SHATTERED GLASS AND BROKEN BONES: PIIKANI DOMESTIC SPACE 1880-1960

by

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ABSTRACT

Reserves have existed in Canada for over 140 years, yet their archaeological correlates are virtually unknown. Historical archaeologists in North America typically focus on sites of European origin, so critical examinations of Indian engagement with Canadian society from an archaeological perspective are lacking. Using a combination of historical documents, oral testimony, and archaeological data, I examine the Piikani First Nation's transition from tipis to cabins in the late 19th- and early 20th-centuries. I detail the Piikani adoption of alien vernacular architecture, exploring what elements of tipi spatial organization persisted once they adopted cabins. I document the material culture associated with a sedentary occupation. It has been assumed that, having adopted European housing, Indians lived inside them as "White" people did. Yet the organization and use of space within at least on Piikani cabin reflected continuity from their pre-reserve tipi lifeways, even though the associated material culture the indicated change.

Keywords: reserve archaeology, tipi, cabin, culture continuity, culture change, Piikani, Blackfoot, social space, Plains

Subject Terms: Blackfoot, Piikani, historic archaeology, household archaeology, Peigan, Treaty 7, domestic space,

DEDICATION

I remember saying as a child that I wanted to be a writer. My parents told me I could, but I let that dream go. Yet I ended up being a writer, after all. Funny little world, ain’t it?

To my parents, for everything.

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To my family: You put up with years of me being essentially incommunicado for eight months out of twelve, and especially my parents, who are loving, supportive, and quick to point out that my schooling came at the cost of no Olympic 2010 grandchildren.

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DLC: Having a non-archaeologist review my work was helpful, and your refusal to let me quit the programme is why this thesis is getting published. And no, it was DLC, not DLS, and I didn't—*especially* not over pizza. Savages have standards, too.

And to Alan McMillan: Without knowing it, you started me down this path with your ANTH 160 course at Douglas College, and forced me to look beyond my own biases. You forced me to realize that many White academics are not exploitive of First Nations heritage, and many are advocates and partners in the truest meaning of the word. It was inspiring, and I've since met many wonderful like-minded academics. Kitchi Meegwetch!

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GLOSSARY

Aboriginal. A term used in the *Constitution Act* (1982) of Canada, which specifies three groups of people: Indian, Inuit, and Métis. The Canadian colloquial use usually refers to the pre-European inhabitants of Canada, even though the inclusion of the Métis in the group makes this use inaccurate. Globally, it generally refers to the original inhabitants of continents which were later settled from the 15th-century and onwards by Europeans. I have used it here in latter sense when discussing Aboriginals before the passing of the *Indian Act*, 1876, which made the term "Indian" a legal category.

Euro-Canadian As used in this work, a Canadian by virtue of birth in, or having made the lands of, Canada their home, ultimately originating from Northern European stock and sharing the cultural conventions and ideologies of post-Renaissance Europe. I often use "White" as a synonym, though I acknowledge both terms mask the cultural diversity present in Europe.

Indian Indian is used in a legal context in Canada, as the term appears in the *Constitution Act* 1867 and 1982, as well as the *Indian Act.* Indians form the most heterogeneous of the three categories of Aboriginal though culturally it is a broad, monolithic term, equating in descriptiveness with Eurasian. Some find the term offensive, while other use it as a self-designation. The politically correct term for Indian is First Nations, but only for status Indians. I use the word in a legal sense in my thesis, referring to status Indians, that is, people recognized by the federal government as Indians under the *Indian Act.*

CHAPTER 1: THE *SHATTERED GLASS* OVERTURE: INTEGRATING ARCHIVES, ORAL HISTORIES, AND ARCHAEOLOGY ON THE PIIKANI RESERVE

Figure 1. The south side of Herbert One-Owl's home on the Piikani reserve. While seemingly an obvious example of change, continuity from pre-reserve life may have oriented domestic space within the home. Photo by author.

Romanticizing the Blackfoot Indians of North America owes much to their command of the horse, their military dominance of the northwestern Plains until the late 19th-century, and their defence of their sovereignty. Americans in particular alternately feared, romanticized, and demonized the Blackfoot in media

representations as they expanded westwards under the auspices of their "manifest destiny[1]." The Indian Wars of the 1860s and 1870s caught the attention of American and Dominion citizens, fuelling a curiosity that still lingers in the 21st-century. Christian missionaries within Indian territory published exotic accounts of "savages" from the 1600s to early 1900s that both inspired public imagination and inflamed European sensibilities (Harrod 1971: xvii; for an example see Duchaussois 1919). Television shows and Hollywood movies of the 1950s and 1960s depicted Indians based largely on the so-called "Indian Wars" that occurred in the United States during the 19th-century, typically portraying Plains Indians as unruly, blood-thirsty savages bent on eradicating American settlements[2]. In fact, this archetypal image of Indians as tall, proud, gun-toting redskins astride magnificent horses, wearing elaborate feather war-bonnets, intent on counting coup upon, or slaughtering, their enemies even as they raided horses and cattle is more entertainment than historical fact (McMillan and Yellowhorn 2004: 129; Schultz 1907: 7).

After 1870, Indians in the former Rupert's Land, concerned about the influx of immigrants into their territories, asked for lands to be put aside for their exclusive use. Canadian officials were equally anxious about potential conflicts between its citizens and the Aboriginal inhabitants of the prairie (as will be discussed in Chapter 3). This mutual unease led to the creation of reserves: Indians were restricted to these small areas of land on their ancestral landscape,

[1] See Reilly (2010) for an analysis of American "frontier" newspaper articles published 1862-1891.

[2] See Neil Diamond's documentary *Reel Injun* for an examination of the Hollywood Indian.

and changes within their culture, already extant for a century due to engagement with Euro-Canadians (discussed in the next two chapters), accelerated. Examining the archaeological traces of diaspora, another source of culture change, Douglas Ross (2009: 1) asked, “When migrants leave one place for another, what do they bring with them; what do they leave behind; what do they pick up along the way; what do they choose and what is chosen for them?” Few people have asked this of Indians who settled on reserves. Yet Ross’s questions echo the colonial experience. When Indians accepted reserves, what elements did they bring with them; what did they leave behind; what did they chose and what did the Dominion of Canada chose for them? How did Indians engage with Euro-Canadian society? What indigenous cultural elements persisted, what transformations occurred, which cultural traits were incompatible with a new, settled lifestyle in the Reserve-Era? My thesis examines these questions, using the Piikani[3] as a case study to decipher some of the transformations and continuities that occurred on their reserve ca.1880-1960.

This chapter begins with an examination of the general lack of archaeological research on later-contact-era First Nations, followed by a brief discussion of the Piikani. The Piikani discussion will be expanded upon in subsequent chapters, but is presented here so the reader has some understanding of who these people are. My research objectives are then laid out, and a discussion of the various datasets employed in this study are presented. A

[3] The Piikani are one of the Blackfoot groups. The distinction between “Blackfoot” and “Piikani” will be explored in the next two chapters.

discussion on the archaeological implications of culture change rounds out this chapter, and finally, the organization of the rest of my thesis is given.

Historical Archaeology and First Nations

Archaeologists have undertaken few examinations of the period after Indians settled on reserves and became subject to a nationalist agenda of cultural reprogramming. Kent Lightfoot (1995: 203) points out that the majority of historical archaeology in North America focuses on sites of European origin, a position Patricia Rubertone (2000: 425) agrees with, writing "[h]istorical archaeologists have given relatively scant attention to the study of Native Americans." Reviewing the journal *Historical Archaeology* for the years 2000-2007 demonstrates the preferred focus of historical archaeologists had not changed just a few years ago. This journal, which emphasizes archaeological research in the Americas, published nearly 250 research articles in seven years, many of them examining questions related to the colonial experience of Euro-Americans in the United States. Only 13 publications focused on North American Aboriginal groups[4], and none explicitly explored changes in a post-reserve populace[5]. Historical archaeology seems committed to examining Aboriginals only in initial periods of engagement between Indian and colonial.

