



Blackfoot ceremony : a qualitative study of learning
by Donald Duane Pepion

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

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Abstract:

This study utilizes qualitative research methodology to ascertain the process of learning the ceremonial practices of the Blackfoot Native people in Montana and Southern Alberta, Canada. The literature on adult learning reveals that little is known of how Native Americans learn. Fifteen Blackfoot ceremonialists were interviewed following the general interview guide approach of qualitative research methodology. The study participants were selected as a representative group of ceremonialists known to the researcher. The interview findings are presented in a case study format that provides insight into the naturalistic context of how this group of Blackfoot ceremonialists perceives ceremonial learning processes. The findings were analyzed using the illuminative model of naturalistic research, which identifies recurring trends, incidences and issues as they emerge from the data. The findings were grouped into seventeen categories according to commonalities, patterns, and relationships. The conclusions are presented with interpretive comments based on the common perceptions and views of the study participants. Several recommendations are made relevant to each of the seventeen categories identified in the findings.

The results of the research concluded that the ceremonial learning process of the Blackfoot included the following elements: a) divination process of learning, b) motivational process of learning, c) memory association learning process, d) visual and auditory learning process, e) mentoring and facilitation learning process, f) rite of passage learning process, g) participant-observation learning process, h) process of learning how to learn, i) inductive reasoning process of learning, j) cognitive process of learning, k) environmental process of learning, l) self-directed/interactive learning process, m) socialization process of learning, n) learning process through symbolism, o) perceived barriers to learning process, p) effects of spirituality on learning process, q) structural synthesizing of learning process, r) effect of language usage on learning process, and s) effect of Blackfoot way of knowing on learning process.

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
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Doctor of Education

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY-BOZEMAN
Bozeman, Montana

December 1999

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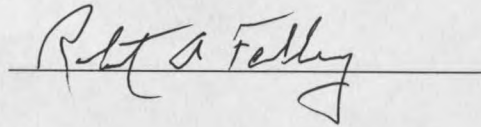
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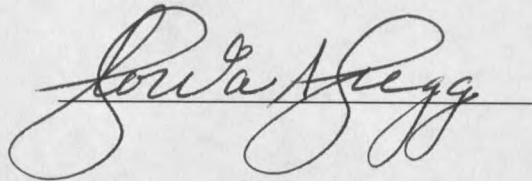
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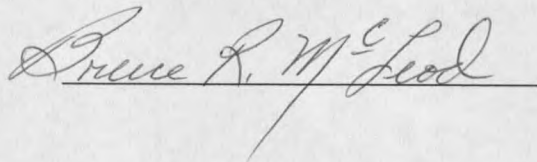
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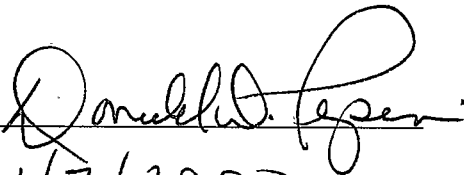


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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with sincere appreciation that the researcher acknowledges the ceremonialists and elders who gave their time and knowledge to this study.

I am thankful for the support and encouragement of Dr. Robert Fellenz, committee chairperson, who guided me through the sometimes difficult tasks related to the research. The assistance and guidance of doctoral committee members, Dr. Nate St. Pierre, Dr. Wayne Stein, Dr. Bonnie Sachatello-Sawyer and Dr. William Farr, is appreciated.

Appreciation is extended to President Carol Murray and the Board of Trustees of Blackfeet Community College, who provided sensitivity and support as my employer. A special thanks to John and Carol Murray, whose discussions are very much a part of this study. Thanks for the positive encouragement and support provided by my co-workers, friends and community members. Thanks to George G. Kipp, III for inspiration.

It is with heartfelt appreciation that I acknowledge my parents, LeRoy and Eileen Pepion, for their perseverance and loving dedication in helping their eight children become successful. I wish to extend my gratitude to my wife Debbie, daughter Maja, and grandson Dylan, for their patience, love, kindness and generosity.

Finally, I am very grateful for the work of Dana Pemberton, who dedicated much of her personal time in word processing and editing. The editing work of Barbara Weathered and Barbara Planalp is appreciated.

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ABSTRACT

This study utilizes qualitative research methodology to ascertain the process of learning the ceremonial practices of the Blackfoot Native people in Montana and Southern Alberta, Canada. The literature on adult learning reveals that little is known of how Native Americans learn. Fifteen Blackfoot ceremonialists were interviewed following the general interview guide approach of qualitative research methodology. The study participants were selected as a representative group of ceremonialists known to the researcher. The interview findings are presented in a case study format that provides insight into the naturalistic context of how this group of Blackfoot ceremonialists perceives ceremonial learning processes. The findings were analyzed using the illuminative model of naturalistic research, which identifies recurring trends, incidences and issues as they emerge from the data. The findings were grouped into seventeen categories according to commonalities, patterns, and relationships. The conclusions are presented with interpretive comments based on the common perceptions and views of the study participants. Several recommendations are made relevant to each of the seventeen categories identified in the findings.

The results of the research concluded that the ceremonial learning process of the Blackfoot included the following elements: a) divination process of learning, b) motivational process of learning, c) memory association learning process, d) visual and auditory learning process, e) mentoring and facilitation learning process, f) rite of passage learning process, g) participant-observation learning process, h) process of learning how to learn, i) inductive reasoning process of learning, j) cognitive process of learning, k) environmental process of learning, l) self-directed/interactive learning process, m) socialization process of learning, n) learning process through symbolism, o) perceived barriers to learning process, p) effects of spirituality on learning process, q) structural synthesizing of learning process, r) effect of language usage on learning process, and s) effect of Blackfoot way of knowing on learning process.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

This research examines the traditional Native ways of learning within the Blackfoot Confederacy, which consists of the Blackfeet Tribe (Southern Piegan or Pikuni) in Montana and the North Peigan (Northern Pikuni), Blood (Kainaa) and Blackfoot (Siksika) in Alberta. These groups are all part of the same tribe of Indians, which are being termed the Blackfoot Confederacy. Although the Canadian/United States boundary line separated this tribe of people, they have been considered a nation of people for centuries. The tribes maintain their affiliation especially through language, ceremonies and customs. The extended family ties within the Blackfoot peoples are strong especially since they are related by blood and marriage.

Empirical observations of Blackfeet tribal elders (Kicking Woman, personal communication, 1995) in ceremonies and rituals by Blackfeet tribal educators (Kipp, personal communication, 1996) have presented some interesting ideas. The phenomenal memory of elders in conducting ceremonies that involve numerous songs, ritual movements, and dance is extraordinary, especially since strict conduct and adherence to intense dictates are required in the process. How did these people learn to retain and

perform intense, complicated and rigorous ceremonies that can take sometimes several days to perform?

Blackfeet elders such as Kicking Woman (personnel communication, 1995) talk about knowing songs and rituals from being present as a child or young person during ceremonies, although they did not actively participate. This kind of learning has some interesting ramifications as it presents the idea that indirect information is somehow memorized and applied later in life.

This investigation is culturally specific to the Blackfoot tribal people. Brookfield (1986) relates that the generalizations on adult learning are all based on samples of studies done for the most part on ethnically homogeneous Caucasian Americans. In regards to this matter he states the following: "To base a comprehensive theory of adult learning on observations of white, middle-class Americans in continuing or extension education classes in the post-Second World War era is conceptually and empirically naïve." Brookfield further states: "Nonetheless, we fall far too frequently into the mistake of declaring that research reveals that adults, in generic sense, learn in a certain way" (p. 32).

Education imposed from another culture, society, or social structure is oppressive. For example, Horton, in working with Blacks in the South through the Highlander Folk School, found that "individualism" was a white imposed concept from a paternalistic system. He had to accept that a system of equal treatment had to include the Blacks' individual and group characteristics (Adams, 1982). Horton further clarified this by understanding that Blacks had to be free to make their own choices on their own terms.

Thus, anything meaningful for the Blacks had to be "freely what they themselves wanted to be" (p. 109).

The Blackfeet People

The Blackfeet Indian Reservation is located in Northcentral Montana. It consists of 1.5 million acres and is larger than the size of Delaware and Rhode Island combined. It is bordered on the west by Glacier National Park, which is on the continental divide of the Rocky Mountains, and on the north by the Canadian province of Alberta (Blackfeet Tribal Business Council, 1995).

