

THE MANDAN AND HIDATSA ESTABLISH MISSOURI VALLEY VILLAGES

The Mandan and Hidatsa Villages The Year of 1730

Over hundreds of years the Mandan people made their way from the eastern woodlands of the Ohio River Valley to the valley of the Missouri River. Divided into five bands, the Nuptadi, the Mananar, the Nuitadi, the Istope, and the Awikaxa, the Mandan have established nine large well-fortified villages along the banks of the Knife, Heart, and Missouri rivers. Some reports tell us that the Mandan reached their present sites as early as the year 900.

Numbering in the neighborhood of 9,000, the Mandan are a Siouan-speaking people who owe their origins to First Creator and Lone Man. These two powerful spirits, the Mandan believe, created the Missouri River Valley and the animals, plants, and people who live there. First Creator made the hills, woods, springs, buffalo, deer, and antelope on the south side of the Valley. Lone Man created the flat lands, ponds, trees, birds, cattle, and water creatures on the north side. Lone Man created the people, taught them how to live, and protected them. After establishing a prosperous society, Lone Man returned to his home, the south wind, but each spring the warm south wind reminds the Mandan that he continues to care for them.

Eventually, three other Siouan-speaking tribes have joined the Mandan. Around 1500 some Awatixa warriors wandered west and encountered the Mandan who gave them a few ears of corn. The Awatixa, who maintained large gardens, had never tasted corn, and finding it to their liking, added corn to their gardens.

The Awatixa soon left the area east of Devils Lake and moved to the Missouri River Valley. They have established their villages quite close to the Mandan. Since they belong to the Siouan language group, they can communicate with the Mandan in spite of dialect differences.

The origins of the Awatixa, as passed down

through oral tradition, began with Charred Body who lived in the Sky. He heard the bellowing of buffalo, and looking through a hole in the heavens, discovered the earth below. Liking what he saw, he descended to earth in the form of an arrow. He erected 13 earthlodges and brought down 13 young couples who founded the original families. Sacred arrows have the power to protect the people from evil.

Not long after the Awatixa arrived on the Missouri, the Awaxawi, Siouan-speaking eastern neighbors, left for the Missouri Valley. The Awaxawi origin account begins with the creation of the earth by Lone Man and First Creator who competed with each other to see who could make the best location for their people. Lone Man fashioned the rolling land to the east of the Missouri River. First Creator made the rugged lands west of the river. When the creation was completed, the Awaxawi, who had been living inside the earth, climbed a vine to the surface.

About 1650, the largest Siouan tribe that had lived not far from the Awatixa and the Awaxawi settled in the Missouri River Valley to the north of the other tribes. These were the Hidatsa who believe that they had lived within the earth beneath Devils Lake. One day some Hidatsa hunters discovered a vine that was growing upward to the earth's surface. They climbed it and most of the people followed. But not all. The vine snapped, leaving some below the lake where they continued to live. When Hidatsa hunters return to the lake, they say that they can hear the sound of drums beneath the waves. Eventually, the



Hidatsa village.



Mandan village on bluff. Bull boats in river.

Awatixa and Awaxawi have been, in the popular notion of the Plains, merged with the much larger Hidatsa tribe. The three groups number about 7,000 people. When the North Star Dakotan uses the identification Hidatsa, it refers to the three groups that had so much in common.

ABOUT THE NORTH STAR DAKOTAN

Welcome to the new first issue of the North Star Dakotan, a North Dakota Studies project, a textbook in newspaper format.

In this issue, we explore that long stretch of history from early human occupation to about 1860 — one year before Congress organized Dakota Territory and two years after the government established the first Indian reservation in what would become North Dakota. We emphasize two major subjects: the native people and their way of life and the arrival of non-native explorers, trappers, traders, and settlers.

In presenting the early history of the native people we have attempted to blend the written observations of whites with the oral traditions of the Indian people. We are fortunate that early explorers, trappers and traders kept journals about their experiences. We have relied on these documents, but we have used them carefully. Whenever possible we have used oral history to complement the records of non-natives.

The theme of the sections on native people is best articulated by a traditional Hidatsa story elders told their grandchildren:

Look at the eagle. It soars through the air and swoops down with a ferrible noise. And it has feathers.

Look at the duck. It flies through the air and swims on the water and quacks. And it has feathers.

Look at the owl. It sits in the tree and looks wise and hoots. And it has feathers.

Look at the sparrow. It flits around and chirps. And it has feathers.

We Indian people, like the winged ones are all different, but like the winged ones we are all alike.

The point of the story is this: the Arikara speak Caddoan, the Chippewa speak Algonquian, the Lakota/Dakota speak Siouan; the three tribes (Arikara, Hidatsa, Mandan) raised crops; the Lakota were hunters; the Chippewa were traders and hunters; the tribes disagreed, fought battles, and made peace. All lived close to nature and held kinship and family in high esteem. All depended upon the bison for food and skins. As the story shows, the native people each had their own unique traditions, customs, and languages. For every difference there is a similarity among the tribes.

The arrival of the first non-native explorers and traders is the other major topic covered in this issue. We explain why they came, how they operated and what impact they had on the native people. Our contributing historians relied on the journals of those explorers and traders as well as the observations of painters such as Catlin, Bodmer, and Kurz. We also found much in the accounts of Four Bears and Waheenee.

Many people are fascinated with the expeditions of the Corps of Discovery, La Verendrye, and David Thompson, and other agents of the fur trade era. We have narrated that story and we have not neglected the great damage caused by European and early American quests for riches. We have attempted to present a balanced perspective of history.

We have a rich past. It is our intention to investigate and report that heritage as honestly as we can.

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THE MANDAN AND HIDATSA: A SPECIAL REPORT



Interior of an earthlodge.

The Mandan and the Hidatsa got along very well—they were both Siouan-speaking peoples who resided in permanent earthlodge villages and whose main livelihood was cultivating large gardens. The vegetables provided food for themselves and items for trade. Annual buffalo hunts and fishing augmented the food supply.

The Mandan and Hidatsa were people of the earthlodge who lived in well-planned villages. The earthlodge was the main type of dwelling among the agricultural people of the Missouri River Valley. Because the Mandan and Hidatsa had permanent villages, the earthlodge was a large, immovable structure that suited their housing needs very well. The lodges were warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Most often a family had a permanent summer lodge on high ground and a winter lodge near the river where wood was plentiful. Often spring floods washed away the winter lodge so the people considered the summer, better-built, earthlodge as home. Summer lodges could last up to ten years.

The erection of a lodge was complicated and required the work of many people. First, a one-or-two-foot-deep foundation was dug. Then four large posts about twelve to fifteen feet long were set up as a square—about ten feet apart. Along the outer edge of the foundation as many as sixteen short posts (five to six feet in length) were set up and attached to each other. Then large rafter posts were tied into the four main posts. Lighter poles were placed between the large posts and the smaller posts along the edge of the foundation. Now the frame was completed.

Over this framework the people placed a thick mat of willow branches and dry grass. Finally, a two-to-three-foot layer of earth was placed over the entire structure. An entryway about ten feet long was then added. Earthlodges varied in size but most were between 30 and 60 feet in diameter.

Although men helped put up the large posts, women designed and did most of the work in the building of the earthlodge. The home belonged to the woman.

The earthlodge had a well-organized and efficient interior. In the center was the fire pit which kept the dwelling warm in the winter and provided a cooking area. Smoke rose through a central opening in the roof. Near the fire rested an earthen pot filled with water for washing up in the



Two Ravens, Hidatsa Chief



Hidatsa Green Corn Dance. Thanksgiving for the crop.



Mandan Bison Dance.



A scene from the Mandan Bison Dance.

morning. Usually, a pot of buffalo meat or corn and beans cooked on the fire in case visitors arrived. They were always offered a meal. Beds, enclosed hides over a pole box-like framework, were arranged along the outer wall. From the outer ring of posts hung the man's belongings such as bow and quiver, war club, medicine bag, shield, and headdress. Cooking equipment and other household goods hung from the center posts. The far back was reserved as a sacred area for items of spiritual importance. During terribly cold weather the family's horses were allowed inside the lodge just to the side of the entrance.

The women kept the earthlodge neat and clean. On sunny days they aired out the buffalo-skin bedding; after breakfast, they swept the lodge with backbrush brooms. Regularly a tribal group inspected the earthlodges for cleanliness.

The earthlodge was a well-built and homey place. It used natural

materials that were readily available. The lodge was a part of nature. That is why they had a spiritual meaning to the people who lived in them.

The Mandan and Hidatsa women were gardeners who followed the time-honored ways of their people. Gardens were near the summer village on the Missouri bottomlands where the soil was fertile and easy to work. Family gardens could be as large as 160 paces by 80 paces.

The planting and harvesting seasons were pretty much the same year after year. Sunflowers were planted in April as soon as the soil could be worked: three seeds to a hill about eight paces apart at the edges of the plot. Corn planting took most of May—when the gooseberry bushes leafed out. The women placed eight grains in the hills which were spaced two paces apart so the stalks would be strong and ears would be large.

In early June, the women sprouted their squash seed. Four seeds in pairs were placed about a large handspan apart in the hills which were in the middle of the garden. Beans were then planted between the rows of corn, three to a hill.

The summer was spent hoeing the garden and keeping birds from eating the plants and their fruit. Each family built a watchers' platform for the garden, usually in the shade of a nearby tree. Girls began to go on the watchers' stage when they were about ten years old. They went just before dawn and stayed until it was dark. Their job? Scare the birds away. It was a long day but the girls had fun, singing, cooking, and taunting the boys who passed by. For those boys, the girls sang: "You bad boys, you are all alike! Your bow is like a bent basket hoop; you poor boys, you have to run on the prairie barefoot; your arrows aren't for nothing but to shoot up in the sky!"

Harvest and food preparation was a busy time. The first corn was ready to be eaten early in the harvest moon when the goldenrod blossoms were light yellow. Fresh green corn, boiled or roasted, was a delicious favorite. Some green corn was made into bread; some was stripped and dried for winter use. When the rest of the corn reached a golden yellow, it was time for a husking-season celebration: a feast of ripe corn and fresh buffalo meat.

The Corn Dance which offered thanks for

the crops was central to festivities. Elderly women hung dried meat on poles and danced. Younger women fed them meat and received corn to eat in exchange.

The corn was husked in the field and braided into strings of 55 ears. Some braids were threshed, dried, and readied for winter. Some were stored on the braid. The cobs were burned in the field and the ashes were worked into the soil. Usually a harvest provided a family with enough corn for itself and for trade with other tribes.

The women did two squash pickings. The family ate the first, about the time of green corn. In the fall the second picking yielded enough for immediate and winter eating. The squash was sliced and dried for storage. The barren blossoms were collected, dried, and prepared as a mess for an immediate eating treat.

Like corn, beans were harvested, dried, and threshed mostly for winter storage. Sunflowers came at the end of the harvest season, hopefully after a frost. The heads were dried, face down, on the roof of the earthlodge. The seeds were beaten out with a stick, roasted, and ground into meal. Some of the seeds were rolled into small balls which warriors and hunters carried with them. Whatever the crop, the best seeds were used for a two-year supply of planting.

The fruits of the harvest were stored in cache pits that were dug within the earthlodge and lined with grass and willow branches. A two-foot opening at the top enlarged to about six to eight feet at the bottom—about the same as the depth. A ladder had to be used to bring up the last of winter's food.

Garden produce provided the Mandan and Hidatsa with valuable trade items. Indian tribes from all directions descended on the Mandan and Hidatsa villages which had become important trade centers. The nomadic tribes who lived off the buffalo and wild berries were eager to trade for garden food. From the north the Cree and Assiniboine came with items received in trade with the French and English. Southwestern and western tribes such as the Utes, Shoshoni, Nez Perce, Crow, and Flathead brought horses and items they had gained from Spaniards or northwestern Pacific Coast Indians. Siouan peoples—the Dakota, the Yanktoni, the Teton—arrived from

the prairies and woods to the east. Most everything was traded: guns, horses, iron arrowheads, axes, knives, foodstuffs, fancy robes, cookware, cloth, and even some “made clothes.” The Mandan and Hidatsa were considered to be skilled traders. Typical of one deal: the Crow exchanged 250 horses that they had traded from the Shoshoni to the Hidatsa for 200 guns which the Hidatsa had bought from the Assiniboine and Cree. Great profits were made in what were usually peaceful trade sessions.

All Mandan and Hidatsa village leaders were part of a democratic decision-making council of headmen. Two members were elected chiefs based on their hunting and warfare skills and on their generosity to elders. Both tribes had a war and a peace chief. Peace chiefs maintained good relations with other tribes and settled village arguments. It helped the chief to keep the peace if he provided a feast every once in a while.

Age societies guaranteed the transfer of power from older to younger men. For example, in Mandan society from boyhood to about age 50, males went through a series of societies, each of which had its own leader, dances, songs, regalia, and instruction. Boys advanced from the Cheyenne Society to the Swift Fox Society. Men’s societies, youngest to oldest, were Little Dog, Crazy Dog, Crow Indian, Half-Shaved-Head, Soldier, Dog, Old Dog, Buffalo Bull, and Black-tailed Deer. Women, too, advanced with age through seven societies. The Hidatsa had a similar system that controlled social behavior and guaranteed camaraderie and skilled leadership.

Spirituality was very much a part of Mandan and Hidatsa life. Each person had private prayers, and families had sacred bundles that held objects that reminded the people of their origins and spiritual journey. Associated with each bundle were songs and celebrations that dramatized sacred stories.

Formal rituals and ceremonies followed the seasons: spring to welcome the birds and agricultural spirits; summer to bring rain and good crops; fall to prepare men for war and the annual buffalo hunt; winter to bring the buffalo near to the village and to prevent a harsh winter. To the Mandan, the most important religious event of the year was the Okipa; to the Hidatsa, the Naxpike. Both were similar to what other plains tribes called the Sun Dance. Lasting four days, the events were held in a special lodge. The ceremonies enacted the tribe’s world view; their purpose was to provide spiritual renewal

for the people and to bring the buffalo near the villages. Participants wore masks that represented animals and underwent strenuous endurance tests. Tribal elders took this opportunity to tell the stories of creation and to pass on tribal ways to the young people.

Kinship played an important role in everyday life. Children were taught to treat all members of a village on the basis of kinship. The family clan, organized around the mother, was a large extended family. The clan cared for its members, disciplined the children, and promoted spiritual growth.

Within the clan and family a wedding was a time of special joy. In Mandan society, marriages were usually arranged by relatives of the young couple. The prospective groom gave a white buffalo hide to the lodge of his wife-to-be. Brothers of the bride gave horses to the betrothed. During the ceremony, the buffalo hide was placed over the couple’s shoulders and was painted with sacred designs. The couple gave it to the elders and, then, were considered married.

The Hidatsa also practiced arranged marriages, but most often a young man and woman agreed to marry. In this case the man would move in with the woman’s family and the woman would move into the man’s lodge. If all turned out well, the two were considered married. In both types of marriages, a ceremonial exchange of gifts and food occurred between the two families. One had to marry outside of one’s clan.

Divorce was simple: the wife placed her husband’s belongings outside the earthlodge, ending the relationship.

