasks or the work of the seasonal round. In the settler colonial narratives of the time, the women doing this work are generally referred to as "the Indian women" or "the squaws." However it would be appropriate to call them "laborers;" so, too, the men whose knowledge, skills, bodies, and time were consumed in service to the settler colonial economy. To assume that families desired the settler goods and were therefore happy participants in the settler economy

[414] "Louis Shambow Reminiscence" (1916), 7–8, SC 729, Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena, MT, U.S.A.

misses two key points. First, while colonial goods, such as copper and iron kettles, made life easier, particularly in pemmican production, there is only so much that can be carried when living on the land, and the People did not want to leave their way of life. Secondly, as Indigenous people lost access to places and other-than-human relatives who supported their lifeway, what choice did they have but to turn to the settler economy? As the four-leggeds were extracted from the landscape, Anishinaabeg and their kin increasingly needed wool and calico, and eventually canvas, to clothe and shelter themselves. Their demand for settler goods was driven by necessity and limited by their mobility.

The speech of a mourning Indian named Pee-wa-Kay-win-in (a Cree) sums up the struggle of Indigenous laborers caught between two competing food systems and economies. HBC trader Isaac Cowie relates the story in his journal:

> [H]e made a speech to me…that, in order to feed the few white people in the world, who the Indians vastly exceeded in numbers, the allied tribes in camp (Cree, Assiniboine, and Ojibwe) had been compelled to follow the buffalo here far inside the hunting grounds of the Blackfeet and their allies. In consequence, two of the sons of Pee-wa-Kay-win-in had been slain, with the other fifty-eight young men, in the recent battle.

Cowie then recalls how he tried to assuage Pee-wa-Kay-win-in, "I thought the supplies I had brought to sell to them ….were fair exchange for the provisions we might buy and . . . they required to follow the buffalo to feed themselves, anyhow." Growing angry, Pee-wa-Kay-win-in said, "What would become of the Great White Queen and her people if we did not send them our pemmican? Of course, they would all starve to death."[415] Though the Queen may not have been dining on pemmican, Pee-wa-Kay-win-in was accurate in that the British Empire was devouring

[415] Cowie, *The Company of Adventurers: A Narrative of Seven Years in the Service of the Hudson's Bay Company during 1867-1874, on the Great Buffalo Plains, with Historical and Biographical Notes and Comments*, 300–301.

the Indigenous food system.[416] As environmental historian George Colpitts' research demonstrates, "On the plains grasslands themselves, the provisions trade in pemmican by the nineteenth century—continually enlarging from about 91,000 pounds in 1840 to some 202,680 pounds by 1860—undoubtedly composed an important means of British commercial expansion."[417] Every buffalo and berry consumed by settlers was food denied to Indigenous people.

At this time, approximately 1868, Cowie further reported that the great herd had not returned to their eastern grazing areas in the Owaycepee (Qu'Appelle) and Touchwood Hills, so "the Indians had been compelled to seek their prey farther west." "To collect all their friends and allies together in one camp, a big Sun Dance had been proclaimed by runners, and, as they gathered together in strength for the purpose, they extended the programme by deciding to keep together, so as to allow the buffalo to return to the east without being scared and driven back to hostile territory." The "Big Camp of Allies"--Crees, Saulteaux, semi-Stony and Cree "Young Dogs" of Qu'Apelle and Touchwood Hills, a few English and French Métis belonging to these places and Fort Pelly, and some Assiniboines from Wood Mountain and a few from the North Saskatchewan--pitched their camp in in the Big Sandy Hills twenty miles northeast of the neutral ground between many different warring tribes, Me-nach-tah-kak (the Cypress Hills, Cree) deep in Blackfoot Country. In all they were three hundred and fifty large leather lodges,

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[416] Arthur J Ray, "The Northern Great Plains: Pantry of the Northwestern Fur Trade, 1774-1885," *Prairie Forum* 9, no. 2 (Fall 1984): 55–73; John S. Milloy, *The Plains Cree: Trade, Diplomacy, and War, 1790 to 1870*, Manitoba Studies in Native History 4 (Winnipeg, Man.: University of Manitoba Press, 1988), 108.

[417] George Colpitts, "Provisioning the HBC: Market Economies in the British Buffalo Commons in the Early Nineteenth Century," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (July 2012): 185, https://doi.org/10.2307/westhistquar.43.2.0179.

approximately three thousand people, "five hundred men and lads capable of making war."[418] Large multiethnic camps were gaining popularity as an Indigenous strategy of adaptation to changing conditions under colonial rule, "where bands could only hunt by the sheer force of numbers and their large assemblies required considerably strengthened intertribal and cross-tribal affiliations."[419] Indigenous cooperation here marks a land practice or a method of conservation so that all would have what they need.

Although they were united in their need of sustenance, through the ceremony of the Thirsty Dance, and the common cause of defending themselves, the diverse population was not a harmonious one. Cowie noted that shared governance in the hunt and camp was chaotic, and mutual suspicion ruled their relationships. As he explained, the Blackfeet and Sioux called these ones, "the people without chiefs." The colonial system that developed on the model of the HBC, whose policy was "dividing to govern," had precipitated a shift in Indigenous authority from all-powerful and hereditary chiefs to a preference for and recognition of peacemakers over warriors. In spite of their strength-in-numbers strategy, the alliance was weakened through their association with the colonial economy and its erosion of cultural seats of power. When the Blackfoot, who were less integrated with the HBC, attacked the Big Camp of Allies, their impact was substantial. It was estimated that as many as two-thirds of the big camp perished.[420]

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[418] Cowie, *The Company of Adventurers: A Narrative of Seven Years in the Service of the Hudson's Bay Company during 1867-1874, on the Great Buffalo Plains, with Historical and Biographical Notes and Comments*, 302–6.
[419] George Colpitts, "The Methodists' Great 1869 Camp Meeting and Aboriginal Conservation Strategies in the North Saskatchewan River Valley," *Great Plains Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (2009): 5.
[420] Colpitts, 9.

In the years leading up to the Big Camp conditions were growing dramatically more difficult on the plains. Fur trader, Willy Traill recorded in 1865, "Ten years ago Buffalo used to swarm round this place and now we have to send two or three hundred miles and sometimes do not fall in with a single animal." In January 1867, Traill wrote, "Sioux starvation; no buffalo, living off rabbit." In February 1867, "Hunting party went off to the plain, came back with nothing but a mouthful. Learning to eat sinew." March 1867 was equally dreary, "Living chiefly on fish just now. Buffalo are far and few between." In August of that year, "living hand to mouth," and in October, "hard times all over the country." And, by November 1867, "Grasshoppers ate crops…buffaloe scarce…staple food of the Wood Indians rabbits have entirely disappeared and all kinds of game are very scare."[421]

The Big Camp of Allies worked together with diplomacy to prevent the fracturing of the buffalo herd and to protect the well-being of all in their alliance who depended on buffalo. Banding together and entering Blackfeet territory they were not, as historian John Milloy emphasized, a warring party. "The cavalcade was composed of young women, old women, children, old men, warriors and all their possessions. . . .It was a group of people travelling for life."[422] Though they attempted to work together to conserve the herd by hunting more cohesively, the shrinking buffalo commons of the 1860s was a competitive space in the mutual struggle of survivance.[423]

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[421] W.E. Traill, "Traill Family Fonds: W.E. Traill's Correspondance to His Family from Fort Ellice, Touchwood Hills, Egg Lake, Fort Pitt, and Carlton House" (67 1865), M-1241-1/M-1241-2, Glenbow Western Research Centre, Calgary, AB, Canada.
[422] Milloy, *The Plains Cree*, 115.
[423] Colpitts, "The Methodists' Great 1869 Camp Meeting and Aboriginal Conservation Strategies in the North Saskatchewan River Valley,"18.

"Hunting the buffalo in company" was not new within the buffalo lifeway of the Northwestern Plains. Buffalo nations had been hunting in proximity and collaboration with one another for millennia. Peace treaties were often made between tribes as they sought the common good amongst themselves. One example is that of the Bloods, Gros Ventres, Flatheads, Nez Perces, and Kutenais who, according to the Blackfeet winter count of 1825, shared the pipe to make peace in their relationship to hunt in the same territory. *This is the Native way of conducting treaty*, smoking from the same pipe to establish a relationship of cooperation.[424] Likewise, as Colpitts concludes, there was a cooperative Native response in the face of rapid environmental change of the 1860s "to search for a means of coordinating the efforts of many hunters around fewer resources and territories."[425]

Colonial Geologic Definition

As Native bands adapted to new shared definitions of territory, the colonial enterprise was advancing its own process of defining territory. Henry Youle Hind, an agricultural chemist and geologist, conducted one of two significant expeditions, the other led by Captain John Palliser, to inscribe the land with scientific and settler geologic definition.[426] It was the endeavor

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[424] Hugh Dempsey, *A Blackfoot Winter Count*, vol. Occasional Paper no. 1 (Calgary, Alberta: Glenbow Foundation, 1964), 7.

[425] Colpitts, "The Methodists' Great 1869 Camp Meeting and Aboriginal Conservation Strategies in the North Saskatchewan River Valley," 18.

[426] Here I would like to introduce the conversation regarding "White Geology," which observes the coupling of scientific processes, such as mapping, "as a historical regime of material power, not a genetic imaginary," contrast the Indigenous notion of the web of relationship. The work that the scientific actors in colonization performed was a process of colonial dominance in which, "White Geology makes legible a set of extractions, from particular subject positions, from black and brown bodies, and from the ecologies of place. The collective functioning of geologic languages coded—inhuman, property, value, possession—as categories moves across territory, relation, and flesh. It is not just that geology is a signifier for extraction but that a

of these two expeditions to explore the Northwest Territories of British North America for agricultural and other assets. Like Lewis and Clark and so many others, Hind and Palliser were conducting studies on behalf of territorial expansion, this time on behalf of Upper and Lower Canada, to determine the feasibility of agricultural development in the fur trade areas.[427] Though the HBC was meticulous in scientific documentation of the areas they occupied, they held their cards close to their chest. Information helped maintain their monopoly as long as possible.

The Hind Expedition, upon commencement of their work, immediately faced Anishinaabeg resistance. Traveling by steamer from Toronto through Lakes Huron and Superior, Hind's party arrived at Fort William, near present-day Thunder Bay, Ontario, at the end of July 1857. En route to the Red River by canoe, on August 24th they camped near an Ojibwe settlement near Garden or Cornfield Island. Hind was impressed by their well-cultivated field of Indian corn, large potato patch, and variety of squash and pumpkins, "cultivated by the Lake of the Woods Ojibway Indians for generations." He helped himself to samplings of the corn, which

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transmutation of matter occurs within that signification that renders matter as property, that makes a delineation between agency and inertness, which stabilizes the cut of property and enacts the removal of matter from its constitutive relations as both subject and mineral embedded in sociological and ecological fields." Thus White (or settler) Geology fractures the web of life or nindinamaaymaganadok (all my relations) in an extractive process of dispossession through charading objectivity. "Geopower" (Yusoff 2018) is a product of subjugating relations as well as geopolitical consideration and capitalization rather than to reinforce and reiterate the "naturalization" of colonial dispossession of land and minerals."
Kathryn Yusoff, *"Geology, Race, and Matter" in "A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None" on Manifold @uminnpress* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2018), https://manifold.umn.edu/read/untitled-5f0c83c1-5748-4091-8d8e-72bebca5b94b/section/6243cd2f-68f4-40dc-97a1-a5c84460c09b.

[427] Historian Pekka Hämäläinen refers to Lewis and Clark's expedition as an "act of sovereignty making." Pekka Hämäläinen, "Reconstructing the Great Plains: The Long Struggle for Sovereignty and Dominance in the Heart of the Continent," *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 6, no. 4 (2016): 481–509, https://doi.org/10.1353/cwe.2016.0070.

precipitated a middle of the night visit by Ojibwe and a council the next day with the Ogimaag (headmen) and ogitchidaag (warriors), totalling fifty-five in all. Quoting an Ogima who spoke in council, Hind reported he said, "Remember, if the white man comes to the Indian's house, he must walk through the door, and not steal in by the window. That way, the old road, is the door, and by that way you must go. You gathered corn in our gardens and put it away; did you never see corn before?" Then in refusal of Hind's bid that he might still acquire an Ojibwe scout to guide their expedition, the Ogima replied, "It is hard to deny your request; but we see how the Indians are treated far away. The white man comes, looks at their flowers, their trees, and their rivers; others soon follow; the lands of the Indians pass from their hands, and they have nowhere a home. You must go by the way white man had hitherto gone. I have told you all." Before the council ended the Ogima concluded saying:

> Let not these men think bad of us for taking away their guides. Let them send us no presents; we do not want them. They have no right to pass that way. We have hearts, and love our lives and our country. If twenty men came we would not let them pass to-day. We do not want the white man; when the white man comes, he brings disease and sickness, and our people perish; we do not wish to die. Many white men would bring death to us, and our people would pass away; we wish to love and to hold the land our fathers won, and the Great Spirit has given to us. Tell these men this, and the talk is finished.

When Hind realized that two of his party, an Iroquois guide and Mr. Dawson, were very ill, again he asked the Ogima for help. This time the Ogima lent him two young men to guide the party to Winnipeg. Hind promised to send presents back with them. [428]

[428] Henry Youle Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857 and of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition of 1858*, vol. 1 (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1860), 97–100, http://archive.org/details/cihm_35699.

Despite the fact that the Ogima denied Hind guides, valley by valley, his party explored the watersheds of the Red, Saskatchewan, and Assiniboine Rivers, during the years 1857 and 1858. Geographer and Irish Military Captain John Palliser conducted his survey of the interior of the continent in the overlapping years of 1857-1861. He surveyed everything west of the Red River to the Pacific Ocean and north to the parklands, including a delineation of the 49th parallel through the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific. Hind called his discovery the Fertile Belt extending from the Red River throughout the Saskatchewan River watershed west to the Rockies.[429] The geologic inscriptions of the two expeditions favored settler advancement on the region. They demarcated "Palliser's Triangle" with a subset of three longitudinal arcs defined according to their suitability for crops—a northern and western cold zone, a middle zone of highest arable conditions, and a sizeable southern center of aridity.[430]

[429] For a discussion of the influence that the term Fertile Belt had on the Canadian imagination see Doug Owram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 65-79.
[430] Beth LaDow, *The Medicine Line: Life and Death on the North American Borderland* (New York: New York : Routledge, 2001), 8–9; Sheila McManus, *The Line Which Separates: Race, Gender, and the Making of the Alberta-Montana Borderlands*, Race and Ethnicity in the American West (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 5–6.

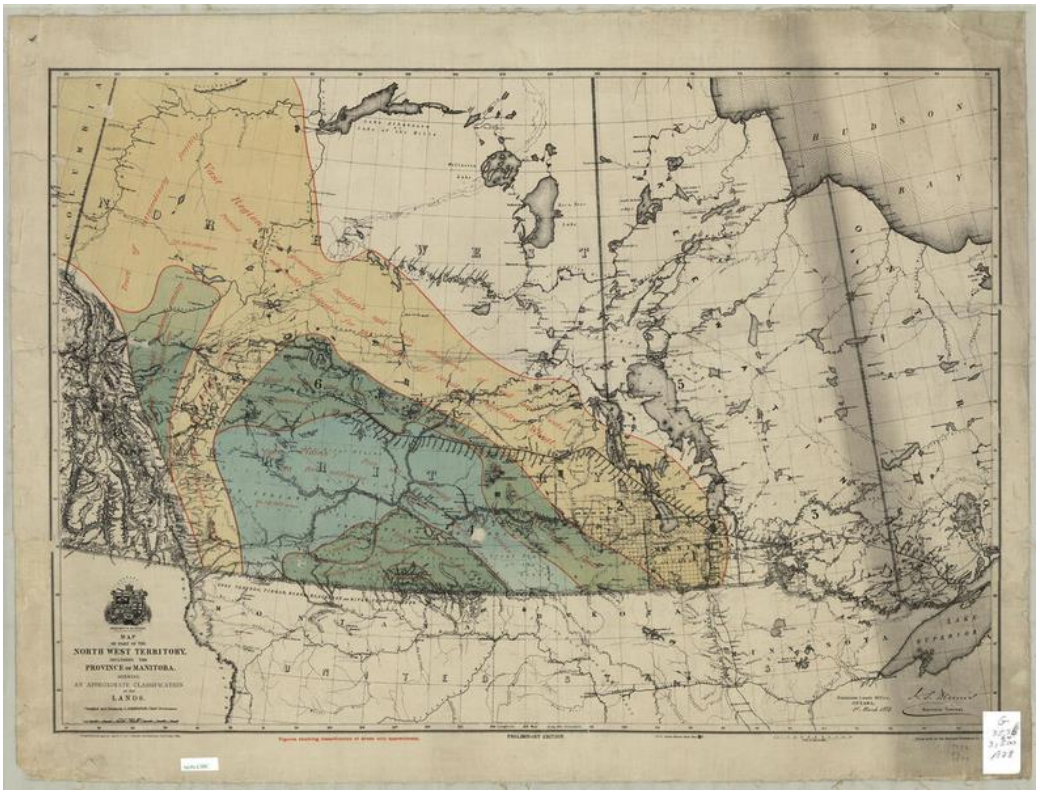


Figure 16. Palliser's Triangle as included in John Johnston's "Map of part of the North West Territory, including the province of Manitoba shewing an approximate classification of the lands," Dominion Lands Office: Department of the Interior, Ottawa, 1878. According to Palliser's final report of his expedition, the triangle portion of what is now the southern prairie provinces was a northern extension of the Great American Desert as it is called in the United States.[431]

[431] John Johnston, *Map of Part of the North West Territory, Including the Province of Manitoba Shewing an Approximate Classification of the Lands*, 1:3,500,000 (Ottawa: Dominion Lands Office: Department of the Interior, 1878).

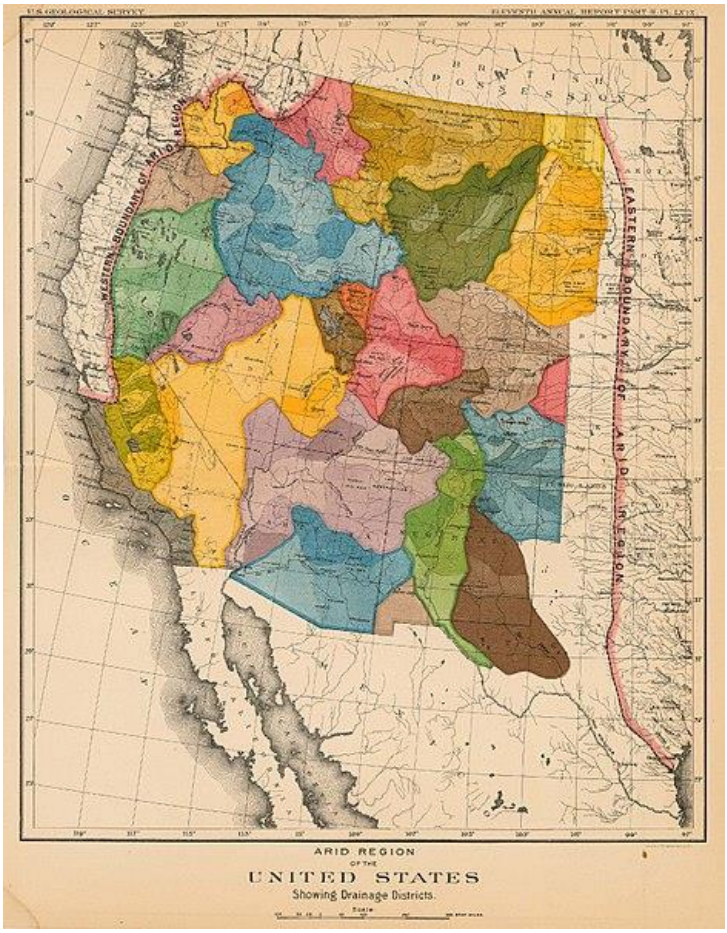


Figure 17. Arid Region of the United States Showing Drainage Districts. A map showing subdivision of the western United States by natural "drainage commonwealths", 1890, John Wesley Powell. By placing Palliser's map with that of American geologist John Wesley Powell, we can see the arid region in the center of the Old North Trail Corridor in its totality, representing a circle rather than the triangle Palliser saw with the false boundary, the straight line of the 49th parallel.[432]

In his May 20th, 1859 letter to the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Captain Palliser replied to the questions at-hand: Was the expansion of the Red River Settlement worthy of consideration as an English Colony? Should British troops be sent to "this portion of the empire" to achieve this end? How could settlers access this colony? Palliser observed that in the

[432] John Wesley Powell, *Arid Region of the United States Showing Drainage Districts: A Map Showing Subdivision of the Western United States by Natural "Drainage Commonwealths"* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1890).

Red River colony "the chief wealth of the agriculturist would be derived from the rearing of cattle; large quantities of very nutritious grasses abound everywhere. Hemp, flax, and hops grow admirably." Seeing similar, but perhaps not as ideal qualities, he stated "I…feel decidedly in favour of annexing not only the Saskatchewan, but also the Swan River District in one Colony, and so establish one great border line from the new Colony of British Columbia up to the Red River Settlement…The whole would thus include a territory of 240,000 square miles."

In response to the question of sending troops, Palliser stated that "it is impossible for the Hudson's Bay Company's authority to provide a government to meet the exigencies of a growing colony. Indians they can govern well through the medium of the trading shop; but the interests of a commercial community, which at all events must be adverse to their own, would not be likely to prosper under their rule." In answer to the final question, Palliser recommended a rail line following the southern branch of the Saskatchewan to the base of the Rockies, and a wagon or cart trail over the mountains until "a railroad by this route…might be reasonably entertained." [433] His words, for all intents and purposes, sealed the deal--the days of the fur trade economy were ending. The British colonial economy was placing its bets on large-scale agricultural settlement.

The Gifting of Ceremonies

As the settler colonial system blanketed the People, pressure on the bands resulted in internal and external struggles over access to land, food, and participation in the settler economic

[433] John Palliser and Thomas Wright Blakiston, *Exploration--British North America: Further Papers Relative to the Exploration by the Expedition under Captain Palliser of That Portion of British North America Which Lies between the Northern Branch of the River Saskatchewan and the Frontier of the United States, and between the Red River and the Rocky Mountains, and Thence to the Pacific Ocean.* (London: Printed by G.E. Eyre & W. Spottiswoode for H.M. Stationery Off., 1860), 4, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/011631187.

system itself. The effort of holding the Anishinaabe world together was felt within the bands as some leaders succumbed to political pressure and asked band members to join the Christian church. In other situations, the People themselves began to look for help and other sources of protection to aid them in their changing times. The People began to adopt Christianity or integrate aspects of Christianity into their Midewiwin practices.

In their winter counts, the Dakota refer to one village of the Turtle Mountain Band of Anishinaabeg, Peshikeekatat, (Bisskskatàt or Buffalo Lodge Hill), located about fifty miles south and west of Turtle Mountain.[434] Living on the margins near other tribes, Anishinaabeg built a fortified village there in the early part of the 19th century. Like their Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara kin, they grew massive quantities of corn, precious carbohydrates to round out their diet as they had mostly left behind the wild rice beds. Peshikeekatat (Buffalo Lodge Hill) is also a spiritual home of Chi Bizhiki (Grandfather Buffalo) and a sacred site where the People held Sun Dance. The Dakota remember when their scouts, disguised in wolf skins, discovered an Anishinaabe Sun Dance pledged by an Ogima known as Many Eagles Sitting.[435] Seeing so many ogichidaag (sacrifice dancers) crowding the huge Sun Dance arbor and the number of tipis in the Sun Dance encampment, the Dakota dared not attack.[436] Alexander Wolfe recounted the importance of Buffalo Lodge Hill as a shared landscape of sustenance and spirit, "When they

[434] Howard, *The Plains-Ojibwa or Bungi, Hunters and Warriors of the Northern Prairie, with Special Reference to the Turtle Mountain Band*, 5–6.
[435] Howard lists the name Many Eagles Sitting as šaptaneknosnewap and cites Turtle Mountain historian Charles Cree Jr. for this knowledge.
[436] Howard, *The Plains-Ojibwa or Bungi, Hunters and Warriors of the Northern Prairie, with Special Reference to the Turtle Mountain Band*, 5–6.

were hungry and desperate, spiritual instinct sometimes led grandfather and other Indians to [that place.]"[437]

Anishinaabeg immersed in the cultural diversity of the Plains kinship web adopted the Sun Dance, or Thirsty Dance. This was a sign of their increasing connection to Chi Bizhiki (Grandfather Buffalo.) The Sundance, pledged by an individual holy person, was the collective effort of the community, a physical sacrifice made as an appeal to the Spirit World for the gift of water (rain) to feed the grass, the buffalo, and the people. As the Anishinaabeg learned the ceremonial way of their Cree and Assiniboine kin, ethnographer David Mandelbaum reported that the Cree also went to the Ojibwe to be brought into their Midewiwin ceremonies and the plant knowledge that they held:

> Maskwa (Mandelbaum's Cree informant) told of a Plains Cree who went on an expedition to the east for the express purpose of securing medicines. He took with him two horses loaded with fine clothes. The Saulteaux (Ojibwe) were especially glad to get the horses, for they had very few. They took him into their mite-wiwin lodge where they taught him the use of many plants for medicinal purposes. Whenever it was possible, Saulteaux practitioners were called in to treat the sick.[438]

The spread of the Midewiwin ceremonies is reported by Charles Pratt, a Christian Anishinaabe, who recorded the practice of the Midewiwin ceremonies in the bands at Owaycepee (Qu'Appelle) Lakes throughout the second half of the 19th century.[439] The healing work of the Mide lodge with its plant medicine practices and the Sun Dance in support of the buffalo were carried together in support of the well-being of the kinship web. Both were important as the People faced waves of disease—scarlet fever, influenza, cholera, smallpox, measles and

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[437] Wolfe, *Earth Elder Stories: The Pinayzitt Path*, 67.
[438] Mandelbaum, *The Plains Cree: An Ethnographic, Historical and Comparative Study*, 165.
[439] Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780 to 1870*, 153.

tuberculosis—and food scarcity. James Daschuk describes these times as "a synergy of hardship."[440]

The Land and the People

The Land was of utter significance to the People. As Earth Elder acknowledged, the Anishinaabe relationship with the Land was not one of ownership but of responsibility:

> Our fathers periodically journeyed south to the hill country where Assincaocepeeod (rock with written symbols) is found. There they would fast and pray. They believed that the symbols on the rock at this spot described the level on which the Indian was placed, at the time of creation, a level that defined his responsibility and role in future times.[441]

The place Earth Elder speaks of is Writing Rock, near the current borders of Montana, North Dakota, and Saskatchewan. It is an example of a place that archaeologists Gerald and Joy Oetelaar have called a "focal point of spiritual power" where ritual observance and storytelling maintain relationship between humans and other-worldly figures for the sake of maintaining balance in the web of life.[442] The People moved over the Land in a reciprocal relationship of shared responsibility and mutual dependence. In another example of reciprocity, Alexander Wolfe explains that his band chose to live near Strawberry Lake because when the prairie fires came in the past, they would go into the water for protection. As they watched for fires, they worked *with* the elements of life for their survival. Where Anishinaabeg reciprocity comes is in

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[440] Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*, 77.
[441] Wolfe, *Earth Elder Stories: The Pinayzitt Path*, 22.
[442] Gerald A. Oetelaar and D. Joy Oetelaar, "The Structured World of the Niitsitapii: The Landscape as Historical Archive Among Hunter-Gatherers of the Northern Plains," in *Structured Worlds: The Archeology of Hunter-Gatherer Thought and Action*, ed. Aubrey Cannon, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2012), 70. Also quoted in, Colpitts, "Peace, War, and Climate Change on the Northern Plains," 423.

our tradition of looking after the water with prayer and ceremony. By maintaining a relationship of acknowledgement, honoring, and protection, the People maintained their seasonal way of life within a spiritual landscape.