Rubertone (2000: 426) believes the disproportionate emphasis on sites of European origin is partly due to unwillingness on the part of many historical

[4] A similar number of publications examined Aboriginal groups in other colonial nations.

[5] Prince's (2002) examination of changes in late 19th to early 20th-century mortuary practices at Kimsquit on the Northwest Coast does not make clear if his research was conducted on a reserve or not.

archaeologists to critically question the textual records written about Aboriginals in colonial contexts. Rubertone (2000: 427) notes while post-contact studies have been extant in archaeology since the 1930s, “archaeological research on [Aboriginal] historic period sites served more as a means of gaining a backward glance at earlier cultural periods and less as a critical source of evidence for illuminating the realities of Native peoples’ lives and struggles in colonial America.”

Lightfoot (2006: 282) attempts to explain the lack of archaeological work in later historical eras by noting that culture contact studies in North America typically focus on short-term contacts rather than long-term engagements, and implies that examining later-period contacts when disease and violence typify European-Aboriginal relations may be viewed as overly challenging by researchers (see also Silliman 2005: 62). Additionally, funding is more readily available from government agencies and private organizations to conduct research on sites of European origin than it is for studies of Aboriginal sites in the historical era (Lightfoot 2006: 280). Whatever the ultimate and no doubt complex reasons are, the reluctance to examine changes in Aboriginal societies in colonial settings is not restricted to North America: Carlson (2006: 196-198) points out similar trends in the archaeological/anthropological practice in New Zealand, Australia, and Africa.

This study aims to help fill in the void of later period post-contact archaeological research on Aboriginal communities by examining continuities and changes in uses of Piikani domestic space during the colonial Reserve-Era.

My research is thus different from most studies of Aboriginals in the contact-era in that rather than focusing just on the ethnogenesis of the new Piikani social identity begun in the late 18th-century (discussed in Chapter 2), it explores continuity and changes of their culture in the 19th- and 20th-centuries.

The Piikani Nation

The Piikani people reside within the confines of what is now Canada. Most of the ethnographic and ethnohistoric literature on the Blackfoot (e.g., Dempsey 2007; Ewers 1971; Farr 1984; Jackson 2000; McClintock 1910; Michelson 1911, 1916; Schultz 1907; Wissler 1910, 1913) chronicle a century of the American experience of the group known in Canada as the "South Peigan." Similar publications about the Blackfoot in Canada are fewer and more temporally compressed (e.g., Brink 1986, 2008; Lewis 1941; Yellowhorn 1993, 2002, 2003).

The administrative centre of the Piikani Nation is the village of Brocket in southwest Alberta. As with many other First Nation communities, the Piikani want to develop their lands while protecting their cultural heritage. The Piikani have documented little about the early years of their reserve; elders hold remembrances but these may be lost with the passing of the current generation. My project contributes to both the preservation and further understanding of Piikani history in the Reserve-Era by documenting their experience with the colonial system, beginning in 1880 when their reserve was established.

Objectives

Investigating the Piikani experience with the modern era will lead to a better understanding of how the Reserve-Era shaped the contours of their culture. My goals are fourfold. Firstly, I contribute to Piikani written history by documenting and analyzing changes in the Reserve-Era, when the Piikani were forced to shift from a highly-mobile bison-based subsistence to a sedentary, agriculturally-based life style. Secondly, I examine the transition of Piikani housing from round, gracile tipis to square and robust cabins. Thirdly, I document the material culture associated with a sedentary cabin occupation. Finally, I explore what elements of tipi spatial organization persisted, if any, once cabins were replaced tipis as people's homes.

One of the strengths of historical archaeology is its ability to access multiple lines of data (Rubertone 2000: 426). I have used textual records in the form of government documents, journals, and transcribed interviews with Piikani elders to sketch a broad history of the Piikani reserve. I conducted archaeological excavations of a Piikani home, documenting for the first time some of the material correlates of the Reserve-Era. I interviewed two Piikani elders, who lived at the site I excavated in order to access information on social space within the home unavailable to textual information and invisible to archaeological methods. While the use of multiple data-sets to interpret archaeological manifestations of human behaviour presents the opportunity to produce a narrative that is more inclusive, it also presents additional challenges to the researcher, as each source of data has unique limitations that must be addressed (Loren 2008: 14;

Rubertone 2000: 426). As my thesis emphasizes historical documents, a brief discussion of their advantages, shortcomings, and critical use, is required.

Textual Sources

The use of documentary records in archaeology is well established. Even archaeologists studying "prehistory" avail themselves of documentary evidence as part of their research cycle, assessing papers, reading reports, scouring edited volumes on method and theory, and examining the conclusions of their colleagues. Textual records, however, are afforded different weight by historical archaeologists, and many approaches exist for working with them. Some use excavations as a way to test documentary information (Galloway 2006: 42), whereas others may privilege the textual record over archaeological material (Church 2002: 222). A third approach, advocated by archaeologist Martin Hall (1999: 193) suggests examining the contradictions between textual and archaeological data in an attempt to glean information that went unrecorded in both the documentary and material culture records. A fourth method is to integrate archaeological and textual information in an attempt to reconstruct the lifeways of people who lived at a specific site (Galloway 2006: 42; Wilkie 2006: 16). As my archaeological sample size is too small[6] to use material culture to test the archival record, or to examine the dissonances between them, I have chosen to integrate the archaeological data, oral histories, and historical documents in my study. Government records form the bulk of the historical documents used in my thesis.

[6] The reasons for this will be discussed in Chapter 5.

The Indian Affairs Annual Reports published by the government of the Dominion of Canada (later the Government of Canada) from 1864 to 1990 provided a valuable archival source. Published as a sessional paper, the annual reports were compiled for every band, reserve, and school in the Dominion. Indian Agents submitted reports, typically one- or two-pages in length, to their superiors in the Department of Indian Affairs. Most reports are simply summations of the previous year's census data, condition of Indian health, progress of schools, problems encountered, and aspirations of the writer for the next year. Eurocentric bias is invariably evident in them, and many contain descriptions of Indians that are little more than moral judgments. For instance, one author considered the Sun Dance a waste of time, where "immorality, gambling, and other such evils [are] practiced… [i]n a few years it may be hoped that these foolish practices will die out" (Canada 1902: 189). "Temperance and Morality" are headings that can be found in various annual reports, and under this heading in 1899, Blackfoot women were considered "moral, and compare favourably with other tribes" (Canada 1900: 131). The Annual Reports vary in their quality and the ministry usually edited reports from Indian Agents prior to their publication so that the public received only the information the government wanted them to (Carter 1999: 167).

A more complete documentary assemblage is the Indian Affairs Record Group [RG] 10 files at Library and Archives Canada. The RG 10 series of files

are on microfilm[7] and contain the reports to and from various agencies, Indian Agents, Indian Commissioners, and various other civil servants working with the Indian Affairs department. Never intended for public dissemination, the RG 10 files are primary documents and remain unedited. Some RG 10 records are classified documents and so access to them is restricted[8], but I examined thousands of letters and memos from the 1880s to the 1940s. The records contain a wealth of little used information about the Piikani from 1880 to the early 20th-century. My review of these files shows their content becomes largely uninformative to my purposes during the First World War, primarily consisting of equipment requisitions and staff transfers. By 1918, little more than mundane administrative details, such as requisitions and agency personnel files, formed the Agent's dispatches. Very little about reserve life can be gleaned from them by the 1930s.