At no time did the clan play a more important role than on the occasion of a member’s death. The deceased was wrapped in his or her finest robe and placed on a scaffold out of the reach of animals. Clan relatives mourned for four days. Closest relatives mourned for a year, dressing poorly and keeping their hair short. The women usually expressed their sorrow by cutting themselves so a bit of blood would flow. The deceased’s possessions were distributed as gifts: a giveaway. The Mandan and Hidatsa, like the other Plains Indians, believed in a life after death. The soul would either shoot to the heavens as a star or join others in an ideal place within the earth.

Mother Earth was all-important to Indian people who insisted that she be treated with respect. The Great Spirit, sometimes called



The dress of a Hidatsa elder.



Mandan Buffalo Society member.



The Ptihn-tak-ochata dance of the Mandan women.



Crossing the frozen Missouri.



The autumn hunt.

the Great Mystery, ruled the universe and was embodied in all of nature: the land, the animals, the birds, the fish, and all vegetation. For example, the Indian people needed to kill buffalo in order to exist. Because the Great Spirit had made the buffalo into a sacred beast, through a ceremonial dance the people sought permission to hold a buffalo hunt and forgiveness for the killings. An Hidatsa saying summed it up this way: “We come from the earth; we live on the earth; we return to the earth; we must respect the earth and all things of the earth.”

ASSINIBOINE ALLY WITH CREE TRIBE IS KNOWN FOR SAVVY TRADING

The Assiniboine Villages The Year of 1730

The Assiniboine have journeyed, along with other Siouan-speaking groups, from the woodlands of the Ohio and Mississippi river valleys to their present location north of Lake Superior and west to the Lake of the Woods. The people are no longer associated with their Siouan relatives and have found a strong alliance with the Cree who have lived around Lake Winnipeg to the northwest of the Assiniboine since around 900.

The alliance is considered strange since the Cree are of Algonquian ancestry, not Siouan. Too, the Assiniboine are relative newcomers to the region, having arrived by 1610. What holds the alliance together is trade. The two tribes live between the York Factor, an English trade center on Hudson's Bay, and the tribes that reside on the prairies and plains to the south and west. Daniel Greysolon Dulhut has reestablished a French trading post on Lake Superior not far from the Assiniboine. Since the 1690s the Cree and Assiniboine have been the main sources of trade items for the many tribes to the south and west.

Although there is intermarriage between the two tribes, the Assiniboine have always maintained their own independence. They have been a woodlands and lake-country people who have subsisted on fishing, wild rice, fowl, and animals of the forests such as deer and moose. Occasionally some bands move westward to hunt buffalo and set up encampments in the Souris River Valley.

The Assiniboine are divided into 33 bands, each with its own chief and council whose decisions are enforced by the akitcita, the band's police. Unlike the Mandan and Hidatsa, the bands act independently of each other. The bands do come together, however, for buffalo hunts and war purposes.

The Assiniboine have adopted the tipi as their living quarters. The tipi is a cone-shaped tent that is covered with buffalo skins. The size and number of poles varies a good deal. Some tipis reach as high as 30 or 40 feet and need as many as 22 skins to cover the frame. Most Assiniboine tipis are about 14 feet high at

the center and use seven or eight buffalo skins to cover the 15-pole framework. They have a ground diameter of about 14 feet.

The entry has a flap cover that can be closed in bad weather. The doorway usually faces east, away from the prevailing west winds. Inside, the



Assiniboine warriors.



Assiniboine encampment.

tipi is a compact living unit. Sacred items are kept at the rear of the tipi; an altar occupies the center. The fireplace is near the center so smoke can rise through an opening at the tipi's top.

Buffalo-skin bed areas are on the outer edge—men on the right and women on the left. Just inside the entry firewood, weapons, and riding gear are stored.

Women put up, care for, and own the tipi. They also decorate the exteriors. A band's village consists of up to 200 tipis which house between 750 and 1,000 people. In all, the Assiniboine population is about 28,000.

Spiritual life centers around Wakan Tanka, the great and mysterious creator whose spirit is in all things. The most important religious ceremony is the Sun Dance which brings together the scattered Assiniboine bands. Horse Society rituals include prayers that the tribe would obtain many horses (it has very few) and that children would be free of illness. The Fool Society is a two-day ceremony which gives members powers for war and hunting. Participants speak backward, saying the opposite of what they mean. Like the Mandan and Hidatsa, Assiniboine men and women belong to a variety of societies that assist them through life.

Marriage requires the young man to send a horse to the girl's tipi. A refusal calls for another horse, if possible, and other presents. Acceptance of the gifts seals the marriage.

When a person dies, the relatives and friends mourn by cutting their hair and begging the spirit of the deceased to leave the body and travel to the good land of spirits. When a warrior dies, he and his weapons are wrapped firmly in a blanket, buffalo robe, and rawhide. The Assiniboine practice the scaffold in the winter and hilltop burial in the summer. A man's war horse is killed at his grave to take him to the spirit world.

Assiniboine were given that name by the Cree. In Algonquian, it means "those who cook with stones." The Assiniboine, however, refer to themselves as Nakoda which in Siouan means "people not at war."

FIRST EUROPEAN VISITS MANDAN FRENCHMEN SEEKS BEAVER PELTS ASSINIBOINE SERVE AS GUIDES

Mandan Villages December 1738

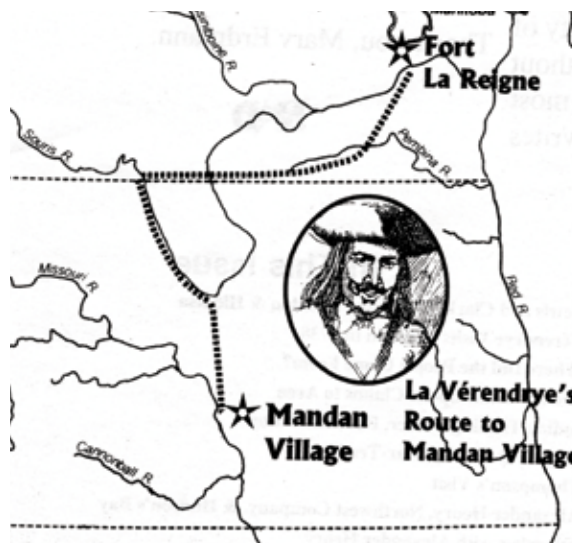
La Vérendrye met the Mandan near the Missouri River and entered their fort on December 3, 1738. The French fur trader hoped to exchange trade goods for many beaver pelts for which there is great demand and profit. The first contact has been very friendly.

The major goal of the explorer is to find a water route to the western ocean.

Sieur de La Vérendrye, otherwise known as Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, has been granted a monopoly on the fur trade in the area west of Lake Superior by the King of France. With the help of his three sons he has built a network of trading forts from Lake Superior to Lake Winnipeg and the Red River of the North. His newest venture carries trade goods to the Mandan.

La Vérendrye wants the Mandan to trade only with him. He fears that the English fur traders from Hudson's Bay will attempt to capture new trade areas. He is satisfied that he is the first white explorer to reach the Mandan.

The explorer and his party of some 50 Frenchmen



and 25 Assiniboine guides took a detour to an Assiniboine encampment before coming south. By the time they met a group of Mandan some distance from the village, the visitors numbered over 600. All the Assiniboine—men, women, and children—wanted to come along!

While the Mandan warmly welcomed the French visitors, they were not eager to entertain the large group of Assiniboine. In fact, they tried to get them to leave by spreading a rumor that the Sioux, a mortal enemy of the Assiniboine, were in the vicinity.

As the visitors approached the Mandan fort, the people came out to meet the marching group. Some sources report that the Mandan put La Vérendrye on their shoulders and carried him into their village.

La Vérendrye has been given the use of one of the largest of the 130 earthlodges in the Mandan village. The Mandan have given him more than 20 dishes of food. The entire community is feasting in honor his arrival.

However, the Mandan are concerned about the large amount of food being consumed by the Assiniboine who serve as the explorer's interpreters. They speak to the Mandan in Cree.

Most of the Assiniboine, afraid of the Sioux, left by December 6. Among them was the chief interpreter, who would not stay even though La Vérendrye paid him well. "He was a young man of the Cree nation who spoke excellent Assiniboine, but he was in love with an Assiniboine woman who didn't want to stay," said the explorer. After the interpreter left, La Vérendrye says talk has been reduced to "signs and gesture."

La Vérendrye believes that he is the first white explorer to reach the Mandan. He is so impressed with their advanced culture that he believes they must have had contact with Europeans sometime before.

He has asked the Mandan about a water route to the west—a passage to the Pacific Ocean. They know the Missouri River better than any other tribe and may have information about another way across North America. The tribal leaders have spoken to the Frenchman about a river that becomes so wide that person cannot see across it, a body of water which is not good to drink. Although this river is south of the villages, La Vérendrye believes they may know of another river that leads to the west.

The French party is expected to stay on the Missouri for about ten days. La Vérendrye and his men believe that trade contacts look very promising.

La Vérendrye says that he will leave behind two of his party who learn languages with ease to ensure further communication with the Mandan people. He believes that the Mandan will be a good source for beaver pelts.

LA VÉRENDRYE IN HIS OWN WORDS: ON THE MANDAN

They keep the streets and open spaces very clean. Their fort is surrounded with a ditch fifteen feet deep and from fifteen to eighteen feet wide. Built slightly higher than the ground around, they enter the fort on steps made of pieces of wood which they can remove when threatened by an enemy. This fortification has nothing "savage" about it.

The whole tribe is very industrious. Their dwellings are large and spacious, divided into several apartments with wide planks. Nothing is lying about; all their belongings are placed in large bags hung on posts. Their beds are made in the form of tombs and are surrounded by skins.

Their fort is very well provided with cellars where they store all they have in the way of grains, meat, fur, dressed skins, and bearskins. They have a great stock of these things, which form the money of the country.

They made wickerwork very skillfully, both trays and baskets. They use earthen pots that they make, like many other nations, for cooking food. They are for the most part great eaters, and are very fond of feasts.

The men are large and tall, very active, and the greater part fairly good-looking. They have fine features and are very affable. Most of the women do not have Indian features. The men play a kind of ball game on the open spaces and ramparts of the fort.

SAHNISH PROSPER ON GARDENS CORN IS BIG TRADE ITEM

The Sahnish Villages Near Bad River The Year of 1743

The Sahnish are the northernmost people of the Caddoan speakers and are related to the Pawnee, the Caddo, the Waco, and the Wichita. Over centuries the Sahnish, referred to as Arikara by other tribes, foreign travelers, and mapmakers, migrated northward from south of the Rio Grande River Valley to the drainage area of the Missouri River. Presently, the Sahnish occupy over 30 permanent villages around where the Bad River flows into the Missouri. They are a sedentary people who live in earthlodges and maintain huge gardens. Estimates place the Sahnish population as high as 30,000.

As oral tradition maintains, the Sahnish once lived within Mother Earth. A shrew bored through the earth to the surface and came out into the sunlight. Blinded by the brightness, it drew back, but it had created an opening through which most kinds of living creatures could reach the daylight. Some such as snakes, badgers, and gophers continued to live in the earth.

A mysterious voice urged the people to go forward and not turn back. The Sahnish came to a great water which blocked their journey. Out of nowhere came a mysterious bird that parted the water. The water, however, closed, leaving some in the water. They became the fish and other creatures of the sea. Soon an impassable cliff confronted the Sahnish. Again, the mysterious bird appeared and provided a way of passage. Those who could not survive the passage became the creatures of the air. The Sahnish then came to an impenetrable forest. A screech owl opened a way through the dense woods. Again, some did not make it. They became the deer, the moose, and all forest dwellers.

The Sahnish, however, had no knowledge of the ways of the earth. Nishanu Matchitak, the Chief Above, who ruled the world, blessed his people and gave them Mother Corn to teach them wisdom in spiritual matters and to provide them with knowledge about everyday life, how to live on the earth.

The Sahnish survival largely depends upon their skills as farmers. Although from time to time they have moved up or down the Missouri watershed, they maintain large gardens where, like the Mandan and Hidatsa, women grow squash, beans, small watermelons, sunflowers—

but mostly corn. They have developed eleven varieties of corn. The golden kernels provide the people with delicious meals. Dried corn is boiled with fat or marrow; beans and buffalo meat are frequently added.

Corn has made the Sahnish villages into lively trade centers that rival the Mandan and Hidatsa activity. Yearly, between 2,000 and 3,000 bushels of corn are available for barter with the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa, and even some Sioux bands who have been traditional enemies of the Sahnish. As one observer has put it: “Corn is more important than blood.” So essential is the corn to the nomadic and hunting tribes that the sign language of the plains depicts the Sahnish as “corn shellers.” Of course, the “corn shellers” need the buffalo meat, hides, horses, and European manufactured goods that the visiting tribes provide.

Spiritual life centers in the medicine lodge which is located in the middle of the village. Of primary importance are ceremonies related to corn. Early in the spring before planting season, the Sahnish conduct the Corn Planting Ceremony. Sacred bundles that hold ears of corn representing Mother Corn are opened. In front of the altar are three bows and arrows, three ears of corn, and three hoes. After the creation account is recited, a dramatic enactment of the planting process is intended to ensure a successful crop. The men pantomime protection of the crop from enemies and the women mime the hoeing of the corn garden. At the time of harvest a thanksgiving ceremony extols the power of Mother Corn. In the fall the Medicine Lodge Ceremony lasts 20 days. During this most sacred ceremony, the people fast, perform dances, give thanks for the harvest, seek the guidance of Mother Corn, and pray for a guardian spirit.

Marriage rituals are similar to those of the Hidatsa. When a young man wishes to marry a certain woman, his family sends an old man to the woman’s lodge to ask for the daughter. If the young woman’s family approves, exchanges of gifts follow. An invitation to the woman’s lodge establishes the union.

Care for the deceased is quite similar to that of the Mandan and Hidatsa, with one important exception: the Sahnish practice ground burial

since they come from the earth.

Unlike the Mandan and Hidatsa and like the Assiniboine, the Sahnish bands are a loose confederation with no overriding political structure. Each band has its own chief. Only in times of war do the bands cooperate to defend themselves or attack an enemy.

Since their villages are a two-day journey south of the Mandan and Hidatsa, the Sahnish encountered European traders as early as 1714 when Étienne Venyard, Sieur le Bourgmont, estimated 43 Sahnish villages. He reported that they were a very numerous people who were engaged in trading furs. Five years later Jean-Baptiste Bénard de la Harpe believed there to be 45 villages.

The sons of La Vérendrye, as in the case of their father, are searching for a waterway to the Pacific Ocean. They have just left the Little Cherry People, a Sahnish band, near the mouth of the Bad River. The brothers conclude: “These people are friendly and peaceful.”

SAHNISH COYOTE TALES TEACH MORAL LESSONS

Coyote tales are important aspects of Sahnish culture. The coyote is a cunning trickster whose adventures teach moral lessons. One day when Coyote was very hungry, he was walking along the bank of a creek with the qualities of a mirror. As he was looking for frogs to eat, he looked at the creek and saw another coyote. When he ran, the other coyote ran. When he leaned over, the other coyote leaned over. When Coyote peeked over the bank, so did the other coyote. Coyote became angry because he did not want to share his food. “You are hateful for following me like this,” Coyote said. As Coyote went along the bank of the creek, the other coyote did the same. Finally, full of rage, Coyote lunged at the other coyote, wanting to fight him. Angrily, Coyote jumped into the creek. Coyote did not know how to swim, so he drowned.

