



Ashaammaliaxxia, the Apsaalooke Clan System : a foundation for learning
by Lanny Real Bird

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
Montana State University

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Abstract:

The Apsaalooke or the Crow Indians of Montana are faced with a loss of their cultural practices, values, and language because of threats in the mainstream society. This study is about "Ashaammaliaxxia", the Apsaalooke Clan System and the application of learning in this social religious institution. Using the formal background of adult education in this qualitative study, the researcher collected data based on oral tradition and history from the nativist elders among the Apsaalooke and created a study to bridge an understanding of the Apsaalooke culture and adult education through the formal system of the Apsaalooke learning process in the Apsaalooke Clan System. Although, learning occurs in informal settings, the process is very much formal. The research and interviews were conducted with nativist Apsaalooke elders and, also during ceremonies and the preparation process for religious rituals like Sweat Lodge Ceremonies and Peyote Ceremonials, where learning is occurring for the Apsaalooke.

By providing a background of the culture, the purpose of this study presents other interrelated customs, practices, and religions. It is important to present other topics such as the interview process, learning during preparation, women involvement, oral tradition, clan membership reduction, threats in the mainstream, the impact of disease and warfare, adoption, the clan functions, clan parents, maternal clan affiliation, the teasing clan, clan backgrounds, relationships and kinship, clan practices, and the meaning of being Apsaalooke because these aspects of the culture are integrated with the Apsaalooke Clan System. The functions and applicability of the Apsaalooke Clan System are important, because they are the primary application to the learning process.

In this study, there are several major conclusions.

They are: that there are reduction of nativist elders; ceremonial preparations are an important learning process; oral tradition is a facet of learning; the researcher's background contributes to this study; clan mergers have been occurring; the Apsaalooke Clan functions are the foundation of learning; each clan has characteristics; kinship and relationships are viewed as the wealth for the Apsaalooke;. there are environments where clan practices and learning occur; and finally, the meaning of being an Apsaalooke is based on natural phenomena in the cosmos.

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ABSTRACT

The Apsaalooke or the Crow Indians of Montana are faced with a loss of their cultural practices, values, and language because of threats in the mainstream society. This study is about "Ashaammaliaxxia", the Apsaalooke Clan System and the application of learning in this social religious institution. Using the formal background of adult education in this qualitative study, the researcher collected data based on oral tradition and history from the nativist elders among the Apsaalooke and created a study to bridge an understanding of the Apsaalooke culture and adult education through the formal system of the Apsaalooke learning process in the Apsaalooke Clan System. Although, learning occurs in informal settings, the process is very much formal. The research and interviews were conducted with nativist Apsaalooke elders and, also during ceremonies and the preparation process for religious rituals like Sweat Lodge Ceremonies and Peyote Ceremonials, where learning is occurring for the Apsaalooke.

By providing a background of the culture, the purpose of this study presents other interrelated customs, practices, and religions. It is important to present other topics such as the interview process, learning during preparation, women involvement, oral tradition, clan membership reduction, threats in the mainstream, the impact of disease and warfare, adoption, the clan functions, clan parents, maternal clan affiliation, the teasing clan, clan backgrounds, relationships and kinship, clan practices, and the meaning of being Apsaalooke because these aspects of the culture are integrated with the Apsaalooke Clan System. The functions and applicability of the Apsaalooke Clan System are important, because they are the primary application to the learning process.

In this study, there are several major conclusions. They are: that there are reduction of nativist elders; ceremonial preparations are an important learning process; oral tradition is a facet of learning; the researcher's background contributes to this study; clan mergers have been occurring; the Apsaalooke Clan functions are the foundation of learning; each clan has characteristics; kinship and relationships are viewed as the wealth for the Apsaalooke; there are environments where clan practices and learning occur; and finally, the meaning of being an Apsaalooke is based on natural phenomena in the cosmos.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Apsaalooke

The Apsaalooke or Crow Indians of Southeastern Montana are a unique group of people. They are unique because they are one of a few Indian tribes in the United States that practices their traditional culture, language, and values. Today, the Apsaalooke are threatened. Over the years, they have survived many different migrations across America, starvation, war, disease, federal policy, Christianization, parochialism, exile to the reservation, and the termination efforts by their enemies, other hostile tribes, and the United States government.

Apsaalooke have great reverence for the land they occupy. It is just a small piece of the traditional homeland they once held which prior to United States treaties was over approximately 38 million acres (Old Coyote, 1993, p. 149). These government contracts were used to extort billions and trillions of dollars from many tribes in resources and land base from American Indians. The Apsaalooke are just one of many other tribes. Today, the Apsaalooke occupies a small part of the vast homelands that

were seized.

The reservation is approximately 2.5 million acres. The land is surrounded by the Big Horn, Pryor, and Wolf Mountain ranges. Streams such as the Little Big Horn River, Big Horn River, Pass Creek, Lodge Grass Creek, Pryor Creek, Soap Creek, Reno Creek, Arrow Creek, and others pass through the heartland of Apsaalooke Country. The people can be found in districts such as the Might Few, Big Horn, Black Lodge, Lodge Grass, No Water, and Reno.

A person can still drink from the streams that run through the reservation. Fishing and hunting can still be done year round by tribal members. The land is a variety of prairie, rolling hills, mountains, and valleys. Beautiful cottonwood trees, ash, willow, maple, aspen, box elder, pine, and other vegetation are abundant. Within an hour drive during the summer, a person can leave the arid prairie surrounded by sagebrush, yucca, and cactus and then find oneself listening to mountain streams feeling the cool breeze of fresh air among lodge pole pines.

At day break, while the morning star shines above, a traditional Apsaalooke will greet a new day. While traveling through the Little Big Horn valley near sundown, a person could see smoke from the fireplaces of where a Sweat Lodge Ceremony is being held. The Apsaalooke people love their horses, and in the rural areas plenty of them can be seen. Amidst the mystique, history could be found such as

the Battle of the Little Big Horn. Here Cheyennes, Lakota, and Arapaho laid to rest a man who massacred defenseless women and children of Cheyenne Chief Black Kettle for the sake of gold and land.

The Apsaalooke are a distinct and unique cultural group. However, Euro-western beliefs and specifically the cultural invasion (Freire, 1970) has influenced the learning institutions of the Apsaalooke such as the Apsaalooke Clan system or even the language. The Crow must validate and formalize their current learning structures such as the contributions from the Apsaalooke Clan System (Ashaammaliaxxa) and other systems of learning, teaching, knowledge, information, education, and scholarship among them in order to assure the survival of their flourishing and unique culture. A cultural invasion is a force that has affected the Apsaalooke. Paulo Freire (1970) described the threat to a culture,

A cultural invasion, which serves the ends of conquest and the preservation of oppression, always involves a parochial view of reality, a static perception of the world, and the imposition of one world view upon another. It implies the "superiority" of the invader and "inferiority" of those who are invaded, as well as the imposition of values by the former, who possess the latter and are afraid of losing them. (p. 141)

A cultural invasion is taking place against the Apsaalooke people in the area of education. The power of the current political/educational structures of the State of Montana are awesome. For example in the local public school

systems, the Apsaalooke are not allowed to contribute to the curricula of how their children are educated. Yet, there are Apsaalooke participants serving in roles as educators, teachers, administrators, and board members (Fact Finding Hearing on Indian Education in Montana, United States Commission on Civil Rights, December 10, 1996).

Unfortunately, many Apsaalooke are powerless or ignorant of the threats to this delicate culture.

There remain traditional learning and educational institutions in the Apsaalooke culture that have allowed this group of people to survive. These institutions are the social and religious practices among the Apsaalooke. "The Apsaalooke children learn by participation, mainly through the respect and honor they have for their elders. Places where activities are going on like dances, ceremonies, and even at play, they are the classrooms for traditional learning" (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). The language is a learning institution. Activities practiced among the Crows are also learning institutions. An example of this is the Crow Fair held every year during the third weekend of August. Many activities occur during this period (M. Old Coyote, 1992). Here Apsaalooke practice and conduct specific customs during this annual event. There are several kinds of cultural practices occurring such as the observation of the traditional parade, camp moving, teepee raising, horsemanship, clan feeds, public education,

dances, ceremonies, year round preparation, and other social activities (E. Little Light, Jr., translated personal conversation, 1997).

Ashaammaliaxxia, The Apsaalooke Clan System

The Apsaalooke Clan System is an institution for learning. The Apsaalooke Clan System is the organizational structure created by a supernatural figure named "Old Man Coyote." In an interview with Apsaalooke traditionalist Lawrence Flat Lip (translated personal conversation, 1997) he described Old Man Coyote as "an angel of Iichikbaalia (God or 'the First Doer'). Old Man Coyote created this system for the Apsaalooke for social control and religion" (personal translated conversation, 1997). "We are like a piece of driftwood that floats down stream, it has no choice" (B. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997). This comment by an Apsaalooke elder reflects the representation of Ashaammaliaxxia.

Ashaammaliaxxia, the Apsaalooke Clan System, is the foundation of learning. The clan system serves as a foundation for social control and religious protocol for honor and respect. This system is matrilineal affiliation where clan membership is passed by the mothers to the children. Female clan members perpetuate membership. The mothers and fathers exercise a distinct role in the clan system either as parents or children.

The Apsaalooke, being matrilineal, receive their clan affiliation from their mother. The mother's clan takes care of the physical and emotional needs of the individual. The relationship with the father's clan was also important, since this clan promoted the status of the individual through public announcements of their achievements, and, more important, by providing prayer-blessings for a long, happy, and successful life. Clan mothers and clan fathers are considered sacred. The Apsaalooke credit Old Man Coyote for saying, "No Matter how poor, no matter how pitiful, no matter how unaccomplished your clan father may be, whatever he says on your behalf to the spiritual realm will come true." The clan fathers, therefore, have two roles for their clan children; to speak on behalf of the clan children in the spiritual realm and speak on behalf of the clan children to people, so that the people would know about their clan children's accomplishments.

The father's clan also provides the individual with joking relations, or teasing cousins. Individuals whose fathers belong to the same clan regard each other as teasing cousins. The joking relations have free license to tease each other about public and private misconduct. (Old Horn & McCleary, 1995, p. 67)

Furthermore, the clan system is the primary means of conduct in all aspects of the Apsaalooke culture. In every facet of this culture the respect of clan roles are the precedent. These roles, whether by maternal or paternal connection, define the conduct of all Apsaalooke individuals.

An important aspect of the Apsaalooke Clan System is that it determines kinships. Relationships, like parents and children, are established by the clan system. "Even before a child is born, they have parents and children. The tiniest infant belonging to a clan has clan children. This child always has parents, no matter what. The clan system

also extends in the spirit world" (G. Reed, Jr., personal translated conversation, 1997).

Currently, the Apsaalooke recognize five clan groups which are the results of mergers that occurred with other clans. The number of clans differs through historic times. According to some accounts, there were 13 clans, and others indicate 10. The following listing represents the clans of the Apsaalooke.

13 Identified Clans of the Apsaalooke

<u>Translation</u>	<u>Apsaalooke Meaning</u>
Greasy Mouth	Uuwuutasshe
Sore Lips	Ashiiioshe
Wealthy Gophers (Whistling Water or Bilikooshe)	Akchihpawaaitché
Bad War Deeds	Ashakpkawiia
Ties in A Bundle	Xuhkaalaxche
Brings Home Game Without Shooting	Uussaawaachiia
Filth Eaters	Ashpeennuushe
Big Lodge	Ashshitchite
Newly Made Lodges	Ashhilaalio
Treacherous Lodge (Piegangs or Ashkamne)	Ashbatshua
*Crop Eared Domestic Animals	Isaashkahpaleete
*Tattered Lodges	Ashxahche
*Ferocious Guard Dogs	Iishkakaashexawiia
* Extinct	

Remaining 10 Clans Merge into 5 Clan Phratries

1. Greasy Mouth
Sore Lips
2. Whistling Water (Bilikooshe)
Bad War Deeds
3. Ties in A Bundle
Brings Home Game Without Shoot

Filth Eaters

4. Big Lodge
Newly Made Lodge
5. Piegans (Ashkaamne)

Source: (George Reed, Jr., personal conversation, 1997)

According to the late Mickey Old Coyote (1997), "Over the years clans have merged, with a number of names changes" (p. 39). Other Apsaalooke elders such as Francis Stewart stated, "At one time there were as many as twenty to thirty clans" (translated personal conversation, 1997). Also, Robert H. Lowie (1966) indicates there may be more than the 13 clans presented earlier. He also points out many of the different clan "names seem to be synonymous" (p. 341). Lowie also lists other clans not mentioned which he assumes are synonymous, such as the "Bad Leggings Clan", who are identified as the Greasy Mouth Clan or the "Not-Mixed Clan" (Lowie, 1935, 340).

Problem Statement

There are many social and religious practices that exist as the foundation of being Apsaalooke. By some mystic intervention, these institutions have survived, yet they are threatened by changes which seem to assimilate the Apsaalooke people into the mainstream world. "Apsaalooke share stories of how tribes attempted to annihilate us. Our heros like 'Rides A Paint Horse' (Moccasin, translated personal conversation, 1997) saved us through his gallantry

and supernatural power. Maybe he was Old Man Coyote. Today, we are threatened by the White man" (W. Moccasin, translated personal conversation, 1996). The nativist Apsaalooke realizes this subtle and nonphysical threat is just as destructive as a military force coming from the south or north. Yet, many contemporary Apsaalooke (non-traditional) do not realize the cultural extinction effect of continually accepting mainstream ideals.

Today, there is a greater threat facing the Apsaalooke than that which has even been compounded by all the other efforts. This is the threat of the loss of a unique and distinct culture. Throughout the years, the Apsaalooke have met every challenge with courage and valor. They have been diplomatic and tactful in dealing with adversity in situations such as starvation, disease, and war. The Crows have prevailed against every historic effort to annihilate the Apsaalooke from the face of this earth (Moccasin, translated personal conversation, 1996).

Today, that threat is very subtle. The threat to this culture is being furthered through contemporary educational means specifically in the public school environments.

The economy also has an impact of taking traditional teachers, such as mothers, out of the home and forcing them to work in order to survive. The woman exercises a vital role in promoting the culture. Without promoting the roles of traditional people interacting with the culture, it

becomes threatened.

The role of the elderly is being ignored by Apsaalooke society just as it is in the mainstream culture with more and more of the senior citizens that maintain traditional values are being institutionalized and separated from the practice of Apsaalooke culture (E. Little Light, Jr., translated personal conversation, 1996). Men are also effected. Their traditional roles have been abolished as primary providers of families. The lack of participation in the economy, of racism, and of statewide hostility toward native rights are contributing factors. The Apsaalooke do not view education as a solution to the problem. It is just another contribution to the mainstream adding to list of consolations by the Apsaalooke.

A need exists for traditional Apsaalooke people to find the value of their experiences and recognize the institutions that have facilitated their learning. This enlightenment is tied to realizing that language, customs, and values are a fundamental means of learning, understanding knowledge, and gaining experiences. When learning through a system determined by their own educators, the Apsaalooke can use the anchor of their own culture as an exercise in practice. In this way their educational practices can be based on their own efforts of research and can be implemented in a traditional Apsaalooke style based on the educational institutions of the culture. Such an

approach would use Apsaalooke thought and culture as the foundation and medium for teaching any topic applicable to an Apsaalooke educational system. For example, English could be taught using the Apsaalooke language and other cultural experiences as the reference point for learning. Through this, the Apsaalooke may find value in perpetuating the existing traditional customs or educational institutions in their culture.

Decline of Traditional Knowledge and Respect

The use of the Apsaalooke language is diminishing drastically. The conduct of respecting clan relationships is not being practiced as it was traditionally exercised in daily life. Today, some clan children do not observe their surroundings; they are not aware of the clan membership of whom they pass by in the public. Young people violate traditional teachings by laughing at their clan fathers and mothers. Some Crow people even go as far as teasing their clan parents. This is a breach of the respect of clan mores (L. White, personal translated conversation, 1997). People try to find risqué statements in someone's holistic delivery of Apsaalooke speech. This humor is generated by and consistent with the current mainstream society standards of morality. The Apsaalooke language has no nasty or dirty words in it. Those turning to the mainstream culture have only the attitudes influenced by the mainstream to determine

whether something is indisputably right or wrong (E. Little Light, Jr., translated personal conversation, 1997). There are some Apsaalooke that have fully committed to becoming fundamentally Christian by denouncing their tradition heritage and religions. They laugh at the traditional people. Their main concern on earth is to get to heaven when they die; this is a contradiction to the traditional Apsaalooke philosophy. It is forbidden to speak of death and of those that passed away, yet today our people are persuaded to condemn practicing nativists and pray to a dead man (G. Reed, Jr., translated personal conversation, 1997).

Apsaalooke learners, particularly children, are not being encouraged or reinforced by the principles of the traditional learning and educational institutions that have survived to this day. This is especially true of the language. Cultural surveys conducted over the years reflect a dramatic shift in Crow language usage. In 1970, 83% of the school age population spoke the Crow language as their primary language (Dracon, 1970). By 1978, this number had declined to 73% (Read, 1978). Currently, only 25% of the student population 3-years to 18-years old speak the Crow language as their primary language (Chesarek, Graczyk, & Peregoy, 1995).

Any interest and inquiry of the Apsaalooke traditions by learners are suppressed by the lack of awareness of their culture and lifestyle or curricula in schools serving

Apsaalooke people. Their inquiry in this area is also halted and desisted only to validate western educational systems. This is the view that they have been conditioned to interpret. The Apsaalooke do recognize their traditional learning institutions, such as the Tobacco Society or Sweat Lodge Ceremonies, as formal systems to educate learners about their traditional culture, values, and language. Like the oppressed in Third World countries (Freire, 1970), many Apsaalooke have not actualized the control of education. Thus, the Apsaalooke do not see education as a means for liberation and empowerment. So, there is a need to empower the reservation community through the use of contemporary applications of education and technology (Freire, 1970; Horton 1990).

Currently, the Apsaalooke are in a state of dependency. The political, education, and religious control are overwhelming. Like most other tribes, the Apsaalooke have accepted a subordinate role to the federal government. The plight of the Apsaalooke is similar to the Cheyenne.

Government and Christian authorities were tenacious in a policy to dismantle tribal cultures and supplant their system with their own during most of the Reservation Era. Indeed, from the experience of the elders, educational policies imposed by the reservation authorities have meant that at every pivotal juncture the Cheyenne have had to content with the domineering force of the non-Indian to change their ways in forcible conformation. (Rowland, 1994, pp. 135-6)

Since the treaty years, almost every aspect of native peoples' lives has been dictated by the government. There

is no resolve to question or challenge the governmental authority especially when it concerns the threat of the culture. The government is posed with all initiatives for development such as economic, political, educational, and even religious. Most Crow Indians believe that the power and authority dictating their lives lie in the control of the government. They have conceded to this authority and accept all consolations of government action as obligations. If given any opportunities to empower themselves as in self-determination, almost sadly they will still petition the government for direction.

Other people than the Apsaalooke are determining the role of education on the Crow Reservation. It is a shame that the Apsaalooke are being told by other people what to do and how to think in their own country and among their own people. The Apsaalooke must realize that they have been "invaded" just as Freire conveys. Why should the Apsaalooke be told what to do and how to think by people who are guests in their country of the Apsaalooke Reservation. Such control is analogous to going into someone's home and telling them how they should arrange their furniture or telling them to keep their pots outside rather than in the cupboard.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to describe the ways in

which Ashaammaliaxxia, the Apsaalooke Clan System, serves as the foundation of learning among the Apsaalooke people of Southeastern Montana. The cultural activities of the Apsaalooke take place in the informal setting of daily living but represent the formal learning process for the Apsaalooke. For the purpose of validating the education, knowledge, learning, teaching, and experiences of the cultural practices of the Apsaalooke, these activities need to be acknowledged and described. This can allow the Apsaalooke to examine their cultural activities as an educational environment in order to perpetuate their traditions.

Research Questions

In order to identify the role of Ashaammaliaxxia, the Apsaalooke Clan System, a key concept is to reflect on the social and religious purpose of the clan system. In order to understand the dynamics of this clan system, questions about its origin and significance must be answered. Individual roles must be identified in the context of belonging to Ashaammaliaxxia. This idea generates the questions related to what it means to be an Apsaalooke.

Understanding the Apsaalooke Clan System requires an awareness of all cultural activities and practices. For this the dynamics of the Apsaalooke Clan System had to be identified and discussed. By discussing these cultural

activities as learning and educational institutions, the role of the clans included comments about the knowledge and experiences occurring.

When addressing each particular clan, research required the inclusion of the characteristics of each clan. This included questions such as, "Why are you called the Whistling Waters?" This indication explored historic representations of how a clan came to be. After facilitating such knowledge, questions about specific roles and conduct of clan membership set the stage for an overview of this system. Therefore, the specific research questions for this study were:

1. What does it mean to be an Apsaalooke?
2. What are the characteristics of each clan?
3. How does the Apsaalooke Clan System relate to the practice of the culture and learning?

Definitions

Apsaalooke: This is the name given to themselves by the Crow Indians.

Ashaammaliaxxia: This is the Apsaalooke Clan System. It signifies the driftwood that is bound together along the rivers. The meaning indicates driftwood lodges.

Band: A division of a nomadic tribe; a group of individuals who move and camp together

(Stein, 1973, p. 116). In this study bands are describes like sub-tribes of a larger tribe. These bands could very well be considered separate tribes.

Brother: All male members of the same clan and male children of fathers who are clan brothers. This includes some relations through kinship and proclamation.

Clan: "A group of persons who are related through one of descent from a common ancestor. Some clans are matrilineal, (related through the female line) . . . Members of a clan feel a close relationship to each other and usually have a strong spirit of unity....They often share property or special privileges. Most clans are exogamous--that is, the members must marry outside of the clan (B. White Clay, 1978, p. 1).

Elder: These are the people that have acquired traditional knowledge and experiences within the culture. They are resources for nativist information. Elders are the practioneers of nativism. An elder can be a leader, teacher, mentor and parent of the learners in the Apsaalooke

culture.

Father: Any male member of the same clan as a biological father. This includes kinship ties through blood, like in the case of a biological father's male cousins and spouses of female cousins by marriage who are maternally related to the biological father.

Mother: A natural mother and all her clan sisters older than her, including her biological sisters. This includes clan father spouses and kinship ties of certain relatives. A similar relationship exists for female siblings of a child's father. In the Apsaalooke language, it is "isbaaxia", identifiable as a paternal aunt.

Nativist: This is the term used to identify Apsaalooke members, who in the traditional sense, participate in the native cultural practices such as recognition of and active participation in Ashammaliaxxiia (Apsaalooke Clan System), Alawusuua (Sweat Lodge Ceremony), Baasshussuua (Tobacco Society), and Iipche (Ceremony Pipe).

Other contemporary practices include activities associated with the Sun Dance, Hot Dance, Day Time Dance, Fasting, Medicine Bundles, and the Peyote Religion.

Religion: A specific fundamental set of beliefs and practices generally agreed upon by a number of persons or sects (Stein, 1973, p. 1212). In the mainstream, there is an assumption that a person has only one religion. For Apsaalooke nativists, they have many because their religions are interrelated.

Sister: Younger female members of the same maternal clan, and also all female children of the members of a father's clan. Older female members of the same clan of an individual are called, "isahkaate".

Limitations

This study was limited to Apsaalooke elders and nativists on the Crow Indian Reservation in southeastern Montana. The practice of recognizing the Apsaalooke Clan System goes beyond the physical borders of the Crow Country. Apsaalooke people recognize the dynamics of the clan system in every aspect of their life even if they are visiting or

reside elsewhere.

Delimitations

Participants in this study were chosen by their affiliation with either the Whistling Water and Bad War Deeds Clans. These two groups represent "aashke", the fathers, and "isbaaxia", the paternal aunts, of the researcher and fathers of the researcher's mother. Other associations for gathering data included maternal brothers and children of the Big Lodge Clan that are Whistling Water or Bad War Deeds children. Other data in the form of recorded interviews kept at the Little Big Horn College Archives were included. The format for selecting prerecorded interviews was also based on the informants' affiliation with either the Whistling Water, Bad War Deeds and Big Lodge Clans.

Assumptions

The people selected to participate in this study are closely related by clan or kinship. The reason for organizing the research from the perspective of the Whistling Waters, Bad War Deeds, and Big Lodges was because these clans are at the foundation of the education process for the researcher in the Apsaalooke culture.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Our people tell stories when there is snow on ground. According to my elders, This is the only time we share such stories. Today, there is snow on the ground and I will tell you what you want to hear. (D. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997)

Ashaammaliaxxia, the Apsaalooke Clan System, has been long established among the Apsaalooke, and it is also part of social structure of the Hidatsa people. "Even before the acquisition of the Sacred Tobacco Plant, Ihchihchiaee, in the Big Horn Mountain, and their split from the Hidatsas, we had clans. Old Man Coyote gave us the clan system" (F. Stewart, translated personal conversation, 1997).

The Apsaalooke Clan System is a way of life. It is the basis for respect, honor, and humility. The Apsaalooke recognize the clan system as a creed to abide by throughout life (see p. 7). There are relationships defined by Ashaammaliaxxia. The basis for acknowledging these relationships is through respect, "mut iichikichtu". "We conduct ourselves through this respect for one another. This respect that we maintain is an education. It is how we

learn and how we teach" (R. Real Bird, translated personal conversation, 1996).

One example of the relationships among the Apsaalooke is the conduct of not speaking to or being in the same room with one's mother-in-law. An Apsaalooke elder proclaimed,

The Apsaalooke Clan System is the best system in the world. When other cultures like the White Man and the Black Man ridicule and belittle their mothers-in-law, the Apsaalooke have a way of demonstrating this relationship through respect and honor. I know of no other culture in the world that exercises this conduct. We do not address our mothers-in-law. We don't speak to them, because we respect them. It took a genius to figure out a system like this. The credit goes to Old Man Coyote. (E. Little Light, Jr., Personal Translated Interview, 1997)

In order to understand how Ashaammaliaxxia, the Apsaalooke Clan System, fits within the organization of the Apsaalooke people, the origin and history, including prehistory of the tribe, must be presented. This part will introduce the different bands of the Apsaalooke and present the current reservation as a conglomeration of three different bands of Apsaalooke. Also in this scope, philosophical views defining an Apsaalooke person will be introduced. Furthermore it is also important to express the nature of how Apsaalooke people make their decisions. These include views and attitudes that determine action, just like the mother-in-law relationship.

In another example, an Apsaalooke nativist expressed that "we have great reverence for the life, and of the four directions. East represents life because this is the

direction in which the sun rises. We greet the sunrise as a new day in life. The West represents where our deceased go. We avoid speaking of morbidity, and of those who have gone on to the next camp" (G. Reed, Jr., translated personal conversation, 1997). Life and living are basic presumptions for Apsaalooke well-being and the Apsaalooke Clan System vastly contributes to this way of life.

Apsaalooke

The name Apsaalooke means "Children of the Large Beaked Bird." The word Crow came from the initial contact with early European groups. When the word Apsaalooke is analyzed in parts, "Ap" indicates a beak while "saa" is an abbreviated root meaning big, and "looke" is another root meaning child (S. Takes Horse, translated personal conversation, 1997). According to the late Mickey Old Coyote (1992), the word Crow was made by a translation error. He states this in his book that:

French trappers, hearing that we were children of a large-beaked bird, gave our tribe the nickname of Crow, something which we at first resented but in later years have accepted. In reality the large-beaked bird, now extinct, belonged to the raven family, a bird having a long split tail, although some white authors have mistakenly said that the bird was a sparrow hawk. The raven designating our nation. Large Beak was described as possessing courage, wisdom and the most resourceful way to survive. The raven being a shaman animal as the magpie is. (p. 34)

The term Crow was also translated differently by the use of other tribes when they referred to the Crow using

sign language. The hand gesture in referring to Crow "mimics the movement of a bird's wing" (Frey, 1950, p. 27). Over the years different groups chose to refer to the Apsaalooke as Crow. The name, Crow, has been formally accepted, and many Apsaalooke people will refer to themselves as Crow. In this dissertation, the terms are used interchangeably.

According to the elders and other nativists among the Apsaalooke, the name they refer to themselves has mystic and supernatural origins (Red Wolf, translated personal conversation, 1997). Apsaalooke is the name for the tribe and declares membership or belonging to the group. They use the term "biiluuke". "Biiluuke" stems from an older dialect of the Apsaalooke language which was "miikuuka". This means, "the one close to the Creator or unique among the rest" (S. Takes Horse, translated personal conversation, 1997). The word was first said by Iichihkbaalia, the Creator. "While his helpers were creating the world, Iichihkbaalia expressed his wish to place a group of people, he called 'Biiluuka', in the region of what was their traditional homeland. This is how this name came to be" (T. Red Wolf, translated personal conversation, 1997).

When White Men first encountered different tribes in the Great Plains region, they inquired about the Apsaalooke. They asked the different tribes to identify these people. The responses of names for the Apsaalooke included names

such as "Awaxaawe bilaxpaake" by the Hidatsa and sign language interpretation by themselves and others (T. Red Wolf, Sr., translated personal conversation, 1997). The Lakota have a name for the Apsaalooke, which is taken from the Apsaalooke word for greeting people. The Apsaalooke say "ka he" with an open hand, so when the Lakota were greeted by Apsaalooke, this is what they heard. The Lakota identifies the Apsaalooke with the word "kaxee", which stems from the greetings expressed by Apsaalooke people (T. Red Wolf, Sr., translated personal conversation, 1997). This word also is said to be the sound similar to the one made by the raven or crows, "ka ka" (Flat Lip, translated personal conversation, 1997). The word "Crow" is a bastardized mistranslation by early French fur traders of the word "Apsaalooke", which means "Children of the Large Beaked Bird" (Medicine Crow, 1992, p. 2).

There historically were three different bands that made up what is now the Crow Reservation. Each band had its own name and could be identified by each other and by the Hidatsa and Mountain Crow (Red Wolf, personal conversation, 1996). In particular, the original people who left the main body of Hidatsa and went westward are identified as Apsaalooke or "Awaxaawe bilaxpaake" (Red Wolf, personal conversation, 1996). The word "Crow" is a general classification from the Hidatsa perspective that possibly could have included any satellite bands of Hidatsa,

including the more closely related to the River Crows. In retrospect, it seems any bands that left the main body of Hidatsa and moved westward were classified Apsaalooke, even if they were very closely related to the main body of Hidatsa like the River Crow.

The Apsaalooke have allowed themselves to be identified by the misnomer of "Crow". Even worst, early interpreters documented encounters with Apsaalooke in a general sense of them as Crows rather than specifically identifying them technically as either "Ashalaho", "Binnessiippeele," or "Eele alapio" (P. Real Bird, translated personal conversation, 1997). These are the names by which they identify themselves as. Thus, an error was committed by early historians and translators of categorically identifying all Apsaalooke's as Crows rather than the name by which they knew themselves. In an example of "self-depreciation" (Freire, 1970), the Apsaalooke first experience in the oppressive nature of western thinkers was at hand.

Different Bands of the Apsaalooke

There is an abundant amount of studies about the Apsaalooke from the social science perspective. A visit to the Little Big Horn College Library and Archives can confirm this. There are several different versions of many stories among the Apsaalooke like their split from the Hidatsa. All

these versions whether documented by transcript or described by oral account have some strong similarities. On the other hand, much of these histories and descriptions may be less similar and totally different from other versions of certain topics. For example, through early research efforts to document the introduction of the horse to the Apsaalooke people, there have been several contradicting stories of when the first horses were acquired by the Apsaalooke.

First, there was a version acquired through early childhood stories by the late Edison Real Bird, also supported and similar to a version by Wayne Moccasin (1997). There are other versions documented in texts that were similar to each other by process but technically different (Medicine Crow, 1994). Finally, there also is a non-Crow version described by a military officer through accounts of Apsaalooke scouts (Clark, 1967).

In order to describe and validate certain oral descriptions through the interviews of the traditionalists and elders, various versions, and accounts will be considered. Yet, many of these different versions may be just as valid as the other due to their source being either Mountain Crow, River Crow, Kick in the Belly, or Hidatsa.

The sources of these stories are critical in that not all Apsaalooke are the same. It is important to clarify the different Apsaalooke divisions. Since many stories may be different through familial interpretations, the main

contrast may be from the source of where the stories originated (G. Bulltail, translated personal conversation, 1997). The likelihood of the different versions can be attributed to the different bands of Apsaalooke such as the "Mountain Crow, River Crow, and Kicked in Belly Bands" (Old Coyote, 1992, p. 36). In conversations in various Sweat Lodge Ceremonies, elders and another doctoral researcher, who is Apsaalooke, agree that some stories such as the acquisition of the horse may be valid for Mountain Crow people, but it is different from the Kicked in Belly version as well as it is unique in the River Crow version (D. Yarlott, personal conversation, 1996).

There are no extended texts available or documented research depicting separate histories of the different bands of Apsaalooke. Historically and even today, the Crow Reservation is the melting pot of three different Apsaalooke cultures. These are the Mountain Crow, River Crow and the Kick in the Belly bands. The point is hardly discussed by most ethnological studies. This is an important point to discuss. Timothy McCleary (1993) discusses four documented bands of Apsaalooke in his master's thesis. These different bands could very well have had different origins or transitions into being identified as Apsaalooke. In comparison, these bands are like the relationships of the Blackfeet, Piegans, Bloods, and Sissika people. Their languages, culture, and values are primarily the same, yet

they are different bands of Pikuni people (R. LaDue, personal conversation, 1997).

The Mountain Crow people lived in the mountain ranges of the Apsarokee, Beartooths, Big Horns, Bridgers, Crazies, Gallatins, Pryors, Rockies, and Tetons. Their territory was vast. They identify their homelands and the association with the mountains, as "Awaxawaguusaawada" or extended mountains (Takes Horse, translated personal conversation, 1997). River Crows lived along the Big Horn, Little Big Horn, Missouri, Musselshell, Powder, and Yellowstone Rivers. Since the River Crows were more closely related to the Hidatsa, their territories were close to each other. The River Crows primarily lived along the upper Missouri River in northern Montana and all along the Yellowstone River. Apsaalooke territory covered most of Montana and Wyoming and extended into North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska (P. Real Bird, translated personal conversation, 1997).

Theoretically, the basis of identifying the four bands is (a) through the language; (b) by identification through the Hidatsa accounts; and by the original band of Apsaalooke, the "Ashalaho" (Mountain Crows); and also (3) by the Hidatsa reference, "Awaxaawe bilaxpaake" (Red Wolf, 1996), which means "mountain people". These four bands are identified by Hidatsas and the Ashalaho as the "Mountain Crow" (Ashalaho, Ashkuale, or Awaxaammilaxpaake), "River Crow" (Binnessiippeele), "Kick in the Bellies"

(Eelalapiio), and a less known group known as "Beaver Dries It's Fur" (Bilapiiutche) band. The Eelalapiio band is an extension of the original Ashalaho band or the Mountain Crows. The later group, "Bilappiuutche", is no longer associated with the main group of Apsaalooke because of their disappearance.

Some believe the Beaver Dries Its Fur group split off in Canada and remained there. Others say they turned east, ending up at Lake Michigan. Both of these beliefs stem from the claims of Crows who, after visiting in northern Canada or Michigan, say they have found a people who could converse within the Crow language. Others believe this group became part of the Kiowa, with whom the Crow were closely associated in the 1600 and early 1700's. Still, other traditions relate the Comanches located a group of massacred people in southern Colorado who were dressed like Crows. (McCleary, 1993, p. 35)

This group was last seen in the Spear Sighting area of the Crow Reservation (B. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997). The Beaver Dries Its Fur Group was said to have camped west of Gillette, Wyoming. According to the Kiowa, their accounts describe their origin from the area of the tributaries of the Yellowstone River (B. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997).

Hidatsa also claim encounters with a group of people who spoke an "Apsaalooke/Hidatsa" language.

Our boys were singing over in Canada one time and took shelter in a tent to get out of the rain. Then one of them heard some people talking outside and asked if everyone came. When they looked out at the men speaking the "Apsaalooke/Hidatsa" language, they did not recognize them. They were sitting around a fire and boiling some coffee. (M. Wolf, personal conversation, 1996)

The languages of all these different bands along with the Hidatsa are very similar. Even today, a Hidatsa elder made a comment about how the different districts on the Crow Indian Reservation speak differently,

Even I notice the Crows speak differently. It seems I clearly understand the people of Pryor area, whereas the people in the Crow Agency and Lodge Grass area are harder to understand. I can understand the Pryor people just like my people. It seems the people in the Little Big Horn Valley have shortened their words or are not fully expressing statements. Some parts I can recognize though. I was amazed. (M. Wolf, personal conversation, 1996)

This distinction may be attributed to the different bands making up the Crow Reservation.

Elders among the contemporary Apsaalooke also have identified a group of people in the Red Springs area of Alberta near the mountains as Apsaalooke and Hidatsa speakers. The information about this group being like the Apsaalooke is common among elders although no documented information about them is available.

The different bands have a similar language. Even generations ago and today, Hidatsa and Apsaalooke conversed in their mother tongues with each other. Yet understandable, they are different just as those who speak the Romance languages are different from each other. Some words are very traceable and found in different cultures such as the word "four". The Apsaalooke and Hidatsa say "shobe" whereas the Mandan and Lakota say "tobe" (J. Tiona, personal conversation, 1996). The root of these two

indications for the number four is "obe". If said by any of the tribal members mentioned, it can be understood. Many of the first seven counting numbers of these people mentioned are very similar and distinguishable. Somewhere, there is a connection just like the Latin language groups in Europe.