As colonial conditions grew worse in the second half of the 19th century, the People's instinct was to continue to turn to the Land, their ceremonies, their way of life and one another. The kinship exchange network minimized risk, in part, through the seasonal movement over the land which minimized overuse, and, as Cole Harris acknowledges, by "cooperation and sharing within systems of generalized reciprocity. Sharing, rather than wealth hoarding, incurred reciprocal obligations that could be drawn on in times of need."[443] Kinship bonds helped maintain their autonomy in the face of colonial intrusions. For example, the Pembina Band, in their mixed heritage, reflected the larger web of relationship that had spread from the Red River to the Rockies between 1730 and 1850—the kinship web of the Assiniboine, Cree, Ojibwe, and Métis, also known as the Nehiyaw-Pwat Confederacy, or alliance.[444] Originally a branch of the Red Lake Band Ojibwe, the Pembina Band had through intermarriage become more and more Métis:

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[443] Cole Harris, "Arthur J. Ray and the Empirical Opportunity," in *New Histories for Old: Changing Perspectives on Canada's Native Pasts*, ed. Ted Binnema and Susan Neylan (Vancouver, B.C.: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 258; Arthur J. Ray, "Periodic Shortages, Native Welfare, and the Hudson's Bay Company, 1673-1930," in *The Subarctic Fur Trade: Native Social and Economic Adaptations*, ed. Shepard Krech (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984), 1–20.

[444] This alliance is also referred to as the Nehiyaw-Pwat or Iron Confederacy, particularly in relationship to their opposition of the Niitsitapi (Blackfeet) Confederacy. See Vrooman, *"The Whole Country Was...'One Robe'": The Little Shell Tribe's America*; Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line: Creating a Border and Dividing a People*. Robert Alexander Innes, "The Importance of Family Ties to Members of Cowessess First Nation" (Ph.D., Tucson, AZ, University of Arizona, 2007), 47-62.

> Notwithstanding their interdependence and coparticipation in a variety of activities, groups maintained their ethnic integrity and separateness through various structural mechanisms (Albers 1993: 100-111). On the other hand, Plains Indian populations were tied to each other through relationships of merger where ethnically distinct groups stood on more or less common grounds in relation to the means of production.[445]

In other words, the kinship network was held together by the buffalo. Banding together was not always an easy way of survivance, but it was the natural strategy of highly relational Indigenous cultures.

The Northern Plains Native sense of responsibility to territory, or the Land, implied an obligation to share with others. George Colpitts has described how tightly responsibility and reciprocity are tied together in an example of a place of peaceful coexistence and abundance, during a time of hardship through multiple years of drought, 1830-34. The Neutral Hills, a rich hunting, berry and herbal gathering place between the North and South branches of the Saskatchewan, was a well-known place of neutrality, where the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) and Nehiyaw Pwat Confederacies, acknowledged a mediated peace between tribes, sealed with the pipe, in recognition of the shared needs of all for the abundance the Land offers there.[446] This example of "a cooperative encounter [that] reaffirmed strategies of resource allocation among

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[445] Patricia C. Albers, "Changing Patterns of Ethnicity in the Northeastern Plains, 1780-1870," in *History, Power, and Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Americas, 1492-1992,* ed. Jonathan D. Hill (University of Iowa Press, 1996.) See also: Sharrock, "Crees, Cree-Assiniboines, and Assiniboines: Interethnic Social Organization on the Far Northern Plains," *Ethnohistory* 21, no. 2 (1974): 95–122, https://doi.org/10.2307/480946; Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line : Creating a Border and Dividing a People*.

[446] The area of neutrality, or shared abundance, was located to the south of the crook in the North Saskatchewan, and included the area of the hills, and the area north and east of them. George Colpitts --, "Peace, War, and Climate Change on the Northern Plains: Bison Hunting in the Neutral Hills during the Mild Winters of 1830–34," *Canadian Journal of History* 50 (2015): 420–41.

the many bands that relied on them," demonstrates the spirit of cooperation that once existed and was, as Alexander Wolfe and so many others attest, part of Indigenous ways of being.[447]

The Function of Food

From this understanding of sharing the abundance of the land, we turn to the concept of "starving" among the Native peoples. Records from fur posts, missionaries, and the military document this phenomenon on the Northwestern Plains. Historian Mary Black-Roger plucked some examples from the records of the era noting, "It seems to have been peculiarly easy-and apparently communicative-for a trader to write, for example: '5 Indians came in STARVing, brought furs,' 'they STARVed much the first part of the winter,' 'the usual yarn, STARVation,' 'entire family STARVed to death.'"[448] In Black-Rogers analysis she concludes that the keepers of the journals interpretation of "Indians as dependent, childlike, begging, destitute, starving, and oriented toward welfare has been overdrawn." To her point, much has been lost in translation as historians have worked in these archival records. Building on her analysis, I would like to emphasize the complexity added to interpretation of this term in the context of the intermingling of the settler economy and the kinship network of exchange.

In the Native kinship network, asking for food and receiving it was part of establishing relationships and practicing the cultural value of reciprocity. Yes, the act of asking for food at the posts and elsewhere could have also meant many things: that Indigenous people were intent on establishing relational expectations; that they wished to trade fish or rabbits for foods they preferred or needed, such as fatty pemmican, which the posts may have possessed; or they may

[447] Colpitts, 421.
[448] Mary Black-Rogers, "Varieties of 'Starving': Semantics and Survival in the Subarctic Fur Trade, 1750-1850," *Ethnohistory* 33, no. 4 (1986): 353, https://doi.org/10.2307/482039.

have meant we literally have nothing and are in dire need of sustenance.[449] In any case, the philosophy of sharing food was understood differently by the settler-colonial and Indigenous cultures of the region.

Further interpretation of the Anishinaabe understanding of the "right to" and "good use of" food comes in the name Bungi, a common settler misnomer for the Ojibwe. Bungi means "a little bit" in Ojibwemowin, or "give us a little bit," and was recorded by HBC traders to have been used frequently *in first encounters*. In his explanation on the "discourse of starvation," historian George Colpitts reports that, "The strategic claim to starvation affected not only the food trade, but also other trades, especially furs and skins."[450] In other words, the request for food was an Anishinaabe or Bungi contractual demand when doing business. In Colpitt's reading, by asking to share a little food, Anishinaabeg were asking to establish relationship. Hence, the term Bungi used to refer to the Anishinaabe, or their starving demeanor reported in the fur trader's nickname for them, was a cultural norm of relationship building rather than a literal request to alleviate suffering or starvation.

The Ojibwe were existing in two economies, yet, as Colpitts observes, they brought their Indigenous identity to the table in both settings. We share because we are establishing relational bonds that serve as an agreement to tend to one another in the future.[451] As with use of the pipe

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[449] Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780 to 1870*, 176.
[450] Colpitts, *Pemmican Empire: Food, Trade, and the Last Bison Hunts in the North American Plains, 1780-1882*, 278.
[451] Colpitts, 278. In reference to this discourse Colpitts quotes Victor P Lytwyn, *Muskekowuck Athinuwick : Original People of the Great Swampy Land* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2002), 45. See also, Mary Black-Roger's in depth examination of the term 'starving' and how it relates to the Ojibwe notion of 'pity': Mary Black-Rogers, "Varieties of 'Starving': Semantics and Survival in the Subarctic Fur Trade, 1750-1850," *Ethnohistory* 33, no. 4 (1986): 353–83, https://doi.org/10.2307/482039.

in the “ceremony” of colonial treaties made with Indigenous nations, the use of feasting by the colonial treaty conference organizers violated the cultural values of the Anishinaabeg and their kin. Feasting is a way of establishing good relationships. The Indigenous social contract of feasting, sharing food until it was gone with knowledge that together we would protect and care for one another in future times of mutual need, did not translate across the divide of world views and cultural values. Certainly, our ancestors recognized that feasting in the treaty context did not mean the same thing as when their communities held feasts.

As the recorders and interpreters of history have dealt with the symbolic function of food in Indigenous worlds, they often lacked understandings of Indigenous ways of being, including responsibilities to territory and other-than-human beings, which would have shed light on Indigenous meaning. The same cultural blindness was at work when colonial governments coopted Indigenous ways of being with regard to treaty-making. Assumptions about the function of food have obscured historical interpretations of the People and their realties.

Gashkadino-Giizis (Freezing Over Moon)

Gashkadino-giizis is the time of year when the Star Nation is closest to us and a time when every creature being prepares for the coming fasting ground. With this closeness of the ancestors traveling amidst the nearby medicine road (the Milky Way,) we prepare by seeking the spiritual knowledge that will guide our path. Ancestral knowledge lies in our songs, ceremonies, and stories, As we prepare to meet the physical and spiritual landscape ahead, we do the work which make us ready to receive minigoowiziwin (that which is given to us.) The ogimaag in the

19th century were intensely challenged as the struggled to hold the Anishinaabe world together, particularly in the treaty process with the colonial governments

Treaty Making/Treaty Taking

Treaty making in the European-American tradition began as all Indigenous-settler relationships did—with European appropriation of Indigenous "values, observances, and practices in order to establish their sincerity and bona fides as trading partners."[452] Just as colonial surveyors marking the US-Canadian boundary line began by extracting Indigenous knowledge of place for their own purposes, the colonial treaty makers studied Indigenous protocols of council and used them for colonial ends.[453] Symbology important to the Indigenous cultures of the Northern Plains--the pipe, laden with symbolic significance, along with elaborate gift giving, speech making, and other ceremonies—was brought into colonial treaty agreements.

While treaty making between Nations of the Northern Plains and Rockies was a norm, the kinship ties of the Native network represented a different kind of contract from those the settler governments sought to establish. By all evidence, in the Euro American view colonial treaties were transactional commercial agreements.[454] George Colpitts explains the difference, "Relationships based upon material exchange in [Indigenous] America, then, did not end when goods of equal value finally passed hands. The true cost of a trade was in social obligations, obligations that went beyond the ledger and usually served to enliven, rather than end, the

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[452] J.R. Miller, "Compact, Contract, Covenant: The Evolution of Indian Treaty-Making," in *New Histories for Old: Changing Perspectives on Canada's Native Pasts*, ed. Ted Binnema and Susan Neylan (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 69–70.
[453] Palliser and Blakiston, *Exploration--British North America*, 10.
[454] Craft, "Breathing Life Into the Stone Fort Treaty," 20–40; Johnston, *Anishinaubae Thesaurus*, 19.

relations both parties had begun in their transactions."[455] Treaty negotiators who represented their colonial governments coopted Indigenous protocols, and rather than presenting a discrete commercial exchange, they obscured their intentions in a cloud of cultural confusion.

By wading into Indigenous traditions in treaty making, the colonial powers were stepping into the "covenant" relationship between people and the Land. Historian of Native-Newcomer Relations, J.R. Miller observes, "As treaty-related ceremonies suggest and oral history confirms, western First Nations saw the agreements that they made between 1871 and 1877 as establishing relationships under the oversight of the Creator, relationships that were intended to be renewed annually, last forever, and be modified as circumstances required."[456] While Miller is referring to the British treaty process, the pattern was the same in treaty-making, or rather treaty-taking, on both sides of the Medicine Line.

On the American side the treaties with the Anishinaaabeg of the West began with a failed attempt at treaty all together. The 1851 Turtle Mountain Treaty, or Pembina Treaty, was negotiated by Alexander Ramsey, US Commissioner of Indian Affairs, with the Ogimaag of Pembina and Red Lake and Métis leaders. Ramsey, after much discussion, decided to allow the halfbreeds to participate because he favored, and assumed they wanted, access to scrip certificates which could be cashed in for fee simple land on which they could settle. Given the Métis embrace of life with the buffalo, this was not the case.[457] The final terms of the deal had

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[455] George Colpitts, *North America's Indian Trade in European Commerce and Imagination, 1580-1850: North America's Indian Trade in European Commerce and Imagination, 1580-1850* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2014), 56, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/montana/detail.action?docID=1582242.
[456] Miller, "Compact, Contract, Covenant: The Evolution of Indian Treaty-Making," 87–88.
[457] Vrooman, *"The Whole Country Was...'One Robe'": The Little Shell Tribe's America*, 91–101.

the Pembina Chippewa and halfbreeds ceding five million acres of land including thirty miles of land on both sides of the Red River, for a sum of $230,000 in annuities paid out over twenty years. This first US attempt at a treaty for the fertile Red River Valley was not, however, ratified. Congress decided they were in too tight a squeeze, settling with the Dakota for $3,750,000, and anticipating the potential Fort Laramie settlement with multiple tribes. Nevertheless, the derailed treaty process dispossessed the Red River Ojibwa and Métis, as ratified or not, it sparked a settler land rush along the border.[458]

"A Great Struggle of Ascendancy"

By the time of the Pembina? treaty, the colonial machine was rolling westward on wagon wheels. Long wagon trains, with as many as 500 wagons, snaked across the lands of the Northern Plains following the Oregon Trail System at the rate of 50,000 settlers per year.[459] Along the middle portion of the Old North Trail Corridor, Fort Laramie, originally an American Fur Company post, was now a weigh station for prospector settlers. Some headed west to the mines in the new state of California; Mormon settlers headed to land of the Utes and Shoshones; and others pointed north, along the Bozeman Trail, though gold discoveries there would not be made until 1858. The Lakota and their neighbors, the Crows, were pressed in competition with one another, as were all buffalo nations, while the one who stood for us was disappearing.

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[458] Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*, 74.

[459] "From the Utah Territory," *The Washington Republic*, September 16, 1851. Historians at the Wyoming Historical Society estimate "by 1850 there were 50,000 emigrants using the routes" each year. "Digital Toolkit: Father De Smet's Map: Tribal Boundaries and the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851 | The Online Encyclopedia of Wyoming History," accessed October 22, 2021, https://www.wyohistory.org/education/toolkit/father-de-smets-map-tribal-boundaries-and-fort-laramie-treaty-1851.

At the beckoning of emigrants and by the appropriations of the US Congress, Fort Laramie had been purchased to advance the Nation's purposes. Local Indian agent Thomas Fitzpatrick, in his correspondence with the military leadership, wrote, "My opinion is that a post at or in the vicinity of Fort Laramie is much wanted. It would be nearly in the vicinity of the buffalo range, where all the more formidable Indian tribes are fast approaching, and near where there will eventually (as the game decreases) be a great struggle for the ascendency."[460]

When the US government summoned delegates of eight tribes--Lakotas, Dakotas, Arapahoes, Northern Cheyennes, Crows, Mandans, Arikaras, and the Assiniboines—to the1851 treaty conference, they probably did not expect twelve thousand Indigenous people to show. These twelve thousand represented broad intertribal resistance to the full-scale settler colonial invasion of their homelands. Amongst them was Maskepetoon (Chief Broken Arm, Cree) and Chief L'Ours Fou (Crazy Bear, Assiniboine) representing the Nehiyaw Pwat Confederacy of Ojibwe, Cree, Assiniboine, and Métis. What was negotiated at Fort Laramie was the first territorial boundaries of the Northern Plains imposed by the US Government on the tribes to take control of the land, a precursor to the reservation system to come.

Previous US boundaries on Indian Territory had established longitudinal boundaries for settler invasion--the Appalachian Range, then the Mississippi River. The Fort Laramie Treaty now undermined the Intercourse Act of 1834 with its "Permanent Indian Frontier Boundary" of the Mississippi and established US government right-of-way to establish posts and roads across western territories. It demanded that travelers, railroad surveyors, and construction workers be

[460] Quoted in LeRoy Reuben Hafen and Francis Marion Young, *Fort Laramie and the Pageant of the West, 1834-1890,* (Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1938), 108.

permitted to enter tribal lands safely. In the larger view, in addition to moving these tribes to an area that would serve as a collective northern reservation, the central and southern plains tribes were similarly being moved to make way for two transportation avenues. The sovereign claim made by President Andrew Jackson in the 1830 Indian Removal Act whereby he laid out the power and intention of the US Government to make treaties with Indian Nations, was now unleashed on the Northwestern Plains. To make space for the deluge of settlers rolling across the Plains, the US Government also passed the 1851 Indian Appropriations Bill, which authorized the establishment of Indian reservations, smaller parcels than previous territories assigned to Indian Nations. As historian Pekka Hämäläinen wrote, "The idea of a permanent Indian country had died, replaced by a new order of racial segregation."[461] The West was now officially "open for business."

In exchange for their dispossession the tribes would receive annuities, including "provisions, merchandise, domestic animals, and agricultural implements," for ten years this annuities clause was the beginning of a new relationship with food and new foods for Indigenous people. The treaty legislated a dependency relationship between the Northern Plains tribes and the federal government. The final article of the treaty stated, "should any of the Indian Nations…violate any of the provisions thereof, the United States may withhold the whole or a portion of the annuities," thus weaponizing food in the context of a dependency relationship.[462]

[461]Hämäläinen, "Reconstructing the Great Plains", 485.
[462] "Treaty between the United States and the Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapho, Crow, Assiniboin, Gros Ventre, Madan and Arikara Indians at Fort Laramie, Indian Territory" (Department of the Interior: Office of Indian Affairs, September 17, 1851), Record Group 75: Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1793 - 1999, National Archives, https://catalog.archives.gov/id/12013686.

North of the Medicine Line, the colonial government of British North America began establishing the Robinson Treaties with Anishinaabeg in the Upper Great Lakes in the 1850s. Anishinaabeg and their kin living in the area north of Lake Huron and east of Lake Superior had been participating in a mixed subsistence and commercial economy since the middle of the 18th century or for a hundred years. During the first half of the 19th century their Indigenous food system fell into an environmental crisis owing to the depletion of the four-leggeds. They were now reliant on hares for meat, and fish, if they had access. Owing to fluctuations in the hare cycle and no flexibility in the larger web of life due to depletions, the People experienced waves of starvation. The Anishinaabe threshold was hit in the 1840s when the Crown began to allow mining leases on Anishinaabe lakeshore settlements. The Anishinaabeg organized. In the spring of 1846 Chief Shiguakonce (Little Pine) of Garden River threatened a Crown land surveyor and organized his band to demand payment for their lands. In November of 1849, an armed party of Anishinaabeg seized the Quebec Mining Company property at Mica Bay north of Sault Ste. Marie and forced the closure of the copper mine. Anishinaabeg resistance to the mineral extraction wave of settler development and demands for support brought about the Robinson Treaties of 1850 and Treaties 1, 2, 3, which set precedents for further treaties to come in the Interior.[463] However, western expansion north of the line occurred at a slower pace than south of the Medicine Line.

In late September 1855, the US process of treaty taking advanced under the leafless, bare cottonwood trees at the confluence of the Judith River and Missouri River, on the path the great

[463] Arthur J. Ray, Jim Miller, and Frank J. Tough, *Bounty and Benevolence* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 32–86.

herd had long followed. The Judith Treaty put an emphasis on government dictated peace terms among "Crows, Assineboins, Crees, Snakes, Blackfeet, Sans Arcs, and Aunce-pa-pas bands of Sioux, and all other neighboring nations and tribes of Indians," while giving federal recognition of "a common hunting-ground for ninety-nine years, where all the nations, tribes and bands of Indians, parties to this treaty, may enjoy equal and uninterrupted privileges of hunting, fishing and gathering fruit, grazing animals, curing meat and dressing robes."[464] The treaty strategy was to recognize a common hunting ground which previously existed on the Upper Missouri and Yellowstone drainages. As historian William Farr acknowledges, the early 19th century journals of explorers and fur traders of the area document, the existence of "an ongoing 'bison diplomacy' between the contending if unequal tribes that was vibrant, intensely dynamic, and nothing like the picture of unremitting and unrelieved warfare so often portrayed."[465]

While the treaty implied the protection of the buffalo way of life, it also stated "for the purpose of establishing travelling thoroughfares through their [Indian] country" the nations and tribes consent to allow the US to:

> establish lines of telegraph and military posts; use materials of every description found in the Indian country; build houses for agencies, missions, schools, farms, shops, mills, stations, and for any other purpose for which they may be required, and permanently occupy as much land as may be necessary for the various purposes above enumerated, including the use of wood for fuel and land for

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[464] "Ratified Indian Treaty 299: Blackfeet, Flathead, and Nez Perce-Council Ground on Upper Missouri near Mouth of Judith River, Nebraska Territory," October 17, 1855, Record Group 11: General Records of the United States Government, 1778-2006, National Archives and Records Administration.

[465] William E Farr, "'When We Were First Paid': The Blackfoot Treaty, the Western Tribes, and the Creation of the Common Hunting Ground, 1855," *Great Plains Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (Spring 2001): 135.

> grazing, and that the navigation of all lakes and streams shall be forever free to citizens of the United States.[466]

The treaty essentially paid lip service to the requirements and continuation of buffalo life at a time when the settler economy was extracting boats full of buffalo robes on the very waters where the treaty was signed.

"My dependence is on that prairie"

Just before nindaanikoobijigan (my ancestor), Songab (Standing Strong), Grand Nokomis of the Ahdik dodem at Red Lake made her journey to the next world, her brother Misko-makwa (Red Bear) was summoned along with Ase-anse (Little Shell) and other ogimaag of the Pembina and Red Lake Bands to the high banks of the Red Lake River at Old Crossing. It was early fall, mandoomin-giizis (wild rice moon), in the year 1863, and Indian agent Ashley C. Morrill and then Minnesota Governor Alexander Ramsey again wanted to negotiate with the Red Lake and Pembina Bands regarding a land cession "of extraordinary fertility and finely adapted to the production of small grains."[467] What was at stake was the entire Red River Valley from the 49th parallel to the Sheyenne River, or 11 million acres of Anishinaabewaki, a much larger claim than that of the earlier failed Pembina Treaty.[468]

Ramsey and Morrill, both seasoned Indian agents and treaty negotiators, promised use of the land for years to come and played up their bargaining chips--annuities, halfbreed scrip,

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[466] "Ratified Indian Treaty 299: Blackfeet, Flathead, and Nez Perce-Council Ground on Upper Missouri near Mouth of Judith River, Nebraska Territory," October 17, 1855, Record Group 11: General Records of the United States Government, 1778-2006, National Archives and Records Administration.

[467] "Articles of a Treaty Made and Concluded at the Old Crossing of the Red Lake River, 39" (Senate Exec.Doc., 26th Congress, 1st Session). https://www.redlakenation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/old_crossing_treaty.pdf

[468] Treuer, *Warrior Nation: A History of the Red Lake Ojibwe*, 52–62.

reservations, and hunting and fishing rights.[469] In spite of the recent passing of the US Homestead Act of 1862 and its intended transference of land into the hands of settler citizens, the notion of private property was deliberately played down by the treaty negotiators and the land claims buried in language indiscernible by the intended signers. As the ogimaag from both bands discerned the future for generations to come, they spoke back to Ramsey's condescension of their way of life. Little Rock spoke for the Red Lake Band when he said: "The Master of Life gave us the river and the water thereof to drink, and the woods and the roads we depend on for subsistence, and you are mistaken if you think we derive no benefits from them. The Master of Life gave it to us for an inheritance, and gave us the animals for food and clothing…My dependence is on that prairie."[470]

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[469] Scrip refers to redeemable certificates issued by the governments of Canada and the US to Métis (halfbreeds) for the purpose of settlement. The certificates were negotiable and redeemable for cash or land grants. "These grants were meant to extinguish any aboriginal rights to the landscape that they might hold as an indigenous culture. Along with the Indian treaties, they would allow the federal government to convey western lands to new settlers unencumbered by prior rights of use. Land grants were seen as the least expensive way for the government to extinguish the Métis title." Like bank bonds Canadian scrip certificates were printed in denominations of $20, $80, $160, and $240; and in 80, 160 and 240 acres. On the US side, scrip was also called "halbreed tract" and was also redeemable for land, up to 640 acres. However, once certificates were issued there were many ways that holders could be dispossessed. Frequently, the land that scrip holders held claim to was already settled by colonial settlers, scrip holders were also shut out of land offices where claims were made, and land speculators swindled scrip holders for their certificates and then made claims on mining territory around silver mines in Nevada and the forests around Lake Tahoe. Frederick L. Johnson, "'Half-Breed' Tract | MNopedia," MNopedia, Minnesota Historical Society, July 24, 2013, https://www.mnopedia.org/place/half-breed-tract; Library and Archives Canada, "Essay: Métis Scrip - 'The Foundation for a New Beginning,'" April 8, 2013, https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/metis/metis-scrip-records/Pages/essay-foundation-new-beginning.aspx.

