

AWAKENING INTERNALIST ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE ABORIGINAL WORLD

BY

ELDON CARLYLE YELLOWHORN

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Résumé

Les peuples autochtones commencent à mieux percevoir les potentialités que peut offrir l'archéologie dans l'étude de leur histoire. Toutefois, il n'existe présentement aucune assise théorique qui puisse guider les recherches des communautés qui veulent utiliser les méthodes archéologiques mais qui, en même temps, rejettent les tenants théoriques de cette discipline qui s'est développée en dehors du monde autochtone. Les recherches archéologiques portant sur les peuples autochtones ont traditionnellement suivi les codes idéologiques et esthétiques de la société dominante sans attention particulière aux connaissances et à la pensée de ces peuples dont les ancêtres ont pourtant produit les cultures étudiées. La perspective que nous proposons tente de remédier à cette situation en insistant sur l'importance de développer de l'intérieur des approches théoriques et méthodologiques qui permettront aux peuples autochtones de se réapproprier leur histoire. Au Canada, la relation des Premières Nations avec l'archéologie a longtemps été conflictuelle mais des changements positifs se sont amorcés au cours de la dernière décennie. Il y a définitivement un intérêt croissant pour les recherches archéologiques et même certains y voient des possibilités de carrière. Il s'agit de se servir des méthodes pour mieux saisir l'histoire locale, pour évaluer les impacts de projets de développement sur l'environnement et pour sauvegarder des sites importants. Mais il faut dépasser ce cadre et s'engager dans le chemin de l'interprétation et cela à partir de notre propre héritage et de notre propre vision du monde. L'interprétation des données archéologiques doit se baser sur un examen des traditions orales comme sources d'explication car chacune porte en elle une version de l'histoire. Les mythes sont aussi des réservoirs importants d'explication. Parce que ceux-ci, transmis de génération en génération, lient divers niveaux d'abstraction de la pensée et soutient des visions du monde, il est important de découvrir les messages qui y sont codés et de développer des méthodes qui permettent d'identifier leur signification dans les données archéologiques. Il est tout aussi important de comprendre le vécu dans l'explication du passé récent, une méthode que permet une interprétation plus compréhensive des changements dans les communautés dans la période historique. Notre propos, en montrant l'importance dans l'interprétation de données du sens du passé et de l'expérience telle que conçue et vécue est de réconcilier archéologie et savior autochtone. Cette thèse est donc un pas dans une démarche de définition de paramètres pour l'archéologie dans le contexte autochtone. Elle se veut un guide pratique pour imaginer le passé à partir d'une perspective interne tenant compte de la façon dont les érudits autochtones interprétaient, de leurs propres points de vue culturels, le passé archéologiques. Dans la mesure où les autochtones ont développé des visions uniques de l'histoire, en dehors de la pensée archéologique occidentale, celles-ci révèlent une compréhension du monde étroitement liée à des concepts élaborés dans le passé. Notre propos est aussi de montrer la signification de symboles anciens dans la construction d'une identité autochtone contemporaine et de souligner l'importance d'une compréhension moderne des traditions anciennes. En présentant cette approche que valorise une vision de l'intérieur, je m'appuie sur ma compréhension des traditions de mon peuple, les Blackfoot de l'intérieur du Canada, sur mon expérience étendue en archéologie à la fois comme chercheur indépendant et comme consultant, et aussi sur mon expérience dans le milieu académique. Des documents ethnographiques et historiques reflétant les points de vue autochtones du passé et les interprétations des données archéologiques sont utilisés afin d'illustrer la nature et le rôle du savoir autochtone. Dans le cadre de l'approche proposée, il est évident que l'environnement culturel des chercheurs autochtones exercera une certaine influence tant sur les objectifs de recherche que sur les interprétations. Toutefois, le but ultime de notre engagement en archéologie est d'éclairer des processus de développement des cultures autochtones et, conséquemment, de proposer des théories qui rendront mieux compte de la réalité autochtone. Il est essentiel pour les peuples autochtones de réclamer un rôle en archéologie non seulement pour réconcilier la pensée autochtone avec l'archéologie mais aussi pour contribuer au développement de cette discipline.

Abstract

The aboriginal world is awakening to the possibilities that appear with researching their ancient history using the methods of archaeology. Presently, there is no standard theoretical programme to guide aboriginal people when they implement archaeology's methods but reject its current theories. Archaeology originated in the mainstream and failed to count Indian people as part of its constituency. Antiquity was produced, packaged and presented for the larger society, with little consideration for the people whose ancestors produced it. Internalist archaeology works to remedy that situation and one of its highest priorities becomes filling the theoretical vacuum that exists. It draws on cultural traditions to motivate field work. It begins by appropriating the methods of archaeology to study local history, to assess the impacts of terrain-altering developments, or to rescue sites that are in some manner endangered, but it continues from there to explanation. Interpreting the archaeological record from an internalist perspective begins with examining oral traditions as sources of explanation because these store their own versions of ancient history. However, its broader goals include proposing theories to compete with those extant in the mainstream. I will draw on my understanding of Blackfoot traditions, and my experience in consulting, field excavation and academia. Accepting that archaeology is not the antithesis of aboriginal history, nor is it about negating an internalist sense of the past, removes the main obstacle blocking the task of finding ways to explain certain manifestations in the archaeological record. This thesis is one step in defining the parameters of archaeology in an aboriginal context. It is designed to be a practical guide for imagining the past from an internalist perspective because archaeological methods offer the opportunity to represent antiquity that is simultaneously rational and familiar. However, an ancillary objective is to utilize symbols from antiquity as markers of modern Indian identity.

Archaeology appeared on the radar of First Nations because their growing populations demand housing and economic opportunities. Recent settlement of land claims has brought large tracts of land under the control of Native people. Archaeological sites, by their very nature, are defined by their geographical location. Artifacts and sites are the products of past human labour and as such are a unique cultural legacy that must be understood within the context of a generalized world history. Internalist archaeology mediates between a local understanding of antiquity and the ancient history of humanity on a global scale. It is a product of the dialogue that began when the world system intruded on the local experience of aboriginal people. Modern prehistory was accessible only by employing archaeological methods and traditional history, as related in story, was relegated to the margins along with its authors. Myths were discounted as plausible sources of explanation for antiquity as archaeologists constructed their theories to explain the data they accumulated during their excavations. Internalist archaeology is an analytical tool that will play a prominent role in rehabilitating oral narratives by deploying methods to search for the signatures they would leave in the archaeological record. It is also a means to examine folklore so as to discover the messages that are encoded in myths. Myths act as mediating devices which connect the high levels of abstraction, those informing the traditional worldview, with lower levels of abstractions, as represented by customs. Ecological messages are encrypted in narratives which are then transmitted between generations. Each generation must decypher the meaning embedded in a myth to benefit from it. For internalist archaeology, mythology is a reservoir of explanation that has been ignored by mainstream research but which can be the basis for this brand of archaeological research. Indian communities wishing to investigate ancient manifestations to verify their sense of the past can benefit from archaeological methods. So too, when investigating the recent past to corroborate their historic experiences. The direct historical approach is particularly suited to reserve communities that wish to understand the changing conditions of reserve life in the historic period.

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INTRODUCTION

DIALOGUE WITH THE SPIRIT NATION

Awakening internalist archaeology in the First Nations is a natural response to the appearance of secular antiquity. Formerly, perceiving the past as a spirit nation brought the mythic era into the daily lives of Blackfoot people. Secularism and modernity explained the same time differently than Blackfoot thought. Modern times could not accommodate their mythic past, so Blackfoot mythology seemed to be resigned to the fringes of explanation. The relative timing of mythic events was over-ruled by absolute chronology and modern research methods. Internalizing archaeology is the antidote, since it occurs within a community that has its own sense of the past. Since Euro-American archaeologists find nothing of their ancestry in America's antiquity, they can only present externalist perspectives: like spectators to some ancient drama. Blackfoot people can present an internal viewpoint: like actors in that ancient drama. Therefore, internalist archaeology finds its parallels, not in the colonial brand practiced in America, but in the archaeology of Europe, Asia and Africa. Colonized people, for example in Australia or Polynesia, whose history mirrors that of American Indians, will find their way to a similar appointment with archaeology. Their experience will inevitably follow its own unique trajectory because it is a specific heritage in general human history. Each group has its own version of antiquity, but as information its hypotheses must convince even those who are disinterested listeners. If the past becomes a forum of propaganda, its explanations will be heard by a narrow audience who will ignore broader explanations. Politically motivated research is always hazardous; all we can do is offer an alternative that is based on a rational understanding of antiquity. If internalist explanations contribute real insight about the past, they will be contrasted with competing theories. They will be accepted if they are the most compelling or plausible. The experience of a specific culture may have lessons that have universal appeal. This thesis represents the awakening of internalist archaeology among the Blackfoot. I present it as a practical guide for imagining the past.

Starting the Journey

Aboriginal people accept that their ancestors created the archaeological record and now the present generation wishes to find meaning in this legacy by appropriating the methods of archaeology. They are defining a brand of archaeology that begins by using standard field and analytical methods to examine ancient history from an internalist sense of the past. Field methods, of course, occupy a low level of abstraction because they are the tools of the trade. Quibbling about field methods is really just a distraction that obscures the destination. The methods exist, let's use them. Analytical methods help to organize data by time, space and cultures, so they occupy a higher level of abstraction. They influence the way researchers envision their data, so they will direct subsequent research. The more distant the methods are from field work, the more abstract they become. However, methods are not theory, so energy is best expended on digging. Archaeological theory, or what passes for it, is a different matter entirely and there is no reason for Native archaeologists to parrot the theories already put forward as standard archaeological discourse. But detaching ourselves from mainstream theories, and holding no loyalty to any specific interpretations of artifacts and sites, and especially not to the grand theories espoused in the peopling of the Americas, invariably leaves gaps. For such reasons, internalist archaeology will operate as a bridging device allowing aboriginal people to get from here to there on their own terms. Indigenous archaeology has been offered as a name for this process. A volume with that title was published by Joe Watkins (1999) and his working definition states that it is "archaeology as a discipline developed with the control and influence of indigenous populations around the world" (xiii). Internalist archaeology is used in this volume to denote this same process, which encompasses the awakening of a secular antiquity among aboriginal people. It is a product of a dialogue on heritage that goes on within Native communities as a response to modern life, but it is not restricted to them. That dialogue accepts that archaeology is the product of a hegemonic worldview, but it has been adopted and "normalized" by Native people to better understand their past.

For Blackfoot people, there is a spiritual facet related to provenience which has its origin in traditional beliefs associated with the treatment of the dead. Internal explanations of antiquity saw the origin of archaeological features and artifacts as the work of spirits. Ancient artifacts carry a kind of spirit power that people seek deliberately; or, if discovered on the land, such artifacts might be kept as personal ritual objects. In that context, they accumulate their patina of meaning. Their significance increases if they have been passed from one owner to the next from a remote age. These ancient spirits eluded the senses of mortals, but they could pass on their power to living people if they appeared as guides in visions or dreams. This concept of spirit-power sufficed as explanation. It remains the motive for procuring and curating fossils and antiquities such as projectile points. Implicit in this perspective is the belief that the past and present do not exist as separate nodes on a timeline, rather they interact and influence each other. On the other hand, historical archaeology may complicate fieldwork because of taboos associated with the dead. Objects that belonged to deceased persons are contaminated with the residual presence of their prior owner and are thus avoided by the living. Against this background we begin to appreciate the dialogue that begins once sacred objects are encountered as archaeological artifacts. Internalist archaeology is concerned about this debate because it will be the means of articulation with the broader discipline.

Adopting emblems from antiquity is understandable considering that Indians are reacting to the spiritual dysfunction afflicting them today. Antiquity is an irresistible force, even for those who cannot accept spirit-power, because its silence is like a cognitive compass through troubled times. It brings a sense of direction to the path across chaos. Their sense of the past is also the foundation of their identity, which currently is in a state of crisis. The meaning they apply to antiquities reinforces the emotional connection they feel with their ancestors. Their quest for spiritual sustenance is itself the corollary of religious colonization. In its aftermath they seek to rekindle the divine light that burned in ancient times. They are engaged in a dialogue with the spirit nation, reaching into antiquity

for the vital spark that will ignite the ashes left by the departure of classic Christianity from their lives. The animated universe that inspired their ancestors is once again proving its worth in sustaining a healthy and vibrant belief system. However, slaking a spiritual thirst is only one reason for connecting with the past. In a world of economic developments and impact assessments, it sometimes seems like a luxury. Now, researching secular antiquity is an expected option. What follows is a scouting mission into the unfamiliar terrain of archaeology with the task of reporting its properties to an Indian constituency.

Travelling the Ancestor's Road

Although scientific tradition discourages belief in an afterlife, archaeologists might find inspiration if they imagine the past as aboriginal people have done since time out of mind - as a spirit nation, where sooner or later we all become citizens. The spirit nation exists in time, but its manifestations in space are what awakens internalist archaeology. An internalist sense of the past is rooted in the concept of interacting with spirits, using visions and dreams as the media. Dreaming creates salient space in the spirit nation and allows the dreamer to step through the ethereal barrier to encounter spirits on neutral ground. The past and present become mixed in the quixotic logic of dreams, where enigmatic messages can be transmitted to the dreamer. Often they are conveyed by dead relatives, bestowing a haunted contentment on reality in the hereafter.

Knowing citizenship in the spirit nation to be certain, visions become the preferred mode of travel there in anticipation of that final journey. The pilgrim seeks by vision to make acquaintance with a local guide who might ensure a safe passage. The vision quest is a deliberate attempt to enter consciously the salient space created by dreams with the intent of securing guidance on the long path that will eventually lead to a reunion with all of one's ancestors. With a little help from a benevolent escort, the journey can be made less hazardous - but that provides no guarantee it will be easier. Obtaining a guide through a vision quest may prove feasible because of the footprints and landmarks left by ancestors who had previously travelled the same trail. One generation after the next added the

milestones by way of cairns, effigies and stone memorials. Seeking a spirit guide was never an accidental encounter, since the same ancestors contributed their experience of the spiritual geography. Their scattered monuments identify the sites in the sacred landscape where spirits are known to frequent. Assured of companionship, the pilgrim can proceed on the life-long journey to the spirit nation.

Through their activities, generations of ancestors left a permanent record of their presence on the landscape. Now, these ancient sites are the locations they frequent as they traverse their spirit nation. Even today local custom deems it helpful to seek the security of antiquity when searching for answers to the vagaries of life. For many generations, rituals have been performed at these sites and, as today, the intent was to invoke communication with spirit travellers. For those who sought answers there was always a message, although deciphering it always took some effort. Sometimes insight might be encountered in a vision of a wandering spirit who rested at an ancient site, or it might come in a dream after visiting such a place. Divining meaning from these cryptic messages required a guide who had studied many years to gain the unique knowledge of spirit customs. Knowing the spirit protocols proved beneficial to conducting a safe journey.

Today, as in the past, dreams and dreaming continue to be sources of learning because they help us make sense of the world out there. Humans are problem-solvers, and our dreams function to help us sort through the countless stimuli that bombard our senses daily. Each second of existence is fraught with decisions, many of which are made with no effort. Periodically, large problems arise that have no easy solution. When posed with a problem, with no ready solution immediately obvious, the best advice is to sleep on it. Inducing sleep shuts out the external stimuli because the personal, internal dialogue of the dream holds the key for problem analysis. Dreaming is personal, universal and ever-present, so each person possesses the potential to solve problems in their dreams. Knowing the power of dreams becomes the fertile soil for seekers of the visionary experience who depart on their quest because they face a problem. Visions seen in a spirit

quest are sources of learning new songs, new rituals and novel ceremonies, but they can just as easily help researchers make sense of their data. Dreams and visions may be sources of creative inspiration revealed by some benevolent spirit or they may be the product of an internal dialogue that solves a problem in a dream, depending on the context. They can carry such significance that the message from dreams can transcend the dreamer and provide guidance for a whole people. Significant dreams that become the common experience of many generations produce the mythic past that helps the culture make sense of the world out there. Myths direct a people the way dreams guide the individual. Studies of the mythic past fulfill contemporary goal of motivating a research programme, but the research can serve to connect modern Indian communities with their ancient ancestors.

Awakening Internalist Archaeology

Perhaps a condition of life in the global village is to make the concept of an internalist archaeology in a strictly Peigan context impossible. While there is a unique encounter with the subject, a topic as large as internalist archaeology can be understood through the experience of one Indian community. Sometimes the timbre of the debate is advanced by events elsewhere and the fallout may influence local practices; at other times, events at Peigan have stood in the spotlight and provided the model for others to emulate. Certainly the success of the Head-Smashed-In buffalo jump interpretive centre immediately adjacent to the Peigan Nation, has been singled out as a model of a cooperative effort culminating in a win-win scenario. The increase in tourist traffic has demonstrated that ancient culture can contribute to a modern economy, and the Peigan and Blood both have benefited from interpreting their culture for an international audience at a World Heritage Site. This success is the natural result of local decisions to become active players in examining the archaeological record. When the global community looks for examples of aboriginal people interacting with archaeology, Peigan ventures in cultural tourism hint at the viability of archaeology in the local economy. For such reasons, sustained contact between Peigans and archaeologists have been comparatively pacific and archaeology is

accepted for its work-generating status. While true, internalist archaeology here orbits a local focus, it has not devolved into a parochial discipline conducted in the local vernacular. That scenario will not materialize because Peigans, like other aboriginal peoples, contribute to, and are informed by, a broader discourse on antiquity that draws all of us along in its wake. Indeed, as demonstrated in chapter five, internalist archaeology must strive to be cosmopolitan, to be archaeologists without borders.

Borders, be they geographical, political, cultural or social, are the inevitable reality of aboriginal people. They have all worked to exclude Blackfoot people from participation in the larger community. From the time of its appearance on the northern plains, the world system already had designs for Blackfoot country. Two polities evolved recently from one colonial regime and imposed the bicameral relationship that still dominates the lives of Blackfoot people. For nearly two centuries now, the Blackfoot polity has struggled to persist under these conditions. In the United States federal laws, such as the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) directly address Blackfoot claims while Canada remains silent on that issue. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) advocates for Native claims, but its agenda is devoted to more pressing items. Heritage has been subjected to piecemeal treatment so no statutes provide guidance or a mechanism for settling disputed claims. Despite two nations bisecting their country, Blackfoot people have had an uneasy history with the American progeny of Europeans on both sides of the white border. Often the trajectory a debate takes in one country may vary little from a similar debate in the other, or there may be no debate. For Blackfoot people these debates are really just variations on the theme. Reality dictates that we must pursue our cases in the courts and legislatures that were imposed by hostile powers that cared little for the human rights of aboriginal people. I make little distinction between them because the Blackfoot experience has been dictated by Euro-Americans on both sides of the Canada/U.S. border. Now the subject is antiquities that represent Blackfoot links to their ancient heritage, but Euro-Americans decide the terms and conditions of Blackfoot involvement in their heritage.

Reflecting their status in society, Indians have never been the main agents of archaeology, nor were they its primary constituents. From such inauspicious beginnings things got worse. The resulting skewed relationship left little room for thoughts of reciprocal arrangements or accommodation of divergent views. This inevitably led to discord and protest. However, in the current context there is greater need for co-operation and for negotiating compromise. Archaeologists need Indians in order to conduct work on traditional lands and Indians increasingly require the services of archaeologists to conduct impact assessments and related research in order to receive the needed capital to proceed with development projects. This tense history means Utopia is still a long way off. There exist lingering perceptions that archaeology remains a bastion of white privilege and Indians feel estranged from the archaeological community which enjoys priority in researching their heritage. Two decades ago it was rare for scholars to muse about the possibility "that the concern of native people for their own history may be the principal means by which a European[internalist]-type of understanding of the past ultimately is introduced into American archaeology" (Trigger 1978: 16). Others had warned that Indian activism was likely to turn routine archaeological work into a theatre of political contestation, in which mutual concerns would be a casualty of the resulting conflict (Burley 1994). In light of these perceptions, rapprochement is a missing element that internalist archaeology can add to the debate. Its awakening in the First Nations brings everyone closer to filling that void. One signpost ahead will give direction to an approach that will serve Indian communities in a way that lessens their historic mistrust of archaeology. Contemporary necessity makes finding that internalist approach a priority as it will be a step toward elevating the status of archaeology in the First Nations.

The beginning of history written by aboriginal people may have been a by-product of resistance to colonial powers imposing their understanding of the past. The main reason for aboriginal people amassing data from the archaeological record is its potential for contributing new knowledge about their ancestors that does not rely on Euro-American

historiography. Furthermore, the archaeological perspective of the past which has dominated the writing of an ostensibly prehistoric America has tended to diminish the role of ancient people by concentrating on their manufactures. Now that Indians have the opportunity to express their views, they are openly skeptical about extant interpretations because of who is producing and consuming ideas about their heritage. Indian bands have seen state agencies appropriating their heritage to implement archaeological resource management schemes, with a lack of consultation in policy-making. Not unreasonably, they desire to be included in research that is about their ancestors. So, aboriginal people have had to struggle for recognition. The emergence of aboriginal voices expressing concerns about the construction of history has been described as part of a global phenomenon with serious repercussions for social science research (Wylie 1995). Even Western academics have commented on the exclusion of minority scholars from archaeology, since this exclusion sustains a privileged access to interpretations of the past and bestows ideological power on the dominant culture (Franklin 1997). Educators concerned with the dearth of material devoted to Indian people are reassessing accepted curriculum with the goal of augmenting it with a more inclusive account of the past (Schmidt and Patterson 1995). As a starting point, claiming a place for aboriginal people in their history will be the mission statement for aboriginal scholars who choose archaeology as a career. Here, experience in land claims provides a suitable model for claiming Indian history for Indian people because their legal struggles have made Native people amenable to adopting certain instruments of the larger society on their own terms.

Historically, Indian participation in archaeology was non-existent. Only in the last decade have any begun to attend conferences or pursue scholarly research. If they were present at archaeological sites, they were the labourers sifting through the back dirt while their white employers reserved for themselves the big questions for publication. The archaeological profession has been slow to acknowledge that Indians had legitimate interests in their work. The more common pattern was to dismiss Indian protests as the

actions of a few malcontents who did not represent their communities. This culturally induced isolation from Indians seriously distorted professional interpretations of archaeological data, so that the formulation of what passed as theory was basically a reiteration of nineteenth century stereotypes that portrayed Indian cultures as unprogressive (Trigger 1980). Archaeology itself has not been a progressive social force trying to overcome the negative stereotypes attached to Indians. Not too long ago, social policy analysts were complaining about the moral amnesia that archaeologists displayed toward Native people in Canada (Spurling 1988). As practiced then, archaeology was not useful to Aboriginal people because they were excluded, even as an audience, by the profession, whose main concern was appealing to the Euro-Canadian middle and upper classes, whose largesse usually provided the funding supporting archaeological work. This state of affairs had to change. Some archaeologists (notably Burley 1994) went so far as to say that the survival of archaeology depended to a large part on engaging Native people as its allies, because they would add needed clout to attain some form of federal heritage legislation.

One of the peculiar features of archaeology was what passed for heterogeneity among its practitioners. Seldom did one find articles in archaeological journals written by Indians. When such articles appeared in print they stood out because they tended to be the exception. Early examples of Indians writing about archaeology expressed the concerns that Indians felt about research, but which no audience ever heard. Basil Johnston (1976), the celebrated Ojibway writer and storyteller, offered his thoughts to a symposium at a time when archaeologists were considering new perspectives in Canadian archaeology. He warned of the resentment that Indians harboured toward archaeologists because of their treatment of the material remains of Indian people. More than misunderstanding resulted from the collision of conflicting interests of two cultures. The situation in archaeology reproduced in miniature the disparity in power relations between an Indian minority and a Canadian majority. The root of these trepidations was the archaeologists' disinterring of human remains said to lie in an archaeological context. Johnston wrote of the harm and

distress done when subordinating Indian traditions to the privilege of Euro-Canadians doing research. Indians had a wrong inflicted on their heritage and they felt an apology was in order; he pointed to respect for Indian traditions in future research as a good starting point.

Plains archaeologists have not always dismissed oral narratives. From time to time, traditionalist such as Joe Medicine Crow (1978), a respected elder, would appear at plains conferences to address topics of mutual interest. He explained the role of communal hunting on the northern plains by citing Crow oral traditions to illustrate their adoption of the practice of running herds of buffalo over embankments. He traced the practice to a single individual who introduced it in the early nineteenth century when the Crow first ventured out onto the plains from their earth-lodge villages. He located specific precipices where historical drives were known to have been initiated by Crow hunters. He described the rituals they performed and the techniques they employed to call the buffalo and coax them over a cliff. In archaeological data he encountered artifacts that were reminiscent of material culture described in Crow oral narratives. Yet he acknowledged that the Crow were associated with that practice for a relatively short time - certainly nowhere long enough to account for all buffalo drives. His anecdotes were intended to demonstrate how Crow narratives could help archaeologists interpret their data, whether it inspired any archaeological research is another matter to ponder.

During the outburst of writing regarding the Columbian 500th anniversary, Vine Deloria (1992) spoke to the annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology reiterating the concerns expressed two decades earlier by Johnston. He noted that Indians still were encountering difficulties on issues like reburial and the ongoing struggle to clarify the legal status of sacred sites. His opinion was that "unless and until [Indians] are in some way connected with world history as early peoples....we will never be accorded full humanity" (Deloria 1992: 597). He even conceded that some Indian spiritual leaders were not averse to archaeological investigation of sacred sites. Some were actually eager to have

such work completed because they felt it would strengthen their case to have science verify the existence of traditional ceremonial sites. One suggested route to that end was to adopt archaeological methods not only to explore antiquity but also to buttress the legal claims of modern Indian communities.

At a gathering on the northern plains, the archaeological societies of Alberta and Montana invited Native people to participate in a forum on sacred places that double as archaeological sites (Reeves and Kennedy 1993). Native delegates expressed their views on sacred sites and objects in the context of treaty rights, noting that at no time did they surrender their culture. In fact, traditional religious thought remained one of the few avenues that sustained a distinctiveness. Performing rituals and chanting Blackfoot prayers at sacred places held back assimilation at a time when confidence in traditions waned among the Peigan. These same places were suddenly off limits because they were registered as state, provincial or national historic parks. However, those attending the conference did not articulate an approach or secular research paradigm for Native researchers to follow that could be considered the foundation of internalist archaeology.

These isolated cases illustrate that Indians were participating in conferences and symposia, but seldom as professional archaeologists. Instead they were more likely to be scholars or traditionalists whose background brought them into contact with archaeologists. Only in the last decade did Indian students begin expanding their scholarly interests to include undergraduate and graduate archaeology programmes as an integral part of their schooling. Some have opted for careers in archaeology and have even found ways of contributing new knowledge considered germane to the discipline and useful to their communities. Examples include my examination of the legal problems associated with investigating archaeological sites on Indian lands. The resulting thesis became a handbook that Indian band councils could use to interpret the existing *Indian Act* to initiate heritage protection on Indian reserves (Yellowhorn 1993; 1996). Eva Linklater (1994), a member of the Cree community of Nelson House, Manitoba, wrote of the Cree cultural landscape as

an archive for their history and of the deleterious effects that hydroelectric development projects had on it. Brian Scribe (1997), from the Cree community of Norway House, exercised a traditional approach to archaeology when he investigated the appearance of ceramics on the northern plains. His main concern was to understand the nature and connections of Besant/Sonata pottery, the origin of the potters and their locus of diffusion. This sample of Indian writing reflects the minor impact that archaeology has made within contemporary Indian thought, but it also speaks to the common ideal expressed by these authors of making archaeology relevant to their communities.

Belatedly the archaeological establishment has come to realize that it must attempt to reach out to the Indian constituency it found all too easy to ignore. Assuming that their common concern could be the basis for building a relationship, academics, heritage managers and Indian scholars from across Canada filled the pages of *At a Crossroads: Archaeology and First Peoples in Canada* (Nicholas and Andrews 1997) with commentaries about practicing archaeology with a local focus. Their goal was attempting to imagine the past in ways that are cogent for people interested in local history as it is represented by sites and artifacts. Despite occasional trends in the opposite direction, a similar endeavour is underway in the United States as heralded by *Native Americans and Archaeologists: Stepping Stones to Common Ground* (Swidler et al. 1997). Thirty-three authors, including twenty representing fifteen Indian nations, share their views on their common interest as stewards of their culture's heritage. They explore relations between Indians and archaeologists to address on-going efforts to forge an equitable dialogue. They revisit contentious issues that have long-dominated the debate and propose models of cooperation that could be practiced on future archaeological projects. All the contributors have either worked with tribal governments on heritage projects or have published works regarding Indians and archaeology; thus their research places them in an intermediary role even if they are not archaeologists by profession. The contributing authors provide an open and comprehensive examination of their relations to each other and to the

archaeological record. Understanding the dynamics between these two groups requires examining the often tense feelings that defined past encounters and finding areas of compromise to reduce acrimony. Clearly the two groups still adhere to ideologies that require further deliberation, but it has not been an obstacle to working on the details of effectively managing the archaeological heritage. That these volumes should have appeared in the late 1990s may indicate that the winds of change are blowing some fresh air into American archaeology.

Archaeology has become a reality for Indian communities for various reasons, not the least of which is economic development and the coeval obligation for cultural impact assessments. One article in *Native Americans and Archaeologists: Stepping Stones to Common Ground*, written by B. L. Cypress, a Seminole leader from Florida, concisely summed up the dilemma it presented them. He referred specifically to the biases against archaeology that were embedded in his community and which hampered its initial acceptance. Yet there was a need to implement heritage impact assessment regulations, because land development was necessary if the local economy was to thrive. Once artifacts were recovered and people understood their significance, they overcame their initial reticence and became convinced of the value of archaeology. Recognizing it to be an instrument of society that can be wielded to achieve certain goals encouraged confidence within his community. Afterward, local support of heritage surveys grew because the local people wished to know the extent and type of heritage sites on their reservation in order to set in place effective protective measures. Now the tribal administration routinely issues permits for impact assessments, knowing that archaeology is "neither good or bad....[rather it] is a tool that can be used to further knowledge" (Cypress 1997: 160). Of course cultural differences will mean variation in the theories and ideologies that will emanate from Native communities. In the above example, antiquity lends its symbols to bolster pride in Seminole identity.

The crucial element missing from this growing body of literature is any attempt to define a theoretical alternative to rival standard archaeological approaches: one that is grounded in an Indian sense of the past because internalist archaeology does not begin and end with adopting archaeological methods. One complaint that Indians often use to dismiss archaeology is that they do not see themselves being represented in the stories about their past. Indeed, given the "archaeologist's privileging of temporal chronology" (Nabokov 2002: 49) they often were treated as superfluous to the goals identified by scholars. This has been an annoying impediment blocking Indian students from undertaking studies in archaeology or pursuing a career in it. Yet failing to articulate a rational paradigm for local projects where archaeology is most visible may serve only to alienate Indians further. More troubling would be accepting without question interpretations of the past which plainly abuse antiquity and promote a pseudo-scientific version that bears no resemblance to reality. While casting scientific research and scientists in an adversarial role against the backdrop of conspiracy theory may be a box-office attraction for the movie industry, it does not hold up well as scholarly research. Reactionary theories that pay little attention to scientific accuracy and rely on half-truths based on suspect research and faulty logic do not offer credible alternatives in creating the explanations that Native people deserve. Selective citations and uncritical acceptance of fringe data do not advance the cause of Indian scholarship, or of Indian research in the realm of legitimate scientific work. Therefore, now is as good a time as any to begin the task of determining how to construct archaeological theory from an internalist perspective that will withstand critical scrutiny and contribute new knowledge to the mainstream.

This thesis is devoted to that subject. Awakening internalist archaeology is a response to repeated interaction with the past. Archaeology in the First Nations expresses an internalist perspective in a form that is analogous to a fractal. The endlessly replicable contours reiterated at ever-decreasing scales makes a suitable metaphor of post-processualism where academic archaeology provides the main pattern and all the subalterns

employing it are the microcosmic copies. The New Archaeology was no stranger to the fractal model because influences from other disciplines guided the trend toward specialization, as denoted by the prefixes that certify each partition. The following chapters chart one course that leads from an internalist attempt to organize local traditions through to a global search for riddles posed by the archaeological record. Chapters one through four each contain a Blackfoot story of ancient times to illustrate for the reader that folklore can be interpreted with varying degrees of certainty and ambiguity. "One often hears Indian old-timers and intellectuals grumbling that characterizing their indigenous histories as 'mythology' or 'folklore' suggests fabrication or simple-mindedness, and furthers the stereotype that they had no sense of history or that they made things up" (Nabokov 2002: 53). My intent is not to impose an irrational order inappropriate to the task, rather I wish to overcome such stereotypes by providing a practical guide for imagining the past by blending Blackfoot folklore with archaeological methods. The origin myth, beginning with the apocalyptic ending of the former world, is an attempt to deal with the prevalence of flood stories in the Algonkian language family. "Scientific records of volcanic eruptions, meteoric showers, major floods, or earthquakes are unambiguous; one might also expect their psychological impact to carve themselves deeply into Indian oral tradition" (Nabokov 2002: 74). The idea that Blackfoot mythic history is a chronicle that begins in the Upper Palaeolithic and leads into modern times, is, at best, a concept or statement of general orientation. Much like the sociological concepts of status or anomie, it cannot properly be called a theory. However, it allows Blackfoot people to deal with the world of earth sciences from a starting point that is their local world view floating in a post-modern universe. Presenting the origin myth as a study of landscape sculpturing that introduces principles of geology does not undermine science or mythology, but applying research methods to ancient tales necessarily modernizes the story. Myths have always helped people deal with the world out there and this would be no exception. It provides a modern answer that helps us make sense of the messages embedded in traditional narratives.

Countering the internal dialogue is an external one that engages agents and agencies that operate the mills of production in the cultural industries. Ordaining that ancient history of Indians is the archaeological record and then deciding that it is a resource subject to the unilateral policies of federal and provincial governments are the methods by which the Blackfoot past was lost. Modernizing the past has made an external prescription real. Blackfoot notions of the past must compete with the modern instruments of society that appropriate their heritage and exclude them from decisions that affect it. Managing heritage as a resource was a twentieth century phenomenon and its utility to government has made it the most attractive option for controlling access to the archaeological record. Cultural resource management is the reigning paradigm in North American archaeology and its popularity will ensure that it will be around for a long time to come. Opposing this concept is the Indian side of the dialogue. The past for Blackfoot and other Indians is an estate they inherit from their ancestors. Peter Nabokov, the anthropologist and ethnohistorian, related just such a message in his book *A Forest Of Time* when he stated:

I've used the verb 'bequeathed' to characterize how traditionalist historians and others preoccupied with ensuring historical continuity often frame their responsibilities. Perhaps this analogy to material inheritance also has heuristic value in communicating the senses of property and duty that are often found in Indian notions of history. Conceiving of the past as a collective dowry, which subsequent generations must maintain in high repair and to which they must even contribute (Nabokov 2002: 239).

Chapter two begins the search for a theoretical approach for internalist archaeology. It reports on the role of folklore as a guide for theory-building. Creating a testable hypothesis, founded on a Blackfoot myth, verifies the notion that Indian lore is susceptible to empirical testing. It demonstrates that internalist archaeology in the Blackfoot tradition does not have to import mainstream theory because the homegrown variety is just as potent. This chapter examines the potential that traditional narratives hold for contributing archaeological theories emanating from internal sources and growing from self-determined objectives. These narratives cover a wide range of topics but they are also endangered because of historic biases and modern indifference. A case in point is the long road to

acceptance for folk medicine in modern times. It began with rejection by a medical community intent on ridding itself of any lingering superstition. Botanical knowledge was denigrated as the usual thaumaturgy needed to soothe the savage mind. Traditional healers were dismissed as witch doctors whose bag of tricks centred on the usual prescription of drums, rattles and incantations to drive out harmful spirits. When pharmacologists began seriously to conduct studies into ethnobotany, they corroborated what Native healers knew all along; that plants contain ingredients that have medicinal properties. Finally Indian plant lore was recognized as a legitimate source of information in the search for new medicines (Cox 2000). There is a happy ending for the witch doctors too, because their reputations have been rehabilitated and they are now applauded for preserving valuable information. Sadly, though just when interest has been rekindled, folklore is getting harder to find. Like endangered languages, it survives through the experience and memory of elders, many of whom are aging and dying without passing on their observations. Protecting such data means encouraging active research to determine the nature of plant usage while recognizing the intellectual property rights of Native people. An indication of the growing acceptance of such knowledge is the international protocols, such as the 1992 *Convention on Biological Diversity*, which call on everyone to promote, respect and preserve cultural diversity. Internalist archaeology can play a role in this laudatory goal by researching the origin and persistence of ecological messages disguised as Indian lore.

Folklore has as its inspiration the origin stories held in the mental library of Indian storytellers. These stories served as mnemonic devices for encoding ecological messages that many successive generations found valuable for interacting with their environment. Predicting usage for such knowledge is a risky business, but the metamorphosis of Indian art offers a lesson to instruct our use of folklore in an archaeological setting. When a wage economy replaced the fur trade, Indians had few skills that could be used to capture wealth, but the arts consistently translated into monetary gain for working artists. The net effect was a steady source of income for some artists, fame for a few and the transformation of

traditional aesthetics from a craft oriented practice into a multimedia expression of identity. Like art in a cash economy, folklore in the information economy will occupy an economic niche. It will be a means of capturing wealth, not in the sordid manner of black market economics, but rather as a source of jobs and careers. The more research it launches, the more it will experience a transformation similar to Indian art. Heeding the lessons of Indian artists may serve well as a guide for conditions at the frontline of such research. In any case, oral narratives and archaeology share a common interest in knowing about the past, so that it makes sense to blend them if one can enhance the other. In this way investigating a community's heritage using archaeological methods would not require abandoning folklore to pursue a scientific ideal of theory-driven archaeology. Rather such an investigation might involve locally defined goals driving fieldwork, which could contribute explanations relevant to broader research questions. Research related to folklore can function as a theoretical guide for aboriginal archaeologists, providing them with an opportunity to contribute new knowledge about their traditions and new theories for archaeology. Chapter two applies the concept of limited range theorizing introduced into sociological research in the World War Two era. It examines the functioning of such theorizing as a bridging device for connecting data that exists at different levels of abstraction in mythology by examining the Blackfoot story about the origin of tobacco and the beaver medicine bundle. It assesses the environmental conditions implied in the story and explains their mnemonic advice for cultivating and growing tobacco. It also demonstrates that folklore is susceptible to empirical testing.

Chapter three continues the exercise of collating the various levels of abstraction implied in traditional narratives. This chapter deals with the ambiguity inherent in working with an untestable hypothesis. However, the absence of definitive evidence is no obstacle for limited range theorizing. Anomalous data may defy an explanation, especially if there is no experiment that will prove the hypothesis. This chapter introduces the *post factum* interpretation to the goal of presenting hypothesis-like explanations that are consistent with

observed phenomena. Evidence may be circumstantial, in which case any one of several explanations might suffice. However, the point is to attempt to posit explanations that are consistent with all the observations. Since they must rely on circumstantial evidence rather than empirical evidence, they compete to be the best explanation possible. Limited range theorizing emanating from oral narratives is significant for internalist archaeology because an important goal of using ancient Blackfoot lore is to submit archaeological theories that argue for their ancient occupation of the plains.

Conventional history has it that Blackfoot people only occupied the plains in the late eighteenth century, only a decade or so before Europeans discovered that country. So far, applying such an approach to archaeology has been a tentative and sporadic affair, because theories espoused by archaeologists are often judged to be in conflict with Indian lore. Mythology as primitive philosophy has veiled its utility in explaining ancient manifestations. Dismissing legends as a fertile ground only for spoken literature may be a hold-over of nineteenth century positivist ideology, but it still permeates archaeology. Undaunted by skepticism, I delve into Blackfoot mythology to produce the scheduling breakthrough hypothesis to explain the origin of the archaeological manifestation known as Besant. The type-site was unearthed in southern Saskatchewan, but similar technology and communal hunting styles were soon discovered throughout the northern plains.

Since that first excavation in 1955, the origin of Besant has been a vexing problem for archaeologists, and there is still no definitive theory that explains the sudden appearance of Besant-style communal hunts. I posit that the Blackfoot narrative of the lost boys and their ascension into the sky world holds the answer for the appearance and diffusion of Besant tradition. Implied here is a connection between Besant ideology and Blackfoot spiritual thought. Even now Besant symbols are evident on Blackfoot tipis. Blackfoot storytellers inherited a narrative that transmitted information based on a discovery someone made two millennia earlier. Positing that the tale of this star cluster explains the origin of Besant, supports the conclusion that the immediate ancestors of Blackfoot people, or

people who intimately influenced the Blackfoot, occupied the plains in antiquity. Theories of Besant origins are varied and each explains limited ranges of data observed in the archaeological record. Most, like the hypothesis presented here, are unprovable because they are constrained by their status as *post factum* interpretations. Since they are proposed to explain observed data, they must compete to be the best explanation. And, as is the case here, each must stand or fall on its own merits.

Internalist archaeology, chapter four makes clear, is guided by its own landmarks as it searches for an organized antiquity. Criticizing mainstream analytical tools necessitates some alternatives. Internalist perspectives can play an active role in tearing down the image of the past produced by traditional archaeology and consumed in the popular culture: an image that relies on a long chronological period known as prehistory and is inhabited by the ancestors of modern Indians. If the Indian past remains unknown, and archaeological data is the accepted standard for knowing about it, it follows that a scientific perspective will be promoted as the only legitimate version of antiquity. And, by extension, if traditional narratives are kept in a subordinate position, oral traditions that relate cultural history will continue to be regarded with skepticism as hearsay or rumour. This history/pre-history dichotomy is problematic because Indian historical identity is made contingent on a European presence, while at the same time periodization is a standard tool of historians and archaeologists. Therefore, internalist archaeology can apply similar techniques to periodization so that antiquity will mean more than just the time before Europeans. To fill this gap, Native archaeologists must propose their own schemes for organizing the broad periods that are distinguishable in the archaeological record.

An alternative to prehistory is not that difficult to imagine for speakers of Algonkian languages, like Blackfoot or Cree, because statements making use of the first person plural paradigms routinely distinguish between levels of exclusivity of subjects. The dual nature of this perspective is analogous to expanding concentric circles that distinguish between an inclusive and exclusive sense. Activating this linguistic strategy to organize a study of the

past would mean conceptualizing an ancient Indian history that applies the exclusive paradigm and a recent Indian history that applies the broader inclusive one. For example, first contact with Europeans is the event that declares the beginning of the historical record and, due to geography, it is an event that affects each Indian group differently; therefore the switch to an inclusive sense varies by region as well as time. However, periodization is a familiar concept for Blackfoot historians; for example, horses revolutionized Blackfoot lifeways so that their appearance distinguishes the era that followed the dog days. Thus the Blackfoot past can be articulated in terms of an ancient history that excluded horses and a recent history which included them simply by shifting paradigms. As it is employed in Blackfoot history, periodization is a convenient device for organizing local history and is not meant to encapsulate the experience all people.

Chapter five is about history, historiography, and historical archaeology that departs from Blackfoot culture and places the Tsek'ehne experience at its centre. Thus it deviates from the pattern established in the first four chapters. Due to the specialized training that archaeology entails, the few Native researchers who receive professional degrees, by necessity, will find embracing cosmopolitanism difficult to avoid. As professional archaeologists they have to accept that neighbouring Indian cultures may require their services to guide their projects. Many aboriginal communities are resigned to hiring a professional corps to mediate their impacts on their heritage. This chapter is a chronicle of archaeology in the Tsek'ehne community of McLeod Lake, B.C., which blazed a trail for internalist archaeology in discovering Indian history. Writing the last chapter in the first person singular paradigm to relate the sequence of events represents my own involvement in the project. By contrast to folklore that recites ancient history, the McLeod Lake Indian Band archaeology project was immersed in the direct historical approach. Archival documents and historical records are available to students of the fur trade, so archaeological methods simply expand the options. If the goal is to overhaul the way Euro-Americans perceive aboriginal history, Native people cannot ignore research that

uses archaeological methods to augment archival sources that report on recent history. Historical archaeology from a Native perspective marks another milestone in the long march toward defining a theoretical approach for internalist archaeology. Its purpose is to expand the ambit of the internal and external dialogues so that Indians participate in a meaningful way in research programmes.

The entrenched terminology of the discipline will linger on and supporting modes of thinking will not disappear from mainstream archaeology simply because Indians disapprove of the labels and categories that distinguish eras and archaeological cultures. At least for the near future, reserves and other Indian communities will represent the locus of this variety of internalist archaeology. Nevertheless, aboriginal people have come to learn that archaeological terms and categories have been developed not just to classify projectile points but to claim a cultural affinity. As western settlement expanded over Indian land, Native toponymy was systematically erased and transformed into a Euro-Canadian cultural landscape. In a like manner the practices and terms adopted by the archaeological establishment in naming type-sites ensured that a Canadian identity superseded the aboriginal provenience. In the current process of land claiming, toponymy has resurfaced as a convenient tool to establish the edges of customary lands. Researchers working for Yukon Indians are finding that in recalling and mapping their cultural landscape, archaeological sites have been discovered because the aboriginal names recorded the activity conducted at these locales. Taking a lesson from the land claims experience might begin with adopting more aboriginal names for archaeological cultures. So, reclaiming the Indian past for Indian people might begin with creating an internal brand of archaeology that encourages ties to ancient cultures through aboriginal terminology and categories.

CHAPTER ONE

IMAGINING TIME OUT OF MIND

Introduction

Modern society has little room for supernatural explanations, especially now that scientific ones have effectively exorcised the wistful spirits that once haunted ancient monuments. By demonstrating past human labour to be the source of cairns, medicine wheels and stone effigies, archaeologists ignored the spirit nation and instead saw property and a resource that had to be managed. Archaeology has promoted its version as the accepted standard for researching the past and recommending procedures for managing the archaeological record. Belatedly aboriginal communities have been given the opportunity to participate in the dialogue regarding the disposition of archaeological remains; a tardiness they find particularly galling since their ancestors were primarily responsible for creating the archaeological record. Indians continued to regard archaeological manifestations as tangible evidence of a spirit nation, so they never stopped paying homage to the ancestral spirits that animated their sacred landscape. However, their heritage turned out to be the same resources that archaeologists claimed. When cultural resource management (CRM) came into being, its proponents defined its agenda in such a way so as to alienate Indians from their heritage. At the same time, the archaeological record reflects Indian cultures from antiquity, so the present generation considers adopting methods that can expand their understanding of their ancestral cultures a welcome measure. Against this background, Native people are employing archaeological methods to investigate their cultural landscape and they are developing internalist approaches when those offered by the mainstream prove inadequate. What they find compels them to engage in two dialogues simultaneously. The first takes place between the core and periphery of modern society. Aboriginal people at the periphery opt to create their own brand of archaeology that does not depend on core values. Theirs is the voice of resistance against the hegemony of the archaeological establishment as it attempts to appropriate ancient Indian history.

The second dialogue is an internal one debating the nature of the past. It is a recent phenomenon that resembles the debate between 'the moderns' and 'the ancients' in early scientific discourse. Internalist debate about approaches to the archaeological record has the ultimate goal of claiming a place for Native peoples in their history. The external dialogue is conducted with mainstream archaeological thought, while the internal dialogue is necessary if archaeology is to contribute anything substantial to the Indian community. The trend toward professionalization of archaeology in the Fourth World encourages Native people to lose their aversion to it. Therefore, they must seek ways to accommodate it now that sites and artifacts are routinely explainable without reference to a metaphysical domain. Among traditionalists, attaching meaning to found objects is an exercise in divining the message from the spirit world. Artifacts are carried as personal charms infused with spirit power. However, Native people employing archaeological methods will have to adopt "scientific" definitions to satisfy funding arrangements or statutory obligations. Thus researching theory to complement internalist archaeology will be about finding the middle grounds between opposite views. Without a doubt, ambiguity bordering on anarchy may be expected as people mix traditional and non-traditional approaches before settling on a defined set of tenets. As with other post-processual archaeologies, the ensuing product will add surprising and exciting new dimensions to the dialogue with the core. To that end aboriginal people are coming to accept that archaeology is an instrument of society that can be used to learn more about local history when heritage sites are encountered during the course of community development for purposes of housing, business and other ventures. Of course, residual suspicions will linger about theories emanating from the mainstream so long as there are no alternatives. Countering the confusion requires Native researchers to begin charting a course through the theoretical realm to complement and support their use of archaeological methods. From the vantage point of 2002 AD, chronicling this emerging relationship may seem a bit like divining in the entrails of a badger, but archaeologists need a datum point.

Internalist Archaeology and the World Out There

Internalist archaeology is the corollary of a dialogue that began when aboriginal people encountered the world system. They witnessed the transformation of their cultural landscapes when nation-states annexed their lands and appropriated their natural wealth to fuel capitalist economies and bankroll nationalist aspirations. That archaeology should be a convenient creation of hegemonic powers intent on usurping Indian land is not re-assuring and may account for much of the indifference or antipathy Indians feel toward the discipline. An internal dialogue is necessary because the undercurrent of suspicion runs deep in the Indian community concerning the nature and character of archaeology. Participation in an external dialogue concerning antiquity, awakened interest among aboriginal people. They begin their internal dialogue in order to set up an agenda that is not merely an effete parrot of the mainstream. Their concern is for more than just Indians employing the methods of mainstream archaeology to investigate antiquity. It is the voice that articulates Nativist thought in the dialogue with the larger world. It is the vehicle that conveys the perspectives that Indians hold about antiquity. Perhaps because archaeology is an imported profession that introduces uncertainty, it is vulnerable to charges of creating explanations that are ideologically driven, and thus unacceptable. The internal dialogue confronts the world out there to allay latent suspicions about what was considered alien and dangerous. One benefit that comes with familiarity is strengthening cultural ties to ancient peoples in a deliberate attempt to mitigate the impact of a modern world that is constantly eroding cultural traditions.

Coincidental with the dispossession of their lands, modernity engulfed the aboriginal world. The effect was to dislodge the aboriginal worldview from its customary foundation. Contrasting traditional and modern views of reality add a facet of tension to the internal dialogue because it forces aboriginal people to critically examine the mythic past in relation to a secular antiquity. The debate influences everything from local band politics (Wilson 1999) to research on the status of folklore today. Traditionalists, elders, and other

cultural ayatollahs prefer to look at antiquity as a golden age of wisdom, a time made pristine by its proximity to the mythic past. Modernists see in the archaeological record the long path travelled by humans en route to becoming modern (Gould 2000). Rather than wasting precious energy on rehashing an old debate, energy and curiosity are better expended toward researching ancient history and in the process syncretizing ancient stories with the information age.

Internalist archaeology responds to the skepticism and alienation by articulating a theoretical foundation that emanates from the Indian's sense of the past. An acceptable starting point may be declaring unequivocally that it is neither nomothetic nor monolithic! Clearly, following the culture historical approach may be better suited to the goal of understanding local cultural sequences. Survey methods may be adequate to comply with federal laws, so there is little to be gained from searching for nomothetic laws governing human behaviour when research is motivated by internalist goals. Nativist thought is not monolithic because there is no single voice that verbalizes the spectrum of opinion that rises from their communities. Therefore imagining a single, all-purpose, aboriginal theoretical perspective would be naïve. Be that as it may, internalist archaeology requires direction lest it drift into some intellectual backwater, there to stagnate into non-importance. The fractal analogy of archaeology practiced by Native people captures well the unique experience in each community as they reiterate the broad methods at a microcosmic scale.

Naturally, charting a course for any endeavour necessitates defining some goal to motivate it and here internalist archaeology is a metanarrative that follows the permutations of aboriginal identity in modern Canada. Archaeological manifestations explained and interpreted for a Native audience can contribute symbols and emblems of identity as aboriginal people embark on their project of colonizing the nation-state. Canada is only one of many nation-states that were created by erasing aboriginal homelands, but now, after a few centuries of retreat, Indian nations have been revived. Contemporary First Nations may have been carved out of traditional homelands, but they were tailored for a population

that had yet to reach its nadir. When their numbers expanded, the reserved lands simply could not contain the burgeoning population. Many people, tired of the boredom and poverty of their reserves, voted with their feet and became economic refugees. They did not abandon their communities when they relocated to urban Canada, rather they were the first wave of colonists to arrive in Canadian cities. Colonizing Canada meant moving away from the comfort and closeness of a familiar community to take up residence in an alienating city. As citizens removed themselves from their reserves and traditional homelands a sense of displacement gnawed at their identity and took its toll on individual lives. Disappointment, disillusionment and despair fueled the daydreams of Indians who wished to live as their ancestors, because the urban experience gave them an idea of how different their lives were from the mainstream. Yearning and nostalgia posed the question: What does it mean to be an Indian in contemporary society? Internalist archaeology has to play an activist role in answering that question. It will be a cognitive compass pointing out the signposts and cultural markers to direct those who seek in antiquity a guide for their daily lives. Reclaiming the Indian past for Indian people will fortify the connections to ancestral cultures by examining an internalist history that emanates from the mythic past.

With or without the internal dialogue on archaeology, symbols from antiquity are already directing the discourse of aboriginal people. Too often archaeologists are loathe to admit the influence of popular culture on notions of the past and dismiss or underestimate its impact on scholarly research. However, misinformation, coupled with the tendency to revere a putative aboriginal utopia, has led some to embrace the veracity of concepts attributable to an ancient wisdom, when in fact these concepts are little more than feel-good messages contrived by contemporary shamans catering to a New Age sensibility. A case in point is the holistic ideology said to be embodied by the stone circles known on the plains as medicine wheels, and which have emerged as a much-loved analytical tool. Blackfoot speakers refer to them as *o'takainaka'si*, or wheel (pl. *o'takainaka'siksi*) and the medicine comes from the implied sacred mystery. Perhaps his close association with Blackfoot

speakers had inspired George Bird Grinnell when he introduced the phrase 'medicine wheel' in an 1895 issue of the popular outdoor magazine *Forest and Stream*. He used it to describe a stone construction atop Medicine Mountain in Wyoming, which was said to resemble Mesoamerican calendar stones (Grinnell 1922). Curiosity as to its origin, meaning and antiquity led S. C. Simms (1903) on an expedition to find informants among the Sioux and Crow who could provide some details about this 'peculiar structure' and its meaning, but his queries were soon frustrated by the meager data provided by his informants and by the vagaries of translation. George Bird Grinnell (1922) left back into the fray to elucidate what had eluded his colleague. He attributed the monument alternately to stories that gave credit to 'little people' who lived in caves scattered around the mountain, to Shoshonian tribesmen symbolically representing their bands, or to Cheyennes representing a medicine lodge in ground plan. After this minor debate subsided, medicine wheels sporadically rolled off the presses in scholarly journals over the next few decades (Brumley 1988); although explaining their origin in the absence of systematic archaeological study still required deft mental contortions (Wilson 1981).

Medicine wheels began to circulate again in popular culture with the publication of *Seven Arrows* by Hyemeyohsts Storm (1972), an Oglala Sioux writer who presented his vision to an audience afflicted by a severe case of spiritual ennui. Ostensibly founded on traditional Sioux philosophy, and liberally spiced with fantasy, fiction and invented narratives, the popular imagination fervently accepted the symbol and all its alleged Pan-Indian significance. Ignoring the anthropological research conducted on these stone structures, and despite near-unanimous denunciation of his scholarship, the author combined bucolic illustrations with florid prose to squeeze 'traditional native thought' into a circle of stones, and in doing so produced an instant classic. Perhaps the preceding decade had thrown the doors of perception off their hinges, but before long the volume was a must-read for every flower child going to seed. Coeval with Storm's paperback volume, James Eddy (1974), an astronomer by vocation but an archaeologist by avocation,

published an article in the journal *Science* in which he purportedly discovered astronomical alignments radiating from the cairn, spokes and rim of the Big Horn Medicine Wheel in Wyoming. Subsequently medicine wheel inquiry began to follow two trajectories. A self-selected coterie investigated them as archaeological phenomena but declined to ascribe any specific ceremonial function. No such misgivings were apparent in the other camp, whose members were intent on ascribing meaning, power and totemic animals to the cardinal directions, as well as lessons for achieving psychic harmony with the universe. These spiritual teachings ultimately became fodder for New Age philosophy and medicine wheels became emblematic of high plains ideology.

Medicine wheels may not resonate with the same New Age theme when mobilized by Indian scholars as analytical tools, but they have become inexplicably important for visualizing methods of healing, learning and empowerment in Indian communities. Given the notions encapsulated in the pseudo-philosophical discourse of *Seven Arrows*, no one should wonder why the enigmatic medicine wheel should metamorphose from an arcane reminder of antiquity to a malleable icon of Indian spiritual enlightenment. The real surprise is the rapidity with which it crossed the divide from fringe concept to mainstream thought. Scarcely two decades later, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (RCAP) formatted its report on the medicine wheel model, and heard a witness testify that the "principles of Primary Health Care are similar to those of the Circle of Life or the Medicine Wheel, which have served as a guide for health care for generations of some of Canada's Aboriginal people" (Canada 1996: 220). Like the mute effigies themselves, the vague reference to cultural identity simply reflects the uncertainty that stares back from these circles of stones. Regardless, for some Native educators medicine wheels embody a holistic organizing principle for structuring Native language education (White 1996), while others see in them the basic principles for contextualizing science within a cultural system that does not dismiss the spiritual aspect underlying natural phenomena (Dyck 1996). Wherever writers invoke the philosophy of the medicine wheel, their vision comes from the

same blueprint described by Storm (1972) and they preserve the basic text used to denote the power associated with each point of the spiritual compass. Amid the muddle, and obscured by it, is a sincere desire on the part of Indians to invoke the traditions of their cultures as they discover new career paths. Making their career choices comprehensible to their audience is central to their mission. Whether medicine wheels will persist as an analytical tool, or fall by the wayside as yet another deflated fad, will come clear in time.

Imagining a role for internalist archaeology finds fertile ground within another Nativist concept: that of the Fourth World espoused by Manual and Posluns (1974). They offered a credible ideological landscape for imagining the past, although it was defined by twentieth century polarized, Cold War politics. Theirs was an ideology of resistance which they superimposed upon the Native's experience with post-colonialism. The Fourth World was encapsulated within the overarching political reality of the First World. It was fundamentally different from the experience of people in the Third World. While aboriginal people in Third World countries had the potential to reclaim their nations after expelling colonial powers, those in the Fourth World had no such prospects of reclaiming that form of nationhood. Instead they had to articulate their nationalism in terms of resistance to a powerful, encapsulating polity. Thus archaeologists in Third World countries could write about how antiquities supported nationalist causes by contributing symbols of identity for their newly independent nations (Mazariegos 1998). In countries like Canada, where archaeological work is dominated by the state, Native people were likely to ignore it as a source for constructing their identity. However, their interest in antiquities and sacred sites never diminished, as these were regarded as loci in their on-going dialogue with the spirit nation. Rather, their silence reflected the disadvantaged socioeconomic status of Indians in modern society. Without starting an archaeological cold war, Indian researchers guided by Fourth World ideology can embrace resistance to an establishment that seeks to appropriate their heritage for its own purposes. Resistance may be manifested by direct challenges to spurious musings that are put forward as plausible explanations of observed data or by

reclaiming emblems from the archaeological record which are employed as material to buttress an identity anchored in antiquity.

Just as the passage from protest to professionalism requires a set of tenets inspired by aboriginal people's sense of the past, moving beyond protest and resistance will require some form of rapprochement between Indians and archaeologists. The reality is that professional accreditation is assigned by the institutions that sponsor the archaeological research. The paucity of Indian authors in the scholarly literature is but one symptom of the under-representation of Nativist perspectives, and the only way to insert some balance is to encourage Indian students to consider archaeological careers. Appealing to the ideal of resistance to the hegemony of First World archaeology may yet prove to be the most compelling motive for Indian students to embrace careers that will permit them to critique the ideological and theoretic foundations of contemporary archaeology. In the longer term, such an orientation will become the point of departure for proposing competing theories that will bring an internalist sense to ancient history. Once beyond protest, the need will be to articulate those tenets so that internalist archaeology will have a practical guide for imagining the past.

One more point has to be made about this dialogue. Indians developed unique concepts of antiquity in the absence of Western archaeological thought and these form the basis of traditional narratives. If internalist archaeology is to reflect that uniqueness, it must give serious thought to hearing stories from ancient times as its antidote. Fortunately, archaeology is tailor-made for imagining the past within an oral tradition because both tap into history from unwritten sources. Curiously, this sentiment is not too distant from that expressed by Wayne Nelles, a Canadian archaeology graduate student studying at Simon Fraser University during the 1980s. Lamentably, he mused, professional archaeologists were largely indifferent to mnemonic recitations, narratives, stories and legends and, because of this, they ignored an important tool for interpreting archaeological data (Nelles 1984). Archaeologists had artificially impeded the inter-disciplinary status of their studies

by deferring to specialization, fragmentation and professionalization of knowledge, when the opposite tack would better uphold the holistic spirit of archaeological research. Examining myths was compatible with the search for cultural processes because "exposure to myth analysis for archaeologists will not only help them evaluate historicity in traditions or myths, but will aid them in recognizing the mythical quality of their own historical perspectives and the cultural relativity of archaeological knowledge" (Nelles 1984: 2).

That oral traditions should receive too little attention as a source for imagining antiquity is hardly surprising since the historical encounter with Christianity and science denigrated Indian lore to the point of irrelevance. However, the general concept that oral traditions contribute to an internalist sense of the past has significance for the intellectual discourse of aboriginal people. More significant though, is the role of mythology as a marker of identity, as a result of which the goal of rehabilitating oral traditions as a means for understanding antiquity takes on greater relevance. The duel between Christianity and science dominates modern social discourse, but a conspicuously different origin myth underscores the unique identity that aboriginal people carry into the modern world. Therefore, if myths are to be vibrant sources of inspiration, Native researchers must demonstrate their potency for constructing special theories that explain limited ranges of data. The objective is not to recreate the ancient aboriginal world, but to arrive at a modern understanding of traditional narratives. With that in mind, the appropriate next step is to lead by example and relate the story of the creation of the world according to *Naapi*. If Blackfoot people wished to envision a plausible reality for their origin myth they would have to search for its signature in the geological record. The story relates the origin of Blackfoot identity and anchors their strongest emotional ties to their homeland. Since ambiguity looms large over any interpretation based on scientific principles, only general statements on earth science and Pleistocene conditions can follow from this story. The intent is not to remake science into mythology, but to make science comprehensible to a Blackfoot audience by way of mythology.

The World According to *Naapi*

Blackfoot internalist history emanates from origin narratives that recount in the adventures of *Naapi*, the creator, how the Blackfoot world came into being. According to Percy Bullchild, an elder with the Peigans in Montana and author of *The Sun Came Down* (1990), there had existed previously eras on earth where different conditions prevailed. One such era had snakes as the dominant lifeform. It was destroyed because the snakes conspired against their creator. Reggie Crowshoe, a Peigan elder in Alberta and director of the Oldman River Cultural Centre, tells of another era immediately before the present world was created, in which humans and star-people enjoyed proximal relations (Personal Communications 1998). Some events that occurred in that ancient time left reminders that explained the origin of conditions in the current era. They are woven into the narrative in which *Naapi* survives the destruction of the former world, sets in place the condition of the present world and re-creates life on earth. Even now Peigans still relate this story, although it must compete with Christian and scientific explanations about the origin and nature of the universe.

A long time ago, the sky and the earth were joined. There was no day or night during that time. Humans and star-people walked side by side and daily held conversations on all manner of things. Unlike the snakes, whose treachery doomed their kind, humans and star-folk had no aspirations to over-throw their creator. Mostly they lived harmoniously with each other, sharing in all the experiences they encountered together. All that ended because a star-boy went to meet some human children to play their games in the forest near a river. They played well for awhile, but then the human children began to tease and taunt the star-boy. At first only two human boys did the teasing. Soon, others joined until they were all in the fray throwing their insults at the doomed star-boy. Their hysteria built to such an extent that their persecution began to turn violent. They picked up stones and started to hurl them at the star-boy. He cried and protested, but they ignored his pleas. He begged them to stop, but they only laughed and threw more stones. When he lay

helpless on the ground one of the older boys picked up a cobble and walked up to him and dropped it. The human children came to their senses too late. They stood stunned knowing that they had done a terrible wrong.

They fled the scene, running in different directions. As they disappeared into the forest the star-boy exploded. Pebbles of light streamed about in chaotic frenzy hitting against trees or landing on the ground nearby. Like embers fading to ash, the star-boy's remains dimmed and solidified. Where they hit the trunks of trees bracket fungus grew out of the bark and where they landed on the ground puffball mushrooms appeared. For that reason Blackfoot speakers make no distinction between fungi and stars when they say *kakato'siiksi* (sg. *kakato'si*). The connection between the two meanings is made clear by this story. When a sacred fire was needed to begin a ceremony, the dried punk of bracket fungus was used. Its combustibility, old Blackfoot people would say, was the residual heat of the star-boy being released to start the fire.

The human children who witnessed the explosion trembled in terror as they wondered how they were capable of such a deed. They shuddered to think of what would happen next. They said nothing as they drifted off from each other and glumly stumbled back to their camp. Although their parents may have wondered about their silent children, nobody noticed anything awry. At least the human parents were unconcerned by the sudden flight of merriment from their camp. The mother of the star-boy, on the other hand, knew something was amiss. She had cooked a meal and yet her son had not returned. So she went looking for her husband in case they were together. She found her husband visiting with some humans and interrupted their conversation to inquire about their son. He answered in the negative and asked her concern. She said their son was missing. She grew apprehensive as she began to think where he might be. She recognized a human boy peeking out from inside a tipi and remembered her son saying he was joining his friends by the river.

She thought he might still be there so she told her husband. They decided to go and look for him. They went to the places where they usually found him. They grew wary of the forest as they approached the river's edge. Something was out of the ordinary. The trees had a different quality to them that they could not point out. They came to the place where their son had been murdered. There they saw the small crater left from the explosion. They realized that the bracket fungus on the trees and the mushrooms on the ground were what remained of their son. They cried out in anguish as they raced back to camp, all the while blaming themselves for not being more vigilant. They wondered who would carry out such a heinous act. Someone had to know! They wondered if the human children had something to do with what happened.

The star-people convened a meeting with their chief, Sun. The parents told him of their suspicions that their son was murdered by the human children. They described how their son had gone off to play with them right before he went missing. They were able to give a description of his usual playmates. Sun said that he would go to the humans and ask if their children were responsible for his murder. Sun went to the humans and told them of the suspicious demise of the star-boy and that he was last seen playing with some human children. Sun demanded that the humans hand over their children for interrogation by the star-people. Fearing the fate of their children, the human parents denied that there was any connection between the two circumstances. They told the star-people that their children were innocent of any wrong-doing. Sun again demanded the culprits be turned over to face up for their actions. Again the humans rejected his demand, saying there were other possible suspects in the death of the star-boy. Sun asked again, but the humans said that possibly his death was accidental. Sun asked a fourth time for the young offenders to be brought forward, but the humans said no again. Perhaps the star-boy was mauled by one of the wild animals that frequently roamed nearby the camp, they explained.

Sun became exasperated with the human's refusal to deal with the crime and went back to his tipi, where he met a mob of angry star-people. He told them of the recalcitrant

humans who would not listen to his case. One star-man suggested that they hold a riot in the human camp and wreak havoc there. A second star-man proposed that they retaliate in kind and kill the human children who committed the crime. A third star-man said they should hold the parents responsible and kill them too. A fourth star-man rose and said that perhaps the world was no longer safe for star-people. The solution was to peel the sky away from the earth and put some distance between themselves and those treacherous humans. Anger and revenge hung in the air like thick, acrid smoke as the star-people considered their options. They liked the last suggestion, but they still felt that the humans could not go unpunished for their stubborn evasion of justice. After some more deliberation the star-people decided that all the humans should be held accountable if they would not deliver the criminals. They agreed that they would move the sky away from the earth and live out of reach of humans, who could not be trusted anyway. They decided that their parting gesture would be to send lots of clouds to rain constantly upon the earth until it was drowned by water.

Sitting at the back of the conference tipi was an elder star-man named *Naapi*. His thick mane was more white than gray, but he wore his age comfortably. He was the last surviving member of his star-family and no one paid any attention to him. All his kin had grown old and lost their light and energy. Afterwards he lived alone in his tipi and the only visitors who ever stopped by and broke his loneliness were the humans. He felt delighted when they brought their children to him and asked him to confer names upon them. His spirits were always lifted when the human children called him grandfather. He felt a special attachment to the humans and he loved them like the family he once knew. When he heard what the star-people were planning, he decided to do something for the humans. After the meeting he left the tipi and went over to the human families and told them they were in danger. The world would soon be visited by cataclysms because the star-people were angry and were threatening to peel the sky away from the earth. They were planning to inundate the world with water and drown them all.

He described the approaching calamity and said there might be a safe haven in the mountains. He instructed them to follow him there and to climb with him to the lofty heights of *Ninaiistako*, the chief mountain. He told them they had no time to strike their camp or pack their food. They had to go immediately. Nobody doubted his words since they all considered him their grandfather. They left their camp behind and made haste to get to the mountains. As they were crossing the plains a strong wind blew in and great clouds of dust billowed in the air. *Naapi* told them the star-people were pulling the sky away from the earth. People looked about in confusion as everything blue seemed to lift off their world. They strained against the wind as they watched the blue float over their heads, then it was above the highest trees. Soon they could see the star-people walking about as they rose higher and higher. Finally they appeared only as points of light as they disappeared with the blue. Then the world was cloaked in darkness as swollen rain clouds closed off all sight of the blue. Water burst down from the clouds and washed the earth. Hailstones pelted the people as they ran for cover under the trees. They found no shelter there because the lightning seemed to track down those huddling under trees and fry them to cinders.

Naapi urged them to keep walking. They left their camp in the valleys because the river banks could not contain all the water. They started marching faster when even the river valleys were overflowing. Lakes were forming or getting deeper right before their eyes. Those who tarried too long in one place were lost in the deluge. The band seemed to grow smaller with each step they took. Only a few reached the chief of the mountains where *Naapi* led them. Anyone who looked behind would have seen the plains disappearing fast under a sheet of water. Anything they ever owned was now so much flotsam and jetsam roiling in the muddy waters. They could not waste any time on regret however, because the flood waters were lapping at their heels. One or two people lost their footing as they clambered up the side of *Ninaiistako*, the chief mountain, and were instantly pulled in by the under current foaming up behind them. *Naapi* reached the top of the

mountain and looked behind to see only a few people desperately seeking the summit. He knew their chances were slim, but he encouraged them to climb faster.

Knowing that he too might be drowned if he did nothing, *Naapi* reached into his carrying pouch and withdrew a wondrous lariat. Every colour imaginable shimmered off its length as he twirled it over his head. He threw the rope in the direction of a passing cloud to capture it within the noose. He pulled it taut and anchored his end to the top of the chief mountain so the cloud could not rain down anymore. To this day, when Blackfoot speakers see a rainbow, they still say the rain will stop soon because *Naapi* has let fly his lariat to capture the clouds. *Naapi* took out a second rope and lassoed another cloud and tied it down too. He took out a third rope and ensnared yet another to make sure it could go no further. He took out the last of his ropes and caught a fourth cloud which he tied down beside the others. For the few souls who made it near the summit *Naapi* quickly made a raft from the logs that floated nearby. However, it was too late for them and the last sight they caught of their world was a brilliant stream of iridescent colour passing above them to the clouds. At last, the star-people had gotten their revenge because all humans had been drowned in the flood. Like the snakes, the human's demise was a result of their treachery.

Naapi had not acted quick enough by tying down the clouds as the rising water soon inundated the mountain. *Naapi* climbed aboard his raft, alone again. Nobody had survived the deluge. He floated with his regret for a long time after the clouds stopped sending rain. When the clouds broke apart they revealed a brilliant blue sky above the water that had not existed before. *Naapi* could see Sun sitting bright in the middle of it, and nearby was his wife, Moon, and barely visible was their son, Morningstar. *Naapi* surveyed the water all about him and could not see a mote of dry land. Inundating the world had kept the sky close so Sun could hear his words. His tone was respectful, but reflective, when he revealed his thoughts to Sun. *Naapi* said he understood why the world was destroyed, but he added that creating humans had not been a mistake in the first place.

He found them to be endlessly fascinating and their companionship to be a constant source of amusement. Sun told *Naapi* that he could join the other star-people in the sky country that they had just made. However, *Naapi* declined their offer because he now felt more out of place than ever. He said he might as well just float on the water until his light and energy gave out. Sun could not accept that option. So he gave *Naapi* the power of creation and told him to create a new world from and for which he could re-create humans. *Naapi* learned that creation would be his choice and dilemma, but the power to destroy it was reserved for Sun. He also learned that Sun and his family would watch over it closely and not interfere. Sun said that at times he would retreat to his lodge in the sky country so that the other star-people could watch the new world that *Naapi* would create.

Infused with the power of creation, *Naapi* suddenly felt vigorous and rejuvenated. He could do anything, but he was a creative force with nothing to work with. That is when he first understood the dilemma of creation that Sun had spoken of. Fortunately for *Naapi*, not everyone was destroyed in the flood. While he was pondering his priorities, Loon suddenly swam by and asked *Naapi* if he could rest on his raft. Loon ululated his affection for water, but he thought that too much of a good thing was not so good. He told *Naapi* how he survived the flood by swimming on the rising water. He was certain that some other water-people had survived, but he was not sure where they were now. Just then Muskrat came paddling along and climbed on board the raft too. He was too short of breath to talk, he only gasped and pointed to a driftwood log where Otter and Beaver clung for safety. *Naapi* directed the raft toward them and they too climbed on board. No one was injured but they were all cold and tired, so they huddled beside *Naapi*. While they recovered their wits, *Naapi* thought of what he had to do.

The small cadre of survivors rested and recovered, and when they awoke *Naapi* announced to them that he had a plan. He told them that if he was to create a new world he would need a sample of the old one. All he required was a handful of mud. He would need their help for his mission. They were each to dive into the water, find the bottom and

retrieve some earth. Once he had the mud, he could use it to create a solid, new world. The water-people agreed to join the mission. Muskrat was rested and volunteered to go first. Before anyone could object, he was in the water. His scaly, little tail cut the water as if waving farewell. Many heartbeats later, the scrappy little rodent came to the surface; once more gasping for air and clinging to the side of the raft. Muskrat recovered his breath and apologized for his failure. *Naapi* assured Muskrat that his apology was unnecessary. He had not failed because they knew now that it was far deeper than they expected.

While everyone was preoccupied with Muskrat before they realized what happened, Loon jumped into the water. He was long gone. They had only to wait and see if he had any success. They waited and waited. Finally, an exhausted, sleek bird broke the surface of the water and gulped in air as if it were a particularly large trout. Once he regained his composure he too apologized for not succeeding. *Naapi* told him not to worry, they were just glad he could still breathe. *Naapi* told them the flood water was deeper than he thought and he might have to reconsider his plan. With a single voice they objected saying his plan could work. Otter said he would try next. He hyper-ventilated for a few seconds then dove into the water. An instant later he disappeared into its murky depths. For a long, long time he remained submerged and they waited with baited breath for him to surface. Suddenly he cried from the water as his aching lungs filled with air. He was aided aboard the raft and he told *Naapi* of his failure to reach the bottom.

Naapi was seriously rethinking his plan. He confided his uncertainty to Beaver who persuaded him that his plan could work. Beaver convinced *Naapi* to let him make one more effort. So Beaver jumped into the abyss, slapping his flat tail on the water in furious bravado. He was gone far longer than any of his mates. Muskrat chewed his claws, while Otter darted around the raft studying the water. Loon warbled nervously that Beaver might be lost. Just as *Naapi* reassured him that everything would be fine, Beaver's lifeless body floated to the surface. They choked back their cries so they could pull him aboard the raft. Beaver's body lay on the raft. As his friends began to mourn, *Naapi* said he could revive

Beaver by sharing the spirit of breath with the amiable, toothy mammal. His friends waited anxiously as *Naapi* pulled open Beaver's mouth and breathed into him. Instantly he revived as his companions cheered in delight. Beaver began coughing up the water he had swallowed. They cheered even louder when Beaver opened his paw to reveal a clump of mud. They all agreed that in the new world Beaver should be chief of the water-people. *Naapi* concurred and said he had lots of work to do.

He accepted the mud from Beaver and proceeded to demonstrate his creative powers. He rolled the mud in his palms, all the while breathing over it. When it formed a ball, he threw it back in the water. Rather than sinking the ball of mud bobbed in the water and began to grow. First it grew to be the size of their raft, then an instant later it was the size of a small island. It continued to increase in size until it grew to be a big island. Soon the castaways no longer felt marooned on their raft. They left its confines beached on dry land as they walked across the new world *Naapi* had created. *Naapi* raced ahead of them unable to contain his joy. He declared he would remould the world in his image. While the earth continued to grow he piled up some dirt to be the backbone of the world. When the world was fully formed these became the Rocky Mountains. Then he made smaller piles and these became the Hand Hills, the Belly Buttes, the Knee Hills, the Thigh Hills, etc. Even today, modern cartographers continue to employ the *Naapi* toponymic system for their maps of southern Alberta.

As water retreated from view, Loon fretted that he might soon perish because, despite everything, he was still a diving bird. Muskrat chimed in that he too liked water around and not having any would pose serious problems for him. Otter echoed Muskrat and Loon's concern, but said he liked flowing water and a river or stream would be nice. *Naapi* saw their predicament, so he etched in some river valleys and formed some shallow land as basins to collect water. Since Beaver was declared the chief of the water people, *Naapi* instructed him on the methods of controlling flowing water. That way he could create a home for himself, and for Muskrat, Otter and Loon. Then *Naapi* set about creating

mates for his companions by forming them out of clay and sharing with them the spirit of breath. Then he created the trees in the forest and all the animals that lived on the land.

He had built his new world to its present dimensions because he had enjoyed the company of humans. Now finally, *Naapi* prepared to create humans to inhabit his world. He picked up some clay and shaped it into the image of a man. Then he shared the spirit of breath with his creation and instantly the man began to breathe on his own. He shaped some clay into the image of a woman and brought her to life with his breath. *Naapi* told the couple who they were and then taught them how to live in the new world he had created. He warned them that the star-people were known to be vengeful. People must always be respectful of them, otherwise they might just destroy the world if they became offended by human actions. For eons the ancestors of the Blackfoot inhabited the world *Naapi* had created for them. They enjoyed all its benefits, and they faced its obstacles together as a people.

Sadly though, that world ended when modernity intruded on the northern plains. Proselytizing missionaries taught the Blackfoot that their universe was flawed and replaced it with the heaven of classic Christianity. Too soon, that vision was supplanted by a more modern universe that astronomers could discern while peering through their telescopes. Now post-modern astronomy makes the universe of *Naapi* ever more remote each time they look to a more distant galaxy in some corner of the sky. As for *Naapi*, he still likes the company of humans, and finds their antics amusing, but he has grown more reclusive as modernity has entrenched itself. *Naapi* once again feels out of place and prefers to pitch his camp in the boreal forest. Its solitude suits his temperament, but he still finds time to show his affection. Every winter, just as the solstice has passed *Naapi* gathers all the presents that he has made over the summer and packs them into a big sack which he places on his toboggan. Then he rounds up a herd of eight caribou and hitches them to his sleigh. He imbues them with his power and they magically fly off to all the homes on the Blackfoot reserves where he distributes presents to one and all.

The World According to *Naapi*: Reconsidered

Myths of deluge rightly seem out of place in a land-locked, semi-arid grassland where droughts are common and dust bowl conditions are always only one dry season from returning. Water everywhere is but a mirage of phantom lakes that disappear with the heat waves on a hot summer afternoon. Potable water is mostly absent because the few sloughs that persist throughout the summer are saturated with alkaline and choked with algae in bloom. Rain punctuates the sunshine so infrequently that no little irony goes along with the Blackfoot phrase *nisamsootaan*, or long rain, to denote the short rainy period in spring. Throughout recent history too there is ample evidence of drought on the plains, yet paradoxically in the Blackfoot origin myth the world is destroyed and reborn in water. Pouring the waterlogged myth from the storyteller's repertoire onto the geological record is not about drowning the spark of reason. Nor is it about fossilizing Blackfoot mythology by situating it among the sedimentary strata. Rather, reconsidering the world according to *Naapi* in light of modern geology is about finding new uses for oral narratives in a modern worldview. Blackfoot mythic history is too good to be forgotten and here it can serve as a starting point for lessons in topics such as Pleistocene geology, palaeoclimatology or geomorphology. Explaining the mechanics of land formation mentioned in the story by reference to physical processes brings the ancient past into focus through two lenses that each add a unique perspective.

This origin myth could easily be dismissed as an artifact of ancient times, except that it shapes the identity of a modern people. Themes and motifs woven through folklore are fantastic embellishments lacquered onto first-hand experiences. Still, catastrophes of biblical proportions, star-people tearing the sky from the earth, larger-than-life heros and spontaneous creation make the retelling of this ancient tale problematic for the secular mind. Blackfoot origin myths seem hopelessly quaint when told to an audience whose comprehension of modern geology sculpts their cognitive geography. Everyone in the age of reason knows that the earth is not flat, nor is there a sky at all; they are merely illusions

imprinted on the mind from a certain perspective. Plate tectonics, mountain building and global climate change explain the secular landscape better than a star-man living in self-imposed exile. Therefore, syncretizing such divergent worldviews seems as near to impossible as explanations can get. However, if Blackfoot people wish to imagine a modern equivalent of their origin myth, the most likely candidate would be Glacial Lake Agassiz - a mythical lake in its own right (Figure 1.1).