There is a distinction among Apsaalooke speakers today. This distinction is also attributed to the separate bands of the Mountain Crow and the River Crow (L. Flat Lip, translated personal conversation, 1997). Mountain Crow people pronounce some words with the "m" sound while the River Crow people begin the same word with a "b" sound. For example, the Apsaalooke word for "work" is pronounced by the Mountain Crow as "maahile," and this same word is said by the River Crow as "baahile" (L. Flat Lip, translated personal conversation, 1997). The Mountain Crow, including the people in the Pryor district, use a form of the Apsaalooke language that is an older dialect and is much closer to the pronunciation of the Hidatsa language. Between the Apsaalooke and Hidatsa, there are many such cases. For instance, one difference is the "sh" sound of the Apsaalooke that replaces the "d" sound among the Hidatsa. In the Apsaalooke word for "home", it is referred to as "ashe" while the Hidatsa will say "ade" (M. Wolf, personal conversation, 1996).

The main considerations of this discussion are the four distinct divisions of Apsaalooke people. Each of these

divisions are closely related by the language from the sister tribe of Hidatsa. The theory is each of these divisions have and had unique stories depicting their band's history prior to the merging of all bands with the development of the reservation. Even in recent times, the different bands distinguished themselves and at times did not get along (S. Takes Horse, translated personal conversation, 1997).

The people identified historically as Apsaalooke were a conglomeration of three different divisions or groups of Hidatsas that split from the main group of Hidatsas and the original Mountain Crow at different times and "occupied regions near the headwaters of the Missouri to the mouth of the Yellowstone extending to foot hills of the Black Hills to the Platte River onto the Teton Mountains and into the Big Horn Basin of Wyoming" (E. Real Bird, 1969). This was the border of the Apsaalooke Country according to the late Edison Real Bird.

Reflections on the different bands of Apsaalooke, language similarities, and populations reveals that the current Crow memberships have historical differences. Theoretically, the historic Crow Reservation consists of a conglomeration of three different divisions identified as Apsaalooke. Through the years, the three bands have embraced their identities through their own stories and history. However, through the establishment of the

reservation, each of the bands was forced to become a conglomeration or melting pot of Apsaalooke, where stories and histories changed.

It is highly possible that some research may have different origins according to the different bands and through the reinforcement of familial educators. Each individual family passes different accounts of Apsaalooke history. The reservation established by U.S. policy has merged all the separate bands together and categorized all these bands the same through "self-depreciation" (Freire, 1970). Technically, they are not the same although they have a similar language. Their origins are chronologically different, and their cultures were distinct. Historically, these bands distinguished themselves from each other. At times, they disagreed or fought with each other, even with their Hidatsa relatives, and between clans.

Origin of the Apsaalooke

The word "Apsaalooke" means the tribal name while "biiluke" is a mystic and supernatural description by Iichihkbaalia, the Creator or God, about the people who he chose to occupy the historic lands of the Apsaalooke people (G. Bulltail, translated personal conversation, 1997). Iichihkbaalia told this word to his helpers when they created this land. These supernatural beings are like angels. One of these is also identified as the Creator. He

is Old Man Coyote. The helpers are (a) Isaahkawuatte, (b) Old Man Coyote (Old Coyote, 1993, p. 29); (c) Shilubay, the Fox (Real Bird, 1990, p.3); and (d) Hissishetwia, Red Woman (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997).

Old Man Coyote was a trickster. There are enough legendary stories about Old Man Coyote to fill volumes. Some people, down through the history of our culture, have called him both the trickster and the creator of everything while others call him First Maker's helper. He is sent to us to teach morality. (Old Coyote, 1993, p. 29)

The role of Old Man Coyote as the Creator or as a helper differs from family to family as well as between clans. Among the Hidatsa, he is "Old Man," and coyote is not distinguished (R. Wood, 1986, p. 99). The link also may be associated with the different bands. One elder among the Apsaalooke states clearly, "There are many stories out there, and this is what they told me. They are all good, and all deserve credit because they have significant meaning to our people. I do not intend to criticize the other stories out there" (Flat Lip, translated personal conversation, 1997).

For this reason, Old Man Coyote is either God, or he is a helper. He is also the sun. All these roles are respected because he was able to transform himself to whatever he intended to do. Thus, there are ample publications and oral accounts shared by the Apsaalooke relating to the following creation story (e.g., Hatheway, 1970; Lowie, 1918; Real Bird, 1990; Simms, 1903).

The Creator, Iichihkbaalia, is responsible for the different versions of the creation stories. There is a good purpose for this.

He made many different versions, so the people will know where they came from. There are many because if we had only one, there would be a chance of losing just this one as we lived. With many stories, there is a greater chance of these stories to exist and live on for our people. (S. Takes Horse, translated personal conversation, 1997).

All the creation stories are appropriate. There are ample versions among the Apsaalooke people of how they were created.

Interestingly, the Hidatsa also share many similar creation stories (Wood, 1986, p. 97-104) such as the Whistling Water version, and these may differ from family to family. Basically, they all involve Old Man Coyote and some ducks, who helped him create land (Frey; Hatheway; Lowie; Nabokov; Real Bird; and et.al.) The following account of how the world was created was shared during the researcher's childhood years by Edison Real Bird and later was reiterated by Floyd Real Bird. Many of the other accounts are similar. This was presented through oral tradition.

Long ago there was nothing but water in the world we know now. The only person around was Old Man Coyote. He was swimming around in the water. This was the way life for him then. While he was swimming around, he came upon some ducks. Each was a different species. They began to converse, and Old Man Coyote expressed his wish for land because he was tired of swimming in the world that was all water. The ducks shared his concern. Old Man Coyotes convinced one of the ducks which was a mallard to swim deep into the water and see if he

could bring something up. This duck obliged and was unsuccessful. He asked another duck, a teal one, to do likewise. This one also did not have any results. Another was asked. This one was a pintail. This duck also failed.

There was one duck who was kind of small and dark, kind of pitiful. This one was a mud duck. Old Man Coyote did not really take this duck seriously, but he expressed his wish to give the duck a chance to swim below and see if he could bring up any earth. The mud duck dove deep and after some time below the water, he surfaced with some mud. Old Man Coyote was happy. He proceeded to convince the mud duck to bring more earth to the surface and continue piling and piling the mud until the land is above the surface of the water. This is how the earth was created.

The mud duck is held in high regard among the Apsaalooke. When most ducks fly south for the winter, sometimes the mud duck will remain. We avoid eating the mud duck because he is part of many medicine bundles.

This story continues to describe the creation of rivers and other aspects of life such as the animals, birds, and people. Hissishetwia, Red Woman, was called upon to carve out the stream beds for rivers. This action was the gift of Iichihkbaalia to the ducks that helped Old Man Coyote so they could have a home (G. Reed, Sr., translated personal conversation, 1997). Shilubay another supernatural assistant, is also given much credit for helping create things on the earth as a helper to Old Man Coyote. (Real Bird, 1990)

There are many other attributes given to Old Man Coyote (Lowie, 1918). During the time when Old Man Coyote created land, he also created people by the instructions of Iichihkbaalia. These were the people the Creator wanted to

call "biiluuke" or the Apsaalooke people (T. Red Wolf, translated personal conversation, 1997).

Old Man Coyote Creates Ashaammaliaxxia

Ashaammaliaxxia, the Apsaalooke Clan System, was created during the creation of the earth's surface (G. Bulltail, personal translated conversation, 1997). While the earth was being created, Old Man Coyote, Shilubay, and Red Woman took obligations to create the different aspect of what is now life on earth. Shilubay also came into existence and is Old Man Coyote's little brother. He was made of mud and red clay. He is a fox. Red Woman was Old Man Coyote's wife (H. Real Bird, 1990, p. 36). The Sun also was credited for his contributions because he is also Old Man Coyote.

Before the earth was created, one star out of the heavens approached earth and came to be our sun (H. Real Bird, 1990). Another star came from the heavens as a person. When Old Man Coyote approached this person, the person transformed himself into a plant. This is the tobacco plant. Even before the creation of people, Old Man Coyote said that this plant would be the "mainstay" of the Apsaalooke people; "it shall be everything to them" (Lowie, 1918, p. 16). Basically humans were created out of pre-existing elements as in the following example: "Human beings were created by Old Man Coyote from water, ground, and wind"

(H. Real Bird, 1990).

The following is another version of the creation of man. During the various periods during earth's creation, Shilubay and Old Man Coyote competed against each other. They each created their own people. Old Man Coyote created his people in the form of arrows while Shilubay's people were made of earth or mud. They taught these people to utilize the buffalo and other means of subsistence on earth. These people also fought each other. While Shilubay and Old Man Coyote competed, Shilubay took advantage of Old Man Coyote many times. The people of Old Man Coyote were defeated during a war and annihilated by the people of Shilubay. Those people became the Apsaalooke (G. Bulltail, translated personal conversation, 1997).

While among these people, Old Man Coyote assigned names to the different groups. Among these people, he was a person at one time; he was the Sun, Isaahkaxaalia. He proclaimed himself as "Uuwuutashe" (G. Bulltail, translated personal conversation, 1997). Old Man Coyote, also the Sun, was responsible for creating the concept of Ashammaliaxxia among the Apsaalooke people. Old Man Coyote belonged to the "spirit keepers of the Sun". Since he was the sun, his people were the Uuwuutasha (Old Horn & McCleary, 1995, p. 69).

The tradition relates that there was a time when the Apsaalooke people were gathered together in groups and Old Man Coyote said, "I am a member of this ashammaliaxxia." The people replied, "What

is an ashammaliaxxia?" And he explained, "An ashammaliaxxia, is when people are related, you are not to marry within your ashammaliaxxia." (1995, p. 69)

Shilubay, little brother to Old Man Coyote, also had a clan. He was the first member of the Whistling Water Clan, Bilikooshe. Hissishetwia, Red Woman, is a Big Lodge Clan member or Ashshitchite (F. Real Bird, translated personal conversation, 1997). The moon is known by the Apsaalooke as an old woman or Kaaleexaalia, she was a Ties in a Bundle Clan member (G. Bulltail, translated personal conversation, 1997). Other groups of people were proclaimed as Ashiiooshe, Xuhkaalaxche, Bilikooshe, Ashbatshua, Uusaawaachiia, Ashshitchite, Ashxahche, and Ashhhilaalio. Many of these are no longer in existence (G. Bulltail, translated personal conversation, 1997).

Many Lodges

The term Ashammaliaxxia has a traditional translation; "asha" means lodges, and "ammaliaxxio" means where they come together" (Bulltail, translated personal conversation, 1997). Another interpretation holds that "the Apsaalooke call clans, ashammaliaxxia, which literally means the lodge where the wood intertwines, but is in reference to a driftwood pile and therefore, a metaphorical reference to the unity of a clan" (Old Horn & McCleary, 1995, p. 68). A late, well-known Whistling Water clansman wrote the meaning Ashammaliaxxiia represented "driftwood lodges or symbolic of

driftwood in a river, tightly bound, all clinging together in a turbulent stream, as in life" (Old Coyote, 1993, p. 37).

The Apsaalooke Clan System at one time had many more clans than the ones identified as active or extinct (see p. 7). According to one elder, "at one time, there were more than 20 to 30 clans among the Apsaalooke. Many of them are no longer around" (F. Stewart, translated personal conversation, 1997). Many elders have indicated that many clans are no longer in existence (Flat Lip, translated personal conversation, 1997; Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). These clans that have become extinct were either annihilated or perished because of disease such as small pox (Medicine Crow, 1977, p. 1).

Another factor contributing to the decline of a clan is the lack of women born to perpetuate the clan. This is one reason why some clans disappeared. Even today, an elder indicated,

If you look around, there are very few Whistling Water women. These are the ones that pass on the membership of a clan. Look at this family. They have only one or two daughters. There are not too many of us. We need more female members. (W. Moccasin, translated personal conversation, 1997)

When the numbers of the clan memberships dwindled, the members merged with other clans. These mergers have occurred to where 13 identifiable clans are now represented by 5 clans phratries (P. Crooked Arm, translated personal conversation, 1997).

During the early 1800's, Joe Medicine Crow (1992, p. 12) estimates the Apsaalooke population at approximately 8,000. Other elders such as Flat Lip, Little Light, Reed, Stewart, and the late Edison Real Bird state other information. Some elders indicated that Medicine Crow's estimations may have been appropriate for a specific band like the River Crow or Kick in the Bellies. However, according to many elders among the Apsaalooke, Medicine Crow's population figures are inaccurate (Flat Lip, Translated Personal, 1997). Also, other information presented by other elders indicated the small pox epidemic was worse than reported by Medicine Crow. According to oral accounts, there were three periods when small pox took the lives of thousands of Apsaalooke people (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997).

An interesting consideration arises from the reflection on childhood stories shared by the late Edison Real Bird. According to the stories he received from elders during his childhood, "all the Apsaalooke numbered about 35,000 or more." He indicated that there were a lot more Apsaalooke before the time of all the epidemics. This is supported by the Mandans and how many people they lost. There were tens of thousands lost to disease. Today, they are extinct. There are no full blooded Mandans because most of them have mixed with the Hidatsas.

The Apsaalooke lived in this vast area and were

distinct as Mountain Crows, River Crows, and Kick in the Bellies. This population estimation is contrary to accounts of Crow Historian Joe Medicine Crow. It is highly possible that Medicine Crow's research only identifies either a population count of Mountain Crow or River Crow. There are no specifications or no indications of the distinction of separate groups. Other informants have indicated that there were 22,000 Apsaalooke (Bad Bear, translated personal conversation, 1997). Another estimation reported 30,000 Apsaalooke people (Flat Lip, translated personal conversation, 1997). However, when identifying themselves, the Mountain Crow, River Crow, and Kick in the Belly bands consider themselves unique and distinct.

Apsaalooke and Hidatsa Split

The Apsaalooke were once part of the Hidatsa Tribe. According to Hidatsa accounts, the River Crows are identified (Wood, 1986). "In the mid-sixteen century, the ancestral tribe of the present-day Hidatsa and Apsaalooke lived in a land known as the 'tree country' or 'land of the lakes', the Winnipeg country of southeastern Manitoba" (Frey, 1950, p. 8). This has been also verified by accounts among the current Hidatsa people of the Three Affiliated Tribes in North Dakota. Two traditional elders among the Hidatsa recently stated that "the Apsaalooke (River Crows) left the Hidatsa while they were living near Devil's Lake in

North Dakota" (Wolf & Driver, personal conversation, 1996).

The identity of the Apsaalooke is based on a personal account of stories shared by the late Edison Real Bird. His explanations of Apsaalooke stories and teachings are reflected by personal memory during childhood years of the late 1960's and early 1970's. His account is as follows:

The Crow were once part of the Hidatsa people. The tribes are like sisters. We are called sister tribes because our languages are similar. There was a man who raised a set of twin brothers. This man was the twin's grandfather. He taught them throughout their early years. At a time in their youth, when the twins were about 15, the old man had prepared them to seek a vision. He had prepared them to fast. The purpose of this fast was to prepare them for their life's journey. Each of the boys fasted at location determined by their grandfather. They had fasted for four days and nights. After completing their commitment to fasting and praying, the grandfather built a Sweat Lodge and instructed each of the boys to enter. While preparing to initiate the Sweat Lodge ritual, the grandfather asked each boy what they had seen during their fast. The first child to relate his story was Red Scout. He stated in his vision he saw a lot of gold hair or the silk of the corn plant waving in the wind. The other child, No Vitals, indicated that he saw a sacred plant and that he and his relatives were taking care of this plant. The grandfather allowed the twins to smudge themselves with the smoke from burning cedar and asked the Creator, Iichikbaalee, for guidance. He began praying for his grandsons and conducting the proper ritual required for Apsaalooke Sweat Lodge ceremonies. While preparing for them to exit the Sweat Lodge and see the new day, the old man told each twin the significance of their visions. He told each that they would go on and become great leaders of their people. However, the only thing is that each of you will have your own people. Red Scout will take his people, and they will hold the corn plant sacred. They will commit their lives to planting and caring for corn. These people will be the "Among the Willows" or Hidatsa. The old man told No Vitals that he will be given seven seeds of a

tobacco plant and wherever this plant grows and flourishes will be the home of your people. You will travel with your people to various parts of this land until you find a place where your plant will grow. This is the origin of the Apsaalooke.

When the Apsaalooke split from the Hidatsa, research indicates during the No Vitals migration, he took the seven singers who were part of the tobacco medicine. This left no singers with the rites to accompany the tobacco rituals of the Hidatsa, thus ended this ceremony for them (Nabokov, 1988, p. 246).

Traditional Apsaalooke learners receive an education passed on by stories. These oral traditions can be interpreted differently throughout the years. For this reason, this account may differ slightly from other texts, publications, and translations of the story relating to the origin of the Apsaalooke. It is likely most families have a different account, delivery, or indication of the relationships of the boys and the old man. This is oral tradition. Some stories indicate the old man was the father while some tellers say the boys were actually cousins.

This origin story of the Apsaalooke also coincides with the story of the split among the Hidatsas. One Hidatsa elder, while sitting around a fire in a lodge where a Peyote Ceremony was conducted and while speaking to young Crow Indian men indicated that "our story is the same as yours. Those boys were cousins, though. They were Red Scout and No Vitals. At about the time of this split, they were in

between the lake regions of southern Manitoba and the Devil's Lake in North Dakota" (Red Wolf, personal conversation, 1996).

In discussing the split of the Hidatsa and Apsaalooke in a contemporary perspective, the young Crow men and the Hidatsa elders conveyed and concluded that this split was not abrupt. It occurred while different camps of the original Hidatsa ventured to new territories for economic reasons. As they began to spend more winters apart from the main camp, they gradually began to separate from each other through the generations. It is reasonable that the new group of Hidatsa, those that became the Apsaalooke, would not dissociate themselves with the main groups because of religious, social, festive, clan, and familial relationships. As the groups that ventured away from the main group, they began to identify themselves as a distinct group (Conversation after a Peyote Ceremony, 1996). According to the Hidatsa elders, this group was called, "Those in the Mountains or Mountain People" (Red Wolf, personal conversation, 1996).

The River Crow and the Hidatsa share another version of the split. The story behind this split is about a political misunderstanding in the hierarchy of chieftain authority concerning the distribution of buffalo meat; this specifically was the paunch (Nabokov, 1988). This is the story shared by the late Whistling Water Clan member Edison

Real Bird.

There is one story some people tell about how the River Crow and Hidatsa split. The Hidatsa blame us, and we blame them. We tease each other about it. At one time when we were all camped together, buffalo were scarce. That year, the hunters did not have very good luck. One day, one of the hunters came across an old buffalo bull and killed it. Upon hearing the news of the harvest, many people in camp were happy. The women were instructed to prepare the meat. As they separated different delicacies while butchering, women prepared the most highly regarded delicacy that of the buffalo stomach or tripe. When the meat was ready, elder men and decorated chiefs lined up according to their merits and hierarchy for the tripe. There was one war leader who disagreed with this procedure because he was hungry for tripe and felt he would not get any since he did not have such decorated merits except for his age. This man moved to a higher position in the line where the tripe was being served, and many of the higher chiefs disapproved of this move. This disagreement turned into a scuffle, and the man's relatives took his side. Other relatives took the side of the leaders who ranked higher than the man who was hungry for tripe. The man said to his relatives, "Let's go and find our own buffalo so we can have as much tripe as we want." So they left and separated from the main band of Hidatsas. This is one story which we tease one another for pouting over tripe.

It is quite common in conversations between the Apsaalooke and the Hidatsas to hear a version of this story. When this story is brought up, most often it is in the form of teasing each other. One elder's comments indicated that this story was about the Hidatsa and River Crow split. In younger days, while living among the Hidatsa and Arikara people of Fort Berthold, it was usual for some of the people to refer to the researcher as belonging to the people who pouted over tripe. Apsaalooke people will also tactfully

set a dialogue that eventually leads to humorously antagonizing the Hidatsas about pouting over tripe.

The different versions describing when the Apsaalooke split from the Hidatsa concern two different occasions. The first split involves the people of No Vitals who are known as "Awaxaawe bilaxpaake", the Mountain Crows and his mission to find where "Itchihchiaee", the sacred tobacco, grows (Takes Horse, translated personal conversation, 1997). The other split where tripe was the issue of disagreement involved the "Binneessippeele", commonly known as the River Crows.

The split between the Mountain Crow and Hidatsa was established by supernatural means. The visions of No Vitals and Red Scout indicate that mystic forces in the cosmos were involved by some economic and religious utility related to a new existence for the two groups. Change was imminent. No Vitals led his people through the west and Midwest to fulfill the prophecy of his vision. Red Scout led his people to the Knife River and Missouri River regions and allowed his people to evolve (Smells, translated personal conversation, 1997).

Another perspective of the Mountain Crow split concerns the issue of the Apsaalooke people being in their present region long before the plight of No Vitals. In this version, the migration of No Vitals' people is only a confirmation that his followers belong with the Apsaalooke

people already established in this region.

The Apsaalooke were here long before the story of No Vitals. When White Men first encountered tribes of this region, they came from the east going westward. In this case, when they were asked about the Apsaalooke, the White Men heard what the Hidatsa people shared first. With that, there was little concern to attain an Apsaalooke version. We were here long before No Vitals led his people to the Big Horn Mountain region. In his vision quest, he was posed with the mystery of finding where they belonged. He took the sacred tobacco seeds and planted them, hoping he would find the place for his people. All along their place was with the Apsaalooke who were already established here. (Flat Lip, translated personal conversation, 1997)

This account provides another variation of the story because the people here originated from the Shoshone (Flat Lip, translated personal conversation, 1997). Furthermore, a group of people described as the Sheep Eaters of the Yellowstone were also described as Mountain Crows (Flat Lip, translated personal conversation, 1997).

An interesting point is made here. While researching documentation of the Apsaalooke and Hidatsa split, a reference is made of the three different bands of Hidatsa. Each of whom have a different origin. Two of the versions relate to the Apsaalooke (Wood, 1986). The River Crows are tied to one migration of Hidatsa from the Devil's Lake region of North Dakota. Another band of Hidatsa are said to have once been Apsaalooke or Mountain Crows as documented by George Catlin and migrated to the east to become a band of Hidatsa (Wood, 1986). These three bands also have distinct dialects. This account may substantiate that the Apsaalooke

occupied their historic homelands prior to the reference of No Vitals (Wood, 1986, p. 88).

Sacred Tobacco, Ihchihchiaee

The Awaxaammilaxpaake or Mountain Crows were led by No Vitals to find a home, a place where they belong. In this journey, they migrated across the country to find a place that was part of a vision. No Vitals possessed the seeds of a tobacco plant, Ichihchiaee. The brother of No Vitals, Red Scout, later became the leader of the more sedentary Hidatsa. The Sacred Corn plant became their shrine and reverence.

The Apsaalooke traveled great distances for the purpose of finding a place appointed to them by Iichihkbaalia. This distance was very far considering this was prior to the acquisition of the horse. This migration went into Canada, as far south as Texas, to Utah, and to the west coast. This story is reflected from accounts told during the researcher's childhood. The source of the story was a Whistling Water Clan member and leader of Apsaalooke people for many years.

No Vitals received a pouch of seven tobacco seeds from his grandfather. His brother, Red Scout was given kernels of corn with the instructions of leading his people. No Vitals was instructed to take his relatives, clan members, and the relatives of their spouses. He was told, he would find a place that would be their home. The winters there were mild, the game was plentiful, and there were lots of streams. No Vitals set out to seek his vision. His instructions were to

cherish the tobacco seeds; they are sacred and are very important to the people. In his journey, the vision showed him a place near the mountains had a specific feature. This was a ridge shaped like a saddle. When his people came upon a country that was hospitable to them, they were to plant a seed. No Vitals and his trusted companions planted one of the seven seeds. If this seed grew to maturity, this would be the place that they were seeking. They traveled into Canada and attempted to plant a seed, but it did not grow. It was too cold there. So they went westward into the coastal regions of Washington or Oregon. Here, they planted a seed. It nearly blossomed, but it died. The Apsaalooke did not like this place anyway. The people of this region had teeth they did not like. They traveled southeast near the Salt Lake area. Again, they attempted to plant, but the wind was too harsh and the water was too salty for the plant; and it did not survive. There were only four seeds left. Next, they went eastward to the "Red River of the South", which is located in Texas and Oklahoma. They planted a seed and it sprouted. But the heat was too much here, and it did not mature. With two seeds remaining, No Vitals decided to lead his people northward. Eventually, they came upon the Big Horn Mountains and the feature described by the vision. They went to the area of the saddle, and there they planted a seed. This seed germinated and reached maturity and produced more seeds. This is how No Vitals found this place.

There are numerous documentations about this migration.

One account indicated that while in Canada, these early Apsaalooke were in the Cardston country (Medicine Crow, 1977). In Calgary, the Glenbow Museum has a collection of Blood Indian artifacts. Stories are documented on buffalo hides as drawings. They are similar to the Lakota winter counts. In several Piegan and Blood accounts, Apsaalooke camps are described in areas near Calgary. Several elders indicate that while in this region, a group of these Apsaalooke stayed and now reside in the Red Springs Area of

Alberta (F. Real Bird, translated personal conversation, 1997). Along the migration route, there are several sites in this region that the Apsaalooke can identify. One in particular is Chief Mountain in Montana (Takes Horse, translated personal conversation, 1997). The Apsaalooke have described oral accounts of being in Alaska (D. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997).

While on the west coast, the Apsaalooke mentioned and described the condition of the teeth of the people residing there. They figured if they stayed there and ate fish like the people of this area, their teeth would wear out from chewing fish bones like they do (C. Real Bird, translated personal conversation, 1997).

When the Apsaalooke traveled into Utah, "they came to a lake that was described as so large that the other side could not be seen. It was also so salty that they could not drink it" (Medicine Crow, 1979, p. 68). Later, the Apsaalooke would travel to this area and acquire the horse (Medicine Crow, 1977). On their journey toward the "Red River region", the Apsaalooke came across a place called "Where there is a fire". "It was apparently a burning coal vein at the time, but must have caved in long ago. It may have been located somewhere in the present states of Wyoming, Colorado, Northern New Mexico, or Northern Texas" (Medicine Crow, 1979, 68). Another elder stated that this migration occurred twice before No Vitals and his band

settled (B. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997).

The Apsaalooke still have names in their language for the places and people they encountered. They have a name for Pikes Peak in Colorado. It is referred to the place where Wraps His Tail fasted (Flat Lip, translated personal conversation, 1997). When they encountered the Navajo, Pueblo, and Mexicans, the Apsaalooke language developed a name for them; they are respectively known as "Akbishxaxxilia", and "Uukashee" for the last two groups (L. White, translated personal conversation, 1997). Throughout Colorado and Wyoming, there are many designations made by the Apsaalooke. These include battlefields, fasting sites, coup accounts, and other history pertaining to the Apsaalooke. In eastern North Dakota, there is a small community named after Apsaalooke visitors. The Apsaalooke have been documented throughout the plain states of Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Utah, Colorado, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico, and also in the provinces of Alberta and Manitoba (Crow Collection, L.B.H.C., 1985).

Another version of the arrival of the Apsaalooke at the base of the Big Horn Mountains is documented in a text for the Crow Studies Department at Little Big Horn College. The story of No Vitals or "No Intestines" is provided in a condensed version.

After the initial vision, No Intestines and his followers began a long trek west. The Biilooke eventually stopped near Chief Mountain, in present day Montana. There No Intestines fasted. On the fourth day he received a vision telling him he was not at his destination, the area was too cold. The Biilooke then moved south, passing by Salt Lake, Utah. No Intestines and his group eventually reached the Canadian River in Oklahoma, called Arrowhead River by the Apsaalooke. Here, No Intestines fasted again and was told to move north. The Biilooke moved north, following the Missouri to the Platte River. The Platte River led them to the Powder River which they followed north until they reached the Big Horn Mountains in northern Wyoming.

The crest of the Big Horn Mountains is called Awaxaawakuusawishe, Extended Mountain, by the Apsaalooke people, it is considered the most sacred place in their world. The highest peak of this crest is known as Cloud Peak, and it was on this peak that No Intestines fasted for the fourth time. He received a vision telling him that this was in the right place and the tobacco seed could be found at the bottom of Cloud Peak. As he looked at the base of the mountain, he saw the seeds as twinkling stars. The Biilooke then made their home in southern Montana and northern Wyoming, with the Big Horn Mountains as their center. (Old Horn & McCleary, 1995, p. 12-3)

The time that this arrival occurred is debatable, according to other accounts mentioned earlier. No Vitals was said to be looking for a place where he belonged, and the Mountain Crows were here when he arrived (Flat Lip, translated personal conversation, 1997). One separation from the Hidatsa occurred "either 510 years ago, or 654 years ago, or 970 years ago" (Wood & Downer, 1977, p. 96). There is data that links the Apsaalooke being in the Big Horn Mountain region around 1550-1600 (Frison, 1979, p. 4-5). An analysis of the glottochronology of the Apsaalooke

and the Hidatsa languages occurred around year 1150 A.D. (Headley, 1971, p. 65). The earliest estimated through glottochronological analysis places the Apsaalooke and Hidatsa separation around 14 B.C. (Pierce, 1954, p. 135).

Children are told stories or versions, and the accounts vary from each family, clan, and band. At the center of each story are Itchihchiaee and No Vitals. A recollection from my childhood stories includes an event that occurred as the Apsaalooke began moving into northern Wyoming and southern Montana.

No Vitals and his people were seeking a special place told to him through a vision. At one point, they were moving into northern Wyoming and southern Montana. At that time, they did not have horses. Dogs were used to pull travois and whatever else. While the procession was moving, one man's dog began to stray. He kept drifting off toward the mountains and each time he was led back to the parade of movers. After several efforts to discipline the dog and lead him back to the procession, the man became upset. Finally, when the dog strayed again, he attempted to return the dog when he looked up. Here, in the direction of where the dog was straying was the area described by No Vitals' vision. This was the place that was to be their home. This is where a seed will grow.

Re-emphasizing a point stated earlier, the Apsaalooke have many different versions of a story. In an oral tradition, all of these versions are worthy and valid. The story of this migration is also the lyrics of a children's lullabies (D. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997). Although they lack scientific reference, they are all valid to the Apsaalooke. The last thing people such as

the Apsaalooke need is more and more scientists and experts to tell them how to think and devalue aspects of their culture (Horton, 1990).

Tobacco Society

Itchihchiaee, the sacred tobacco of the Apsaalooke, is identified as "Nicotiana multivalvis" (Nabokov, 1988). This tobacco is a shrine to the Apsaalooke, and for that reason it is not smoked. Itchichiaee is the central figure of the Tobacco Society of the Apsaalooke, "Baasshussua". It is also known as the Beaver Dance (F. Real Bird, translated personal conversation, 1997). The Tobacco Society is a religion. Members organize for purposes that include healing, honoring, recruitment, and adoption. Not all Apsaalooke people are members of this society. An important mechanism of this society is the Tobacco Dance Adoption, "Baasshousseheelaakbisua".

The Tobacco Society consists of specific roles and participation among the membership. Caretakers or bundle holders, those who are designated by inheritance or acquisition through purchase of the tobacco medicine bundles, have special obligations. Caretakers perform and maintain special duties in caring for the sacred tobacco. This is a religious responsibility (F. Real Bird, translated personal conversation, 1997). During the adoption ceremony, the society has designated roles for the

participants. All members must belong to the Tobacco Society. These roles include "Pipelighter, Fire-Starter, Server, Drummer, Singer, and other offices may perform them" (Nabokov, 1988, p. 256).

Like the concept of rebirth in Christian religion, the Tobacco Society Ceremony allows Apsaalooke people to be reborn into the clan system through adoption (B. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997). New members are introduced to the Tobacco Society by selection. The process is similar to inductions fraternities and sororities on college campuses. Members introduce inductees, but these individual do not have any rights into the Tobacco Society until specific rituals are performed. Even at that time, they still do not have full membership. There are other specific rights and duties that can not be performed by new members (B. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997).

The Tobacco Society extended from the vision of No Vitals. On his divine mission to find the location of where to plant the sacred tobacco seed, he led his people. This group and No Vitals commenced the initial foundations for the society. Upon finding their destiny, No Vitals adopted his own son. This is one reason why adopting is a fundamental part of the Tobacco Society (Takes Horse, translated personal conversation, 1997). This is also an important issue in the perpetuating the existence of the

Apsaalooke Clan System.

Through the past centuries, the Apsaalooke have lost clan memberships. "Some clans disappeared or were annihilated, other merged and kept on merging until we have those that are remaining. We did not have the foresight to do something about the threat to these clans and the mergers" (Crooked Arm, translated personal conversation, 1997).

The Tobacco Society is an established institution and key to building clan memberships. The Apsaalooke people historically brought in new blood into the tribe from their neighbors the Pikuni, Kiowa, Flathead, Nez Perce, Cheyenne, Hidatsa, Mandan, Arikara, Arapaho, Lakota, Cree, Shoshone, Gros Ventre, Assiniboine, and others (Crooked Arm, translated personal conversation, 1997). There are hardly any true full-blooded Apsaalooke. When new members came into the tribe, they were sometimes adopted into a clan or even developed their own clan (Lowie, 1966; Nabakov, 1988; Red Wolf, 1997). In the scope of where the Apsaalooke are today, more clan relationship must be established through the Tobacco Society.

There are many mixed or other tribal people among the membership the contemporary Apsaalooke. Most of the time, intertribal marriages produce a child who does not have a maternal clan or a child that does not have a paternal clan (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). Among the

Apsaalooke, there is difficulty about being in this status especially in the case of having no clan fathers. This is similar to being fatherless. In reference to the Apsaalooke Clan System, it is not necessarily detrimental, but the major spiritual role of the paternal clan is not available for the well-being of a person (Flat Lip, translated personal conversation, 1997). Today, there are Apsaalooke members who are of mixed blood such as being half Arikara and half Apsaalooke, but they have all the clan memberships. This was enabled by the Tobacco Society.

Apsaalooke Economy

Prior to the reservation years, the Apsaalooke economy was based on the migration and harvest of the buffalo. Basically, this economy was a cyclical phase throughout a calendar year. There was a strong purpose for the migratory patterns of the Apsaalooke. This is contrary to the nomadic impression labeled by anthropologists (Heidenreich, 1979). Many assumed that many tribal groups "wandered about" in their existence.

The traditional homelands of the Apsaalooke were vast. The cyclical network that encompassed the Apsaalooke economy extended throughout many states and provinces. The Apsaalooke were involved in a great trade network with other tribes such as the Hidatsa, Mandan, Nez Perce, Shoshone, and others (Nabokov, 1988). Other facets of their economy were

based on naturalistic phenomena (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). The Apsaalooke people consider themselves part of the world and have been deeply involved in the study of natural events. This is a basis of their historic economy.

The Apsaalooke knew the migratory routes of the game that were part of their subsistence like buffalo and elk. They were very familiar with the patterns and behavior of deer and antelope. In the stream, the spawning of fish was a reference of time. The traditional Apsaalooke harvested buffalo berries, June berries, plums, choke cherries, cherries, wild strawberries, gooseberries, huckleberries, raspberries, sarvesberries (Bernardis, 1986, p. 14), and other fruit at different times and locations during the year. Their yield was collected from nearly landmark mountain ranges areas such as the Big Horn, Pryor, Gallatin, Bridger, Apsarokee, Little Rockies, Wolfs, Tetons, Black Hills, Rockies, and the Crazy Mountains. Other foods that contributed to their diet also were harvested and gathered during a specific period or season. This includes wild onions, potatoes, carrots, corn, rice, squash, and tomatoes (F. Real Bird, translated personal conversation, 1996)

This cyclical economy embraced social and religious functions as well. Ceremonies such as the Sun Dance were held at a specific period in early summer and late spring. Medicine bundles were opened and blessed during the first

lightning in spring (Crooked Arm, translated personal conversation, 1997). Vision quests were also designated to a certain time of the year but were not entirely bound to this season. Offerings to the river were seasonal practices; "these are done once during the fall to help carry the people through the winter and then in the spring for protection of children, elders, and livestock during the times of high water and crossing during the upcoming seasons" (L. White, translated personal conversation, 1997). The different bands of the Apsaalooke met at certain times during the year for the purpose of re-establishing relationships, trade, courtship, ceremonial responsibilities, governance, and enemy or economic intelligence. These cyclical events comprise the basis of the concept of a historic Apsaalooke economy.

The wealth of the Apsaalooke is not measured by the assets held by an individual. This standard is determined by the number of relationships a person has like their family, relatives, clan members, and friends (P. Real Bird, translated personal conversation, 1997). The concept of wealth in the Apsaalooke culture is discussed by a contemporary Apsaalooke educator.

I think that a sense of family, clan and tribe are things that don't have a similar definition in non-Indian society. Wealth is measured (among the Crow) by one's relatedness, one's family, and you have all these networks of relationships. My father has fifty-eight first cousins on one side and fifteen or sixteen on another side, and then all of their children. And my (non-Indian)

friends out there in the mainstream society, they're saying, "You're strangled by this. How can you possibly stand to be related to so many people? They're all looking at you and they know your life and they smother you". I don't feel that. That's my wealth, and I think the people outside the Crow community often come here alone and that is abject poverty to a Crow. To be completely alone, that would be poverty. (Film, *Contrary Warrior*, Interview with then Janine Pease Windy Boy, 1985)

Once confined to the reservation and bound by the useless contracts of United States treaties, this economy ended. This began the formalizing process of oppression and conquest (Freire, 1970) of the Apsaalooke culture. A way of life ended. This was compounded by a deliberate genocidal policy of germ warfare. The United States military, government agents, and other representatives were instrumental in providing many tribes with blankets infested with diseases such as small pox (Old Coyote, 1993, p. 10). This proved 100% effective in eliminating tribes such as the Mandan and almost 90% in destroying the Hidatsa. With the estimated population figure of 35,000 Apsaalooke prior to the small pox epidemic and an estimated population figure of 1,000 in 1845, at least 97% of the population was lost. The government also led a successful campaign to destroy a central component of the Apsaalooke economy by wiping out the buffalo; being restricted to the reservation ended the cyclical migrations where before the Apsaalooke hunted, harvested, worshiped, and interacted (Bulltail, translated personal conversation, 1997).