The Blackfeet Indian Reservation lies on the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains where the terrain flows from rolling hills of grassland to where the farmland plains begin toward the east. The elevations vary from 9,000 feet on Chief Mountain to 3,400 feet on the plains.

The 1990 Census as adjusted in 1991 by the U. S. Department of Commerce showed the following profile characteristics for the population of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation:

	<u>Total Persons</u>	<u>Percent of Population</u>
Total	8,549	100.0
White	1,498	17.5
Black	9	.1
American Indian/Eskimo or Aleut	7,025	82.2
Asian or Pacific Island	2	0.0
Other Race	15	0.2

The Enrollment Department of the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council (1997) (governing body of the Blackfeet Nation) lists over 14,000 tribal members. Comparing this number with the above census reveals that about 50% of the enrolled Blackfeet membership does not live on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. The Enrollment Department's records indicate that although many Blackfeet members live in the region, there are high numbers in urban areas including Seattle and California.

The Blackfeet, also called Southern Piegan or Pikuni (as they call themselves), are actually part of a group of peoples that populated most of Montana and southern Alberta, Canada since ancient times. The Blackfoot Confederacy, as this group of aboriginal people is sometimes called, consists of the Blackfoot, Peigans and Blood Indian Tribes. The Blackfeet or Southern Piegan are located in Montana while the North Peigan, Blood and Blackfoot are located in Alberta, Canada. Although most literature indicates that the Blackfoot nations (or tribes) were primarily composed of the three bands, the North and South Peigans were actually one sub-group until the United States and Canadian border separated them. They all speak the same language and have similar customs, traditions and beliefs. According to the anthropologists, this group of people are of Algonquian linguistic descent (Ewers, 1958, p. 6). The differentiation of these people in regards to terminology is explained by Ewers:

For nearly two centuries the three Blackfoot tribes have been known to white men by their separate names. They are the Pikuni or Piegan (pronounced Pay-gan'), the Kainah or Blood, and the Siksika or Blackfoot proper, often referred to as the Northern Blackfoot to distinguish it from the other two tribes. The three tribes were politically independent . . . So it has been customary to speak of these three tribes as one people, under the general name of Blackfoot or Blackfeet. The former is the more literal translation of Native name, Siksikauwa (black-footed

people). Together these three tribes comprised the strongest military power on the northwestern plains in the historic buffalo days (Ewers, 1958, p. 5).

For the purposes of this study, the term Blackfoot will be used to talk about the three divisions of the tribes (North Blackfoot or Siksika; Blood or Kainah; and Blackfeet or South Piegan or Pikuni). However, it is important to remember that the North Peigan are also a part of the tribes. (Note the difference between the American spelling of Piegan and the Canadian spelling of Peigan). In this study, the term Blackfeet or Pikuni will be used to discuss the Southern Piegan.

Statement of the Problem

Brookfield (1986) relates that the research in adult education has been largely on "ethnically homogeneous" samples of Caucasian Americans. He further states that "the samples for the studies on which these generalizations concerning the nature of adult learning are based are culturally specific" (p. 32). The work of Heynemman and Loxley in their 1983 study is cited by Brookfield (1986) as follows: "With less than 5% of the world's school population, the United States accounts for the majority of the world's empirical research on education" (p. 32).

Although theories abound on learning styles, strategies and methods, educators really do not know how adults learn. Simpson (1980) noted this when he looked at the state of art in adult learning theory: "In essence, no comprehensive theory of learning seems to exist that suffices for the divergent learning episodes that the adult experiences throughout a lifetime. Moreover, adult educators have been unable to articulate an adequate theory of adult learning" (p. 45).

The situation of examining adult learning from a cultural point of view can be demanding when ethnic values are considered in the domain. This can be especially true when the affective realm of learning is explored. Keefe (1982) notes how affective styles of learning are influenced by many factors including "the cultural environment". Thus, cultural values and certainly personalities are considerations within the learning process. "Not every student can be successful in every learning environment because family or ethnic customs may be at odds with school practices" (p. 48).

It appears, therefore, that there is a case for concern when current generalized studies on adult learning are applied to groups other than white Americans. Brookfield (1986) makes this case apparent when he states:

How can we write confidently of adult learning style in any generic sense when we know little (other than anecdotally) of the cognitive operations of, for example, Asian peasants, African tribespeople, or Chinese cooperative labors? Even within North American culture the empirical accuracy of generalizations about adult learning principles is highly questionable in that we have few studies of the learning styles of Native Americans, white working-class adults, Hispanics, blacks, or Orientals" (p. 33).

For many years, efforts made to improve the educational level of Native Americans across the nation have been exerted with no significant advancement. For the most part, current educational theory has not had a major influence on increasing the educational status of Indians.

Although there are studies that deal with limiting or accounting for cultural bias, much of the research may be misguided because it starts from the wrong premise. This is especially true with Native Americans because of their diversity in language, philosophy and culture. Each of the over 500 Native American tribes in United States have their own

unique language, beliefs, religion, and traditional knowledge base. These distinct ethnic groups, called Native Americans, pose a problematic situation in research methodology. This can be particularly the situation when the research methodology uses a scientific method, which may be averse to the belief system of the tribal group being studied.

The purpose here is not so much to present a treatise on cultural bias and the scientific method, as it is to present a study based on the frame of reference of those being studied.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to ascertain the Blackfoot traditional cultural learning process in ceremony and attempt to describe or transmit this information into the dominant culture language and knowledge base. The qualitative research method of case study interview is utilized. The naturalistic technique of research is employed to avoid any contamination of imposing outside influences and value judgements. This is of particular concern since this is not a cross cultural study. It is an attempt to determine how culturally traditional ceremonial learning takes place. It is also important because this study proposes to look at a learning environment within its own context.

Research Question

This project proposes identifying the traditional Native ways of learning within the Blackfoot Confederacy. Empirical observations reveal that these people perform

intense, complicated and rigorous ceremonies that can take sometimes several days to complete. As with most people, the traditional Blackfeet must have learning styles, strategies and processes in learning ceremony. The research question for this study: what is the learning process used in Blackfoot ceremony?

Significance of the Study

This study is important and useful to a variety of audiences for several different reasons. Most importantly, this research can be useful to educational bodies who deal with Native American learners at all levels. As indicated in the literature, knowledge of Native American learning is limited. Since it is generally known that Native Americans have had lower achievement levels in education than other races, this information may be useful to examining ways to improve educational effectiveness for this group of people.

This study may have some utility for Native and indigenous people throughout the world who are seeking ways to preserve and protect their culture, language and knowledge base. The research verifies that world indigenous people are looking to their own cultures and ways of knowing to find solutions to their situation.

People such as Miles Horton (Adams, 1975) and Paulo Freire, (1985) have identified how paternalism and oppression have imposed ways of knowing on indigenous people that is many times differential to their culture and beliefs. More importantly, effects of oppression and paternalism have created complex issues for indigenous people that need examination, study and research in order to understand the situation and improve things like social/economic conditions. Hopefully, this study may provide the

impetus for Native people and others to examine the effects of oppression that impedes the progress of indigenous people.

Native American traditional practices and ceremonies are considered by many groups to be pagan practices that have little value to the dominant culture in the Americas. Recent studies by Harrison (1997), Real Bird (1997), Rowland (1994), St. Pierre (1996), Still Smoking (1997) and others reveal that Native American ways of knowing are important to learning. This research can be useful to Native American populations in identifying their own knowledge base that can be helpful to improving their social, economic and educational levels.

The qualitative and case study method of research used in this study has utility for diverse cultures whose ways have not been fully articulated through other methods of inquiry. The qualitative research methodology has grown tremendously in the past few years, which has caused it to gain a level of credibility with academia. For some Native populations, this research methodology is conducive to maintaining the integrity of their culture and way of knowing.

Much of the Native American history and culture has not been included in the literature used in schools and colleges in the United States. Most of the current literature used in learning institutions has not been developed from the Native perspective. These kinds of studies can be models for the development of Native materials that can be used in the classroom. Also, vital to the issue of the need for Native learning materials is the development of literature by Native scholars. It is especially important to use Native scholars steeped in the culture and ways of knowing of their tribe.