The Piikani Indian Agents wrote reports serving specific functions, such as reporting to superiors about their activities, describing the results of departmental dictates, or outlining potential local issues that may require the assistance of a superior to resolve. While such documents do provide important information about life on the reserve (as discussed in Chapter 4), they cannot present the direct experiences and perspectives of the people they reported on. In the 1960s

[7] Library and Archives Canada had begun to digitize some of these reels and post them on their website by the time my thesis was nearly finalized. When I conducted my RG 10 research, the digital copies were not yet available.

[8] As per Indian and Northern Affairs Cabinet Directives No. 46 and No.47. The reasons for restricting public access are varied, and include "records that cannot be legally released, records covered by an agreement with another government or whose release would constitute a breach of faith with another government, those which might embarrass Canadian relations with another government, records relating to security and intelligence,and personnel records" (Tener 1978 :23).

and 1970s, interviews were conducted with Piikani who lived in the turbulent transitionary period of the late 19th- and early 20th-centuries. Stored at the *Canadian Plains Research Center* at the University of Regina, these transcribed interviews record something of the daily lives of the Reserve-Era Piikani. The challenges they faced, their perceptions of role of government and Indian Agent in their lives, and their attempts to adapt to new modes of living and subsistence, provide different perspectives than recorded in government documents and assist the task of interpreting both the historical and archaeological datasets.

Limitations of Textual Sources

Relying strictly on one type or class of document (government records, reports, or transcribed interviews) means the research they informed is unlikely to capture a holistic view of an issue as complex as continuity and change in cultural practices in an era of social upheaval. Using government reports alone to document the Piikani's Reserve-Era is problematic as the official record of what happened on the Piikani reserve—the Indian Affairs Annual Reports—were generated by officials half a continent away. Colonized people tend to be invisible and voiceless, unless the colonizer decides to write about, or speak for, them (Given 2004: 3). As government records typically exist to serve administrations and rulers, not to benefit future generations (Tener 1978: 16), using them as the only documentary source to understand changes and continuities on the Piikani reserve is problematic. Moreover, the information presented in the Annual Reports represents partisan-summarized and edited information (Carter 1999: 167). Furthermore, such colonial accounts are the products of affluent and

influential White men in positions of power (Lightfoot 1995: 201), who undoubtedly possessed a clear vision of both the naturalness of Euro-Canadian society and their place in it. The Annual Reports and RG 10 documents supported and justified the colonial regime.

An additional problem is that the government dispatches in the RG 10 files were not written by trained ethnographers, but rather men whose primary concern was to implement, and ensure a local population conformed to, the policy directives emanating from the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa. Furthermore, interpersonal conflicts are represented in some documents and thus may prejudice content. These disputes can only (sometimes) be gleaned by carefully reading and re-reading reports, and supplementing them with documentary sources outside the government archives[9]. Other documents relating the Piikani experience in the 19th- and 20th-centuries, such as the ethnohistoric record, are often romanticized and thus potentially biased (e.g., Schultz 1907, 1974).

Interviews with Piikani elders likewise must be read critically. The experience of the colonized is typified by loss of livelihood, personal humiliation, and knowledge that they are being cheated, either by the regime or its' agents (Given 2004: 3). As such, one cannot assume an unbiased recollection on topics such as the role of the Indian Agent in local affairs, since "[r]esistance to colonial

[9] For instance, Father Doucet, a French Catholic who prosthelytized among the Piikani, had a bitter rivalry with Piikani Indian Agent Robert N. Wilson, an atheist who repeatedly castigated the Catholic work with the Blackfoot as sub-par, especially in relation to teaching proper English. Only the reading of Doucet's journals and Wilson's dispatches together reveals the extent of their animosity towards each other. Claims either man made of the other—their motivations behind actions undertaken, accomplishments and failures—must be scrutinized with this in mind.

rule is often played out in people's conversations and stories" (Given 2004: 6). Contextual history compels us to recall that the interviews were conducted during the early days of the American Indian Movement, when tensions between Aboriginals and Whites resulted in several high-profile confrontations, such as the internationally reported 1973 Wounded Knee incident of South Dakota. Indeed, the leader of the American Indian Movement in southern Alberta, Nelson Small Legs, Jr., committed suicide on the Piikani reserve in 1976 (Hughes 1986: 395), demonstrating the community was directly affected by the turmoil of the era. The interviews from the *Canadian Plains Research Center* used in my project do not discuss these tensions, therefore, we cannot know if the social unrest of the 1960s and 1970s coloured both the questions asked by the interviewer or the perceptions of the interviewee.

The Ethnographic Limits

Ethnographic sources also provided valuable information to my study. Yet the volumes of Blackfoot ethnohistory from the late 19th-century all recite the mantra common to the era that Indians were inevitably becoming extinct. A view popularized by John Lubbock surmised that extinctions of indigenous peoples were a natural result of evolution and thus was not to be overly regretted (Trigger 2006: 173-5). Motivated ethnographers raced into the field to practice "salvage ethnography" (Wobst 1978: 304), trying to record all that they could about the vanishing Aboriginal cultures of the world. In the span of approximately two decades, several volumes appeared that described the Blackfoot through the words and memories about northern Plains cultures prior to the Reserve-Era.

George Bird Grinnell, for example, first published his collection of Blackfoot stories in 1892, followed by another article a year later. Grinnell's contemporary, Walter McClintock, published his narrative in 1910, largely based on research he had completed by 1896, though his 1905 visit to the Piikani Reserve is included. Clark Wissler, the first professional anthropologist to work among the Blackfoot, conducted his fieldwork in 1902 and 1905, though only among the Montana Peigan (Murdock 1948: 293). Thereafter, no researcher wrote ethnographic works for students of Blackfoot culture until the 1940s and 1950s.

The ethnographies that emerged in the late 19th- and early to mid 20th-centuries were little concerned with how the Blackfoot were living on their three reserves and one reservation. The authors of such documents focused instead on how the Blackfoot had lived ca.1850, when they were the dominant military and political power on the northwestern plains. The ethnographies stress religion, oral histories/traditions, and men's societies, often lamenting the passing of the ancestral ways coeval with the Blackfoot becoming wards of the state. As was typical of the time, a male bias permeates the ethnographies, reflecting the patriarchal nature of both North American and Blackfoot cultures. Decisions Blackfoot made relating to reserve life are seldom discussed. The South Peigan themselves speak little about the creation of their reservation, and in their oral traditions[10] they recount the life ways of their pre-reservation ancestors (Farr

[10] I follow Mason's (2006) definition of oral tradition and oral history. Oral traditions are the amassed memories professing to speak of the remembrances of dead ancestors. Oral history differs in that it encompasses the remembrances of the oldest person alive in a community (Mason 2004: 4). To put this into context, Canadian (non-text) remembrances of the First World War are now oral traditions, having passed out of living memory with the death of the last Canadian veteran to participate in it.

1984: 188). Walter McClintock and Edward Curtis deliberately ignored the effects of reserve/reservation life when recording the traditions and scenes they observed and staged in the early 20th-century (Farr 1984: 189), an understandable (if now lamentable) approach, given anthropologists of the era believed Indians were inevitably becoming extinct.

As a consequence of the above issues, I have attempted to integrate the various documentary sources into my examination of continuities and changes on the Piikani reserve. I have not attempted to reconcile the differences between the various textual sources, though I do point them out and discuss them. Not only is the goal of perfectly reconciling various accounts of the same event or process unfeasible, but also, I believe, unwarranted, as the differences in the information presented—the dissonances discussed by Hall (1999)—are potentially informative to future researchers.