SIOUAN PEOPLE REFLECT DIVERSITY

LAKOTA RULE THE NORTHERN PLAINS

The Villages of the Oceti Sakowin The Year of 1750

They are commonly referred to as the Sioux. They call themselves the Oceti Sakowin, Siouan for Seven Campfires, representing the seven major bands of the Great Sioux Nation. Once each year representatives of the bands come together to hold council, socialize, and participate in religious rites. This meeting of the Great Sioux Nation takes place in “the heart of everything that is”—the Black Hills, the place, according to tradition, that gave birth to the People of the Oceti Sakowin. It is a serious mistake, however, to group all these Siouan-speaking people under one name or characterization, for the ways of life of the campfires differ considerably.

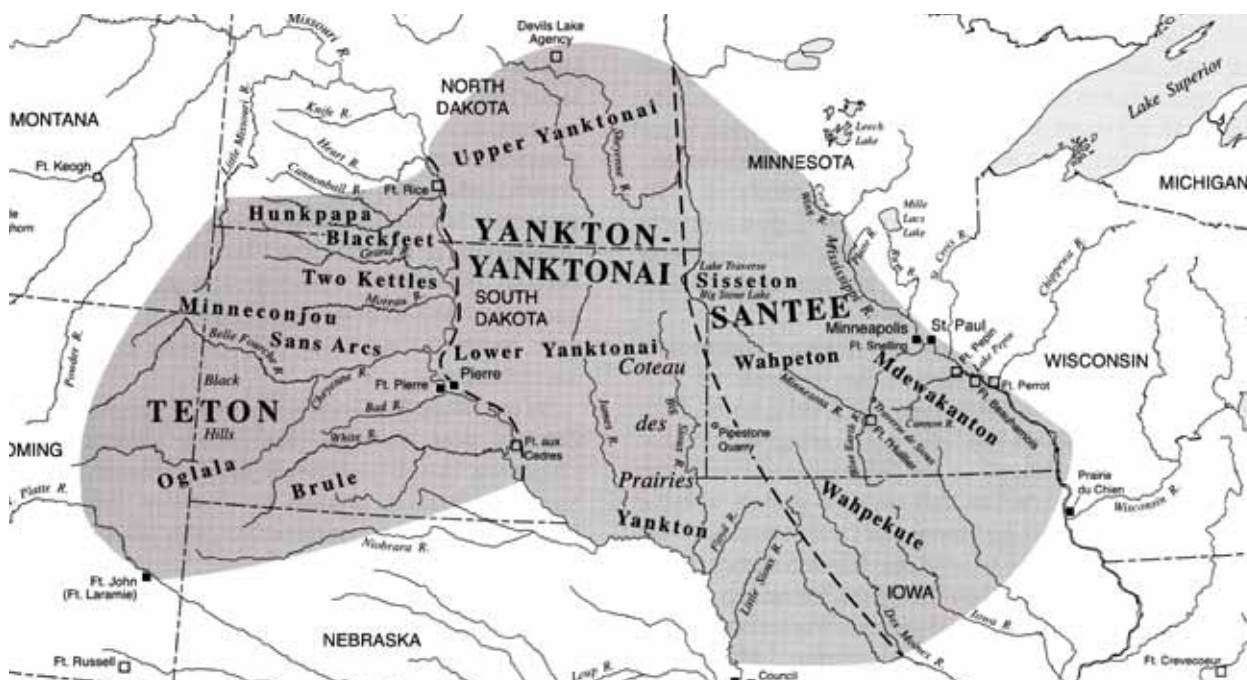
The Dakota, sometimes referred to as the Eastern Sioux or the Santee Sioux, live in the Mississippi and Minnesota river valleys and account for four of the seven campfires: the Mdewakanton (Spirit Lake People), the Wahpekute (Shooters Among The Leaves), the Wahpeton (Dwellers Among The Leaves), and the Sisseton (People Of The Swamp). To the west of the Dakota in the region of the James River Valley lie two campfires, the Yankton and the Yanktonai, sometimes known as the Nakota or the Middle Sioux. The Lakota, who populate the plains from the Platte to the Knife rivers, is the seventh campfire. Also known as the Teton Sioux or Western Sioux, the Lakota are comprised of seven bands: Oglala (They Scatter Their Own); Brule (Burnt Thighs); Miniconjou (Planters Beside The Water); Sans Arcs (Those Without Bows); Two Kettles (the Oohenonpa); Blackfeet (the Sihaspas); Hunkpapa (Campers At The Horn).

By the 1500s, the Oceti Sakowin inhabited the prairie and woods to the east of the plains. They could not avoid contact with the Ojibway who were moving toward the same territory south of Lake Superior. Tied closely to the French fur trade, the Ojibwa, armed with French guns, gradually pushed the Yankton, Yanktonai, and Lakota to the west. The Ojibway made peace with the 5,000 Dakota who stayed in the Mississippi and Minnesota river valleys.

The Dakota remain people of the woods. The Mdewakanton occupy seven villages along the Mississippi; the Wahpekute have a large single village on the Minnesota River not far upstream from where it empties into the Mississippi. The Wahpeton’s seven villages and the 12 of the



A Dakota summer village.



Sioux country about 1750.

Sisseton are to the west on the Minnesota River.

That the Dakota are people of the woods and water influences how they live. They construct permanent heavily-timbered bark houses with pitched roofs. Some live in small conical structures covered with skins and bark. Both men and women build the dwellings—sometimes referred to as wigwams. For food, the Dakota depend upon the lakes and rivers for fish and the woods for deer and small animals such as rabbits and muskrats. An annual early winter deer hunt usually brings enough meat to get through the winter. The Sisseton, the furthest west of the

Dakota, venture out into the open prairie to hunt buffalo. Some Dakota raise corn, squash, and pumpkins. Wild rice and cranberries are plentiful and maple sugar mixed with water provides a tasty hot drink. Dakota life reflects a typical woodlands culture.

The Yankton and Yanktonai lived together around Leech Lake prior to the late 1600s when the two campfires separated. The Yankton, about 3,000 people, moved out of the northern woodlands and onto the prairie country near the pipestone quarries. A hundred years later they have established themselves in the region of the



The Lakota following the buffalo.



Dakota woman and Assiniboine girl.



Lakota warrior.

lower James River Valley. The Yanktonai, with a population of about 6,000, left the woodlands in the early 1700s and have built permanent winter homes in the James River Valley to the north of the Yankton.

The two groups developed into mixed cultures; that is, they combine the ways of the woods with the realities of a new environment. They continue to live in permanent villages near water where fish are plentiful. Gone are the large quantities of deer, wild rice, maple sugar, and cranberries. In their place are large gardens and buffalo. Buffalo hunts take the Yanktonai north to Devils Lake, east to the Red River, and west to the Missouri River. The Yanktonai have adopted the earthlodge, probably learning the building technique from the Missouri Valley tribes.

The Lakota, the largest campfire with about 12,000 people, moved to the plains between the late 1600s and the mid-1700s. By the mid-1700s, the Lakota entered the sacred Black Hills, displacing the Cheyenne and Kiowa. As more and more bands reached the lower Missouri River, the Lakota pushed the Sahnish northward upriver toward the Mandan and Hidatsa villages.

Facing a new land, the Lakota have had to abandon their woodland ways and adjust to a completely different climate and terrain. Soft-soled moccasins, so comfortable in the woods, have been replaced by hard soles, more appropriate on the sun-baked plains. Total dependence upon the buffalo has forced radical change. The buffalo, so numerous that they look like a vast brown sea, have become the life blood for the Lakota, providing food; skins for clothing, shelter, and beading; bone tools; sinew for sewing; materials for making all kinds of containers including cooking pouches and spiritual objects. One cannot overstate the importance of the buffalo to sustaining Lakota life.

Because the buffalo herds migrate from place to place—sometimes hundreds of miles apart—so, too, do the Lakota. This has made permanent villages impossible; the tipi, a portable dwelling, has replaced the fixed wigwam. Village membership disappeared and has been replaced by smaller units called tiospaye—groups of related people. Each tiospaye is divided into camps that represent extended families. Because the Lakota have to travel, skin cookery has taken the place of breakable and heavy pottery. Because a tiospaye sometimes has to move suddenly, life is extremely well-organized and the closing down of a campsite can be done in a short time. The Lakota have acquired horses, making life much easier.

The Oceti Sakowin are people of the woodlands, people of the prairie, and people of the plains. Where they live has dictated how they live. Their bond of togetherness, however, is stronger than their separatism.

OCETI SAKOWIN SHARE COMMON BELIEFS WAKAN IS CENTRAL TO LIFE

The Villages of the Oceti Sakowin The Year of 1750

The members of the Oceti Sakowin hold similar spiritual beliefs and codes of life. The spiritual is a part of everyday activity. The people and all living things were created within Mother Earth. The universe is a great mystery that the people can never fully understand. This mystery is called Waken. Objects such as rocks, trees, and water have spiritual power—Waken. The Waken have power over everything on earth and control all of life. Waken Tanka is the great mystery who created all of life. At the same time Waken Tanka is the universe. If this is difficult to understand, it is supposed to be, for as Good Seat, an Oglala Lakota, explains, Waken is “anything that is hard to understand” and Waken Tanka is the “great incomprehensibility.” Or, as Black Elk simplifies it: “We know that we are related and are with all things of the heavens and earth, and we know that all things that move are a people as well.”

Of the many rituals that are part of spiritual life, the vision quest and the Sun Dance illustrate the people’s relationship to the Waken or Waken Tanka, their efforts to please the spirits and the great mystery.

The vision quest, a ritual shared by all the tribes of the plains and Missouri River Valley, is a way for men to seek guidance and gain favor of the Waken. After a purification ceremony in a sweat lodge, the young man goes away from the village or camp to a hill where, wearing only a breechcloth and with hair unbraided, he cries for a vision. He becomes the essence of humility. If possible, he stands on a bed of sage, the fragrance of which wards off evil spirits. The quest, carried on without food or water, can last several days. The vision gives the seeker a Waken quality that sets him apart from others. The gift of a vision is knowledge, power, and guidance.

The Sun Dance brings together the most important spiritual beliefs about themselves and the universe. It is held each year during the moon of the ripening of the chokecherries and lasts 12 days. The first four days are a festive time during which the campsite is prepared. During the next four days the holy men give special instructions to the participants and ready them for the ceremony. The final four days are the sacred days. On the first day a large circular dance arbor of poles covered with leafy boughs is erected in the center of the campsite. On this day the Buffalo Dance is held to bless the ceremony and to please the Waken. On the second day the enemy, as represented by a cottonwood tree, with great ceremony is found, with great festivity is chopped down, and with joyful singing and loud cheering is paraded to camp. After being painted (west side, red; north, blue; east, green; and south, yellow) the pole is raised in the middle of the dance lodge. Images of evil spirits are attached to the pole. Warriors conduct a war dance and shoot arrows at the evil spirits. At day’s end the holy men bless the site. The Sun Dance proper fills the last day—a day in which the dancers publicly demonstrate their selflessness by submitting to ceremonial capture, torture, and captivity. In this humiliating experience, the young men find spiritual strength and guidance—good has triumphed over evil and the Waken have been pleased.

Within the Oceti Sakowin each person is expected to seek four interdependent virtues: bravery, fortitude, generosity, and wisdom. The

virtue of bravery explains why the Oceti Sakowin, and especially the Lakota campfire, have been characterized as warrior societies. Men can only gain respect and honor through success in war and war-like activities. “It is better to die on the battlefield than to live to be old,” as one Lakota sums it up.

Fortitude implies two things: the endurance of physical discomfort and pain and the ability to show reserve during periods of stress. Fortitude is expected in battles, on the hunt, during the Sun Dance, at the time of a vision quest, and in everyday relationships. Day-to-day behavior has to demonstrate a quality of dignity. To show modesty and reserve is the heart of fortitude.

The bands of the Seven Campfires insist on generosity. The ownership of things is important only as a means to giving. Gift-giving is a part of everyday life. The young bring food to their elders’ tipis; hunters share



Lakota Bear Dance.

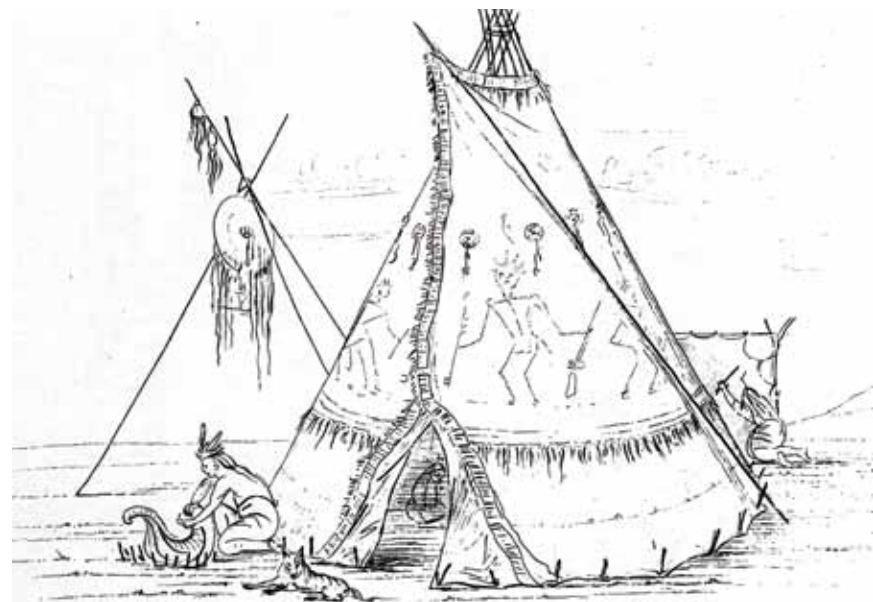


Lakota Chief's Scaffold Ceremony.

their kill with the aged and ill; women make gifts for orphans and widows. At death a man's personal property is buried with him and his best horse is killed. Distribution of material things takes place during one's lifetime, not after death. Many ceremonies involve gift-giving. In fact, people vie with one another over who can give the most and finest gifts.

Of the four virtues, wisdom is the most intangible. Wisdom is more than intellectual excellence. It involves the ability to advise others, to settle disputes, to instill confidence in others, and to explore the realms of the holy men. Those who achieve true wisdom are called Wicasa. They are the men who have the power of helping and who have demonstrated the highest degree of the other virtues. Small are the number of the Wicasa; few are they who gain true wisdom.

The Seven Campfires may be separated by a many-day journey, but in spirit they remain as one.



The tipi, the woman's domain.



THERE WERE MANY WAYS TO GET A BUFFALO



LAKOTA READY FOR CAMP HUNT **BUFFALO IS KEY TO SURVIVAL**

Lakota Camp Autumn 1775

The camp council has just decided that the time for the camp buffalo hunt has come and it has appointed the four akcita who will organize and lead the hunt. All at once the camp is buzzing with activity. The men are packing away their war equipment and are preparing their hunting weapons, the bows and arrows, and are overhauling their riding gear. The women are busy repairing tipis and wardrobes and are planning everything for packing and conveyance. The spiritual leaders are making medicines and performing ceremonies to assure a successful hunt.