This research is a model for the beginning of a change process for Native American tribes. As indicated in the literature by Lane and others (Bopp, 1985) change starts from within the people themselves. The culture many times contains ways to understand and explain the complex issues facing tribes. In order to bring about awareness and education on the issues, tribes may use these kinds of studies to begin approaching on-going problems using their traditional ways of knowing. Answers can truly come from within.

Technology and many other factors in a changing world are influencing the traditions and ways of many Native people. It is important to preserve the old ways and ceremonies. This study is one example of how knowledge preservation uses current technology while protecting the integrity of the traditions and culture.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to only the fifteen Blackfoot tribal members who participated in the study. The participants in the study were limited to Blackfoot ceremonialists that the researcher had become familiar with in attending ceremonies. The study participants were all either current or former medicine bundle holders.

Although the study included interviewing Blackfoot ceremonialists, none of the members of the Siksika division participated in the study. Nine of the study participants were from the Blackfeet or Southern Piegan division of the Blackfoot, while four were from the North Peigan and two from the Blood tribe.

The interviews were limited to this representative group of ceremonialists known to the researcher. The findings represent the perceptions of this particular group of ceremonialists. No attempt was made to factor the participants by demographics or any other criteria.

The interviews were limited to the generalized questions asked by the researcher regarding Blackfoot ceremonial learning process. Limited guided questions were asked in order to preserve the integrity of the qualitative methodology.

Interpreting Blackfoot words into English when necessary in the study was limited to phonetic spelling. The Blackfoot tribes do not have an agreed upon spelling for writing the language.

Definitions

Anthropologic - Refers to the methods used in the discipline of anthropology for case study techniques in such things as cultural research.

Band - During the teepee days the members of the Blackfoot Confederacy lived in small groups somewhat like clans. Each group was composed of families with situational leadership. The band groups usually had a name or title. The band affiliation was loose in the sense that some individuals, families or groups may change band association. The term band is sometimes used to describe the members of the Blackfoot Confederacy such as the Blackfeet, North Peigan, Blood or Siksika. Some tribal members still consider themselves as part of a specific band.

Beaver Bundle - The medicine bundle that was given to the people in spiritual ways through the beaver. The origin story of the beaver bundle relates how the animals gave their spirits to the bundle.

Blackfeet - A term adapted by the dominant society to a group of aboriginal people living mostly in what is now Montana. The federal government has adopted this as the legal designation for the Southern Piegan, who are now located on the Blackfeet

Indian Reservation in northwest Montana, adjacent to the eastern boundary of the Rocky Mountain continental divide and Canadian boundary to the north.

Blackfoot - In this study, the term is used to include the Native people who are members of a group that has three primary divisions including the Piegan, Blood and Siksika. The Piegan are divided into two parts called the Southern Piegan who are located on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Montana and the North Peigan who are located on the Peigan Reserve in southern Alberta Canada. The Blood division of the tribe is located on the Blood Reserve near Stand Off in southern Alberta, Canada. The word Blackfoot is also sometimes used to describe the Siksika located on their reserve east of Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Blackfoot Confederacy - A term used to include all the divisions of the Blackfoot people including the Blackfeet, North Peigan, Blood and Siksika.

Blacktail Deer Dance - A winter nighttime dance involving the use of songs and music accompaniment with bells on a leather strap. The dancers jump like deer in a circle around the singers. Some say this dance derived from the Salish-Kootenai people.

Blessed Mother - A term used by one of the study participants to describe the Catholic Virgin Mary.

Blood - A division of the Blackfoot Confederacy located on the Blood Reserve near Stand Off, Alberta, Canada. The Blackfoot word for this group of Blackfoot people is Kainaa. (See definition for Blackfoot).

Brave Dog Society - One of the more social type (as opposed to religious type) of societies of the Blackfoot. Early writers called these fraternal types of age-graded groups. There seemed to be a hierarchy of societies that individuals moved through during their lifetime. The Brave Dog Society is the same as the Crazy Dog Society as termed by the Blackfeet. This society was considered one of the policing groups that kept order in the camps and travels of the tribes.

Buffalo Calling Stone - The special stone that spiritually spoke to the Blackfoot woman in the genesis account. The rock is used by the Beaver medicine person in a ceremony that "calls" or brings the buffalo to the "buffalo jump". (See inisskimm definition).

Bundle keeper - Much discussion takes place regarding the correct terminology regarding a person who is in possession of a medicine bundle. Since a medicine bundle is transferable, the person only has temporary possession of the article until it is transferred to another. However, contemporary convention has caused some of

the bundle keepers or holders to maintain their status for many years either because of their reluctance or the reticence of others to seek procurement.

Cleansing Ceremony - A ritual that cleanses the individual from being around such things as funerals. The Blackfoot belief in spiritualism contends that an individual needs a purification ceremony after being around funeral rituals, especially before participating in ceremonies.

Creation stories - An expression used to describe the genesis narratives of the Blackfoot people. The term may be used interchangeably with origin or genesis stories. (See origin or genesis stories).

Cultural Materials - The sacred or holy articles brought back by Scar Face and Woman Who Married A Star during their mystical journeys to the cosmos where the divine beings live. In the genesis accounts, these sacred materials were a part of the medicine lodge ceremonies, which was brought to the people by these two individuals. Scar Face brought the Crow Tail Feather, Sun Dance Necklace and bracelet, and the lizard symbol. Woman Who Married A Star brought back the Sun Dance Headdress Bundle.

Dominant Society - Used to delineate those groups of people who emigrated to North America and became the dominant force in language, culture, and governance.

Effigy - In this study the term effigy is used to signify the stone configurations that are located on the prairies of Montana and Southern Alberta. The configurations may be in the outline form of a man or animal. The stone outlines vary in shape, form and size from a one hundred foot "Napi" image to a twenty to thirty foot lizard or turtle likeness.

Elder - This term is usually used to identify an older Blackfoot person who is generally recognized as possessing knowledge and wisdom relevant to the traditional ways of the people. For Blackfoot ceremonialists, an elder is usually someone who has had several transfers in their lifetime. For example, in most societies, the elder advisors are those individuals who have held former positions and status in the society, but they have now transferred that on to others. In some instances, the elder is someone who is twice removed from a status such as a medicine bundle holder.

Ethnographic - A term used to characterize the process of describing different cultures but not in the anthropological demeaning sense of defining literacy in terms of reading and writing by the dominant culture.

Genesis Stories - Narratives that describe the way the Blackfoot people came to be. The narratives may be highly metaphorical or in the form of an allegory.

Hair Parter's Song - A song that is used in Blackfoot ceremony that derived from one of the genesis accounts.

Holy Parent or Grandparent - The term used for the elder mentor who facilitates the ceremonial learning process for the apprentice bundle keeper or holder. Sometimes may be referred to as holy mother or holy father.

Holy Smoke - A ceremony sometimes called the Big Smoke, Smoke Ceremony or Kano'tsississ. In the Blackfoot way, the holy smoke ceremony involves an all night ritual of singing and smoking of the individual smoking pipes. As with most Blackfoot ceremonies the women have an important role in the ritual.

Horn Society - One of the most secretive and eminent societies involving both public and private rituals, now practiced mostly by the Blood division of the Blackfoot people.

Iinisskimm or sacred buffalo stone - The holy buffalo stone that is found within most medicine bundles and some painted tepees. In this genesis account, a Blackfoot woman receives information from the spirit within a special rock that provides the song and ceremony for calling the buffalo.

Learners - When the study participants or interview respondents discussed their situation as a learner this title is used.

Learning process - In the context of this study, learning process is examining the way in which learning is taking place. The manner or procedure by which people learn.

Medicine Bundle or Medicine Pipe Bundle - Blackfoot holy or sacred objects are wrapped into a bundle using series of cloth and/or various animal hides, depending upon the nature of the bundle. The bundle is considered a very sacred article to be treated with much reverence and respect. Bundles are usually only opened during ceremonies.

Medicine Horse Bundle - The name of a medicine bundle kept by one of the study participants. In some cases, a medicine bundle will have a name. (See medicine bundle definition).

Medicine Lodge or ookaan - A term commonly used for the sun dance ceremony.