[470] "Articles of a Treaty Made and Concluded at the Old Crossing of the Red Lake River, 39," 18–20.

After many heated rounds of negotiation, it was Ogimaa Moose Dung who was left at the table trying to acquire a significant payment and with hopes of protecting the people from what government force might come if they did not sign. With the disappearance of the buffalo in the region over the previous thirty years, Moose Dung was justified in his efforts. The treaty was signed by both bands—each received a 624-acre reservation, for the chief of Red Lake near Thief River and for Songab's brother, Ogimaa Misko-makwa, on the north side of the Pembina River. They were also promised annuity payments for twenty years including money for agricultural education and supplies.[471] However, the *agricultural land,* the most excellent agricultural land of the Red River Valley, went to the settlers. The Anishinaabemowin word ishkonigan is used for reservation—it means "that which is left."[472] Songab's children would have to move. Many of her children with Peter Grant, including my family, and those she had with her second husband, Charles Bottineau, would come west following the buffalo.

"Extracting from the Indians"

In the mid-1860s, the western and southern bands of the Nehiyaw Pwat Confederacy (Cree, Assiniboine, Ojibwe, and Métis) lived in proximity to the remaining buffalo in the Old North Trail Corridor on both sides of the Medicine Line. On the American side, they were in the Milk, Marias, Judith, and Teton River valleys, with the trading post, Fort Benton, in the center. Those who lived to the north between Wood Mountain and the Cypress Hills had access to

[471] Vrooman, *"The Whole Country Was...'One Robe'": The Little Shell Tribe's America*, 143–50.
[472] Wolfe, *Earth Elder Stories: The Pinayzitt Path*, 56.

trading at HBC posts along the South Saskatchewan and at American Missouri River posts.[473] Those living farther east on the Souris River and around Turtle Mountain, traveled great distances to the buffalo. At this time, there was also a significant out-migration of Anishinaabeg and Métis coming from the St. Francis Xavier near Winnipeg and Turtle Mountain heading towards the western prairies and Rocky Mountains.[474] The robe trade reached its peak in the mid-1860s, and the mobility of the people was a result of the chaos that it was causing.

Reporting on the conditions of the Indians relative to the fur trade, Samuel H. Latta, Indian Agent on the Upper Missouri wrote the following in his 1862 letter addressed to US Commissioner of Indian Affairs, William Dole:

> This old American Fur Company (so called) is the most corrupt institution ever tolerated in our country. They have involved the government in their speculations, and schemes; they have enslaved the Indians, kept them in ignorance; taken from them year after year their pitiful earnings, in robes and furs, without giving them an equivalent; discouraged them in agriculture by telling them that should the white man find that this country would produce they would come in and take their lands from them. They break up and destroy every opposition to their trade that ventured into this country, and then make up their losses by extracting from the Indians.[475]

The American Fur Company did business on the upper river until 1864 when they sold out to the Northwestern Fur Company, but the inland port of Fort Benton remained essential to US industrial development for another twenty years until railroad transportation took over. The

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[473] Michel Hogue, "Disputing the Medicine Line: The Plains Cree and the Canadian-American Border, 1876-85," in *One West, Two Myths: A Comparative Reader*, ed. Carol Higham and Robert Thacker (Calgary, Alberta: University of Calgary Press, 2004), 87.

[474] Gerhard J. Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 111–12. Eli Louis (I-iss-se-na-maka Guardipee Takes Gun Ahead), "Eli Guardipee Reminiscence" (1940), Archive Collection, Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena, MT, U.S.A.

[475] Samuel H. Latta, "Letter from Samuel H. Latta, United States Agent, Upper Missouri, to US Commissioner of Indian Affairs, William P. Dole, US Office of Indian Affairs, Montana Superintendency Records, 1861-68, 1870-1871," August 28, 1862, Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena, MT, U.S.A.

upper part of the river was only navigable in the highest water of the year. On June 11, 1866, there were seven steamboats at the levee of Fort Benton, 3,560 miles from the ocean.[476] Powered by coal, the steamboats were express transportation in the robe trade, carrying the hides of buffalo off to colonial centers of industrialization. Here is where the US and the American Fur Company had an advantage over the British Territories and the HBC. Transportation in the interior of the British Northwest Territories was restricted by the terrain of the Canadian Shield, mainly rocky ground interspersed with copious numbers of lakes and bogs. There was no intercontinental waterway such as the Missouri-Mississippi route and no easy work-around for an overland route by road or rail. The US had the quickest route to the eastern and global markets for robes.

In 1867, British North American became the Dominion of Canada, comprised of a few eastern provinces, Rupert's Land, and the Northwest Territories. The vision of Canadian expansionists was of an agricultural empire in the Northwest in which there would be a "joint extension of settlement and commerce." The hope of Canadian nation builders was for a land full of farmers who lived lives of buying and selling goods, rather than subsistence farming. As the spirit of nationalism spread through Canada, the future of the Dominion was tied to the rapid occupancy and plowing of the prairies. [477]

In October of 1869, Canadian surveyors were seen traipsing around Métis settlements along the Red River. For years, there had been growing debate about the expansion of the new

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[476] Hiram Martin Chittenden, *History of the Early Steamboat Naivigation on the Missouri River: Life and Adventures of Joseph La Barge, Pioneer Navigator and Indian Trader for Fifty Years Identified with the Commerce of the Missouri Valley* (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1903), 238.
[477] Alexander Russell, *The Red River Country, Hudson's Bay and the North-West Territories Considered in Relation to Canada* (Ottawa: G.E. Desbarats, 1869,) 5.

Nation to annex Rupert's Land. Now the narrow French-style river lots of Métis farmers, including that of my own great-great grandfather, Pierre Falcon, were about to be reassessed in the rectangular survey, as the Canadian government threatened to overwrite Métis claims to their lands. Louis Riel surfaced as the Métis leader in opposition to the HBC sale of Rupert's Land to the Dominion. Riel voiced the Métis position which acknowledged that they belonged to the land, knew the land, and had built the commercial economy that existed there at the time. The Métis were vested in Rupert's Land and expressed their opposition by first blocking the Canadian-appointed governor from crossing the border at Pembina in early November. They also seized the HBC's Fort Garry and, later in the winter, formed a Provisional Government of Rupert's Land to press their claims with the Dominion, including an appeal for territorial status within the Dominion for all of Assiniboia (Rupert's Land). They also called for local control of the territories, and respect for existing "properties, rights, and privileges." In assertion of their corporate rights, the Métis gained recognition of Métis aboriginal title in the 1870 Manitoba Act of 1870 and established the new Province of Manitoba. In the spring, the Canadian government sent military troops to the Red River Settlement leading to an unsettling in which additional families headed west.[478]

Under pressure from Great Britain, and in fulfillment of Captain John Palliser's recommendation, the Hudson's Bay Company reluctantly sold Rupert's Land to the Government on March 20, 1869. Ownership of the 1.5 million acres changed hands for a dollar an acre, a fraction of the rate the U.S. paid Russia for Alaska two years previously. The colonial expansion

[478] Hagen, "Northern Plains Borders and the People In Between, 1860-1940," 160–63; Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line: Creating a Border and Dividing a People*, 215.

of the US and Canada were in full swing. Meanwhile by 1870, the seasonal round pattern of movement across the land was in shambles and there were no alternative employments. On the Plains the situation was quite urgent, and it was from this place that the ancestors came to negotiations with the US Government and new Dominion of Canada in negotiating treaties, reserve/reservation homelands, scrip, and other government management strategies for "clearing the land" of Indians.

The dance between two economies had been ongoing in the Anishinaabe experience for the better part of three centuries. Native co-existence in two economies had long frustrated the settler economy, as Cole Harris summarizes, "Demand inelasticity was related partly to the carrying capacity of canoes, partly to mobile lifestyles in which goods quickly became impediments, and partly to cultures that assigned no status value to material acquisition." Indians did not make good capitalists. The dance could not go on forever. As historian Cole Harris declares, "there was a gradual loss of control as, sooner or later, Native groups lost the means of their own support."[479] While battles were waged between the tired and weary Nations of the Northwestern plains, the real battle was for the sovereignty of one economy over another. In 1858 when meeting with a Cree Council, Henry Youle Hind heard an elder, who had lived a hundred winters, speak. Hind said the elder remembered the time "when his people were as

[479]Cole Harris, "Arthur J. Ray and the Empirical Opportunity," in *New Histories for Old: Changing Perspectives on Canada's Native Pasts*, ed. Ted Binnema and Susan Neylan (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 252. Arthur Ray and D.B. Freeman argued that the fur trade represented a hybrid economy that embodied elements of 'gift trade,' 'administered trade,' and 'market trade.' Arthur J Ray and Donald B. Freeman, *"Give Us Good Measure" : An Economic Analysis of Relations between the Indians and the Hudson's Bay Company before 1763* (Toronto ; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1978).

numerous as the buffalo are now, and the buffalo thick as trees in the forest."[480] His words connect the well-being of the people and the buffalo. As the storm was passing over the People, their sovereignty, the one who stood for them for millennia was disappearing.

Conclusion

Dagwaagin is a time in which we traditionally separated from our relatives. Following the fall buffalo hunts, as we neared the time of winter, we divided into extended family groups or bandlets to be easier on the land in our taking of food and wood. The land and everything in it is more fragile and vulnerable in the winter. It was our land practice to walk tenderly in this season. In these northern latitudes many of our other-than-human relatives were leaving for the winter as well—the winged ones, the crawling ones, and the bears made their disappearance for the long cold months ahead. In these troubled times, relatives were leaving for the next world as well—taken by illness, battles, and hunger. Like the young boy and girl who left their people for want of food, we were separating from our relatives.

There is a story that has been passed for generations in my family of my nindaanikoobijigan-kwe (ancestral grandmother) traveling with her brothers, husband and children, along the Gitchipeeganoweceepee (the Upper Missouri River). Somewhere near Fort Benton, they were attacked by other Native people who were after their horses. We do not know when this was exactly, but we can deduce by place names and times it may have been after 1846 when the American Fur Company post, Fort Benton, was established and at a time when our people with the assistance of mishtadimoog (horses) had followed the buffalo west across the

[480] Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857 and of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition of 1858*, 1:361.

Plains. Owing to the tensions between the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) and Nehiyaw Pwat Confederacies, it may have been Amskapi Piikani (Southern Piegan or Blackfeet) who attempted to steal their horses that day, but there were many Native peoples in the area at the time as the pressure for subsistence and survival in a changing world touched us all. In the skirmish that occurred, my nindaanikoobijigan-inini (ancestral grandfather) was killed and my nindaanikoobijigan-kwe (ancestral grandmother) hid with the children as her brothers fled with the horses. Grandmother and her brothers must have been quite distressed by the dangers around them. The brothers fled, perhaps to protect the horses who were great helpers in their way of life, and plausibly her brothers trusted grandmother's strong heart and good judgment to protect the children. Hiding in the day and traveling by the cover of night, kokum (grandmother) kept her children safe as they followed Gitchipeeganoweceepee, the river, who led her home to the place where our People were camped, near Fort Union, a distance of 400 miles. I imagine the strength she and the children must have had to navigate the rugged Missouri River Breaks; the reprieve her body experienced at daybreak as she and her children nestled into the tallgrass and willows to rest; and, the relief she and our relatives must have felt that day when she and the children walked back into camp.

CHAPTER SEVEN

BIBOON (WINTER), 1871-1890

Manidoo-Giizisoons (Little Spirit Moon)

Manidoo-giizisoons is a time of healing by seeking the vision of the spirits for mino bimaadiziwin (good life). [481] For us, good health means we are living in a balanced way. This is explained as "standing in the middle of the medicine wheel with one foot touching each of the four quadrants"—spirit, emotion, physical, and spirit. As we enter winter, we want to be in a place of positivity and strength so that we can be a good relative. In Little Spirit Moon, we turn listen to our stories and sing our songs to strengthen our spirits for the road ahead.

All of the annual seasonal round is a sacred landscape. The great buffalo herd of the Northwestern Plains kept moving all year in order to inscribe the great medicine wheel on the land.[482] The winter, like every season, is a time of preparation, anticipation of the new life that awaits us. As we prepare to meet the physical and spiritual landscape ahead, we pass tobacco to the old ones that they might, in the quiet of biboon, share with us the songs and stories which

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[481] Anishinaabeg moon names are taken from our relationship with place, therefore, wherever you go you will hear the moons called differently according to relationships the People had with Spirit, plant, and animal relatives in each moon of the annual cycle of movement across the land.
[482] Henry Youle Hind recorded this pattern in 1858, "The great western herds winter between the north branches of the Saskatchewan, south of the Touchwood Hills, and beyond the north Saskatchewan in the valley of the Athabaska; they cross the South Branch in June and July, visit the prairies on the south side of the Touchwood Hill range, and cross the Qu'Appelle valley anywhere between the Elbow of the South Branch and a few miles west of Fort Ellice on the Assiniboine. They then strike for the Grand Coteau de Missouri, and their eastern flank often approaches the Red River hers coming north from the Grand Coteau. They then proceed across the Missouri up the Yellow Stone, and return to the Saskatchewan and Athabaska as winter approaches, by the flanks of the Rocky Mountains." Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857*, 108-09.

make us ready to receive minigoowiziwin (that which is given to us). The words of Shaw-shaw-wa-be-na-se (The Falcon) reminds us of their purpose and function:

> The songs used on occasion of these medicine hunts have relation to the religious opinions of the Indians. They are often addressed to Nanabooshoo or Nanabush, whom they intreat to be their interpreter, and communicate their requests to the Supreme. Oftentimes, also to Me-suk-kum-mik O-kwi, or the earth, the great-grandmother of all. In these songs, they relate how Na-na-bush created the ground in obedience to the commands of the Great Spirit, and how all things for the use, and to supply the wants of the uncles and aunts of Na-na-bush, (by which are meant men and women,) were committed to the care and keeping of the great mother. Na-na-bush, ever the benevolent intercessor between the Supreme Being and mankind, procured to be created for their benefit the animals whose flesh should be for their food, and whose skins were for their clothing. He sent down roots and medicines of sovereign power to heal their sicknesses, and in times of hunger, to enable them to kill the animals of the chase…Hence it is that good Indians never dig up the roots of which their medicines are made, without at the same time depositing in the earth something as an offering to Me-suk-kum mik O-kwi. They sing also…[483]

Shaw-shaw-wa-ba-ne-se offers here a very clear articulation of the web of life as it was understood by the Anishinaabeg in the 19th century and now. The Great Spirit, Grandmother Earth (Me-suk-kum-mik O-kwi), the People (aunts and uncles), the animals, and the medicines, worked together in a circle of reciprocity. The songs and the stories held our world together, affirming the work of each one. The quiet time of biboon is a time for growing in spiritual understanding of the web of life.

The Passing of Good Woman

On March 20th, 1871, an Anishinaabe-kwe, named Nahastay (or perhaps Wahashtay meaning Good Woman), began her journey to the next world. At the time of her passing she and her extended family were "following the buffalo" on the Marias River deep in western

[483] Tanner, *The Falcon: A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner*, 184–85.

Anishinaabewaki (the Anishinaabe homeland). Her life's story captures Anishinaabeg history in a critical phase of transition.[484] She began her life on the edge of the prairie where with her parents she probably would have harvested manoomin (wild rice) and ziissbaakdoke (maple sugar). Her husband, Awistoyus (Louis Marie Guardipee), was a voyageur of the Northwest Company, and at the time of his death, the family was farming near Granttown (St. Francois Xavier) on the Whitehorse Plain in the northern part of the Red River Valley. After Awistoyus' death in 1856, Nahastay left the Red River Valley, along with her son, Baptiste, and extended family, and they followed the buffalo.[485] All of Nahastay's grandchildren were born in places significant to the buffalo culture seasonal round. With her family, she moved from the White Horse Plain of what is now Manitoba to the southern part of the Red River at Pembina, across the plains to Turtle Mountain and the Mouse (Souris) River, along the South Saskatchewan River to the Cypress Hills, and then to the valleys of the Teton and Marias Rivers in what is now Montana.[486] Nahastay left this world at a time of uncertainty for the Anishinaabeg and their kin who were following the buffalo. While little is left behind in documents to tell us what she

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[484] Nahashtay's colonial or French name was Josephte Ducharme (also appeared as Rosette Duchon). She was born in 1826 in ? and died on the Marias River in Montana on March 20, 1871, at a time when the buffalo were also beginning to disappear in great numbers.

[485] The family's colonial name was spelled several ways including Gaurdipee, Gariépy, Garepee, Gardipuis and Garipuis.

[486] A. W. Bowen, *Progressive Men of the State of Montana* (Chicago: A. W. Bowen & Co., 1886), 1557–58, http://archive.org/details/progressivemenof02bowe; Lawrence Barkwell, "Gariépy, Louis Marie Awistoyus (b. 1777) | American Bison | Canadian Prairies," Biography (Winnipeg, MB: Louis Riel Institute, n.d.), https://www.scribd.com/document/321248124/Gariepy-Louis-Marie-Awistoyus-b-1777; "Gariepy, Louis (1777-1856) (Fl. 1804-1825)," Record of Louis Marie's positions and years at NWC and HBC, Biographical Sheet, n.d., (KE, 08/1998); June/99/mhd, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Winnipeg, MB, https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/_docs/hbca/biographical/g/gariepy_louis.pdf.

thought and felt about the rapidity of change she experienced in her life, her life reflects the connections of people and place and the commitment of Chi Bizhiki who stood in the western doorway through it all.

Biboon Waaginogaan (Winter Camp)

When nodin (the wind) and that Great Makwa (the white bear) who stands in the northern doorway were busy with their winter work of protecting the medicines by sending them into dormancy, bizhikiwag (buffalo) used the parklands (the edges of woods), coulees, and deep river and creek valleys, to find protection.[487] The People sought shelter in the folds of the land in the same way.[488] Just as the buffalo marked the land with a great medicine wheel, they show us the path of life in time and place, showing us, as good relatives do, the sheltered places.

Nodin (the wind) had another winter trick up its sleeve which made the wintering places in the western side of the Old North Trail Corridor good ones. Using the power of nibi (water) which joins with the air and rises and falls as it warms and cools, nodin brought a gift over the mountains when the snows of biboon covered the foothills and prairie grasses—the chinook wind. As the buffalo were getting tired of wagging their heads to and fro, browsing, to plow the snow off their food, the warm dry wind came cascading down the mountain front and unleashed its power to melt many feet of snow overnight. In the summer and the fall, this same chinook wind cycle had cured the grasses preserving their nutrients for the coming season and for bizhiki and all the relatives who depended on them.

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[487] Brink, *Imagining Head-Smashed-In,* 63.
[488] Rosalyn R. LaPier, "Relationship with the Land--Seasonal Round Unit Lesson (How We Lived with the Land Activity --Niitsitapi--in the Virtual Exhibit: Glenbow Museum, Calgary, AB, Canada)" (Piegan Institute, n.d.).

The biboon waaginogaanag (winter camps) were just a few families together, a bandlet.[489] In order to protect the Land when it is in its most vulnerable stage, the People broke up into small groups. Anishinaabeg and their Plains kin made their wintering camps and then conducted an early winter buffalo hunt. In this part of the season, the buffalo mothers were nearly back to their prime after having nursed their young all summer. A healthy cow carried the fat essential for life in the northern latitudes. Among elk, deer, antelope, moose, waterfowl, prairie chickens, and fish, only bear and buffalo offered substantial fat calories. Pemmican making, which involved a process of drying lots of meat and mixing it with fat and sometimes berries, was only done in the warmer weather. In the winter if it was hunting time, smaller quantities of fresh meat were dried over a hot fire, pounded and served in a wooden or birchbark dish with an equal portion of fat. A stew might also be made over the fire with fresh or frozen meat, cooked with foods harvested in the summer--thickened with a powder of dried prairie turnips, and flavored with wild onions, juniper berries, and salt harvested from prairie springs.

Very little hunting was done after the end of Manidoo-giizisoons (Little Spirit Moon), not "until the grass was fit for pasture for horses in spring."[490] When the hunting was done, Ininiwag

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[489] Timothy G. Roufs, ed., *Gabe-Bines "Forever Flying Bird": Teachings of Paul Peter Buffalo, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe*, vol. 1 (Minneapolis, MN: Wise Ink Creative Publishing, 2019), 457–80.

[490] William McD. Tait, ed., "'"I Remember:" Recollections of "Kootenai" Brown Related Verbatim to W.D.T.,' Glenbow Foundation Typescript Copy" (Glenbow Western Research Centre, University of Calgary, Alberta. Originally published in Farm and Ranch Review, 1919), 14.

(men) might set a trap line for small game, like rabbits and fat muskrats, that might be cooked by smoking. If food supplies were adequate, they might stay in the same camp all winter.[491]

Biboon gave the People work to do inside and outside the lodge. The buffalo robes harvested in the winter were wooly, thick, and warm. Ikwewag (women) tanned the robes for bedding or for market trade, hides for lodge coverings, and sewed makizinan (mocassins) and clothing. The river bottoms and creek gullies also provided firewood. Using amikwaab (hide straps), twelve feet long, women gathered kindling and lighter wood. Like sewing, this is something the women liked to do together. Men hauled the pretty good-size logs, sometimes dragged them together in a chain length one pole following after another. Inside the lodge, the ishkode (fire) was kept burning all day long and the coals dried and heated the ground to about two feet down. Beds were sometimes constructed of willow, or simply balsam bows, leaves, or grass for comfort and as insulation from moisture coming up from ground. Buffalo robes, bear pelts, trade blankets, and rabbit-hide quilts made good coverings. The nights were long and cold, but the sense of the ancestors' closeness in stories shared, the brilliance of the Star Nation and the waawaate (northern lights), brought a sense of security.

Métis winter camps were sometimes log cabins set in the same way along rivers and creeks where there was wood, water, and protection from the wind.[492] Nahastay and her family

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[491] John Canfield Ewers, Susan R Sharrock, and Floyd W Sharrock, *Ethnological Report on The Chippewa Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boy Reservation, Montana and the Little Shell Band of Indians, Docket No. 221-B, Indian Claims Commission* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1974), 9–10.

[492] Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line: Creating a Border and Dividing a People*, 69.

may have lived in one of the Métis cabins at some point in their travels. There were many along the Milk River, both temporary and permanent residences of the Métis.[493]

Nahastay's son, Baptiste Guardipee, was one of two Métis men running mail from Fort Totten to Mouse River by dog sled in the winter of 1869 or 1870.[494] Crossing what is now North Dakota, the men fought their way through a fierce blizzard. A mail run that would have taken two days each way in good weather, became a three-week ordeal in which they dealt with snow blindness and nearly starved. Guardipee's partner, Kootenai Brown, telling about this harrowing ordeal on the prairies, remarked on the relative mildness of the winter conditions closer to the mountains, "We think we have cold snaps in Alberta, but go to North Dakota in the sixties and seventies and you'll think this is Florida in winter time."[495] The climate along the Rocky Mountain Front where the Old North Trail runs was indeed a sheltered place where the chinook winds, grass, water, trees, gullies and river bottoms, made a perfect winter home for buffalo and people. It had been that been that way for millennia.

A Time in Between

By keeping the roads dry and open, the chinook winds also did a favor for freighters moving the carts across the land. The Hudson's Bay Company was eager to send their shipments to market, hoping for a cheaper route to eastern markets through the cart connection to the

[493] Dusenberry, "Verne Dusenberry Papers," Box 6, File 6.
[494] It was common for Métis men to be under the employ of various settler colonial enterprises, the military, fur trade, boundary survey, jobs which helped support their families' well-being while they also lived a .
[495] McD. Tait, ed., ""I Remember:" Recollections of "Kootenai" Brown Related Verbatim to W.D.T.,' Glenbow Foundation Typescript Copy," 36.

Missouri steamboats.[496] By 1870, Red River Carts were rolling down the Old North Trail along the front of the Rockies from Fort Edmonton to Fort Macleod to Fort Benton.[497] The two-wheeled wooden carts were loaded heavy with buffalo robes and, as they always did, made a terrible screeching sound for the lack of lubrication of their high wheels. So pervasive was their presence that for a while this ancient trail had a new name the Red River Trail. Traveling through wind and weather on that mountain front over glacial moraine and gullies, it was not an easy go, and soon the experiment was abandoned.

Owing to the elements of protection of the Land—wood, water, and buffalo--the mountain front valley of the Teton River was an important place to the Amskapi Piikani (Blackfeet). From 1868 to 1875, the Blackfeet Indian Agency, Fort Four Persons, was located there between the Teton and Spring Creek. In 1873, a community began to develop around settler commerce in that valley as the Old North Trail linked trade from Fort Macleod in the north passing through to Fort Shaw, where Lt. John Mullen's new colonial wagon road connected mail and trade from the steamboat port, Fort Benton, over the mountains to the west. As the colonial system of trade overlaid the Indigenous roads and valley homes, the town of

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[496] Helen B. West, "Blackfoot Country," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 10, no. 4 (1960): 38, fn7.