The United States continually reneged and violated terms of their treaty contracts. Each time, they demanded more and more sacrifices from the Indian people. In the case of Apsaalooke, their first homelands as defined by treaty included a territory of 38 million acres in 1851. This was the consolation for sacrificing other territory outside the establishment of the first reservation. Then, in 1868, it was further reduced to 8 million acres. Next, in 1904, through cessation of land, Apsaalooke lands were reduced to 3 million acres. The State of Montana through the federal court system was able to coerce the Apsaalooke again out of 35,000 acres of the Big Horn River in 1981. In 1993, it was reduced to approximately 2 million acres (Old Coyote, 1994, p. 149). More recently, because of survey error the Apsaalooke government gave 45,000 acres to the Cheyenne at \$0.02 per acre (K. Real Bird, translated personal conversation). Currently, the Apsaalooke own a small majority of the land holdings within the reservation; the estimate is 51% Apsaalooke and 49% non-Indian (K. Real Bird, translated personal conversation, 1996). The sad case is that some Apsaalooke people are so disillusioned by the "economic manipulation" of their poverty (Freire, 1970) that they feel they can get away with selling their land. In Apsaalooke thought, this land is their mother. This transaction is like prostitution (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997).

Obligations of the United States government were to provide food and provisions in exchange for all the land they seized. Restricted to the reservation and waiting for rations created dependence among the Apsaalooke. This obvious form of a cultural invasion (Freire, 1970) has created a welfare state on the Crow Indian Reservation. Waiting for rations and hanging around the fort groomed dependency and an end to self-reliance. Any push to revive the old economy meant death. The Apsaalooke are still forced to depend on this control and oppression (Freire).

The Apsaalooke were forced to eat tainted meat and sometimes had very little food. The flour provided was mixed with sand and dirt. Children were kidnaped from their homes and forced to be White men. This plight of the Apsaalooke is similar to the North Cheyenne (Rowland, 1994). People were punished for speaking their own language. Their hair was chopped off in contradiction to their Apsaalooke beliefs. They were forced to pray for a time when they die and not consider the present (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). The world of the Apsaalooke is in the present and for the well-being of relatives and loved ones. "It's for when you're alive right now. So that you will be healthy and have all the things that you need to survive (Nobakov, 1988, p. 152).

The following is a selected chronology of socio-political and economic "land mark events" that affected the

Apsaalooke. The overview presents events that had major impact on the Apsaalooke people. There are other significant events like the U.S. wars and other legislation that had an effect that are not included in this overview. The event highlighted are one that have implications of the cultural invasion (Freire) upon the Apsaalooke people.

- 1400-1500 Traditional exodus from the northern "bush country" and separation from the Crow ancestral tribe. No Vitals, after receiving a vision, led about 400 people westward on foot, using pack dogs. Based upon glottochronology, the separation from the parent tribe occurred anywhere from 1800-2500 years ago.
- 1600 The Great Spirit appeared to Chief No Vitals again and gave him sacred ceremonial seeds. Later tribal members went on a reconnaissance trip to Mexico and returned in five years with much knowledge.
- 1675-1735 Crow Tribe and Northern Plain Indians acquired horses from natives near Great Salt Lake (Horses, after being extinct for 10,000 years in American, were reintroduced to southwest Natives by European explores, the Spaniards, in the 1500's and 1600's. These horses were primarily of the Andalusian, Arabian, and Barb blood).
- 1743 Apsaalookas (Crows) saw white men for first time near present town of Hardin, Montana. These were the Verendrye brothers from Canada. They call the Crows "Beau Hommes" when crossing the Absaroka Divide, now called Shoshone Pass.
- 1803 Louisiana Purchase, vast Indian lands, acquired by U.S. from France--no consultation with Indians Living on these lands as sovereign nations.
- 1805-1806 Lewis & Clark traveled across Crow Country. Clark met Apsaalookas at Pompey's Pillar. Francois Laroque visited Crows on Yellowstone about this time.

- 1825 Crows made their first treat (Friendship Treaty) with the United States.
- 1830 President Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act (IRA) passed, forcing eastern Indians west; caused friction among all.
- 1843-1845 Government distributes smallpox-infected blankets as germ warfare in Crow Country where no vaccine had been inoculated. Epidemic reduced population from over 8000 to fewer than 1000
- 1850 First siege of entire Crow Tribe by Sioux in which Crows won.
- 1851 First so-called Treaty of Fort Laramie. Crow Country reduced to 38 million acres.
- 1862 Homestead Act, giving 160 acres of Indian lands to settlers for \$1.25 an acre.
- 1864 Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapahos tried to annihilate the Crows but failed, seven miles north of present Pryor, Montana. Crow warriors were outnumbered over 10 to 1 but succeeded in blocking the invasion.
- 1868 Last treat signed between U.S. Government and Indians, second Treaty of Fort Laramie. Crow Country reduced to 8 million acres.
- 1870 Indian Homestead Act passed.
- 1870 Crows required to conduct "reservation life".
- 1872 Crow Agency moved to Rosebud River near Absarokee, Montana.
- 1882 Land Cession agreement with Crow Reservation reduced acreage.
- 1884 Crow Agency moved near Big Horn and Little Big Horn junction due to murder of a member by Bureau of Indian Affairs
- 1888 Crow Tribe confined to reservation, homeland remnants.
- 1893 Secretary of the Interior, Hoke Smith, (Cleveland Administration), came to Crow Agency to purchase part of Crow Reservation; Aleck Greene official interpreter for council.
- 1903 Annual Crow Fair established.
- 1905 Land cession of Crow territory reduces it to 3 million.
- 1920 Crow Allotment Act.
- 1926 Crow Act amended, authorization leasing of allotted lands for many purposes,

- including oil and gas leases. From 1920s until present, Crows request Allotment Act be addressed by authorities. No action taken.
- 1934 Crow Tribe opposes IRA due to B.I.A. control clause.
- 1934 BIA threatens to dismiss Indian employees who speak against Washington policies.
- 1942 BIA protects non-Indians instead of Indians in regard to leases.
- 1943 Indian Affairs Committee of the U.S. Senate recommended abolishing BIA.
- 1948 BIA constitution for Crow Tribe and other tribes; went into effect following year.
- 1953 Indian Termination Act; Congressional resolution of termination of federal services and supervision of Indian affairs passed, House Concurrent Resolution 108.
- 1950 (late). Modern-day problems of Crows increase. Yellowtail Dam water rights lost.
- 1961 BIA inflicted strict Resolution 62-11 and 62-12 on Crows, controlling their money and forcing all tribal policies and activities to be approved by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
- 1966-72 First time Crows strive formally for sovereignty, under Edison Real Bird.
- 1970 President Nixon's new Indian Policy--self-determination without termination.
- 1975 Crow Tribe sues to invalidate coal mining leases on reservation.
- 1978 Crow Tribe files coal severance tax suit against Montana, three years after controversial tax was passed.
- 1981-86 Crow Tribe administered by strict BIA control.
- 1983 Crows win inherent sovereignty case in Supreme Court.
- 1986-90 Second time tribe starts to make progress toward sovereignty and development of resources, during Richard Real Bird Administration.
- 1987 Apsaalookas win millions in Crow Coal Severance Tax Case from state of Montana, a Supreme Court decision.
- 1987 Real Bird Administration fires former Secretary of Interior, James C. Watt, for neglect, etc. in litigation over

- 107th Meridian Crow boundary, survey mistake made by U.S. Government.
- 1987 Crow Tribe filed dereliction suit against U.S. Government regarding Sect 2, Crow Allotment Act of 1920; breach of trust responsibility.
- 1987 First machine-gun raid on Crow Tribe by FBI/OIG SWAT team that confiscated BIA records from the Crow Tribal office.
- 1988 BIA shuts off Crow Tribe from heat, utilities, and their own moneys.
- 1989 Second machine-gun raid by FBI/OIG SWAT team, at same time as Crow instigated investigation of mismanagement and missing millions of dollars of Indian funds in trust by BIA.
- 1989 Indian leaders, led by Richard Real Bird, form First American Sovereignty Alliance.
- 1989 BIA secretary storms Crow Tribal Council meeting to take away voting rights and government participation from Chairman Richard Real Bird and others indicted; same month BIA froze tribal funds; BIA instigated riot.
- 1989 Real Bird Administration member's cases dropped in indictment.
- 1989 Investigation of BIA, called for by Crow Nation; with BIA found to be corrupt, New Indian Federalism proposed by Congress to give funds directly to Indians and to give them control of their own governments.
- 1990-92 BIA presents dictatorial control over Crow Tribe in its Resolution No. 90-35; leader of 1989 riot in charge of Crow Tribe.
- 1992 Date indicates 500 years of suppression and oppression of Native Americans by dominant society.
- 1993 BIA still has stranglehold on Crow Tribal government. (M. Old Coyote, 1993, p.10-12).

Institutions Among the Apsaalooke

The institutions involved in the Apsaalooke people learning their culture are social events or activities that

take place in the informal situations of everyday living for the Apsaalooke people. From the view of Apsaalooke elders, these systems could be identified as formal structures for the purpose of helping members learn.

Many of these activities and events have strong overtones of influence involving the Apsaalooke Clan System. If the event involves competition, the Apsaalooke person in all likelihood consults elders and mainly clan fathers for guidance. In response to clan children intentions, clan parents bless and make wishes for success, safety, and prosperity for their child (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). Apsaalooke people might participate in noncompetitive events where special prayers or rites might be involved. Again, consultation and guidance are solicited from the person's clan parents.

Events such as the Crow Fair, hand games, and others are described as institutions. These events define and describe the culture of the Apsaalooke. Many of these events involve a way of life for many of the tribal members. Apsaalooke people are dedicated to their crafts such as beading, painting, horsemanship, and other vocations. Some of these institutions are new to the Apsaalooke, and they have adapted quite well. There are some newer institutions like the new religions that primarily pose a threat to the Apsaalooke culture. Some of these institutions have capitulated to the cultural invasion.

Traditional Religions

There are four tradition nativist religions among the Apsaalooke. Ashaammaliaxxia is interrelated in the practices of all the nativist religions. Other nativist religions have been incorporated by the Apsaalooke, but these four have been in existence as long as there have been Apsaalooke. Three of these religions were part of the Hidatsa culture. The clan system, Sweat Lodge Ceremonies, and Pipe Ceremonies all made the transition into the Apsaalooke culture. Only one religion is native to the "Biiluuke" culture, and it is the Tobacco Society.

These religions involve different ceremonies or practices. There are distinct rituals and customs involved with each from of worship. Each of these religions are at the foundation of the Apsaalooke culture. They can be recognized as individual denominations or interrelated religions. The customs of Apsaalooke nativism recognize each religion as an institution. They are all part of the spirituality of the Apsaalooke.

The four major religions of the Apsaalooke are Ashaammaliaxxia, Sweat Lodge Ceremonies, Tobacco Society, and Pipe Ceremonials. All of these religions can be interrelated within the Apsaalooke Clan System. The Sweat Lodge Ceremonies are rituals that can be practiced daily. Today, between Garryowen and Hardin, Montana, there are over 30 sweat lodges within a 16 mile distance. The Apsaalooke

have several versions of the acquisition of the Sweat Lodge. Four of these Sweat Lodge Ceremonies were acquired through supernatural assistance. In one story, one Sweat Lodge ritual was given to a young boy named Big Metal. There are two other versions that were acquired by some type of supernatural help (G. Reed, Sr., 1997). Water spirits also gave another Sweat Lodge ritual to the Apsaalooke in another story. A fourth ritual also exists; it is the Small Sweat Lodge (P. Crooked Arm, 1997).

The Sweat Lodge Ceremony is the only religion that has an open door policy. The other institutions require an adoption or induction. Generally, participants are selected into these. This does not rule out inquiries for requests to be included. Most inductees do not interfere or assert intentions to becoming involved. Selection is based on respect and honor. Members make vows to adopt new members. Basically, selection just happens. "To be a member of the Tobacco Society or the Sacred Pipe Society or any of the others does not give one special privileges or special favor from God, they are no closer to God than any other person" (Old Horn & McCleary, 1994, p. 41).

Pipe ceremonies are another religion of the Apsaalooke. These types of rituals can be found among many plains tribes. This religious practice came from the time when the Apsaalooke were among the Hidatsa. This practice involves pipe ceremonies that are associated with medicine bundles.

Apsaalooke bundle holders will perform these types of rituals during the first lightening of spring (P. Real Bird, translated personal conversation, 1997).

The tradition religion of the Apsaalooke is the Tobacco Society. It is one traditional Apsaalooke religious practice because the others came from the time when the Apsaalooke were among the Hidatsa. There are many published documents explaining this custom (e.g., Nobakov, 1988; Frey, 1987; Old Horn & McCleary, 1994). This religion can be an important contribution to perpetuating the Apsaalooke Clan System. One of their primary practices during this ceremony is adoption. Iichihchiaee or the Sacred Tobacco Seed is the shrine of this way of life. It represents the migration of the present day Apsaalooke. "The seed is the reason the Apsaalooke are where they are today" (Old Horn & McCleary, 1995, p. 38). "The belief is that one can attain greater fortune in terms of wealth, well being, good fortune, and health by being a member" (Old Horn & McCleary, 1995, p. 41). Sweat lodge ceremonies and The Apsaalooke Clan System are part of this religious practice. There are many interrelated contributions of each religion into the spiritual practices of an Apsaalooke nativist.

Dormant Religions

There are several religions that are no longer practiced or seem to be in a dormant phase in the Apsaalooke culture. These are the Apsaalooke Sun Dance, Bear Song

Dance, and the Singing of Cooked Meat. Major changes to the culture, such as being restricted to the reservation, have greatly impacted traditional practices especially where these dormant religions played significant roles. Many government agents and Christian missionaries forced the Apsaalooke to end these types of practices. Their children were threatened and taken away. If they continued to violate the martial law which restricted their freedom of religion, they were forced to starve or were punished somehow (E. Little Light, Jr., translated personal conversation, 1997).

Being confined to the reservation ended the practices associated with traditional Apsaalooke Sun Dances. There were no longer raids upon enemy camps. Apsaalooke warriors could not travel freely to exercise their participation in the traditional economy. Revenge, mourning, and other purposes for the Apsaalooke Sun Dance were too extreme in their penance according to those intent on destroying the Apsaalooke. The severing of fingers, drawing of blood, piercing, and extreme torture was put to a close (L. Flatlip, translated personal conversation, 1997). These were some of the practices of the Apsaalooke Sun Dance. On some occasions, this ceremony was conducted by one person's intent for leading a war party, for revenge upon their enemies, or for mourning the loss of a loved one. Other ceremonies like the Bear Song Dance and the Singing of the

Cooked Meat also came to a close (Lowie, 1935). One of these ceremonies were rituals that revealed the power of medicine bundles or sacred objects that were secretly possessed. During this ceremony, even if an individual attempted to hide his power it would be revealed.

New Religions

There been many new religions introduced during the past century since beginning of the era of the reservation period. Four of these religions are very compatible and appropriate for the traditional practices of the Apsaalooke. These four religions are the Peyote Ceremonial, the Shoshone Sun Dance, the Hot Dance, and the Day Time Dance (Crow Collection, Little Big Horn College Library, 1985). Another nativist religion, the Lakota Sun Dance, has been introduced to the Apsaalooke, but there are some functions of this ceremony that are contrary to the nativist Apsaalooke values especially with the handling of the Pipe. Aspects of Apsaalooke Clan System are recognized in this religion, but there seems to be some major controversies between these two tribes and the pipe.

Another new religion is the influence of Christianity. There are many organizations represented on the reservation. This religion has come hand-in-hand with the oppression and cultural invasion of Native American cultures (White, translated personal conversation, 1989). The most controversial aspects of this religion are the manmade laws

that contradict the essence of Apsaalooke nativism which is "natural law" or natural phenomena. The basic element of these men-made laws is control whereas in natural laws of the universe all power is in the hands of the Creator. During their first encounter with Apsaalooke, these religions have exploited and destroyed the culture (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). Even today, there are fundamentalist organizations constantly condemning nativist practices. Some view Christianity as a tool or weapon of destruction supporting the long-standing strategy of the government to conquer and acquire Native American lands.

Other Aspects of the Culture

There are many other aspects of the Apsaalooke culture. There are spiritual beings and heros, such as Old Man Coyote, Seven Sacred Rams, Seven Buffalo Bulls, Little People, Red Woman, Shilubay, Old Woman's Grandson, First Yellow Leggings, Deer Woman, White Owl, Rides a Paint Horse, and the chiefs and spiritual leaders of the past (Old Horn & McCleary, 1994). The culture hosts many different kinds of institutions which are social, cultural, competitive, and religious.

In these institutions, all types of cultural practices are involved. Apsaalooke have careers and vocations that are associated with the culture. Horsemanship is a

tradition among the Apsaalooke (W. Moccasin, translated personal conversation, 1997). Even the preparation for the Crow Fair is year round. Every year the Crow Fair is like a New Year's Celebration. It was originally started in the same format as county fairs. Traditionally, each year Apsaalooke people would present and demonstrate their crafts and trades, like horsemanship, gardening, and leather work. Today, it is celebrated a little differently and more contemporary activities occur like a powwow and rodeo. Sewing and preparing hides requires tedious effort because the regalia of an Apsaalooke person is important. Camping and raising teepees is a learning process, just as much as when information is provide by camp criers or announcers. The parade is a great spectacle where clan children can be honored and where valuable craft work can be exhibited. Ceremonies are vital, such as the "Dance Through Camp" held every Monday after the Crow Fair weekend (P. Real Bird, translated personal conversation, 1997). Many activities take place during Crow Fair like clan feeds, give aways, socializing, singing, and dancing. All of these contribute to learning and practicing the Apsaalooke Culture and are learned through the Apsaalooke Clan System.

Within the culture, there is great competition among horsemen, hand game players, arrow throwers, and other sports. These institutions have somehow survived just like the languages. Many people still speak the language and

communicate from a distance using plains' sign language. These are the vehicles for delivering programs and curricula associated with the oral tradition. Old Man Coyote stories, origin stories, adventure stories, war stories, lullabies, ethics, and other hero stories are part of the rich oral history (Crow Collection, Little Big Horn College Library, 1985).

There are other societies organized for specific cultural practices. The warrior societies or fraternities included the Lumpwoods, Foxes, Muddy Hands, Large Dogs, and Crazy Dogs. Religious organization can be found among the Tobacco Societies. These societies within the religion are Big Yellow Tobacco, Long Tobacco, Otter, Weasel, Mallard, Blackbird, Meadowlark, Eagle, Star, and Hawk. Among the dance societies, there are the organizations called the Arikaras, Night Hawks, Unequaled, and the Sioux (Lowie, 1935; Old Coyote, 1993; Old Horn & McCleary, 1995; Nabokav, 1967).

There are all kinds of different dances and songs expressed by the Apsaalooke. Some are religious like the Sun Dance, Medicine Pipe, Tobacco Lodge, and Seed Planting. Other dances are social like the different styles of war dance or powwow, Round Dance, Owl Dance, Push Dance, Victory Dance, Honor Dance, First Time Dance, Rabbit Dance, Adoption Dance, Taking War Bonnet Dance, and Woman Keepers of War Bonnets Dance. The music includes that used for the powwow

dancing and social dances. Other songs are ceremonial like Tobacco Society Songs, Sweat Lodge Songs, Medicine Bundle Songs, Praise Songs, Day Time Dance Ceremony Songs, Peyote Songs, Sun Dance Songs, Water Songs, Doctoring Songs, Clan Songs, and Crow hymns. Other social music includes 49 Songs, Door Way Songs, Love and Courtship Songs, Flute Songs, District Songs, and Hand Game Songs (Crow Collection, Little Big Horn College, 1985).

All of these are other facets of the dynamics of the Apsaalooke culture. The clan system touches all of these aspects directly or indirectly. This is the culture, and many of these institutions are part of the traditional learning systems of the Apsaalooke. Many of the artisan practices such as craft work, quill work, bead work, hide work, feather work, drum making, flute making, bone work, shell work, saddle making, war bonnet making, regalia making and other contemporary art are flourishing vocations. These crafts contribute to the current economy of the reservation. They are also learning institutions that are tied-in with Apsaalooke Clan System. There are many important facets of the skills that are involved in the ceremonial and cultural practices of the Apsaalooke.

Learning Among the Apsaalooke

The knowledge, experience, learning, and teaching that occur in the cultural practices of the Apsaalooke take place

in informal settings where practices and customs such as the Apsaalooke Clan system dynamics or social activities are learned. In this informal adult education setting, learning associated with andragogy segues into pedagogy (Knowles, 1980). Children are recognized as people or participants as well. In the Apsaalooke Clan System, children also have parental roles by the identity of their clan (E. Little Light, Jr., translated personal conversation, 1997). A nativist describes the nature of Apsaalooke learning, "If they love you, they will tell you. If you love someone you will not misinform them" (G. Reed, Jr., translated personal conversation, 1997). The learning that takes place within the social structure of the clan system is the traditional formal education system for the Apsaalooke.

For the Apsaalooke, learning in their cultural practices involves everyone of all ages. Participation in cultural experiences is critical in recognizing the clan dynamics. For example, if a child wishes to become a dancer, the parents of this child will seek clan mothers for a female or clan fathers for a male to provide wishes and blessings as a dancer and throughout life in this and other roles. The environment of education is based on the freedom to choose what to learn in the Apsaalooke society.

On the other hand, from the view and reference of the Apsaalooke, learning about the practices in the clan system, storytelling, mentoring, and life experiences can be

considered a formal settings (W. Stein, Committee Meeting, 1997). Even in the previous example, the informal representation of a child's intent can be viewed among the Apsaalooke as a formal process because it is part of life's merits. In the holistic view of the Apsaalooke, "life is sacred" (G. Reed, Jr., personal translated conversation, 1997). The morning prayers are very much formal as are the informal environment of social conversations which can be viewed as formal in the holistic sense of the Apsaalooke. Thus, for the Apsaalooke learning takes place through the educational elements associated with acquiring and practicing the culture.

Among the Apsaalooke, the group is important. Individualistic and personal standards are contrary to the utility of the tribe. People are the strength of the Apsaalooke, and this strength comes through the family. Individualism is not a priority. "Your people are most important. In comparison to the mainstream, money is not an important value to the individual. To an Apsaalooke person, this monetary wealth is comparable to having a family, relatives, clan relationship, and a tribe. This is our wealth" (R. Real Bird, translated personal conversation, 1997).

The learning practices of the Apsaalooke have attributes of the Social Learning Orientation (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). The important facets of the Social

Learning Orientation are "interaction with and observation of others in a social context, and interaction of person, behavior, and environment" (Rotter, 1954, p. 85). These key facets reflect the qualities of the Apsaalooke reverence to "belonging" to a family. The consideration for the environment is equally important. With any reference to the environment, this opens the whole world into the process. Whereas individualism puts man at the center of the world, the Apsaalooke believe that in their relationship to the world, they are just part of it along with everything else such as plants, animals, air, wind, water, and fire, and the spiritual, and metaphysical. The Apsaalooke do not put individualism or man in front of the world of the Creator for he is all and everything. This is why all other orientations of learning are contrary to the Apsaalooke philosophies because they are established with the self and people at the center. The Apsaalooke will live with the beliefs of their values such as interaction with people and their environment. These are key aspects of the Social Learning Orientation (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991).

Socialization, social roles, mentoring, and locus of control are key manifestations in learning (Rotter, 1954). In terms of the Apsaalooke process, socialization means interacting with your people. Knowing the language and communication are vital to the process. In social roles, the Apsaalooke Clan Systems defines relationships, respect,

honor, and humility (R. Real Bird, translated personal conversation, 1997). Apsaalooke people respect their clan parents and find humility when they are humbled by their teasing relatives (E. Little Light, Jr., translated personal conversation, 1997). The Apsaalooke siblings such as a mother's brothers and older brothers are the primary mentors for a male child while a mother's sisters or aunts and older sisters serve the females.

Clan uncles are vital to the well being of Apsaalooke children, but when it comes down to it, the brothers are the ones who will help a child learn. They will tell them things that are right to the point. They are more direct and less concerned about the etiquette of the respect and humility that clan parent relationships demand. Clan parents may not articulate situations or controversy that would open a clan child to public attention or embarrassment. (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997)

The Apsaalooke learn in all environments of their world. Ashaammaliaxxia, the clan system, is a foundation for conduct. The role of older brothers and sisters as mentors facilitate individual learning as a Big Lodge Clan member for example. If a sibling is a warrior, his younger brother becomes a warrior. If an older sister has serenity and compassion, so will her younger sister. Even today, when an older sibling is an educator, the younger siblings do likewise. The Apsaalooke learn by participation in their activities such as horsemanship, agriculture practices, competition, social activities, and ceremonial practices. The Sweat Lodge is an institution where learning occurs.

When the Pipe is offered, the Apsaalooke learn while they speak, pray, and offer wishes. When the clan parents and older siblings speak, these are the same words that will be used by the younger ones. When the elders tell stories, they are passed on in the same manner to following generations. When a man walks, so will his child. Learning among the Apsaalooke is about mentoring and facilitation through experiences.

Impact of Mainstream Education

Many people among the mainstream power structures--those in control of the economic, political, and education systems--have failed to provide an overall awareness about the contributions of Native Americans to this nation throughout history. Generally, all Indian people have been lumped together in school books as "savages and barbarians" (Old Coyote, 1995, p. 93). Although there may be some knowledge of the diversity of tribes, the main impression about Native Americans is very generalized throughout all the curricula of public education. Indian people are falsely stereotyped as being one whole group. This provides the impression that all Indian people are the same. However, tribal groups are different just as being Italian is different from being German or Belgian.

All Indian tribes are not the same. The Apsaalooke have their own language just as do the other tribal groups

across the nation. Each group has its own history, customs, values, traditions, religions, and land base. It is important to be aware that although many tribes have similar qualities such as religion and social structure, the tribes are still different and distinct. For example, the Apsaalooke have a great respect for the land and nature. This is related to their language, clan system, and the homage they have for the land they occupy. The Apsaalooke have great reverence for holistic thought and natural phenomena since they are only a small part of the world. The Apsaalooke closeness to the land is described by Arapooish, Chief Sore Belly (1825).

The Crow country is exactly in the right place. It has snowy mountains and sunny plains; all kinds of climates, and good things for every season. When the summer heat scorches the prairies, you can draw up under the mountains where the air is sweet and cool, the grass fresh, and the bright streams come tumbling out of the snow banks. There you can hunt the elk, the deer, and the antelope, when their skins are fit for dressing there you will find plenty of white bears and mountain sheep.

In the autumn when your horses are fat and strong from the mountain pastures, you can go down into the plains and hunt the buffalo or trap beavers on the streams. And when the winter comes on, you can take shelter in the woody bottoms along the rivers; there you will find buffalo meat for yourselves and cottonwood bark for your horses; or you may winter in the Wind River Valley, where there is salt weed in abundance.

The Crow country is exactly in the right place. Everything good is to be found there. There is no country like the Crow Country. (Edgar & Turnell, 1978, p. 21)

Apsaalooke elders will often refer to the uniqueness of this

land as the heart of the reason of who they are (Moccasin, translated personal conversation, 1996). Visions were attracted to this country and it is blessed with many sacred, mystical, and holy places.

The Apsaalooke have been documented in journals, oral histories, and other publications for nearly 400 years even through their own accounts are prehistoric. Throughout all the chronology of their history, they have managed to deal with change and to somehow survive as a distinct culture. Currently they are faced with a threat to the uniqueness of their culture mainly by western ideals, religion, and technology. This dominant political influence of the mainstream power structure has a controlling effect upon the Apsaalooke people. It severely affects the traditional learning and Crow educational institutions that are in place and which influence the practices of Apsaalooke culture in learning institutions such as the Crow Fair, language, clan feeds, give aways, and other social functions practiced by the Apsaalooke.

In recent hearing conducted by the United States Commission on Civil Rights, testimony was given by a principal of a local reservation elementary school. He boasted about the enrollment being 100% Indian. However, when questioned by a member of the hearing committee about why the language and culture are not being taught, this principal did not have an answer. He later was asked if

there were any Crow Indians on the local school board, and he did not know. (Fact Finding Hearing on Indian Education in Montana, United States Commission on Civil Rights, December 10, 1996).

This scenario illustrates the drastic threat for the Apsaalooke if a person is unresponsive to changing curricula to meet the needs of the local community. It is very frightening to realize that a local administrator is unaware or ignorant of the governance of a local school board. This person is non-Indian, he does not live in the Crow Agency community, and furthermore, he does not contribute to the local economy on the reservation. Unfortunately, this is the typical scenario of non-Indian educators working or serving the school districts on the reservation. This was revealed in the recent hearing where statements indicated a school enrollment of 100% Indian, and yet 4 out of 6 school trustees were non-Indian (Fact Finding Hearing on Indian Education in Montana, United States Commission on Civil Rights, December 10, 1996). Furthermore, in the local community college, Apsaalooke speakers as instructors are in the minority (Real Bird, 1996). These are further examples of the cultural invasion described by Freire (1970).

As more and more Crow people begin to accept and make the transition into utilizing the values of the mainstream power structure, they put aside and alienate their Apsaalooke traditions and customs. While some of this is

due to economic reasons and convenience, more and more Apsaalooke are putting a distance between themselves and the environments where Crow customs and values are practiced. This is especially evident in the public and parochial schools serving the Crow Reservation (Peregoy, personal conversation, 1995). This is revealed in various testimony during a fact finding hearing in Billings. (Fact Finding Hearing on Indian Education in Montana, United States Commission on Civil Rights, December 10, 1996). Outside of the local tribal college, there are few curricula or Apsaalooke cultural programs for learners in the Crow Reservation educational systems.

Many Apsaalooke people have misconceptions of the idea of formal education. If education is mentioned in any conversation, the immediate assumption of an Apsaalooke is that it is "a White man's education." In addition, it is assumed that all education occurs in formal settings. Merit is not give to the experiences of traditional peoples. Although Apsaalooke people learn in informal structures such as in the home or through their social conduct in recognizing their clans in public, Crow people seldom consider this a foundation or an academic institution for education, scholarship, and learning. Too much credit is given to the White man's education. In contrast,

The Crow Indian culture is applied in such a fashion that it does not hinder the traditional classroom activities. Instead it complements the dominant society's practices while maintaining and

preserving Crow Indian practices. Our value system extends into associating with other persons in their everyday life style. This provides the environment to cope with the contemporary, emphasizing personal growth and personal skills and is based on a learning environment of sharing and giving way to each other. The development of pride, the awareness, and self-confidence are all products of this experience. Indian culture, through close-knit family life, is perhaps one of our greatest strengths which provides a learning model--a support system to maintain the individual, the family, and the community group. (Old Coyote, 1995, p. 92)

The mainstream influence of education upon the Apsaalooke is a shield to the reality of their oppression. (Freire, 1970). Finding value in their own experiences without this influence is difficult. Yet, if more Apsaalooke people collaborate to empower themselves to recognizing the value and roots of their own system of learning, they can liberate themselves from thinking education is just of the White kind.

Influences such as modern technology and public school systems reinforce primarily mainstream values and applications. Through contemporary efforts, the Apsaalooke have gained awareness of, success in, and proficiency with these systems. However, they have failed to utilize them to empower their own cultural experiences. By using these systems, the knowledge they acquire mainly reinforces their economic survival in the mainstream society. Very marginal applications are used to augment Apsaalooke culture in learning and teaching environments such as in the public school systems and through the use of technology.

Today the impact of religion and government controlled education is threatening the existence of the traditional Apsaalooke culture. The use of the language and cultural ways of learning are not being implemented in any of the religious or public educational programs. Hardly any Apsaalooke values, traditions, spirituality, and customs are incorporated in mainstream educational and religious institutions.

The Apsaalooke are being threatened with the loss of their language, customs, religions, and self-identity. The great effect of Euro-western influence has become an overt entity in an relentless historical, religious, and governmental policy to destroy traditional Native American cultures. Rowland (1994) discusses shifts in balances of power. The trauma of this experience is described as follows:

Beyond the spiritual ramifications of being on the reservation are the factors related to dispossession of traditional ways of gaining sustenance, the shock of being faced with forced change, and the inevitable loss of self-esteem and self-worth by virtue of governmental policies designed to deny tribal customs and traditions.
(p. 42)

Through a chronology of governmental and religious intervention, the Apsaalooke enemy has become a mind set among the Apsaalooke which accepts the mainstream power structure. In 1978, Pope Paul expressed an apology for the atrocities committed by the Catholic Church against Native Americans ("The Papal Visit", 1987). This force which

exercises this control and oppression (Freire, 1970) upon the Apsaalooke is like the mystical water beasts and evil spirits that roam the earth. Behind this force is an economic attitude of dissipation of natural resources and capitalism; this mind set seeks to consume and devour like a predator.

The Apsaalooke are allowing their traditional culture to become threatened by accepting mainstream values, religion, and educational systems which is shown by the decrease in the use of the language (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). The control, which these systems have, does not facilitate any comparison or contrasts of Apsaalooke traditional educational institutions with the system. Accepting the mission of these mainstream systems becomes a deadly ultimatum. With such vast economic and governmental control, these systems have the power to starve and defeat Apsaalooke people if they do not accept them. The illusions of the conveniences provided by the mainstream system place a shield over the reality and dynamics of the Crow traditional foundations of knowledge and learning.

Many Apsaalooke are brainwashed to become very dependent upon governmental assistance. They have lost the initiatives to be self-supporting. "Our children watch too much television and impressed by the way people live in Billings. Our men need to find value in their life to make

it worthwhile. Too many sleep in until noon and they do not want to work" (Thomas Big Lake, Peyote Ceremony Speech in Pryor, 1996). Many contemporary Crows are impressed with the luxury of new cars and designer labels; consequently, they fail to understand the impact of their devotion to the economic realm of mainstream power structure.

Many of the conveniences destroy initiative and dedication to upholding and living a traditional way of life. Some contemporary Crows have chosen to become involved with media sources such as television and radio, which in turn feed them images supporting the mainstream culture. The time which is now spent in front of the television was time traditionally used to teach and participate in experiences related to the Apsaalooke culture. These conveniences are replacing the resourcefulness of a work ethic which involved taking the time and devotion to bake bread, tell stories, bead, and do other cultural activities related to the traditional way of the life of the Apsaalooke. It is now easier to go to the store and get something or to let someone else do it than to create it as was traditionally done in the Apsaalooke culture.

By controlling the use of technology, the mainstream power structure controls the Apsaalooke. In one way, the Apsaalooke do not see the potential of utilizing new technologies within their culture. An example of this is

the lack of any media sources. Community members are so desperate for news that most homes have police scanners. The local BIA police are aware of this and use this means to communicate the need to get ahold of someone or recruit forest firefighters (Apsaalooke Gathering of Native Americans, Community Commentary about Community Needs, 1997). Most Apsaalooke do not see how this technology is used to manipulate them.

The Apsaalooke fail to utilize education and technology in perpetuating their existence. The contemporary mainstream systems of education, technology, and religion attack the self-esteem of Apsaalooke learners. These systems serving the Apsaalooke "provide an assaultive curricula to the Crownness of students and develop a higher status to being White" (Peregoy, personal conversation, 1996).

The dynamics of this control are awesome. Many Apsaalooke will not take action without consulting some representative of the government. While peyote worshipers were drinking water during a ceremony, an elder explained, "It is difficult. To think that I am a man but that I must beg the people using my land to feed my family. Who are these people?" (Peyote Ceremony, 1996). Even some Crow families will ask a white person leasing their land for permission to negotiate terms of the lease. The Apsaalooke fail to recognize themselves as authorities for controlling

their own self-determination. If posed with an opportunity for building their communities, it is likely the current Apsaalooke are not confident enough to empower themselves as their forbearers had done. They are likely to be so dependent that they could want some white person to do this for them. Otherwise, they would rationalize the change to justify their own resistance rather than validating their own experience and knowledge to make the transition (Horton, 1990). With their present mind set, it is easier to criticize and blame an effort in change than to work together in cooperation to make it happen. The Apsaalooke are alienated by the dehumanization of the mainstream power structure.

It is in the interest of the oppressor to weaken the oppressed still further, to isolate them, to create and deepen rifts among them. This is done by varied means, from the repressive methods of the government bureaucracy to the forms of cultural action with which they manipulate the people by giving them the impression that they are being helped. (Freire, 1970, p. 122)

Many Apsaalooke are unaware that they are the subjects of the governmental policy of divide and conquer. The few who are in leadership positions or authorities have been totally influenced by the government; they too are blind to oppression and solution of education to help their people.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Design

This descriptive study was a qualitative case study (Guba, 1978). "The qualitative case study can be defined as an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit" (Merriam, 1988, p. 16). The Apsaalooke are unique as discussed earlier. Today this culture is threatened by many entities such as government controlled education and other mainstream factors. For example in education, state controlled educational institutions such as in the public school do not implement Apsaalooke curricula, experiences, and knowledge into the teaching and learning processes of Apsaalooke youth. As with the Northern Cheyenne (Rowland, 1994), this process is also reflected in the adults where the history of their mainstream education did not incorporate any aspects of their traditional culture.

Through qualitative research conducted among Apsaalooke elders and traditionalists such as interviews, analysis of publications, and archival material, this study provides a historical overview of Ashaammaliaxxia, the Apsaalooke Clan

System. By defining traditional practices and activities as institutions for Apsaalooke traditional education, the process for learning through the Apsaalooke Clan System was examined. Traditionalists and elders were asked to reflect on the traditions and customs of Ashaammaliaxxia, the Apsaalooke Clan System. The result of this research effort has the potential and possibility of reintroducing and re-emphasizing these Apsaalooke clan practices into an Apsaalooke educational system. This aspect of the research activity was designed to contribute to the efforts for a cultural renaissance and for self-determination among the Apsaalooke. It is also important to document the influences of forces affecting the surviving and dormant traditional practices and customs in all aspects of the holistic Apsaalooke way of life.

Date Source

The participants for this study are all associated with the Apsaalooke people. The total number interviewed was 42. All the participants had clan membership. Three participants were non-Apsaalooke, but had clan membership by adoption in the Apsaalooke society or other clan membership including the Hidatsa tribe. All of the Apsaalooke participants speak the Apsaalooke language as their first language. The other participants understand and are able to communicate with Apsaalooke speakers through the Hidatsa

language.

