

A Historical Reconstruction for the Northwestern Plains¹

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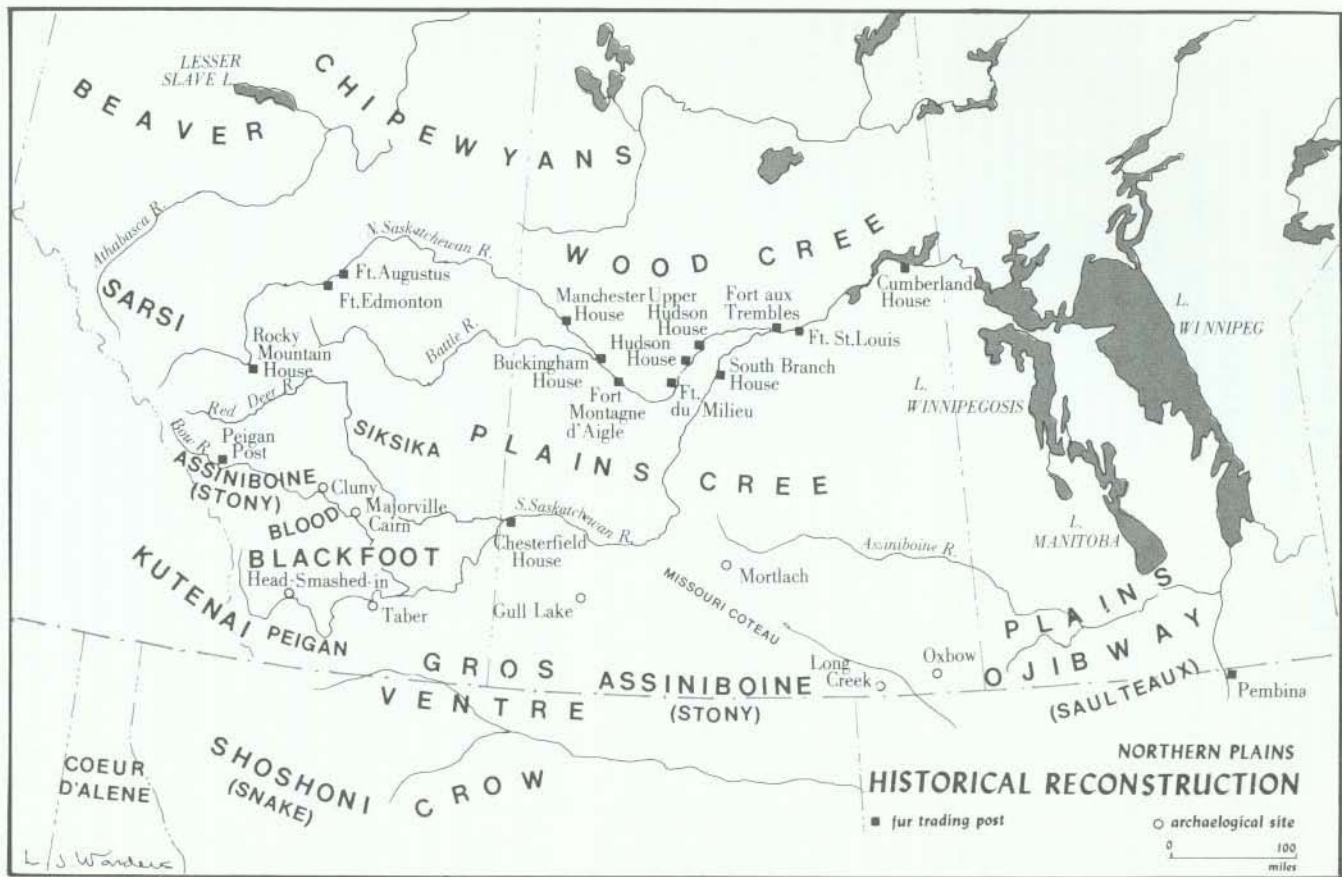
ABSTRACT. There is now no doubt as to the considerable time span of human habitation on the northwestern plains of North America. Indeed, some of our most ancient archaeological records have been discovered here. However, archaeological evidence has not been found to support the hypothesis that early migrating Siberians found a corridor in the open lands east of the mountains; those historic plains tribes which did originate in the northwest—all Athapaskan-speakers—arrived comparatively recently. Ancient Amerindians of the plains appear to have had more connections, however remote, indirect and sporadic, with the eastern and northeastern woodlands, as well as with the civilizations of the Mississippi, the pueblos of the southwest, and even tenuously with Mexico. We would do well to re-evaluate our perception of Canada as a "new world" without traditions of civilization before the arrival of Europeans.

RESUME

Les plaines du nord-ouest de l'Amérique du Nord sont indubitablement habitées depuis une époque très reculée. En fait, beaucoup de nos découvertes archéologiques les plus anciennes y ont été faites. Cependant, aucune évidence archéologique ne vient soutenir l'hypothèse que les premiers migrants Sibériens ont trouvé un corridor dans les grands espaces situés à l'est des montagnes. Ces tribus historiques des plaines qui n'étaient pas originaires du nord-ouest, et dont la langue était l'athabaskan, sont arrivées assez récemment. Les anciens Amérindiens des plaines semblent avoir eu plus de liens, aussi éloignés, indirects et sporadiques soient ils, avec les habitants des terres boisées de l'est et du nord-est, avec les civilisations du Mississippi, avec les pueblos du sud-ouest, et même quelques liens ténus avec le Mexique. Nous serions bien avisés de réévaluer notre perception du Canada en tant que "nouveau monde" sans traditions de civilisation avant l'arrivée des Européens.

Reconstructing the early history of the people of the northwestern plains of North America has been so difficult for the historian that the task is still far from completed. Because the written record began very recently, historians have had to place a heavy, and professionally uncharacteristic, reliance on unwritten resources. In effect, this has meant a dependence upon archaeology, which has been very useful up to a point. But the plains have not been kind to archaeologists either, especially in Alberta and southwestern Saskatchewan where the record has been particularly difficult to decipher.²

It is perhaps not surprising, under these circumstances, that it came to be believed that the plains had not been inhabited to any extent before the appearance of the European-introduced horse. Such an eminent authority as Clark Wissler wrote in 1907, "the peopling of the plains proper was a recent phenomenon due in part to the introduction of the horse and the displacement of tribes by white settlement."³ Even as late as 1939, A.L. Kroeber concurred, adding that in his view, the plains had developed culturally "only since the taking over of the horse from Europeans."⁴ These two authorities were writing principally of the plains south of the forty-ninth parallel. If their interpretation was correct for the south, so the reasoning went, how much truer must it have been for the north?



Today, we know that such views were heavily conditioned by the inability of most nineteenth-century scholars, as well as some in the twentieth century, to envision man as having been capable of wresting a living from the plains before the advent of the horse and gun.⁵ Here archaeology has helped to set the record straight. It is on the plains, including those of the northwest, that some of our earliest evidence of human presence in North America has been found. The great advances in archaeology during recent years have dramatically lengthened our historical perspective of man in the Americas. The world that Europeans labelled "New" when they became aware of it in the fifteenth century has turned out to be anything but new; and the people who inhabited it, considered by Europeans to be such a young race as to be still in their cultural ABCs,⁶ have a history that can claim the dignified label of "ancient."