The decision to begin the annual hunt has taken several days. The hunt must be planned for a time when grazing is good and the buffalo are likely to be fat. Four days ago a spiritual leader experienced a vision that was favorable to the hunt. The camp council then deliberated upon the questions of when to start, what route to go, what territory to hunt, and who should be appointed akcitas, the four men who have complete control over the hunt.

Camp will break tomorrow morning after breakfast. The akcita hope to travel 10 to 20 miles each day. Each night tipis will be raised near water. The hunting may take place as far away as 200 miles. When scouts notify the akcita that they are near a buffalo herd, the men will ride out for the hunt and the women will ready themselves for preparation of the meat and skins.

The buffalo hunt must be successful for the Lakota to survive the winter. The buffalo is their main food supply. Everyone must work together. When the meat is dried, the council decides whether there is a sufficient food supply for the year. If not, the Lakota will repeat the hunt. If so, the council will announce where winter camp will be. Although most people will stay with the camp, some may choose to leave until winter camp times.

ORAL TRADITION TELLS OF GREAT SHELL MEGIS LEADS PEOPLE WEST

With the Anishinabe Over Hundreds of Years

The Anishinabe, an Algonquian-speaking people, were living on the coast of a great salt ocean when Megis, a great seashell, rose to the water's surface and reflected the rays of the sun for a long time, giving warmth and light to the people. All at once it sank into the ocean and the people were without warmth and light. It appeared again on the great river which drains the waters of the great lakes and once again it provided warmth and light. Again, it disappeared until it surfaced on the shores of the first great lake and once more the Anishinabe basked in its reflecting glow. But Megis sank from sight, and death daily visited the people's wigwams. The rays of sunshine once more appeared at Boweting near Sault Ste. Marie where Megis remained for a long time. Once more it returned to the water, leaving the Anishinabe in darkness and misery. For the last time it rose from the water and gave off warmth and light at Moningwunakauning, also referred to as La Pointe Island or Madeline Island, just off the southern shore of Lake Superior. Here Megis forever remained, blessing the people with life and wisdom. According to tradition, its rays stretched out to the most remote villages of the Anishinabe.



No-Tin, an Ojibway Chief.

ANISHINABE SPLIT CAMPS OJIBWAY COME TO LIVE ON ISLAND

La Pointe Island Mid-1600s

The westward movement of the Anishinabe has taken several centuries. Numbering about 30,000 when these people reached the Straits of Mackinac, the tribe split into three divisions. The Potawatomi moved south to a place called Lower Michigan; the Ottawa made Manitoulin Island in Lake Huron their home. The Ojibway, sometimes spelled Ojibwa, continued northward to the Falls of St. Mary's River where most remained for about 200 years.

The chiefs decided to move further west for two reasons. First, the Iroquois, who were being pushed westward toward the Ojibway, kept attacking Ojibway villages that stood in their way. Although the Ojibway had defeated the Iroquois in several battles, this old enemy had become a nuisance. Second, the Ojibway needed to find a place where game was more plentiful. Approaching Lake Superior, the tribe split into two groups. One followed the north shore of Lake Superior. Most often referred to as Saultees, this group was the smaller of the two.

The main body of Ojibway, about 6,000 people, pressed its way along the southern shore of Lake Superior, facing periodic resistance from the Dakota Sioux into whose territory they were penetrating.

By 1500 the tribe had established itself on La Pointe Island, sometimes referred to as Madeline Island, not far off the southern coast of lake Superior. Here the Ojibway built their villages, developed extensive gardens, and caught all the fish they could eat. Since the Ojibway were moving into Dakota Sioux territory, the island provided a safe place. Several times, however, the Ojibway had to fight off Dakota raiding parties that canoed to the island on moonless nights.

The Ojibway became and remain closely tied to the French fur trade. The tribe provides the French with mostly beaver pelts in exchange for European items such as guns, gunpowder, knives, axes, and metal cookware. They are traders who in turn trade European goods to tribes to the west for horses, buffalo hides, and beadwork. The Ojibway have lived in relative peace on La Pointe Island for well over a hundred years.



An Ojibway encampment.

OJIBWAY LEAVE LA POINTE ISLAND BANDS GO THEIR OWN WAY

La Pointe Island The Year of 1700

Having secured guns and gunpowder from the French, the Ojibway have left the security of La Pointe Island for the mainland. The gun is their new security since the Dakota Sioux have not yet obtained the weapon. The many bands have gone their own ways and established villages as independent units. The Ojibway do not have the political unity that characterized the Oceti Sakowin.

The important division within a band and among bands is the totem—a large family known by a symbol taken from nature. Membership in a totem descends in the male line and marriage within a totem is forbidden. Therefore, a family might, and probably did, have members in more than one totem. The crane, catfish, bear, marten, wolf, and loon totems represent about 80 percent of all Ojibway.

The Pembina Band, the most western of the Ojibway bands, is led by Chief Weeshedamo. He and many of his people are of the crane totem, although the marten totem is also represented. They have been known to hunt buffalo as far west as the Red River. The title, Chippewa, has become the official government name for these people.



CREATION OF THE ANISHINABE WORLD

In spiritual matters all the totems accept the vision of Kitche Manitou, the Great Spirit, and the teachings and knowledge of the Midewewin. Kitche Manitou had a vision. In this he saw a vast sky filled with sun, moon, earth, and stars. He beheld an earth that was made of mountains, valleys, islands, lakes, plains, and woods. He saw trees, grasses, vegetables, and flowers. His vision included beings—walking, flying, crawling, and swimming. Kitche Manitou brought into existence what his vision had showed him.

Out of nothing he made rock, water, wind, and fire and breathed life into each, giving them a soul-spirit. From these substances he created the solar system; the face of the earth, and the beings of the earth: plants, animals, and, last of all, humans. Humans were the weakest in bodily power but were given the greatest gift—the power to dream. Kitche Manitou completed his vision by establishing the Great Laws of Nature which governed the workings of his creation so that all things would be in harmony.

But disaster destroyed this beautiful world. A great flood covered the earth for many generations and only the creatures of the water survived. High in the heavens lived a spirit woman, alone and sad. The water creatures felt sorry for her and persuaded a giant turtle to rescue her and let her use its back for an abode. This was done. She then

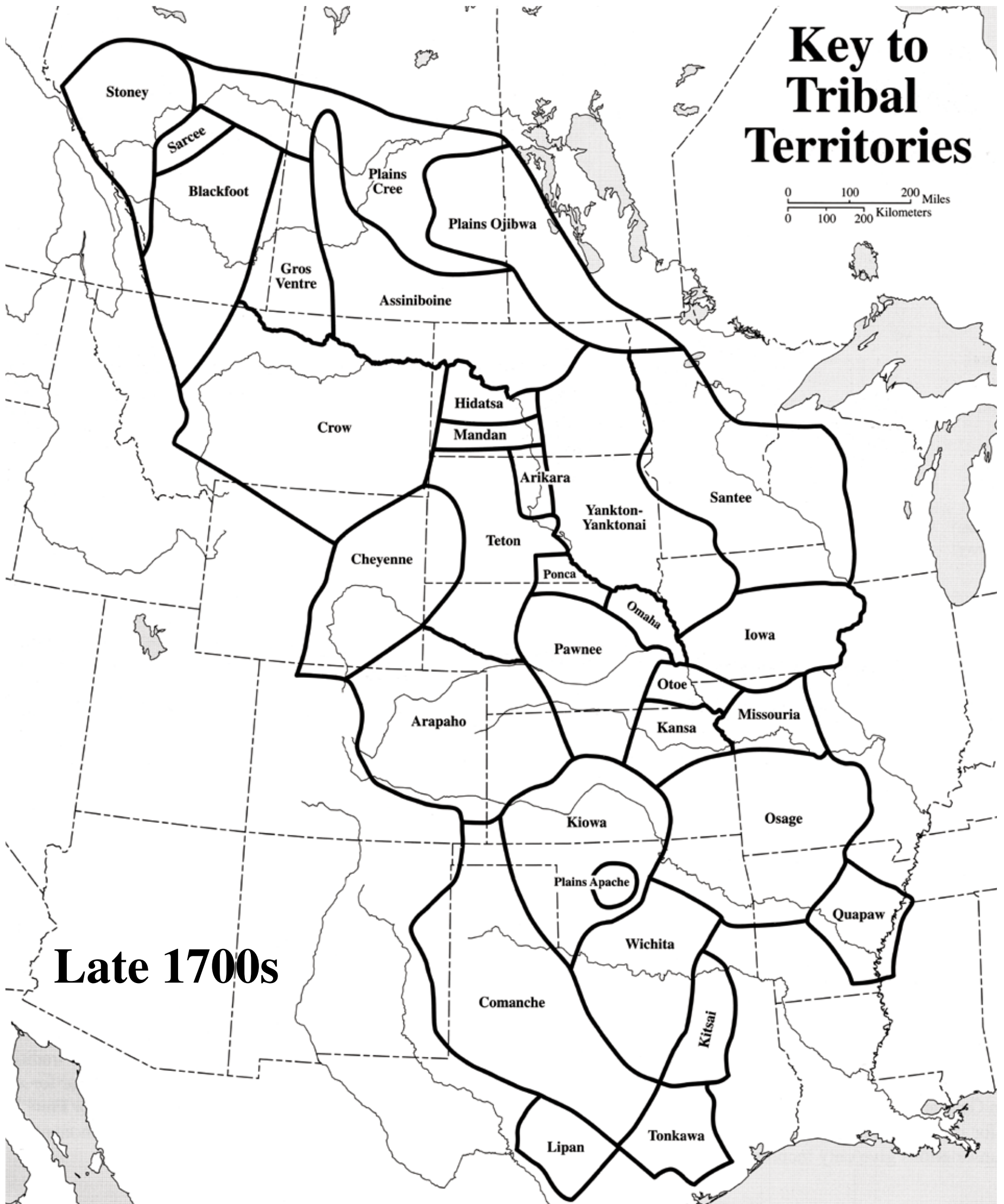
asked the water animals to dive to the bottom of the sea and bring up some soil. After several animals failed, a little muskrat succeeded. The spirit woman covered the turtle's back with soil which grew into an island. The turtle swam off but became the symbol of thought, given and received. So, from this island a new earth and its plant, animal, and human life merged. The cycle of creation, destruction, and recreation was complete. In this recreated world men would have to dream and receive visions—the way to find guidance and self-fulfillment.

To promote and sustain a good life, Kitche Manitou directed his people to perpetuate the knowledge of medicine and morality. The Midewewin, a society of medicine men and women, came to fulfill Kitche Manitou's command. Admission to the membership of the Midewewin and its lodge, the Midewigum, required a knowledge of healing plants, ceremonies, and a high moral character. Each new member had to go through at least four degrees of learning—each taking a year with a recognized teacher. Long life was the objective of this “medical society.” But it was concerned with more than physical healing; it developed a code for long life and wisdom: thank Kitche Manitou for his gifts, honor the elderly, honor women, honor promises, honor kindness through sharing gifts, be peaceful, be courageous, and be moderate in all things.



Key to Tribal Territories

0 100 200 Miles
0 100 200 Kilometers



Late 1700s

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT:

SMALLPOX 1775-1782

In late 1780 Domingo Cabello, the governor of Texas in San Antonio observed, “One does not hear or see anything day or night except the tolling of bells and the sight of burials.” In the far north, William Tomison, the Hudson’s Bay Company’s trader at Cumberland House, noted in his diary of December 1781, “Disagreeable news of so many Indians dying.” What was killing the people in Texas was killing the Indians in the far north: Variola major, better known as smallpox. Between 1775 and 1782 variola virus ravaged not only the plains but also places as distant from one another as Puget Sound on the Pacific Ocean to Boston on the Atlantic. To die of smallpox was a terrible death. “Ghastly” to use explorer Alexander Mackenzie’s description.

Contracting the disease to the appearance of symptoms took about 12 days. Then suddenly one’s temperature rose to as high as 106 degrees accompanied by debilitating backache, blinding headache, chills, nausea, convulsions, and often delirium. After four days of the awful condition, one experienced two days of relief and a sense that the bad days were over. Then all the symptoms returned with an explosion of pain. Red blotches appeared on the face and then spread over the body. Soon the blisters ripened into pus-filled sores; the face became a hideous mass of rotting flesh; the body turned into a giant oozing mass. The stench was unimaginable, the pain incredible. This terrible suffering could last as long as two weeks before death brought the final relief.

Smallpox was not a new disease, dating as early as 1500 BC in India. It spread, following trade routes and during wars for empire. By 410 AD, the highly contagious disease had killed several million people in the Roman Empire. Outbreaks of smallpox occurred periodically in European towns and cities. An epidemic swept through London in 1562; Queen Elizabeth caught a mild case. She survived but lived with a pox-marked face which she covered with thick white makeup. Louis XV did not survive the epidemic that engulfed Paris in 1774. His body was too rotten to be embalmed and was placed in a lead casket to stifle the odor. Even so, the stench was so severe that one of his pallbearers died of convulsive choking at the funeral.

Europeans carried the deadly virus to the New World, the Spaniards to Central and South America, the English and French to North America. In the East, smallpox plagued General George Washington’s revolutionary troops, killing nearly 1,000 and causing the general three weeks of illness.

It was, however, the Indian people of the plains who felt the full wrath of the disease. They had no immunity whatsoever from smallpox. The outbreak began in Mexico and worked its way north along trade routes. About 46,000 died throughout Mexico. It crept into Texas and New Mexico where over 5,000 Native people succumbed to the virus. The Comanche, who lost 5,000 to the pox, carried the virus into Crow territory where the smallpox killed about 3,400. The Crow spread the plague to the Ojibwa of which 3,500 died. The toll would have been much higher had not so many



Lakota been on buffalo hunts. Village residents were especially vulnerable. In all, 13,000 Mandan, Hidatsa, and Sahnish (Arikara) perished.

Ojibway oral tradition explains the northward spread of the virus. In 1781, a war party of the Cree, Assiniboine, and Ojibway attacked an Hidatsa village. They found lodges filled with dead bodies emitting a terrible odor. They took a large scalp anyway to prove their “success.” On the long journey home, warriors, one by one, became ill and died. Only four survived. In this way, the smallpox came to the Cree, Assiniboine, and Ojibway.

The Ojibway who had some immunity due to earlier contact with smallpox suffered 1,500 deaths. Variola brought havoc to the northern plains tribes: the Assiniboine, the Cree, and Chipewyans. Nearly 11,000 fell victim to the scourge. Trader Tomison believed that “not one in fifty” Assiniboine had lived through the ordeal and that of the plains Indians “one half were swept off.”

Saukamappee, a Cree, reflected the deep anguish that smallpox caused: “We believed the Great Spirit had forsaken us and allowed the Bad Spirit to become our Master. We moved about to find our people. It was no longer with the song and the dance, but with tears, shrieks, and howlings of despair for those who would never return to us.”

As he came upon one deserted village after another, explorer Alexander Mackenzie described smallpox’s death march across the plains: “This was the smallpox which spread its destructive and desolating power as the fire consumes the dry grass of the field.”