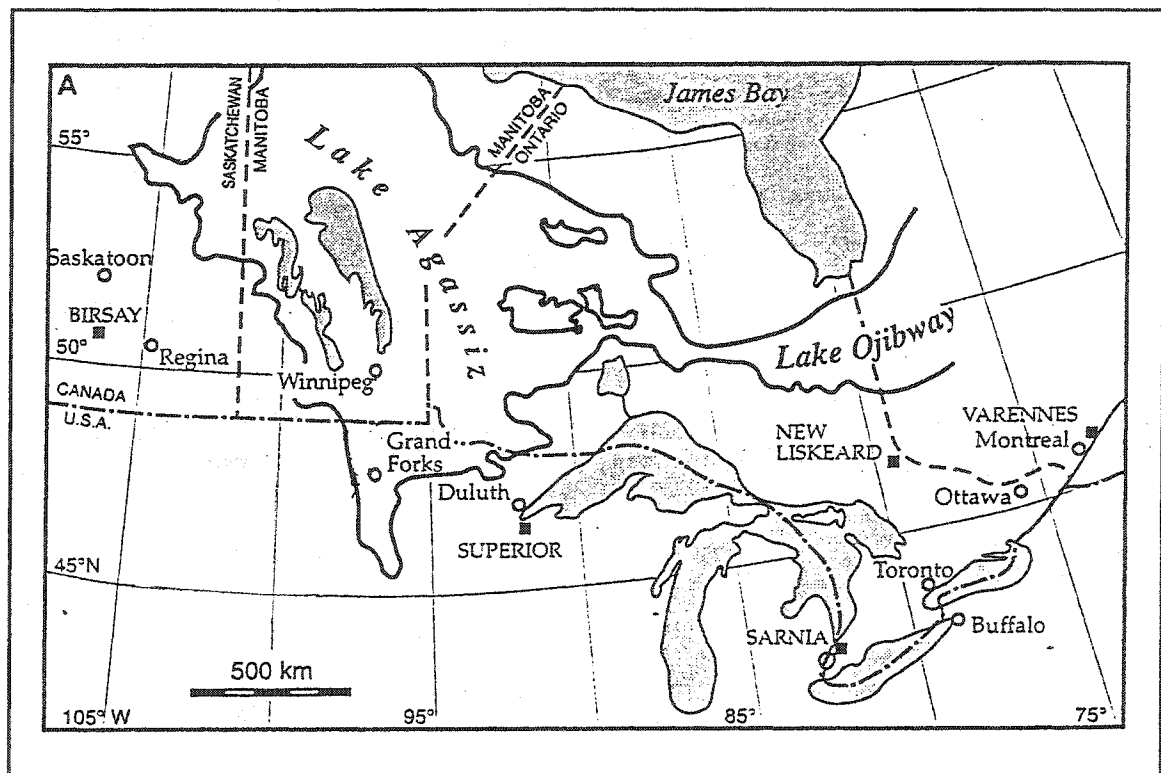


Figure 1.1 Glacial Lake Agassiz at its maximum extent in front of the Laurentide ice dam. Such proglacial lakes are typically ephemeral. They drain rapidly when the ice dam melts (Remenda et al. 1994).

Reason, in a knowable universe, explains the landscape to be the end result of uniformitarian action of a dynamic earth. Only statements of general orientation could be made from the concept that ancient myths make reference to pluvial events or ephemeral impoundments of water obliterating dry land. However, if the intent was to present a lesson in geology, where geophysical processes are substituted for *Naapi*, then certainly such general conclusions would suffice. The sequence of events would make a plausible

case for imagining this narrative in a secular history built on current notions of global climate change. Finding the deluge described in the tale, means understanding how it would leave its signature in the geological record. Archaeological evidence might consist of features like hearths adjacent to, or below, the glacio-lacustrine sediments, but that only proves people were in the region not that the myth occurred there. Determining if mythical references to a deluge found their inspiration in geological events is not the conclusion, rather situating the myth in geological time is about defining a modern purpose for myths.

Delivering mythic tales in a vehicle built for understanding natural processes has the benefit of introducing timeless concepts, such as the water cycle, into a lesson based on traditional narratives. Rain is a significant motif in the story because it is a familiar source of water to plains cultures, and it can impart information on how weather patterns work. Persistent rain is deemed responsible for flood conditions, whereas on the global scale it is actually a symptom of climate change. If the story unfolds at the Pleistocene/Holocene boundary, when proto-Algonkian speakers were first colonizing the land made free by melting ice, it was likely reporting on the local climate at that time. Imagine the weather if sudden deglaciation released massive amounts of water into the atmosphere. Naturally, the water cycle would bring lots of precipitation to regions adjacent to any large impoundment of water. Local climate regimes are typically influenced by continental climatic patterns and on the northern plains two significant atmospheric phenomena fuel the pluvial conditions. The first is a stable high pressure system supported by the cold air atop the continental glacier system and the second is the influx of moist, tropical air from the Gulf of Mexico. Air circulates clockwise around a high pressure system in the northern hemisphere, so any cells of tropical air would be deflected in the direction of rotation. Warm, moisture laden air would also be rising toward the northern plains and as it cools its moisture-holding capacity is reduced - resulting in precipitation. Thus, rainy weather dominating the short, summer season was likely the reality for proto-Algonkian people living in the Hudson Bay watershed before the flood began. Any increase in moisture would affect the biotic regime,

so a change in the pollen profile could be expected. Furthermore, sedimentary evidence would also accumulate in areas receiving increased precipitation.

Persistent rain is present in the myth, but in the geological context it is one of several factors contributing to flood conditions. Thus, the lesson turns to understanding geomorphic processes where glacial action impounds melt water into ephemeral, proglacial lakes, such as Lake Agassiz. At the height of the last ice age, approximately 12,000 years BP, lobes of Laurentide ice overran the highland divide between the Hudson Bay and Gulf of Mexico watersheds. Rivers draining from the Rocky Mountains into Hudson Bay were deflected southward through a series of ice-front channels and proglacial lakes and spilled into the Mississippi drainage system. By 11,000 years BP, ice age conditions were collapsing and the continental glaciers had retreated to the Hudson Bay watershed; the flow of water from the Rocky Mountains also returned to its natural course. Another millennium later the ice front had receded to the region of northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba (Kehew and Teller 1994). Immediately in front of the continental glaciers impounded water from the rivers flowing east from the Rocky Mountains over-flowed their valleys and coalesced to form huge proglacial lakes. Glacial Lake Agassiz was the result when flood waters reached their maximum extent. Its dimensions were so immense that it filled up the basin reserved for the Hudson Bay watershed; the overflow spilled into the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico drainage from its southeast extremity (Teller and Mahnic 1988) while in the northwest it discharged into the Arctic Ocean via glacial Lake McConnell and the Mackenzie River (Fisher and Smith 1994). No one can say for certain how quickly this ice-dammed lake flooded the land below the Missouri Escarpment, but ancient beach features, such as stranded shorelines and fluvial sediment, all situated high above modern water levels reveal the extent of this deluge (Teller 1995). Organic material, such as pollen, plant macrofossils, insects, and mollusc assemblages, provide more clues regarding the absolute chronology of events. Radiocarbon dates can distinguish different phases of the lake over the thirty centuries during which it existed (Bajc et al. 2000).

Imagining the physical environment of the myth contains the ingredients for a lesson in archaeological reconstruction of ancient cultures. Fortunately, humans are visible in the vicinity of glacial Lake Agassiz, for example in the Swan River valley of west-central Manitoba, although the cultural sequence has yet to be elucidated. Lake maximum extent in this region coincides with "the time the Fluted Point Tradition (Folsom) was replaced by the Plano Tradition (Hell Gap, Plainview, Agate Basin, Cody, etc.) on the Southern and Central plains. Distinctive projectile points and other artifacts recovered locally from cultivated fields indicate that hunters who made points of the Plano Tradition succeeded in occupying the Swan River valley" (Nielsen et al. 1984: 838). People of the Plano Tradition crossed into the Hudson Bay watershed and proceeded eastward until their advance was checked by the glacial lake. For all the succeeding millennia, people settled among the ephemeral lakes and swollen spillways practicing their hunting skills on bison, muskox and caribou. Coincidentally, cultural groups belonging to the Algonkian language family, such as the Cree, Blackfoot, Ojibwa, all refer back to a mythical time that had its origin in a flood. Proving that Blackfoot people are the direct descendants of the Plano tradition people who lived on the shores glacial Lake Agassiz is difficult. However, as a statement of general orientation, it reinforces internalist history in the Blackfoot world.

Reconsidering the world according to *Naapi* through geological events does not diminish the intrinsic value of the story. It performs its function as a bonding agent for Blackfoot culture. Accepting the veracity of the story is not the point either, nor does the situation call for an either/or proposition (Either you believe this version, or you are a scientist!). Rather it demonstrates that the internal and external dialogues are not antipodal. Researching an internalist understanding of antiquity can be the agent for syncreticism. Blending Blackfoot narratives and geology can provide insight about the world that may have inspired the origin myth. Following this approach will entail an examination of traditional narratives with the intention of decyphering the meaning they carry. Explaining the Blackfoot mythic past to a modern audience that is only too familiar with a secular

history will be made possible by appropriating the methods and analytical tools of archaeology to promote an internalist sense of the past. Parallel to the internal dialogue, an external one will take place because archaeology is increasingly a consideration for aboriginal communities. They require an intermediary who can translate the nuances of a complex discipline and who can challenge the *status quo* when it does not fulfill their expectations. The external dialogue examines the pervasive modes of conducting archaeological work and proposes the approach that is better suited to an internalist understanding of antiquities and their management.

Cultural Resource Management

Objects from antiquity inspire much rumination because their sudden appearance usually presents the finder with an indefinite message to decipher. Even today, when Indians unearth artifacts or fossils the message some hear is from the spirit world. They curate these charms as holy gifts which could protect the possessor from harm. Time is not a consideration when they feel the rush of good fortune knowing that some sympathetic spirit has shared a unique honour. Surmising a supernatural origin for found objects fuels the dialogue with the spirit nation and infuses artifacts, physical features or unusual natural objects with special powers. The statement "In folklore we have relics of ideas which were current in former ages" (Oakley 1965: 9) would be a familiar sentiment for people whose reality includes a spirit haunted universe. For example, among aboriginal cultures on the northern plains, the extraordinary phenomenon of medicine wheels was better explained as the labours of little people who lived in nearby caves (Grinnell 1922). Chapter four in this volume shows how Blackfoot people see in ammonite fossils a buffalo charm that gives the holder direct communication with the buffalo spirit. Elsewhere among other cultures, curious objects like iron meteorites were gifts from heaven that the gods hurled down and which were transformed into ritual objects that were sometimes left in graves (Zimmer 1916). Thus, setting aside supernatural explanations and instead seeing the manufactures of another age requires a conceptual reorganization when imagining the past. Antiquities as

a generic category promoted a secular antiquity that was acceptable to an age of reason. However, in the post-World War Two era a similar mutation occurred in the imaginary terrain of the past that has gone unnoticed.

Cultural resource management (CRM) is an industry mandated by law and activated in governmental policy. Joe Watkins, a Choctaw archaeologist and expert in CRM, distinguishes two modes of archaeology which he labels compliance and academic. Compliance archaeology is regulated by public laws and is largely the domain of consultants, whereas academic practices have fewer constraints and regulations (Watkins 2000). Because compliance archaeology enjoys legal protection, it has diffused through the discipline and now informs the establishment discourse concerning the contested terrain of antiquity. Ostensibly it was about advocating for endangered archaeological material, because it bore a "dynamic element" engendering "an attitude towards ancient monuments and historic buildings preservation....that was significantly different" (Cleere 1989: ix) from the old archaeology. When it first appeared on the scene, it was supposed to inspire a new attitude of concern for heritage material that was being razed beneath the bulldozers of progress. Coupled with the realization that material things handed down from the past did not carry uniform value was the requirement that choices had to be made regarding levels of protection. Not everything could be saved, and restrictions on time and money led to the solution of developing a scale to distinguish which material would be awarded protection and which were expendable. Such fragility indices were designed to balance development plans for a region against the cultural significance of archaeological material; with archaeological consultants, not Indians, being the arbiters of cultural significance.

Cultural resource management operates under the premise that modern practices such as developing undisturbed lands for residential, industrial or municipal infrastructure place cultural materials at risk of destruction. The best society can hope for is keeping the destruction light and mitigating the unavoidable impacts. Thus, mobilizing public concern for potential harm to archaeological sites spurred governments to respond with public laws

that forced compliance with a process of inventory and analysis. The final product was an impact statement of development plans on archaeological resources. A typical legal prescription, such as the *Historical Resources Act* in Alberta, assigns a cabinet minister to be responsible for administering the act and explains the broad duties of the minister. It establishes the ministry necessary to administer the act, and empowers the minister to act in the public interest. "The Minister may from time to time engage the services of experts or persons having special technical or other knowledge to advise him or to inquire into and report to him on matters under this act" (Alberta 1987: 3). Taking his direction from the act, the minister may "carry out surveys, investigate, document and excavate any site in Alberta." In order to "report on the investigation, documentation or excavation of any site," he may "enter into agreements with persons to carry out surveys and excavations and prepare reports on them" (Alberta 1987: 7). The experts alluded to, form the professional corps of the consulting industry, whose personnel are trained in methods and techniques of archeological research necessary to execute the various steps involved in the impact assessment process that emanates from this act. Consultants cannot instigate an impact assessment, nor can they proceed with archaeological work without a permit granted by the minister. They only deliver a service to their clientele, who must comply with the law.

Archaeological consulting appeared in Canada during the late 1970s in response to environmental assessment statutes that had been passed by various levels of government. In fact, some archaeological industry experts go so far as to admit that "the character of the archaeological consulting industry in Ontario is an artifact of government policy" (Tyyska 1986: 6). Nowhere is this more evident than in public works, such as building highways, where the government is the advocate, the client and the developer. Development plans trigger the impact assessment process that requires consultants to tender bids when notices are posted by their public or private sector clientele. Alternatively, a developer may approach a specific company because he is familiar with the services they offer. Successful consulting firms get their permission to investigate and, if necessary, excavate

archaeological sites from the appropriate ministry, because public laws expect an impact assessment in advance of disturbances to the natural and cultural landscape. Developers bear the burden of providing such a report to government, if they expect permission to proceed with their plans. Consultation reports must be submitted to the responsible ministry within a period of time specified on the permit; usually six months to a year for the final report depending on the complexity of the work. A small contract may require less time to produce a report, especially if nothing is found. A preliminary letter report is submitted to the heritage ministry immediately upon completion of field work and analysis. It allows the developer to proceed with a project before the final report is prepared. The letter report identifies the developer, the type of development and its location, and the type of impact that is likely to occur.

When the contract is awarded, the consultant proceeds to initiate a judgmental or systematic testing programme at the project site that entails physically traversing the area and subjecting it to a visual ground-surface inspection. Systematic testing programmes involve shovel test-pit sampling at regular intervals to assess the location, extent and nature of any buried sites. Judgmental testing programmes involve surface collecting of unique, or diagnostic portable artifacts (e.g., projectile points, formed flake tools, antler or bone items) lying on the ground, or other interesting, superficially evident material. Apportioning time to laboratory and field methods precedes a written report that presents the results and analysis of the survey or excavation carried out. Consultants will assess the overall heritage significance of all sites identified and evaluate the development plans for their potential impacts on heritage sites. Their professional training will allow them to formulate expert management recommendations for those significant sites in potential conflict with the project plans. Typically, an environmental impact assessment report closes with a series of options ranging from safeguards against destruction to salvage field work that the developer can act upon before proceeding with the project. Authors of reports will solicit opinions about the project area through personal communications with nearby residents.

Interviews and other forms of community consultation are considered integral to assessing the social and cultural impact of a project. Preparing such a report means conducting documentary background research involving the review and evaluation of the archaeological, historical, and ethnographic literature relevant to the proposed project location, because the report must provide a detailed description of the natural and cultural setting, in addition to its contemporary and traditional usage. Often times, written details alone will not suffice, so a final report should contain colour pictures of the project area that accurately illustrate the natural setting and maps should have a scale of 1:15,000, or less, to precisely locate sites.

As provincial governments pass laws about heritage matters within their boundaries, they in effect define the parameters of archaeological consulting because these laws enable public service employees to regulate industry standards for professional recognition. Consultants wishing to be considered competent recipients of archaeological excavation or survey permits must hold the equivalent of a masters of arts degree in archaeology or anthropology. Junior archaeologists may hold a bachelor of arts degree, but do not qualify as permit-holders. They can contribute to the impact assessment in field collecting and laboratory analysis, and they can also be junior authors in the subsequent report. Field survey and excavation methods rely on basic human labour that do not require extensive training, so on-the-job trainees and volunteers often suffice for field work. Consulting firms regularly enter into partnerships with First Nations, whose personnel frequently are young and unskilled, so they are especially suited for field labour. Their involvement typically ends with the field season and their input beyond physical labour is not solicited. Provincial heritage statutes created the hierarchical system of permit holders, support staff and field labour, each level down requiring fewer skills but a bigger labour pool. Activating the law determines who can participate in the archaeological consulting industry.

Resulting from the impact assessment process is a fragility index that reflects the values that contemporary society places on antiquities, as measured in scientific, aesthetic, economic, educational or symbolic terms. "Value is not inherent in any cultural items or properties received from the past....Value is learned about or discovered in these phenomena by humans and thus depends on the particular cultural, intellectual, historical, and psychological frames of reference held by the particular individuals or groups involved" (Lipe 1984: 2). Depending on their assessed value, sites are rated according to their proximity to obliteration. One end of the index relates to material that is not in immediate danger and the management recommendation of leaving the site intact exempts it from more testing. Other cases involve sites that are in immediate danger and all material will be lost if no remediation work is completed. Salvage, or rescue, archaeology then becomes the necessary option and a field crew is dispatched to excavate the endangered site. Mostly this process operates like a well-oiled bureaucratic machine, and development projects proceed apace. However, occasionally, there comes a site such as the Hatzic Rock at Mission, British Columbia that is more touchstone than datum. When this transformer-being was threatened with destruction by a developer in the early 1990s, archaeologists and Indians waged a publicity campaign to inform people of the site's significance. Public interest mounted to the point that the University of British Columbia dedicated a field school to excavate the site, and the developer backed off plans to blast the rock. Eventually, public support grew to such an extent that the provincial government bought the property from the owner and created a heritage park. CRM assigns value to sites based on, among other considerations, educational, scientific or recreational criteria, but the guiding paradigm was that "cultural materials from the past can function as resources - that is, be of use and benefit - in the present and future" (Lipe 1984: 2).

Antiquities and Cultural Resources

Antiquities and cultural resources are one and the same, but this has not always been the case. Conventional wisdom holds that cultural resource management (CRM) first appeared in the early 1970s "in response to federally mandated programs to inventory, to assess the significance of, and to manage cultural resources on public lands" (Fowler 1982: 1). Antiquities, on the other hand, have a long presence in popular accounts of objects found during amateur research of ruins and gravesites. Yet, CRM, in its present form, has become the dominant mode of imagining the past because it serves the national culture so well. Canada's economic history is steeped in resource exploitation, such as beaver pelts in the fur trade, and its relationship to its resources is the sublime theme written into the historical epic underlying the making of a common Canadian identity (Innis 1930). Even the emblems of self-adulation (for example, Canada - the breadbasket of the world) rely on their association with resources. Without a doubt, resources "have always been important in the construction of individual and collective identities. The definition of resources is a culturally driven and culturally constrained process, which also helps to define the social limits of action and experience[...Political] sovereignty and collective political identity have always relied on control of natural resources such as minerals, forest products, energy and wildlife" (Howitt et al. 1996: 4). Through the machinery of CRM, culture was added to that list!

Tracing the origins of a secular interest in antiquities leads to the antiquarians and dilettantes who inhabited renaissance Europe and whose enviable social status allowed them the choice of indulging their eclectic hobbies (Randsborg 1997). Classical Rome and Greece beckoned the renaissance nobleman like sirens singing their spell to the argonauts. Even those scholars not directly spellbound by classical antiquity felt its influence in their studies and travels. Ole Worm (1588-1654), before becoming the father of Danish museums, attended university in Basel, and travelled to Italy on a study tour of ruins. After his studies abroad he returned home to Copenhagen, where he initiated an innovative

survey of historical monuments and other historical remains in the rural parishes around the city to determine if comparable antiquities existed in the north lands. His ground breaking work "untainted by any mysticism or romanticism about the past" was later published and the artifacts formed the inaugural collection of the Danish national museum (Randsborg 1994: 136). His treatise is still a standard reference for modern scholars because many artifacts and sites did not withstand the allure of the black market or the ravages of war.

Antiquities was a generic term used to describe all ancient material and procuring them invariably depended on the tastes and aesthetics of noble souls. Only later would people understand them to be artifacts with a unique provenience. However, there were curiosities they called thunderstones and elfstones because their unusual form resembled tools, only made of stone instead of metal (Oakley 1965). Europe's encounter with the aboriginal world gave antiquarians their first glimpse at a comparative collection for their curiosities. Stone tools and artificial curiosities made in America, and brought home as cargo by seafaring adventurers, gave them the cues they needed to make the connections to the functional equivalent of their enigmatic thunderstones. They saw for the first time a human hand making the elfstones buried in the ground. The ancient past became modern, and it was far older than anyone had imagined. Scientific explanation, similar to theories articulated by geologists and biologists, was needed to create a new basis for imagining the past (Randsborg 1994). As antiquity grew older, degenerationist views, which had dominated religious and social discourse, gradually made room for evolutionist theories of progress. Initially the greater curiosity lay among the elite and ruling classes, but it trickled down to the common folk who displayed no lack of interest in museums and exhibitions (Trigger 1989). Public interest compelled governments to extend legal protection to cairns and monuments and a special class of laws devoted to antiquities came into being. When antiquities gained recognition as evidence of a prior reality "the intrinsic importance of the remains of the past was acknowledged in a national legal code" (Cleere 1989: 1). Antiquarian ideas influenced the debate when these laws to protect ancient sites were being

enacted. By the time Daniel Wilson introduced the term prehistory in his study of ancient Scotland, antiquities had long been a topic of public discourse, and even enjoyed legal protection.

Later, when the northern European model of collecting antiquities as property owned by the finder was exported to its former colonies in North America, antiquarians practiced their trade by amassing Indian artifacts. Debating whether citizens or the state owned antiquities was made moot when national governments began to create their laws implicitly accepting that understanding. When the United States congress enacted the *Antiquities Act* in 1906, it legalized the notion that objects of antiquity could be properties owned by the state (Hutt et al. 1992). Archaeology itself gained formal recognition because of popular support. Universities and governments began expending funds to support research, even if archaeologists had to labour under an antiquarian reputation (Kehoe 1998). As the twentieth century dawned, cultural institutions, such as the Bureau of American Ethnology and various national museums, thrived with support from private and public endowments. Raising their public profile was instrumental in raising public support for appropriating the heritage of Native Americans by exercising the lever of the law. However, the interesting facet here is that archaeologists of the day still imagined antiquities to be property.

Antiquities were still considered cultural property in the premiere issue of *American Antiquity*, the journal of the Society for American Archaeology in 1934, but mid-twentieth century archaeologists were beginning to imagine the past using a novel frame of reference. The significantly different attitude described as the dynamic element of heritage preservation, and tied to the new archaeology, was the introduction of the resource model of heritage. World War II, and its aftermath, were crucial in the development of current public policy as "it saw the beginnings of archaeological heritage management as an integral component of social and economic planning" (Cleere 1989: 2). In the economic boom of the 1950s, development of rural lands into industrial parks and residential neighbourhoods

increased the frequency of encounters with ancient material remains. Embedded in the discipline, but largely overlooked, was that in the post-war years the ideological terrain had shifted and had subtly directed heritage management away from the property model and toward the current resource model.

Under this regime cultural resource management (CRM) became the operative phrase that guided archaeological work. It was embraced quickly by governments because it was a convenient legal instrument that legitimated their claim on antiquities. No Indian nation voluntarily ceded their cultural heritage to any foreign government, so there was residual aboriginal interest in the archaeological record. The ideology of CRM suited the resource-based, national economy because once antiquities became resources there would be no need to create new laws nor any court cases to decide ownership; they were simply retrofitted into the complex legal machinations that governed the country. It fitted well with the opinion of provincial governments in Canada because they retained jurisdiction over natural resources within their boundaries. Although appearing late on the public radar, CRM nevertheless grew to influence public policy until heritage laws came to resemble natural resources statutes. By defining antiquities as resources, archaeologists were paving the way for legislators to proceed with the statutory expropriation of aboriginal rights.

CRM and the Nativist Critique

Like so many social trends, the resource model found its way into modern thought by way of California. In an article about their field work on the Channel Islands, off-shore from Los Angeles, Clement Meighan and Hal Eberhart, two archaeologists from the University of California, Los Angeles, introduced the phrase archaeological resources in the October issue of *American Antiquity* in 1953. Their seminal report, "Archaeological Resources of San Nicolas Island, California," is instructive for understanding the origin of the resource paradigm in archaeology. Less than a decade after World War II, their employer, the U.S. Navy, expedited their reconnaissance project on San Nicolas Island when it granted the two archaeologists permission for their survey. Catering to the aesthetics of their military client likely inspired them to model their report on the military protocol of a scouting mission. Yet, although military in style, their main goal was an archaeological survey. Their reference to cultural resources appears only in their title, whereas in the text they refer to antiquities or artifacts.

Prior to departing on their mission, the scouts gathered ethnographic intelligence in the archives, but it proved to be scanty value indeed. The one slim volume of cultural espionage dedicated to Nicoleños, in Alfred Kroeber's terminology, was gleaned from observations of the last Nicoleña found alive on the island. Evidently, she lived alone there for eighteen years until she was captured in 1853 and brought to Santa Barbara, where she died less than two months later. The lachrymose routine of colonial policies had ensured that her people experienced the same catastrophic population decline as their mainland kin, so little was known of their culture. Like Ishi, the last of his kind, no one spoke her language; from the few words he collected, Kroeber surmised her language belonged to Shoshonean stock. Thus, with few accounts to guide them, the scouting mission set off to the island. They had no trouble finding traces of the former aboriginal inhabitants, because turbulent winds on this desert-like island had caused some stable sand dunes to become

active again, leaving numerous artifacts strewn on the ground surface. All was not lost, as the authors soon found many sites that had not been disturbed in the least.

Scores of middens, cemeteries and village sites covered the island and many overlapped to such an extent that the authors had difficulty deciding where one site ended and where the next began. As their reconnoitering was carried out in the days before absolute chronologies became common, they had to guess at the antiquity of settlement. Either a large population occupied the island for a short time, because the midden deposits were relatively shallow, or the density of sites indicated small groups of seal hunters had occupied it intensely and continuously from very early times. One way or the other, the settlement pattern would have been recognizable to a military strategist storming the beaches of a Pacific island. Nicoleños preferred to locate their village sites at the height of uplands, the better to see migrating whales; a down-slope midden behind the village was the remains of past meals and assorted refuse. Cemeteries often coincided with the dimensions of discard middens, but they were dug into the sterile sand below. Since the Nicoleños subsistence economy had a maritime basis, they gave top consideration to accessing the beach and sea. Their second priority was fresh water and the third determining factor for situating their villages was elevation, the "choice of a high spot with a relatively unimpaired view" being especially regular (Meighan and Eberhart 1953). Their reconnoitering led the two archaeologists to believe that there had been no more than 1200 Indians living on San Nicolas. Of course, these were hypothetical Indians, since their scouting mission was archaeological.

After this one report, mention of resources was absent from *American Antiquity* for a full decade. When it reappeared, it was a guide for developing archaeology as a private enterprise. Fred Wendorf, an archaeologist at the Museum of New Mexico in Santa Fe, borrowed the concept when he warned: "Without prompt action we will soon find most of our archaeological resources destroyed"; therefore governmental action was needed to recognize "the interest of the general public in our cultural and historic resources" (Wendorf

1963: 286). Governments had initiated make-work projects in salvage archaeology during hard economic times, and massive water impoundment projects, such as Glen Canyon Dam, after World War II. Certainly, these government-sponsored projects initiated archaeological surveys in advance of development (Kehoe 1998); however, as Wendorf pointed out, while the robust, post-war economy was generating many new construction activities, such as building pipelines and transmission lines, salvage attempts did not increase commensurately with the number of private construction projects. Any such work relied on the good will, interest and largesse of the company, but "these pioneer efforts in salvage archaeology resulted in overwhelming favorable public approval" (Wendorf 1963: 286). Just as there was need for salvage work during the depression, that did not logically mean it was unnecessary in good economic times. Archaeological salvage, he stated, ought to be a routine part of the equation when assessing the impacts of all development projects.

Wendorf then proceeded to outline a four-step approach to entrenching salvage programmes in the work of private industry. Public support was always crucial, so the Society for American Archaeology had to implement a public education campaign to raise concern over cultural resources threatened by construction projects. Coincident with that action, was the need to invest some energy into politicking. Governments had to be persuaded to recognize the importance of compliance with antiquities legislation before issuing land-use permits. The SAA had to convince government agencies to require salvage archaeology on projects they financed and, finally, they had to convince legislators that new statutes were needed so private companies could not ignore the cultural resources in their path. Private companies had hired archaeologists to carry out research in areas they affected, but that was viewed as a weakness. Since they were employees of the company, they had to follow its orders. There was no independent means of supervising the public's interest in the work, or ensuring that standard archaeological methods were used. One promising solution was for construction companies to contract out the salvage archaeology to a third party; not tied to the company, but not tied to the government either. Negotiated

arrangements resulted in the company covering the cost of survey and excavation, but retaining the option of deciding the final plans. Contract archaeology firms provided the necessary personnel and scientific supervision, and promised to stay out of the way of construction work. There already existed a labour pool of archaeologists graduating from universities who were not sharing the social benefits of a robust economy despite their extensive training; in fact many had to find work outside their profession. Hindsight shows that the author described the foundation for contract archaeology, but he was also referring to cultural resources in a generic fashion, certain that his audience knew what he meant.

Once planted, the resource model took root and grew rapidly in the intellectual matrix espoused by the 'new archaeology'. After all, cultural resources was a new way of imagining antiquity and it gave archaeology the cachet of scientific venture. Furthermore, exploiting resources was already a familiar occupation in capitalist economics. Canada was not far behind in adopting the resource paradigm and in 1960, at a meeting hosted by the Glenbow Institute, the Western Canadian Archaeological Council minutes casually mentioned the idea of cultural resources without providing a definition (Spurling 1986). Everyone in attendance already seemed to know what it meant. By the end of that decade, the property model of antiquity had been supplanted in the discourse of mainstream archaeology. Thanks to the effort of archaeologists, provincial legislators easily proceeded with the statutory expropriation of whatever residual interest aboriginal people may have had in their own heritage by enacting laws using resource definitions. CRM continues to exert its influence throughout Canada, as is clearly visible in the current regime of land claims in Canada. When the Council for Yukon Indians negotiated the terms for a comprehensive agreement, they accepted the resource model in formulating those sections that address heritage (Yellowhorn 1997). They agreed to accept a process "to involve equitably Yukon First Nations and Government, in the manner set out in this chapter, in the management of the heritage resources of the Yukon" (Canada 1993: 147). Toward that

goal, they contribute personnel who sit on the Yukon Heritage Resources Board which was created specifically to implement and act on the clauses contained in the umbrella agreement.

As the 1970s began, CRM was firmly entrenched as normal archaeology and in fact most professional archaeologists made their livelihoods by working in the private sector as contract archaeologists. Contemporary review articles began with the declaration that, "American archaeology is predominantly cultural resource management (CRM) archaeology" (Green and Doershuk 1998: 122). No one would dispute it anymore. Alice Beck Kehoe (1998), in her own inimitable fashion, maintains that CRM made archaeology more democratic, because it was more accessible to a greater cross-section of society. However, as history shows, American-style democracy has seldom boded well for Native Americans. In the process of responding to public demands for protecting historic sites, the U.S. congress passed laws mandating heritage protection on American Indian reservations. The added burden of heritage protection mandated by law obligated tribal governments to look outside their communities for the expertise necessary to manage a sophisticated programme at acceptable levels of academic practices (Klesert and Downer 1990; Anyon and Ferguson 1995). The university-trained personnel needed to oversee such a demanding task were recruited from among the white, Anglo-American student population that was then graduating. Granted, many were motivated by advocacy of a marginal group, but as they moved into tribal government positions they instituted the prevailing model of heritage management coming out of the New Archaeology. As a result the resource paradigm became the common mode of managing the past even in Indian country.

'Thinking outside the box' is one of those strategies that used to inspire corporate middle managers to think up innovative solutions, but which now only inspires parody in comic strips. Once culture was defined in resource terms, everything fitted into one box and American archaeologists, comfortable in that resource paradigm box, never strayed too

close to its edges. When contract archaeologists first ventured onto Indian lands, they found hiring Indians to be a necessary, but frustrating, experience, because they invariably had to train any personnel they wished to hire (Stacy 1998). However, over the three decades that CRM has been common on Indian lands, both sides have matured in their relationship so that each side has a better idea of the other's expectations. However, even those archaeologists who have attempted to present the Indian perspective, have invariably framed it in terms of Euro-American cultural ideals about resources. Richard Stoffle and Michael Evans (1990: 91), two members of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, began their review of "how the process of cultural resource assessment, conceived in Western epistemology and law, forces American Indian people to shift from a traditional resource position," with the premise that Indian people envision heritage in the same mode as mainstream archaeology. Their analysis of the cultural values Indian tribes must deploy to facilitate the cultural triage demanded for development projects underscores the confusion that archeologists often experience as they try to figure out why Indians "prefer to protect all traditional cultural resources when they are potentially impacted by an externally proposed development project" (Stoffle and Evans 1990: 91). Externally imposed ideals for externally proposed development! Exactly the kind of relationship that Indians have been trying to subvert for over a century now.

More troubling, is how cultural resource management has tended to naturalize antiquities. As cultural resource they are prone to scarcity, albeit measured in symbolic terms. In an article entitled "The Past as a Scarce Resource," Arjun Appadurai, an anthropologist at the University of Pennsylvania, wrote of the shared pasts of south India. His words can just as easily apply to the current debate in North America:

In the south Indian temple, the past is an extremely important component of the debate and division in the present. But it does not seem infinitely susceptible to contemporary invention. Indeed, there appear to be a set of norms, pertaining to authority, continuity and interdependence, which govern the terms of the debate concerning the past....these norms permit a controlled accommodation of the structurally 'new' features of colonial rule with the core concepts of the culture system of the temple. Such norms, therefore, have a dual function: on the one hand, they provide a set of rules

within which the past may be debated; and, on the other, they provide an idiom for mediating the effects of structural change on cultural continuity (Appadurai 1981: 217).

So students of archaeology learn about cultural resource preservation because field excavation depletes the resource. With such a rationale for heritage conservation, artifacts and sites stop being the products of Native labour and instead appear naturally in the ground like other resources. As cultural resources, heritage objects can be placed legally beyond the reach of aboriginal people. Not surprisingly, the core economy of industrial capitalism and its policies toward resource management have become the guiding principles for CRM. Human remains and artifacts become analogous to objects formed in nature and, like other non-renewable resources, are uncontrollable in terms of production and location. Ostensibly CRM is about preserving archaeological material as though they are non-renewable resources deserving protection, but built into the model is the rationale for harvesting cultural resources under the guise of salvage. Typically, CRM plans receive priority endorsement for development projects in the resource sector of provincial economies. Archaeology field crews, for example, first enter a forestry cut block to inspect and, if possible, harvest the cultural resources. Afterward, logging companies move in their equipment and begin harvesting the natural resources. CRM itself is consistent with the common law doctrine that Indians did not and do not own the land they occupied in aboriginal times. Rather they only lived on the land, not unlike wildlife. Since they did not own the land they cannot possibly own the cultural resources (Christie 1998).

Development no doubt makes compliance archaeology inevitable but academics who engage in pure research are not obligated to follow the CRM approach. Nevertheless, the resource paradigm guides their mindset as they embark on their field work because scientific archaeology has whole-heartedly embraced the CRM model. The term antiquities at least acknowledges a human origin for artifacts, but it has become a charming adjective that is unable to describe cultural resources. Unfortunately, the vocabulary of resource managers invariably naturalizes antiquities so they have no human origin. Such was the

case when some Mesoamerican researchers announced their discovery of a pre-Classic Mayan cemetery in Honduras. They spoke as if it was a rich, pristine vein of artifacts that, like stalactites, were "deposited over millennia by rainwater seeping through the cavern's limestone walls" (Brady et al. 1995: 36). "Harvest of Skull and Bones" was the headline that trumpeted their discovery in the journal *Archaeology*. In this case the archaeologist was a prospector who scours the caverns in his search for cultural resources.

When modern archaeology began to present the past as a non-renewable resource, it borrowed the ideas favoured in early capitalist environmental economic thought which were created to make sense of the emerging industrial economy with its dependence on resources, such as coal. Erhun Kula (1998:1), an economist at the University of Ulster, explains that extant attitudes and philosophies about resources are a function of mercantilist traditions that developed in early capitalist society. Beginning in Palaeolithic times, cultures were aware of, but aloof to, natural resources and they took their environment for granted. They merely "Nibbled around the edges of a seemingly inexhaustible supply of natural resources." Neolithic cultures on the other hand too often practiced reckless farming methods which affected the environment in detrimental ways. Deforestation, desertification and salinization of the soil, too often formed the legacy of farming cultures that depleted the natural world to subsidize their built environment. Such harmful actions often contributed to the demise of civilizations. Even in the time of empires, philosophers were indifferent to natural resources because conquest could always be counted upon to deliver new territories and resources into the state economy. These models do not harbour the threads of current ideology supporting cultural resource management.

Contemporary western environmental economic thought began with the mercantilist tradition of Europe's colonial era. It's emphasis on commerce, agriculture, international trade and the accumulation of treasure, particularly gold and other precious metals, was vital to the national treasury. Essentially, resources existed to be exploited and to enhance personal and state fortunes. Foreseeing only progress and abundance in a market-driven,

state economy, mercantilists framed the tenets of resource management to suit the demands of industry. Industrial development required fuel, such as coal, which could be found in nature but was finite and so prone to scarcity. Usually its location was not immediately evident, thus natural resources came to be perceived as non-renewable. Renewable resources, on the other hand, were products of agriculture which humans habitually controlled both in production and location.

Choosing a model for heritage is as much an ideological decision as it is a legal one. Ironically the success of CRM has become a major obstacle for comprehensive, national statutes intended to protect heritage material in Canada. Just as human rights legislation was a provincial concern until the federal charter was enacted, heritage legislation remains a provincial matter until over-riding federal laws are passed through parliament. As directed constitutionally, all natural resources fall under provincial jurisdiction. In the early 1990s, the federal government attempted to enlist support for a national heritage resources act. It ultimately failed at the committee stage over provincial complaints that any federal resource laws would trample on their constitutionally defined powers and would not survive a court challenge on those grounds. After this brief flurry of interest, the federal government abandoned its endeavour and successive governments have been reluctant to revisit this topic (Yellowhorn 1993). Paradoxically, if a heritage resource crosses a boundary, provincial or federal, it ceases to be a resource and instead becomes cultural property at which point it is subject to federal laws. The only federal statute enacted to date, *The Cultural Property Export and Import Act*, controls the movement and sale of found objects. However, it cannot protect immovable cultural properties which, because they are wedded to their site, remain resources in their provincial provenience.

Furthermore, in professionalizing cultural resource management, archaeologists convinced the mandarins who create public policy that they alone were capable of harvesting those resources. Professional standards were set at levels that immediately disqualified Native people from having any control over their heritage. Keeping them in

the subaltern when excavating, or analyzing archaeological objects, means Native people may labour under the direction of a professional archaeologist, or Native elders may be consulted to interpret found objects. But, they do not qualify as principal investigators unless and until they hold at least a master of arts degree, at which point they are recognized as professionally competent archaeologists. Such terms ensure that Indians will have to consult and depend on the archaeological community to investigate their heritage; always with the promise of hiring a few temporary labourers for on-the-job training in archaeological field methods to give the impression of a partnership. As illustrated in chapter five, lack of skilled personnel in Indian communities points to the essential need to recruit Native people into this profession so that Native people as a whole have real choices rather than always having to rely on core archaeologists servicing peripheral clients.

If language is the articulation of thought, the resource paradigm has crystallized in archaeological thought. Just as nineteenth-century anthropological theory still guides government relations with Indians, twentieth-century archaeological theory has set the course for public policy on antiquities and it is going to be around for a long time to come. CRM remains the standard content of academic discourse. Nevertheless archaeology has to demonstrate that it is pliable enough to accept Indian motives for heritage management. It has to prove itself as an instrument of society that can be utilized to pursue internalist objectives. Now that heritage management is demonstrably a viable career option for Indians there is a need and an opportunity, and perhaps even an obligation, to imagine alternatives to CRM. Aboriginal people experience a spiritual link with the people who created the archaeological record. Indians regard antiquities as an inheritance which they curate for the duration of their lives and pass down to the next generation. Where an estate is involved, an executor is specified, or if no will exists, a trustee is appointed, and there are rules of inheritance that begin with the immediate family. Therefore, imagining the past in a manner analogous an estate may be better suited to their internal dialogue.

Internalist Archaeology and the Cultural Property Model

CRM is more popular in America than in Europe, precisely because the latter practice an internalist archaeology. Britons, notably, have been reluctant to use a resource definition of culture and instead prefer to treat historic sites as cultural properties. British laws regularly refer to cultural properties, because they are not convinced there is any legal advantage in changing the legal or ideological terrain of their heritage (Cookson 2000). The same standard holds true for international protocols like those sponsored by the United Nations, which routinely define cultural property but are silent on cultural resources (Skeates 2000). Even covenants of war time conduct bind the adversaries to exempt cultural property, rather than resources, in times of war, for example the *Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict* signed at The Hague in 1954. Article 1 defines cultural property because "[t]hroughout history, war has gone hand in hand with widespread destruction and the 'right to booty'....The general law had it that the property of the vanquished belonged to the conqueror" (Toman 1996: 3).

CRM is as much a theory of the past as it is a method of investigating it; the theory being that culture is a resource and the method consulting archaeology. Without question, internalist archaeology is concerned with large issues, such as advising band governments when they interact with other levels of government. Consultants schooled in their own traditions and archaeology, act as the expert opinion for their communities. Applying their expertise on behalf of their constituency has the potential of directly affecting public policy in the larger context. Proponents of a trustee role for aboriginal people express convictions refracting a spectrum of positions ranging from radical to moderate, depending on the degree of their confidence in the *status quo*. Radical voices contend that direct action such as protest marches, civil disobedience and information pickets are the only methods for transmitting their message. They have little faith in the ability of foreign cultures to curate their heritage in a sensitive fashion. Deferring to scientific explanations, which they view with suspicion, only explains away and devalues their traditional narratives.

Moderate views, on the other hand, acknowledge the greater power of federal and provincial governments, and seek ways to find redress using legal or persuasional means. From their perspective, aboriginal rights to an interest in antiquities already has been recognized under section 35(1) of the Canadian constitution act of 1982; it reaffirms existing aboriginal and treaty rights without providing an exhaustive list defining them. Deciding for greater clarity requires judges to contrive tests to determine if cases brought before them qualify as existing aboriginal or treaty rights. Test cases usually focus on some practice in which resources are harvested, such as fishing without a valid provincial license or cutting down timber on crown land. In deciding the outcome of three fishing rights cases in British Columbia, the Supreme Court of Canada established the *Van der Peet* test, as it has come to be known; named after the defendant in the lead case, Dorothy Van der Peet. In dismissing the appeal in this case, Chief Justice Lamer, writing for the majority, noted: "The doctrine of Aboriginal rights exists, and is recognized and affirmed by s.35(1), because of one simple fact: when Europeans arrived in North America, Aboriginal peoples were already here, living in communities on the land, with their own distinctive cultures, as they had done for centuries" (Wilson 1996: 178). In the *Van der Peet* test "To be an Aboriginal right an activity must be an element of a practice, custom or tradition integral to the distinctive culture of the Aboriginal group claiming the right" (Wilson 1996: 178). Until the world system intruded on aboriginal people, their distinctive activities were leaving traces in and on the land. Canadian jurisprudence regarding aboriginal rights has usually been based on present activities rather than on found objects, nevertheless applying this test to artifacts and heritage sites seems to indicate that interests documented in the archaeological record meet the requisite criteria to pass the *Van der Peet* test (Christie 1998).

Other Native proponents of Indian heritage rights see courts as an expensive means of finding justice, and there is always the risk of a ruling injurious to their struggle. Instead they seek remedies within the legal system that do not require extensive court

battles. For them, copyright laws and other forms of protecting intellectual property, are viable instruments for protecting their heritage from crass commercial exploitation. They follow the syllogism that equates cultural property and found objects. All products of human hands are cultural property; found objects are products of human hands, therefore found objects are cultural property. Their advocacy centres on specific types of antiquities, particularly rock art. Images painted or incised on rocks are popular products for appropriation, because bootleg artists consider rock art to be unclaimed booty. Rather than confrontation in the courts, aboriginal people seek to dissuade artists from using ancient, sacred images to decorate tea cups or t-shirts. In July 1999, *The National Post* ran a story about the Nanaimo First Nation and their efforts to restrict the use and dissemination of petroglyphs from Gabriola Island, B.C., which was part of their customary lands. Presently, they rely on the good will of artisans to respect their wishes, as copyright laws have not been interpreted to include ancient intellectual property. If excessive reliance on the court system is to be avoided, they have to go to the source and convince the art-buying public to ignore the cultural products that are not endorsed by aboriginal people.

Imagining the past as property is a option for Native archaeologists to consider. Imperfect though it may be, it is an alternative that encourages an heirloom effect, which can guide internalist perspectives about the archaeological record. A trustee's relationship to an estate goes far to providing a substantial milepost in the quest for a management system that is not about cultural resources. Using the analogy of an estate, a trustee makes decisions about real estate, financial assets and personal possessions that must be liquidated in order to execute a will. Financial assets are usually the most convertible, whereas real estate may require more attention; personal possessions may require even more deliberation. Contained in an estate will be those places and possessions which carry a meaning known only to the heirs. Their intrinsic value lies beyond utilitarian worth because of who owned them previously, rather than for what they are. For example, a tract of land may have a cottage where the family retreated for summer vacations. The memories

and experiences associated with it would provoke second thoughts about its sale, especially if some family members had been buried there. People imbue inanimate objects with real feelings so that they become treasured reminders of past relationships. *Memento mori* expresses the special value that relatives imbue on keepsakes which in turn makes their sale a reluctant option. If an object stays in a family for generations and each owner cherishes it equally, its sale becomes unthinkable. Aboriginal people appreciate the heirloom effect because an internalist view of the past emanates from the spiritual and emotional link to ancient ancestors (Figure 1.2).

Adopting the cultural property model is more than ideological, as there are also legal arguments that favour it. Under the constitutional arrangement in Canada the federal government maintains stronger, direct ties with Native people - who tend to regard the same entity as the devil they know. Nevertheless, it is seen as the ally with the power to offset the influences of the provinces, which tend to favour a diminished role for First Nations. Adhering to the resource model simply acquiesces to provincial governments and their policies, and allows their bureaucrats to set the agenda on aboriginal heritage matters. The property model may even have some political benefits, as it would strengthen the links to the federal government, which is expected to represent the interest of First Nations. Defining antiquities as cultural property would allow the federal government to enact laws applicable to all regions of Canada, without trampling on the resource rights of the provinces. As enclaves of federalism within provincial boundaries, the First Nations could rely on federal policies if they wished to negotiate some control over their heritage in their traditional territories. Not that the property model is without flaws; for instance in former legislation, such as the *Indian Act*, antiquities were treated as property owned by the Crown rather than Native people (Yellowhorn 1996). Nevertheless, cultural property is a real option that puts the weight of federal influence on the side of First Nations. The federal government has been more amenable to recognizing aboriginal rights, whereas provincial governments see them as an intrusion into their jurisdiction.

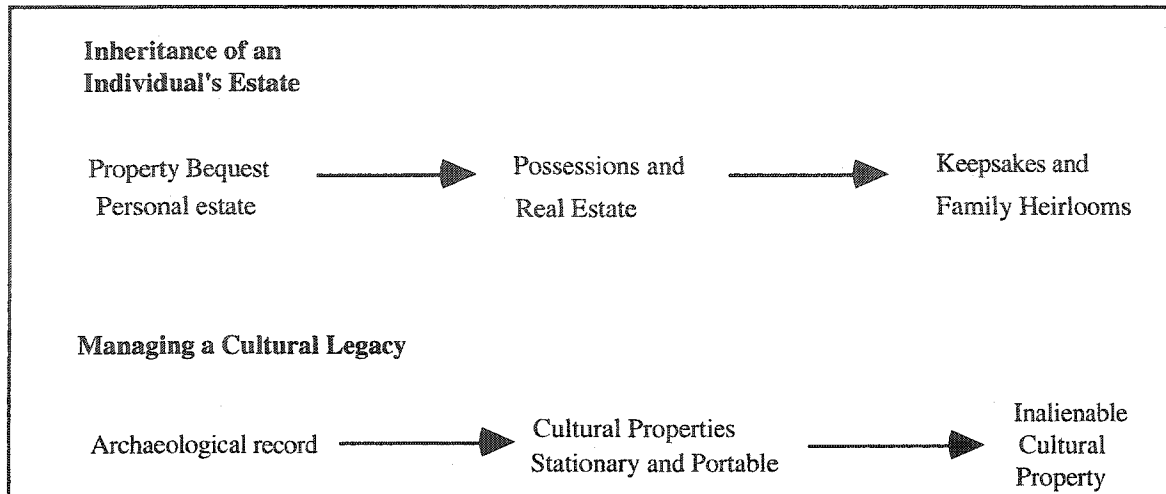


Figure 1.2: Employing an estate model for imagining the past is a suitable analogy because of the parallels between a personal estate and a cultural legacy.

Since portable and immovable cultural properties are at risk of obliteration, they must be managed in the present to ensure that future generations can know the spirit and essence of their identity. When queried for their views Indians invariably respond that "archaeological sites are an essential link to the land, their ancestors, their culture and traditions: sites embody life forces" (Anyon and Ferguson 1995: 914). Because they represent direct, tangible links to their heritage, aboriginal people have been reticent to speak of artifacts and heritage sites solely in terms of extracting, selling or harvesting resources. Since cultural property brings substance to the spirit of a people, it is a common source of identity; therefore it is inalienable by any member of that group. Protecting heritage sites speaks to the active commitment that contemporary Native people feel toward their ancestors which they manifest through prayers, offerings and ceremonies at archaeological sites.

Envisioning the archaeological record as an estate is the logical route for explaining the aboriginal perspective for purposes of the dialogue with mainstream archaeology. However, an internalist approach must be more than just an exercise in research methods, it must give aboriginal people a clearer focus for their reverence and respect. Everything gets murky when Indians choose careers as archaeologists, or are obliged by law to conduct

archaeological work. Then an internalist perspective faces dilemmas with no easy answers, especially if it concerns encounters with ancient ancestors. Based on his experience, Joe Watkins stated unequivocally that he "had never excavated human remains, didn't want to, and never would" (Watkins 2000: x). Yet Dorothy Lippert, a physical anthropologist of Choctaw ancestry, felt a career that routinely brought her into contact with ancient human remains actually strengthened her ties to her ancestors. She noted that she could "maintain appropriate reverence toward the ancients while continuing to learn from their material remains" because her research allows her to learn about their lives. "For many of our ancestors, skeletal analysis is one of the only ways that they are able to tell us their stories" (Lippert 1997: 126). Similarly, managers of the heritage portfolio on the Leech Lake Reservation in Minnesota, accept archaeological work as a formal part of impact assessments but this does not diminish their reverence for ancient ancestors. Field workers were "instructed to place tobacco on the ground before beginning any excavation" and if human remains were found "they should smudge themselves with sage or cedar every morning before work....and [place] tobacco near the area where the remains were found and a dish with food for the spirit of that individual" (Kluth and Munnell 1997: 114).

Taking the view that Indians are unanimous in rejecting archaeological research obscures the obvious array of opinions within their communities. Instead they are accepting archaeology on their own terms by adding their own procedures, such as defining a methodology of respect. Even mainstream archaeologists engaged in academic research no longer feel uncomfortable with the idea of adopting the ritual methods of respect when conducting field work in Indian communities (Nicholas 1997). These methods may include offerings of tobacco, sage or sweetgrass, or a local elder may visit a site to conduct a blessing to appease any lingering spiritual presence. They also serve to remind people of the human side of their investigation. Methods of respect are not devices to force aboriginal religions on secular scientists, they are expressions of reverence that appear with the internal dialogue.

Chapter Summary

Where archaeology already exists as a local management practice, it may not make much practical difference if it operates under the control of an Indian regime that reflects traditional thoughts on antiquity, rather than a Euro-Canadian one, since its purpose is mainly to satisfy statutory requirements. However, the practice of archaeology has the potential to fulfill some needs for Indian communities beyond merely scouring Indian lands for artifacts and excavating sites. Invariably such activities result in the amassing of data that extends beyond the artifacts or site locations recorded graphically on maps. Knowledge of antiquities places a burden of stewardship on the holder which carries an obligation to construct heritage management schemes that ensure they are curated wisely. Archaeology, in that context, is recognized as a means to an end that can be used by Native communities wishing to pursue heritage management. It is an instrument of society that is wielded to achieve a desired objective because it creates the milieu for investigating the past. It shows its utility when it is implemented for cultural impact assessments in advance of economic development projects, or when creating jobs for cultural tourism, or when conducting cultural inventories for traditional use studies, or when supporting research-oriented projects to advance the cause of heritage preservation.

Over the last two centuries the spread of nation-states and their institutions has taken place at the expense of the aboriginal world, which has experienced the loss of its lands and resources. In the process modernity has been thrust upon aboriginal people and with it has come the tension that fuels the current dialogue. Their traditions situated the spirit nation in the past. The past is infused with power and mystery, which continue to inspire people to incorporate antiquity into their ritual life. The scientific side stresses a secular world view that envisions the past as the path trod upon by humanity on its way to the present. Reconciling these opposing views may not be possible, or even necessary, on an ideological level. However, signs that each side will be affected by this encounter are already becoming clear.

Central to an internal dialogue concerning the past is recognizing the shortcomings of mainstream archaeological thought which equates the heritage of aboriginal people to natural resources. Internalist archaeology makes a critical assessment and proposes options that address such concerns. Discussing reasons for beginning an internal dialogue is especially pertinent now because it goes directly to the heart of why archaeology is inviting skepticism from Native people. Studies in archaeology will aid extant aboriginal communities that wish to reacquaint their citizens with the intellectual traditions, such as those concerning *Naapi*, that sustained their ancestors, and at the same time contribute new knowledge to the discipline. By encouraging research into traditional cultures, internalist archaeology contributes to the fundamental desire to promote cultural diversity. Mythology is examined as a source of explanation, but also as a way of introducing physical science to aboriginal students.

The professionalization of archaeology by Indians marks a turning point in their relationship with the discipline. Naturally, they should wish to adopt the methods of archaeology to explore their history because the material culture archaeologists work relates to Indian cultures from antiquity. While some may be suspicious of the motives of professional archaeology, others see it as an instrument of society that can be wielded in their favour. However, a theoretical vacuum has resulted that must be addressed if archaeologists expect to recruit more Indian students to this field of study. Field excavations, consulting and academia must be tailored to meet the aspirations of aboriginal people as they construct their secular histories. Ultimately the purpose of an internalist archaeology will be to reclaim the archaeological record for aboriginal people, and the presence of Indians in archaeology may be the means for bringing this goal to fruition. The identity crisis among contemporary Indians has reached into the past and discovered the symbolic value of those times. Awakening internalist archaeology can contribute to the cultural renaissance occurring among Indians by helping to recast their fractured identity and by resisting perjorative speculation that is presented as scientifically derived fact.

CHAPTER TWO

BEAVER TALES AND TOBACCO SMOKE

Introduction

Archaeology and the aboriginal have become acquainted only recently. The painful reality is that there exists, neither within the discipline nor within Nativist thought, any ready guide for imagining the past from an internalist perspective. The methods of archaeology are now available for use by aboriginal people, so the next logical step is to create the road map through the realm of theory and practice. When archaeologists begin to explain their data -- to generate theories about the meaning of their findings -- a dilemma arises. Archaeological theory was constructed by imperial interests within a colonial regime for a settler population to study a past to which they had contributed nothing. Their explanations are unimpressive to Indians because the authors cater to an audience that is culturally distant from the data they observe. Indians see little of themselves or their ancestors when they review those theories so they perceive little gain by giving archaeology any consideration. A practical guide for theory is the best hope for avoiding the paradox of employing archaeology's methods while rejecting its theories. The mistaken belief is that archaeology is a whole, indivisible package; that accepting its methods necessarily means accepting its theories. In that case the path of least resistance would bypass the whole lot rather than sample its uses. However, if theories espoused in the mainstream do not suffice for Native people, they must assign a high priority to identifying a theoretical programme to support an internalist sense of the past. Preparing the cognitive map into the uncharted terrain of theory is one goal of internalist research.

This chapter continues the effort to bridge the distance between Blackfoot folklore and explanation in archaeology. It examines the connections between them to ascertain if experimentation is possible in this context. Unlike the broad concept, which works best when appended to generalizations, the testable hypothesis works better when explaining specific observations. Stating that Indian lore can be a source of explanation is too vague

an assertion to be a practical guide for internalist archaeology. Since it is unprovable and untestable, it harbours too much uncertainty. The antidote to such uncertainty is to make specific statements about particular aspects of folklore. Of course, refining the statement to the status of a testable hypothesis requires proposing a relationship that is susceptible to empirical verification. Internalist research finds its motive in the Blackfoot mythic past, but its relevance to a wider audience is demonstrable by the questions that are posed. The research problem in this instance is the anomolous appearance of a domestic plant in the hunting and gathering culture of the Blackfoot Indians. Tobacco was not a food crop, so caloric equations were irrelevant to their decision to adopt a foreign custom as their own. Nevertheless, Blackfoot horticulture became a reality because tobacco's wild habits suited their mobile lifestyle. The story of the beaver giving humans the seeds to grow their first crop is told here to illustrate the use of folklore in creating a testable hypothesis.

The Blackfoot experience described in this thesis is a microcosm of a much larger dialogue between tradition and modernity that people around the globe share. Like plastic media shaped by artists our ancestors created unique cultures from the material they procured from their world and which they moulded to suit their needs. Unfortunately the last few centuries have provided no shortage of examples where obsolescence has eroded away the ancient heritage of aboriginal people. Obscuring the path to cultural diversity is unfortunate work for the angel of progress, but internalist archaeology is sensitive to the need to restore clarity to unused trails. Among Native cultures, the greater interest lies in posing questions that relate to their cultural practices that leave readable signatures in the archaeological record. Indian lore exhibits a wide array of properties that can be sorted into levels of abstraction. An internalist archaeology can include ecological explanations to better understand Blackfoot cultural traditions. Archaeologists routinely examine ancient and extinct knowledge to discern its properties and explain its function in the host society. Therefore, it is an ideal instrument for Native people as they look for the customs of their ancestors.

Nativist Thought and Discourse in the Modern World

Nativist thought is in a state of flux because the pressures of modernization have forced Indians to reconsider their relationship to their ancient worldviews. Blackfoot people began their dialogue with modernity when the world system arrived at their tipi doors. Since then, no aspect of their culture has remained unaffected. At one time people felt secure that their traditions and customs accurately described reality. Beyond the frontier of their universe was the mythic past. It was a time when heroes lived and their exploits brought the world into its present form. The star people's deeds brought them to the sky world where they dwell to this day. Between the earth and sky lived the people who by virtue of their hero's work enjoyed a world of relative comfort and abundance. However, in the recent past that vision of reality has fallen into disuse and now obsolescence relentlessly stalks the arcane environment that nurtured it. Such practical knowledge cannot be archived. Maintaining its vibrancy requires regular exercise. Its loss is a symptom of a global era in which cultural diversity is regarded as regional variation on the theme that is humanity. However, heritage research driven by a preservation ethic can be a potent instrument for recapturing forgotten traditions. Archaeological methods allow us to unravel the knowledge of ancient people, not simply for posterity but to provoke debate that can benefit the modern, industrial world. Internalist archaeology utilizes folklore as explanation to broaden the debate about the nature of ancient customs and their role in the modern reality of Indians.

Research into traditional knowledge has been put forward as fertile ground for its potential to syncretize the worldview of aboriginal people with contemporary archaeology. In the past when people made observations about their environment they relied on their worldview to help them arrive at explanations that made sense for their purposes. Their explanations are now called traditional knowledge (Wenzel 1999). Researchers figure it will loom large in the social sciences because Native people will insist on posing questions about the past based on internal motivations. Therefore, archaeology has to be understood

as a method of inquiry that is suited to examining this traditional knowledge (Denton 1997). In the volume *At a Crossroads: Archaeology and First Peoples in Canada* (Nicholas and Andrews 1997), there is a whole section devoted to traditional knowledge in archaeology. Archaeology conferences routinely include sessions where papers are presented on that topic, or at least mention its use in field work. Its current prevalence in archaeological reports has to be addressed at this point for the sake of clarity.

Oral traditions can preserve messages detailing past events which persist for many generations if they continue to have significance (Vansina 1985). The interpretive value of culture-specific knowledge is that it is based on sound and logical principles that are still in operation today and which can be compared with artifacts in the archaeological record. As demonstrated in chapter one, ancient tales can be used to explore connections to ecological themes. Stories become plausible records of environmental change at the Pleistocene-Holocene boundary. Certainly, the idea that cultural memories relating to climatic episodes that influenced the decisions and migrations of people soon after the Ice Age has been proposed elsewhere (Hanks 1997; Harris 1997). These attempts at syncretism signify that archaeologists desire to incorporate culture-specific knowledge into their research on palaeo-environments, but it is still in a formative stage; hence uncertain results and inadequate methods may characterize the current discourse. As aboriginal people continue practicing archaeology, clarity in their internal dialogue will ameliorate the speculation.

When searching for clues about the distant past, Blackfoot and other aboriginal peoples invariably look to their customs as a basis for understanding antiquity (Figure 2.1). Archaeology builds upon this desire by demonstrating the utility of methods dedicated to studying these customs. Therefore, researchers have been giving more thought to incorporating such customs into their research programmes. Exactly how to do this, has been the vexing problem. Knowledge of the sort practiced by Native people is a dynamic entity that invigorates their culture. It is not an object that can be archived and stored for use at a later date, like so many embryos in a fertility clinic (Agrawal 1995). Alternatively

called indigenous knowledge, traditional knowledge, and sometimes more specifically traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), the practices that allow people to deal with the world out there have eluded capture by labels and acronyms. Each phrase is loaded with meaning and its usage is fraught with trepidation. Even the very notion of definition is regarded as a Eurocentric strategy to subordinate Nativist research, particularly when the possessors of indigenous knowledge have no formal training that gives them their credentials (Battiste and Henderson 2000). Elders and others who possess such knowledge suddenly find their observations the subject of more scrutiny as each new research team attempts to verify their experiences. Employing the inevitable adjectives only yield imperfect qualifiers of knowledge that fail to summarize the essence of their interaction with the world. So traditional knowledge becomes unacceptable because "[by] using the term 'traditional,' one risks implying a static or archaic form of knowledge that is inherently nonadaptive" (Usher 2000: 186). Examining artifacts in the archaeological record has long revealed forms of knowledge that are no longer extant.

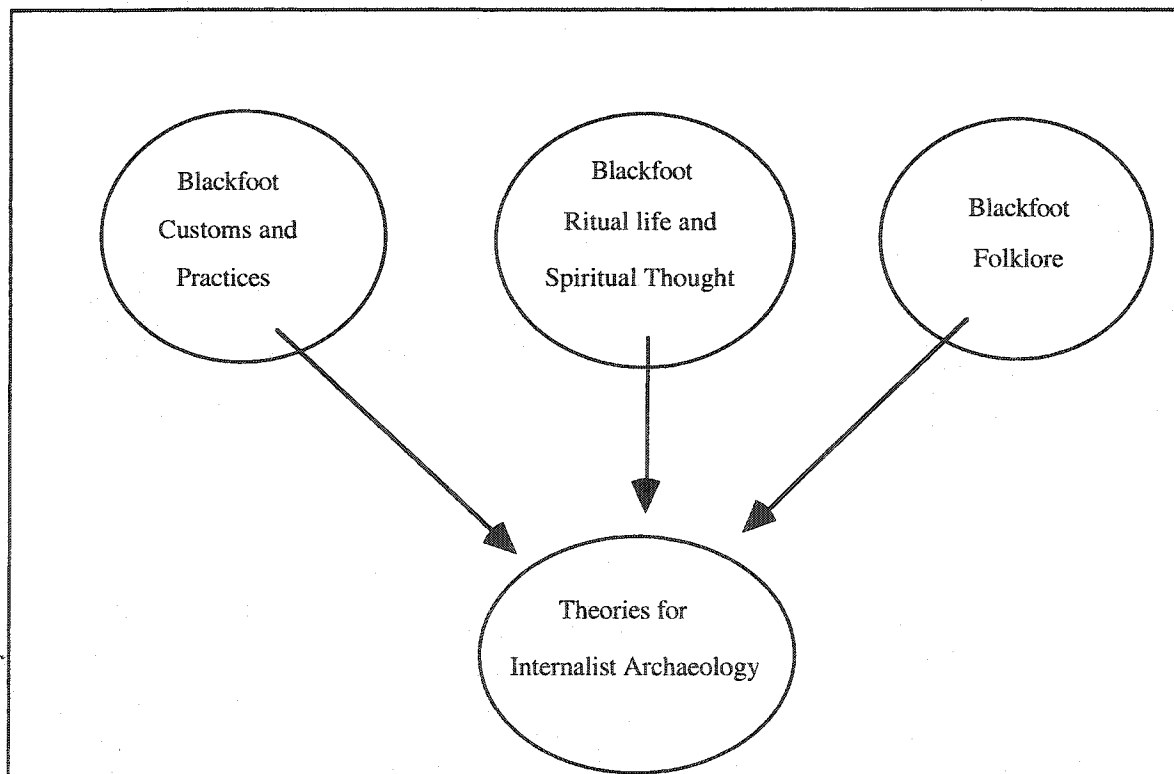


Figure 2.1. Internalist archaeology draws its explanations from Native sources.

Blanket statements about traditional knowledge are vulnerable to irksome questions about their properties because the attempted definitions usually fall short of clarifying the concept. Even reference to a dictionary brings no clarity because there is no entry that refers to such a concept. A difficult task lies ahead of any researchers who attempt to capture such complex epiphenomenal manifestations of events at the interface between culture and environment. The term evades a precise dictionary definition because the words in combination reach a level of vagueness that is not reducible to a series of phrases separated by semicolons. Within the alphabetized listings of *Webster's College Dictionary* (Costello 1991), for example, meaning can be found for the words 'traditional' and 'knowledge', but there is no entry that combines them. Traditional means "of or pertaining to tradition;" a quick glance at the word tradition will catch a glimpse of the phrase, "the handing down of statements, beliefs, legends, customs, etc., from generation to generation, esp. by word of mouth or by practice." Here traditional is an adjective for the noun knowledge, which means "acquaintance with facts, truths, or principles; general erudition." Intuitively people expect that "this arrangement of words (which is not a sentence) gives us the meaning of the term" not articulated in the definition of either word (Scriven 1958: 103). Instead the opposite is the case and the meaning of traditional knowledge is made no clearer by combining the meanings supplied for each word. Traditional knowledge research is a reality, especially in arctic Canada, and time may provide more clarity on its properties. At present, it is defined idiosyncratically by different groups who are more concerned with local conditions than with universal definitions. This suggests, contrary to the positive reviews of it, that traditional knowledge is too vague a concept to give clear guidance for internalist research. Putting it forward as a viable venue for research is a statement of general orientation, and in broad terms there is nothing inherently wrong with doing so. On the other hand, there is nothing inherently right about the term either. Simply put, the more general the summation the less likely there will be any reason to disagree in principle. However, clarity is the expectation of any research.

If traditional knowledge seems problematic, no comfort can be found in alternative phrases, such as indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is a concept that has crystallized in international protocols that commit governments of developed nations to aid those deemed underdeveloped. "Indigenous knowledge forms the capstone of several convergent trends in social science thinking and development administration practice. In the past few years, with the failure of the grand theories of development, the focus in most of the social sciences has altered to favour middle-range theories that are site- and time-specific" (Agrawal 1995: 415). For reasons unknown, Canada's policy to international development has never been regarded as a national remedy for its own internal problems of underdevelopment. However, Canada embraced indigenous knowledge when it went looking for models to solve domestic problems. It looked promising, so federal bureaucrats borrowed it from the international programme and deployed it as a management tool for implementing public policy. Native people, as represented by such entities as the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee, were sensitive to changes in the political climate. They had learned to employ recognizable terms to achieve their goal of greater autonomy for their constituents. Hence, indigenous knowledge grew out of their interaction with this federal bureaucratic milieu. Despite the elevation of its status from local concern to international development, Native researchers are still left wary and troubled. A quick glance back at the dictionary reveals the indigene and all things indigenous nestled too comfortably between indigence and indigent. Perhaps the message is that the developed world has simply found another way to express its opinion that scholarship emanating from third and fourth world sources is only good enough for them. Understandably, Native scholars are loathe to accept that theirs is the impoverished knowledge of underdeveloped people. The lack of consensus over terminology, imprecise definitions and imperfect descriptions plague the discourse on this topic. Hence, indigenous knowledge is also proving to be a concept that lacks the substance needed to guide a theoretical programme for internalist archaeology.

International gatherings that bring together representatives from various nations often culminate with a protocol agreement that spells out commitments in broad terms. One such example, the so-called Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, in its 1992 *Convention on Biological Diversity* placed special urgency on fostering "knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities" (Fenge 1997:2). It made direct and specific reference to cultural diversity as a desirable complement to biological diversity. Governmental bureaucracies are given their policy directives from elected politicians who attend these meetings. Bureaucrats in turn preserve the wording and phrases of policy statements that are recognizable because their job is to activate policy, not invent it. These officials are important for implementing policy because their departments often sponsor the development projects that support field research as part of the environmental impact assessment process. Their task is of implementing a policy that introduces vague and undefined terms. Bureaucrats, therefore, expect researchers to supply a concise definition for a policy phrase that has filtered down to them. They desire an executive summary that will neatly sum up in one phrase the compiled folklore practiced in the daily life of many generations of Native people.

Folklore began its transformation into traditional knowledge, and then indigenous knowledge, when aboriginal people began to exercise the levers of power in their favour. Researching it for reports on the social and cultural impacts of pipeline construction or resource extraction on Native people became standard procedure. Northern Canada is the locale where Dene, Metis and Inuit have translated the highly abstract phrase into an environmental management regime because they still have access to their tundra economy. They exert significant control over research conducted on their traditional lands because they operate the tools of government. Since they occupy seats in government, they have been at the forefront of melding scientific research and folklore to insert some parity for aboriginal customs. Government agencies establish boards and assign them their mandates to ensure that the broad outlines of traditional knowledge are visible in final reports of

projects. The Government of the Northwest Territories set up the Traditional Knowledge Working Group which regards such knowledge as being "derived from, or rooted in the traditional way of life; the accumulated knowledge and understanding of the human place in relation to the universe, which encompasses spiritual relationships, relationships with the natural environment and the use of natural resources" and maintains that this knowledge "is reflected in language, social organization, values, institutions and laws" (Greer 1997: 146). Once embedded in public policy, traditional knowledge research proved to be a lively and dynamic entity that can supply answers for as many questions as researchers ask.

Consultants trained in Western schooling, which has never been fond of funding research into folklore, found themselves ill-prepared to deal with the expectations of governments and aboriginal people over a concept some found obscure, alien and alienating. Frustration with an ambiguous concept led some researchers to lash out at what they saw as an unfair and unreasonable imposition of spiritual and cultural values that were compromising their ability to carry on scientific research objectively. They complained that it put too much control over research objectives and conclusions in the hands of people who were unfamiliar with the machinations of western science. They were convinced that it posed a real threat to legitimate research and academic freedom. Impressionistic and anecdotal learning systems that relied too heavily on personal encounters with the spirits that lived out on the land were no model for serious research. That expectation only served to cast the shadow of superstition over normal science. When their observations conflicted with Native observations, theirs had to be paramount (Howard and Widowson 1995). The same researchers failed to notice that their scientific dichotomies and categories were themselves subjective and impressionistic and relied heavily on arbitrary guidelines.

Faced with identical circumstances, other consultants managed to cope with a vague idea that was open to interpretation. Ambiguity proved to be no impediment to producing a coherent, systematic analysis of the basic properties inherent in living in harmony with nature. Far from being a threat, aboriginal philosophies actually contributed significant

viewpoints because their holistic perception of the environment was unique and imbued with their values and beliefs. Indeed, traditional knowledge, as a generic phrase, strained to take account of present-day lifeways and did not satisfy the full scope of activities practiced by contemporary aboriginal people. The preferred term became indigenous knowledge because it satisfied legal and bureaucratic requirements and it did not have the same connotations of livelihoods practiced in the past but no longer vital to any living people. Indigenous knowledge consists of customs, social interactions, subsistence lifeways and shared experience that could be incorporated at different levels of the impact assessment process. Specific knowledge of local environments was essential to field work that relied on observation because narratives acted as a bridging device between the local community and the researcher. Beliefs and customs, under the heading of community contacts, had the potential to influence the management recommendations that are standard features of consultant reports (Stevenson 1996). Beyond acceptance, consensus has been difficult to achieve because even the supporters of science and traditional knowledge are uncertain how to syncretize the two.

The authors of these articles, whether writing in support or against the various synonyms of indigenous knowledge, consistently place it in opposition to scientific research. As the argument goes, compare traditional knowledge to Western science and it quickly becomes apparent that the former is subjective where the latter is objective. Customs possess practical value and respond better to intuitive thinking, while value-free science nurtures theoretical thinking and is amenable to abstraction. The quantitative, reductionist traits of science oppose the qualitative, holistic attitudes of aboriginal beliefs. Unlike Western science, aboriginal knowledge did not seek nomothetic laws in nature, or search for cause and effect relationships in ecosystems. Rather aboriginal elders were content to invoke spiritual explanations that directly challenged the mechanistic, physical universe of scientists. They preferred to leave their offerings to animal spirits rather than collect data about animals. Informal or intuitive knowledge may govern aboriginal beliefs,

but that did not mean there were no shared goals or complementary objectives, nor that one should be considered the replacement of the other (Stevenson 1996). Despite the volumes submitted for publication, the reportage betrayed the fact that precise definitions for traditional knowledge continued to elude the ardent researcher.

That traditional knowledge evades definition became apparent when the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (RCAP) heard testimony from various First Nations on that very subject, but that did not stop them from discussing some of its properties. In the volume entitled *Gathering Strength*, they concluded that traditional knowledge "is a discreet system of knowledge with its own philosophical and value base." It permeated the lives of aboriginal people in ancient times. Today it remains important to people whose lifestyle and reliance on country foods link them to the bush economy. It is transmissible via oral traditions, embedded as it is in stories and myths, and includes ecological teachings, medical knowledge, and cognitive geography. However their findings artificially limited its nature by construing elders to be the sole repository of traditional knowledge. Implicit in that understanding is that young people, especially those estranged from their communities, must find an elder to teach them folklore. Internalist archaeology recognizes that some traditions no longer function in any culture system and in fact attempts to regain meaning by examining those culture traits observable only in the archaeological record. This minor concern, of course, does not dilute their recommendations that educational specialists endorse folklore as a topic of instruction, give credit for courses in it, and collaborate with elders to make it accessible to an education system. Community leaders were tired of seeing "young people and adults emerge from school with a confused sense of Aboriginal identity and without the basic cultural knowledge to participate fully in the traditions of their society" the commissioners found. Indeed, considering this situation, archaeology in its own way contributes to realizing the recommendations of the commission by pursuing similar goals.

Within the larger society folklore has been rejected as a source of learning and marginalized as an instrument of education. The long-standing skepticism archaeologists hold about oral narratives drives a wedge into their relationship with Native people. Their indifference to an Indian constituency means that their research and results are denied a place in Indian education and this, the commissioners recommended, has to change. They criticized the reluctance of mainstream academics to incorporate oral traditions in their research by stating that while some "western academics and intellectuals have begun to give some credence to Aboriginal understandings of the universe, including ecological knowledge in particular, the gatekeepers of western intellectual traditions have repeatedly dismissed traditional knowledge as inconsequential and unfounded." Rather than getting lost in the convoluted paths of traditional or indigenous knowledge, the term folklore is preferred here because it already carries an accepted meaning in scholarly writing. Unfortunately, folklore also carries the stigma nineteenth century anthropological discourse placed on knowledge transmitted by word of mouth.

In the passages dedicated to Indian lore in the inaugural *Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* in 1881 John Wesley Powell declared "Mythology is primitive philosophy." With those words he crystallized anthropological thought that oral tradition constituted at most a lower form of knowledge characteristic of savage worldviews. Ever since then Indians have struggled to liberate their approach to learning from the primitive shackles of nineteenth century evolutionism. Powell asserted that the "objective or scientific method of studying a mythology is to collect and collate its phenomena simply as it is stated and understood by the people to whom it belongs" (Powell 1881: 82). However, he could not envision any way that local mythology could contribute to broader research questions. Those words continue to reverberate through contemporary archaeological opinion when authors say folklore "must be understood on its own terms, in its own context" (Mason 2000: 251). They stand by Powell's claim that it "is vain to search for truth in mythologic philosophy."

Ethnographers could dismiss mythology but they could not ignore it, mostly because it fit the agenda of a young "anthropologic science." For Powell reconstructing the "primordial mythology" of civilized folk was paramount if ethnography was to validate evolutionary schemes, and oppose degenerationist views, of cultures. Data for this problem, he maintained, could be obtained among the Indian tribes because in "North America we have scores or even hundreds of systems of mythology, all belonging to a lower state of culture." The scientific study of mythology was germane to this enterprise because it was a literary product that contained expressions of human thought regarding the human experience which were useful "for the purpose of comparison with the myths of alien or of cognate peoples and for the data it contains relating to the customs, arts, and archaeology of the people among whom it exists" (Hodge 1912: 965). The *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico* hastened to warn the student of ethnology not to take oral narratives too seriously because the "world of the savage was indeed of small extent, being confined by his boundless ignorance to the countries bordering on his own, a little, if any beyond his horizon. Beyond this, he knew nothing of the world, nothing of its extent or structure. This fact is important and easily verified, and this knowledge aids in fully appreciating the teachings and philosophy of savage men" (Hodge 1912: 969). Hence, aboriginal researchers must take up the task that ethnographers avoided. Although Powell's assertion that folklore "must be understood in its own context" does not contradict the internalist view that folklore contains encoded messages with substantive historical meaning, his dismissive contention that it is vain to search for truth in folklore cannot go unchallenged. The burden falls on aboriginal researchers to undermine that notion and show that broader research goals can benefit from mythological narratives.

The reluctance noted by the commission is alive and well and scholars can still declare that oral traditions are "quintessentially local [and they] cannot simply be adopted wholesale into the structure of science or Western historiography" (Mason 2000: 272). The unflattering assessments of oral traditions demonstrate the aversion to accept them into

research programmes and the unwillingness to abandon roomy, comfortable biases. "Scholars generally do not see value in assessing oral tradition....because it is widely assumed that some form of barrier or boundary prevents information from being effectively conveyed into the present from distant time periods" (Echo-Hawk 2000: 273). At first glance this statement may seem unusually critical, but it has been a consistent theme in archaeology. Traditional thought is regarded as a tangle of lore with no ready parallel in reality, or even the remotest chance of lending any coherence to theory building. Perhaps for this reason, the archaeological establishment has dismissed it as a basis for imagining the past. Not much has changed from the nineteenth century, when anthropologists defended Indian removal policies by dismissing folklore as savage musings. Now the agenda is to diminish Indian legal rights by taking a narrow view of traditional narratives and their content in order to undermine confidence in their reliability as evidence. Scientists dismiss oral traditions as merely the attempts by nonscientific cultures to satisfy primal yearnings to understand their place in the universe (Bonnichsen and Schneider 2000).

Internalist archaeology harbours no such prejudice against folklore and instead will apply archaeology as an implement for researching it. Eventually the two data sources will reach a point where new understandings can be expected to emerge. Internalist archaeology begins the task of attributing meaning to folklore, because it is expected to bring clarity to disputes that arise from land claims and claims for repatriation of human remains. In the United States, the impact of the *Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act* (NAGPRA) has been to give archaeology a prominent position in evaluating claims of cultural affiliation, but it "also lists oral traditions as a source of evidence on cultural affiliations" (Echo-Hawk 2000: 267). The archaeological establishment begrudges the fact that the NAGPRA gives credence to oral history and current efforts to discredit such history have more to do with anticipating the adversarial nature of court proceedings than with archaeological research. The tenor of the debate

teaches us that strong biases against folklore remain and Indians cannot rely on the archaeological establishment to give it serious consideration.

Modernizing folklore is another goal for internalist archaeology because its agents have a vested interest in the interpretation. No little trepidation accompanies the Native researcher because there are few precedents where such traditions have been transferred successfully to modern culture. There are, however, some examples. Converting ancient insights into commodities that can be exchanged for currency is exactly the type of inspiration that governs Indian artists. Indian art is the archetypal example in which aesthetic traditions have been successfully introduced to a broader, and receptive, audience. There is a direct link between art forms that existed in aboriginal cultures and those employed by contemporary Indian artists. Many Indian artists have won accolades for their talents and their ability to connect ancient designs with modern media. For example, contemporary artists from west coast cultures regularly combine a style of art that has great time depth with novel media like paper, silver and gold. Although a motif may have archaeological visibility, its appearance in an art gallery does not imply a static art tradition. Rather each artist's rendition of a traditional motif reflects a unique experience as the artist filters his or her culture's worldview through their own reference point. Experimentation and interpretation are crucial ingredients for the artist's work, but they do not necessarily compromise authenticity. Indeed, they contribute to a broader appreciation and enjoyment of traditional aesthetics. Of course, there has to be some benefit for the artist beyond art for art's sake. The artists collectively responsible for launching the "Woodland School" of Indian art looked to their culture's aesthetic traditions and reinterpreted the motives for an audience whose appreciation of their art placed on it a value that enabled the artists to capture wealth from a cash economy. The show *The Art of Norval Morrisseau* mounted by the Glenbow-Alberta Institute, in Calgary, Alberta, in the summer of 1999 clearly illustrated this point. The evolution of his work and art style, beginning with his early career, reveals a clear path from the ceremonial art of mediwewin societies to a secular

practice that has monetary value but no sacred meaning. An early work of his entitled *Fish* (n.d.) emulated loyally the creation of a mediwewin scroll, including stitching together panels of birch bark and scraping them to produce a design with the light and dark hues of cambium. A later painting entitled *Spirit Soul Trout* (n.d.) reproduced the same fish image in vivid colour, with oil on canvas. An intermediary step in his transition from Ojibway aesthetics to the formality of Western art is evident in his *Life Scroll* (n.d.), in which he mixed elements from both traditions to render a work of art that is uniquely his. It resembles a mediwewin scroll, with five birch bark panels stitched together with sinew, but rather than incising the images he has employed acrylic paint. The work of this artist reminds the viewer that his art was a visionary experience that was motivated by the same vision that inspired the mediwewin birch bark scrolls and infused the images with sacred meaning. His genius is clearly visible in his art.