It is also a complex history. The development of stone and bone tools represented one of man's great strides forward into technological sophistication; and while such a technology can in a way be regarded as "simple," it was viable only because of acute and careful observation of nature—still a basic requirement today. As a general rule, a "simple" technology is effective in proportion as it is based upon sharp and accurate observation on the one hand, and supported by a workable social organization on the other. In other words, the intelligent manipulation of nature backed by supportive social structures makes possible man's survival under extremely difficult conditions. The process is a dynamic one; although the rates of change can and do vary, at no time can a living culture be regarded as static. As far back as we have traced the presence of man in America, his story has been one of adaptation and alteration—so slow as to be all but imperceptible in the beginning, but ever so gradually gaining momentum. This process was not characterized by a consistent rate of change, but rather by spurts or leaps alternating with "idling" periods. In this context, the arrival of Europeans, horses and all, is to be viewed as part of an ongoing process; the intrusion may have accelerated or altered patterns of change, but it did not initiate change in itself.

The story of this change on the northwestern plains is the concern of this paper. Because the time span is so long, from early prehistoric to European-Amerindian contact, it will be possible to trace events only in their broad outlines, but with the hope that this will be sufficient to reveal something of underlying patterns. The term "northwestern plains" includes the southern halves of Alberta and Saskatchewan, the eastern two-thirds of Montana and the northern third of Wyoming; however, the focus will be on Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Early Big-Game Hunters (17,000-5,000 BC)

The earliest consistent evidence of man on the Great Plains

clusters in the period of 17,000 to 7,000 years ago. We do have some evidence from earlier dates, perhaps even as far back as 30,000 B.C.,⁸ and there is that tantalizing skeleton of an infant found under glacial till at Taber, Alberta, which suggests considerable antiquity—more than 22,000 years, and perhaps as much as 60,000.⁹ But such evidence is at present too scattered and fragmentary to be anything more than suggestive. With the big-game hunters of 12,000 or so years ago we are on firm ground. Our knowledge of their activities is derived from sites associated with kills of mammoth, contemporaries of giant beaver and giant wolves, of camels and horses, species which disappeared during the late Pleistocene megafaunal extinctions of about 11,000 years ago. We know that long before the invention of the bow and arrow, paleo-Amerindians hunted with spears tipped with bone or with fluted stone points. Very early—at least by the time of the extinctions—the “atlatl,” or thrower, appeared, enabling hunters to hurl their spears with great force.¹⁰ Used in this manner, spears have been aptly described as “guided missiles”; their effectiveness has been dramatically illustrated by the discovery of points embedded in bone, such as the rib of a mastodon or the scapula of a giant bison.

Sites associated with bison hunting date from more than 10,000 years ago; the earliest buffalo drive of which we have a record was a jump at Bonfire Shelter in southwestern Texas from about that time.¹¹ The greatest number of jump sites have been found in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, where they outnumber pounds. The latter were apparently more commonly used on the plains,¹² particularly in such areas as the Missouri Coteau. Drive sites are most frequent in Saskatchewan, Alberta, Montana and Wyoming. By whatever means the herds were harvested, the archaeological record indicates that buffalo hunting has provided the basis for life on the plains for at least as long as jumps have been used. It also tells us that our previously held and much cherished picture of early hunters perpetually facing starvation does not equate with what we now know to have been the case. Although lean times certainly alternated with periods of plenty, such cycles were prepared for from a very early period by drying or otherwise preserving meat. Oddly enough, the dog does not seem to have accompanied man in the Americas during distant prehistoric days;¹³ the earliest indications of its presence—and these are not undisputed—date from about 5,000 B.C.

Plains Archaic (5000 BC to BC/AD)

After 5,000 B.C., seasonal nomadism continued, largely based on bison as a food resource. However, there was a long period called the Altithermal (5000-2500 B.C.), in which bison appear to have been scarce or even absent, and during which human presence also seems to have been much reduced, particularly in short-grass areas.¹⁴ The

Altithermal is believed to have been marked by higher temperatures and increased aridity which decimated the herds of giant buffalo by cutting down on their food supply. Before the Altithermal, hunters pursued giant bison; afterward, the bison available was of the smaller variety with which we are familiar.¹⁵

The end of the Altithermal period saw the growing elaboration of the buffalo drive, such as the jump at Head-Smashed-In, Alberta, and as indicated by campsites at Oxbow and Long Creek in Saskatchewan. In fact, sites in general increased throughout the two provinces; about 12,000 have been recorded in Alberta alone, believed to be a small proportion of those that existed;¹⁶ their numbers reflect substantial increases in population. From this period too we can date the appearance of elaborate surface assemblages which probably indicate eastern influence.¹⁷ Some sites include several hundred tipi rings which extend for miles; it has been estimated that there are more than a million such rings scattered throughout Alberta.¹⁸ They may be mute testimony to the annual cycle of buffalo hunters, who in historic times gathered seasonally in large camps, for they are usually excellent observation posts for watching the movement of game, a characteristic which they share with medicine wheels.¹⁹ Wheels found on the Canadian plains, largely in Alberta, seldom exceed 30 feet in diameter; those dating from the proto-historic period characteristically have four spokes; earlier ones may have five or even more.²⁰ Those found south of the forty-ninth parallel are usually more complicated in form but are far fewer in number.

All these features were associated, particularly in the later phase, with the appearance of the small-point weapons system to which the bow and arrow belongs. This new weaponry may have been introduced by peoples filtering down from the north, such as the Athapaskans, who reached the southern limits of the plains sometime before the sixteenth century.²¹ These were probably the people described by Spaniards during the first half of that century as "dog nomads," appearing at pueblos with as many as five hundred dogs loaded with the products of the buffalo hunt to trade for farm produce as well as for manufactured items.