[497] Jim Peebles, Métis Cultural Recovery Trust, February 24, 1995, OH1896, Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena, MT, U.S.A. Eli Guardipee, Nahashtay's grandson, described the Red River cart as crude, but "substantial enough to carry the loads of meat and the vast number of robes that were the fruits of the chase each year…not a particle of iron in its construction: body (or frame) and also wheels held together with wooden pins…tires were the thick, heavy part of the buffalo bulls' hide and they lasted amazingly well considering the rough usage to which they were subjected…Drawn by light cayuse ponies, they would haul from 800 to 1000 pounds…no iron thimble on the axle, the consequence being that when a train of carts was in motion the noise it made is beyond any description of mine." Guardipee, "Eli Guardipee Reminiscence," 2.

Choteau was established, platted in 1883, six years before the state of Montana entered the Union.[498]

On January 22, 1886, *The Choteau Calumet* (meaning peace pipe) newspaper reported, "it was only a few years ago that a snowstorm like the present would have brought vast herds of buffalo from the high or prairie lands to the Teton bottom."[499] The Teton River begins as a narrow glacial blue estuary that spills from the heights of the Grandmothers (Rocky Mountains) to the west, crossing the raised broad plains to the place where it joins the Marias River and then Pegano Ziibi, Piikani River (the Missouri), just above Fort Benton.[500] It was here in this buffalo home that four years earlier in 1882, Nahastay's son, Baptiste Guardipee, pivoted from the central part of his life's work as a buffalo hunter for his family. He secured a ranch eighteen miles from Choteau and began raising cattle. This protected place, where the Grandmother mountains, sun, wind, grass, and water, created a perfect buffalo home, would be one of the last places that the buffalo lifeway we knew would exist.

From 1856 to 1867, the Guardipee family had been moving with the buffalo in the pattern of Anishinaabeg and their Métis kin in the area that today is North Dakota and Saskatchewan. Then in 1867, Baptiste met Tom Lavatta who was driving 150 head of horses from Montana to the Red River. His son Eli, who was born at Turtle Mountain in 1857, recounted the story:

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[498] Choteau, named after the fur trade mogul Pierre Chouteau Jr. (as is the county to which Fort Benton belongs), became a settler center of commerce in 1873 when A.B. Hamilton established a trading post there.

[499] "Buffalo," *The Choteau Calumet*, January 29, 1886.

[500] Anishinaabeg have two names for this river, Ogima Ikwe Zibi, The Head Woman River, and the Pegano Ziibi, Piikani River. I chose to refer to it as the Pegano because in this country we live in relationship with our Piikani relatives with whom we share common connections to the land, the buffalo, and a shared Algonquian linguistic heritage.

> Lavatta told my father about Montana and in particular he told him of the vast herds of buffalos and other big game in the plains country and the fine land and pleasant places to live in the Deer Lodge Valley country. He made the picture so attractive that a number of the Turtle Mountain half-breed families resolved to leave their old home and come out to the land where there was so much good hunting and that was so much better than the place where they then lived. Ten families, using about 30 Red River carts, came with him. There were about 50 people, men, women and children. This was probably the first organized Red River cart caravan to migrate to Montana for the purpose of establishing permanent homes within the territory.

Eli's words are a precious first-hand view of the movement of people, their motivations, and way of life. Eli's mother was Shoshone, Lodge Pole woman, married to Baptiste in 1844, and the one he called his "other mother" was Chippewa, Julie Judith Cardinal, married to his father in 1855 at St. Francois Xavier in the Red River Valley. Eli continued his story of the family's move to what is now Montana:

> The journey first started with a great company of half-breeds, something like 400 other carts besides my father's group were coming west to hunt. They travelled slowly, about 15 miles [per day]… Most of the way through North Dakota we followed what was then known as the "Great Ridge," (the Grand Couteau) which is the high divide, or water-shed between the Mouse River and the Missouri… We touched for a short visit at Fort Berthold where the pitiful remnant of the Mandan tribe was camped and I suppose it was for protection against the Sioux that they were located at the Fort…We saw many Sioux Indians on the way and camped with them from time to time but our party was so large and so well armed that they did not offer to molest us. At that time the Sioux were lords of all the plains country except the region held by the Blackfeet and they were ready to attack any people, white or Indian, if the party was not a strong one. Their war party made a great show and some of them were well armed. When the Milk River country was reached another great camp of breeds was found somewhere in the vicinity of where Dodson is now, and our party stopped there a couple of weeks to visit and hunt with these people.

The Milk River country was a rich buffalo home to many Anishinaabeg and their kin, including my own Anishinaabe great-great-great grandmother from Red Lake, Ain-anikip-kik (Runs with Child), who gave birth there to her child, my great-great-grandfather Daniel Turcotte, in 1870. From the Milk River Country, the Guardipees continued westward. On route to Conrad's new

trading post on the Marias, they met two Métis scouts, Adolph Fellers and Pete Cadotte, who advised them to avoid the post as there was trouble there and told them about how the government was building a new Indian agency on the Teton. The Guardipees met up with John J. Healy's bull train carrying materials for construction of the agency. Once they arrived at Four Persons, Baptiste, his brothers, and other Métis men came under the employ of the fort. Eli recounts how they lived there, "I lived with my father until I grew to manhood. We lived in camps and hunted. Game was so plentiful that it was an easy way to live…at the fort at Four Persons."

From the Hunt to Treaties to Annuities to Farming

By the 1870s, the pressure on the buffalo had resulted in a subsistence crisis for the Northwestern Plains Nations.[501] "In times of scarcity when there was only a small amount of food in the camp, as sometimes happened in later years, a general drive would be ordered by the captain when everything killed was 'minis-a-wak' (common property)," reported a Métis buffalo hunter.[502] Otherwise you had to remember which animal you shot and be responsible for harvesting it. This was a time for looking out for one another. Yet the scope of the growing crisis was monumental.

As the buffalo became harder to find, Cree leaders began to press the British for treaties to alleviate the subsistence crisis on the Plains.[503] The treaty process on both sides of the

[501] Hogue, "Disputing the Medicine Line: The Plains Cree and the Canadian-American Border, 1876-85," 87.
[502] McD. Tait, ed., "'"I Remember:" Recollections of "Kootenai" Brown Related Verbatim to W.D.T.,' Glenbow Foundation Typescript Copy," 45.
[503] Hogue, "Disputing the Medicine Line: The Plains Cree and the Canadian-American Border, 1876-85," 87.

Medicine Line was not carefully thought out by either Empire and reflected more of a kneejerk reaction to their own objectives of opening the land for settler development than a comprehensive and well-orchestrated approach to taking responsibility for settler encroachment on the livelihood of Native peoples.

From 1851 to 1871, the United States pursued a robust, yet incohesive treaty making process with Native American Nations—one that was particularly confused by many overlapping and "negotiated but unratified" settlements. Then abruptly, in a last-minute congressional deal under the 1871 Indian Appropriations Act, the government declared that Indians were no longer sovereign nations and that they would no longer write treaties with them. Instead Indians would be considered wards of the state. Treaty deals did, however, continue in earnest only under new names. In the coming decades the US would continue to shuffle the cards time and again, under a variety of methods including executive orders, "agreements," and treaties. As the settler system of state and economy craved more land, it ordered more land cessions and reservation consolidations which placed multiple tribes together on a single reservation. In the area of the Old North Trail Corridor of the Northwestern Plains and Rockies this included reservation removal of the Amskapi Piikani (Southern Piegan, Blackfeet), the A'aninin (White Clay, Gros Ventres), the Nakoda (the generous people, Assiniboine,) the Sioux divisions of Sisseton, Wahpetons, Yanktonais, and Teton Hunkpapa, the Sqelix^{w} (Bitteroot Salish), Ktunaxa (Kootenai,) and Q̓lispé, (upper Pend d'Oreille), the Niimíipuu (the People, Nez Perce), the Apsáalooke (children of the large-beaked bird, Crow), the Tsis tsis'tas (the beautiful people,

Northern Cheyenne), the Nank'haanseine'nan (Northern Arapahoe, the white sage people), and Gweechoon Deka (the buffalo eaters, Eastern Shoshone).[504]

Adopting the position of Indigenous peoples who moved freely over Turtle Island, the treaty-making process was one process with two imperial-nation states, the US and Canada. "Northern Plains treaty history spans decades and includes dozens of documents and hundreds of events."[505] The US treaty making process was one of befuddled logistics, everchanging understandings, and shifting territorial boundaries. Nations were called together time after time for further cessions and each time new lines of relationship were drawn among people and places. Historian Delia Hagen notes the process between the US and Canadian treaty-making with Northern Plains peoples was also "an integrated process because many groups and many individuals participated in multiple treaty events on both sides of the border."[506] One outcome of this complicated and reiterative treaty making process was the production of contradictory jurisdictional problems in the treaties with respect to definitions of people, place, and rights—something that plagues Indigenous life and legal dealings to this day. Treaty making still deserves the name treaty-taking in that it is a legal structure that reflects the extractive intentions of the imperial nation-states.

For a little over a century, the colonial economy had advanced across Turtle Island whittling away the great herds of buffalo that once existed and compressing the remnants of

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[504] My intention in the encumbered use of Indigenous peoples' names for themselves is to offer visibility of these nations and the diversity that they represent—something that was obscured by the treaty process and in the telling of history. While lumped together as "Indians," each nation had its own language, foods, ceremonies, creation stories, and connection to place.
[505] Hagen, "Northern Plains Borders and the People In Between, 1860-1940," 141.
[506] Hagen, 145.

those herds in the western interior. Fine furs, buffalo robes, copper, gold, soil, and water—the economy led the way. Supply and demand were the way finders as settlers spread out across the land. The process of colonization was not discriminating in its interruption of the web of life. What followed the contraction of the buffalo herds was the concentration of native Nations into areas of what is now Oklahoma, Kansas, the Northwestern Plains, and Rocky Mountains. In those places Chi Bizhiki continued to stand for us. Treaty-making set the stage for the settler colonial project to enter the phase of economic development in which Christian Euro-American farmers spread out from coast to coast. In the decades of the 1870s and 1880s, the settler colonial system rose to a position of dominance over the Northwestern Plains. One food system was effectively devouring the many Indigenous food systems which came before.

Across Turtle Island those Indigenous food systems were circular, following that annual seasonal cycle, and known by the other-than-human relatives that stood for people and places. At the centers of these circles were the mainstay sources of life--manoomin (wild rice), bizhiki (buffalo), salmon, caribou, corn, seals, and whales. Each circle represented a web of life within the larger web of relations. What was coming to the Northern Plains in the 1870s was linear not circular, a system of straight lines--furrows, railroads, and market indexes.

The US treaty making process took place in a time in American history that has been defined as the "Greater Reconstruction," 1845 to 1877. It is important not to be fooled by the phrase "Greater Reconstruction," which could be interpreted as the building of something positive for everyone, in fact it meant quite the opposite. Historian Pekka Hämäläinen summarizes this as "a period defined by three wars (the US-Mexican War, the Civil War, and War against Native America), a continent-wide racial crisis, the extension of northern state

power to the South *and* the West, and wholesale dispossession of native societies."[507] It is true as Elliott West states, "Expansion triggered an American racial crisis."[508] But it is also true that Expansionism was all about the hungry appetite of Empire seeking new resource frontiers—new black and brown bodies and new other-than-human-relatives that formed the raw materials on which the colonial nation is built.[509] In this way, colonization is all about the construction of hierarchies in the web of life, including the structure of race and racial hierarchies. Colonization occurs across the web of relations. There is a fourth war to add to the list of wars named in the Greater Reconstruction, the unspoken war on nature. Settler colonial belief in manifest destiny meant a hierarchy over Land including other-than-human relatives. These wars have never been

[507] Pekka Hämäläinen, "Reconstructing the Great Plains: The Long Struggle for Sovereignty and Dominance in the Heart of the Continent," *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 6, no. 4 (2016): 481–509, https://doi.org/10.1353/cwe.2016.0070, 481.
[508] Elliott West, "Reconstructing Race," *Western Historical Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 6–26.
[509] Tuck and McKenzie acknowledge, "…in several contexts, settler colonialism has simultaneously taken form as "Slave estates" (Spillers, 2003; Wilderson, 2010), requiring the forced labor of stolen peoples on stolen land. In these cases, settlement required/s the labor of the chattel slaves and guest workers, who must be kept landless and estranged from their homelands." Eve Tuck and Marcia McKenzie, *Place in Research : Theory, Methodology, and Methods* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 61. See also, Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (Chapel Hill; London: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

settled.[510] Treaties were a part of these wars, as Hagen points out, they "crucially, contributed to the expansion and elaboration of state status categories and their import."[511]

As in the US treaty making process, in the Canadian treaties 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, the federal government agreed to distribute annual cash payments to the Plains nations and agricultural implements to help them become European-style farmers, while setting aside reserves established in consultation with the signatory bands. In the Treaty 1 territory, this stipulation came at the request of the Ojibwa and Swampy Cree of Manitoba, who had been mostly without buffalo in their territory for forty years by the time of treaty making.[512] Anxious to get started in agriculture, some tribes rushed to choose their reserves. For the Peguis Band at Netley Creek, the Turtle Mountain fortified village near the Grand Coteau of the Missouri, and Nahastay and the Guardipee family, an Indigenous emphasis on farming was already well underway before treaties with the federal governments mandated a switch to agriculture. Farming was not a foreign

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[510] It is the opinion of the writer at the time of writing, that the current state of degradation of the biocultural web, which we call Mother Earth, is directly related to the permeance of these wars and the social amnesia and oblivion to their historical, epistemological, and ontological roots. Native American authors and activists such as Melissa Nelson (Turtle Mountain Anishinaabe) and Winona LaDuke (White Earth Anishinaabe) observe the ongoing effects of colonialism across the web of relations. Nelson argues, "Ongoing cultural genocide persists every time Indians are denied religious freedom, federal recognition, treaty rights, a 'seat at the table,' and other fundamental rights." Contemporary colonialism occurs in the context of "political, legal, and economic issues related to tribal sovereignty, agriculture, and environmental protections," and what LaDuke refers to as the "binge of neocolonial expansionism." Indigenous ways of knowing offer an alternative way of relating within the web of relations and are critically important in engagement of a shared future for the web. Gregory D. Smithers, "Beyond the 'Ecological Indian': Environmental Politics and Traditional Ecological Knowledge in Modern North America," *Environmental History* 20, no. 1 (January 2015): 83–111, https://doi.org/10.1093/envhis/emu125.

[511] Hagen, "Northern Plains Borders and the People In Between, 1860-1940," 141.

[512] Hogue, "Disputing the Medicine Line: The Plains Cree and the Canadian-American Border, 1876-85," 87.

concept to the Anishinaabeg. Bands across Turtle Island cultivated substantial vegetable crops as one land practice in the diversified and flexible Anishinaabe food system. Agricultural historian Sarah Carter reports that prior to contact seventy-five percent of the food consumed on Turtle Island was agricultural products—among them legumes, squash, grains, seeds, fruits, roots.[513]

There was a difference however, in how the Anishinaabeg went about incorporation of cultivated foods in their system of sustenance and what the settler system envisioned for Indians. As Carter explains, "In the scientific community, agriculture was viewed as a key stage in man's evolutionary sequence of progress from savagism to barbarism to civilization."[514] Victorian attitudes toward Indigenous peoples, who lived "the roving life," and attitudes toward the wilderness were the same. They took their mandate to impose their will on both, the People and the Land, from Christian scripture, or what is called dominion theology.[515] To the settler system of state and economy, establishing Indians as farmers was as much about forcing their social conformation as it was about ensuring that they provide for themselves. Once again, we see the odd marriage of Science and Christianity as tools of the settler colonial project. For Anishinaabeg who saw themselves as the last one to show up in the web of relationships, who

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[513] Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests : Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 37.

[514] Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993,) 19. See also Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes to U.S. Indian Policy* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), 102-4.

[515] Dominion theology stems most directly from the following scripture, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea; and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Today, dominion theology as applied in political movements is called "dominionism." Genesis 1:28 as quoted in Carter, *Lost Harvests : Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy*, 16.

sang to their plant relatives and watched over them to protect them from the winged ones, the settler methods and approach to agriculture was foreign.

As the British treaty process rolled westward through the fertile belt, Treaty 7, in what is now Alberta, focused on the provision of livestock. A family of five or fewer received two cows, and an additional cow for each additional five people in your family. Head and minor chiefs also received a bull.[516] The sequentially named treaties covered geographic areas and took an approach of blanketing many different Native Nations under one treaty in the defined areas. Compared to the US, the Canadian process of treaty making with prairie nations took place in a relatively short time, 1871 to 1877. Nevertheless, it served the same purposes of removing Indians, building hierarchical and racialized structures in the web of life, and giving way to settler farmers while making European Christian Indian farmers.

The Treaty Conversation: Treaty 4 Case Study

In August and September of 1874, the Queen's representatives called a treaty conference at Qu'Appelle Lakes to negotiate what would be Treaty number 4 between First Nations and British America. Acknowledging the allied presence of the ones gathered, Ogima O-ta-ka-o-nan (The Gambler, Cree), addressed Lieutenant Governor Alexander Morris and the British representatives, "Now when you have come here, you see sitting out there a mixture of Half-breeds, Crees, Saulteaux and Stonies (Assiniboines), all are one, and you were slow in taking the hand of a Half-breed."[517] After standing up for the halfbreeds, O-ta-ka-o-nan continued by

[516] Arthur J. Ray, *Illustrated History of Canada's Native People: I Have Lived Here since the World Began*, Fourth (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 248.
[517] All quotations in this section are drawn from Alexander Morris, *Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba, the North-West Territories, and Kee-Wa-Tin* (Toronto: Willing and Williamson, 1880), 77–125.

saying all were offended at the recent intrusion of HBC surveyors who were making moves in the territory. Resentful of the Crown's connection with HBC, O-ta-ka-o-nan stated many times that this matter troubled him so, he could not speak. Morris asked him what the Company had stolen from him, O-ta-ka-o-nan replied, "The earth, trees, grass, stones, all that my eyes can see." His upset was a matter of distrust that prevented all the members of the Nehiyaw Pwat Confederacy gathered from participating.

Lt Gov. Morris tried to leverage the ogimaag, telling them they should allow the Company (HBC) to trade in the country as it was the Queen's right to allow them to, just as it was her right to "lay off lands for you if you agree to settle on them." The ogimaag countered with a demand that the Company only be allowed to trade at their own posts, and not to send traders into their territory. Morris then accused the ogimaag of listening to "bad voice who have not the interests of the Indians at heart." He continued saying, "If because of these things you will not speak to us we will go away with hearts sorry for you and for your children, who thus throw back in our faces the hand of the Queen that she has held out to you."

The Crown's motivations remained as economically motivated as always and the ogimaag knew it. Morris enjoined again, "during the winter that is coming, many a poor woman and child will be saying, how was it that our councilors and our braves shut their ears to the mouth of the Queen's messengers and refused to tell them their words." Pis-qua (the Plain) intervened, pointed to Mr. McDonald who represented the HBC, and said, "you told me you had sold your land (Rupert's Land) for so much money, £300,000. We want that money." Morris explained that the Queen bought back the rights her father's father who had given to the HBC, and now she could do whatever she wanted with the land. At that, the Cree and the Saulteaux

stated they were leaving to join in council with one another. As the conference adjourned, Morris made one more appeal trying to build cooperation through commonality, he said, we too "worship the Great Spirit, and do not work on Sunday," and that he hoped they would see that what the Queen was offering was "for your children's good."

In a letter to his superior Morris described the next day, "On the 11th we sent a bugler round to summon the Indians to the appointed conference, but they did not come. Instead, the Saulteaux sent word that they could not meet us except in their own soldiers' tent, distant about a mile from the militia encampment, but we refused to do so."

On the fifth day, the ogimaag returned to Morris' turf and he greeted them calling them, "Children of our Great Mother." On behalf of the Nehiyaw Pwat Confederacy gathered, O-ta-ka-o-nan, backing away from the claim on the money the Queen paid the HBC in purchasing Rupert's Land, stated that their council recognized that the Queen took away the HBCs rights, but that the Queen is also retaining those rights by allowing HBC to stay and trade in the territory. O-ta-ka-o-nan then made it clear that they weren't talking about anything more until the Queen's representatives acknowledged limitations on HBC trading in their territory. Morris countered saying that the company was good for the Indians, "helps you live." O-ta-ka-o-nan stood strong saying, "The Company is not to carry anything out into the country, but are to trade in the Fort." Morris then threatened the tribes saying, "it will be a long day before you again see the Queen's Councillors here to try to do you good…" and "[We] may think you do not want to be friends, that you do not want your little ones to be taught, that you do not want when the food is getting scarce to have a hand in yours stronger than yours to help you."

On the sixth day, the Ogimaag gathered and many of them said they could not speak for their people, as many of them were away trying to “get something to eat.” They also stated the importance of gathering all of their people to make a collective decision, to be of one mind. Morris again tried to force things and said, “you know what is good for you and your children.” Then as if speaking of their relatives who were looking for food had turned their emotions and infused their thoughts, the ogimaag began to *deal* with Morris and the Queen’s representatives. A back-and-forth negotiation began, the Indians starting at a demand of twenty dollars in each hand every year. Morris quickly rejected their proposal. Morris then put the ogimaag on notice that it was “the last hour of the last day” that his party could stay in discussion with the Qu’Appelle Indians. It was then that the ogimaag assented to the original terms laid out by Morris. They would receive roughly the same amount as the Indians at the Lake of the Woods had received, five dollars per head per year, with some indiscernible adjustments for population size. The ogimaag, concerned for their relatives, made inquiries whether the halfbreeds would be allowed to hunt and that the ones who were away seeking sustenance would be included in the treaty. They were assured that they would.

Then, in another coopting of Indigenous protocols of treaty, Morris promised that the treaty would be written on a hide, so it could not be smudged away in the future, and said, “I forgot to say that we will be able to give you a small present, some powder and shot, blankets and calicoes.” Finally, Morris reminded the ogimaag that in return for all of this, they must be “good red children of the Queen,” and said, “I am glad to shake hands with you; the white man and the red man have shaken hands and are friends. You must be good subjects to the Queen and obey her laws." Then the ones gathered, without benefit of time to conduct their own process of

seeking culturally relevant leaders to represent them, named two "chiefs" to be their representatives going forward. They then asked if they could be sent away with food and Morris assured them, they would.

The dialogue of Queen's representatives with the Nehiyaw Pwat Confederacy relatives who negotiated Treaty 4 demonstrates the overriding context and motivations of the lasting arrangements that were made on the prairies one hundred and fifty years ago. The context for Indigenous people was hunger and concern for their relatives, with a motivation to alleviate this vulnerability as quickly as possible and into the future. The context of the Queen's representatives was one more colonial administration of power. The motivation of the settler colonial state was to take the Indians by the hand, or by the mouth, and to ensure that they would cooperate with their future plans for the territory.

Grandfather Buffalo: Our Sovereignty

In 1876, when Alexander Morris came to Fort Carlton attempting a repeat of his leapfrog process with the tribes and promising this time that these Indians could only have what the Qu'Appelle Indians received, he was met with a more complex constituency, who challenged the process. The tribes of the region had already experienced one winter of starvation and while their need of assistance was urgent, they were also aware of the agricultural value of the land and the rumor of gold in the area.[518] Poundmaker, a Cree, decried, "The governor mentions how much land is to be given to us. He says 640 acres, one mile square for each family, he will give us. This is our land? It isn't a piece of pemmican to be cut off and given in little pieces back to us. It

[518] Hugh A. Dempsey, *Big Bear: The End of Freedom* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 67.

is our and we will take what we want."[519] Mistihai'Muskwa (Big Bear) came prepared to present on behalf of various camps of Crees and Assiniboines, "so that he could carry their messages as well as his own," but the other leaders gathered at Fort Pitt, the second stop in Morrison's treaty 5 tour, didn't wait. Arriving late from the plains, Big Bear was interested in discussing the preservation of the buffalo and how it was tied to the freedom of his people. Effectually, Big Bear had arrived to make an argument for sovereignty and how it is found in the one who has always stood for us, Grandfather Buffalo. At the time of Big Bear's arrival, the hired conference translator Peter Erasmus, a Red River Métis who spoke six Native languages, was already traveling home. Big Bear's words were lost in the translation that followed. His argument had been meant to be delivered in the context of treaty negotiation, not as a complaint once the dialogue was concluded. Big Bear chose to dissent from the treaty saying he would return the following year along with his people.[520]

Big Bear and Little Pine where among influential leaders and their bands who stayed with the buffalo and demanded better treaty terms. They refused to sign the treaties altogether. Piapot, too, was amongst them and refused to choose a reserve even after agreeing to treaty.[521] These were the most motivated and adventurous mixed bands of the Northwestern Plains who stood in defiance of the new regime.

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[519] Peter Erasmus, *Buffalo Days and Nights* (Calgary, Alberta, Canada: Glenbow Museum, 1976,) 244.
[520] Dempsey, *Big Bear: The End of Freedom*, 66–76.
[521] Hogue, "Disputing the Medicine Line: The Plains Cree and the Canadian-American Border, 1876-85," 87.

Gichimanidoo-Giizis (Great Spirit Moon)

The purpose of Gichimanidoo-giizis is to purify us. Anishinaabeg seek purification in many ways—through ceremonies like the sweat lodge, smudging, and fasting. We make ourselves "pure" by doing work that aligns us with the spiritual and natural worlds. The Sun Dance/Thirst Dance is an act of personal sacrifice done to bring about such alignment, asking for rain to feed the grass and the buffalo, to make things anew. These sacrifices made by the ogitchidag (spiritual warriors) who dance in the Sun Dance are offered to bring harmony and balance in the web of relations.[522] In the past, the ancestors made those sacrifices *in* and *with* their lives so that we can still call ourselves Anishinaabeg. They kept dancing through the whole, just as the Sun Dancers do.