Medicine Wheel - A conventional term used to describe the rock, stone or boulder configurations that have been mysteriously placed throughout North American country especially located in the traditional roaming area of the Blackfoot in Montana and Southern Alberta, Canada. The terminology is also now used to

describe a symbol, which is becoming commonly used by Native Americans. The term may include medicine circle, wheel or prayer wheel or circle.

Miniipokaan - A special child that is adopted, usually by a grandparent, and treated favorably. Some of these children are brought to ceremonies and begin performing small tasks associated with the rituals. These children are sometimes allowed to "play" ceremony, which is taboo for the adult. Several eventually become leading ceremonialists.

Naming Ceremony - A ritual for the giving of a name to an individual. An elder usually confers a name on the child or person in a short ceremony involving prayer and oration. Gift giving, and sometimes a feed, takes place. In former times, there may have been other activities such as a sweat associated with name giving.

Napi - A figure in Blackfoot genesis narratives who had divine qualities as well as human characteristics. He is portrayed in many of the childhood stories as a person that could converse and interact with the animals. Napi has mystical powers, yet he has fallible human characteristics that cause him to suffer consequences of action that is usually forewarned.

Napi Naatosi - The name of the divinity inherent in the sun. In the genesis accounts, Napi Naatosi is sometimes referred to as the husband of Kookoomiikiisoom (the name of feminine moon) and the father of star boy. This term is used frequently in prayer and supplication, and sometimes just the term Naatosi is used as a shortened version with the same meaning.

Native American - Commonly used term in describing the indigenous or aboriginal people of North American. The term is common in the United States but is frequently used as Native in Canada and other countries.

Niitsitapi - A Blackfoot language word used to identify Native American or American Indian people, sometimes commonly used to designate Blackfoot people as a whole.

Ninaimsskaa - This term is presently being used by some to denote members of a medicine bundle society. It is probably a derivative of the term ninaimsskaan, which means medicine bundle owner.

North Peigan - A division of the Blackfoot Confederacy who are affiliated with the South Peigan. The North Peigan are located on the Peigan Reserve near Brocket, Alberta, Canada. (See Blackfoot definition).

Ookaan - The Blackfoot term for sun dance or medicine lodge.

- Oral tradition - The oral history of the Blackfoot people but also used to describe the verbal narrative way of transmitting historic and current information.
- Origin Stories - An expression used to describe the genesis narratives of the Blackfoot people. The term may be used interchangeably with creation or genesis stories.
- Pan-Indianism - A term that is being used to describe ceremonies that have been developed by adopting rituals, symbols, words, actions, or other conventions from other tribes. Usually frowned upon by traditional Blackfoot ceremonialists as compromising the integrity of the Blackfoot rituals. The contemporary powwow type of celebration is considered pan-Indian by many traditional Native people.
- Participants - The individuals who were interviewed are called participants in this study. In some cases, they may be referred to as a learner or respondent depending upon the context of the discussion.
- Pikuni or Piikani - The name used by the division of Blackfoot that was called Piegan by early historians. This group of Blackfoot is termed North Peigan in Canada and South Piegan or Blackfeet in the United States.
- Pipe Dance - A conventional term used to denote a medicine bundle ceremony. Probably derived out of the fact that the medicine bundle keepers will usually dance with the medicine pipe during the bundle opening.
- Powwow - A conventional term that is being used to describe the inter-tribal celebrations involving contemporary Native American social dancing and singing. (See Pan-Indian definition).
- Protocol - Blackfoot ceremony is imbued with an extraordinary amount of rules and proprieties, which can be contextual, yet sometimes associated with individual ceremonialists.
- Rights - Usually through the rite of transfer the person gains rights or privileges, authority, and honor associated with specific actions, objects, tasks, or status.
- Rite of Passage - In most Blackfoot ceremony the individual goes through a ritual that serves as an induction into such things as membership in a society. The rite of passage is affiliated with the rite of transfer ceremony, which is used for this purpose.
- Sacred - Used in the common dictionary term as something that is holy, religious, revered or spiritual in nature. In the Blackfoot context, it may be something that is mysterious, metaphysical, or supernatural in nature.

Scabby Round Robe - The individual Blackfoot person who in the genesis accounts was taught in a mystical way by the beavers and animals the songs and rituals contained within the beaver bundle.

Scar Face - A male figure in the genesis of the Blackfoot who mystically traveled to the cosmos and consorted with the divine beings embodied in the sun (Naatosi or holy one), moon (Kipitaaakii or old lady) and stars (star boy). Scar Face was "cured" of his disfigurement by the sun and brought some of the ceremony related to the ookaan or sun dance to the Blackfoot people.

Siksiikaisittaapii [sic] - A word that is used to describe the collective body of Blackfoot people. However, the term has meaning and connotation beyond simply "the people".

Siksika - A designation for a division of the Blackfoot Confederacy who are located on the Siksika Reserve east of Calgary, Alberta, Canada. The term in the English language means Blackfoot. The literature sometimes refers to the Siksika as the Blackfoot proper. (See Blackfoot definition).

Smudge - An incense composed of a live, hot, charcoal with a substance such as sweet grass, sweet pine or other such material relevant to the ceremony and the ceremonialist. The smudge is used to purify and symbolize the carrying of prayers to the Creator.

Snake Indian - Usually a term to indicate a Shoshone Indian but it is sometimes used to generally signify a person from a tribe that is unfriendly to the Blackfoot.

Societies - Fraternal and religious groups of the Blackfoot that are organized around a complex set of rituals, rules, and behavior with social, religious and governance implications. There is usually some kind of induction and exit process and procedure involving rite of passage in ritualistic form.

Song Service - A ceremony involving the exchange and singing of songs.

Songs or singing - Songs, as discussed in this study, are chants that have been referred to by some as a falsetto intonation. Most ceremonial songs use the accompaniment of a drum or rattle. Some Blackfoot ceremonial songs may be interspersed with minimal wording. In some ceremonies, songs may include simultaneous hand gestures, body movement, or dancing. In medicine bundle ceremonies, each part of the ritual has a specified song or series of songs. Most of the ceremonial songs are connected to an oral tradition narrative or origin story.

South Piegan - A division of the Blackfoot Confederacy called the Blackfeet who are located on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Montana. The term is an English

interpretation of Aamsskaapiikani or South Piegan. The South Piegan are considered the same as the North Peigan located in southern Alberta, Canada. A shortened version used for this group is Pikuni as it is used in the United States but the term is spelled Piikani as used on the Canadian side of Blackfoot country. (See definitions for Blackfeet and Blackfoot).

Spirituality - The common dictionary term that is preferable to some Blackfoot people that best describes Blackfoot spiritual beliefs as a way of life rather than a religion.

Sun Dance - A complex set of rituals combined to form a liturgy of the Blackfoot people that is highly symbolic of the genesis and beliefs, usually conducted in the summer with the participation of most of the tribe.

Sun Dance Headdress Bundle - The medicine bundle containing the sacred articles brought by Woman That Married A Star during her divine journey to the cosmos. These holy articles are used in the medicine lodge ceremonies.

Sweat Lodge - A ceremony involving the use water of splashed on pre-heated rocks inside a covered willow enclosure, which is large enough for a few men. The sweat lodge ceremony is much like a sauna experience, however much prayer, ritual and supplication take place.

Taboos - Like protocol, there are many taboos associated with ceremony. However, individual ceremonialists may have prohibitions or restrictions related to their status or obtained in spiritual ways. Taboos connected to an individual may be sometimes difficult to ascertain since they may not be able to even talk about it.

Teepee transfer - A ceremony involving the rite of transfer where one owner confers the teepee ownership to another individual. In most cases, this is a painted teepee that has songs, rituals, taboos and rights associated with the lodge.

Thunder Medicine Pipe - One of the medicine pipes that were given to the Blackfoot people by the thunder being. The pipe is kept in the medicine bundle as the primary object.

Thunder Teepee - A teepee or lodge that is owned by one of the study participants. A lodge of this type is usually painted and it has certain protocols and taboos as well as song and ritual connected with its status.

Traditional - Commonly used term by Native people to indicate the lifestyle of their ancestors prior to European contact. May also be used to designate those Native people who practice the traditional cultural ways.

Tribe - A term that is used to designate a division of the Blackfoot Confederacy such as Blackfeet, North Peigan, Blood and Siksika. The term may also be used to designate the members of the Blackfoot Confederacy as a whole. The word may also be used relative to the common dictionary term to indicate the different Native groups of North America.