Plains Woodlands (250 BC-950 AD)

This was the period when plains cultures, as we know them, began to develop patterns resembling their proto-historical forms. This seems to have resulted from an accelerated infusion of eastern influences.²² The northern plains continued as the centre for bison hunting. Pottery was now seen for the first time; its evidence indicates that ancestral Kutenai occupied southern Alberta as much as 2,000 years ago, supporting oral traditions reported by David Thompson.²³

It was also the period in which agricultural communities appeared in those areas of the plains where rainfall and the growing season allowed—factors which still have to be contended with. The Adena and the later Hopewell cultural complexes, each named from Ohio sites where their distinctive characteristics were first identified, spread in from the south. Hopewell extended further north than Adena: mounds and burials after the pattern of Hopewell have been found in Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Such traces are also seen in ceramics, some of which have been found in southern Alberta. In the northwestern grasslands generally, hunting and gathering persisted in cultural manifestations such as the intrusive Besant and the indigenous Avonlea. At those sites especially, the developing complexities of ritualized, planned buffalo drives have been traced.²⁴

Plains Village (900 AD-1750 AD)

These social units were characterized by multi-family lodges at fixed locations; permanent settlements fortified with dry moats and stockades; underground storage pits, pottery, and a wide range of artifacts in stone, bone, horn, shell and other materials. The Cluny Earth Lodge village at Blackfoot Crossing, about 70 miles east of Calgary, may have been the northernmost manifestation of this phase; according to Blackfoot legend, it was built by the Crow, in which case it would be proto-historic.²⁵ In any event, village life on the high plains was discouraged by recurrent droughts, to the point of disappearing entirely during the fifteenth century; surviving villages in peripheral areas, such as the aspen parklands, provide mute testimony to what once had been.²⁶ It is interesting that all historic farming peoples of the plains speak a Hokan-Siouan tongue; this language group may well be the oldest in North America.

Bison populations recovered more rapidly than human populations from these droughts. At about this time the herds reached the immense sizes reported by Francisco Vasquez Coronado in the south (1541), by Father Simon Le Moyne in the Great Lakes region (1654) and Henry Kelsey on the Saskatchewan (1690). Their spread east of the Mississippi appears to have been comparatively recent, if one is to judge from the tenuous evidence of Spanish accounts; and it was not until the late eighteenth century that they were seen on the Peace River west of Lesser Slave Lake.²⁷ These herds could well have prevented the return of village farmers to the high plains.²⁸ For instance, Hernando De Soto reported in 1541 that the Amerindians of Caluca in north-central Arkansas

... stated that thence toward the north, the country, being very cold, was very thinly populated; that cattle were in such plenty, no maize-field could be protected from them, and the inhabitants lived upon the meat.²⁹

Colonists who tried to farm the plains before the extermination of the herds discovered to their sorrow that they were as vulnerable to depredations by bison as their Amerindian predecessors had been. Not only did the animals eat and trample crops, they were even reported to have demolished a settler's cabin in Pennsylvania about 1770.³⁰ The movements of such great herds rendered permanent settlements extremely precarious, both from the physical as well as the economic point of view, and they were also dangerous to hunters on foot. Canadian-born explorer Louis Jolliet, with Jesuit Jacques Marquette in 1673, reported bison as being "very fierce . . . not a year passes without their killing some savages." Amerindian appreciation of these dangers is graphically presented in a Caddo legend which tells how buffalo ceased to eat humans.³¹

Proto-Historic Buffalo Hunters

The buffalo-hunting way of life on the plains which today is considered "traditional" crystallized between 1600 and 1750, depending on locality; in southern Alberta and Saskatchewan, it seems to have appeared during the first half of the eighteenth century. It was, of course, based upon horses, which not only altered the hunt, transportation and warfare, but also, and perhaps most importantly of all, trade routes. Interestingly, horses did not generally become a source of subsistence in themselves, as they had in Asia.³² However, to view the changes that did occur with the introduction of the horse as simply superficial, as some have done, is to misunderstand the process of cultural evolution. Technologies change faster than institutions, and institutions change faster than ideologies. In less than two centuries on the northwestern plains, the horse in conjunction with the fur trade had heavily altered the principal institutions of plains Amerindian society; given more time, more profound ideological modifications would probably have been effected as well.³³

While there is no doubt that horses were first reintroduced into the Americas by the Spaniards, there is considerable question as to when Amerindians began to ride and own them. In 1541 Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza provided mounts for Mexican allies during a campaign in central Mexico; about 1567, the Amerindians of Sonora rode horses and used them for food.³⁴ Spanish stock-raising settlements in the southwest, particularly in the neighborhood of Santa Fe, were apparently points of diffusion;³⁵ as for the Atlantic seaboard, where horses had been present since early in the seventeenth century, they do not seem to have crossed the Alleghenies until later. On the southern plains, Amerindians owned horses by 1630, and may well have had some as early as 1600. Athapaskan-speaking Apache were raiding on horseback by mid-seventeenth century;³⁶ indeed, they evolved Amerindian techniques for mounted warfare, and also had become the prototype of the mounted buffalo hunter.

Although horses had such a radical effect on buffalo hunting, they were not universally suited to their new role. Some could not overcome their fear of buffalo and so could not be trained as hunters; among the Cree during the last days of bison hunting, only one tipi in ten had a good buffalo horse, although nearly all had riding and transport animals. While running buffalo became universally favoured as a hunting technique, horses were also used for surrounds, which became more efficient as a result.³⁷ Jumps began to fall into disuse between 1840 and 1850; the last known use was by the Blackfoot in 1873.³⁸ Pounds, on the other hand, continued to be used until the end of the herds. Another effect of the horse was to eliminate women from direct participation in buffalo drives, turning their attention exclusively to the preparation of meat and hides.

Apart from its usefulness for hunting and transport, the horse both extended and altered trade routes. As a consequence of all this, it became a symbol of wealth in its own right and, as always with the growth of affluence, polarized economic status both between individuals as well as between tribes. For example, in 1833 a Peigan chief, Sackomaph, was reported to own between 4,000 and 5,000 horses, 150 of which were killed upon his death. Among tribes, the Assiniboine and Plains Cree had fewer horses than the Blackfoot. However, they were highly skilled as horse raiders; David Thompson described a spectacular raid in which a band of Assiniboines disguised as antelope made off with fifty horses from Rocky Mountain House.³⁹

The Shoshoni (Snake, Gens du Serpent), seasonal residents of grasslands and plateau, are generally believed to have been the first to acquire horses on the northwestern plains.⁴⁰ Their sources were their relatives to the south, the Comanche, as well as neighbours, such as the Coeur d'Alene and Flathead from the western plateau and Columbia River, who were early large-scale herders.⁴¹ The Shoshoni may have employed their horses at first principally for the hunt, presaging, as the Apache had done earlier, the emergence of the buffalo-based "horse cultures." By the 1730s the Shoshoni were using horses for raiding, and during the following decades they were feared mounted warriors of the plains.⁴² Under the circumstances, word quickly spread of the strange animal, "swift as a deer." A Cree, Saukamapee, described to David Thompson his first encounter with the new arrival, which occurred while he and some fellow tribesmen were hunting in the territory of the Peigan, westernmost and most southerly of the four tribes of the Blackfoot Confederacy. Attacking a lone Shoshoni, the Cree succeeded in killing his mount, and crowded in wonder around the fallen animal which, like the dog, was a slave to man and carried his burdens. So they called it "Misstutim," "big dog";⁴³ later, the Blackfoot were to name it "Ponokamita," "elk dog," in recognition of its size and usefulness.⁴⁴