Interviews

Oral history not only has the ability provide information on the historical experiences of people who typically go unrecorded (e.g., ethnic minorities or marginalized groups) but also permits the detailed exploration of daily life (Thomson 1998: 584). This research presented a fairly unique opportunity: to interview two men who grew up at the site I excavated. Piikani elders Romeo and Joe Yellowhorn graciously provided me information on the site layout, internal cabin layout, and the history of the site. In other words, they provided information which, until now, escaped notice of the written record. I interviewed both men separately, on several occasions spanning an approximate two-year period.

Their remembrances demonstrated conformity not only to each other's recollections, but across the two-year interval.

I did not use a tape or digital recorder to conduct my interviews, disliking the implied formality they bring. My experience is formal recording devices change what was once a fluid conversation between people into a "question and answer" session, a not uncommon experience (see Lang and Mercier 1984: 82). Furthermore, while I am of First Nation's ancestry[11], I am aware I look and speak like a "White man." The mental image of a White man recording an Aboriginal person for academic work made me strangely uncomfortable (even though I was explicitly recording Romeo and Joe's answers for academic publication). Therefore, I simply wrote the responses to my questions in my notebook. The questions I asked were open-ended, such as "Can you describe how space was utilized in your house?" and were focused on the reserve and the household they grew up in. Both Romeo and Joe read and signed consent forms approved by the university's ethics department prior to beginning the initial interview.

While it is well established that oral histories can actually be more reliable than written sources (e.g., Lang and Mercier 1984: 82), relying solely on oral testimony to document the Reserve-Era is as problematic as using only documentary sources. Oral evidence presents a different perspective than recorded documents do, but is no more holistic than the former. The advantages of integrating oral histories with textual documents in this project are that since

[11] My band is Henvey Inlet First Nation, located in Ontario. It has no political, cultural, or historical ties that I am aware of to the Piikani First Nation.

people of European origin wrote government records, Piikani oral histories give voice to the people about whom government agents were writing.

Archaeology

My research emphasizes the material culture record associated with the Piikani transition from tipis to cabins, from mobile hunters to sedentary agriculturalists. Undertaking an archaeological excavation of a Piikani home and analyzing the recovered artifacts complement the oral history interviews I conducted with Romeo and Joe Yellowhorn. Archaeological data frame the details that the archival material and oral testimony add to the broader picture of this transitional period.

Church (2002) demonstrates that even some historical archaeologists accept textual data as *prima facie* evidence, privileging the textual record at the expense of analyzing and interpreting archaeological data. Her demonstration came seven years after Lightfoot (1995) wrote on the same problem, possibly indicating a lag in recognition and understanding of the problem. As the resultant interpretations of such research can suffer the fallacy of affirming the consequent (see Church 2002), archaeological data are the ideal component with which to test written and oral records. Not only do archaeological data enable one to examine the veracity of written records and oral testimony, they permit one to document events or processes unrecorded in other types of datasets. Textual and oral histories contribute to my research, but my interpretations have firm grounding in the material culture record, though only to the degree the archaeological assemblage permits.

My project marks the first foray of household and historical archaeology into Piikani territory. Since the family forms the basic unit of production, consumption, and reproduction (both biological and cultural), household archaeology has a broad investigative mandate to probe the social, political, and economic spheres of peoples' daily lives (e.g., Ames 2006; Ames *et al.* 1992; Hendon 1996; Sutro and Downing 1988; Wilk 1989). Topics such as the social status and ethnicity of the people who lived in residential dwellings refine our interpretations of these conditions (e.g., Jamieson 2004) and of the interactions between people and ideology as they actively negotiate their social world (e.g., Olsen 1989).

Being the first to conduct this type of research among the Blackfoot communities poses unique challenges, such as having few data to draw upon to formulate testable hypotheses. Therefore, my thesis represents an exploratory-descriptive research project that contributes *post-factum* interpretations of recovered material culture. Definitive statements about assemblages and measurements needed to critically examine Blackfoot cultural change currently remain elusive.

The Archaeology of Culture Change

The literature on culture contact and culture change is immense, and in North American, is nearly as old as the discipline of archaeology itself (Cusick 1998: 3). A full discussion of the implications and expressions of culture change is well beyond the scope of my research. Therefore, the following discussion will

focus only on very brief overview of the relevance of culture change as it pertains to my study.

In North America, culture change studies typically focus on the processes and results of early interactions between Aboriginals and colonizers, attempting to elucidate on the ethnogenesis of new social identities and emphasizing culture flow between groups (Voss 2005: 461, 465, 471). Early work (e.g., Deetz 1963; Di Peso 1974) essentially counted the number of Aboriginal and European artifacts found at an indigenous site. When the relative proportion of European goods recovered exceeded those of Aboriginal origin, it was generally thought to indicate Aboriginal assimilation to European society, whereas if indigenous artifacts were more common, it was considered a measure of cultural conservatism (Lightfoot *et al.* 1998: 200; see also Rubertone 2000). These examinations typically proceeded from the implicit assumption that Aboriginal people possessed an overwhelming desire to obtain European technology (Rogers 1993: 73). Generally known as acculturation studies, such research tended to describe, rather than explain, culture change as a unidirectional process imposed on typically passive Aboriginal recipients by a European donor culture (Deagan 1998: 26, 28).

Some formulations of acculturation studies retain their usefulness (Cusick 1998: 126-127). It is now, however, generally accepted that they produced limited understandings of past behaviour, as they both ignored the fact that culture contact does not possess a unidirectional flow (Lightfoot *et al.* 1998: 200; Rice 1998: 48), and failed to generate an explanatory framework that accounted

for cultural changes (Ramenofsky 1998: 78). The dissatisfaction with acculturation studies had been building for decades, and reached a “critical mass” in anthropological scholarship in the early 1990s due, according to Cusick (1998: 1,10) and Deagan (1998: 23), to the Quincentenary of Columbus’ Caribbean landfall and the reflection upon historiography it engendered. Recent attempts to understand culture change emphasize human agency, recognizing that culture change in colonial contexts can be multi-directional, resulting from interactions between individuals with differing social, ethnic, and cultural affiliations (Deagan 1998: 35-36; Rice 1998: 59).

Sudden changes in material culture are the basic proxy that archaeologists use for assessing culture contact. For instance, in colonial settings, the replacement of natural materials with those made by Europeans to produce a tool (e.g., chipping a projectile point from bottle glass instead of stone), or metal items of European manufacture reworked into items which have to no European analogues, are archaeological examples of culture contact/engagement (Wagner 1998: 433, 466). Such goods are usually interpreted as local innovations demonstrating cultural continuity, not acculturation (e.g., Wagner 1998: 446). Archaeologists have long recognized that merely adopting a new technological innovation does not automatically equal acculturation (e.g., Rogers 1993: 73).

Alterations in manufacturing methods and/or preferred materials (e.g., Pointing 1999) in a given region may also be indicators cultural change. The function of an artifact, however, and not just the material from which it is must be

considered when critically assessing culture contact. For instance, during the 19th-century, the Potawatomi[12] bone and chipped-stone industries declined, replaced by European metal goods, seemingly strong evidence of culture change (Wagner 1998: 446-449). The metal traps, harpoons, and arrow-points the Potawatomi adopted, however, continued to be used for the same functions and in the same contexts as their non-metal antecedents: to hunt and trap game for subsistence and trade (Wagner 1998: 449). Despite earnest acculturation attempts by the European immigrants, the Potawatomi actively chose which foreign elements to incorporate into their culture. Their decisions were based on their personal preference, perceptions of the utility of European goods, and a recognition and rejection of items and behaviours intended to encourage abandonment of their cultural values and subsequent replacement with European ones (Wagner 1998: 450).