EUROPEANS TO THE UPPER MISSOURI

HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY, NORTH WEST COMPANY CONTROL TRADE

*Mandan Villages
Early 1790s*

Since 1781, fur traders of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company of Montreal have been making periodic trips to the Mandan and Hidatsa villages for beaver pelts. Although they know that the whole of Louisiana has belonged to Spain since 1762, they claim that the boundaries are fuzzy; furthermore, it is impossible for the Spaniards to govern Upper Louisiana from far-away St. Louis and New Orleans. René Jusseume of the North West Company has been so bold as to build a small trading post at the junction of the Missouri and Knife rivers. He even flies the English flag.

D' EGLISE REPORTS ILLEGAL ACTIVITY

*St. Louis
1792 and 1794*

Concerned about the illegal trade of the English and French in Upper Louisiana, Spanish authorities learned that such activity was indeed going on. After his 1792 trip up

the Missouri, Jacques D'Eglise reported that the Mandan and Hidatsa were in constant communication with traders out of Canada. Two years later D'Eglise returned from another foray up the Missouri with two former employees of the North West Company who confirmed D'Eglise's earlier report.

SPANIARDS SEEK CONTROL OF TRADE

September 23, 1796

Representing the newly organized Spanish company, the Commercial Company for the Discovery of the Nations of the Upper Missouri, usually referred to as the Missouri Company, John Evans has demolished Jusseume's post and warned the traders from Canada to quit their trade with the Mandan and Hidatsa. A Welshman, Evans was disappointed to discover that the Mandan were not the lost descendants of the Welsh hero Madoc who supposedly discovered the continent in 1170. Evans has taken extensive notes on and made detailed maps of the Missouri Valley. Reportedly, Jusseume unsuccessfully tried to murder Evans. The Missouri Company hopes to develop a profitable trade with the Indians of the Missouri.

THOMPSON URGES TRADE WITH NORTH WEST

*John McDonnell's House, Assiniboine
River
February 3, 1798*

David Thompson has returned from his November visit to the villages of the Mandan and Hidatsa. The 27-year-old Englishman, an employee of the North West Company, has made maps of the area he visited in the dead of winter.

The purpose of the trip was to establish the exact geographical location of the villages and to encourage the village people to trade with the North West Company. He estimates that ten Hidatsa and eight Mandan live in each earthlodge he counted: a total of about 2,000 Hidatsa and 1,500 Mandan. Thompson and his party bought 300 pounds of corn and other food, paying for the purchases with tobacco, soap, ammunition, and dogs.

Thompson was surprised to learn that there were so few horses. He also noticed that most gardening tools were made of the shoulder bones of the buffalo.

Obviously, the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company remain active in the region's fur trade. His final impression? "These great plains appear to be given by Providence to the Red Man for ever, as the woods and sands of Africa are given to the Arabians."

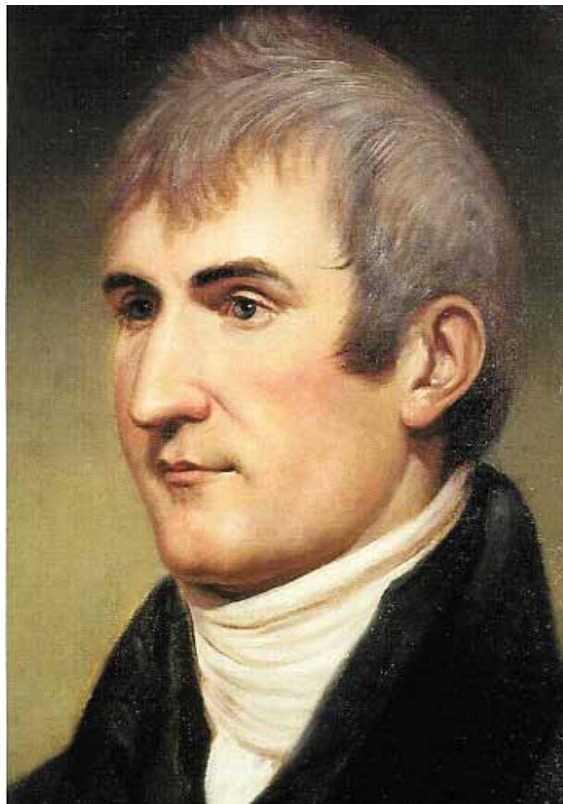


CORPS OF DISCOVERY WINTERS WITH THE MANDAN AND HIDATSA

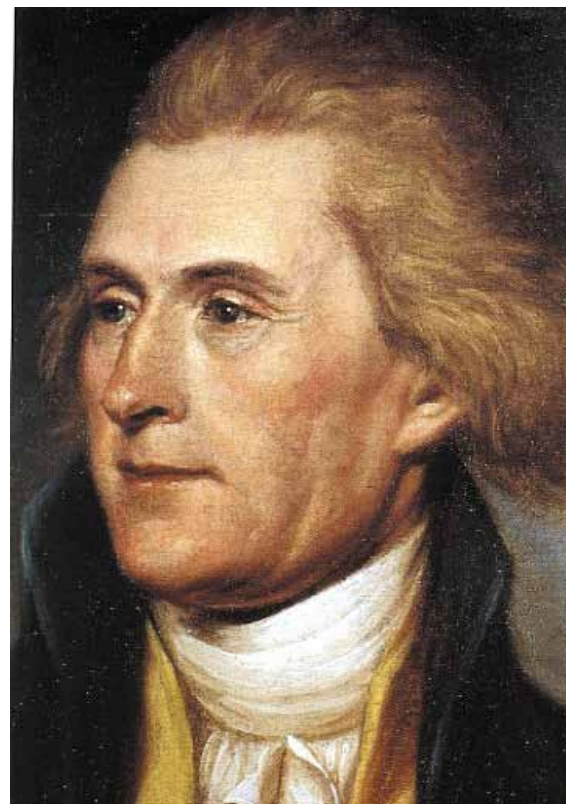
*Mandan Villages
April 1805*



William Clark



Meriwether Lewis



President Jefferson

Meriwether Lewis and William Clark and their crew are ready to head west after a hard winter. They received food and advice from the local Indian people which makes possible continuing the trip. They have packed their gear, and the Corps of Discovery is once again moving up the Missouri River.

The expedition arrived at the Mandan villages in late October 1804 and promptly built Fort Mandan. The fort has an outer wall built 18 feet high. The log wall is so strong it can withstand a shot from a cannon.

The Corps of Discovery found that winter on the Upper Missouri can be bitter. Lewis noted that the coldest temperatures reached 45 degrees below zero. It was so cold that some of the expedition's hard liquor froze solid in 15 minutes. Despite the cold, much has been learned. The Mandan have helped chart out the course of the Missouri River above the villages. The Indians believe that the river is navigable nearly to its source in the mountains. William Clark hopes that the river will lead them all the way to the Pacific Ocean.

Lewis and Clark hired an interpreter, Toussaint Charbonneau, a Frenchman who has been living at the Knife River villages. His young wife, Sakakawea, will be able to help the expedition when they pass through the lands of her tribe, the Shoshoni.

President Jefferson jumped at the chance to buy Louisiana from Napoleon who had secretly taken back the territory from Spain. He saw the need to explore the nation's new lands above the Mandan villages. There have been plenty of rumors about the new lands. Some believe that Louisiana contains a mountain of pure salt and cliffs made entirely of gemstones. Others think that unicorns live in the unknown lands along with beavers that are seven feet tall.

Captain Lewis, personal secretary to Thomas Jefferson, and Second Lieutenant William Clark were chosen to lead the Corps of Discovery. They carefully selected 30 men to accompany them. Some are soldiers; others are hunters, carpenters, boatmen, and blacksmiths. All are capable.

A keelboat, 60 feet long, served as the main transport up the Missouri River. Lewis and Clark outfitted the boat with swivel cannons for defense. In addition, Lewis ordered improved versions of the Kentucky rifle which has also proved most useful for hunting.

The expedition brought 21 bags of trade goods for the Indians. The presents bring good will and also show that the Americans will be good traders with the tribes.

The Corps of Discovery expects to find the source of the Missouri River. They will mark the Continental Divide as the western boundary of the Louisiana Territory. Lewis and Clark hope to reach the Pacific before next winter.

TRADER HENRY VISITS HIDATSA CHIEF LE BORGNE IS IMPRESSIVE

On the Knife River
1806

Alexander Henry, the North West Company trader at Pembina, has met the Hidatsa chief who thought that Lewis and Clark gave too many speeches when they were here last winter. On a visit to the villages with other North West Company traders, Henry is most impressed with the head chief called Le Borgne: “The man is upward of six feet high, stout but not in the least fat. He has lost the sight of his right eye, but the penetrating look from his left eye makes up for the lost eye.” Henry says that the chief is the oldest of five brothers and appears to be about 45 years of age.

Henry witnessed a peace arranged by Le Borgne with the Cheyenne, a tribe that sometimes goes to war with the village Hidatsa and Mandan. Henry was able to visit with the chief at the Cheyenne camp. Le Borgne greeted him warmly and ordered his women to prepare food immediately.

Henry learned much about the nomadic tribes of the West from Le Borgne, who told him that the Cheyenne, the Pawnee, and the Arapahoe traded with Spaniards.

The peace arranged by Le Borgne almost was broken on the same day when a group of Assiniboine, traditional enemies of the Cheyenne, arrived at the camp where the Cheyenne were celebrating with the village people. The Cheyenne wanted to kill the Assiniboine, who demanded protection from their friends, the Mandan and Hidatsa. Le Borgne managed to get the Assiniboine safely into his tent. The next day, he adopted a Cheyenne son in a ceremony in which he used an American flag given to him by Lewis and Clark.

Even so, the Cheyenne seemed ready to fight as the village people packed up to return home, but Le Borgne simply stood up to them and managed to leave without incident. He told Henry that there were too many women and children with the group to risk a fight, but that he would have fought if necessary.

During his visit Henry learned that Lewis and Clark had reached the Pacific and were expected



Hidatsa Village

to be in the Mandan and Hidatsa villages within a month.

Henry notes that Le Borgne had at first refused presents offered by the Americans because, in his words: “We were disgusted at the high-sounding language of the captains. They will not entertain the idea that any race is superior to their own.” Henry believes that “if the United States ever attempts to reduce the Hidatsa by force, they will meet with more resistance than they may be now aware.”

Henry finds Le Borgne to be a most pleasant man, one who “smiled even when matters did not please him—but it was a ghastly grin.”

Henry also met René Jusseaume at the village where he lives with his Indian wife and children. According to Henry: “He appears a Christian, but he will try every mean, dirty trick the Mandan have learned from the scoundrels who visit these parts.”

Henry had a successful trip. He was fortunate, he said, to have the services of an old Irishman, Hugh McCracken, who had guided David Thompson to the Mandan. “I found him at the trading post at the Souris and Assiniboine rivers. Thompson had reported him dead, but here he was, alive and ready to show me the way!”

Le Borgne is skeptical about the American traders, especially Lewis and Clark, who came with little trade goods. Moreover, he found the white visitors far too confident that their way of life was better than his. He found this unacceptable.

CORPS OF DISCOVERY RETURNS CLARK PRAISES SAKAKAWEA

*Mandan and Hidatsa Villages
August 14-17, 1806*



Upon return to St. Louis, Clark strikes a more formal pose.



Upon return to St. Louis, Lewis shows off his frontier garb.

The Lewis and Clark party has returned to the villages on the Knife and Missouri after a successful trip to the Pacific Ocean. Lewis arrived wounded. He has a bullet hole in his thigh. Peter Cruzatte, one of the expedition's best hunters in spite of being blind in one eye and nearsighted in the other, mistook Lewis for an elk and shot him.

Clark said that he met two trappers headed for the Yellowstone River to trap. This means that the West is open. Upon reaching the villages, one member of the group, John Colter, asked for and received permission to join the two trappers. Colter is not ready to go back to civilization. "I will just be lonely in St. Louis," he says.

Lewis explains that his party had to kill two Piegans of the Blackfoot confederacy in an encounter on the Marias River while he was separated from Clark's party. The two leaders had split up to explore different areas on the way home. They joined up a couple of days before reaching the Mandan and Hidatsa villages.

The encounter with the Piegan was the only incident which resulted in the death of Indians during the entire journey.

Charbonneau, his wife Sakakawea, and their son Baptiste, also called Pompey, left the expedition at the Mandan and Hidatsa villages. Clark offered to take the young boy, who had traveled all the way to the Pacific and back to St. Louis to educate him, but Charbonneau decided his son was too young. Clark expects Charbonneau and Sakakawea to bring the boy to him later. Charbonneau was paid \$500.33 for his work as guide.

Clark especially praised Sakakawea. According to the captain, the young woman saved important documents when a boat overturned. She was very helpful when the Corps reached her people, the Shoshoni. United there with her brother, Sakakawea won the hearts of everyone.

Eager to get back to St. Louis, the group does not plan to spend much time with the village peoples on the Knife. They do hope to convince some of the leaders to return with them to Washington, D.C. to meet President Jefferson. Not many are interested. Most are very concerned about the safety of the group, which has to pass through Lakota country on the way home.

Mandan Chief Sheheke, also known as Big White, has agreed to make the trip on the condition that René Jusseume can come along as an interpreter. The expedition leaders have agreed. Jusseume can take his wife and two children, but Big White will be allowed to take only one of his wives and her child.

Clark tried very hard to convince Le Borgne to make the trip. The Hidatsa leader came to the encampment to hear what the Americans had to say. Clark gave Le Borgne perhaps the most expensive gift given to any Indian leader during the entire expedition—one of the swivel guns from a keelboat.

Clark hopes to convince the village peoples that the Americans can bring peace to the area, but Le Borgne is not impressed. Through interpreter Jusseume, he let Clark know that he was better at making peace than the white explorers. He told them about his successful, if only temporary, peace with the Cheyenne.

Lewis and Clark had both hoped that the demands that they made for peace among all the Native peoples living on the Missouri would be followed. Le Borgne told them that peace was easier to talk about than to bring to pass.

Although somewhat concerned about the enemies of his people that he may encounter on the trip with Lewis and Clark, Sheheke is willing to make the trip. He hopes to regain some of the power his Mandan people in the area had before smallpox made them so weak. Le Borgne still does not trust the whites.

RIVALRY MARKS RED RIVER FUR TRADE

DICKSON HOPES FOR LARGE PROFIT

*Montreal, Lower Canada
1787*

The merchants of Montreal have succeeded in forming the North West Company of fur traders. This company will compete for furs with the Hudson's Bay Company.

The North West Company is made up of Scottish merchants in Montreal and French-Canadian and mixed-blood agents in the forests and plains. The agents, or "pedlars," will build new trading posts and trade directly with the Indian people.

The main competition of the new company is the older Hudson's Bay Company. The area that drains into Hudson Bay, including the Red River, is the protected trading area for the Hudson's Bay Company. The Indians bring their furs to the company post at York Factory. The King of England has granted a monopoly to the Hudson's Bay Company. The North West Company does not have a royal charter to do business.

The North West Company agent assigned to the Minnesota River territory is Robert Dickson. This year he has hauled trade goods by canoe for dealing with the Dakota people of the prairies. He is presently at Lake Traverse, the headwaters of the Red River, which runs north to Hudson's Bay. There he plans to trade his goods for furs. The Lake Traverse area is a common camp ground of the Yanktonai, and he will not be far from the Sisseton and Wahpeton Dakota who hunt the region. Dickson believes that the trade will be profitable for his company.