Historic Residents

At this time, all of the year-round residents of the northwestern plains were Algonkian or Siouan speakers except the Sarsi, who spoke an Athapaskan language and who had broken away from the Beaver, apparently not long before the arrival of Europeans. Eventually, they became part of the Blackfoot Confederacy, along with the Siksika (Blackfoot proper), Blood and Peigan.⁴⁵ Linguistic evidence indicates a great time span of occupation for the Algonkian-speaking Blackfoot and Gros Ventre, much of it in isolation from their own language group. Speech similarities between the Blackfoot and the Kutenai may hark back to the time when the latter also lived in the area. In any event, the Blackfoot were probably the first to arrive of all the historic peoples still in the region; cultural indications are that they came from the eastern woodlands,⁴⁶ the source of much immigration to the northwestern plains. Directly to the east of the Confederacy were the allied *Gros Ventre* (*Atsina*, originally a division of the *Arapaho*) who may have been second to arrive in the region.⁴⁷ They share with the Blackfoot the probability of being the "Archithinue" or "Archithine" reported by Anthony Henday in 1754.⁴⁸ If we except the Plains Ojibway (*Saulteaux*, *Bungi*), who reached Saskatchewan by the late eighteenth century, but who did not establish a major presence on the high plains,⁴⁹ the newest arrivals on the northwestern plains are the Plains Cree. Their presence dates from some time during the seventeenth century; their arrival may have been in association with their close allies, the Siouan Assiniboine, who probably preceded them. To the south were the Siouan Crow, who were described in their territory of the middle Yellowstone by the Nor'Wester François Larocque in 1805. It has been estimated that at the beginning of the historic period the population of the northwestern plains averaged less than one person per 10 square miles.⁵⁰ However, there were considerable fluctuations. Tribes from surrounding areas made forays on to the plains for hunting and warfare, such forays increasing in frequency as the buffalo herds declined and then disappeared from their eastern ranges after 1850, until their final extermination in Alberta in the 1880s.⁵¹ All of these peoples, with the exception of the Gros Ventre and Crow,⁵² had been hunters and gatherers from time immemorial, so that their shift to plains life was from one form of hunting to another.

The opening of the historic period saw the southwestern parts of the region being dominated by the raiding Shoshoni. They appear to have been an aggressive people even when they were on foot; horses enabled them to extend their field of operations. According to Saukamapee's description of some of their raids during the first half of the eighteenth century,⁵³ the Shoshoni wore six-ply quilted leather armour and carried shields, but did not at that time have firearms, as they had "no Traders among them."⁵⁴ What trading connections they

had were with the south, and Spaniards were reluctant to include arms in such transactions. However, the Shoshoni sinew-back bow was an efficient weapon, particularly when used with metal-tipped arrows, and was both more accurate and more reliable than guns until about the middle of the nineteenth century. With the principal exception of the Cree, but also of the Assiniboine and Saulteaux, it was usually preferred by Amerindians for buffalo hunting. In 1811, Alexander Henry the Younger reported that Peigans would trade a horse or a gun for such a bow.⁵⁵ The principal economic purpose of the Shoshoni raids seems to have been the acquisition of captives, who as slaves were useful to both Amerindians and Spaniards as well as to the French, and so had high trading value.

Shifting Power Balances

The acquisition of the gun by the Comanche, from the French pushing west of the Mississippi early in the eighteenth century, inaugurated the final phase of shifting Amerindian power balances on the plains. The gun, for all its inadequacies at that time, had been quickly adopted for warfare for its psychological effect as well as for the damage it could do; for one thing, it rendered Amerindian armour ineffective. Within twenty years the Comanche had driven the still gunless Apache south of the River Platte.⁵⁶ In the north, the Shoshoni had no such luck; they first encountered guns in the hands of their enemy the Cree, about the same time as their southern kinsmen, the Comanche, were acquiring them in trade. The Cree were blessed with two sources of the new weaponry: the English, who by that time were established on Hudson Bay, and the French, whose St. Lawrence and Great Lakes network of posts had by 1753 reached into the northwest with the establishment of Fort St. Louis on the Saskatchewan River. The Shoshoni quickly discovered that this new weaponry seriously diminished the advantage they had gained from the horse.⁵⁷ But before they could gain regular access to firearms, the French and Indian War had broken out, seriously interrupting such trade in the West. By 1770, British traders were back on the Upper Mississippi and the Saskatchewan, and were beginning to penetrate into the far northwest; but France as a power had all but disappeared from North America, and her jurisdiction over Louisiana had been transferred to Spain. This dealt a severe blow to whatever hopes the Shoshoni might have had of obtaining enough guns to face their enemies. As the Blackfoot, now mounted, already had access to British firearms, the Shoshoni were pushed off the plains by the end of the eighteenth century.⁵⁸ In achieving this, the Blackfoot were powerfully aided by epidemics, especially that of 1781-1782, which took a particularly heavy toll of the Shoshoni.⁵⁹ By the turn of the century, the victorious Peigans, who had been the tribe of the Blackfoot confederates mainly involved in the struggle, were referring to the once-dreaded Shoshoni as miserable old

women whom they could defeat with sticks and stones.⁶⁰ With the removal of the Shoshoni threat, the fragile alliance of the Confederacy with Assiniboine and Cree lost its principal motivation, and the two expanding power groups came into collision.

Before this happened, and while they were still allies, the Blackfoot had obtained their first trade items from the Assiniboine and Cree, rather than directly from Europeans. Linguistic evidence hints that the first white men they met were French, as they designated them as "Real (or Original) Old Man People"; their term for whites in general was "Napikawan," "Old Man Person."⁶¹ While the furthest west of the French establishments, Fort St. Louis, was located east of the forks of the Saskatchewan and thus outside Blackfoot territory, it would have been easily accessible to them. However, the first recorded meeting is the well-known encounter with Anthony Henday in 1754-1755. It has been estimated that by that time the Blackfoot were all mounted; but Henday's report that they had horses was greeted with disbelief by the English on the Bay.⁶² By then, the Blackfoot were well into their period of expansion; as the Peigan pushed the Shoshoni south and west, the Sarsi moved into the North Saskatchewan basin and the Gros Ventre occupied territories vacated by the Blackfoot around the Eagle Hills. By 1770, the territory along the eastern Rockies north of Yellowstone was controlled by the Blackfoot Confederacy and its allies. It was about this time that the Crow (Hidatsa) first appeared in the southern part of this region; they also took up the fight against the Shoshoni.⁶³

The Blackfoot never took to trading with Europeans as had the Cree and the Assiniboine; neither Henday nor, later, Matthew Cocking had been able to persuade them, or the Gros Ventre, to make the arduous journey to the Bay. This resistance was due partly to the fact that they were already receiving trade goods through the Cree and the Assiniboine, and partly to a conflict of the demands of the fur trade with those of buffalo hunting, which provided so bountifully for them. Late fall and early winter was the best season for trapping, as pelts were then in their prime; it was also the best time for killing bison and preparing winter provisions. From the social aspect, trapping was a family affair, whereas buffalo hunting involved the whole community. Of the Blackfoot confederates, the Peigan had the most beaver in their territory, and consequently became the most active as trappers; the others, as well as their allies, were to become provisioners for the trade rather than trappers for furs. This independence of the Blackfoot and Gros Ventre helped convince the Hudson's Bay Company to build Cumberland House (near The Pas) in 1774 and Hudson House (west of Prince Albert) in 1779. These posts were, however, outside Blackfoot territory. By the time the Nor'Westers built Fort Augustus on the North Saskatchewan in 1795, and the Hudson's Bay Company had countered with Fort Edmonton that same year, Blackfoot territory was ringed with trading posts.⁶⁴ It was not until 1799, when the

Nor'Westers built the first Rocky Mountain House, that a post was established within the Blackfoot sphere of control.