Transfer rite or rite of transfer - A ritual that is conducted to convey authority and privilege to an individual regarding such things as membership in a society; singing a particular song; performing a certain dance; use of a particular object such as a smoking pipe; possessing a certain relationship with a medicine bundle article; or to perform a certain task related to ceremony. The transfer gives the individual certain "rights", privileges and honor associated with Blackfoot ceremonial life. The transfer ceremony can be considered a rite of passage in many cases. Transfer ceremony varies from a complex series of rituals such as a medicine bundle transfer to simple tasks such as carrying a charcoal for a smudge.

Vision Quest - A ceremony usually involving a young man fasting and praying for four days and nights at an isolated area such as a hill top or high mountain area. One of the purposes of this ritual is to obtain spiritual guidance for the person throughout their lifetime.

Weather Dancer - One of the primary dancers in the ookaan or medicine lodge ceremony. The weather dancers are said to be those who have the ability to control weather through supplication with the assistance of divine intervention.

Wholistic or holistic - Related to the word holism or wholism which denotes the concept that some perceive things as a whole rather than components or elements. The term is identified with inductive reasoning as opposed to deductive reasoning where meaning and understanding are perceived as either a whole or the sum of the parts.

Woman That Married A Star - In the genesis of the Blackfoot this is the tribal person who traveled to the cosmos where the divine beings live and brought back the female parts of the song and ritual related to the medicine lodge or sun dance.

Worldview - A term that is being used to describe the belief system of a culturally and linguistically unique group of people. Worldview includes the philosophy of the people but also has connotations to practical application of meaning and understanding either consciously or subconsciously.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Blackfoot People

It is commonly known in the literature and the oral tradition of the Blackfoot tribes that the traditional roaming area of the Blackfoot was between the North Saskatchewan River, Rocky Mountains, and the Missouri River (Reeves, 1997; Schultz, 1986; Dempsey, 1972; Grinnell, 1962; and Ewers 1958). Reeves (1995), an archeologist from the University of Calgary, is a noted expert on the people of the Blackfoot Confederacy. He equates the traditional historic size of the Blackfoot territory to that of the size of France (personal communication, 1995). Although the Blackfoot tribes roamed this entire area, they frequented somewhat regionalized areas. The Piegan divisions seemed to locate more in what is now Montana and the southern edge of Alberta. The Blackfoot proper or Siksika were in the area east of the Saskatchewan River, around what is now known as Red Deer River. The Bloods centered their activities around the Bow and Belly Rivers. However, we must remember that this is not a hard and fast rule as the different bands traveled about in the entire territory, as all boundaries were fluid and variable with no clear lines of demarcation.

In Curtis' (1911) research on North American Indians, he says that the Peigan wintered on the Missouri while the Bloods stayed on the Belly River, with the Blackfeet

on the Bow River (p. 4). He documents that Sir Alexander MacKenzie had seen the Blackfoot in 1789 north of the Bow River. Through this source it seems that the Blackfoot people, at this time, possessed horses and followed the buffalo to Alberta.

There is much discussion in the literature as to where the Blackfoot tribes originated. Hale (1882) in his research identified several early contact persons, who documented information about the Blackfoot peoples' origination. He relates that MacKenzie, an early Indian trader in 1789, said that the Blackfoot tribes lived along the Saskatchewan River from its source to the south branch. According to MacKenzie, they were known to be in this area for a century after traveling from the Northwest. However, Maclean (an Anglican minister and historian in the 1870's) says they came from Red River country where they got their name Siksika since their moccasins were black from soil. In Hale's findings, Maclean feels that the Blackfoot were pushed west by the Crees. Hale's research identifies Father LaCombe, who brought Christianity to Southern Alberta in the mid-1800's, believing that the Blackfeet came from the West after fighting with the Nez Pierce over buffalo territory (p. 6).

Research by Curtis (1911) provides a belief that the Blackfoot peoples lived around the Slave Lake prior to 1790. He based this belief on an informant called Tearing Lodge, who said that they had been living at the Peace River country prior to traveling south (p. 3-4). David Thompson (Henry & Thompson, 1897) stayed at Rocky Mountain House (Alberta Canada) in 1810 and 1811 and indicated that the Peigan territory included the foot of the Rocky Mountains and as far south as the Missouri River. He also indicates that the buffalo regulated the movements of these people. According to

Thompson, the Peigan have large summer camps of "100-200 tents for defense" (p. 723). However, he reveals that these people had smaller camps in the winter nearby buffalo pounds. Furthermore, "30 to 40 tents always stay near mountains" (p. 723) (Which is presumably the Rocky Mountains, since this is where Thompson and Henry had their trading fort built at that time).

Clark Wissler (1912c) believes that the three political divisions of the tribes have their origin in mythology (p. 7). This is corroborated by John Mason Brown (1867) who tells the origin story of Napi (Old Man) creating man from mud of the bottom of the river (p. 162). Recent works by Kehoe (1995) on mythology of the Blackfeet, as compiled and translated by Clark Wissler and D. C. Duvall, presents the following version on the "Making of the Earth":

During the flood, Old Man was sitting on the highest mountain with the beasts. ...Old Man sent the Otter down to get some earth. For a long time he waited, then the Otter came up dead. Old Man examined its feet, but found nothing on them. Next he sent Beaver down, but after a long time he also came up drowned. Again, nothing was found on his feet. He sent Muskrat to dive next. Muskrat also was drowned. At length he sent the Duck (?). It was also drowned, but in its paw held some earth. Old Man saw it, put it in his hand, feigned putting it on the water three times, and at last dropped it. Then the above-people sent rain, and everything grew on the earth (19).

The Blackfeet Community College Catalog for 1996-98 presents a version of Blackfeet creation as told by Chewing Black Bones (a respected elder) in 1935 to Ella E. Clark in her 1966 book entitled Indian Legends from the Northern Rockies.

Old Man came from the south, making the mountains, the prairies, and the forests as he passed along, making the birds and the animals also. He traveled northward making things as he went, putting red paint in the ground here and there--arranging the world as we see it today . . . One day Old Man decided that he would make a woman and a child. So he formed

them both of clay, the woman and the child, her son. After he molded the clay in human shape, he said to it, "You must be people" . . . This is how we came to be people. It is he who made us (p. 8).

In a lecture at Blackfeet Community College, noted archeologist "Barney" Reeves (1994), who has done extensive research on the Blackfoot Tribes, refuted the idea that these people came across the Bering Strait. He based his evidence on archeological data coupled with Blackfoot oral tradition. He discussed the Blackfoot coming from the West where the large body of water exists (Pacific Ocean), which is related in the oral tradition origin stories. He also noted how anthropologists disregard evidence of an Algonquian-speaking people in California. His work on medicine circles and sacred places has revealed Blackfoot relics that date three to five thousand years back in time. Most archeological findings have not been this thorough, since the evidence is quite limited to points and early white contact with North American Natives.

Although there is some criticism of Catlin's writings based on his visits with the Indians on the Missouri in the 1830's, he did intimately get to know some of the tribes. In Catlin's (1841) travels up the Missouri he did stay at Fort MacKenzie for awhile where he had the opportunity to observe and sketch or paint Indian portraits including some Blackfeet (p. 31). In some of his later writings that have been republished over the years, Catlin (1926) became quite philosophical and espoused lengthy dissertations on Native Americans. One such discussion, however, agrees with the traditional beliefs of the Blackfoot:

I believe they were created on the ground where they have been found, and that their date of creation is the same as that of other human species on the other parts of the globe (180).

According to Hale (1882), the confederacy of the Blackfeet had no regulatory league or constitution. The tribes are separate but they are united by religion, social customs and ancestry. They were also united against common enemies but they never fight each other. Hale relates that Father LaCombe (a Catholic priest, who proselytized in the mid-1800's with the Canadian Blackfoot) says the Blackfoot are a family with three branches who are held together by a bond of kinship. Like many tribes, the Blackfoot had no general name for themselves but sometimes referred to themselves collectively as "Sawketakax" (men of plains or "Netsepaje" which means people who speak one language). Hale could not identify any system of clans or gens. However, he qualified this statement with the idea that this needed further investigation (p. 13).