CHABOILLEZ REAPS BEAVER HARVEST

*Pembina
May 17, 1798*

Charles Jean Baptiste Chaboillez has bid farewell to his small post located where the Pembina River flows into the Red River. Since he arrived in



Fort Pembina. Note the Métis ox carts.

September 1797 he has, with the help of his 22 French workers and the Pembina Band of Chippewa, had a very active and profitable season. A successful trader with the North West Company, he is the first to see the lucrative possibilities of that area of the Pembina, Park, Turtle, Goose, and Forest rivers. He arrived with a wide variety of trade items: 17 bales of dry goods, four cases of iron goods, 11 bales of tobacco, two bales of tin and copper kettles, beaver traps, two cases of guns and ammunition, 30 kegs of rum, and a wide assortment of beads and ornaments.

What skins has he gained in the trade? 1,785 beaver, 23 bear, 27 elk, 98 buffalo, 46 wolf, 11 moose, 24 deer, 12 fox, 7 marten, 3 otter, 8

raccoon, and 3 mink. The journey east to Grand Portage will take his several canoes on the usual route: the Red River to Lake Winnipeg, the Winnipeg River to the Lake of the Woods, and Rainy Lake and River to the east. With many portages, the trip will take nearly 50 days. Chaboillez, who is 60 years old, doubts that he will return for another season.

HENRY ESTABLISHES PEMBINA POST

*Pembina
1800*

Alexander Henry of the North West Company has set up a trading post not far from Chaboillez's

abandoned post. "It is very difficult getting here with goods," says Henry. His eight canoes held 28 90-pound packs of goods which contained corn, grease, tobacco, guns, gunpowder, lard, flour, sugar, and rum. He is in the process of building a stockaded post with a storehouse, stable, and small whitewashed houses. Henry plans to contract for beaver pelts with the 50 Chippewa and Métis families who live around the post. He will provide his trappers with goods worth 20 beaver skins and will send them out each fall.

PEMBINA FUR TRADE EBBS

*Pembina
1808*

This year Alexander Henry's trappers could provide only 60 packs of fur. In the 1804-1805 season his posts brought in 2,736 beaver pelts which equaled 144 packs. This year only 696 pelts were transported east. Disease and overtrapping are blamed for this decline. Stiff, sometimes ruthless, competition with the Hudson's Bay Company added to Henry's woes. He believes that the days of the fur trade in the Red River region are numbered.

INTERVIEW WITH ALEXANDER HENRY IN HIS OWN WORDS

What do the native people think of the white traders? Well, they have come to depend upon the trade goods. They call them their "necessaries." But I know that they despise us in their hearts.

Why do they despise you? They have good reason. They now totally neglect their ancient customs. We have destroyed both mind and body with that pernicious article, rum.

Are Indian people here worse off since you have come? Yes, I think that I have to admit this. We are not, of course, responsible for all the misery in this area. War with the Sioux people, the Dakota tribes, was going on before I got here. Just this year, 300 Yankton warriors killed ten Chippewa on the Tongue River, including my wife's parents. But we are responsible for the murders caused by liquor.

How do you spend your time here at Fort Pembina? I love to hunt, and I'm very good at it. We amuse ourselves by waiting for buffalo to come and drink at the river. When the poor brutes come within ten yards, we fire with 25 guns, kill and wound many. We take only the tongues. I read, write in my journal, and spend time with my wife and children and the 50 or 60 Chippewa who live here at the fort. I like to watch my wife and the other women slide down the hill to the river. Naturally, I have had to spend a great deal of time taking care of the problems caused by liquor. I do find time to garden. We grow great quantities of potatoes as well as cabbage, carrots, onions, and turnips.

WILDERNESS PRIEST: SÉVÈRE DUMOULIN

A PROFILE

On September 13, 1818, Father Sévère Dumoulin arrived at Pembina to begin his ministry to several hundred Métis and Indian people who resided there. At age 25, he had been ordained the previous year. Bishop Joseph Octave Plessis of Quebec sent him along with Father Norbert Provencher and seminary student William Edge to the Church's westernmost missionary field. Provencher founded his mission at Saint Boniface; Edge accompanied Dumoulin to set up a school.

Dumoulin's instructions were clear. His primary task was "to reclaim from barbarism the Indian nations scattered over that vast country." He was also to baptize "infidel women," make marriages "legitimate," and minister to "delinquent Christians who are living licentiously."

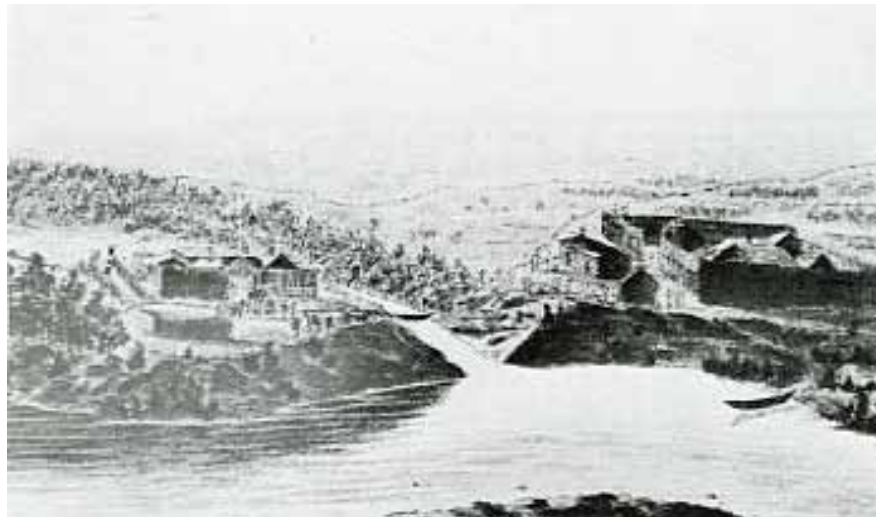
Quite early on he complained about his situation. Grasshoppers plagued the settlement; catfish from the Red River became a steady diet. "Nothing but religion could make me continue to remain here," he wrote shortly after his arrival. On second thought, however, the young priest admitted, "I am not as unhappy as I thought I should be." He did fear that he did not possess "apostolic zeal."

In the fall of 1818 his attitude was upbeat in his letter to Bishop Plessis. Dumoulin reported that the Indians and Métis were "willing for instruction" and that the Métis "show much intelligence." He proudly boasted, "Already a big transformation has taken place." The priest, however, recognized early the insidious influence of alcohol on the people: "The great and almost the sole obstacle that we have found to stand in the way of teaching and even of civilizing the Indians is liquor; it is the unfortunate custom to intoxicate the natives whenever one wants to get something out of them."

The inexperienced cleric found the lack of guidance troublesome. Communication with his bishop in Quebec was tenuous at best. Dumoulin's letters would normally go east with the canoes in the fall. A response from the bishop, if all went well, could arrive at Pembina with the spring coming of the trappers. Often all did not go well; a response from Quebec sometimes took a whole year. The priest's letters held as many as 15 questions in his search for guidance. For examples, ought one baptize inveterate drunkards? Is it acceptable to say Mass in moccasins? Is it alright to marry Catholics to Protestants? Is it permissible to eat food in a home if that food was traded for rum? May I baptize Protestant children without a pledge to be raised as Roman Catholics? May I offer communion to one who carries rum to Indians but does not dispense it?

In spite of the lack of advice, 1819 was a successful year. Mr. Edge had 60

in his school. Father Dumoulin oversaw the building of a presbytery, a store, and a chapel; he generally preached to 300 and had baptized 52 since his arrival. During Lent he conducted Mass every day for about 150 people. And, he maintained a sense of humor: "Tomorrow we celebrate Palm Sunday, or rather Oak Sunday, for there is neither olive, nor fir, but only hardwood. I suppose its branches will do just as well."



Pembina about 1823.

Bishop Plessis required Father Dumoulin to go on evangelizing trips to outposts on Rainy Lake and Hudson's Bay. At Rainy Lake he baptized 36 adults. Hudson's Bay was a disappointment. He baptized only six because, in his words, "the employees are young men still at the height of their passions." He was not able to "arrest the progress of evil." He was certain that "Canadians especially are given to sin."

During 1821 Dumoulin began to show the stress of a wilderness priesthood. "It is hard to be at once priest, missionary, building overseer, and clerk to obtain food and pay the men," he wrote in January. By August, "I feel my strength waning." Yet, he still found satisfaction in his ministry: "Sixty adults baptized at Pembina!" he informed his bishop. "That is one of the rewards that sustain the zeal of missionaries in their arduous task." He was pleased that he had gotten a few Chippewa to plant gardens, even though Indians had shot at him twice.

The tension between Great Britain and the United States over boundary locations was unsettling to Dumoulin and the Pembina settlement. A treaty of 1818 placed the boundary at the 49th parallel, but no one knew its specific location. In 1823 an army expedition led by Major Stephen H. Long located the boundary. The Pembina settlement, except for one cabin, lay in American territory.

Even before that, Father Dumoulin had become extremely discouraged. In August 1822 he reported "very little progress" to his bishop and concluded, "I hope the first light canoe will bring me the good news that I may return to my home and loved ones." Two months later he had not changed his mind, "The longer I remain the more I desire to give it up."

On July 10, 1823, the light canoes arrived and Father Dumoulin left the wilderness behind. His last report described the Pembina situation as the "most wretched condition imaginable," but that "the cross of Christ has been shown to the Indians." While at Pembina the young priest had baptized 394, married 68, and buried 49. From 1825 until his death in 1853 he served as parish priest of Saint Ann at Yamachiche not far from Quebec.

WHO ARE THE MÉTIS?

In French, Métis means half-breed. Beginning in the 17th century French traders began to marry women of the Cree and Ojibway (Chippewa) tribes. The children of these unions are referred to as Métis. The Métis became closely associated with the fur trade, especially in the Red River region. They invented the Red River oxcart. Made solely of wood the carts became an invaluable vehicle for transporting buffalo robes from the annual hunt and for carrying goods to and from St. Paul. About 400 Métis lived in the neighborhood of Pembina.

THE UPPER MISSOURI FUR TRADE



John Jacob Astor

AMERICAN FUR COMPANY FOUNDED MILLIONAIRE ASTOR ENTERS TRADE

*New York City
September 1808*

John Jacob Astor, who is already worth millions earned as a fur broker and international trader, mostly with China, has just returned to New York City after an appointment in Washington City with President Thomas Jefferson and members of his cabinet. At the meeting Astor laid out his plan to establish a chain of fur posts along the trail opened up by the Lewis and Clark expedition. He informed the president that he had incorporated the American Fur Company to achieve his goal. He hoped that Jefferson would give his operation official government approval.

Jefferson knew that the German-born Astor, who had come to America in 1784 at age 21, was a very successful and respected businessman. The president was especially interested in Astor's plan because an American presence in the West would warn the British to keep off American soil. Astor's company would carry the American flag into the wilderness.



Manuel Lisa

The president told Astor that the government "would do what it could do," but did not grant an official blessing to the plan. Although disappointed, Astor will go forward with his vision for the West. To this point he has been a broker who depended upon others to provide his furs. That is now a thing of the past. Astor will organize his own company with hundreds of employees. He enters a highly competitive business facing the cutthroat aggressiveness of the Hudson's Bay Company, the North West Company of Montreal, and several small American companies.

LISA LED MISSOURI TRADE PIONEERED NEW WAYS

*St. Louis
November 1815*

Around St. Louis, Manuel Lisa is considered to be one of the smartest operators in the fur business. This reputation is well deserved. He was the first to open up fur operations on the Upper Missouri--just a half year after the Corps of Discovery returned from its long journey.

In the spring of 1807 he set out from St. Louis for the Yellowstone River with two huge keelboats loaded with 20 tons of goods. It was slow

going for Lisa and his crew of 60 men. By early October the Lisa expedition reached the confluence of the Yellowstone and Bighorn rivers. There he erected a trading post which became known as Fort Lisa or, more commonly, Fort Manuel.

Lisa has been very successful. In part dependent upon Indian people as a fur source, he has maintained a respect for his Indian customers. He tells the North Star Dakotan: "I appear as a benefactor, not a pillager, of the Indian. My blacksmiths work incessantly for them, charging nothing. I lend them traps. My establishments are the refuge of the weak, and of the old men no longer able to follow their lodges; and by these means I have acquired the confidence and friendship of the natives and the consequent choice of their trade."

Lisa, however, understood that he could not depend solely on Indian barter for his furs. He came up with an innovative idea: he would employ his own trappers to bring in the beavers. His trappers were furnished with everything needed to live and work in the wilderness. Lisa also gave each of his trappers a share of the profits that the pelts brought in St. Louis.

In the summer of 1808 Lisa returned to St. Louis where the pelts sold for \$4 each. His success encouraged several local businessmen, including William Clark, to join him in the organization of the Missouri Fur Company. Trapping was excellent for 1808 and 1810. That year two of Lisa's partners established a post much further west where the Jefferson, Madison, and Gallatin rivers empty into the Missouri. They were certain that this new territory would yield as many as 24,000 pelts annually. But, disaster struck. Blackfeet Indians killed several of the company's trappers, forcing the company to retreat.

Currently, Lisa is serving as a government agent among the Siouan

people. The fortunes of the Missouri Fur Company have recently declined dramatically due to strong competition and Native hostility. The recently concluded war with England which began in 1812 severely interrupted the fur trade.

ASTOR ABSORBS COLUMBIA FUR COMPANY

*New York City
July 1827*

John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company has merged with his most serious competition, the Columbia Fur Company. Joseph Renville, a former British trader on the Red River, organized the Columbia Fur Company in 1821 when he lost his job due to the merger of the Hudson's Bay and North West companies. Kenneth McKenzie and William Laidlaw, both experienced fur traders, joined the new outfit. Its field of operations concentrated on the territory between the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. Renville's company established small posts along the Missouri and maintained its principle post near Lake Traverse. As part of the agreement with Astor, the Columbia Fur Company has withdrawn from the regions of the Great Lakes and Upper Mississippi and become the Upper Missouri Outfit, replacing the American Fur Company's Western Department. The absorption of the Columbia Fur Company has provided Astor with exceptionally qualified traders to run his Upper Missouri operations.

ASTOR HAS PROFITABLE YEAR

*St. Louis
September 1830*

The American Fur Company has concluded a very successful and profitable year. According to company officials, its fur post at Fort Pierre has shipped to the Missouri city: 25,000 buffalo robes,



The St. Louis waterfront.

250,000 pounds of beaver pelts, 37,500 muskrat skins, 4,000 otter skins, and 150,000 deer hides. The company is in the process of establishing two new posts upriver, one near the Mandan and the other at the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers.

HUGE PROFITS REPORTED

St. Louis
1830

Reports from this city place the total profits of the western fur trade for the last fifteen years at \$1,650,000. The primary sources for this profit have been 375,000 beaver pelts and 390,000 buffalo skins. It is estimated that St. Louis merchants make between \$200,000 and \$300,000 annually.