Trading Situation

The trading situation on the plains was complex, compounded by rivalries between tribes, between traders, between traders and Amerindians, as well as between Canada and the U.S.A. Despite their unwillingness to meet the fur trade on its own terms, the Blackfoot and Gros Ventre felt that they were not as well treated in trade as their enemies, the Cree, particularly in the case of firearms.⁶⁵ The traders, especially the independents, did not help when they treated Amerindians badly, as happened all too frequently. The resultant tensions sometimes erupted into violence, as in 1781 when Amerindians burned the prairie around the posts, which the traders believed was done to scare game away.⁶⁶ When the Nor'Westers sought to cross the mountains and make contact with the Kutenai and other plateau peoples, the Blackfoot became seriously alarmed. David Thompson finally succeeded in building a post in Kutenai territory in 1807, which moved the Peigans, already disturbed by the killing of two of their tribesmen by members of the Lewis and Clark expedition shortly before, to raise a war party. Although Thompson was able to negotiate a peaceful settlement, the unfortunate result for him was that famous delay which cost the Nor'Westers the right to claim the mouth of the Columbia for Britain.⁶⁷ That same year (1807), a band of Bloods and Atsina pillaged the first Fort Augustus, and when the Hudson's Bay Company built Peigan Post (Old Bow Fort) in 1832 in territory controlled by the Bloods, the latter refused to allow their allies to trade there, forcing the closing of the post two years later.⁶⁸ Nor did it take long for the Blackfoot to take advantage of the new international boundary; they became adept at raiding posts built in that part of their territory claimed by the United States and then selling the proceeds to posts north of the border.⁶⁹ The situation was aggravated by the American custom of sending out white trappers instead of relying on Amerindian sources—an act which the Blackfoot considered trespassing.

It was a change in the character of the fur trade which brought about better relations between the Blackfoot and traders. In Canada, this developed because of the opening of the Athabaska region, which resulted in a greatly increased demand for pemmican to provision lengthening supply lines. Pemmican, a highly concentrated food, was particularly suitable for the transportation facilities of the northern routes which depended upon the canoe. In the U.S., the growing importance of buffalo robes, encouraged by the development of transportation facilities, made it practicable to traffic in the bulky, heavy hides. In either case, developing affluence was manifested in the

size of tipis, which by the 1830s could be large enough to accommodate as many as 100 persons.⁷⁰ The new commerce placed a premium upon the services of women, who prepared both pemmican and hides. This encouraged polygamy, as well as a younger age for brides. Where plains Amerindian women had usually married in their late teens, girls as young as twelve now did so. Rarely could a man afford to buy a wife before he was 35, however. As polygamy developed, so did a hierarchy among wives, with the senior wife usually directing the others.⁷¹ Women taken in raids now tended to be retained by their captors rather than to be sold, a trend that became particularly evident after the first third of the nineteenth century.

Commercialism and its concomitant emphasis on wealth affected other social institutions as well. A great many societies appeared, the best known of which were connected with war and the maintenance of camp and hunt disciplines. War as a way of life was a comparatively late development; for the Blackfoot, it became a means of accumulating wealth, which in turn was a route to prestige. Still, something of the old ways persisted, for although the Blackfoot were a major military power on the northwestern plains for more than a century, it remained possible in their society to become a chief without going on the warpath.⁷² Bravery and generosity were the requisites, as they were among the Plains Cree and others.

Allies and Enemies

The Gros Ventre, who were established between the forks of the Saskatchewan River when Matthew Cocking visited them in 1772—he referred to them as one of the tribes of “equestrian natives”—were the easternmost of the Blackfoot allies. The expression “Gros Ventre” was first recorded by Edward Umfreville, who was in their territory from 1784 to 1788.⁷³ The Blackfoot term for these Algonkian-speaking agriculturalists-turned-hunters was “Atsina,” “gut people”; they called themselves “Haāninin,” “chalk-men” or “men of soft white stone.” They impressed Cocking not only with their skill as buffalo hunters, but also in their customs and manners, which he found more like those of Europeans.⁷⁴ A later fur trader, however, described them as “lazy” and “treacherous,” good only at stealing horses,⁷⁵ an opinion probably based on nothing more substantial than on poor trading relations. Weakened by the ravages of the great epidemic of 1781-1782, the Gros Ventre began to be pushed south and east by the Assiniboine and Cree. In 1793, a key battle was fought near South Branch House, when Cree wiped out a Gros Ventre band which had numbered sixteen lodges. Apparently their alliance with the Blackfoot was not on a very secure basis,⁷⁶ as they received little, if any, help from them.

Such incidents greatly exacerbated the resentment shared by the Gros Ventre and the Blackfoot toward the trading success of the Cree

and Assiniboine, which made possible the latter's superiority in firearms. In the eyes of the Gros Ventre, the traders were in effect allies of their enemies, so they responded to the Cree raid by attacking fur-trade posts such as Manchester House (on Pine Island, Saskatchewan River), which they looted in 1793, and in the destruction of the Hudson's Bay Company's South Branch House the following year. In both cases, nearby Nor'Wester forts had been able to defend themselves. Such raids, of course, only compounded the trading difficulties of the Gros Ventre, who apparently were responsible for pillaging Chesterfield House at the mouth of the Red Deer River in 1826; in any event, groups of them subsequently fled south to the headwaters of the Missouri, where they joined their Arapaho kinsmen.⁷⁷ The disappearance of the Gros Ventre from the Saskatchewan basin meant that there was no longer a buffer between Blackfoot and the Assiniboine-Cree, who were thus in direct conflict.

The first European mention of Cree and their allies, the Assiniboines (Stoneys), is in the Jesuit Relations for 1640, when the latter are referred to first as the "Assinipour" and later (1657) as "Assinipoulak," "Warriors of Rock." The Assiniboines came to the attention of the French because of their connection with the Ottawa River trading system.⁷⁸ A Siouan-speaking people, they apparently broke off from the Yanktonai Dakota sometime around 1600, moving north and west, with some moving northeastward into the boreal forest. According to David Thompson, the rupture had not been peaceful, with the breakaways establishing themselves on the Red River and along the right bank of the Saskatchewan River to the foothills.⁷⁹ As the Assiniboines became more firmly associated with the fur trade, their alliance with the Cree and other Algonkian speakers strengthened, as did their hostility to their kinsmen, the Sioux.