Archaeologist J. Daniel Rogers (1990: 224, cited in Wagner 1998: 434-35) has also documented that changing material culture does not automatically equal a social change in society: the archaeological assemblages of 17th-and 18th-century Arikara[13] indicate a "veneer of material change" which superficially masked cultural continuity from the pre-contact era. Archaeologist Mark Wagner (1998: 434-436) presents reviews of Onondaga and Tiontate Huron archaeological research which reinforce Roger's position, demonstrating that changing material culture of these Aboriginals during their early engagement with

[12] An Algonquin group who, by the early 19th-century, lived in the Great Lakes region in various areas of what is now Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, and Indiana (Wagner 1998: 436).

[13] A Plains group living along the Missouri River in the present state of South Dakota (Rogers 1993: 80).

Europeans did not represent periods of significant social change in their societies. Furthermore, rates of change are not uniform within a group: some people are more willing to embrace new materials, social institutions, and practices, than others (Kent 1983: 57). The idiosyncratic behaviours that have produced the archaeological record must be considered in contact studies, creating another layer of interpretive challenges.

Despite academic recognition that culture flow can be multi-directional in contact settings, unfortunate biases still exist in public understandings of "Indians." Archaeologist Stephen Silliman (2009: 214) argues that the American public generally accepts the notion that by accepting various European institutions and material culture, contemporary Indians have relinquished their rights to self-identify as true "Indians." Similar opinions are likely held by Canadian public, as well. Such views about Indians are not new: over 30 years ago, Berkhofer (1978: 29) documented the existence of this prejudice, which linked material culture with ethnic identity, and demonstrated such notions applied only to Aboriginals, not White people.

This unilinear connection between material culture and ethnicity in the archaeological record is a cause for concern, even if archaeologists are not making it. As Ucko (1989) pointed out over a generation ago, ethnicity is often associated with material culture, even though the relationship between the two is frequently ambiguous, resulting in the creation and perpetuation of racial/cultural stereotypes, such as—in this case—what an "Indian" assemblage looks like. Although Ucko's caveat may not be the spanner in the works, it identifies the

condition that makes interpretations difficult. Consider the following examples. In her study of changing post-contact childbirth practices in southern Africa, Beverley Chalmers (1990) documents the incorporation of Western objects into indigenous contexts. Pre-contact Zulu made *izijolandi* and *uxoxo* necklaces strung with horn, into which a *sangoma*[14] placed herbs that granted the wearer specific attributes, such as increased fertility (Chalmers 1990: 76; Beverley Chalmers, personal communication 2011). Discarded Western medicine bottles have now replaced horn on the *izijolandi* and *uxoxo* necklaces, though sangoma-recommended herbs are still placed inside (Chalmers 1990: 76). Elsewhere in southern Africa, herbal medicines are stored in decorated coffee cans, replacing the plant gourds previously used as receptacles, and Western toy dolls clothed in Ndebele "tribal dress" are given as gifts to encourage fertility among newlyweds, supplanting the pre-contact non-anthropomorphic dolls once given for the same purpose (Chalmers 1990: 7, 67, 79, 98; Beverley Chalmers, personal communication 2011). These examples represent the recontextualization of European objects into existing indigenous categories of meaning.

Silliman points out that assuming too much about material goods obscures the flow of cultural exchanges which occur between Europeans and Indians. An Indian household is likely to receive the interpretation of "Indian assimilation" if the home is archaeologically similar or indistinguishable from a Euro-Canadian one, but a Euro-Canadian site with Chinese porcelain goods does not automatically become a Chinese household (Silliman 2009: 227). When one

[14] Effectively, a shaman in the Zulu culture.

considers that most consumer goods in 19th-century Canada were imports from England, and mass-produced goods made in Canada or the United States entered the local markets and had to compete with overseas merchandise well into the 20th-century, it becomes clear that such goods do not readily lend themselves to interpretations of ethnicity or cultural behaviour. Choices groups make about which objects to adopt from a range of material, however, may tell us something about behaviour (see Pyszczyk 1985).

As the above section illustrates, culture contact scenarios are complex, multifaceted events, and examining them archaeologically presents interpretative challenges. The diversity of an assemblage, and adoption of items of alien manufacture into local systems, are the standard measures of the degree of culture contact (Alexander 1998: 489). Archaeological investigations of culture contact then must have at least two assemblages to compare: a pre- and post-contact sample, ideally from the same region and definitively attributable to one culture (for examples, see Rogers 1993; Wagner 1998). My research emphasizes changes in Piikani housing, from pre-reserve tipis to Reserve-Era cabins, within the Piikani homeland. Ethnographies such as Wissler (1910) provide examples of Blackfoot pre-Reserve-Era material culture for comparison with the archaeological assemblage I excavated.

Organization

My thesis is arranged thematically. Chapter 2 reviews those aspects of the Blackfoot ethnographic record relevant to my thesis, and discusses the interpretive challenges of ethnography, and of utilizing ethnographic documents.

Special attention is given to tipis and the division of household space within them, as I later discuss changes and continuities of domestic space that occur with the Yellow Horn[15] cabin in the early to mid 20th-century.

Chapter 3 discusses the political events of the incipient Dominion of Canada and its impact on the Blackfoot. As with many Aboriginal groups, the Blackfoot recognized their world was changing and sought to secure their livelihood. I discuss the sale of Rupert's Land to the government of Canada in 1870 and its impact on Blackfoot/Canadian relations. A review of the Numbered Treaties that resulted from the Rupert's Land sale, particularly Treaty 7, the treaty the Blackfoot signed with the Crown, is given, and the subsequent creation of the Piikani reserves is covered. The purpose of this chapter is to familiarize the reader with the politics surrounding Euro-Canadian expansion, and thus understand how the Piikani articulated with the Canadian, and, to a lesser degree, American governments up to the year 1879. Chapters 2 and 3 situate my case study of Piikani continuity and change, while chapters 4 and 5 continue to examine the Piikani in their homeland, after radical changes occurred in their world.

Chapter 4 documents the experience of the Piikani primarily from the perspective of unpublished government records from 1880 onwards, in conjunction with interviews conducted with community members in the 1970s. I

[15] I deliberately use the spelling "Yellow Horn," rather than "Yellowhorn," when referring to the cabin site: the former is consistent with Blackfoot ethnographic name spellings, while the latter is slowly being adopted by some Blackfoot as a Western convention. The Dominion of Canada Indian Affairs reports for 1880-ca.1940s shows the older spelling (keeping each word separate, and the second and all subsequent words usually capitalized, as in 'Strikes With A Gun') was common and a glance through the Fort Macleod, Pincher Creek and Lethbridge phonebook in 2007 demonstrates the ethnographic spelling style still dominates.

contextualize their experiences against a critical examination of broader social forces in late 19th- and early 20th-century Canada. I explore Piikani experiments with new vernacular architectural styles post-1880, and document a sequence from tipis to cabins to frame housing.

Chapter 5 presents the archaeological data recovered during my excavations at one cabin site associated with a sedentary occupation. It also documents, for the first time among the Blackfoot, what some of the material correlates of the Reserve-Era are, critically examining changing material culture in light of the data presented in Chapters 3 and 4. Interviews from two informants who lived at the site as children help to interpret the archaeological record.

Chapter 6 presents reconstruction of social space within the cabin. Derived from interviews with two men who lived in the home, this reconstruction would not have been possible with archaeological or historical methods. I suggest that, despite the government's belief that Indians living in cabins were proof of successful social reprogramming, at least one Piikani family adapted their cultural practices to suit their new vernacular architecture.

CHAPTER 2: THE BLACKFOOT CONFEDERACY AND THE PIIKANI NATION

This chapter examines the ethnographic accounts of the Blackfoot relevant to my thesis. I start by briefly discussing how “Blackfoot” refers both to a cultural and language group before examining some of the names the Blackfoot have been known by in the various ethnographic and ethnohistoric texts. Having stated in Chapter 1 that the horse and gun are both recent adoptions by the Blackfoot and are simultaneously embedded in public perception of them, I summarize the Blackfoot embracement of these items. I then discuss camp life and housing, paying particular attention to the demarcations of domestic space within a tipi. These elements are important aspects of my thesis, and the patterns documented in the ethnographic records regarding domestic space continued into the Reserve-Era despite changes in house form and material, something I demonstrate in later chapters.