Much of the relationship and location of tribes is determined by language grouping. The Blackfeet have always been linked with the Algonquian speakers, who are grouped nearby and west of the Great Lakes. In reviewing this connection, Hale (1882) found that MacKenzie (an early Indian trader) felt there was no language affiliation with any other tribes. However, Hale found that Umfreville in his 1791 book listed forty words of Blackfeet. He also finds that Albert Gallatin, in "Synopsis of the Indian Tribes" published in 1836, conveys that the language is different from any known linguistic group. In spite of this, Gallatin believes that the language is connected to the Algonquian family. LaCombe, according to Hale, says the Blackfoot language is the same as Algic, Ojibwa, Sauteax, Masken and Cree. In language, Hale agrees with LaCombe and finds much similarity between words of the Blackfeet, Cree and Ojibwa (p. 4-6).

In discussing linguistic differences between the three Blackfoot divisions, Wissler (1912c) says the differences were chiefly between choice of words and current idioms. He reports the following: "The Northern Blackfoot seem to differ more from the Peigan than the latter from the Blood" (p. 8).

The Blackfoot nations have been somewhat elusive when being researched and discussed by early ethno-historians. Thus, describing these groups of peoples in standard ethnographic categories or terminology was sometimes inexplicable. Hodge (1910) in the "Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico" indicates that the social organization of the Northwest Algonquian tribes was not well known. In describing the Blackfoot division of the Blackfoot peoples he states:

The Siksika have numerous subdivisions, which have been called gentes; they are characterized by descent through the father, but would appear to be more truly local groups. Each had originally its own chief, and the council composed of these chiefs selected by the chief of the tribe, their choice being governed rather by the character of the person than by his descent (Hodge, 1910, p. 611).

The standard hierarchical authority of the dominant white society was not apparent in this tribe. Hodge goes on to note that the chief's authority was based upon the voluntary cooperation of societies (p. 610). It is noteworthy here that the clan system, as identified in most tribes, does not seem to fit nor is the patrilineal or matrilineal system of grouping seem to be applicable.

Clark Wissler is probably one of the most renowned authors who studied the Blackfeet. Wissler utilized a protege named David Duvall, who was the son of Yellow Bird and a French Canadian named Charles Duvall, to do much of his field work (Kehoe, 1995, p. vi). Since Duvall was part Pikuni (Blackfeet) he could understand and interpret

the language during interviews and participant/observation of ceremonies and activities of Blackfeet people. Wissler (1912c) made the following statement regarding Blackfoot bands:

As a hypothesis then for further consideration we may state that the band circles and the bands are the objective forms of a type of tribal government peculiar to this area, an organization of units not to be confused with the more social clans and gentes of other tribes which they bear a superficial resemblance (p. 5-6).

Thus, Wissler (1912c) felt that the bands were "conventional by custom" and that they were "merely a conventionalized scheme of tribal government" (p. 1, 2, 5). He says that the bands were a function of social, political and ceremonial groupings that happened to become fixed. Wissler lists the following characteristics of Blackfoot bands:

- instinctive and physical grouping
- sexual group
- adapted to economic conditions
- relation to governance is clearly conventional
- perpetuates the band move
- the bands may regroup for physical economic reasons

Early descriptions of Blackfoot tribal divisions, in Hodge's (1910) research, reveals that the Siksika were considered "restless, aggressive and predatory people" and that they "were constantly at war with all their neighbors, the Cree, Assiniboin, Sioux, Crows, Flatheads and Kutenai." Although the Blackfoot bands were never regularly at war with the United States, they were hostile towards Americans. Although the Blackfoot

divisions traded with the Hudson Bay Company before the arrival of the Americans, their friendship to the Canadians was considered doubtful (p. 257-260).

However, at a later date, Curtis (1911) says, "In disposition the Piegan are particularly tractable and likeable. One can scarcely find a tribe so satisfactory to work among" (p. 10). In fact, at this time in Blackfeet history, Curtis relates the favorable attitude of Blackfeet resulted in marriage of many white men into the tribe. This change in perspective from the mid-1800 to early-1900 created an increase in amount of mixed bloods into the tribe. Curtis (1910) describes the Blackfeet as not being prejudiced against the white man like many other tribes who refused inter-racial marriage (p. 12).

This contradictory view of Blackfeet being vicious and hostile yet friendly and hospitable is portrayed in Father DeSmet's (1843) writing. In one instance he says,

The Blackfeet are the only Indians of whose salvation, we would have reason to despair, if the ways of God were the same as those of man, for they are murderers, thieves, traitors and all that is wicked (p. 135).

Yet, he then goes on to say, "What's more, the Blackfeet are not hostile to the Black Gowns" (p. 135). He then discusses how the Blackfeet carried him on a robe to the village. These Native people invited DeSmet to a feast and indicated that they knew about his works through sign language. However, it must be remembered that the Flathead Indians were the people who had brought the "Black Robes" out from the East. The Flatheads, as traditional enemies of the Blackfeet, probably had an effect on DeSmet in his unfavorable view of the Pikuni.

However, Hayden (1862) says that the Blackfeet became increasingly peaceful after the small pox epidemic in 1836 and especially after the first treaty with them in 1855. He relates the honor of the Blackfeet as follows:

From my own experience among the them and from information derived from intelligent men who have spent the greater portion of their lives with them, I am convinced that they are among the most peaceable and honorable Indians in the West: and in an intellectual and moral point of view they take the highest rank among the wild tribes of the plains (p. 3).

Coues (1897), editor of Alexander Henry and David Thompson journals, related that the primary occupation of the Blackfoot people was warring with other tribes. According to these authors, the Blackfoot were considered extremely cruel in the treatment of their enemies. They would not hunt beaver but they traded buffalo robes, wolf and fox pelts (p. 529). At this time in the between 1799 and 1814, Henry and Thompson believed there were over fourteen hundred people in the three tribes. Their tally is as follows (p. 530):

	<u>Tents</u>	<u>Warriors</u>
Cold Band (Blackfoot or Siksika)	120	360
Bloods	80	160
Piegans	350	700
Totals	620	1,420

In the above population count, Henry and Thompson journals (1897) noted that the Piegans were the most numerous and most despised of the three divisions. They relate that other tribes were in awe of the Piegans. The Piegans were known to offer to quell disturbances between other tribes.

The Blackfoot culture, according to early studies, seemed to approximate that of some eastern tribes. Although the three main divisions of the Blackfoot have their own

sun dance, council and elected chief, their social/political/economic unit was the band. Hodge (1910) quotes Grinnell's 1892 works in stating there were forty five (45) bands composed of gentes of which "their gentile character no longer apparent" (p. 570-572). Curtis (1911) in his works identified thirteen (13) gens in the Peigan nation, including the "Worm People, Skunks, Those Who Do Not Laugh, Small Robes, Fat Roasters, White Breasts, Blood People, Buffalo Dung, Black Patched Moccasins, Hard Top Knots, First Finished Eating, Small Brittle Fat, Seldom Lonesome, and Pack Meat Raw" (p. 29). Wissler (1912c) relates that the names of the bands were of no particular significance since grouping was for economic and physical reasons (p. 4). The band grouping, according to Wissler, was a functional adaptation which was a product of ideation and that the marriage role was accidental.

The three sub-divisions each had military and fraternal organizations called the "All Comrades or Ikumuhkahtse" societies. Wissler (1912b) in talking about the Blackfeet and the plains tribes relates the following:

There were also a number of men's societies or fraternities of a military and ceremonial character upon any one or more of which the tribal government might also call for such service (p. 89).

There were twelve orders of the societies, some of which were extinct as late as 1910 (Hodge, 1910, p. 570). Each society had a great number of rituals, dances, social and war activities (p. 570). According to Curtis (1911), the societies were the dominating force in tribal organization, "indeed the power of the head chief depended largely on his cooperation with them" (p. 16). In Societies and Dance Associations of the Blackfoot Indians, Clark Wissler (1916) lists the following societies:

Little Birds	includes boys from 15 to 20 years old
Pigeons	men who have been to war several times
Mosquitoes	men who are constantly going to war
Braves	tried warriors
All Crazy Dogs	about forty year old men
Dogs}	Dogs and Tails are different societies, but they
Tails}	dress alike and dance together and alike
Horns, Bloods}	obsolete among the Piegans but
Kit-foxes, Peigans}	still exist with Bloods.
Catchers or Soldiers	obsolete for 25 or 30 years, perhaps longer.
Bulls	obsolete for 50 years

The above societies are corroborated in the writings of both McClintock (1937, p. 11) and Grinnell (1962, p. 221). The societies were age-graded as indicated above and men moved from one society to the next through a transfer rite. Grinnell (1962) indicates that the primary function of the societies was to "punish offenses against the society at large", although they were "benevolent and helpful" associations and served in a military capacity for the tribes (p. 220-221).