The Cree, the most widespread of northern Amerindians, were first identified by the French as "Kristinaux" or "Killistinaux"; like the Assiniboine, they were connected with the Ottawa and Huron trading systems. Soon, however, they were in direct trading contact with the French in what is now northern Quebec, to the east of Hudson Bay, as well as north of Lake Superior. By 1684, the French had built a post on Lake Nipigon to trade with the Cree and their Assiniboine allies in the area;⁸⁰ by that time, other bands of Cree were actively trading with the English on the Bay.⁸¹ Kelsey noted in 1690 that both Cree and Assiniboine were well armed, a situation which encouraged an already evident trend toward expansion. By 1730, Pierre Gaultier de Varennes et de La Vérendrye reported a detachment of Cree south of the Saskatchewan, which the stories of Saukamapee support.⁸² The Cree probably entered the northwestern plains by two routes, the Saskatchewan to the north and the Assiniboine and its tributaries to the south. That they flourished in the plains environment despite the

decimations of the smallpox epidemic of 1776-1777 and later is witnessed by the number of bands which developed between the Qu'Appelle Valley and Edmonton—eight, all told.⁸³ In the forests of the north, the Cree were finally stopped and pushed back by the Chipewyans, although bands raided as far as the Mackenzie basin in 1820, the farthest point of their expansion.⁸⁴ In the southwest, they were stopped by the Blackfoot, with whom they had once been in sporadic alliance when the Shoshoni were a common enemy. By the early nineteenth century, Cree and Blackfoot considered each other their worst foe.

Whether or not the Cree were introduced to plains life by the Assiniboine, as some have maintained, underlying similarities between customs of northeastern woodlands and northwestern plains meant that adaptation was not difficult. By 1772, Cree were impounding bison, but preferred the gun to the bow for the hunt, in contrast to peoples longer established on the grasslands. However, buffalo hunting lessened dependence upon the fur trade; bands of Cree acting as hunters for particular posts, known as the "home guard," were more a phenomenon of the northern forests,⁸⁵ although they were not unknown at the posts of the parklands or prairies, as for example at Fort Pembina.

Reduced dependence on the fur trade affected relationships with traders, and it was the Plains Cree who were involved in one of the most widely remembered confrontations. It occurred in 1779 in reaction to the callous behaviour of a group of independent traders at Fort Montagne d'Aigle (Eagle Hills Fort), on the Saskatchewan between Eagle Hill Creek and Battle River. Two traders were killed and the rest forced to flee; the post was abandoned, and was apparently never permanently reoccupied. The incident also caused the abandonment that same year of the Nor'Wester Fort du Milieu and Upper Hudson House of the Hudson's Bay Company. Nor was this an isolated occurrence. For just one more example, it was the Cree who were participants in a *mêlée* in 1781 at Fort des Trembles on the Assiniboine that resulted in the death of three traders and between 15 and 30 Amerindians. Only the outbreak of the 1781-1782 smallpox epidemic prevented large scale retaliations against the traders.⁸⁶ The much-vaunted peaceful cooperation considered to be characteristic of the fur trade in the northern forests was not so evident on the plains.

In spite of this, the converging influences of the horse and the fur trade fostered an efflorescence of plains cultures, whose golden years in the northwest are usually dated from 1750 to 1880. The horse facilitated the exploitation of the buffalo herds and the extension of overland routes; the fur trade made available a new range of goods, but even more importantly, provided new markets for products of the hunt. This meant that as long as the herds lasted, plains Amerindians

were able to hold their own and indeed to reach new heights of cultural expression as their societies became increasingly complex. They were even able to overcome to a large extent the demographic disasters of introduced diseases. But they did not have time to make their own accommodations to the disappearance of the herds upon which all this was based; it was the dramatic suddenness of that event which catapulted matters beyond their control.

This flourishing of a culture soon to die was not unique to the plains. It had previously occurred in the eastern woodlands, for example, among the Ojibway, Woods Cree and Iroquois; and it occurred simultaneously and continued somewhat later on the west coast, where one of its more spectacular manifestations was the burgeoning of totem poles, not to mention the appearance of button blankets and argillite carving. But in sheer artistry of dress, the mounted plainsman achieved an elegance which has never been surpassed; as an expression of the nomadic buffalo-hunting way of life, he was his own *pièce de résistance*.

Summary

To conclude, there is now no doubt as to the considerable time span of human habitation on the northwestern plains. Indeed, some of our most ancient archaeological records have been discovered here. In Alberta, for instance, there is Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump and the Majorville Cairn and Medicine Wheel site, both of which have yielded evidence of continuous human use for 5,000 years or more. In Saskatchewan, Oxbow and Long Creek campsites show a similar length of habitation. However, archaeological evidence has not been found to support the hypothesis that early migrating Siberians found a corridor in the open lands east of the mountains;⁸⁷ those historic plains tribes which did originate in the northwest, all Athapaskan-speakers, arrived comparatively recently. Ancient Amerindians of the plains appear to have had more connections, however remote, indirect and sporadic, with the eastern and northeastern woodlands, as well as with the civilizations of the Mississippi, the pueblos of the southwest, and even tenuously with Mexico. Similarly, when the horse and European trade goods appeared on the northwestern plains, they filtered in from the south as well as from the east and northeast. When Europeans first began to colonize mainland America during the sixteenth century, they often compared Amerindians with what they imagined their own Stone Age ancestors to have been like, and even sometimes with the peoples of classical antiquity. In the hurly-burly of conquering the land, that more generous perspective was often overlooked. As archaeology reveals the richness and antiquity of our prehistoric heritage, and as its links with the historic present are slowly traced out, we would do well to re-evaluate our perception of Canada as a "new world" without traditions of civilization before the arrival of Europeans.