The Blackfoot

“Blackfoot” refers to both a culture and a language. The Blackfoot language is a member of the Algonquian language family, the largest and most widespread Aboriginal language family in Canada (McMillan 1995: 5). Goddard (2001: 71) states that while Blackfoot is a single language, it does possess slight dialectal variation, and Goodstriker (1996: 3) points out each of the Blackfoot nations have slightly different dialects. Grinnell (1893: 44) indicates three

different dialects already existed by 1892, indicating dialectal differences predate the Reserve-Era, which began for the Blackfoot in 1880.

Culturally, the term “Blackfoot” refers to the three Plains nations of the Siksika (Blackfoot), Blood (Kainai), and Peigan. The Peigan are subdivided into a north and south division (Hungry Wolf 1975: 2, 12). Together, they comprise the contemporary Blackfoot Confederacy. In 1887, the Blackfoot chief Crowfoot stated his people were the *Sokitapi* (“Prairie People”) (Brink 1986: 5). More than a century later, Arima (1995: 7) provided yet another variation on the Blackfoot name, referring to the Blackfoot as *Soyitapi*[16] (“Plains People”). Contemporary Blackfoot collectively know themselves as the *Nitsitapi* (“Real People”). Earlier literature cites different names and information about the Blackfoot. For example, Cocking stated in 1772 there were four divisions, the Blackfooted, Bloody, Muddy-water, and Wooded Country Indians (cited in Burpee 1907: 316). Brink (1986: 15), however, suggests the Wooded Country Indians Cocking referred to were Gros Ventre, not Blackfoot. Such inconsistencies in names are common in the earliest historic records of the prairies, for both Aboriginal groups and geographical features such as lakes and rivers (see Brink 1986; Burpee 1907).

The Pre-Reserve Blackfoot

In order to appreciate how the Reserve-Era affected Piikani culture, a basic understanding of the Blackfoot culture that existed prior to 1880 is required. Much of the ethnographic and ethnohistoric literature written on the Blackfoot is based on studies among the South Peigan (e.g., Grinnell 1892; McClintock 1910;

[16] Johnston (1982: 1) provides an alternate spelling, *Sow-ki'tapi.*

Schultz 1907), making them particularly relevant to an understanding of the Reserve-Era Piikani. Schultz (1907), and particularly Lewis (1966) and Secoy (1966) are drawn on heavily for this discussion. Wissler (1910) provides an excellent overview of late ethnographic material. Those elements of Blackfoot culture that are the most germane to my research comprise the following discussion.

Historically, the Kainai, Peigan, and Siksika, were politically independent. All nations spoke the same language, shared the same customs (though certain ceremonials might have been unique to one group, and the people of each nation typically practiced their own Sun Dance), intermarried, and typically went to war against the same enemies (Ewers 1971: 5; McClintock 1910: 1). Each group determined their own relations with neighbouring Aboriginal groups, even if they were enemies in the eyes of their confederates. For instance, the Siksika were friendly, and intermarried with, the Cree under Big Bear, whereas the Kainai and Peigan resented them (Schultz 1907: 378-9). The Peigan went so far as to conduct raids against the Cree, even when Big Bear's people were camped with the Siksika near the Peigan camp in 1880 (Schultz 1907: 377-379).

The Emergence of the Horse Days

The horse and gun, so firmly entrenched in public imagination, arrived in different areas of the Plains from different vectors and at different times. Frank Secoy has studied the effects of horses and guns on Plains cultures from the 17th- to 20th-centuries in several publications. Secoy (1966: 2) provides a detailed description of directions and timings of the gun and horse, which are

summarized here. Guns diffused onto the Plains from the northeast, due to differences in the expansion of European nations into North America (Secoy 1966: 3). The Spanish were in the southwest, operating under a tightly state-controlled policy of political and religious subjugation. The French and English were in the northeast, and their policies were based on economic growth. Aboriginals were active partners in this new trading economy, and guns were an effective tool of economic expansion. Armed Aboriginal hunters were not typically viewed as a military threat by the English and French, whereas they certainly were to the Spanish, who passed laws to prevent the sale of guns and ammunition to them (Secoy 1966: 2-5). The result was a horse-and-gun gradient across the Plains as these items worked their way through Aboriginal trade networks.

The northwestern Plains groups obtained horses before guns, likely through the Shoshoni ca. A.D. 1700 (Secoy 1966: 33). Horses were rare in the northwest then, and proved invaluable for hunting bison: they were too rare and important to be risked in war, though they may have been occasionally used to monitor enemy positions (Secoy 1966: 33, 55). The Blackfoot were still horse-poor in the 1730s, and did not have significant access to firearms until the mid-1780s (Secoy 1966: 37, 46). When Anthony Henday was among the Blackfoot in 1754, he noted they were armed only “with Bows and Arrows, & bone spears and darts” (cited in Burpee 1907: 335). Secoy (1966: 43) argues that resident cultures on the northwestern Plains did not fully adopt the horse and gun complex until the early 19th-century, though Lewis (1966: 60) suggests the Blackfoot were fully

mounted by 1754. The horse and gun culture is considered the “typical” Plains Indian culture by many, yet these elements had only been recently adopted by the Blackfoot by the time sustained Euro-Canadian contact with them occurred.

Camp Life

The two principle seasons in the Blackfoot world are winter and summer. Summer consists of six moons after the vernal equinox, and winter the seven moons after the autumnal equinox (Hungry Wolf 2006: 127; Yellowhorn 2003: 334). Summer was the time of greatest mobility and also when many bands converged for social and ritual purposes, especially the Sun Dance (Ewers 1971: 90-1). Large camps were also a defensive strategy the Blackfoot used to protect themselves from raiding parties preying on smaller encampments, as summer was the season of war (Ewers 1971: 39; Secoy 1966: 52-3). Late in the summer the Blackfoot dispersed into smaller bands comprised of 10 to 20 tipis and began hunting bison and collecting berries in preparation for the coming winter (Ewers 1971: 39, 88, 91; Harrod 1971: 6). By the time the first snow storms arrived, the Blackfoot typically had already settled into sheltered areas, usually valleys, wintering there until late March/early April (Ewers 1971: 88-9). Re-emerging onto the prairie as the chinook winds melted the snows, the Blackfoot began hunting spring game and gathering various tubers in the months prior to the Sun Dance season (Harrod 1971: 6).

Housing

Tipis (or teepees) are one of the most famous examples of North American Aboriginal architecture, perhaps second in their fame only to the igloo of the Arctic. Tipis are portable, making them ideal for a highly mobile people, and were used year-round (Bryan 2005: 68; Wissler 1910: 114). Much of the ethnographic literature refers to these structures as “lodges” (e.g., Grinnell 1901; McClintock 1910; Wissler 1910). I have chosen to use the term “tipi” as it is an Aboriginal word, used by the Blackfoot and other Plains groups. “Tipi” is derived from two Sioux words meaning “used to dwell in” (Bryan 2005: 70).

Roughly conical in cross-section and ovoid in plan, Blackfoot tipi frameworks rest on four foundational rails and are slightly steeper at the back (which typically faces west), for greater resistance to the pervasive prairie westerly winds (Bryan 2005: 68; Grinnell 1901: 655). Among the Blackfoot, women owned the tipis and its furnishings, and were responsible for their construction, set-up, and take-down, though no taboos restricted an old man from helping his wife erect one (Dempsey 2001: 610; Grinnell 1901: 651-2; Wissler 1910: 99). An exception to this rule seems to have been when new poles were needed for the tipi: these would be cut by the husband and his wife, though the wife was expected to strip the bark from them (Grinnell 1901: 654). This pattern has now changed: while attending a Sun Dance in 2007 on the Blood reserve, I observed only men setting up and taking down tipis.