Folklore can be understood in a like manner by Native archaeologists because it has potential as a source of ideas that can be harnessed in order to capture wealth in an information economy. This practice is already routine in northern Canada, where political leaders suggest that "traditional knowledge is 'intellectual property' for which the holders should be paid" (Fenge 1997: 2). Considering it as a source of revenue is not heresy, since its dissemination has always involved some form of payment. Services like medical advice, rituals of passage and vows to the sun were dispensed by appropriate practitioners and in return their clientele presented them with tribute goods such as tobacco, cloth and foodstuff. Clark Wissler's multi-faceted Peigan protagonist in the fictitious biography of Smoking-star describes the efforts of local doctors to help his ailing son. While travelling the war trail he received a sign from his spirit guide that he should go home. Upon arriving home he found his son near death. He exchanged his property for the services of local doctors who intervened without success. "When I got into our camp I saw many people standing about my woman's tepee and heard a doctor's drum. My son, my first born, was very ill. Three doctors had been called, one after the other. I gave them all my

horses....Now I was poor. All my horses went to the doctors" (Wissler 1922a: 57). Transitory earthly wealth always changes hands as that is the nature of economic activity and people always find ways to convert their talents into a career. Today those same services are just as likely to be performed in exchange for cash, but this in no way diminishes the impact of the ceremony or ritual.

Mileposts Leading to Internalist Theorizing

The most basic method in archaeology is using the humble shovel. From there techniques become more elaborate and each new method brings new data to light that cause more rumination on their meaning. Theory-driven research typically focuses on methods that amass data relating to specific questions. The plethora of methods mobilized to study the archaeological record challenge the notions of antiquity extant among aboriginal people. Focusing debate on the methods is to divert precious energy to travelling a path that leads nowhere. Dating methods organize and divide time immemorial into discrete eras and sort events in absolute years before present, but at the same time they alienate the mythic past by pushing it to an implausible time. The challenge for internalist archaeology is to make those methods, including the shovels, available to its constituency to avoid alienating an internalist understanding of history. Proving the utility of archaeological methods might begin, appropriately enough, by posing research questions that bring about a better understanding of folklore and remould it for a modern world. While the legitimate concerns of Native people about the attitudes and activities of archaeologists deserve some debate, archaeology seems to be tailor-made for people with no writing tradition. It is an accepted technique for investigating a human presence on the land through time. Since artifacts recovered during field work give proxy evidence of past cultural phenomena, they allow researchers to peer into the daily lives of extinct cultures and how they interacted with the environment. For their part, Native people see in these same artifacts their connection to past generations; and their history embedded in the archaeological record. Thus archaeological methods can only strengthen those connections. A systematic study of

features, artifacts and oral traditions from an internalist perspective can eventually combine to attain certain goals; for example, a possible goal could be to establish a chronological sequence for ancient customs.

Archaeology as an instrument of Nativist thought is a method to search the past, but it inevitably generates data. Therefore theory-building and explanation become essential steps in developing an internalist archaeology. The research problems that will define it have yet to become apparent; at present, a coherent theoretical direction does not exist. This vacuum has not gone unnoticed, even in the mainstream, spurring some archaeologists to "contend that new theoretical and methodological approaches to the archaeological record must be developed. These approaches need to be cognizant of tribal historical knowledge and integrate these traditional perspectives in the way archaeologists interpret the archaeological record" (Dongoske et al. 1997: 601). Oral traditions and archaeological methods have a shared history of indifference. Yet, if aboriginal people desire greater clarity for their internal sense of past, that is all they have. As is evident from recent literature, aboriginal people are amenable to adopting the methods of archaeology (Nicholas and Andrews 1997; Swidler et al. 1997), yet internalist archaeology faces the danger of becoming little more than an esoteric curiosity if the theoretical implications are not considered. Archaeology will find permanent space in the intellectual terrain of Nativist thought only if research is guided by internalist goals.

Using Indian lore is no strange method in archaeological research, where it is well known as a source of functional interpretation for artifacts by means of ethnographic analogy. Every student of archaeology eventually encounters the ethnographic record. It is a staple of theses, archaeological reports, or impact assessments that attempt to explain or interpret a site or artifact. It is used in a variety of ways and for different purposes. For example, in palaeoethnobotany, organic specimens recovered during excavation provide evidence of the economic importance of plant foods. They reveal behaviours that are reflected by the habitual choice of certain plants to produce cultivars, although not always

for food, that become dependent on, and are sustained by, human intervention. Studying plant lore collected ethnographically informs ethnobotanists about the dynamic relationships between aboriginal people and plant communities, which sometimes resulted in widespread ecological disturbances and the artificial expansion of plants beyond their natural range. Traditional botany has even piqued the interest of pharmacologists who survey ethnographic literature for references to medicinal plants attributed to plains cultures. They then scrutinize these plants with the intent of isolating compounds that might have medical applications (Kindscher et al. 1998). Ethnographic descriptions of healing ceremonies may have concentrated too much on the incantations recited to the beat of a medicine drum. Only now does the value of ethnographic accounts of Native American plant lore grow clear to biochemists. They recognize this pharmacopoeia to be the result of rational choices made for therapeutic reasons to reap the potential benefits of prairie herbs. Traditional medicines were handed down in an apprenticeship whereby a medicine man taught a novice his arcane knowledge about the secret life of green plants.

Folklore also informs zooarchaeology, since faunal remains at archaeological sites show the role ancient hunters played in local ecology and what animals were important to them. Sometimes a species may appear in the archaeological record even though it cannot be situated in a purely caloric context. The zooarchaeologist can refer to ethnographic information to find out how people might use inedible fauna in their culture system. Living off the land was a standard feature of aboriginal life and careful analysis of wildlife habits created a corpus of data that was passed from one generation to the next. Although fewer Native people pursue a livelihood characterized exclusively by hunting and gathering, the bush economy is still operating. It can be observed directly if comparisons between archaeological and ethnographic data are needed. One such instance was two raven skeletons unearthed at the Palaeoindian level at Charlie Lake Cave in northeastern British Columbia (Driver 1999). Since the raven is an unpalatable bird even at the worst of times, the tantalizing intimation was that the bones were deliberately placed in the cave in a ritual

fashion. In searching for a nomothetic explanation, Driver (1999) cited the ritual treatment of ravens described in passages from the Peigan entry in Edward Curtis' series *The North American Indian* (1911) and Clark Wissler's Blackfoot ethnography (Wissler and Duvall 1909). In their ethnographies they mention raven skins among the contents of the beaver medicine bundle. They described a bundle opening ceremony where the owner shook a rattle and performed songs, including one that was dedicated to ravens. The words in the song alluded to ravens looking for food, such as carrion. "The words of the next song were: 'Buffalo I am looking for,' and all the singers cawed four times: 'The wind is our medicine. Raven says powerful dead buffalo I want.' During this song the men held rattles vertically with the ball part resting on the rawhide. They made movements with the right finger and pecked at the rattles with it four times. This represents the raven pecking on a dead buffalo" (Wissler 1912: 181). Both versions contained references to ravens as particularly observant of the land while hunting for food from the air. If this avian behaviour is consistent over time, then they likely filled a similar scavenger niche during Palaeoindian times when local bands might have observed the flight of ravens to locate game. Perhaps they even curated medicine bundles that contained raven skins. The use of ethnographic texts shows that Indian lore often fills in the gaps when archaeologists are forced to consider intangible explanations that are not readily apparent by invoking strictly taphonomic scenarios. These accounts led Driver to conclude that the raven skeletons were intentionally interred in the cave and the presence of two in temporal and spatial proximity revealed the status of ravens in ancient ideology. Hunters seeing their presence in the sky would be alerted to the nearness of game animals, therefore where ravens are found in the local environment, they are likely to play a like function in local legends.

Historically, when folklore was found in archaeological reports it was limited to researchers trying to interpret the result of their field seasons. That has changed with the settlement of land claims in the Yukon and Northwest Territories. Considering folklore in field research, under the heading of traditional knowledge, is now stipulated in the text of

settlement agreements. Land claims often seem inadequate to describe the scope of the topics included under that rubric, because land is only one facet of these comprehensive agreements which address all activities conducted on that land, including archaeology and traditional knowledge. Chapter 13 of the *Umbrella Final Agreement* in the Yukon is devoted to heritage matters and has a stated objective of promoting and preserving the traditional knowledge of signatory First Nations. Furthermore, its objectives include incorporating "where practicable, the related traditional knowledge of a Yukon First Nation in Government research reports," recognizing that "oral history is a valid and relevant form of research for establishing the historical significance of Heritage Sites" and recognizing the "interest of Yukon Indian People in the interpretation of aboriginal Place Names." The Yukon Heritage Resources Board was directed in the agreement "to make recommendations respecting the management" of heritage sites, including human remains where the intent is "to preserve the dignity of the Yukon First Nation Burial Sites" (Canada 1993: 147). Professional archaeologists no longer have any discretion about including or excluding traditional knowledge from their research reports, they are required to include it.

Mandating the use of traditional knowledge in law has sparked some controversy; however as a method it has proved useful to archaeology, as it has aided site recognition in local surveys and identification of spatial patterning of sites on a regional basis. Oral narratives that describe the landscape have been instrumental in discerning traditional land use in areas that have experienced significant environmental change, sometimes due to geomorphic processes. In one instance in the southern Yukon Territory, a toponym recorded information about salmon fishing along a lake which was no longer available as salmon spawning habitat because several centuries ago an advancing glacier had dammed the river leading to it (Greer 1997). No excavations or surveys have been conducted, but the possibility of artifacts related to salmon fishing being present is real since traditional cognitive geography often contains meaningful spatial information. The landscape itself is used as a mnemonic device and storytelling relays details about activities at specific

locations, such as good camping spots, choice fishing streams or good mammal habitat. By traversing the land and revisiting sites on a regular basis, Dene people accumulated data on local conditions and preserved their geographical observations in story form, which was the only medium available (Andrews and Zoe 1997). In Arctic Canada, archaeology and its methods have proved useful in furthering the goals of Native people, because in claims they must verify their traditional land uses as proof of their tenure on the land. Land claims litigation provides an example of reciprocal benefit, where each side uses the other to advance their goals, even if they are not guided by the same motivations. Archaeologists may pursue a research agenda, while Native people are on a legal quest for justice.

Pathways for Internalist Analysis

Archaeology is to folklore what linguistics is to Indian languages. Blackfoot, like so many Native languages, is endangered because the pernicious forces of obsolescence and homogenization continuously place pressures upon it and make maintaining vibrancy a constant struggle. Originally it needed no other device than speech to broadcast meaning and those within hearing distance seldom heard competing languages. A local population could live an entire lifetime and hear only Blackfoot spoken. Even in the early twentieth century, when reserves became linguistic islands and bilingualism normal, Blackfoot remained the preferred language for domestic and social discourse in the community. English was necessary for dealing with the settler population, but after World War II it became more pervasive. The stress on Blackfoot increased primarily because the broadcast range of English had reached into reserve homes through communication media. By the latter years of the last century, few Blackfoot homes were without radios, televisions or computers; hence English supplanted Blackfoot as the common language in home and community life. Extinction seemed the next inevitable phase, except that the present generation of Blackfoot speakers did not want to be the last to speak their language. So they began experimenting with methods to ensure that Blackfoot survived and became a modern language. Perhaps the boldest act on the part of Blackfoot speakers in the last two

decades was recruiting linguists in their effort to create a written format for Blackfoot. By adapting the Roman orthography of English to write in Blackfoot, an alien, yet familiar, script was enlisted as an ally in preserving the oral form. Predictably from the start there were those who felt that writing was an inappropriate medium for expressing a language that had previously only been spoken. Regardless, the effect of literacy has been to broaden the options for language transmission and improve its chances of survival by demonstrating that Blackfoot is a modern language capable of conveying thoughts using modern media. Furthermore, for the first time instruction in Blackfoot is available in the school curriculum and the concept of mass literacy is a realistic goal. As a result, while no one expects a linguistic renaissance, the task of maintaining a critical mass of speakers does not seem so daunting. This will in turn influence the evolution of spoken Blackfoot, but the important point is that the spoken language now has a chance of evolving.

Linguistics has been deployed favourably in support of Native languages, and in a similar manner archaeology can be aligned with Indian lore. Since narratives mediate between people and the world, such information is sound because at its base is lived experience in nature. It starts by way of seeing the natural landscape, with a sensitivity to the interrelatedness of natural entities, and is melded to the on-going practices of Native people whose identities are deeply rooted in their customary lands. Folklore is a work in progress because many generations contribute information about their world to the mental library of their culture. It is passed on so that each subsequent generation can benefit from it, but also make their own unique contribution. At times it can even breach cultural boundaries to influence decisions on related topics. This was certainly the case with Blackfoot cognitive geography which was adopted by modern cartographers. Blackfoot geography envisions the world in anatomical terms so that the world is a body and the anatomical features become the terms for toponomy. *Saoksspiksi*, or the backbone (the Rocky Mountains), holds the world in place, and to the east is the anatomy that *Naapi* set in place. Even after the Blackfoot were confined to their reserves their cognitive geography

continued to inform travellers and government officials. Blackfoot geography even inspired the first cartographers who mapped their traditional lands to incorporate an anglicized version onto the modern cultural landscape, albeit in a fragmentary state.

Not all Native people have access to their traditional lifeways due to prevailing social conditions, so the questions of obsolescence and extinction introduce new variables in the debate about the placement and viability of customs. Economic realities may force Native people to contemplate the scenario in which folklore is regarded, and behaves as a form of currency that can be converted into wealth for their community. Therefore to continue enjoying the benefits that flow from it, future efforts must emphasize broadening our understanding of it. Pragmatic choices can transform it, but this does not mean the decisions must always lead to abandonment. Some traditions, like architecture, are still vibrant, despite changes in settlement patterns that reflect modern conditions, because their inherent properties serve to buttress group identity and sense of self. For example, among the Peigan there really is no reason for anyone to live in a tipi these days, because modern housing is generally available. Yet, the desire to participate in the same cultural traditions as their ancestors inspires many people to exchange their frame houses for painted lodges seasonally. One trait of the information age is the persistent homogenizing pressure of the larger culture and in this case the tipi literally is a canvas for sketching Peigan identity.

What seemed secure only a century ago is now endangered, and each technological invention and innovation inevitably begs a reason for keeping extant outdated knowledge. Each generation must revisit old customs, reassess their meaning, and decide whether it is worth the effort to attempt to resist the erosive effects of obsolescence. Given the plethora of found objects, obsolescence is not a debate unique to the present. Rather, it seems to be as ancient as the archaeological record. In the course of their practice, archaeologists regularly handle artifacts that represented skills which have long since disappeared from extant culture systems. The metamorphosis of customs is idiosyncratic and unpredictable, but certain trends in Blackfoot history provide clues for what goes extinct and what persists

in the culture system. Technical traditions seem to be more prone to erosion in comparison to ideational traditions, which repel obsolescence because of their status as emblems of identity. Customs such as tipi designs apparently were more esteemed; hence they proved more durable and they made the transition into modern times intact. Furthermore, the plastic nature of ancient customs ensured that new media would be found to express old motifs. Today tipi designs appear on canvas instead of buffalo hides, but they retain their emotional impact and so they are esteemed. However, not all traditions are equally esteemed. The extinct Blackfoot traditions of cultivating tobacco and making earthenware stand out as examples of this fact. Manufacturing ceramic pots was a technical skill on the northern plains for over a millennium before tobacco appeared in the same region. Both practices were subjected to the same erosional forces brought on by the fur trade era on the northern plains; however the tobacco customs thrived while the ceramic tradition withered because each carried different cultural baggage. These practices speak of Blackfoot customs that leave readable signatures in the archaeological record. This example puts to rest the assumption that archaeology has nothing to offer Blackfoot lore. The intent is not to recite a requiem for such lore, but rather to demonstrate how archaeological research methods can contribute to recovering information about it. Placed in tandem they can augment or reciprocate research goals; for example as a device to enhance site survey in environmental impact assessments, or to decipher the messages embedded in oral narratives and recover dormant folklore.

Unfortunately, the annals of obsolescence contain many examples, such as Blackfoot pottery, to illustrate its persistent force. Ceramic ware was a poorly understood manifestation of northern plains cultures until Byrne (1973) took up the task of examining chronological trends in pottery sherds collected from disparate sites in southern Alberta. Using the Morkin Site as his control, he distinguished two types of traditions, defined by geographical and temporal criteria, which he designated as the Saskatchewan Basin and Cluny complexes. The former was autochthonous, widespread and had great time depth,

while the latter had existed for a short duration, was intrusive and restricted geographically. Archaeological evidence from the northern plains indicated that people possessed the technical knowledge for Saskatchewan Basin ceramic ware and that a viable pottery tradition had persisted for almost two thousand years. Byrne was able to discern three distinct periods defined by materials, production methods and surface finish, which he labelled I, II and III. Using clay coils, they formed the shape of the jar, then literally hammered out the details with a paddle and anvil technique. This resulted in two modes of finish: a roughened exterior surface which played a secondary, decorative role or, a polished exterior surface smoothened with a pebble. The featureless contours could be further modified by impressed designs on the body or incised lines around the lips. Only the smooth finish is present in all periods. Plain fabric and net impressions were common in Period I, but they were replaced by cord marked impressions in Period II, while Period III featured two novel techniques of surface texturing: brushing and knotted cord impressions. The moulded features displayed stylistic variations, such as pronounced shoulder ridges leading to the orifice, in-sloping rims, and flat, rounded or thickened lips, or shaping the pot into ovoid or spheroid forms. Byrne's research and his tripartite arrangement and nomenclature set the standard for understanding the ceramic industry of the northern plains, but he also chronicled its appearance, persistence and dynamics and ultimately its demise.

The northern plains ceramic industry has been missing from Blackfoot material culture since the historic encounter between the Blackfoot and the intruding world system. Pottery and tobacco growing were both present in Blackfoot culture at the dawn of the global era, but the novel technology soon inspired amnesia about them. They survived the initial encounter, but extinction began when Anthony Henday led a failed English trade mission into Blackfoot country in the winter of 1754-55 (Burpee 1907). Living at the distal end of the world system meant that Blackfoot were among the last people in North America to know the inherent autonomy of self-reliance. They were the producers and

consumers of their own products. However, they were not isolated from the continent-wide trade system that brought exotic goods to the northern plains. They produced enough surplus goods to be able to trade for dentalium shells from the west coast, obsidian from the Great Basin, and agricultural produce from the Missouri River. While trading with their neighbours, they imported a few ideas into their intellectual culture; ideas such as ceramic production and tobacco cultivation. These traditions were present when the fur trade began, but they disappeared like so many other Blackfoot traditions.

Anthony Henday left York Factory on June 26, 1754 on a mission to increase Hudson's Bay Company trade. In the company of Cree scouts, who were familiar with the river and land route to the interior, he completed a long summer trek when he met some Blackfoot scouts on October 1. His Cree guides, by sign language, informed them that they had come to open trade relations. Two weeks later he was formally invited into a camp that was assembled for the occasion and met with a Blackfoot chief. He marvelled at how trade talks could proceed smoothly when an Assiniboiné trade delegation arrived and suddenly four languages were being spoken, but all could communicate by their gestures. After smoking Blackfoot tobacco and eating a small feast of local produce and buffalo tongues, his Cree guide signed that he "was sent by the Great Leader who lives down at the great waters, to invite his young men down to see him and to bring with them Beaver skins, and Wolves skins: & they would get in return Powder, Shot, Guns, Cloth, Beads, &c." With these signs he made his case for direct, open trade, if they undertook the long journey to the trading post, which mostly resembled an obstacle course. The chief replied only "that it was far off, & they could not paddle" and with those gestures Anthony Henday's mission failed. His repeated offer also got much the same response since he could offer nothing of interest to entice them to undertake the long trek to the English trading posts on Hudson Bay. The chief assured him that Blackfoot people "could not live without Buffalo flesh". He did not leave empty handed, since general amity ensued and he got a promise from several chiefs that they would trap mammals over the winter and

intercept him as he floated eastward in the spring. After five days of frenzied and bustling activity in a Blackfoot town of 350 tents, he felt slightly overwhelmed when it all disappeared in one morning. It gave him the impression of a mirage, or that he had woken from a dream only to himself alone - a stranger in a strange land.

After the camp left, Anthony Henday and his band were allowed to stay the winter in Blackfoot country and hunt beaver which they did to good effect. Winter was collapsing and the ice was breaking off the river when they began making preparations for their trip downstream. They could hear thunder as they collected birch rind to make canoes. Overhead, the returning swans and geese looked down and saw them packing their pelts into bales. Finally on April 28, they stepped into their canoes happy to be rid of the mosquitoes that were plaguing them. They floated down river and two weeks later they met a large camp of Blackfoot waiting with their wolf skins and dried buffalo meat which they traded for axes and kettles. He tried again to convince some to travel to the English trading post but got the same disappointing answer that doomed his mission to failure. He suspected his Cree guides of deliberately sabotaging his objectives to keep their advantage by not being persuasive enough in their invitations to the trading forts. He opined that "altho' the Indians promised the Chief Factor at York Fort to talk to them strongly on that Subject, they never opened their mouths; and I have great reason to believe that they are a stoppage: for if they could be brought down to trade, the others would be obliged to trap their own Furs: which at present two thirds of them do not" (Burpee 1907: 351). In the last days of May he left Blackfoot country with a failed mission to enlarge trade but, over 60 canoes of people and pelts, and "scarce a Gun, Kettle, Hatchet, or Knife amongst us."

When his party ended their visit it had minimal impact on Blackfoot material culture but it was enough to start the consumer culture that supported the fur trade. His visit was an event that came and went. He introduced metal pots to Blackfoot domesticity, but they did not supplant the ceramic industry. He shared his tobacco, but the Blackfoot preferred the brand they grew. Exotic items entered their culture system by way of their neighbours,

or from the French traders who visited them, but to little effect. Twenty years later Matthew Cocking arrived in Blackfoot country on a second trade mission to open direct trade relations and invite them down to the shores of Hudson Bay. He wrote "they have dealings with no Europeans, but....draw towards the N.E. in March to meet our Natives who traffick with them" (Burpee 1908a: 110). Like Anthony Henday, he too went away empty handed, hearing much the same words when "they said that they would be starved & were unacquainted with Canoes & mentioned the long distance."

In the early summer of 1772, he left York Fort on the journey that would see him winter on the northern plains as a guest of the Blackfoot and return in only fifty-one weeks. After three months travel, during which time he abandoned his canoes in favour of horses, he reached the eastern frontier of Blackfoot country in late September. He searched and found signs of their camps everywhere, but a personal encounter eluded him. On the crisp evening of October 6 his party set up their camp near a brackish prairie lake. The following morning, while reconnoitering, he came upon an old camp where he "found in an old tent-place....part of an earthen vessel, in which they dress their victuals; It appeared to have been in the form of an earthen pan" (Burpee 1908a: 108). Finally in late November, with winter coming on and food getting scarce, his party met two scouts from a Blackfoot camp who agreed to inform their leaders of his presence. However, an early winter storm blew in forcing all persons to hunker in their tents for a whole seven days. It delayed further meetings until December 1 when the weather broke and a party arrived and pitched their tents nearby. Matthew Cocking felt secure in Blackfoot country and he was treated hospitably. Blackfoot hunters even killed a few buffalo so his party could have a meal of fresh meat. They invited him to partake of their food and at the banquet he notice that "Their Victuals are dressed in earthen pots, of their own Manufacturing; much in the same form as Newcastle pots, but without feet" (Burpee 1908a: 111). Apparently Blackfoot women still possessed the technical knowledge to manufacture ceramic ware and Henday's visit had not altered their industry.

Resigned as he was to his failed mission, a sullen Matthew Cocking lamented, "I am certain they never can be prevailed upon to undertake such journies" (Burpee 1908a: 111). His assessment proved true and a year after his return to York Fort he made another trip inland, in the company of Samuel Hearne, to set up shop at Cumberland House in 1774. The consumerism of the fur trade began in earnest later, as more trading posts were built farther inland. Convenience became increasingly important for Blackfoot consumers when Manchester House was hastily established on the North Saskatchewan River (near Edmonton, Alberta) in the fall of 1786. There, trade was conducted for seven years until it was plundered by dissatisfied Peigan customers. Through Manchester House the world trade system had reached to the doors of Blackfoot tipis. David Thompson arrived in autumn 1787, and promptly left to spend the winter in a Peigan camp on the Bow River. Although he passed an entire winter as a guest in the lodge of *Saukamappee*, he made no mention at all of seeing earthenware (Glover 1962). Apparently within a decade of importing the first metal pots to their camps the long-standing ceramic industry was abandoned, making the technical knowledge required to manufacture ceramic ware obsolete, a casualty of foreign trade. Luxury items, such as metal pots, quickly lost their novelty and became necessities for the cooking fires, proving this nascent consumerism to be an erosive force that undermined and eliminated ceramic ware from Peigan culture.

For generations Blackfoot women passed down the traditional techniques for making clay pots and for a while they co-existed with the new metal pots. Accommodating them was easy because of their utility, but it also meant making room in the language for an item that was both foreign and familiar. In Blackfoot, *ko's* is the generic word for dish. It is used to denote a metal, wood or earthen pot or bowl but the ambiguity is lost by assigning gender (Franz and Russell 1989). Blackfoot speakers express gender in terms of animate or inanimate; animate nouns use the plural suffix *-iksi*, while inanimate nouns use *-istsi*. The distinction between domestic and exotic manufacture becomes apparent when the plural form is activated, or if someone claims ownership of a bowl. Homemade pots are

denoted by the inanimate gender, while the imported metal pots take on the animate gender. The phrase *kiphkokkit annistsi ko'sistsi* means 'give me those wooden, or earthen, pots.' Stating it *kiphkokkit anniksi ko'siksi* means 'give me those metal pots'. This implies that the inanimate gender of *ko's* is the older form, and the novel technology was linguistically defined by creating a new category for metal pots that carried an animate gender. This linguistic distinction is an artifact of the fur trade and about all that remains of Blackfoot pottery.

In contrast is the planting and use of Indian tobacco, which underwent its own metamorphosis when the fur trade economy arrived on the northern plains. In aboriginal times Blackfoot botanists had taken only one plant under their protection and that was the sacred tobacco plant. In Blackfoot mythology, the seeds were a gift from the chief of a beaver family who had befriended a young man he had rescued. The people who were entrusted with the seeds and the arcane lore of their cultivation and harvest, were members of the beaver medicine bundle society. Their training consisted of learning when, where, and how to till the soil so that seeds would grow, yield a crop, and produce more seeds for the next year. When the fur trade era began, cultivating the local variety ceased, also a casualty of foreign trade. However, the symbolic value of tobacco was strong and easily accommodated the intruding product. Tobacco symbolism continues to resist erosion. It plays the same role in ritual today as it has since the beaver people first handed it over to humans. This raises interesting questions about the antiquity and origin of Blackfoot tobacco rituals and in this case archaeological and palaeobotanical research methods, specifically fine screening and flotation, can provide proxy evidence for them. Medicine bundle ceremonies involving tobacco have been an integral part of Blackfoot culture for centuries, and in earlier times it was a trade item that was sought by neighbouring people.

Prior to visiting Blackfoot country Anthony Henday, through his long career in the fur trade, was aware of the high value that Indians placed on tobacco. Smoking was the standard protocol used to open trade negotiations, and a gift of tobacco was a sign of good

faith. Therefore tobacco was among the gifts he gave when he met some Blackfoot scouts on October 1, 1754, and afterwards smoked with them to garner their friendship. Upon arriving at a Blackfoot camp two weeks later, he knew better than to talk of trade before the pipe had been passed around. "Our Leader set on several grand-pipes, and smoked all round, according to their usual custom: not a word was yet spoke on either side" (Burpee 1907: 335). The tobacco they smoked was not a gift brought by the trader, rather it was an homegrown product that was harvested from Blackfoot garden plots. Evidently Anthony Henday shared some imported tobacco with his hosts, and their appraisal was to the negative. Much to his chagrin he found that, "They think nothing of my tobacco." But, as he confided to his journal, the feeling was mutual and he "set as little value on theirs: which is dried Horse-dung" (Burpee 1907: 339). Passing a mild winter along the Red Deer River, he made no more mention of Blackfoot tobacco, perhaps he had enough Brazile tobacco to supply his party for the winter.

When Matthew Cocking led his hapless trade mission into Blackfoot country two decades after Henday, tobacco plants were still a growing concern. On the weekend of October 16, 1772, while travelling in the heart of Blackfoot country, his Cree guides discovered a plot of tobacco growing nearby one of their camps. "The Natives shew me a tobacco plantation belonging to the [Blackfoot] about 100 yards long & 5 wide, sheltered from the northern blasts by a Ledge of poplars; & to the Southward by a ridge of high ground" (Burpee 1908a: 109). His meager description is instructive. His journal reads mid-October and the tobacco crop had not been harvested yet. Although it must have been mature. Tobacco gardens were not located in open country, rather they were planted in sheltered areas for protection from the elements and were hardy enough to thrive with little, or no, tending. They struck their camp a week later, October 22, making no mention of anyone arriving to harvest the crop, even though he reported snow three weeks earlier. The sequence of events would imply that tobacco was harvested in late October, around

mid-autumn. Perhaps the camp he met later was arriving to harvest the tobacco and were holding their harvesting rituals at the camp before approaching the garden.

Matthew Cocking's party then wandered around Blackfoot country for another month, trying to operate a Blackfoot buffalo pound, and to make contact with them. The luckless crew could lure no beast into the pound. Eventually, with snow falling around them, they abandoned the enterprise. They remained at the pound, but resorted to hunting individual animals with guns and bows and arrows. The blame for the failure at the pound fell squarely on the shoulders of the Cree guides because "They are an indolent thoughtless set of beings, never looking beyond the present time" (Burpee 1908a: 110). Despite his dismal impression of them, he could not venture far from their support; nor could he control their insistence on having a good time, of which he complained. Maybe sleep deprivation, brought on by the constant drumming and dancing, explains his sour disposition. No doubt it was compounded by his feeling that he had fallen short of his objective of trading with the Blackfoot.

When he did meet some Blackfoot scouts on November 22, he activated the standard protocol with a gift of tobacco to show his candour. His elation was temporarily muted by a prairie blizzard, but on December 1 a large camp of 21 tents joined them at the buffalo pound. The common parlance for trade talks between the Cree and Blackfoot leaders was conducted in the Assiniboine language, rather than the usual sign language. The formal meetings began with the traditional smoke, after which he made a present of his tobacco to the Blackfoot leaders. In the privacy of his own musing he related their horticultural habits and its unpleasant product. "The tobacco is of their own planting, which hath a disagreeable flavour" (Burpee 1908a: 111). Apparently the local variety was an acquired taste. Blackfoot smokers, for their part, initially recoiled from trade tobacco but soon acquired a taste for it once they opened foreign trade relations. Twenty-five years after this meeting, the long practice of cultivating tobacco was gone.

The botanical knowledge required to sow, tend and harvest tobacco rapidly gave way to importing a product that by European accounts was superior to the local variety. David Thompson lived among the Peigan 15 years after Cocking's visit and apparently sampled the tobacco they once grew but which they subsequently abandoned. He wrote:

until the year 1800 they had always raised tobacco in proportion to their wants. When they became acquainted with the tobacco of the U States brought by the traders, which they found to be so superior to their own, that they gradually left off cultivating it and after the above year raised no more. The tobacco they raised had a very hot taste in smoking, and required a great proportion of bears berry weed to be mixed with it. The white people gave it the name of the devil's tobacco (Glover 1962: 266).

Satan's weed did not have the heavenly taste of trade tobacco so it was not smoked alone, rather it was mixed with other plants. Nevertheless, it was an important element in Blackfoot ritual culture and had been present for centuries. Yet it was abandoned readily. It is now completely absent from Blackfoot custom. From the vantage point of the present, the fur trade was a homogenizing agent eroding cultural diversity. However, Blackfoot smokers still practice large-scale, secular usage of tobacco, and the ceremony associated with the beaver medicine bundle is still integral to Blackfoot ritual culture.

By the time Anthony Henday slandered their leaves, Blackfoot gardens had been producing tobacco for several centuries and tobacco rituals were firmly embedded in Blackfoot traditional thought. Tobacco was indispensable for public ceremonies and private offerings. Every medicine bundle had a medicine pipe, and every medicine society needs tobacco for its ceremonies. Including the present, tobacco is indispensable to medicine ceremonies. When owners of medicine pipe bundles hear the first thunder of spring, they announce their intention to ritually open their medicine bundle. They will invite people to attend their bundle opening, or *saipsstaahkaan*. People know there will be a bundle opening when they hear the phrase *aakssaipstaahkaawa* - he will open his medicine pipe bundle. Distributing tobacco to those in attendance is an essential act of communion between host and participant. Near the end of the ceremony a bundle owner will present tobacco to guests and that is when people will use the phrase

aakssaipstaahkiwa - he will give out tobacco. When distributed thus, it is blessed and people will use it when making an offering to the sun, or *ikkitstakkssin*. The phrase *iikitstakiwa* - he placed an offering to the sun - denotes someone who has made an offering, for example at a Sundance. These Blackfoot words and phrases antedate any influence from Western thought and are derived from the ritual use of tobacco.

Since tobacco monopolized Blackfoot gardening, the vocabulary about tobacco and cultivation allude to this connection. The tobacco society had the specific duty of preparing the garden, sowing the seeds, and harvesting the crop; and they enlisted the family members, both male and female, to help in the physical labour. In effect the tobacco society was a horticultural society and the custom they practiced was planting tobacco. Meaning for cultivating plants is carried in *-simaa* which is the identifying portion in cognate words. Sowing seeds is *i'nssimaa*, as in the phrase *ai'nssimawa* - he is sowing seeds. Or, if one is planning on it they would say of him *aaksi'nssimawa* - he intends to sow some seeds. The first step was preparing the soil for planting by softening it up by turning over the topsoil, which is meant by *ikkiniihkimiksiiyi*. This meaning is carried by the phrase - *aaksikkiniihkimiksiiyima anni otayaakitsi'nssimaahpi* - she will till the soil where she will plant her garden - and the tilling implement she would use was known by *iihtaopahkimiksaakio'p*. When the seeds germinated and seedlings appeared the gardener would say *i'nssimaan* to refer to a plant, or collectively to plants in a garden, and she would assigned an inanimate gender denoted by the article *anni*. A gardener referring to his crop uses the phrase *nitsi'nssimaanistsi* - those are my plants. After the seeds were planted and prior to leaving the garden plot, the leader would call out the command *maaksistsiipisskit*, or build a fence, by piling logs around the edge. The last act before leaving the garden was placing offerings to the timid, little people who lived in the forest and who tended the plants when the tobacco society members departed. Then the garden plot was left alone for the duration of the growing season.

When the tobacco society went to harvest their crop they would send a young man ahead to scout the crop, and to alert the little people to their arrival. He would pull a plant up by the roots and bring it back to the approaching camp. *Opitsskimiksimaan* referred to the sample plant brought back to the main camp in this manner. Uprooting the whole plant was the standard harvesting method, so the act of harvesting tobacco is *opitsskimiksaaki*. When a Blackfoot person spoke the phrase *aakopitsskimiksaakiwa* - he will uproot plants - it was said of someone who was gathering plants by digging in the ground. As tobacco is an annual plant, new seeds must be planted each year. The seeds were collected from the vine before the plants were harvested. Once the tobacco society had harvested their crop and dried the leaves, they set about preparing the tobacco for distribution to the various societies and bundle holders. Tobacco prepared for smoking was mixed with other smoking substances and the resulting mixture was known as *piiksiistsimaan*. Originally these words would have been said in reference to tobacco plants. When Blackfoot people settled on reserves and adopted agriculture as a way of life they were already familiar with the concept of cultivating plants. Although tobacco had not been planted for almost a century, the vocabulary had persisted in the language and was transferred to farming activities and agricultural produce, such as potatoes.

Determining the antiquity of Blackfoot horticulture is possible because smoking is an activity that leaves an identifiable signature by way of pollen grains, phytoliths, and seeds. Although the ephemeral nature of tobacco gardens would make them extremely difficult to locate, if one were found it would have archaeological visibility because its signature remnants would be present in the soil. Research methods such as flotation and fine screening, were used successfully on samples of matrix excavated at known horticultural village sites located in Iowa to search for such plant remains. Subjecting the matrix samples from sites on the Missouri River to these methods revealed carbonized tobacco seeds of the species *Nicotiana attenuata* in a context that suggests tobacco was first cultivated there approximately 1000 years ago (Haberman 1984). Plant taxonomists find

the wild ancestor of this species west of the Rocky Mountains in the Great Basin, and from there its range extended eastward only through aboriginal horticulture. Artificial selection for desired traits eventually produced four distinct cultivars, with the one on the plains growing between 30-50 cm in height, and displaying white to purplish flowers that yield a seed capsule about 12 mm long. *Dentalium* shells found at the same sites hint at a long distance trade network extending into the upper Missouri River and across the continental divide into the Columbia River right to the northwest coast.

Along the Missouri River this species held an honoured position in the horticultural repertoire of the Crow Indians who cultivated it for ceremonial purposes and for its medicinal properties. Archaeological evidence seems to corroborate the Crow origin stories for tobacco. One narrative relates how a young man went west to the mountains on a vision quest where he met seven spirits who were the stars in the constellation *Ursa Major*. When he returned he had tobacco seeds and the knowledge for their cultivation which he shared with his compatriots. The sowing and reaping became infused with ritual and the planting was part of a broader practice with specific ceremonies for each stage, such as approaching and leaving the garden. The relative chronology of story-telling appears with phrases such as "Before there were any horses" to begin the narrative. It places the event of tobacco appearing in their gardens before horses, but further on in the story horses appear - as do guns. Horses become trophies while the Crow travel the war trail, but success is attributed to the intervention of tobacco spirits.

Another story relates that a party of Peigans who walked the war trail south from their homeland came upon a camp of Crows who were inspecting their plants. When the gardeners departed, the Peigan vandalized their garden! Except for one young man who decried this behaviour and instead wrapped up some plants and took them with him. His companions were all killed for destroying the garden, but he escaped because in a dream the tobacco spirit warned him of approaching danger. Later, the Crow adopted some Peigans into their tobacco society and taught them the recondite lore on growing tobacco

plants (Lowie 1919). In this way, it diffused to the Blackfoot who lived on the extreme northern edge of its growing range. It was available only through cultivation or trade, as there were no wild ancestors on the plains. Its growing season coincided with the number of frost-free days at these mid-latitudes. Trying to grow it any farther north than fifty degrees latitude was futile. Thus, if direct botanical remains were found in Blackfoot country the candidate regions would be along the Oldman, Belly or Saskatchewan rivers. If tobacco plants remains were found, they could be subjected to radiometric analysis to establish an absolute date for tobacco's cultivation on the northern plains. A date no earlier than 1000 AD can be expected, since tobacco plants were not cultivated on the Missouri River before that time (Ford 1981). Therefore, their appearance in Blackfoot country would have to be later, so a date of approximately 1300 AD is not unreasonable. Also, plant remains could be regarded as proxy evidence for tobacco ceremonies, such as those found in Blackfoot ritual culture. David Thompson stated that the last tobacco crop was planted 200 years ago, indicating that tobacco horticulture had persisted in the Blackfoot culture system for about five hundred years before being abandoned in 1800 AD.

Archaeological evidence reveals, surprisingly, that tobacco and smoking are not synonymous. Artifacts recovered in the course of standard archaeological excavations include smoking pipes, which means that smoking was already an ancient tradition when tobacco appeared. The Cactus Flower site in southeastern Alberta was a good location for small groups of hunters to camp. They left it and went to conceal themselves and wait to ambush bison approaching the South Saskatchewan River to drink. Repeatedly, between 4100 and 3600 years ago, they set this tactic in motion and brought back to this campsite the butchered animals they succeeded in killing (Brumley 1975). The hunting bands often left things behind as they abandoned and reoccupied the site and during one such turnover someone left behind a tubular stone pipe. Its presence reveals that smoking was a habit on the northern plains for over 3000 years before tobacco entered the cultural system. It also implies great time depth for a lithic tradition that specialized in producing smoking

paraphernalia and that some herb, or herbs, other than tobacco were available locally to smoke. Blackfoot smoking pleasure was derived by concocting a blend of the dried leaves of tobacco and bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), laced with the dried cambium of red-osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*), and placing it in a stone pipe (Hellson 1974). An ember was picked from the hearth with hand-held, wooden tongs and placed atop the mixture and the smoker inhaled. Both bearberry and dogwood are found among the local flora, and have been since the onset of the Holocene, so the ingredients for autochthonal smoking existed prior to tobacco cultivation, although introducing the latter had the effect of altering cultural behaviour by growing a domesticate. On the basis of archaeological and ethnohistorical evidence, the practices of smoking and tobacco cultivation overlapped only briefly before commercial trade made the botanical practices obsolete. Cultivating tobacco and making stone pipes ended when the fur trade expanded into Blackfoot country. An unintended consequence was the unemployment that befell the little people who tended the gardens in exchange for offerings.

Tobacco and smoking continued to be important to private offerings and public rituals, but the enduring legacy was the medicine pipe ceremony, the tobacco society and the beaver medicine bundles that thrived as the common religion of the Blackfoot people. The importance of tobacco to Blackfoot ideology was such that the rituals surrounding it did not face a similar fate as cultivation, even though bounteous availability ensued with commercialism - which in turn promoted greater secular usage. Smoking became part of daily life even as it remained central in religious thought, except that sowing and reaping tobacco plants ceased to be a focus for the tobacco society. Instead the smoke itself became the draw. Keepers of the beaver bundles still performed their vernal planting rituals into the early twentieth century, even though tobacco planting was an intellectual artifact mentioned only in the oral narratives about the origin of the medicine bundle ceremonies. Here archaeology contributes to the goal of divining the hidden meaning behind rituals and

ceremonies to better understand the history of Blackfoot spirituality, but not with the intent of explaining away sacredness.

Archaeological methods will unite with Indian lore to provide the driving force for research that will add substance to an internalist perspective. This option may be the best hope of advancing the case for a discipline in search of a sympathetic audience in the Indian world. Just as an internalist perspective will adopt the methods of archaeology to define research goals and subject data to rigorous scrutiny, so it will introduce folklore as a guide for archaeological research. The present rift between the two is founded upon the distrust that mainstream archaeology still holds for any source of information that is expressed in an oral tradition. Since it will bear the burden of uncertainty so long as no one pays close attention, internalist archaeology has a special obligation to research it for a skeptical discipline in a mode that is at once rational and testable. Native researchers using archaeological methods can delve into the folklore that nurtured their particular culture to demonstrate theirs was not an impoverished worldview.

Directions for Internalist Archaeology

Since Native archaeologists seek ways to make meaningful contributions to the broader discipline they must take the lead in defining the details that will bring substance to an internalist sense of the past. Planning for such a quest can only benefit by heeding experience, because nobody can anticipate all the challenges. Unfortunately aboriginal people have not been well served by archaeology, which has tended to be dismissive of their folklore when it did not conform to scientific explanation. When used for publication, it is invoked in an *ad hoc* manner that leaves the impression of a chaotic, rambling sermon rather than an exercise in constructing archaeological theory. Advocates for a scientific version of the past saw no room for it in their research and explicitly warned against "accepting folk knowledge - let alone implicit folk knowledge - as the basis for describing the past" (Binford 1981: 25). Distrust of traditional narratives and oral histories was a founding tenet of anthropological thought, so there is no reason to expect that situation to

change any time soon. Therefore the burden falls on internalist archaeology to elevate the status of folk knowledge from story-telling to research paradigm. It will be the gateway to imagining the past.

Even in the early ethnographic discourse, ancient lore was considered intriguing because it often contained valid information for explaining archaeological data (Powell 1885; Hodge 1912). However, their use of it was to substantiate anthropological opinion that Indians had been the sole occupants in America only briefly before Europeans arrived; of course later archaeological evidence in the vicinity of Clovis and Folsom, New Mexico would prove that wrong. This research was current at a time when dispossessing Indians from their homelands was considered a regrettable necessity of manifest destiny. Archaeologists dutifully contributed their justification of that policy by pointing out that the plains, for example, had been abandoned for most of the Holocene because it was simply too difficult an environment to be occupied by pedestrian cultures. Only with the aid of European horses could the Indians leave their woodland homes and effectively exploit the natural abundance available - but previously out of reach. Thus they had no greater claim to their prairie homelands than the white settlers who displaced them. Edward Curtis in his multi-volume set *The North American Indian*, published prior to World War I, found oral history to be very useful when he wanted to prove the Peigan had only a short tenure in the Montana territory recently appropriated by white settlers. Relying greatly on the memory and lineage of his aged informant, and applying his own math skills, he calculated the Peigan had only abandoned their forest home in the year 1790 AD. They had scarcely wintered more than a decade along the Yellowstone River before Lewis and Clark discovered that same territory and claimed it for the United States. Later, when his informant failed to conjure up stories of those old days in the forest he marveled how "Notwithstanding the comparatively brief time since their settlement on the prairie, their former forest habitat apparently has left slight impress on their culture, nor do their folktales make any considerable reference to a former home country. It seems incredible that in

so short a period a people, however primitive, could so completely lose sight of a former home. It is evident, in this case at least, that folk-tales are constantly changing" (Curtis 1911: 12). Evidently, the idea that Peigans could not recall a forest home because they had enjoyed a long history on the plains was simply too implausible to imagine. Curtis' logic of denial also informs Thomas Flanagan's argument, in his recent book *First Nations? Second Thoughts* (2000), that Indians have no special claim to their homelands because they only arrived there a few years before Europeans and in some cases even after Europeans. Whether for manifest destiny or NAGPRA, a political agenda always seems to lurk behind academic writing discounting oral narratives as incapable of imparting information about ancient times.

As an antidote to this bias, Native archaeologists have to undertake the task of rehabilitating the oral tradition because it will bring coherence to an internalist sense of the past. It will bring ancient lore into modern research design. The exercise will begin by examining the structure of traditional thought and sorting through its levels of abstraction to reveal its inherent lucidity. Organizing devices become necessary because internalist archaeology will require a theoretical template to motivate and guide future research. Organizing traditional thought by degrees of abstraction removes the apparent chaos typically associated with it and lifts the patina of irrationality off Indian lore. Instead, traditional practices interact with the worldview through messages transmitted by oral narratives. Information is blended into the storyline, which acts to bind these messages together in a legend and transmit them across time. The acts of hunting and gathering are informed by ecological parameters and creative tales are the beguiling deposits in mnemonic coffers. Distinguishing activities by applying archaeological methods effectively reveals the time depth of ideas expressed in cultural narratives.

Folklore wraps a parcel of thought and practice together, so finding the inherent trends and patterns is a research problem for internalist archaeology. Indeed, narratives built around cultural practices work to bridge the conceptual distance between activities,

such as gathering plant foods, and the ceremonial life of the culture. The worldview explains reality and is narrated in folklore. Thus, it mediates between the least abstract customs that are practiced on a daily basis, or which recur at regular times, and universal themes that are celebrated in ritual and ceremony. In pursuing this search for hidden meaning in traditional narratives, the role of tobacco in Peigan lore, custom, and ideology will serve to illustrate the links in this hierarchy. The Peigan were not by habit a horticultural people but they did cultivate tobacco and this in turn produced links with cultural traditions associated with medicine bundles. Although they were familiar with plant domesticates, it was for ritual purposes only since tobacco was a food product only for pipes. Plant mythology justifies the patterns of cultivation, harvesting, and saving seeds; it also helps to select the themes apparent in ceremonies and ideology.

Tobacco occupies privileged space in Peigan thought because it draws the smoker closer to the dreams and visions where spirits speak to people. The mythology of its origin connects the practice of cultivation to a ritual activity mandated by the universe. Planting and raising crops is a practice that requires certain skills and knowledge because seeds need to be carefully gathered, stored, and planted. When Peigan people adopted the tradition of gardening they had to make room in their worldview for a new custom, and they did so in the only form that was available. Botanical knowledge about tobacco was codified and embedded in Peigan oral narratives along with vital ecological messages related to selecting the proper environmental conditions to produce a good crop. The hunting and gathering lifestyle of the Peigan adopted cultigens on its own terms and the narrative recounting their origin transmits the information required to grow tobacco on the northern plains. Essential knowledge overcomes such problems as when and where to plant seeds so that a healthy crop is produced in the short growing season. However, beyond the basic practice of planting seeds, there exists symbolic value which contributes to constructing the worldview, the highest level of abstraction, and this is expressed in ceremonies dedicated to the practice.

Beaver Tales

The story of how the Peigan got tobacco is told in the legend of the beaver bundle ceremony. This story will be used to illustrate how traditional narratives parallel limited-range theorizing and meditate between levels of abstraction. Ceremonies dedicated to the beaver medicine bundle exist at the highest levels of worldview. Practices, in this case cultivating tobacco, are physical activities that require human labour. So, like methods, they occupy the lower levels of abstraction. The following passage is an abbreviated version of the story related to Walter McClintock by his host, Mad Wolf, concerning the origin of tobacco. The story involves two brothers, Akaiyan and Nopatsis, who held similar passions for the same woman. The object of their interest flirted with Akaiyan, and obviously liked him, so a jealous Nopatsis schemed to remove his competition. He tricked a naïve Akaiyan into going hunting with him on a remote island in the middle of a big lake and stranded him there. As winter was setting in Akaiyan, bemoaned his lot until he was rescued by the Beaver chief who wondered why the young human was alone:

The Beaver Chief bade him to be seated, and asked him why he was living alone on the island. Akaiyan told him how cruelly and unjustly he had been treated and left alone to die. The Beaver Chief pitied Akaiyan and counselled with him, saying 'My son, the time will soon come when we will close up our lodge for the winter. The lake will freeze over and we cannot come out again for seven moons, until the warm winds of spring will break up the ice. Remain in our lodge while the snows are deep. We will teach you many wonderful things and, when you return again, you can take knowledge with you, that will be of great value to your people.' The beaver were so hospitable, Akaiyan decided to remain with them. He took with him into the beaver lodge many ducks and geese for food and his bird-skin robe to keep him warm. They closed their lodge before it became cold, leaving a hole for air at the top. During the coldest days the beavers kept Akaiyan warm by lying close to him and placing their tails across his body. He made friends with all of them, but he liked the youngest and smallest beaver the best of all. He was the cleverest as well as the favourite child of the Beaver Chief. Akaiyan learned their habits and manner of living. They taught him the names of the herbs and roots, which we still use for the curing of the people. They showed him also the different paints, and explained their use saying, 'If you should use these, they will bring to your people good luck and will ward off sickness and death.' They gave him the seeds of the tobacco (origin of tobacco), and taught him how they should be planted with songs and prayers. They made scratches with their claws on the smooth walls of the lodge to mark the days, and when the days completed a moon they marked the moons with sticks. He witnessed many dances belonging to their medicines, and listened carefully to the songs and

prayers. The Beaver Chief and his wife (Wise Old Woman) taught him the prayers and songs of their medicine and the dances that belonged to them, and said, 'Whenever any of your people are sick, or dying, if you will give this ceremonial, they will be restored to health.' He noticed that the beavers never ate during the ceremonial, and that they beat time for the dances with their tails, always stopping when they heard any suspicious noise, just as they do when they are at work. They told him that they counted seven moons from the time when the leaves fall before they prepared to open their lodge in the spring. When they heard the booming of the ice breaking in the lake, they knew it would soon be time to leave their winter home.

The Beaver Chief also told Akaiyan that when he returned to his people, he should make a sacred Bundle similar to the one he saw them using in their ceremonial. He also taught him the songs and prayers and dances that belonged to the Bundle and informed him that, if any of the people were sick, or dying and a relative would make a vow to the Beaver Medicine, the sick would be restored to health.

One evening, when the Beaver Chief returned from his cutting, he said to Akaiyan, 'My son, remain in hiding and do not show yourself. To-day, when I was among the trees on the main shore, I saw your brother's camp.' The next day Akaiyan, watching from the beaver lodge, saw Nopatsis coming to the island on the raft. He saw him land and walk along the shore hunting for his bones. Then Akaiyan ran, with Little Beaver under his arm and took possession of the raft. He was far out in the big lake before Nopatsis saw him. He at once realized that his younger brother had secured great power superior to his own and had become a great medicine man.

Akaiyan now returned with Little Beaver to the tribal camp. He went at once to the head chief's lodge and told his story. All the people received him with the greatest honour, when they heard of the wisdom and power that had been given him by the Beavers. Akaiyan gathered together a Beaver Bundle as the Beaver Chief had directed. He and Little Beaver had remained all winter in the camp, teaching the people the songs, prayers and dances given him by the beavers. When Spring came, Akaiyan invited all of the animals to add their power to the Beaver Medicine. Many birds and animals of the prairies and mountains came, offering their skins and taught him their songs, prayers and dances to accompany their skins, just as the beavers had done. The Elk and his wife each contributed a song and dance, also the Moose and his wife. The Woodpecker gave three songs with his dance. The Frog alone of all the animals could neither dance nor sing, and it is for this reason he is not represented in the Beaver Bundle. The Turtle could not dance and had no song, but is represented in the Bundle, because he was wise and borrowed one from the Lizard, who owned two songs.

In the following spring Akaiyan returned to the island with Little Beaver to visit the beaver lodge. He saw his brother's bones on the shore and knew the beavers had not helped him. The Beaver Chief welcomed Akaiyan warmly and when he gave back Little Beaver to his father, the old chief was so grateful that he presented him with a sacred pipe, teaching him also the songs, prayers and dances that belonged to it. When Akaiyan returned again to the Indian camp he added this pipe to the Beaver Bundle. Every spring Akaiyan went to visit his friends, the beavers, and each time the Beaver Chief gave him something to add to the Beaver Bundle, until it reached the

size it has to-day. Akaiyan continued to lead the Beaver ceremonial as long as he lived and was known as a great medicine man. When he died, the ceremonial was continued by his son, and has been handed down ever since (McClintock 1910: 236).

Tobacco Smoke

The traditional narrative indicates tobacco and the beaver medicine bundle share a common origin: the antiquity of one is equal to the other. Smoking already had a ritual purpose before tobacco appeared on the northern plains, so the Peigan had the cultural background for accepting the product. However accepting the practice of planting tobacco into their culture system was a different matter. The benefit, of course, was access to a herb that likely improved the flavour of previous smoking blends. The narrative is the mnemonic recitation. The beaver is the benefactor of seeds, but since the origin of this world the beaver has been allotted a revered space in Blackfoot ideology. When the star people drowned the last world, it was a beaver that dived to the abyss to retrieve a pawful of mud. From this mud all the world was formed. In this story, the aquatic habits of the beaver imparted the information crucial for timing and locating tobacco gardens. Sowing the seeds at the proper time was critical because the young plants were cold-sensitive and a sudden, late frost could wipe out a new crop. Thus the plants had to germinate and mature between the frosty nights that bracket summer. But deliberate choices could mitigate the impact of an adverse climate. These were the ecological messages embedded in the narrative.

The story of the beaver medicine bundle appears in the ethnographic classic *The Old North Trail* by Walter McClintock (1910). He had befriended William Jackson, a Peigan scout for a United States Forest Service survey party in Montana. When the survey was complete he returned with Jackson to the Blackfeet Reservation. While a guest there he became acquainted with Mad Wolf, who later sent him to the Peigan Reserve in Alberta to visit other authorities on Blackfoot lore. Mad Wolf invited Walter McClintock to sit within hearing distance and commit to paper his mental library because he desired to leave a memoir chronicling his knowledge and worldview for a future generation. His is an

account of the upheaval wrought in the life of a Blackfoot ritualist during their days of change. His faith unshaken, but facing uncertain times, Mad Wolf made a pragmatic choice to recruit a literate visitor who was eager to experience life as an Indian. As Mad Wolf's biographer McClintock was privy to ceremonies such as the Sundance and the medicine pipe ceremony. Attending Mad Wolf's beaver medicine bundle opening was his introduction to the ritual life of a Peigan medicine man. Outside his familiar ideological landmarks and adrift in an alien culture, the ceremonies were incomprehensible for him. So he watched and he recorded. But no matter how much he saw and wrote, he could not understand because the worldview that gave rise to these ceremonies lay beyond his cognitive boundaries along the borderlands of the Peigan mythic past. To help him make sense of it all, Mad Wolf told him the story of Akaiyan, tobacco, and the beaver bundle. The narrative became a compass to traverse the ideological terrain manifested in the beaver medicine bundle and all the songs, prayers, and dances associated with it. Mad Wolf showed him the contents of the medicine bundle and handed him a small beaver-heart sack saying, "In it are some of the original seeds of the tobacco given to us by the beavers. They were secured many years ago by Akaiyan, the man who lived all winter in the lodge with the chief Beaver and brought back with him the Beaver Medicine. I will relate to you the story as it has been handed down to me from our ancestors. What I will tell you happened long ago, when our people made all of their tools and weapons from stone, and when they used dogs instead of horses for beasts of burden" (McClintock 1910: 104). The story, an intellectual artifact, became a bridging device articulating an ancient, but obsolete, practice with an older, but extinct, worldview.

Clark Wissler in his treatise *Ceremonial Bundles of the Blackfoot Indians*, described the beaver medicine bundle, or *ksiskstakissomopistaan*, as the nucleus of a coterie of bundles and stated that a "more or less integral part of this is the tobacco planting ceremony." The bundle contains a pipe, many skins of birds and mammals, plus fossil ammonites (*iniskimiksi*), sweetgrass, roots, paints, rattles and rawhide, and "counting

sticks used in keeping tally of the months" (Wissler 1912: 169). Several of the mammal species are represented by neonate pelts, others are those of animals that hibernate over winter, and many of the birds are migratory species that arrive with the onset of spring. The animal parts are used as mnemonic devices to recall songs devoted to the long ceremony of opening a bundle. The owners are called beaver men, or *ksisskstakinaiksi*, who are "considered skillful in forecasting the weather....and formerly kept count of the days and months...[they would] open it in the spring at tobacco-planting time and again at the harvest when tobacco is put into it" (Wissler 1912: 171).

Timing was critical to reap the benefits of tobacco. In this story the hero received instructions for reckoning the planting season and how to treat the tobacco at harvest time. Reciting the legend during the winter reiterated the steps involved in accurately forecasting the ideal time for planting a garden. The ecological messages in the beaver bundle origin story are the environmental cues that ritualists interpreted to give tobacco a better than average chance of survival at mid-latitudes. The first cue came from the beaver scratching the walls of their lodge to keep track of days. The beaver medicine bundle served a calendrical function in measuring the length of winter on the northern plains. The ancient Peigan were familiar with the concept of a lunar calendar. "It is the duty of each bundle owner to keep tally of the days....For this purpose sets of sticks were kept in bags. They claim twenty-six days for a moon and four days during which the moon is invisible (dies, or covers itself) making a period of thirty days" (Wissler 1912: 171). A moon, in modern measurement, is actually 29.53 days, but the Peigan estimate was accurate enough to calculate future moons.

There are 12 full lunar cycles and one partial moon lasting 10.89 days in a solar year which accounts for the Blackfoot calendar counting seven moons for winter and six for summer. Today opening the bundle is a seasonal ritual but in the dog days, the long era before horses, it would be opened at each new moon. Counting the seven moons of winter began when the leaves turned yellow. For convenience sake, assume that the fall equinox

is when the leaves are showing their brightest yellow. So seven moons of 29.53 days would count 206.71 days, enough to comfortably surpass the vernal equinox. In current time keeping the beaver bundle would be opened for the seventh and final new moon of the winter, a date around the middle of April. Thereafter the members of the tobacco society would begin preparations for the planting ceremonies and as the moon grew full they would be making plans to depart for their gardens. Curating tobacco seeds required a reliable calendar, but whether this lunar calendar arrived as part of the beaver medicine bundle or had an independent origin is another matter.

The next challenge for Peigan gardeners, was to locate the space for a garden. With their calendrical knowledge they could plan ahead for seeding, but knowing where to plant was the next piece of the puzzle. The cue came from the benevolent rodent himself. The beavers invited the hero to spend the winter in their lodge, and when the ice broke up they swam out of their lodge again. Beaver habitat on the plains is restricted to forested valleys where the high moisture regime supports lush stands of woody vegetation, such as aspen and poplar, which are also preferred by beaver. This would indicate that it is the type of habitat where tobacco gardens produce their best crops. There are logical reasons again for choosing these specific conditions. First there is the availability of water. The high water table adjacent to streams and oxbow lakes made watering unnecessary, as soil moisture would be sufficient throughout the growing season. No watering was a huge advantage since the gardeners left during the growing season. Second, when beaver became active in spring and the ice was off the ponds, the ground was no longer frozen so tilling the soil and softening it with bone hoes would be practicable. Furthermore, beaver prefer backwater channels rather than the mainstream, unless it is a minor creek that can be dammed to slow down the current locally. Side channels flood periodically but mostly are full with standing water where sediment accumulates regularly, if sporadically. Thus, there is a greater likelihood of locating pockets of well-drained, sandy loam that make the ideal soil for a tobacco garden. Finally, locating the gardens in valleys has an ameliorating effect

because the local microclimate acts as a buffer against sudden and severe weather changes on the plains. When the tobacco seeds are first planted in spring, the prairies are still prone to sudden frosts and late spring blizzards, so the trees shelter the young plants from cold snaps and the canopy provides an umbrella against snow. The water from the rivers and side channels too will coddle the seedlings in case of cold weather, because it releases its latent heat under cooler temperatures, so the rising warm air will insulate the young plants. When Matthew Cocking and his party stumbled upon the tobacco plantation in October, 1772, they were out trapping beaver.

Once the tobacco society had chosen their site, they would set up camp nearby and work together on the project. They would cut down vegetation in a large plot and spread dry tinder about it to feed the fire they would set. After the flames had subsided, they would use their bison-scapula hoes, digging sticks and bison-rib tilling tools to soften the soil and mix in the ash. Each member of the society would mark out rows for their own usage. Then they increased soil fertility with their prepared mixture of buffalo dung, elk dung and tobacco seeds which they placed in the soil. Tending the plants was unnecessary because Peigan believed that small people lived in the woods and watched the plants during summer in exchange for offerings of food and small clothes. After songs, dances and ceremonies were performed, they would place the offerings around the garden. Once seeded, further visits to the tobacco garden were taboo and strictly avoided lest the visitors disturb and frighten the shy, small folk. Peigan customs were sensitive to the plant's requirements. Tobacco cultivation was aided by mixing ash into the soil, which leached off the seed coat to activate the seed. Then the animal dung created a nutrient-rich package for the seed that is akin to humus. The mixture increased soil fertility to spur plant growth in the vulnerable stage. The taboo on return visits, and respecting the privacy of the small folks, respond to the qualities of this hardy plant. It needed little tending and could compete successfully with local species that favoured disturbed soil. Indeed, botanists report that when found in the wild, tobacco is a colonizing species that thrives in areas

disturbed by fire (Ford 1981). Perhaps competing vegetation had the secondary, beneficial function of discouraging grazing animals from browsing in the garden. Nevertheless, the lack of attention during the summer did not adversely affect the fecundity of this species.

For Peigan gardeners, the narrative is the bridging device that connects the customs and practices with a universe that is abstract - paradoxically omnipresent yet remote. Folklore and narratives preserve the ecological information necessary to produce successful crops of tobacco, at the same time they infuse tobacco with mythical powers to convert cultivation into a sacred purpose. Breaking, tilling and preparing the soil and making fences become ritual chores for the gardeners who create sacred ground with their labour. Each drop of sweat running down their faces cements their relationship to the worldview where a beaver family shared a gift with humans and joined in a compact of mutual amity. Abandoning the gardens and leaving the plants alone gave the little people an occupation. Now the Peigan no longer plant tobacco, and the little folk have nothing to do so they go around the countryside and cause mischief. The fence kept out grazing animals, but also symbolically separated the secular world from the hallowed ground where grew the plant that connected the gardeners to the eternal spirit of the universe. When the tobacco society returned in the fall to harvest their crop, the beaver medicine bundles owners were preparing to celebrate the second moon of winter when the leaves had fallen from the trees.

The Peigan experience with tobacco is a case study of the interactions between the different levels of abstraction that exist in Native thought. Native people wish to build a sense of history that balances the global experience with their own. Discarding their myths to appease the modern world is unnecessary. Particularly since fomenting diversity is a long-term goal for internalist research. Aboriginal researchers must start by demonstrating that their cultural traditions are not artifacts to be archived in the *Human Relations Area Files*. Nor is folk knowledge a chaotic realm to be avoided because processual archaeology saw no use for it. Folklore is susceptible to analysis because its influence can be observed in very real practices. It is an abstract product of the human mind that still manages to

affect the daily lives of ordinary people. Like all intellectual products, it can be written into a research programme to help derive explanations for data amassed from archaeological work. Organizing folklore into levels of abstractions reveals a clearer path toward finding a practical guide for internalist theorizing.

A Practical Guide for Internalist Theorizing

Writing on sociological theory in the post-World War II years, Robert Merton (1945; 1948) decried the use of the term theory by his colleagues. Some researchers, he opined, had got lost in their empirical studies, while others were prone to "seek the grandeur of global summaries" based on very limited data (Merton 1945). The former group sought assurance in statistics, even though they often stopped short of explaining the significance of their numbers. The latter group disregarded the triviality of observations, preferring instead to seek the sociological laws that govern human togetherness. However, in constructing sociological theory both groups tended to confuse methodology with theories of human behaviour in large groups. The problem lay in the growing pains of a fledgling discipline, unsure of its footing in an academic milieu. The mature sciences, such as chemistry or physics, which could deal with higher orders of abstraction, were no model for sociologists because thousands of careers had been devoted to finding explanations for the obvious. Sociology enjoyed no such luxury of devotees. Therefore, it could not be confident of articulating 'sociological laws' and instead had to content itself with statements of general orientation, sociological concepts (for example, status, *Gemeinschaft*, or *anomie*), *post factum* sociological interpretations, and empirical generalizations. Still, here was a discipline which desired to be invited into the club of sciences and was eager to display its scientific credentials. Therefore, Merton surmised, assessing concepts and methodology that contributed data for sociological theorizing was necessary to strengthen connections between theory-building and empirical research.

One of the problems had been that sociologists concentrated on the destination without examining the approach, so that all the intermediary steps appeared disconnected

and discontinuous. The result was a medley of statements called sociological theory which seemed to eschew rational steps in favour of leaps of logic. The remedy, Merton advised his colleagues, was "to create small families of empirically verified theorems" rather than attempting immediately "to create total systems of sociological thought" (Merton 1948: 165). This route would potentially lead to connections between "empirical research, on the one hand, and systematic theorizing unsustained by empirical test, on the other" (Merton 1945: 172). He advocated that sociologists emulate the way mature sciences dealt with their observations by searching for sociological theories for specific types of phenomena. They could develop "special theories applicable to limited ranges of data - theories, for example, of class dynamics, of conflicting group pressures, of the flow of power and interpersonal influence in communities - rather than to seek here and now the 'single' conceptual structure adequate to derive all these and other theories" (Merton 1948: 166).

Internalist archaeology is a fledgling discipline; it shares properties with the sociology of Merton's era. In fact, the sociology of that era was farther along because by then many careers had been devoted to the subject. Like those sociologists, Native people wish to examine their culture's ancient lore to find specific observations that are testable within a research regime. For an internalist sense of the past to invite serious consideration of its explanations for artifacts, it must consist of more than opinions and general orientations. Folklore research in archaeology is a social instrument that Indians can use to manage their environment to their advantage. Since it is a social construct, the lesson contained in the sociological debate might save internalist archaeology from endless, needless rumination on a global summary for internalist archaeology in the aboriginal world, when the real benefit might be found in looking for special theories to explain customs. The smallest steps make incremental progress toward a farther, albeit undefined, destination.

The fact that traditional lifeways persisted successfully for so many generations shows their high degree of effectiveness. Therefore drawing them into a research strategy

means finding ways to demonstrate their potency, so that they withstand the critical scrutiny of peer review. Simply stating 'we say it, so therefore it is' will never be an acceptable answer for a skeptical audience in a media savvy world. Making general statements too brings no clarity. For example, one of the canons of the environmental movement is to portray the noble savage as the poster boy for a healthy earth. At the same time, authors, such as Shepard Krech III in his recent volume with the provocative title *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History*, write of the wasteful habits of Indian people. For him, a statement like 'traditional narratives contains ecological messages' appears as blasphemy. It is an expression of opinion rather than guidance for constructing a testable hypothesis. Indeed, the daunting task of implanting folklore in a modern research milieu might seem a little like trying to practice the bush economy in the heart of a modern city. The properties of bush life might seem inadequate as coping mechanisms in urban areas. Defining the qualities folklore can bring to research is difficult only because it has not received much attention beyond ethnographic analogy.

Until now Peigan narratives only ever reached a small community. They informed members of the group about the origin of religious thought and accompanying ceremonies. Ceremonies existed primarily as emotional provisions feeding the human need for spiritual sustenance. That function has not diminished and will remain vital for its adherents. The narratives rationalized and guided the practices and made them familiar in their social setting. However, there has been no will to extend the reach of traditional narratives to influence modes of thought beyond the Peigan cultural context. Few people bother to image a situation outside storytelling, where folklore displays those qualities relevant to research questions. Still such uses for it exist, as demonstrated by the example of tobacco and beaver ecology. The story is a worthwhile reminder to listen for messages in traditional narratives because they expand the prospects of finding explanations for human behaviour revealed in the archaeological record. In a reciprocal process archaeology can contribute fresh meaning to ancient tales by applying its methods to deciphering the cryptic

messages implicit in folklore. Internalist archaeology searches for meaning in customs and rituals that have their origin in antiquity, but the significance of which has been obscured by time. Illustrating how they can contribute data that test theories in standard archaeological discourse is a challenge for internalist research. Also, there is potential for recapturing arcane messages and recasting them in terms that are intelligible to a modern worldview. For internalist archaeology the immediate goal is to place folklore in a research environment with a longer term objective of defining theories derived from such research. In the interim, there are realistic, achievable goals, such as undermining the mistaken stereotypes attached to traditional narratives. The first step toward that destination is to examine and organize the levels of abstraction exhibited by traditional thought.

Peigan gardening illustrates the connections and information flow between the various levels of abstraction in traditional thought. The basic practices, such as selecting a suitable location to grow tobacco, are clarified by environmental cues embedded in the legend and this links the horticultural practice to universal themes that are reinforced with religious ceremonies. Once the narrative is taken outside the ambit of religious abstraction, it becomes the basis for testing hypotheses under the auspices of internalist archaeology. Generic statements which may seem like rhetoric can be corroborated by specific case studies. The general claim that 'traditional narratives contain ecological messages' can be refined to a specific hypothesis by proposing that the Peigan narrative of the beaver bundle contains ecological messages important for successfully cultivating tobacco on the northern plains. The null hypothesis would declare no connection between folklore and proper environmental conditions desirable for tobacco cultivation. However the hypothesis is a testable one. It is the focus of observations that can generate empirical data and it is demonstrable within a research programme (Figure 2.2).

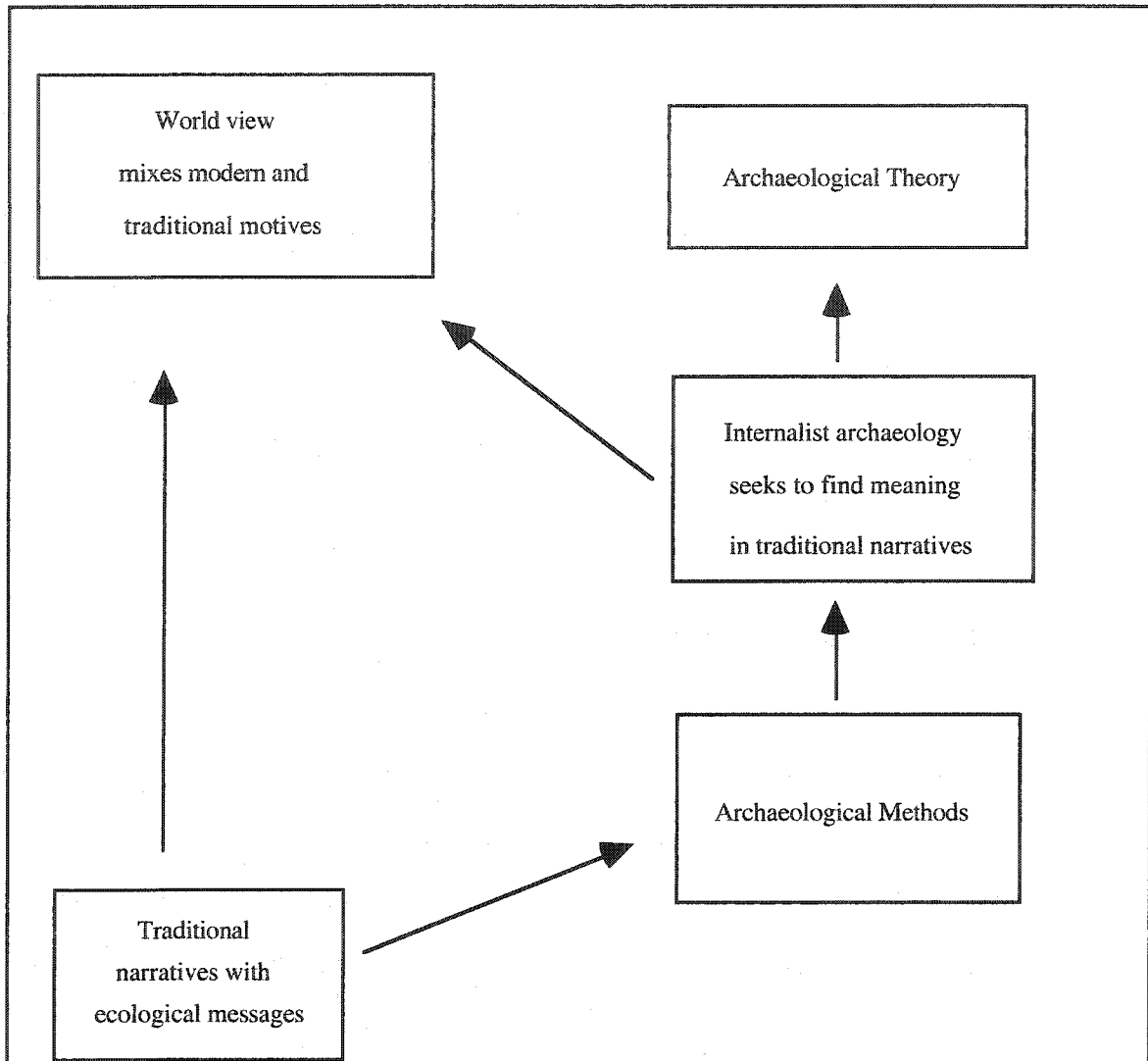


Figure 2.2. Indian lore will contribute theories for mainstream archaeological thought.

Making the connection between environmental cues and narrative themes can aid in narrowing the search parameters when seeking empirical confirmation, or refutation, of tobacco remains. What is needed is a predictive model, refined to be sensitive to those cues, and based upon the ecological messages in the story. Rather than expending time, effort and resources scouring the entire prairies for tobacco gardens, searches can be confined by specified limits, such as river valleys, and even within river valleys specific habitats would have higher probability for data collection. Sampling river valley sediment can be carried out using archaeological methods. With a predictive model in tow, proceeding to higher levels of abstraction occurs by way of proposing an experiment

designed to test a hypothesis based on a traditional narrative. The prediction builds on the notion that there is substance to the narrative hypothesis. Testing it may entail finding plant evidence while sampling along the guidelines of the predictive model. Testing it, however, might also mean designing an experiment to grow tobacco given the environmental cues embedded in the story. If the prediction holds up, growing a crop should be possible, even after a two-century hiatus, by following the instructions related in the story (Figure 2.3). Approaching the highly abstract worldview might include re-introducing homegrown tobacco into the ritual culture of Blackfoot medicine societies. This would be possible given that these societies still exist, and tobacco is still held in great esteem by Blackfoot ritualists.

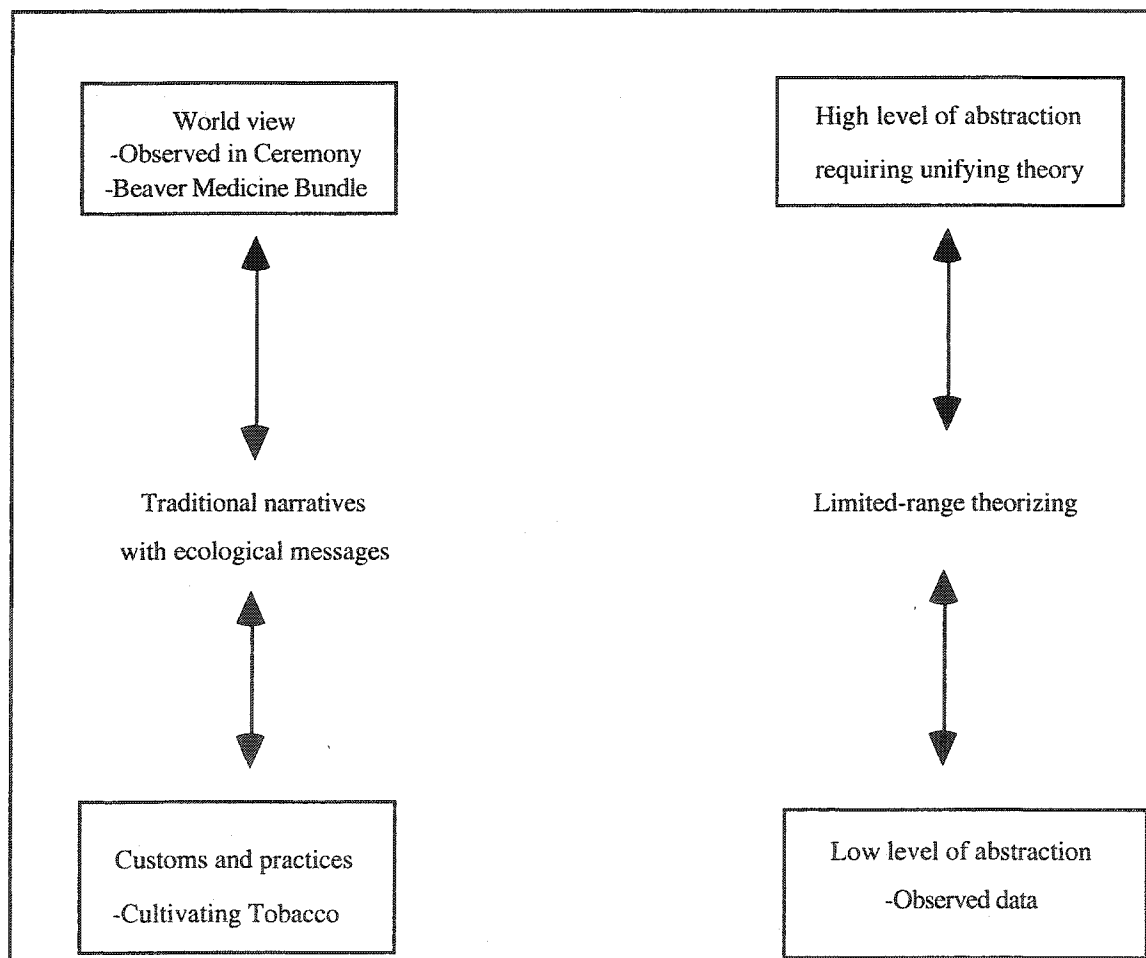


Figure 2.3 Levels of abstraction inherent in traditional thought. Blackfoot thought, stories and practices can be organized in a hierarchy of abstraction.

However, for Native people, whose culture and identity is found in oral narratives, each generation must determine how best to use such knowledge and has an obligation to seek ways to enhance it. The present generation continues this practice by adapting such narratives' lessons to suit modern times and one way to do this is to construct theories for ancient artifacts visible in the archaeological record. Enhancing folklore by implementing methodological procedures of the broader discipline to systematically investigate its properties so that it acquires new meaning for a modern audience is a good start. Internalist archaeology seeks to add clarity to research problems by defining theories based upon accruing data to test them. Organizing customs and legends in a hierarchy aids in finding a viable structure that is familiar and compatible with mainstream archaeology. Fortunately, Blackfoot folklore can be the equivalent of middle-range theory in modern archaeology. The intent of limited range theorizing is not to nullify ancient customs, but rather to contribute insight for better understanding cultural practices.

Traditional narratives are to the Peigan worldview what middle-range theorizing is to archaeology; both play the role of binding high levels of abstraction to observed data. Therefore, folklore can function easily in an equivalent role. Middle-range theory "is widely regarded as a useful means by which archaeologists can reconstruct human behaviour from a materialist and rationalist perspective" (Trigger 1995: 450). While its merits are debatable, especially those concerning the uniformitarianism implied in its use, there is no doubt it has been an influential guiding force in archaeology in the last few decades. As applied by processualists, middle-range theory seeks to infer patterns of human behaviour predicated on the assumption that past and present human cognition are interchangeable. Limited-range theorizing aided sociologists in their search to infer behaviour about extant social systems, in the same way that middle-range theorizing sought to make inferences about those that have gone extinct (Raab and Goodyear 1984). Internalist archaeology can benefit by employing a similar device to find meaning in customs associated with traditional cultures. In pursuing its goals internalist archaeology

can validate traditional thought, construct theories based on such thought and determine its time depth in a culture system. Research about ancient lore actually offers the option of finding something, for a change, instead of always losing things. Using the example of tobacco, after lying dormant for two centuries, cultivating tobacco gardens is an achievable goal. We can literally reach into the past and retrieve an extinct tradition.

Chapter Summary

The modern world abhors diversity. Homogenization is a reality for aboriginal people who must restructure their culture to adapt to modern times. Sometimes traditions are discarded as novel practices make their use redundant, or new technology renders them obsolete. Yet folk knowledge can persist in a culture system and, like the atavistic trait of an organism, reappear among later generations who may appreciate its symbolic value more than its practical use. Native researchers are in a position to examine such traditions with novel technology and modern research methods. They can begin the internal dialogue on finding modern uses for ancient lore. It is truly uncharted territory, but the few precedents include Indian art which has undergone considerable alteration in form, function and meaning. Indian artists adapted their vision to blend traditional motifs with novel media. Similarly, folklore can be moulded for an audience that is searching for reasons to continue practicing the ancient traditions of their culture. There are lessons to be learned from interpreting the essential messages embedded in these stories, but they are different for each generation reciting the narratives. Everyone can potentially donate something toward a broader understanding of folk knowledge. Contemporary Indian scholars add archaeology with an aboriginal flair as their contribution. Internalist archaeology is motivated by the notion that encrypted data lies in the plot, storyline and themes of oral narratives. Added to that is the visibility of elements of these narratives in the archaeological record.