In addition to the societies within Blackfoot tribal divisions, also secret and religious societies centered on ritual around the "sacred bundle". These societies were characterized by the following elements: a) personal medicine; b) both sexes in some societies and c) principle deities in the Sun and Napi (Hodge, 1910, p. 570).

On observations of religious activities, Curtis (1911) relates, "They did not confine their religious observations to a fixed time or place, but rather were constantly in act or thought supplicating the infinite" (p. 11). When Hale (1882) examined the religion of the tribes he used some of Father LaCombe's impressions as the first Catholic order in Southern Alberta. He found two levels of religiosity, which they labeled primary and secondary creation. In the primary creation, the creator or superior divinity is called

"Apistotokiw". However, the sun (Naatosi) is in some manner identified with the creator. Included in the primary creation are "our mother (Kikristonnan)" and "our father (Kinnan)" who is called on in invocations. "The man is considered to be one and the same divinity with the sun"(p. 9), while the father is somehow a consort of the Sun. The secondary creation includes "old man" who is termed "Napia" by the author. In the Blackfeet creation story, Napi makes the earth from a mud ball that is taken from a water animal's feet whom he had sent down in the waters (see origin stories above). After taking four days to complete the creation of earth including mountains, rivers, plants and beasts, Napi creates a woman in two days. Hale, using LaCombe's findings, notes, "This number four is a fatidical one in the legends of these Indians" (p. 9).

As indicated by Hale (1882), the personified divinity of Napi appears in many Blackfeet legends and accounts (p. 10). He calls Napi a trickster, buffoon, treacherous, being who came down from creation and later disappeared. "Napia is the most genuine and characteristic of Algonquian divinities" (p. 10).

It has long been recorded by Wissler (1912c), McClintock (1912), Schultz (1935), Grinnell (1962), Ewers (1958) and others that the social organization of the Blackfoot evolved around camp life. The major religious, cultural and social event of the Blackfoot was during the annual sun dance encampment. During this time, the different bands of the Blackfoot came together to participate in the sun lodge ceremonies. However, it was also during this time that many of the societies came together for religious, social and cultural interaction (Wissler: 1909; McClintock: 1937).

In 1898, Curtis (1911) saw the sun dance encampment of 230 lodges. One of his informants, Red Plume said the camp compared to earlier times when he observed lodges spread out a mile or more in diameter (p. 13).

The Blackfeet were considered to have a "fanatical devotion" to the sun dance, according to Hale (1882, p. 11). Hale's research is somewhat confounding when he attempts to identify how the Blackfeet obtained the sun dance. On one hand he says it is "not properly Algonquin", as tribes east of the Mississippi did not have this ceremony. On the other hand, Hale relates that the sun dance "may have come west of mountains and taught to Dakotas and Crees" (p. 10-11). Apparently, the Dakota idea came from Hale's findings that a Reverend Stephen Riggs, as a missionary to the Dakotas, had information about the origin of the sun dance. It is interesting to note how Hale does not connect the sun dance with the origin and mythology stories as Wissler later finds. Wissler (1909), in his adept research, using Duvall, found that the Blackfeet story of "Scar Face" alludes to the medicine lodge coming from his (Scar Face) visit to the sun's lodge (p. 64-64). Furthermore, Wissler (1915) found that the sun dance (or medicine lodge ceremony as it is commonly called by the Blackfeet) is a complex set of rituals that is intimately tied to origin stories and medicine bundles (p. 230-258, 268).

Learning Opportunities in Blackfeet Cultural Ceremonies

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest by Blackfeet people in their own culture and tradition. Some evidence of this is demonstrated by the Blackfeet Community College's founding mission statement which includes language that addresses

"educational advancement and cultural preservation" of the Blackfeet nation (Blackfeet Community College Catalogue for 1996-1998, p. 12). In addition, the Blackfeet Community College in 1990, reflecting a service area need, changed the Native American Studies curriculum to Blackfeet Studies. This change process is probably a manifestation of the cultural revitalization effort that has some of its roots in the social revolution of the United States and other countries in the late 1960's (Prucha 1986, pp. 365-369). For Native Americans, the social change critical turning point took place with the action taken at Wounded Knee in 1973 (Deloria & Lytle, 1984, pp. 12-13). Certainly, the Indian affairs legislative action during and after this time has had an effect on the ability to institute a cultural revolution. Some of the legislation included the Indian Self Determination and Educational Assistance Act of 1975, Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968, and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 (Indian Tribes as Sovereign Governments, 1988, pp. 14-18, 30, 45-46, 94-100). Although the social climate changed in recent years, which allowed Native people to openly discuss and practice their traditional and cultural ways, the rich spiritual beliefs and practices had been quietly, and sometimes secretly, preserved. This is true for the Blackfoot as well as other tribes. The Blackfeet have always had small groups of people who continued to practice the old ways.

Elders have continued the ceremonial rituals and practices such as keeping the medicine pipe bundle active for many years. One called the "long time pipe" or "thunder pipe" has been handed down through "transfer" rites for generations. Blackfeet tribal elders have been instrumental in not only preserving, protecting and practicing the

traditional ways, but they have been teachers to many tribal people who are seeking the knowledge and ways of the past.

There are certainly several others who have continued to practice the old ways, as evidenced in Dorothy Still Smoking's case study of tribal education using Blackfeet elders (1997, pp. 87-94). However, people like one elderly lady and her late husband were instrumental in being the "keepers" of one of the other medicine pipe bundles that was kept in constant "use" for probably centuries. These two elders are also known as kindly people who provide information and knowledge on language and tradition to genuinely interested tribal members.

The medicine pipe bundle that was kept by the above two elders was "transferred" to a younger tribal member several years ago. This young man has continued to keep the ceremonial and spiritual activities related to this medicine bundle active. As with all these types of medicine pipe bundles, definite ceremonial rituals are required at certain times and seasons.

As a result of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990) and Blackfeet social change, some of the "religious" articles housed in museums and publicly owned collections have been returned to the tribe. Two other medicine pipe bundles have been placed back into active practice, as well as two beaver bundles and a "police pipe" medicine bundle. There are also some medicine bundles that have been kept by individuals on the reservation, but they remain inactive for various reasons. In addition, there are probably numerous "religious" articles still housed in public holdings

like museums and art collections throughout the world. Private holdings are extensive and largely undocumented, also throughout the world.

The important idea here is that there is a revitalization movement going on as demonstrated by the number of "active" medicine pipe bundles with the Blackfeet people. This, coupled with the desire of young people wanting to know their traditional ways, is providing an insurgence of learning opportunities. Not only is this a learning opportunity, it is a "learning event" of increasing proportions. It is vitally important to know that this reactivation movement is not to be viewed as simply a re-socialization of culture within an ethnic group. Medicine pipe bundles are considered very, very sacred among the Blackfoot peoples. Therefore, the notion of re-activating traditional spiritual ways is done with very careful consideration and protocol. It must also be noted that bringing something like a medicine pipe bundle back into practice requires a complex set of ritual activity and traditional canon, which also means that those people involved in becoming "keepers" of the medicine pipe bundles enter a spiritual learning realm that is complex and rigorous. Fortunately, the Blackfeet have elders like an 83-year-old man, who was essentially the only person who has all the knowledge and "rights" related to the medicine lodge and the beaver bundle ceremonies.

In order to understand the discussion of learning opportunities, some fundamental precepts need to be clarified. In order to obtain a bundle, an individual must learn the proper protocol and requirements. As with most things in the sacred realm of the Blackfeet, the process often begins with a spiritual happening such as a dream, vision or event where one obtains a divine message that this is something they need to do.