This study is part of a lifelong learning process of the dynamics of the Apsaalooke Clan System. This research is a part of a journey that was founded upon the principles of the clan system. Through the years in life of the researcher, many members of the Whistling Water and Bad War Deeds Clans made wishes and expressed hope through their prayers for the life of the researcher. For that purpose, this study is dedicated to all clan parents among the Apsaalooke people.

The primary target population for this study was the Whistling Water and Bad War Deeds Clans. The purpose was to focus on one of the phratries of the Apsaalooke Clan System. Permission to conduct this study was attained from Floyd Real Bird, Charles Real Bird, Pius Real Bird, and Wayne Moccasin. After consulting with these Whistling Water members, they recommended participation from other clan memberships. This participation extended into the Children of the Whistling Water and Bad War Deeds Clans. Further, participation extended into members of the Big Lodge and Newly Made Lodges Clan. Participation in this study was conducted in honor of the members of the Whistling Water and Bad War Deeds Clans. The role of clan parents is spiritually vital, and in the Apsaalooke way of life, people must depend on their clan parents to help. So, this study was an exercise in practice.

Three types of interviews were conducted. The categories were formal, informal, and archival. First, the formal interviews were tape recorded with the approval of the participants. In this formal process, gifts were offered to the participants such as tobacco, cedar, and other items. Permission and consultation were the first exercises to request participation. According to the Apsaalooke tradition, respect and honor must be at the forefront of any request. This procedure is the convention for approaching clan parents and other respected elders. Traditional Apsaalooke elders are obligated to help those people who ask. The true and dedicated elder will not refuse. If they are unable, they will find some other means to help by offering suggestions or referrals.

Next, informal interviews were included. In the process of conducting this study, many of the participants of the informal interviews provided daily inspiration and motivation. These participants exercise vital roles in the support system of the researcher among the Apsaalooke people. These participants were readily available to answer questions or provide commentary on a daily basis. The informal participants play an active role in the spiritual practices of the Apsaalooke. Many of these participants have been instrumental in the lifelong learning process of the researcher. The Apsaalooke participants are practicing nativists of the culture. Other informal participants,

including the non-Apsaalooke members, are traditional or spiritual leaders among the Hidatsa and Lakota tribes. These participants are familiar with Apsaalooke customs and provided a perspective of someone outside looking in. All of these participants have kinship ties to the researcher through the clan system, by adoption, or by proclamation. All of the informal participants are active in ceremonial practices and have contributed to this study by providing data during or after Sweat Lodge Ceremonies, Peyote Religion Ceremonies, or during the preparation of activities associated with these ceremonies.

Finally, the third category consisted of archival interviews. These are tape-recorded interviews on the subject of kinship and the clan system that are part of a collection held at the Little Big Horn College Archives. These interviews include members of the Whistling Water, Bad War Deeds, and Big Lodge Clans. Two of the eight subjects are deceased.

In total, 37 out of the 42 interviews were conducted in the Apsaalooke language. The other three were conducted in English. All the participants felt more comfortable conversing during the interviews in the Apsaalooke language. If a word or statement was not understood because of the use of an older dialect of the Apsaalooke language or speed of delivery, the participants explained their point more plainly in conversational Apsaalooke or translated concepts

into English. When it was inappropriate to ask questions during formal interviews, the informal participants were available to clarify or elaborate on issues presented after the formal activity.

There are many concepts and ideas in the Apsaalooke language that do not have a direct meaning in English when translated. Although there are similar meanings that are translated, most concepts may lose some meaning in the process. For example, in the English language, the word aunt is almost generic. Among the Apsaalooke, if aunt in the English context were translated, it could take on several meanings. First, there are paternal aunts, who the Apsaalooke refer to as "isbaaxia". Then, there is the maternal aunt, who is referred to as a mother or "isahke" (Smells, translated personal conversation, 1997). "There is not such thing as an aunt among our people. The White people have different views on relationships. The Apsaalooke recognize kinships by addressing these important relationships with specific names" (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). These meanings are even detailed in relationship to the English word for uncles. There are no terms for uncles among the Apsaalooke; this relationship is either a father or a brother. This is important in terms of the honor and respect the Apsaalooke have for their families. This is an important value for the Apsaalooke.

Procedures

Data were collected from several sources for this qualitative study. Information and history about the Apsaalooke Clan System were attained from interviews with Apsaalooke elders and traditionalists. Traditionalists or "nativists" according to George Reed, Sr. (personal conversation, 1997) are contemporary practitioners of the culture. While elders also serve as practitioners, they are more importantly the resource centers for traditional knowledge.

Other data were collected from information attained during Apsaalooke ceremonies such as the Crow Peyote Religion Ceremonies and Sweat Lodge Ceremonies. This research also included the knowledge conveyed by individual instructors such as parents, uncles, brothers, friends, and other elders. Included in this is personal recollection, lifelong learning, and personal knowledge as a practicing nativist among the Apsaalooke. During such ceremonies, the use of conventional research technology such as note taking and recording is discouraged. More importantly, the use of oral tradition is conveyed. In Apsaalooke philosophical thought, great reverence is given to dreams and visions. Through the use of tobacco and crystals, the spirit world was asked to intervene to bestow mystic thoughts and words to be included in this study by being revealed in dreams and visions during reflection or meditation. Therefore, some

data were collected through participant observations.

The qualitative data gathering such as the interviews with nativists and elders was designed to find specific ideology, thought, or words that are consistently at the basis of each institutional explanation and the role of the Apsaalooke Clan System. These were used to define the attitudes, description, and character of a traditional Apsaalooke person. Much of the background such as origin stories, dreams, and visions were compatible to research analysis conducted through qualitative means. Oral accounts of such original stories and history have been included in a scope that facilitates learning about the dynamics of social functions, respect, honor, familial obligations, loyalty, role modeling, clan roles, and religious duty.

In such ceremonies or personal instruction, the delivery of knowledge is conveyed or inspired through speeches or storytelling. Some of the research information in this study was conveyed based on personal recollection of such occasions and opportunities. Other research included archival material held at Little Big Horn College and the many published documents about the Apsaalooke. Thus, multiple sources were used to collect data for describing the educational and learning function of Ashaammaliaxxia, the Apsaalooke Clan System.

Participatory Research

This qualitative or naturalistic inquiry (Guba, 1978) was presented and interpreted from the view of a participant observer who is a member of the Apsaalooke culture. The researcher interpreted and reflected upon the data for this study from the view of a lifelong learner and active participant. This role provided valuable insight in understanding the ques in interpreting clan activity. Being attuned to such dynamics and relating those concepts to learning were part of the objectives of this study.

The study is based on the encouragement of elders and other nativists, whose wish is to empower people in their culture in order for them to perpetuate this knowledge for future generations of Apsaalooke. It was part of the initiative of authors such as Joe Medicine Crow and the late Lloyd Old Coyote to write from Apsaalooke viewpoints. An elder mentioned a comment about such efforts for Apsaalooke to create their literature base: "Your late father said something about his book. It might have a few errors, but it is a start. We need to do something about writing about our people" (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997).

As an informant and interpreter, this study is a foundation for understanding aspects of the Apsaalooke culture. Such research has the potential of serving as a bridge joining the knowledge of mainstream adult education ideology and the Apsaalooke culture. A particular insight

was given to this study by the researcher's background as a nativist. The qualitative data and other research provides information from an insider's view of the Apsaalooke Clan System. The narrative provides an active first hand interpretation and reflection of the nativist Apsaalooke philosophy and ideology.

Personal experience provided an emotional interpretation and meaning to understanding the Apsaalooke culture. Standards of objectivity were a consideration. "The researcher is a finely tuned instrument with considerable skills, but is a person no less, with values, beliefs, and a self. The researcher's own background, interests and values will be influential in selecting a topic for research" (Wood, 1996, p. 53).

In selecting this approach, considerations for choosing a qualitative approach rather than scientific methodology were based on the uniqueness of the people. The emotional aspects of this study are a contribution to the research. Such considerations are likely to be political depending on who utilizes this information. As a basis for serving the Apsaalooke people, this study can benefit from this approach. The qualitative background of this research is in the framework of feminist methodology (Hammersley, 1995, p. 46) where validity is based on personal experience (Du Bois, 1983, pp. 108-10). The basis of emotional attachment to research is discussed as a dimension or quality "for it

is closer to a real world in which emotions rather than dispassionate rationality play a central part in the trajectories of people's lives" (Williamson, 1996, p. 39).

Concepts such as emancipation and power are useful topics for research (Hammersley, 1995). There is also a need in research to address the concept of control. For the sake of the Apsaalooke people, their economic and political struggles were explored in this study. Education plays a major role, depending how it is used whether to empower or control a group (Freire, 1970). This is an important issue in dealing with the threats to this culture.

As for change and adaptation, this study is an attempt to bring new scholarship and knowledge in the areas of adult education. Working both ways, it was conducted in hopes of being a contribution to the process of change for the Apsaalooke culture. The intent was to develop a means for the Apsaalooke people to empower their own traditional knowledge by creating research based on their own experience. It also sought to document and formalize Apsaalooke knowledge as a reference for their way of thinking. The Apsaalooke need such control to perpetuate their culture rather than experiencing the constant oppression of cultural invasion. The world has many tools in education and technology; these are tools that the Apsaalooke could use for their empowerment.

In summary, the researcher interpreted the interrelated

dynamics of the culture by using a variety of data sources and provided a view from the perspective of the Apsaalooke. This contribution provided an active first hand reflective view of interpreting the Apsaalooke Clan System. Data were collected in ways that are not intrusive to the culture. By being an active participant, the researcher adapted qualitative inquiry techniques for use in the daily lives of the Apsaalooke people. This study was authorized by nativist elders of the Apsaalooke tribe to be conducted in means that would be effective in helping the culture.

Background of Researcher

The researcher's membership in the Apsaalooke culture is a lifelong learning process. The process began with the nurturing from infancy and continued throughout life. Knowledge in the Apsaalooke system is unlike that of the mainstream system. Knowledge is acquired through oral traditions and through practicing this knowledge in everyday experiences. Education involves all the dynamics of the knowledge and experiences of Apsaalooke people. Knowledge includes the customs and ethics of clan relationships, the language, familial commitment, and some means of success or victories. This knowledge is more. It is dynamic. In many forms, the Apsaalooke culture can be scientific. In the Apsaalooke culture, there are concepts of spirituality, astronomy, psychology, physics, mathematics, language,

humanities, sociology, and much more. It is there for the Apsaalooke to interpret.

The streams that run through Apsaalooke country are mystical. They have powers of healing and blessings for all those who pay homage and reverence to the entity of the sacred water. Like the wind, the Apsaalooke breathe precious air. Water also gives the Apsaalooke life. Elders and traditionalist refer to the "water of life". Water is sacred (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). Traditional Apsaalooke, as educators, realize the importance of water and are grateful for the abundance of this resource. They know other people on this planet are not as fortunate. Water, also like the winds, provide a vehicle for Apsaalooke prayers and songs. In the currents, songs can be heard and given to individuals. These are such blessings in Apsaalooke country.

It is very heart-breaking to see mainstream educated Apsaalooke people exodus the Apsaalooke reservation to seek economic gains through the mainstream standard. By leaving, the loss of their leadership and talents are destructive to the survival of the culture. Sadly, these educated Apsaalooke choose to worship the almighty dollar in the holy land of their white heroes rather than somehow help to serve their people.

The researcher has made a commitment to the past generations of Apsaalooke leaders, warriors, and women to

continually serve the people of this nation. By some means of service to the Apsaalooke people, the researcher seeks to make some repayment to sacrifices made by those elders that signed the treaties. In those treaties, past leaders gave away millions of acres of land and millions of dollars of natural resources under a military threat just so that their people like this researcher could live. A contemporary Apsaalooke must have some commitment to those people who cared enough to think about future generations when they signed those treaties.

The significance of this study is attributed to the continuing education and experience of the researcher as an Apsaalooke learner of tradition, language, and customs. Throughout the life of the researcher, the Apsaalooke culture and heritage has validated itself as the foundation of experience and learning of any knowledge offered by all education systems. The foundation of the Apsaalooke culture as a basis of learning has been interpreted through experiences in the culture and through the dynamics of the oral traditions. Apsaalooke ideas, examples, and references are the standards of learning for the researcher.

This study incorporated the experiences and participation of the researcher in the cultural practices of the Apsaalooke. The researcher has been given some special rights and referent authority as a member of the tribe. Also, important are the active practice of traditions and

culture.

During early childhood years, the researcher's main mentors of language included female members of the Moccasin family. The language attained by the researcher was a form of Crow mainly spoken by women. As a result of teasing from other males and through this traumatic experience, English was used after that. For a period of nine years, my membership was among the Arikara and Hidatsa people. During this time, the Hidatsa language was understandable, and some small communication was exercised. When returning to Apsaalooke country, the Apsaalooke language was used mostly around circles of partying and drinking.

In a third phase a more mature stage of life, the membership in ceremonial and social activities brought upon a more spiritual use of the Apsaalooke language. People most instrumental in assisting with the reacquaintance and practice of the Apsaalooke language include Wayne Moccasin, Harry Moccasin, Samuel Takes Horse, R.C. Old Coyote, Curtis Real Bird, Barry Real Bird, Richard Real Bird, Henry Real Bird, and other traditionalists who chose to express themselves with their mother tongue. Another contributor includes a grandmother who went on to the next camp, Florence Real Bird. Her role in communication included mentoring the researcher in the use of the plain's sign language.

Participation in environments of spirituality has been

enlightening such as the daily participation in the Sweat Lodge rituals. Other religious activity involves participation in Apsaalooke and Lakota Sun Dances, Apsaalooke Peyote Religion, fasting, pipe ceremonies, medicine bundle ceremonies, healing ceremonies, offerings at sacred sites, offerings to the water, and Lakota night singing ceremonies. The late William Deane, grandfather of the researcher, provided valuable encouragement during athletic competition. He shared a powerful medicine with researcher that allows a person to go without water for a long time. Also, great reverence is given to the religious and social structure of the Apsaalooke Clan system.

To be a public speaker in the Apsaalooke culture, an individual must possess the right to "speak loud" or as a herald. Not every member of the Apsaalooke can speak in public. There are only certain individuals selected for this right. It is a medicine (xapaaliia); the right is holy, and words of supernatural power are allowed by this medicine to be said by the person with this authority. The researcher has this right and exercises this duty on occasion. It was attained with the assistance of Robert Little Light to allow the researcher to be a race announcer during the Crow Fair. The late Ernest Hold the Enemy provided this right during a feast in Wyola, Montana.

Because of the experience of successes in mainstream education as an instructor at Little Big Horn College and

through athletics, the researcher has been instructed by elders to speak to young people during the breaks for water during the Apsaalooke Peyote Religion. Customarily, only warriors, elders, and respected authorities are given this opportunity to express themselves during the ritual. It is an honor which is experienced by the researcher. To be merited by one's own people to share successes and victories during an important occasion is a mentoring exercise to encourage Apsaalooke learners, especially young people. Traditionalists and elders use the opportunity to allow examples of contemporary successes to be interpreted by individuals who utilize traditional knowledge and culture as a framework in their life work. It is a role modeling exercise.

Being Apsaalooke, one's commitment is to be of service to the people. It is important to adhere to the needs and requests of elders. Many blessings or good fortune arise for those willing to serve. Throughout the years, primary mentors have instructed the researcher in traditional knowledge by having the student exercise work details associated with cultural activities. Many important people such as Floyd Real Bird assigned the researcher to prepare Sweat Lodge Ceremonies by gathering firewood, preparing the fire, and retrieving the stones and by providing knowledge of medicinal and plant use, music appreciation, and even the construction of the lodge. Such teachers foster and

facilitate other knowledge such as hunting, social conduct, etiquette, politics, survival, story telling, and role modeling. Years and years of being told what to do plays a vital role in creating expectations and parental involvement in a traditional education.

Elders and parents play a vital role in terms of involvement in cultural activities. By instructing or telling their children what to do, they give the learner direction. The outcome serves the purpose such as praising or letting the learner know they contributed to the ceremony. Being told what to do is very important; reflecting upon this knowledge represents discipline, guidance, and consistency. Even at a very young age, the researcher can recall going to the bank of the Little Big Horn River and fetching a pail of water for his grandfather. The river was only 150 yards from the house, but the weight and distance seemed endless. The reward was love and appreciation. It was not monetary.

Throughout the years of being of service to elders, the rewards of appreciation and blessings far outweigh any material rewards. By providing firewood for ceremonies, traveling great distances for gathering stones, setting up teepees, and providing various types of assistance for extended families, clan members, and friends, the serving of the Apsaalooke people has reinforced community, belongingness, and tradition. The love and passion for the

teachings and philosophies instilled by elders, traditionalists, and family members were the primary basis for this study. This is a wish to perpetuate the Apsaalooke traditions, practice, and language as a form of education for future generations to come. Finally, the membership of the researcher in the Big Lodge Clan was attributed to the Tobacco Society adoption of my mother, Katherine Real Bird, by the late Mr. and Mrs. Jim Big Shoulder.

CHAPTER 4

ORAL TRADITION AND LEARNING

Introduction

There was a total of 42 interviews conducted with nativist elders and educators. Primarily all of the participants are associated with clan membership by birth or adoption either through the Apsaalooke Clan System or the Hidatsa System. The interviews were structured as formal interviews, archival interviews, and informal interviews on the topic of the Ashaammaliaxxiia, the Apsaalooke Clan System. All of the formal and archival interviews were presented in the Apsaalooke language. Three participants involved during the informal interviews were Hidatsa or Lakota. The formal and archival interviews represent traditional nativist views of the Apsaalooke culture. Their first orientation of the world is from the Apsaalooke view. These interviews were basically organized around the Apsaalooke Clan System and the social structure which include families of the Apsaalooke. Here specific questions about specific topics were solicited like the origin stories, clan history, definitions, and other dynamics. These interviews were conducted at the homes of the

participants.

The observations of this study are based on Apsaalooke views. From this viewpoint, the findings may appear to be unusual or different for mainstream thinkers, but for the Apsaalooke they are ordinary. Apsaalooke elders have indicated that many of the oral accounts related to origin stories. Old Man Coyote tales and others have many different versions. They have indicated that this is a strength to perpetuating the survival of such stories. According a Whistling Water elder, "There are many versions and opinions of our stories, just as much as there are observers. This is a quality and the reality of oral tradition" (B. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997). However abstract this seems, the diversity and range of oral traditions can represent very different views about a subject.

Mainstream researchers for the most part look for concrete and logical deductions of a hypothesis, and any deviation is inappropriate. In discussing this point, an Apsaalooke elder discussed the dilemma of a scout, Curley, who was part of the Little Big Horn Battle. Investigators, in response to the outcome, attempted to uncover information about the battle. As they interviewed different parties, each had a different version. So when they asked Curley, a Crow scout, to collaborate or discuss his observation, it did not coincide with other witnesses. Therefore,

investigators considered him a liar. From Curley's viewpoint, he could not substantiate what others might have seen, so to him the other witnesses were fabricating their own version (B. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997). Representations discussed in this study may not appear to be logical or rational; this is because the world of the Apsaalooke is based on relational phenomena. This means that all conjecture of knowledge is based on natural and cyclical events that are interrelated in the cosmos, especially events like the seasons, weather, fire, air, water, wind, food chains, animals, and man.

In order to approach Apsaalooke elders, a person must demonstrate and exercise the proper respect in acknowledging their presence. Elders are formally greeted along with the acknowledgment of their gender or relationship such as "biikaa", "bachuukaa", "axee", "ihkaa", and "bisbaaxia". Translated respectively, the approach would be "How are you big brother, or little brother?" or "How are you father or mother or clan aunt?" Sincerity is important; being honest and whole hearted are also qualities an Apsaalooke person pursues. Genuine concern and acknowledgment about greeting them is important. Elders are wise and aware of when requests are going to be made of them. When clan uncles or clan aunts are approached by their child, they are ready for any requests. Clan parents will respond by asking a child, "What can I do for you son?" or "How can I help you my

child?" Brothers or others may anticipate approaches as social encounters. These interactions are distinctive because of the clan responsibilities. Most clan children and parents do not interact in the same way as they do with their clan siblings or teasing clan members. This is the reason for their responses; clan parents have the obligation to help their children and are constantly aware of this role.

Formal Interviews

Upon approaching elders during the formal interviews, the relationships were again clarified. They are asked, "Axee, Ashaammaliáxxiia ichiweegua" or "Father, tell me about the clan system." Clan parents will not hesitate to help their child because elders do not acknowledge the meaning of "no". In other words, they will not refuse. These are the traditional people, ones with courage and fortitude. They are people willing to share and teach. Preparations and arrangements are made at this time. Offerings of tobacco can bind this agreement. Otherwise, other offerings were made after the interviews.

Tobacco is powerful. It is seldom utilized unless a person really means business. Tobacco was not offered up front during these interviews, meaning the requests for interviews were granted by honorable agreements acknowledging clan relationships or respect. If tobacco was

presented, it meant the elders were obligated by this offer. Without offering tobacco, the elders did not need to be pressured or convinced in sharing their knowledge. Freewill by the elders was demonstrated and conducted without the formal means of utilizing tobacco through nativist customs.

The formal interviews occurred in the homes of the elders. This put the control of the interviews and conversation in their hands. For the researcher to assert and initiate any control in the homes of the elders would be completely disrespectful. The elders, such as Ed Little Light, Jr. and Desi Old Coyote, made specific remarks about the time stories are told by Apsaalooke people. They indicated that such stories are told only during the winter and at night or only when there is snow on the ground (E. Little Light, Jr., translated personal conversation, 1997; D. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997). This practice was acknowledged and conducted according to Apsaalooke oral tradition.

Ashaammaliaxxiia, the Apsaalooke Clan System, is a story that is interrelated to other creation stories. To hear the origin of the clan system means to hear other stories leading to the origin of the Apsaalooke and the world. The purpose of the clan system is also interrelated to other social and religious aspects of the culture. So, to hear oral traditions about the clan systems also means to hear many other stories applied to the culture. These

include Old Man Coyote Stories, migration stories, Iitchihchea stories, and many other origin lectures. The participants in this research took every effort to specifically stay on the task of relating the Apsaalooke Clan System, but it was very important to tell stories that proceeded creation events. This meant that the participants shared other stories as well in order to get to the point of how the clan system is related to Old Man Coyote, the migration, and other interrelated aspects of the culture.

The elders identified the specific relations involved in the Apsaalooke Clan System. Other information included the purpose of the clan system, history, and social conduct of Apsaalooke people. Reasons were given for the meaning of being an Apsaalooke. Traditional practices and values were contrasted with the modern situation. Further discussions included the changes that have occurred in Apsaalooke society. The elders mentioned activities or customs that were traditionally practiced but which are now somehow neglected. Other commentary includes the effect of religion and mainstream education upon the clan system.

While conducting the formal interviews, some participants used an older dialect of the Apsaalooke language that is used in traditional environments or activities. Here, even while using the formal Apsaalooke language, occasionally statements needed to be distinguished or translated into a simpler Apsaalooke form or in English.

Elders have a distinct flow and rhythm in their presentations. It is impolite and rude to interrupt; at times though they look for signals of acknowledgment. The researcher, then can response with "aa", meaning yes, or during this pause questions can be asked. The elders then will elaborate or translate at that time or will address this inquiry later. Other times, the informal interview participants played an important role in expounding and discussing the stories of the formal interview participants.

The formats for the formal interviews were conducted respecting Apsaalooke values and customs. Both the researcher and the participants view this research from the Apsaalooke perspective. For this reason, many of the ideas, language, and concepts that were translated may not have identical or exact meanings in English. Even psychological concepts are difficult to describe. An Apsaalooke learner does not need as much rational and logic for reinforcement and understanding as the mainstream learners. The contrast may be between a linear psychology versus a circular or cyclical orientation. Basic common sense principals can be total abstracts to non-Apsaalooke thinkers. It is possible that years can be spent in attempting to explain the nature of the Apsaalooke mind to the western thinkers.

It is important to consider this point. Basic principles of Apsaalooke values can be common assumptions to the participants because of their orientation to natural

phenomena and the environment. However, it may be difficult to explain natural phenomena to thinkers in the mainstream. There are difficulties involved with sharing holy and sacred Apsaalooke information when mainstream audiences only attempt to exploit and justify their own experience by manipulating native knowledge for their own benefit. Basically, the premises being discussed are the categorical differences between the way the Apsaalooke value their knowledge and the impression they have of mainstream. It must be emphasized that the Apsaalooke have a uniqueness in their language, values, and culture. Since some information cannot be directly translated, every effort has been made to provide an example or description of the concepts. These translations or comparisons are not directly or exactly the same concept of the mainstream, and they are only somewhat related or identical. Their applications are totally different or unique to the Apsaalooke culture.

The archival interviews, which were also formal interviews, came from the Archives of Little Big Horn College. These were formally structured interviews about specific topics about the culture such as the clan system and origin stories. The participants were allowed to control the interviews; they discussed or lectured on topics that were interrelated. A researcher seldom made comments or asked questions. Respect was also being exercised here. Any questions or inquiry might be considered challenges to

the authority of the participants.

These pre-recorded interviews were part of a collection at the Little Big Horn College Archives. Magdalene Moccasin and several Little Big Horn College students conducted the interviews during the four year "Apsaalooke Oral History Project" sponsored by the National Historical Publication Records Commission.

Participants from the archival collection and the formal interviews were selected based upon their association with either the Whistling Water, Bad War Deeds, or Big Lodge Clans. The purpose for this was based upon the connection the researcher had with each clan as parents or siblings.

Informal Interviews

Informal interviews were conducted with other participants. These participants are involved in roles with the researcher, which include ceremonial, social, daily, mentoring, kinship roles, or other ways of participatory research. Many of the participants were and are involved with mentoring and teaching the researcher in the lifelong learning process of being an Apsaalooke. Other participants were consulted for their comments and feedback about data, translating, expounding, and general discussions. Many of the participants are educators in the sense that they teach the culture, thereby giving significance to their knowledge and formality to their nativist teachings.

Participants interviewed through the informal process were sometimes involved with ceremonial activity or preparation. Many of the mentors and the teachers of the researcher provided guidance and instruction during Sweat Lodge Ceremonies. This format is one of the many classrooms for the formal learning and education of traditional Apsaalooke peoples. The actual ceremony is ritualistic while the preparation for the ceremony provides a forum for storytelling and personal instruction. Elders sitting around the fireplace share an abundant amount of their experience and provide guidance to the younger ones or other adult learners. The storytelling although informal is a means for allowing learners to develop discipline, trust, and loyalty. This conditioning allows respect to be demonstrated by the listeners or learners. Storytellers or elders are not interrupted. All the actions including the subtle hand gestures and pitch in their voice contribute to the lessons. The volumes of their voices indicate whether the characters of their stories are doing right or whether they are in the wrong. The accumulation of acknowledging stories and actions described by elders is a basis for developing a form of conduct representative of the Apsaalooke. This is an important exercise in the teaching of traditional nativists customs. Environments such as the preparation of Sweat Lodge Ceremonies are important learning environments for the Apsaalooke. This practice is a

traditional custom that is still part of the contemporary learning of the traditional nativists.

Prior to the actual Sweat Lodge Ceremony, elders and other participants share information. The tribe does not have a media source such as radio and television, and at a place like the Sweat Lodge, visitors or congregation members provide information about political events and other news. There are occasions during the ceremony when ritual leaders provide lectures on historic events and customs. Ritual leaders share information about the rites conducted and the background or history associated with the Sweat Lodge Ceremony. Even the prayers expressed contain knowledge about the purpose of the ceremony. The words expressed through prayer and storytelling are sacred. In prayer, these words manifest supernatural power for events to occur. Words offered to the Creator ask for blessing and pity to the humble worshipers. The meditation and concentration create images of events to occur in the future like the healing, good health, blessing for loved ones, prosperity of the participants, and happiness for everyone. The words used by participants are powerful especially when they are successful. These prayers are valuable qualities of the learning process involved with ceremonial events such as the Sweat Lodge.

Sponsors of the Sweat Lodge ritual may be involved in competitive activities like horse racing, rodeo, basketball,

or other athletics. Other ceremonies are conducted to pray for clan children, homes, travel, education, healing, and many other aspects of Apsaalooke life. Birthdays and anniversaries are also celebrated in the Sweat Lodge. The Sweat Lodge Ceremony is a major religion and is interrelated to the other religions of the Apsaalooke. This ritual is a custom and a part of the knowledge exercised by nativists. Occasionally, Sweat Lodges Ceremonies coincide with Pipe Ceremonies, Tobacco Society Ceremonies, medicine bundle rituals, and fasting. Apsaalooke Clan relationships are also interrelated and practiced in the activities surrounding the Sweat Lodge Ceremony. Elders or clan parents usually have the precedence of leading the ceremonies. Respect and honor of clan parents are practiced in all realms of Apsaalooke culture, and even the teasing clans exercise their roles at appropriate times during the ceremony. During prayer, everyone is quiet and respectful of this expression. All activities such as teasing and storytelling are halted. These religious rituals and clan practices are important parts of interrelated learning process.

On occasion participants will share a dream that occurred in which the Sweat Lodge was seen. This is another part of the ceremony. Dreams are also significant learning aspects of Apsaalooke knowledge. They are part of the vision process. Respect is given to a visionary who sees

the Sweat Lodge in their dreams. This respect is honored and is important part of the Apsaalooke learning process.

After the ceremony, storytelling and other information is shared around the fireplace. This oral tradition is the framework and foundation for learning among the Apsaalooke. This form of mentoring conditions the learners to become Apsaalooke. These learners demonstrate honor and respect to all facets of nativist practices involved with the religions like the Apsaalooke Clan System, Sweat Lodge Ceremonies, Pipe Ceremonies, and the Tobacco Society. Even new religions practiced by the nativists such as the Apsaalooke Peyote Religion and Shoshone Sun Dance exercises this respect for customs of the Apsaalooke Clan System.

Many of the informal interviews took place in environment such as Sweat Lodge Ceremony and the Apsaalooke Peyote Religion. Mentioned earlier, the religions of the Apsaalooke are interrelated, and even the new Apsaalooke Peyote Religion incorporates the Sweat Lodge after a Peyote Ceremony. The participants in the informal interviews have vastly contributed to this study during the preparation of ceremonials such as the Sweat Lodge, Apsaalooke Peyote Religion, fasting during Vision Quests, Pipe Ceremonies, and the Sun Dance. Their information was informally documented through the basis of oral traditions practiced by the Apsaalooke. A vast amount of knowledge was transferred by the participants to the researcher during these practices.

The learning processes are ongoing and part of the lifelong learning associated with nativist customs.

During the Apsaalooke Peyote Religion, there are water breaks. At those designated breaks during the ritual, elders are allowed to speak to the worshipers. Informal interviews took place during these breaks. The Apsaalooke Peyote Religion although new has fully adopted the practices of the Apsaalooke Clan System. Members of this religion exercise the customs and values associated with the clan system. Clan parents are honored and respected while teasing clan members interact as usual. While the water is being passed around during the ceremony, elders tell about significant information associated with Apsaalooke rituals, customs, language, values, and culture. Knowledge of the mysticism associated with peyote plant is also shared. A tremendous amount of storytelling also occurs during breakfast and when the worshipers greet the new day. This is another form of oral tradition. In the Peyote Ceremony, this learning process can be identified as a formal part of a nativist's education. Elders like Tom Big Lake provided information about Apsaalooke practices and customs that are being neglected. Other Apsaalooke elders through informal interviews have contributed to knowledge held by the researcher over the years; these elders include people like Floyd Real Bird, Pius Real Bird, Charlie Real Bird, Richard Real Bird, Robert Little Light, Mickey Old Coyote.

(deceased), George Reed, Sr., Leroy White, Harry Moccasin, and Wayne Moccasin.

The information associated with the Hidatsa was provided primarily through this informal interview procedure in gathering data for this study. Hidatsa elders such as Malcolm Wolf and Leonard Driver provided the background, discussion, and commentary of the Apsaalooke and Hidatsa Split. Apsaalooke participants in the informal interview at that time with the Hidatsa included Tim Real Bird and Sam Takes Horse.

The researcher was adopted by the Bear Eagle and Tiona family of the Cheyenne River Lakota Tribe. This provided valuable experience in the lifelong learning process as a nativist. This experience allowed the researcher to rely on Apsaalooke customs of respect and honor when learning about Lakota customs. Many comparison and contrasts of practices were experienced. While participating in Lakota ceremonies, the researcher was able to reflect on the Apsaalooke culture from another perspective. There is a distinction between the customs of the Apsaalooke and the Lakota. Some practices are forbidden by Apsaalooke, yet utilized by the Lakota. Likewise, there are Apsaalooke customs that are not acceptable to the Lakota. The Pipe Ceremony is one very important contrast. The Apsaalooke only allow men to handle the Pipe, while the Lakota observe the manifestation of the Pipe as a result of a gift from a supernatural female

buffalo figure, so women are allowed to use the Pipe. These customs require a heightened awareness to ceremonial activity especially when the two cultures are interacting. Depending on the membership of ceremonial participants, specific relationships or membership must be exercised when participating in ceremonies where the Apsaalooke and the Lakota are involved. If the adopted Lakota father is conducting a ceremony, the respect and honor of the adoption must be recognized. Otherwise, the researcher is Apsaalooke first.

The basis for informal interviews represent the lifelong learning process of the interviewer. This participatory research has direct links to the insight of nativist practices. The data is interpreted and reflected from the view point of an active participant in the Apsaalooke culture. The learning environment associated with rituals and ceremonies were not compatible with typical research tools such note taking and recording. Often, elders would discourage the use of notes and recording because of the sanctity associated with the mysticism of rituals. Encouragements to utilize the conventions of oral tradition were conveyed by elders. This meant providing undivided attention and listening carefully without being preoccupied by documentation.

Other informal interviews took place through social interaction. An example of this social interaction in the

clan relates to the responsibility of older siblings to teach younger ones in dealing with real life situations. Elders such as clan parents have the responsibility of providing spiritual guidance to their children as a form of learning, but there is a limit especially in a situation that might be uncomfortable for the clan parent-child relationship. Therefore, in these situations, siblings such as the mother's brothers teach learners such applications (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). Other paternal siblings also contribute to this learning process. They are the teasing clan members, but on the other hand, these siblings are able to teach a learner aspects of life that may be too embarrassing for a clan parent to discuss. These siblings basically tell it like it is. If a situation is detrimental to the learner, siblings will exercise disciplining, lecturing, scolding, or teasing in order to control undesirable behavior. This is how the Apsaalooke learn. Aspects of this process have indirectly influenced the researcher especially when this role has been exercised by some participants in this study. The informal interviews include those with siblings who have exercised this form of teaching and mentoring for the researcher.

Other informal interviews include general discussions and conversations that occurred with the participants through the lifelong learning process of the researcher. These participants have shared comments and opinions to

contribute to the character of being an Apsaalooke person. Some of these participants are nativist educators working in mainstream systems. In these informal interview situations, even social functions such as dinners, birthday parties, and other festivities were environments for learning.

Learning During Preparation

This discussion is about the learning that occurs during the preparations of ceremonial activities. Topics in this process are extensions of the informal interview process, yet they are more associated with the natural phenomena in the environment. A father, a teacher, and a mentor, Floyd Real Bird, has contributed another facet of respect for the nature. His role is that of an educator of nativist knowledge. The experience he shares is a resource for learning and encouragement, especially in the preparation of rituals and ceremonies.

Ceremonies and rituals require much preparation. This preparation depends on harvesting and gathering certain elements in the natural environment. For instance, in the preparation of a Sweat Lodge, Apsaalooke elders use several different types of trees to construct a sweat lodge. Their right as a ceremonial person for leading a Sweat Lodge Ceremony may depend on the construction of a lodge using a specific type of tree of the many species of willow or ash. Nativists are aware of these requirements. Minor rituals

are involved when harvesting plants or trees for ceremonies like the Sweat Lodge or others. Traditional teachers instruct learners on the minor rituals involved in harvesting these living trees and plants. Offerings of tobacco and prayers accompany these minor rituals. These minor rituals although important usually involve one person. This is the person doing the gathering. Respect given to living trees and plants is more knowledge in the dynamics of honoring all living things on earth. If done improperly, destroying and killing plants or trees may lead to other repercussions or consequences in one's life. The Apsaalooke recognize the balance of life forces even in plants and trees. This awareness extends to the supernatural world. There are energies all around that affect each other. Maintaining sanctity and respect for all things on earth may assure compatibility with the Creator, Iichihkbaalia.

Nature is a classroom for the Apsaalooke, especially for learners associated with ceremony. Spirituality contributes to the interrelated knowledge and experience of Apsaalooke learning. Elders speak to trees and plants; they tell them their purpose and intention. It may be something translated like this, "Ash tree, my relatives need your help. We would like for you to be part of our life by giving yourself to us. We will pray for your relatives. Help us this way, so your people and mine can prosper." At

times tobacco is offered. When the Apsaalooke harvest teepee poles, they may do this or offer a prayer during the ritual of cutting the first pole. Plants and trees are very symbolic at ceremonies; they are instrumental and important. Rituals involved with harvesting are very important to the Apsaalooke, especially in the Tobacco Society. Apsaalooke people gather many types of plants and trees for their religious rituals; they include sage, corn, bear root, cedar, sweet grass, many varieties of berries, wild vegetables, healing plants, pine needles, and many more different kinds that serve for a whole host of purposes. This reverence for nature as a quality of spirituality represents a foundation for learning among the Apsaalooke.