The story of the beaver chief, Akaiyan and tobacco gardening is one of those stories that have often perplexed archaeologists. Unaccustomed to imagining more than the usual arguments against traditional narratives, it was long treated as simply one of the abstract

memories recorded by ethnographers working among the Peigan. Here was a written account about an old story that related how they once planted gardens for tobacco. It persisted long afterward to explain the origin of the beaver medicine bundle. Historical documents report the practice of growing tobacco being discontinued in 1800 AD. Research at plains village sites give indirect evidence that this tradition began five hundred years earlier. Smoking existed long before this tradition showed up on the northern plains, so Peigan culture was predisposed to accept a plant for that purpose. However, the same culture had to make room for the new tradition of plant curation. The details of the Peigan story anchored the botanical knowledge in the ritual culture even after the actual practice died out. Its ideological placement saved the knowledge from the erosive influence of modernity, although the message had grown faint due to lack of practical application. When subjected to the harsh light of contemporary research, the messages appear largely intact.

Internalist research requires pathways and direction to be a competent complement to mainstream archaeology. Amalgamating folklore and contemporary research needs a theoretical programme to provide structure and direction, and to avoid drifting aimlessly on a sea of trivia and supposition. Here a systematic analysis of the levels of abstraction inherent in traditional thought can benefit from an organizing device that mediates between the low level practices and high level ideals. Both sociology and archaeology make inferences about human behaviour, and, as their respective disciplines matured, both have developed mediating principles for theories suitable to limited ranges of explanations based on a restricted data base. Constructing special theories about folklore that are effective for limited ranges of explanation can take place in a research regime without compromising its cultural value.

CHAPTER THREE

THE LOST BOYS AND BUFFALO JUMPS

Introduction

Between the testable hypothesis and the untestable concept exists a spectrum of explanation that accommodates varying degrees of certainty. Chapter three examines the category that Robert Merton referred to as the *post factum* interpretation: using Blackfoot folklore to elucidate antiquity on the plains. Coeval with that goal, is the potential for lending theories to plains archaeology, which typically has not counted theory-building among its strong points (Duke and Wilson 1995). Like other researchers, I recognize that Blackfoot culture finds its antecedents in the sites and artifacts that are strewn across the northern plains (Reeves 1983). Being convinced that Blackfoot narratives are a record of lived experience on the plains matters little, so the task is figuring how the mythic past leaves its signature in the archaeological record. First, a hypothesis is proposed, followed by testing. However, finding definitive proof may be elusive, and the evidence may only be compelling. Compelling evidence only supports a hypothesis without proving it. Such theories must compete with alternative explanations. I am confident that those produced under the auspices of internalist archaeology will be as good as those proffered in the mainstream.

Blackfoot identity is rooted in a way of life that disappeared with the buffalo in the last century. Blackfoot and buffalo share a bond that must be measured on a geologic time scale. Their symbiosis began in the Ice Age and persisted throughout all the subsequent years until the present. Even though extinction has claimed many species that once occupied the northern plains, the buffalo days continue in the ideological landscape of the Blackfoot imagination. Emblems of that era permeate the everyday life of modern reserve residents because they inform the spiritual life of Blackfoot people. Although emblems of the horse days dominate the imagined terrain, there are older memories that extend into the dog days, and even to the mythic past, that inform the Blackfoot sense of self. One motif

that transcends all times is the buffalo; as an animal and an icon. No modern Peigans know the life of hunting buffalo, yet the image is indelibly etched into the Peigan psyche. The Peigan flag is a field of red with a buffalo motif adorning a stylized rawhide shield fringed with eagle feathers. Buffalo ranching is not a commercial venture for Peigans, although it could be; the small herd of buffalo grazing at the band-owned C-Y Ranch is an aesthetic choice for band members rather than an economic one. Extinct species of animals live on as memories of a by-gone era, and the buffalo is the symbol of that time. Nostalgia and identity inspire the Blackfoot sense of the past, so the objective of this chapter is to examine Blackfoot identity as an archaeological phenomenon. The archaeology of identity examines the specific cultural link between Blackfoot and buffalo that originated in the mythic past, and which left a visible archaeological signature.

Equally important to modern Blackfoot are the manifestations of ancient lifeways which function now to anchor Blackfoot identity firmly in those ancient plains cultures. The purpose is to refute and rebut the claims in historical and ethnographic literature that Blackfoot occupation of the plains was a recent event. This chapter explores further the potential of assessing the time-depth of traditional narratives that are sources of explanation for archaeological phenomena. Adding a framework of absolute chronology onto ancient times does not demote the mythic past, instead it speaks to the antiquity of Blackfoot lore. Internalist researchers bring the folklore of aboriginal people into a regime of archaeological research as guides for understanding messages relayed through oral narratives. Combining folklore with archaeological methods and theory-building is essential since internalist archaeology will inevitably intrude on the ideological terrain of aboriginal identity. One goal in the larger campaign of reclaiming Indian history for Indian people, is to rehabilitate folklore as aid for imagining ancient times. Since an internalist sense of the past is rooted in narratives explaining events from the mythic past, Blackfoot stories that explain the origins of archaeological phenomena also provide evidence for the antiquity of elements of Blackfoot ideology.

Big Indian Brother Is Watching!

The motif of the ecological Indian has displayed tenacious longevity in American literature and is a popular front in the propaganda campaign against Indians. It originated in the American psyche as Euro-Americans forged their mythic age in America. When they imaged their American Eden it was in the past tense, where the Indians dwelt. Since the aboriginal fact is undeniable, Indians became associated with that pristine natural landscape that Europeans discovered. Looking to that past meant seeing the original state of their transformed new home, so Americans began to wax nostalgic about the land their forebears had encountered when they first immigrated. Starting with environmentalist prose penned by authors such as John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, or David Henry Thoreau, in his memoir of *Walden*, and continuing into the late twentieth century, authors of this genre admired Indians for living in harmony with nature. They regarded American Indian ecology as an underappreciated body of knowledge that could provide valuable lessons for modern society. "It is important for us to learn from nature as the early Indians did, to keep an ear to the earth....The sense of wholeness, of reciprocity with nature, needs to be restored. When early Indians took something from nature, they felt it imperative to give something back," J. Donald Hughes, a professor of history at the University of Denver, wrote in *American Indian Ecology* (Hughes 1983: 139). As a subscriber to the paradigm that Indians "were America's first ecologists" he advanced his cause stating: "It is quite possible that part of the strength of the conservation-ecology concern in America comes from the American Indians' presence here and their influence on our national life and thought" (Hughes 1983: 137). And then he revealed the thought that irks the critics most because civilization is the culprit in this morality play. "One of the inescapable facts which emerge when we contrast the Indian past with the present is that the American Indians' cultural patterns, based on careful hunting and agriculture carried on according to spiritual perceptions of nature, actually preserved the earth and life on earth. Since the period of colonization, wasteful destruction of the earth has accelerated" (Hughes 1983: 139).

Contrasting the present age of industrial-strength pollution in a constructed environment with the bucolic past of Hiawatha and Pocahontas helped to crystallize the mystique of the ecological Indian. The hard-luck child of nature still had some cachet to cash in; too bad it was only modern America castigating itself over its poor environmental record.

Shepard Krech III (1999) decided that he had had enough of this self-indulgent self-flagellation when he wrote his critique of the aboriginal, ecological idol in *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History*. He scoffed at the notion of emulating the dispossessed. They had nothing to offer, and an even worse environmental record considering the number of species and biomes that disappeared during their watch. Average Americans were needlessly engaged in penance for their hyper-consumerism and chronic wastefulness when all along the ecological Indian was only a contrivance. Spicing his text with just a whiff of conspiracy theory, Krech proposes that the ecological Indian was a product of the advertising firms that sell middle America its dreams. Ordinary people were sold on the idea that their wasteful habits, especially littering, were the antithesis of those of Indian stewards with their respect for mother earth. Without regard for reasoned analysis, the modern environmental movement adopted the ecological Indian, in particular the motif of the Crying Indian - although they may have meant cry-baby Indian, as their icon. Since then ecological Indians have occupied a privileged, albeit unwarranted, space in the pantheon of green thought. Curiously, Krech ignores the literary genre of environmental writing. Instead he finds the origin of the motif amid the coincidental convergence of an advertising campaign with a public awareness message on litter and the inaugural celebration of Earth Day, the badge of contemporary environmentalism.

Plying the unsuspecting public with its own imagery, the brain trust of "Keep America Beautiful" offered an Indian actor a gig to star in a commercial parable of nature under siege by litterbugs. Scene one opens with a station wagon carrying an average, middle-class, suburban, nuclear family to the ridge where the west commences. They pull over at a roadside viewpoint to admire the scenery that reminds them of a Kodak picture.

They stay long enough to pull out their own Kodak and pose for the inevitable snapshots. Having soaked in the moment they depart, but not before throwing out their trash. They watch in the rearview mirror of the station wagon as nature retreats under an asphalt road, unconcerned with the trash they have left in their wake. Driving off in their automobile the nuclear family delivers the message that convenience brings city folk into the country and their monument is a mountain of litter. The climatic scene shows an old Indian warrior riding into view on horseback, wearing only a breech cloth, moccasins and braids. White America still likes to image Indians as unchanging people. He is moved to tears when he surveys the litter left behind. The camera zooms in on the teary eyes of the Indian as he looks up and stares intensely into the lens. No one could guess when the director shouted "Cut!" that the enigmatic Cherokee actor, Iron Eyes Cody, would become the intriguing poster-boy who would inspire countless acts of tidiness on the open roads. He was not an aberration either. He was a scout for armies of fictional Indians who would peer out of magazines and chase cowboys across the movie screen.

Litter and waste figure large in the message spliced into the commercial that was broadcast repeatedly on the medium that regularly reached into the homes of middle America. Over and over, the commercial took an image that existed only in the American mind and served it back to the American public. Again and again, they saw that 30-second blip on a television screen until it was imprinted on their mind that Indians were role models for sound, caring environmental stewardship. So effective was the brainwashing technique used in the advertising campaign that the commercial even managed to elicit sympathy for Indians from their dispossessors. Despite the obvious fact they that had been menacing the Cartwrights for years on the television series *Bonanza* - where the commercial would play occasionally. Keep America beautiful, because now big Indian brother is watching you! Once again, middle America had been sold its dream. They bought it gladly too, because they were paying for the certain knowledge that somebody was looking out for the American environment.

Back in the present, the economy receives all the attention while environmentalists must stage ever more elaborate protests just to get their message to a complacent audience pursuing the billions of dollars flowing through the new economy. Environmental policy is a marginal issue so long as trade and gross domestic product grab all the media attention. Professional protesters seize their opportunities to call attention to activities that threaten to compromise the natural world, but no one listens as the robust, but ever-fragile, economy bustles along. Therefore, discrediting the environmental movement as a whole becomes a solution. It entails deconstructing piecemeal the message and messenger, so that critiques of its symbols, such as that offered by Krech, serve a larger purpose. Ostensibly informed by many field seasons doing ethnography among the western Denes in what's left of the Northwest Territories, his scholarly research is intended to turn the ecological poster boy into a whipping boy. An avowed conservationist - he deplores waste - he bristles at the reputed stewardship of the American environment before the arrival of Europeans. He decided that it is time to take the Ecological Indian down off his pedestal and place him and his wasteful kin among the other mortal polluters and litterers. Like a bounty-hunter in a Zane Grey novel, he takes dead aim at the teary eye of Iron Eyes Cody with the intent of blowing away the Ecological Indian motif. Confident that he is doing the Indians 'a favour' by removing the crippling burden of yet another Euro-American stereotype, he proceeds to trash Indian history using evidence garnered from the archaeological record. However, in harping on the worst-case scenarios of environmental devastation inflicted upon the American landscape, all attributable to Native Americans, he can then assert, "When speaking of Native Americans as ecologists, we do not necessarily mean that they used mathematical or hypothetico-deductive techniques, but we should mean that they have understood and thought about the environment and its interrelating components in systemic ways (even if the system, all increasingly agree, is more metaphor than hard and bounded reality)" (Krech 1999: 22). Appropriately enough, almost predictably, he begins his unflattering tirade at the end of the Pleistocene, with the now-infamous mass extinction that

the archaeologist Paul Martin blamed on Indians. Although Krech stops short of echoing that blame, he feels obliged to ask, "Were human hunters responsible for the extinction of many large animals at the end of the Pleistocene?" (1999: 27). By posing his question this way there can be no other answer but: They are guilty! The jury just hasn't delivered that verdict yet. Absent from his bibliography is any reference to standard archaeological literature, such as Frison (1991), which discusses alternative scenarios, for example the climate change scenario. Thomas (2000) summarizes the results of current research which looks to natural factors, such as environmental change, as the cause of mass extinctions.

More cogent to this thesis is chapter five which Krech titles simply *Buffalo*. The chapter is little more than a soap-box pedestal from which he vents his spleen about communal hunting techniques employed by plains Indians in general and Peigans in particular. He starts his narrative at Head-Smashed-In buffalo jump where he claims the Peigan wasted the lives of herds for several millennia by chasing them over the cliff there. There is plenty of archaeological evidence to support the notion that they butchered only a few each time and left the rest to rot away under the prairie sun. He augments the faunal evidence with historical documents. By quoting extensively from archival sources, he details the appalled reaction of European chroniclers who described the awful waste left behind by Indian hunters. He cites, for example, Peter Fidler's disgust at the shocking action of Peigan hunters who had brought a small herd into their pound and the brutality with which they dispatched them. What he doesn't mention is that Fidler, hypocrite that he was, later sat down for supper and enjoyed immensely the meal of fresh buffalo meat that some Peigan women placed in front of him. "Waste is ancient," Krech proclaims, and furthermore the "archaeological record provides abundant evidence for the antiquity of communal hunting and helps determine how ancient waste might be" (Krech 1999: 143). Squandering the buffalo herds was a favourite pastime of the plains Indians who saw no reason to plan beyond their next meal because they had only to go and kill a buffalo if they craved tongue for supper. Typically that meant leaving the rest to go to waste on the prairie

turf. Decrying this waste, he builds his case against the ecological culprits "who ate only the buffalo's tongue, only the fetus, or only the hump, or who abandoned bulls because they preferred cows" (Krech 1999: 142). Every archaeological site, he maintains, is a boney testament to the thriftlessness of ancient Indians. His naïve conclusions are all that can come from unilinear thinking motivated by intolerance toward Indians (Figure 3.1).

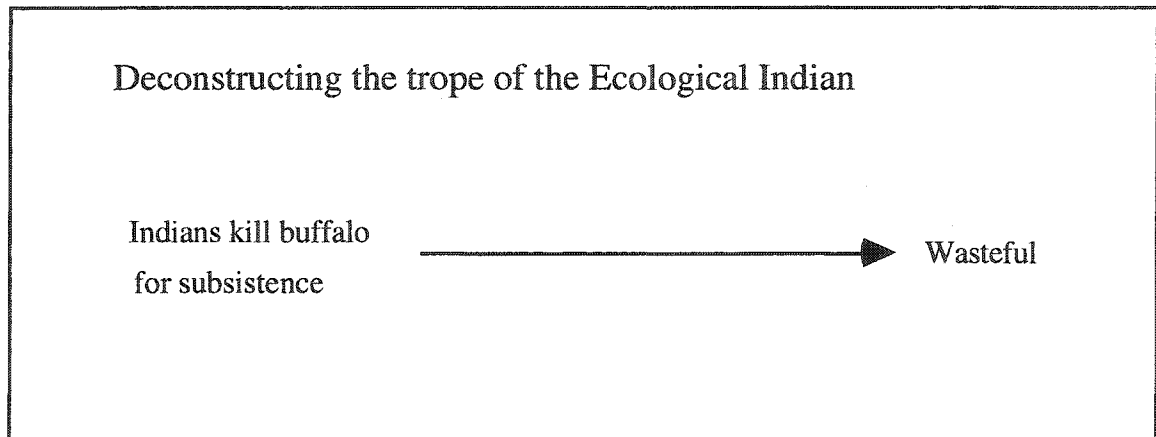


Figure 3.1. Unilinear explanations are necessarily simplistic and reductionist.

In the natural world, simplistic explanations seldom capture the complexity that underlies ecological systems, and prairie environments are no different. Nature's web begins with the grass on which the buffalo graze; or, as Walter McClintock (1910) heard Brings Down the Sun say, "The grass is the king of everything." The buffalo depend on the grass in the same way that Indians depend on the buffalo. Stated in biological parlance, the mutualism they formed with buffalo is a classic example of a predator/prey relationship wherein herbivores are the quarry for omnivores/carnivores. Once the Indians have taken their share, the remainder is available for scavenging. Feral dogs, prairie wolves, coyotes, plains grizzly bears, crows, ravens, magpies, turkey vultures, and many more species, all flourished directly from the communal hunts. Not surprisingly, bones of these animals are found commonly at buffalo jump sites. In fact several species of mammals and birds, for example prairie wolves and turkey vultures, went extinct on the plains when carrion meals vanished. Although all these animals feasted on buffalo meat, few could actually kill a buffalo for a meal. Even when the flesh had been torn away, animals still got plenty of

nutrients from gnawing the bones. Under the snow in winter, voles, mice and pocket gophers still found old bones to be an excellent source of calcium. Since buffalo jumps were abandoned for a few years after each hunt, and as slope wash buried the bones under sediment, organisms in the soil, such as insects and bacteria, continued the decomposition. Eventually, microscopic organisms reintroduced nutrients to the soil so what remained of the bone became fertilizer for grassland vegetation. The act of sending buffalo over a cliff was not one of waste, as Krech maintains, rather it was the moment when the complex food chain that depends on it was served. Perhaps he should follow his own advice when he writes, "conservation and waste should be construed in other than narrowly utilitarian terms" (Krech 1999: 149). Perhaps, but he is not prepared to do so. The purpose of envisioning waste in those narrow terms is to ensure that in future no amount of spin-doctoring will elicit sympathy for Ecological Indians.

Krech's argument of wastefulness is remarkably unilinear in style and execution. There is only one cause and one effect discernible in his antithesis to the Ecological Indian, who, it turns out, is an ecological bad-guy who, courtesy of the good spin-doctors of Madison Avenue, has been given an undeserved reputation. Yet again, the Indians get something for nothing! In his haste to chastise plains Indians for the wasteful habits of their ancestors, he relies on sensationalistic adjectives culled from the journals of fur traders. At the same time he ignores, or is unaware of, some very basic principles of plains ecology. In nature's web, or the web of life, all animals are interconnected because they all co-exist, and the food chain is a closed loop because each consumer contributes to the next link until the decomposers return nutrients to the soil (Figure 3.2). However, his reductionist explanation follows only one line to impose an ideological agenda on this cheerless scenario. By focusing solely on Indian hunters slaughtering bison, and the resulting waste, he unduly constrains his vision and misses the other links in the food chain. While giving his summation of resource exploitation among ancient people, Erhun

Kula (1998) noted that Stone Age people could only nibble the edges of natural resources and their small numbers had minimal impact.

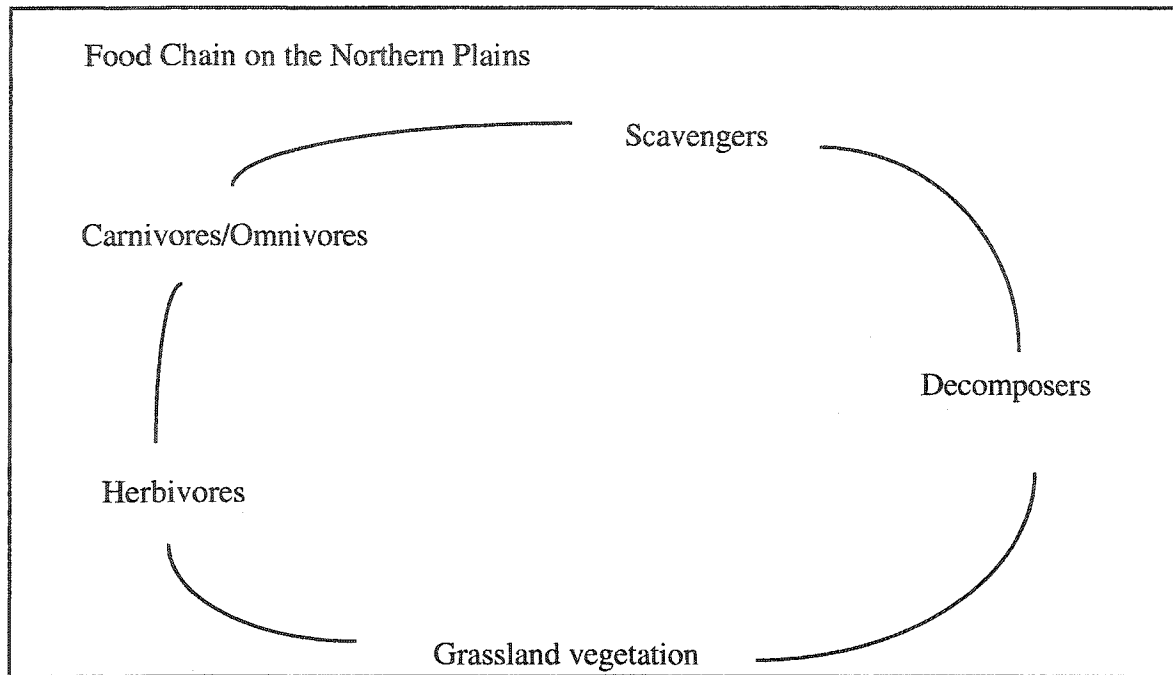


Figure 3.2. Complexity is the rule in grassland environments.

If the trope of the Ecological Indian never existed in reality it is because Indians had no need to portray themselves as such. However, American society, as usual, uses the Indian as a mirror to gaze upon its own environmental impacts. When environmentalists needed a succinct image for their logos and mottos, they looked into the American imagination and saw one of its creations, the Ecological Indian, staring back. Displaying rare insight Krech notes that, "Explicit at several notable moments in the history of Noble Indians (as in the eighteenth century and today), and in the gaze of the Crying Indian, is the fact that the image usually stands against, not alone. Habitually coupled with its opposite, the Nonecological White Man, the Ecological Indian proclaims both that the American Indian is a nonpolluting ecologist, conservationist, and environmentalist, and that the white man is not" (Krech 1999: 22). What passes under his radar is that this environmental debate is internal to Euro-Americans; Indians are merely spectators and in fact are quite indifferent to the whole debate. However, in beating down the stereotype, Krechian scorn

does not rain down on the advertising industry, or its insistence on appropriating the image of Indians to sell its products, rather modern Indians are the ones to feel his bile.

There was another message written into the anti-litter commercial; one that escaped the author's glance. Indians are a paradox for modern Americans, who prefer to keep them in the past. White America could never tolerate aboriginal America and has yet come to terms with those prior inhabitants. They were people of the past who were discarded like so much litter on White America's imaginary landscape. Once the aboriginal people were dispossessed and replaced, White America began to valorize them as if that would offset the atrocities of the past few centuries. The aboriginal icon of environmentalism may be a search for an ecological ethic, but it is also an ideal that stirs in the soul of modern America. "We should be more like the Indians" may be just a mantra recited by eco-freaks at protest rallies on logging roads. However, their chant announces the very desire that incites the imagination when middle America goes searching for its elusive aboriginal identity.

Knowing the Buffalo

Krech's disputations notwithstanding, research on communal hunting on the northern plains has generated enough data that it can be interpreted outside the script of a morality play. Plains archaeologists have long ago acknowledged the preponderance of archaeological evidence that points to a long tradition of communal hunting as a successful, and apparently sustainable, subsistence strategy. Ever since the Ice Age, survival meant knowing the ways of the buffalo (*Bison bison*) in order to subsist effectively off a gregarious, but wandering, food source. During the Holocene epoch when it dominated the herbivorous niche available to ungulates roaming the grassland biome, Blackfoot people became adept at hunting buffalo because they came to know its daily, seasonal and yearly habits. A descendant of *Bison antiquus*, an extinct species, it was one of the few mammals to survive the mass extinction of Pleistocene megafauna. Onward from the early Holocene, it diminished in size to its present form. Evidently its behavioural ecology exhibited traits that were advantageous in an environment experiencing long, persistent warming episodes.

Exactly why bison survived into the Holocene, when other species did not, has eluded explanation, but various attempts have been made by researchers to produce explanatory-like speculation about bison evolution. Their theories include extreme, persistent drought conditions, founder effect resulting in genetic bottlenecks, and decrease and isolation of populations (Reher and Frison 1980). Possibly too, Pleistocene and early Holocene forms of bison exhibited different behaviour patterns and global warming after the Ice Age selected traits adapted to an altered grazing niche on the northern plains.

The enormous herds recorded in historical accounts likely do not reflect the Pleistocene population; rather enormous size is characteristic of fossil bison. Gigantism is a physical trait that responds directly to the onset of global cooling because the higher ratio of body mass to surface area is more efficient for regulating body temperature. Producing a large body mass requires a proportionately long developmental period, suggesting a reproductive strategy that favoured a long gestation to produce a large calf and that neotonous behaviours would be selected to extend the growing years to accommodate an extended juvenile phase. Thus, the behavioural ecology of the Ice Age species would have differed in significant ways from the modern form. The seasonal rutting behaviour exhibited by modern bison probably did not exist in *Bison antiquus*. A mature, giant bison with ever-growing horns would have been difficult to dislodge as the dominant male in a herd. Large horns could be selected as much for attracting mates as for defense. Ancient bison may have tolerated the presence of other bison, but their small population in a big land likely made combat optional. Seasonal competition for mating selected bigger horns which meant visibility from a distance; an excellent visual cue for prospective mates as well as a deterrent for potential foes. A young bull would only jeopardize its future progeny by straying into the mating competition too soon.

Selecting traits for large body mass likely kept bison cows from entering the birthing cycle too early also, and they probably produced fewer calves. The requisite gestation period would select a birthing strategy whereby any given cow would have fewer

offspring over her entire life. Entering the mating cycle every two years, instead of every year as in the modern form, would accommodate a long gestation and developmental period. That way a calf could reside with its mother for two years, perhaps even longer, before another calf arrived. The older sibling would receive ample protection and time to grow before it faced the world alone. The collapse of Ice Age conditions and the onset of global warming selected for traits more suited for Holocene environments. The diminution in size probably resulted in more gregarious behaviour and less pressure to grow large body mass and giant horns. Smaller body mass would select against neotonous behaviours, leading to rapid maturation and therefore less emphasis on maternal dependency. Cows could enter the mating cycle on a yearly basis because calves became independent earlier in life. This strategy would offset the disadvantage for defense; safety in numbers in lieu of gigantic body mass. In the course of her lifetime, a buffalo cow would have more calves, leading to the prodigious population recorded in historic documents. One cautionary note is that this description of the behavioural ecology of an extinct species is only informed speculation.

Close inspection of the extant species reveals a typical buffalo year consisting of occasional voluntary seasonal aggregations, in which males and females of all ages commingle at all times. Leading the cycle were herds that formed in late summer for the mating season, the only time of the buffalo year when ranking and hierarchy appears among the males. Actual combat was usually avoided, as injury would be counterproductive; mock combat, which involved bellowing and displaying horns, wallowing in the dirt to raise a dusty cloud, or snorting in the direction of an opponent, generally sufficed. Sometimes a stubborn challenger would settle for nothing less than winner-take-all and butting heads was the only way to settle the question of status. Generations of bison combatants selected for traits that cause the eyes to grow laterally in their boney sockets, making them less prone to injury and thus optimizing the forehead for high impact rivalry. The brain case is protected by dense frontal bone, covered by a thick layer of cartilage to absorb direct hits,

and mop-like hair to provide more cushioning. Males mature later than females, thus extending their growing years so as to achieve the bulk and size necessary to effectively join a rutting herd. Generally male calves are oblivious to the rut until they have stopped growing at five or six years of age. After several rutting seasons, males were less sought for food, as their meat was pungent and tough. Old bulls were only palatable when other buffalo were absent. Matthew Cocking summed up the consensus concerning meals where old buffalo bull meat was served by stating in his journal "Male Buffalo our food at present; very poor excepting in the spring" (Burpee 1908a: 108). Just the opposite was true for cows; they were considered more edible throughout their lives, perhaps because they did not engage in similar hormonally conditioned head-to-head competition during the mating season. Instead, their behavioural ecology selected for traits such as rapid maturation after a short juvenile stage and becoming mothers at three or four years of age. Mature cows join mixed herds during the mating season in late summer and have a nine-month gestation before the calving season in mid to late spring. They remain in these cohesive grazing herds throughout the fall and early winter but, as forage decreases and competition increases, the grazing herds fracture into smaller units that scatter amid the coulees, valleys, forested uplands and mountains. Their gregarious nature bids them to seek out others and form nursery herds that remain intact through the spring calving season. Seasonally dynamic herds flourished into the summer as the calves' yellow coats turned a dark brown (Allen 1976 [1876]; MacDonald 1982; Wilson 1992).

The notion of bison migration due to the selecting factor of seasonally available forage, is a problematic aspect of the species. Historical accounts provide no insight because of the idiosyncratic and sensationalistic prose that accompanies descriptions of buffalo on the move. Reliance on the observations of nineteenth-century, and earlier, chroniclers led to the conclusion that bison migrated seasonally. Typically observers refer to the dark blanket of bison covering the prairies and moving *en masse* as if driven by instinct between summer and winter ranges. Charles Mair, an nineteenth century naturalist,

offered his opinion that "the migration of the great Saskatchewan herd was undoubtedly from north to south in the spring, and conversely in the fall....But in the spring nothing could stop the southward progress of the herd. By night as well as day it swept onward in living torrents which no obstacles could turn from their paths....The spring migration began as soon as the thaw set in. The bulls and cows formed into files, the cows taking the lead, and all went south, invariably following the old paths, multitudes of which are worn deep into the prairie soil by centuries of use" (Mair 1890: 97). However, even as he was describing the habits of the buffalo, he was keenly aware that he was speaking in the past tense because the buffalo days were over; a regrettable act, in his opinion, that did not reflect well on Euro-Americans since there was "no fact in the natural history of America which brings such reproach on civilized man as the reckless and almost total destruction of the bison" (Mair 1890: 93). Although naturalists of the buffalo days had observed the habits of buffalo and recorded their observations, their conclusions have become suspect among modern researchers. Studies of captive bison herds in national parks and game reserves are used to model bison behaviour in their natural habitat. For example, their mobility pattern as they alternate between forage pastures and sheltered woodlands is thought to reveal ancient migratory instincts. One study rested on the premise that herd movements were timed to coincide with cyclical, seasonal climatic changes. In this model, herds moved to the open grasslands in spring and remained there until late autumn when they moved toward sheltered areas in the parkland region to the north or to the Rocky Mountain foothills to the west (Morgan 1980). Oddly, this study implied that winter herds were larger than summer herds, which seems counter-intuitive given the scarcity of forage in winter. Still another study, ironically using the same historical sources, concluded bison migration to be untenable (Hanson 1984). In studying the habits of modern bison in North Dakota, and surveying historical documents, the author found that winter forage on the grassland was sufficient to support bison herds at all seasons and that movement between environments was in response to local stimuli, such as bad weather. A third author (Epp

1988) opined that the controversy was spurious, and both theses were partially correct, stating there "is no reason to dispute....observations on regular seasonal movements between summer and winter pastures. Similarly, no reason exists to dispute observations of irregular herd movements nor to dispute that herds were to be found in most locales at all times of the year" (Epp 1988: 312). Alas, like imagining the life-cycle of extinct bison, arguing for bison migrations is akin to brooding on the unknowable. It is a riddle with no ready resolution because extinction has a way of making all arguments hypothetical.

Hunting the Buffalo Communally

All through the dog days, the traditional era between the mythic past and the horse days, Blackfoot hunters stalked the buffalo and learned to recognize its habits. They watched and they encoded their knowledge of buffalo ecology in a mnemonic system of narratives. Into the stories they folded their observations of buffalo habits and in telling the stories in winter, elder hunters transmitted their traditional ecological knowledge to the eager ears of apprentice hunters. However, Blackfoot folklore was not immune to the forces of erosion that can render some knowledge obsolete. The onset of the horse days on the northern plains began the process of erosion for Blackfoot lore concerning communal hunting using cliffs and corrals. In the mythic tradition, horses were gifts from the sky people who created thunder.

Modern history began in pages penned by traders such as David Thompson, who recounted in his narrative how the Peigan saw their first horses when they were defeated in battle by equestrian warriors. In spite of their ignominious loss, they admired these animals that looked like an elk, *ponoka*, but served humans in the same manner as a dog, *imitaa*; hence in Blackfoot combining those two words created *ponokamitaa*, a new word specifically for horse (pl. *ponokamitaiksi*). Initially the few horses they had probably made little difference for communal hunting practices; perhaps they made individual hunting less difficult since the horse gave hunters a hitherto unimagined advantage in the chase (Ewers 1955). Before long even communal hunting became equestrian, resembling a military

campaign in organization and execution (Verbicky-Todd 1984); only people lacking horses continued to drive buffalo over cliffs (Grinnell 1892). When Anthony Henday visited the Blackfoot in 1754, they had owned horses for approximately 30 years; they kept large herds, which had already transformed the pedestrian Blackfoot culture into an equestrian one (Burpee 1907).

Henday and his Cree companions took full advantage of the opportunity to kill buffalo once they arrived on the plains, but they did so individually using guns, bows and arrows and stalking techniques. Near the end of September, when his party approached the Red Deer River they saw the smoke of strange tipis to their southwest, which they supposed was a Blackfoot camp. Then two days later, on September 29, four horsemen joined their troop and confirmed that the smoke they had seen did belong to a Blackfoot camp and "it will be eight days before we reach them" (Burpee 1907: 335). Two weeks later, when he finally walked into the Blackfoot tipi town, Henday noted the number of horses they owned. He got a first-hand view of their skill when he was invited to join a buffalo hunting party. They used horses to chase down their quarry and bows and arrows to shoot them. "With the Leader's permission, I rode a hunting with twenty of his young men. They killed 8 Buffalo, excellent sport. They are so expert that with one, or two, arrows they will drop a Buffalo. As for me I had sufficient employ to manage my horse" (Burpee 1907: 340). The mobility and speed of their horses had altered communal hunting, but the older methods had not been abandoned yet.

Two decades after Henday's visit, Matthew Cocking travelled to the northern plains to visit the Blackfoot country, arriving in mid-autumn. He reported seeing buffalo everyday, but hunting them by stalking and chasing resulted only in dispiriting results. Worrisome too was their predicament; too many people in their band and, with winter coming on, no stored-up supply of food. Shortly after his band chanced upon the Blackfoot tobacco garden, he received word of another find - a buffalo pound. His entry for October 20, 1772 alludes to his misplaced excitement. Thinking that slaying some of

the buffalo that his party saw in droves around them would be a matter of running a few animals in, he thought too of the ammunition he could save. His description of the pound appears in the entry of October 23, when his band began their attempt to repair and operate it. "It is a circular fenced round with trees laid one upon another, at the foot of an Hill about 7 feet high & an hundred yards in Circumference: the entrance on the Hill-side where the Animal can easily go over; but when in, cannot return: From this entrance small sticks are laid on each side like a fence, in the form of an angle extending from the pound; beyond these to about 1-1/2 mile distant. Buffalo dung, or old roots are laid in Heaps, in the same direction as the fence; These are to frighten the Beasts from deviating from either side. This pound was made by our Archithinue friends last spring, who had great success, many Skulls & Bones lying in the pound" (Burpee 1908a: 109).

Try as they might, they had no success in their attempts to coax a herd into its confines, although they could see many buffalo grazing nearby. In the last week of October, an exasperated Matthew Cocking noted his band was still "endeavouring to drive Buffalo to the pound but without success. We are not so expert at pounding as the Archithinue Natives" (Burpee 1908a: 109). Thereafter they resorted to their more familiar method of stalking. They hunted with bows and arrows, being careful to conserve their guns and powder. They decided to stay on site and continue their efforts to bring in a herd. By the first week of November they still had no success with their hunt, for which Cocking blamed his Cree companions and in his frustration he resorted to name-calling. "Natives can make nothing of the pound, so are obliged to kill the Buffalo with the Gun, & Bow & Arrows....They are an indolent thoughtless set of beings, never looking beyond the present time" (Burpee 1908a: 110). Still they remained there because snow had started to fall which made travel difficult. Finally, on December 1, a party of Blackfoot found his band by the pound trying to make it work. Their first task was to show the outlanders how to do the pound right, because their ineffectual repairs had made for an inadequate corral. They were able to drive in a few animals, but mostly they too were unsuccessful for good

reason. "No success in pounding: the Strangers say the season is past. A hungry prospect: Many of us and no great Store of provisions" (Burpee 1908a: 111).

Preoccupied as he was with food shortages, he was not likely to notice that the Blackfoot buffalo hunters had changed their tactics. The visual cues were familiar to Matthew Cocking because he had seen people driving cattle with horses so he erroneously described their method using the familiar pastoralism of his native land as the model. They were no longer luring the buffalo into the trap, rather "They set off in the Evening; & drive the Cattle all night" (Burpee 1908a: 111). Unknown to him, his mistaken impression foreshadowed the future role of Blackfoot hunters. Driving buffalo into a pound had its equivalent later in the reservation period when Indian cowboys occupied their days rounding up herds of cattle and driving them into corrals. In the early horse days, the Blackfoot combined their traditional methods of communal hunting with horse power, using pounds and jumps but driving buffalo ahead of their horses. However, they were already exhibiting the skills that later made them so successful at ranching and rodeos.

Two decades after Cocking's visit, Peter Fidler spent the winter of 1792 as a guest of the Peigan near the headwaters of the Oldman's River at the base of the Rocky Mountains west of the Porcupine Hills. His descriptions of communal hunting illustrate the structural changes that had occurred in coordinating a hunt, but also that ideological elements persisted. On Tuesday, December 18, 1792, he wrote (Haig 1990: 35):

In going along this day, we saw a small heard of Buffalo running very hard & 2 men on horse back galloping after them....Not seeing any thing of them after staying a little time we proceeded forward & found that the Indians had drove them before a perpendicular rock, 29 of which was killed on the spot & only 3 escaped, but with broke legs, that the Inds. soon overtook & killed with arrows, as the Indians are always very anxious never to let a single Buffalo escape that has been in a Pound. The reason they assign for this is that should these that escape be at any future time be (sic) in the Band of Buffalo that they might be bringing to the Pound, by their once being caught in the Trap they would evade going into it again, for in general when ever a single one breaks out of the Dead Men, all the rest will follow.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the long practice of communal hunting with cliffs and corrals was retreating into the mythic past. It was a part of folklore and the

messages inserted into stories about holding a communal hunt without horses were starting to grow faint. Like so many other customary practices, the long process of erosion was accelerated by the ubiquitous fur trade, which was the economic vehicle that incorporated aboriginal people into the world system (Kardulias 1990). Although primarily an exchange of dressed hides for manufactured goods, it nevertheless embodied the intrusion of the global economy into the local reality of the Blackfoot world. Encouraged by exotic material goods that people soon found indispensable, especially guns, craft specialization, and in particular dressing hides, became the mode of articulation between the local and global economies; the latter seemingly having the capacity to absorb all local labour and produce. For Blackfoot people, the subsequent contest for land and resources made for a rude introduction to the world market economy (Church 1997).

Calibrating Blackfoot time, as expressed in winter counts, into calendar years gives the date 1868 AD as the winter when the last buffalo hunt using a corral was held (Raczka 1979). Some Blackfoot hunters decided to take advantage of a balmy autumn day on the northern plains, near the present Blackfoot Reserve. They built a pound out of driftwood logs at the base of a small coulee which led down from the prairie into the Bow River valley. Cairns were redundant, as the coulee walls sloped inward at steep angles and at its base it appeared to open into a meadow surrounded by timber. The horsemen rode out from camp and spread out until they had got behind a herd of buffalo grazing and they began to drive them toward the coulee. The buffalo ran toward the river valley, but the horsemen were careful to keep them going toward the coulee. The descending slope of the coulee kept the buffalo galloping downhill until they broke into the open only to find their path blocked by the driftwood barrier. Instead of using bows and arrows, the hunters waiting behind the driftwood walls opened fire with their rifles sending a hail of bullets into the stampeding herd. Operating a buffalo pound by then was closer in style to rounding-up cattle and driving them into a corral. Later, when the reservation era started and ranching became the mainstay of the local economy, Indians were very familiar with their role

because one hundred and fifty years of equestrian hunting transferred directly to a ranching career; there it fueled the phenomenon of Indian cowboys and a rodeo circuit on reservations that is a pillar of identity for modern times. The skills they had learned from several millennia of herding buffalo prepared them to be range riders.

The buffalo economy eventually became a casualty of the world economic system that intruded on the northern plains. Over-hunting to feed the fur trade economy eventually led to the extinction of the buffalo over most of its range by the winter of 1880; in Blackfoot winter counts the year 1879 is called the winter "when the buffalo disappeared" (Raczka 1979: 69). The subsistence economy that began in the Ice Age ended for the Blackfoot when prairie fires drove the buffalo herds south in the summer of 1878, where they ran into the bullets of hunters brought in by the train load. The buffalo days came to an end, and with it ended the autonomy of the Blackfoot people. Nevertheless, the buffalo has experienced an odd reincarnation as the hub of cultural tourism. Being an Indian guide at places such as Head Smashed In Buffalo Jump, near Brocket, Alberta, and Wanuskewin Heritage Park, near Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, means interpreting the ancient hunting skills to visitors who tour displays, walk along nature trails, participate in archaeological digs, or watch multi-media displays animating a vanished world. Regrettably, the ancient custom of hunting buffalo recalled in myth has itself retreated to the mythic past.

Explaining Besant: The Scheduling Breakthrough Hypothesis

In chapter two Blackfoot lore proved its efficacy because it responded well to the procedural logic of scientific analysis. Oral narratives, rather than being naïve tales soothing the savage mind, behave as bridging devices linking customs and ideology; they preserve the ecological messages essential to the successful realization of folklore. The intent was to take the vague statement that traditional narratives contained ecological messages and replace it with a coherent account of one example of these specific messages. Folklore can benefit from archaeological methods; however, to investigate and analyze definite relationships between customs and stories requires a specific proposition. Here the

specific proposition is that the Blackfoot oral narrative about 'the lost boys' contains the information for successfully scheduling a communal buffalo hunt. Ostensibly, the story explains the origin of 'the bunched stars' motif that appears on the smoke flaps of Blackfoot tipis, and explains how the original stars found their way to the sky country. This chapter continues the investigation of ecological messages encrypted in Blackfoot narratives, specifically those relating to communal hunting. Moreover, the resulting theory will be strong enough to withstand scientific scrutiny and corroborate what was traditionally known. Constructing a hypothesis based on a Blackfoot oral narrative has the ancillary effect of humanizing archaeological data.

Like buffalo migrations, direct observation of communal hunting on the northern plains lies beyond the gaze of modern researchers, so faunal assemblages, artifacts and features must act as material records of ancient happenings. The occupation of archaeologists is to infer the cultural activities that left behind tangible material, and on the northern plains hunting and kill sites dominate the archaeological record. As long as people have lived on the northern plains they have hunted buffalo, resulting in a plethora of buffalo kill sites awaiting archaeological mitigation. Excavations and amateur collecting over the last fifty years have amassed a considerable artifact assemblage of hunting tools that outline in general terms two strategies for hunting communally. The first relied on stalking and incurred a modest harvest, whereas the second relied on manipulating large numbers of animals and required coordinating many people. The transition from one hunting pattern to the other is first evident in the Besant phase on the northern plains, ca. 2000 - 1200 BP, and a plausible explanation that satisfies all the observations has eluded archaeologists. The scheduling breakthrough hypothesis is proposed here to fill in this lacuna and demonstrate that Blackfoot traditional narratives can provide theories for explaining limited ranges of archaeological data. As *post factum* interpretations go, there is no experiment that will prove or disprove the message in this narrative, so it exists in the

realm of plausibility. However, there is circumstantial evidence in support of a scheduling breakthrough to be found in bonebeds left behind at buffalo jumps and pounds.

Stalking with small numbers is evident at places such as the Cactus Flower site, a buffalo kill site along the South Saskatchewan River near the city of Medicine Hat in southeastern Alberta. At this neatly stratified site, artifacts from the archaeological manifestations known as the McKean Complex were present in the lower levels, while Pelican Lake artifacts appeared in the upper levels; hunters during this time used spear-throwers to launch their spears, so proximity to their prey was advantageous. The site was repeatedly occupied between 4100 and 3600 years B.P. for the purpose of killing and butchering buffalo. The lead investigator surmised that this site was chosen because "areas of easy river access would have been preferred watering locations for bison and other game animals. Such locales would be ideal for certain hunting methods. Individuals or groups of hunters could conceal themselves near the water's edge and ambush animals coming to drink" (Brumley 1975: 92). The site served its purpose for over 500 years, but the final abandonment of the site after 3600 B.P. hints at an alternative strategy. After looking at the artifact assemblage of his excavation, Brumley (1975: 94) concluded that "the rapid decline in use....of the Cactus Flower sites....probably [reflects] a transition from the [stalking] type of hunting strategy....to one utilizing jumps, pounds and traps....[presumably] hunters were looking for a different set of environmental features".

Evidence for large-scale communal hunting appears later in the archaeological sequence and is most notable in association with Besant tool assemblages. Due to the skewed imagining of sites as exhibitions of lithic technology, projectile points have achieved near-mythic status in northern plains archaeology, and the makers have been treated as incidental to their products. Nevertheless, stylistic metamorphosis does occur through time and projectile points are convenient markers for sorting and organizing collections. Thus in the projectile point sequence McKean-Pelican Lake is followed by the Besant morphology about 2000 B.P. (Reeves 1983). Yet the change in point manufacture

is unremarkable in comparison to the change in food procurement strategies and harvest size that are evident at Besant sites. Effusive compliments emanate from the archaeological literature when describing buffalo hunting skills, with Frison (1991) going so far as to portray Besant as the cultural climax of his northern plains prehistoric metanarrative. His esteem remains undiminished and in the last decade he reiterated his conviction that "Besant, was probably one of the most sophisticated prehistoric bison-hunting groups ever to live on the High Plains" (Frison 1998: 147). The denouement of his prehistoric tale is that buffalo hunting skills degenerated with temporal proximity to the historic arrival of white settlers. Nevertheless, impressive is an appropriate adjective to characterize Besant hunting methods, even if distracted visitors can be forgiven if they are more impressed by the panoramic view from the cliff's edge than by the archaeological features leading to it. A well-chosen buffalo jump features subtle cairns placed in converging lines leading to an unobvious cliff. Routine food procurement at this scale leaves a vastly different signature in the archaeological record and it is not evident until about 2000 BP; although stalking was still a perfectly good strategy which Besant hunters continued to use.

This complexity has been noted by researchers, and despite the many reported sites belonging to this culture, the question of Besant origins is still murky. Speculative explanations abound, but no consensus exists among plains archaeologists. Brian Scribe, an archaeologist from the Cree community of Norway House, in his thesis on Besant-Sonota pottery states:

In the attempts to solve the mysteries surrounding the Besant-Sonota phase on the Northern Plains, archaeologists have developed a number of hypotheses in order to define the development and origin of the culture being studied. The results have produced a number of taxonomic and classificatory approaches. It has also created contention among archaeologists and has caused some confusion in further attempts to define the culture (Scribe 1997: 22).

Explanations for Besant's emergence in the north plains cultural sequence rely on one of two scenarios. Either Besant is an in situ development from earlier cultures, such as Pelican Lake, or it is intrusive and is the result of an in-migration of people who brought

the techniques of communal hunting with them. Those favouring an intrusive culture have had difficulty explaining the locus of Besant technology. One idea posited that Besant technology was associated with an Athapaskan presence on the plains in their migration from their subarctic homeland to the desert lands adjacent to the Rio Grande (Perry 1980). This idea suffers from spatial and temporal requirements that do not coincide with the observed data. The north-south axis of the Athapaskan scenario is at odds with the earliest Besant sites which appear on the eastern margin of the plains and expand west from there. Another attempted explanation by Brian Reeves, an archaeologist at The University of Calgary, proposed that Besant was part of a larger tradition he called Napikwan that appeared on the eastern plains, in the context of the Hopewellian interaction sphere. The Napikwan tradition expanded westward, displacing the extant Tunaxa tradition (represented by Pelican Lake projectile points), into the Rocky Mountains (Reeves 1983). Ironically, to define his archaeological cultures in this scenario of the Napikwan tradition expanding into Tunaxa country Reeves borrowed the Blackfoot word *Naapiikoan* which means white man.

Proponents of autochthonous development see the precursor to Besant technology in the morphology of Pelican Lake projectile points. They note that the two point styles often occur together at sites such as Old Women's buffalo jump. Brandon University archaeologist Bev Nicholson (1986), for example, argued that he could see continuity between these point styles. Besant origins could be explained as a node in the long sequence of archaeological cultures of the plains. At the Besant type site, Wettlaufer (1955) found what he assumed was an early form of Besant point, which he called Sandy Creek. These in turn are often found in association with Pelican Lake points. Furthermore, Pelican Lake and Besant share at least eighteen artifact types, including bifaces, abraders, perforators, and drills, which demonstrate continuity in their respective tool kits. Since Besant food procurement consisted of a complex communal hunting strategy focused on buffalo, they likely required a long association with that animal to become intimately aware of its ecology in order to successfully manipulate its behaviour.

This argues strongly in favour of a long occupation of the plains, or at least those areas in the range of buffalo. "In sum, Besant origins remain obscure" (Vickers 1986: 86) is a common phrase in plains archaeological parlance. The same can be said of its fate because the exact nature of its relationship with Avonlea, a common point style after Besant, about 1200 BP, remains unclear.

Besant projectile points are coeval with Avonlea and Old Women's style projectile points, but the latter two styles signify the appearance of bow and arrow technology on the northern plains. To further complicate matters, these arrow points often resemble small Besant points. Evidently, they were accepted into an extant arsenal and co-existed with the earlier one. Brian Reeves (1983) proposed that Avonlea had a mountain locus and was in the Tunaxa tradition with earlier Pelican Lake forms. However, these new projectiles did not produce a change in hunting strategy, rather they refined the efficiency of the existing one. The Ramillies site in southeastern Alberta demonstrates continuity in communal hunting in the period immediately after Besant. Geographically the Ramillies and Cactus Flower sites are neighbours, being less than 25 kilometers apart, but temporally they are separated by nearly 2000 years. The Ramillies site was used episodically between 1850 and 1035 BP. It consisted of three distinct activity areas, including a buffalo pound structure with a bone discard pile, a processing area with hearths and pit features, and a domestic area with stone tipi rings, cairns and stone drive lanes (Brumley 1976). Alternative structures, such as corrals, were built specifically to impound herds of buffalo when environmental conditions were suitable but a cliff was lacking. These structures were no less effective. The Ramillies site demonstrates that communal buffalo hunting using pounds survived the arrival of the bow and arrow. Hence, adopting this projectile system resulted in no tangible advantage for this style of hunting.

Building intentionally for repeated use, the pound-makers at the Ramillies site took advantage of local topography to disguise their trap and routinely employed it to hunt their prey. Their construction demanded co-ordinated efforts and the labour of many people was

needed to artificially enlarge a natural hollow immediately below a small knoll. Many hands helped to augment the basin with a stone barricade along the perimeter opposite the entrance to the rounded structure. Although small compared to other buffalo kill sites, the hunters could nevertheless trap 20-30 buffalo inside the corral at once. The author noted that "post-cranial elements were represented....from an unknown number of foetal or newborn bison calves.....suggesting spring to early summer occupation of Ramillies" (Brumley 1976: 20). After each hunt it was abandoned for a few seasons until it was revisited by hunters who proceeded to clean out the old bones and discard them in a pile downhill from the corral. This practice is consistent with the Blackfoot custom of using buffalo jump locations once and abandoning that site for several years so that buffalo would forget the location of their traps when they are reborn into the herd.

Unlike the local focus of earlier times, when small bands looked after their own needs, the success of Besant hunters was the result of more effective scheduling on a regional scale. Prior to well-coordinated communal hunts, small bands working in isolation relied on stealth and ambush techniques, which were better suited to their small numbers, but the harvest too was modest in quantity. In contrast, Besant sites regularly feature large bone deposits. The scheduling breakthrough hypothesis posits that bands from across broad regions could routinely meet and cooperate in a buffalo hunt because they overcame the logistical hurdle of timing the event. The scheduling breakthrough that is apparent first in Besant times was sufficiently successful to persist through subsequent generations and continued to inform communal hunting strategies for at least two millennia.

Winter camps attributed to Besant, for example the Coal Creek site (EhPp-1) west of Calgary, Alberta, show similarities with Pelican Lake phase winter camps (Vickers 1986). The same pattern of winter camps was reported ethnographically for the Blackfoot. Typically, winter camps were established by small bands when they dispersed across the landscape for the winter. Relocating during the winter was an onerous task that was assiduously avoided if at all possible, although scarcity of local game, or firewood, might

make it necessary. Food scarcity reduced the advantages of large camps throughout the cold season, so next of kin and other relatives formed the core of winter camps. The pattern was for small bands to set their winter camps among the poplar trees in large coulees and river valleys, and amid the pine trees of forested uplands. Isolated in these camps, they augmented their stores of dried food with fresh meat that hunters brought in from the chase, depending on the ferocity of the winter weather. Open winters with plenty of game were not unusual, if the diverse bone assemblage at the Coal Creek site is any indication of the winter diet. Severe winters were more to be expected though and seasonal famines often occurred late in winter. The longer winter persisted, the greater the likelihood of starvation. Late winter was an especially hungry season.

However, breaking a winter camp and travel on the plains were perilous decisions that were not made easily. Variable weather conditions, such as late season blizzards and persistent inclement weather, made travel precarious, as numerous obstacles could wreck the best laid plans. However, even a mild winter might be a confounding factor for timing a communal hunt because the buffalo calving season would not change even if winter travel was entirely possible. Attempting to synchronize bands in relation to variable local weather patterns was dangerous. Communal hunting using jumps or pounds was not viable in the winter because it was the season when herds dispersed. Only when winter had broken and the prairie became verdant did the herding instincts of buffalo induce them to seek larger aggregations. So breaking camp and departing for the buffalo jump needed a fixed signal that brought together the many small bands that had dispersed for the winter. These assemblies were made possible by the discovery about 2000 years ago that the movement of the constellation known in Blackfoot as 'the lost boys', in English as 'the Pleiades', was an accurate device for timing the buffalo calving season (Figure 3.3). People who shared this knowledge could then plan to meet at a specified locale, knowing that other people would be present.

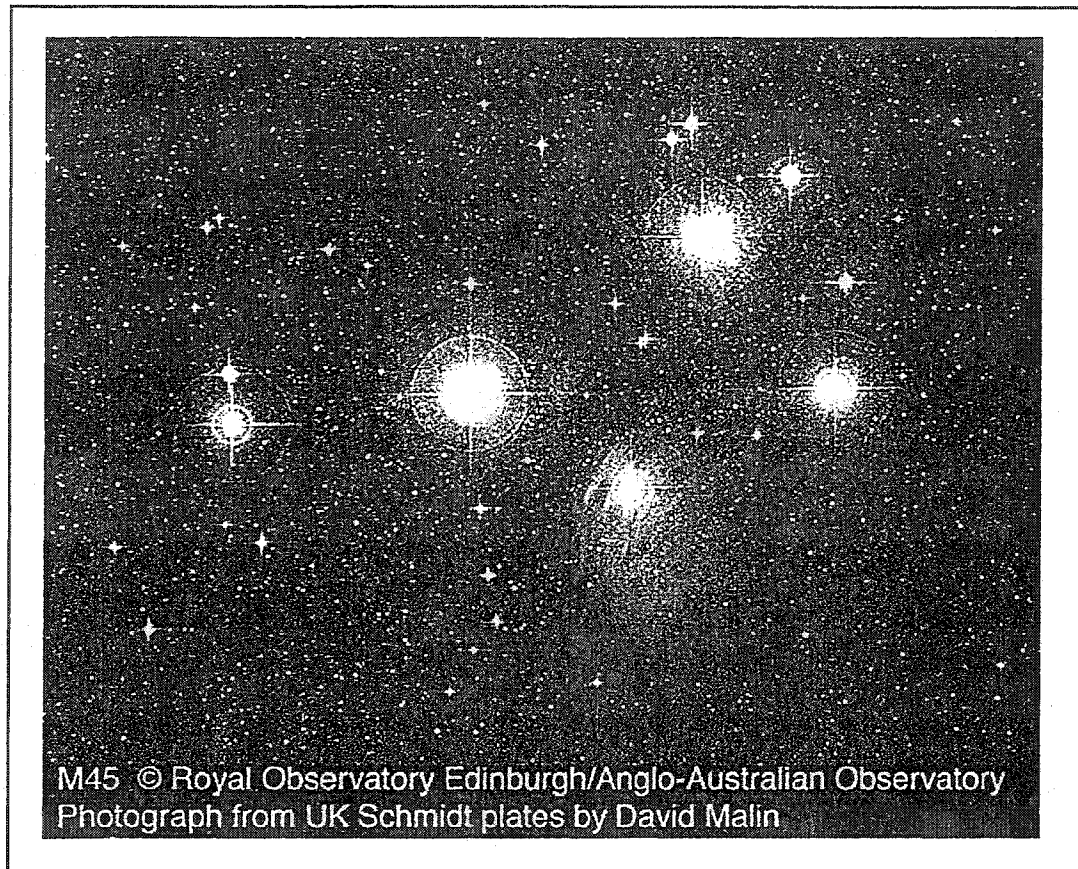


Figure 3.3. The Lost Boys in space. This open cluster is known as object 45 in the Messier catalogue (M45). Reprinted with permission from David Malin.

The Lost Boys Travel the Sky Country

The phrase *miohpokoiksi* that Blackfoot speakers use in reference to the lost boys is comprised of two affixes attached to the root word *pokon*, which means sphere; the prefix *mii-* adds a meaning of a tight cluster and the plural suffix *-iksi* implies many individuals. The open cluster that subtly captures the naked eye on a wintry night is said to be a testament to the close relationship they had on earth. Even when observed in a light-polluted sky, the lost boys are visible as a dim smear of light. Out in the country during a pitch black night, six stars are readily discernible and, depending on atmospheric conditions the sharp-eyed observer can spy up to nine stars, with claims being made for twelve stars in this tight formation. Not to be outdone, modern astronomers designate the lost boys as object 45 in the Messier catalogue (M45). Their images of the sky country

captured by conventional telescopes reveal over 500 stars in this globular cluster, which is estimated to be 380 light years from earth.

Back on earth *Miohpokoiksi* evokes a second image that seemingly has little to do with star clusters but refers to puffballs, a type of fungus often found growing in clusters on the prairie. Comparable in size to a big toe, this fungus can sometimes grow as large as a baseball and even approach a loaf of bread in volume if spring weather is rainy. It can be sliced like bread and is edible when it appears white throughout. By late spring it begins spore production on the interior while the outer husk becomes a delicate, dry envelope that breaks at the slightest touch, dispensing a small, brown cloud. Blackfoot botanical taxonomy recognizes a unique category for fungus, and for mnemonic purposes fungi and stars are connected by metaphor. Back in the mythic past, the death of a star boy coincided with the appearance of fungi (see chapter one); the combustibility of tree bracket fungus is attributed to the residual heat of the dead star boy.

Blackfoot speakers nowadays express a third meaning using *miohpokoiksi*, which still evokes images of white, clustered spheres because the phrase refers to baseballs. It begins in singular form as *miohpokon*, as in the command *kippasstapiksit anni miohpokon* (throw me the baseball). The plural *miohpokoiksi* would refer to several baseballs; as in *kippasstapiksit anniksi miohpokoiksi* (throw me the baseballs) - although one might think twice about this command. Of course this meaning is of recent vintage, since the sport only arrived in the last century, but it demonstrates the plasticity of Blackfoot, whereby the unfamiliar is made familiar by extending metaphorical connections. The Blackfoot parable also contains cryptic information that becomes apparent when examined anew through another facet.

The sky is to Blackfoot culture what television is to modern popular culture. It is a medium for transmitting and archiving information. For frivolous pursuits, such as entertainment, Blackfoot elders found it useful to store their thoughts on the night sky. The nightly procession of stars, planets and constellations crossing the heavens became their

mental library where they saved their observations. Each visible planet, and many constellations, were identified in Blackfoot cosmology through stories that organized the ostensible stellar mayhem. The stories of adventure attached to them were told only during the winter season after the small bands had settled into their winter camps. During those long, cold nights storytellers recalled the heroes who went to the sky country to live with the star people. By the comfortable hearths of their tipis, they recounted those exploits that had made them famous. The moral dilemmas and dangerous choices that tested the hero's mettle were meant to amuse and entertain an audience; more important was the instructive information laced into the fabric of the story that was shared between generations. One generation's encounter with their environment was encoded on the firmament and that knowledge was passed down and applied in practical terms by their remote descendants. The story of the lost boys is one of these.

Ethnographers collecting traditional narratives in Blackfoot country recorded the story the Blackfoot called 'the lost boys' from the various communities in Alberta and Montana. N. Michael Wilson (1893) first brought it to wide attention by publishing an account he heard while working as a missionary on the Blood Reserve in Alberta. In true antiquarian fashion, it was presented to readers as a curious tale, but as a Christian missionary he found it instructive for pointing out that the true nature of the universe was beyond the comprehension of the Blackfoot. Isolated as he was at the distal end of his civilization, he assured himself of his vocation by showing his colleagues the appalling heathen superstitions that he was determined to exorcise. Not so for Walter McClintock (1910), who heard a version amid the campfire banter in the tipi of Brings Down the Sun while visiting with the latter on the Peigan Reserve in Alberta after 1905. He included his version in *The Old North Trail*, his nostalgic retrospective of his life as an Indian. Alas, like an iceberg floating in a warm sea, it merely authenticated his wistful adventure in the waning days of the frontier west that was retreating beyond his reach. It was a keepsake placed innocuously among the meticulous details of his boyhood fantasy come true, but

there was no point to the story, no lesson to be learned. Even Clark Wissler and his Peigan informant David C. Duvall, who collected a version from the mental library of the South Peigan, or Blackfeet, had difficulty explaining its relevance. In the formal style of a monograph intended for an scholarly audience, they could only surmise that this age-old story answered, for the Blackfoot, the mundane question of why dogs howl at the moon (Wissler and Duvall 1909). The ethnographic records crystallized this story in the only medium available to the chroniclers and from the start it was clear that the oral tradition was poorly represented in the pages of the literary text.

Attached to this short saga, but unstated in the various forms, is a chronicle of the demise of Blackfoot lore. The ancient messages that informed Blackfoot hunters are still there, but the milieu in which the message makes sense has disappeared. Downward through the ages retelling the story kept it vibrant and the message of the lost boys was easily understood; the end of the dog days made the message in this story redundant. For better or worse, guns and horses increased hunting efficiency, but in the long run they proved fatal for both the buffalo and folklore. The advent of the horse days accelerated the erosion of buffalo ecology from the message of the lost boys largely because its importance to the Blackfoot had diminished. The effect of reinforcing an epipalaeolithic arsenal with a new weapon system was more than enough to make the arcane message from the star people moot. The persistent forces of obsolescence and homogenization eroding Blackfoot traditional society were compounded by the onset of reservation life in the late nineteenth century. By the time ethnographers began collecting this story, Blackfoot people were already having trouble deciphering the original message. This problem was further obscured by the haphazard collecting habits of ethnographers.

Over a century after Wilson's publication, a Blackfoot version appeared in written form transcribed from interviews with elders of the Blood Reserve (Zaharia and Fox 1995). In yet another sign that the union between the traditional and electronic ages is inevitable, a video version demonstrates the efficacy of electronic media in capturing the

words, gestures and cadence that animate storytelling. This ancient tale is still in circulation in Blackfoot oral tradition, although its meaning has changed to suit modern times. These days the lesson learned from the lost boys relates to child-rearing; they remind parents to treat their children well. Its present sense was mentioned in an exhibit entitled *Powerful Images: Portrayals of Native America*, hosted by the Glenbow Museum in Calgary in the summer of 1999 (Watson 1999). Yet beneath this shallow anecdote is a deeper meaning that once bore messages pertinent to communal buffalo hunting on the plains. Ironically, the ethnographic record preserved this story long after its original message had faded, therefore the story that recalled the discovery equating the seasonal movement of this constellation with the buffalo calving season passed unnoticed.

However, the signs were always there because Blackfoot cosmology continues to be illustrated on tipi designs: the apex depicts the sky country, which is essentially flat and parallels the earth around the lower fringe. The motif, represented as seven closely-spaced circles, typically adorns one smoke flap of a tipi. Skywatching had its adherents in Blackfoot camps and the star cluster known as the lost boys occupied a central position in their calendar. The other smoke flap is a string of seven circles, but that's another story about another constellation. The designs are gifts from spirits who appear in dreams and visions and whose largesse can lead to well-being if the recipient vows to abide by certain rules (Figure 3.4). The narrative of the lost boys presented in the next section splices the various treatments from the ethnographic literature without deviating too far from the central theme. Retelling this tale preserves the flavour of the original story, but adjustments are made to keep the story coherent.

The use of this star cluster as a device for calculating the buffalo calving is not unique to Blackfoot cosmology. Ethnographers like Robert Lowie made extensive visits to the Crow Reservation in Montana to collect memories of ancient tales. The Crow Indians, who also live on the northern plains, keep a similar volume in their mental library. Their saga recalls the mission of a star boy who comes to Earth in search of his mother's family.

When he reaches Earth, he is fortunate enough to meet his relatives as he lands near their camp. Unfortunately for him, his relatives are an eccentric lot who do not welcome him into their circle immediately as he had hoped. He discovered their all too human foibles, especially their delight in tormenting him at every opportunity. Scarcely a year after his arrival, he met some hunters who were using the mild spring weather to hunt buffalo. As he approached them, he saw they had killed a cow and were butchering it. The hunters decided to have fun by terrorizing him with the bison foetus. They chased him with it and, when he sought refuge by climbing up to a high tree limb, they followed him and planted the foetus beside him on the same branch. Stricken with fear, he sat stranded in the tree until the foetus rotted and fell apart. Dismayed by his crazy relatives, he determined that his only recourse was to return with his family and his dogs to the sky country and live up where he belonged among the stars. "You will not see me while the buffalo are calving, but you'll see me after they have given birth to calves" he said as he prepared to end his terrestrial sojourn (Lowie 1918: 69). His parting words and the star cluster his band became were meant to remind his Earth-bound relatives that their nefarious deed was perpetrated in the spring season. With these words, he broadcast a message about the time of year when the buffalo are calving. Being neighbours, Blackfoot and Crow oral narratives often overlap in thematic and descriptive detail and this is evident in the Crow story of the star boy, his mother and her dogs. While the plot, characters and storyline may differ, as do the details of how the star boy's respective predicaments culminated in his ascension to the sky country, the implicit information is the same. Each night the celestial traveller's journey gradually brings them closer to the western horizon until their absence from the sky announces the onset of the buffalo calving season.

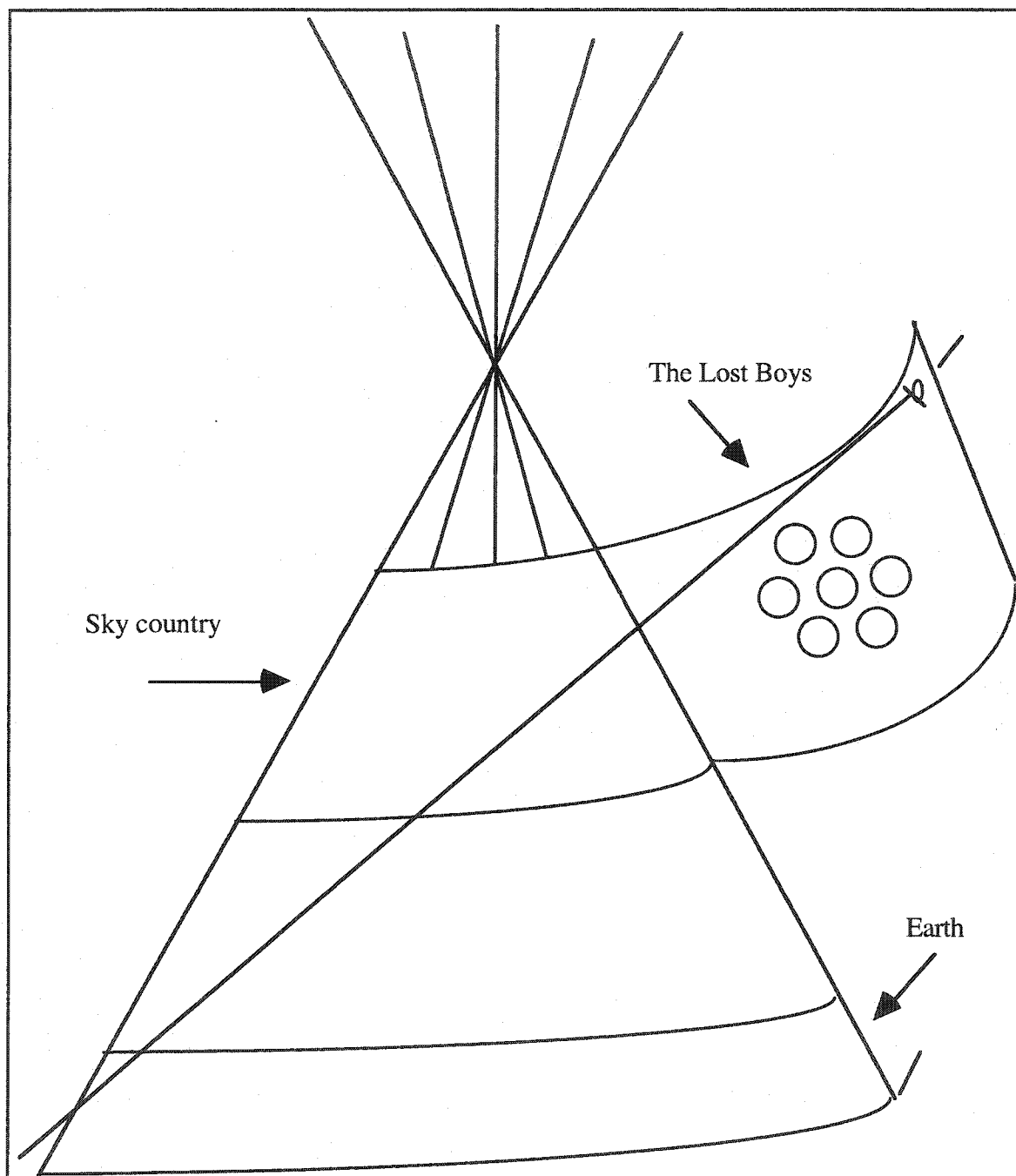


Figure 3.4. The lost boys in the Blackfoot sky country. Blackfoot tipis illustrate their observations of reality. The lower fringe represents the earth while the apex is the sky country. The central area is reserved for portraying the benevolent spirit that protects the occupants. The lost boys motif is a cluster of circles on the smoke flap of Blackfoot tipis. It is an important mnemonic device for calculating the buffalo year.

The Lost Boys

During the dog days, the Blackfoot people by custom would congregate at an appointed location in the springtime to make a large hunting camp. They hunted the buffalo by setting a trap that they led them over a cliff, but to do so required many people working together. After a long wintery isolation tucked into forested hills, or nestled among the poplar glades in the river valleys, joyous anticipation occupied their thoughts about the approaching hunt. They thought of spending time walking and camping on the open plains, and of seeing their friends and relatives who wintered elsewhere. They thought of fresh food and clean hides for new tipis. Some of them were also thinking of new robes to wear. The people customarily made clothing for their children from the soft hides of the new born calves. The tanned hides were supple and folded easily, unlike the thick, tough hide of the cows. For that reason Blackfoot children eagerly anticipated the spring buffalo hunt as it gave them a chance to replace their worn out clothes.

Once the camps were assembled, and the last moon of winter grew full, they began to perform the sacred rituals that protected their hunt. They selected a buffalo runner; a young, swift man who would lead the buffalo herd into the trap. The holy man brought out his medicine bundle to pray for the safety of the runner, then sent him off to fast before the hunt. He brought out his buffalo stones and smudged with an incense of sweet pine and sweet grass. Pungent smoke filled the air as singers chanted the holy songs of the buffalo-caller society, while their leaders performed rituals over the people who would direct the buffalo. Immense danger accompanied their plan and the prayers brought calm to the agitated camp. Sometimes the wary buffalo would sense the trap and break through the line, trampling any hapless soul in their path. Success arrived only if everyone did their part. Hunters disguised themselves as buffalo cows hunkered down by some bushes for the night. They concealed their presence by piling small cairns of cobbles to anchor some branches. Once planted, their twigs resembled bushes. Then they laid under a blind so that in the dim moonlight they would resemble a sleeping cow. Thus they formed two long

rows that converged toward the cliff. If all went according to plan, by sunrise they would be enjoying the sweet taste of fresh buffalo meat.

As fate would dictate, one year as the buffalo hunting season was approaching everything seemed to go wrong. First the winter was especially harsh and the cold days lingered, which caused people to become unsure about leaving their wintercamps. Then there were long delays as people encountered poor weather. Some days the rain forced them to remain at one camp and they had to search long for dry firewood. Finally a camped formed that was large enough to set a proper trap, but when the scouts returned they could only report meager herds with few calves. The hard winter had killed many animals so the hunt would not be as bountiful as other years. Everyone would get young cow hides to make new clothes but the calf robes, those most prized for clothes, would be distributed to toddlers and young girls only. The thick hides of the tough old cows they would use for tipis, but they would also have to salvage the better parts off the old tipis. Knowing this, they tempered their expectations and began to look for ways to save on hides. Shortly thereafter a family of parents and seven boys stumbled into camp to join this hunt. The parents were told of the poor herds and the decision to limit the distribution of calf robes. They agreed that it was in everyone's interest to be frugal with hides, but in their haste to prepare for the hunt they forgot to tell their sons of this shortage. The brothers were each other's best friends and did not mix immediately with the other children so they remained oblivious to this news.

Like everyone else they waited eagerly as the scouts brought back daily reports. People joined from all the camps to build the corral below the cliff. Even the children were busy collecting boiling stones by the river. All the while, the scouts reported that the runner had brought a good number of animals into the gathering basin. The hunt chief decided that between sun down and moon rise the hunters would use the dim light to obscure their movements as they proceeded to the drive lanes. Before the first moon beams lit the sky they had crept into position. They tucked themselves under their blinds where

they waited patiently and quietly. Off in the distance they could hear the runner skillfully imitating a lost calf as he tried to bring the herd into the trap. Eventually he lured the whole herd into the ambush. At the leader's signal the hindmost hunters left their blinds and began to menace the herd. Just then the buffalo runner sprinted for the cliff's edge. Mayhem erupted as the relay of hunters jumped from cover, shouting and waving their blankets. The buffalo jostled each other as they galloped toward the escape route ahead of them when suddenly the ground disappeared. A tangle of mammals poured over the precipice and into the corral below in a hairy, shaggy cascade. Some were crushed and killed by the fall, but many only broke limbs as they tumbled to the ground. Their bellows broke the predawn silence only briefly before the awaiting hunters used their spears to lethal effect.

As predicted the hunt was a success, but the number of animals was low. Even so, the boys pitched in and helped their parents strip hides. The older boys helped their father sharpen knives and scrapers, while the younger boys helped their mother carry hides to the camp. They worked feverishly until the pile of carcasses started to reek and the scavengers caught the stench on the wind. Before long it was too dangerous at the pound because of all the wolves, so people stayed close to camp where there was plenty of work. The boys were invited to games that other children started, but they refused and instead helped their parents. They worked hard because they knew that their labour would bring them a new wardrobe as their share from the hunt. Anticipating clean clothes, they thought what a relief it would be to be rid of the rags the winter had gnawed away. Nothing could compare to the aroma of newly smoked hide. When they talked, they could already feel its soft texture against their skin. Finally the day came when the hides were to be distributed for making tipis and adult clothes, and off to the side was the small pile of calf robes the boys coveted. The hunting chief assembled the camp in a large circle where the buffalo calling society led the resurrection dance dedicated to the buffalo. All the men who participated in the hunt celebrated by dancing around in a circle, while their wives and

children stood by the edge and danced in one spot. When the singing ended, the hunting chief began the give-away dance by calling the names of the hunters. In this way all the food and tanned hides were distributed among the people. The brothers could scarcely believe it when the calf robes were distributed only to families with babies and young daughters and everyone else got hides from the young cows.

Embittered by this slight, they retreated to their favourite hiding spot to decide their next move. One boy suggested they scare off the herd at the next buffalo hunt, but that idea did not sit well with the others because they would only hurt themselves. Another said they should run off and join another band, but the others disagreed saying that nobody would accept them after a hunt where they did not help out. A third said they should go live in the mountains. While the rest agreed the mountains were a nice place to visit, they thought it was impractical to live there.

The fourth voice to offer an idea was the oldest brother. He suggested they leave the earth and go live in the sky country. Everyone agreed it was the best idea they had heard so far, but they also agreed it was even more impractical than going to live in the mountains. But the lad persisted and told his skeptical brothers of a medicine song he had learned in a dream. It had the power to lift them off the ground and carry them skyward. His brothers admonished him for not sharing this secret earlier and challenged him to demonstrate its power.

He took two sticks and began to beat a rhythm out of them and as he did so he chanted a song. When his brothers learned the tune they joined in and they repeated it until they all sang as one. After a few rounds, they stopped. They all agreed it was a nice song but they were planning to run away and singing was getting them nowhere. The elder boy explained that his song and dance had to be done right. He needed a special drum to accompany his song. He told his brothers they should stand in a circle and join hands while they sang. He added that they would sing at the next camp assembly so that all present would know of their discontent before they left.

There was to be one last assembly before the camp broke up and people prepared to move in different directions for the summer. When it occurred, the boys would announce their disappointment and all the adults would know that their stinginess had robbed the boys of their due. Then they would reveal their plans to depart for the sky country. In the mean time the oldest brother got busy making his drum. He requested one hide from his mother who was glad her son suddenly showed an interest in drum-making. One brother got the wood for the frame, another brought the sinew to stretch the hide over the frame, another the paint for the design, and the last toiled away on a special drumstick.

The cool spring evenings were gradually yielding to the longer days. Each night the twilight lingered longer before allowing darkness to envelope the world. People worked as long as there was enough light so they could sew new hides into their tipis or new moccasins for the trails. Soon enough the day arrived when summer beckoned and the people made ready to strike camp and move to their next stop. Everyone was eager to be moving again. Most had already packed their hides and stored their dried meat. They staked down their dogs lest they wander off and hold up the move.

Under a canopy of poplar trees showing new leaves, a group of men sat in a circle beating a drum and singing the assembly song. Upon hearing it people came from all the tipis to join the singers. Many sang along with the drummers and there was a sense of anticipation as they waited for the camp chief to address them. They sat on hides to form a large circle and soon a crowd had gathered that filled in all the remaining gaps. The camp chief was seated at the west side of the circle. When he stood the song began to fade but he waited until there was silence. A breeze rustling through the leaves was clearly audible and then the air was calm too. The chief raised his hand and was about to speak when the boys broke from the crowd and ran to the centre. They were naked but they carried their clothing with them which they threw in a pile.

The assembled crowd took notice of the boys because of their unruly behaviour. Their horrified parents tried to apologize and clear them off, but the boys resisted. They

accused the assembly of stinginess and told them to keep their scabby robes. Then the oldest boy announced that he would sing his medicine song and depart with his brothers to live in the sky country. He said they would look down from the sky and laugh at the puny camp and every year, at the time when the buffalo calves have their yellow hair, they would leave the sky country to remind their stingy relatives of what happened. Of course no one took them seriously. They laughed at this threat and told the boys to put their clothes on for it was getting chilly.

Just then the oldest boy sat down and pulled out his strange little drum with the odd design and started to beat a hypnotic rhythm out of it with a fantastic drumstick. His young voice carried the tune alone at first, then his younger brothers joined in with their tiny voices to create a minor cacophony. They clasped hands and began to dance in a circle around the little drummer boy. Suddenly in front of everyone a gale-force wind seemed to jump out of the trees and swirl around the boys. No one else was affected. The vortex hugged the little dancers and to everyone's amazement they began to rise as if falling upwards. In the time between heartbeats they were gone. All that remained was a little pile of clothes. The people were stunned. They regretted their harsh treatment of the boys and for hurting their feelings, but it was too late.

When the boys arrived in the sky country they were surprised with their success, so they took their time in gathering their wits. They were huddled together trying to stay warm when a beautiful woman came along who introduced herself as Moon. She wondered why these naked human children seemed to be lost and disoriented. She got terribly angry that people would neglect their children and not be concerned as to their whereabouts. The boys pleaded with Moon to keep them in the sky country. She took pity on them and said she would care for them. The boys told Moon of their stingy relatives on Earth who cheated them out of their reward. Moon was aghast when she heard their tale of woe. She told the boys her husband, Sun, was out crossing the sky country but when he got home she would request they stay.

When Sun returned home Moon introduced the boys to him and told him of their desire to stay. She told him their unfortunate story that culminated with their seeking refuge among the star people. Finally she told of their relatives on Earth who behaved poorly. Sun granted the boys refuge in the sky country. They asked Sun to punish their stingy relatives for their poor behaviour and to teach them a lesson they would not soon forget. To punish their stingy relatives they asked him to take all the water away for seven days. Sun agreed and when he crossed the sky country he was extra hot. At night Moon was extra bright so for seven days and nights there seemed to be no darkness.

Back on Earth the days grew very hot and this caused all the lakes and rivers to boil and the water to evaporate. People wanted for water but could find not a drop to quench their thirst. The days got so hot that everyone had to retreat to caves or find shady spots against cliffs to wait until dark. One evening, after Sun had set, some women took their dogs and clay pots and went looking for water. They came to a dried out river bed where they discovered even the small pools had disappeared. While the women sat in despair, the dogs began to dig in the river bank until they exposed a spring. Enough water flowed forth to fill their clay vessels. Each evening thereafter they took their dogs to find the underground springs, but by the seventh day these too were depleted.

That night, when Moon was shining bright, the leader of the dogs called a meeting of the pack out on a butte not too far from camp. The chief dog suspected that the lost boys were behind this catastrophe. He told the pack they must pray to Moon together and in that way she would hear their message. They would explain why the boys got no buffalo calf robes, and tell her of their suffering from the heat and the parched throats of their pups. The people had learned their lesson and from now on they would always be nice to their children. They would ask Moon to forgive the people and allow water to flow across the land once more.