Tipis are tall enough to stand up inside of, but small enough that they are easily heated in winter by their central fire. Smoke is vented out the top of the

tipi, which has two adjustable flaps that can be angled to pull air in or keep it out, allowing for the circulation of fresh air (Bryan 2005: 68; Crowshoe *et al*. 2006: 1). Anchored to the ground by black birch pegs today, in the past stones were used, forming a distinctive ring around the base (Bryan 2005: 68, 70). Stones were also observed anchoring the edges of the tipis in winters, and sometimes in dusty, windy summers (Wissler 1910: 108). Tipi rings are among the most common archaeological feature across the prairie. The oldest dated tipi rings known in Alberta date to the Oxbow period, roughly 5,000-4,000 years ago (Bryan 2005: 78).

Circa 1850 and on into the early Reserve-Era, tipis averaged between 18.0-18.5 square metres and were about 4.2 to 4.8 metres in diameter, though diameters of approximately 7.6 metres were not unheard of (McClintock 1910: 233-234; Wissler 1910: 105). An average tipi required 12 to 14 bison hides, though deer hide was occasionally used as well, and symmetry required an even number of hides be used (Bryan 2005: 70; Crowshoe *et al*. 2006: 1; Grinnell 1901: 652; Wissler 1910: 100). Bison cow hides were preferred due to their thinness (Bryan 2005: 70). With the virtual extinction of the bison in the 19th-century, heavy canvas came to replace hide, though some Plains groups were already using canvas before the bison disappeared from the prairie as it was lighter, easier to cut, and far easier to decorate than bison hide (Bryan 2005: 72). Thomas Kehoe (1958: 867) suggests the transition to canvas began among the Blackfoot ca. 1870. The hides or canvases were wrapped around a framework of stripped lodgepole pine (*Pinus contort latifolia*) poles. The number of poles used

was highly variable and only had a general relationship to the tipi size: a larger tipi obviously needed more poles (Wissler 1910: 104). Grinnell (1901: 654) states that a tipi with more poles would have its hide stretched better than those with few poles, and would last longer. A bison-hide tipi usually only lasted a single year, due to the weather and the highly mobile lifestyle of the Blackfoot (Grinnell 1901: 650-1).

The single door of a tipi typically faces east, though authors such as Liz Bryan (2005: 70), Walter McClintock (1910: 28) and Clark Wissler (1910: 104) state the entrance was always east facing. While an east-facing door was a general cultural practice, local environmental or specific social conditions meant any direction was possible (Oetelaar 2000: 37). In the winter, for instance, winds in southwest Alberta tend to blow in from the northeast or northwest, so a south-facing door becomes the most practical option for keeping the home warm (Oetelaar 2000: 47). An east-facing door makes sense for most of the rest of the year, as the prevailing (non-winter) winds on the northern plains blow in from the west[17] (Bryan 2005: 70; Wissler 1910: 109). There were also ideological reasons[18] for the east-facing door of a tipi: it allowed Plains groups to send their prayers to the rising sun each morning (Bryan 2005: 70). Among the Blackfoot, that direction also honoured the natural environment from which all subsistence was derived (Crowshoe *et al*. 2006: 2). Such beliefs explain why ceremonial

[17] Once Canadians began settling on the prairie, they discovered for themselves the wisdom of not installing doors on the west walls of a building. One of the Piikani Agency buildings had its west door blocked off in 1887 due to these winds as the westerly's made it very cold in winter and dusty in summer (Indian Affairs Canada 1887).

[18] Wissler (1910: 109) refers to such reasoning as "mystic".

structures such as the Sun Dance lodge more consistently possessed eastern doors than vernacular structures (Oetelaar 2000: 37). Figure 2 shows a contemporary canvas tipi.

Figure 2. Tipi bearing the insignia (the blue double circle surrounded by a stylized bison) of the Siksika First Nation at Blackfoot Crossing, 2007. Tipis are still built and used on all three Blackfoot reserves in Canada, and on the Blackfeet reservation as well. During my work in Alberta and visit to Montana, I saw many tipis used much as Canadians use tents today: pitched in the backyard in the summer. They are also used at important ceremonial events, such as bundle openings and the Sun Dance. Photo by author.

Inside Blackfoot homes

The cardinal directions used in the following discussion assume the tipi was oriented towards the east, as was the general pattern. Regardless of which way the door was oriented, the internal ordering of a tipi remained consistent.

Once the door and hearth were fixed in space, all social activity within the dwelling occurred in relation to them. Archaeologically, however, both the hearth and altar need to be identified in order to determine the orientation on the tipi, as a tipi ring has no “break” in it representing the door (see Oetelaar 2000).

Space inside a Blackfoot tipi was specifically demarcated (Figure 3). Women sat to the left of the entrance (the south side) and men to the right (the north side). Gender-specific tasks occurred in these areas (Bryan 2005: 74). The hearth was located along the central axis, slightly closer to the door than to true center (Wissler 1910: 105). A single hearth was typical, but some very large tipis occasionally had two hearths lit in winter, which provided the only illumination in a hide tipi[19] (Wissler 1910: 106-8). An altar was located approximately half-way between the hearth and rear wall of the tipi (Wissler 1910: 105). This was typically a cleared space on the ground or a flat stone, upon which plants such as sweet grass or cedar were burnt for ceremonial purposes such as smudging (Oetelaar 2000: 37; Wissler 1910: 105).

[19] Tipis made from canvas are much lighter inside during the day, as canvas is somewhat translucent.

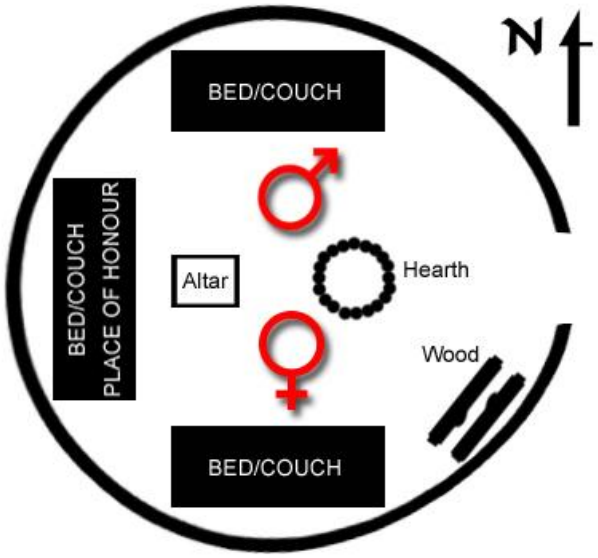


Figure 3. Generalized diagram of the internal arrangement of a tipi. The number and thus the exact orientation of the bed/couch platforms varied, though they were directly adjacent to the outer walls. The west wall would not always have a bed/couch platform along it (see Wissler 1910: 105). This pattern was still in practice in 2007, when I was invited to witness a bundle opening. Diagram by author.