The preparation process contributes toward learning consistency and dedication for nativist Apsaalooke learners. This is a responsibility. Elders teach and reflect this passion for living. Loyalty, trust, and commitment are other adjectives describing the preparation process. The work involved during preparation is like a classroom; there are projects and programs that need to be exercised. This is a learning environment for a nativist. When learners gather the wood and rocks needed for a Sweat Lodge Ceremony, their actions and conduct are similar to prayers except that they are physically demonstrating their commitment. The trees are told of the appreciation of their gift in providing firewood for the ceremonies. The rocks are

treated like elders because they are very old and are part of the earth; they too are thanked for their service. Even when the fire is blazing, it is personified. There is power in the flames, and it is providing essential service to the lifestyle and prayers of the nativist Apsaalooke. The water needed during Sweat Lodge Ceremonies is holy; it has supernatural powers that help the Apsaalooke. There is much more mysticism from its source like the Little Big Horn River. The river is another world. Apsaalooke people make offerings to the river because it is the water of life. Unknown beings live in this world; ordinary people are unfamiliar with what goes on in the streams. These elements discussed like water, fire, earth, and wind have many lessons behind their stories; Apsaalooke people learn of the power of the elements in their lifelong experience.

New religions practiced by Apsaalooke nativist incorporate the interrelated traditional religions. The Shoshone Sun Dance and the Apsaalooke Peyote Religion are very compatible environments for the Apsaalooke Clan System, Pipe Ceremonies, Tobacco Society, and the Sweat Lodge. Preparations for these new nativist religions also involve dedication and commitment. This is especially important for young learners. The Shoshone Sun Dance involves year round preparation especially for the sponsors and the ceremony leader. Customs and traditions are involved in the preparation. Rituals such as pledging and medicine bundle

openings are conducted prior to the actual ceremony. This tribute to custom and tradition is passed on by the participants and families. It is a learning tool that involves dedication, trust, and commitment. Almost every member of a family becomes involved in the preparations. Women may be involved with food preparation, sewing regalia, and helping teach the youth aspects and purposes of the ceremony. Men exercise other rituals like preparing the lodge, gathering firewood, singing, and numerous other activities. This is a way of life that involves teaching and learning applied to custom, ritual, and tradition.

This new nativist religion adopts the interrelated religions of the Apsaalooke. Clan relationships are formally recognized and practiced. The Sweat Lodge Ceremony is used in the many facets during the year-around preparation of the Sun Dance and is used before and after the actual ceremony. Many participants conduct Pipe Ceremony rituals with the religion. Even seasons or months before the actual ceremony, rituals such as medicine bundle openings have pipes as part of the sacred objects. These ceremonies involve smoking a Sacred Pipe where wishes and prayers are offered on behalf of the sponsor, their intentions, and the leaders of the ceremony.

Another contribution of preparation and ritual applied to learning involves the Apsaalooke Peyote Religion, which is also known by other tribes as the Native American Church.

Apsaalooke Peyote Religion is another new nativist religion that is compatible to Apsaalooke traditions. The main aspect of this ceremony is prayer. This religion incorporates many of the traditional forms of prayer practiced by the Apsaalooke which includes singing, using cedar for smudging, and smoking tobacco. The Apsaalooke recognize a fourth means of transcending prayer; this is through the vision and dream process. The plant that has mystic power enables the participants to create prayers and wishes for events to occur. In their words, they form images and visions of success, healing, and other blessings. Nativists recognize higher levels of consciousness and enlightenment through the mysticism of the medicine. Powerful and holy words create a road for those that are the benefit of prayers. In those prayers, essential tools for achieving a mission are included. The images that are created by the powerful word become events for celebration and gratitude.

Sponsors of the Peyote Ceremonies exercise extensive preparations. This process is an excellent learning environment for demonstrating the honor and respect for nature, the Apsaalooke Clan System, other religions, and teaching learners about the culture. Members of this religion go to great lengths in preparing for the ceremony. This preparation is an excellent demonstration for teaching young people and other learners about dedication and

discipline. The ceremony involves many aspects of natural phenomena which are Apsaalooke principles. Learners are taught the significance of these natural elements in applying to the ways of the Apsaalooke. It is an excellent environment for teaching customs of the Apsaalooke. Young people and other learners actively participate in the dynamics of honoring and respecting clan practices, including the teasing clan aspect. Teachings and learning are also applied through nature in the ceremonial preparations such as caring for the peyote medicine, making teas, preparing tobacco, preparing cedar, gathering firewood, gathering sage, singing songs, and other tasks such as preparing corn shucks and tobacco mixes for smoking.

The Apsaalooke have a great reverence for the contribution of nature in all their ceremonies. During the Peyote Ceremonial, elders teach younger learners about the significance of the plants and trees. Conduct and demeanor are also taught. Learners practice discipline and integrity when they are encouraged to fast and pray all night during the ceremony. The teepee lodge is another lesson in the curricula of Apsaalooke nativist teachings. Often during a Peyote Ceremony, elder will tell how the lodge was manifested by supernatural means. Stories about the poles, the covering, stakes, pins, and background are shared. The lodge is a mother figure, and elder teach learners about the proper way of conducting themselves in a lodge. Young

learners are encouraged to be considerate of others and their own appearance. Elders teach perseverance, penance, and dedication especially when participants must sit up all night during prayer services. The reflection of one person or participant is a reflection of a whole family. This is how the Apsaalooke see personalities.

Regalia and other materials require much time and effort in construction. Craft work designs on War Dance regalia, Sun Dance regalia, and other ceremonial or traditional social attire are disciplines. Apsaalooke nativists learn this craft work and art from elders who pass the skill to the next generation of Apsaalooke. Women can spend a year or more to prepare for events like the Crow Fair Parade or Tobacco Society Ceremonies. Tanning, beadwork, quill work, and other leather work such as sewing moccasins, leggings, and outfits involve dedicated efforts. Many Apsaalooke designs are distinctive along with the color used. For example, Apsaalooke bead work has distinctive geometric patterns that uses primarily light blue and pink. Other designs have flower patterns and even geometric patterns of the sacred tobacco, Itchihchia.

The designs, patterns, and symbols represent individuals or families. Some nativists have acquired their designs from supernatural phenomena like a dream or vision acquired through fasting. Patterns may represent the "ceremonial paint" of an individual. These are the patterns

many nativists and powwow people paint on their bodies or faces that represent their supernatural helpers or medicine bundles. Other craft work designs are provided by all the elements in nature such as the wind, water, earth, and fire. Even the new religions such as the Apsaalooke Peyote Ceremonial, Shoshone Sun Dance, and others require traditional craft work regalia. Beadwork, hide work, feather work, and other traditional craft work are part of these ceremonies. For example, the Apsaalooke Peyote Religion has rituals that incorporate traditional aspects of prayer such as singing, smoking, visions, and using cedar smudge. While singing, worshipers use a rattle and drum. On some occasions, singers will carry feather fans. A peyotist's attire is somewhat contemporary, yet it has aspects of traditional craft work such as beaded ornaments and capes. The work involved with the instruments and regalia requires dedication and long hours of work. Many nativist today have dedicated their efforts to this religion. They are involved in the craft work and care for aspects of preparation associated with the ceremonials. The preparation involves the features of nature like the plants and trees that contribute to the ceremony.

The preparation process is an important component of learning among the Apsaalooke. Ceremonies, customs, and rituals are learning environments for teaching Apsaalooke learners about the significance of their culture. The

events surrounding ceremonies also contribute to the learning of interrelated components of the Apsaalooke religions and spirituality. There are many responsibilities and duties involved with preparation. Apsaalooke learn and teach by these practices.

Women Involvement

The preparation process is extensive and goes beyond the examples presented. Women have a vital role in the process. This environment for learning is applied to female roles in the culture. Many of the rituals and ceremonies would not be possible without the contribution of grandmothers, mothers, aunts, sisters, granddaughters, and daughters. The Apsaalooke Clan System is based on a maternal association; the females are vital because they pass on the membership for their children to be either a Whistling Water, Bad War Deeds, Big Lodges, or others.

Mothers are the primary teachers for Apsaalooke youth. Through the years from infancy and all through life, a mother contributes valuable lessons applied to the culture. They are an Apsaalooke person's best and sometime only friend (Little Light, Jr., translated personal conversation, 1997). Language and values are taught at an early age. In these years, the mother's influence is tremendous. Others also play important roles such as female siblings, female cousins, aunts, and grandmothers. The Apsaalooke have

specific names for these relationships because of their important role in kinship and through the Apsaalooke Clan System. The word for paternal aunt is "isbaaxia" while maternal aunts are "isahke" which is the same word for mother. Older sisters of males are referred to by males as "isahkaate", and younger sisters are "isachiite" while a younger sister is known as "isooke" by females. These specific names are respectful and important. The Apsaalooke Clan System is the reference for these relationships. The importance of kinship and relations is a highly valued quality of the culture. This is why even distant relatives are still associated as sisters or brothers or however their relationship is formed around the Apsaalooke system. Even a newly born child could be a grandfather or grandmother to an elder in this system.

Maternal roles are important to the Apsaalooke. Reverence to the earth as a female mother figure is of value to the Apsaalooke. The lodge or teepee is also represented as a mother (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). Some other nativists have even referred the Sweat Lodge as mother. Since the Apsaalooke Clan System passes membership maternally, Apsaalooke are taught to honor and respect their natural mothers. One elder stated, "Treat your mother well, for our mothers are only on loan to us by Ichihkbaalia. They are only on earth for a while, then they return. Take care of them while they are here. She is your best friend"

(Takes Horse, translated personal conversation, 1997). The other mothers are the earth, and teepee lodge, they are said to always be there for an Apsaalooke as a mother. The clan relationships provide mothers for an Apsaalooke person. Even nativists in the Peyote Religion tell the story that the "plant with the mystic powers" was found by a woman. This is the utility of the system and the significance of female roles.

Women are said to have a natural serenity and tranquility. In ancient times, according oral stories among the Apsaalooke, men at one time had this opportunity to have this serenity through supernatural means, but they refused the offer or gift from the Creator. This is why they suffer and seek penance when they sacrifice during Vision Quests, during Sun Dance Ceremonies, and absorbing the extreme heat of Sweat Lodge Ceremonies. They are attempting to achieve the serenity they passed over (F. Real Bird, translated personal conversation, 1997). Women are holy; their suffering is no match to the penance offered by men. As a fact of nature, during labor a woman experiences tremendous amounts of pain to bring life into this world. We are here because of their suffering (Takes Horse, personal conversation, 1997). While carrying a child in her womb, the experiences of women affect the character and personality of the child. The voices and feelings are experienced by this small person. Sounds associated with

the perception of life by women influences an infant association with nature. When the child hears songs, the child will know singing. If a woman is near the sounds of the drum, the child will also know this (R. Little Light, translated personal conversation, 1997).

The women's role in the Apsaalooke culture is an important part of the support system. Natural events such as the nurturing and care of the youth influence an Apsaalooke all through life. A child's personalities evolve around the direction, mentoring, and behavior of their mothers. If a child is encouraged and respected, this person will know this quality throughout life. When a mother demonstrates anger, confusion, and fear, the child assimilates this mentality. Apsaalooke people knew this long ago. A child was sometimes given away if there was tragedy or misfortune in a relationship. Even when a child was sickly, parents who had lost their spouses or were separated often gave their young children or infants to a couple that could provide the full holistic parental roles of Apsaalooke family structures because family represents wealth for the Apsaalooke.

Nativist women are very active. They participate in many activities especially in events where their men participate. They could be husbands, brothers, fathers, sons, grandchildren, clan children, and nephews. Technically, nephews are considered sons or grandsons in the

Apsaalooke system. Family is very important to the Apsaalooke. Apsaalooke women were involved with many aspects of the preparation process described. Their roles are important and critical to the functions of ceremonies. The caring for children are an Apsaalooke women's responsibility, and the woman are the primary teachers of the Apsaalooke culture. They are also part of the solution for encouraging the recognition of clan relationships, language, values, and culture.

Apsaalooke women are responsible for many key roles in the culture. Women are the primary crafters of Apsaalooke ceremonial and social regalia. Beadwork and hide work are mainly done by women, yet some men to participate. Matters associated with domestics such as the home are primarily women's responsibilities. This includes food preparation. To the Apsaalooke food is medicine; it is sacred and holy. This is why the care and preparation of food is a woman's responsibility. Their devotion and care through their natural serenity and tranquility is like a prayer except that it is demonstrated by their actions and love. Some ceremonies such as the Sun Dance and the Apsaalooke Peyote Religions require women to provide the ritual of bringing water. Traditionally, these responsibilities were extensive, but because of modern conveniences and the mainstream feminist influences, it has changed. Most Apsaalooke women do not recognize the significance of their

role as primary teachers of the culture. Turning on the television and playing video tapes are easier than taking the constructive efforts to demonstrate the Apsaalooke language and the telling of stories. Because of economic factors such as the economic need to seek employment, women send their children to a day care or depend on the programs such as Head Start to teach their traditional responsibilities. The homage to community and family is being replaced by the dependence of mainstream systems like day cares, Head Start, and public schools to teach values to the children. Valuable resources such as the grandparents are being neglected and not utilized in teaching the culture. They too are being institutionalized and segregated from the dynamics of their most valuable resource, the family and relatives. This is an important mechanism of traditional learning and teaching among the Apsaalooke.

Conduct and Memory

There are several facets of the Apsaalooke culture that need to be addressed for this qualitative study. This has to do with oral tradition, conduct, and memory. Due to the fact that those interviewed were traditionalists or elders, there was a protocol to conduct for the procedure of making requests. First of all, most accepted forms of interview formats for conventional studies such as this one are not

user-friendly to the customs and culture of elders and traditionalists. Many of the elders were reluctant to be recorded through video or audio tape. Others have experienced previous research efforts and have allowed themselves to be documented. Some elders are very traditional and at times are committed to spiritual practices, ceremonies, supernatural phenomena, and sorcery. They choose not to be photographed or recorded. This exercise in choosing not to be recorded by contemporary technologies reinforces the means of storytelling by oral traditions.

In Apsaalooke educational environments when oral traditions are told, learners needed only their memories and presence. Just by being there, a learner hears and feels the drama and emphasis of the knowledge provided. Attention is held by the gestures and signs performed in motion. The listeners are entranced by the dynamics of speech and sign language used by the facilitator. Notes and recordings are out of the question. The listeners are the learners. By communicating with each other through interaction, they reinforce the stories in their minds and with each other.

In order to approach traditionalists and elders, one must be respectful and courteous. It is important to be polite because the information they provide is a valuable asset. Stories and oral traditions are recognized in the Apsaalooke culture as licenses. There are stories that have

individual ownership if associated with specific medicines or rights. Others do not and are common. In exploring traditional knowledge, consulting the expertise of the elders is the standard.

Many nativists and elders do not like to be constantly asked questions. Gracious tact and diplomacy must be exercised in acknowledging their information. Interrupting the flow of the delivery of their stories by asking questions is impolite. At certain points, elders are willing to allow learners to reflect and make inquiries, mainly in a general sense, but these may not be too specific. Patience is important because most Apsaalooke learners will anticipate solutions to their inquiry by anticipating other parts of a story to address what a learner might be wondering. In other words, it is best just to keep quiet and allow stories to develop. Apsaalooke learn to keep their questions to themselves in silence and somewhere in the future an answer will be actualized.

There are specific relationships within the culture that require special considerations for consultation for oral traditions and stories. People like clan fathers or mothers may require some exchange such as tobacco, dried meat, preserves, cedar, sweat grass, bear root, blankets, material, or other such gifts. Siblings do not warrant such an exchange because in the Apsaalooke society, brothers are the main teachers for the males as sisters are for the

females.

Through stories and practice of traditional values, Apsaalooke learners have gained knowledge and experiences by oral tradition. Memory is key for learning and respect. It also supports this exercise. When an Apsaalooke child is instilled with a respect for all facets of life, this child will hold every essence of life as being important. This learner must realize that anytime an event occurs or whenever some elder or anyone speaks, it is holy. Even humor, sorrow, tribulation, and bad attitudes must be acknowledged in the process of learning and respect. Every essence of life is treated with this type of holy respect. Memory is an important basis for reflecting upon knowledge. With memory, an Apsaalooke learner must reflect on the guidance of a mentor or elder that facilitates oral tradition. Oral traditions in the form of stories are important in creating a positive attitude in learners. The consequences and reason behind stories are essential in building character and conduct. Memory is important in facilitating this character and conduct. A learner will need to reflect on oral traditions and apply a conduct that was expressed in the moral of oral traditions to whatever is going on in their life. Sometimes things are only mentioned once in a person's life. Nevertheless, they are important in the role of learning and knowledge among the Apsaalooke.

To the Apsaalooke, memory and information are vital

aspects of character building. The traditional Apsaalooke treat all events with sanctity and respect. At times, this person will not question fate or consequence with reason. It will be held only as an acknowledgment for whatever destiny is tied to the event or person involved. Memory is used in a holistic sense where events occur in cycles. If an event or action takes place, a lesson is learned by the future outcome of the path of the event or action particularly if a person is involved. In a future time, it will be understood by memory of what happened in the past. This will be a learning experience.

An example of this process is used quite frequently by teasing clan members. If a member of this group by accident or incidently does something out of the ordinary or bizarre, other members of the teasing clan will address this person and remind them of their conduct. Most often this is done in a humorous and boundless way. The main purpose is the create a social control so that other teasing clan members do not get out of line. Boundless means teasing can occur without limit and constraint, but it should be within reason. The victim or subject being teased in this case must not react with anger or violence. They must absorb all the teasing in good humor. Later, they will be given opportunity to seek out a way to retaliate on the other. They must remember, hear of, or observe another teasing clan member doing something out of the ordinary in the scope of

Apsaalooke society. Memory is key to all the events.

In the mainstream power structure, memory takes on a whole different term without the Apsaalooke reverence for respect. Information is gathered, grouped, and categorized. People acknowledge and document information without much consideration for knowledge being part of the whole universe.

Traditionally, there are historical aspects of the culture that are only conducted, spoken about, or told at a certain time of the year. For example, the annual Crow Fair is held late in the summer while hand game activities are mainly exercised during the winter. Other activities like arrow throwing, sun dances, harvesting teepee poles, and other social or religious activities have a designated season. This is typical of the cyclical way of life of the Apsaalooke. Many ceremonies, ritual, and social activities have a specific time during the year when they are performed or practiced. Many of the educational institutions that will be identified have an origin told through a story. For the Apsaalooke, stories about Old Man Coyote, Old Woman's Grandson, and others are told only during cold winter nights. Such stories are told late at night. Elders point out that:

The Apsaalooke tell stories at night during the winter. When a person is telling a story, the women folks make berry pudding and fry bread. This person will tell stories and as long as someone acknowledges. They will keep telling stories until everyone is asleep. If a person did

not catch part of a story, there is always another opportunity. This is how it is done. (E. Little Light, Jr., personal translated conversation, 1997)

Therefore, for the purpose of respecting and recognizing this protocol in the traditional educational system of the Apsaalooke, this research was conducted during the late evening hours during the winter of December of 1996 through February of 1997.

CHAPTER 5

ASHAAMMALIAXXIA

Introduction

You have to know where you came from to know who you are. (G. Reed, Sr., personal conversation, 1997)

Ashaammaliaxxiia, the Apsaalooke Clan System, is a way of life. To be Apsaalooke means to know one's clan. The use of the clan system has always been a part of the religious and social well-being of the Apsaalooke ever since they came to be (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). The system was created by Isaahkawuatee, Old Man Coyote. This supernatural figure is known as a transformer, a being that can change himself into whatever he wanted. He could be a woman or he could be a "no-fire, baaisbilaaleete". These are the beings without fire; basically they are the animals (Takes Horse, translated personal conversation, 1997). Old Man Coyote is also known as the Creator or God. Old Man Coyote is identified to be somewhat like an angel (Flat Lip, translated personal conversation, 1997). Other Apsaalooke elders do not recognize Old Man Coyote as God and make a distinction about him as a helper of God, "Iichihkbaalia". Old Man Coyote is

also referred to as the "Sun, Asaahka Xaalia" (Bull Tail, translated personal conversation, 1997). To the Hidatsa, Old Man Coyote could be Lone Man (Wood, 1986, p. 97-104). Old Man Coyote, a Greasy Mouth Clansman, had helpers and these supernatural beings like angels also had clan memberships. These beings were Shilubay, the fox, and Hissishetwia, Red Woman. Shilubay is considered the first member of the Whistling Water Clan, and Hissishetwia is the first Big Lodge Clan member.

The Apsaalooke have origin stories, deities, and religions. These stories, deities, and religions are institutions. These are environments where the Apsaalooke people learn. Sweat lodges, the Tobacco Society, Pipe Ceremonies, and Apsaalooke the Clan Systems are formal learning, teaching, and educational institutions. These four institutions are also the primary religions of the Apsaalooke culture. The oral traditions of storytelling, teasing clans, mother's brothers as teachers, and heralds are mediums used to teach the Apsaalooke.

The Apsaalooke know God as Iichikbaalia, Akbaatatdia, Aasshke, Issahka, Axee, and Baakukkule (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). Iichikbaalia is living and ever present. It is very difficult to say if many Apsaalooke believe this anymore. There are many supernatural beings recognized by the Apsaalooke like Rides A Painted Horse, the Little People, Seven Buffalo Bulls,

Seven Rams, Shilubay, Old Woman's Grandchild, and many others (Crow Collection, LBHC Library, 1985).

Ashaammaliaxxia, the Apsaalooke Clan System, is the foundation for learning among the Apsaalooke. The description of this system is based on Apsaalooke concepts. Experience from contemporary programs of education will be used as the medium for a bridge in understanding the Apsaalooke Clan System. The participants and the researcher interpreted and reflected upon the dynamics of this system as a foundation for learning as well as teaching cultural applications pertaining to Apsaalooke nativism.

The world must recognize the validity of Apsaalooke research and scholarship. With more Apsaalooke becoming involved in higher education, their experience with mainstream technologies and education should be a resource for formalizing and using these applications to empower their own culture. Possibly, many are not enlightened to the fact that the Apsaalooke culture is a foundation of formal or informal education. Traditionally, the program or curricula of Apsaalooke nativists included much of the community and nature, especially the elders and oral tradition. Natural phenomena was part of the learning and teaching tools to mentor and facilitate Apsaalooke learners. Recognizing the power of elements such as the earth, fire, water, and wind are important.

Apsaalooke educators must recognize facets of the

culture that foster learning and teaching. Documenting aspects of the Apsaalooke Clan System is just a start. The reality of mainstream educational influence is apparent. The Apsaalooke are subjected to the political, economic, and educational control of the government. There are aspects of the mainstream educational system that could be adapted for Apsaalooke use. Educators need to be resourceful and creative by working together. Team efforts of educators with the ability to translate mainstream concepts into Apsaalooke thought would be a tremendous gift toward empowerment and knowledge. Mainstream education is a gift from the generations of Apsaalooke that gave their lives and commitment to preserving what little land base and culture that is left. The least Apsaalooke educators and nativists could do is sacrifice a little of their efforts to strengthen this culture by working together.

The same energy spent by Christian fundamentalists denouncing nativist practices is the same energy they could use to learn about each other. If the Apsaalooke way is going to survive, the communities must work together in rebuilding their heritage. Apsaalooke elders know the balance of nature. Among the Apsaalooke, they are aware that "the people can build you up, and they could also bring you down" (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). This reality must be accepted. It is far too easy to accept the brainwashing of mainstream education systems and go

along with their oppressive cultural invasion.

Clan Membership Reduction

Today, the Apsaalooke identify 10 clans, and these are grouped into 5 phratries. These five phratries are the result of mergers (see p. 7). Historically, Apsaalooke elders identified 13 clans. Prior to the 13, the oldest informant indicated there were more than 20 clans at one time (F. Stewart, personal translated conversation, 1997). There are several reasons for the reduction of the clans. The following discussion addresses problems affecting the clans.

First of all, the members of the clans are being reduced because of the influence of mainstream education, economics, government, religion, and substance abuse. These facets of the mainstream are the enemies of Apsaalooke culture and tradition (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). These influences are affecting the Apsaalooke in negative way, and these facets represent the cultural invasion described earlier.

Many Apsaalooke are unaware of the threat to their unique culture. Basically, they have been brainwashed to think that mainstream ideals are the only ideals. Education for some Apsaalooke is a White man's education. To think that the Apsaalooke traditionalist teach and learn seems to be an abstract.

With less time contributed to their cultural practices, Apsaalooke learners are experiencing more and more conditioning to mainstream ideals such as education system, media, non-Apsaalooke religions, and governmental control. This action takes away from the dynamics of learning cultural practices by interaction and experience. Influences such as the impact of public education are not serving the tribe.

Religious influence of Christianity has been detrimental to the culture, yet the Apsaalooke cannot turn their backs to aspects of this religion that have promoted their survival. Nativist recognize the need for prayer, yet non-Apsaalooke religious institutions represent oppression and control of cultural practices. Early missionaries encouraged Apsaalooke nativist to throw away sacred object and accept the White God. While attending schools, Apsaalooke children were forbidden to express themselves in their sacred and holy language. If they did, they were severely punished. During the early reservation period, the U.S. Government and Christian religion collaborated to destroy support systems like traditional religions (Rowland, 1994). The freedoms stated in the United States Constitution did not apply to Native Americans. Through the use of education, the government and churches tortured and tormented many natives to accept Christian fundamentals and oppressive nature of government controlled education. An

Apsaalooke elder reflected upon the control of church groups such as the Baptists even in the 1940's. Before his death, Edison Real Bird said, "I had to hide in order to Sun Dance. The Reverend would go to a ceremony and see if any members were attending. While I was in there, my fathers hide me under blankets. I was scared of the Reverend. He might whip me.

Fanaticism has reached an all time high on the Crow Reservation. Fundamentalism, such as the Pentacostals, far out number practicing nativists (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). Many are former nativists. Some are kind and considerate of the Apsaalooke traditional practices and sometimes use the Apsaalooke language in their new religion. There are others that denounce, condemn, preach against, and antagonize nativists. This situation is no different from the influence of early Christian groups such as the Jesuits. However, this time the oppressors are the Apsaalookes' own people. There are many good people among these worshipers, yet the influence of oppression and cultural invasion is in their blood. Through hypocrisy, some religious extremists have learned and were conditioned to hate and attack anything different. Others are humble and accept the fact that everyone has a right to pray however they choose.

Fundamentalists have been conditioned to live like their oppressors without realizing their traditional

Apsaalooke values of respect and honor. This religion could be an excellent environment to incorporate nativist customs in their rituals like the honor of clan parents. On the other extreme, one informant described the conflict among family members associated with the fundamentalists and himself as a nativist. While away from home, he returned to find many of his eagle feathers, regalia, sacred objects, and medicines torn up and scattered (Takes Horse, translated personal conversation, 1997). Nativist practices are described as work of the Devil.

Some fundamentalist may not have anything else to stand on. The Apsaalooke culture, language, and values were not part of their foundation for learning. Influences of the mainstream were too overwhelming. Their new religion is all they have to combat the effects of government control, oppression, unemployment, substance abuse, other social problems, and poverty. There are some aspects of each religion that may be similar like the sacred objects of nativist is like the Holy Scriptures. Both pray to God. Many nativists have sacred objects that are associated with supernatural beings such as the spirits. The fundamentalist also recognize spirits in their services. The Apsaalooke nativists have sacred objects and sites; the fundamentalists have the Bible and Israel. Each group prays, yet much effort is put into imitating this non-Apsaalooke religion. These fundamentalist in their attempt to be like Whites are

never going to make it. Their skin will always remain red. Furthermore, the mainstream has been unwilling to accept them. Their blood will always remain Apsaalooke, but their minds are at the control and oppression of the mainstream culture. If they were accepted, they are good models to becoming what the government and Christianity desires in their efforts to control native populations.

This desire of those who are politically dominant is control. The fact of Apsaalooke people sacrificing their values, language, and culture means little except that they are in an easier economic situation to manipulate because of poverty especially if the government wants their land and resources. An elder once described Christian missionaries as follows: "The black robe came with nothing but a Bible and no land. Today his people have our land, and we got his Bible" (L. Old Coyote, Sweat Lodge Ceremony at North Garryowen, 1994).

Spirituality is dynamic on the Apsaalooke Reservation. Christian groups such as the Pentecostal have powerful ways of healing and helping Apsaalooke people. This religion can be somewhat identified as distinctly Apsaalooke because of their spiritual leaders. Healing ceremonies involve supernatural help in form of spirit helpers and angels. The Holy Ghost has a tremendous amount of mysticism and sacredness. This religion is somewhat similar to nativist practices with spirits and sacred medicine bundles except

that only it is applied in a more contemporary environment involving Christian Church settings. This comparison may not be welcomed, but somewhere in the practice of Pentacostalism, there is a lot of nativist influence. The Apsaalooke Clan System could benefit if it was introduced in the Pentecostal ceremonial and social practices. After all, these members are never going to cease to be Apsaalooke. Their great heritage cannot be erased. Past generations of warriors and leaders should not be discredited for their compassion and effort to save this land for the few thousand survivors today.

Threats in the Mainstream

Social problems such as substance abuse, domestic abuse, and other unhealthy behavior is rampant on the reservation. Many people involved with these illicit behaviors totally withdraw from the dynamics of nativist practices. These illnesses are drawing energies of Apsaalooke members away from the healthy and constructive well being of honor and respect. As people become absorbed by this epidemic, they are veering away from the holistic and sacredness of Apsaalooke spirituality. People become exposed to unhealthy and evil energies surrounding their abuse. This has an effect on the clan system and other traditions or religions. On the other hand, they also provide solutions for those caught up in the illnesses. The

nativist practices are healthy and promote well being which is something most needed among those plagued by such problems as alcoholism, drug abuse, spouse abuse, and elderly abuse.

Ashaammaliaxxia can be a tool to promoting healthy living. It is a way of life that has endured for centuries. In describing the significance of the clan system, a Whistling Water stated, "The Apsaalooke Clan System is a means of survival. It builds character, self-respect, moral, and self-esteem" (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). These qualities can contribute to the healing process and reintroduction to learning of Apsaalooke traditions. This could possibly be an intangible need for some people and especially those negatively affected by the mainstream power structure such as poverty and oppression on the reservation.

The previous discussion addresses the influence of factors affecting the Apsaalooke Clan System. More non-traditional Apsaalooke do not recognize Ashaammaliaxxia, or they were not told about it. With approximately 9,000 enrolled Apsaalooke members, about one-third live away from the reservation while little more than half live on the reservation. The others live in off-reservation border towns such as Billings and Hardin. Yet, they are in an environment close to the Apsaalooke culture. During nativist ceremonials, like Sun Dances or Tobacco Society

Ceremonials, at the most, there may be only 80 to 100 Sun Dancers. These participants have family support such as spouses, children, siblings, and extended family that may amount to four or five people each. This multiples ceremonial participants to roughly 500 to 600. Of this 600, all may recognize the Apsaalooke Clan System, and they also participate in Sweat Lodge and Peyote Ceremonies. A few will be Tobacco Society members. Basically these active nativists represent less than less 7% of the population. Even if 1,000 Apsaalooke can be identified as nativist, this is only 11% of the population.

These situations and facets of the mainstream describe the changes in the Apsaalooke Clan System. There are many Apsaalooke people that do not know the significance of the clan system. A nativist that describes the clan system will say it is a religion. Any Apsaalooke unaware of the structure and function will think that as a religion it must have a church. The impression will be of formal non-Apsaalooke religious practices. The cultural invasion by the mainstream is one of the major factors affecting the membership of Apsaalooke Clan System. Apsaalooke members that contribute more time and energy in the practice of mainstream values do not recognize the significance of the Apsaalooke Clan System as a means of learning, teaching, knowledge, experience, scholarship, and education.

Impact of Disease and Warfare

In historic times, the Apsaalooke Clan System experienced changes by disease and warfare. Memberships were reduced, and this contributed to mergers of some clans (Red Wolf, translated personal conversation, 1997). Contrary to non-Apsaalooke reports of one small pox epidemic, Apsaalooke elders indicate three major epidemics that nearly annihilated everyone (L. Flat Lip, translated personal conversation, 1997). In an Apsaalooke nativist's book, it is mentioned that the epidemics were strategies of genocide committed by the U.S. Government (Old Coyote, 1993, p. 10). Almost 97% of the population was destroyed in these three waves of the disease. After the first result, many missionaries and government representatives used the effect of small pox among natives as a strategy to raid their lands. Acknowledging the catastrophic effects on Native Americans, they conspired to spread the disease in contaminated blankets and clothing (L. Old Coyote, personal conversation, 1993). When an army hospital in Washington, D.C., treated many numbers of small pox patients, they boxed the blankets and shipped them to the Apsaalooke (I. Bad Bear, translated personal conversation, 1997). This initiative of genocide eliminated men, women, and children that occupied land desired by the early representatives of the mainstream power structure.

Clans such as the Bad War Deeds were nearly eliminated

and had to merge with the Whistling Waters (L. Flat Lip, translated personal conversation, 1997). Other clans also experienced the trauma of small pox and had to do likewise. Warfare had little effect on the reduction of clan members compared to the devastating results of the small pox epidemics. However, there were some clans that were nearly wiped out by enemy raids (E. Little Light, Jr., translated personal conversation, 1997). For example, one band of Apsaalooke, the Beaver Dries It Fur Band, was said to have been found massacred in the Southwest (McCleary, 1993).

Numbers reported by early anthropologists do not support Apsaalooke knowledge and oral history. These reports serve non-Apsaalooke entities especially those involved with perpetuating an existence of oppression and control on the reservations. The population estimated at approximately 8,000 in the early 1800's does not support the numbers of Apsaalooke needed to control their large homelands that extended into Canada, the Green River region of Idaho, Colorado, the Dakotas, Wyoming, the Platte River area of Nebraska, and most of Montana. In order to control a land base of this magnitude, the number of Apsaalooke are misrepresented. Calculations by contemporary Apsaalooke educators while comparing archival reports indicate that because of disease and warfare near the 1800's, the Apsaalooke lost nearly 30,000 members (L. Flat Lip, translated personal conversation, 1997). This population

figure is near the 35,000 estimate made by a former tribal leader, Edison Real Bird, in the 1970's.

The loss of vast numbers of Apsaalooke cited by oral tradition indicate, in all likelihood, that there were at least 20 clans as were reported. Possibly many of them became extinct due mainly by disease and partially through warfare (F. Stewart, translated personal conversation, 1997). This is a major historical change that adversely affected the Apsaalooke Clan System. Furthermore, populations were totally annihilated.

Clans became extinct by the loss of members through disease and war. The people most affected were women because they perpetuate the existence of the clans. When clans did not have female offspring, that ended the clan. This role is important in the Apsaalooke Clan System. Some clans had very few women members, so the result was to merge (Moccasin, translated personal conversation, 1997). Populations were reduced by germ warfare and confrontation. This government initiative proved devastating to many Native Americans. For the Indians, it was one of the most evil, dastardly, and unholy acts of all time.

In their country, the Apsaalooke have traditionally been friendly and good hosts. There were known for their diplomacy and intelligence. There were many times when their traditional enemies became their friends and relatives. War did not always happen; peace and truce

occurred often.

With the transition into the reservation period, the traditional economy of the Apsaalooke came to an end. No longer could they trade with their Hidatsa and Mandan relatives, nor could they harvest the elk herds of the Beartooths or Rockies. They no longer go on war parties and practice the deeds that were initiations into leadership roles. Lakota, Pikuni, and Cheyenne women were now safe from being the wives of Apsaalooke warriors. Apsaalooke say that this was unfortunate. New blood could no longer be brought in the gene pool. In traditional times, Apsaalooke warriors often brought home women and children of other tribes and adopted them as their own. Most often, when given the opportunity to return to their people, the naturalized Apsaalooke chose to stay. Many have found peace among the Apsaalooke and in their land.

Adoption

Another change affecting the Apsaalooke Clan System is their own initiative to do something about the threats to the culture. The number of clans has been reducing over the years, and most of the responses by the Apsaalooke have been reactionary (P. Crooked Arm, personal translated conversation, 1997). Mergers occurred when memberships dwindled. The Apsaalooke were at an all time low when the reservation period began. Records indicate that at one

point there were only 1400 enrolled Apsaalooke, and a number of these were the non-Indian neighbors or non-Indian spouses of Apsaalooke (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). Their traditional practices of increasing membership came to an end during this period. They were nearly wiped out and are barely surviving. All their foundations of education, governance, history, science, and economy were literally destroyed. Their desperation response called for mergers, where traditionally their numbers could have been increased by other means.

Finally, the process of increasing membership in the clans is through the adoption process. Today, fewer and fewer Apsaalooke members are adopting new family members. The main religion of the Apsaalooke, the Tobacco Society, is founded on this practice. Elders have indicated that people still adopt but often only if they want to attract attention or for show (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). Many are adopting non-Indian members, mainly Whites, into the clans. However most of these people do not live or contribute in anyway to the well-being of all the Apsaalooke. Historically, other tribal peoples were adopted by the Apsaalooke much like naturalized citizens. The Apsaalooke are not full bloods; they are genetically produced hybrids of other tribes (B. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997). The blood of the Apsaalooke contains that of many of the plains tribes and others

including non-Indians.

There is a situation among today's tribal members. As the result of mixed-race or intertribal marriages, there are children produced that lack both the benefits of both maternal and paternal clan membership. In historic times, this would not be allowed, and a new person brought into the tribe would be formally adopted. Of the approximately 9,000 currently enrolled, many of these tribal members do not have a clan affiliation. For example, if an Apsaalooke man belonging to the Ashkamne Clan married an Arapaho woman and if she was not adopted in the clan system, their children would only benefit from being a clan child of the Ashkamne Clan (Piegan Clan). Although by legal blood quantum, the male child offspring could still be Apsaalooke, but in the traditional perspective, this child does not have a clan. The child would still benefit from the teasing clan aspect of the Ashaammaliaxxia, yet the child could not be called upon to help clan children unless the child was adopted by parents that have clan membership. If this child marries outside the tribe and produces children, these children would not be part of the traditional clan system even though they are one-fourth Apsaalooke. It would especially be difficult for a female child of an Apsaalooke man and mother from a different tribe. A male can marry an Apsaalooke woman, and they will have a clan. However, a female offspring of an Apsaalooke male and a woman from another

tribe that marries an Apsaalooke man will not have a clan (Flat Lip, translated personal conversation, 1997). Again, they would still be clan children and have the rights of teasing clan practices.