Way up in the sky country Moon heard the dogs baying and understood their predicament. She heard their plea and decided to approach Sun with her concerns. She

told him that the people regretted their treatment of the boys. No one could fault the dogs that the boys only got buffalo cow hides for clothing. There was no reason for all animals to suffer along with the people. Sun agreed with Moon and together they decided to turn down the heat. Soon, water was flowing across the riverbeds and filling the lakes.

Sun told the boys that they would become star people and live in the sky country forever and to this day all winter long when night closes in we can look up and see the lost boys travelling along their path (Figure 3.5). But at that time of year when the buffalo calves have yellow robes they disappear beyond the western horizon to send their vindictive message back to earth. Nevertheless people were very happy that the world no longer sweltered. The dogs too were happy because people treated them a little better afterward, and to this day they still sing their appreciation to Moon.

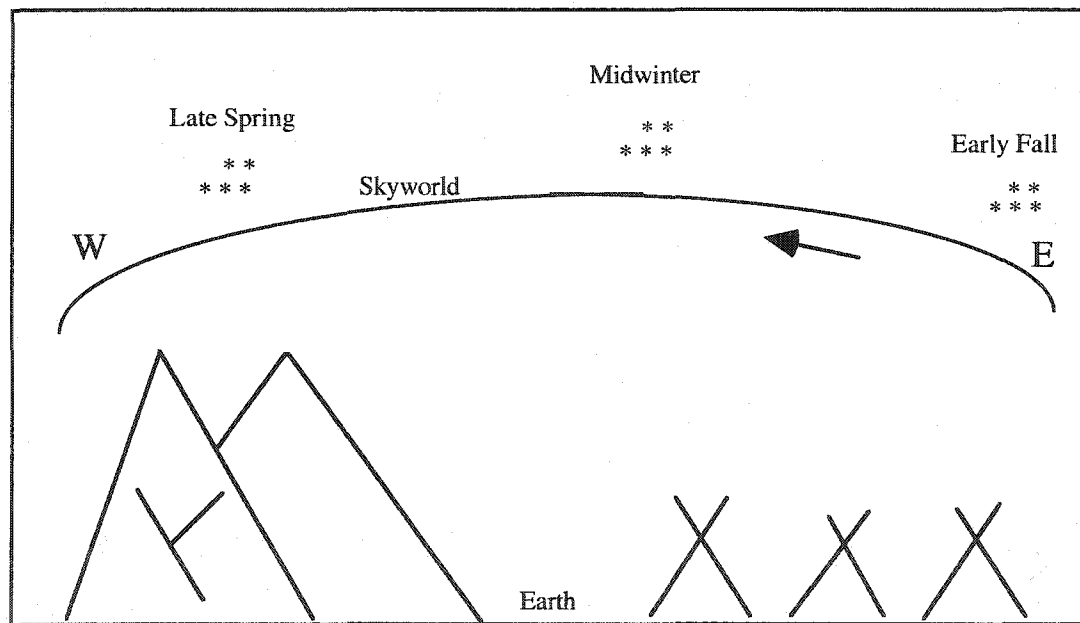


Figure 3.5. The lost boy's location at dusk. Autumn arrives and they appear in the eastern sky. By midwinter they start their nightly travels at their apex in the sky. Spring arrives with longer days and so they are visible only briefly in the western sky. They then set shortly after the sun.

Scheduling the Buffalo Jump

Large-scale communal buffalo hunting occurred during the mild season. The first hunt of the spring was especially critical, as it was a chance to replenish their stores of meat, sinew and hides. Unlike the methods practiced throughout the winter, when hunters mainly relied on stalking, communal buffalo hunts became more efficient when enough people congregated after winter. Thus, coordinating and timing events involving many bands that had dispersed for the winter was the main logistical challenge that had to be overcome for communal hunting to be effective. "Scheduling....was necessary, since decisions were required to exploit the economic benefits offered at a given location in any particular season" (Frison 1998: 148). Making the whole venture worthwhile was the big payoff; which was realized when many buffalo went over a cliff at once. Effective, flexible planning demanded that people devise a system to keep track of time so as to better plan future activities. A reliable calendar of the buffalo year was essential for assembling the requisite numbers to operate a buffalo jump (Figure 3.6).

The seasonal nature of communal hunting has led anthropologists and historians to imagine that hunters lived at the mercy of buffalo instinct. So the tendency has developed to infer the seasonal round of people from the instinctual rotation of the buffalo year. A typical example of naturalizing aboriginal modes of life appears in Arthur Ray's chronicle of *Indians in the Fur Trade* (1974). He illustrates the natural history of buffalo in "The yearly cycle of the bison in the parkland-grassland area" (Ray 1974: 33) and the natural history of Cree and Assinboines in "Parkland exploitation cycles" (Ray 1974: 47). The figures illustrate fauna in their natural habitat and Indians in theirs. Like wheels in a well-oiled, organic machine, the buffalo, Cree and Assiniboine oscillate along the grassland-parkland ecotone. Equating Indian hunters with their ungulate prey is common in reconstructions of archaeological cultures (see for example Epp 1988; Morgan 1980), but it leaves little room for human agency. Asserting buffalo migration to be the stimulus for human movement in modelling seasonal settlement patterns piqued one researcher to call

such models simplistic (Vickers 1991: 66). Indeed, naturalizing human cultures is as old as modern anthropology (Kehoe 1993); the fact that such models still find authors indicates that old habits really are hard to break.

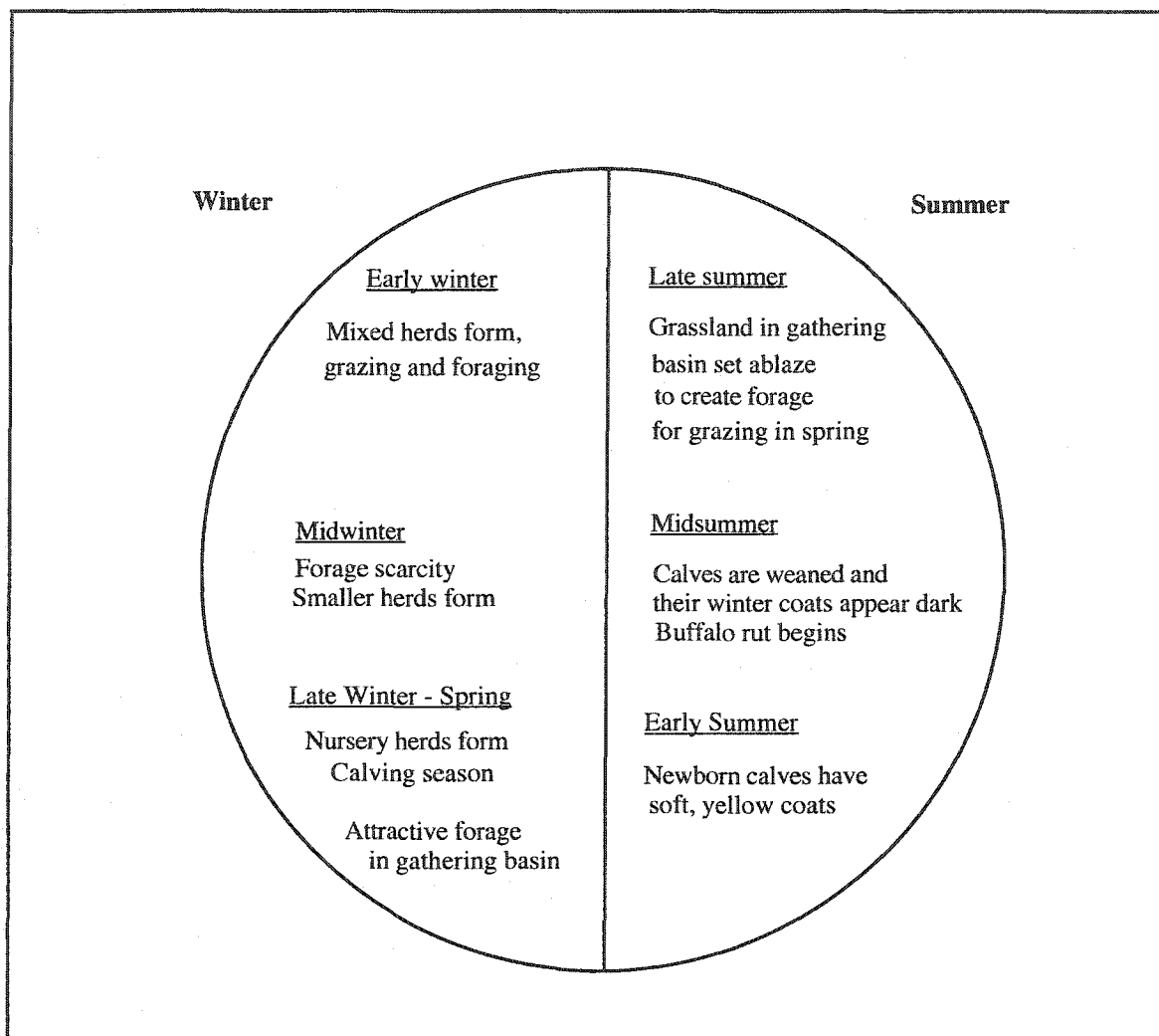


Figure 3.6. Ecological behaviour of buffalo was driven by seasonal changes on the plains. Knowing the habits and habitat of the buffalo allowed hunters to create the right conditions for a buffalo jump.

Evidence from sites such as Head-Smashed-In buffalo jump attest to this method's popularity over several millennia (Reeves 1978); however, operating a buffalo jump was a venture that required a considerable number of participants. This meant that, for logistical reasons, organization had to occur well in advance. Knowing the time and the place of an event was crucial for attracting a crowd, so more advertising could only increase the

likelihood of a large crowd. Artificially creating the proper conditions gave people more control, therefore bands had to agree on a location for the next spring hunt before they dispersed for the winter. Once a location was identified, a task force was sent to prepare the gathering basin. They would create forage for the spring by burning the dry, yellow grass in the fall. The blackened prairie landscape would lie under a white sheet of snow for most of the winter. With the longer, warmer days of spring, melting snow would moisten the thawing soil. Ash from burnt grass mixed with the dirt to fertilize the soil at a time when the grass seeds need to germinate fast. Each new blade of grass that broke through the ground created the kind of pasturage that hungry herbivores found to be good grazing. When the small, fractured herds began to leave their winter range in search of good forage they would congregate in nursery herds in the gathering basin deliberately prepared by hunters.

Scheduling was more problematic, so it likely posed the main obstacle to planning. Plans predicated on weather are unreliable because of the local variability of such events as the first thunder after winter. Some years winter persists; in others it may end early. Hence, a constant, unwavering reminder that could broadcast a message to many bands dispersed across the plains would have been most valuable. The Blackfoot year consisted of a winter and a summer season. Planning during the summer mitigated the effects of winter. Winter brought in the new year, and from the vantage point of the following summer, tribal historians reflected on its influence and gave it a name. Winter after winter the difference between comfort and hunger was measured by the amount of food available during this season. Late winter was a hungry time for people. Food shortage was always a constant concern. Hunters then employed stalking methods which were more practical in winter, and for that purpose the bow and arrow was especially effective. They could supplement their stores with fresh meat, but all stored food was gone by the end of winter. However, planning allowed people to stave off such catastrophes because they made observations of their world that improved their chances.

Blackfoot medicine men were the keepers of this arcane calendar which worked only if they carefully watched the bunched stars in relation to the western horizon. Their mysterious seasonal departure from the sky country coincided with the buffalo calving season (Figure 3.7). The Blackfoot sky world lay high and flat, and the apparent movement of the stars was analogous to a trail that a person would travel. After the summer solstice, they rise in the eastern sky before daylight takes over. At the autumnal equinox, they are visible in the same region immediately after sunset and cross the sky through the night. They retain their aura of mystery because of an optical illusion unique to the human eye. An observer looking directly at this open cluster will not have a very clear a view. In fact, it will seem blurred and indefinite. However, the observer who looks slightly to the side will see a crisper image. Their coy demeanour irked someone's curious mind until the connection was made to the buffalo year.

The nightly position of the cluster changes as the winter deepens, but it is not random motion. At the onset of winter they begin their trek low in the eastern sky after twilight and travel across to the western horizon. By midwinter the lost boys begin their journey near the midpoint of the night sky and set long before the night gives way to sunlight. As each winter moon passes they get closer to the setting sun, so they appear nearer the western horizon at dusk. As the last cold snaps of winter get less severe, the lost boys appear only briefly on the western edge of the sky world. The longer days bring a long twilight, so they set before the dark blanket of night covers the sky. In ancient times, the best buffalo robes for clothing came from the hides of new born calves. Predictably, each year during the buffalo calving season, the lost boys left the sky country. In real chronological terms, the lost boys reappeared in the midsummer night sky because the earth had come around the sun; when the constellation appears to rise in the hours before dawn.

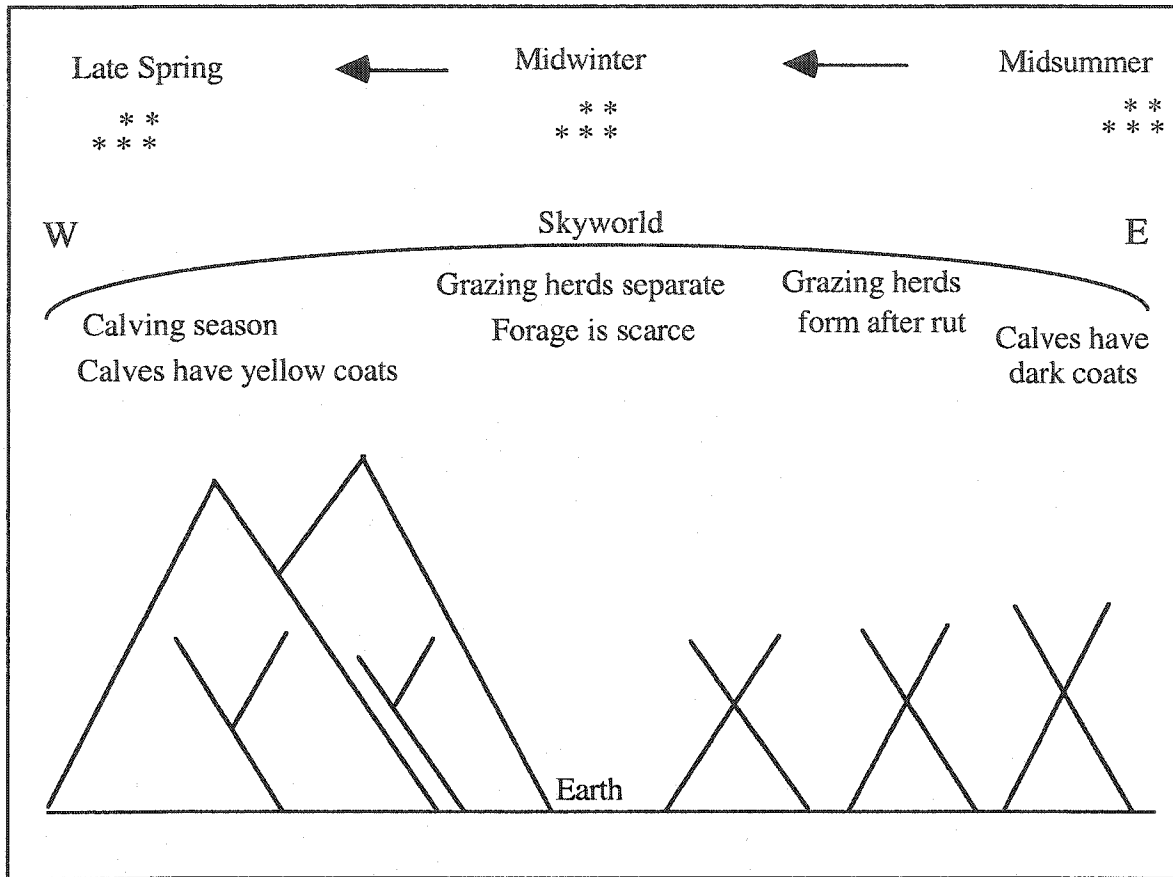


Figure 3.7. For earth-bound, naked-eye astronomers, the correlation between the stellar phenomenon and the buffalo calving season was more than coincidental.

Summer's end, in the buffalo year was marked by the full, dark coat the calves had grown. It would provide enough insulation against the approaching winter. After the rutting season, the bulls became more tolerant of other males and the herds settled into their winter grazing patterns. By which time calf robes were better suited for winter clothing. Blackfoot story-tellers would be pointing out the dim constellation as they recited the tale of the lost boys. However, even in a Copernican sky, the message of the lost boys stands the test of time. Theirs is an elegant story that translates well into a modern understanding of stellar phenomena (Figure 3.8). Their ostensible seasonal absence results from the occulting of this open cluster by the sun near the summer solstice. The terrestrial orbital path, revolving in a counter clockwise direction, brings the earth into position nearing the summer solstice when the winter constellations first become visible. At the autumnal

equinox the earth has moved into a position when these constellations start to shine in the early evening. By winter solstice the earth is directly between the sun and Taurus, where the lost boys dwell. As the vernal equinox approaches, the earth and sun are perpendicular in relation to the lost boys. Approaching the summer solstice the earth moves directly opposite the sun from the open cluster. Given the long daylight hours and extended twilight, the sky is too bright for them to appear but briefly deep in the night. Although Blackfoot astronomy has been supplanted by modern devices such as optical and radio telescopes, the connection found by naked-eye astronomers is not diminished. The scheduling break-through hypothesis may originate in the Blackfoot mythic past, but the ecological message is still rational in a modern context.

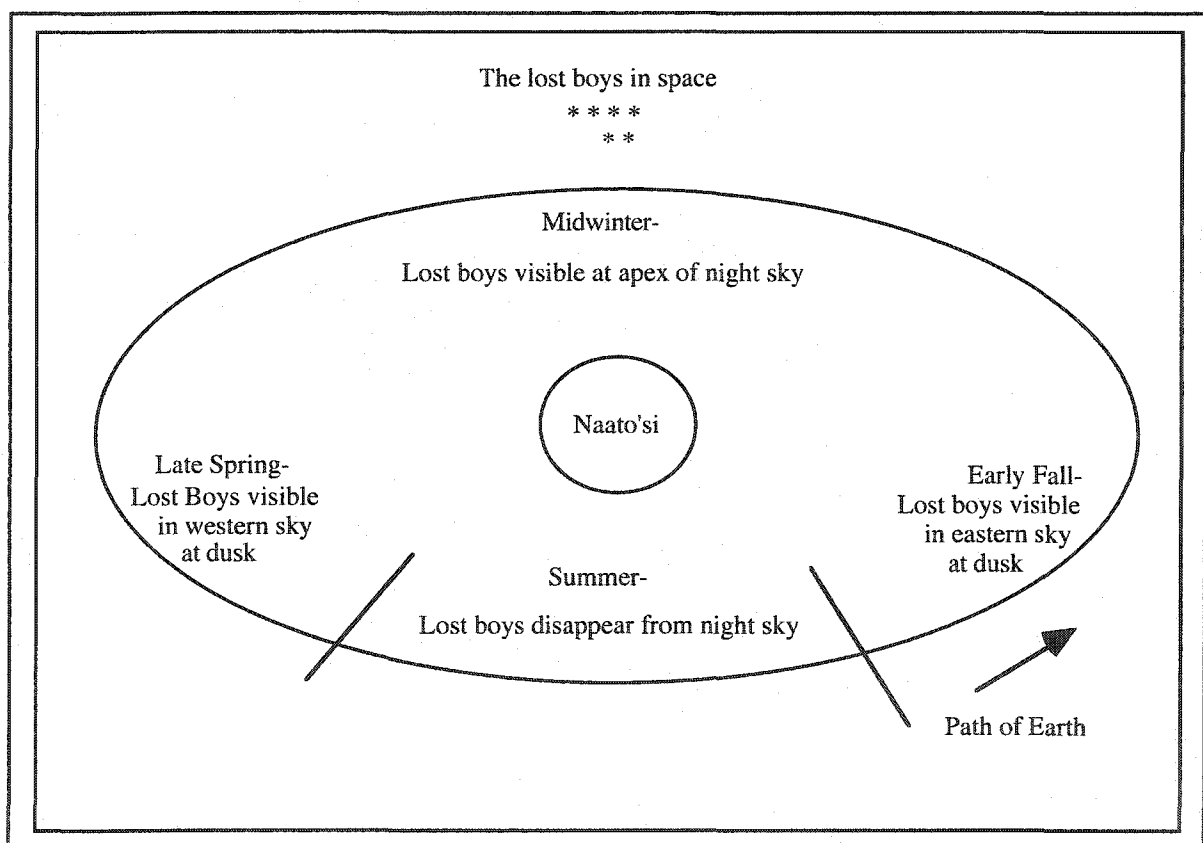


Figure 3.8. In the modern sky country the lost boys are observable when the earth's orbital path places them in the night sky. In spring and summer they share daylight with the sun.

Besant and Blackfoot

In the archaeological record, Besant sites with the greatest time depth are along the eastern margins of the plains and they spread westward. Other than the odd surface find, no Besant sites have been reported beyond 53° north latitude and none extend below 43° north latitude. The message of the lost boys seems to have an effective latitudinal range. North of the plains the lengthening days of spring and the persistent twilight may have been enough to obliterate the seasonal message. Southward, other ecological factors may have limited the effectiveness of their message, or perhaps communal hunting was viable during winter. Interestingly, Besant sites are restricted to ten degrees of latitude, even though buffalo range north and south of these latitudes.

The story of the lost boys and the scheduling breakthrough hypothesis act as bridging devices in the manner of limited range theorizing. On the one hand it serves to explain an archaeological manifestation; on the other it functions as a bridge between contemporary Blackfoot identity and an archaeological culture. Blackfoot oral narratives contain hidden messages that once aided them to make plans for hunting buffalo, but they also contain information about the antiquity of Blackfoot thought. Contributing theory to explain the appearance of intensive communal hunting based on a traditional narrative dispels the notion that people on the northern plains were hapless hunters of buffalo subject to the vagaries of the buffalo year. Rather, juxtaposing the seasonal behaviour of buffalo with the seasonal procession of object M45 reveals the lesson that ancient skywatchers learned from the lost boys. Their discovery had practical as well as mythical significance because the open cluster aided the memory and the myth bore the message. Its impact was to transform buffalo hunting from a local, opportunistic ambush into a purposeful operation that organized bands on a regional scale. Richard Forbis (1982) was probably right when he mused on the implication of large populations occupying the northern plains, which could create the critical mass required for this cooperative effort. The buffalo motif fits well into the overarching religious thought hosting this knowledge and acted to cement

social bonds across great distances. By participating in the *ookaan*, or Sundance, bands could demonstrate their knowledge of the buffalo nation, its land and citizens. Circulating among the small bands was the story that called them to an appointment in the springtime.

The implications for more coordinated scheduling would have been immediate. Planning would have allowed larger assemblies at hunt locales. Individual bands could make plans feeling secure about knowing the time and the location. Therefore camp sites associated with communal hunt sites would grow larger because more people were present. However, the ephemeral nature of archaeological encampments is a source of ambiguity. As with other sites featuring multiple, episodic occupations, imagining one encampment from many tipi rings is usually futile. Intuitively one would expect many people to be essential to an integrated occupation motivated by a single activity; nevertheless proximity is not convincing evidence. Concluding statements in archaeological reports still note that "9 stone tipi rings and 3 small cairns may or may not be associated with use of....a bison kill and processing area" (Brumley 1976: 14). Prior research into habitations on the plains depicted open air sites as frequent, ubiquitous, and present throughout the Holocene (Brumley 1988; Kehoe 1960; Malouf 1961), but whether any two tipi rings were contemporary is speculative (Brumley 1988). The acceptable evidence must stem from the actual operation of a buffalo jump; nothing less demonstrates the plausibility of a scheduling breakthrough.

Indeed, if the scheduling breakthrough hypothesis is any indication, and if Besant is its archaeological manifestation, the Blackfoot conclusion is that a story similar in nature to the lost boys has been told around hearth features of stone circles on the northern plains since about 2000 B.P.. This story held a similar message for the audience who heard it, but its real success grew from its identification of a reliable calendrical device that could broadcast the same message to winter camps spread out across the landscape. Subsequent spring gatherings would be better timed, but, since larger numbers would be present, coordination would be more critical so it probably involved a greater emphasis on ritual and

ceremony, the traits of their common culture. Curiously, Frison (1991) described just such a scenario for a Besant pound in Wyoming called the Ruby site, where a ceremonial structure aligned to true north had been constructed adjacent to the pound. If Besant is the ultimate source of the scheduling breakthrough, then large-scale communal hunting is an autochthonous development on the plains. A people would have spent many winters getting to know the habits and seasons of the buffalo nation. Once the connection was made, the idea could spread rapidly from its locus, as seems to have been the case with Besant material culture. However, Besant was more an ideology than an actual people. Their discovery diffused westward to the mountains affecting all recipient cultures along the way and persisted downward through the ages until the Blackfoot told the story of the lost boys.

Still, if the objective is to demonstrate the antiquity of Blackfoot lore, and if archaeological methods are to be applied as a test to corroborate its veracity, then any predictive statement powered by a traditional narrative must lend itself to archaeological verification. Since the message bore practical ecological information, the obvious quest for archaeological visibility pivots on discerning the type of debris that would accumulate in the wake of the lost boys. Like so many Blackfoot narratives, there is no ending to this story because it is still being told. Thus, the scheduling breakthrough hypothesis is proposed here as a starting point for further dialogue. Only future research will determine if this hypothesis has the same stamina as the narrative of the lost boys.

Chapter Summary

The ecological Indian is a popular motif in the American imagination where it approaches iconic status. The image of the natural man in a pristine landscape embodies the ideals of environmentalists and frames their critiques of current environmental practices. Its status also makes it a target for scholars who wish to critique the aboriginal status of contemporary Indians. The latest deconstruction of the Indian and the image is presented by Shepard Krech III; he bristles at the thought that Indians have been handed an unearned reputation as stewards of the natural world. His thesis is devoted to attacking the notion that Indian lore is based on an appreciation of nature that is lost on modern American society. Krech argues that Indians now enjoy a privileged space because the advertising industry was given the task of devising an anti-litter campaign. Advertising executives know how to sell a product, which involves manipulating their audience to market their products. Thus, folklore that originates in antiquity is dismissed as modern creations of an advertising industry that is determined to foist on unwary Americans an image to sell a product. While the dialogue is internal to the society that created the image, real Indians invariably get caught in the cross fire. The job for internalist archaeology is to counter such spurious scholarship by examining Indian lore with a rational mind.

Folklore and archaeology are forming links because Native archaeologists are searching for a motive to propel their research. Posing questions that originate with an internalist sense of the past serves the goal of establishing links to ancient cultures. When Blackfoot people assert their relationship with ancient plains culture, they may be responding to prevailing legal and social conditions. Their identity is predicated upon an ancient connection to their customary lands, which, incidentally, have been appropriated by more powerful polities that wish to legitimate their claim by denying any antiquity to Blackfoot and other aboriginal people. The role of the archaeological establishment is to construct theories that create a cultural discontinuity between prehistoric and historic cultures. Historically, anthropologists and ethnographers, such as Clark Wissler and John

Ewers, asserted a shallow time depth for extant cultures such as the Crow or Blackfoot, but they too were driven by political and ideological reasons. By claiming that Indians and their homelands were recent phenomena, they could assert that the Indians had no greater claims to the land than had settler populations. Archaeological research into folklore will act as an antidote for the logic of denial espoused by modern authors, such as Thomas Flanagan and Shepard Krech III. The results will buttress an identity that is discernible in the lowest strata of the archaeological record. Ultimately, the goal for internalist archaeology is to create a bulwark for the statement that occupation of customary lands began in antiquity; and if an absolute date is expected, that can be supplied too!

The Blackfoot state that they, and their ancestors, occupied the plains for millennia and the Blackfoot mental library is stacked full of narratives that recall those ancient times. Such claims can be supported archaeologically. The story of the lost boys seems innocuous enough because it has cultural appeal and entertainment value as folklore. However, like excavating a 2x2 meter square, each layer reveals a deeper meaning. The connection between seasonal stellar procession and hunting buffalo provides the basis for the scheduling break-through hypothesis proposed for explaining the archaeological manifestation known as Besant. Inserting traditional narratives into archaeological theory has the dual effect of subjecting Blackfoot lore to rigorous scientific scrutiny and providing explanations for phenomena encountered in the archaeological record. Moreover, it demonstrates that Native thought can provide mainstream archaeology with insights to guide the interpretation of archaeological finds.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE END OF PREHISTORY

Introduction

The end of prehistory is more than the beginning of history. It is about reconciling Indian history with archaeological standard time, while maintaining loyalty to methods of archaeology. However, some methods, specifically the analytical methods, generally employed in American archaeology are proving inadequate for achieving an internalist sense of the past. To avoid the inevitable gap this situation creates, Native researchers face the challenge of creating the units of analysis using their own cultural referents. Ideally, the analytical framework that emerges will articulate with the larger discipline. Internalist motives will be at odds with mainstream archaeology because the latter's preferred language still harbours clear bias against Indians. Units for periodization, such as "Archaic" and "prehistory," invariably impose stasis on Indian history, yet they are the stalwart terminology of archaeology. Internalist archaeology regards the concept of the Archaic as obsolete. Prehistory too has reached the limits of its usefulness because there is no advantage in adopting colonial terminology to organize an aboriginal past. Thus, an important objective for Native archaeologists is to find the terminological and conceptual options that lie beyond the colonial brand that currently defines the discourse on antiquity.

Speaking at a symposium of the Society for American Archaeology (SAA), Vine Deloria, Jr. (1992: 597) declared "I personally feel that unless and until we are in some way connected with world history as early peoples....we will never be accorded full humanity." Taking my cue from Deloria's statement, I propose that Native archeologists take the lead in constructing analytical methods that will nurture an internalist sense of antiquity. This chapter addresses the contested terrain of Blackfoot history, which is also archaeological time on the northern plains, to demonstrate that analytical units devised by Native researchers do not necessarily estrange aboriginal people from their history or from contemporary archaeology. Rather, the search must be for synthesis to escape the

tyrannies of the prehistoric and the Archaic and preserve the integrity of the aboriginal past. An antidote is possible for internalist discourse because a syntactical feature of the Blackfoot language allows for nested histories. Blackfoot speech habitually uses terms of inclusion and exclusion in the first person plural paradigm when distinguishing between groups of people who are related in various ways. As analytical tools, ancient and modern histories are nested one inside the other. An ancient history that is exclusive for Blackfoot speakers co-exists with a modern history that includes the world system. Ancient history related in Blackfoot relies on traditional forms of historiography, such as oral narratives, rock art and winter counts. Modern history introduces the documents produced by literate witnesses which were then deposited in archives.

Internalist archaeology cannot strike a position of isolation from world history. It has to recognize and prepare its perspectives in light of what is found farther afield. It can prove its efficacy by organizing antiquity for internal use, but at the same time applying terminology that recognizes world archaeology. America seems the exception for classifications systems that encompass human history. Lithic eras and their prefixes that adequately encapsulate antiquity on other continents inexplicably fall below the radar of American archaeologists. Generic periods that routinely classify antiquity on other continents are stricken from the archaeological literature on America. Instead terms are created specifically to define American traditions even though they may have parallels elsewhere. Since internalist archaeology seeks ways to align competing versions of the past, one route may be for aboriginal people to phrase their history in universal terms. Using terms such as Palaeolithic recognizes American Indians as early peoples, while the terms Epipalaeolithic and Neolithic place aboriginal lifeways in a global context. I first encountered the Epipalaeolithic when I was a teaching assistant for Professor Bisson's course on human origins. I immediately felt that it offered a plausible alternative for terms such as Archaic and Prehistoric. While the focus of this chapter is on the northern plains, the Epipalaeolithic is flexible enough to embrace diverse environmental conditions.

Blackfoot Mythic Time

There is a volume in the mental library of Blackfoot storytellers that relates a legend about how buffalo were created by *Naapi*, the maker of the Blackfoot world. Thereafter, plenty of buffalo could be seen grazing the prairie grass, but hunting them was often problematic. Hunger frequently stalked the camps, but hunter's chances improved when a Blackfoot woman discovered the strange little stone buffalo charms called *iiniskimmiksi* (sg. *iiniskimm*). *Iiniskimmiksi* are ammonite or bacculite fossils that erode out of the soft sandstone bedrock of the Bearpaw formation. In the Cretaceous era, when waves of the shallow Bearpaw Sea lapped upon the shores of the Canadian Shield, live ammonites and bacculites swam in its warm water. When they died they sank to the ocean floor where eons of sediment built atop them. Quaternary times were marked by the uplift of the Rocky Mountains, which resulted in a marine regression. Thereafter, rivers flowing eastward began to erode the sedimentary plain. Eons of erosion created the badlands out of the Bearpaw formation bedrock, which bears the fossils of dinosaurs and many sea creatures of the Cretaceous era. Traditionally, these fossils have a specific symbolic referent that is explained in the Blackfoot narrative about the woman who married a buffalo. Their origin is a vital ingredient that adds to the dramatic effect of the story; their function is to invigorate the prayers, dances and songs of Blackfoot ritualists.

When the story about the origin of buffalo stones was first captured in text by George Bird Grinnell (1892), the buffalo days were gone and what lore remained was itself starting to erode from the culture system. Grinnell actively participated in collecting expeditions, inspired by a journalistic curiosity that took flight when he read the dispatches of Willard Schultz, an American with a Peigan wife, in the magazine *Field and Stream*. Like Walter McClintock, who was on the Blackfeet Reservation to live out a boyhood fantasy when he inadvertently became an ethnographer, Grinnell was an aficionado of western lore, for which he scoured the few remaining tipi camps making queries of the elderly about the buffalo days. Overcoming the language barrier was made easier for

Grinnell and McClintock by William Jackson, a mixed-race member of the Blackfeet (South Peigan) and a former scout for the U.S. cavalry. Early in the twentieth century, Clark Wissler, a decidedly different species of ethnographer, embarked on his own expedition to collect Blackfoot myths while working at the American Museum of Natural history. During four collecting season he set out by train for Cutbank, Montana where he would meet David Duvall, a mixed-race member of the Blackfeet who was recruited for his bilingualism. Together they travelled by horse-drawn wagon to the Blackfeet Reservation to spend the summer in the company of storytellers, plodding briefly across the border to sample the mythology of the reserves in Canada. Regretfully, the context where Blackfoot knowledge of buffalo made sense was gone so the stories were treated as curious, savage literature isolated from the obsolete universe they helped to organize.

Harnessing the replicable reality of the print medium, Grinnell, the reporter and purveyor of early kitsch, interviewed elder Blackfeet men with the intent of serializing their folklore for a mass audience. Like John Wesley Powell, Grinnell accepted the natural superiority of civilized thought and saw in Blackfoot mythology a primitive philosophy. He absorbed the extant theories of culture and repeated them in his references to the infancy of mankind. "The Indian is a man, not very different from his white brother, except that he is undeveloped" he explained to his readers (Grinnell 1892: xiv). Blackfoot mythology was a facsimile of what passed for reason in primitive thought. As a reporter, Grinnell was conscious of space restriction and word counts so his articles were edited to fill a given space in a certain issue or fractured to fill columns over several issues. His terse reporting of the myth of the first buffalo stones was calculated to fill an empty page in a monthly magazine; in a subsequent edition he revisited this theme to relate the story of the ghost buffalo. Foreshadowing the style of spin doctors, his editing for publication proved to be a fickle, albeit effective, method for communicating his own impression that Blackfoot mythology was the childhood of literature. His readers would put down the issue

reassured in their conviction that "The Indian has the mind and feelings of a child with the stature of a man" (Grinnell 1892: xiv).

Grinnell dealt in popular culture, catering to the whimsical tastes of his readers, whereas Clark Wissler was to be the very model of a modern anthropologist when he left New York city for the plains to collect Blackfoot folklore. Wissler had an agenda grounded adamantly in Boasian relativism. The old-style ethnography, predicated as it was on evolutionism, had been rejected by the Boasian school, but they shared an interest in collecting stories. Students of the new paradigm felt that comparative mythology could reveal the primordial myths of a larger linguistic entity whose group solidarity was unaffected by the fissures of language change. Wissler himself held that "myths function as ritualistic origins, the rituals themselves being in part dramatic interpretations of the narratives....Thus the myths are, in a sense, preludes to the rituals; yet, when one asks for the reason or significance of a specific part of a ritual, he is referred at once to the myth" (Wissler and Duvall 1909: 12). Mythology was more than primitive philosophy, it was, in effect, a mnemonic mooring holding fast their organized universe as time drifted by. Where stories explained ritual, Wissler saw only fiction and chaos because his cognitive compass found no lodestar to guide his thoughts. Blackfoot myths were but pieces in a jigsaw puzzle whose picture only future researchers would see. "The narratives collected by us contain incidentally and otherwise a great deal of important data on the culture of the Blackfoot Indians, which we expect to use in the future" he explained to that future (Wissler and Duvall 1909: 7).

Whether the future unfolded as Wissler expected is a subject for a sibyl. Neither Grinnell, nor Wissler, could envision the collision between ancient myths and late twentieth century entertainment media. A hundred years after Grinnell first committed the story to print, Joseph Campbell introduced it to a television audience that routinely tuned-in to an electronic universe. Casting off the pedantic, stodgy image of anthropology, Joseph Campbell delighted his audience by revelling in the role of storyteller. Television had

become the electronic campfire for people watching his series *The Power Of Myth* and he delivered a richly illustrated programme that transcended the talking head reputation of the interview genre. Coupled to his charisma was the wisdom of an elder-academic who used media to popularize his synthesis of the meaning of myths. Contrary to Wissler, who asserted that myths were spoken fiction, Campbell proffered that myths mediated between the mind and the world out there. Whether they were true or not was irrelevant! Their purpose was to "harmonize the mind and the body. [Ancient] myths and rites were means of putting the mind in accord with the body and the way of life in accord with the way that nature dictates" (Campbell and Moyers 1988: 70). Myths not only helped the individual proceed through the passages of life, they also helped society deal with its lifeways. "Man lives by killing, and there is a sense of guilt connected with that" (Campbell and Moyers 1988: 72). Myths articulate the covenant that exists between the animal world and the human world because the hunter must compensate psychologically to engage in the act of killing his quarry. Blackfoot culture thrived on killing masses of buffalo so the narrative of the woman who married a buffalo, which he told to illustrate his point, "helps the psyche to participate without a sense of guilt or fright in the necessary act of life" (Campbell and Moyers 1988: 73). Recalling the origin of buffalo stones is a reminder of famine and the need to kill buffalo, but it also explains that buffalo cooperate in the drama of nature. The myth also compels individuals to make vows to join the buffalo society and is a prelude to the buffalo society's dances and rituals. The hunt is incomplete until the ritual actions of Blackfoot hunters restore the life of the dead buffalo.

Fortunately, Blackfoot mythology has proved remarkably malleable. It responds easily to suit the time and need at each moment it has been invoked. In this volume, it is a bridging device connecting Blackfoot mythic time with an ancient past represented by artifacts leaving a readable signature in the archaeological record of the northern plains. Although naturally occurring only in bedrock formations, ammonite fossils have been discovered in proximity to buffalo bones far from the nearest Cretaceous outcrops

(Brumley 1975; Kehoe 1965). *Iiniskimmiksi*, or buffalo stones, form when fossil ammonites erode from the bedrock and are exposed to natural forces that break apart the fossil shells. Each septum of an ammonite coil was once a chamber of hard shell that enclosed the soft tissue of the living creature as it matured. Sutures between the septa are weak spots that break apart readily as the fossil weathers and their convoluted shape brings to mind the form of a resting buffalo. Several septa were excavated at the Cactus Flower buffalo kill site located along the South Saskatchewan River in a layer of alluvial sediment. The organic material recovered yielded a date of ca. 4200 B.P. (Brumley 1975). Perhaps the people who deposited them in the archaeological record were already telling the story of the woman who married a buffalo.

This narrative is nested within a longer narrative that explains the origin of death. It also explains the apparent recuperative powers plants and hibernating animals exhibit after winter stasis melts away. When Blackfoot people were created, *Naapi* gave them life by sharing the spirit of breath. He did not think that death was necessary just yet. After some time, the first lady he created wondered how people would ever care for each other if they never died. She fretted that people would just live on and on, taking advantage of everything they saw. So she made her case to *Naapi* who agreed with her that certain death would force people to care for each other. After a short contest, *Naapi* brought death into the world and it came to be a constant reminder of the need for compassion. Many winters later, a boy was born who lost his parents early in his life. He lived with a heavy heart and often he lapsed into a sullen mood. His only pastime during these spells was whittling figures of small people. For this reason, everyone called him *Iipiiksaakiwa*, or Cut Wood. His desire to be re-united with his lost parents caused him to make a hazardous trip to the sky country. He visited Sun and told of his loss and continuing grief. Sun was moved by hearing of his lonely life and invited him to live among the star people. *Iipiiksaakiwa* considered the invitation but decided that his original mission was too important.

So Sun showed him how to make a medicine bundle for the purpose of restoring life. Sun taught him the ceremony and songs that would go with it and told him to bring it back to his people. He returned to his camp with his medicine bundle. Word spread that he had returned as a powerful medicine man. He put on a show to display his power. He went beside some dead trees and performed his ritual. Upon completion, new leaves sprouted from its dead branches. New blades of grass sprung from dried yellow forage. Next, he went to his parents graves on a far butte and collected the few bones that were still evident. He brought them to his camp and with his power he restored their lives. However, his parents were not happy that they had been brought back to life. They told him that their shadows had long departed for the Sandhills. They were content to live there because it was a wonderful place with no lack of comfort. Although they were happy to see him, they felt strange and thought people would be scared of them. He was saddened by their request but he respected their wish. However, after his parents returned to the Sandhills he felt no levity. His morose mood swings returned. His powerful medicine bundle was suddenly of no use to him. Finally he decided to accept Sun's offer to live in the sky country. He left his medicine bundle with a trusted friend and ascended to the sky country. He is still seen periodically when he crosses the night sky. Modern sky watchers know him as Saturn.

The Woman Who Married A Buffalo

Naapi had created buffalo in the same manner as they had lived in the previous world. Like people, the original buffalo were made out of mud that *Naapi* had shaped. He formed a four-legged animal with thick fur and great, long horns. He unwittingly made these animals fierce and gave them sharp teeth with which they preyed on people or anything that moved. Buffalo would stalk people, and since the buffalo could run so fast, people had no chance to escape them before they were gored and eaten. Fortunately, *Naapi* was still around, so people told him how they were tired of being buffalo food and appealed to him to help them out of their plight. *Naapi* heard their complaint and agreed

that buffalo were created too powerful and aggressive. To execute his judgment he reformed the buffalo so that they lost their appetite for human flesh. Their sharp teeth he blunted so they could only grind grass. Their horns he shortened so they could only use them in self-defence. He told the people that buffalo would now be their food. However, the people argued that buffalo were too fast. *Naapi* refused to make buffalo any slower because they had to be able to escape other fast animals. Instead he showed humans how to make spears from stone, sinew and wood, and how to make arrows and bows. He taught the people to pile stones in converging lines leading to a corral at the base of a small knoll. He taught them to hide behind the cairns like resting buffalo and to lure the buffalo into the trap. He showed them how to use cliffs if they were available. Then left the people to their own devices.

Blackfoot hunters learned the ways of the buffalo and began to hunt them efficiently. They found buffalo meat delicious and the hide useful for making tipis and clothes. They became such good hunters that no one ever got hungry. After a long time people noticed it was getting more difficult to bring the buffalo into their traps. *Naapi* was nowhere to be found and no matter what they did the buffalo avoided their traps. For the first time in anyone's memory famine threatened the people's camps. Their stealth and weapons suddenly meant nothing and they even resorted to eating the few fish they caught.

One evening a young woman called *Aanattaakii* left her family tipi and walked down to the river to fetch some firewood. As she approached the river valley she saw a buffalo herd grazing off in the distance. She thought how long it had been since she had last eaten buffalo meat. It was delicious, she recalled. She used to have a full figure, now she was scrawny. She looked at her tattered shoes and thought she could use some fresh tanned hides to sew herself some new shoes. She looked with desire at the nearby cliff which already had a trap set up, but it had fallen into disrepair for lack of use. She had learned to ignore the hunger pangs, but the tantalizing sight of a buffalo herd stabbed her in the stomach like a flint-tipped arrow. If only they could find a way to run a herd over the

cliff she thought. As her hunger pangs subsided, she said aloud that if the buffalo would bring themselves near so that her people could have fresh buffalo meat she would marry the chief of the herd.

Off in the distance the chief of the bulls heard the plaintive cry of the hungry young lady. He thought how he might like to be married to this woman. The next evening when she walked to the river for water he left the herd behind and transformed himself into a man. He waited on the trail until he heard *Aanattaakii* approach, then he began to sing a courtship song so that she was charmed by his singing. He interrupted his song to introduce himself as the chief of the buffalo herd she saw. She had made a wish and he had heard it. He said to her that if she married him he would make sure that her people would have some food. *Aanattaakii* thought about it but remained skeptical. She wanted to know if he was telling her the truth. The buffalo chief reached into a pouch he wore on his belt. When he withdrew his hand he opened his palm and laying there were two tiny stone buffaloes. These are *iiniskimmiksi*, he told her. They are charms that will help your people hunt buffalo. I will teach you a song and show you the ceremony that releases their power. Bring them to a medicine man and teach him the song and ceremony I will show you. She thought of her hungry children and decided it was a fair trade, so she took the *iiniskimmiksi*. She would go with him so her children would not know hunger anymore.

When she got home with her load of wood, she set it down in her tipi then went off to see her father *Naatowa'pinna*, who was a medicine man. *Naatowa'pinna* listened intently until he learned the songs and then he memorized the instructions for the *iiniskimm* ritual. As the darkness grew deeper news of the special find spread through the camp. Curiosity took hold of the people and they gathered at the tipi of *Naatowa'pinna* to see what kind of power *Aanattaakii* had found. *Naatowa'pinna* began to perform the whole ritual with the stone buffaloes. He pounded his drum and sang four rounds of the song. He performed each step of the ritual as instructed. When he had completed everything there was a great thunder and they felt the ground tremble as if a thousand hooves struck the

ground in a gallop. When morning dawned, to their surprise they found a large herd of buffalo had run over a cliff near their camp. They immediately took their flint knives and began butchering the animals. They were busy all day long peeling hides and cutting up meat, so no one noticed when *Aanattaakii* disappeared. Her husband, *Sootainah*, inquired as to her whereabouts but no one could answer. He began to search frantically but could find her nowhere. Later, someone found her clay pots down by the river. They assumed she had fallen in and drowned. *Sootainah* was terribly saddened by losing his wife and he returned many times to the place where her pots were found.

After the buffalo had gone over the cliff and everyone got busy butchering them *Aanattaakii* had remembered her promise to the buffalo chief. She felt grateful that her children would now have plenty of food. She knew the buffalo chief would be waiting for her down by the river so she picked up her clay pots as if she was going for water. She left behind her tipi, her husband and their children and quietly went to keep her side of the bargain. As she expected, a young man was waiting for her on the trail. The young man transformed them both into buffaloes and brought her back to the herd with him. *Aanattaakii* lived with the buffalo herd for several winters during which time she learned that they lived in a cave near the entrance to the mountains. Most of the winter they spent there, but it was like the badlands, arid, barren and with little to eat. Spring arrived on the prairie and they left to graze on the lush green grass. While they were inside the mountain they transformed into people, and lived according to customs similar to those of her people. Outside the cave they changed into buffalo, during which time they were vulnerable to the charms the people used. If the medicine man made the *iiniskimm* ceremony to call the buffalo they would feel compelled to approach the traps. The people would butcher them and leave their bones on the prairie.

One spring after *Aanattaakii* had left the cave with the other buffalo she saw an old camp of her people. She remembered her human family and wondered how they were faring. While she was grazing in the tall grass near a brook, she began to wonder how she

could become human again and go back to the family she missed dearly. Her melancholy mood preoccupied her mind, and made her oblivious to the nest of eggs a prairie chicken was coddling. As she was about to step forward the prairie chicken flew up suddenly and startled her. *Aanattaakii* jolted backwards in fright but she settled down and apologized quickly to the prairie chicken and said that her loneliness had distracted her. The bird inquired why a buffalo would be lonely in a large herd. *Aanattaakii* explained that she was once human and had a small family herself. Then she became a buffalo so her children would not go hungry, but now she missed them and wished she could go back. The prairie chicken, being a mother hen, could empathize with *Aanattaakii*. She asked *Aanattaakii* why her husband had not tried to rescue her. She responded that he did not know of her transformation and she had implied her death before leaving. The prairie chicken was sentimental and the story moved her. She told *Aanattaakii* she would help her out by flying to where the people had their camp and inform *Sootainah*. *Aanattaakii* was very thankful for the help and said she would watch the nest.

Sootainah was still mourning his late wife. Whenever the people happened to camp near their old site he always visited the place where she drowned. One spring as they were travelling to a hunting camp, they stopped near there and he decided to make a visit by the creek. He was recalling her image from memory when he lapsed into sleep. In his dream he sat in lonely reverie by the creek when a prairie chicken hen came flying out of the air and landed on a driftwood log. She suddenly spoke to him and said she had a message for him from his wife *Aanattaakii*. The hen informed him that *Aanattaakii* was not dead. She had been turned into a buffalo. She wanted to be human again, but the buffalo chief was jealous and domineering. You must rescue her near the cave where the buffalo dwell. *Sootainah* awoke, certain that his wife was alive and needed his help. As he rose to leave, he saw a prairie chicken hen sitting on a driftwood long. Then he knew for sure what he had to do.

Sootainah returned to camp and went immediately to see *Naatowa'pinna* at his tipi. He recalled his dream for his father-in-law and said they must make plans to rescue her. *Sootainah* had a problem though: he did not know the location of the cave where the buffalo enter the mountain. *Naatowa'pinna* had been to the cave and knew its location. Once when he was out stalking some buffalo he followed them and to his surprise they entered a cave. He said they should gather their weapons and depart at once. They would travel to the cave and rescue *Aanattaakii* together. Their guide was the prairie chicken hen that *Sootainah* recognized from his dream. She flew out of the grass ahead of them, always in the direction they were travelling. Finally one morning they reached the crest of a foothill and glanced out from the trees. There below them in a meadow on the far side of a small brook, a large herd grazed and lolled about. From their position it was difficult to tell which cow would be *Aanattaakii*. So they thought they would wait and follow the herd back to the cave. They made a camp and when they slept that night the prairie chicken came once more to *Sootainah*. She said they should not go to the cave. Instead she instructed *Sootainah* to find her nest amid the tall grass by the brook. *Aanattaakii* always grazed nearby and he could alert her from there.

Sootainah awoke and told his father-in-law they should approach the herd now. They crept downhill in the dim light of dawn and slipped into the cool water and followed its slow current. *Sootainah* searched for the nest and knew he had found it when the hen flew up suddenly from the grass. They crouched down by the embankment and waited. The cool air of night warmed quickly when the sun rose over the horizon. Sure enough, as morning grew late a lone cow, grazed her way slowly to the brook. She stopped grazing long enough to sip water. *Sootainah* called out her name as loud as he dared and he reached out and touched her mane. *Aanattaakii* had almost forgotten her human name, but she recognized *Sootainah's* voice. He informed her that they were not hunting but had come to rescue her. He told her to act as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened and

not to alarm the herd. She should go back to the herd and wait until evening and then return for a drink.

She returned to the herd and, while she was grazing, she heard the buffalo chief call her to his side. *Aanattaakii* obeyed and went to lie next to the buffalo chief. Immediately he grew suspicious and said he smelled a human on her mane. She denied that anyone had touched her, but to no avail. The buffalo chief jumped up and bellowed for the other bulls to come to him. He told them there were humans nearby and to search the meadow. The bulls began snorting and pawing the ground as if to charge. They looked around until one young bull spied the two humans hiding near the water. The herd charged at them causing the two rescuers to flee for their lives.

Sootainah and *Naatowa'pinna* raced for the forest where they might find safety. The herd was closing in on them, and behind the herd was *Aanattaakii* pleading for her kin. The men got to the hill and as they scrambled up the side they saw a tree that was isolated from the forest. *Naatowa'pinna* reached it and started climbing. He got to a high branch before he looked down. He could see the bulls stomping their hooves and snorting wildly and he realized that *Sootainah* had fallen and was being trampled by the herd. When the bulls stopped there was nothing left of *Sootainah* except shards of bone sticking out of the bloody mud. *Aanattaakii* walked to the remains and wept for her slain husband. The chief of the herd walked to her and inquired why she should cry in sorrow for one man. He reminded her of all his children who regularly ran over the cliffs on her people's behalf. Then he turned to the bulls and said they should prepare to knock down the tree and trample the old man sitting in the upper branch. The bulls snorted their agreement and prepared to charge.

Naatowa'pinna heard the buffalo chief admonish his daughter and give the order to topple the tree. Just before they charged, *Naatowa'pinna* yelled out that he wished to share some secret knowledge. The Blackfoot had learned the secret to restoring life and he would share it in exchange for his daughter. The buffalo chief grew curious at what

Naatowa'pinna had to say. He signalled for calm and asked for a demonstration. *Naatowa'pinna* climbed down out of the tree and said to the buffalo chief that he owned a medicine bundle that could bring *Sootainah* back to life. It was handed down to him from the first Blackfoot man who learned to restore life. He unfurled the blanket that wrapped the bundle and spread it over the bone shards. Then he reached into a small pouch from which he took a whistle made from an eagle leg bone and wore it like a necklace. Then he retrieved a rattle which he proceeded to shake. He began singing the medicine song taught to his ancestor before him. Upon finishing the song, he put the bone whistle in his mouth and blew it as he walked around the medicine blanket. When he stopped whistling he called to *Sootainah* and told him to rise and get his weapons as the hunting party needed his help. At first nothing seemed to happen and the buffalo chief snorted his skepticism. However, *Naatowa'pinna* persisted and sang the song a second time. This time the blanket seemed to stir as if something moved underneath. The buffalo chief looked closer as *Naatowa'pinna* began to sing the song a third time. As he called out to *Sootainah* for a third time, the blanket moved some more. The whole herd stared in curious silence as *Naatowa'pinna* started shaking his rattle for a final round. He sang the medicine song and called out to his son-in-law for a fourth time. *Sootainah* sat upright and immediately asked for his weapons, saying he had to go hunting.

The buffaloes were amazed. They no longer doubted the power of the medicine bundle that *Naatowa'pinna* held. He told the buffalo chief that he would give this bundle to him in exchange for his daughter. He said the next time that people drove a herd over a cliff, the buffaloes should gather a shard from each animal killed and bring them to their home in the cave. There the chief should perform this revivifying ritual to bring them back to life. The buffalo chief said he was reluctant to let go of *Aanattaakii*, but he would accept the deal. He said in appreciation the buffaloes would teach the humans some of their own songs and dances. He showed *Naatowa'pinna* and *Sootainah* a whole ceremony with songs, prayers and dances. He told them they should bring it back to their people and

share it with everyone. Then he transformed *Aanattaakii* back into a human and told her she was free to go. *Aanattaakii* was reunited with her long-lost husband *Sootainah*, and *Naatowa'pinna* brought home the dances of the buffalo society. So long as the Blackfoot could hunt buffalo, and even after they could not, they performed the ceremonies passed on to them by the chief of the buffalo.

Naatowa'pinna was glad to have his daughter back, even if it meant giving away his cherished medicine bundle. He was surprised the buffalo chief did not request the little stone charms be returned. Those he still possessed, but he always warned the hunters before they drove a herd to the cliff that none should escape. If only one animal escaped it might break the spell of the stone buffalo charms. Then it could warn the others away the next time the people set one of their traps. *Aanattaakii* became known as the buffalo woman and because her children were still part of the herd, Blackfoot hunters were always respectful of the buffalo they killed. All through the dog days, when Blackfoot hunters drove the buffalo to their cliffs and corrals, they used *iiniskimmiksi* in their pre-hunt ceremonies as charms. The buffalo-caller curated the *iiniskimmiksi* in a special medicine bundle, and he performed the songs of the buffalo-calling ceremony specifically for the hunt. It was especially important during times, like early spring, when famine stalked the camps. Everything would go right so long as the buffalo stones worked their charm.

Procuring an *iiniskimm* required a hazardous trip to the hot, arid, desolate badlands where the enchanting stone buffaloes were known to roam. Helpful toponyms, such as Buffalo Stone Lake in northern Montana, made finding these mysterious, charming creatures slightly easier. However, a stone buffalo hunter still faced a tumultuous trek that would bring him to the edge of the Blackfoot mythic past. His journey was not a fossil finding expedition, rather it was a quest to corroborate the story in which people and buffalo agreed that their fates should be forever intertwined. The hunter was a medicine man travelling the ancestral path to the time when the primordial world awaited its sculptor to bestow the fossil for his medicine bundle. His inspiration may have come from a dream,

or perhaps it was a vow made during a famine, but he relied upon the spirit of his medicine bundle to guide his sacred task. He sang his medicine song as he walked to the lip of the badlands and left offerings of food and sweetgrass for the spirits that dwell there. He said his prayers, explained his purpose and pleaded for assistance that his endeavour should be realized. He stepped slowly down the treeless, sandstone slopes, carefully avoiding spiny cactus and ever-wary of hissing rattlesnakes, but always keeping his eyes trained on the ground. Upon finding his quarry he ritually shot the stone buffalo and collected the pieces into a pouch which he carried home. He would cleanse them by passing them over the smoke of sweetgrass and then paint them with the sacred red ochre paint before wrapping them in his bundle. Fresh charms with their vital magic intact would appeal to buffalo hunters seeking their own success in the chase.

liniskimmiksi, ammonite fossils curated as buffalo stones, may be an obscure Blackfoot tradition that would make an interesting addition to the folklore of fossils if it were not for the archaeological signature they leave. Finding fossil ammonites amid the debris at buffalo kill sites may remind archaeologists of similar fossils commonly contained in Blackfoot medicine bundles. Those same fossils remind Blackfoot ritualists of their origin in the myth of the woman who married a buffalo. Archaeologists may be confounded to see the inclusion of Cretaceous ammonite fossils at a Holocene buffalo kill site but Blackfoot people know that placing them at the site of a hunt is a desperate act made as a last resort. The excavation team for field seasons 1972-74 at the Cactus Flower site in southeastern Alberta, a MacKean Complex site which subsequently yielded a radiocarbon date of ca. 4200 B.P. for the initial occupation, was perplexed by unearthing one such ammonite septum. Blackfoot ritualists would recognize the extreme privation that led to this sacrifice. Thomas Kehoe (1965), a noted plains archaeologist, reported on a Late Prehistoric Period buffalo pound site near Stony Beach, Saskatchewan. There excavators found two ammonites located in the drive complex; he noted too the strong resemblance to Blackfoot 'buffalo stones.' Blackfoot ritualists would accept such finds at a buffalo kill

site as evidence that the rituals they practice are equivalent to those performed in antiquity. Even a normally skeptical archaeologist was forced to conclude this "buffalo stone implies a certain amount of continuity in magico-religious beliefs between Old Channel Lake peoples and groups inhabiting the northern plains ethnographically" (Brumley 1975: 97). The fact that archaeologists and Blackfoot traditionalists can agree on the meaning of *iiniskimmiksi* found at archaeological sites should indicate that their conclusions are not so far apart. Moreover, it shows that archaeological chronology is not antithetical to the mythic past. That Blackfoot people can recognize their cultural referents in these fossils implies that the medicine bundle complex was already in place on the northern plains at least 4,200 years ago. Perhaps this ideology infused the fossils with the same meaning that informs Blackfoot ceremonialists when they open their medicine bundles, even though no buffalo roam the grasslands.

The Problem of Prehistory

Blackfoot folklore leaves its signature in the archaeological record of the northern plains because that has been the homeland for countless generations of Blackfoot people. Their experience with modern history from the archives began in the religious missions established on their reserve, such as Mission St. Paul des Pièganes, which began keeping records of Peigan converts and baptisms in 1889. These, however, might record three or four generations of Peigan families at Brocket. Elderly Peigans may remember an unrecorded generation or two until those memories too fade like ink on brittle paper. Beyond their memory, on the trail to the mythic past, is the time out of mind; where searching for meaning in found objects is the inspiration for Blackfoot narratives. Folklore and artifacts converge around Blackfoot ancestry to collapse the distance between the Blackfoot mythic past and archaeological time. Be that as it may, Blackfoot mythic time is an internalist creation situated among emic referents. By contrast, archaeological time is an etic aid for researching ancient Blackfoot history. Archaeology supplies the indispensable analytical methods for imagining the past within the logical framework of scientific

reasoning. However, employing its analytical tools, such as taxonomies, is not without its problems for reasons that will be discussed here.

Prehistory of the New World informs the neophyte antiquarian how ancient Indian history is to be construed within archaeology. It neatly sums up the establishment position in its dialogue with the periphery. Prehistory and New World are the pillars that support the establishment understanding that New World prehistory is a chaotic realm to which only archaeology can bring order. Constructing a culture historical sequence on the basis of archaeological evidence alone is a tested method for charting a course through this undiscovered time. Coincidentally, it bestows on the core the privilege of formulating an official version of the past. Except for the occasional nod in the direction of ethnographic analogy, there is little will to imagine Indian identities in archeological data. Ignoring, or denying, that Indians possess a sense of history ensures the subordinate status of autochthonous views of the past as mythic. The limitations of standard archaeological method and theory result from the assumption that Indian lore has nothing to contribute when imagining ancient times. Thus in their dialogue with the core, Indians feel compelled to qualify their loyalty to a discipline that seems intent on undermining confidence in their connections to ancient cultures. Or worse, to use ancient customs to denigrate modern Indians! If there is to be a rapprochement between Indians and archaeology it may start when aboriginal people appropriate its analytical methods to organize their history around an internalist sense of the past. Understanding and applying these analytical tools serve a secondary purpose because credible alternatives must accompany Native critiques of standard archaeological methods. Countering critical attitudes toward theories nurtured in the mainstream begins with deploying analytical tools to build options. Theories built in the periphery can be just as good, if not better, than those supplied by the core.

Archaeology's theories are routinely cited by academics in related disciplines, such as Thomas Flanagan, who make no secret of their contempt for aboriginality and begrudge the Indian's casual declaration that they are in fact aboriginal people. For such academics

the dental studies conducted by physical anthropologists, the language categories devised by linguists and the genetic material extracted from cells are sufficient to demonstrate that Indians are only the original immigrants. Special rights based on a vague notion of aboriginality is anathema in a modern, democratic society that prefers to guarantee equal rights to all. The damndest part is that "Indians did not do anything to achieve their status except to be born, and no one else can do anything to join them in that status because no action can affect one's ancestry" (Flanagan 2000: 22). How typical that Indians should expect something for nothing. First God gave them a whole continent, for nothing. Then they did nothing with it. Then they became aboriginal people without doing anything to earn that status. In railing against those lazy Indians, right wing academics use archaeological findings to project into the past the fiction that American Indians contributed nothing to the emergence of humanity, and nothing of substance to antiquity for that matter. If they contributed nothing in the past, maintaining they contribute nothing to contemporary society becomes easy.

Flanagan even offers up absolute chronology as a means of contesting priority for aboriginal people in law, as if there exists a magic date that is a threshold for their special status. Relying on the assumption that radiocarbon dates are the same as calendar years, he attempts to deconstruct time immemorial by asserting that 11,200 years of occupation does not meet his test of aboriginality. Even Palaeoindians do not merit sympathy because they were responsible for the late Pleistocene mass extinction postulated by the over-kill hypothesis; no mention is made of the competing theory that environmental change brought on by the collapse of Ice Age conditions was responsible. Favouring the current three-wave migration theory used to explain the peopling of America, Flanagan cautions that only the first generation of Siberian-Canadians who crossed Beringia could really claim aboriginality. Curiously, he fails to notice that the original immigrants must now justify their status to America's white tribe and prove they are not Siberian-Canadians. Having failed repeatedly to convince Indians to buy into that original immigrants' scenario,

Flanagan and his brand of research uses the archaeological record to construct and apply his own little tests of aboriginality that no aboriginal person can pass.

The hegemony of the archaeological establishment is apparent by recurring attempts to appropriate the ancient history of Indians, most recently manifested in the Kennewick Man debate. At issue this time are alleged caucasoid traits observed on a human skeleton with a Palaeoindian provenience. Although the data are explainable in terms of theories like microevolution driven by natural selection, they have been used to stir up an old, but popular, metanarrative that haunts the psyche of America's white tribe. A search for their aboriginality, accompanied by great time depth, compels them to see in artifacts a story to soothe the burr in their collective somnambulism. Archaeologists, ever wary of their funding sources, are catering to this yearning by reanimating, like Frankenstein's monster, the trope of a white tribe in ancient America. Ever since they stranded themselves here a few centuries ago, they have coveted an aboriginal identity; so, tired of the stigma attached to immigrants, they re-create the historical reality of a great migration across the Atlantic in the late Pleistocene. The yearning to set down roots in America is as old as their presence and the role of the archaeological establishment is to construct a reasonable scenario for its plausible acceptance.

Perhaps recycling, with its mantra of "Reduce, reuse, recycle!", will eventually be identified as the *zeitgeist* of the last decade of the old millennium. It was a commendable, albeit naïve, attempt to save the planet. More importantly, it made people feel less anxious about their consumer culture. Perhaps archaeologists simply got inspired by the recycling movement when they reached into America's attic and dusted off an old *zeitgeist* of another era. The supposed white race of industrious Moundbuilders was once a robust theory, transmuted into the image best suited for its era. For nineteenth century Euro-American ideologues it was the means of denying a connection between aboriginal peoples and their ancient earthworks. By the twentieth century the Moundbuilder myth had been laid to rest, ironically enough by archaeologists working under the auspices of the Smithsonian

Institution. Now in the twenty-first century, similar ideas have crept into archaeological discourse, disguised as a debate between diffusionists and inventionists (Fingerhut 1994). Diffusionists ignore independent invention and instead see "pre-Columbian cultural diffusion-people crossing the oceans, bringing to the Amerindians intellectual, artistic, cultural, and material baggage resulting in impressing their hosts and inducing them to modify their lifestyles. The new ideas were adapted by Amerindians, creating new cultures or severely modifying their old ones, prompting new and unique cultural developments" (Fingerhut 1994: x). Based on his research into the arcane epigraphy of Ogam and Tifinag languages, Barry Fell published books with controversial titles such as *America B.C.: Ancient Settlers in the New World* (1976) and *Bronze Age America* (1982) in which he purportedly demonstrated the linkage between American Indian rock art and ancient Celtic and Libyan inscriptions. The recurring theme of the diffusionist camp is that the world visits America and causes change, but not vice versa. The diffusionist mantra of enlightenment from across the ocean holds as gospel that America can only import the global, intellectual largesse that fosters cultural change among the unchanging Amerindian cultures. They support the notion that Indians contributed nothing to the modern world and were fortunate to be discovered by it.

Just when 'the diffusionists' seemed to be in retreat, the discovery of a human skeleton in southeastern Washington rekindled those dormant hopes. Before long they were being taken seriously once again; even the influential literary magazine *Atlantic Monthly* devoted its January 2000 cover to that story and trotted out the usual early white-male suspects as the creators of petroglyphs, antiquities and other ancient American monuments (Stengel 2000). Hot on its heels, the February issue of *Scientific American Discovering Archaeology* published a feature article on a new story of the first Americans that is emerging from research, which suggests that they "arrived long before Clovis. Perhaps they came not on foot, but in boats or rafts following ice sheets and coastlines. Perhaps their homeland was not northeast Asia, but Eurasia, Polynesia, and even Europe.

Perhaps the Americas were peopled by multiple waves of settlers with assorted origins" (Leach et al. 2000: 4). Multiple waves indeed, but at least two contributing authors propose the first wave had its locus in western Europe, rooted in the Upper Palaeolithic Solutrean culture (Stanford and Bradley 2000). Their alliterative Solutrean solution conveniently ante-dates any antiquity that Indians can claim. Sadly though, it is but a twice-told tale of the immigrant experience. This time, rather than Egyptians, Phoenicians, or whoever, the immigrants are from an archaeological culture whose type site happens to be a rockshelter in France. The competing hypothesis of technological convergence to explain similarities in projectile forms goes unnoticed amid the hype of a Solutrean candidate, stoking the hopes of America's white tribe. Once again prehistory is abuzz with announcements of "new evidence" that allows Euro-Americans to see their aboriginality in the mummies and relics formerly assigned to a Palaeoindian provenience.

"Europeans Invade America: 20,000 years ago!" screamed the headline from the glossy cover of the February 1999 issue of the popular science magazine *Discover*. Piqued by reports in the journal *Science* (e.g. Morell 1998a, 1998b), which purported to have discovered that Indians were not the original immigrants after all - that distinction goes to Europeans - the author declares that "Spirit Cave Man is one of a dozen or so early Americans who are helping to rewrite the prehistory of human habitation in the New World" (Wright 1999: 52). The article goes on to propose that those hardy pioneers started their journey from the frigid shores of Ice Age Iberia, coincidentally the point of departure of Christopher Columbus. They navigated the iceberg labyrinth of the north Atlantic to reach the east coast of America, whereupon they abandoned their maritime culture and migrated westward across the continent to manifest their destiny on the open plains. These early Americans devoted themselves to big-game hunting and other blissful pursuits until they were exterminated by, or interbred with, the ancestral Indians. This story of rugged individuals struggling against the elements to establish overseas colonies in a new world seemed to strike a chord with the media, so much so that a reconstructed European face

superimposed on an American skull graced the cover of the June 1999 issue of *Newsweek*. The First Americans, the authors reported, "were a Rainbow Coalition of ethnic types", and America was "home to settlers so diverse that it was, even millenniums ago, the world's melting pot" (Begley and Murr 1999: 57). Presumably for people like "Spirit Caveman" (sic).

The refrain may sound familiar, if only because William Cullen Bryant's poem *The Prairies* (1829) spoke to that very subject. It read:

....Let the mighty mounds
That overlook the rivers, or that rise
In the dim forest crowded with old oaks,
Answer. A race, that long has passed away,
Built them; - a disciplined and populous race
Heaped, with long toil, the earth....
The red man came -
The roaming hunter tribes, warlike and fierce,
And the mound-builders vanished from the earth.
....the rude conquerors
Seated the captive with their chiefs; he chose
A bride among their maidens, and at length
Seemed to forget - yet ne'er forgot - the wife
Of his first love, and her sweet little ones,
Butchered, amid their shrieks, with all his race.

Dissenting opinions are not enthusiastically elicited and those that raise questions about the data are summarily dismissed, as Straus (2000: 219), "an Old World prehistorian who lives and teaches in the United States," found out when he wrote to the editors of the news magazines printing the articles. Alas to no avail he pointed out that unsuspecting readers had missed out on the full story. He felt obliged to set the record straight as he noticed the lack of competing theories. He noted too that by presenting their views in the popular press these scholars had bypassed the usual peer review process. Supposing a lithic tradition from the Upper Palaeolithic cultural sequence in Europe to be the source of the American Palaeolithic, knowingly disregarding a 5000 year temporal barrier and an ocean was irresponsible scholarship. Their incredible musing explained for him why such views were unpublished in scholarly journals. There is no evidence that Solutrean people practiced a maritime culture, or had navigational technology, such as ocean going boats, or

that deep-sea fishing or hunting marine mammals figured in their economy. Yet learned men who once knew better now propose as plausible an icy, Pleistocene Atlantic-crossing.

For generations historians have relied on the principles of exploration and discovery to validate a white presence in America. However, as these legal fictions crumble, security must come from other sources, hence the obsession with a defunct trope. The explorer may be an extinct species now that satellites routinely circle the globe sketching ever-more accurately what was formerly known as *Terra incognita*. Nevertheless, exploration is extant, robust and occupying the discourse on prehistoric thought. Following the trail blazed by their geographic forerunners, prehistorians chart the frontier of the known past in absolute chronologies and beyond that they imagine a *tempus incognitum*; a mysterious, hidden time that only archaeologists can explore and discover. As in former days there are rewards that accrue by right of discovery, only today that might mean securing funding for the next field season, or perhaps that elusive fifteen minutes of fame. While extending the boundaries of European sovereignty explorers saw only an empty land, *Terra nullius*, a wilderness casually inhabited by Indians, but essentially unclaimed. Now archaeologists reiterate the explorers' claim and see in ancient America a chaotic vestige of an undiscovered time they call the archaeological record. They conceptualize it as if it were *tempus nullius*, the time of no one, or more accurately, unclaimed by anyone. Exploring the archaeological record and discovering a new site gives priority opinion to researchers who populate it with archaeological cultures bearing Euro-American names like Clovis, Folsom or Hopewell. Their nomenclature, being the revered names that resonated with meaning in the settlers' struggle to tame the wild west, superimposes the cultural landscape of Euro-American settlers onto the archaeological record. Conveniently, it also expunges an Indian presence from the cultural historical sequence. In the grand narrative of exploration, discovery shapes the form of prehistory; leading Alice Beck Kehoe to proclaim "prehistory was tailor-made for American antiquarians" (Kehoe 1998: 64).

Like the ancient mariners, exploration and discovery foster the antiquarian fiction of prehistory. Thirty years ago, the phrase land claims had little meaning in the lexicon of modern America. Indians were artifacts from another time and their concerns simply had no place in the twentieth century. That situation changed after Indian activists pushed their claims onto the public agenda. Since then the public has come to know the phrase inside and out. The archaeological dialogue between the core and periphery, with its antipodal ideologies and questions of priority, resembles closely the modern land claim. It is a zero-sum game so the end game is to surrender as little as possible. Mainstream archaeology has enjoyed a long, unbroken monopoly on America's antiquity. Its theories, presented to look like facts deduced by the scientific method, are accepted wholly by the larger society. Indians objected that archaeological theories were being proposed as the only source of explanations of past lifeways. They asserted that oral narratives should be accorded similar status. Those arguments have caused much consternation among the archaeological elite because the end of prehistory is the result.

The dialogue with the core plays out a scene from the class struggle in modern society. Indeed, elitism and archaeology have always gone hand in hand. Professional consultants recognized that hiring from the large, under-skilled class of Indians was the price of doing business with Indian communities; see, for example, the consultant's report in the Canadian Archaeological Association newsletter edited by Carlson and Nicholas (1997). The report from the British Columbia consulting firms shows they hire large numbers of "First Nations assistants" who work seasonally on projects such as impact assessments, surveys, and traditional use studies, but few make the cut as full-time employees. Early in its existence archaeology successfully promulgated its interests among the social elite whose largesse nurtured the development of the discipline from a dilettantish, antiquarian hobby into a professional, scientific enterprise (Kehoe 1998).

In fact the invention of new communication media made it easier to broadcast an official version of the past to an appreciative audience that eagerly consumed archaeology's

theories and accepted its interpretations as facts. Enjoying the unequivocal support of powerful institutions such as government, academia, private foundations and mass media, the archaeological establishment had few opponents to its portraying of Indians as superfluous to the aims of scientific archaeology. Seldom have opposing voices threatened its monopoly of exploring the archaeological record and ruminating on the meanings to be attached to artifacts. Contemporary archaeology is still characterized by imbalance owing to the ease with which core views find their way into the mainstream press, particularly when its explanations align with the expectations of popular culture. For example, when the established archaeologists muse on arcane topics, such as Ice Age Europeans in America, they immediately catch the ear of journalists who are always looking for a good story and a usable quote. Complicating matters is the information deficit that plagues Indian counter-arguments. The expertise required to assess the accuracy and validity of archaeological theories is often unavailable to them. Appeals to oral narratives look weak by comparison and are dismissed as unverifiable hearsay, the sort of unreliable folk history of the lower classes.

Assured by the support of the power structure of their country, archaeological elites in the United States tended to dismiss Indian appeals for the return of human remains. Only passage in 1990 of the *Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act* forced them to work with Indian tribes (Zimmerman 1997). Archaeologists were unable to recognize that Indians had learned about political lobbying until Indians began rescuing their ancestors from storage bins of museums and universities. In the aftermath, they have taken some time to come to terms with a statute passed by their traditional protectors in government, especially one that placed Indian rights ahead of scientific curiosity and which ended the archaeological practice of hoarding human remains for research (Morell 1994). Almost predictably, given the litigious nature of American society, archaeologists claimed injury before the courts when they sought an injunction against plans of reburial. In the meantime, they have encouraged vigorous speculation in the media, about Kennewick Man

for example. They have been eager to lend their names and credentials to these news reports because they will benefit most by swaying public opinion against a statute that reconsiders the priority usually assigned to research in public policy. Archaeologists have been obligated, by law and by protests, to begin a dialogue with Native people with the added legal requirement that academics and curators must act on the concerns expressed by the aboriginal side. However, their discomfort with that possibility is apparent by their reluctance to accept legislation designed to protect Indian rights.

New World prehistory is deeply entrenched in mainstream archaeology, but it is inadequate to serve as a theoretical foundation for internalist archaeology. Instead it embraces the icons of an ideology that must be resisted. True, these icons will probably persist in scholarly as well as popular literature since archaeology still caters to the aesthetics and expectations of a culture that reifies exploration and discovery. Prehistory was contrived within a culture with a tradition of writing history; therefore it was easy to contrast events occurring before and after the advent of writing. History as a written record was a part of the mix from the start and served as the standard method of record-keeping, while prefixes conveniently signalled accessories to the historical record. Given that many aboriginal groups did not maintain similar writing traditions, they prefer to resist prehistory as the basis for understanding the past among people who do not depend on writing. Resistance to prevailing ideology will mean parting the shroud of New World prehistory to better reflect an aboriginal understanding of the past. The starting point is to review the periods and eras that inform the archaeological establishment and propose options that better include the internalist history of the First Nations.

Archaeological Standard Time on the Northern Plains

Periodization and nomenclature are standard methods for organizing the past into broad time periods and supplying consistent analytical categories that describe discrete units of time. While seemingly modest, and admittedly low-profile, they can still promote their own brand of linguistic despotism because of the connotations they convey. Currently, plains archaeologists use terms such as the prehistoric and the Archaic to periodize the cultures that occupied the northern plains between the Pleistocene epoch and the historic era. Unfortunately, these designations fall short of satisfying the taxonomic requirements for an internalist archaeology. Its role must be to make archaeological data available to Indian communities in a comprehensible format.

The periods currently in use for the northern plains, Early, Middle, and Late Prehistoric, were devised by William Mulloy in the mid-1950s to organize the plains cultural sequence he encountered in his research in northern Wyoming (Figure 4.1). As soon as he had proposed his taxonomy, his colleagues were wondering aloud whether his scheme was flexible enough to accommodate new discoveries. Some also noted that it was prone to generate contradictory terms: for example, the late-early prehistoric was not the same as early-late prehistoric. Still, there was a desire to develop a classificatory system that could organize the growing data. Two scholars independently converged on a scheme that resulted in the prefixes palaeo-, meso-, and neo-, being grafted onto Indian. Richard Forbis, then with the Glenbow Institute in Calgary, devised this scheme to organize artifacts in an exhibit that was to appear at the Denver Museum of Natural History, Denver, Colorado. Unknown to him another curator, Arthur George Smith of the Firelands Museum in Norwalk, Ohio, had developed the same system, right down to prefixes describing the same stages (Wormington and Forbis 1965). Perhaps attempting to avoid the evolutionism implied in these systems, Carling Malouf published reports of his work in Montana in which he employed his own system that used the terms Early Hunters, Foragers and Late Hunters to designate successive periods. His nomenclature was also

misleading in that his middle category implied a period when hunting was not a factor. The Smith-Forbis and Mulloy systems each enjoy their sphere of influence among archaeologists, while Malouf's system has largely drifted into disuse. Much the same fate has befallen the neo-Indian category, a term that was never popular with anybody. Most plains archaeologists have rejected these schemes because they all included the defunct concept of a cultural hiatus on the northern plains brought on by global warming, which was the consensus when they were formulated (Walker 1992).

Common to all these schemes is an early period that is typically characterized by communal hunting that involved stalking extinct megafauna, such as horses, camelids, musk oxen, mammoths and buffalo. Hunting and gathering sustained the northern plains economy beginning in the late Pleistocene and through the Holocene epoch until only a century ago. These activities figure large in the archaeological record since hunting activities typically leave unambiguous evidence that is recoverable by means of conventional excavation techniques, while gathering activities leave more subtle traces that are recovered by employing methods, such as flotation and fine screening. Strictly speaking, two or more individuals cooperating in the chase constitutes communal hunting. Evidently innovations changed its focus and scale; however, its function as an effective food-getting device never wavered. The earliest levels of the archaeological record indicate that hunters once chased fauna that are now extinct, leading researchers to seek answers to this riddle of extinction.

Hunting techniques and technology also changed over time. Early techniques for achieving success in the hunt depended on close-quarter encounters using javelin-style stabbing spears and spear-throwers. This composite-projectile system consisted of large, chipped-stone spear points glued with pitch onto a foreshaft, and hafted with sinew; it was then attached to the main shaft. Proximity was better for spears, but their effective range was extended when launched from a spearthrower. The shock of impact was enough to dislodge the main shaft, which could then be quickly refitted for another shot. When bows

and arrows appeared, they gave hunters another technological advantage because they were more effective at hitting moving targets than were spearthrowers. Both weapons systems worked well, but the latter technology had the advantage at a distance. They were, however, inefficient for large-scale communal hunting. Subterfuge proved to be the more effective and efficient strategy for dispatching a herd. Stalking by small numbers of hunters, while no less effective on a smaller scale, did not pose the logistical obstacles of hunts co-ordinating the effort of many bands, and so it remained part of the hunter's repertoire.

Smith (1957)	Mulloy (1958)	Malouf (1960)	Wormington and Forbis (1965)
Historic			
Neo-Indian	Late Prehistoric	Late Hunters	Neo-Indian
Meso-Indian	Middle Prehistoric	Foragers	Meso-Indian
Cultural Hiatus			
Palaeo-Indian	Early Prehistoric	Early Hunters	Palaeo-Indian

Figure 4.1 Mid-twentieth century taxonomic systems of Plains Archaeology. They all agree that people retreated from the plains during a warm period called the altithermal.