Replacement Foods

As named in the treaties of both colonial governments, farming and annuities were the two sides of the federal governments' solution to the Indian problem—that is, dealing with those who, under the 1871 US Indian Appropriations bill, were named as "wards of the state." Wards of the Queen Mother and Uncle Sam, taken from the Land in the process James Daschuk aptly calls "clearing the plains." The two-pronged approach was to administer annuities and rations through the Indian agencies, in the US--Fort Four Persons on the Teton, Fort Browning at the confluence of the Milk and the Missouri, Fort Peck, and later, Belknap. On the other side of the

[522] George Catlin, an outside observer, described this four-day ceremony including the dance done under a buffalo skin and the personal sacrifices of the dancers as a request for buffalo for the good of the People. George Catlin, "George Catlin Letter Written at the Mandan Village, Upper Missouri," August 12, 1832, 2, MS 2958.1698, The New York Historical Society, New York, NY.

newly surveyed boundary line, 1871-73, annuities were paid on "treaty day." Bands had to make a trip to the government agency at places such as Forts Qu'Appelle, Ellice, and Edmonton. In turn for the "gifts given" there, the tribes were expected to adopt "civilized ways." However, agency provisions were often inadequate, and the People had to stay with their own way of hunting and harvesting as those ones they had long depended on were disappearing.[523]

The annuity and ration delivery processes were as befuddled as the government process that invented them. The US government began delivering rations on the Upper Missouri under early treaty agreements. The commencement of the long-distance delivery of food began with delivery of annuity foods to Northern Plains steamboats and barges chugging up the Missouri. These wood-fired steam-powered vessels were loaded with "white" foods of Euro-American culture, many which also happened to be white in color, a reflection of their low nutritional content. The boats, often white in color, left St. Joseph, Missouri, with their decks piled high with bags of white flour, white rice, lard, and sugar next to barrels of salt pork and other mass-produced foods from the east.

As the food crisis continued, bands had to decide if they were moving to other territory to permanently reside with the buffalo or turning to other sources of food. Many made their move by accepting treaty, selecting reserve sites, and embracing farming. Anishinaabeg often wintered in parklands areas where they could run a trapline in the autumn and early winter, and also rely

[523] Smithsonian Institution. Board of Regents, and United States National Museum, "Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution 1879" (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1880), 309–27.; A.J. Simmons, *Map of the Milk River Indian Country, Showing Location of Indian Tribes, Oct 1st, 1871* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1871), B-266, Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena, MT, U.S.A.

on the buffalo nearby.[524] As the herds diminished, they withdrew to the south. From 1877 to 1879, Big Bear's Band began wintering in the southern part of their annual round on the plains in the river bottom at the forks of the Red Deer River and near the Cypress Hills. The transition to a food system heavily reliant on agriculture, of course, occurred earlier for the Ojibwe bands of the Red River Valley than it did in the western part of Anishinaabewaki. Farming took hold on the prairies in 1870s and 1880s—including the bands Ft. Ellice (Qu'Appelle), Yellow Quill (Egg Lake) Fort Pelly, Key and Kishikonse—all in present-day Saskatchewan. Their crops were reflective of the types of prairie foods they were used to, cattle and root crops. Owing to their intimate knowledge of the Land and the seasons, the People had an advantage in farming as compared to newly arrived Euro-settlers. To farm with the intensity required to live mainly off farming, they did, however, require implements, oxen, and seed, as well as sustenance during the time in which they developed a piece of land. This, as historian Sarah Carter concludes, was not supported with much determination from the Canadian government. In neither the US nor Canada did the government provide effective farm instruction.[525] Not only was federal motivation an issue, the logistical capability for delivering treaty promises was an essential factor once tribes were removed to reserves/reservations. These factors left a critical, often fatal, gap in the plan for Indigenous transition between food systems.

Rations were a part of the plan since the beginning of the treaty process on the Upper Missouri. However, the ration delivery process was mired in the immaturity of the colonial food delivery system, which consisted of letting government contracts with private merchants, such as

[524] Carter, *Lost Harvests : Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy*, 44–45.
[525] Carter, 49.

I.G. Baker in Fort Benton and T.C. Power from Helena, both Montana mercantile companies that did business through the northwestern United States and western Canada. Additionally, the government sourced supplies from much farther away. These were delivered by steamboat on the Missouri directly to Indian agents and military personnel. Standard provisions included salt pork, beef, flour, sugar, baking soda, suet, and coffee. By the late 1870s, soap, corn, oats, hominy, and beans were also listed with annuity goods arriving on barges and steamboats with names like the *Assiniboine* and the *Chippewa*.[526]

In 1862, agents Latta and Reed reported their urgency for additional military escorts on the Upper Missouri, stating that annuities could not be delivered to their respective agencies for lack of escorts and "extremely low water" in the Missouri. There were many obstacles in the development of a national supply system. During the US Civil War there was shortage of military personnel, which had "a delaying impact on dealing with Indians."[527] Annuities to be delivered for 1862 were stored at Fort Union to be "distributed in spring."[528] Although steamboats were the most expeditious route to the Northwestern Plains, they could not navigate the Missouri all the way to Fort Benton until 1860. Even after that it was difficult due to low water levels for most of the year. Cow Island, near the confluence of the Milk and Missouri

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[526] "U.S. Office of Indian Affairs. Montana Superintendency Records," (United States Office of Indian Affairs, Montana Superintendency, 1868, 1870-71 1861), Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena, MT, U.S.A.

[527] John Hutchinson, "Letter to the Honorable William P. Dole, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington City, from John Hutchinson, Acting Governor and Ex-Officio Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Dakota Territory," January 13, 1863, "U.S. Office of Indian Affairs. Montana Superintendency Records," (United States. Office of Indian Affairs. Montana Superintendency., 1868, 1870-71 1861), Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena, MT, U.S.A.

[528] "U.S. Office of Indian Affairs. Montana Superintendency Records" (United States Office of Indian Affairs, Montana Superintendency, 1868, 1870-71 1861), Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena, MT, U.S.A.

Rivers, became a place to drop annuities, between the mid-1860s to the mid-1880s, once the army built a small garrison there. The island offered a shoreline access point amidst the rugged Missouri River Breaks. From there, annuities were freighted in wagons overland to Fort Benton, or the bands were required to travel to Cow Island for distribution by military and Indian agents. This added complexity to division and distribution of the provisions as well as confusion in orchestrating ration day.

Historian Hiram Chittenden, following the development of steamboat transportation on the upper Missouri, offered a view of the corruption in the annuities delivery process as witness by steamboat captains such as the famous Captain Joseph La Barge. In the conclusion of Chitenden, "It is doubtful if, during the period from 1850 to 1870, the Indian tribes along the Missouri River received more than half the bounty which was promised them by the government."[529] In fact, Captain La Barge was loath to unload annuities at Fort Union knowing that they were going to be "stored until Spring," he was an openly critical of the corruption of Indian Agents who sold a third to a half of shipments to the American Fur Company which then traded the goods with Natives for buffalo robes. LaBarge was so incensed that when he had a chance to visit with President Lincoln in Washington, DC, in the winter of 1863-64 and again in 1864-65, he emphatically brought this matter to the President. However, Lincoln passed him off to an officer of the Indian Department, who argued with LaBarge claiming that the receipts in his possession proved that the Indians on the Upper Missouri had received their annuities. As an

[529] Hiram Martin Chittenden, *History of the Early Steamboat Navigation on the Missouri River: Life and Adventures of Joseph La Barge, Pioneer Navigator and Indian Trader for Fifty Years Identified with the Commerce of the Missouri Valley*, vol. II, 2 vols., American Explorers Series: Early Steamboating on Missouri River (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1903), 361.

eyewitness of delivery after delivery which were ultimately reduced by half by the corrupt siphoning of American Fur Company, LaBarge knew better.[530]

The obstacles to making good on the promises of replacement foods made to Anishinaabeg and all tribes were vast and enduring, as historian William Farr summarizes:

> They knew in Montana, that congressional appropriations for rations were consistently inadequate and slow in arriving. American agents had already experienced the short-changing of contracted food rations by territorial merchants and the delays in the delivery of supplies, especially under difficult road or weather conditions or when prices soared. The American policy of reservation confinement…was predicated upon adequate food provision and storage—yet sufficient food was not available, and everyone knew it…agents, the U.S. Army, and the Great Father in the form of the Office of Indian Affairs.[531]

The reports in the Fort Belknap records are reflective of the impact, September 16, 1875, "Many Indians in begging all camps near," September 5, 1879, "Indians very impatient about the annuity good," October 22, 1879, "100 sacks flour and annuity good steamboat Josephine," November 4, 1879 "completed arrangements for receiving beef cattle from T. C. Power average weight 1683, 1/3 gross…2/3 net," and, November 24th, 1879, "men working on slaughter house."[532] The development of the replacement food system was underway and though steamboats had been working on the Upper Missouri for a half century there were still struggles with long distance transport of these foods. North of the border, comparable inland boat transport

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[530] Chittenden and La Barge, *History of Early Steamboat Navigation on the Missouri River*, 315-41.

[531] William E Farr, "The End of Freedom: The Military Removal of the Blackfeet and Reservation Confinement, 1880," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 62, no. 2 (Summer 2012): 8.

[532] "U.S. Office of Indian Affairs. Montana Superintendency Records," (United States, Office of Indian Affairs. Montana Superintendency, 1861-68, 1870-71,) Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena, MT, U.S.A.

in the North West did not occur until the 1870s, when the HBC released a fleet of steamers on the major rivers of the interior.

The developing colonial food system was not only serving the administration of Indian rations, it was also needed to develop all aspects of the settler economy. On October 25, 1880, the Fort Belknap journal reports, "started receiving good for military 233,692 lbs of beef from I.G. Baker (183 head) (1,277 [lbs.] each.)" The new system replaced pemmican manufacture and trade, the interim industrial food system built on Indigenous labor and extraction of the buffalo--what fur trade historian Arthur Ray referred to as "a prairie pantry" which supplied the fur traders and fueled their work.[533]

Reliance on the new food system, something Plains Natives had little choice in, was a precarious existence at best. As they always had, Anishinaabeg and their kin continued to rely on their own food system as best they could, receiving the gifts of the four-leggeds, the winged ones, the swimming ones, and the plant nations who protected them.

Once the treaties were in place north of the line, Britain and the new Canadian government, moved into an intentional state of denial regarding the conditions which existed on the plains. It simply was not good for the business of getting settler bodies out onto the prairies to occupy territory with the Indians. They needed to maintain the idea of a land of "milk and honey."[534] As one 1892 assessment bluntly declared, "All these treaties have been carried out with the utmost good faith and the nicest exactness, except that much more has been done for the

[533] Arthur J Ray, "The Northern Great Plains: Pantry of the Northwestern Fur Trade, 1774-1885," *Prairie Forum* 9, no. 2 (Fall 1984): 55–73.
[534] Carter, *Lost Harvests : Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy*, 72.

Indians than was stipulated."[535] The farm experiments were spread out in nearly every reserve, reservation, and Indian agency operation throughout the region. As authors Amanda Nettelbeck and Robert Foster explain:

> In an ideal world, the land cession treaties undertaken through the 1870s would have led to the form of managed development of the North West Territories imagined by Ottawa, in which the forfeiting of First Nation sovereignty would lead through agricultural education to Aboriginal people's assimilation within the colonial economy.[536]

However, the Canadians' capacity to implement the planned transition from hunting to agriculture was compromised by a range of their own practical obstacles, including a chronic shortage of equipment, supplies, and personnel, the accounting bureaucracy, and transportation infrastructure.

Louise Fast Buffalo Horse, born about 1865, told her daughter Mabel Pepion Salois, when she was little "they lived good." As Mabel recounts:

> They roamed all over on the plains. When they got tired, they moved to another place. They had a lot of buffalo. They lived good, you know, until they made them go on these reservations and then they promised they would take care of um and give 'um everything. Homes, and all they needed. Then they used to ration them. All they allowed them was so many pounds of beef. There was no more buffalo then. And flour to each member. If there were two of you, you didn't get much. Anyone with children well they got quite a bit. They used to get so many pounds of meat and flour once a week. Every Saturday, and you had to live on that for a week. To think of it today, I wonder, "How did they ever get by?"

Adaptation was the hallmark of the Indigenous seasonal round. Anishinaabeg and Métis families, like Mabel's, made the best they could of what they were given. Even when "green coffee" was

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[535] William Trant, "The Treatment of the Canadian Indians," *Westminster Review* 144 (1895): 520.

[536] Amanda Nettelbeck and Robert Foster, "Food and Governance on the Frontiers of Colonial Australia and Canada's North West Territories," *Aboriginal History Journal* 36 (2012): 31, https://doi.org/10.22459/AH.36.2013.02.

received in the rations, they tried "boiling and boiling it still had no flavor," so they "parched it on the open fire until it was brown, mashed it, put it in a cloth and made their coffee." Likewise, when the governments gave flour and baking powder and not much else, ingenuity led to frybread, bannock, and/or gallet, which have become mainstay and beloved additions to Native diets. Alexander Wolfe relates his ancestor's memory:

> In the last years of his life Grandfather depended largely on the rations provided twice a month by the local farm instructor. This ration consisted of about ten pounds of flour and about a pound each of tea, dry beans, rice and rolled oats. In the spring and summer he received a small slab of salt pork, about five pounds, The pork was so heavily coated with salt it had to be boiled twice and the water dumped out before it could cook and eat. In the fall and winter Grandfather was also given a hunk of beef, about five to ten pounds, depending on the supply on hand at the ration house.[537]

The replacement foods were the start of a new relationship with food. In the competition between Hudson Bay and the North West Company, the western interior was deluged with tobacco and alcohol, "addictive consumables that lubricated trade when the demand for durable goods was satisfied."[538] The white foods delivered on the white boats, meant to facilitate colonization, were particularly addictive and built dependencies in much the same way.[539] The balance of all things, the balance that Anishinaabeg work for, mino bimaadiziwin (a good life), was tipping. Inadequate supplies of food, coupled with nutritionally poor food, weakened immune systems and left Indigenous peoples vulnerable smoothing the progress of epidemic diseases.[540]

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[537] Wolfe, *Earth Elder Stories: The Pinayzitt Path*, 60–70.
[538] Harris, "Arthur J. Ray and the Empirical Opportunity," 254.
[539] Magalie Lenoir et al., "Intense Sweetness Surpasses Cocaine Reward," ed. Bernhard Baune, *PLoS ONE* 2, no. 8 (August 1, 2007): e698, https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0000698.
[540] Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*.

"The armies of the light-skinned race"

The wholesale military invasion of the Plains did not proceed until after the colonial powers initiated "the sorting of the People on the land" through written agreements. In the late 1860s, following the Civil War, the US began a westward military buildup or what our traditional stories refer to as the "armies of the light-skinned race." The Blackfeet Winter Count for 1874 tells the story, "Ennakex/ otsitotorpi /akapoiyis," "police/when they came/many houses (Fort Macleod)."[541] Construction of Fort Shaw on the Medicine (Sun) River commenced in 1867. The US military purchased Fort Union at the confluence of the Elk (Yellowstone) River and Gitchipeeganoweceepee (the Blackfoot, Missouri River) in 1873. The border between colonial powers, surveyed in the years 1871-73, lacked management infrastructure. In 1877, Fort Assiniboine was built as an effort at policing Indigenous movement across the border and stopping unregulated cross-border trade. The US was especially interested in collecting tariffs on buffalo robes carried by Métis Red River Carts to the port at Fort Benton.[542] After their 1876 attack on a coalition of Indigenous forces at the Battle of the Greasy Grass or Little Big Horn, the US lost five companies of calvary and began sending great numbers of troops west. By 1877, 3,300 troops were in Montana alone.[543] Fortified colonial military settlements infiltrated the Old North Trail Corridor on both sides of the border. In addition to the brick monolith, Fort Assiniboine, Forts Keogh, Custer, Missoula, Fizzle, Maginiis, Saskatchewan, Calgary, and

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[541] Dempsey, *A Blackfoot Winter Count*, Occasional Paper no. 1:16.
[542] Martha Harroun Foster, "'We Know Who We Are': Multiethnic Identity in a Montana Métis Community" (Ph.D., United States -- California, University of California, Los Angeles), 212, accessed November 11, 2021, https://www.proquest.com/docview/304583353/abstract/DB984D9EF0D94BECPQ/1.
[543] Hagen, "Northern Plains Borders and the People In Between, 1860-1940," 137; Foster, "'We Know Who We Are,'" 212.

Walsh were operationalized. The homelands of the Anishinaabeg and their kin became a police state. As Delia Hagen noted, "the availability of the means of violence pervaded Plains consciousness."[544]

A View from the Plant Nations

Of the time of his family's arrival in the Old North Trail Corridor in 1868, Eli Guardipee said, "Grass was plenty, buffalo were so numerous that the whole country was, as the Indians say, 'one robe.'"[545] The buffalo were so numerous because of the grass or was the grass so plentiful because of the buffalo? Historian Joseph Kinsey Howard explained the relationship:

> Sturdy "blue bunch," the great perennial wheat grass of the Montana plains, wiry, drouth-resistant, nutritious, made up a large part of the ground cover of the bison's winter range. It grows only from seed; and the trampling of the bison's hooves … planted the seed. It was as simple as that: the grass flourished, matured, and dropped its seed; and as they foraged on the ripened crop, the bison planted it for next season…But there were no sheep to crop to the roots the tender shoots of new grass when they came up in the spring there were no cattle penned within fences, insatiably hungry—and above all, there were no desperate or greedy homesteaders to sink the murderous blades of their plows into this matted cushion![546]

Howard's conviction is supported by the work of Indigenous ecologist Jason Baldes (Eastern Shoshone) who demonstrates the vital connection that buffalo had with the plant nations as they

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[544] Hagen, "Northern Plains Borders and the People In Between, 1860-1940," 138.
[545] Eli Louis (I-iss-se-na-maka Guardipee Takes Gun Ahead), "Eli Guardipee Reminiscence" (1940), 1, Archive Collection, Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena, MT, U.S.A.
[546] Joseph Kinsey Howard, *Montana High, Wide, and Handsome* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1943), 10. Howard writing in 1942, goes on to say, "There were scores of varieties of these native grasses. Some have disappeared, others, including the most valuable for forage purposes, have become virtually unobtainable in the commercial seed form. Nearly all species, with the exception of those maintained in protected areas such as national forests, have changed drastically in physical character, in ground cover and in nutritive quality."

wallowed.[547] By their grazing and movement along the prairies edge, the buffalo also created more grassland by limiting the spread of willows and aspens along the parkland fringe. The Homestead Act of 1862, the federal policy of making Indians into European-style farmers, the extraction of the buffalo--all of these colonial legacies took place on a great ocean of grass, or more specifically all of the plant nations.

"Just as precious metals had first attracted a sizable population to western Montana in the 1860s, the more abundant resource of free grass first lured a permanent white populace onto the eastern plains during the 1870s," wrote historians Richard Roeder and Michael Malone, "blue gramma, needle-and-thread-buffalo grass, and western wheatgrass—had, after all, supported millions of buffalo."[548] Reflecting on three decades of colonial bounty harvested in Montana, Judge Lyman Munson made a speech to the Merchant's Exchange in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1899, "the grasses which in summer carpet her hills and valleys are sweet and nutritious the year round," he began and continued:

> Finer beef I never saw in the markets of our large eastern cities, than may be found any month of the twelve in the markets of Montana, fattened exclusively upon grass. As a stock growing region, I know of no place on this broad continent more highly favored than the grassy ranges of Montana. Upon them, buffalo, moose, elk, antelope and other herbivorous animals have fed and roamed in fatness during the ages past, and domestic animals feed and thrive upon them equally well. [549]

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[547] Jason Eric Baldes, "Cultural Plant Biodiversity in Relict Wallow Depressions on the Wind River Indian Reservation, Wyoming, & Tribal Bison Restoration and Policy" (Master's Thesis, Bozeman, MT, Montana State University, 2016).
See also David Augustine et al., "Thinking Like a Grassland: Challenges and Opportunities for Biodiversity Conservation in the Great Plains of North America," *Rangeland Ecology & Management* 78 (September 2021): 281–95, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rama.2019.09.001.
[548] Michael P. Malone and Richard B. Roeder, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries* (Seattle: University of Washington Press1976, n.d.), 113.
[549] Lyman Ezra Munson, "'Address Delivered by Hon. L.E. Munson before the Members of the Merchants' Exchange, at New Haven, Conn," Lyman Ezra Munson Papers (New Haven, CT, February 6, 1867), SC 553, Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena, MT, U.S.A.

Historians Malone and Roeder observed that, "By the early 1870s, overcrowded and overgrazed ranges and the rising competition of farmers and dairymen for the use of the land began pressuring Montana stockmen eastward and northward, beyond the mountains into central Montana."[550] This was the last place of buffalo where the great herds had been culled and compressed along the Rocky Mountain Front and the valleys of the Missouri and Judith Rivers. The convergence of animals on the grass was a ticking clock of unsustainability.

With the overturn in species relationships the balance of all things tipped. As Daschuk explains, "the spread of cattle ranching brought intense competition for forage and introduced diseases to the already endangered bison population. The ecological significance of the introduction of cattle cannot be overstated."[551] Between the end of the US Civil War and the beginning of the 20th century, six to ten million cattle and one million horses were pushed north out of the mild-weather breeding ground of Texas. This continental shift represents méttisage of immense scale—the stirring of animals, people, and biota, lifeways up-ended. Anthrax, Texas tick fever, brucellosis, and bovine tuberculosis came with these cattle and spread to the buffalo.[552] In the late 1870s Indigenous peoples in the region were exposed to a new and yet unexplained "explosion of clinical tuberculosis in humans" which may have been caused by their consumption of diseased beef.[553]

The buffalo were not the only four-leggeds who faced extraction. The number of elk on the Elk River (Yellowstone) and bears on the Bear River (Milk) and throughout the region

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[550] Malone and Roeder, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries*, 150.
[551] Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*, 127.
[552] Daschuk, 102.
[553] Daschuk, 103.

dropped precipitously. The wolves who followed the buffalo herds were intentionally poisoned so that they might not turn to cattle for their sustenance. Judge Munson remembered visiting Wolf Point in present Montana sometime in the late 1860s or 70s; speaking of the methods used by the wolfers, he said, "They killed a buffalo, cut out what meat they wanted for their use, and poisoned the carcass for the wolves. The first night seventy-two wolves came to grief, the second twenty-eight." Howard also acknowledged, "Thirty or forty million antelope range the Great Plains, and no one knows how many of them were in Montana. But they were dainty eaters, and restless: and there were no fences."[554] With the disappearance of all of these relatives from the biocultural region, the People were desperately hungry and without hides to clothe them.[555] With pressure in the years 1874-76 from Anishinaabe-Nehiyaw Big Bear, Nehiyaw Chief Beardy, and the famous Father Lacombe, who traveled with the ones who still followed the buffalo, Canadian government officials contemplated legal measures to protect the remaining herds.[556] Chief Beardy's told Commissioner Morris at Duck Lake in August 1876, "I wish that each one should have an equal share (of the buffalo), if that could be managed….I trust to the Queen and to the Governor, it is only through their aid we can manage to preserve them."[557] As the colonial government considered what to do, pressure continued to increase on the animals and the People who depended on them. The Northern Pacific Railroad had reached Bismarck, North Dakota, and was serving as a super conveyor for buffalo hides. Professional American hide hunters flooded the Plains in search of sport, Western adventure, and market returns on their

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[554] Howard, *Montana High, Wide, and Handsome*, 9.
[555] Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*, 107.
[556] Daschuk, 102.
[557] Ray, Miller, and Tough, *Bounty and Benevolence*, 138.

hides.[558] The hide hunters also employed another form of technology that factored into the rapidity of the departure of the buffalo. Louis Shambow who lived amongst the Métis on Milk River, talked about how the professional buffalo hunters operated, "The buffalo started South with the buffalo hunters after them. These fellows would telegraph ahead to others that the herds were coming and they met and killed them all by the time they got to Texas."[559] It was true what Chief Beardy had said, they needed the help of the colonial government to stop what was happening. A letter from Commissioner Morris to Alexander Mackenzie, Liberal prime minister, reiterated what leaders of the Iron Confederacy were saying, "They saw the buffalo, the only means of their support, passing away," he reported, "and they dreaded that during the transition period they would be swept off by disease and famine."[560]

Grandfather Earth Man "and his people went often to hunt [in the Cypress Hills] because there was much game in this place."[561] For the Anishinaabeg, the Cypress Hills are known as a sacred place where the face of Anishinaabeg is on the Land. Creator has put a symbol on the land there to remind us we are "from the soil," "we are the Land."[562] The ones who stood for the buffalo and intensely resisted the loss of the buffalo went to that place in their need. After passing the winter of 1877-78 along the Red Deer River, Big Bear realized that there was no point in going north in the spring as they usually had; the country was devoid of buffalo.[563] The

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[558] Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*, 102.
[559] "Louis Shambow Reminiscence," 7.
[560] Geoff Cunfer et al., eds., *Bison and People on the North American Great Plains: A Deep Environmental History*, First edition, Connecting the Greater West (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2016), 249, https://muse.jhu.edu/book/48405.
[561] Wolfe, *Earth Elder Stories: The Pinayzitt Path*, 67.
[562] O'Chiese, "Let's Talk Ojibway."
[563] Dempsey, *Big Bear: The End of Freedom*, 81.

dissenting bands of Cree, Assiniboine, Ojibwe, and Métis, with the most outspoken chiefs Big Bear, Little Pine, and Piapot congregated near the Cypress Hills, near "the last refuge of the species (buffalo) in Canadian territory." There were nearly 3,600 relatives in all--bands of Cree, Assiniboine, and Ojibwe from Fort Pitt, Edmonton, Carlton House, and Qu'Apelle, Blood and Blackfeet, as well as 6,000 to 8,000 Sioux refugees along with Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse.[564]

After a failed request for better treaty terms in 1877 at Fort Pitt, Big Bear went again to treaty conference in 1878, this time with Commissioner Laird at Sounding Lake. He had the consensus of his band to sign if the terms were right. Amongst other things, the Native leaders objected to what was known as the famine clause which required proof that there was a "general famine" across the plains before governmental measures to alleviate starvation would be taken. Additionally, treaty and non-treaty chiefs requested release of agricultural implements held in government warehouses. In short, Big Bear was there to negotiate a successful transition to what would be a new way of life for his people.