The responsibility of perpetuating Ashaammaliaxxia belongs to the nativists and others that know the function of clan practices. Responsibilities include adoption. A tremendous step would be accomplished by reintroducing the clan system to intertribal and mixed race members of the tribe. Any enrolled Apsaalooke has the right to know where they came from and to know what they are about. More environments for learning traditional practices must be promoted. This includes formal dinners, birthday parties, celebration, graduation, clan feeds, butchering beef, and whatever activity that could bring together Apsaalooke people. Participating in and encouraging others to become active in the dynamics of the culture is a step in the right direction.

The Tobacco Society is the only traditional religion that is uniquely Apsaalooke. The Sweat Lodge, Ashaammaliaxxia, Bear Dance Ceremonies, and Pipe Ceremonies can all be traced to the Hidatsa (B. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997). This nativist custom is key to promoting the well-being of the Apsaalooke Clan System and other cultural practices. Adoption is a major facet of this religion. An attribute of this religion promotes

economic wealth. The sacred tobacco is part of many medicine bundles that contribute to the economic well-being of Tobacco Society members. Wealth goes along with Iichihchia (B. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997). Apsaalooke must promote this religion with the adoption of members in order for the clan system to survive.

There are other adoption procedures that the Apsaalooke practice. During public gatherings, a family can adopt a member by proclamation. Through an honored herald, the family can ask to inform those gathered about their intentions. As the herald describes the relationship, the new family member is introduced to the community (B. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997). There, new relationships are determined. Teasing clan members will be identified and brother-in-laws will be introduced and told of their roles. Other siblings, clan parents, and clan children will have their first acquaintance with a new relative.

Other ways of adoption as observed by elders are through Pipe Ceremonies and proclamation. Some Apsaalooke siblings give the care of their natural children to another family. This honored family then bestows their clan membership to the new and blessed member (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). Children are considered blessings to the Apsaalooke, and they are a contribution to the wealth and well-being of families. If more initiatives

were taken by current Apsaalooke members to exercise the adoption practices, this action would be a constructive movement to revitalizing the culture particularly when there are a lot of Apsaalooke members that are unaware of their clan affiliations.

In recent times, the researcher observed adoptions that occurred during dinners, in Sweat Lodge Ceremonies, during Peyote Religion Ceremonials, and through casual conversations under the cool shade of a tree. Having relatives is one of the best things in the world for the Apsaalooke. There should be no hesitation in the promotion of the Tobacco Society and their adoption as well other adoption practices. This is especially important to many of the enrolled tribal members that need to learn about the clan system. The Tobacco Society's association with wealth should encourage Apsaalooke members to increase their wealth by promoting this religion (B. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997).

Ashaammaliaxxia, the Function

Respect and honor through kinship are the main qualities of the function of the Apsaalooke Clan System (R. Real Bird, translated personal conversation, 1997). This respect and honor through kinship is a way of life. All throughout the culture, respect and honor are recognized. It is a practice and an ongoing exercise. Apsaalooke

elders identify respect as the most dominant quality reflecting the identity of the Apsaalooke. The following discussion describes the primary function of the Apsaalooke Clan System. These functions are the most important aspects of the clan system.

Following the discussion of the function, each clan will be presented. Each clan has a name and a particular association with the tribe. Through this association is how they are identified. For example, the Big Lodge clans people were known for being husky and very big people; therefore this is the name of their clan and how they are identified. This identification is not as important as the role and function of the Apsaalooke Clan System. The main purpose is to describe the functions of the clan system and how it applies to learning.

Years ago a story was told. This story described four brothers and the traditional religions of the Apsaalooke. Whistling Water people have a different version from the Bad War Deeds clansmen while other clans tell of similar versions. The common message is about the power associated with Ashaammalixxia as a religion. The following is published summary of the story.

Four brothers decide to worship in four different ways to see who will be the most successful and live the longest. One brother prays to the Sun. Every morning at sunrise, he's up and make an offering to the Sun. The second man goes out to fast and thirst. He stays out sacrificing from one to four days at a time, returns to camp for a few days, and then fasts again. The third brother

builds sweat lodges and calls men of importance to come in and sweat with him. The fourth man feasts and gives gifts to his clan uncles and aunts, men and women of this father's clan. Whenever a deer or buffalo is killed, he feeds these people.

The faster becomes a prominent man, but is soon killed. The Sun worshiper becomes famous as well, but like his fasting brother is killed. The sweat lodge owner lives to a good age, becomes a chief, and then dies. But the fourth brother, the one who feasts and gives gifts to his clan uncles and aunts, becomes a great chief and lives to such an age that "when he moves his skin tears." His deeds are the greatest. Since then, this practice of honoring our clan uncles and aunts has continued. (Frey, 1987, p. 41)

Whistling Water elders indicate that the Sweat Lodge worshiper was a leader and lived a long time but was not as wealthy as the brother who fed his clan parents. This story is presented to tell the significance and importance of the Apsaalooke Clan System. The other religions are just as important because they are all interrelated.

The following discussion will address the roles of relationships surrounding an individual. References are based on the researcher's personal reflection of the ongoing lifelong learning process as an Apsaalooke which is supported by the formal and informal interviews with elders. These views are expressed primarily from the experiences of the Whistling Water Clan child as a member of the Big Lodges. There are many other possible combinations. The identity of the clan also is a factor, but function is the key process of learning. The term "child of" refers to the father's clan while "being a member" addresses the maternal clan.

Clan Parents

The clan parents are siblings of an Apsaalooke child's father. They are called "Aassahke". An Apsaalooke's membership to a clan has two affiliations. First, the person is a clan child of the father's clan. Next as a clan member, they have an affiliation just like a support system (J. Smells, translated personal conversation, 1997).

Basically, an Apsaalooke is born into two clans and is identified by the maternal clan. The Aassahke are both male and female. Members of this affiliation are always treated with respect and honor. These members belong to the same clan as an individual's father. Male members of the Assahke are also called Assahke or "Axee" which means fathers.

Female members are called "Isbaaxia". Isbaaxia are paternal aunts and refer to a clan child as "isbaapite" (W. Moccasin, translated personal conversation, 1997). This term also means grandchild. Even though they are aunts, they have the privilege of using the term for their clan children.

Females address their clan uncles as "isaake" and clan aunt as "isbaaxia".

A published description about the purpose of Aasahke points out that "Aasahke provides praise, prayer, and protection" (Frey, 1987, p. 46). An Apsaalooke elder described the clan system in general as "a means for survival for building character, self-respect, moral, and self-esteem (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997).

Ashaammaliaxxia is described as the socio-religious function of the Apsaalooke. Aasahke is the primary religious part of the Apsaalooke Clan System. When male members of the same clan have children, these children are "teasing clans members". This is the social role of the Apsaalooke Clan System. Members of a clan also have other social relationships.

Apsaalooke people practice a religion that involves feeding and honoring a person's "Aasahke". It is a spiritual custom. When describing the process, the Apsaalooke say, "Aasahke baaluushe'chek", which literally means feeding your clan parents. Old Man Coyote was credited with saying, "No matter how poor, no matter how pitiful, no matter how unaccomplished your clan father may be, whatever he says on your behalf to the spiritual realm will come true" (Old Horn & McCleary, 1994, p. 68). This is the purpose for feeding clan fathers and mothers. Feeding them and offering them gifts for their prayers and wishes is the intent.

Any member of a clan can be a clan parent. They are born into the clan system automatically as a child and is a parent through their maternal membership. These relations are always there even for those in the spirit world (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). Parent and sibling roles are predominant. Grandparent roles are distinguished, yet among the Apsaalooke there are no such relationships as

cousins, aunt, and uncles. These relationships are distinguished more importantly as parental or sibling affiliations (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997).

During practices of feeding clan fathers, they are given gifts for their prayers and wishes for whatever intent is mentioned by the host or the clan child. Apsaalooke recognize "wishes" as prayers. When a clan father expresses a wish, he is expressing a process of the vision form of prayer among the Apsaalooke. By describing a wish, a clan father is reflecting upon an intention to some day see his words come true. The following comments depict the clan parent relationship.

Respect is offered to one's aasahke in various forms. An individual may meet a clan uncle in passing at grocery store or a social gathering and give him a dollar, saying "Get something good to eat or drink." It is improper to walk in front of one's aasahke while they are seated at a public gathering. When an individual receives an honor, such as being elected to tribal council office, dancing in a first powwow, graduating from high school, returning from military service unhurt, or winning an arrow-throw championship, the individual will hold a giveaway (ammaakee), in which he or she offers gifts to his or her various aasahke. (Frey, 1987, p. 46)

There are many more contributions to a person's well being that are attributed to the respect and honor of clan parents. This study is indirectly based on the wishes of clan fathers made around the fire place where ceremonies were conducted. Much of the personal successes, achievements, and experiences of the researcher were accomplished through this process. This includes state

championships in athletics and degrees in higher education.

Apsaalooke parents will invite a clan mother or father to a feast organized to "name a child". The father consults one of his siblings for naming their clan child.

Ordinarily, men name boys while women name girls. This naming process is not the precedence since grandfather, grandmothers, and other honored Apsaalooke including siblings can have this right to name a child.

When the family goes to a clan parent to name a child, the clan parent is honored and respected for past deeds and accomplishments. This might include their valor in the armed services, outstanding academic achievements, excellent leadership qualities, athletic superiority, well-known horsemanship, high qualities of good parenting such as raising dignified children, having many grandchildren, foundations of devotion toward religion and spirituality, caring for sacred objects or medicines, and many more qualities of success according the knowledge of the Apsaalooke. These are contemporary successes while traditional achievement may include the ability to lead successful hunting expeditions, victorious war parties, an abundant amount of coups counted against enemies, motherhood roles of maintaining a good household, raising excellent crops, harvesting outstanding yields, being dependable, and devotion toward family..

From these deeds or representations of nature, clan

parents will describe their exploits, dreams, visions, achievements, or sacred spiritual animal helpers of their experience. A name will be developed through this experience, and a child will be bestowed the name along with the glory and good fortune from the event. The clan parent like those of the Big Lodges will either describe their deeds and the new name, or they will consult a herald to share this information with all those gathered at the event. For example, a male elder may describe a time when one of his elders "Seized Two Guns" from their enemy during war, thereby counting one of the four requirements for being recognized for traditional leadership by the Apsaalooke. These requirements were part of the coups counted by warriors in historic times. With this event, he names his clan child.

Clan children also turn to their aasahke for health needs and healing. This includes well-being and protection. If a person is having difficult times and is faced with trauma, clan parents are asked to intervene in order to bring "good days" for their clan children. The power of the feeding and offering gifts to the aasuhke is awesome and mystical. They have been instrumental in clearing illnesses and aid healing. During the protection process, many Apsaalooke participate in dangerous and often life threatening activities where they risk injury such as war, traveling far, or rodeo. Clan parents will be consulted to

ask Itchikbaalia to provide protection and guidance for their child in whatever they are doing. Good health is one of the most vital aspects of well-being among the Apsaalooke just like good health for relatives is as important to living well. Elders always mention this aspect in their wishes, prayers, and conversation. Honoring and respecting the asahke promotes this well-being.

Apsaalooke recognize their clan parents all the time and anywhere. Clan feeds can occur whenever there is the need. Feeding the aasuhke is important in good times and during hard time. It must be practiced in the realms of all Apsaalooke functions of culture and tradition (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). Even if clan children are doing well and has no immediate need for anything, they will still provide a gift or some gesture of respect to their clan parents. These can be gifts that are extraordinary and expensive, or they can be practical. Most nativists like to provide four different gifts for clan parents. Clan Children will provide their clan father tobacco, food, clothing, and money. At clan feeds clan parents are given fine tobacco, cedar, bear root, other herbs, pemmican, powdered meat, dry meat and dinner, Pendleton and Hudson Bay Blankets, suits, buffalo robes, buckskins, quill work, beadwork, other regalia, and many fine expensive crafts that a clan parent deserves.

Apsaalooke are taught to know who their clan parents

are and to honor and respect this relationship. Even the young children are clan parents. They are treated with dignity and reverence. If an Apsaalooke is out in the public or attending community event, they will be conscious of their presence and look for their clan parents. They do this so they do not offend their clan parents by crossing in front of them. If it is necessary, they will greet them and shake their hand, thereby recognizing their relationship of honor and respect. It would be rude and disrespectful to go in front of them because they are the ones responsible for promoting the spiritual well-being of a clan child's life. It is customary to inform or pardon one's self if it is necessary to cross in front of a clan father even if this clan father is a toddler. They might not know the practice, but if they understand the respect, it is a practice contributing to their learning.

Clan parents are important to the spiritual well-being of Apsaalooke people. The clan father has a responsibility of interceding with the spiritual world and promoting their child to be blessed in a sacred manner. The words a clan parent expresses are heard by the supernatural world and by some routine of mysticism, they are allowed to happen. A clan child's world is full of many different energies. If this clan child is influenced by contradicting and negative forces, there could be consequences and suffering. The children may have laughed at a clan parent or conducted

themselves in a disrespectful way by crossing in front of their clan parents without recognizing them. Negative actions have repercussions. For this violation, sometimes a clan parent's wishes or prayers may not come about because of the way the children conduct themselves and how their parents have taught them.

When the prayers and wishes are expressed, they are a responsibility of the clan parent. In some way they have a lifelong obligation to maintain the spiritual guidance for a clan child. On the other end, a clan child also has an obligation to honor and respect the traditions, values, and practices of the clan system. One elder indicated, "We can pray and offer penance until we are blue in the face, but they won't do anything because the one we are praying for has to do their part" (L. Old Coyote, Sweat Lodge Ceremony, 1995). It is an interrelated function of spiritual practices of the Apsaalooke.

Clan parents especially clan fathers have an obligation to speak on the behalf of their children (Old Horn & McCleary, 1994 p. 68). They serve in the role of promoting their child's self-esteem. By speaking on behalf of their children, clan fathers will tell about the accomplishments and successes of their child. Basically, it is like a support system where the clan fathers boast of victories of their child without the individual having to speak about them self. It is a community function for building

character. Other clan fathers have formal rites to honor and praise their clan child. They can do this through songs that offer praise or during public events they can formally orate about their clan child's accomplishments.

Clan fathers have praise songs to honor their child. Many of these fathers have the honor of speaking in public. As herald or announcers, they can publicly describe the victorious or honorable accounts of a child (Frey, 1987). Wherever a clan father goes, he may sometime get into a debate on the outstanding abilities of his children. The Whistling Water Clan has many successes, and sometime around the fire at a Sweat Lodge Ceremony, they will describe the feats accomplished by their children. This clan also has a special ritual and song to honor Whistling Water children. In 1995, the researcher was bestowed this honor in front of thousands of spectators in the Montana State University Field House. The audience was told of an event when the researcher risked his life to save a man from a burning automobile. The Montana Highway Patrol provided a certificate based on the merits of life saving. During the Crow Fair, Hand Game Tournaments, New Years Dances, feasts, birthday parties, or other formal activities, clan fathers can be seen praising their children.

The Apsaalooke recognize clan parents as that; they are not declared siblings or even buddies because of the sanctity of the parent relationship. Their role is

important and the sanctity of this kinship must be respected. Clan parents should always be acknowledged and honored at all times even if the gesture is just a hand shake. Nativist Apsaalooke go to great lengths to provide offerings to their clan fathers and mothers. The mainstream reaction to depleting resources out of the pocketbook is far from the thoughts of someone offering gifts. Those giving understand that no amount of material wealth can measure up with the cost of happiness and well-being among family members. Apsaalooke parents do the very best for their children because they love them. It is especially important to go to great lengths of devotion and dedication in order to see that the spirit world carries forth the wishes and prayers of clan parents. When family members demonstrate the love for their honored and pitiful children, this can be seen by the spirit world and Iitchikbaalia almost as an act of prayer and penance. This is a contribution to the wishes and prayers of the clan parents.

Maternal Clan Affiliation

A person born to Apsaalooke parents belongs to his or her mother's clan. Years ago, the clans were a support system just as much as they are today. Back then, clans camped together, hunted together, fought together, and celebrated together. The clans were a larger version to extended families.

Clans stayed together. When members achieved successes, they accredited their victories to the foundation of the Apsaalooke Clan System. The clans were part of all three bands of Apsaalooke. Members of the clans look out for each other. Clan brothers treat each with a special kind of respect which is both mutual and social. The clan sisters perpetuate the membership. The following are characteristics that exemplify maternal clan members.

The Crow clans are very competitive in sports, social, and military affairs and activities. This instills in the individual motivation and desire to achieve excellence in all clan undertakings and activities.

It is here that the Crow individual is convinced that he is first a clansman and second a tribesman! If he is a good clansman then it follows that he is a good tribesman. I believe this is the main feature of the Crow matrilineal clan system.

There has always been and still is today mutual concern, helpfulness, and sharing of responsibilities within the matrilineal clan. The needy, aged, and less fortunate members are generally provided with food, shelter, clothing, and other needs. (Medicine Crow & Bradley, 1977, p. 19)

It was unethical for members of the same maternal clan to marry each other. Apsaalooke can trace clan heritage to past generation when people were closely related. Elders have mentioned that paternal siblings were also discouraged from marrying. The clan system is founded upon principles of kinship. Marrying within a clan is like incest. This even extended to refraining Apsaalooke men from marrying their paternal aunt or "isbaaxia". Apsaalooke understood

genetics and adopted other tribes to produce the current hybrid species of Native American (B. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997). This is why adoption, kinship, and clan system are very important.

The special respect that clan brothers exercise is for the role of "aasahke". Each male member of a clan serves as the clan father for all of his clan brothers' children. A male clan member's older brother are called "iike" while the younger ones are called "ichuuke". Sisters call their older brothers "isalee" or "isbatchee". A sister's younger brother is called, "ichuuke". These members do not treat each other the way teasing clan members do. They know that they may be turned to intervene through spiritual practices on the behalf of a clan child. Honoring the clan brother is just as important as honoring a clan father especially for their children. The respect and honor for a clan brother is just like an investment. Quality is strived (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). When the male siblings have children, these children become teasing clan members or Iiwatkusshe.

These relationships are very special. In the event of hardship, a male sibling may ask his brother to raise his children for him. A female will also ask her sister to the same. This is an adoption process where a person receives the children of their siblings. These hardships might be caused by illness or marital problems. It is important for

a Apsaalooke children to have parents. If one parent is missing, it becomes difficult for the child (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997).

When Old Man Coyote and Shilubay first developed the clan system, they declared their own membership. They then assigned different Apsaalooke groups as Whistling Waters, Bad War Deeds, Big Lodges, Newly Made Lodges, Piegans, Greasy Mouths, Sore Lips, Ties in a Bundles, Brings Game Home without Shooting, and Filth Eaters. Women and their female children were the ones that passed along membership. From the time a female child is conceived, she has a clan, she has clan parents, and she has clan children. Even after living earth's surface, she still has those kinship ties. As long as there is a little girl among the clan, there is a hope to perpetuate the clan membership. A young girl becomes a Big Lodge or Whistling Water because her mother was one as were all those females before her. A clan is threatened when there are too few female members; years ago this was said to be the case when clans became extinct (Moccasin, translated personal conversation, 1997).

Female clan members are always "isbaaxia". This means they have clan children, and this is how they are addressed. In general a male clan member will identify his sister as "isbia". More specifically, older ones are called "isahkaate", and the younger ones are referred to as "isahchiite". Females address their older sisters as

"isahkaate" while the younger sisters are called "isooke" (J. Smells, translated personal conversation, 1997).

In the Apsaalooke language, males have specific words used to address specific relationship, and females have their own. For example, siblings with the same father each refer to him differently. The males call his father "iilapxe", and the female sibling calls her father "isaake" (Red Wolf, translated personal conversation, 1997). It is improper for an Apsaalooke to use the wrong gender in addressing specific kinships.

Today, clan members socialize and worship together. North of Garryowen, Montana, the tradition is maintained. Whistling Water members participate in Sweat Lodge Ceremonies, Pipe Ceremonies, and Peyote Ceremonies together. Many of their children are Big Lodges with a few exceptions. The Whistling Water Clan fathers are very instrumental as teachers and facilitators of the experience in helping learners, their clan children, understand Apsaalooke knowledge, culture, language, and values.

Throughout the reservation, there are a handful of nativist families dedicated to this practice. It is very threatened by people and institutions that ostracize nativist practices such as the Christian fundamentalist groups and government controlled education and by the lack of control by the tribal government which lacks the power to organize an education system based on their cultural needs.

"Iiwatkusshe", The Teasing Clan

Clan brothers' children provide a foundation of another aspect of learning among the Apsaalooke. This is the teasing clan. They are the children of clan brothers (Old Horn & McCleary, 1994). The basis of this function is more applicable to social experiences. The role of the teasing clan is to help each other (D. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997).

Years ago, it was not like it is today. Teasing clan members would say something very direct which almost always seemed humiliating. This was not the purpose. The purpose was to correct ill-behavior, conceitedness, or unusual conduct. Directly addressing someone's improper conduct was a way to help them become a better person (D. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997). Other times, individuals are brought down to earth or humbled by the fact that teasing clan members will point out how they are being conceded or depressed.

The teasing clan system operates as a neutralizing mechanism for balance in the social and spiritual worlds. People are reminded that some of their misfortune may be attributed to their odd behavior, and teasing clan members are quick to point this out. When an individual becomes centered too much on his or her own ego, it can be harmful. A teasing clan member will look for this and address this situation because it may affect someone's holistic life.

Odd or strange behavior could also be detrimental to the whole community. This is why it could be addressed through the teasing clan.

Teasing clan siblings do not have many rules except that they can only use this practice with other children of fathers who are of the same clan (B. Old Coyote, Jr., translated personal conversation, 1997). If a person is continually haphazard, clumsy, accident-prone, miserable, grabby, gluttonous, greedy, lustful, envious, jealous, selfish, and behaving peculiar, then they are subjects to ribbing or direct confrontation of comments by their teasing siblings. The custom of the teasing clan requires that if anyone is being addressed by their siblings, they must not react or display anger.

Basically, the teasing is another form of oral tradition that gives children of fathers who are of the same clan a right to directly address misdeeds of other siblings because this behavior could be unhealthy and may cause problems in the community. In the days before Christianity and mainstream influences, the ordinary Apsaalooke person did not speak out in public because this was a sacred right. A person among the Apsaalooke had to have one of the several rights as a "person that speaks loud" or as a public herald. Speaking and words were considered very holy and sacred, so only a few responsible people had the privilege to express their voices of the public. If it was necessary, an

individual would seek the assistance of a herald or "one that speaks out loud" to express their intentions. So, communication between people occurred predominantly in private circles. Learners were encouraged to keep quiet and not interrupt their elders during teachings through oral tradition. Speaking is a privilege, and words can influence the spiritual world. Apsaalooke are always taught to watch what they say. With the teasing clan aspect, individuals who were clan children were able to directly express their opinion about the wrongdoings of their siblings.

This right works like the theoretical checks and balances of government. It is a common privilege that paternal clan children share in expressing words out loud. Clan children keep an eye on one and another because they are representing children of their father's clan. Any illicit or detrimental behavior reflects upon their fathers. In preventing humiliation and embarrassment among the fathers' clan, clan children directly address the wrongdoings of their siblings.

The impression of the teasing clan system is not to belittle or humiliate members. Although these tactics are sometimes applied, the main aspect is that the paternal clan children help each other out in a holistic way since their behavior affects social and spiritual planes. If one teasing clan member reacts and displays anger, it is a violation of the oral tradition. This member may be

disowned and publicly ridiculed for their behavior. Other paternal clan siblings will organize to address this behavior of one of their members. The person that reacted and demonstrated unethical behavior must make offerings of tobacco and other gifts to get back in good with his siblings.

If disowned by a paternal teasing clan, a person who acts angrily and hasty may face dire consequences. The teasing clan practice is a system for the balance of life forces. If people do not recognize this facet of their life, they become out of balance and steadily become out of sorts until finally they go over the edge and possibly die. This practice is a contribution to mental health.

Teasing clan members use this practice all the time. Like any privilege, it can be abused. If a person realizes that they are the focus of their teasing clan, they will adjust or change in some way to not be scrutinized. Once a person is directly confronted by their paternal clan siblings, they must be patient and humble. By doing this, they know that if they are attentive and aware of their surroundings in the future, they will be able to catch the one that is ribbing them doing something wrong. It is a system that promotes learning and social control. The conditioning needed to accept this system requires commitment and trust. The reality and harshness of the system can be painful just like the cliché, which states

"the truth hurts". This is the focal point of the system.

Apsaalooke people are taught to know their clan members, their clan parents, clan children, and teasing clan siblings. They also know the members of the other clans too. By learning these relationships, they understand how to demonstrate their respect and honor. The system is holy. There is great joy in arriving at a public gathering and seeking out teasing clan siblings. If they are there, then the event will be joyous and fun. Teasing clan relationships are very important and healthy to Apsaalooke people.

There is much tact involved with demonstrating the practice among teasing clan members. Men can be boundless amongst each other in addressing the wrongdoings of their male siblings, but they must not be too extreme with females. Paternal siblings like a brother and sister do not go to the extreme like males do. A brother might casually make a remark or none at all out of respect. Sisters respect their brothers and seldom address their wrongdoings because they will not want to humiliate them. Many times, a sister may observe her paternal brother marry. She then will realize that she has a sister-in-law, so she must provide nice gifts to her because she loves her brother. The brother does likewise. If his paternal sister gets married, then he has a new brother-in-law which he must honor and respect with fine gifts also.

The paternal clan children have an obligation to provide gifts or money if their clan parent happens to slip or fall. It is very improper to be a witness to this event. Occasionally, during a public event, an announcer will tell those gathered that a member of a certain clan has fallen. It is up to the clan children to seek out their clan parent. At that time, they provide him or her with a gift or money. The purpose is to relieve the embarrassment. It is also gesture of respect and concern.

Teasing clan members have other responsibilities. There is a practice among clan children that involves purchasing actions or behavior from their clan fathers. If a clan father misbehaves or does something uncharacteristic in front of their clan children, it could be humiliating. Therefore, a clan child purchases the right of this action, thereby giving the child license to the behavior. It also deters and relieves the humiliation brought onto the clan father. The humiliation is now upon the child, who basically takes the brunt of the embarrassment (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). Years ago, the leader for the tribe was a Whistling Water. He had to leave a community function early to catch a flight where he would represent the tribe. While everyone was lining up for dinner, he cut in front of the line to get his plate. Some Whistling Water children saw this and heard others mumbling, so they purchased this right from their clan father. In

turn, the Whistling Water children now have license to cut into lines, but the main point was to detract the attention from their clan father (F. Real Bird, translated personal conversation, 1997). The clan child that buys the right has the option of sharing it with his siblings or of throwing it away. The purpose for sharing is because it might be useful. On the other hand, a clan child purchases the license to throw it away so it will not be used again. Exercising this action is a measure to prevent the mistake from ever happening among the paternal clan again (S. Takes Horse, translated personal conversation, 1997).

When teasing clan members are interacting, a visitor could easily get the wrong impression. The remarks made by these siblings can be sarcastic and bizarre; this is especially so among men. They are downright blunt. Being a member of a teasing clan is a privilege of the Apsaalooke Clan System. It is also as important as being a clan child and a clan parent. Teasing clan members bring humor and laughter amongst each other. They support and help each other in the social realm of the culture. It is an excellent system contributing to the cultural learning of Apsaalooke nativists.

Summary

The following contribution describes the "Paternal Clan System". This outline was used in a Native American Studies

class at Little Big Horn College in 1977. It is an excellent summary of the previous discussion. It was developed by an Apsaalooke educator and a contemporary writer on Apsaalooke history.

The Crow Paternal Clan System

This is perhaps a more meaningful and functional day-to-day experience thing in the life of the Crow Indian than the matrilineal system. Here the relationships between a person and the members of his or her father's clan (paternal clansmen) are set in definite and clear terms. These become the usual and accepted ways, the customs, to wit:

1. Relation of a person to his or her paternal clansmen (Asaahke or fathers and Ishbaaxia or mothers):
 - A. Must always show respect, courtesy, and honor by:
 - a. Addressing and referring to one's male paternal clansmen (Asaahke) as "father" and female paternal clansmen as "mother" (Ishbaaxia)
 - b. Not crossing in front of Asaahke when seated.
 - c. Giving something to a "father" or "mother" when she or he slipped or stumbled and had fallen.
 - d. Inviting Asaahke and Ishbaaxia to feasts and giving presents.
 - e. Asking Asaahke or Ishbaaxia to bestow a name upon one's child or grandchild.
 - f. In serious and important undertaking one will ask an Asaahke or Ishbaaxia to advise, bless, and support him all the way. In the old intertribal war days young warriors would do this when going on a warpath.
 - g. When a person is having a hard time, having a series of misfortunes, bad luck etc. he or she will ask an Asaahke to

come and give him spiritual comfort, by praying for him and making "good medicine" for him.

- h. A person may acquire the right or license to emulate a clan father's or mother's unusual, unique, or humorous mannerism by giving him or her a gift, generally money nowadays. This called "buying one's ways". This custom fosters good humor and fellowship in the community.
2. Relations of a paternal clansman (Asaahke or Ishbaaxia) to a person must always be an expression of concern for his or her welfare by:
 - A. Addressing and referring to the male as "son" and female as "daughter".
 - B. Being always ready and willing to come when requested to advise, comfort, and pray for his recovery if ill, for his release from problem situations, etc...
 3. Relations between and among children of a paternal clan:
 - A. All become opposites, contrary to one another and in juxtaposition. These "children" are often referred to "joking clan relatives" and they themselves refer to one another as "grandmothers".
 - B. These people receive practical jokes, jibes, reproofs, and downright criticisms from each other. They fabricate humorous anecdotes and tales about each other to induce laughter.

This custom is a device at social control. The antisocial, the recalcitrant, and the crazy fool is controlled. No one can abuse civil rights laws, religious taboos, etc. No one is to get mad or even show irritation when subjected to this treatment. But he has a right to retaliate later. (Medicine Crow & Bradley, 1977, p. 20).

Ashaammaliaxxia, the Clans

The following is a discussion about the background of the clans that are part of "Ashaammaliaxxia". Each clan is known for their particular characteristics or social practices. The data collected about each clans' background was through oral tradition and history. There are several versions to each account, and many might not have been included. The basis for the study was primarily focused on the learning contributions of the functions of the clan system. The membership, history, and characteristics of the clan could very well be another lengthy study. Today, there are five groups of clans. They are the result of a merger of 10 unique clans. Prior to the 10 clans, there were 13. The oldest informant had mentioned at one time there were more than 20 (F. Stewart, translated personal conversation, 1997).

The clans must be viewed from a holistic perspective and not from mainstream values because that would tend to demean nativist concepts. There are words and meanings that may seem derogatory to a mainstream thinker, but to the Apsaalooke they were not, like the name of the River Crows (Binnessiippeele). All words and meanings have some holistic symbolism and purpose to the natural world. The Apsaalooke recognize the holiness and sacredness of words

and meanings. The clan names are special.

Greasy Mouth and Sore Lips

Greasy Mouths. The Greasy Mouths or "Uuwuutasshe" are known as the first clan. This is the clan of Old Man Coyote. He said, "His people were of the Sun" (H. Real Bird, translated personal conversation, 1997). They were known to be powerful medicine people (Bulltail, translated personal conversation, 1997). It is quite common for Apsaalooke people to call on members of the Greasy Mouth clan to ask for favorable weather. In describing Greasy Mouths, Old Man Coyote declared, "They are great hunters and they eat nothing but the best of the meats, that is why their mouths are greasy" (Old Coyote & McCleary, 1994, p. 69). Members of this clan were known to sit around the fire extract the juices of choice meat and spit out the gristle and unwanted fat. When they spit into the fire it would ignite. After observing them, people would notice the grease on their mouth; hence, they became known as Greasy Mouths (L. Flat Lip, translated personal conversation, 1997).

Sore Lips. The next clan is the Sore Lips or "Ashiiooshe". They are known to be great outdoors people. They were brave and tough. They hunted in any kind of weather, even during extreme cold. When they did this often, their lips became wind burned. This is why they were called Sore Lips (Reed, translated personal conversation,

1997).

Whistling Waters and the Bad War Deeds

Whistling Waters. The Whistling Water Clan or "Bilikooshe" were once known as the Wealthy Gophers or Prairie Dog Do Gooders. Their name was "Akchihpawaaitché". At one time they were at war with the "Traacherous Lodges" (B. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997). It was a very embarrassing time especially since there were many relatives on both sides. Some Bad War Deeds people intervened and fought the Traacherous Lodges. Eventually they put an end to the war. They then merged with the Whistling Waters.

There are several versions to how the Whistling Waters received their name. One informant told a version he recounted from an elder named Plain Feather. The following is one translated account of the Whistling Waters were known.

Many years ago a group of Apsaalooke were crossing the Big Horn River at the present location of the bridge east of Hardin. As the families crossed, they used rafts made of buffalo hides. One family had placed a young child on one of the rafts and preceded to cross. Somewhere in the commotion of crossing, they lost the raft with the young child aboard. They asked other travelers if they see him, but they did not notice. For weeks, the band searched for the child but was not successful. The band went on their way while relatives stayed and continued the search. After months they decided it was time to get on with their lives and declared that it must be the work of the Creator. So they left. Years later, while the band was camped near Twin Bridges, Montana, somewhere a young man approached some of the Apsaalooke and told him that he had returned. They were shocked

and surprised. He resembled the family somehow, but they could not believe what he said, until he reminded them what happened 18 years ago. He asked them if they remembered losing a young child while crossing the Big Horn. They acknowledge and send to his family. There they cried and rejoiced. His brother, sisters, mother, and father asked what happened. He stated that, while everyone was busy, some otters took him to their home. There they made him do many errands. He finally finished and came home. After being among the band, he gathered a few young men and told them to follow him. He led them to the river and said, "I will show you something that the otter had showed me." The young men were informed to bring good food and meat to the river. It was then thrown in. About the same time, he instructed his companions to whistle like he does. They whistled a tune to attract women. Some older women were talking and asking what the young men were doing. One responded they are always down by the river whistling. After they do this, they are soon married. They must be doing pretty well. Therefore, they are Whistling Waters. (I. Bad Bear, personal translated conversation, 1997)

In early times, they were the Wealthy Gophers. Old Man Coyote said, "They are intelligent, they speak well, and they are generous, they are so generous that when they are going down the path they leave morsels of food for the gophers, that is why they are called Wealthy Gophers" (Old Horn & McCleary, 1994, 70). Other elders indicated that some of the clansmen courted members of their same clan, which was forbidden. Their liaisons occurred near the shores of the river where nobody would suspect them. Their signals to their lovers were their whistling down by the river. When people in the camps heard this whistling, they would ask, "What is that?" Others would respond, "It is the river." Hence, they are called Whistling Waters (B. Old

Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997).

After merging with the Bad War Deeds Clan, each clan blames the other for their ability to lie. Whistling Waters blame Bad War Deeds for being liars because their war deeds could not be verified. One elder commented that the necessity to lie came about in tight situations. The lying is an attribute to the craftiness of the Whistling Water Clan.

A young Whistling Water Warrior was traveling alone and before this he was told by his war party of a place where they would meet. While traveling at night, he came upon the place that was described. When he arrived there were already lodges there. Under the presumption of meeting his war party, he entered a lodge. Much to his surprise, there were many Lakota warriors inside. Thinking quickly, he used sign language to tell them that he was half Sioux and he had many relatives among them. He told them that they had better leave because there is a whole bunch of Apsaalooke coming to kill them. The Lakota immediately moved camped, and the Whistling Water warrior escaped. (Takes Horse, translated personal conversation, 1997)

This ability to lie and maneuver out of tight situations is quality of the Whistling Water. They are known to be crafty and tactful.

Bad War Deeds. The Bad War Deeds Clan or "Ashkapkawiia" has been misinterpreted on many occasions. According to their elders, this clan was so fearless and courageous that the word in Apsaalooke which is used to describe them translated as "being dumb" or "without thinking". This is how they were as warriors. They would go into battle and perform such extreme risk-taking

maneuvers, that others described the Bad War Deeds as so fearless it was without thinking (Red Wolf, translated personal conversation, 1997). Other elders describe the ferocity of the Bad War Deeds as the "bite of grizzly". This is how they attack, just like a fierce grizzly bear (L. Flat Lip, translated personal conversation, 1997).

The Bad War Deeds Clan nearly wiped out the Treacherous Lodges who had been at war for years with the Whistling Waters. Since it was embarrassing, Apsaalooke do not talk about those times. The Bad War Deeds intervened on behalf of the Whistling Waters because they did not like what was happening. The Piegan Clan were nearly annihilated (I. Bad Bear, translated personal conversation, 1997).

The Bad War Deeds Clan was new to the Apsaalooke. The Bad War Deeds were said to be a group of Arapaho that lived with the Apsaalooke. They had a different language. After a while, they finally became known as a clan and were "Biluuke" (T. Red Wolf, Sr., translated personal conversation, 1997).

The Bad War Deeds are called liars by their Whistling Water brothers because they say that they made up accounts of their war deeds (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). When members of this clan told stories about the coups they counted, many times they could not be substantiated because they were not witnessed. Other times, they just made up the stories. Therefore, other clan

described their accounts as "not true or bad". This is why they are called the Bad War Deeds (L. Flat Lip, translated personal conversation, 1997). In later years, they were known to do peculiar things; sometimes they would do things backwards or awkward. This is also a reason why they were called Bad War Deeds.

Ties in a Bundle, Brings Game Home
without Shooting, and the Filth Eaters

Ties in a Bundle. Mergers among clans was due to the reduced populations of some of the clans. These three clans were brought together as one. The Ties in a Bundle Clan or the "Xuhkaalaxche" are known for the way that they packed when they moved camp. They were said to have powerful medicine bundles. Some of the men among this group were said to powerful medicine men (G. Bulltail, translated personal conversation, 1997). Informants indicate that the men of this clan were short and stocky. Others have indicated that members of this clan slept until the middle of the day. Old Man Coyote said, "When they move camp they are always in a hurry and they are not neat, they get their belongings and put them in a bundle and tie it up, that is why they are Ties in a Bundle, they are Crazy" (Old Horn & McCleary, 1994, 71). When they moved camp, the bundles were not neat and at times some of their belongings were hanging out and lost. They were sometimes untidy and clumsy (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). They were formerly

known as the "Not Mixed" Clan (Old Horn & McCleary, 1994).