Plains archaeologists agreed that the earliest period began in the Pleistocene epoch, be it Early Hunters, Palaeo-Indian or Early Prehistoric. Environmental studies of the Great Plains region hold a special interest because of the search for an Ice-Free Corridor; much as the warm stream called the Northwest Passage once captured the imagination of error-prone navigators. Archaeologists see in this hypothetical corridor the putative route to the New World traversed by the original immigrants. Stalking this chimera has been frustrating due to the lack of material for accurate dating. The absolute chronological sequence that would elucidate the current understanding of deglaciation has yet to be worked out. So theories must be framed within the relative timing of geological events. Presently, dates proposed for the retreat of cordilleran and continental ice sheets vary widely, are based on weak, proxy evidence, and hence remain speculative. A novel dating method based on measuring cosmogenic Cl^{36} accumulation caused by cosmic ray reaction with the nuclei of K, Ca, Cl atoms (Jackson et al. 1997) shows promise. A study conducted on exposed surfaces on foothills erratics concluded a very recent date for the fissioning of the two ice masses. According to the results, late Wisconsinan continental ice sheets reached the base of the Rocky Mountains and retreated after 14,000 B.P.. "Because the Foothills erratics train is a byproduct of the coalescence between montane and continental ice, a late Wisconsinan age for it argues strongly against the entry of humans into the Americas from Beringia during the climax of the last glaciation via an ice-free corridor, a long standing hypothesis" (Jackson et al. 1997: 198). The results are no problem for the Clovis-first scenario, but are problematic for explaining extremely early dates south of the ice sheets. If the Ice-Free Corridor did exist, then it was for a brief period, which was characterized by an unstable, dynamic landscape dominated by glacial melt-water draining into ephemeral pro-glacial lakes. The postglacial warmth meant a rapid retreat of ice from the region and the biotic regime of the short grass prairie claimed the landscape by 9500 B.P. (Vance 1991). Effectively, the Palaeoindian period ends with the retreat of glaciers, replacement of tundra conditions with grasslands and disappearance of megafauna.

The Middle Prehistoric, Meso-Indian or Forager period, is characterized by a continuation of the hunting and gathering lifestyle first evident in the Pleistocene. The projectile points, like the surviving fauna, display a marked diminution in size throughout the Holocene. Coevally, smaller side- and corner-notched spear tips became prevalent. With the megafauna extinct, a broad range of alternative food-game animals, primarily ungulates, and small species, such as rabbits, was exploited. The plains archaeologist Waldo Wedel noted that a lack of field work in the region led to the erroneous notion that the plains were unoccupied by Indians until the horse days. Basing their ideas on little evidence and scanty research, palaeoclimatologists imagined a mid-Holocene climatic optimal, also called the altithermal, fueled by global warming. The northern plains were envisioned as too dry, too hot and too inhospitable for sustained occupation during the altithermal. This image explained an apparent cultural hiatus when people lived on the margins of the plains and ventured onto them only occasionally to hunt. Following the altithermal, a gradual cooling of the earth set in place the present climatic regime.

The picture that is emerging of the immediate post-glacial was one of rapid global warming in the early Holocene followed by less drastic cooling and warming episodes around a long-term average. Robert Vance, a palaeobotanist with the Archaeological Survey of Alberta, recovered pollen samples from cores drilled into shallow, saline lakes from an extremely arid part of southeastern Alberta. The pollen provides a proxy record of environmental conditions extending back to before 6000 B.P. and shows the northern plains to be:

a challenging environmental setting, with dynamic climatic conditions producing extremes in the availability of natural resources. Periods of intense drought would have created chronic resource shortages, but these relatively short-term events would have been balanced by intervals of abundance. To nomadic peoples used to dealing with periodic shortages in a semi-arid environment, a fluctuating resource base would not likely have created insurmountable problems, but presumably maintained low population densities (Vance 1991: 154).

Also in the last few decades, excavations at stratified sites located across the prairies and its margins have indicated the continuous presence of people on the plains throughout the

Holocene. Artifacts and features corroborate Wedel's summation: he stated that "Far from having been an uninhabited area in prehorse days, the Northwestern Plains have revealed indisputable evidence of human activity running back several thousand years into the past" (1961: 247). Yet he prefaced this observation with the disclaimer, "There is evidence that most of these horse-nomads were comparatively recent arrivals in their historic Plains habitat, and practically all have been so regarded for many years" (Wedel 1961: 242).

Stalking buffalo, and other game species, was the prevalent mode of hunting for most of this period. However, Late Middle Prehistoric sites show evidence of a major shift in emphasis, focusing significant energy on this one species. It was a time on the northern plains when "the pedestrian nomads thoroughly embraced methods of communal hunting, such as the use of buffalo jumps and pounds" (Forbis 1982: 162). Typical of this period is the Mortlach site which Boyd Wettlaufer, an archaeologist working for the Saskatchewan Ministry of Natural Resources, excavated and described in south-central Saskatchewan during the early 1950s; it is the type site of the Besant culture, named after the Besant Valley. As he dug into the Besant level, a crew member noticed a double row of soil features arranged in a semi-circle. These turned out to be post-holes for a structure that would be "approximately twenty-five feet across and circular in shape....Although obviously intended to help support a structure of some kind this may not necessarily have been a house. It may well have been somewhat similar to the sun-dance lodge" (Wettlaufer 1955: 43). He noted too that bison phalanges were deliberately inserted into the post-holes alongside the pole. While the wooden poles long ago disintegrated, the phalanges were still *in situ*. Unfortunately, the ground where the centre pole would have been was obliterated by amateur diggings. The Besant culture has been identified at many sites in southern Alberta, for example, the Kenney site excavated in 1959 immediately west of the Peigan Reserve (Wormington and Forbis 1965).

Two eminent plains archaeologists, Marie Wormington and Richard Forbis, produced a synthesis of archaeology in Alberta based on known sites and data. They noted

the significance of Besant communal hunting strategies: "At the Old Women's Buffalo Jump, and at other jumps, Besant and related points have been found in the lowest layers suggesting that the practice of driving buffalo over cliffs entered Alberta about 2000 years ago" (Wormington and Forbis 1965: 136). Nearly two decades later, Richard Forbis wrote of the Late Middle Prehistoric:

There is, suddenly, an enormous increase in the number of sites attributable to this period. No doubt, some of this apparent increase can be attributed to visibility owing to recency of occupation. But I am inclined to believe (going on gut-feeling) that the increase was actually real.

This sharp increase in population is probably correlated with changes in the seasonal round, settlement patterns, religious practice, techniques of food preservation and other aspects of life (Forbis 1982: 162).

This sudden increase and expansion of communal hunting techniques is the subject of the scheduling breakthrough hypothesis discussed in the previous chapter. The tradition of communal buffalo hunting that was the basis of Blackfoot customs and narratives was manifested first in the Besant culture around 2000 B.P..

The Late Prehistoric (Smith's neo-Indian period) is distinguished solely on the basis of two technological traditions, the first being the appearance of pottery, as previously discussed, and the second the bow and arrow. The communal hunting complex centred on buffalo persisted as the basis of subsistence, as did the gathering of local plant resources. Grinding stones, used as mauls to process wild berries, and digging sticks were expedient tools. Still, grinding stones made from river cobbles were deliberately shaped to produced a flattened crushing surface with a central groove for attaching the handle. Digging sticks were made of fire-hardened cherry wood, which did not preserve well, although some are included in ethnographic collections. Most rock art, petroglyphs and pictographs, was created at this time. Not that it would have been absent earlier; rather the sandstone bedrock surfaces on which pictures were incised or painted are susceptible to erosion by freeze-thaw cycles, so any very early rock art would have disintegrated. Many traces of Blackfoot customs are discernible from this time on; this is the period when tobacco cultivation appears. However, these customs are indistinguishable from those of

related cultures that occupied the same prairie environment, because these cultures practiced the same hunting and gathering customs as did Blackfoot ancestors.

Following the late prehistoric, archaeologists today recognize the protohistoric and historic periods. Both the Mulloy and the Smith-Forbis taxonomies recognized the historic period, but neither anticipated the protohistoric, which was created later. The former refers to that time when European manufactured goods were appearing among the plains cultures, but no direct contact between local aboriginal people and Europeans had yet been established. Protohistoric sites typically blend home-made and imported artifacts so that metal-crafted arrowheads, pots, ornaments and hand tools, such as axes, appear in the same cultural horizon as do stone arrowheads, ceramic pots, shell ornaments and bifaces. They fall into a chronologically discrete period defined by this mixing, which lasts for only a few decades and is fragmentarily documented in works such as the journal of Mathew Cocking. As the world encroached on the plains and European visitors became permanent residents, the protohistoric gave way to the historic era. It records the complete disintegration of traditional cultures, the disappearance of lithic technology and the general replacement of the Indian population by Euro-Canadian settlers. Material culture in the archaeological record on the northern plains during this period became more cosmopolitan as various ethnic identities left their signatures.

Clearly the existence of various taxonomic systems, developed specifically to deal with the same data and same region, underscores the arbitrary nature of such schemes (Figure 4.2). Being archaeological, they accept technology as proxy evidence of former lifeways. As more data accumulated and research refined our knowledge of plains technology, Mulloy's system tended to be cited frequently and his terminology was adopted wholly by Brian Reeves (1983) in his 1973 thesis dealing with antiquity on the northern plains. However, the system developed, independently but coevally, by Forbis and Smith still has its proponents (Forbis 1982). A notable exception to the prehistoric problem was the solution proposed by Ian Dyck (1983), curator for the plains region at the

Archaeological Survey of Canada, which simply avoids prehistory by replacing it with "Plains Indians." The prehistoric is hard to shake and was preferred by Ernest Walker (1992), an archeologist at the University of Saskatchewan, although he borrowed Smith's term Palaeoindian.

Frison (1978)	Reeves (1983)	Dyck (1983)	Walker (1992)
Historic			
Late Prehistoric	Late Prehistoric	Late Plains Indian	Late Prehistoric
Plains Archaic	Middle Prehistoric	Middle Plains Indian	Middle Prehistoric
Palaeo- Indian	Early Prehistoric	Early Plains Indian	Palaeo- Indian
		Pleistocene Hunters	

Figure 4.2 Recent systems no longer rely on a cultural hiatus to construct their cultural and temporal classifications.

The concept of the prehistoric enjoys wide support among plains archaeologists, but it remains problematic for internalist archaeology because it implies that Indians do not have an ancient history. More importantly, its vulnerable assumptions about technology are beginning to show. For example, in Mulloy's usage the late Prehistoric is denoted by the appearance of new technology in the form of pottery and bows and arrows. Certainly that was the case then, but subsequent research revealed those artifacts in Besant assemblages, which are typically placed in the Late Middle Prehistoric (Scribe 1997). Either the Besant culture has to be moved forward, or the late prehistoric began earlier. Protohistoric, being a late addition, demonstrates that classificatory systems are not immutable; nor are they permanent, as the disappearance of the neo-Indian category shows.

Mid-twentieth century periodization was formulated at a time when few sites were known and fewer still had been excavated. However, enough data have now been collected that, even for plains archaeology generally, the term prehistoric is proving to be an awkward means of imagining the past. Quebec archaeologists are also keenly aware of its constraints and they too are uncomfortable with its implied meaning. There is a desire for an alternative that Daniel Chevrier (1998) acknowledged in his plea to use the term *paléohistoire* (palaeohistory), because "*Le temps est le nerf de l'archéologie*". Yet he was certain that any alternative to prehistory will create controversy. "*Alors que le terme 'paléohistoire' a été inventé dans un élan de rectitude politique pour tenir compte des rouspétances de certains Amérindiens qui associaient, de façon erronée, le terme 'prehistoire' à primitif, son utilisation montre une incompréhension de la notion de temps*" (Chevrier 1998: 63).

Archaeologists may dismiss aboriginal sentiments as little more than the semantic complaints typically associated with the current mood of political correctness, but the controversy over labels and categories is one that internalist archaeology cannot ignore. Aboriginal people are searching for options because they feel an intense dissatisfaction toward the *status quo* which consistently begins from the premise that they had no sense of history. As categories go, the term prehistory is a chronological artifact that cannot seem to shake its hopeless bias against Indian cultures, and no amount of word analysis is going to remove the stigma that adheres to it. Younger archaeologists emerging from university programmes even admit to a growing discomfort over its use. Perhaps the debate over the use of seemingly innocuous terms will have a beneficial effect in the long term by making it more inclusive of minority peoples whose history is being researched.

Calibrating Blackfoot History and Archaeological Time

Perhaps the mood for change is simply the residuum of our collective millennial anxiety attack. However, aboriginal people are not alone in calling for a review of standard archaeological procedures. Researchers accept that normal science benefits from periodic paradigm shifts that accompany the accretion of knowledge. While internalist archaeology may not represent one, a paradigm shift can be a source of inspiration. Archaeology, being a field of study dependent on observations, requires researchers to collect data and seek to define and explain the patterning in their data. One such system was fashioned by François Bordes in the 1950s in association with his analysis of Mousterian tool assemblages. Afterward researchers of the Middle Palaeolithic came to regard his categories of tool types as archetypal. Lately though, some archaeologists feel that his conclusions, made on a limited data base, do not hold up to our expanded understanding.

The Bordes system, which has a similar vintage as those of Smith (1957), Mulloy (1958) and Willey and Phillips (1955), is straining to maintain its viability as a guide for larger samples. "Originally designed to aid culture-chronological research, the Bordes typology has for 50 years brought order to the description and comparison of European Middle Palaeolithic assemblages. At the time it was formulated, this order was necessary, but for the past two decades discontent with the typology has been growing" (Bisson 2000: 2). The weaknesses of the original Bordes typology became evident when the data outgrew the definitions showing that he was overly subjective in his description. If a taxonomic canon of the Palaeolithic can be challenged after fifty years, and be replaced if it has outlived its original purpose, then perhaps the standard chronological categories of American archaeology could benefit from a similar review. Internalist archaeology intends to take the lead in rethinking the conventional wisdom that informs them. Certainly gaining acceptance for taxonomies based on aboriginal notions of antiquity will take time, however "[w]hat is important is that the process be set in motion" (Bisson 2000: 4).

Canadian archaeologists can imagine a putative prehistory on the northern plains, but that only underscores the short duration of their own history as residents there. Blackfoot culture, on the other hand, has no room for an instrument of reason that is predicated on denying their history. Listening to oral traditions is enough to reveal that an ancient history is literally preserved in the landscape. Confronted as it is with the modern world, Blackfoot mythic history must compete with modern views of the past that have dislodged its monopoly on explaining antiquity. However, the archaeological record and the Blackfoot mythic past are concerned with similar questions of origins, albeit starting from different perspectives (Figure 4.3). Internalist archaeology faces the challenge of striking a balance between the analytical tools of archaeology and an internalist sense of the past. Imagining the past from an internalist perspective requires a solution that devises a taxonomic system that begins with a familiar antiquity. An internalist taxonomy is designed for a particular group, such as the Blackfoot, but it can be made malleable for use in the unique histories of various cultures. When presented to a global audience, an alternative taxonomy will have to convince skeptical mainstream archaeology that it is viable. Since all aboriginal people share the common experience of encountering the world system, they can distinguish an exclusive past that differs from their current reality.

Blackfoot attempts to establish an calendrical system to distinguish the mythic past from lived history holds the model for an internalist taxonomy. As a conceptual tool, an expanding circle is an appropriate metaphor for imagining a Blackfoot past rooted in myth and rippling through a continuum to the present; each new ripple adding novel dimensions to the Blackfoot experience. Each new age overlapped the previous but all combined to produce the common history of Blackfoot people that was recalled from the memory of its keepers or recorded as graphic images painted on hides. Wintercounts, as they came to be known, were tribal history in which notable events became mnemonic anchors for historians when they recalled winters gone by (e.g. see Raczka 1979). Recalling history from the mythic past required only a relative chronological structure and the narrator's

imagination. The storyteller captured his audience by animating the amazing exploits of heroes who had lived among the people in mythic times. These stories explained how the world came into being and placed ancient events in relative sequence leading away from the epicentre of creation. Recounting calendrical history, on the other hand, was a specialized task because it blended biography, tribal history and experimentation with absolute chronology. Biographical wintercounts kept a record of actual events in a person's life, because the intimate details were the exclusive experience of one person. Personal aggrandizement and megalomania were not uncommon attributes of this style of record-keeping. Not so with tribal histories which recounted a long ordered sequence leading to the most recent winter. One of those histories could contain the experiences of several authors and describe winters beyond those of the living. Most importantly, it was inclusive because a whole group could see their history recorded in the pictures drawn within each panel. Biographical wintercounts would be narrated using exclusive terms, but tribal histories would be told using inclusive terms.

Paradigm shift is a descriptive phrase that has come to mean the way normal science responds to changes in the theoretical universe. It was used first in this sense by Thomas Kuhn in 1962 in his landmark analysis of the scientific process. He borrowed it from linguists who used it as an analytical tool to describe the various inflected forms of a particular word. When expressed in verbs and nouns, shifting paradigms change perspective and determine the syntactical proximity between a speaker and everything else. Paradigms assigned to the first person will convey meanings different from second and third party referents in a clause; singular or plural paradigms will further reduce ambiguity. Homing in on this same linguistic instrument reveals a beacon pointing in the direction of an organizational model of an internalist antiquity. Blackfoot speakers habitually shift between exclusive and inclusive paradigms when expressing the first person plural, so they can accommodate two levels of historicity without promoting one at the expense of another.

Since this linguistic trait is a property of all Algonkian languages, it can appeal to a larger constituency than just Blackfoot.

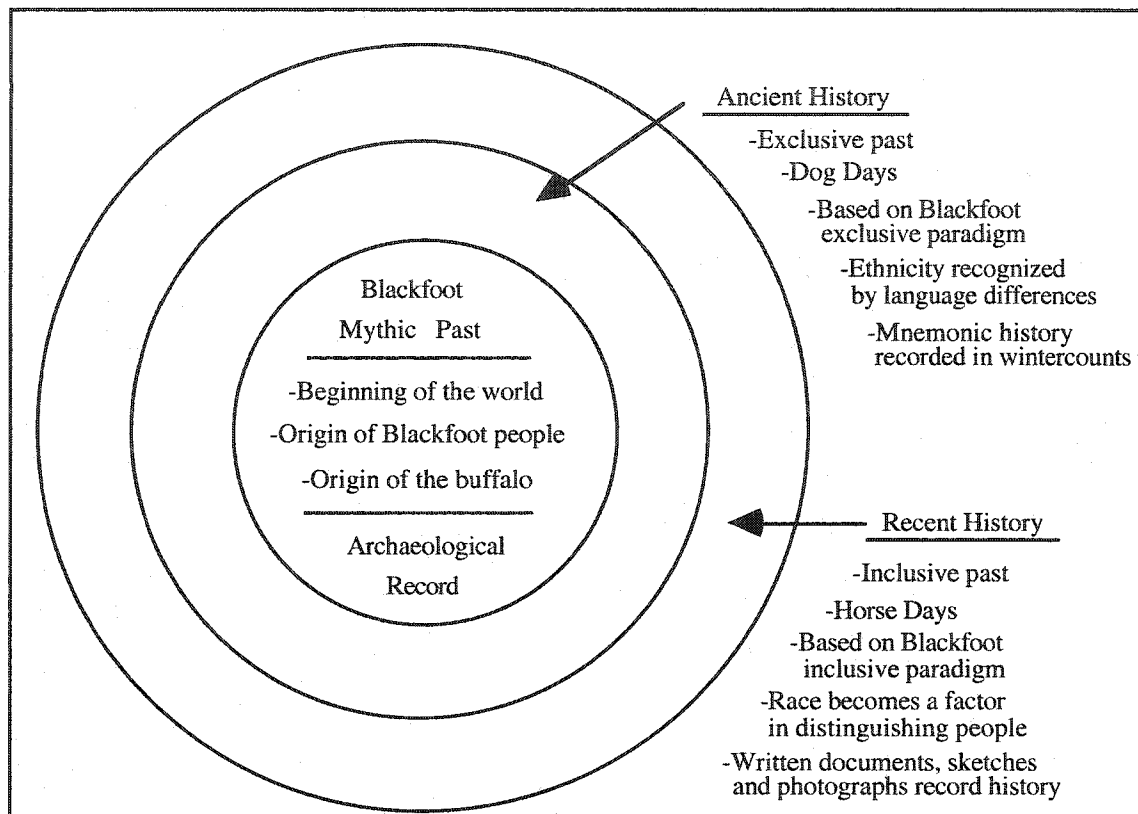


Figure 4.3 Conditions for an internalist taxonomy of Blackfoot history are defined by familiar milestones in antiquity.

The problem of prehistory arose because archaeologists were confronted with two histories, one which was familiar and one foreign. However, the English language had only one marker for the first person plural and it was reserved for what was familiar. Such a quandary would not occur among Blackfoot speakers because they have the option of choosing between two referents for that pronoun. "Blackfoot grammar *requires* (sic) a speaker to indicate whether or not one to whom he or she is speaking (the addressee) is included in the 'action'" (Franz 1991: 17). Making a specific or general statement about the past is made possible by assigning one form of the pronoun to one period or another depending on proximity to the speaker. "These two types of reference....which Blackfoot distinguishes, are traditionally termed 'exclusive we' (speaker and at least one other, but

not the addressee(s)) and 'inclusive we' (speaker, addressee, and perhaps others)" (Franz 1991: 17). In Blackfoot a general reference to the past is stated *isskoohtsika*. It is a noun stem that is generic by nature but its ambiguities are erased when a speaker attaches affixes that imply proximal and distant meanings. The exclusive affixes (k-/-innoon) are attached to the stem to create *kisskoohtsikinnoon*, a history that is shared exclusively by Blackfoot speakers. Distinguishing it from recent history is accomplished by switching to inclusive affixes (n-/-innaan) to create *nisskoohtsikinnaan*, which refers to a history known to everyone within hearing distance of the narrative. Of course Blackfoot history, like history at large, does not end on a specific date because an exclusive, internalist past will always start from the premise that one's experience represents a unique timeline. Determining when one period begins or ends is arbitrary; nevertheless the paradigm shift associated with this linguistic manoeuvre can be exercised in reference to an ancient, exclusive history and a recent, inclusive one.

Blackfoot speakers referring to the dog days implicitly accept the conditions of an exclusive history. Blackfoot have owned dogs since mythic times, shortly after they were created by *Naapi* when he made the present world. Dogs were renowned for their stealthiness and for barking at the smallest porcupine that passed in the night. There are stories of how the archetypal dog handed down medicine for use by the Brave Dog society. Ancient ancestors living during the dog days knew language as the only foreign signal among cultures they encountered on the plains. They travelled the Old North Trail, and amid the mountains to the west they saw the familiar landmarks of the Swan's bill, isolated from the mountain front near the head waters of the Bow River. South of the Porcupine Hills the Chief Mountain straddled the highland divide between the Muddy River and the Oldman's River like a king on his throne. They enjoyed their political autonomy, practiced their traditions, and spoke only their language. They were solely responsible for their economy, they manufactured and controlled their own technology. They believed their culture prepared them for all challenges they would meet in the world. The dog days on the

plains ended when the horse days began, although dogs still lived amid the tipis of ephemeral villages.

Blackfoot historians distinguished an ancient and recent history with the sign of a horse to acknowledge that Blackfoot history had to include a larger world. Paradigm shift truly encapsulates the fundamental change that followed when the Blackfoot first encountered the world system (Figure 4.4). That event transformed their traditional perception of the universe and replaced it with a cosmopolitan worldview in which racial considerations affected every facet of their new world. Blackfoot people watched as impotent spectators while their traditional homeland was divided up among foreign powers. Ancestors of modern horses evolved on the plains, but did not survive the post-Pleistocene mass extinction. Nor did they run among the mythic fauna that galloped in the Blackfoot imagination. Since the horse days began, Blackfoot people have become aware that their unique timeline is also woven into a generalized world history. This period began 270 years ago, and lasted for a century and a half until the reservation era closed the old times. The horse days ended in AD 1877 with the signing of Treaty #7, which provided for lands reserved for the use and benefit of Blackfoot people. When loghouses on reservation lands began replacing tipi towns on the northern plains, the mobile lifestyle of the Blackfoot had become an artifact. Some things remained from those former times because horses still graze contentedly in the meadows on the reservation just as dogs loll in the shade of wood-frame houses.

Ancient history begins in the mythic past while recent history originates in the archaeological record. This dichotomy is a convenient analytical device with potential to be an antidote to prehistory. It is not designed to be deployed universally, because an internalist taxonomy works best for a particular group looking back on the trajectory of its interaction with the world. Essentially, internalist archaeology is contributing an option for communities that desire a sense of history that is compatible with local traditions. Linguistic relatives of Blackfoot speakers will be familiar with it because they find this

same grammatical feature in their languages. Host communities can then imagine the past from an internalist perspective without estranging themselves from understanding the past using archaeological methods. Aboriginal people can employ it to visualize their historical timeline, adding the chronological signets that resonate with significance for them. Since promoting cultural and linguistic diversity is a trait of contemporary society, this model may not suit everyone. Alternative models may be devised by specific communities to better suit their particular conditions. Any model devised to organize local history may begin in the mythic past and extend through an exclusive history, but ultimately an internalist history must include the wider world.

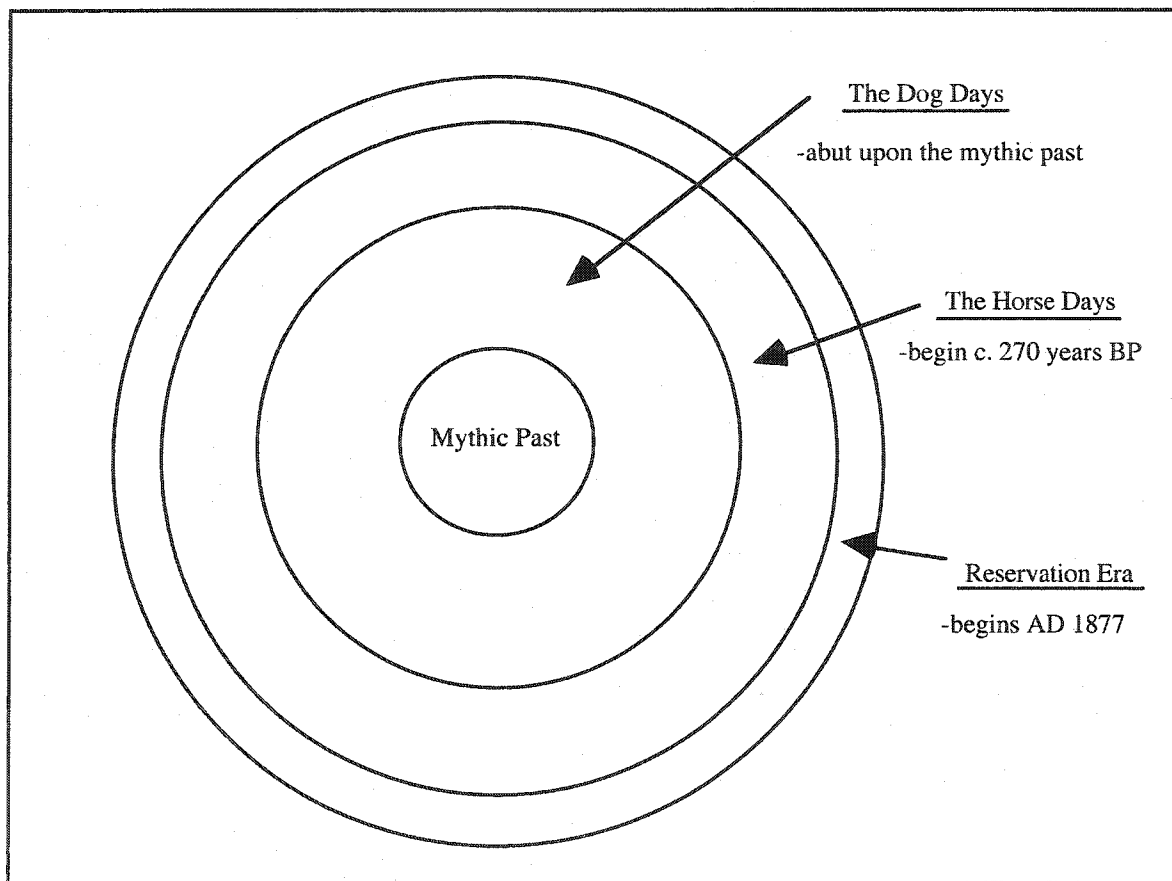


Figure 4.4 Blackfoot internalist history resembles ripples expanding away from an epicentre. Each era is marked by unique events that take us all farther from the mythic past.

The Archaic

Like prehistory, the Archaic is an analytical tool of colonial archaeology that will not be a part of an internalist perspective. Internalist archaeology and the Archaic go together like werewolves and silver bullets. The word and the concept were fine when the consensus was that modern aboriginal people possessed parochial cultures isolated from the world community. When attempting to describe ancient cultures in America, archaeologists still cling to cultural stereotypes that have long been discredited elsewhere. Choosing a term that has as its synonyms such words as old-fashioned, outmoded, bygone, obsolete and out of date, makes the message all the more insulting. For aboriginal people, prehistory and the Archaic are obsolete for demarcating a period of antiquity. Not because a mood of political correctness influences the tenor of debate. Simply stated, an internalist sense of the past cannot be secured by wielding the residual colonial instruments of mainstream archaeology.

There is no doubt about rejecting the Archaic, but there are problems if nothing replaces it. Its current usage was devised by Willey and Phillips (1955), who used it as a marker for a chronological and developmental stage that followed their Lithic stage (their equivalent to the Palaeoindian and Early Prehistoric periods described above). Oddly, stone tools continued to be produced throughout the continent, but their Lithic period ended temporally with the Pleistocene; after which came the Archaic. The Archaic became a descriptive term nearly a century ago and has enjoyed remarkable longevity as a quasichronological creation of American archaeology, despite the vehement reaction it has elicited from archaeologists and aboriginal people alike. In one way or another ceramic technology always fit into the equation and like an old ceramic pot, its sherds have since been recycled through the archaeological literature. However, it has never been embraced thoroughly for the simple reason that it "is nothing but a catchall, non-descriptive and indefinite" (Smith 1957: 169).

Originally coined in 1913 by Manual Gamio, a Mexican archaeologist and student of Franz Boas, to describe those strata below the Teotihuacan level uncovered during excavations in the Valley of Mexico. The Archaic was discarded when he reclassified those pots as Preclassic or Formative. Herbert Spinden rescued the English equivalent from obscurity when introducing his Archaic Hypothesis in 1917. The Archaic he defined was to be an important stage in the rise of New World civilization, "a kind of American Neolithic" (Willey and Sabloff 1993: 140), but his pots turned out to be late variants of the Preclassic. Along with Spinden's hypothesis, the Archaic was obsolete again. However, the term was rescued once more and ground down as temper for a regional synthesis of New York State by William Ritchie in 1932 (Willey and Phillips 1955: 739). His Archaic was different from Spinden's in that it described an aceramic, non-agricultural people inhabiting the region after the Pleistocene, rather than the mother of all cultures growing food crops. James A. Ford and Gordon R. Willey expanded its meaning for their 1941 areal synthesis of the eastern United States (Willey and Sabloff 1993). The Archaic then mushroomed into a formalized, hemispheric stage to depict preceramic, postPleistocene cultures: the standard category that George Arthur Smith so thoroughly deplored.

Waldo Wedel, in his 1961 synthesis of plains archaeology, had no misgivings about the Archaic, despite its ambiguous meanings. First he only saw similarities between the artifact assemblage of the central plains with that of the eastern Archaic and mused on the possibility of influences from there. Mysteriously, he then borrowed the term to parachute a category of "Archaic Mandan" pottery into his text, seeming to ignore it as a designation for preceramic cultures. Perhaps for such confusing reasons, the Archaic stage seemed inappropriate for plains antiquity to Wormington and Forbis, who wrote, "The authors are not convinced that the Archaic Stage, as defined in the Eastern United States, can be equated with post-PalaeoIndian developments in the west and are reluctant to use this terminology here" (1965: 13). Unperturbed by this admonition, later generations of plains archaeologists would share Wedel's enthusiasm and insist on viewing their data

through an Archaic lens. George Frison (1991; 1998) defined a Plains Archaic in the first edition of his regional synthesis, *Prehistoric Hunters of the High Plains*, in 1978, and reiterated his ideas two decades later. The Plains Archaic is now routinely employed in articles, but as a chronological unit rather than a developmental one (e.g. Guenther 1991). Quebec archaeologists have not figured prominently in plains research, but they have adopted a French version of the English nomenclature with *paléoindienne* and *l'archaïque* (Figure 4.5).

Plains archaeologists no longer debate the broad parameters of the Archaic, because those supplied by Willey and Phillips still guide them. Oddly though, the Holocene figures only peripherally with the Archaic, although the latter occurs entirely within the former. The Archaic has resisted attempts to constraint it with dates, so it is not strictly a chronological indicator, although it does contain properties that can be ordered chronologically. More precisely, it is a material culture inventory of lithic artifacts and tool-making techniques. Flintknappers of the Archaic added polishing and grinding to their repertoire, in this way producing adzes, axes, milling tools and stone vessels. "Thus the addition of a new way of handling stone resulted in an immense increase in variety and complexity of the archaeological inventory" (Willey and Phillips 1955: 740). However, this condition alone did not satisfy the entire period and setting out other diagnostic parameters became necessary, such as an increase in gathering, dependence on a broad array of game species, greater stability of occupation and invasion of littoral and marine environments, to refine its meaning.

Willey and Phillips created a plastic Archaic so as to achieve hemispheric acceptance for their scheme; which they realized subsequently when researchers began using it in a generic sense with regional variants. Adjectives such as maritime, cordilleran, desert, shield, and riverine specify the geographical theatre of the Archaic; with each region having a uniquely adapted stone technology (Fiedel 1992). However, in the twenty-first century, when the reality of world archaeology cries out for syncretism across the globe, the

hemispheric definition may be obsolete. Rather than finding modern means to marginalize Indians on a world stage, the emphasis ought to be on aligning their experience to a global context. This is precisely the gauntlet that Vine Deloria, Jr. dropped when he called for Indians to be "connected with world history as early peoples" (Deloria 1992: 597). Native archaeologists must chart the course that will lead from an internalist perspective to the standardized terminology of world archaeology, keeping in mind the goal of occupying the space left vacant by the obsolete Archaic. If Indian scholars intend to articulate with the larger discipline through an internal dialogue, they must be prepared to shape the content of their discourse in a mode that is comprehensible to the mainstream, without simply becoming its echo. The task ahead is to construct a taxonomy using familiar terms, but refining the definitions for a specific geographical region.

The Old Stone Age in America

Differentiating the past in terms of ancient and recent history works so long as this analytical method operates in the local sphere. It is the vocabulary of the internal dialogue. However, the external dialogue requires a specialized vocabulary that has meaning for both parties. Therefore, the larger challenge for internalist archaeology is to harmonize the two by devising a taxonomic system that conjoins Indian history with that of human experience on a global scale. The solution, I submit, is not to be found by searching for new modes of insularity. Since defining the tenets of internalist archaeology has typically required modified archaeological theory to meet the terms defined by aboriginal people, the same will hold true when implementing analytical tools. Importing the familiar nomenclature of archaeology and refining the definitions to suit the objectives of internalist archaeology is preferable to abruptly inserting untested terms that do not withstand scrutiny. Such a taxonomy could be adopted by the mainstream for creating hemispheric and regional categories. The ultimate aim is to synchronize Indian history with world archaeology, not to be the flavour of the month.

Lacking consensus on one system, American archaeology has been left with a confusing assortment of taxonomies that blend Greek prefixes, Latin stems and English words and whose nuances often overlap and collide with each other (Figure 4.5). Starting with the first signs of human occupation coincidental with Pleistocene times on through to the historic era, all attempts have had the intent of organizing antiquity into discrete temporal-cultural units. Curiously the old stone age in America has never been called the Palaeolithic even though the Greek prefix 'palaeo-' and stem 'lithic' both appear as categories, albeit in different schemes and by separate authors. Smith's (1957) nomenclature severed the stem lithic from the prefixes palaeo-, meso- and neo- and spliced Indian in its place. For reasons unknown, the archaeological establishment decided that, despite the fact that Upper Palaeolithic technology appeared contemporaneously with humans, the Upper Palaeolithic ended in Siberia and did not cross into America. Thereafter, the word 'lithic' hung around American archaeology like a bad dream caught in a dream-catcher. 'Lithic' did not hang around for long, as it reappeared as the stand-alone category 'the Lithic Age' introduced by Willey and Phillips (1955), but it had the same meaning as Palaeoindian and early Prehistoric. These authors noted that mid-twentieth century archaeology was preoccupied with methods and regional syntheses, but in all cases they were working with limited data due to the fact that theirs were often the first structured investigations. They were attempting to organize what was novel then. Sometimes, this led to an over-emphasis on technological categories that dismiss human labour completely from the interpretations. Researchers now deal with a larger data base, because many sites have been exposed by urban sprawl, industrial development and agricultural practices. Subsequently, researchers refined and sometimes rejected the analyses and explanations of those days because new data came to light. Given what is known today about plains archaeology, there is no credible reason for not recombining 'palaeo-' and 'lithic'.

Articulating with world archaeology means that internalist taxonomies would begin with the Palaeolithic period to represent the first appearance of humans in America near the

terminal Pleistocene. The lifeways associated with that time include a specialized technology for practicing a hunting and gathering economy that exploited megafauna adapted to severe global cooling. Unlike extant taxonomies, which tended to emphasize technology as the basis for distinguishing this early period, the Palaeolithic in America is coeval with Pleistocene conditions. The nadir of global cooling, the Younger Dryas event (ca. 11,500 B.P.), usually marks the end of the Ice Age, but megafauna and periglacial environments persisted into the post-Pleistocene warm spell. Although the climate had ameliorated, the proximity of alpine and continental glaciers offset the warming to favour tundra conditions for centuries into the early Holocene. The Palaeolithic period ends with the Ice Age, when Holocene fauna replaced earlier forms and temperate environments succeeded the cold landscape. On the northern plains the factors compound to place the end of the Palaeolithic at ca. 9500 years B.P., by which point the megafauna had gone extinct and the grasslands had replaced the retreating tundra. Those definitions typically designated as Palaeoindian and Lithic can just as easily apply if the category Palaeolithic is employed instead.

HOLOCENE	Epipalaeolithic	Neolithic	Woodland (ceramics)	Sylvicole (avec poterie)
	Divisible into Early, Middle and Late	Food Production	Archaic (aceramic)	Archaïque (sans poterie)
PLEISTOCENE	Upper Palaeolithic		Lithic	PaléoIndien
	(Yellowhorn, this volume)		(Willey and Phillips 1955)	(Chevrier 1998)

Figure 4.5 The taxonomy of world archaeology is available to internalist archaeology. Adopting its terms indicates a maturing discipline.

Following the Palaeolithic two economic patterns take hold that respond to global warming. The first continues the subsistence strategy dependent on country foods, and the second replaces country food with food production. The former is the Epipalaeolithic, and the latter the Neolithic. These terms emphasize economy rather than temporal units or technology. Since they are the only two modes of food-getting there is no danger of confusing them. Neolithic is a global term that has a long association with agriculture, but that equation does not imply that studies of technology are irrelevant to research into the origins of food production. Determining the reasons people would embrace agriculture is an unresolved riddle; some investigators feel that it is a cultural response to global warming, others conceptualize a Darwinian mutualism and see the plant/human dynamic as a symbiotic relationship from which both species benefit, while still others see it as symptomatic of idiosyncratic human behaviour (Piperno and Pearsall 1998). All things considered, growing food was a great idea but nobody knows when or why it started. Blackfoot country was simply too far north for aboriginal cultigens (tobacco being an exception), so the Neolithic does not have great significance for the northern plains. The Cluny site on the Bow River, a short-lived, fortified village consisting of earthlodges surrounded by a palisade, is the only site that fits in this category and it is an anomaly. The distinction between the Neolithic and the concurrent Epipalaeolithic is a matter of economy.

Country foods dominated the post-Pleistocene economy on the northern plains, and excavators of archaeological sites expect to find their traces. Organizing antiquity using the Epipalaeolithic category has its advantages because it does not impose a specific chronology, although it is amenable to such. Nor does it imply a transitional stage, as does the Mesolithic. It makes reference to a 'proto-historic' era redundant because it abuts upon the recent historic (Figure 4.6). It can apply globally to cultures that depended on country foods for their sustenance, it can be expressed in different languages, it is not prone to contradictory usage and it can be inserted into regional chronologies. Adapting it to describe hunting and gathering cultures does not stray too far from its intended meaning.

Originally, the Epipalaeolithic was proposed by Ofer Bar-Yosef, an Israeli archaeologist at The Hebrew University in Jerusalem, to refer to the microlithic technology evident in the cultural sequence of the Levant adjacent to the eastern Mediterranean Sea. It was to encompass the period following the Palaeolithic but prior to the Neolithic. While working on his doctoral thesis during the 1960s he took to the problem of collating what was known of sites of the Kebaran and Natufian cultures in order to create a regional synthesis. His research led him to the conclusion that "the term Mesolithic in its European sense is inadequate in the Levant" (Bar-Yosef 1975). In its place he proposed attaching the prefix 'epi-', because 'following' and 'succeeding' are among its meanings, to the well-defined, quasi-chronological category 'palaeolithic'. The period following the Palaeolithic exhibits continuity in its lithic technology and subsistence economy, but seed collecting requiring special tools eventually led to Neolithic technologies and lifeways.

Geological Epoch	Generalized Internalist Chronology	Blackfoot Internalist Chronology
Holocene	Recent Historic	Reserve Days
	Late Epipalaeolithic begins c. 270 BP	Horse Days
	Middle Epipalaeolithic begins c. 2000 BP	Dog Days
	Early Epipalaeolithic begins c. 9500 BP	
Pleistocene	Palaeolithic	Mythic Past

Figure 4.6 Analytical methods adopted from mainstream archaeology can be adapted by aboriginal people to organize their history.

Appropriating this term for internalist archaeology will required fine-tuning its definition while maintaining loyalty to the original meaning. Epipalaeolithic lifeways, broadly defined, emerge in the Pleistocene and persist throughout the Holocene in a variety of environmental and geographical settings until the historic period. This generic sense can organize regional history into chronological categories that better reflect particular cultural sequences. Its properties include an economy dependent on country foods, reliance on lithic technology, adaptation to Holocene conditions, and increasing diversity in the resources and environments exploited (including specialized marine, littoral, lake and riverine subsistence strategies and technologies). Thus, in the North American high arctic, for example, the first traces of human antiquity occur during the Epipalaeolithic because, during the Palaeolithic and for a long time afterward, continental glacial conditions persisted so that the arctic region simply was not available for human occupation. Epipalaeolithic lifeways on the northern plains the are evident ca. 9500 years B.P. when the severely cold climate eases and the extant cultures succeed in adapting to Holocene fauna and adopting customs more suited to a warmer globe. Epipalaeolithic lifeways endured until AD 1887, when the buffalo days ended, and thereafter a hunting and gathering subsistence strategy became impossible to practice. It ended not because mobile hunters settled down to become Neolithic farmers. Instead, they became market farmers ploughing the earth and homesteading on newly allotted reservations.

Archaeologists seem to gravitate towards tripartite arrangements in their taxonomies without dwelling too long on a literary device that brings them to the denouement of the present. "Often, these heuristic units take on a life of their own and drive subsequent interpretation. The plethora of periods divided into Early, Middle, and Late should tell us we are imposing our own cultural values on the past; surely not everything develops in three stages" (Duke and Wilson 1995: 7). Nevertheless, the Epipalaeolithic on the northern plains can be divided into three eras based on hunting practices. The early period is bracketed between ca. 9500 years B.P., when the grasslands replace the boreal condition,

and ca. 2000 years B.P.. During this time the northern plains was occupied by small bands of proto-Algonkian speakers who adapted to persistent arid, warm conditions and became acquainted with all areas south of the parkland belt and east of the Rocky Mountains. Communal hunting in the Early Epipalaeolithic meant small groups of hunters cooperating to stalk and ambush their prey. The middle period begins with the Besant expansion ca. 2000 B.P. and marks a fundamental change in the development of communal hunting. As discussed in chapter three, an apparent scheduling breakthrough allowed large aggregations of hunters to employ stealth, manipulate herds and operate traps using cliffs and corrals. The point here is that communal hunting using buffalo jumps and pounds is the conspicuous condition of the Middle Epipalaeolithic.

The beginning of the Late Epipalaeolithic is coincident with the return appearance of horses on the northern plains; although they evolved in this biome, they ultimately went extinct in their native land. Their return, after an absence of about 11,000 years, was the cause of another fundamental shift in hunting strategy that all but eliminated cliffs and corrals. Tame horses appear in Blackfoot culture ca. 270 years B.P. (AD 1730) and they immediately improved the mobility of hunters. Stealth was the last thing on the hunter's mind because the excitement of the chase resembled a cavalry charge. Initially, lithic technology complemented the novel mode of hunting, but as the outside world intruded on the northern plains the aboriginal people supplemented their arsenal with firearms. There is no neat line demarcating the Late Epipalaeolithic from the Recent Historic period, because the two overlapped and co-existed for a few decades before the former came to an end. So long as the ancient subsistence economy was viable, the Epipalaeolithic continued, but the world system engulfed the northern plains and ushered in the Recent Historic period.

Clearly the creation of taxonomic systems informed by internalist notions of the past are necessary, and they do not have to be foreign objects in the mainstream. For internalist archaeology to be a vibrant force it must balance the concerns of aboriginal people and archaeologists and offer choices that work for both groups. Analytical methods

designed to organize the past can be effective instruments to further this cause. Like field methods, analytical tools of the trade exist to bring order to local history. They can be refined to support internalist perceptions without antagonizing mainstream archaeology. Keeping in mind that classifications, systems and categories all employ arbitrary definitions, aboriginal people can apply familiar landmarks to define and organize an internalist history. Articulating with the broader discipline is, of course, always a laudable goal.

Chapter Summary

Blackfoot history represents a unique timeline in the annals of human experience. It begins in the mythic times and takes shape in the dog days. The history of this period is told in such stories as the woman who married a buffalo. They explained the existence of *iiniskimmiksi*, the stone buffalo charms. People found them to be useful when hunting magic was needed. Apparently a similar narrative informed the hunters who occupied the Cactus Flower site in southeastern Alberta, where fossil ammonite shells were discovered in a level dated to ca. 4200 B.P.. Interpreting these fossils as proxy evidence of the enduring messages related in oral traditions, hints at the ideological parallels in Blackfoot, and more generally Plains Indian, traditions. Particularly, the medicine bundle complex practiced by Blackfoot ritualists exhibits great time depth as the common religion of plains cultures. Blackfoot culture finds its roots in the archaeological record because the emblems of ceremony persist to the present. Far from being a foreign time, antiquity on the plains continues to be related in stories and re-enacted in ceremony. Finding familiar traces of Blackfoot culture binds the present generations to all their ancestors who have trod upon the northern plains.

Dealing with antiquity using the analytical tools of archaeology has led to a form of linguistic despotism that internalist archaeology wishes to avoid. Organizing an internalist familiarity with ancient times does not begin in a classification system that intentionally negates Indian history. Therefore, new analytical methods and terminology must be

created to replace the cultural taxonomies and nomenclature that erase or diminish Indian history. Chronological sequences that originate in an internalist setting do not naturally estrange themselves from a broader understanding of the past. In fact, for aboriginal people the search for syncretism with world archaeology is the search for an antidote to archaeological standard time. In particular, the taxonomic systems devised around the concept of prehistory and the Archaic are unacceptable to aboriginal communities. As souvenirs of colonial archaeology, they fall short of relating a familiar, Indian history. Aboriginal people desire different terms and concepts that acknowledge their experience with antiquity. At the same time, there is no doubt that world archaeology is converging around a standardized nomenclature. Defining a place for aboriginal people in that global scheme is a priority when implementing the analytical methods of archaeology.

Internalist history can be conceptualized by activating a paradigmatic trait of the Blackfoot language, which can be the basis for a taxonomy that respects Blackfoot history. Distinguishing an exclusive, ancient history from a recent, inclusive history is a matter of shifting paradigms when speaking in the first person plural. Essentially, this dichotomy can be a model for framing local history to an internalist understanding of a familiar past in contrast to the common history of humanity in the context of an integrated world system. Existing taxonomies, devised in the mid-twentieth century, are proving to be inadequate for organizing the history of aboriginal people. World archaeology already has a recognized nomenclature that can be appropriated and moulded to regional syntheses. A taxonomy devised for internalist archaeology can apply the categories that are employed in other regions and adjust the definitions to suit regional and temporal conditions. The Palaeolithic in America is a rational substitute for the Palaeoindian/Early Prehistoric categories. Likewise, the Epipalaeolithic is a perfectly legitimate replacement for the Archaic. Neolithic cultures are those associated with an agricultural economy.

CHAPTER FIVE

SIMON FRASER SLEPT HERE!

Introduction

Archaeology is a fledgling discipline on the periphery. Its growing pains will seem daunting, but the most serious deficiency is the paucity of skilled personnel. Those who choose it as a career must accept that fact and embrace the cosmopolitanism required for internalist archaeology. That situation brought me to work with the Sekani, the people who inhabit McLeod Lake, a small community in northern British Columbia. The McLeod Lake Indian Band holds the distinction as the epicentre for internalist archaeology in Canada. When they initiated their heritage excavation project in 1992, their effort marked the first time that an Indian community sponsored field excavation using only Indian personnel. For the Sekani heritage excavations, archaeology proved to be a viable instrument for them to initiate a project that began with the community and was guided by local concerns. Appropriating the methods of archaeology to investigate local history lit the spark under an internalist perspective and made real the discussion of this issue. What began as a local experiment with the direct historical approach to bridge recent and ancient history led to a broader goal of defining tenets for internalist archaeology.

Sekani is a language in the Athapaskan family and a way of life adapted to boreal conditions. McLeod Lake is the village originally founded by Simon Fraser as a trading post in 1805; its citizens will mark a milestone in their history in 2005. Since that summer night nearly 200 years ago when Simon Fraser first slept there, no summer has passed when this settlement was empty. The Indian village that subsequently sprang up beside the fur trading post formed the node where Sekani identity diverged from its customary patterns and turned down the path toward modernity. Here, amid the spruce log cabins and birch bark lean-tos, the Sekani left behind the bush economy and took the first tentative steps into the world system. Although the hunting and gathering economy that sustained them and their ancestors since the end of the last Ice Age is the ultimate source of their

identity, the fur trade too has left an unmistakable imprint on Sekani people. The forest may be just beyond the last house of the village, but few Sekani today feel compelled to engage in traditional pursuits, nor do any depend wholly on the products of the chase. When the calendar reads 2005, Sekanis can look back on the transformation that began when Simon Fraser first arrived. With history and archaeology in tow, their retrospection assesses the impact the world system has wrought on their culture.

Sekani studies is organized here under three banners. The first examines the history of the economic, political and cultural contacts that have transformed Sekani society since European contact. Modern historians must infer Sekani history from historical documents that chronicle their interactions with the larger world, a difficult task when the record is an imperfect impression of an ancient, spirit-haunted world. Encounters with the world system introduced a barter economy that employed animal pelts as its currency and which ultimately undermined their traditional subsistence economy. Their traditional world view proved impotent as a shield against a hegemonic world religion, while local polities were unable to gain advantage when confronting global political powers. Sekani today are left to reflect on that awkward legacy that is their history. The second part reviews the nature of Euro-Canadian studies of the Sekani and analyzes the literature pertaining to their status as research subjects. Field research is a necessary reality of academic tenure, and so academics often find themselves working among Native people and publishing the results of their work in scholarly journals. Beginning in the ethnographic era, Sekani have been subjects in various linguistic, anthropological, medical and, now, genetical research. Despite the body of publications, the results have little meaning for the extant community, primarily because no one is familiar with the meaning of this research or what to do with the results. The third reports on the efforts of the Sekani to study their own history, with the archaeological record acting as a proxy archive holding data relevant to them. Although typically associated with the study of ancient traces, the Sekani experience demonstrated that archaeological methods are equally viable when researching recent history. Sekani

initiatives in archaeology exerted their influence on the larger discipline because the excavations were conducted at ground zero of internalist archaeology.

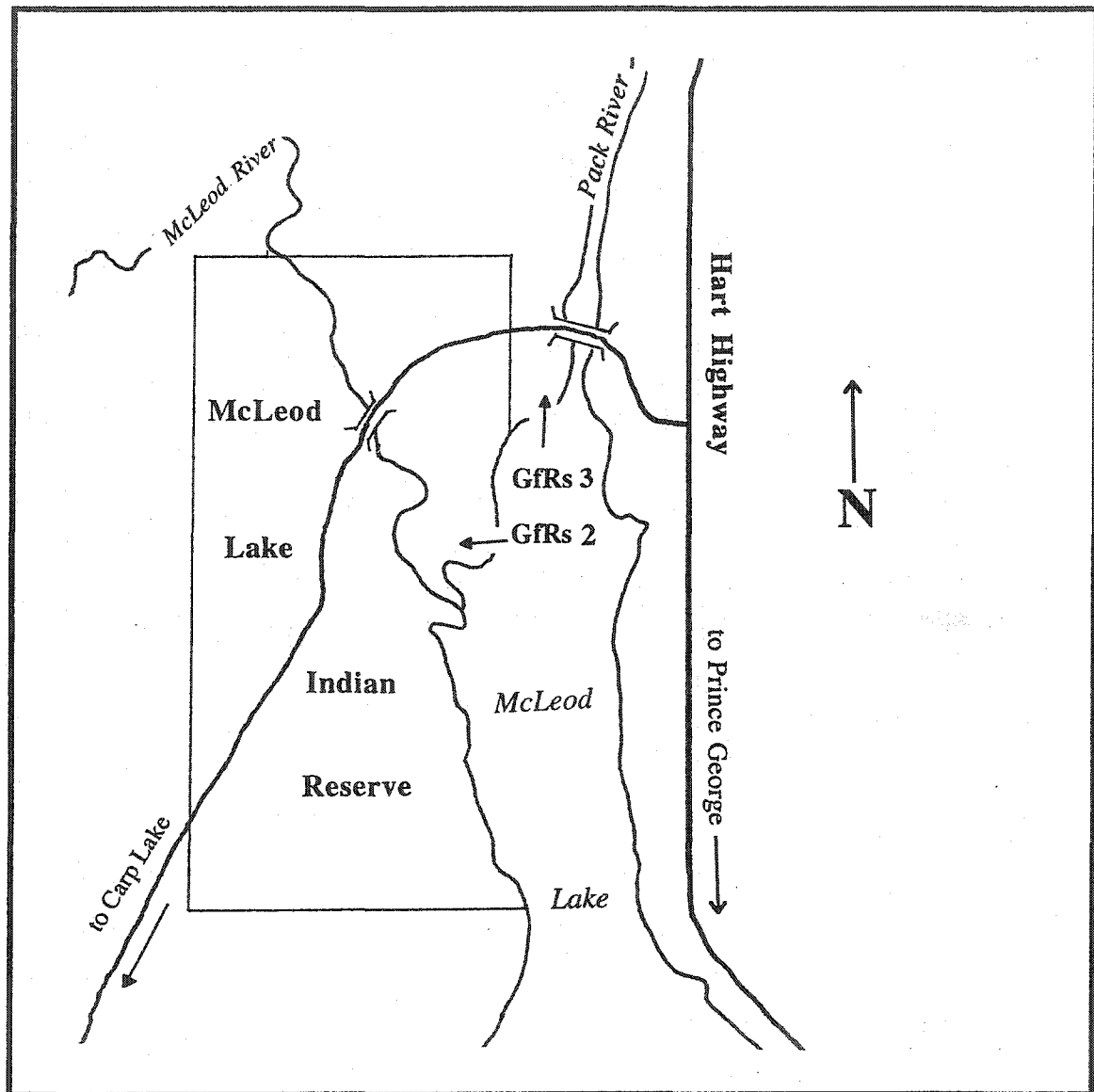


Figure 5.1 McLeod Lake, British Columbia. The old trading post (GfRs 3) was founded in 1805 by Simon Fraser to initiate trade between the Sekani and the North West Company. The old Sekani village site (GfRs 2) was a favoured Sekani camping site before the fur trade. Trading at this post continued until the 1950s, when a paved road to Prince George made the water route obsolete.

The Sekani Today

Like a meteor dislodged from the firmament, the past two centuries have left a deep crater in the Sekani world. Unlike their ancestors, the present generation finds itself adrift amidst political entities whose boundaries have redefined their reality. Their aboriginal lifeways have been altered so that they no longer move as freely through their boreal homeland, nor do they practice the same occupations. Instead they live in permanent settlements in single-family bungalows supplied by the Department of Indian Affairs. They interact with the global society; they rely on its cash for their subsistence and when jobs are available they participate in its wage economy. If one were to read only ethnographic sources, Sekani would appear immune to the influences of the modern world. Yet nothing could be further from the truth, since the modern world intrudes on every facet of their community life.

Long before any foreign government laid claim to their homeland, Trout Lake was a familiar spot in Sekani cognitive geography. When Simon Fraser built the North West Company trading post there, he overlooked the Sekani toponyms while honouring Archibald McLeod. Before too long, McLeod's Lake had become the nucleus of a small Sekani settlement. However, the Sekani homeland was introduced to cartographers as New Caledonia, because its rugged terrain reminded Simon Fraser of the homeland of his Scottish ancestors (Morice 1904). At that time, most Sekani were still living off the land in the mode of their ancestors. The occasional forays to the trading posts became extended visits until some families built permanent houses and routinely spent part of the springtime there. The British established colonial rule in 1846 and then promoted British Columbia to the status of a Crown colony in 1858 (Begg 1894). This meant little to the Sekani as they were in the more remote part of the new colony; thus the effects of government were slight and they were not well-known to colonial officials. Even unification with Canada did little to undermine their autonomy; again their remoteness and the fatiguing trip there acted as a buffer against governmental intervention.

The post-confederation era in New Caledonia, that period following the unification of the Crown colony of British Columbia with the Canadian federation, required the federal government to conduct an inventory of its newest Indian citizens. Under Article thirteen of the Terms of Union, the federal government assumed responsibility over Indian affairs in the new province (Canada 1925). As a Crown colony, British Columbia had a domestic Indian affairs policy designed by Governor Douglas's administration (Bancroft 1890). After 1871 responsibility over Indian affairs was transferred to the federal government, and it was left to Dr. J. W. Powell, Indian Superintendent for British Columbia, to apprise the new government of the Indian peoples who would now fall under the aegis of the Indian Office in Ottawa. His unflattering account states only that the "Siccanies (sic) occupy the region of Pean (sic) River, north of Fort MacLeod (sic)...their social and moral character [is] extremely low; and the only christian teaching which they have received has been by occasional visits from one of the Roman Catholic Missionaries" (Canada 1873: 8). The Department of Indian Affairs established its Babine Agency at Hazelton in 1890 and the Sekani, by default, were included in its administrative region (Canada 1891).

Just as New Caledonia was on the fur trade frontier, so it was on the political frontier of the new federal system. Thus the first attempt at a census in the pre-reserve era was little more than a rough estimate. The return stated only that they "number about [500], and as yet have no Reserves set apart for them" (Canada 1873: 8). Exact figures were elusive and that first estimate was reiterated in subsequent reports, until the agent in charge of the Babine Agency recorded 105 Sekani living at Stuart's Lake and another 53 at Bear's Lake (Canada 1891). No figures were given for McLeod Lake, but when it finally appeared in the census there were 92 residents, but the other two bands had experienced a loss of members bringing the total Sekani population to 240 people (Canada 1894). Evidence that these estimates are inherently unreliable appears later, when the same agent reported 95 people resident at McLeod Lake, 91 at Fort Grahame and 119 at Lake Connelly, and most were still listed as nomadic (Canada 1895). The fluctuating accounts

are hardly surprising given, as this agent noted, that these bands "are nomadic, live in wigwams, fish, hunt and trap in and about the localities named" and camped at these posts only in the winter (Canada 1896: 160). Due to its isolation and the limited number of white settlers, little attention was paid to the area or its Native population, which explains the static population estimates of the Sekani submitted over the years. The chief of the McLeod Lake band was *Ninsit*. He held his title for life, as did *Kartha*, chief of the Fort Grahame band; the Fort Connelly band had limited outside contact, thus no chief was recorded by the agency (Canada 1898).

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, Sekani autonomy eroded severely and control of their land contracted as foreign governments intruded upon them. This process began in 1892, when the Indian Reserve Commissioner visited New Caledonia for the first time with the expressed purpose of delineating lands for the Indian bands resident in the region. During this visit he defined McLeod Lake Indian Reserve No. 1, the oldest of the Sekani reserves (Canada 1893: 265). His task on his subsequent visit, in September 1894, was to survey formally a reserve which encompassed 286 acres on the Long (now known as the McLeod) River where it drained into McLeod Lake. No new reserves were created as the nineteenth century drew to a close, but the Klondike gold rush was in full swing and the federal government hastily dispatched its treaty commissioner to negotiate Treaty 8 with the Cree, Beaver, Chipewyan, Slaves, Dogribs and Sekani (Canada 1900). The land under consideration was the arctic watershed south of 60° N and east of the Cassiar Mountains, past the front range of the Rocky Mountains and onto the adjacent plains to the Hay River, then to the south shore of Great Slave Lake (Canada 1901). Unfortunately, the Sekani were deprived of the benefits of their treaty settlement because the treaty commissioner did not venture to the west side of the Rocky Mountains to meet them; hence the reserves they occupy evolved out of government policy, not from treaty. Outstanding entitlements from Treaty 8 led all three Sekani communities to file land claims in 1989, when the provincial government reversed its long standing policy of refusing to consider

such claims. Then only a year ago, the McLeod Lake Indian Band dropped its legal proceedings, when the federal and provincial negotiators proposed a compensation agreement that all parties found acceptable (Canada 2000).

Unresolved differences over the acreages to be assigned to each family created uncertainty between the federal and provincial governments until 1912, when a Royal Commission was appointed ostensibly to settle all outstanding land issues (Canada 1925: 7). The land question was the reason the Indian Reserve Commission existed and it was carrying out government policy when it dispatched surveyors north in 1925 to delineate reserves for the Sekani where they had begun to establish their communities. The surveyors were a busy lot. "Seven survey parties were in the field on the work of surveying new reserves in accordance with the Royal Commission's report. 121 parcels were surveyed. Of these 66 were in the Stuart Lake agency" which had responsibility over Sekani land (Canada 1926: 23). The reserves surveyed for the Sekani bands included McLeod Lake Indian Reserves Nos. 2, 3, 4 and 5, and Fort Grahame Indian Reserves Nos. 1 and 2. The Sekani band that frequented old Fort Connelly had seven small reserves surveyed near Bear's Lake. No more lands were reserved for the Sekani until the mid-1960s, when hydroelectric development in the north initiated by the government of British Columbia inundated existing reserves and compensation was required (Lewis 1972).

Presently the Sekani occupy reserves in northern British Columbia at McLeod Lake, the most southerly community, Tsay Keh (formerly called Ingenika), at the north end of Williston Lake, the massive artificial lake created by the W. A. C. Bennett dam on the Peace River, and Fort Ware on the Finlay River, the most northerly community. The reserve at McLeod Lake consists of two contiguous reserves, one that straddles the McLeod River (286 acres) and the other along the Pack River (276 acres), and three smaller reserves that were set up as fishing stations; one on the east side of McLeod Lake (17.3 acres), at War Lake (8.2 acres) and at Carp Lake (12.1 acres). The reserve at Fort Ware encompasses an area of 968.3 acres divided into a main reserve of 958 acres and two

smaller reserves at Sucker Lake (5 acres) and Weissener Lake (5.3 acres). The latter two reserves are at traditional fishing sites. The Fort Grahame band had its main reserve at Police Meadows (320 acres) and two smaller reserves of 84.3 and 92.3 acres were set up at Parsnips and Tutu Creek, respectively (Canada 1972). These reserves were located about 60 kilometers north of the Finlay and Parsnips rivers confluence until the rising waters of Williston Lake flooded their community in 1968 (Lewis 1972). They were relocated to a small reserve south of the town of Mackenzie, where they lived until 1980 when they moved to the north end of the reservoir near the Ingenika Arm of Williston Lake. In 1989 they signed a settlement agreement which did not create a new reserve; instead it set aside 220 acres of Crown Land for a community that they moved into the following year. Census figures reveal a population comprised of 1044 people living in three communities (Canada 1997). McLeod Lake has the largest membership of the three bands with 383 members. Fort Ware has 356 members, and Tsay Keh has 305 band members. McLeod Lake is the most accessible community, as it is beside the Hart Highway only 150 km north of Prince George, B.C.. Fort Ware and Tsay Keh are remote and accessible only by air or via rough, gravel roads that are mostly used by logging trucks; however both bands have offices in Prince George that handle their affairs.

Compiling a demographic profile of the three bands depicts a statistical population that resembles many Indian communities; over half the band members are under 25 years old. Membership in the Fort Ware and Tsay Keh bands is equally balanced between male and female, while at McLeod Lake women make up a slightly higher ratio of the population. As is the case with other Indian bands, there is a movement away from the reserves. Approximately one-third of Fort Ware and Tsay Keh members reside away from their isolated communities, while an astounding 66% of McLeod Lake residents live elsewhere. At the front end of this Sekani Diaspora are the women, who consistently leave in larger numbers. The figures would be exaggerated if women were treated as a homogeneous group; however, it is not just adult women who are leaving. The average

woman who leaves her community is in her late thirties and is likely to be a single parent; thus she takes her male and female children with her. Mobility patterns at Fort Ware and Tsay Key indicate that women make up 33% and 37.5% of migrants, while men make up 30% and 29% respectively. The out-migration from McLeod Lake, being more like a rupture, shows that 62% of women and 49% of men live away from the reserve; this anomalous situation has resulted in a large bachelor population on the reserve.

Chronic underemployment and limited career prospects are factors draining away the talent from the Sekani communities. This is especially noticeable when gender is taken into account. Women make up a greater portion of the permanent reserve workforce and their labour keeps the reserve bureaucracy functioning. Often they are the sole regular income earners in a family unit. When families disintegrate, usually the mother takes responsibility for domestic matters. This may mean leaving the community to find work to support her children. Women often take the initiative in organizing community events; yet they are systematically excluded from political decision-making and positions of power. If women desire to succeed in careers or education, they must make the sacrifice of leaving the community to pursue their aspirations. Women may dominate white collar and clerical jobs, but they are usually low income earners and their skills will provide only a subsistence wage. This pattern was illustrated in the 1991 aboriginal people's survey, which found that Indian women participate in the workforce at a higher rate than Indian men but the average income for them is still far below that of the men (Canada 1995).

For their part, Sekani men inherit their power in the community partly because of the historic social structure which favours male leadership (Lanoue 1983). They display no great commitment to the labour force and they are more likely to engage in casual or seasonal labour than to pursue career oriented occupations. They favour blue collar jobs in resource industries such as forestry, where they work as loggers or in wood processing plants. Their participation in education beyond secondary school is minimal, the drop out rate is high and those who continue into post-secondary school generally prefer trades,

such as carpentry. Social problems, particularly alcoholism, are more pronounced among men who also tend to be less active in family matters.

In the local context, the Sekani have always been an autonomous people, but on a larger scale they occupy a hinterland removed from the mainstream. During their long history as a tribal entity they were a locally-based people, with their outside relations restricted to their tribal neighbours, such as the Carrier and Beaver. Their labours were based on self-interest; they exploited local resources and produced and consumed their own food and technology. This pattern expanded to accommodate the fur trade and interactions with the world system. Global economic forces eroded local autonomy, and subsequently interactions with external political and social institutions diminished further the independence of Sekani lifeways. Centripetal forces of the larger society exert a strong attraction on the Sekani population and are partly responsible for the out-migration. However, even those who settle in cities often find themselves on the margins, because they may not have the requisite skills to participate effectively in an urban, wage economy. Sekani are burdened with unfavourable circumstances associated with their hinterland status, which limits their ability to realize fully their community's potential. They cannot practice the traditional livelihood of hunting and gathering, and traditional crafts play only a minor role in employing band members. They rely heavily on employment in resource industries or on government-sponsored make-work projects, which are typically seasonal and unreliable. There is no heavy emphasis on education, and job training programmes do not usually translate into permanent, full-time work. Relief payments originally allowed people to supplement the wages they earned as trappers. Later, they replaced earned income and learned dependency displaced initiative. Leaders fear another generation of workers will be lost if an indifferent attitude is allowed to persist, thereby continuing the cycle of dependency. Instilling loyalty to a career path led nowhere because make-work projects were designed as temporary measures to inject money into Indian bands. Once the funds were exhausted, the work stopped.

The McLeod Lake Indian Band decided to implement an archaeology programme in an attempt to provide meaningful work that combined temporary summer employment and knowledge of Sekani traditional culture. They looked to local history as an antidote to the endemic tedium of creating work with no direction. Job creation, in this case, became an guide to direct the career options of young people entering the work force. Selecting careers in the cultural industries figured prominently among the identified objectives for summer field work. Beginning in 1992, the band identified funds to hire a qualified archaeologist to conduct a training programme for Sekani youth. Introducing archaeological methods through this excavation project demonstrated the type of skills that could be gained only through direct participation. In addition, corporate donations from the band-owned logging company, *Duz Cho*, and grants from federal and provincial agencies, allowed the McLeod Lake Indian Band to initiate a heritage project celebrating a milestone in local history. What began as summer temporary employment to perform a controlled excavation of their former village culminated with a museum and heritage park recognizing their bicentennial. Archaeology provided the field methods, a regular salary was its own incentive and local history was the focus of observations; together, they demonstrated that temporary job creation can produce long term benefits.

Sekani Identity From Ancient Times

Because local history is steeped in the fur trade, expectations ran high that this period would be represented in abundance among the features and artifacts. Less so for an ancient history; although Trout Lake was a favoured place in aboriginal times, recent disturbances, such as gardening, building and road construction, to a great extent have disturbed the material remains. Therefore discovering ancient artifacts was not a high priority for this excavation. Sekani lifeways did not emphasize central places, so their ancient presence is ephemeral and dispersed across the land. For countless generations they enjoyed unfettered use of the boreal forest within the geological province known as the Rocky Mountain trench. They travelled in small bands along familiar footpaths, breathing the intoxicating scent of the pine forest; they rested in luxurious quietude beside lakes where only the solitary call of the loon breaks the stillness. They lived off the products of the chase and manufactured their necessities from the resources available to them. Thus they became familiar with the land they called home. They were an independent people who needed nothing from anybody, and, likewise, the outside world placed no limits on their activities. Evidence for their long presence in this boreal land can be found in the archaeological record which has preserved a cultural sequence extending back to the retreat of the cordilleran glaciers (Fladmark 1986).

Deglaciation in the Peace River country began as early as 11,000 years B.P. and the mountain valleys were available for human occupation shortly thereafter (Mathew 1980). The northern terminus of the supposed "Ice Free Corridor" is widely considered a logical precursor for early settlement farther south and its proximity argues for ancient occupation (Fladmark 1982). The archaeological record has not complied with this scenario, as the corroborating sites have yet to be discovered. At Charlie Lake cave, with its raven burials, the cultural material recovered includes such diagnostic artifacts as fluted projectile points resembling those of the Clovis cultural horizon (Wilson 1996). Although assigning an ethnic identity to stone tools is controversial, nevertheless some archaeologists posit that

the fluted point tradition does not represent the ancestral culture of the Athapaskan linguistic group (Carlson 1996). Instead they propose that the ancestors of Athapaskan speakers carried the Microblade Tradition in their tool kits when they crossed Beringia. Upper Palaeolithic cultures had crossed the Amur River and invaded Siberia by 14,000 years ago, bearing a tool kit that included microblade artifacts. Microblade technology then appeared in the central Alaska region at approximately 10,700 B.P. (Hoffecker et al. 1993). Although some northern Yukon sites are known to contain microblade technology, there is no dated context for them (Clark and Morlan 1982). South of the Yukon border, the Peace River country does contain sites with microblades dating ca. 9,500 B.P. (Fladmark 1981). Generally microblade technology is restricted to the northwest corner of North America and is not present in the continental heartland. However, it is a technology that does persist until about 1000 B.P.. Its geographical distribution overlaps well with Athapaskan linguistic groups who colonized the lake country of the interior plateau from the Rocky Mountain Trench to the Coast Mountains (Carlson 1996).

Remoteness is a logistical challenge, so northern British Columbia is known mainly from a few archaeological field surveys that have been conducted in the course of cultural resource management. Archaeological work only began when construction of the Peace River dam made field surveys necessary. This early effort succeeded in identifying five archaeological sites along the Parsnip and Finlay rivers (McGhee 1963). Artifacts associated with these sites consisted of lithic debitage, primarily flakes of obsidian and chert, several scrapers, and other tools. However, no temporally diagnostic projectile points were found. Near the reserves along the Bear River, six archaeological sites were identified a decade later. They included ancient sites with lithic materials, cache pits, hearths with charcoal, and possible housepits. The recent sites included abandoned log cabins, artificial mounds and cache pits (Helmer and Mitchell 1972). Wherever mitigation required impact assessments, archaeological sites of an ancient and recent provenience have been encountered. Regardless of remoteness, the Finlay River manages to produce sites

that tease out rarely-used Borden numbers (Ham 1987; Lawhead and Stryd 1987). Even minor watersheds like Kemess Lake revealed two sites on an adjacent terrace indicating that people had camped beside the lake. A third site was discovered on a terrace along Kemess Creek approximately 1.6 kms. downstream from Kemess Lake. These sites consisted of lithic scatters that contained obsidian and chert waste flakes. No tools or temporally diagnostic items were recovered from any of the sites, thus determining their age was impossible (Rousseau et al. 1993). Taken together, these investigations offer direct evidence that people were everywhere interacting with the environment and practicing lifeways recognizable as Sekani in the ethnographic era. These sites demonstrate that extant cultures were fully aware of the locally available resources and were exploiting them routinely. Although archaeologists may find the region remote, it was the cradle that nurtured Sekani identity throughout the millennia that followed their mythic time. Sekani still look to the ancient past as a template when recasting their culture for modern times.

From Tsek'ehne to Sekani

Historical records chronicle the course of events since the world system intruded on Tsek'ehne reality. It arrived with the canoe brigade that accompanied Alexander Mackenzie on his voyage to the Pacific in 1793, scratching, as he went, an inky trail across the empty landscape of his diary and leaving behind a worn path of words, thoughts and impressions. He did not write of Tsek'ehne explicitly. Instead he alluded to the Rocky Mountain Indians who lived along the upper reaches of the *Unjigah*, or Peace, River. He came and went only twice, but he left the world system at their wigwam doors. When Mackenzie, then an agent of the North West Company, embarked on his journey the Sekani homeland was still out of reach of both the maritime and land-based fur trade. There were no trading posts in the region, but a few trade objects had filtered into the area through intermediaries (Burley et al. 1996). Although he provided some details about the "Rocky Mountain Indians," he did not attempt to differentiate them from their close linguistic relatives the Beaver; perhaps he simply could not distinguish the nuances inherent in their spoken words (Mackenzie

1971). Simon Fraser established the first trading post in Sekani territory, in 1805, at McLeod Lake, but he did nothing to clarify the confusion either with his cryptic account of the Meadow Indians whom he designated as "Baucanne" (Lamb 1960).

Daniel Harmon, in 1810, made the first direct reference to the "Sicannies" in his description of the Indians west of the Rocky Mountains (Jenness 1931; Lamb 1957). Fourteen years later, Samuel Black, in a report of his expedition on the Finlay River, gave an account of the "Thecannie" who lived along its upper reaches (Rich 1955). Four years later, Governor George Simpson, during his 1828 inspection of trading posts acquired in the western regions, mentioned the "Seccanies," who frequented the trading post at McLeod's Lake (Rich 1947). Accompanying Governor Simpson on that journey was Archibald McDonald, who kept his own journal and wrote of their encounter with the "Chicane" Indians (McLeod 1971). John McLean, in 1833, reminiscing about his years of service for the Hudson's Bay Co. in New Caledonia, recalled trading routinely with the "Tsekanies" (Wallace 1932). As these authors got better acquainted with their customers, they became more adept at writing *Tsek'ehne*, which only had been spoken previously.

Still, some labels are difficult to discard. For example, Hodge's *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico* (1910) formalized the spelling "Sekani" in the annals of ethnographic writing and that name has been preserved in the literature to the present (Denniston 1981). The confusing array of nomenclature inherited from the fur trade era stems from the fact that ethnographic writing was incidental to economic affairs. The fur trader's labelling of Indians did not originate from anthropological curiosity so much as from efforts to know the customer better. Nevertheless, these nascent anthropological accounts have become the favourite, oft-cited, primary sources of contemporary ethnologists who research the aboriginal way of life (e.g. McMillan 1995) or who employ ethnographic data to reconstruct a proto-Athapaskan culture (Perry 1983). They may not be the most accurate, or complete, sources but they are the earliest. Mostly through these sources the anthropological profession came to know the Sekani. Presently these

historical documents are being pressed into service as legal devices to buttress cases by Native claimants for protecting their treaty rights from provincial governments (Ray 1995).

Since ancient times, Sekani harvested furs in the course of enjoying their customary pursuits. As they chased their livelihood in the streams, rivers, forests and mountain meadows of their hunting grounds, they established a network of trails that brought them to all its extremities. They hunted and trapped for their own use, so they were conscious of the value of pelts for trade, and therefore the habitat of their prey. The exact nature of their tenure systems in the forest environment remains obscure and has been the subject of some speculation, the debate focusing on the role of hunting territories. The idiosyncratic observations of Daniel Harmon during his retail career in the northwestern region in the 1820s alluded to family hunting territories. Historians now cite these statements to argue that traplines originated in ancient times (Davidson 1928). Simpson also mentioned that Sekani families maintained hunting territories in the Peace River country, implying their long existence (Ball 1985). Simpson's journal notes that "McLeods Lake....is frequented by about 30 to 40 Seccanies, whose hunting Ground is the Mountanous (sic) Country in the neighbourhood of Finlays branch" (Rich 1947: 16); the conclusion being that, while Sekani practiced a mobile culture, their mobility was confined to certain watersheds controlled by extended family ties.

Of course, there is no historical consensus on this point. An alternative view posits that supposed family hunting territory ownership was an artifact of the fur trader era (Sloan 1979). The argument states that Sekani bands had formerly welcomed strangers and relatives to their camps. When the economic benefits of harvesting animal pelts became clear, the Sekani became increasingly apprehensive of accommodating strangers. New arrivals brought new hazards with their rivalry, and carried the potential risk of usurping control over their traditional resources. Evidently the Sekani began to guard their territories against intruders, but could not always keep them at bay. Without regard for their livelihood, the Hudson's Bay Company hired Iroquois freelancers to trap out their

territory. These free trappers "had no interest in maintaining a good stock of fur in any country that they hunted: rather did they sweep it clean before moving on....Skimming the cream off the country as they went....In the tradition of their nation they were fighting men, and it was all in a day's work for them to brush aside the Sekanis of the Finlay country" (Patterson 1968: 55). Such a policy would inevitably produce detrimental ecological repercussions, but in the Peace River watershed it was not permanent and the local fur trade did recover (Rich 1947). Responding to such threats made Sekani more protective of their districts to ensure exclusive access to fur bearing resources. However, this academic debate is moot to the Sekani, because traplines are the ancient manifestations of their cognitive geography. Through this network of trails their ancestors accumulated knowledge of their customary lands, which they passed down to the modern generation. These traplines now bring them to the borderlands of their identity even as they travel in the modern world.

The upper Peace River was one of the last areas of the continent to experience direct contact with European fur traders. Although foreign goods were filtering into the region from the Pacific coast in the years immediately prior to Mackenzie's voyage, there was no sustained trade until Simon Fraser established McLeod Lake Post in 1805. The following summer, 1806, he returned to the west side of the mountains to establish three other forts, Fort St. James (at Stuart Lake), Fort Fraser (at Fraser Lake) and Fort George (at the confluence of the Nechako and Fraser rivers). Departing from Fort George, Simon Fraser began his journey down the river that would eventually bear his name. Here the Nor'Westers built a stronghold where their supremacy was challenged only minimally by their envious British and American competitors. A European could go to greater lengths to get away from his civilization, but there would be no point. After the union of 1821, the Hudson's Bay Company used the region as a gulag for unruly employees (Sage 1956). The final frontier of the fur trade made a fitting epilogue as the New Caledonia posts were the last to be active. As recently as 1950, Sekani trappers could still bring their furs to the

trading post and exchange them for goods and food stuff (Johnson 1965). Even after the Hart Highway was constructed in 1952, the main building at the post was disassembled, moved across the lake and reassembled beside the road. There it continues to operate as the general store and post office.

In 1994, the remaining buildings at the historic site were restored and opened to the public as a heritage park and museum. That year, the McLeod Lake Indian Band began their experiment with cultural tourism. McLeod Lake post reiterated the experience of other former fur trading posts that have emerged from obscurity to form the nucleus of economic development for adjacent communities. Today Fort St. James is a historic site where Parks Canada interprets the fur trade era for tourist traffic. Fort George is a museum operated by the city of Prince George to expand the cultural amenities in their town. Resisting the trend, Fort Fraser is a bustling little truck stop on the Yellowhead Highway, where the few permanent citizens remain indifferent to local history. Rescuing derelict buildings and reorienting the focus toward cultural tourism and heritage exhibition is a microcosm of the evolving role of the fur trade in Canada's national identity (Klimko 1992).

The fur trade had a big influence on many aboriginal people, but when they appeared in histories about it they were only minor characters. Even the fur trade journal *The Beaver* tended to treat the Indians as incidental to the saga of the fur traders and their enterprise. This is so partly because the fur trade has meant different things to different people depending on the era and degree of amnesia in which it was framed. For Isaac Cowie (1913) it was a stroll down memory lane. His was a retrospective of his years as a player in the fur trade. He penned a quirky record of the characters and events that shaped his impressions. Many of his companions were the Indians who brought their furs to the trading posts during his employment. Embedded in the nostalgic reminiscing was an account of life in the last days of a diminishing enterprise. Lawrence Burpee (1908b), in contrast, was one of the first writers to envision such records as history. By the time of his writing, the fur trade had achieved its quasi-sacred status as a heroic age. Given that the

professional historian class was dominated by white males, no surprise greets their narration about how their putative ancestors built their country. Indians were the homogenous mass of humanity who provided the colourful part of history. Harold Innis (1930) contended that the fur trade was an economic epiphenomenon which stoked the flames of supply and demand in the nascent capitalist order in North America. The dry economist penchant for numbers permeates his text, but he treated Indians as cardboard, petty capitalists wearing feathers rather than as people with their own cultural values and motives. To be sure, he was a man of his times. In his time, Indians were marginal to Canada's economic concerns. If a scholar were to write similar prose today, their erudition would raise eyebrows. Unlike those aloof economists, Nick Kardulias, a professor of anthropology whose interest in culture contact drew his attention to the fur trade, saw in it the opportunity to illuminate the nature of race relations in the historic era. His explanation posited that processing animal pelts was an existing craft that intensified as an industry because of the "economic emoluments offered by the European market" (Kardulias 1990: 25). The fur trade was responsible for much of the cultural complexity observed in the ethnographic text. While small-scale, remote economies, like that of the Sekani, might appear as outlying nodes in a global economic network, they soon became subject to the gyrations of international trade. His observations positioned the fur trade within a bigger picture of non-state societies responding to the intrusion of the world economy.