NOTES

- 1 This paper was presented in a slightly different form to the Edmonton Branch of the Alberta Historical Society, December 6, 1979. I would like to thank Dr. Paul F. Donahue, acting director of the Archaeological Survey, Historical Resources Division, Alberta Culture, for his generous assistance, as well as Dr. L.H. Thomas and Dr. John Honsaker, both of the University of Alberta, for their thoughtful and informed comments. The conception and line of thought is entirely my responsibility.
- 2 H.M. Wormington, and Richard G. Forbis, *An Introduction to the Archaeology of Alberta*, Denver, Proceedings of the Denver Museum of Natural History #11, 1965, 198-99.
- 3 Clark Wissler, "Diffusion of Culture in the Plains of North America," *International Congress of Americanists*, 15th session (Quebec, 1906), 39-52; also cited by William Mulloy, *A Preliminary Historical Outline for the Northwestern Plains*, Laramie, Wyoming, University of Wyoming Publications, XXII #1 (July 1958), 6. However, Wissler later modified this view. See Edward Adamson Hoebel, *The Plains Indians: a critical bibliography*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1977, 8-10.
- 4 A.L. Kroeber, *Cultural and Natural Areas of Native North America*, Berkeley, University of California, 1939, 76; also cited in Mulloy, *Preliminary Historical Outline*, 6.
- 5 Waldo R. Wedel, *Prehistoric Man on the Great Plains*, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1961, 243-244, 256. Also, by the same author, "The High Plains and their Utilization by the Indian," *American Antiquity*, XXIX #1 (1963), 1-16.
- 6 Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Works of Montaigne*, trans. by Donald M. Frame, Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 1957, 693.
- 7 The classification I am using was suggested by that of Waldo R. Wedel in "The Prehistoric Plains," *Ancient Native Americans*, ed., Jesse D. Jennings, San Francisco, W.H. Freeman, 1978, 183-219.
- 8 Hoebel, *Plains Indians*, 12; Zenon S. Pohorecky, "Archaeology and Prehistory: The Saskatchewan Case," in *Region of the Mind*, ed. Richard Allen, Regina, Canadian Plains Research Center, 1973, 47-72.
- 9 Brian O.K. Reeves, "The Southern Alberta Paleo-Cultural Paleo-Environmental Sequence," in *Post-Pleistocene Man and His Environment on the Northern Plains*, Calgary, University of Calgary Archaeological Association, 1969, 21.
- 10 H.M. Wormington, *Ancient Man in North America*. Denver, The Denver Museum of Natural History, 1964, 149.
- 11 George W. Arthur, *An introduction to the ecology of early historic communal bison hunting among the Northern Plains Indians*, Ottawa, National Museums of Canada, 1975, 71.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 72; Reeves, *Post-Pleistocene*, 22; Thomas F. and Alice B. Kehoe, "Saskatchewan," in *The Northwestern Plains: A Symposium*, ed., Warren W. Caldwell, Billings, Montana, Centre for Indian Studies, Rocky Mountain College, 1968, 21. See also Thomas F. Kehoe, *The Gull Lake Site*, Milwaukee, Milwaukee Public Museum, 1973.
- 13 Wedel, *Prehistoric*, 249.
- 14 There is always the possibility—even probability—that this reduction is more apparent than real. As archaeological techniques develop, traces of man's presence become more evident. For other aspects of the problem, see Brian Reeves, "The Concept of an Altitheermal Cultural Hiatus in Northern Plains Prehistory," *American Anthropologist* LXXV (1973), 1221-53; and W.R. Hurt, "The Altitheermal and the Prehistory of the Northern Plains," *Quaternary* VIII (1966) 101-13.
- 15 Jennings, *Ancient Native*, 202.
- 16 So far the Archaeological Survey of Alberta has examined about 5 percent of the province's surface.
- 17 James M. Calder, *The Majorville Cairn and Medicine Wheel Site, Alberta*, Ottawa, National Museum of Man, (Mercury Series #62), 1977, 202. See also two reports by Boyd Wettlaufer, *The Long Creek Site*, Regina, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, 1960, and *The Mortlach Site in The Besant Valley of Central Saskatchewan*, Regina, Department of Natural Resources, 1955; and one by Robert W. Nero and Bruce A. McCorquodale, "Report of and Excavation at the Oxbow Dam Site," *The Blue Jay*, XVI #2 (1958), 82-90.
- 18 Richard G. Forbis, *A Review of Alberta Archaeology to 1964*, Ottawa, National Museum of Canada, 1970, 27.
- 19 Arthur, *Introduction*, 110ff; Forbis, *Review*, 29. See also Thomas F. Kehoe, *Indian Boulder Effigies*, Regina, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, 1965.
- 20 Forbis, *Review*, 27. On the significance of the circle, Calder cited Hyemeyohsts Storm: "It is the mirror in which everything is reflected, it is the universe and the cycle of all things that exist," and added that it represented understanding, knowledge and perception. The four great powers of the circle found at the four cardinal points are wisdom, innocence, illumination and introspection. (Calder, *Majorville Cairn*, 207.)
- 21 Kehoe, "Saskatchewan," 30.
- 22 Jennings, *Ancient Native*, 203. Ceramic evidence also supports this hypothesis. See William J. Byrne, *The Archaeology and Prehistory of Southern Alberta as Reflected by Ceramics*, 3 vols., Ottawa, National Museum of Man (Mercury Series #14), 1973, II: 561.

- 23 *Ibid.*, II: 554; Richard Glover, ed., *David Thompson's Narrative*, Toronto, Champlain Society, 1962, 240.
- 24 Reeves, *Post-Pleistocene*, 34-36.
- 25 Richard G. Forbis, "Alberta," in *Northwest Plains Symposium*, 44. An earth village described by Peter Fidler, who was in Saskatchewan late in the 18th century, has not been located. (Kehoe, "Saskatchewan," 32.)
- 26 Population on the high plains during the post-glacial period has been estimated at 0.2 to 0.3 persons per square mile. (Reeves, *Post-Pleistocene*, 37.)
- 27 Dolores A. Gunnerson, "Man and Bison on the Plains in the Protohistoric Period," *Plains Anthropologist* XVII #55 (1972), 3-4, 5-6. See also F.G. Roe, *The North American Buffalo*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1972, 228-56 and 283-333.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 2. It has been estimated that the buffalo may have numbered as many as 60,000,000 at their peak. (Arthur, *Introduction*, 11-12; F.G. Roe, *The North American Buffalo*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1951, 518-19.)
- 29 T.H. Lewis, ed., "The Narrative of the Expedition of Hernando de Soto by the Gentleman of Elvas," in *Spanish Explorers in the Southern United States 1528-1543*, ed., Frederick W. Hodge, N.Y., Scribner's, 1907, 213.
- 30 Roe, *American Buffalo*, 235, 843-44; Gunnerson, "Man and Bison," 2. Buffalo also destroyed small trees and pushed over telephone poles. Arthur, *Introduction*, 15-16.
- 31 R.G. Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 73 vols., Cleveland, Burrows Bros., 1896-1901, LIX, 113; Gunnerson, "Man and Bison," 2-3, citing G.A. Dorsey, *Traditions of the Caddo*, Washington, Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1905, 50-55, 109-11.
- 32 Joseph Jablow, *The Cheyenne in Plains Indian Trade Relations 1795-1840*, Monograph of the American Ethnological Society, XIX, Seattle and London, University of Washington Press, 1950, 14; Robert H. Lowrie, *Indians of the Plains*, New York, American Museum of Natural History, 1963, 45.
- 33 William Duncan Strong, "The Plains Culture Area in the Light of Archaeology," *American Anthropologist* XXXV (1933), held that horse nomadism represented no more than a "thin and strikingly uniform veneer" on earlier cultural manifestations. For the lack of specific rites among the Plains Cree for the increase of horses even though they were the symbol of wealth, see David G. Mandelbaum, *The Plains Cree*, New York, American Museum of Natural History Anthropological Papers #37, Pt. 2, 1940, 195-96. Mandelbaum's work has recently been reprinted by the Canadian Plains Research Center, Regina.
- 34 F.G. Roe, *The Indian and the Horse*, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1951, 54.
- 35 John C. Ewers, *The Horse in Blackfoot Indian Culture*, Washington, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1955, 2-3.
- 36 Roe, *Indian and Horse*, 74-75.
- 37 Arthur, *Introduction*, 66; Elliott Coues, ed., *History of the Expedition Under the Command of Lewis and Clark*, 4 vols., New York, Harper, 1893, III: 1148.
- 38 Arthur, *Introduction*, 72.
- 39 Oscar Lewis, *The Effects of White Contact Upon Blackfoot Culture With Special References to the Fur Trade*, Monographs of the American Ethnological Society #6, New York, Augustin, 1942, 39-40; Bernard Mishkin, *Rank and Warfare Among Plains Indians*, Monographs of the American Ethnological Society #3, Seattle and London, University of Washington Press, 1940, 10; Glover, *David Thompson*, 267-68. For other such raids, see A.S. Morton, ed., *The Journal of Duncan M'Gillivray of the Northwest Company at Fort George on the Saskatchewan, 1794-1795*, Toronto, Macmillan, 1979, 27.
- 40 Glover, *David Thompson*, 241-42; Frank Raymond Secoy, *Changing Military Patterns on the Great Plains*, Monographs of the American Ethnological Society XXI, Seattle and London, University of Washington Press, 1953, 33; Lewis, *White Contact*, 11; George E. Hyde, *Indians of the High Plains*, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1959, 121, 133-34.
- 41 James Teit, "The Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateaus," *45th Annual Report, U.S. Bureau of American Ethnology (1927-1928)*, Washington, 1930, 109-10; Mishkin, *Rank and Warfare*, 9.
- 42 Secoy, *Military Patterns*, 36-38.
- 43 Glover, *David Thompson*, 244.
- 44 John C. Ewers, *The Blackfeet*, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1958, 22.
- 45 John C. Ewers, "Was There a Northwestern Plains Sub-Culture? An Ethnographic Appraisal," *Northwest Plains Symposium*, 71. See also Hugh A. Dempsey, *Indian Tribes of Alberta*, Calgary, Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1978.
- 46 Ewers, *Blackfeet*, 6-7; Hoebel, *Plains Indians*, 37; Lewis, *White Contact*, 7-9.
- 47 Ewers, "Ethnographic Appraisal," 73.
- 48 Ewers, *Blackfeet*, 24-25.
- 49 Cf. James Henri Howard, *The Plains-Ojibwa or Bungi. Hunters and Warriors of the Northern Prairie*, Vermillion, S.D., South Dakota Museum, University of South Dakota, 1965. Also, Edwin Thompson Denig, *Five Indian Tribes of the Upper Missouri*, ed., John C. Ewers, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1961, 100. Denig says that the Ojibwa and Cree were so intermingled as to be difficult to consider separately.