Kenneth McKenzie

CONGRESS BANS LIQUOR IN INDIAN COUNTRY

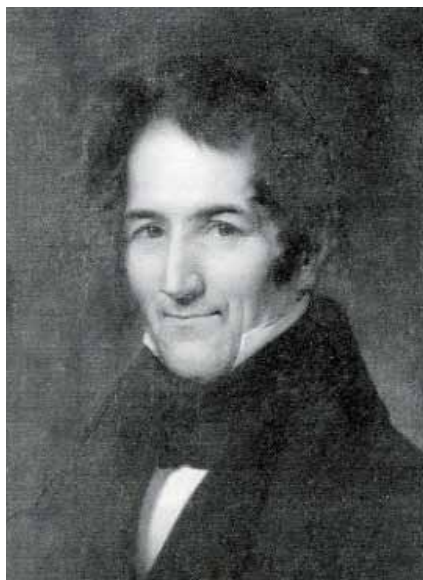
Washington City
April 23, 1832

Congress has enacted legislation that bans the transportation of liquor into Indian country. Fur trading companies have used alcohol as a trade item for decades to the detriment of Indian people.

FORT UNION FLOURISHES

Fort Union
Summer 1833

Fort Union, under the experienced supervision of Kenneth McKenzie and the watchful eye of general



Pierre Chouteau

manager Pierre Chouteau has established itself as the most important trading post on the Upper Missouri. McKenzie has been most eager to control the fur trade westward into the mountains. In the fall of 1829 workmen, mostly French Canadians, began construction of the large post. In early 1830, 120 men completed the basic building, although alterations have been made since then.

Fort Union is the most successful post in the West. That is due largely to the efforts of McKenzie. He has cultivated the trust of the nearby Assiniboine and Cree and has moved the post's reach toward the mountains. He early sent Etienne Provost west to woo the Rocky Mountain trappers into bringing their beaver pelts to Fort Union. A surprise to everyone, McKenzie was able to make peace with the Blackfeet who have killed more than their share of traders and trappers. Two years ago in 1831 he sent a former Hudson's Bay Company employee who knew their language and culture to convince the tribe to trade with Fort Union. He succeeded.

McKenzie sent James Kipp to build a small post in Blackfeet country. Within ten days Kipp had traded for 2,400 beaver pelts. Fort McKenzie has become the trading center for the Blackfeet.

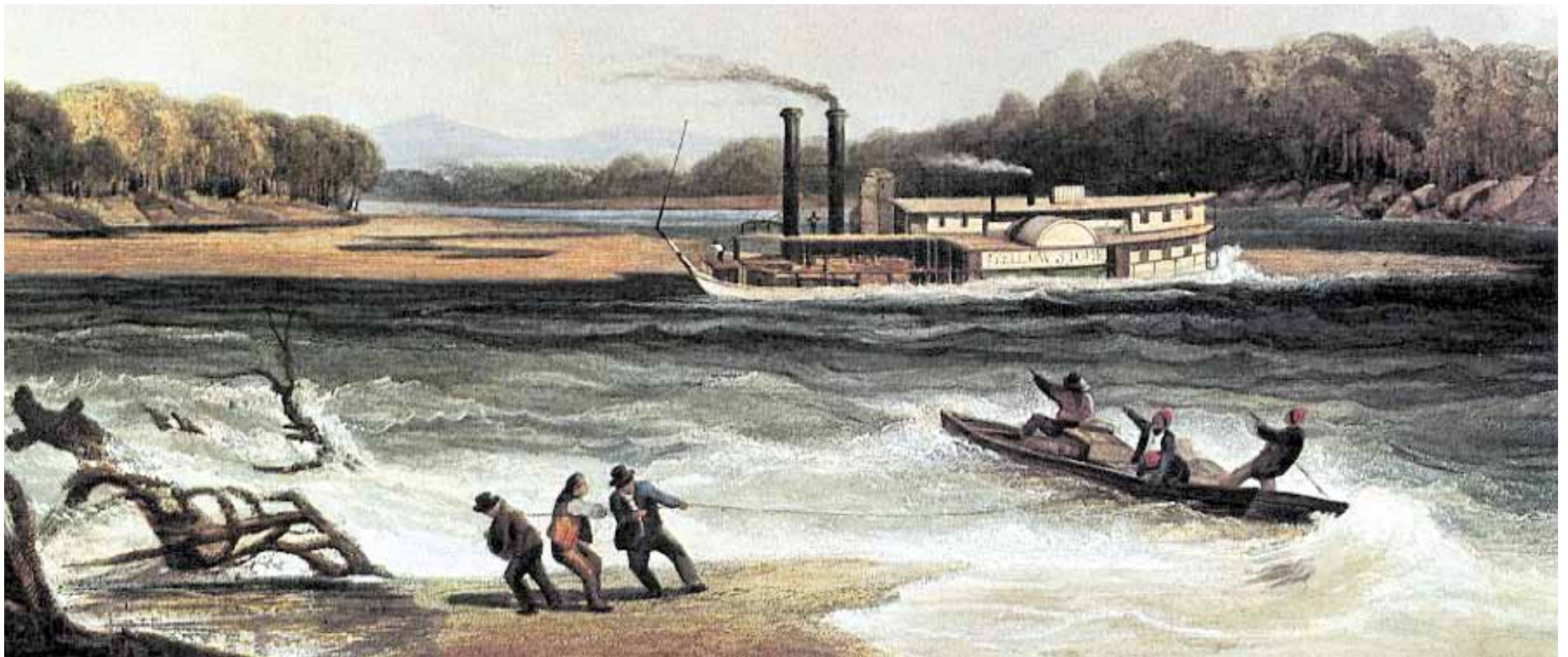
Fort Union's position in the trade

has been greatly advanced with the company's investment in steamboats for the Missouri. This June the Yellow Stone, which can carry 144 tons of freight, proved that steamboat transportation the Missouri is possible. It covered the 1,760 miles from St. Louis to Fort Union in just 80 days. The outmoded keelboats could travel only 12 miles per day. Each spring when the water is highest, a boat will leave St. Louis with goods for a year's trade--blankets and cloth (red or blue preferred), guns, powder and lead, tobacco, knives, flints, and kettles. For one season the company delivered 6,000 pairs of French blankets, 300 guns, and 300 dozen butcher knives. The boat would return with the harvest of beaver pelts and buffalo robes. From St. Louis the furs and robes are shipped via New Orleans to New York City where Astor sells some and ships some to Europe, mostly London, and to China. Fort Union has become part of international trade.

CONGRESS: "NO LIQUOR FOR INDIANS" MCKENZIE: "TRY AND STOP ME"

Fort Union
March 18, 1834

Kenneth McKenzie has argued that the use of liquor in the trade is essential to the survival of western



The American Fur Company's Steamboat, the Yellowstone.

fur companies. He points out that the Hudson's Bay Company uses rum in its trade and fears that Indian people will abandon America for Canada.

Just before the ban went into effect, the Yellowstone had taken 1,500 gallons up river. Arguing that he had not yet received orders, William Clark, Superintendent of Indian Affairs in St. Louis, allowed another shipment of 1,072 gallons. None of it arrived at Fort Union. During an inspection at Leavenworth, soldiers read the captain the new law and confiscated the illegal alcohol.

McKenzie was furious, but he had a plan to outwit the government. He purchased distillery equipment and began making his own alcohol. The law, he believed, prohibited the importation, not the distilling of alcohol on the premises.

In late December 1833 he gleefully told his boss, Pierre Chouteau, "Our manufactory flourishes. The quality is fine." Chouteau, who claimed he knew nothing about the distillery, was not pleased. He feared that the company could lose its trading license. With fast talk and Washington connections Chouteau saved the company's license. McKenzie is livid. His men are currently dismantling his still. He

will have to depend on smuggling.

UNION KILLS OFF "THE OPPOSITION"

Fort Union April 1834

William Sublette and Robert Campbell formed a partnership and decided to challenge the American Fur Company and its Fort Union post. Their scheme was grandiose—build a series of competing posts up and down the Missouri Valley. The first was Fort William, just three miles from Fort Union, striking at the heart of Astor's business empire.

By Christmas the small post was in business. Campbell hired Charles Larpenteur, a veteran of the fur trade, to run the operation. Campbell, supplied with a large quantity of illegal liquor, hoped to take the Indian trade away from Fort Union.

Kenneth McKenzie was furious. Supplied with huge stocks of alcohol, he was determined to crush the opposition upstarts. Campbell discovered that McKenzie, who had the deserved title "King of the Upper Missouri," had placed a spy in Fort William. Sources report that Campbell complained to government officials that

"McKenzie gives as much whiskey as the Indians can drink for nothing. Barrel after barrel he sends all around amongst the Indians."

Campbell had underestimated McKenzie. He was heard to have said only two weeks in to the business, "I can safely say as unhappy a time as this I have never before passed during my life." Over at Fort Union, at about the same time, McKenzie was overheard to have said, "The new company is in bad odor and must sink."

McKenzie is enjoying the game of squashing the competition. He is utterly disappointed at the news he received today from St. Louis; Pierre Chouteau has bought out Campbell and Sublette. McKenzie is certain that his method would have been less expensive.

ASTOR SELLS FUR BUSINESS

New York City June 1, 1834

John Jacob Astor has sold the business that enhanced his fortune many-fold. The 71-year-old multimillionaire announced today that the American Fur Company has new owners. The company has been split into two business

units. Ramsey Crooks, who has been a valued confidante of Astor, heads a group that has purchased the northern department which covers the Great Lakes and adjacent territory. Pratt, Chouteau and Company has bought the western department known as the Upper Missouri Outfit. This involves key posts: Pierre, Clark, and Union. The wealthy St. Louis merchant Pierre Chouteau will head the company. The purchase price was \$400,000.

The shrewd Astor is certain that the time for the sales is right. On his European travels he observed that silk was replacing fur as the desired fashion. In London he noticed that rabbit skin, much less expensive than beaver, was increasingly being used in the manufacture of felt.

The growing suspicion that pelts are responsible for the spread of cholera accelerated Astor's exit from the fur trade. His son William, who has taken over management of fur operations, is elated that he will no longer oversee such an unpredictable and complex business.

The senior Astor has had a unique sense of timing. He withdrew from the China tea trade just months before that market collapsed. He most certainly agrees with Sullivan's Journal that just this month told



Fur store advertisement.

its readers: “It appears that the fur trade must henceforth decline.”

CHARDON ASSIGNED TO FORT CLARK

*Fort Clark
June 19, 1834*

Frances A. Chardon has been named bourgeois (manager) of the American Fur Company’s post on the Missouri not far from the Knife River and near a large Mandan village of about 1,000 residents.

Chardon, a native of Philadelphia, came west after the War of 1812 and lived among the Osage. In 1827 he began his employment with the Upper Missouri Outfit; he was in charge of building a fur post at the confluence of the Poplar and Milk rivers. After establishing Fort Jackson, he took over his duties at Fort Clark.

The post was completed in the spring of 1831 under the supervision of another trader from the former Columbia Fur Company—James Kipp. A master carpenter from Montreal, he built several posts for his company.

To build a trading post about halfway between Fort Pierre downstream and Fort Union upstream was a logical decision for the American Fur Company. It would serve the nearby 1,000 Mandan and be strategically situated for trade.

UNION OUSTS MORTIMER

*St. Louis
Spring 1845*

Fort Union’s profits remained high enough—especially in buffalo robes—to lure another competitor into its immediate location. In 1842 the Union Fur Company and Fox, Livingston and Company opened Fort Mortimer near where Fort William had been built—unfortunately too close to the Yellowstone River. Its sudden rise in the spring of 1844 caused the post’s occupants extreme anxiety as a collapsing bank almost ended the post’s activity. Later, the companies rebuilt the fort out of adobe, a unique construction material for the

Upper Missouri country. Neither wood nor adobe, however, has made a difference in the fortunes of Fort Mortimer. McKenzie would have enjoyed squashing the opposition, but he has retired. This time the task fell to Alexander Culbertson. The Mortimer folks, like the Fort Williamites before them, could not survive in a contest with the Upper Missouri Outfit of Fort Union. Culbertson received word today that Pierre Chouteau bought out the opposition.

FORT UNION REPORTS PROFIT

*Fort Union
1854*

An estimate places the cost of building Fort Union at \$40,000.

Profits quickly justified the building investment. By mid-1832 sales included 8,000 buffalo robes, 4,603 pounds of beaver pelts—a value of about \$42,000. Net profit soon reached \$134,800. As the availability of beaver waned, buffalo robe business has boomed: 1835, 22,000; 1836, 30,000; 1837, 43,000.

Each spring one of the company’s several steamboats brings an inventory of goods usually worth about \$20,000 for trading. This year’s profit is about \$44,000. This is considerably less than fifteen years ago, but company officials claim that the post remains a solid investment and the West’s leading fur center.



Fort Clark to the left. Mandan Village to the right.

GAUCHE: THE CRAFTY ASSINIBOINE CHIEF

A PROFILE

The Gens du Gauche became a primary fur source for the American Fur Company which built wintering houses not far from Fort Union for the band. Until 1800 the band, named for its chief, Gauche, lived in British territory where it traded with the Hudson's Bay Company. As a child Gauche had contracted smallpox, but survived the illness.

What we know about this Assiniboine chief comes from oral tradition and the observations of fur traders. From all accounts Gauche was an extraordinary person--to some, evil; to some, sacred. According to Edwin Thompson Denig, an employee of the American Fur Company for many years, as a young man Gauche secretly poisoned several of his tribal enemies and then predicted their deaths. This made the tribal people believe that Gauche was empowered with the gift of prophecy.

Soon he became chief. Denig concludes that Gauche "was more feared for his supposed supernatural powers than any other Indian of modern times." To achieve the total respect of his people, however, he needed to prove his bravery in battle, a difficult task since close friends believed that he was a coward. He introduced a new approach to battle. He fashioned a hollow log into a drum which was etched with drawings of monsters that had been revealed to Gauche in dreams. When assured of a skirmish victory, he led his warriors, intoning the magic of his drum. He carried no weapon, but did make sure that he rode a very fast horse. Gauche often positioned himself on a hill that overlooked the place of battle. From here he conducted medicine ceremonies to assure success for his warriors. Denig maintains that in a case of reversal "he hastily packed up his drum and pipe, mounted his swift horse, and was the first to fly."

In a fight with a Gros Ventre war party, however, Gauche earned legitimate respect. The Gros Ventre were traditional enemies whose territory abutted that of the Assiniboine to the west. (These were not the Hidatsa who were sometimes referred to Gros Ventre.) Seeing that the Assiniboine chief was unarmed, a Gros Ventre warrior attacked him with a knife. Gauche, a large and strong man, wrestled the enemy to the ground, sustaining minor cuts. The knife, however, now belonged



Assiniboine encampment at Fort Union.

to Gauche who buried it in the attacker's chest, killing him. This act of bravery earned Gauche the title of He Who Holds the Knife, thus enhancing his position within his band and all the Assiniboine people.

The intensity of Assiniboine hatred for the Gros Ventre is demonstrated when Gauche led about 1,000 men against a Gros Ventre camp of 125 to 150 people. Since the men were on a hunt, only a few were in camp to protect the women and children. The Assiniboine killed all but two. Gros Ventre oral tradition (passed down by one of the boys who escaped) holds that some of his people were roasted alive like pigs over a fire.