Consultation with an appropriate elder or keeper of the proper knowledge is important. Another way to obtain a medicine bundle is by making a holy vow or promise to keep the bundle, based on a desire to ward off a potentially harmful phenomenon, or as a result of a favorable outcome related to a negative or positive event in one's life. Once the vow is made, the individual should seek the advice of an appropriate elder who has the kind of knowledge needed in directing the person on how to proceed. It is critically important that the vow maker adhere to strict protocol in learning who, where, when and how to request a medicine bundle. Once the process is initiated, assuming correctly, the process of "transfer" ceremony begins. This process also adheres to rigorous customs and requirements, which eventually leads the person to becoming a "keeper" of a medicine bundle. As the keeper of the bundle, the person now continues learning the many, many songs, rituals, and numerous requirements attached to this position.

The two important concepts in this cursory explanation of basic protocol attached to a medicine bundle are the rite of "transfer" and becoming a "keeper" of the bundle. Although most times bundle "keepers" are referred to as "owners," the former title is more correct. Throughout the ages, medicine bundles have been "transferred" from one individual (or family) to another. No one really "owns" the bundle, as it is a divine gift to be kept by the tribal people. As explained above, the "transfer" concept is a very intricate and complicated process.

One of the difficulties encountered in attempting to discuss Blackfeet spirituality has to do with the word "religion". The concept of a "religion" in the terms of the dominant society is probably not definable in the Blackfeet way of knowledge and

language. The term "spirituality" is now used because the word seems to encompass more of what the Blackfeet way is about. In the Blackfeet way, the practice of religion is not separated from the concept of being human. This is exemplified in the Napi stories told to children. Napi was partly divine, and yet he was human. He had divine powers to talk to animals and to perform supernatural deeds. Yet Napi did foolish things and learned from many mistakes. Thus, the Blackfeet way integrates spirituality into one's existence as a human being. Religion and being are not separate concepts.

Additional learning opportunities exist in the medicine bundle ceremonies as individuals are invited or inducted into the bundle society. The medicine pipe bundle members are called *ninaimsskaa* and they each have various roles related to the rituals. These members are governed by strict codes of living but they also gain certain "rights" to specific songs, dances and rituals related to the ceremonies. The beaver bundle also has inducted members called beaver people, who, like the medicine pipe bundle members, must learn their specific roles and requirements related to the ceremonies. In addition, like most bundle societies, beaver people also have specific taboos and rights to perform certain aspects of ceremony.

The Crazy Dog Society of the All Comrades, as the collective body of societies was called by the early anthropologists, is still in existence today. They practice some of the same ceremonies of their ancestors of the past. As with most of the societies, the members go through an induction process and transfer rite. The Crazy Dog Society, like most societies, has specific ceremonial activities relative to their group. Members have specific taboos, rights, and duties to their being in the society. Crazy Dog Society

members have traditionally played a policing role in tribal ceremonies and activities.

They also act as workers and role participants in ceremonies such as the medicine lodge.

The ookaan or medicine lodge ceremony is still active in the Blackfoot nations. In recent years, the Blackfeet have annually had the medicine lodge ceremony or sun dance, as it is sometimes called. Much of this ceremony is public since the ookaan is considered a spiritual activity that is done for all the Blackfoot people. However, much of the ceremony is so sacred that it is very private with only very specific people, who have the rights, duties and responsibilities, participating in that portion. As indicated in the literature, however, many of the activities involve tribal members, especially in building portions of the medicine lodge. There are an extraordinary number of opportunities for learning in the medicine lodge event. This is especially true since, in addition to the four-day encampment, there are several parts of the ceremony that begin and are carried out before the actual tribal gathering. As indicated above, the ookaan event involves many complex rituals and rigorous spiritual doctrine. The complexity of the ookaan is intimately tied to the genesis, theology, ritual and liturgy of the Blackfoot people. The knowledge acquired by the various elders and people, who participate in the various aspects of this tribal ceremony collectively encompasses many years of study, participation, commitment, hardship, endurance and sacrifice.

The above discussion of learning opportunities is a limited discussion of some examples of the many ceremonial activities that take place with the Blackfoot people. There are certainly many more aspects that could be added to the discussion including things like the sweat lodge, holy smoke, song service, naming ceremonies, teepee

transfer, vision quest, pipe smoking, and several others. However, the above important aspects of Blackfoot ceremonial life reveal that there are many opportunities to experience traditional Blackfoot learning in this context.

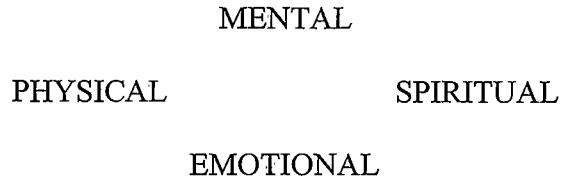
In addition, the above ceremonial examples take place within the three tribes of the Blackfoot. Some things, such as the Horn Society, only take place with the Blood division of the Blackfoot confederacy. However, the study will encompass all the divisions with emphasis on the Southern Piegan or Blackfeet (Pikuni).

It is also important to note that there are other ceremonies and Native American cultural activities taking place in Blackfeet country. Some of these, such as the Blacktail Deer Dance, have been adopted from the Salish/Kootenai tribes. Other rituals may be adaptations from other tribes. This study will examine only those orthodox Blackfoot ceremonies that are known to have been in existence for hundreds of years.

Related Concepts of Adult Learning

The Four Worlds Project at the University of Lethbridge in the early 1980's examined some traditional Native learning ideas and precepts. Phil Lane and others had used elders of the Blackfoot Confederacy and other Canadian tribes to create some Native concepts and symbols that could be used in health and wellness education (Bopp, 1985). This group analyzed Native culture and tradition in order to develop meaningful approaches to community development and change process (p. 20). The Four Worlds Project (Bopp, 1985) used the "medicine wheel" symbol to represent the idea that people

are composed of four parts of a whole. The medicine wheel depiction, used to describe the Native way of looking at the world, is as follows:



The four parts of the medicine wheel include the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual self as described in relation to learning. The Four Worlds Project describes the medicine wheel in relation to learning as follows:

There are four dimensions to "true learning." These four aspects of every person's nature are reflected in the four cardinal points of the medicine wheel. These four aspects of our being are developed through the use of our volition. It cannot be said that a person has totally learned in a whole and balanced manner unless all four dimensions of their being have been involved in the process (p. 29).

Traditional Indian beliefs knew about this "relatedness of things" or what is being called a holistic philosophy. Simpson (1980) came to a similar conclusion but he used the term "blending". He feels that "no comprehensive theory of learning seems to exist that suffices for the divergent learning episodes that the adult experiences throughout a lifetime." Although he says that no "adequate theory of adult learning" is articulated by educators, he espouses using a "diversity of perspectives" (p. 45-50). Thus, blending to Simpson is infusing practical application with learning theory.

Merging . . . principles derived from the learning theories, conditions, and circumstances of adult learners can be blended to suggest alternative approaches to designing and understanding adult learning experiences (p. 45-46).

Contemporary educational learning style discussion includes three parts of the holistic medicine wheel as demonstrated in Keefe's (1982) writings on adult education. He categorizes learning styles as cognitive, affective and physiological domains (p. 44). By displaying Keefe's learning styles (in parenthesis) with the medicine wheel idea, we can portray this as follows:

MENTAL (Cognitive)
 PHYSICAL SPIRITUAL
 (Physiological)
 EMOTIONAL (Affective)

Rowland (1994), in his doctoral dissertation, discusses the Cheyenne idea that "life is one interrelated whole" whose purpose is known only by the Creator. This concept relates to the portrayal here that spirituality is a part of the learning process. Rowland (1994) further discusses how the object of learning must include "surrendering oneself to the greater whole of both the physical and spiritual realities" (p. 131).

An illustration of the Native holistic way of thought versus the scientific or rationalistic conception is how these two belief systems view the archeological rock configurations placed throughout traditional Blackfoot territory. Although work has been done by archaeologists and others reviewing, analyzing and categorizing the various rock formations commonly called "medicine wheels", there seems to be no conclusive evidence regarding purpose, function and sometimes even the age. Contemporary archeologists and anthropologists have identified these boulder alignments as sites where Native people have piled these rocks in various formations. Wilkie (1986) theorizes that the rock formations evolved in a developmental process from "commemorative" structures to "burial sites" to "symbolic memorials" (p. 28). However, Wilkie also refers