Brings Game Home Without Shooting. The "Uussaawaachiia" were very intelligent hunters (Old Horn & McCleary, 1994, 71). They had medicine to bring home food without using a weapon. Their talents were ascertained through medicine bundles associated with buffalo jumps (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). Men of this clan would send a herd of buffalo over a cliff and harvest vast amounts of meat for their people. Another indicator of their hunting prowess was to harvest game that they chased over thin ice. They were very resourceful in bringing home food without shooting arrows or guns.

Fifth Eaters. In days before the influence of the White man, the name for this clan was not derogatory as it was translated. They had a special purpose among the Apsaalooke. "Ashapeennuusha" literally means the lodge that eats excrement. Today, most of the members have been fully assimilated as "Ties in a Bundle" clan members. They would rather not be identified by this description. The people of this clan enjoyed the delicacy of tripe or paunch (D. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997). Whenever people saw them, they were always busy cleaning buffalo guts. Sometimes, this delicacy was not very clean, so the elders were called this name. The wastes of the buffalo were around when they were cooking and preparing their meat (B. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997).

This is why they were called "Ashapeennuusha". A published description of the Filth Eaters describes the jealous nature of one of their chief among their clan.

The chief beat his wife, cut her hair, and forced her to eat dung. Her brothers went and rescued her, thereby ending the marriage. The other people were ashamed of the chief's actions and they ostracized him and began to call his clan the Ashpeennuusha, Dung Eater Lodge. (Old Horn & McCleary, 1994, 72)

Other informants tell of another story where a man's wife was taken away by another man. This man suffered very much from the heartbreak and wanted his wife back very much. In the most humiliating gestures, he was offered his wife back if he would eat excrement. His pain must have been worse than they thought, so he acted accordingly. The members of his clan were identified by this action (F. Stewart, translated personal conversation, 1997).

Big Lodges and the Newly Made Lodges

Big Lodges. There are several versions of how the clans received their names. All the versions are worthy and valid. This is the nature of oral tradition among the Apsaalooke. The Big Lodges or the "Ashshitchite" have their versions. They are noted for being hefty people and very hard workers (Old Horn & McCleary, 1994, p. 73).

A well-known elder among the Whistling Waters describes the Big Lodge Clan members as good providers, and the ones that bring home the best meat. Some of the best singers among the tribe are from this clan. If it was not for the

gallantry and bravery of their warriors, the Apsaalooke would not be here today. They raided and chased off enemies in the bravest and most risky way by going right into the camps of the enemies and attacking them right in their lodges (B. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997). Other informants say that the Big Lodges have many wives. This is the reason their homes are so large. Others say that the Big Lodges are known to charm women (Takes Horse, translated personal conversation, 1997).

Years ago, there were two men concerned by the status of Ashaammaliaxxia. Back then, Apsaalooke people were corrupt and violated rules of the clan system by intermarrying and not respecting each other. One of these men fasted for the purpose of strengthening the Apsaalooke Clan System. Upon returning, he later declared, "These two girls are big people and work very hard. From this day on, they will be known as Big Lodges. Their daughters, grand daughters, great grand daughters, great-great grand daughters and into the future will be members of this clan among the Apsaalooke" (L. Flatlip, translated personal conversation, 1997).

Newly Made Lodges. The background of the "Ashhilaalio" is unknown. It is said that this clan did not come along with the other lodges that originated among the Hidatsa. This lodge or clan was from another tribe. They did not have a clan. When Apsaalooke elders were asked about them,

they would tell others that they were from another tribe, that they did not have a name, and that they were a clan. They are the Newly Made Lodges (B. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997). When asked who they were, Old Man Coyote stated, "Oh, those are just now made, therefore they are the Ashhilaalio, the Newly Made Lodge" (Old Horn & McCleary, 1994, p. 73).

During the springtime, women members of this clan took extra effort to care for their homes. At that time, their lodges would be made of the finest new white hides. Their homes were always new. This was another characteristic of the clan.

Men among the "Ashhilaalio" were very brave. After hearing intelligence reports from scouts, they would go right into an enemy camp seeking out the fiercest and toughest enemies. After they defeated and punished their enemy, they stole their women to further humiliate them. They were always up for any challenge (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997).

Treacherous Lodges or Piegans

Once known as the "Ashbatshu", their name was changed through a misunderstanding of translation. Today, they are known as the Piegans or the "Ashkamne". The clan was said to be treacherous, just like the enemy. Once at war with the Whistling Water Clan, they were nearly annihilated. When other clans described the "Ashkamne", they were

described as like "kamne" which means enemy. Through this description, they became "Ashkamne", which later was misinterpreted as Piegan, who were once enemies of the Apsaalooke. The word "Kaamne is the Apsaalooke way of pronouncing Kainai, which is the Blackfeet term for one of their three political divisions" (Old Horn & McCleary, 1994, page). This clan was very treacherous and mean, just like the enemies.

Extinct Groups

Participants in the study have mentioned three extinct clans through their recollection of oral history. It is not known whether they merged with the present clans or were phased out because of the lack of females. There were other factors that influenced clans that were mentioned earlier. In all likelihood, these clans may have become extinct due to the small pox epidemics or annihilated during war. They also may have terminated their clan by failing to adopt new members.

The Crop Eared Domestic Animals Clan was known as the "Isaashkahpaleete". They were so named from their domestic animals or pets. The type of species is unknown.

The Tattered Lodges or "Ashxahche" were known for the worn condition of their lodges. There is still debate that this clan is the Bad War Deeds. Other participants indicate that the Tattered Lodges were a separate clan and became extinct (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997).

The Ferocious Guard Dogs or "Iishkakaashexawiia" probably got their name from the animals used to watch the campsites and lodges. In ancient stories of the Apsaalooke, guards or sentries surrounding the lodge or campsite were not only dogs, but they also could have been mountain lions, owls, and coyotes. The Apsaalooke translation for dog primarily depicts the act of guarding and does not necessarily specify a dog. Over the years, the term specifically meant a dog.

Relationships and Kinship

Many elders describe the function of Apsaalooke Clan System as a work of a genius (E. Little Light, Jr., translated personal conversation, 1997). Even contemporary educators have shared this comment (W. Stein, 1997). It promotes compatibility. Relationships are honored and distinguished. There are formal practices that are defined in the system. A spouse's husband is forbidden to speak to the mother-in-law. They do not even sit in the same room or house. If the spouse is not present and the mother-in-law is present, the husband should leave the room. This even occurs at public functions. There are customs that do allow the speaking to occur. However, it involves offering gifts for this right. While it could be consequential, there could be repercussions. Afterwards, if this happens, a man is not prosperous. It is best that the traditions are

honored.

This same process occurs for a man's spouse and his father. The daughter-in-law is refrained from speaking to her father-in-law. This might seem limiting just one relationship, but it extends to others that serve as a father or mother. Being forbidden to speak to a mother-in-law includes all her sisters and maternal female cousins. A daughter-in-law also must not speak to her husband's other fathers that include paternal uncles (E. Little Light, Jr., translated personal conversation, 1997).

Brother-in-laws are respected and honored. These are the husbands of sisters. They are given fine gifts, and they are addressed very honorably. This honor is for the love of the sister. Apsaalooke men practice this tradition, yet it is threatened just as much as the other traditional practices. A member of the Bad War Deeds describes this relationship.

Apsaalooke respect their brother-in-laws, those married to their sisters. They give horses, fine goods, and even their medicine bundles. If they are working, they help them. Even in times of war, if an Apsaalooke sees his brother-in-law making a stand against the enemy, he will approach him and get off with him to make this stand. This happened in the case of one man in a battle west of present day Pryor. A man saw his brother-in-law faced with overwhelming odds because he was surrounded by the enemy. He told the other warriors, "If you come looking for me, you will find me at the side of my brother-in-law making a stand against the enemy." The next day, they were found lying together, yet still honoring the custom of respect for a brother-in-law. (L. Flat Lip, translated personal conversation, 1997)

Brother-in-laws are recognized through all extended families. A female's cousins are recognized as siblings, and they recognize this custom as well. The brothers of a sister will give her husband the best of horses and finest of regalia. If their brother-in-law is without, the family will not stand for it and will immediately see that the brother-in-law has what he needs. This is an important function of respect and honor.

Women also honor their brothers by respecting their sisters-in-law. They make them fine gifts such as elk teeth dresses, a buckskin dress, moccasins, and fine bead work. They provide their children with cradle boards (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997). Whenever women receive a visit from their brother and sister-in-law, they usually provide gifts to their sister-in-law even if it is a meal. On the other hand, the brother-in-law has a teasing relationship with his spouse's sisters. It is more intense with the spouse's cousin sisters. These are the female offspring of the spouse's mother and her sisters. The sisters of the spouse are teased but not extensively because they are very close offspring of the marriage. These "mothers" perform important responsibilities for maternal nurturing and teaching of the children. So they must be respected. The cousin sisters can be treated to whatever extent the teasing will allow, like teasing clan aspect. A sister's brothers do not do this to their brother-in-law

(Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997).

The brothers of a husband will treat his spouse with respect because their children are also their clan children. They are allowed to tease, but again this has constraint due to the children. Other paternal kinships have the pleasure to tease their sister-in-law within reason like the clan brothers or paternal cousin brothers. Even the maternal cousin brothers, those sons of mothers who are sisters, can also tease the sister-in-law. This extends into brotherhood roles of both the maternal and paternal clans.

As mentioned earlier, there is a system in the kinship structure among the Apsaalooke that require no contact or interaction. The one example is that of a husband and his spouse's mother. Another is the father of the husband and the new daughter-in-law. There are other relationships that have certain constraints for interaction and contact.

One relationship that has some constraints is between a brother and sister. Out of respect, they do not sit in the same room or in the same house. Years ago when the Apsaalooke resided in teepees, people wishing to enter cleared their throats or called to see if anyone was inside. If a sister responded, the brother did not enter. Apsaalooke honor their sisters with respect. Brothers and sisters do not visit with each other. If they have to speak they do not directly speak to each other or look into each other's eyes. They usually sit facing sideways or with

their backs to them. Then they speak to them only when necessary. Fathers also demonstrate this conduct with their daughters as do the mothers with their sons.

The most direct relationships for males are between father and son or brother to brother. Females have direct relationships as mother and daughter or sister to sister. In the Apsaalooke system, there are a whole host of systems that serve as fathers, brothers, mothers, and sisters. The separation of gender is a practice of honor and respect. This may be a difficult concept for those with a mainstream perspective to understand. However, for the Apsaalooke, it is custom and culture. It is like opening the door for ladies and other mainstream etiquette.

Grandparents are elders. They are also teachers and role models. Grandparents are honored and respect. To get to an advanced age with good health is a difficult task. Senior citizens are honored for their duration and ability to gain many worldly experiences. Some grandmothers take on the responsibility of raising their grandchildren. On some occasions, if the grandparents raise their son's children, this child may assume the clan of the grandmother and the paternal clan of the grandfather. This is also an adoption (Moccasin, translated personal conversation, 1997).

The role of motherhood is very revered among the Apsaalooke. Women are respected because they are the ones that bring life into this world. They have a natural

serenity and tranquility that is not a quality of the male psyche. The lodge and the earth are all women symbols. Among the Apsaalooke, a woman must be impeccable. She represents a clan and family. Being a hard worker and good caretaker are encouraged during the learning process of an Apsaalooke woman. She must be honorable and respectful because women are holy and sacred. The home is hers, and her opinions are important to the well-being of the clan and camp. An Apsaalooke mother is the primary teacher and best friend for any Apsaalooke person. Women are expected to dress appropriately, not showing much of their skin and keeping their hair neat and tied or braided. Women are important to the Apsaalooke in many spiritual and cultural ways especially through their teaching and nurturing. Apsaalooke women go to great efforts to provide a meal for their visitors and relatives. They go to great lengths to be a good host, and they provide gifts to their visitors. This is how the traditional woman was taught.

Today, these nativist women are an endangered species. They too have been influenced by contemporary mores and values of mainstream society. Luxuries and material wealth have impressed them to turn their back on their cultural ways. Women lately seem to feel that there is no need to teach the honor and respect of the way traditional nativist women were. Those with traditional values will be very instrumental in the ability of the tribe to maintain their

culture and traditions.

Clan Practices

Clans will be organized at hand games and will play each other. This practice allows the clan members to know each other. During a powwow, if a male child is stepping out on the dance floor for the very first time, the child's parents will call upon a clan father to dance with the child on this occasion. The child is introduced to clan members in the audience. There they are told of their relationship as a clan parent or a clan child during this time of the child's first dance.

The clan feeds are other environments of where clan practices occur. A feed is an occasion where a special dinner is prepared for clan parents. Clan parents are gathered together for the purpose of helping their clan child. This might be a birthday or the event initiating a new path in life, like joining the military or attending college. The relationships of the clans roles are important. Clan parents are honored and respected. They intercede on behalf of their child.

At Crow Fair time, many clan members are introduced during the parade and at other times by public address announcers. People participating in the parade are sometime honored by a herald that accompanies them during the procession. Observers are told of the purpose of why

someone is honored during the parade. At that time, the person's clan kinship is described. Those observers then determine their relationship with the person being honored. Other participants in the parades include clan princesses. They are introduced as a representative of their perspective clans. Even floats seen in the parade may represent a specific clan. Horse races are held in honor of the clans, where each clan is represented by an entry. This race determines which clan has the fastest horse.

When the Apsaalooke have give aways, they do this during public events like dances, hand games, or other social activities. The gifts being offered are for clan parents. During this event, members of the Apsaalooke become familiar with clan representation. If the child's clan parents are Greasy Mouths, the announcer is instructed to call specific members of the clan in the audience. When clan members are called, they are addressed by their Apsaalooke names. It is respectful to know these name because of their sacredness and mysticism in helping the spiritual life of that person.

Ceremonies such as Sun Dances, Peyote Religion Ceremonials, and the Tobacco Society are excellent environments for promoting clan dynamics. Clan practices fit in naturally with the ceremonial rituals of these religions. Participants demonstrate respect, honor, and homage. When prayers are offered, consulting a clan parent

during the ceremony is very appropriate. Apsaalooke ceremonial leaders recognize the precedence of clan kinship. Give aways also occur at these ceremonies. Those attending notice those being honored as members of a specific clan. Relationships are again defined even for the teasing clan members.

The Meaning of Being Apsaalooke

At the beginning of this chapter a translated quotation was presented by an Apsaalooke nativist. He stated, "You have to know where you came from to know who you are" (G. Reed, Sr., translated personal conversation, 1997). The significance of this quote reflects the whole meaning of being an Apsaalooke. The language, customs, culture, and values define the meaning of "Biiluuke". This is the term Iichikbaalia called the Apsaalooke when he made people. The Creator stated, "I will make humans (Awaakiiwilaxpaake) and among them will be the Apsaalooke (Biiluuke). They will be at the center of the Earth, and they will be between their enemies who will try to wipe them out" (L. Flatlip, translated personal conversation, 1997). This was the challenge presented to the Apsaalooke by the Creator.

Within the Apsaalooke Clan System, there is a characteristic that is the foundation of defining who an Apsaalooke is. This is respect. It is the simple gesture of accepting and implies that clan parents, clan children,

and siblings have a basic human right to be treated well. Demonstrating this respect on behalf of the Creator is everyone's responsibility. The essence of this practice of respect and honor through kinship is the foundation for learning, teaching, knowledge, experience, scholarship, and education among the nativist Apsaalooke. Knowledge and experiences accumulated through the practices of respect spreads into other worlds like nature, society, and the spiritual realm. As people enter these other realms, the foundation of respect and honor are their tools in finding a balance of all life forces. It was how the warriors succeeded against overwhelming odds. This is the fortitude to find abundant food during the harshest and most bitter winters. Respect is at the foundation of miracles and a doorway to the supernatural world.

The world of the Apsaalooke is associated with natural phenomena. The Apsaalooke recognize that they are a small part of an interrelated universe. All aspects of life are dependent on each other. There is a complex network of natural cycles and patterns that change due to the influences of different energies. It is too vast to understand and reason; trying to do this will only cause the mind to be in confusion and chaos. Attempting to understand the world is like trying to figure out God. There is no reason to question the all powerful force of nature and the universe because this is the Creator's world.

The Apsaalooke were given gifts by Iichikbaalia, Old Man Coyote, and their helpers. They were a system of interrelated elements that contributed to a holistic way of life with nature. They were the seasons like spring, summer, fall, and winter. The natural elements of earth, air, fire, and water were also gifts. Several forms of prayer were based on four ways of expression. Apsaalooke people pray when they sing and when they use smudges like cedar, sweet grass, and bear root. A third form of prayer is through the use of tobacco where holy words transcend in the spirit world through the smoke as a vehicle. The fourth form of prayer is through dreams. Here, dreams and visions are holy events that have impact on the spiritual life of an Apsaalooke. Wishes said by clan parents are also reflections of visionary thoughts. To create a sacred image of victory and success through a wish is another dynamic part of the dream process of prayer (Reed, translated personal conversation, 1997).

The whole significance of this discussion is about the natural phenomena of patterns surrounding the Apsaalooke way of life. Many natural elements and events are represented by specific numbers. In the previous paragraph, the number four is very significant. It represents the four seasons, four sacred elements, and four forms of prayer. Today, the number has another significance in the four major religions of the Apsaalooke. This includes Ashaammaliaxxia, the Sweat

Lodge Religion, the Tobacco Society, and the Pipe Ceremonial.

The four seasons have a place within the four cardinal directions known as east, south, west, and north. East is represented by life and birth, just like spring. It is the direction of where everything is good. In the east comes a new day. Apsaalooke always face their doors of their lodges in this direction. This includes their homes, ceremonial teepees, sweat lodges, and sun dance lodges. From the south come the warm days like the ones during the summer. The west is the direction of the "next camp". It is like autumn when many of the plants of nature rest. Apsaalooke refrain from speaking of death and of those that have gone in that direction. Life is about happiness and prosperity; the Apsaalooke do not focus on negative forces affecting life. Cold weather comes from the north, this is where winter resides.

The most important elements that comprise the phenomena of life are earth, air, fire, and water. Life as it is known would not be possible if one of these elements were absent. These forces are interdependent on each other in occurrence. They are at the foundation of life and gifts from Iichihkbaalia. Apsaalooke nativist express great appreciation in living on this sacred earth and being able to breathe healthy air, to be warmed by the mysticism of fire, and be anointed by the holy water of life.

Furthermore, four is also symbolic in the foundation of a teepee. The lodge is set up using four poles as the foundation. When gifts are offered, many times four things are given away, like a Pendleton quilt, tobacco, fabric, or food items (F. Real Bird, translated personal conversation, 1997). During the meals accompanying ceremonies, the food is served in four categories such as water, corn, fruit, and meat. On the following Monday of the Crow Fair weekend, a ceremony is conducted through the camp. This is called the Parade Dance. There are four stops that occur during this ritual. At each stop, a pipe is smoked and prayers are offered. During certain parts of the songs, the dancers salute the Big Horn Mountains toward the shrine of the Sacred Tobacco.

These aspects of natural phenomena define the Apsaalooke. Other numbers are significant. Seven represents the stars of the Big Dipper. It also symbolizes the sacred pipes and the Seven Buffalo Bulls, the guardians that watch over the Apsaalooke. It also represents the seven doorways of the senses felt by the human head. Human birth is represented by the 10 lunar moons that pass during the process of human conception. Ten also signifies the current number of clans. Traditionally, the Apsaalooke recognized 13 clans, which represents the number of moons that comprise the measurement of one year.

The Apsaalooke refer to themselves as "Biiluuke".

Basically, they say this to mean "our side" (Takes Horse, translated personal conversation, 1997). In actuality, it is a state of mind. The people called the Apsaalooke are not a pure race. They are offspring of many intertribal and mix-race marriages. An elder declared, "We are genetically produced hybrids" (B. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997). With the term comes the foundations of learning associated with Apsaalooke Clan System, the Sweat Lodge Ceremonies, Pipe Ceremonies, and the Tobacco Society. Other religions like the Bear Dance Ceremony and the Cooked Meat Ceremony were other foundations. Language, oral tradition, values, customs, and behavior are typical components of defining the traditional Apsaalooke. An Apsaalooke is a nativist that adapted and changed to incorporate new religions like the Shoshone Sun Dance and the Peyote Ceremonials. This is the meaning of Apsaalooke.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Summary of Study

This was a case study about the Apsaalooke Clans System as a foundation for learning among the Apsaalooke people of southeastern Montana. Apsaalooke is their own tribal name, but people in the mainstream know them as the Crow Indians. The Apsaalooke have a unique native culture that is extremely threatened by the loss of their traditions, customs, values, language and culture. A primary reason of this threat is the cultural invasion by the mainstream culture. In this situation, the Apsaalooke are not in control of their educational systems that promote their culture. These systems are mainly controlled by mainstream authorities of government and religion.

The purpose of this study was to describe the ways in which Ashaammaliaxxia, the Apsaalooke Clan System, serves as the foundation of learning among the Apsaalooke people. The cultural activities of the Apsaalooke take place within an informal setting, but they constitute a formal education situation. For the purpose of validating the education, knowledge, learning, teaching, and experiences of the

cultural practices of the Apsaalooke, these activities were acknowledged and described. This can allow the Apsaalooke to examine their cultural activities as an educational environment in order to perpetuate their traditions.

The threat to this delicate culture was examined. One of the primary aims of this study was to describe the Apsaalooke Clan System so that the Apsaalooke people could examine the clan system as an institution for learning. This effort has the potential of helping and encouraging the Apsaalooke to take another view of their cultural institutions, like Ashammaaliaxxia, and develop them so that generations to come will have the sanctity of their clan system. Ashammaaliaxxia is a formal institution where learning and teaching take place. This learning is about respect and honor. Through the Apsaalooke Clan System, elders teach about culture, oral tradition, language, and values.

Another goal for this study was to provide a document that would encourage the Apsaalooke to take control of the culture and find ways to teach it for the future generations. The tribe must realize what they need to have to empower themselves in order to save the culture of the "Biiluuke". Leaders must reflect upon the current mainstream education systems that are in their communities and realize that over the past 150 years this system has forced the Apsaalooke to give and sacrifice many valuable

aspects of their culture. Many lives have been lost and millions of acres of land has been seized.

All the Apsaalooke ever needed was peace and happiness. Apsaalooke people will be encouraged to consider using new technologies to rejuvenate their culture. In one sense, the Apsaalooke are using technology the way their oppressors designed them; that is, it is serving the purpose for cultural invasion (Freire). If the Apsaalooke had television programs or stations and their own computer software to promote their culture, things could be different. The solution is in the hands of the Apsaalooke; the White man of mainstream society is not going to help them find answers. They must do this themselves.

The Apsaalooke people and their culture are unique. It is a delicate culture that has been greatly affected by mainstream influences in the form of cultural invasion. The influences of the mainstream power structures are vastly controlling the role of education among the Apsaalooke. This is the main factor that threatens this culture.

Learning in the Apsaalooke society is in the informal setting of the clan system. Cultural practices are institutions where Apsaalooke learn and teach. Although, they may be presented in an informal structure, they are very much formal from the Apsaalooke perspective. The public school system for the Apsaalooke could benefit from having a similar structure which is based on cultural

practices, values, and language. This could be accomplished through restructuring mainstream curricula and by teaching this material from the reference point of the Apsaalooke experience. Furthermore, this means incorporating the cultural practices, values, and language as the background and foundation of a new educational system.

The foundation of the institution of the Apsaalooke Clan System is based on the principles of oral tradition. Events like the separation from the Hidatsa have histories based on different versions presented through oral history. This applies to the three different bands identified as Apsaalooke. One extremely important aspect of this study is that it is from the perspective of the Apsaalooke. A large amount of studies about the Apsaalooke are written from viewpoints that do not incorporate the culture. More or less, they are written from a western or mainstream perspective. This study seeks to serve the Apsaalooke people by encouraging them to reflect upon their own knowledge, experiences, scholarship, learning, teaching, and education. Other facets of this study relate to translating the context of Apsaalooke culture for mainstream thinkers. An important consideration is about translating Apsaalooke ideals. There are some principles that do not have symbolism in the mainstream culture. At best, there are only some relative comparisons. This is the difficulty of translating the psychology of the Apsaalooke and the

importance of presenting this study from the Apsaalooke point of view.

The oral history of the Apsaalooke is important. It occurred during ancient times, historic times, and the transitional period (B. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997). In the ancient period, Old Man Coyote created the world. During this period, Ashaammaliaxxia was developed by a supernatural being and his assistants were also responsible for much of other creation on earth. The historical times included the identification of a traditional economy. About the same period, the migration of the Apsaalooke occurred and their destiny depended on the Sacred Tobacco. The transition period is the time when great changes occurred. Here, the impact of western influences began to traumatize the culture. Government control was overwhelming. The wars against the Indians were no longer conducted on battlefields, but they were waged by governance, legislation, religion, and commerce. The mainstream power structure still desires the land and resources of the Native people. The battles are subtle and elusive.

This case study is based on qualitative data gathered about the Apsaalooke Clan System and culture. It is a dynamic system that is interrelated in nearly every aspect of the culture. The clan system has functions as a religion and applications to social consciousness. An

approach was developed in this study to use the experience of the researcher as an active participant in the Apsaalooke culture.

With a background in adult, community, and higher education, the researcher merges his experience as a nativist in building a bridge in understanding concepts of learning, teaching, and knowledge among the Apsaalooke. For the Apsaalooke people, this study provides a retrospective view of the impact of the control and intrusion upon their culture. The initiative was to produce a study for the renaissance of the Apsaalooke culture through the paradigms of empowerment and liberation (Horton). It is not a revolution, only a movement to take responsibility in perpetuating the traditions, culture, values and language of the Apsaalooke people.

Elders among the Apsaalooke have discussed this study around fireplaces of the Peyote Religion and in Sweat Lodge Ceremonies. Their emphasis was the necessity to promote this study as one would when they are speaking from the heart. The permission and leadership to undertake this task was granted by the fathers of the researchers. Basically, this study is based on an assignment given to the researcher by his clan fathers and brothers.

The researcher provides reflective interpretation of the study of learning among the Apsaalooke. The background of the researcher is used as a vehicle to translate the

fundamentals of the Apsaalooke that apply to learning. The participants of this study primarily spoke their native language as their first language. Much of the data provided by the participants were interpreted from the Apsaalooke language into English.

Readers are introduced to learning environments associated with preparation. Involvement include views from both genders. Oral tradition, conduct, and memory are important facets of learning for the Apsaalooke. These topics are important, especially among teachers of oral tradition. Apsaalooke learners must be very considerate to their elders. This is important because there is a protocol to being a student, and it involves respect and honor.

In the introduction the foundations of Apsaalooke Clans are important. Today, the status of the clans are threatened. In the 19th century, the number of clans were reduced because of disease and war. The significance of respect and honor were the main issues of the study, identifying the clan characteristics became secondary. Each clan has background information about their oral history. These clan characteristics are another facet of oral tradition. It is possible that this could be the basis for an additional study. A major quality of the clan system is kinship and there are specific relationships within this structure that are different from mainstream observations. The parent and sibling relationships have a religious and

social significance. The discussion concludes with a nativist interpretation of the natural phenomena that define the meaning of Apsaalooke.

There were several significant topics that are applied to learning in the research of the Apsaalooke Clan System. It must be mentioned that without presenting other facets of the culture, this study would be difficult. The Apsaalooke culture is highly interrelated and interdependent on the dynamics of nature and the universe. This extends into the religion and social customs. Individual roles are also significantly based on the clan membership. Describing an aspect of the culture, such as the clans, is similar to describing a role in the food chain. One part is important, but it is not as important as the system is working together.

There are ten categories to this study about the facets of learning and experience of the Apsaalooke. Three research questions are presented, and the study broadens the scope of functions of the Apsaalooke Clan System. Each category has some application to the function of the Apsaalooke Clan System. These aspects are about oral tradition background, applications, or purposes. The knowledge of the participants is a resource of the culture, and very little is being done to document the oral tradition that Apsaalooke elders maintain.

Second, Learning and teaching are involved in the

preparation process for ceremonials or social conditioning. Preparation is like large classroom that extends into nature, society, and the homes. Woman exercise a major role as the first teachers of their children.

Third, there is a protocol for a learner in respect to oral tradition. Here, the experience as a student and learner is described. This is primarily a commentary to guide readers in understanding the processes involved with learning.

In the fourth area, the experience of the researcher brings the dynamics of a lifelong learner into the study. The researcher provides a reflective view as an active participant. From this perspective, much of the data for the study was translated from an Apsaalooke view of learning which then is discussed in the context of adult education

In the fifth section, the threat to the Apsaalooke Clan System resulted in mergers because of disease and warfare. There are systems, like adoption ceremonies within the culture that could contribute to a solution in perpetuating clan memberships. It is also a solution for many of the tribal members that lack clan memberships.

The sixth area is about the roles of the clan members. In this area the primary functions of the clan system are the most important qualities of the institution called Ashaammaliaxxia. The roles in the structure of the Apsaalooke Clan System are based on the social and religious

well being of individuals.

The characteristics of the clans are introduced in a seventh section through the foundations of oral tradition. Sometimes, clan members today sometime demonstrate these qualities. The crux of this study focuses more on the applications of the Apsaalooke Clan System.

In the eighth section relationships and kinship structures are part of the value system and defining relationships are viewed as wealth. Ashaammaliaxxia, the Apsaalooke Clan System is at the core of defining relationships. Certain customs are required in the roles of these relationship involving respect, honor, and even teasing. This section describes to the characteristics of the clan and other cultural practices associated with the interrelated applications. Clan and cultural practices occur throughout the culture, and these practices can be identified during social events and ceremonies.

In the ninth section, the areas of clan activity were described. These environments are where the Apsaalooke practice and interact clan dynamics. The Apsaalooke exercise customs involving the Apsaalooke Clan System roles, like the give aways held to honor clan parents during occasions like feasts, powwows, and ceremonies.

Finally, the meaning of being an Apsaalooke is presented from a nativist viewpoint. It is primarily based on natural phenomena and interdependence of all roles in the

universe. This is foundation of who the Apsaalooke are, it is a huge contrast to mainstream concepts on the topic of "who are person is". An emphasis is that, this philosophy belongs to them.

Reduction in Elders

Conclusions

1. The keepers of the knowledge in the Apsaalooke Clan System are the elders.
2. The reduction in the number of elders threatens the existence of the clan system.
3. The elders are a precious resource because there are very few that maintain the traditional culture of years ago.
4. The tribe and/or Little Big Horn College are major institutions that could make an extensive effort to document the stories that are still alive in the culture.
5. Nativist elders deserve respect as a national treasure to the Apsaalooke.
6. Elders can initiate efforts to teach their knowledge because it is very important.

There is important information the Apsaalooke should know. There is an opportunity in their culture for them to learn this from the elders. After conducting the research associated with this project, it seems the elders are being neglected because many Apsaalooke are not exercising an active part in saving this culture. Members of the Crow Tribe should use every opportunity to learn from their

elders. These elders are like national treasures of information.

On the other hand, elders should encourage each other to seek better ways to teach the culture. They can set an example by organizing and developing a sense of community for teaching their culture. They need to get involved and work together for the benefit of future generations.

Recommendations

In order to involve nativist elders in a movement to teach culture, the community must be involved because everyone interested and concerned will strengthen this effort. Elders are dynamic and very active people. They enjoy learning and participating in community events. It is recommended that the community organize social events that teach culture. This could be an institution where children, young adults, and anyone could interact in the dynamics of the Apsaalooke culture. Elders could also be encouraged just to get together. There needs to be more holistic activities in the community that contribute to the well-being of elders and senior citizens. Elders are not only just older people, some younger members of the tribe have the qualities of successful experiences and leadership.

Elders should have a forum to discuss the plight of the Apsaalooke culture. This should occur immediately. The threat to the culture is happening at this moment. Support must come from the tribe and other institutions that could

contribute to building the strength of the Apsaalooke culture. Little Big Horn College is a natural site for holding such forums because the school represents a successful model of education developed by Apsaalooke people.

Elders and educators should organize some kind of contemporary organization to create an Apsaalooke education system. The reality of the threat to the culture is at hand. Apsaalooke educators must take an active initiative in the responsibilities of empowering their community. As leaders, they must compromise just a small amount of time in their life to be dedicated to their people and the future. It is too easy to be caught up in the financial incentives of their jobs and leisure. They must have trust and love for their culture (Horton, 1990).

The Apsaalooke need to take control of their educational systems. Elders play a role as resources for developing programs and curricula to teach the culture. Too many Apsaalooke are dependent on government intervention. Many Apsaalooke have come to expect the government to make decisions for them. However, the Apsaalooke do not need the permission of anyone outside their own elders on taking an initiative to allow this culture to grow.

This recommendation is for the children. Listen to your elders and learn from them. They have a vast amount of knowledge that they would love to share with you. Record

and document this knowledge; pens and paper are very inexpensive. The same amount of money that is used to trash the innocent brains of young Apsaalooke minds with such things as rap music, country western music, and rock and roll is the same money that could be used to buy cassettes and equipment to record the stories of the elders. Apsaalooke people must find ways to demonstrate respect and honor for the nativist elders.

Preparation

Conclusion

1. While preparing for ceremonies or social functions, the Apsaalooke learn.
2. Preparation is an important attribute to learning about the culture.
3. Nativist and teachers demonstrate care and love in the preparation process for ceremonies and social functions.
4. Women play an important role in teaching culture.

Preparation for ceremonial and social functions is an important learning and teaching environment. It is the most important process to teaching culture and tradition. During the preparation of ceremonies, Apsaalooke learners get to experience the purpose of the rituals and participate in the dynamics behind the scenes. It is an important hands-on practice of learning through participation in the natural world. Women, especially mothers, exercise the most important role in teaching because they usually are the

primary teachers of a learner. Speaking Apsaalooke to their child and respecting the customs of the culture are two of the most important exercises that would take place. It means more people are going to learn about culture. If they neglect their culture, then children as learners are deprived of an important foundation of knowledge especially if they are around cultural practices.

Recommendations

The first recommendation is for the practicing nativists. Teach Apsaalooke learners with patience and care. Preparation is an important part of teaching traditional knowledge and experiences. Many nativists have learned about their ways from this preparation. Patience is important; many people assume too much when they think a child anticipates what they know. Teaching is like leadership, and good leaders care for and love their people. This is just one way.

The Apsaalooke must reflect on what it is like to learn. Is learning best with someone that encourages ones efforts or with someone that humiliates or scares you into learning? Learners, as well as teachers, must care for and love their roles in the process especially with children. A teacher sometimes must realize that some learners have been associated with care and nurturing. When students leave this environment and the teacher that was there, this is their impression of the learner-teacher relationships. If

the learners first teacher is bitter, anxious, and resentful, then the job of new teachers is to help their learners develop trust and confidence.

The next recommendation is for the Apsaalooke women. Children or learners will learn what you want them to. This means you must have high expectations. Mothers and sisters must speak Apsaalooke to their children. This must be consistent. If a mother or a teacher expects a child to learn Apsaalooke and English, then this child will. If no one cares, then nothing is accomplished. When learners are expected to participate in a certain way, they must be willing. High expectations are like that. When a learner trusts the teacher, then the learner will do whatever is expected. While this could mean being the best basketball player or the fastest runner, it could also mean speaking fluently in both Apsaalooke and English and having very good grades.

Another recommendation is for the Apsaalooke to realize that learning occurs everywhere. This is especially so at home. The elders in their youth saw respect and honor; this is what they know today. If learners see generosity and kindness, this is what they know. When the sounds from the television are the only thing happening, this is all there is for a learner. Apsaalooke people must take the responsibilities to teach the culture because no White person in a school district is going to do it for them.

The next recommendation is for everyone that teaches and learns. When you teach, you learn; when you learn, you can also teach. Teaching and learning are interactive. Many things can be accomplished if a teacher finds ways to learn while they teach. Learners could learn more if they figured out how they could teach whatever it is they are learning. Learning and teaching are vital parts of the preparation process because this is the environment where Apsaalooke people learn.

Finally, the final recommendation associates preparation with involvement. When the teachers of Apsaalooke traditions and culture went into nature, they were involved dynamically. When a child goes to a public school, and the parents do not know what they are learning, this is not involvement. Apsaalooke parents must find out what their children are learning. This shows interest, and if a parent could help in the process, this is participation. If more people became involved with the educational process, they can make a difference. If they care, Apsaalooke parents can encourage the school to make changes that they could further the Apsaalooke culture in the classrooms.

Oral Tradition, Conduct, and Memory

Conclusion

1. Oral tradition, conduct, and memory are crucial facets of the learning among the

Apsaalooke.

2. The topics of oral tradition, conduct, and memory can function as a guide to working in nativist settings.

Conduct and memory are important in the learning process of oral tradition. As a guide, these topics are considerations that nativist researchers must acknowledge. Conduct is like a protocol for entering nativist circles in a respectful way. Memory is an important part of the learning process of oral tradition.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Apsaalooke educators and nativists produce their own research. This research must be produced for future generations. As more and more models are produced discussing oral tradition and history, they become accepted as scholarship and knowledge. A step in the direction of empowerment is through the process of taking control of research and education (Freire, 1973) in the Apsaalooke perspective. Consider a child in the future that wishes to know about Old Man Coyote. Would an Apsaalooke want a child to learn about Old Man Coyote from a mainstream view or from those that have been taught by elders?