When the Ogima got to Sounding Lake, he was concerned by the atmosphere. "Tents, stores, and the carts of twenty-three traders were already there, some with goods the Indians had never seen before."[565] They were selling racehorses and buffalo runners, and more. Hugh Dempsey summarized the alure of it all:

> A nontreaty man with a family of five could collect thirty dollars for that year alone if he accepted treaty, and his bonus would give him another seventy-two dollars. Moreover, keen competition among the traders had caused prices to fall lower than anyone had ever seen before: a man could buy a Winchester rifle for forty-five dollars, a blanket for five dollars or an unbroken cayuse for as little as

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[564] Robert Alexander Innes, "The Importance of Family Ties to Cowesses First Nation" (Tuscon, AZ, The University of Arizona, 2007), 80; Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*, 105.
[565] Dempsey, *Big Bear: The End of Freedom*, 85.

> thirty-five dollars. Even Red River carts were going for the unheard of price of twenty dollars each.[566]

Big Bear knew those who had not yet signed treaty were getting anxious and that if he failed to win concessions for the People they might settle and sign anyway. Any individual could break with their leadership and sign treaty directly with the government. As the days went on, both treaty and nontreaty Indians appointed Big Bear their spokesperson. As the dialogue with Laird progressed, Big Bear discovered that Laird held no power to change the terms of the treaty. Big Bear stopped the discussions, told the commissioner to pass the requests of those he represented to someone who did have the authority to make the changes. He would wait until the following year to hear the government's answer. The treaty chiefs were also frustrated with Laird and waited two more days to see if he might muster authority to change the treaty terms. When it did not happen, the people scrambled to receive their annuity monies and to spend them in treaty market. Only two chiefs broke ranks with Big Bear and signed treaty.

Big Bear left Sounding Lake alone and troubled by the situation. He was a deeply spiritual man, the son of an Ojibwe Ogima, Black Powder, and had been transferred spiritual teachings, songs, and ceremonies.[567] In his 53 years had many visions including one in his youth which told of the white man's coming and his taking of the land and his backward way of giving gifts.[568] After leaving the treaty conference he had another vision that told him to back away from the fight and allow the Great Spirit to do the work. He was moved to wait four years for

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[566] Dempsey, 82–83.
[567] Dempsey, 11–17.
[568] Dempsey, 17.

something good to come. “Big Bear would now give the spirits a chance to exert their healing powers upon the prairies.”[569]

In the Spring of 1877, the US Army campaign against the Nez Perce chased them to another place sacred to the Anishinaabeg, the Bear’s Paw Mountains just south of the Medicine Line. Chief Joseph and most of his band were forced to surrender, but Chief White Bird and about hundred others made it to the Cypress Hills. After traveling nearly 1,000 miles over 121 days, fleeing the chaos of gold mining and colonial oppression in their homeland in current day Oregon and Idaho, the Nez Perce were captured by US military lying in wait for the Sioux. The ones who escaped, riding double and carrying wounded children, made their way into the Sioux camp at Wood Mountain. Though the Nez Perce and Sioux were long-standing enemies, they were both refugees from the violence of the US government. The Sioux were reported to have taken the Nez Perce with them into their crowded tents and cared for them as relatives.[570] But the 1877-78 winter hunt in foothills failed, bands travelled over a 100 miles to find game on the plains and a cycle of despair set in.[571] In Maureen Lux’s analysis, “The stress of overcrowding, an inadequate diet, and the constant movement in search of game produced an out-of-control synergism between infection and hunger.”[572]

A Canadian Indian Commission estimated that there were about 26,500 Native people on the Plains in 1878. The food crisis was growing so deep that even if they had the will and means,

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[569] Dempsey, 85.
[570] LaDow, *The Medicine Line: Life and Death on the North American Borderland*, 72.
[571] Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*, 107.
[572] Maureen K. Lux, *Medicine That Walks: Disease, Medicine, and Canadian Plains Native People, 1880-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 31.

Commissioner Edgar Dewdney feared there was no way for the government to procure the quantity of food it would take to avoid absolute famine. Farm instructors, seeds, and implements were also needed to reverse the direction of things. Traders at Fort Benton estimated that there was a herd of maybe one hundred buffalo remaining.[573] By July of 1879, ration warehouses were raided at Qu'Appelle and the Touchwood Hills. At Battleford where 1,000 people were camped, women were digging prairie turnips and picking berries but there was no meat or flour in the province. Further west, Crowfoot's Blackfeet band were emaciated to the point of eating the flesh of poisoned wolves and dogs; others were boiling old bones for soup. Old Sun's band and Chief Bullhead's Sarcee band were eating dogs, gophers, and mice.[574] For the year 1879, only 8,000 buffalo robes were brought in at Fort Walsh and 5,000 at Fort Macleod.[575]

With little choice, the bands around Cypress Hills began to move south to seek the last buffalo around the Missouri and the Milk Rivers. Eli Guardipee (Anishinaabe-Métis) remembered Spring 1880 as the last time the great Blackfeet camp ever went in a body to hunt in the fine game country of the Judith Basin, and when all trekked back to their Agency it was as if they had relinquished their right to Montana's finest game country."[576]

The commensurate grief of losing relatives must have been palpable in the camps—the lost connection to the herd and all the other-than-human relatives, long absences from places known as home, and the uncertainty of the future. My great great grandparents, Job Falcon and Marie Laroque Falcon were in a camp in nearby Wood Mountain in these years. Grandpa Falcon

[573] Lux, 100.
[574] Lux, 34–35.
[575] Dempsey, *Big Bear: The End of Freedom*, 91.
[576] Guardipee, "Eli Guardipee Reminiscence," 10.

was a buffalo hunter and no doubt looking for the same remaining animals, when in 1879 their baby girl, Margaret was born. Records say she passed from this world the same day. In 1880, Job and Marie were again blessed with a baby girl whom they named Catherine, also born at Wood Mountain. By 1884 the buffalo were gone and Job and Marie had decided to join their relatives at Turtle Mountain, on the newly established Chippewa reservation there. While they were there, Catherine also passed to the next world in 1884. Relatives can only speculate what conditions may have brought their early departures from this world, probability says it was hunger and disease precipitated by the destruction of the buffalo.

The colonial policies at-hand were complex yet growing familiar. Dr. John Kittson of the NWMP analyzed the rations that were given to Siberian prisoners in comparison to those given to First Nations and Métis in 1882. He determined that the daily ration of a half-pound of meat and a half pound of flour was far less than the prisoners received. His report to the Indian Department read:

> Gaunt men and women with hungry eyes were seen everywhere seeking or begging for a mouthful of food—little children…fight over tid-bits…I tell you that the mortality exceeds the birth rate it may help you to realize the amount of suffering and privation exists among them. The only surprise is that they remain so patient and well disposed… but human suffering must have its limits.[577]

Prime Minister John Macdonald had ordered his deputy superintendent, Lawrence Vankoughnet, to keep the People surrounding Fort Walsh on starvation rations. Commissioner Dewdney realized that Big Bear, Piapot, and Little Pine, were trying to "maintain Cree autonomy by establishing a huge concentration of reserves near the Cypress Hills." This would stand in the

[577] Lux, *Medicine That Walks: Disease, Medicine, and Canadian Plains Native People, 1880-1940,* 38.

way of the Canadian Pacific Railway which was intended to cross there. Using food as a weapon, Macdonald began forcing Crees out.[578]

The Delineation of Lines

The survey of the international boundary in the years 1871-73 was, as historian Michel Hogue acknowledges, the delineation of a line that would "serve as the basis for subsequent land and railroad surveys."[579] It marked the way forward for capital development and nothing could stand in the way of it. Historian Richard White noted that railroads increased the speed of change—bringing settlers to the West and carrying natural resources away from the West.[580] The marvel of the railroads was their fossil fuel-fired power and speed. Transcontinental railroads crossed the US in 1869 and Canada in 1885; Pekka Hämäleinen wrote of their destructive force: " By 1868, the Union Pacific cut across the central Plains, preventing north-south migrations of the bison and thus compromising their reproductive capacity."[581] Earth Elder told of the prophecies that came to the Anishinaabeg of "an iron road on which would travel something that looked like a great worm. It would contain fire, make much noise and blow clouds of smoke into the sky. In this would ride the whiteman in great numbers."[582] These long straight iron lines transected the circle of the medicine wheels that the great herds inscribed on the land. Their power to carry people and cargo to and from the eastern population centers contributed to the rate by which buffalo robes and hides were removed from the Northwestern Plains.

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[578] Lux, 39.
[579] Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line: Creating a Border and Dividing a People*, 1.
[580] Richard White, *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America*, 1st ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2011).
[581] Hämäläinen, "Reconstructing the Great Plains: The Long Struggle for Sovereignty and Dominance in the Heart of the Continent," 451.
[582] Wolfe, *Earth Elder Stories: The Pinayzitt Path*, 28.

The railroad reached Great Falls in 1880, and Medicine Hat in 1883. The grand desideratum, the thing that was foreseen in visions, was happening before the People's eyes. The colonial powers' embrace of fossil-fuel technologies to colonize and industrialize was happening. This medicine had the power to carve a line right through the medicine wheel, breaking the connection with the new life that was coming—the reproductive capacity of the buffalo and that of Native people whose mortality rate now exceeded their birth rate.

When a culture loses its connection to its way of being--the regenerative sources of life--what is lost is sovereignty. Standing Rock Sioux scholar, Vine Deloria Jr. identified sovereignty as "continued cultural integrity" rather than political power or autonomy. He concluded that "to the degree that a nation loses its sense of cultural identity, to that degree it suffers a loss of sovereignty."[583] For the Anishinaabeg of western Anishinaabewaki and their kin, buffalo were the center of their way of life, as well as their kinship network of exchange and their sovereignty. Pekka Hämäleinen made this observation of the tribes further south, "in the end, their power and sovereignty rested on the bison. They could remain independent only as long as there were buffalo to sustain them. They had always known it, and by 1869 Sheridan knew it, too."[584] Many iron lines were crossing Turtle Island severing the web of life.

Understanding the Loss of the Buffalo

Reflections. The gravity of the loss of the buffalo disturbed those who participated in and benefitted from it even while it was happening. Thomas G. Mooney, born in Cataragus County, New York, was a settler and son of Irish immigrants. In 1868, Mooney made his way west to

[583] Deloria, "Self-Determination and the Concept of Sovereignty."
[584] Hämäläinen, "Reconstructing the Great Plains: The Long Struggle for Sovereignty and Dominance in the Heart of the Continent," 502.

Fort Benton, Montana, aboard the steamboat *Ida Stockdale* and then overland to Fort Shaw just as it was being built. He reported that at the time there was no stock in that Sun River country, "but buffalo everywhere in bunches."[585] His acknowledgment that domestic cattle had not yet taken over the countryside was likely shaped by his recent westward journey; he clearly knew the forecast of cattle dominance to come.[586]

In a moment of awe, Mooney recounted a horseback ride he made in 1877 from Fort Keogh (Miles City) all the way to the Bear River (Milk River.)[587] It was the first time he came in contact with 'the main herd.' It took him four solid days to pass through it, four solid days. In 1880, again passing through the main herd, he noted that the Indians were being "very conscious of not taking more than they could use."[588] His arrival in this country, he acknowledged, coincided with the height of what he described as "the human race engaged in wholesale slaughter." In his reminiscence of the experience of what it felt like to be on the land in that time, he stated, "when lying down at night, there was a rumble of earth never to be heard again unless the country again became peopled by large animals."

In Mooney's own meaning making, he provided context for the events of his time. He recollected that after the Custer battle at the Little Big Horn, General Miles established a camp at

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[585] Thomas George Mooney, "Thomas George Mooney Reminiscences, 1939-1942" (August 1939), Archive Collection, Montana Historical Society Research Center.
[586] In 1867, the number of cattle in the United States was 25 million, by the late 1880s it was 55 million. M. Scott Taylor, "Buffalo Hunt: International Trade and the Virtual Extinction of the North American Bison," *American Economic Review* 101, no. 7 (December 2011): 3179.
[587] Plenty Coups (Apsaálooke) refers to the Milk River as Bear River. John Canfield Ewers, Susan R Sharrock, and Floyd W Sharrock, *Ethnological Report on The Chippewa Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boy Reservation, Montana and the Little Shell Band of Indians, Docket No. 221-B, Indian Claims Commission* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1974), 123.
[588] Thomas George Mooney, "Thomas George Mooney Reminiscences, 1939-1942" (Helena, MT, August 1939), 4–5, Archive Collection, Montana Historical Society Research Center.

the mouth of the Tongue River. “Destroy the buffalo and you will solve the Indian question,” was the word Miles sent back to the War Department. Mr. Mooney said following this, a slaughter began which he termed, “a crime against Nature.” In the end, Mooney, who had come to Montana as fur trader and buffalo hunter, left this haunting expression of deep remorse for his actions. He stated, “If I ever die of starvation, it would be a judgement against me for meat I destroyed.”[589]

Kootenai Brown, the Oxford-educated buffalo hunter and wolfer who traveled with the Métis, recalled:

> Around 1883 I recall one year when it was said a quarter of a million buffalo had been killed. Not one-hundredth part of all these were used and the carcasses were left to rot on the ground. Ten years before that, when buffalo were killed mostly by professional hunters for their hides, the I.G. Baker Company shipped annually a quarter million hides, but every buffalo killed at that time was skinned. And across the line the slaughter was a great deal worse. A high-mucky-muck in the North West Mounted Police about that time said the United States government did the killing so that Sitting Bull and his Sioux warriors might be starved into submission. The Indians certainly suffered. At the same time I am of the opinion that in the States, if the buffalo had not been killed, there would have been Indian wars going on today.[590]

Brown’s meaning making was typical of many settler narratives of the time, both those with power and everyday citizens--remorse but a sense of necessity. It was somehow inevitable that one culture would dominate another even if it meant the destruction of the buffalo, the Land, and the People who belonged to them both. This manifest destiny thinking was pervasive.[591]

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[589] Mooney, “Thomas George Mooney Reminiscences, 1939-1942.”
[590] McD. Tait, ed., ““‘I Remember:” Recollections of “Kootenai” Brown Related Verbatim to W.D.T.,’ Glenbow Foundation Typescript Copy,” 113. From 1881-1883, 320,000 hides were shipped form MT and the surrounding area. Rudoph W. Koucky, “ The Buffalo Disaster of 1882,” *North Dakota History* 50, no.1 (Winter 1883).
[591] Bill Waiser, “A Legislator’s View of Bison Collapse: The 1877 North-West Territories Bison Protection Ordinance,” in *Bison and People on the North American Great Plains: A Deep*

On January 29, 1886, three years after the last of the buffalo in the last buffalo home along the Rockies had disappeared, *The Choteau Calumet* reported in a story titled "Buffalo," "Half-breeds located thirty head near the Sweet Grass Hills and the Judith Valley." *The Calumet* writer remained optimistic that the herds would soon return from the "very far north across the boundaryline" to the area around Choteau.[592]

Environmental History, ed. Geoff Cunfer and Bill Waiser, Connection the Greater West (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2016), 258.

[592] "Buffalo."

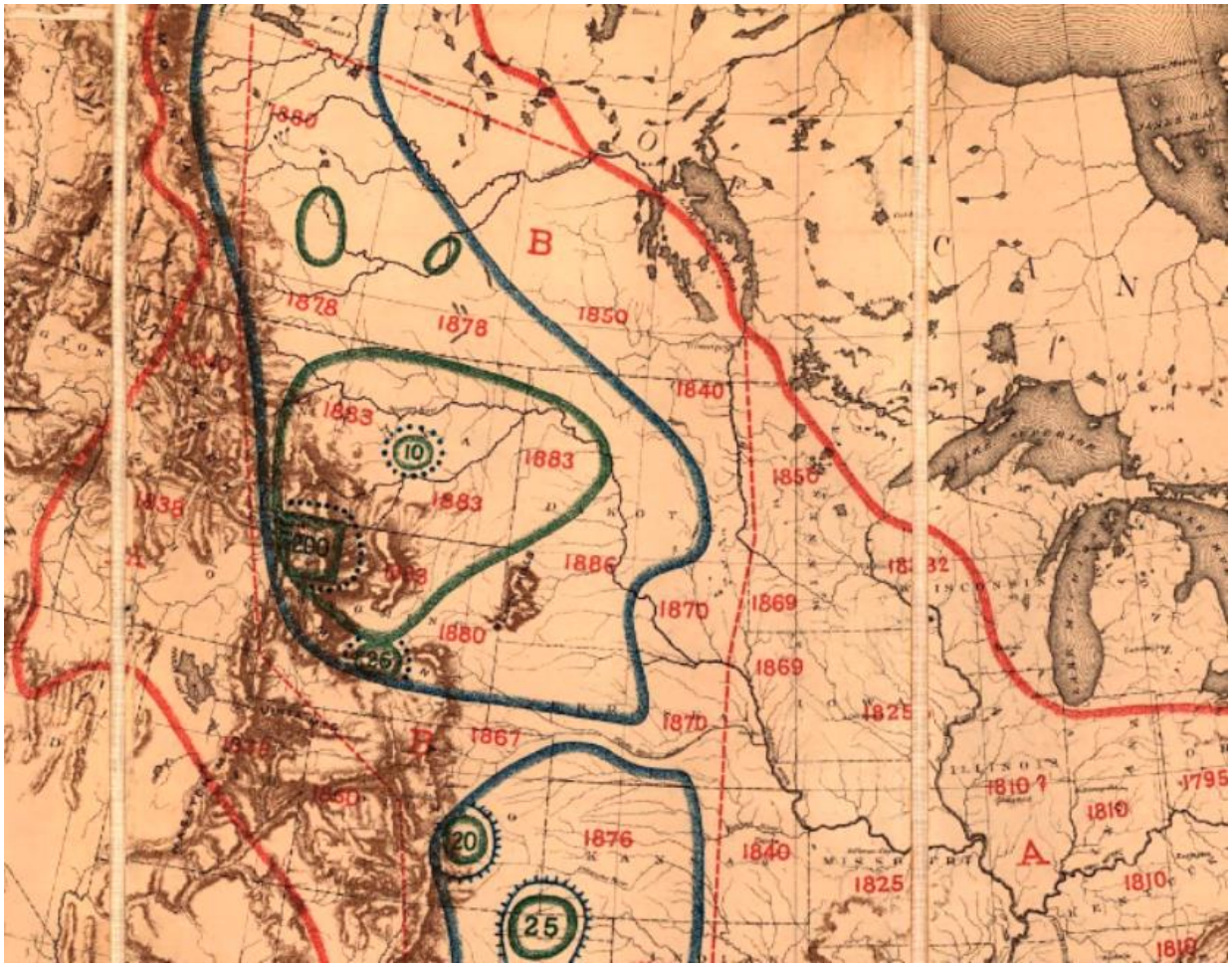


Figure 18. Map of the Extermination of the American Bison, William Temple Hornaday, Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1889, a partial view of the original.[593]

Extraction and Compounding Events. With no regulation of the buffalo hunt, by 1889, the information in this map was the story reported by chief taxidermist of the Smithsonian Institute, William Hornaday. From the Musselshell River Valley in the heart of the Old North

[593] William Temple Hornaday, *Map Illustrating the Extermination of the American Bison* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1889), G3301.D4 1889, Library of Congress Geography and Map Division, Washington, D.C., https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3301d.ct000308/?r=-0.613,-0.434,1.688,1.402,0.

Trail Corridor of current day Montana, where he collected bison specimens in 1886, Hornaday wrote to the Secretary of the Smithsonian:

> The total number of buffalos killed on the Expedition, including last spring's work, was 25. I consider that we have been extremely lucky in finding a sufficient number of buffalo where it was supposed by people generally that none existed. Our "outfit" has been pronounced by old buffalo hunters "The luckiest outfit that ever hunted buffalo in Montana," and the opinion is quite generally held that our "haul" of specimens could not be equaled again in Montana by anybody, no matter what their resources for the reason that the buffalo are not there. We killed very nearly all we saw and I am confident there are not over thirty-head remaining in Montana, all told. By this time next year the cowboys will have destroyed about all of this remnant. We got in our Exploration just in the nick of time, --the last day in the evening, so to speak, and I do not hesitate to say that I am really rejoiced over the fact that we have been successful in securing the specimens we needed so urgently.[594]

In just over ten years, from the time of Mooney's four-day trip through the main herd along the Missouri Breaks to Hornaday's salvage mission for specimens of a disappearing species, the colonial machine swallowed up the buffalo. At contact there may have been somewhere between 45-75 million buffalo on Turtle Island, by the late 1880s there were less than 100 animals left in a wild state.[595] The timeframe is dramatic and shocking and not easily understood, though many hypotheses have been pushed forward. While there are clear connections to be made between the desired outcome of clearing the land of the people who were already here by eliminating their food source, it is also true that the buffalo themselves were colonized. Some have said they were extracted from the land to make way for cattle, farms, and railroads, and those motivations are

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[594] William T. Hornaday, "Spencer F. Baird, Secretary. Miles City, MT. Washington, DC.," December 21, 1886, Smithsonian Institution Archives.

[595] Ernest Thompson Seton, "Lives of Game Animals," in *Hoofed Animals*, vol. 3 (Boston: Charles T. Branford, 1953).

clear. It was, as historian Ted Binnema said, "a process," but how do we understand the rapidity of this process?

Conveyor Belts and other Cash Crops. By the mid-nineteenth century, businessmen in the Eastern US had realized the advantages of buffalo hide in supplying factories with belts to run machinery. Buffalo hide is supple, elastic, and extremely strong. While industrial development in the US created a demand for hides, it was not at the same stage of advancement as industrialization in Europe. Demand for hides for factories became an absolute vacuum of destruction for the buffalo when hides began to be exported on the international market. While tariffs existed on tanned hides imported to Europe, little or no tariffs were administered on raw hides. Then in 1870 or 1871, tanners in England and Germany developed their own methods for tanning buffalo hides, circumnavigating tariff restrictions, and the step of tanning by hand previously done by Native women. As Europeans figured out how to tan the hides themselves for use in factories, demand exploded. Because buffalo hides were lumped in with cattle hides (about 3-4% of the total hide market) and buffalo taking was not regulated, the market price stayed fixed. US export data from the time period demonstrates how this effectively set a fixed value for bison hides independent of their supply—the market did not adjust for scarcity as the buffalo disappeared.

There were no economic or other incentives for conservation or regulation.[596] This is not because conservation methodologies had not yet been applied. By 1877 the seal fishery on the Pribilof islands in Alaska was regulated with a quota on harvests. Nor was the lack of buffalo

[596] Taylor M. Scott, "Buffalo Hunt: International Trade and the Virtual Extinction of the North American Bison," 3162–95.

harvest regulation a matter of ignorance. In 1866, *Harper's Magazine* discussed a bill to restrict buffalo hunting saying: "The difficulty will be to secure its enforcement, as the extermination of these animals, which is now impending, is brought about by parties who, at a distance from any control, are a law unto themselves, and who are not likely to be influenced by any enactments that do not involve the means of execution."[597] This is the same argument that the Canadian government had with itself in the mid-1870s when Anishinaabeg and the kin petitioned for protections. Was there the infrastructure to support enforcement? Perhaps this was a genuine issue, but one would think that Alaska in 1877 was also lacking in policing infrastructure.

It is commonly estimated that there were 25-30 million buffalo in North America in the sixteenth century. What is most remarkable about the buffalo slaughter is the variability of the scale over time: "one half of the precontact buffalo population was killed in just ten years' time post 1870; the elimination of the other half took over 100 years."[598] To break it down, the removal of buffalo east of the Mississippi took place over 100 years, but the remaining 10-15 million were slaughtered in a timeframe of approximately 12 years.

The primary economic demand for buffalo was in their hides, tanned for use as conveyor belts, but there were other ways buffalo were commodified. For many homesteaders, their first harvest was bison bones when they cleared their land for tilling. Buffalo bones were a cash crop for homesteaders and a resource for manufacturing--crushed up for fertilizer and china dishes and then shipped back out to settler consumers.

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[597] *Harper's Magazine,* April 15th, 1866, Scientific Intelligence section, quoted in Taylor M. Scott, "Buffalo Hunt: International Trade and the Virtual Extinction of the North American Bison," 3188.

[598] Taylor M. Scott, "Buffalo Hunt: International Trade and the Virtual Extinction of the North American Bison," 3165.

Market forces and industrial development, including mechanization and vertical integration on a global scale, did not in themselves cause the near extermination of the buffalo, but they did set the pace of their demise.[599] Environmental historian George Colpitts observed how the settler economy worked in relationship to buffalo extraction, "Capital and markets prompted slaughter in almost counterintuitive ways: merchants protecting investments far away from the western hunting grounds, for instance, encouraged overkill to make up for saturated markets at home and dropping prices on skins and robes."[600] It appears that the colonial machine swallowed up bizikiwag (buffalo) whole, but there is more complexity to the story.

Cattle. The largescale invasion of the colonial replacement species for buffalo—cattle—brought disease to both buffalo and humans and the development of an herbivore monocrop which devastated the web of life through their grazing patterns. Though Thomas Mooney did not see many cattle in 1868, relative to the places he had come from in the east, they were there. By 1864, Conrad Kohrs and others were moving large herds in the Sun River Valley. Johnny Grant, a Métis from the Red River Valley, also had great herds in the Deer Lodge valley of Montana by his time. All throughout the region cattle were being pushed by settlers, the colonial governments trying to adapt Indians to their way of life, and Métis—those who lived a liminal life between two worlds.