Unlike previous generations of authors who wrote their history as a righteous struggle that culminated with the birth of Canada, in the last three decades historians have revisited the fur trade archives to search for an Indian presence amid the dusty stacks. Using original documents, letters and diaries, historian Arthur Ray (1974) attempted to discern the ambiguous identities of the tribes involved in the early fur trade in Rupert's Land. His task was to reconstruct their homelands and lifeways during the protohistoric era, when they were taking the first tentative steps into the global economy. His meanderings through the pages of history resulted in a routine description of seasonal

rounds, migrations, material culture and cultural habits. Robin Fisher (1977), in his optimistic account of the fur trade in northern British Columbia, would have his readers believe that the Indians were in full control of their encounter with Europeans. Originally from New Zealand, he perhaps felt no allegiance to the nationalism that inspired other historians of Canadian society. He placed the Indians at the centre of his tale and put the agents of change in orbit around them. However, in doing so he tended to gloss over the details of the violence that accompanied the fur trade, such as the murder of Samuel Black. Despicable and hated though he was, when he was murdered by a Shuswap Indian at Kamloops he was an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company. A vigilante mob organized by the traders hunted down and killed the culprit to discourage a recurrence of such killings. Retaliation in kind describes the typical justice white traders meted out for injury to one of their own, but only a corporate entity could afford to organize and sustain a campaign of fear (Reid 1993b).

Far from being a benign encounter, the fur trade was a power struggle between the Indians and the white traders, one which ultimately favoured the traders whose cosmopolitan lifestyle contrasted sharply with the local experience of the Indians (Reid 1993a; 1993b; Harris 1995). Constructing fortified residences was only one display of White power in the transmontane fur trade, which proved so effective at instilling fear in the Indians. Thus, it was an effective mode of control. Historians of the fur trade era wonder in print how an author could claim unabashedly that the "Indians probably had the power to destroy [the traders], and yet they refrained, not because they feared the white traders but because they valued their presence" (Fisher 1977: 39).

Statements like this underlie an enduring myth about the British fur trade in the Cordillera: that, compared to the American fur trade, it was gentle and benign, an early manifestation of a more managerial, less competitive, and less violent Canadian culture (Harris 1995: 138).

Indeed, others flatly state that at the margin of the rule of law the fur traders became a law unto themselves. Precisely because they could appeal to violence, the fear of reprisal allowed them to move freely in Indian country (Reid 1993b). Retired fur traders can spin

their yarns of adventure in the wild Peace River country and they can take for granted the docile Sekani who came to their posts to trade (Sherwood 1958). As direct beneficiaries of decades of White terrorism, they worried little about their security.

No matter how it is presented, the fur trade did impinge on the local autonomy of this boreal frontier. During the first half of the nineteenth century, it was the economic foundation of New Caledonia. The years leading up to the amalgamation of 1821 had fueled an unsustainable economic rivalry between the North West and Hudson's Bay companies. Thereafter the Hudson's Bay Company enjoyed paramount influence over the region's economic development. As a consequence of their former encouragement of over-hunting, they were forced to engage in some conservation measures to rebuild the local fur bearing population (Ray 1975). When Governor Simpson was made aware of the situation, he recommended prudence in future trapping around the McLeod Lake post. He states in his journal:

The returns of this Post might be increased for a few years by employing Trappers in the neighbourhood of Finlays branch, but that, I feel assured would be a very impolitic measure, as it would not only be sacrificing the permanent advantage we derive from the regular hunts of those Indians for the encreased temporary gain, but it would in my opinion be highly injurious to the whole of Peace River, by cutting off the supply of young Beaver carried down annually from the Mountains by the high Waters, which recruits the lower Country (Rich 1947: 17).

The Hudson's Bay Company's efforts restored health to the animal population, which in turn spared the fur trade economy in New Caledonia from collapse (Cowan 1938).

After 1850 the discovery of gold began to eclipse the economic importance of the fur trade; 1858 was a benchmark year for both. That year British Columbia was given Crown colony status, and the full impact of the gold rush hit the northern interior (Bancroft 1890). Carrier Indians brought some of the yellow nuggets they found in the streams to Fort St. James to trade, so the Hudson's Bay Company became aware of the precious metal in local streams. Just as miners exhausted the California gold fields, word reached San Francisco about the northern gold discovery. Although nominally a British colony, local officials were powerless to stop the tidal wave of miners that flowed north (Begg

1894). The immediate impact was felt along the Fraser River into the Cariboo Mountains, where the gold strike of 1858 made the town of Barkerville the capital of New Caledonia (Busch 1994). Beginning in 1861, a few miners began exploring the lower reaches of the Finlay River, eventually reaching the placer fields of its upper reaches in the Omineca country (Johnson 1965). By 1870 there were enough people there for a settlement to be established under the presumptuous name of Omineca City. Like the gold rush, it proved to be ephemeral but the Omineca country continued to lure prospectors and gold seekers for the rest of the nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century (Hall 1994; Yellowhorn and Rousseau 1997). The sudden influx of these miners adversely affected the livelihood of the Sekani people because the increased competition for game animals placed their traditional food sources under greater stress. Exacerbating the situation was the fact that the prospectors showed little respect for the trapping lifestyle and often conducted their activities along Sekani traplines. Later more people travelled through the Omineca country, the poor man's route to the Yukon, on their way to the newly discovered Klondike gold fields (Patterson 1968). Nothing could stem this flow of human traffic and, with each new wave, the Sekani lifestyle became more difficult to practice. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, gold fever had reduced both the fur trade and the Sekani people to a marginal status.

The gradual dispossession of the Sekani from their lands, and the decline in traditional pursuits for the fur trade, did not escape the attention of the bureaucrat given administrative charge of the Babine Agency. The Indian Agent, although often sanguine about the Indians' lifestyle, displayed an unusual pessimism about the viability of their livelihood. He wrote in his annual report:

One serious trial threatens all these tribes in the apparently inevitable decay of the trapping industry, which is already showing an appreciable decline....These Indians....are excellent hunters and trappers; but the proceeds of the fur-hunting industry have on the whole been declining, and threaten to diminish still further (Canada 1899: 212)

Despite the poor environmental conditions, he hoped that agriculture could replace the fur trade in employing the dispossessed Sekani trappers. Eventually the Babine Agency was split in two and the newly created Stuart Lake Agency at Fort St. James assumed administrative duties for the Sekani bands in 1910. The new agent described them as semi-nomadic; they camped at the forts during the spring, or in the case of the McLeod Lake band they returned to their houses, but for the rest of the year they maintained their mobile ways (Canada 1912). The Sekani band at Fort Connelly had four of their seven small reserves surveyed for them at Bear Lake at this time (Canada 1914). The start of World War I had a direct impact on these bands as it "interfered with the fur trade; the European market for furs [had] disappeared for the time being. Under these conditions the results of the hunt....[were] without appreciable value" (Canada 1915: xxvii). The war years greatly deflated fur prices, which did not rise appreciably for the duration of the war (Canada 1916; 1918; Ray 1990).

Prior to World War I, and for some years afterwards, Indians were the majority work force that harvested the fur resources in north-central British Columbia (French and Ware 1924; Johnson 1965). Immediately thereafter the situation changed for a number of reasons, the most important being the increased number of White men who participated actively as trappers and the consequent over-trapping (Hawthorne et al. 1958). Another reason was the opening of a boarding school at Stuart Lake in 1917 (Canada 1918), which had the long-term effect of reducing the role of the family unit in trapline maintenance. By the mid-1920's, both the provincial and federal governments had resolved the Indian land issue, to their satisfaction, and a concerted effort was made to survey reserves and establish permanent settlements for the Sekani (Canada 1926; 1927). No alternative economic activities were identified; however, the erosion of Sekani confidence in the fur economy was compounded by the actions of the Provincial Game Commission which instituted a traplines registry in 1926 in an effort to control the depletion of animals. Trapline registrations lasted for five years and required an annual fee (Hawthorne et al. 1958).

The national economic crisis that began in 1929 caused even more stress on the northern region, as more White men escaped the unemployment that gripped the nation by going north to become trappers (Canada 1930). Their presence had the effect of usurping the Indian's traditional traplines, because White trappers could pay the annual registration fees, which the Indians had tended to ignore. Some trappers used aeroplanes to fly into remote trapping areas that an Indian trapper might require several days to reach (Canada 1937). In response to these practices, the federal government began to pay the registration fee for Indian trappers, it banned the use of aeroplanes, and it bought any traplines vacated by White trappers as a way to alleviate unemployment among the Indians (Canada 1938). The depression years were marked by economic and technological forces that redefined the nature of the fur trade by gradually increasing governmental regulation, introducing new competition for Sekani trappers and placing greater pressure on the fur bearing animals.

The advent of World War II did not curtail the harvesting of animal pelts in northern British Columbia. When the war ended, the federal government was in the same position that Governor Simpson reported for the Hudson's Bay Company in 1828. They were promoting actively schemes for the conservation of beaver in the streams and swamps on the Finlay River (Canada 1945). Some traplines were purchased and let lie fallow for a few years to allow beaver to replenish the streams flowing into the Parsnip River (Canada 1948). Following the war, there was more employment in other resource sectors, which paralleled a general decline in returns for trapping. As an industry, trapping was not able to support that many people and increasingly it took on the appearance of a failed make-work project (Canada 1949). Employment opportunities appeared in forestry, in lumber mills and in service industries, and increasingly Sekani trappers relied on relief payments and seasonal work in those industries (Canada 1951). With fur trapping returns falling below even subsistence levels, the fur trade was becoming a seasonal supplement for work wages. The continued low returns persuaded most trappers to seek employment outside the north and many failed to return to their traplines (Canada 1953; 1954). Whereas in

former years the fur trade was a staple of annual governmental reports, it began to appear less often until it seemed anomalous when it was included. However, like any resource, fur prices were subject to the vagaries of market demand and the year 1957/58 was notable for its higher than average prices. Many Sekani who had all but abandoned their traplines returned to the forest to take advantage of the high fur prices (Canada 1958). The following year, no mention was made of the fur trade and the traditional economy of the Sekani quietly slipped off the annual reports of Indian Affairs (Canada 1959).

Perhaps not unexpectedly, academic observers of the fur trade, unlike bureaucrats, did notice the changes that were taking place among their Indian subjects. External influences were promoting this shift away from a trapping lifestyle, including increased government services that reduced reliance on income derived from trapping. Establishing federal schools led to mandatory attendance for Indian children. Naturally, parents desired improved housing in nearby settlements which led to increased participation in the wage economy (VanStone 1963). The demise of the family trapline followed a pattern only too familiar to those who witnessed the death of the family farm on the prairies (Jarvenpa 1976; 1977). By World War II, seasonal family nomadism in subarctic Dene communities was disintegrating rapidly and population aggregations in permanent villages became the norm. However, market demand for furs kept the allure of traplines alive for males who remained committed to the mobile lifestyle associated with a trapline career. Given the small number of trappers in these remote communities, the task group was a kin-based trapping party. They practiced a unique economic dualism in which they balanced their activities between a national cash economy and local subsistence.

Increasing reliance on imported technology, such as snowmobiles, revolutionized trapper mobility such that long periods on the traplines and living off the land were replaced by short jaunts into the bush during which they carried all their supplies. Trapping success increased, but it also ensured their increasing interaction with the cash economy. Economic dualism described in abstract terms the reality of two groups whose lives were governed by

their degree of involvement in commercial trapping (Savishinsky 1978). One group based their livelihood on trapping and thus relied on rapid movement across their trapline, rarely staying out of the village for extended periods. The other group, whose needs were modest, mainly depended on trapping for subsistence; they invested long periods on the trapline and tended to utilize the total environment and its resources. Nevertheless, both groups shared a common fate as a result of abandoning the family trapline! The list of catalytic agents included missionaries, boarding schools, government agents, welfare and wage employment.

Dene communities across the Northwest Territories repeated this scenario with astonishing regularity (Jarvenpa and Brumbach 1988). The pattern began with a trading post being established near the traplines of several Indian bands. Summer gatherings in tent camps become the nucleus for semi-permanent settlements with log houses. A missionary arrives, at which point the temporary village evolves into a permanent settlement. Later government agents arrive and the permanent village becomes a reserve. Family dynamics change as the trapline becomes an ephemeral part of community life: the men remain committed to the trapline while the women and children become estranged from bush life. Although these communities are geographically distant from each other, their experiences are remarkably similar to the Sekani. The decline of the family trapline, noted by earlier anthropologists, was verified in the Aboriginal Peoples Survey conducted during the 1991 national census (Canada 1995). Responses to the census questionnaire indicated that trapping was a marginal occupation, one that was dominated by Indian men (only a few Indian women, Metis and Inuit considered it their occupation). Present Sekani trapping of furs has little to do with their economy and everything to do with cultural survival (Lanoue 1983). Yet despite their involvement, the fur trade is a diminishing source of identity for Sekani, who find themselves struggling to discover an economic niche that will articulate with the world system.

Although the fur trade is still alive, it is no longer an occupation of choice, since in an age of alternative possibilities the rigorous life on the trapline is a less favoured option. The recent trend in the fur trade has emphasized job creation as the main reason for keeping Indians on their traplines. Trapping, as a vocation, is viewed as an antidote to the high, and chronic, unemployment among Native people who live at a distance from the centres of industry and commerce. Cash capitalism supplanted the barter economy of the fur trade and its tendrils reached the remotest Sekani trapline. Even the venerable Hudson's Bay Company was not immune to the influences wrought by the advent of the industrial age. It was forced to redefine its goals, to downsize its trading role and emphasize more its commercial endeavours (Ray 1990). Rail and air transportation, urbanization and a fast-growing manufacturing industry exerted tremendous pressure on a trade that relied too heavily on human labour, an out-moded distribution network and a barter system of exchange. The comfortable monopoly it enjoyed could not survive the competition of a free market. Innis (1930) contended that the fur trade was the standard bearer of capitalism and the company of adventurers its agents. Ironically, it could not sustain its success in a mature economy.

Industrial Canada had little use for the fur trade; a postmodern society is proving to have even less. The animal rights movement has been especially effective in using communications media to sway public opinion against the harvesting of mammalian resources. Animal rights activists opposed to the trapping lifestyle argue that economic decisions, like job creation, are made for short-term benefits to human communities, but at a long-term cost to the nonhuman elements of the environment. They find this theory of anthropocentric utilitarianism to be an inadequate rationale for the harm inflicted on the ecological system (Norton 1982). With such ideas in mind, environmental activism appeals enough to public sensitivity about the rights of nonhuman individuals to pressure governments into reducing the scope of support for the fur trade. Activists drew a parallel between the liberation movements of oppressed human groups, such as women and gays,

and animal rights. They saw in these causes a suitable analogy for demanding an end to the prejudice and discrimination against animals, particularly those animals that were killed to cater to the needs of the food and fashion industries. Boycotts, and other forms of direct action, became their preferred tools for drawing public attention to the activities of trappers (Lamb 1982). The inflicting of pain on animals and killing them was evil, and not just because it served a utilitarian purpose. An animal cared about its existence and to be deprived of it could not be justified by any economic interest (Cave 1982). Images of animals writhing in leg-hold traps were powerful enough to mobilize public opinion, which in turn compelled governments to ban this method of trapping. It did not stop the fur trade, but it provoked debate that resulted in more humane traps that did not condemn animals to lingering, painful deaths. The collision of 'rights', Native rights vs. animal rights, brought to light irreconcilable ideologies, because one had to be promoted at the expense of the other. Paradoxically, animal rightists seek a utopian way of life, one that is an alternative to the competitive materialism of mainstream society (Riches 1995). Their models for this way of life are tribal peoples, especially the ideologies of North American tribal people, whose ways of life they find repugnant because of their reliance on harvesting wild animals. Regrettably the trappings of the fur trade are not as romantic as they used to be. Just as industrialization affected the fur trade, the postindustrial age will leave its indelible mark, and only time will tell if animal pelts have any currency in an information economy.

Over the course of two centuries, Tsek'ehne has transmogrified into Sekani. The former identity grew from an internalist sense of identity, while the latter is an externalist product of recent history. Winnowing Tsek'ehne from Sekani reveals the bias inherent in archives built upon the impressionistic narrations comprising the historical record. Chronicles of the fur trade document the Sekani as seen through the experience of the intruding world. These documents contain information that has symbolic value for the community. Local pride swells in knowing that theirs is the oldest continuously-occupied community in British Columbia, even though that same fact commemorates the first stage

of their dispossession. Seeing the fur trade era through a material culture investigation of its impact on their culture set in motion the idea of initiating an archaeology programme. It began with concern over the shortcomings exhibited in historical records, which tend to be dismissive of the Indian customers. Yet, appropriating archaeology to explore local history put the Sekani heritage project in the ironic position of interpreting Euro-Canadian history for White tourists who have all but forgotten the fur trade. The Sekani experience with history is a local variant on a theme that reverberates across the country because it is the common experience of so many Native people. The excavations at McLeod Lake proved instructive to archaeological thought because they constituted the field test for the direct historical approach as a facet of the Indian brand of internalist archaeology.

Tsek'ehne in Academic Discourse

Tsek'ehne have appeared sporadically in academic discourse because scholars designed research objectives, gathered data, and interpreted their results. Before any of that could happen, researchers needed subjects to observe. Thus, Tsek'ehne presence in the literature reveals a researcher's interest in ethnography, ethnohistory, cultural and physical anthropology, linguistics, archaeology and biosciences. From their first encounter with erudite missionaries to current research into archaeology, Tsek'ehne as research subjects have contributed the data that were reported subsequently in journals. They provided words for philologists, sat passively for anthropometric measurements, and gave blood samples for serum testing. Yet they got surprisingly little in return for their co-operation. Most of the early anthropological research was incomprehensible to them and its objectives were designed by researchers pursuing broader interests. Tsek'ehne appeared as subjects in research projects whenever a statistical population was needed to find patterns or to trace connections, but they seldom benefited from the data they generated. Archaeology solved this perennial conundrum by granting them decision-making power over the data, while contributing to the broader discourse of the discipline.

Ethnographers have two centuries of data collected about the Tsek'ehne. The first words were written by Alexander Mackenzie during his adventure in the homeland of the Rocky Mountain Indians in 1793. Guy Lanoue, a graduate student at the University of Toronto, wrote the final volume in 1983. By then, reserve life had replaced reliance on the bush economy. The early ethnographic period contributed descriptive accounts of Sekani material and intellectual culture. Ethnographic data were to function in lieu of real people, so researchers of this period expended their energy recording the details of their aboriginal lifeways. Reliance on detailed observation postponed the need for theory building, thus sampling material culture and recording practices became the mode that would preserve Native people for the larger world. Scholarly publications in the early part of the 20th century attempted to mold this mass of data into a coherent encyclopedia of world cultures (Hill-Tout 1907; Hodge 1910). Similarly, museum collections were being synthesized to form the theoretical basis for culture areas (Wissler 1922). Thereafter, the Tsek'ehne were placed in the western subarctic culture area.

The Dene section of the ethnographic library expanded with the arrival of Catholic and Protestant missionaries, even if they had less than scholarly motives for observing Sekani lifeways. Although mention of Sekani customs and habits was a staple practice of early travellers, the first systematic, detailed ethnographic portrait of the Sekani was written by the Oblate missionary Father Adrian Morice (1890; 1904), based on his long residence in New Caledonia. Ostensibly sent there by his order, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, to evangelize among the aborigines (Mulhall 1986) and pre-empt the efforts of the Protestant missionaries (Cronin 1960; Choquette 1995), Father Morice took it upon himself to expand his mission and assume the role of anthropologist (MacLeod 1926; Mulhall 1986). He became an indefatigable observer of the western Denes, including the Sekanis, whose habits and customs he described in detail for scholarly publication. Commencing in the last decade of the nineteenth century, and continuing through the early decades of the twentieth, his staccato narrations were featured regularly in the pages of the *Transactions of the*

Canadian Institute, Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada and the journals *Anthropos* and *American Anthropologist*. Without the presence of traders and missionaries, the aboriginal lifeways of the Sekani would have been absent from the literature. Professional anthropologists did not begin working there until the mid-twentieth century; long after Sekani had settled on reserves and adopted a western lifestyle.

Through the pages of anthropological narratives, the world learned of the Sekani and their boreal homeland in the Rocky Mountain Trench (Boas 1889; Chapman 1921; MacLeod 1925; 1926; Morice 1899; 1925; 1928). Along with their neighbours and linguistic relatives, the Carrier, Chilcotin and Beaver Indians, they constituted the extensive Athapaskan presence in the heavily forested interior of British Columbia (Morice 1891). They were organized in loosely affiliated, kin-based egalitarian bands; no tribal chief was considered paramount, instead each band was led by a head man, who was usually the patriarch of the group. Band membership was fluid and it was not uncommon for families to have relatives in neighbouring bands; in this way they were able to forge a larger tribal identity. It also allowed them to gain access to hunting and fishing resources. While "each band [had its] traditional hunting grounds, the limits of these [were] but vaguely defined... Furthermore, several members of one band will not infrequently be found hunting unmolested on the land of another" (Morice 1895: 28). He identified nine subdivisions, or bands, that occupied sections of the Parsnip, Finlay and Peace rivers (Morice 1892a; 1895). During his visit to northern British Columbia, Diamond Jenness (1931) could discern only four subdivisions in the same region. Coincidentally, that was the same number of trading posts operating at the time. Since the fur trade was winding down, the Department of Indian Affairs was able to amalgamate Sekanis into three administrative groups. Each band, as defined by the *Indian Act*, was assigned a particular reserve.

Contemporary anthropological studies of Sekani socio-political organization have focused on changes in historic times resulting from their interaction with a larger world. Four levels of social organization, beginning with the local band, then the phratry, next the

regional band, and finally the tribe, constituted the common culture of Sekanis. Prior to the fur trade they practiced a "phratric exogamy", which they abandoned in favour of a "patronymic exogamy" as a reaction to the fur trade economy. This change was their way of coping with the new economy and is the system of kinship observed in the modern era (Lanoue 1983: 351). The phratric social system was a feature of Sekani society that had developed in response to subsistence conditions; as opposed to the more complex economic variables introduced by the ability to procure furs. This social flexibility reflected the Athapaskan propensity to change or adopt ways without losing their own identity as a distinct group. Possibly bad economic conditions in the late nineteenth century, coupled with poor fur returns, had led to high indebtedness among the Sekani, which caused them to become tied economically to a particular fur trade post. Living off the land had become less viable and this in turn had resulted in food dependency and population stabilization at specific posts. Their descendants were the people who welcomed Diamond Jenness onto their reserve.

Classical ethnographies compiled about the Sekani described a hunting and gathering culture that eked out a meagre existence in a challenging environment. These records included descriptions of the ingenious snares and deadfall traps they devised to procure the animals that provided them with furs for clothing and food to eat. A typical description of their seasonal round began in the springtime when they subsisted on the tender shoots of budding plants, such as nettles and cow parsnips, and migrating water fowl. In the summer they travelled by foot along well-worn trails between camps, or paddled the lakes and rivers in spruce or birch bark canoes and poplar dugouts. At their many customary campgrounds, they constructed conical shelters made of poles covered with sheets of spruce or birch bark. From these camps they scoured the forest for big game mammals, built weirs and nets to capture fish and made birch bark baskets to gather roots and berries. They continued these activities well into the autumn in preparation for the approaching winter; at which time they engaged in absentee hunting on their traplines

using deadfall traps and snares. From a base camp, they employed dog traction and toboggans to travel between camps to inspect their traplines. Near the end of winter they often suffered privation as they exhausted their stored food and live game became scarce (Morice 1895; Hill-Tout 1907; Jenness 1937a; Helm 1993). Their strategy, coupled with the low carrying capacity of the boreal forest, resulted in a sparse population dispersed across their vast homeland.

Sekani material culture could be described in minute detail and function; yet there was one aspect that eluded even the most vigilant observer. The Sekani world was saturated with spirit beings and creatures endowed with supernatural power who could intervene on behalf of, or against, any person. These spirit beings lived underwater or underground and could manifest their power by their actions. For example, a giant fish was thought responsible for earth tremors, and its movements caused a set of rapids in a river that forced people to portage around them (Sharp 1987). If these giant fish were displeased with the actions of people they could destroy nets that were set in the water, which in turn would cause hunger or even starvation. Thus any device constructed to capture prey was futile until it was infused with spirit power to protect it from harm. Ensuring success meant praying, to invoke sympathetic magic or solicit help from spirit guides, or leaving an offering to the spirit of the animal prey. If a spirit was offended by a careless hunter who was preparing his snares, animals would be alerted to the presence of the snares. They would run around them, rendering the snares useless for their intended purpose. Appeasing supernatural forces with prayers and offerings, as manifested among northern hunting cultures, was believed to enhance the efficacy of their traps and snares. Religiosity was a response to their lack of control over their environment. Control was "the ultimate scarce valued resource and assumes a greater utility than the actual physical resources over which it is exercised" (Ridington 1968: 1153). Power was part of the equation in risk assessment; thus, the greater the risk of an enterprise, the greater the need for spiritual guidance. This belief system later was disparaged as so much superstition, but

in its aboriginal context it allowed people to envisage a higher level of order in an otherwise chaotic universe.

Spirit power was not reserved for inanimate objects; it was a fundamental motif of being. In the Sekani world, as with other Athapaskan people, there were several pathways for attaining spirit power, or medicine; the most important of which were dreams and visions (Ridington 1988). The ubiquitous act of dreaming was the first step toward understanding the quixotic machinations of spirits. Tsek'ehne pursued dreams like a hunter chases his quarry because "supernatural power or 'medicine' derives from knowledge that someone acquires during dreams and other personal encounters....dreams are real; the phenomena one encounters in dreams are tangible, substantive" (Rushforth 1992: 485). Experience with dreams and dreaming was essential since everyone dreams. Invariably dreams influence action, therefore messages imparted in dreams had to be interpreted. The visionary experience began when individuals deliberately induced dreaming in their vision quests, both as a rite of passage and as a method of obtaining medicine. During the dream, the individual encountered the spirit beings that could make the difference in their subsequent lives and, if they proved adept at invoking spirit power, they were respected as medicine people or shamans. "People who have lived past maturity have amply demonstrated sufficient supernatural power to protect themselves against the ecological and supernatural perils of being....[they] are accorded the power to kill and to cure, to dream and to divine" (Ridington 1968: 1154). Equating long life and prosperity with receiving the protection of spirits during personal encounters with the universe helps to explain the obsession with elders in modern Indian discourse.

The aboriginal beliefs are enigmatic even in the contemporary community, given the lengthy period of religious indoctrination from outside sources. Since much of their ritual life was reported during trade encounters by culturally uninformed and prejudiced observers, it was usually misunderstood and invariably misinterpreted. Sometimes, traits were attributed to particular groups that were in fact foreign to them. For example,

Harmon's erroneous insistence that their burial customs included cremation was accepted without question by historians (for example see Chapman 1921; MacLeod 1925), who continued to defend this questionable fact despite reports to the contrary (Morice 1925). Subsequently ethnographers would have trouble sorting out the shifting realities of a group that was in the midst of conversion to Catholicism. Oddly, mistaken speculation about aboriginal beliefs made Father Morice (1928) bristle even though his ultimate goal was to supplant them. Thereafter, his personal crusade was to clarify the confusion resulting from a slavish acceptance of faulty historical accounts. His call for critical evaluation of the evidence by his anthropological colleagues was not always appreciated (MacLeod 1926). Morice the amateur anthropologist was more than a match for the armchair ethnographer. When linguists arrived looking for subjects, he was more than ready to take them to task.

When anthropological methods were directed to the Sekani language they enhanced the understanding of the larger Athapaskan linguistic group. The linguistic work conducted among the Sekani, while open to as much speculation as their ritual life, did not elicit the same passion or fervour. The extensive Dene presence in the subarctic, coupled with the plethora of languages, became a popular subject in late nineteenth century anthropological discourse. The linguistic diversity along the northwest coast was interpreted as indicating that Dene speakers had been in contiguous occupation of the coast from Alaska to California and that subsequently intrusive Pacific migrants had displaced the extant Dene tribes (Hill-Tout 1898). Although he did not accept such spurious theories, Morice (1906; 1907a; 1907b) could not ignore the pervasive presence of Dene speakers in so many disparate environments in western North America. Of all Indian groups, Dene affinal ties with Asian cultures seemed to have the best prospects of being demonstrated by comparative philology (Morice 1892b), the precursor of modern linguistics. Observing the variety of Dene languages and of the theories explaining this diversity, in the light of his own religious training, reminded Morice of the biblical myth of Babel as a fitting analogy (Morice 1915a).

The study of language took an interesting turn in the early twentieth century when Edward Sapir began to publish his theories on the dynamics of spoken language and the Athapaskan languages figured prominently in his research (Sapir 1915a; 1915b). Sapir contended that language was an integral part of culture. It persisted even as material culture was subjected to dramatic replacement. It represented a sort of stratified matrix - analogous to a geological stratum - that could aid in reconstructing linguistic prototypes or tracing the movement of peoples. Also, the geographical distribution of languages could provide important clues for establishing relative chronologies on the separation of closely related languages (Sapir 1916; Haas 1973). Father Morice (1915b; 1915c) lost no time in expressing his opinion regarding Sapir's conclusions since Dene languages had been cited prominently. He congratulated Sapir on his *tour de force*, but wondered how he could make such sweeping generalizations after compiling only a limited Athapaskan wordlist. Sapir's work was the type of publication that made Morice (1917) uncomfortable, since in his many years of service among the Carriers and Sekani he had become fluent in their languages but did not make the associations Sapir did.

Sapir's research objectives, not being informed by ecclesiastical mandates, followed a trajectory that led away from the ethnographic style of Father Morice. The phenomenon of language change and the search for a Dene homeland led him and others to look to northwestern North America as the source of all Na-Dene speakers (Sapir 1914, 1936; Hoijer 1938). Their methodology consisted of collecting seemingly stable lexical items in Dene languages and employing direct comparison to establish a relative chronology for the separation of the various Dene groups (Voegelin 1945). Language scholars had noticed early on that the speech of Sarcee, Beaver and Sekani were quite similar (Campbell 1884; Morice 1891). Logically, the small degree of linguistic difference among these three languages would imply a low relative chronology for separation from a common language. For example, Sarcee and Beaver lexical items different greatly relative to those between Sekani and Beaver. Logically, it meant that Sarcee speakers had separated from the shared

language sooner than had Sekani and Beaver. Extending this logic to the greater linguistic family could determine if Navajo, for example, had separated from proto-Athapaskan earlier than, say, Hupa. Between the two world wars, linguists were content to follow this avenue of study. However, by the mid-twentieth century the search for a Na-Dene homeland and the historical studies of their languages had lost their investigative vigour (Haas 1973). Willard Libby's discovery of the decay of unstable Carbon-14 isotopes to Nitrogen pumped some fervent energy into a worn out idea. Radiocarbon dating inspired a new era in linguistic analysis, as researchers grew more confident that they could analogically establish an absolute chronology for language change. Applying the statistical principle underlying nuclear decay rates to words would lead researchers to discover the half-life of languages (Swadesh 1952; Hymes 1957). From the beginning though, researchers acknowledged that glottochronology could not stand on its own and would require corroborating evidence from such disciplines as archaeology or physical anthropology. Armed with a novel lexico-statistical technique, the search for a Na-Dene homeland seemed to point out of America and into northeast Asia. Using a wordlist that purportedly resisted change, linguists sought to link the Athapaskan language family with Sino-Tibetan (Shafer 1952; Hymes 1955; Hoijer 1956; Krauss 1964). Once again, optimism gradually yielded to ennui as the theory failed to deliver the conclusive observations. Sporadically, linguists still announce the discovery of Dene roots in central Siberia. Now the links are to the Yeniseian family rather than to Sino-Tibetan, as was previously postulated (Ruhlen 1998).

Glottochronology barely reached its teenage years before linguists began to question the very notion underlying it. Once again researchers found themselves searching for new leads to follow. Research goals were amended to pursue more modest goals: grand theorizing and sweeping generalizations were replaced by the search for specific traits fundamental to the mechanics and structure of Athapaskan languages (Cook 1977; Huld 1983; Rushforth and Gorbet 1989). The theoretical and culture-historical concerns of

linguists gave way to the unique problems that have emerged as the process of globalization exerted its influence on Native peoples. Modern times undermined the viability of their languages, even rendering some obsolete (Swadesh 1948). The facts were that European languages were rapidly replacing Native languages, and Native people were not exhibiting loyalty to their ancestral languages (Miller 1971). For their part, Native people generally regard language replacement to be symptomatic of a world that has been indifferent or even hostile to cultural diversity. The loss of languages was also regarded as encouraging cultural homogenization. Thus stabilizing or revitalizing endangered languages is reiterated as a laudable goal by diverse Native people who wish to apply linguistic methods for their potential in enhancing language transmission (Mithun 1990). Without remediation, many Native languages are destined for extinction due to their existence as linguistic islands in a sea of English. Unfortunately, the Sekani language falls into this category. It is a threatened language because it is spoken by a few adults, but not by children; nor is it a medium for social interaction (Goddard 1996). Indeed as early as 1970 it was reputed to be a moribund language no longer vital to the Sekani community or to linguists (Krauss 1973). Potential methods for preserving it include analyzing it and describing its structure (Hargus 1986; 1988). Members of the McLeod Lake Indian Band, working with linguists, devised a written form of the Sekani language using Roman orthography. However, literacy and fluent writing in Sekani are curiosities that have not been embraced by all band members.

Coeval with linguistic research, physical anthropologists proposed several theories regarding the Asian origin of Athapaskan people. Instead of focusing on language, their speculation was based on similar physical traits; an idea that was first articulated in scientific circles in the nineteenth century (Campbell 1884). Anthropologists thought that studying the phenotypic characteristics of American Indians would reveal their ultimate progenitors. They felt that systematic measurements of physical traits, or anthropometry, might succeed where comparative philology had come up short. Their work appeared

similar to phrenology, but this was not the same as the once popular method for assessing the moral characteristics of people by feeling the bumps on their heads. The methodology did include meticulous measurements of Dene crania, in all their varied populations, and detailed reporting on the patterns of their teeth (Grant 1936). The studies on archaeological and modern populations succeeded in tracing similarities in the dental pattern and tooth morphology between Asians and American Indians. The frequency of specific traits, such as shovel-shaped incisors, a large first maxillary premolar, and overall structure of the dental arcade became known as sinodonty. It is thought to be the culmination of selective pressures associated with the arctic diet of northern Asia (Turner 1985). The conclusions that have been drawn from these data include ideas about the origin of Na-Dene speakers and their placement in the hierarchy of early migrations from Asia to America. However, much like the speculation regarding linguistic analysis and lithic traditions, the dental record did not deliver the definitive bite.

As new research techniques developed, researchers had the opportunity to explore new avenues that dealt with the relatedness of linguistic groups and their links to northern Asia. One area that received particular attention was the work started before 1920 on the variation in blood groups among different populations. Thereafter blood became the preferred bodily fluid for studies on the relative allele frequencies in genetic analyses of Indian populations (Callegari-Jacques et al. 1993). With the discovery of distinct blood groups (A, B, O and AB), a myth seeped into the anthropological literature that all 'pure-blood' American Indians belonged to blood group O (Boyd 1939). More recent work conducted on different tribal and linguistic groups has demonstrated that this is simply not the case. Even in populations with relatively minor admixtures of non-Indians there is no concentration in any one group. There is no evidence to associate a homogeneous blood trait with race (Gates 1929; 1939; Boyd 1939; Matson 1940; Chown and Lewis 1955; Corcoran 1959; Lewis et al. 1961). As the techniques for DNA sequencing became more refined, the focus of researchers shifted from blood groups to specific blood proteins and

enzymes. For example, a typical study will compare the distribution of gammaglobulin haplotypes in Na-Dene populations with those of Inuit, Asians and other Indians (Szathmary 1981; 1983; Callegari-Jacques et al. 1993). Geneticists argue that genetic markers will reveal historical relationships that are not evident in cultural data. The main point here is that race, language and culture are separate (as Boas demonstrated long ago); the only way biological relations can be established is biologically. Undaunted, physical anthropologists continue to look to direct comparison of the inherent similarities and differences of these genetic markers to provide clues for finding their holy grail: the origin of American Indians (Szathmary 1985).

Beginning in the ethnographic era, the Tsek'ehne appeared in academic discourse as a unit of examination, whether as a cultural or linguistic unit, or as a blood group. Scholarly interest in them ensured their presence in research literature although they were not always the exclusive focus of research. Classic ethnographies, such as Jenness' (1932) survey of the Indians of Canada, are typical in that they summarize culture areas rather than cultures. Reports of their material culture are scattered through Jenness' volume, depending on whether the chapter topic was about trapping techniques or habitation styles. He reckoned a pessimistic future for the rapidly disappearing Tsek'ehne, which he did nothing to revise in subsequent editions even though they contributed to ongoing research. In the post-ethnographic era, when Sekani traditional culture was retreating into the past and their new reality was being dictated by a remote and alien government, they still found their way into the reports and journals of researchers looking for subjects to prove one theory or another. Control of data collected with their cooperation stayed in the possession of the researcher whose project included Tsek'ehne subjects. Regardless of the nature of research, it was a one-way endeavour that resulted in loss for the Tsek'ehne communities. There was always a bigger picture, a broader canvas, in which they were bit players who were content simply to lend their experience. Oddly, a pessimistic undertone seemed to direct scholarly interest on the northern Denes; they were

always on the verge of losing some aspect of their identity which necessitated research among them.

By contrast, archaeology offered the Tsek'ehne an unique opportunity to find something. Their experimentation with archaeology marked a milestone in their historic relationship with academia. Excavating the old village was their attempt to evaluate the fluid and dynamic nature of identity. Their field project to investigate their recent history, placed the McLeod Lake Indian Band in control of the research agenda. They set the direction by defining parameters and objectives of the project. They controlled the data that was generated and curated the artifacts that were unearthed. Never benefiting directly had been a chronic source of aggravation until the opening of a museum and heritage park revealed the tangible results of archaeology for community economic development. As for their contribution to the discipline, their project began the search for an internalist sense of archaeology. Excavating the old McLeod Lake village is the prototype for the choices that characterize internalist archaeology because it involved excavation and a field crew. My involvement as the director was unprecedented, because by then I had received the accreditation required to be a professional archaeologist.

Prior to 1993, archaeology on Indian lands looked like a standard case study of the core servicing the periphery. When the McLeod Lake Indian Band recruited me to lead their excavation, they were the first to exercise a choice that was not previously been seen as available. I was not a band member, to be sure, but being an Indian from another Indian band gave us parallel experiences. I could understand their expectations related to work and training. I could also connect with their concerns about it. At the time, neither I nor the band leaders could appreciate that our excavation was unique in the annals of Canadian archaeology. My experience there convinced me that my constituency expanded beyond the borders of my reserve to include any Indian band that might require the services of an archaeologist. It made me aware that power comes from exercising independence. Over-reliance on Canada has led to a culture of dependence that Indians must struggle against

constantly. The excavation at McLeod Lake was a case study demonstrating that Native people need nobody to hold their hand and guide them through each step of field work.

Digging Up the Past at McLeod Lake, B.C.

When the first patches of turf were peeled off in one-by-one meter squares at the Tsek'ehne village in 1993 (Figure 5.1), it began the long march toward creating an Indian version of archaeology. Community leaders had defined their own immediate and longterm goals, which included summer job creation, meaningful temporary employment, problem-oriented labour and work experience. Their stated goal was for the younger generation to enter the job market with training and choices, rather than as unskilled labourers. Therefore, temporary job creation was the initial stage in contributing toward the long term objective of constructing a heritage theme park and museum by investing in the future labour pool. Since cultural tourism is not viable without skilled workers, fulfilling such a goal means creating locally the experienced personnel who can operate a heritage theme park and museum. It requires people who are familiar with the role of heritage interpreters. Employment may be a strong motivating factor as an expedient objective. However, planning for the long term means articulating a strategy that translates into a sustainable project. Thus, the heritage theme park and museum became a reality because the McLeod Lake Indian Band decided to experiment with cultural tourism. Celebrating two hundred years of fur trade history, and preparing for the bicentennial in 2005, became the context for heritage interpretation.

McLeod Lake post, GfRs 3, would become the anchor for the proposed heritage park, although the infrastructure was in a poor state of repair (Figure 5.2). When the main trading store was removed to its present location next to the Hart Highway in 1953, the remaining buildings were left abandoned and unused. The windows were boarded up and the doors padlocked shut. There in the emptiness, pigeons and swallows nested in the rafters. Brittle caulking fell away, inviting the weather indoors. Sunlight pierced the dimness through missing shingles, casting spot lights on airborne dust. Restoring these

buildings to museum standards required a heavy investment that could only be a longterm objective with no set timetable. Constructing a tourist attraction would necessarily include plans to renovate these buildings into a museum quality facility. Estimating the costs for such an endeavour quickly pointed to a needs assessment. Given the dilapidated condition, a construction triage seemed the appropriate measure.

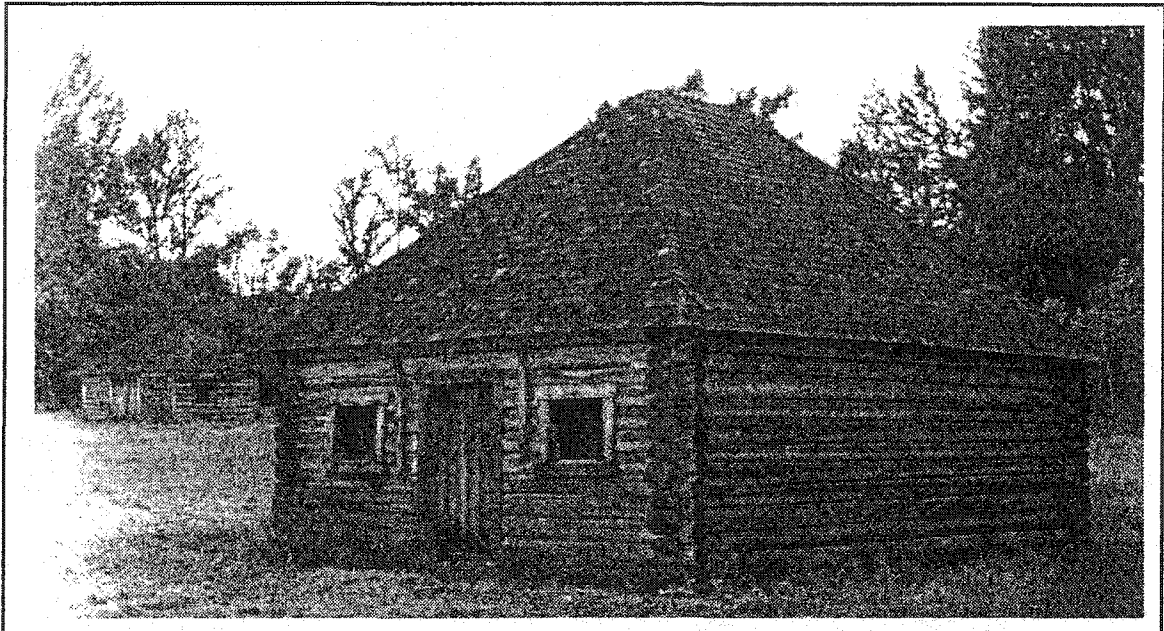


Figure 5.2. The remnants of Fort McLeod (GfRs 3) were in a dilapidated state of repair. The warehouse, in the foreground, and the tool shed as they presently appear.

Bill Quackenbush (1990) had conducted excavations at the site as part of an overall assessment of its heritage potential. He evaluated the site for inclusion in the cultural industries and found that it had the requisite qualities. Its setting was a natural candidate for heritage interpretation. Four buildings of the original post remained standing: the residence, icehouse, storage warehouse and tool shed. The log cabin designs reflect the era of the 1920s when they were built. The post was far from major centres and transportation routes consisted of lakes and rivers, so to keep costs manageable building materials were handcrafted locally, except the nails and shingles. Structures such as boardwalks and the flag pole had disappeared, but their presence was still readily visible as mounds and depressions in the sod within the compound area. Since the buildings had fallen into

disrepair, reclaiming them for exhibition space meant they all had to be made weather proof. Therefore, each structure was assessed for minimum repairs necessary to shut out weather and secure the remaining structure. The Ministry of Tourism and Small Business granted the funds to restore the former residence, as it would become the centrepiece of the restoration. It would house a small museum dedicated to recounting the role of the fur trade in local history (Figure 5.3). Completing a full restoration on the icehouse, tool shed and warehouse has no time frame, the more pressing matter being stabilization.

Once the fragility index was established, and pressing needs identified, a funding source was identified. A B.C. heritage trust grant of \$40,000.00 from the British Columbia government enabled Bill Quackenbush to contract, Bill Smith of Ravenwood Pro'd Inc., who specialized in restoring old buildings, to complete the restoration of the old residence. He worked through the winter of 1993 and by spring a new cement foundation supported the building. A new roof sat atop the restored walls and logs that had rotted or showed signs of fire damage were replaced. The new logs were cut to approximate the size and shape of the original ones. The interior was rebuilt with fresh drywall on the walls and ceiling, and glass panes replaced the boarded up windows. A new hardwood floor, electricity, and new doors all confounded the occasional stray sparrow that accidentally flew in to a familiar perch only to find an illuminated museum. Fresh paint, both inside and outside, restored the white walls and red roof of the residence. The larger expenditure of funds was concentrated on the restoration, and about \$15,000.00 was dedicated to exhibit design. Coincidental with the restoration work, an historical exhibition was designed by Bill Quackenbush based largely on his research for his thesis. Display technicians from Barkerville, Anne Laing and Bert de Vink, were the principal designers. In the spring of 1994 an installation crew stormed the outpost and installed the exhibit dedicated to the fur trade at McLeod's Lake Post.

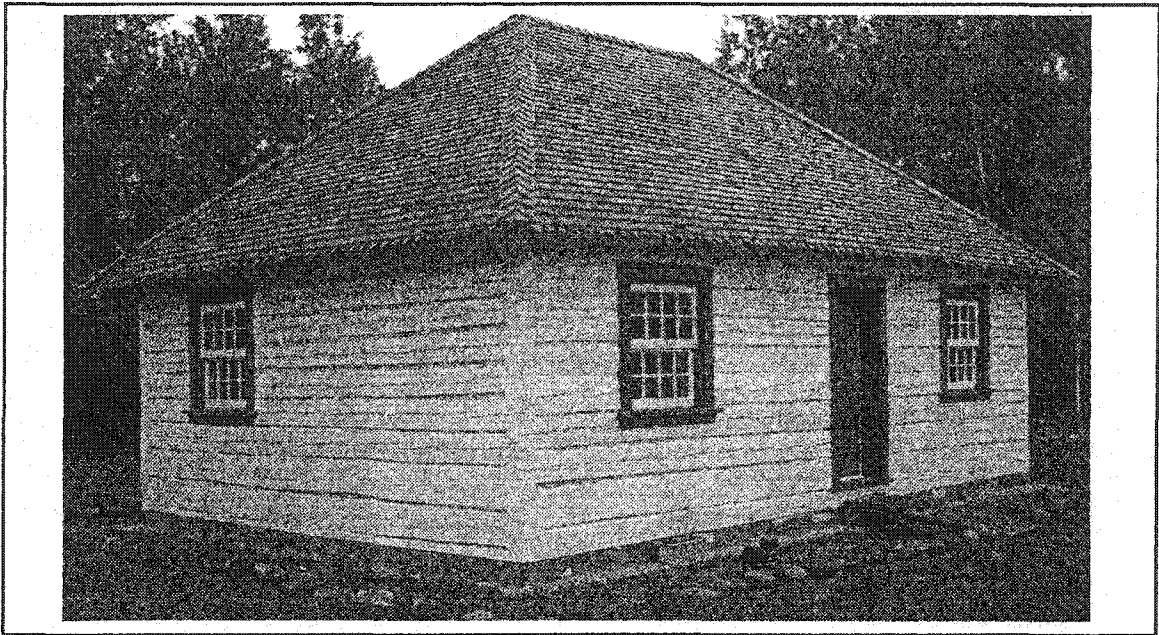


Figure 5.3. Restored former residence was reopened to the public as a museum. The restoration was a success and even impressed the village dogs.

Funds for the heritage project came from sponsoring agencies that included the McLeod Lake Indian Band, the Access to Archaeology programme operated by the federal Department of Communications, and a BC21 grant from the Province of British Columbia. The McLeod Lake Indian Band, with matching funds from the federal government, provided employment in archaeology field work by providing salaries for the participants over three field seasons. Supporting a field director and crew of six for two seasons was made possible by \$87,520.00 in grants from the above agencies. Only financial support of such magnitude could make providing meaningful work experience for high school students during their summer recess an achievable objective. Financing restorations and improvements at the heritage theme park was a costly initiative but provincial and corporate grants in the amount of \$80,000.00 facilitated structural improvements and exhibition installation. The costs varied with each building because the sizes and states of disrepair varied, but to bring four structures to display quality for public exhibition cost between fifteen and twenty thousand dollars each. Bill Smith of Ravenwood Pro'd Inc. continues restoration work on the other buildings under contract to Bill Quackenbush, who stays alert

to government programmes to fund restoration work. In 1996 the ice house was restored, a new roof was placed on the warehouse and two years later the workshop was restored. Additionally, \$5000.00 was donated to the project by *Duz Cho* Logging for landscaping and improvements to the cemetery. Experimenting with cultural tourism required an initial investment of nearly \$200,000.00 to pay for salaries, materials, exhibits, restoration and landscaping; however, the benefit to the community is a tourist attraction that can inject tourist dollars into the local economy. One hundred and eighty-nine summers after Simon Fraser first slept here, a museum quality display in a heritage theme park opened on the shores of McLeod (formerly Trout) Lake to commemorate the aftermath of his visit. Bill Quackenbush has not lost his confidence that this historic site can shed its image as British Columbia's best kept secret. His muse, Simon Fraser, will not let him think otherwise.

Excavating McLeod Lake Village (GfRs 2)

Bill Quackenbush has had a special regard for this lonely little outpost built by Simon Fraser during the fur trade era of northern British Columbia ever since he completed a heritage assessment of McLeod Lake post as part of his graduate studies in archaeology at Simon Fraser University. Two short centuries has been a sufficient span of history to obscure the whereabouts, and even the existence, of these first capitalist enclaves and he determined to rescue this one from oblivion. Some trading posts were occupied for only a short duration before being abandoned, but archaeologists had shown that these posts could be found using archaeological survey methods. Excavation showed that the intensity of occupation left good traces. One such site was Rocky Mountain Fort on the upper Peace River, where it exits the mountains and begins to flow across the plains en route to the Arctic Ocean (Burley et al. 1996). Simon Fraser departed from Rocky Mountain Fort when the ice floes cleared in the spring of 1805. He dipped his paddle against the current of the Peace River as he ventured to the west side of the Rocky Mountains, following the route travelled by Mackenzie into the Sekani heartland. Simon Fraser carried his canoes around the gigantic rapids that poured through the gates of the Rockies. Like Mackenzie he

turned left where two rivers joined and paddled south against the Parsnip River to its confluence with the Pack River, then followed the latter stream until he reached Trout Lake.

Only muted celebrations greeted the sesquicentennial of the founding of the post when it arrived in 1955, because by then the Hudson's Bay Company had already ceased operations at the post. The land had been given over to the province as a historic site. Adjacent to the post, the small Tsek'ehne village had grown from a small, seasonal camp to become the nucleus of an Indian reserve for the McLeod Lake Indian Band, the descendants of the people who greeted Simon Fraser upon his arrival at Trout Lake. Two decades later, the Tsek'ehne population had outgrown the old village site. The houses were levelled after the Department of Indian Affairs relocated the entire village to the bluff above the west shore of the McLeod River beside the road to Carp Lake. The old Sekani village persisted for two decades more after the trading post closed its operation. Community planners with the Department of Indian Affairs decided in the mid-1970s to build a new village because the limited space where old one was located could no longer keep up with housing demands. By 1980 the old village was completely abandoned and relocated to the new site. Save for two small houses, the entire village was demolished and the site known to archaeologists as GfRs 2 was created. Construction of the Hart Highway had reoriented the Tsek'ehne away from the lake and toward the road system. People relied less on boats as the convenience of automobiles lessened their reliance on water travel. Timber harvesting in the Carp Lake area necessitated a secondary road that was built through the reserve (Figure 5.1). The result was to shift the village away from the lake completely, leaving the waterfront to become overgrown with alder and willows. What were once well-worn trails down to the old beach became obscured by tall grasses and shrubs. Church-goers, few as they were, attended mass during weekly visits by a priest to the new church constructed in the village of McLeod Lake along the Hart Highway. Even the cemetery fell into disuse as the band began to bury the dead in Prince George. The old village, although unused, was not entirely forgotten as members

continued to visit the site to pick berries and a foot path was a short cut to the bridge that spanned the lake and led to the post office (Quackenbush 1990).

Bill Quackenbush graduated from Simon Fraser University in 1990 and promptly received a posting with the province of British Columbia as curator of the northern interior region for the heritage branch. Working out of Barkerville, the gold rush theme park in the Caribou Mountains, and with a district of responsibility that included McLeod Lake Post, he found himself in a position to act on his long-held conviction that this overlooked historic site had economic potential as a tourist attraction and a source of new jobs. He seized the opportunity when the provincial government announced a programme called BC21 that would target heritage projects. Garnering funds to restore a neglected site was the first phase in his vision of creating an historic site in partnership with the McLeod Lake Indian Band. He convinced the band to support field excavation for the summer of 1992 as part of a strategy to secure funding from the now-defunct Access to Archaeology programme of the federal Department of Communications. He recruited a graduate school colleague, Beth Bedard, to work for the band and supervise excavations at their old village. The field personnel, Shannon Chingee, the Inyallie twins, Edward and Fred, and their younger brother Broken Arrow, were teenage band members attending high school. They were paid salaries from monies designated by the Department of Indian Affairs as a job fund for young aboriginal people. Armed with a successful first year, Bill Quackenbush applied for an Access to Archaeology grant to sponsor further excavations the following summer. Unfortunately, Beth Bedard had been hired to direct a heritage project in the Bella Coola valley on the central coast and was unable to continue the project for the summer of 1993. Bill Quackenbush then recruited me to take over for the summer of 1993, just as I was completing my graduate programme at Simon Fraser University. One week after defending my thesis I departed for McLeod Lake. On June 28, 1993, I began my first excavation as a professional archaeologist. My field assistant was Georgina Chingee and my crew consisted of Shannon Chingee, Broken Arrow Inyallie and his younger brother,

Sundance, Kenneth Solonas, and Sean Myers (a White teenager who was an unofficial band member).

The Tsek'ehne welcomed Simon Fraser when he first arrived to build the post he would name after Archibald McLeod. The disappearance of their toponym for Trout Lake foreshadowed the changes Fraser would wreak on their culture as he constructed New Caledonia. Now they wanted to investigate the conditions that led to their occupation of their old village. The Tsek'ehne did not disappear, nor assimilate into Euro-Canadian society, rather they accommodated the traders and observed an uneasy truce with the new regime. Throughout the fur trade period, considerable ethnic variation was on display in the walk from the trading post to the village. Not unexpectedly, the historical record is about the fur trade. Lost under the glossy veneer of Canada's history is a story about the dispossession of Tsek'ehne. Regrettably, the Tsek'ehne had no one to chronicle their experience, but luckily the imperfect historical record is not the only source of local history. Searching for traces of Tsek'ehne history demanded alternative methods designed to utilize unwritten sources. Here, archaeological work demonstrated its potential for aboriginal people with no written history who desire to investigate the past without deferring to the written word. The excavation at McLeod Lake was also instrumental in forming those questions that would lead me to a theoretical discussion of internalist archaeology.

Prior to this point, my understanding was that archaeology was better suited for recovering ancient artifacts and that the historic era was best left to historians. However, our excavation changed my attitude when I realized that archaeological methods usually reserved for researching the ancient past were equally applicable to recent Indian history. As a prototype for an internalist archaeology, our crew showed that excavation could shed light on the dynamics between the traders and the Tsek'ehne, and how Tsek'ehne culture coped with the intruding world system. Excavating the old village was not meant to supplant historical research. Rather the dig was intended to complement archival studies and determine the course of events as reflected through material culture. Inadvertently, we

demonstrated that internalist archaeology could bridge the distance between academic discourse and local aboriginal communities. We were able to realize the desire to define and control the research agenda in the modern Tsek'ehne village.

The old Sekani village was located on an elongated, narrow raised beach, a remnant from an earlier water level, along the northwest shore of McLeod Lake (Figure 5.1). Demarcating the western edge of the site is the McLeod River, formerly a tributary of the Pack River until captured by the lake. One kilometer to east, the Pack River drains McLeod Lake into the Parsnip River. Spring freshets and ice dams bring water seasonally to the scroll bars and abandoned channels behind the village site where standing water typically remains for the duration of the summer. Before built roads, lakes and rivers connected northern regions, hence the village was oriented to the water. Steep-sloped trails worn into the embankment led to the beach, where canoes and boats were pulled ashore. All doors in the village once opened to a view of the lake and the boreal forest beyond (Figure 5.4). Climax vegetation here is comprised of white spruce and subalpine fir, while disturbed areas are characterized by homogeneous stands of jackpine. However, in the immediate vicinity of GfRs 2, a mixed coniferous-cottonwood forest thrives due to the moist regime. Moisture-tolerant, riparian species, such as red alder, willow and dwarf birch, proliferate along the lake margin, and cottonwood forests closely follow the stream and river courses. Stands of black spruce abound in areas of poorly drained terrain and pockets of aspen grow well on exposed, dry slopes. Numerous fruit-bearing shrubs, such as blueberry, wild rose, hawthorne, chokecherry and saskatoon, occupy the forest floor. Although a dense forest surrounds the village, the sandy soil beneath it promotes rapid drainage and contributes to the low soil moisture regime where only drought-tolerant plants grow. Like a island, this grassy knoll seems an anomalous opening amid the landscape of continuous forest. The Tsek'ehne thought it was ideal for camping and occupied it many times as they rested by the lake (Figure 5.5).

Vertebrate wildlife species occupy every available terrestrial and aquatic habitat around the village site, with mammals constituting the most visible faunal group. Larger mammals include ungulates, such as moose, deer, elk and caribou, and smaller ones include rodents such as beavers, muskrats, marmots, ground squirrels, bats and mice. Predatory mammals range in size from grizzly bears, black bears, wolves and coyotes to smaller weasels, martens, fishers and wolverines (Banfield 1974). The resident population of game birds expands seasonally with the arrival each spring of large flocks of waterfowl that use McLeod Lake as their nesting habitat. They spend the summer raising their young and depart in the fall. Resident birds, those that remain throughout the year, include songbirds, owls and game birds, such as grouse. Local rivers draining into McLeod Lake support freshwater fish species, such as arctic grayling, mountain and lake whitefish, rainbow and lake trout, Dolly Varden char, northern pike, northern pikeminnow, suckers, slimy sculpin and burbot (Rousseau et al. 1993).

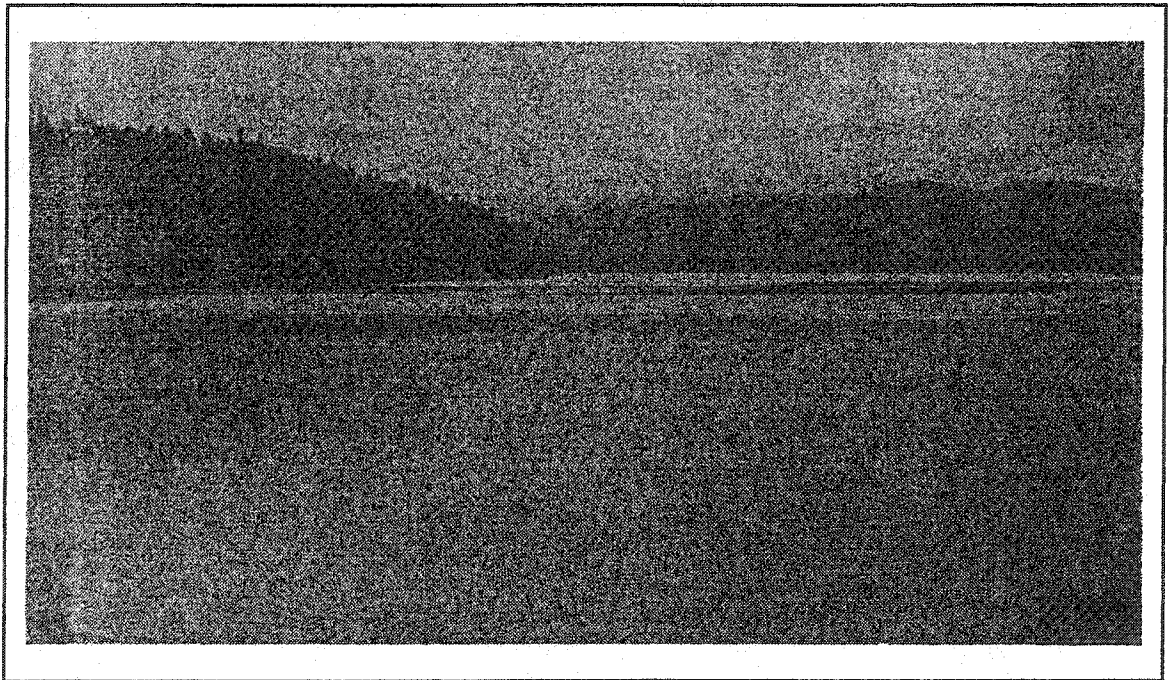


Figure 5.4. View to south across McLeod Lake from the village.

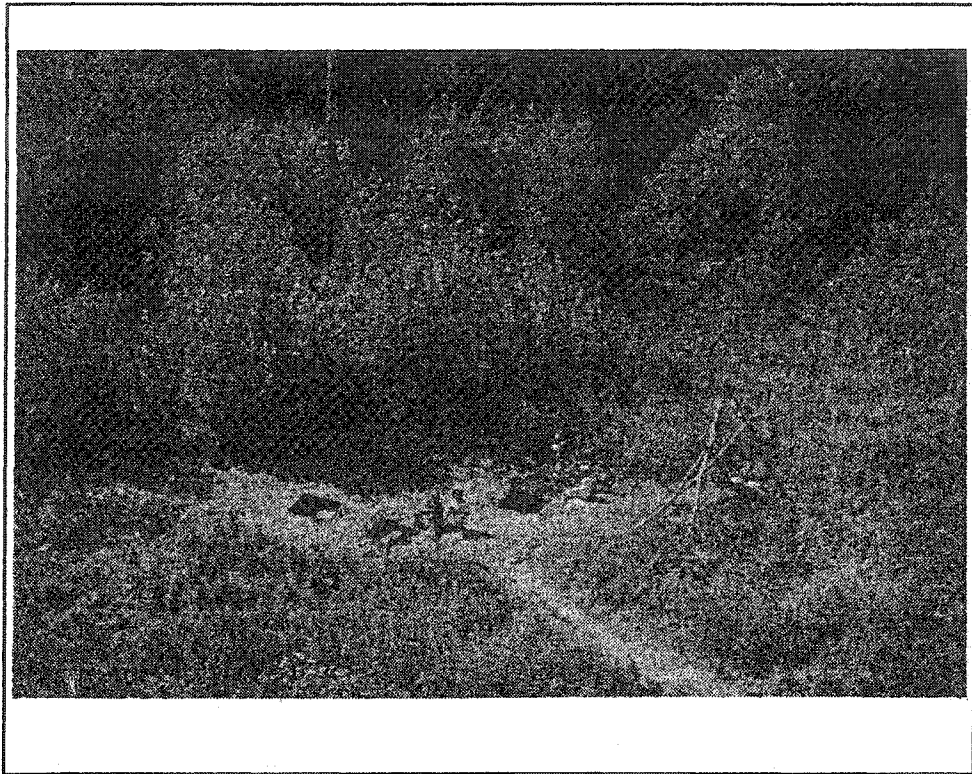


Figure 5.5. Excavations were conducted on the raised beach.

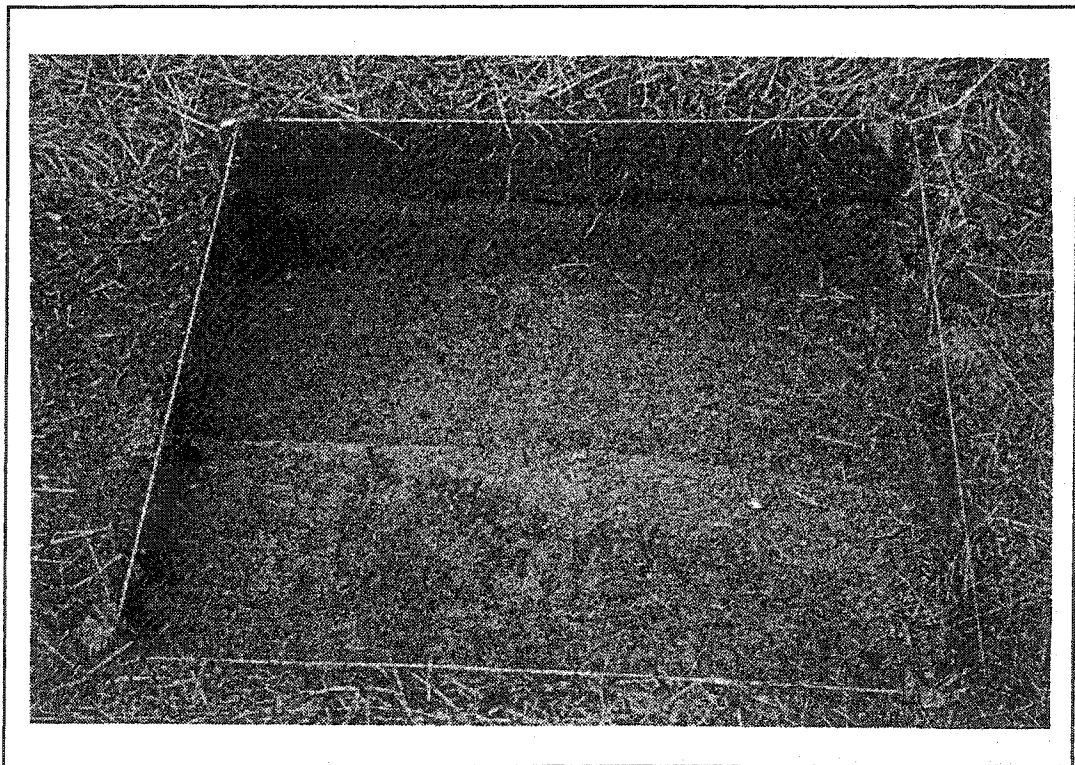


Figure 5.6. Soil formation is affected by the sandy parent material and grassy vegetation.

The common soils of northern British Columbia are all found locally and include luvisols, gleysols, podzols and brunisols that vary with local terrain, moisture regime, vegetation cover, and parent material. The pervasive brunisolic soils occur primarily in forested areas characterized by cold climates, manifesting minor changes to the coarse parent material (Figure 5.6). Gleysolic soils are moisture-saturated mineral matrices that generally occur in zones that receive moisture faster than it is drained. Luvisolic soils form under conditions of low evapotranspiration, where cottonwood forest cover predominates. Podzolic soils are associated with coniferous forests; the well-drained, coarse textured parent material promotes intense leaching within the soil horizon (Meidinger and Pojar 1991). The matrix at the Tsek'ehne village site falls within the brunisolic soil category; developing as it did on a parent material of clay-rich loam, sediment types consistent with accreting alluvial environments, overlying coarse-grained sand and small gravel deposited on an ancient beach. The vegetation mat of old grass contributes to a shallow humic layer, typically no more than 5 cms deep. Beneath it, the brownish, clay-rich loamy matrix extends to a maximum depth of 75 cms; although 25 cm is more typical of this layer, which contains the cultural material. The sandy texture of the remnant beach is greyish in colour and is a culturally sterile layer.

Artifact Recovery Methods

Uncovering the cultural material required invasive techniques; which in turn meant excavation. Ground survey was difficult within the old Tsek'ehne village since surface vegetation, consisting of densely packed grasses obscuring the surface, made a systematic visual examination impossible. However, as a site continuously occupied during the fur trade era, the entire area displays some form of cultural disturbance. In those patches with good surface visibility, cultural features such as depressions formed by trails, discarded tools, fire-altered rock, bone, historic refuse and/or structural remains were evident. Site survey was not a high priority, since the village was well known and previous excavations

at GfRs 2 and at GfRs 3 (McLeod Lake post) had already demonstrated the high potential for cultural material.

A judgmental shovel testing program was employed as a discovery technique to determine archaeological potential and suggest the placement of excavation units. The shovel tests averaged 45 cm in diameter and were dug within the village area to depths of between 25 and 60 cm below surface. The matrix was then sieved through a 1/8" (3 mm) mesh screen to recover the smaller fraction of cultural materials that might be present. Before too long, every shovel test pit uncovered cultural material (Figure 5.7). Further shovel testing proved unnecessary and subsequent work concentrated exclusively on excavation. The datum selected for previous work proved useful for this project. It followed an old hydro-electric line set up on a north-south grid that ran through the village. A total of 10 - 1x1 m units were excavated and, based on the shovel tests, two locations were selected. One set of excavation units was located near the datum at the southern edge of the site; the other set was placed in the main residential area of the old village. Trowels, dust pans, shovels and screens aided digging through the cultural horizon until the sterile sand level was reached. The filing systems for the artifacts followed the excavation unit and began with the last two digits of the year 1993, then the sequence of units numbered from one to ten depending on their order of excavation. Each unit was subdivided into 50x50 cm quadrants that were labelled NW, SW, SE, NE. Arbitrary 5 cm levels in each quadrant were numbered from the surface downward and continued until the sterile sand appeared. Thus a catalogue number, for example GfRs 2; 93-1; NW1/4; Level 4, located each artifact to a 50 cm square at a specific depth below surface. The artifact sequence in any level was open-ended to accommodate as many artifacts as were found.

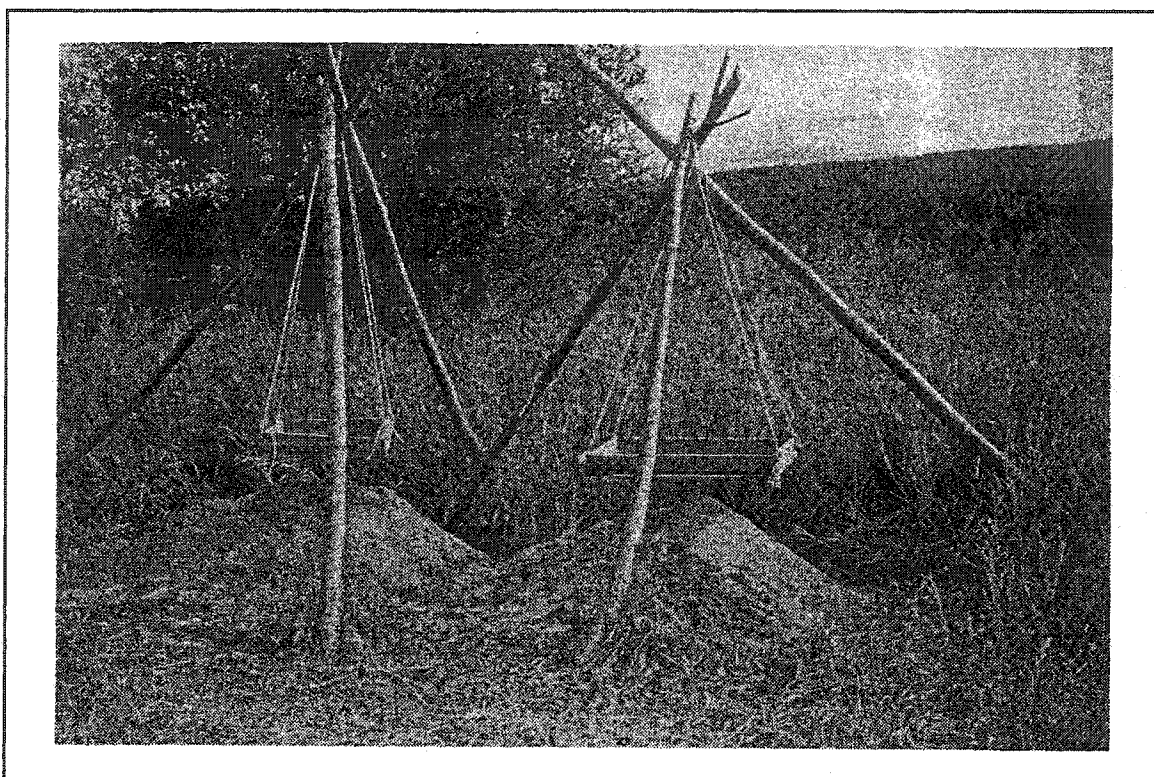


Figure 5.7. The matrix was sifted through 3 mm (1/8 inch) wire mesh screens.

Artifact Assemblage

Bone, lithic, wood, metal, plastic, ceramic and glass artifacts were recovered (Figure 5.8) that represented the recent history of Sekani material culture. Any artifact collected during excavation was immediately placed in a paper bag that contained the Borden number, and unit, level and quadrant information. When a new level was reached, a new bag was started. The artifacts were stored temporarily in our field laboratory, where they were cleaned and catalogued on rainy days. Each artifact was given a unique number and its provenience was recorded, as well as a description of the artifact, and any specific observations. Larger artifacts were labelled using white or black ink to inscribe the catalogue number on a special surface created with nail polish. When dried, the nail polish makes an excellent, durable writing surface that can be removed easily if necessary. Seed beads, lead shot, and nails were too numerous and too small to be described separately, so they were catalogued *en masse* and assigned one page per unit. Then they were placed in

bags, sorted by level and quadrant, within their respective excavation unit. The artifact assemblage remains in the custody of the McLeod Lake Indian Band.

The lithic component of the artifact assemblage was restricted to minor debitage consisting of five flakes of obsidian, basalt and rhyolite. Bone artifacts included the long bones of a large ungulate, possibly a moose or caribou; although Quackenbush (1990) cites historical documents that report people resorting to killing their horses for food in late winter. Other mammal bones included an innominate, clavicle, femur, humerus and radius of a beaver. The ungulate bones showed evidence of a saw blade being used to cut into the marrow cavity of the bone. Some heavily calcined bird bones were recovered that showed evidence of cooking. Evidently fishing continued to be a staple activity and no doubt it became easier when metal fish hooks replaced the traditional stone ones (Figure 5.8.a). Nails became common artifacts because housing styles changed as village life became routine (Figure 5.8.b). Log houses with overlapping corners served well for seasonally occupied dwellings but they were eventually replaced by frame houses that required more nails. Foundations were shallow because basements were unnecessary; therefore the highest concentration of artifacts was in the first 5 levels (approximately 25 cm below surface). Still the dynamic action of cryoturbation, or freeze-thaw cycles, was enough to cause some vertical movement of material, as indicated by the presence of a nickel which bore a date of 1984 40 cm below surface, in GfRs 2; 93-4; NE1/4; Level 8! Common metal artifacts throughout the site consisted of shotgun shells and spent cartridges of various calibers, as well as bottle caps. Metal lids for containers could be identified by trade marks, or company names, such as a match box lid and the snuff box lid (Figure 5.8.d and e). Infrequent metal objects included a door hinge, a bicycle spoke, a horseshoe and the tip of a large needle. Red, green, brown and clear glass sherds were present in large quantities, and two complete, clear medicine bottles were recovered. One had the metal screw cap still attached, while the other had a neck capped with a cork stopper.

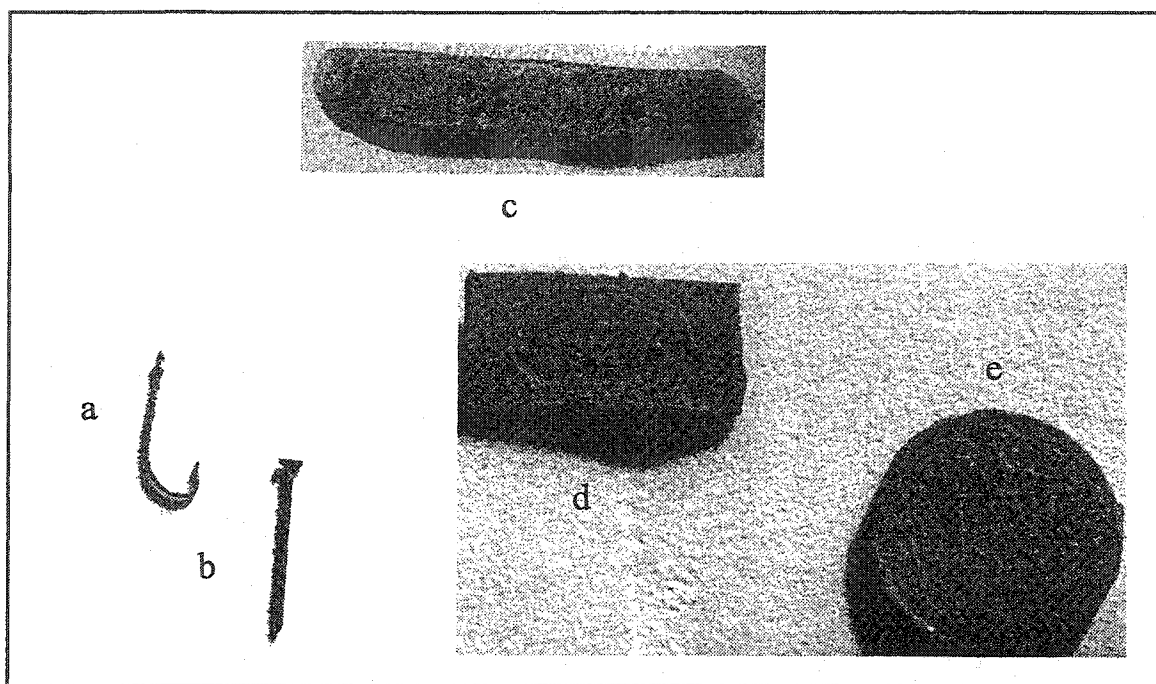


Figure 5.8. Artifacts recovered at GfRs 2; a - metal fish hook; b - metal nail; c - carbonized knife handle; d - match tin lid; e - snuff can lid. This sample of artifacts indicates the extent to which the fur trade influenced Tsek'ehne lifeways.

Numerous features constituted direct evidence of intense occupation. Commonly red-stained earth or hearths filled with ash and charcoal were encountered immediately below the vegetation mat. However, amid this sooty monotony lay a unique charcoal artifact (Figure 5.8.c). What had been the wood handle of a trade knife had come loose and fell, or was thrown, into a hearth, where, rather than being turned to ash, it baked into charcoal and retained its shape. Wood artifacts were rare because they disintegrated rapidly in the soil. However, a number of units contained wood from the remnants of house posts; an example being the one found in the wall of unit GfRs 2; 93-2; SW1/4; Levels 1-5 (Figure 5.9). A pole planted upright in the soil was the support post for a beam roofing a temporary shelter known as an Indian cabin, similar in style to a leanto, which is still used today, albeit infrequently (Figure 5.10). Once abandoned, the subsurface portion of the support was preserved while the upper portion disappeared. When exposed to air the wood quickly dried out and broke into slivers.

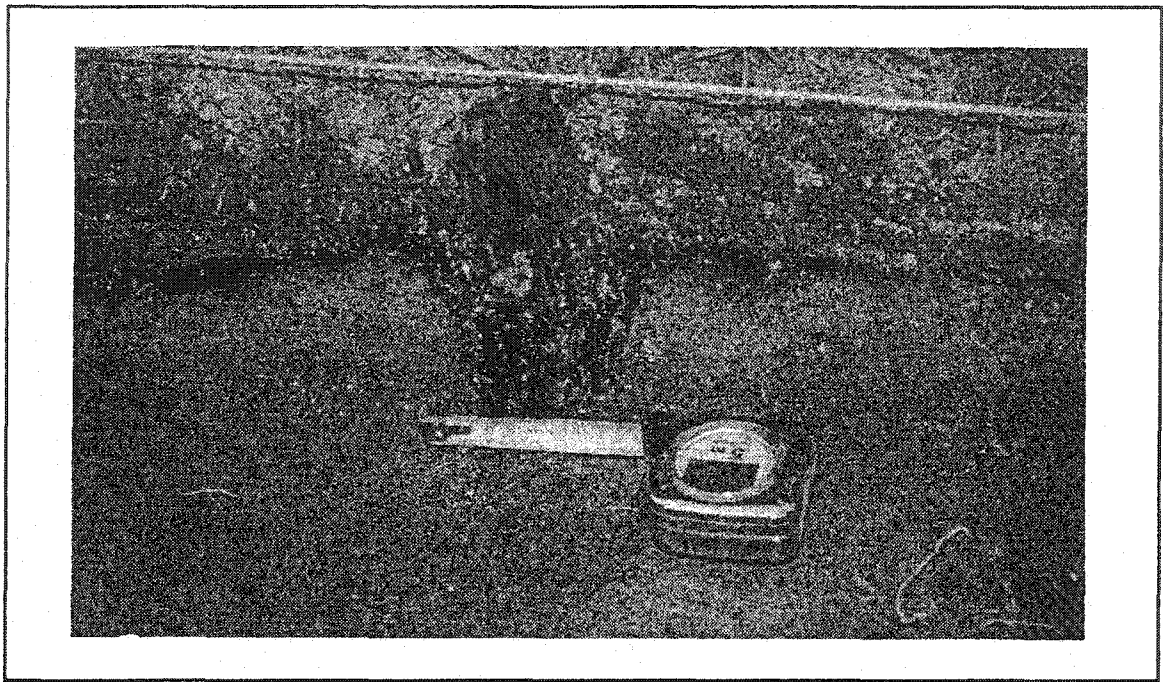


Figure 5.9. Housepost feature within cultural matrix. This ephemeral style of construction proved sufficient for people with a mobile lifestyle. They did not consider any one stop in their customary lands to be their preferred settlement.

Immediately the crew members recognized the buried log as a support post for an Indian cabin. In an effort to demonstrate the practical aspects of archaeology, the crew participated in reconstructing this aboriginal structure. Authenticity guided construction of this replica, but improvisation also loaned a hand. The logs for the walls were delivered to the site courtesy of *Duz Cho* Logging, the band-owned logging company. The logs were set one atop the next and kept upright by tall stakes set on both sides of the wall. Each log was lashed into place by twine tied to the stakes before the next log was set in place. Where possible, the rest of the materials were collected from traditional sources. Bark tiles for the roof were stripped off birch trees, using axes and trowels. Poles for the lattice were cut from willow thickets growing near the site, as were the upright supports for the walls. Based on ethnographic descriptions and local knowledge, a replica was built to approximate detail of an Indian cabin (Figure 5.10). The front and back walls would have been enclosed with hides to keep out wind and weather.