The smallpox scourge of 1837 killed about half of the Assiniboine. About 200 had been vaccinated by the Hudson's Bay Company; Gauche, of course, was immune since he had had the disease as a child. He had heard that the virus had killed most of the Mandan and developed a scheme to travel to the Mandan villages under the guise of peace but really intending to loot the lodges and take the horses. He was certain that 60 men would be sufficient for the task. It wasn't. During

the day-long peace pipe ceremony which took place some distance from the village, the Mandan became suspicious of Gauche's motives and dispatched a runner to seek the help of the Arikara. When Gauche saw Arikara warriors on the horizon, he gave the signal to flee. He lost about 20 men as the Mandan and Arikara pursued.

Charles Larpenteur who worked for William Sublette and Robert Campbell at Fort William, the short-lived trading post near Fort Union, remembered Gauche as an unpredictable rascal. Word came that the Assiniboine were on their way to Fort Union to trade 200 buffalo robes. There the American flag was raised and the cannon loaded to give Gauche a salute. Fort Union officials went out to greet Gauche who had always traded at the "Big Fort." Larpenteur arrived just in time to hear Gauche rebuff the Fort Union interpreter with, "If your great chief had sent any other but you I would have gone to him, but I don't go with the biggest liar in the country." With that, the Assiniboine marched with Larpenteur to Fort William for a night of intense bargaining and wild celebration. The clever Gauche always struck his bargain before celebrating.

CATLIN VISITS UPPER MISSOURI PAINTINGS CAPTURE INDIAN LIFE

Fort Union 1832

When George Catlin, age 36, headed for Fort Union in 1832 on the steamer Yellow Stone, he carried with him the equipment of an artist and a passion for painting and understanding the Indian way of life. He has forsaken the practice of law and now dedicates his time to establishing an Indian Gallery. The self-taught artist has already painted many Indian people in the East.

He spent 1830 and 1831 in the vicinity of St. Louis. With the assistance of William Clark, he traveled the Lower Missouri and the Upper Mississippi Valley, painting as many Indians and their environs as time would allow. He jumped at the opportunity to journey to the Upper Missouri.

From his quarters at Fort Union and later Fort Clark, Catlin has painted and sketched at a feverish pace: Indian portraits, everyday life, and the landscape. From his art work, Americans will visualize the people of the Upper Missouri. Just as important, however, are his written observations which will be published in two volumes. The books will provide a detailed account of Indian life. His Indian Gallery exhibitions are scheduled for London and Paris.



George Catlin's self-portrait of himself at work.

GEORGE CATLIN IN HIS OWN WORDS

The several tribes of Indians inhabiting the regions of the Upper Missouri are undoubtedly the finest looking, best equipped, and most beautifully costumed of any on the continent. They are the most independent and the happiest races of Indians I have met with: They are all entirely in the state of primitive wildness and consequently are picturesque and handsome, almost beyond description. Nothing in the world, of its kind, can possibly surpass in beauty and grace, some of their games and amusements.

MAXIMILIAN, BODMER HEAD HOME UPPER MISSOURI MISSION COMPLETED

Boston
July 16, 1834

Prince Alexander Philipp Maximilian Wied-Neuweid pursued a career in the natural sciences. He studied at the leading German universities and possesses an exceptional knowledge of geology, botany, and zoology. He joined two other German scientists in a two-year exploration of Brazil's coastal forests. The publication of a book on his Brazilian experience establishes Maximilian's reputation as a naturalist and an ethnologist.

His next challenge?
The Upper Missouri.
This time he wanted
an exceptional artist to
document the Indian
people and their lives.
He contracted with



Karl Bodmer (far right) and Prince Maximilian arrive at Fort Clark.

Karl Bodmer, an experienced and professionally trained Swiss painter. On July 4, 1832, the 52-year-old prince, the 24-year-old artist, and Prince Maximilian's assistant landed in Boston. The following spring the three arrived in St. Louis and on April 10, 1833, they began their journey upriver on an American Fur Company's steamboat. They traveled as far west as Fort McKenzie, stayed at Fort Union, and wintered at Fort Clark. Thirteen months later on May 27, 1834, Maximilian and Bodmer landed back in St. Louis, and on July 16 they, along with artifacts and two caged bears, sailed for Europe.

Bodmer's paintings and sketches present the world with an exceptional view of the Indian people and their ways of living. Maximilian plans to publish his detailed account of the journey. His published observations will give the world an accurate view of Indian life on the Upper Missouri.

MAXIMILIAN IN HIS OWN WORDS

Aboard the steamship , June 24, 1833

About ten o'clock we had an alarm of fire on board: The upper deck had been set on fire by the iron pipe of the chimney of the great cabin. By breaking up the deck, the danger was soon over; which, however, was not inconsiderable, as we had many barrels of gunpowder on board. We had scarcely got over this trouble when another arose; the current of the swollen river was so strong and the high west wind was against us. Both together threw the vessel back three times. The first shock was so violent that the lower deck gallery was broken to pieces. Our second shock: Part of the paddle box was broken and carried away by the current. We were now obliged to land 40 men to tow the vessel. Two days later, in the 75th day of our journey, we reached Fort Union.

At Fort Union, August 17, 1833

Wild beasts and other animals whose skins are valuable in the fur trade have already diminished greatly in number along the river, and it is said that in another ten years the fur trade will be inconsiderable. As the supplies along the banks of the Missouri decreased, the Company gradually extended the circle of their trading posts and thus increased their income. Above 500 of their agents are in the forts of the Upper Missouri, and at their various trading posts.

At Fort Clark, November 12, 1833

I requested Mr. McKenzie to provide us winter residence at Fort Clark in order more closely to study the Indian tribes in the neighborhood. The order unfortunately came too late. As our lodging has not been habitable for some time, Mr. Kipp received us in the small apartment which he himself inhabited with his family. The stores of the fort were well filled; there were goods to the value of 15,000 dollars, and in the loft from 600 to 800 bushels of maize, which a great number of Norway rats assiduously labored to reduce.

Ready to leave Fort Clark, April 14, 1834

*At the beginning of April I was so very ill that the people who visited me did not think that my life would be prolonged at the most, four days. I was advised to take a recipe of *Allium reticulatum*, a small white flower gathered by Indian children. I ate a quantity of them. I gained strength daily, and we carried on the preparations for our departure.*

SMALLPOX RAVAGES UPPER MISSOURI INDIANS ONLY 125 MANDAN HAVE SURVIVED

Fort Clark Spring 1837

On April 17, 1837, the American Fur Company's St. Peter's, under the captaincy of Bernard Pratt, departed the St. Louis waterfront to begin its two-months-long journey to Fort Union. The steamboat was crammed with freight, mostly Indian rations and fort supplies, and a crush of people, mostly fur-trade workers and Indian agents. Twelve days upriver, a deckhand began to complain of severe back pain and a blinding headache accompanied by a high fever. A few days later William Fulkerson, agent for the Mandan, warned Captain Pratt that the deckhand had smallpox and that the deckhand, not yet contagious, should be put ashore to prevent the spread of the virus. Pratt refused. When pus-filled sores began to cover the deckhand's body, it was too late to act; contagious for the last 16 days of the virus's 30-day cycle, he was spreading smallpox to all corners of the boat. Several other passengers fell ill.

When the St. Peter's docked at Fort Bellevue near Council Bluffs on May 14, the deckhand was highly contagious as three Arikara women and their children boarded the boat for Fort Clark near the Mandan villages. They, too, contracted the dreadful disease. On June 5, the St. Peter's arrived at Fort Pierre; the Arikara were deathly ill; the deckhand had fully recovered; others were shedding their scabs. By the time the steamboat reached Fort Clark in Mandan country on June 19, everyone on board had recovered or were recovering. No one had died, but the virus remained active in the air and on clothing. The St. Peter's had brought a cargo of death to the Mandan.

Smallpox again ravaged the Mandan. Only 125 of 1,800 have survived the ordeal! Death among the other tribes is not quite as severe. About half of the Hidatsa, Assiniboine, and Arikara have perished. Among the Mandan dead is tribal chief Mahto-To-Pe, known to whites as Four Bears. With his wife and children dead beside him, the friend of whites now blamed those whites for the calamity that had struck down his people. The peaceful man was now full of hatred. With his last breaths he urged Indian people to rise up and kill white people.



FOUR BEARS' DYING DECLARATION

*My friends one and all,
listen to what I have to say.
Ever since I can remember, I
have loved the whites. I have
lived with them ever since I
was a boy, and to the best of
my knowledge, I have never
wronged the white man; on
the contrary, I have always
protected them from the insults
of others, which they cannot
deny. The Four Bears never
saw a white man hungry, but
what he gave him to eat, drink,
and a Buffalo skin to sleep on
in time of need. I was always
ready to die for them, which
they cannot deny. I have done
everything that a red skin could
do for them, and how have they
repaid it? With ingratitude! I*



Four Bears

*have never called a white man a Dog, but today, I do pronounce them to be a set
of black-hearted Dogs. They have deceived me; them that I always considered
brother have turned out to be my worst enemies. I have been in many battles, and
often wounded, but the wounds of my enemies I exalt in, but today I am wounded,
and by whom, by those same white Dogs that I have always considered, and
treated as Brothers. I do not fear Death, my friends. You know it, but to die with
my face rotten, that even the wolves will shrink with horror at meeting me, and
say to themselves, that is the Four Bears, the friend of the White. Listen well
what I have to say, as it will be the last time you will hear me. Think of your
wives, children, brothers, sisters, friends, and in fact all that you hold dear, are
all dead, or dying, with their faces all rotten caused by those dogs the whites,
think of all that, my friends, and rise up all together and not leave one of them
alive. The Four Bears will act his part.*





Maxidiwiac in her garden.

HIDATSA RELOCATE MAXIDIWIAC RECALLS MOVE

Like-A-Fishhook Village 1845

Because of declining population due to smallpox, the Hidatsa have moved north on the Missouri. The tribe chose a hooked bend on the river where the people are in the process of building earthlodges and planting gardens. The remaining Mandan and Sanish (Arikara) will join the Hidatsa.

Maxidiwiac, also known as Waheenee or Buffalo Bird Woman, is a member of her mother's clan, the Prairie Chicken clan. She was just a young girl when her people moved north, but she remembers well that dramatic time: "Enemies gave our people much trouble after the smallpox years. So my people decided to move our village north, up to the Missouri River. We were told by the spirit people that we must always move north on the Missouri River."

Maxidiwiac emphasizes that her people will keep their old ways: "My grandmother made sure that she had her bag of seed for the new garden. When we got to our new site, the first thing my grandmother did was to pick a place for a garden. Even before building the new earthlodge, she planted the seeds she had brought with her."

The Hidatsa hope that they have moved far enough north out of the reach of the Lakota Sioux.

FORT LARAMIE TREATY SEEKS PEACE

Fort Laramie September 17, 1851

On July 31, 1851, Father Pierre Jean De Smet left Fort Union in the company of 31 Indian representatives for Fort Laramie and the great council of Indian people. Father De Smet, a Jesuit priest, is well known through the West as a protector of Indian people; they trust him more than any other white man.

He and the delegation of Assiniboine, Hidatsa, Mandan, Crow, and Arikara completed their 800-mile journey in time to participate in this great council. Here are almost 10,000 Indian people representing all the plains and plateau tribes.

Hoping to open up passage to the Far West through Indian country and to promote civilization of the Indians, the federal government has brought together this great council for treaty making. Today, most of the tribes accepted the terms of what has been called the Fort Laramie Treaty. The Treaty has the following major provisions. The Indian tribes agreed to cease hostilities among themselves, to allow the government to build roads and forts in Indian territory, to accept detailed boundaries for each tribe. In return the United States promised to protect the Indians from white depredations and to pay annuities of \$50,000 a year for 50 years. The annuities are to be paid in farm implements, domestic animals, and provisions.



Fort Laramie

David Mitchell, who has negotiated on behalf of the government, believes that the treaty will save the Indians: "Humanity calls loudly for some interposition on the part of the American government to save, if possible, some portion of these ill-fated tribes, and this can only be done by furnishing them the means, and gradually turning their attention to agriculture." Father De Smet views the treaty in a positive light: "The treaty is a commencement of a new era for the Indians, an era of peace."

NORTH DAKOTA

900

Mandan on Upper Missouri

1500

Awatixa to Upper Missouri
Ojibway on Lake Superior island
Oceti Sakowin east of Mississippi River

1610

Assiniboine near Lake of Woods

1650

Main Hidatsa to Upper Missouri

1700

Ojibway move to mainland

1738

La Vérendrye visits Mandan

1750

Lakota onto the plains and Black Hills

1775-1782

Smallpox epidemic

1792-1796

Spaniards control Missouri Valley

1803

Jefferson buys Louisiana

1804-1806

Lewis and Clark Expedition

1800-1808

Alexander Henry's Pembina post

1807

Manuel Lisa opens Upper Missouri trade

1820s

American Fur Company dominates trade

1830

Fort Union trade center opens

1831

Fort Clark trade center opens

1832

George Catlin visits Upper Missouri

1833-1834

Prince Maximilian and Bodmer visit Upper Missouri

1834

Astor sells American Fur Company

1837

Smallpox epidemic; Four Bears dies

1840s

Hidatsa move to Like-A-Fishhook Village

1851

Fort Laramie treaty

NEW WORLD, COLONIAL AMERICA, THE UNITED STATES

900

Mayans settle Yucatan peninsula

1500

Columbus completed three voyages
Cabral discovers Brazil
John Cabot explores North American coast

1610

Jamestown Colony in third year

1650

Harvard College receives royal charter

1700

Paper manufacturing begins

1738

Religious Great Awakening begins

1750

First theater opens in New York

1775-1783

American Revolution

1796

Washington retires; Adams elected president

1803

Fulton propels a boat with steam power

1804-1806

Thomas Jefferson is president

1800-1808

Washington City becomes capital; 2,464 free, 623 slaves

1807

Relations with Great Britain deteriorate

1820s

"Era of Good Feeling" after War of 1812

1830

Joseph Smith founds Mormonism

1831

Nat Turner leads Virginia slave revolt

1832

Andrew Jackson reelected president

1833-1834

Whig Party organizes

1834

McCormack patents his reaper

1837

Mount Holyoke Female Seminary opens

1840

War with Mexico gives U.S. California and the Southwest

1851

Baseball gains popularity

WORLD

900

Vikings discover Greenland

1500

Lead pencil invented (England)
First caesarean operation (Switzerland)
The Pope plans crusade against the Turks

1610

Shakespeare writes "A Winter's Tale"

1650

World population at 500 million

1700

The commode becomes popular

1738

First cuckoo clocks manufactured

1750

European population approximately 140 million

1775-1792

Mozart dominates European music

1796

Jenner perfects smallpox vaccination

1803

Napoleon leads France against England

1804-1806

Modern Egypt established

1800-1808

Napoleon crowned emperor

1807

France at war with most European countries

1820s

Populations (in millions): France 30.4, Germany 26

1830

Serbia is independent country

1831

Great cholera pandemic in Europe

1832

The word "socialism" first used in England

1833-1834

Charles Dickens begins writing career

1834

Southern Australia open to colonization

1837

Victoria becomes queen of Great Britain

1840s

Marx and Engels issue "Communist Manifesto"

1851

Populations (in millions): China 430, Germany 34, Great Britain 20.8, U.S. 23