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[599] Jennifer Hansen, "A Tanner's View of the Bison Hunt: Global Tanning and Industrial Leather," in *Bison and People on the North American Great Plains: A Deep Environmental History*, ed. Geoff Cunfer and Bill Waiser, Connection the Greater West (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2016), 227–44.
[600] Colpitts, "Provisioning the HBC," 180.

Compatibility. Kootenai Brown remembered a conversation he once had with Canadian Senator Matthew Henry Cochrane, an early banker and rancher in the North West Territory. Cochrane reportedly announced his intention to bring in several thousand head of cattle. Brown explained to him the way that the buffalo moved across the land grazing over thousands of miles in a season. On the open range of those days, they were unpredictable in their movements. "Then, too, a buffalo faces into a storm while a cow or steer goes with it regardless of where it leads." He advised Cochrane on cutting hay for winter feed, and said the Senator laughed. The first season the Senator lost half his herd to starvation. A year later Cochrane's herd was starving in deep snow and with the use of a large herd of Indian horses his crew drove them through the drifts in the direction of the Waterton lakes where the chinook wind would open up the ground for them.[601]

On that day when thermometer read thirty-five below, January 22, 1886, the rest of the Buffalo section in *The Choteau Calumet* read as follows:

> It was only a few years ago that a snowstorm like the present would have brought vast herds of buffalo from the high or prairie lands to the Teton bottom. Now the land is covered with domestic cattle whose light coats are more vulnerable and their flesh more sensitive to the keen blasts of winter than the heavy robe and the tough hide of the prairie monarch. The buffalo are gone, and there is no more sport for the boys and no certainty of meat for the winter. Alas!

The settler nation already knew that buffalo were more compatible with the land, however cattle were the ones European settlers had already domesticated—they had control of them. To the degree that people or animals are vulnerable, they are more easily manipulated and controlled.

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[601] McD. Tait, ed., "'"I Remember:" Recollections of "Kootenai" Brown Related Verbatim to W.D.T.,' Glenbow Foundation Typescript Copy," 131–32.

When a system uses vulnerability to achieve its ends it creates dependencies. This is what sets apart systems of dependency from independency.

Cattle like buffalo belonged to the market system. Settler-ranchers on the Northwestern Plains imported thousands of head of cattle to exploit both local and distant transatlantic markets in a transition from what environmental historian Matt Todd describes as "a Native-managed grassland occupied by wild bison to a leased rangeland stocked with domesticated cattle."[602] Alexander Wolfe touches on the difference from an Anishinaabe perspective:

> The Saulteaux (Ojibwemowin) word for buffalo is muskoday pesheekey, for cattle is awacanee pesheekey. Awacan is a Saulteaux word used to describe a person or animal that has been denied its freedom and confined to a limited environment. The word muskoday describes an open plain such as the prairie where the buffalo in times past roamed in freedom.[603]

There is great nuance in how the language explains belief. The buffalo who roams free is permitted to stay in relationship with the place that it belongs and therefore is free to do his own work or "give his gift" from a place of freedom that is respected by the community.

Commodification. The presumption that Indigenous peoples were using buffalo for a means to an end, sustenance in the same way that the settler system was using cattle is a dangerous one. It is a one-dimensional perspective that I often hear hints of in economic and ecological arguments around the demise of the buffalo. What makes it dangerous is that it excludes the dynamism of systems and the role of belief. An Indigenous view is a holistic view, which requires patience for complexity in the web of relationship.

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[602] Cunfer et al., *Bison and People on the North American Great Plains: A Deep Environmental History*, 275.

[603] Wolfe, *Earth Elder Stories: The Pinayzitt Path*, 70. In my work, I used the spelling bizhiki for buffalo.

The colonial commodification and exploitation of animals in the market system represents a different relationship of people with the web of life, or "all of our relations," based on a different way of seeing or ontology. In the Anishinaabeg worldview, buffalo are our relative, the ones who have stood as a teacher of Respect in their example of giving all of themselves in the relatives who need them. Anishinaabe harvesting of buffalo within the context of their intact culture, spiritually grounded, honors the work that each relative does in the web of life and respects the needs of each one to life in a reciprocal network of exchange. Anishinaabe taking of buffalo in this way is the opposite of commodification because the measure of the value of the buffalo is in what they give, not in what can be taken from them. The orientation of the Anishinaabeg is on the collective, the web, not on the individual.

In the same way that the buffalo had work to do and a gift to give, humans do, too. Alexander Wolfe acknowledged, "Grandfather's way of life and his diet had changed drastically…He could no longer provide for himself as he had done in times past. The meat that was issued to him during the fall and winter was not the meat to which he was accustomed."[604] The relationship of the buffalo and the People was a relationship of life. The two were co-evolved with one another in a relationship that, as the field of epigenetics observes, promoted mutual well-being. By eating the foods that Grandfather "was accustomed to" his body and well-being were tended by a relationship as old as that of Indigenous peoples and buffalo—as long as they existed in the shared web of life.

[604] Wolfe, 70.

The arrival of cattle, and to a similar extent sheep, changed many aspects of the health of the Land and the health of the People, their arrival alone was not responsible for the dramatic decline in the buffalo.

Cooperation and Contingencies. As the colonization of people and place advanced, Anishinaabeg had to make painful decisions about whether or not to cooperate with their colonizers. Their choices were contingent because, as a matter of survivance, Anishinaabeg probably felt that their choices were limited and not optimal. One example might have been Chief Peguis' choice to offer the Selkirk settlers assistance. Perhaps he did it as a contingency, money in the bank, as settlers arrived and began to establish their dominion over the land. Another example was Indigenous participation in the settler economy. Anishinaabeg had been participating since the 1600s when French fur traders made their entre to the area around the Great Lakes. Participation in the settler economic system involved different cultural norms and values and yielded different results. However, as the settler extraction reduced the other-than-human relatives that Anishinaabeg and others relied upon, there was reason to participate in the new economy.

As a result of colonization, Anishinaabe participation in the buffalo hunt changed. First, without settler expansion in their own food system Anishinaabeg may not have turned so strongly to the support of Chi Bizhiki. Second, Anishinaabeg may not have acquired horses to join the hunt and travel greater distances as the great herds shrunk and compressed in the Western doorway. Third, as colonization intensified so did competition on the "resource frontiers' that capitalism so desires. Hunting, for sustenance or trade purposes, became increasingly fraught, more wasteful, and wild-eyed with anxiety for the future.

For the ones that stood between two worlds, the Métis, their mixed cultural values and mixed methods of hunting including a very militarized and spiritualized (Catholic) approach, are always difficult to articulate.[605] In the end, each band found its own allegiances with the multi-cultural web of relationship of the Northwest Plains in the 18th and 19th centuries. Métis were often resented by both Indigenous and settler relatives alike. One thing the positionality of the Métis teaches us is that in the end the constructs of race and social categories do not reveal where someone really stands in relationship to the web of life. The real values, intentions, and practices of a person are only known through relationship.

Climate. It is generally estimated that in the sixteenth century there were 25-30 million buffalo on the Great Plains.[606] Environmental historian Dan Flores posits the question: "Why did the bison, a genus that had survived the arrival of humans, the Pleistocene extinctions, and one hundred centuries of contraction and expansion, come within the barest whisper of disappearing a century ago?" His answer is that "great superorganisms like the southern plains bison herd were capable of functioning sustainably over tens of thousands of years…" with all the fluctuations of natural forces, but at some point, the herd hit a tipping point of unsustainability. His answer lies, not the 1870s and 1880s when we saw precipitous declines, but the 1840s and 1850s, owing to the Little Ice Age.

The Little Ice Age, a time of cooler global climate and optimal conditions for grass, faded away in the first half of the 1800s. This was followed by an intense period of drought over most

[605] Dusenberry, "Verne Dusenberry Papers," Box 6, File 6.
[606] Taylor M. Scott, "Buffalo Hunt: International Trade and the Virtual Extinction of the North American Bison," 3165.

of the plains from about 1855 to 1866. There is a dramatic difference in grassland productivity based on precipitation, as demonstrated in Palliser's Triangle and John Wesley Powell's 100th Meridian. In the example Flores employs, "Native grasslands that can produce 3,000 pounds of forage with 20 inches of annual precipitation yield only some 350 pounds when rainfall drops to 10 inches." Citing climate scholar Reid Bryson's claims that the 1850s and 1860s saw a reduction of as much as 40-60 percent of the Little Ice Age carrying capacity, Flores argues the climate created a retractive backdrop for buffalo, and human, life on the grasslands. This in turn then set the stage for all that would come next by way of human choices that contributed to the decline of buffalo.[607]

So, what can we take from all this? The great superorganism, the grassland, or in my words, the web of life, which is always evolving, always fluctuating in cycles and seasons, was in a period of expansion right before the effects of European colonialization hit the buffalo (and the People) hardest. The understanding of how an overall cooler climate supported the plant nations' (grass) expansion and in turn that of the buffalo is informative. However, it is important to hold on to the fact that what existed prior to settler-colonial arrival was not a *state of nature* or any other *notion of purity*. What existed was a biocultural region in which people lived with the seasons. On some parts of Turtle Island, buffalo were key parts of this web as they provided for humans, plants, soil, and riparian areas and were reciprocally honored and respected by those they sustained.

[607] Flores, "Reviewing an Iconic Story: Environmental History and the Demise of the Bison," 39–42.

Climate regimes do not stand still, nor does anything in the biocultural world. With the idea of the biocultural web firmly in mind, we can examine what came next—the multitudes of horses, oxen, and cattle; competition for grazing; diseases; the settler colonial economy, thought, religion, presence, policies, and agents; and the over harvesting of buffalo by Natives, Métis, and colonial hide hunters. Suddenly, the multi-faceted argument for the near extinction of buffalo seems more an issue of scope and scale, than just many coinciding events. Colonization was all encompassing. It was not just about people or merely about two worlds. Colonization, with the force of fossil fuel behind it was a hungry machine always looking for new resource frontiers to feed factories, farms, ships, railroads, and all matter of infrastructure development in the name of economic development. The scope and scale of métissage, fueled by fossil fuel was faster and more powerful métissage than ever before, powerful enough to tip the balance in the web of life. The unrelenting force and rapidity of European expansion, that I refer to as colonization, was capable of taking thirty or forty million buffalo away in the course of one human lifetime, and also capable of significantly damaging Indigenous lifeways that had sustainably existed for millennia.

Culture. To those who say there is "no corroborating evidence" as to a "government/military conspiracy," I have a simple one-word response, colonization, and all that comes with it.[608] The colonial system that I have often referred to in these pages was one of a "State Economy," and while Capitalism touts free markets and free trade, there is corroborating evidence in these pages that the State and the Economy were very hard to distinguish from one

[608] Flores, "Reviewing an Iconic Story: Environmental History and the Demise of the Bison."

another. One example is the way in which the State, British North America, served the HBC in their initial two-hundred-year lease and then made a final payment for the "right" to take Rupert's Land back. The HBC and the Crown, at the very least, had mutual interest in the acquisition of Turtle Island. Historian Cole Harris names the HBC strategy and its effect, but "the British/Canadian effort to make Natives into farmers" could easily be substituted for HBC in this statement:

> Sooner or later, the principal effect of the fur trade was to replace Native ecological strategies with an entirely different strategy dependent on fixed settlement, specialization, storage, and long-distance shipments at precise times along defined routes. It was in the HBC's interest to bind Native people, their principal source of labour, to this system as closely as possible.[609]

The culture at work behind British and American colonization of Turtle Island was more than that of Capitalism. It included the evolution of Western Civilization, thought, and philosophy particularly the dominance of science and Christianity. Colonization has radically suppressed, destroyed, and fragmented Indigenous knowledges. To say it more clearly, the settler colonialist project has intentionally attempted to dismantle Indigenous knowledges—the very way that peoples see the world.

Makwa-Giizis (Bear Moon)

In Makwa-giizis "we honour the vision quest that began in the fall. During this time, we discover how to see beyond reality and to communicate through energy rather than sound."[610] As the 19th century ancestors persevered through myriad episodes or grief and despair

[609] Harris, "Arthur J. Ray and the Empirical Opportunity," 258.
[610] "Ojibwe Moons," *Muskrat Magazine,* August 14, 2005. These Grandmother Moon teachings are from *Kinoomaadiewinan Anishinabek Bimaadinzinwin, Book Two* by author Anishinaabe-kwe Arlene Berry.

they fought to "see beyond reality." They recognized that the words were hollow promises and reached into the energy of Spirit to find life.

Resistance: Keeping Body and Soul Together

In the last days of the buffalo, Anishinaabeg and their kin resisted colonial domination and stood with the one who had stood for them, Chi Biziki. It is true there were not many who resisted in the end. As hunger and disease wore down the population, many Anishinaabeg and their kin north of the Medicine Line turned towards treaty. This was a contingency deliberated in prayer, in council with one another, according to the wherewithal of the family. The decision to enter into treaty or accept scrip, was not easily accepted for some who foresaw the shortcomings of the plan—shallow promises, inadequate supplies, the threat of manipulation, dependencies, and the potential for losing ourselves in the process. Again, the decision was a contingency and not an issue of being a sell out to the system. Everyone needed to look out for themselves in a less than ideal world.

Big Bear had been south of the line in Montana for a few years. Fears about movements by Sitting Bull and the Nez Perce, and his own reputation, as well as rumors of inter-tribal plotting and threats of violence, were driving military interventions and public anxiety. In 1881, the US Army began a program of identifying and removing any unauthorized bands from the Milk River Reservation, a vast area between the Missouri River and the border. This new step of sorting people on the land was a further use of colonial constructs of racial and ethnic categories. The whole process was terribly complicated by the endless layers of métissage among the People. In the fall of 1881, Army officials for the District of Montana received approval to "destroy all huts" of "foreign Indians and half-breeds." As Hagen reports, "one settler from the

Musselshell River recalled destroying "a thousand" halfbreed "shacks" in two weeks that fall.[611] As state violence escalated, Big Bear headed back across the Medicine Line.

On December 8, 1882, Big Bear finally conceded and signed as an adhesion to Treaty Six.[612] In the same year, Cree chief Piapot and his band were force-marched over 350 miles from the Cypress Hills to their reserve east of Regina. En route, they were permitted a daily ration of "one half pound of flour and a small amount of pemmican per person."[613] Appalled by the conditions of starvation on the reserves, Piapot along with other Nehiyaw-Pwat leaders—Long Lodge, Lucky Man, Big Bear, and Little Pine—and more than 2,000 members of their bands, returned to the Cypress Hills within a matter of months. There at the Fort Walsh agency, Commissioner Dewdney put them on starvation rations as he liked "to punish them a little."[614] Once there were no buffalo and nowhere else to turn, the People and their leaders entered in relationships of dependency with the government. Their vulnerability with the loss of their own food system led to a situation in which they could be manipulated, and there are countless examples of how food was used as a weapon and a punishment.

Once Fort Walsh was ordered closed in the Spring of 1883, the bands of Piapot and Long Lodge had to return to their reserves at Indian Head. Dewdney then sent them bacon, something Native bands had often protested as it was either inedible or spoiled to the point of being deadly.

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[611] Hagen, "Northern Plains Borders and the People In Between, 1860-1940," 176.
[612] Chief (Plains Cree) Big Bear, "Treaty between the Cree People under Big Bear and the Dominion of Canada, Fort Walsh, Saskatchewan, Canada," December 8, 1882, Edmund Morris Collection, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. "Big Bear, the Indian Who Turned Back the Canadian Pacific Surveyors," *The Independent-Record*, December 27, 1882.
[613] Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*, 141.
[614] Daschuk, 142.

The reserve "work for rations" program then distributed the rancid bacon to members of Piapot's band who had been cutting cordwood. A nearby settler reported that 130 people died. Dewdney was later accused of making a government contract with a friend who needed to unload 90,000 pounds of meat. That friend, mogul trader I.G. Baker of Montana, was rumored to have bought the spoiled pork in Chicago for 1.5 cents per pound and sold it to the government for nineteen cents per pound.[615]

As Indigenous conditions deteriorated, and settler anxiety increased, the governments of the US and Canada had not succeeded in their plans of protection for people and commerce. "A hungry Indian is a bad man to deal with..." declared the *Fort Benton River Press* in 1885, as cattlemen sought to protect their herds from being culled by natives seeking basic sustenance.[616] According to the *Livingston Daily Enterprise*, the St. Louis Cattle company reported losing on average one beef a day: "The Indians on the reservation are in a most deplorable condition, so it is reported, having scarcely food enough to keep body and soul together."[617]

Leaders like Big Bear were faced with multiple contingencies as they tried to walk a narrow path between seeking the help the people needed and quelling rebellion. By now Big Bear was in his mid-fifties and his prayerful and slow-to-react measure was not always a match with the impatience and energy of the younger ogitchidag. With some success, he had been holding them back through more than a decade of suffering. As the People worked to "keep body and soul together," they also tried to stay together. Beth LaDow reports on "overtures for tribal alliances: the Cree chief Big Bear to the Blackfeet and Sioux in the Cypress Hills area; Sitting

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[615] Daschuk, 142–43.
[616] "The Ugly Red," *The River Press,* (Fort Benton, MT) September 02, 1885: 1.
[617] "Montana News," *The Daily Enterprise*, (Livingston, MT) December 14, 1884: 4.

Bull to the Cheyenne before the Battle of the Greasy Grass, and in Canada to the Blackfeet leader Crowfoot (for whom Sitting Bull named his son). Louis Riel envisioned a pan-native alliance, using Montana as a base to invade Canada and create an independent native republic."[618]

Dancing through our Grief

The grief of terrible conditions in Indian camps and reservations compelled the People to hold ceremonies and burdened healers. Fearing intertribal coordination, in response to the growing popularity of the Ghost Dance amongst the Sioux and other Plains tribes, in 1883, the US Code of Indian Offenses banned ceremonies, dances, and the work of medicine people or traditional healers.[619] In Canada Anglican and Catholic missionaries were crying out for the government to stop the great obstacle to their work.[620]

In 1883, as the first winter in which the buffalo seemed to have completely left the Old North Trail Corridor ended, more and more of the roving bands so feared by the settlers and the governments, took up reserve life in Canada. "Once the Indians were settled on reserves (and dependent on rations), the government could counter protests by withholding food."[621] As

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[618] LaDow, *The Medicine Line: Life and Death on the North American Borderland*, 68.
[619] Maureen Lux has scribed a succinct explanation of the function of ceremony: "the plains medical/healing complex functioned on a number of levels from the purely physical to the sublimely spiritual. It reflected a world-view that was remarkably well adapted to prairie existences and sought to make the physical and spiritual worlds both knowable and predictable." Lux, *Medicine That Walks: Disease, Medicine, and Canadian Plains Native People, 1880-1940*, 82.
[620] Lux, *Medicine That Walks: Disease, Medicine, and Canadian Plains Native People, 1880-1940*, 83.
[621] Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*, 133.

desperation set in, more and more violent skirmishes with government officials and raids on ration houses occurred.

In response to deteriorating conditions, Big Bear sent out word to the reserves of the Saskatchewan district that he would host a Thirsty Dance and grand council in the summer of 1884. Like all summer ceremonies, this would be a time for visiting, building alliances, settling differences, and instead of talking about hunting, they would discuss rations. Big Bear hoped that he would build strong ties that would permit him to speak with the strength of their numbers as they continued to seek better conditions and, most importantly, that the sacrificial work of ceremony would guide their future.[622]

In June, bands traveled from every direction and gathered at Big Bear's camp. He greeted the chiefs and then removed himself in prayerful focus for ceremony. The Thirst Dance is, of all the curing ceremonies, the most demanding to pledge and was often done in times of extreme duress.[623] Once the ceremony was underway, a scuffle between a couple of his band members occurred at the nearby ration house and was reported to the NWMP. While the affair was minor, the ceremony was interrupted by police presence and the sanctity of the work violated. The negotiations following the Thirst Dance again failed to illicit a favorable response. The people of his reserve continued to have to work for rations, but without farm implements, adequate seed, and calories enough to fuel their work.

In the following Spring, at a time in the seasonal round known as the hungry time when buffalo are looking for those first sprouts of green grass poking up through the soil and snow,

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[622] Dempsey, *A Blackfoot Winter Count*, Occasional Paper no. 1:123–32.
[623] Lux, *Medicine That Walks: Disease, Medicine, and Canadian Plains Native People, 1880-1940*, 79.

Louis Riel was preparing to stage a resistance. In this hungry time of the year, there were no buffalo, and the people continued to suffer. Big Bear's sons were also agitating with exasperation for what was happening to the People as their rations had been cut off for not cooperating with treaty signing.[624] On April 2nd, 1885, Big Bear reluctantly stepped up in support of his two sons and followed them to Frog Lake. Big Bear tried to warn people that his sons were enraged and threatening violence in the community, but he could not stop the bloodshed that would happen.[625]

First, his sons and their party killed the sub agent, "Thomas Trueman Quinn, a very hard man," who flaunted his power, calling people in for rations and then declaring it an April Fool's Day prank. Next, they killed the farm instructor, John Delaney, who was "roundly hated for his relationships with very young women of the reserve and for his casual humiliations of the hungry people."[626] Contempt for Delaney was linked to a larger issue of Native women being made into sex workers as a survival strategy.

In synchronous events elsewhere, a farm instructor and farmer were killed on the Stoney reserves, as was the rations controller, and a local farmer who was hated by the People of the reserve. In this moment, Cree chief Poundmaker also decided to act with a show of loyalty in

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[624] Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*, 152.
[625] Brenden W. Rensink, *Native but Foreign: Indigenous Immigrants and Refugees in the North American Borderlands* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2018), 76–77.
[626] Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*, 152–53; Lux, *Medicine That Walks: Disease, Medicine, and Canadian Plains Native People, 1880-1940*, 53–54.

Battleford where his band went to meet with the agent. After waiting for days at the fort to meet with the agent, "the hungry people looted shops and quickly left town."[627]

The Métis, too, had lost the base of their economy, and were hoping for land, either the grants they had already settled along the South Saskatchewan or scrip certificates. They also required rations in the absence of buffalo. Riel had been organizing for a year leading up to 1885 and had drawn up a manifesto which outlined his vision and Métis demand. He included the interest of the Indians with whom the Métis allied themselves. Riel and the Métis, following their 1869 strategy of resistance, declared themselves a provisional territorial government of the North West. They prepared to attack a column of NWMP moving toward Fort Carleton, and set-up by taking over stores and placing local traders at Batoche in custody. Riel had organized several hundred Métis, a few Ojibwe, Cree, Sioux, and Canadian settlers who were unhappy with the government. The resistance lasted eight weeks from March 18 to May 12, 1885. As the North West did not yet have a sizeable military force, Ottawa made a call for volunteers. Thousands of armed civilians, with no military experience, boarded trains in the east. Ultimately, the Canadian government deployed eight thousand Mounties and volunteers. By November, Riel was captured, tried, convicted of treason, and hanged.[628]

Historians generally agree that these events were not the result of an intertribal coordination and strategy. Rather they see this as a moment in which mutual desperation led to violent methods. The oral history record of the Iron Confederacy of Métis, Nehiyawak, and

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[627] Lux, *Medicine That Walks: Disease, Medicine, and Canadian Plains Native People, 1880-1940*, 53.
[628] LaDow, *The Medicine Line: Life and Death on the North American Borderland*, 69–70.

Anishinaabeg does not agree.[629] It is hard, though, to discount the sense of solidarity that Indigenous people were experiencing in their shared suffering in the colonial construct. Coordinated or not, the colonial response was swift and harsh. Everyone who was with Big Bear was charged with treason for organizing resistance and sent to the Manitoba Penitentiary for three years. Big Bear was released early for health reasons but died shortly after his release. Eight other Crees were sentenced to hanging, in the largest public hanging ever performed in Canada. Local reserve Natives were forced to go and watch as were the students of the Battleford Industrial school. Canada wanted to be clear about resistance.

As the People fought "to keep body and soul" together, the colonial governments were staging a new attack, an effort to suppress our ceremonies. Initially, the Canadian government resisted interfering with ceremonies because they thought it might bring about more resistance from the People. But pushed by policymakers and missionaries, they "turned to increasingly oppressive measure to end ceremonial dancing." As Maureen Lux frames the story, "Although they [the Canadian government] had no legal power, they did have access to the real source of power on most reserves—rations." In the summer of 1890, a Thirst Dance camp on the Poundmaker reserve was broken up and a threat was issued: annuities would be stopped, ceremonial leaders would be arrested if the ceremony continued. On Chief Ermineskin's

[629] In personal conversations with the author, Jim O'Chiese, Anishinaabe elder from Alberta, and, Jay Eagleman, Rocky Boy Ojibwe-Cree descendant of Chief Big Bear, have expressed the elaborate efforts of intertribal planning and alliance in this part of our history. Although time and pandemic conditions did not permit further investigation for inclusion in this work, cultural knowledge recovery around this part of our history is merited. O'Chiese, "Let's Talk Ojibway."

Reserve, agent Samuel B. Lucas reported that the Thirst Dance was shortened because "the rations [were] greatly reduced, and in many cases cut off."[630]

It is true as historian Sarah Carter recognized, this was the one thing that we would not let happen--the practice of ceremonies, the sounding of our drums, and the medicine and holistic healing that flows from them, would not stop. And they did not, but we spoke of them as having gone "underground," a phrase we also use reflecting the place from which so many Plains Nations believe the buffalo originates. Like the phrase "underground," another way we refer to that place where our ceremonies secretly took place is "in the bush." Spiritually speaking, these places cannot be taken from us. "The bush" and "underground," they are the Land, and "We are the Land." We know this through our ceremonies.