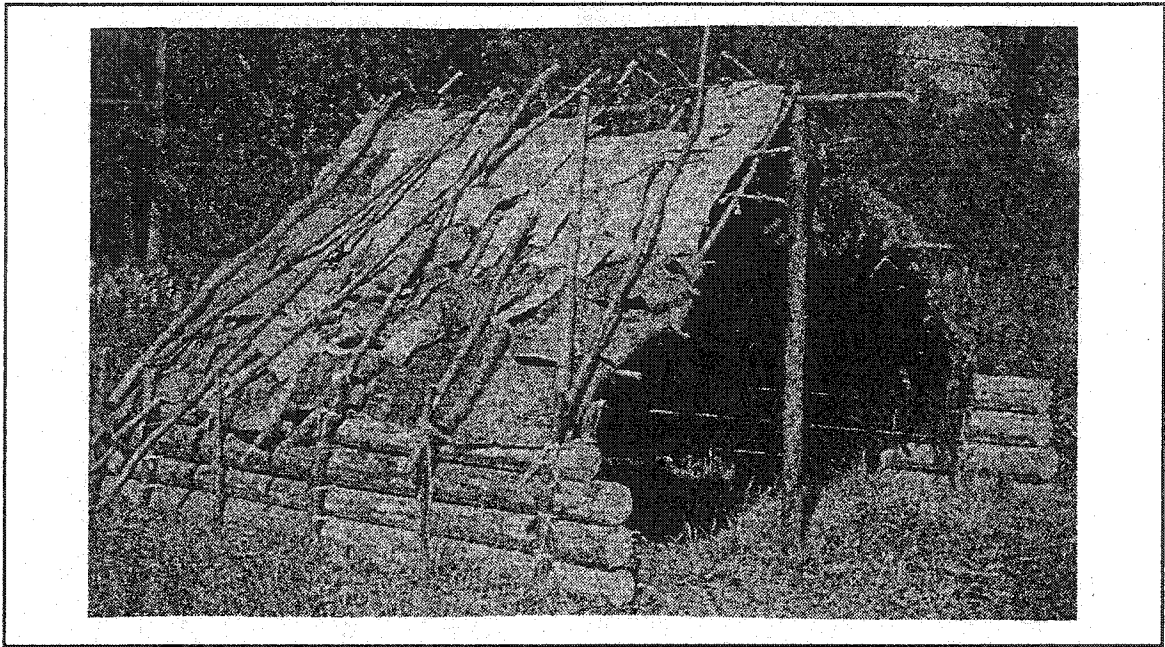


Figure 5.10. Indian cabin replica made of spruce logs, birch bark and willow lattice.

West of the Rocky Mountains no aboriginal ceramic industry existed, so pottery did not appear in the material culture from the ethnographic period, nor in the archaeological record. The aboriginal ceramic techniques on the adjacent plains did not extend to or influence the material culture of the transmontane region. Wood, being in abundance, replaced ceramics as the medium of choice for vessels of all shapes, sizes and utilities. Artifacts recovered from wet sites along the coast, such as the Ozette site on the Olympic Peninsula, illustrate the heavy emphasis on a wood industry. Likewise ceramic-ware, as found in the boreal region, was absent from the material culture due in part to the utility of birch bark and spruce bark. The European ceramic-ware excavated here was imported and showed the patterns, ornamentation, and trade marks of factory-manufacture. Ornamental patterns were expressed in blue, with red and black being less frequent.

Some artifactual remains left no traces because ephemeral media were used in their construction. For example, twine was a popular trade item for making fish nets and it was essential for fishing lines, although angling with a fish hook never equalled the efficiency of net fishing. Material culture is the most blatant influence because it is obvious; however,

other parts of Sekani culture were altered in recent times. No facet of aboriginal lifeways was left untouched and diet was no exception. Exotic food stuffs, as plum pits reveal, found their way into the local diet and then the archaeological record. Plastic toys from the twentieth century demonstrate the changing aesthetics of Sekani childhood. Local toys were few; hence the spread of Euro-Canadian popular culture presented more choice for amusement and play.

Aboriginal People in Canada's Historical Narrative

Employment, although more often unemployment, of band members is a chronic concern for the McLeod Lake Indian Band administration. Job creation begins with the band administration, and summer employment is intended to provide career options for Tsek'ehne youth in anticipation of their entry into the labour market. Providing options is aided if the training can take place on site, where the support network is strongest. The Economic Development Officer orchestrates the projects by submitting detailed applications to funding sources. Breaking the pattern of reliance upon temporary jobs that only require labouring skills requires meaningful temporary employment as an incentive to pursue secondary education to its successful conclusion; perhaps followed by education at the university level. To be sure, archaeology is labour intensive and it may not be competitive on the wage scale offered by private companies to labourers. However, beyond the immediate gratification of a hefty pay cheque, wage labour in the resource sector leads nowhere, which is why there is a high turnover rate among its personnel. If earning a wage ceases to be an end onto itself, archaeology is problem-oriented labour that contributes intangible qualities to work. High on that list is job satisfaction and access to career opportunities with as many challenges as can be imagined. When the endless summer wanes and the students return to their classrooms, they can speak of a unique work experience that taught them the value of their education. Being part of a plan to create locally the infrastructure for cultural tourism and job creation, the excavations were driven by concerns that were indifferent to traditional questions of archaeology.

Still, the research component of the project was not forgotten, because of the dearth of fur trade archaeology in northern British Columbia. Objectives driven by professional considerations of methods and theory did arise when several factors aligned to make them apparent. Here was an opportunity to expand the knowledge base about a region of the province where little archaeological work had been undertaken, and about a period that was poorly documented in fur trade journals. Even in its heyday, McLeod Lake Post was never the bustling, central focus of any major fur trader's attention. When it was mentioned, it was an incidental cog on a larger wheel. The main characters in the fur trade drama passed through the region, stopping only long enough to rest and take stock of local needs. Then they were off again to Fort St. James, the hub of New Caledonia. Remaining at this post were the bit players whose roles were dictated to them by their seniors. Hence, archaeological investigation became an essential method for obtaining information about an obscure trading post on the edge of the world system.

The search for data about the grand narrative of the fur trade enterprise was accompanied by the metanarrative of finding the proto-type for internalist archaeology. For the first time in Canada an Indian community was able to initiate and employ archaeological methods using only Indian personnel; the field crew and principal investigator were all Indians. Imagining the past from an internalist perspective grew out of this experience because it demonstrated in real terms how an Indian band could control and define field research to serve their own goals. Appropriating archaeological methods was the first step, but a glimpse of the possibilities came with the first open house and heritage festival at the end of the first field season. A year later, opening the museum and heritage park created excitement among the citizens at McLeod Lake because they actually had created an attraction for tourist traffic. The McLeod Lake project showed that archaeological methods enhance the clarity of archival research to bring recent history into focus. This exercise extended the range and understanding of Tsek'ehne history in a local and global context. Archival research contributes events and facts about the village, while material culture

reveals unwritten details of village life. Together they tell a story of how the Tsek'ehne adapted their culture to accommodate an intruding reality.

Excavating this fur trading post revealed the potential for finding the Tsek'ehne side of the ledger about a period in their history that Canadian historians and archaeologists had intentionally ignored. Indeed, the fortified trading post contributed an apt metaphor of a discipline reluctant to invite the Indians in from the cold. As a social phenomenon the fur trade has been deployed effectively to cater to a nation in need of a common culture for a citizenry in the throes of an identity crisis (Klimko 1994). Canadians had just celebrated their centennial, their national coming of age, in 1967, and the success of the world's fair in Montreal whetted their appetite for world recognition. Canadians yearned to display that self-conscious patriotism that accompanies a secure national identity, but a quiet revolution was thwarting their best efforts at nationhood. Perceived divisive sentiments propelled the federal government into supporting a fur trade industry that supplied Canada with one of the symbols she needed to forge a national heritage:

Fur trade posts play a role in promoting the nation's integration but Native groups are almost always placed in a subordinate /subservient position if present at all. Indeed, living history programs at developed fur trade sites such as Fort William are frequently dominated by young white Canadians playing out roles associated with Metis or even Native people. Native women are rarely portrayed in these open-air museums and if they are included, they again are depicted by white-Canadian women. The exploitative relationship of the trader to Native society is difficult to interpret and a sanitized version incorporating contemporary values results (Klimko 1994: 196).

Eliminating the Indians from fur trade archaeology coincided with their marginalization in Canadian society. Like fur trade history before it, fur trade archaeology became a forum for Canadians to tell their story about how their ancestors built their country.

The law of superposition recognizes that in any cultural sequence the oldest material culture will be found in the deeper strata and more recent material in upper strata. When Canadian archaeologists search those deeper levels they can find nothing of themselves in those ancient times. There is material culture to be found but it is too alien and too foreign, therefore it has been treated in a fundamentally different mode from that found in shallower

levels, which resonate with greater emotion. "In Canada the 'prehistoric' period is not an integral part of Canadian history but a form of study set apart" (Klimko 1994: 196). Late in the twentieth century, enough dirt had accumulated on the debris piles at those trading posts abandoned with the end of the fur trade economy that Canadian archaeology could finally engage in a bit of internalist-style research. Reared on the colonial notion of prehistory, historical archaeologists finally had an opportunity to apply their methods to finding their European ancestors. Their indifference to an Indian presence led one student of that era to query her colleagues in the heading of one section of her thesis. WHERE ARE THE NATIVES? (Klimko 1994: 183) was her way of pointing to a large deficiency in fur trade archaeology. In its own modest way, the archaeological project at McLeod Lake contributed part of the answer. The Natives were present, but the investigations tended to be confined to the core deposits inside the trading post walls. The Indian's presence was dispersed along the periphery of the archaeological site, where researchers seldom considered digging. Concluding that Indians have not been served well by an archeological industry that is too preoccupied with telling the story of Europe's rise to dominance in North America is no understatement. Open-air museums and heritage theme parks devoted to national heritage receive a disproportionate level of funding because "Material culture is used to create a common identity and in the case of the fur trade this is done through the use of history and archaeology. The archaeological remains and site reconstructions provide the visible link promoting a view of the fur trade as the common, natural and inevitable extension of a European value system" (Klimko 1994: 197).

Excavating the Tsek'ehne village adjacent to the fur trading post and installing the heritage park and museum injected some parity in the telling of history. Tsek'ehne interest in archaeology grew from the conviction that it offered them an opportunity to find something, to recover a fragment of all they had lost. They expected something, even if they could not always say exactly what it was. Late in each field season the crew hosted an open house to invite the public in and view the excavations and artifacts. However, they

quickly discovered that a pit is a pit is a pit! Creating an event centred on archaeology desperately needed a hook to draw attention and make a visit to the site worthwhile and interesting. During the second field season, the crew hosted the open house on a long weekend in the middle of summer and included a celebration of Tsek'ehne heritage. In addition to the Indian cabin, the crew erected a canvas tipi and some temporary shelters to create a village scene. Tsek'ehne elders, Josie and Max Tylee and Theresa Alexis, attended and demonstrated traditional skills such as brewing bog tea, lacing string into fish nets, drying meat on a rack and baking bannock over an open fire. Grants from *Duz Cho* Logging and the McLeod Lake Indian Band covered the cost of buying canvas to build the tipi, they paid the honoraria for the elders and the ingredients for making bannock. The success of heritage days set off a spark of interest in activities that had become obsolete.

When winter subsided and the frozen ground thawed, the renovations on the old trader residence were nearing completion. New varnish had to be spread on the restored hardwood floor, the exterior walls, shutters and roof had to be painted, and the yard had to be landscaped. Meanwhile at Barkerville, the restored gold rush town and heritage park, the curatorial staff assembled the exhibit. They made display cabinets for the artifacts, they mounted wall displays with old photographs and statistics and facts from the old trading days. A replica counter was built and installed, and shelves stocked with replica products, and actual products like trade blankets, recreated the ambiance of the trading post circa 1920. No trading post display would be complete without a few beavers pelts, and other fur-bearing mammals, and the infamous leg-hold traps. Longer daylight hours put few strains on the new electrical system and the warmer season and open door policy put little pressure on the new heating system. Weeks before spring ended the museum was ready for visitors. Its novelty made it an instant success. Facility staff consisted of Georgina Chingee and her aunt, Theresa Alexis, who received instruction on heritage interpretation and read the appropriate historical references in preparation for meeting the visiting public.

They took to wearing period clothing, which they made themselves, and they cited local historical facts to put the exhibit into a historical context.

Community support evolved slowly, but as the official opening date approached volunteers came forward to assist. Paul James Tylee, Georgina's nephew, was added to the staff as a full time facilities assistant. Younger band members saw the old village first through photographs and they came to realize they were a part of that fur trade saga. The exhibit became a tangible artifact linking them to that history. Finally, they could discern the role their ancestors had played. Perhaps curiosity about band history originated in concurrent treaty negotiations for their entitlement under Treaty 8; although concluded in 1899 the Tsek'ehne did not receive their compensation package until 2000 AD. They sought to situate their experience by contextualizing the debate over the compensation offered them. Few had known that Tsek'ehne welcomed the first Europeans into their homeland in 1805, and Treaty 8 did not figure prominently in local politics. As talk of settlement agreements passed among band members, they wanted to know how they had gotten to that point. Today Tsek'ehne welcome visitors to their park to learn about their history and customary lands. However, the underlying metanarrative explains the historical links between them, the land and the world system.

Excavating the Tsek'ehne village demonstrated that history and archaeology can be instruments of economic development for Indian communities. This knowledge was tempered by the fact that a small community such as McLeod Lake cannot launch such a venture as a solo project because the trained professionals, investment dollars, and a skilled work-force are all in short supply. Therefore, for the foreseeable future, they must import those necessities from outside sources. Overcoming these obstacles is made easier when dedicated individuals are willing to divert their energies into making a dream a reality. Coincidentally, the solution to a professional conundrum became apparent through this exercise with the realization that historical archaeology can be a viable component of an internalist perspective. Furthermore, McLeod Lake contributes to the area by enhancing the

tourist experience for visiting friends and relatives, who are always thrilled to visit points of interest locally. Tourists also discovered the park as they travelled the Hart Highway.

Chapter Summary

McLeod Lake, B.C. is a small hamlet, one of several roadside stops resting off the shoulders of the Hart Highway as it cuts through the boreal forest north of Prince George, heading to the Pine Pass and out onto the plains. Between the road and the burned out hotel, beside the abandoned gas station, and in front of the post office, is a cairn with the sole function of noting an obscure moment in history in a remote part of the country. Modern travellers speed by oblivious to the culture and country that was transformed when the world system breached the last barriers of geography and gripped the Sekani homeland. Understating the message, an innocuous monument, barely distinguishable from the surrounding gravels, notifies travellers on Highway 97 that Simon Fraser first slept here in the autumn of 1805. McLeod Lake may have been but one node in the fur trade network, but it was also the catalyst affecting culture change for the Sekani and ultimately displacing local material culture. The post became a conduit absorbing animal pelts and issuing mass-produced goods manufactured in a factory on another continent; the post enticed Sekani trappers into the nascent capitalist economy. Appropriately, personal accounts in fur trade journals make the first historical references to Sekani.

When economic factors subsided as the source of interest in the far north, the new province in Canada beckoned missionaries and professional researchers who were driven by various reasons to seek out the Native population. Thereafter Sekani people appeared sporadically in scholarly publications when researchers reported their latest findings on topics such as linguistics and ethnography. Proselytizing was the vocation of missionaries but it did not limit their personal ambitions, so the reports on their ministries extended beyond church business. Father Morice, for example, was often cited by anthropologists who found his ethnographies to be informative and accurate. Secular professionalism lured

him out of his strict mission and prompted him to pen his observations which the vicarious researchers found so useful.

Archival material is available to students of history to examine, but employing archaeological methods to research Indian history presents a novel approach that is only beginning to demonstrate its potential. Excavation in the old Sekani village at McLeod Lake, British Columbia pointed to another landmark from which to measure progress toward the destination of articulating an internalist archaeology. Deploying archaeology to serve the interests of Indian people does not necessarily mean superimposing the ideology of the larger discipline. Beyond the profession, applied archaeology proved to be an effective basis for cultural tourism and heritage interpretation. Band members hired for the excavation participated in meaningful work that could absorb as much labour as they could generate. Through their own experiments with the cultural industry, the McLeod Lake Indian Band was able to present their history in the tangible, accessible format of a modern museum and heritage park. Although the focus of their effort was local, they still managed to contribute new knowledge globally by providing a template for internalist archaeology.

CHAPTER SIX

CLOSING WORDS

Public interest in their work is a perennial quandary for professional archaeologists. Archaeological sites often become theme parks or tourist attractions because antiquity has popular appeal. Amateur societies and avocational groups display their own curiosity, judging by their willingness to volunteer or even pay for the opportunity to excavate alongside professionals. Archaeologists are at once comforted and flattered to know that people display genuine interest in their field. However, that same interest is disquieting and unsettling because some might express their avocational interest without the appropriate training. The proposed solutions often include public programmes to inform people about the sensitive nature of heritage sites. Of course, the public has to visit a site, or interpretive centre, to hear the message. In which case promoting a preservation ethic may amount to no more than preaching to the converted. Responding to popular demand for information about archaeological sites has prompted managers to hire interpreters for on-site tours, and educators have discovered the benefits of site tours and volunteer programmes (Blausberg 1994). Museums construct exhibits around themes devoted to interpreting the past as entertainment for their visitors, and sponsor outreach programmes using portable resource kits to display artifacts, which they package for presentation to school groups. Public programming at heritage parks, such as Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, in Alberta, and Wanuskewin Park, in Saskatchewan, is deliberately constructed to appeal to the widest range of interest because everyone is invited to visit (Walker 1987). With an array of heritage centres and museums as a model, internalist archaeology can look forward to the day when its expertise is solicited to contribute to curriculum development and museum exhibits that are germane to an Indian constituency. Re-claiming the Indian past for Indian people can begin in this setting, especially since the intended audience will have a direct cultural connection to the exhibitions and dioramas. Indians practicing archaeology may

help lessen the anxiety that Indians feel about archaeology as it is practiced. Understanding its methods can aid in constructing counter arguments when archaeologists proffer unflattering theories about Indians. There are global and local facets that engage the attention of internalist archaeology. Caricature Indians and other stereotypes are all too visible in popular culture, and the only remedy for that is through public education. First Nations ponder at the possibilities that arrive with the social instrument of archaeology. Its ultimate utility may prove useful in revivifying folklore that has gone dormant or when considering the time depth of aboriginal identity based on evidence garnered from the archaeological record.

Archaeology in Popular Culture

Popular culture may seem like an oxymoron, but in this case it is the key to gauging to what extent the trickle-down theory of economists applies to knowledge generated by the archaeological establishment. Sampling the products of archaeologists' traditional allies in the entertainment industry can provide surprisingly hilarious insights relating to the past as perceived in popular culture. Quite apart from archaeology's elitist roots in antiquarianism, recruiting public support places a burden upon archaeologists to generate interest in ancient times. Typically they do not have to break a sweat, because intense public curiosity about archaeological work already exists. Antiquity supports a small industry devoted to producing cultural products that replicate the symbols of the past and incorporate them into the everyday lives of ordinary people. These days Anasazi petroglyphs commonly adorn mass-produced t-shirts, while First Nations apply for copyright to control similar images. These represent the manoeuvres on the frontline of the on-going culture wars between the core and periphery. The masses may see and hear archaeologists go on about their work, but the accoutrements of antiquity they select are not always what was delivered or intended. Modern society is treated to a smorgasbord of ancient human constructs, such as medicine wheels, from which it can pick and choose. Antiquities are reworked into ancient Indian wisdom as fodder for faddish New Age religions (Mazzola 1988). Archaeologists

must then compete with the controversial, which comes to be seen as reasonable, and the pseudo-scientist, who is perceived as rational. Science in our age is credited with providing answers to all the great mysteries that befuddled ancient people. Yet, the popular imagination stubbornly refuses to let go the inherent mystery of antiquity and eschew the possibility that responsible answers may be provided by some dispassionate researcher.

Logical explanation abounds, relegating myths and legends to the dust bins where all quaint superstitions are eventually deposited. Although we live in a known universe where the nature of things is to work rationally, people still hanker for the unknown. Just when ancient legends are expunged from modern worldviews, popular culture invents urban legends to fill the void. The desire for mystery finds gratification in camp fire stories of sasquatch and other big-footed creatures or recovered memories of alien abduction. Antiquity is fertile ground for popular culture because it is a riddle wrapped in an enigma and buried in mystery. It is an X-file! Judging from the frequency of plots with an ancient provenience the popular television programme *The X-Files* plays upon public obsession with the unknown past. Indians legends are brought to life and stalk the little screen to menace the anxieties of the lead characters, who play the two minds of the human condition. One seeks the truth out there and encounters no unsolvable phenomena while the other wants to believe that mystery still exists, that there are some things that science cannot explain. Like these fictional heroes, the public does not demand that archaeological theory be a true representation of the past. There is comfort to be found if archaeological theory leads to more speculation. In antiquity people confront the unknown and the spirits that haunt ancient ruins are their hopes that there is still mystery in their lives.

Since archaeological explanation seeks to infer past human behaviour from the material remains of the past, it can easily give rise to fiction. Coinciding with the advent of post-processual archaeology, and perhaps symptomatic of it, an immensely popular novel hit the book shelves across North America. Entitled *The Clan of the Cave Bear* and set in terminal Pleistocene Europe, the story delivered a fictional synthesis of the then-current

archaeological theory of modern human origins (Auel 1980). The author created an endearing character, Ayla, who embodied human experience at the beginning of the Upper Palaeolithic. While non-fiction literature in periodicals debated the details of Paleolithic environments and lithic traditions, the author of fiction had only the limits she imagined. Stone age characters played out socially contested topics for modern readers of pulp fiction. The site descriptions, the artifacts and the human remains, inspired the imagination of a talented writer who produced a best seller that, unfortunately, inspired a movie of the same name. Modelled on feminist ideals of the *überfrau*, subsequent novels followed the same character as she matured into a cosmopolitan, well-travelled Ice Age European who could invent new tool traditions, tame wild animals and still have time to be mother to the human race. The backdrop may have been ancient but the genre introduced to fiction was totally modern - the Palaeolithic Romance, with its curious blend of romanticism, feminism and archaeological theory.

This unapologetic melding of fiction and archaeological theory proved to be a successful formula that inspired some archaeologists to heed their literary muses and follow them to the fictitious terrain of ancient America. Such temptation is responsible for the six novels in *The First North Americans Series* (Gear and Gear 1990). Beginning with the epic story that chronicles the adventures of a clan living in Beringia that is forced to migrate south to their would-be salvation, the authors people their imaginary America. Naturally the obligatory Clovis people colonize a new world, then they are succeeded by buffalo hunting cultures, ocean-going fishers, Moundbuilders, and others. Each successive novel is set in the timeless cultural geography of recent archaeological theory. Whether they pass as literature is debatable, but the authors preface each novel with a short chapter in which fictitious researchers explain the significance of their archaeological sites as a segue to situate each particular culture in time and space. In this retelling of antiquity to a mass, uninitiated audience, whose only exposure to archaeology comes in the form of fiction, the authors attempt to depict the state of understanding for the cultures they claim to create from

archaeological material. Yet again, the Indians are only bit players. Even in their own fictitious history, they are useful only for filling out archaeological theory.

Representation, storylines and plot liberally embellish the archaeologist in fiction since the actual laboratory analysis, such as calculating minimum number of individuals (MNI), is tedious and uninteresting to the lay reader. When reaching out to the public, researchers labour to make their work appear exciting, or at least not boring. Most archaeologists would not rate entertainment value high when assessing their data and few would admit to the influence of popular culture on their discipline. Yet nobody was prepared for the larger-than-life reputation inadvertently forced upon archaeology when, in 1981, the ebullient, charismatic *Indiana Jones* leapt from the silver screen. Only his macho personality and droll humour could equal the implausible hazards and mind-boggling feats that filled his life. In a trilogy of movies the hard-living hero casually scoffs at danger in the noble pursuit of foiling black marketeers and Nazis. Whether rescuing idols or models he appealed to audiences who willingly shelled out their wallets for a fantasy. At the same time he gave archaeologists their unattainable ideal (Tomasula 1982; Aronstein 1995).

Turning from the big screen to the little screen reveals an even more powerful medium for disseminating information about archaeology. Despite the plethora of television hours devoted to archaeology, the public is still surprisingly ignorant of antiquity, prehistoric cultures, the archaeological profession and heritage legislation (Mason et al. 1989). The advent of the so-called five-hundred channel universe is creating a forum for specialty channels, such as *The History Channel*, *Discovery* or *The Learning Channel*, which target their audience and then cater directly to them. Two decades ago, social critics were already having second thoughts about this phenomenon of bringing history to life via television. They could not doubt its power, since "nearly every American home contains at least one television set, the medium must be taken seriously in terms of its profound impact on the American mind" (Cohn 1976: 281). However, processing history and serving it up to the masses was too close to propagandizing and manipulating public opinion.

Documentary programmes that portray ancient history can be beamed across the ether to end up in the living rooms of contemporary Canada, but they must vie with insipid situation comedies and banal talk shows for the short attention span of the television generation. Thus they opt for the formulaic and the familiar in presenting the alien, 'prehistoric' Indian cultures. In fact, the newest fad in documentaries is to use old, grainy, black and white clips from silent films as if they are real pictures of those 'prehistoric' events, especially since they do not evoke the same sense of nostalgia as historical events. Shows like *Archaeology* or *Ancient Warriors* may adopt the documentary format, but they also rely on animated images or dramatizations to enhance their entertainment value. Familiarity is the cornerstone in serving up history for mass consumption. Despite the recognizable host and the timelessness of comparative cultural values, ancient Indian history remains strange and exotic because it is not the history of middle America. Television has the capacity to inform and educate but, like the Mesoamerican cultures that invented wheels and only used them on children's toys, entertainment overwhelms its potential.

In the fickle world of popular culture, swashbuckling may be a respectable alternative to research. Image is everything, especially when the alternative is mundane field work. However, even staid archaeology consistently piques public curiosity. The frequent use and misuse of archaeological themes in popular culture indicates that the interest is out there and the challenge for archaeologists is to find better ways to cultivate it. Reducing all research to an entertainment package may be the wrong tack. Still, the entertainment industry has to be taken seriously because it is more effective in shaping popular perceptions with one movie than are all the volumes of scholarly journals. Perhaps the potential for discovery is what attracts the public's interest, but manipulating images to attract T.V. viewers means the competition is getting intense. Therefore, archaeologists must find new ways of disseminating the raw data of their excavations, since fantastic speculation has immense entertainment potential.

Just when the curious public appeared sated by the information age, the internet appeared on its radar and introduced an entirely new medium for satisfying its appetite for more entertainment. Anyone with a local service provider and a cable, or telephone, connection can access the electronic universe called cyberspace. It is proving to be unexpectedly egalitarian, and that is its strength and weakness. Electronic publishing has made available formerly obscure documents and theses. However, alongside the scholarly works that slipped past academic journals, the most bizarre ideas are just a click away from the uncritical web crawler. While there is real information contained in this virtual library that is of interest to archaeologists, there are also many web pages devoted to more surreal interpretations of antiquity. Not surprisingly, the internet is where one can find the "published" reports of the Solutrean solution to the Clovis/pre-Clovis debate because such speculation would not make it past the editors and reviewers of scholarly publications.

When the average webcrawler types the boolean phrase "Solutrean + Clovis" into a search engine, nearly 900 sites are virtually identified. Prominent among these is the online magazine www.archaeologytoday.net where the Solutrean solution hypothesis is presented by its authors, Dennis Stanford and Bruce Bradley (1997). Their article was subsequently published in print by a popular science magazine (Stanford and Bradley 2000). Another online magazine www.science-frontiers.com picked up on this theme when it ran a similar article reporting on the intense debate taking place in archaeology about this revolutionary vision of the past. One of the principal authors of this theory, Dennis Stanford, has a detailed summary of his ideas and evidence on his personal web-page at the Smithsonian Institution (Stanford 1997). A full index of online articles can be found through a friendly search engine, preferably a fast internet connection and lots of wading time. For balance among the opined, visit the website www.wintercount.org to find an alternative spin on antiquity.

Popular culture might be a guilty pleasure but it is also a valuable standard to measure how aboriginal heritage is processed and consumed by the viewing public. Since

movies have replaced myths and dreams as the modern cognitive lodestar when dealing with the world out there, movie-goers readily accept stories about the past as real archaeological theory. Cinema propaganda is easily manufactured in the dream factories. If their intended goal is to sway public sentiments all that is necessary is the right sound track. Popular culture can influence public opinion, which in turn plays a significant role in determining how public policy is formulated to deal with First Nations. Internalist archaeology, as an instrument of resistance, must oppose this cavalier manipulation of perception by contributing scholarship to rectify mistaken notions fermenting in the public imagination. Creating an informed public is the best antidote against pseudo-science because it provides rational options that are predicated on tested principles.

Archaeology as the Fourth 'R'

Archaeologists recognize that popular culture may play fast and loose with their discipline, but its popularity reveals the public's eagerness to learn about the past. Internalist archaeology recognizes that its public consists of Indians who wish to learn about their heritage. Popularizing archaeology in Indian country is the link to formal studies tailored for a broad range of ages from primary grades to university. Instruction beyond primary schooling is crucial for developing the personnel who will be the professional educators, but that is where it all starts. Typically one looks for examples of archaeology in education but at least one author has looked for education in the archaeological record. John Friesen, a professor of education at the University of Calgary, argued that pedagogical structures left a readable signature; his example was a kiva at an Anasazi village. He reasoned that "cultures universally foster and project their continuance through the education and training of their young" (Friesen 1993; 53), who benefit from their elders' knowledge. But their training, he contends, must necessarily take place in a formal setting. When the Anasazi culture of the ancient southwest inducted new members into sacred/secret societies, their practices would have resembled a system that modern educators could recognize. They insisted on curriculum content, course objectives and

standardized methods in their learning system. Their education would have concentrated on knowledge of rituals and ceremonies because of their role in community life. Their methods transferred information between generations about agricultural cycles, architecture and tool-making in an environment that compares favourably with schools in contemporary communities. The very items that lead to successful job-training in modern society, Friesen opined, were discernible in the archaeological record of the Southwest.

Whether or not the above interpretation is accepted, the classroom is where preparation for a career in archaeology begins. It is also the locus for implementing an agenda to train the personnel who will create a critical mass for internalist archaeology. Training Native students in archaeology will be a huge hurdle due to the high attrition rate of Indian students from all levels of schooling, and competition from other disciplines for the few who enter post-secondary institutions. Scarce personnel is a function of historical oppression. Even the archaeological establishment has recognized this shortcoming, prompting a U.S. National Parks archaeologist to muse, "It is ironic that the segment of the public most directly connected to the past societies that most American archaeologists study has not been a primary audience for archaeological public education" (McManomon 1991: 127). However, in the last decade there has been a concerted effort to recruit aboriginal people into the profession. The Canadian Archaeological Association (CAA) received a strong endorsement for this priority when it assembled the Aboriginal Heritage Committee in 1992. Four years later, when the committee presented the *Statements of Principles for Ethical Conduct Pertaining to Aboriginal Peoples* for review by the CAA membership, it included an explicit mandate to recruit Native people. The statement grew out of extensive consultation with the membership and aboriginal communities. It was voted on by mail-in ballots and accepted by a significant majority. The section on Aboriginal Involvement read:

1. To encourage partnerships with Aboriginal communities in archaeological research, management and education, based on respect and mutual sharing of knowledge and expertise.
2. To support formal training programs in archaeology for Aboriginal people.

3. To support the recruitment of Aboriginal people as professional archeologists (Nicholson et al. 1996).

Turning commendable principles into reality is a different matter altogether, especially since there are few precedents. A lot of education is invested in becoming a professional archaeologist, so the results have to be effective and definite. Learning about the past in school has to lead somewhere. For a few it will be a career choice, but for most it may be an interest pursued as a hobby. They may be the ones who volunteer or disburse cash to assure a spot on an archaeological excavation. Those choosing a career soon learn that a first degree is not enough for professional recognition. Heritage statutes usually insist on graduate level accreditation to issue permits for excavations or impact assessments. They also quickly find out that few universities have programmes that include archaeology in their curriculum and not all of those that do have put great effort into socializing archaeology into the host community. One programme that has earned well-deserved attention is the joint venture between the Kamloops Indian Band and Simon Fraser University in British Columbia that reached its ten-year milestone in 1999. The Secwepemec Cultural Education Society (SCES), on the Kamloops Indian Reserve, has among its goals to "preserve, protect, interpret and promote their history, language, and culture" (Nicholas 1997: 89). Archaeology and linguistics have proved exceptional vehicles for this objective.

Archaeology courses are standard offerings each semester, and students can apply them toward a minor or they can major in archaeology. Special topics courses address current issues in archaeology and education, cultural resource management and research methods. They are modified and tailored to suit local practices. During the short, hot summer, students can enroll in a field school to become familiar with archaeology field methods, such as surveys, excavations, site description and artifact classification. They immediately see the relevance of their work because the Kamloops Indian Band Council is sensitive to local heritage concerns and invests great significance in mitigation. Before projects, such as installing housing or golf courses proceed, they routinely invite the field

school to undertake the impact assessments on developments slated for the reserve. One housing development even appropriated the Borden numbers assigned to sites for identifying the house lots. The work of the field school was the inspiration for establishing a heritage park adjacent to the campus. It includes a boardwalk and trails that lead visitors through a reconstructed Shuswap pithouse village. As visitors walk along they see displays of salmon drying racks, woven mats that shade earthovens, traditional botany, and an actual archaeological excavation. The success of this case promises that Indian archeologists will start to graduate, with training in the full range of archaeological expertise. The fact is that searching for clues about our ancestor's lives is fascinating. The interest displayed by Indians in archaeology is focusing more on the nature of artifacts and features and less on looking for reasons to protest - although the latter always remains an option. Indians have a vested interest in archaeological research since their expertise will be needed to evaluate research reports, advise leaders on heritage issues and, more importantly, making independent decisions about archaeology is an empowering act.

Some school boards have even created their own archaeological resource centres, going so far as to hire full-time professionals to lead excavations and provide technical expertise (Smardz 1987). Academics addressing archaeology in education wish "to consider just what our subject has done and aims to do in the realm of dissemination and explanation to our successors. All too often, and especially now with the pressure of academic assessments at all levels, and especially to research, there is too little thought paid to presentation" (Malone et al. 2000: 122). Public programming compels archaeologists to develop instructional material to ensure that those wishing to learn about artifacts in a classroom setting have the option of analytical study available to them through the education system. They can design their research with public communication in mind and expect that interested persons will want to participate in excavations (Lea and Smardz 2000). Public education is a concern for archaeology partly because of public support of research, partly to instill a conservation ethic similar to that espoused in environmental

education (Devine 1995), and partly to promote greater awareness of the ingenuity and inventiveness of aboriginal cultures (Bailey 1991).

Educators reason that respect for the past is a learned behaviour that can be nurtured in a state-controlled education system and that archaeology can expand the learning experience for Indian students. Cultural education in Indian schools usually consists of practicing activities enjoyed in the present, so initiatives in heritage education can only augment course content. Developing curriculum for Indian people about their history would include text books devoted to teaching students about the past. They would introduce archaeology as an effective tool in that pursuit. Incorporating archaeological knowledge even in the primary school grades is possible if instructors design activities that demystify the practice of archaeology and acquaint students with the rudiments of human technology (Tisdale et al. 1992; Brooke and Tisdale 1993). Other authors have demonstrated archaeological features, such as geometrical patterns, petroglyphs and designs on ceramic bowls, to be effective methods for teaching mathematical principles (Moore 1988). Rock art symbols display formal properties that can be understood by applying modern geometric or algebraic analysis. Geometric designs in rock art demonstrate that the artists were familiar with such abstract concepts as iteration, recursion, similitude and tiling. Although the artist may have had an intuitive rather than a formal understanding of these formulae, a similar learning module in a modern classroom can illustrate the cognitive abilities expressed in these petroglyphs. If artifacts and rock art can inspire curriculum for public schools, the same can be done with reading material designed for Indian students.

Ideally archaeology programmes should be universally available, but teachers must still find reason to justify teaching it or arranging field trips to heritage centres to augment school work. Few authors have explored the possibility of applying archaeology directly to primary or secondary schooling and most students first encounter archaeology as an academic subject only at the post-secondary level. Communication between archaeologists

and their publics is impeded by several obstacles, not the least of which is the intensive jargon and the quest for scholarly standards in technical journals (Shanks and Tilley 1987). Heritage professionals still have a long way to go before their subject is part and parcel of a modern education system. Usually the pull of the national economy places a greater emphasis on its vocational role. Archaeology may be difficult to rationalize to policy makers who perceive it as only having entertainment appeal for cultural tourism by manufacturing intangible consumer products (Devine 1995). However, mistaking education with training to produce a skilled labour force is not equivalent to teaching whole persons to achieve their potential. In reemerging polities, such as Scotland, teaching local culture is a core subject because the support of political leaders is founded upon nationalist sentiments. Its intrinsic value is that it "is basically a humanistic discipline which aims to improve people's view of the world and of themselves" (Henson 2000: 138).

Internalist archaeology can have equivalent beneficial impacts on Indian education by adding to the curriculum positive images of their ancestors and the lifeways they practiced. It has the potential to augment the quality of formal schooling for Indian students who, for various reasons, have an uneasy relationship with formal education, which they drop early and at an alarmingly high rate - leaving few to attempt university. One reason for the high failure rate may stem from conflicting messages in Canadian public policy, which espouses multi-culturalism but delivers few resources to fund curricula specifically designed for Indian schools. Difficulties also arise in the selective citations of historical events in standard courses; limitations with the historic record often make interpretation problematic when teaching Indian students about their past. Compounding this is the tendency to decontextualize Indian experiences with history, through mythology or oral narratives, and thereby turn such knowledge into trivial, or colourful, appendices of real history (Devine 1992). Indian parents often feel ambivalent about a school system which historically tended to undermine their cultural values. In spite of that, many still believe that education is important in creating responsible citizens and that a quality

education includes an awareness of one's own culture and ancestry (Berger 1994). Since few Indian students make it out of primary and secondary school, they will not encounter archaeology when it is introduced at the post-secondary level. Hence they are denied the possibility of ever learning the full extent of their heritage. Despite some well-meaning efforts to address this imbalance (see for example Marcotte 1990; 1993), such endeavours will continue to miss their intended audience so long as Indian students are absent from primary classroom discussions about archaeology.

Focusing on the past will have implications for the relationship between Native Studies and archaeology; since the latter in America is still concerned mostly with American Indians, it overlaps entirely the mandate of the former. Clearly, the chasm between archaeology and Native Studies is no longer without bridges. Indian scholars can pursue their research under the auspices of Native Studies: for example, Brandon University in Manitoba offers its archaeology programme with the Department of Native Studies. Simon Fraser University offers a minor programme in First Nations Studies which is hosted by the Department of Archaeology at its Burnaby, B.C. campus. Here, internalist archaeology works well within a system designed to introduce the topic for undergraduate and graduate programmes. Historically, relations between Indians and archaeologists have been stormy, as indicated by the debate over exhumation of human remains. Assuming that Indian protest has coaxed the archaeological establishment into recognizing their concerns, assessing the state of affairs of these disciplines is important in order to ascertain the degree to which archaeology can be recognized as a legitimate adjunct to Native Studies. Indian scholars and laymen alike routinely challenge archaeological interpretations of their past and as Native Studies matures, its interdisciplinary objectives will support research in all areas that examine the lives and experiences of Indians. That motivation will inevitably extend its research into the remote past.

So far, the most conspicuous casualty of that blending is the land of prehistory, to use Alice Beck Kehoe's phrase. Indians have long disputed the notion that they were

discovered by anyone. That same spirit animates their argument against what prehistory supposes. Even the archaeological establishment is beginning to hear their opinions and now it find its terms do not make for a comfortable fit among multilateral perspectives. No one represents the establishment better than David Hurst Thomas, a senior archaeologist at the American Museum of Natural History. His recent volume *Exploring Native North America* (2000) takes great pains to present Native perspectives. Indeed, the first heading in the preface, *This Is Not a Book about Prehistoric Indians*, sets the tone for his venture in lending some balance to archaeological writing on Native Americans. Finally, someone from that side admits "the entire notion of 'prehistoric' is problematic" (Thomas 2000: vii). He has found out that "Indian people that I know don't like having their ancestors classified as 'prehistoric,' as somehow 'before history' - or worse yet, 'without history' at all....they have always had their own history, but their own views have traditionally been ignored or denigrated by White American scholars. This is why the idea of a book about the archaeology of prehistoric North America did not work, at least not for me" (Thomas 2000: viii). He proceeds to describe several sites and relates their significance to both American Indians and American archaeology. He even devotes a chapter to Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump; the same site that Shepard Krech III used to point out the indigent habits and wasteful tactics of ancient buffalo hunters. Needless to say, an archaeological treatment without a moral lesson stands out from the fare offered by an ideologically driven interpretation. His dismissal of prehistory indicates that some archaeologists are beginning to question the veracity of their cherished terms, but his inclusion of an Archaic stage in the precontact era shows that there are still miles to go. The alternative offered in this thesis, the Epipalaeolithic, would absorb easily his definition. "When archaeologists refer to Archaic people, they basically mean those hunting-gathering-fishing people who are not Paleoindians" (Thomas 2000: 32). Clearly, Indian writers have had an impact by publishing their own rebuttals to prehistory.

Citing myself in this debate would be merely offering an opinion, except that my essays have been published in peer reviewed journals. In print, I have taken the position that Native Studies has to enlarge its interdisciplinary mandate to be more sensitive to certain areas of scientific research, especially if the data were generated from Native subjects (Yellowhorn 1996; 2000). These articles grew out of manuscripts I originally submitted as part of my course work at McGill University. In them, I examined the relevance of archaeological research to Native people, and, more specifically, the use of the scientific method in Native Studies research. I found that certain facets of Native thought were susceptible to archaeological inference. Topics such as aboriginal astronomy and cognitive geography demonstrated that the flower of science had blossomed in an Indian garden, to paraphrase Nathanael Carpenter (Yellowhorn 2000: 74).

Adding to the mix is my current status as an assistant professor of First Nations Studies and Archaeology at Simon Fraser University. I am obligated to teach courses in both disciplines and one course I regularly teach is the "Archaeology of the New World." While I am not a champion of the course title, I am in a position to expand on my terms and categories when I am organizing antiquity into a logical and coherent syllabus presented in weekly installments during a thirteen week semester. Since I began teaching the course, I have been employing the tripartite arrangement I proposed in chapter four. My students have come to learn about the Upper Palaeolithic, the Epipalaeolithic and the Neolithic as the broad categories evident in the archaeological record. They never, ever hear about any prehistoric era in the New World. Nor have I ever included any discussion of the Archaic. Introducing the Epipalaeolithic as a replacement for prehistory has met a friendly reception, mostly because the current generation of undergraduates is searching for an alternative to it. Furthermore, the Archaic was never popular with British Columbia archaeologists. They still insist on creating their own terminologies, but these are invariably regional and do not transfer readily to the different environmental zones that dominate the landscape. West coast archaeology has difficulty accepting the hemispheric definitions introduced over fifty

years ago, but its own terms have never influenced archaeological nomenclature anywhere else. Its estrangement from categories designed for the continental heartland can be overcome by adopting the Epipalaeolithic.

Internalist archaeology has to use any means available to teach Indians about their heritage. That goal means expanding beyond the print medium. Just as Indian writers adopted literacy to get their Native-centred perspectives into print, Indian broadcasters must explore the existing and emerging broadcast media to relate similar messages. Introducing archaeology as a guide for imagining Indian culture history can exploit the effectiveness of communications media. A welcome addition to the cable menu is the *Aboriginal People's Television Network* which began broadcasting in September 1999. The network name says it all and conceivably Indian audiences could one day tune into a television show devoted to archaeology in their community. Indian film-makers will start to produce their own version of archaeology programmes in the documentary style familiar to viewers of history channels. This medium has the capacity to achieve what classrooms have been unable to do: reach out to Indians and tell stories about the lives their ancestors led long ago. Indians in archaeology can be a television programme documenting the work that Indian communities invest in recovering history. The result could then be broadcast to homes across the nation, with the audience not restricted to Indians. Normalizing archaeology in the imagination of aboriginal people can be accomplished with positive, visual stimuli that bring it into their comfort zone.

Archaeology is susceptible to instruction employing various techniques and media. It can include digging at an excavation, or perhaps a documentary series vicariously experienced at home through cable television. Public education explains the broad goals of heritage protection, site excavation and data recovery. As such, it is a global exercise that can be achieved through instruction guided by interpreters or professional archaeologists. Since archaeology has a high profile in popular culture, public education has the effect of mitigating rampant speculation by acting as a counter-weight. Internalist archaeology must

contribute to promoting public education because aboriginal cultures and customs are vulnerable to negative perceptions and activities. However, there is a role for Native researchers in local communities because modernity has collided heavily with tradition. If the latter is to avoid the fate of artifacts, it must take into account changes in the world system. Oral narratives being the point of departure, Indians by appropriating archaeology mitigate the impact by harmonizing traditional views with the contemporary universe.

Remodelling the Blackfoot Sky Country

Naked-eye astronomy was the only type of observation practiced by Blackfoot star gazers. They understood the world to be flat, and way up there was an equally flat sky country that existed parallel to the earth. Nowadays, that view has largely disappeared, so star lore is treated as an intellectual curiosity that is having difficulty holding its own in the modern universe. Too much like fantasy to be accepted as real, some dismissive youths might say when hearing tales about how the planets came to have a Blackfoot identity. Recovering the Blackfoot universe without alienating the modern one is a problem that can be overcome through researching traditional lore which has been lying fallow for almost a century. Such research can be a model for rescuing dormant lore through ethnographic and archival research for the benefit of the present generation. Learning of ancient heritage through the print medium is unique to this time. Writing adds a new facet but connecting with it through research is no less fascinating. Furthermore, working with ancient narratives places a burden on each researcher to enhance them. So this mission entails a personal contribution to Blackfoot star lore, combining written Blackfoot with a modern solar system to produce an updated model of the sky country.

Walter McClintock (1910) could understand the Blackfoot obsession with star lore because when standing out under a frigid sky on a moonless winter night, the universe presented him the same panorama that has greeted the naked-eye astronomer for eons. He was mesmerized by a view that stretched to the edge of the galaxy. He experienced the sensation that swept through countless generations of sky watchers when he shivered in

awe at the spectacle before him, scarcely believing that so many stars could fit in the sky. He used his terms of reference in his ethnography to describe the vista because the culture of his adopted family was just too foreign to be an adequate guide for him. Where fascinated Blackfoot astronomers saw seven siblings running around the fixed star, he saw the Big Dipper and Polaris. Where they saw the enigmatic Wolf Road that spirits travelled on their way to the afterlife, he recognized the Milky Way. Nevertheless, the Blackfoot sky put a spell on him and drew him out every night with hopes of catching a glimpse of the northern lights, or maybe a space oddity amid the constellations. He could appreciate Blackfoot star lore, because it excited the romantic in him. However, the message he heard was telling him to enjoy the moment because his dreams were moving on.

Clark Wissler (1909) heard similar stories but meaning eluded him because he concluded that chaos governed the primitive mind and his task was to bring order to Blackfoot oral literature. He saw a chaotic collections of stories isolated from each other and he deployed the analytical tools of his trade to sort out the themes; all the while thinking that, his work would make comparative mythology easier for some future researcher. He noted the gravity that pulled Blackfoot narratives to star lore; so much so, that one of the four categories in his myth classification was devoted to them. Tales of the old man, the origin of rituals and sundry legends rounded out his scheme, which was an end onto itself. Although he framed Blackfoot oral narratives within the goals of his profession, he found no meaning in myths beyond devising a mythological taxonomy. The point that eluded him was that the myths themselves were analytical tools, tailored for mnemonic learning (Figure 6.1). The lodestar guiding Blackfoot myths led him to landmarks on a cognitive map that he could not understand. He saw the canopy of light that illuminated Blackfoot myths, but the message he heard was how to organize myths.

When Walter McClintock (1930) returned to visit the Blackfoot family that had adopted him a quarter century earlier, he found a culture dispirited and its young people disinterested in the old ceremonies. For the first Blackfoot generation born in the

reservation era, ancient star lore held little appeal. Their reality did not begin with the mythic past; instead it began with the dregs of their culture that the shock troops of civilization had not destroyed. Loss of confidence in traditions was itself a symptom of the *anomie* that arrived with the imposition of the reservation system. Like their language and customs, myths had been devalued because Blackfoot people had daily interaction with a modern world that did nothing to accommodate their perception of reality. Their myths were therefore demoted as so much arcane trivia. Elders could not bridge the credibility gap that fomented indifference as young people struggled to adapt to modern times. Like the lost generation around him, McClintock could not believe that his memories had been dispossessed by the march of time. Obsolescence had eroded the old days the way flood water had destroyed the previous world. Yet Blackfoot star lore persisted in part because an older generation had recruited people like Wissler and McClintock to record their stories, even though the ethnographers were driven by their own scholarly motives.

Category	Stellar object	Distinguishing features
First Family	Naato'si (Sun) Ko'komiki'somm (Moon) Ipisowaahsiiyi (Venus)	Only objects visible during daylight hours
Heros	Mercury (Blackfoot identity unknown) Katoyis (Mars) Ihpawakksski (Jupiter) Ipiiksaakiwa (Saturn)	Quixotic movements in the Sky Country
Other Families	Miohpokoiksi (The lost boys) Ihkitsikammiksi (The seven siblings)	Clusters and constellations Consistent movement Calendrical potential

Figure 6.1 Blackfoot astronomers classify the visible universe into three categories based on the observed features that distinguish each group of stellar objects.

Ethnographic taxonomies treated myths as disjointed anecdotes, rather than a unified whole explaining the observations of sky watchers. Each star has an individual persona and in its biography is encoded the message it carries. Mythology was the analytical tool available to Blackfoot astronomers and so they employed it to codify their observations. Their taxonomy makes its first division between the day and night sky (Figure 6.2). Sun (*Naato'si*) is the chief of heaven and his light fills the sky; Moon (*Ko'komiki'somm*) is his wife and his son is Venus (*Iipisowaahsiyi*). He has a young male persona so he is also called *Maanikapi*, or young bachelor. They are classified as the first family of the sky because they are the only objects visible during the day. For the night sky, a distinction is made between mobile stars that are perceived as heroes, and clusters or constellations whose proximity bring to mind the closeness of family ties. Heroes are typically impecunious loners whose adventures always begin in conditions of destitution or adversity. Their travels in the sky are slightly quixotic, but significantly, the four stars in this category fall into the pattern of repeating fours as a common story-telling device. Families, on the other hand, move together in a constant, seasonal motion. Two important families that appear in myth, and that are always portrayed on tipi smoke flaps, had time-keeping as their purpose. The Lost Boys (*Miohpokoiksi*) kept track of the approaching buffalo calving season, and the Seven Siblings (*Ihkitsikammiksi*) were sensitive to the time of the night.

Periodically, certain stars appeared after dark that were unlike the others because they seemed immune to the fixed paths of their fellow celestial travellers. From their earth-bound perspective, viewers tracked the visible planets until they fell out of sight beyond the horizon. They saw heroes whose importance was indicated by the magnitude of their brightness so that each star had its distinguishing features. *Ihpawakksski* (Jupiter) is the most important and is recognizable as the brightest. More importantly for Blackfoot ceremonialism, he is synonymous with the customs of the Sundance and the sweatlodge. *Ihpawakksski* translates as Scarface and his name is a tale of woe that is the inspiration for

his adventures. Tired of his disfigurement, he endeavours to visit the sky country with the intent of pleading his case before *Naato'si*. *Ihpawakksski* makes his way there and succeeds in getting an audience where he pleads his case. Sun treats him, but has only his son, *Iipisowaahsiyi*, as his model to shape a new look for Scarface. The two young men join Sun in a sweatlodge where he proceeds to instruct Scarface to take the same ceremony back to earth. Afterward, Sun is unable to tell them apart and mistakenly believes Scarface to be his son. This error alludes to his second Blackfoot name, *Pahsipisowaahsiyi*, means Mistaken Morning Star, because people commonly mistakenly identify one for the other.

Next in terms of brightness is the mythic hero *Katoyis* (Mars) which mean Blood Clot. He tamed the wild forces and made the world safe. He became known as the blood red star, as a reminder of his birth in a boiling pot of blood clot soup. Before Blood Clot was born in the soup, there was a comet in the sky (the Blackfoot called them smoking stars). He identified it as his original form. He gained his fame as a monster-slayer and met many challenges that tested his mettle as a defender of justice. His greatest victory came against a nemesis called the Wind Sucker. This fierce water monster lived in a lake near the mountains. It habitually fed on people by opening its maw and a great wind would suck them into its belly. *Katoyis* went forth to slay this beast. He allowed himself to be carried by the wind into its belly as if he was a meal. There he found its heart fully exposed and vulnerable. Killing the beast was easy then because he tied a knife upright on the crown of his head and stabbed its heart repeatedly by jumping up and down. With the wind sucker dead, he let free the people trapped inside by cutting a hole between two ribs. When at last his time on earth expired, he bade his relatives not to mourn for he would be joining the star people in the sky country and would forever watch over them. While the Sundance was being performed during the summer of 2001 AD, Mars was unusually close to the earth. When they saw *Katoyis* watching conspicuously over the proceedings from his high perch in the south, everyone there agreed it was an auspicious sign.

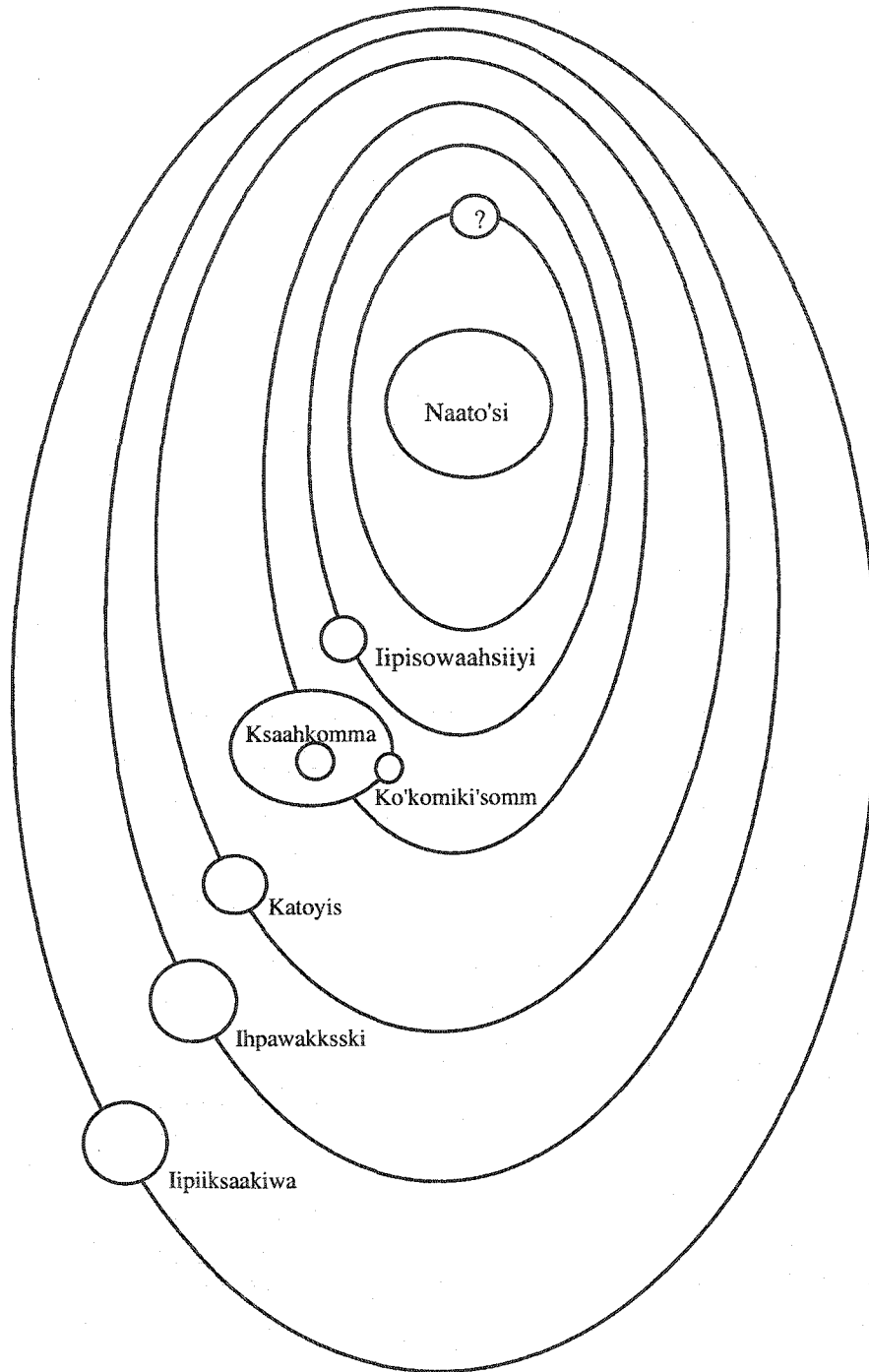


Figure 6.2 The Blackfoot sky country is retrofitted onto a modern understanding of the visible solar system. Each visible planet is identified through a mythical being whose persona and exploits are recounted by story-tellers.

Third in brightness is *Ipiikssakiwa*, Cut Wood. His heroism led to the origin of the medicine bundle that could restore life. Originally, death came to the world because of a contest between *Naapi* and his old lady. Some time later, a young orphan boy sought to cure his maudlin life by rousing his parents from their perpetual sleep. His quest took him to the sky country where he met Sun and told him of his yearning to be reunited with his parents. Sun took pity on the poor boy and gave him the knowledge to construct a medicine bundle that would restore life to dead things, which he brought back to the Blackfoot people. Thereafter, when plants or animals died the restorative powers of the bundle would be invoked to replenish their life. People held onto this bundle and passed it down from father to son, until it was given over to the buffalo as ransom for the woman who married into their herd. However, its powers were still evident because each spring the buffalo performed its rites and caused all the dead plants to sprout anew.

One final hero, Mercury, is barely visible to star gazers; however, he is a reluctant hero and when visible is never too far from the chief of heaven. His Blackfoot identity has proven elusive, a casualty of the obsolescence that McClintock (1930) noticed was eroding the old ways in the early years of the reservation era. People were no longer making observations of planets and stars. Time-keeping was readily available with clocks and seasonal plans could be made by referring to a western calendar. There was no need to pay homage to the star lore that had sustained the ancient Blackfoot and so it was forgotten except for the records made by ethnographers. Just when telescopes with unprecedented magnification routinely pierce the edges of deep space, people have been cut off from the visible universe by light pollution. Hence, the present generation is unmoved when hearing insights of unaided observation and perceives Blackfoot star lore as quaint but inconsequential. Rehabilitating Blackfoot astronomy begins by recalibrating it with the model of the visible solar system that is most familiar. Mythology standardized Blackfoot astronomy so that observers in any generation could recognize the star people who travelled sky country. The task is to analyze the myths to determine the kind of messages that are

embedded in them. Reclaiming Indian history for Indian people means appropriating the written word and deploying such knowledge as a marker of cultural identity. Rehabilitating myths is an objective that has implications for a collective understanding of Blackfoot history. However, there is a more personal benefit to be gained. Individuals seeking their own spiritual compass can look to myths, as an alternative to movies, to help them deal with the world they encounter.

Archaeology and Identity

Internalist archaeology may describe a concept designed for Native research, but it also has the potential to contribute a sense of antiquity to the identity of aboriginal people and First Nations. Internalist discourse poses questions that are important to the host community, therefore the research it motivates creates a new situation when looking for clues to the meaning of aboriginality in a post-modern world. Indians are gradually infiltrating Canadian society and as they colonize Canada they become estranged from their traditional culture, so they must continually seek ways to renew those connections. Their reaction to their environment is as much an affirmation of their identity as it is a symbol of resistance to assimilation. Idealizing traditional narratives and placing them on pedestals is symptomatic of their desire to hang onto those intellectual artifacts that give them insight into an alternative world view. Thus, internalist archaeology creates a matrix for examining those elements that nurture a sense of self. It provides new ways of appreciating ancient lore, since the oral tradition has receded beyond the experience of most Indians.

When employing it to advance local goals, archaeology is an aid for organizing knowledge. Like all forms of knowledge, oral narratives, customs and folklore are susceptible to organization at various levels of abstraction. Placed in their proper role they cease to be chaotic artifacts of primitive philosophy that have nothing to contribute to modern archaeology. Instead they can be interpreted as sources of explanations for archaeological manifestations. Archaeology can help rehabilitate the meaning of Blackfoot stories of ancient times, by finding the signatures they would leave in their wake. By

contributing explanations for found objects, Indians can take pride in knowing that their traditional stories still have a viable role to play in a modern research environment. That archaeological methods can corroborate the messages encoded into oral narratives assures them of the wisdom carried in old stories. More importantly, internalist research shows that archaeological methods can potentially help sort out chronologically the longevity of Blackfoot narratives (Figure 6.3). "How old are your old stories?" ceases to be a dismissive question because archaeological material can place an absolute chronology on oral narratives and folklore.

Elements of Blackfoot ideology become discernible in the archaeological record because material recovered from excavations exhibits strong ties to Blackfoot narratives. Proving deep time for myths has real implications for establishing links to ancient cultures whose lifeways left behind tangible evidence. Internalist archaeology will be a potent shield against arguments that attack aboriginality. Scholars such as Thomas Flanagan (2000), and like-minded, right-wing conservatives would like to erase the whole issue of aboriginal rights off the public agenda. Manifest destiny casts its shadow across his rhetoric when he insists that Native people have no long history in the territory they claim as customary lands. If aboriginal people wish to argue that their presence on the land is in fact ancient, they must feel confident that archaeological evidence will buttress their case. Therefore the challenge is to identify those aspects of their customs that are discernible in the archaeological record. Blackfoot people can legitimately claim to be direct cultural descendants of the people who occupied the northern plains since the Pleistocene epoch, because their oral narratives can explain antiquities found there through excavation. Traces of their customs that leave a readable signature in the archaeological record can support their claims to cultural affinity. Archaeological research will inevitably play a pivotal role in creating a strong sense of identity, because through it aboriginal people will find the evidence to verify the antiquity of their traditions. Far from being recent migrants, they can prove that they have occupied their homelands since time out of mind.

Since the beginning of Canada, being Indian has evolved from birthright to a legal right. Making matters worse is the fact that governments have made a habit of eroding the conditions that favour aboriginal lifeways. Aboriginal people are free to practice their traditions so long as they do not interfere with the control that Canada places on their lands and resources. Customs that originated in the Pleistocene and which sustained aboriginal cultures all through the Holocene are now considered criminal acts because governments have enacted restrictive legislation. Criminalizing Epipalaeolithic lifeways means Native hunters find themselves in the unfortunate position of defending themselves in court for trying to pursue the customs of their ancestors. Governmental agents prosecute cases to assert jurisdiction over so called wildlife resources, but the net effect is to erode the number of traditions that can be protected as treaty rights. Identity for Indians is an exercise of resistance to deliberate efforts to nullify legal recognition of their right to exist.

Legislated actions, such as gun registry laws, continue the legal harassment of hunters by placing statutory hurdles between them and their access to the bush economy. Laws designed to trample on treaty rights invariably adopt a narrow interpretation of aboriginal customs and argue that they must be practiced in their primordial form only and that innovation cannot occur in the practice of that custom. This was certainly the case in the *Van der Peet* trilogy (Christie 1998), where charges were upheld against the lead defendant because she sold salmon caught under a food fishery licence. Her activity failed the so-called *Van der Peet* test because commercial trade could not be considered an aboriginal right despite the fact that salmon was a widely traded commodity in aboriginal times. The commercial venture rising out of catching and preserving salmon for later sale, had no parallel in ancient times so it could not enjoy protection as an aboriginal right. None of these cases relied on archaeological evidence for a defense, but instances occur where archaeological evidence is cited during trial proceedings. While arguments were being presented in the *Delga Muukw* case in northern British Columbia, the Gitksan and Wetsuweten people introduced archaeological evidence to corroborate their oral traditions in

an attempt to strengthen their case (Yellowhorn 1997). Ultimately though, their evidence was unacceptable for the court because they failed to convince the presiding judge that they were the descendants of the people who occupied the ancient villages revealed by archaeological work. Their case was not decided on archaeological evidence alone and on appeal oral traditions were accepted as valid testimony. The point here is that governments will continue to criminalize the traditional lifeways of aboriginal people and archaeological evidence may come to be accepted within legal standards to convince jurists that aboriginal customs have great time depth and deserve legal protection.

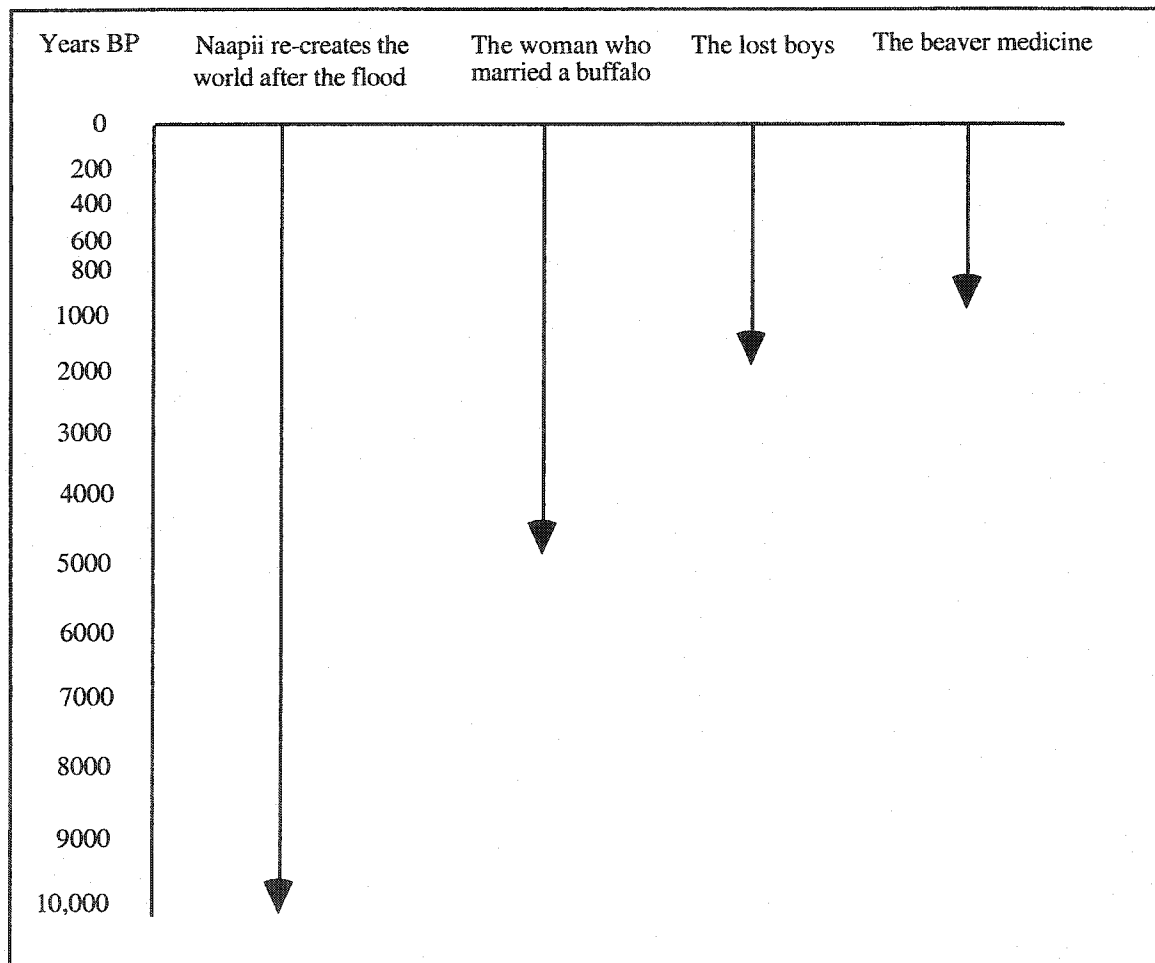


Figure 6.3 Organizing the antiquity of Blackfoot oral narratives becomes possible with archaeological methods. Each story is based on some Blackfoot custom that leaves behind tangible material. Finding its archaeological signature means examining the cultural practices each story would support.

Of course, identity is not contingent solely on laws. It consists of qualities, practices, symbols and self-image that are not easily expressed in any section of the *Indian Act*. Yet, aboriginal people in general have so little of their traditional lifeways available to them because the modern world system consistently encroaches on those resources that make their lifeways possible. Blackfoot people have lost their Epipalaeolithic economy, and with it they lost what made them autonomous entities. So some Blackfoot customs have retreated into a symbolic realm because their physical basis is extinct and can no longer be practiced. As with the buffalo jumps that become showcases for visiting tourists, Blackfoot people must find new ways to maintain their connection to their traditional culture. Some traits survive more easily today than in aboriginal times because contemporary conditions favour their practice (Figure 6.4). Other customs, such as smoking, have been rendered detrimental by modern views. Traditionally, this pastimes was a sacred activities but secular usage has made it a contemporary health issue. After tobacco became commercially available, the sacred chores of cultivation disappeared when the tobacco society re-oriented its spiritual compass to prevailing conditions. Ancillary skills catering to this habit, such as specialized lithic pipe-making, have all but vanished. Technical traditions, such as ceramic production or flint-knapping, which sustained Blackfoot ancestors for millennia, suddenly have no place in contemporary culture.

Threats to identity are an on-going source of crisis for aboriginal people. Early in the last century, Walter McClintock found this to be the case when he returned to the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana. He failed to notice the developing psychological barrier between Canadian and American Blackfoot caused by the international boundary that bisected their homeland. Or perhaps it was not so evident then. The intervening history shows a whole community starting down separate paths in relating to their culture. American Blackfoot fell into the melting pot society and were encouraged to abandon their Blackfoot identity. Meanwhile, the benign neglect of Canada meant that Blackfoot language and tradition survived north of the border. Today the American Blackfoot recruit

Blackfoot speakers and traditionalists from Canada to instruct them about the rudiments of Blackfoot culture as they attempt to re-learn the traditions they lost in the melting pot. While no easy answers will be found in antiquity, archaeological research on Blackfoot traditions at least provides one more avenue for finding traces of their customs. Creating a practical guide for imagining the past from an internalist perspective has real implications for the present generation because it leads to a longer view in which to appreciate Blackfoot identity. The Blackfoot experience is only one story common to many Native cultures facing pressures from the modern world, so internalist archaeology has practical value for them as well.

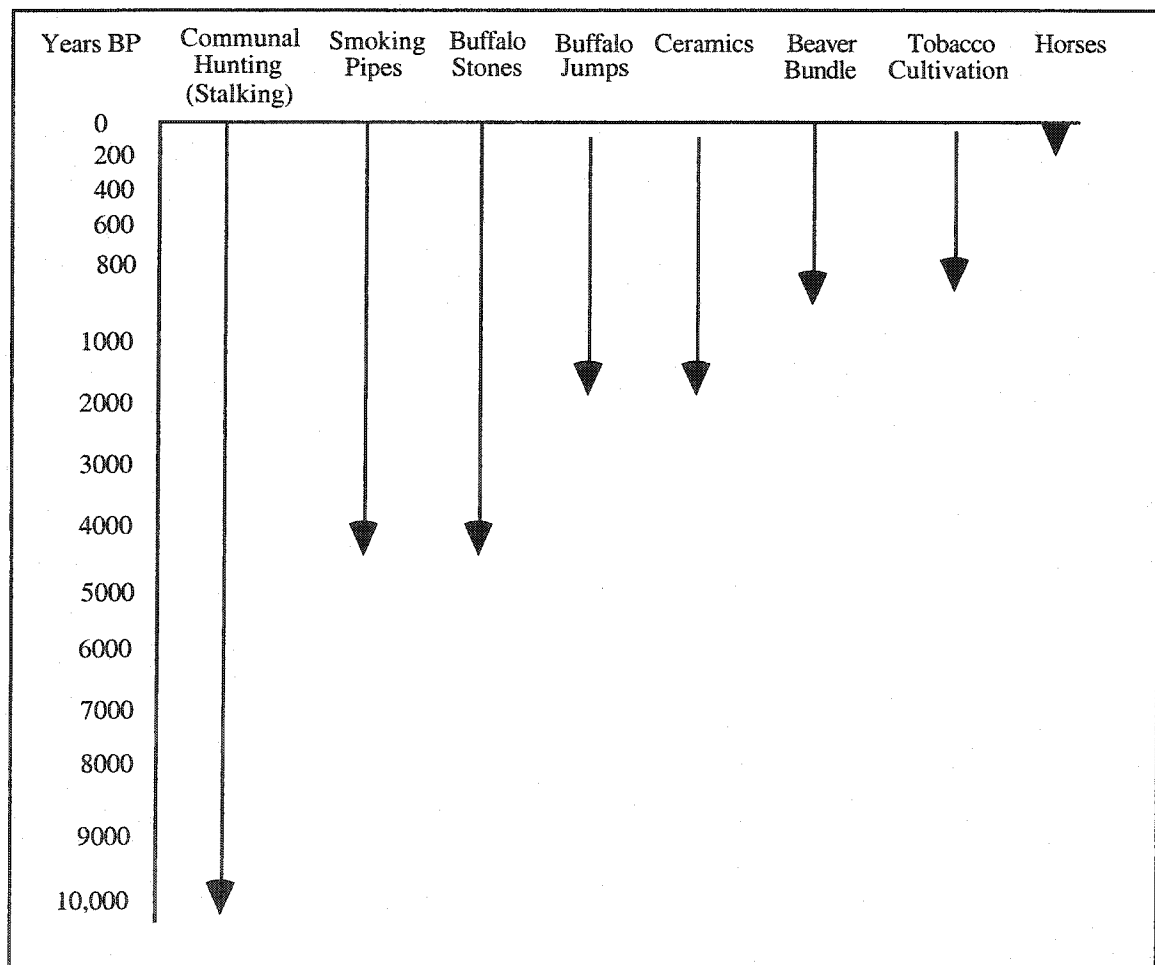


Figure 6.4 Time depth for emblems is significant for knowing the antiquity of Blackfoot identity. Since many Blackfoot customs leave readable signatures in the archaeological record, archaeological methods can be deployed to read them.

...and finally!

Today Indian communities are familiar with the work of archaeologists because of cooperative efforts with researchers through public archaeology or in interactions with consultants during cultural impact assessments. They see artifacts collected as a result of excavation, they hear the interpretations, explanations and conclusions proposed as archaeologists generate theories about the past and they see the museum exhibits that display artifacts. All of which serve a foreign audience at the expense of Indian interests! Understandably, aboriginal people desire to adopt methods employed by archaeologists, but on their own terms. They wish to examine their own experience with ancient history. Thus, creating a set of tenets about archaeology resulting from an internal dialogue is an attempt to fill the theoretical vacuum that glares back at Indians who choose archaeology as a career. The destination has yet to emerge, so for the time being internalist archaeology must concentrate on the journey. One pseudo-destination that can be dismissed now is the notion that it is simply Indians practicing the methods of archaeology. Declaring the journey over at that point would be premature. Likewise, assuming the destination to be so far off as to be unattainable is also a mistaken conclusion.

The first goal of this thesis was to blaze a route past methodology and to chart a course into the theoretical terrain beyond. Internalist perspectives in archaeology originate in a sense of the past that has oral narratives, folklore and mythology as some of its landmarks. Internalist archaeology must consider ways to organize ancient history around them by recognizing their archaeological manifestations. Traditional narratives and oral histories have proven useful as analytical tools in the search for undiscovered sites (Greer 1997). Mythology and folklore about deep time can prove equally useful as potential sources of explanation for data amassed during excavation. Since Native people find their identities in their traditional cultures, practicing archaeology responds to the identity crisis that afflicts them by recognizing the symbolic value of heritage. Thus, an internalist theoretical programme must utilize archaeological research as a instrument to foster a milieu

for Native thought that searches for ways to blend customary lifeways with contemporary circumstances. Internalist archaeology scouts the two paths that Native people must make into one by seeking the common landmarks of a global antiquity common to humanity and the local customs that respect a unique sense of the past. It can help fill in the details of the bigger picture of world archaeology, while employing archaeological methods to better understand the precise historical trajectory of particular cultures.

First Nations today find that many activities designed to stimulate local economies, house their burgeoning populations, deliver services to band membership or construct community infrastructure also bring them into contact with unanticipated discoveries. Preparing blanket policies that anticipate heritage matters is the ideal form of proactive governance, but the reactive scenario is just as likely to motivate band councils. No sections appear in the *Indian Act* to compel Indian bands to conduct impact assessments in advance of development plans, yet they routinely sponsor such work because federal monies usually make up a large part of the budget in their projects (Yellowhorn 1996). Federal statutes require the developers of Indian lands to finance an impact statement into the cost/benefit package of any projects before they receive government financial support. Since all projects on reserves will entail some form of support from the Indian affairs branch of the federal government, they become subject to federal environmental review laws. As a result, band councils find themselves in the awkward position of being the developers of Indian lands and the advocates for heritage material. Thus, balancing priorities is the dilemma band leaders face, since their decisions affect their reserves directly. If unexpected discoveries compel them to take action, they must weigh heritage concerns against economic or other local needs. Managing antiquity means choosing an appropriate model to guide their thoughts when imagining the past. In North America, the choices reflect the two competing schools of thought regarding antiquities; one holds they are property, the other defines them as resources.

The property model has greater time depth than the resources model. However, cultural resource management, since its modest inception in the 1950s, has become the dominate paradigm in American archaeology. CRM grew parallel to the 'new archeology' until it became the primary model taught in university courses and it was offered up as the only standard procedure. Business leaders, belatedly and grudgingly, accepted CRM as a cost of doing business with government clients and for projects receiving government money. Consulting archaeology grew out of cultural resource management, because an unbiased, third party was needed to mitigate the impact of development plans. Enterprising archaeologists mixed business with antiquity to obtain contracts to survey lands that were slated for development. They propose their options, based on an impact assessment of the project and the proximity of sites to danger, then devise a fragility index that would leave some sites unexcavated and ignored while other sites might require immediate salvage excavation. In this way, cultural resource management became a concern for tribal governments. Their lack of trained personnel forced them to turn to the archaeological industry for expert help. CRM appeared with the package as the standard conceptual aid for imagining the past, but it conveniently fit into the legal and ideological institutions that imbue the archaeological establishment with its authority. In Canada, because of the constitutional balance of power between the federal and provincial governments, CRM weighs heavily in favour of the provinces. Archaeological definitions of cultural resources have been embraced by provinces because they allow them to legally alienate any residual aboriginal interest in antiquities by claiming them to be resources. The federal government, although it is constitutionally obligated to represent the interests of First Nations, is impotent to introduce superseding CRM statutes because such an act would trample on provincial rights. Thus, CRM is an instrument that actively severs Indians from their heritage and is deficient as a conceptual guide for internalist archaeology.

However, when portable antiquities cross provincial boundaries they stop being resources and they become cultural property. Opting for the property model is a viable

alternative because it already enjoys a legal definition. Native people have always maintained they hold a spiritual link to antiquity, especially to those sacred sites in their customary lands. They regard their role in heritage matters as analogous to a trustee of an estate, but they have been excluded because provincial jurisdiction is asserted. Using the property model to guide internalist management practices is worthwhile, but not just because it can fulfill contemporary expectations for mitigation in advance of development projects. The property model also has real legal value because it aligns the First Nations with the federal government, which can pass laws on cultural property but not on cultural resources. Imagining the analogy of an estate holds the potential to give Native researchers a credible voice in the dialogue with the archaeological establishment.

Internalist archaeology is equally effective when employed as strategy for studying recent history as the excavations at McLeod Lake, British Columbia demonstrate. History, as Canadians know it, is all about nation-building. It narrates a story of how Canada came into existence and brought the fur trade, capitalism and the world system to the far reaches of North America. Only incidentally does the historic record mention the presence of prior occupation by aboriginal people. Indians were integral to the success realized by the fur traders and were daily in their company, yet they appear as little more than anonymous, indigent ghosts haunting the trading posts. Tsek'ehne people were no different in that respect, so archival documents and historical sources quickly reach their limit of influence. Therefore, in order to understand the impact of the fur trade on their culture, the Tsek'ehne of McLeod Lake decided to experiment with archaeology as an alternative and complement to history. Beginning in the summer of 1992 and the two summers following, several Tsek'ehne students worked under the direction of professional archaeologists, including myself. They learned field methods of survey and excavation to find sites and recover data, and they learned about laboratory methods for examining artifacts to identify their diagnostic features. They also became acquainted with methods of cataloguing and basic conservation techniques. Beyond the excavated units and the recovered artifacts, the crew

began a public awareness campaign for their heritage site that involved an open house where everyone was invited to visit the site and sample Tsek'ehne culture and history. Birch bark has always served as a building material and it was collected locally for some traditional houses that were reconstructed based on details in ethnographic sources. Old McLeod Lake Post was restored and the residence became a modern museum with displays of the post and the old Sekani village nearby. The archaeological project became the nucleus for a larger operation that eventually culminated with the opening of a museum and heritage park where visitors could walk through the old trails winding around the village and view Tsek'ehne history.

Internalist archaeology can support methods appropriated from the mainstream to embark on a theoretical programme that is inspired and motivated by an internalist sense of the past. Designing theory from traditional sources validates the efficacy of folklore and integrates it into a modern research regime, where it can contribute new knowledge to the discipline in general. Theory-building from oral narratives does not have to defend itself as if it were speculation, instead it can harmonize the intent of better understanding oral history. Coeval with improving the reputation of archaeology as an aid to enriching local history, internalist archaeology can contribute to the wider society by acting as an antidote to the perjorative speculation that seeps into popular culture and which inadvertently builds the basis for imagining Indian history. It can utilize modern media to broadcast its message to a wide audience and it can help create an informed public by contributing content to educational curricula. It can help clarify the positions that aboriginal leaders adopt when negotiating land claims and other settlement agreements. After all, there is no point of going through the pretense of having a dialogue if Indians only echo mainstream archaeology.

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