The next recommendation is for more Apsaalooke educators not only to provide research from the Apsaalooke perspective but to also write from their own perspective. Nativist need to work together to create books, learning tools, video recordings, CD-roms, radio stations, television

stations, and whatever aids that will enable the Apsaalooke culture. The millions of dollars spent by the Crow Tribe on legal fees could easily finance a local radio station. The thousand of dollars spent on unnecessary trips can be the same dollars spent on books designed to promote the Apsaalooke language. People must move forward even if it means to make homemade recordings on cassette of people speaking and saying Apsaalooke words. If one 60-minute tape can be made to record an elder saying elementary phrases, this tape can be copied for others very easily. Basically, the challenge is for educators and nativists to develop learning tools and strategies to teach the language, culture, and values.

Researcher's Background

Conclusion

1. For prospective educators, an Apsaalooke person's culture is a way to view and interpret the world even in higher education.
2. No person outside the world of the Apsaalooke can question a nativist's personal knowledge and experiences as a Native American.

The background section on the researcher in this study is another means of encouraging potential Apsaalooke writers and researchers. More specifically, it is encouragement to use cultural knowledge as the reference of the world. There are no experts or professors at any university or college in

this country or the world that can challenge an Apsaalooke's experiences and cultural knowledge, especially a nativist view. An Apsaalooke person's nativist culture is a strength for succeeding in mainstream systems. Apsaalooke people are first Biluuke, they can pretend to be part of the mainstream but this does not define who they are as an Apsaalooke. A low self-esteem and self image are social problems experienced by Apsaalooke people that lack cultural knowledge especially in off reservation communities. In the mainstream, an Indian person stands out, this person can never be like the White people and others of the mainstream because they are Apsaalooke. This is why cultural knowledge and experiences are important. When a learner has the foundations of the Apsaalooke culture, that person also brings along the clans, relatives, and legacy of the tribe.

Recommendations

This recommendation is only for those who consider themselves to be Apsaalooke. Use your culture wherever you go and however you think. Whatever experiences are gained from the outside world can now be of service to you. This is like when the Apsaalooke first used the horse. It came from somewhere else, but there were good ways that the Apsaalooke could benefit from its use. Learning is like this. Use it, but remember there are other things that got you to that point. A major one of these is the culture. It is there for people to stand on and build from.

A recommendation is made for prospective educators such as college students. The Apsaalooke culture is rich in knowledge, history, and tradition. Those that welcome this have a foundation of learning based on their culture. It is an education. The oral traditions, the ceremonies, and "Iiwatkusshe" contribute to a way of life that describes education in the culture. This mindset contributes to success even in the mainstream world. This is discipline. If the Apsaalooke are supposed to write, then they should write about Apsaalooke things. Writing and learning from the Apsaalooke experience is more rich than the foundations of prime time television which represents cultural invasion.

Apsaalooke Clan Mergers

Conclusion

1. Clans merged because memberships were reduced by epidemics or warfare.
2. Females determine clan membership. If a particular clan had no female offspring to perpetuate the clan, then the clan became threatened or possibly extinct.
3. Apsaalooke families with both paternal and maternal clan memberships are in a strong position to adopt tribal members that do not have memberships.
4. The Apsaalooke have many ways to adopt people into their clans like the Tobacco Society.
5. The role of the Apsaalooke Clan System is important in the culture and therefore deserves more importance and acceptance.

6. There are many Apsaalooke people born to intertribal or mixed races, and they do not have full clan memberships.
7. Apsaalooke nativists are being oppressed and antagonized by their own people who base their attack from Christian fundamentalist views.

There has been a reduction in the number of clans since the 1800's. One of the major factors contributing to the decline of the number of clans were three smallpox epidemics. The United States government has been accused of inciting this epidemic through their strategy of germ warfare. According to this study, as much as 97% of the population was lost because of this and there was no western frontier until this disease wiped out millions of other Native Americans. Informants indicate that there were more than 20 clans at one point. This is from their recollection through oral tradition.

Within the tribe, there are many members that do not know about the aspect of the Apsaalooke Clan System. During traditional times, the Apsaalooke brought in new membership from other tribes. The Apsaalooke people are not genetically pure; it is a conglomeration of hybrids produced to improve the race. Traditionally, Apsaalooke people adopted children and women from other tribes to keep the race from mutating. These people were adopted by families through public proclamation or through ceremonies like the Tobacco Society.

Today, some enrolled members of the tribe are not aware

of their memberships to the clan system. They do not know if they are a Big Lodge Clan or Greasy Mouth Clan members. Others are also products of intertribal or mix-raced marriages. They lack the full association of being both a clan child and a clan member. The Apsaalooke still practice adoptions in the Tobacco Society. Practices such as these should be encouraged to include other tribal members that lack the full memberships of the clan system.

There is a threat to the Apsaalooke culture. Mainstream influences of government controlled education and religion are greatly influencing this threat. There are even members that have become so indoctrinated into accepting mainstream ideologies that they use this to attack nativist practices. It is possible that many antagonists of culture are unaware of the value of cultural practices, knowledge, and experiences as an educational foundation. They are unaware that they are contributing to the destruction of the Apsaalooke culture by completely emulating the oppressors of the mainstream power structure. To a nativist, these antagonists are under the control of outside influences and selling out their culture has no relevance to possible outcomes of this threat except to imitate the oppressors.

Recommendations

It is a recommendation that the Crow Tribe take the initiatives to promote their culture. Making a mandate to

strengthen clan memberships and encouraging clan customs would be a major contribution to the effort in perpetuating this culture. If the Crow Tribe can make the Apsaalooke language as the official language of the reservation, they can also reinforce the importance of the Apsaalooke Clan System. Ashammaliaxxia has great significance in the spiritual wellbeing of the Apsaalooke. It is important for a well-balanced social structure. There are mechanisms in this system that promote healthy living. It is still very strong and active in nativist environments. More Apsaalooke people can benefit from this system and thereby build a better community.

The next recommendation is for Crow Tribe to encourage recognition of clan practices in all facets of life. More clan recognition activities taking place which involve everyone from the community is an excellent way to promote and continue this tradition. Tribal members should take the leadership to teach about the clan system in their homes. If they are comfortable, elders that have knowledge about the practices could be invited into the homes to share information. Another extension of this recommendation would be to require the school district to provide traditional instruction about the culture. There is no reason why a school could not commit some instructional time to the culture. In a realistic view, by not providing this instruction they are violating the civil liberties and

rights of the reservation community. The Apsaalooke have a right to education, especially of their languages, values, and culture.

Mothers and female siblings are primary teachers of the youth. Children get their first impression of culture from their mothers. It is recommended that more women take an active role to promote Apsaalooke culture in their raising of children. By speaking the language and actively participating in clan practices, this is what a learner will see. Seeing them is the first step in learning them. Even more important, men, grandparents, and brothers need to encourage and practice clan dynamics. They become the role models for the children, and their influence is important. The family needs both parents for involvement and participation. When these parents expect their children to know traditional knowledge, it is almost like expecting them to eat with a spoon.

Another recommendation is to encourage elders to seek out people in their communities and help them identify their clan memberships. If a person does not know, elders and clan members who know should have the responsibility to share their information in tactful and gentle way. The last thing these learners need is to be humiliated and ridiculed for their lack of traditional knowledge. Traditional teachers should consider themselves as those who are going to help and they are someone who cares. Elders could

benefit by organizing a team of consultants that have knowledge about the clan which they could share with people that are not familiar with this system. They could go into the schools and provide information much like family trees in order to provide students information about their clan memberships. At this point, the elders should make every effort to encourage tribal members to know about the clan system and Apsaalooke history. This team might also take the initiative in developing clan information materials. If a community group of elders could take the leadership in finding ways to teach the culture, language, and values, this would be an excellent way to empower the community.

Another role of elders or some type of cultural organization is that once they identify clan roles among people that are unfamiliar with the system, they need to identify people who are interested in gaining full memberships. For example, many of the children of intertribal marriages may only be a clan child or a clan member because one parent does not have clan membership or they might lack both relationships. Elders or other people willing to help can seek out families that might adopt people in this situation. There are many people within the tribal membership that are unaware of the solutions and the traditions of clan memberships.

The final recommendation is for mainstream institutions like the schools and Christian churches to find ways to

promote Apsaalooke traditions like Ashaammaliaxxia. These institutions are based on education. There is nothing wrong with honoring and respecting clan relationships in the fundamentalist churches. This is the least they could for the generations of elders, leaders, warriors, and mothers that fought for the heritage of this land. Instead of condemning and criticizing nativist practices as immoral, it is better to work with each other rather than attacking each other. Whatever view a person has of the Creator, the practices of people putting down other people who pray must seem silly to the supreme power.

Apsaalooke Clan Functions

Conclusions

1. Respect and honor are the foundations of the Apsaalooke Clan System.
2. Education is a major function of the Apsaalooke Clan System.
3. There are specific relationships within the Apsaalooke Clan Systems of parents, siblings, and teasing clan siblings.
4. Each relationship has specific responsibilities as a clan father, clan mother, respectful maternal sibling, and a relative willing to help paternal siblings through a teasing practice.
5. The clan relationships are a practice, and clan members need to demonstrate their responsibilities so other learners can observe the dynamics of these relationships.
6. Clan members have the responsibility to exercise their rights as parents and

adopt members into their clan because it is a traditional form of wealth.

7. The Tobacco Society religions must be taught to younger members of the tribe. There needs to be a new generation that can carry the function of this unique religion into the future with one of its primary functions as adoption.

Respect and honor are the foundations of the Apsaalooke Clan System. The practices are a way of life. It is the basis for living. Abiding by the ethics of respect and honor is a responsibility and a foundation of knowledge for understanding the world. The Apsaalooke Clan System is a spiritual force that is part of the people wherever they travel. It is protection and sanctity.

The clan members have a responsibility to teach and practice clan ways. This involves treating clan parents and children with honor and respect. It also extends to clan siblings and especially to those who may serve as a clan parent to their children.

More Apsaalooke clan members need to demonstrate their clan relationships. There are younger generations and other learners that need to observe the dynamics of the clan functions. These members should be graceful to the learners if they are not familiar with the roles and customs. There may be some need to explain these dynamics, and clan members should serve as counselors to the learners. This might involve taking learners aside and pointing out the dynamics of the practice and defining the relationship that is there.

The Tobacco Society is one of the solutions for increasing clan memberships. More elders need to teach the younger generations about the aspects of this religion. It is also part of the solution for perpetuating clan membership. Adoption is one of the major practices of this form of worship. This practice is the only unique religion to the Apsaalooke. There must be assurances in the nativist community that the Tobacco Society has a future.

Recommendations

This recommendation is for the Apsaalooke people to take the responsibility to care for their traditions like the Apsaalooke Clan System and see that the foundations are there for future generations. This is a responsibility to the nation of the Apsaalooke. No one else in the world is going to take the responsibility for the people. They have to do it themselves.

It is recommended that the Apsaalooke understand the importance of the Apsaalooke Clan System as a basis of learning. Respect and honor are the main teachings. This knowledge extends into every facet of the world and universe. The Apsaalooke Clan System is an important part of the educational structure of people who identify themselves as "Biiluuke".

The next recommendation is for building sound relationships in practice. This means Apsaalooke must recognize their clan children, clan parents, and teasing

relatives and other clan memberships. If they find themselves teasing their clan father or laughing at his misfortune, this is wrong. They must end this behavior. Clans must dedicate their effort to maintaining the sanctity of their relationships. The teasing clan structure is there for a purpose, and it is there for them to help each other. There is some respect involved, and this is not to constantly humiliate and put down siblings. It is there to help each other control their unhealthy or unsocial behavior. Clan members must respect their clan parents where ever they are. If they are at a public gathering, they should honor them and greet them with openness. Shaking their hand and offering a gift is an excellent way for other learners to see the dynamics of the Apsaalooke Clan System.

Another recommendation is that Apsaalooke families should find willing participants to adopt in order to pass on full clan membership. If families are not part of the Tobacco Society, another form of adoption is through proclamation. These families can host some kind of dinner or function where they can use a herald to inform the public and families of a new member. Here families will know the status of a new member. Relationship roles will be identified to the teasing relatives, siblings, and clan children.

Finally, every member of the Apsaalooke Clan System

must take the initiative to practice the functions of the clan system. They must identify whether their sisters are older or younger or whether they are maternal or teasing clan sisters. Even the brothers must identify their siblings in whatever way as well as their brother-in-laws or their grandparents. By making this a practice, there is hope for the tradition to carry on as long as there are Apsaalooke in the world.

Ashaammaliaxxia

Conclusions

1. The backgrounds of each clan are rich in oral history.
2. There are characteristics that are significant for understanding clan behavior.

The clans have unique characteristics. Behavior of individuals can be traced to these characteristics. In previous discussion, the functions of clan relationships were more significant. The background of the clans offers other Apsaalooke researchers opportunities to present these stories. There is much information on the background of the clans, and like other aspects of oral tradition, there are many versions.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Apsaalooke recognize all the clans at any public function. They should also invite

members of each clan so that other learners can be aware of their memberships. Honoring and respecting their presence at public and private functions are a positive initiative for encouraging the importance of the Apsaalooke Clan System.

There should be more clan competitions and clan forums. Today, the Apsaalooke enjoy hand game, arrow throwing, basketball, and horsemanship. It would be encouraging to have competitions between clans like clan basketball tournaments or clan horse races. There could even be clan championship rodeos. The Apsaalooke people need to observe these kind of dynamics and create environments where they can practice clan relationships of honor and respect. This even includes the teasing clans.

Another scope in this area includes forums that were conducted in the past. Years ago, the clans got together to boast of the achievement of their members. At these forums they discussed their qualities and the background of their clan membership (B. Old Coyote, translated personal conversation, 1997). Stories from elders speak of these occasions as inspiring. The Apsaalooke should have more clan activities like this. There is nothing wrong if a function required teasing clans only. It would be one of the most entertaining events like if it was for Whistling Water Children only. Events like this would be fun and educational for clan members.

Kinship and Relationships

Conclusions

1. There are specific relationships and customs practiced among the Apsaalooke.
2. Clan relationships are based on the foundations of respect and honor; this includes love and trust.
3. Relationships are important and are the wealth of Apsaalooke people.
4. The Apsaalooke have many important symbols of motherhood in the culture.

The Apsaalooke are required by the foundations of the Apsaalooke Clan System to recognize certain customs in their relationships. These relationships have to do with their roles as parents and siblings. They extend to others as in-laws, grandparents, and children. They are very important in the dynamics of the culture and tradition. One example is that a man does not associate with his wife's mother. They are not allowed to be in the same room. Even at a public function, if a man is not accompanied by his wife or children and his mother-in-law is present, it is customary to leave.

Recommendations

The first recommendation is for the Apsaalooke to understand and identify their relationships. They should be familiar with the customs associated with these. Elders must point out the significance of the roles involved with specific relationships. They are very important to the well

being of Apsaalooke ways. Honoring and respecting these relationship extend into nature and the world. The way Apsaalooke present themselves through respect is the way they will carry themselves in the world. If they travel to other places, the Apsaalooke should maintain their foundations of honor and respect. This will go with them. While visiting other communities, the impression other people have will reflect on a person's family, clan, and tribe. If a person is honorable and respectful, the people they visit will point out that this is how Apsaalooke are. If a person is rude and impolite, this is the impression people will have of the family, clan, and the Apsaalooke tribe.

Next, Apsaalooke people should honor their relationships. If their clan father is a child, there is no reason to provide a gift that he would like. When a woman is visited by her brother and his wife, she should honor her sister-in-law because she is important to the happiness of her brother and she can demonstrate her love by honoring and respecting his spouse. She also is the mother to her brother's children. A woman's brothers should also exercise this respect and honor for her spouse. This is the Apsaalooke tradition, and it must be practiced if these people are going to be identified as unique group of people.

It is recommended the Apsaalooke care for their mothers because they are one of the most important people in the

world. Without them, people would not have been brought into this world. They are the primary teachers of the culture and sometimes a person's only friend. They must be respected because the world of the Apsaalooke is made up of many references to womanhood. It is not just a male world; there are many dynamics of female symbolism in the culture especially through how clan membership is passed.

Environments

Conclusions

1. The dynamics of the Apsaalooke culture are interrelated so the practices of the clan systems are in every part of the culture.
2. These environments are the primary areas of where Apsaalooke teach the significance of clan relationships.
3. The Apsaalooke need to create more ways to allow the clan system to be practiced in other environments outside traditional practices.

When public festivities are occurring, the traditional Apsaalooke found the opportunity to point out clan dynamics. Activities where clan relationships were formally practiced were always the precedence because the clan system was recognized always. Giveaways, dancing with a clan parent for the first time, and feeding "aassahke" are important.

Recommendations

The first recommendation is that the Apsaalooke must find more ways and create new environments where the clan

dynamics can be practiced. This could happen in contemporary classrooms in the local schools or the tribal college. This needs to happen so that the Apsaalooke Clan System changes with society. Maintaining the foundations and traditions are important, yet the Apsaalooke need more areas where this system could be recognized. It is up to the nativists, educators, and other elders of the community to create these environments.

Finally, it is recommended that the Apsaalooke continue practicing the Apsaalooke Clan System in every facet of their tradition. Furthermore, this recommendation includes the new nativist religions such as the Peyote Religion and the Shoshone Sun Dance. These and other nativist religions, like the Day Time Dance integrate the Apsaalooke Clan System well. Activities and organizations which foster this integration should be encouraged, and if possible these functions could serve as excellent forum that reinforces clan dynamics. Non-nativist religions like Christian churches can help teach the Apsaalooke culture if they are willing to work with the community. There are many aspects of the non-nativist religions where the Apsaalooke Clan System could be adapted for promoting the culture and its fundamentals. The Apsaalooke Clan System is a successful and excellent model for other non-Indian institutions to adapt. It is an experience and nativist example of a positive influence to culture.

What It Means to Be Apsaalooke

Conclusions

1. The Apsaalooke have a nativist oriented definition to who they are.
2. Being Apsaalooke means being part of the natural phenomena of life.
3. There are significant symbols and numbers that play an interrelated part with nature.
4. Apsaalooke recognize that they are part of an interrelated part of nature which is also interdependent upon the universe.

For the Apsaalooke, it is important to know the background of traditions because this is the foundation of defining who you are. The world of the Apsaalooke is primarily based on foundations of natural phenomena or the laws of nature. They are but a small part of this dynamic set of patterns and cycles of life. Within nature, the Apsaalooke find relevant symbols such as the four cardinal directions that give meaning to the four directions and natural environment. They are important to the lifestyle of the Apsaalooke. Apsaalooke attribute the miracle of life to specific elements, and they are revered with mysticism and supernatural phenomena. They are earth, air, fire, and water.

Recommendations

The first recommendation is to encourage the Apsaalooke to find new ways and methods to teach their culture. It

might require more formal changes by adapting to new technologies. The Apsaalooke need to use new technologies in order to teach their tradition and customs. An example of this would be an Apsaalooke-based television or radio stations. They should choose the Apsaalooke language as the format for their broadcast. Educators and nativist should develop curricula and program that take learners into nature and provide more interactive instruction with the culture. This is very much possible, and the Apsaalooke can do this by making the decision. Contemporary curricula of science and mathematics can be adapted into Apsaalooke experience. This can be done if educators and nativist work together. The Apsaalooke can teach physics or history from their own perspective. Ideas and knowledge from the mainstream can be adapted and translated into Apsaalooke concepts. The basic solution requires involvement and expectations. Taking the responsibility to become involved with a role in education means that someone cares. Creating high expectations is discipline and trust. It is based on a trust in the belief that Apsaalooke traditional ways are just as good as any other on this earth.

Next, the final recommendation is for the Apsaalooke to take over their own destiny by creating an Apsaalooke-based educational system. The mainstream systems of government, religion, and commerce are not going to do anything to help the Apsaalooke take initiatives in self-determination. They

will do nothing because most of the things that the Apsaalooke value are the things that the mainstream intends to destroy. By creating a mindset for liberation and empowerment, the Apsaalooke can take a new direction healing themselves from the atrocities and illnesses inflicted by the oppression and control initiated by the mainstream power structure.

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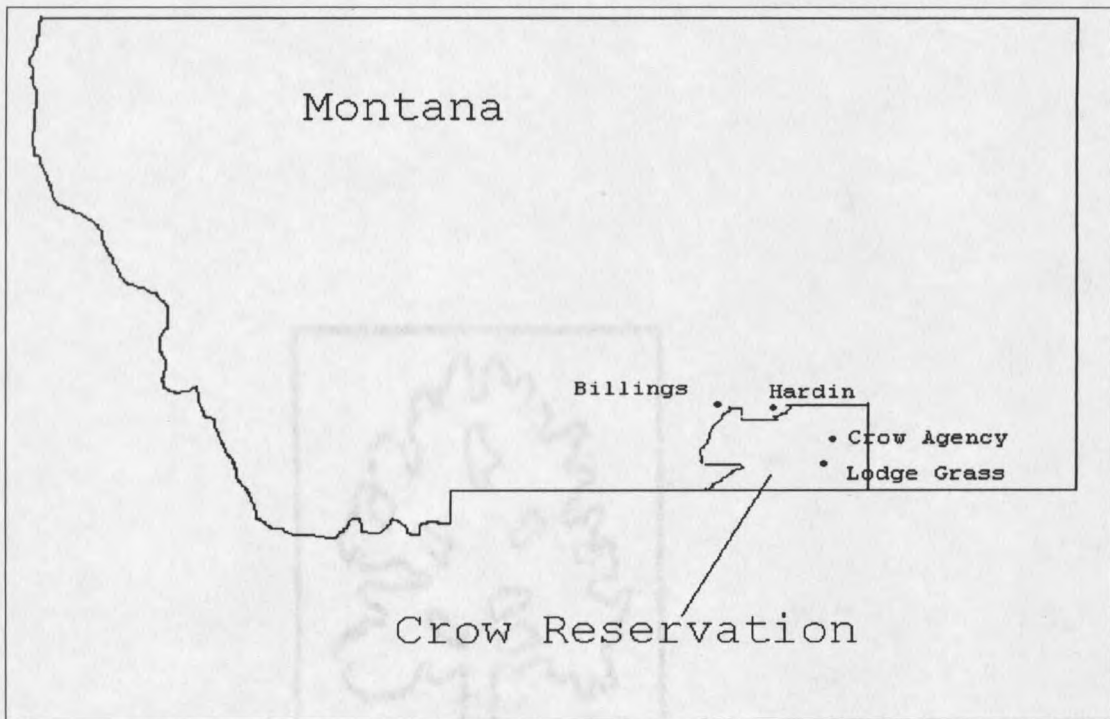
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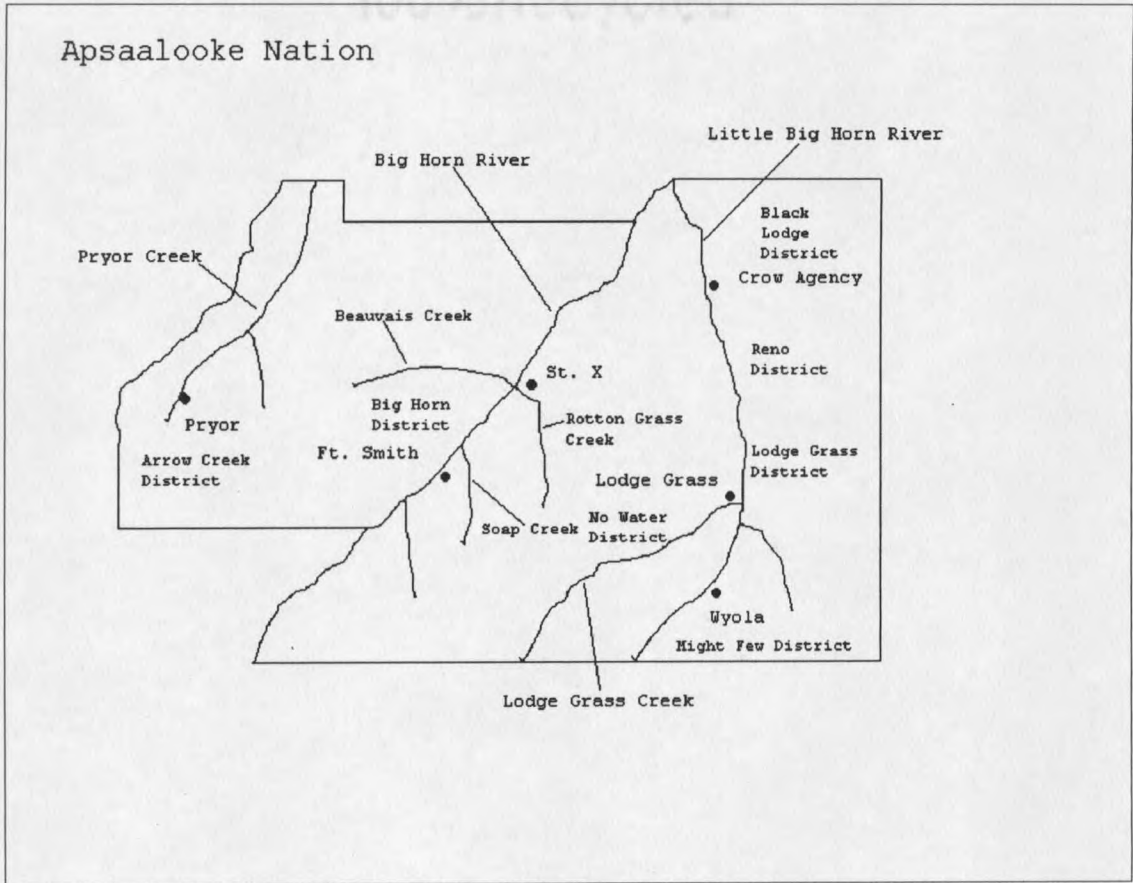
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APPENDIX

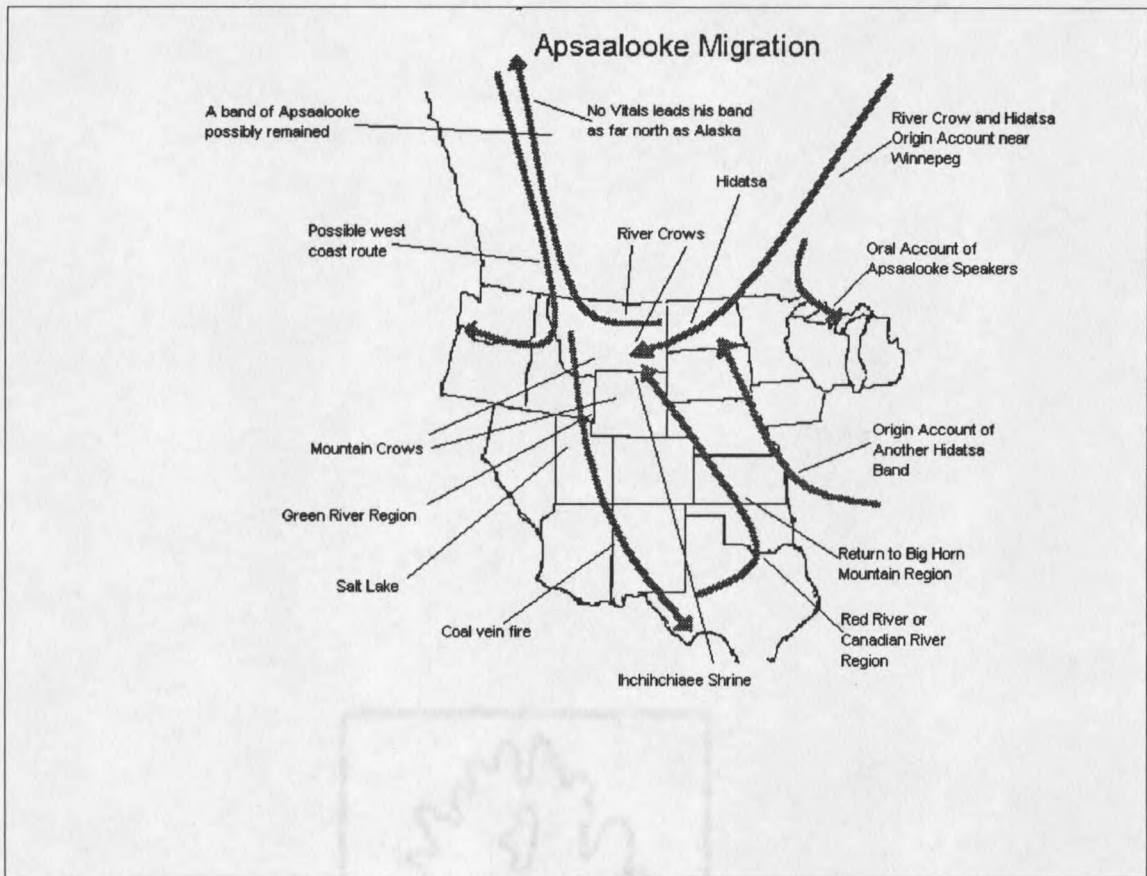


Montana and the Crow Reservation

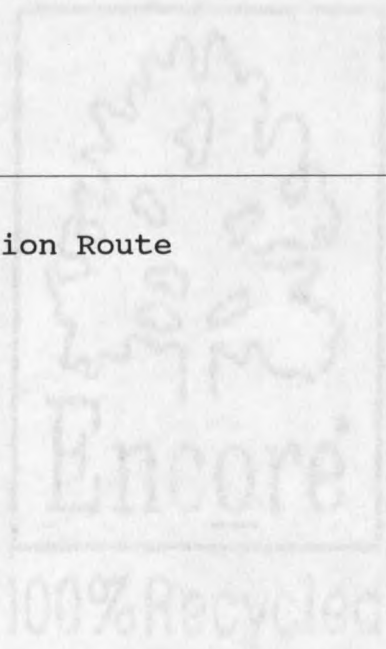
Apsaalooke Nation

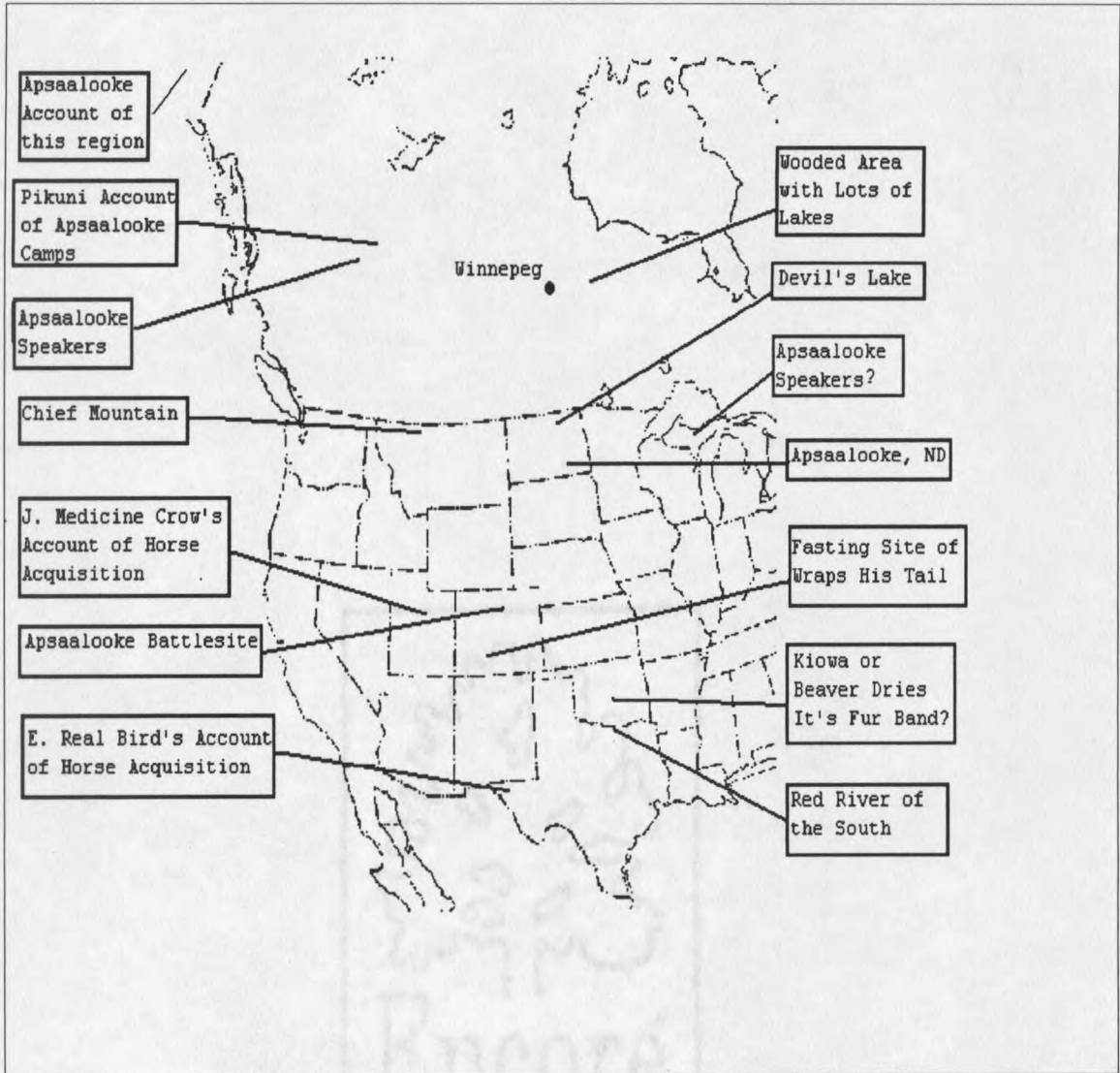


Apsaalooke Nation



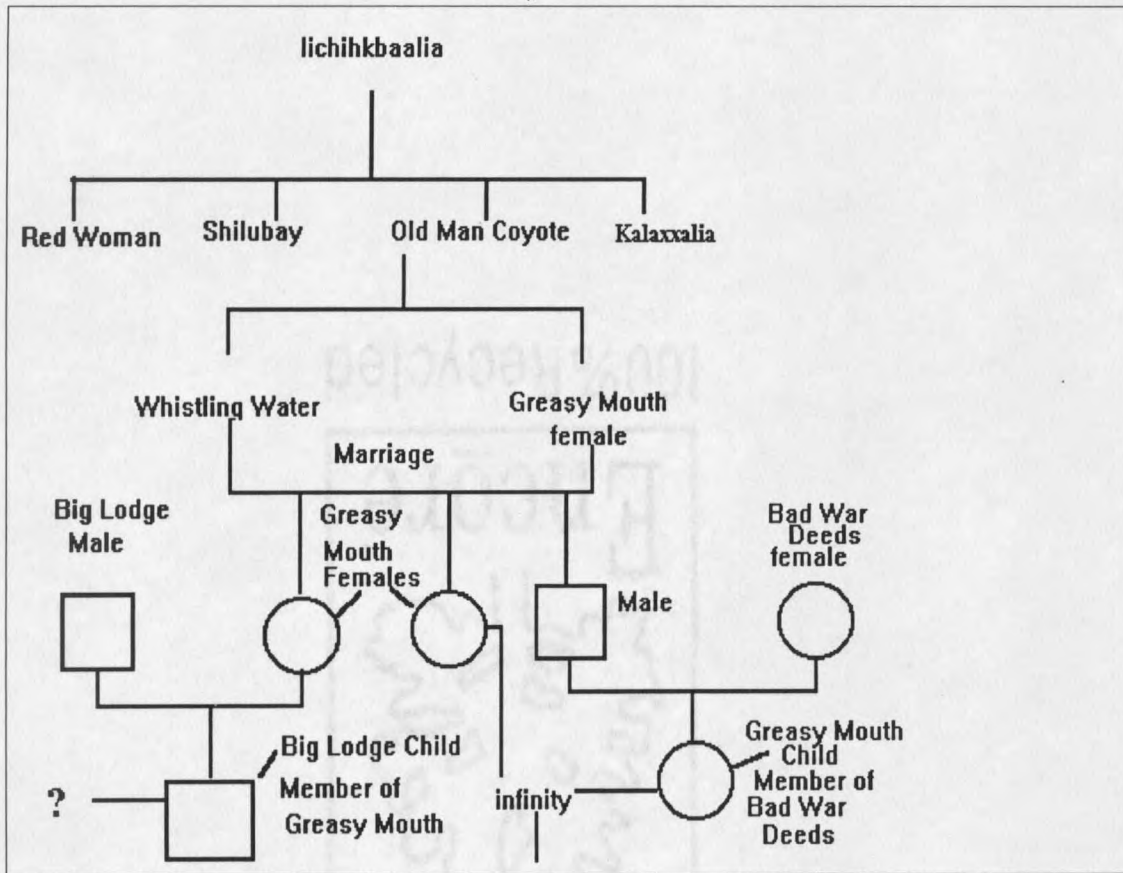
Apsaalooke Migration Route





Apsaalooke Map of North America

100% Recycled



Whistling Water Male marries a Greasy Mouth Female to produce Whistling Water Children and Greasy Mouth Clan Members.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDYInformal Interviews

Bad Bear, Ira Lindsay
 Big Lake, Thomas
 Driver, Leonard
 LaDue, Ron
 Little Light, Robert
 Moccasin, Wayne
 Old Coyote, R.C.
 Old Coyote, Lloyd (d)
 Real Bird, Floyd
 Real Bird, Tim
 Real Bird, Charles
 Real Bird, Kennard
 Real Bird, Richard
 Real Bird, Pius
 Real Bird, Henry
 Real Bird, Edison (d)
 Stein, Wayne
 Takes Horse, Samuel
 Tiona, Joe
 White, Leroy
 Wolf, Malcolm

Formal Interviews

Bulltail, Grant
 Crooked Arm, Pius
 Flat Lip, Lawrence
 Little Light, Jr., Ed
 Old Coyote, Desi
 Old Coyote, Barney Jr.
 Peregoy, Sharon
 Red Wolf, Sr., Thomas
 Reed, Jr., George
 Smells, Joe
 Stewart, Frances
 Takes Horse, Sam
 White, Leroy

L.B.H.C. Archival Interviews

Bad Bear, Ira Lindsay
 Beaumont, Phillip
 Black Eagle, Hartford
 Lincoln, Wilson
 Old Horn, Dale
 Old Coyote, Mickey (d)
 Smells, Wayne (d)
 Yellowmule, Dorthy

(d)-deceased

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