Continuance

In the years after the resistance, the governments and settler society fought back with ever hardening boundaries and abuses. Following the rebellion, Indian Commissioner Edgar Dewdney implemented the pass system in the Dominion of Canada, restricting Indigenous mobility and access to markets for their agricultural products.[631] This hardline approach was disastrous for Indigenous well-being. As Daschuk concludes, "In 1884, the reserve population peaked, but over the next ten years it would decline precipitously due to malnutrition, overcrowding, exposure, poor sanitation, and oppressive government policies."[632] In the US, the 1887 Dawes Act took contiguous parcels of reservations lands and allotted them to individual

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[630] Lux, *Medicine That Walks: Disease, Medicine, and Canadian Plains Native People, 1880-1940*, 85.
[631] Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*, 160.
[632] Daschuk, 162.

band members. This act resulted in the fractionation of land and people which have historically undermined agricultural and economic development pursuits. Reservation lands nationwide became "checkerboarded" with private parcels of what were then consider "surplus lands." One of the leading objectives of this effort, though clothed in language of civilizing the Indians, was to generate additional land for settler pursuits. This process was particularly damaging to my own band, as the allotment process for the Turtle Mountain Band resulted in significant adjustment to enrollment. Determination of *who belonged* on the 1892 McCumber Roll was plagued by questions of who belonged to what band and place, perhaps some lateral violence on the part of Turtle Mountain people who participated in process, and plenty of government manipulation. The outcome was approximately 1,200 people, or half of the reservation roll, was removed and lost status. These 1,200 became landless and without status excluded from annuities and rations.[633]

As lands were fractionated, the process of sorting people to the Land continued. This process was particularly harsh in the borderlands of Montana and Alberta where the mixed bands of relatives were caught up in colonial confusion over their identities.[634] The constructed categories of race and tribe, a quasi-scientific system of classification, did not align with the People's own identities. From the US side a process of ethnic cleansing was orchestrated by military staged from the monolithic solid brick Fort Assiniboine on the west side of the Bear Paw's Mountains in Montana. General John "Blackjack" Pershing and his regiments of Army

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[633] Hagen, "Northern Plains Borders and the People In Between, 1860-1940," 207–23.
[634] Hagen, "Northern Plains Borders and the People In Between, 1860-1940"; Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line: Creating a Border and Dividing a People*; Rensink, *Native but Foreign: Indigenous Immigrants and Refugees in the North American Borderlands*; Vrooman, *"The Whole Country Was...'One Robe'": The Little Shell Tribe's America*.

soldiers, including African American soldiers known as the buffalo soldiers, and others, periodically rounded up what they called “Canadian Cree.” Rounding up the People often meant burning or otherwise destroying their lodges, cabins, carts, clothing, and belongings, and either force marching them to the US border or as recorded in at least one instance, loading them in train cars, and sending them back to the Medicine Line, the US-Canadian border with a stern warning to never return. Within weeks, the NWMP (North West Mounted Police) would return what was left of these bands in a similar fashion and the see-sawing process continued for decades.

During this time the bands became spread out in enclaves throughout the area of the Old North Trail Corridor. Many moved to river valley communities and the canyons along the Front of the Rockies where they could make a living through a combination of hunting, fishing, and harvesting from the land and working as laborers, wood cutters, ranch and farm hands. In a series of interviews with Métis families in the area along the Rocky Mountain Front of Montana, the People reported keeping themselves out of the public eye: “only went to town a couple times a year,” “Big Bear...hiding like everyone else,” “None of the Indians wanted to be seen, were worried they would be taken back to Canada.”[635] Many others were forced onto reservations on both sides of the Medicine Line or lived in squatter communities around Montana’s larger cities.[636]

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[635] Jean Lensing, Métis Cultural Recovery Trust, March 27, 1995, OH1905, Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena, MT, U.S.A.; Luke Salmond, Métis Cultural Recovery Trust, March 4, 1996, OH1878, Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena, MT, U.S.A.

[636] For more on the settlement patterns of the Métis and their kin see Nicholas C.P. Vrooman, The Whole Country Was ... 'one Robe': The Little Shell Tribe's America, (Helena, MT: Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana ; Drumlummon Institute), 2012.

After the resistance, my own relatives--my great grandparents, Job and Marie Falcon, and Job's brother, Jean Baptiste and his family—lived at Willow Creek near the town of Augusta. The children of both families attended the Fort Shaw Indian Industrial School, another agent of change in our family practices and foodways. In 1892, the government established a boarding school for Native students at Fort Shaw, which had once been a weigh station at the intersection of the settler trade network where the Mullen Road intersected with the Old North Trail and Industrial School. The curriculum of the school included teaching the girls sewing, cooking, and other household duties according to the standard of the dominant societies. Boys learned farming, animal husbandry, and small gardening.[637] Henry J. Kinley, a carpenter at the school, and resident of the Ojibwe-Métis village of Gilman (25 miles from Fort Shaw near Augusta) wrote in his diary:

> Much was said about the graduates reverting to old tribal customs and not without basis. Many did so to remain at peace with their tribes and families. Those who did accept land in severalty were plagued by the downright thievery of the white man. Cattle companies would pay to pasture ten thousand head of stock but run forty thousand. Settlers above the farms drew water that the Indian farmer desperately needed for his crops. But even against numerous varied obstacles, many were able to utilize their Indian school education.[638]

Many more fracture lines were coming as the plan of the colonial system was to institute largescale agriculture from the Red River to the Rocky Mountains. Already the ground was being broken and plows were turning up the valleys and prairies, inscribing the Land with straight lines. The measure of extraction was turning from buffalo to bushels.

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[637] Henry J. Kinley, "An Indian School Diary" (1975), Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena, MT, U.S.A.
[638] Kinley, 1.

In 1895 William Trant, a British philosophical radical, composed an article entitled, "The Treatment of the Canadian Indians," that asks the question, "how to deal with subject-races." It reads as a self-congratulatory treatise on Britain's advancement dealing with subject-races compared to its previous days of colonization and declared that Canada was far statelier in treatment of Indians as compared to the United States. The concluding paragraph demonstrates what Trant understood to be the real purpose of colonization:

> General Sheridan is credited with the atrocious remark that the best Indian is a dead Indian. Canada has shown that the dead Indian is the very worst Indian. In 1892 the Indians of Canada produced 181,740 bushels of wheat and 339,632 bushels of potatoes towards feeding the world, and other crops in proportion, as well as $1,309,474 worth of fish, furs, and other industries. Dead Indians could not have done these things…Canada has saved the Indians, and in doing so she has profited herself.[639]

The "work for ration" program that our ancestors endured was a small-scale embodiment of the motivation that Trant revealed in his analysis of "dealing with subject-races" and we now call colonization. The labor of brown bodies was as important to the colonizers as the acreage and the Land and all that it offered. Colonization was a process of extraction that craved all of the web of life.

"Nobody was trying to get rich"

Though colonization is ongoing, we are still here. Job and Marie Falcon continued to move amongst the communities of kin spread out through the Old North Trail Corridor from Turtle Mountain to Trenton, North Dakota, to the Rocky Mountain Front of Montana. Job's brother, Jean Baptiste, whose Anishinaabe name was Sitting Horse, participated in Sun Dances

[639] William Trant, "The Treatment of the Canadian Indians," *Westminster Review* 144 (1895): 506–27.

in Montana for some years, and then settled in Lapwai, Idaho, with his friend, Chief Joseph, and his community.[640] Their children and their children's children are spread across the prairies today.

On that hot summer day in 1932, when great-great grandpa Job and his friend, Joe Renville, were interviewed at Fort Buford, their dialogue rang true as a summary of Anishinaabe life on the Northwestern Plains in the years 1780-1890. In their lifetimes, Job Falcon and Joe Renville, their families, and bands saw incredible change. Through their grandparents they would have heard tell of how things began to change in the 1700s and how Anishinaabeg and their kin began to move into the territories that became the ancestral homeland of Falcon and Renville. The resulting article published in the *Great Falls Tribune* is comprised of a series of direct quotes from their conversation. Falcon and Renville embodied the timeframe of this story and so I allow their words to provide conclusive reflection.

Grandpa Falcon and his friend, Joe Renville, "jabbered in a conglomerate of" Cree, Sioux, French, and Métis that day. Grandpa Falcon was trying to break his lifelong habit of smoking by chewing great quantities of gum. The *Great Falls Tribune* reporter had to wait for him to arrange his gum, but once he began talking, working through a Cree interpreter, the reporter captured their words. Falcon told how they traveled and sold their robes and furs in Winnipeg, "the traders only gave us $2.50 for a tanned buffalo hide." Sitting there not far from the confluence of the Yellowstone and the Missouri, he continued, "There were thousands of

[640] "Silver Bow Crees Fake A Sun Dance," *Anaconda Standard*, June 26, 1904; Nicholas P. Vrooman, Personal conversation with the author, used with permission, June 20, 2017.

buffalo on these very prairies," said Grandpa Falcon, "you should have lived then. They were joyous, carefree, happy days and nobody was trying to get rich."

"The river was full of beaver in those days and deer and elk ranged in the bottoms. I haven't seen elk in this country for more than 50 years." He turned to Renville and said, "We never ate nothing but meat in those days, did we, Joe?" He continued:

> "Joe and me is starving to death now because meat is too expensive and we have to eat vegetables. The Indians used to eat nothing but meat and fish, though sometimes they ate corn, which they grew, and a white turnip that grew wild here. Those are the only vegetables we knew. When things got hard and there was no wild game, we had to eat our dogs and sometimes our horses. I would die first before I would kill my horse. It's too bad a man's friend can't be as true to him as his horse. Me and Joe think that the horse will come back to the farm in spite of the automobile and the tractor. It's them engine things that has ruined us. We had the horse we weren't always broke and hungry."
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> "We always killed more buffalo than was necessary for food," said the old veteran, "because we wanted the hides, but the Indian was careful. He didn't waste anything. We weren't as bad about needless slaughter as the hunters sent out here by the government to kill off the herds. They killed thousands of buffalo and then hauled the skins to the river, where the steamboats picked them up. Government hunters didn't even bother to tan the hides and they left the carcasses on the prairies for the vultures and the wolves."
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> "I remember one day, when a steamboat came up the river in the spring loaded with clothing, which the traders were going to swap with the Indians for their hides," said Falcon. "After the bartering had been completed and the Indians had left with their new garments, thousands of them became sick….The Indian thought the great spirit was angry with him for trading the skins for clothing. The buffalo was meant to be food, clothing and shelter for the red man…I believe that smallpox among the Indians was one of the main things that caused the red man to go on the warpath. There's thousands of graves along the Big Muddy where smallpox victims are buried. The graves ain't marked but I where many of them are."

They talked for a bit about how the traders at Fort Union used "likker" to do business with the Indians. And then Joe Renville suddenly broke out in an explosion of Cree. Grandpa Falcon

"shifted his wad of chewing gum, which had reached 10 sticks, grinned and jabbered back at him:

> 'The old fellow says that the whites never used the Indians right.' translated the interpreter. 'Now, Sitting Bull was a good man, he had a good head, he was kind to his people and to his squaws [sic]. I know because I knew him well.' Falcon nodded his head in approval to his friend's statement and added: '…Some people have remembered him as a ruthless renegade, who plundered and killed at will. This is not true. The soldiers broke treaties, settlers infringed on his rights, the buffalo were vanishing; he had to fight to save his people. Settlers around here do not appreciate the cruel things said of the old chief.'

After asked why Sitting Bull did not fight, Falcon said, "Naw, Bull was no coward. He was smart. He was the medicine man for the outfit and while the fighting was going on he stayed in his teepee crying to the spirits for help and justice."[641]

I am grateful for this article, the reflections of my ancestors who endured these trials of disease and losses of their relatives and the buffalo, the changes in their food and life ways.

Coming Home to Ourselves

A terrible thing happened in the years after the settler colonial system sorted our relatives across the Land, and in it, just as our traditional story told, Chi Bizhiki lost his third leg.[642] As I conducted my research for this work, I spent a lot of time looking at the lives of my relatives, known and unknown, who lived in this time period. In looking at the census records recorded by both colonizing nations, I saw an alarming pattern. Around 1900, the families whose race was once recorded as "Indian" or "halfbreed" were now being recorded as "white." In the communities of Choteau, Dupuyer, and Augusta, Montana, and everywhere I looked--*identity*

[641] Compton, "Stirring Events at Old Fort Buford near Montana Boundary Related."
[642] Refer to Chapter 2 for the traditional story of Chi Bizhiki.

was changing. We were losing ourselves. We no longer knew ourselves as Indigenous peoples, ones of the Land, ones who had been supported by bizkiwag for millennia.

Although I had lived this experience in the losses of identity and cultural knowledge in my own family, still this was one of the most disturbing realizations of my research journey. Was it not enough that we had lost our foods, our connections to ancestral homelands, our connections to the plant nations and the herds of four-leggeds, our language, our ceremonies, and our languages? We were losing ourselves. I later discovered I was not the first to recognize this pattern, other researchers had seen it, too.[643]

As in the story of Chi Bizhiki, Grandfather Earth Elder told of the predictions that this would come to pass:

> Some had the gift of prophecy. From these people came the prediction of events that were to occur…One of these predictions told of the coming of the whiteman—of how he would come and what he would do. Other predictions told that there would be much confusion among Indian people after the arrival of the whiteman. The confusion, which would be caused by the introduction of habits and ways of an alien culture, would lead to a loss of identity and a neglect of the ways of respect. After the whiteman comes, said the predictions, the Indian will look like an Indian, but he will not know the ways given to him by his Creator—the ways that teach him to be a caring sharing person.[644]

Recognition of this reality foretold and fulfilled in my life, and my relatives' and ancestors' lives, serves now as a purpose in writing, but even more so in my ceremonial work, in my community work, in staying connected to my relatives and the Land every day, in the foods I

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[643] Hagen, "Northern Plains Borders and the People In Between, 1860-1940"; Chantal Fiola, *Rekindling the Sacred Fire: Métis Ancestry and Anishinaabe Spirituality* (Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press, 2015), 31; Bonita Lawrence, *"Real" Indians and Others: Mixed-Blood Urban Native Peoples and Indigenous Nationhood* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004); Wolfe, *Earth Elder Stories: The Pinayzitt Path*.
[644] Wolfe, *Earth Elder Stories: The Pinayzitt Path*, 27–28.

choose for my family, in my teaching, in how I carry myself, and in how I greet each new day and that new life that is coming.

The settler system drew many lines across the Medicine Wheel separating us from our relatives and segregating *all people* and other-than-human relatives from one another. Yet, one teaching that comes from our ancestors who resisted colonization, including the decimation of bizhikiwag, is found in our language. The colonial machine compressed Anishinaabeg and all their kin of the Northwestern Plains around the last herd of bizhikiwag, and as they drew closer to one another geographically, they shared one another's fears and struggles and learned one another's languages and ceremonies. In resistance, they recognized their shared purpose in protecting their way of life and the necessity of striving for survivance for the purpose of that new life that is coming. In the sharing of ceremonies--the Midewiwin, Sun Dance/Thirst Dance, and the Ghost Dance--Northwestern Plains peoples came together in one spirit. An important reflection of this new way of seeing comes from our language in the word our people have always used for themselves, "Anishinaabeg." In our earlier use of the word when we were making our western migration around the Great Lakes, "Anishinaabeg" referred to the Council of the Three Fires-- the Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Ottawag—an alliance that was and is so precious to us.

Esteemed elder Jim O'Chiese from Alberta comes from a long line of important teachers who carry our long story of resistance—how we ran with our ceremonies all the way across Turtle Island so that we could save them for our children. For many generations, they were not taught to our children in order to protect them from the persecution they might endure if they said they were, "Anishinaabeg." He teaches that those ceremonies are our archives. Today, Jim

O'Chiese reminds us how we use this word *now*. It applies to all of us, "we don't separate anybody. We don't say 'ah, those are Blood people, those are Shoshone Bannock people,' 'those are Apaches.' We say 'Anishinaabeg"-- it describes everybody. We don't say 'those are Cree people' ... nobody is separated."[645] This word, Anishinaabeg, still has the power to draw Indigenous people together in their own identification and relationships with one another. Anishinaabeg.

Conclusion

This is a story that has been told in two chronologies—one following the movement of the People prompted by the changes of the season and living in intimate relationship with the Land and another following the linear progression of time through the years 1780-1890. Each chapter walks the reader through one season of Anishinaabe life, beginning with the seasonal round of the area of the Red River Valley and western edge of the woodlands in what is now Minnesota, Ontario, Manitoba, and North Dakota. By 1780, the presence of the settler colonial fur trade industry had upset the balance of the web of life causing a scarcity of resources which led Anishinaabeg to look to Grandfather Buffalo and to begin moving west with him. Relying on the strengths of their food system--adaptation and flexibility--Anishinaabeg moved from a seasonal round centered around manoomin (wild rice) to one centered around buffalo.

The seasonal round was a highly sophisticated, methodical, annual series of movements on the land to tend wild plots, cultivate, hunt, fish, harvest, and trade. This way of life has long been misunderstood. It has been overly simplified through the application of the term hunter-gatherer

[645] O'Chiese, "Let's Talk Ojibway."

and portrayals of a hand-to-mouth existence overlayed with colonial preconceptions of savaged or uncivilized lifeways. As we have heard from first-hand accounts of observers and personal testimonies of Anishinaabe people, the ones who lived this lifeway "appear to be the most contented and happy people upon the face of the earth."[646] Far from a hand-to-mouth existence, the seasonal round abided by a complex division of labor within band groups, which guided the procurement, processing, and storage of food which sustained the people in the cold climate of the Northern hemisphere throughout the year. The whole system was built on a vast expanse of ecological knowledge of seasons and place handed down over millennia, retained, and applied as a matter of life and death. Proof of the efficacy of the seasonal round way of life was found in the abundance of food available for sharing with newcomers, particularly in the earliest times of contact before Anishinaabeg adapted to food production for the settler economy. The journals of settler explorers, traders, and missionaries are full of examples of the vast quantities of corn, wild rice, potatoes, dried meat, and pemmican which they were able to procure through trade with Anishinaabeg and the kin.

More than a system of sustenance, the seasonal round was also a cycle following the path laid by the ancestors who, honoring reciprocal obligations to place, sought to maintain the sacred balance amongst all relations. The People practiced ceremonies for the water, placed tobacco offerings when planting and harvesting, carried songs for hunting, visited glyphic carvings, celestial clocks, and inscriptions on the land. The rhythm of the seasons was marked by

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[646] Harmon, *A Journal of Voyages and Travels in the Interiour of North Americabetween the 47th and 58th Degrees of North Latitude, Extending from Montreal Nearly to the Pacific Ocean, a Distance of about 5,000 Miles, Including an Account of the Principal Occurrences, during a Residence of Nineteen Years, in Different Parts of the Country*, 61.

ceremony done in the Midewiwin lodges and the summer practice of the Thirsty Dance inviting rain to feed the grass and the buffalo. The rich buffalo home of the Old North Trail Corridor was predominantly marked with medicine wheels, sacred sites, stone reminders that teach balance in the web of life and within the person—body, mind, spirit, and emotions. The buffalo homeland of the Northwestern Plains was "medicine wheel country." The seasonal round was a movement over a sacred landscape.

The annual seasonal round was sustainable for millennia because it was critically embedded in our way of life. By moving across the land, we dispersed our usage of the life sources we depended on. By practicing ceremonies, we framed our relationship with the Land with cultural values of reciprocity, relationship, respect, and responsibility. The buffalo culture food system flowed from our way of life—our language, ways of thinking, being, knowing, relating, and connecting with the land. As Dr. Leroy Little Bear acknowledges, "food, in our way, is just the end product of a way of life."[647] Lifeways and foodways were highly integrated in the Anishinaabe world in which spiritual beliefs and practices were as essential to the food system as knowledge of hunting, harvesting, and processing food. Historian Irving Hallowell called this "a culturally constituted world."[648]

This is the story of two economies. The Anishinaabeg practiced the kinship network of exchange, which was a form of economic system based on reciprocity and relationship. In the years 1780 to 1890, the Anishinaabeg, faced with colonial contingencies, participated in the

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[647] Leroy Little Bear, *Buffalo Nations Food System Initiative Council Meeting* (Montana State University, Bozeman, MT, 2021).
[648] Brown, *Ojibwe Stories from the Upper Berens Rivers: A. Irving Hallowell and Adam Bigmouth in Conversation*, 161.

Euro-American capitalist market economy. The colonial economy was constantly hungry for new resource frontiers—fine furs, buffalo robes and hides, minerals, then land for agriculture. As it expanded across the continent, the colonial economy was also eating up the Indigenous food systems—draining the land of the life sources Anishinaabeg and their kin relied upon for sustenance. Anishinaabeg lived life between two economies, until the settler economy emptied the land of the ones they knew as life sources and impoverished their kinship network of exchange.

There were marked contrasts between the two economies. The settler colonial market economy was "on the take," a system in which wealth was measured by personal accumulation and equity belonged to the winner within a competitive system. The Anishinaabe kinship system of exchange was reciprocal, and wealth was measured by what was given away. Emphasizing the cultural value of generosity, the Give Away Ceremony embodied this practice. The family or individual practicing the Give Away accumulated wealth for some period of time and then lavishly gave away all that they had to the community gathered. This practice created a kinship covenant with relatives as a measure of social equity or insurance for future times of uncertainty and balanced the distribution of wealth throughout the community. The measure of being a "good relative" was found in what you were willing to give away. In the settler economy, the bottom line was profit earnings whereas the bottom line in the kinship economy was the natural law or balance in the web of relations. While the settler economy was disengaged from local outcomes given its global extractive nature in which capital traveled to settler of power and settler centers of power, the Anishinaabe kinship system was intimately connected to place and therefore localized.

This is a story about two worldviews symbolized by two shapes—a circle and a line. The communally focused worldview of the Anishinaabe and seasonal round food system is relationally focused on the balance of the whole community or web of relations. In Anishinaabe ways of belief, humans are the last ones to arrive, or be lowered down, in the web of life. Therefore, all other-than-human relatives are teachers to humans. Anishinaabeg moved within seasonal rhythms, aligning themselves to the web, rather than taking power over the web. In the settler colonial worldview, the concepts of Manifest Destiny and Dominion Theory originated in Christian theologies and were applied by the settler states. The first ordained a structure which established notions of race and racial superiority to justify the taking of place, while Dominion Theory established a hierarchy in which humans were above all other species. From the settler colonial worldview, straight lines dominated the social and geophysical landscapes—racial and species hierarchies, market indexes, furrows of monocrops, map grid lines, and rail lines.

From an Anishinaabe point of view, there was a steep cost that originated from these differences in worldview or the cost of colonization as it occurred on the Northwestern Plains, the heart of Turtle Island, in the years 1780-1890--a tremendous loss of biocultural diversity. Settler extractive industries broke the web of relations and disappeared two-leggeds, four-leggeds, soil, water, the standing ones, the crawling, swimming, and flying ones. The loss of relatives was accompanied by separation of relatives created by the system of reservation/reserve confinement. No longer able to travel to tend wild plots and move with herds, Anishinaabeg and their kin were isolated from the other-than-human relatives whom they had visited in their annual seasonal movements. Further, the settler states tried to apply a system of sorting people to the land according to settler-defined *Indian spaces,* this was done based on Euro-American concepts

of tribe. Yet, the settler states found it impossible to apply this racialized structure as it was based on a false notion of purity. The diverse and multi-ethnic kinship web defied colonial categories intended for each reservation/reserve box or Indian space. When the settler states could not figure out what to do with highly intermarried and socially complex peoples, such as the Ojibwe, Cree, Métis, and Assiniboine, they orchestrated a campaign of ethnic cleansing across the Medicine Line or 49th parallel. In the same way that settler states carved up the landscape in 160-acre boxes without regard for topography or suitability for agricultural purposes, the settler states attempted to carve up the Indigenous human landscape. Both landscapes became highly fractionated. Colonization occurred at a biocultural level—impacting the web of relations and destroying a balance that had been previously nurtured by Anishinaabeg. Culture or worldview matters.

By the late 1870s, many different buffalo nations were compressed against the Rocky Mountain Front in the area just north and south of the 49th parallel. This rich buffalo home, the Old North Trail Corridor, was the last place for the buffalo culture way of life. There, Grand Father Buffalo, stood in the Western Doorway just as he said he would. The near extinction of the buffalo is witness to our sovereignty. Grand Father Buffalo is our sovereignty and the center of our kinship network of exchange. He has stood for us for millennia and, powerfully, he still stands.

By their words, deeds, and movement, Anishinaabeg resisted colonization of the web of life, or colonization of what we call “all of our relations.” In the late 1870s and early 1880s, as buffalo were becoming more and more scarce, Ojibwe-Nehiyaw head man, Big Bear, along with many other band leaders held off on signing treaty in favor of continued negotiation of terms.

Year after year, Anishinaabe (Nehiyaw, Ojibwe, Assiniboine, and Métis) leaders attended treaty conferences with the Canadian government asking would there be enough rations, agricultural equipment and instruction, and good land to safely make the transition from one food system to the next. What Big Bear, Little Pine, and other leaders understood was that they were being forced to move from one food system, a familiar and sustainable one, to a foreign system which required adaptation and the pitfall of dependencies on the government to tend the needs of their people. Big Bear clearly articulated what he saw as a period of transition from one food system to the next and so he asked for adequate rations for the transition period, allowing the people time and energy to take up the task of breaking the ground and establishing agricultural productivity which would provide nutrition and allow them to sustain their independence into the future.[649] The terms Big Bear and others wanted did not happen and the transition was disastrous.

Looking to the new life that was coming, the Ogimaag, our ancestral leaders, spoke back to power as they both rejected and negotiated treaties bearing in mind the generations of Anishinaabeg that would follow. The People turned to their ceremonies as the buffalo were disappearing. They also "ran with their ceremonies" and took them underground in order to protect the heritage and identity of the ones who were coming—that is us. We are the Spring they were preparing for.

[649] Dempsey, *Big Bear: The End of Freedom*, 82-85.

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