- ⁵⁰ Ewers, "Ethnographic Appraisal," 71.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 72.
- ⁵² Symmes C. Oliver, *Ecology and Cultural Continuity as Contributing Factors in the Social Organization of the Plains Indians*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1962, 46.
- ⁵³ Glover, *David Thompson*, 241-42; Hyde, *High Plains*, 133-34; and Secoy, *Military Patterns*, 36-37.
- ⁵⁴ Glover, *David Thompson*, 245.
- ⁵⁵ Elliott Coues, ed., *New Light on the Early History of the Great Northwest, 1799-1814*, 3 vols., New York, Harper, 1897. II: 713-14. For a Spanish governor's ingenious argument in favor of providing guns to *indios barbaros* in order to make them less formidable, see Max L. Moorhead, *The Apache Frontier*, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1968, 127-28.
- ⁵⁶ Hyde, *High Plains*, 146.
- ⁵⁷ Secoy, *Military Patterns*, 52.
- ⁵⁸ Glover, *David Thompson*, 107, 240.
- ⁵⁹ Hyde, *High Plains*, 164-65.
- ⁶⁰ Coues, *New Light*, II: 726.
- ⁶¹ Ewers, *Blackfeet*, 19, 24.
- ⁶² Glyndwr Williams, "The Puzzle of Anthony Henday's Journal, 1754-55," *The Beaver*, Outfit 309:3 (Winter 1978), 53.
- ⁶³ Lewis, *White Contact*, 14.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 17-18.
- ⁶⁵ Morton, *Duncan M'Gillivray*, 31.
- ⁶⁶ E.E. Rich, *The Fur Trade in the Northwest to 1857*, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1967, 158.
- ⁶⁷ Lewis, *White Contact*, 23.
- ⁶⁸ J.B. Tyrrell, ed., *David Thompson's Narrative of his Explorations in Western America*, Toronto, Champlain Society, 1916, xc; for a different version, see J.E.A. Macleod, "Peigan Post and the Blackfoot Trade," *Canadian Historical Review*, XXIV #3 (1943), 273-79.
- ⁶⁹ Lewis, *White Contact*, 24.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 35-36.
- ⁷¹ Mandelbaum, *Plains Cree*, (1940), 246; Lewis says that among the Blackfoot, the third or fourth wife had such an inferior status that she was referred to as a "slave." (*White Contact*, 39-40.)
- ⁷² *Ibid.*, 57.
- ⁷³ Regina Flannery, *The Gros Ventres of Montana, Part I: Social Life*, Anthropological Series #15, Washington, The Catholic University of America Press, 1953, 4-5.
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 5; Alfred L. Kroeber, *Ethnology of the Gros Ventre*, New York, Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, I, 1908, 145.
- ⁷⁵ Morton, *Duncan M'Gillivray*, 26-27, 73-74.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 62-63; Arthur J. Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1974, 98; Kroeber, *Ethnology*, 146.
- ⁷⁷ Flannery, *Gros Ventres*, 9.
- ⁷⁸ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations XVIII*: 231; XLIV; 249; Ray, *Fur Trade*, 11.
- ⁷⁹ Glover, *David Thompson*, 164.
- ⁸⁰ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations XVIII*: 229; Ray, *Fur Trade*, 11.
- ⁸¹ Apparently the English on the Bay, on the advice of Medard Chouart de Groseilliers and Pierre Radisson, had entered into ceremonial alliances with the local Cree, which were ritually renewed annually with feasting and gift exchanges. One observer saw this as paying "rent." (Denig, *Five Tribes*, 112.)
- ⁸² Glover, *David Thompson*, 240ff; L.J. Burpee, ed., *Journals and Letters by Pierre Gaultier de Varennes de La Verendrye*, Toronto, Champlain Society, 1927, 25.
- ⁸³ David G. Mandelbaum, *Anthropology and People: the World of the Plains Cree*, University Lectures #12, Saskatoon, University of Saskatchewan, 1967, 7.
- ⁸⁴ Mandelbaum, *Plains Cree*, (1940), 183.
- ⁸⁵ Mandelbaum, *Anthropology*, 6.
- ⁸⁶ Coues, *New Light*, I: 292-93; II: 498-99; Alexander Mackenzie, *Voyages from Montreal on the River St. Lawrence Through the Continent of America*, London, 1801, xiii-xiv.
- ⁸⁷ Wormington and Forbis, *Introduction*, 183.