Ceremonial regalia and paraphernalia, such as bundles, the most valuable objects the Blackfoot kept in their homes, were opposite the entrance, behind the hearth. Such regalia were usually the property of the resident patriarch, and this area was also considered the place of honour, and reserved for the head man (Indian Affairs and Northern Development [IAND] 1980: 7; Wissler 1910: 106). The family's wealth and social standing could be gauged by the number and size of bundles at the west side of the tipi (Wissler 1910: 106).The area to the west of the hearth, where regalia were stored, was the "private" and "sacred" portion of the household, the east side near the entrance, the "public" and "profane" section. Bison hide couches were typically located on the north and south sides

of the tipi (DCI, IAB 1964: 2; Oetelaar 2000: 40-1; Wissler 1910: 105), but could also be along the west wall (Oetelaar 2000: 37). Cooking utensils were stored on the south side, left of the entrance and riding gear just to the north of the entrance (Wissler 1910: 106). This reflects typical Blackfoot gender roles: cooking was a female task, while caring for the horses was a male task (Lewis 1941: 177-8).

According to Wissler (1910: 105), the gendered division of space inside the tipi was suspended when sleeping: the husband and wife (and perhaps his other wives, the ethnographies are silent on this point) slept on the south side, with their young children, while older children and guests slept on the north. Oetelaar (2000: 40-1) presents a different interpretation, however, stating that the location in which guests slept depended upon both their gender and who in the household had invited them. Female guests would have slept on the south (female) side, male guests on the north (male) side. The couch/bed platforms were arranged according to status: the highest status members slept on the west side, the lowest status and most visitors slept on the east, near the entrance (Oetelaar 2000: 40-1). While these status and gender divisions were often relaxed in day-to-day living, they were adhered to when rituals were performed in the home (Oetelaar 2000: 40).

From a structuralist viewpoint, the fact that the regalia were stored along the east-west axis could be significant, as this was the axis of the male/female interface within the tipi. Bundles, being the physical manifestations of the mystical powers that pervaded the Blackfoot world, resided on the west side of

the tipi. Since bundles straddled the axis, it may suggest they transcended gender. Functionally, bundles could have been stored anywhere in a tipi, yet bundle location remained fixed within the home even while available space increased as tipis grew larger after ca.1830. Perhaps storing the bundle along the male/female interface was a statement recognizing that spiritual power was not exclusive to any gender. It could also acknowledge that only the combined efforts of the husband and wife could obtain and care for the bundle(s). Additionally, locating bundles directly opposite the door would be the prime location to best impress visitors, signalling the wealth of the family who lived in the tipi. The bundles would have been obvious to a visitor even before they entered the tipi.

Archaeological Data on Gendered Use of Tipi Space

Archaeological data would be the ideal medium with which to examine the veracity of the ethnographic accounts that have formed the basis of my discussion on gendered use of space within tipis. Unfortunately, excavations within tipi rings typically recover few artifacts (Kehoe 1958: 864). Inside their tipis, the Blackfoot usually sat on robes or couches (Kehoe 1958: 871; Wissler 1910: 105) meaning objects were unlikely to have become incorporated into the active layer of the ground. The highly mobile Blackfoot lifestyle with frequent seasonal moves is also responsible for the ephemeral trace of archaeological residues within the tipi ring (Kehoe 1958: 864). Additionally, most domestic activities, including cooking, were conducted outside of the tipi (Kehoe 1958: 867, 871) yet another reason relatively little is found inside. Bone fragments, lithic flakes,

hammerstones, and some charcoal are all that is usually recovered (Kehoe 1958: 864, 867). As such, there is little archaeological information available to test the accuracy of the ethnographic records.

Chapter Summary

The Blackfoot today consist of three groups: the Siksika, Kainai and Piikani, the latter of which have two sub-divisions. Together, they form the contemporary Blackfoot Confederacy. The Piikani are depicted in ethnographic records as the both the most “warlike” and wealthiest of their countrymen. By the early 19th-century, the Piikani seemingly possessed the largest herds of horses and presumably the largest tipis and families. This impression may merely reflect the fact that most of the ethnographic record was collected amongst the southernmost Piikani sub-division.

Blackfoot homes were tipis, conical structures covered in bison hide. Canvas began replacing hide as a covering in the 1870s. Women owned the tipis and its furnishings. In the 19th-century, women were responsible for both the set-up and take-down of their homes, though early in the 21st-century this is seemingly the exclusive work of men. Tipis grew larger throughout the 19th-century as the average family increased its wealth via participation in the bison-hide trade. Space within the tipi was typically gender-specific. Women sat to the left of the entrance, men to the right and gender-specific tasks occurred within each area. Ceremonial regalia such as bundles sat along the axis of male-female interaction within the tipi. Archaeological investigations within tipis typically produce few artifacts, meaning most of our knowledge about tipi life comes from

the ethnographic record. Set up in the open prairie in the summer, in the winter the Blackfoot would build their homes in sheltered areas. For the Piikani, their preferred wintering areas were within the Oldman River valley.

With this brief discussion of the Piikani and Blackfoot completed, I now turn to a specific discussion of the Blackfoot and the events that shaped their world 1830 to 1880. Setting the contextual history for this period is crucial, as the Reserve-Era (beginning 1880) emerges out of these events. I cannot examine the cultural change of the Reserve Period without understanding the Piikani Blackfoot culture which preceded it, nor the causal factors of the change.

CHAPTER 3: THE BLACKFOOT AND THE DOMINION 1830-1880

The Blackfoot were the dominant military power on the northwestern Plains by the mid-19th-century, in possession of a territory constrained by the Rocky Mountains to the west, and reaching to the confluence of the north and south Saskatchewan rivers, and from the Battle River in central Alberta to the Missouri River in Montana (Dempsey 2007: 5-6; Jackson 2002: 26, 84; McMillan 1995: 150). Up to the 1860s, the Piikani flourished, despite the ravages of epidemic disease and alcohol (Notzke 1985: 10). Reciprocity still governed Euro-Canadian/Piikani relations in this era, and neither viewed the other as threatening. Twenty years later, however, the Blackfoot had become dependent wards of the Dominion government, geographically circumscribed to plots of federal land called reserves.

This chapter reflects on the events that led to the Piikani transition from mobile hunter-gatherers to sedentary agriculturists. I begin by discussing the ethnographic name "Peigan" and the contemporary appellation "Piikani," as well as the names "Blackfoot" and "Blackfeet." I then present a brief review of the 19th-century bison robe trade and specific Blackfoot adaptations, which are relevant in later chapters, before moving on to the transfer of Rupert's Land to the Dominion government. The Numbered Treaties, which emerged out of the Rupert's Land transfer, are explained, and Treaty 7—the accord which the

Blackfoot and Canadian government entered in to—is discussed in detail. The end of the bison robe trade is concomitant with the Piikani decision to accept Treaty 7 and its reserve system, and inaugurated their experiments with an alien life-style they were determined to adapt to in their own way.

The Peigan

Known in contemporary Canada as the “Piikani,” ethnographies refer to them as the “Peigan” and portray them as the most numerous, warlike, and powerful of the Blackfoot nations (e.g., Coues 1897: 526; Lewis 1966: 31). Circa 1808-1811, the Peigan perceived themselves to be superior to their countrymen, the Siksika and Kainai (Coues 1897: 530, 722). Their positions as the south-western frontier tribe of the Blackfoot meant the Peigan were most often at war with the Shoshoni, Kutenai, and Salish (Ewers 1971). Much of the warring had to do with the horse-raiding complex that arose among the Blackfoot sometime between the 1750s and 1780s (Secoy 1966: 35, 37, 46, 52). Young Peigan men, eager to demonstrate their bravery and acquire wealth, would often steal horses from neighbouring groups in daring forays (Ewers 1971: 40). The horse-raiding complex emerged in the southern Plains ca. 1630, and was eventually adopted by most Plains aboriginal cultures (Secoy 1966: 1). By 1808, the Peigan possessed the largest horse herds among the Blackfoot; the fur trader Alexander Henry claimed in this year to have heard that one man had a herd of over 300, though herds of 40-50 may have been more typical (Coues 1897: 526).

Early ethnographers such as McClintock and Schultz solicited the memories of aged warriors, whose war stories fit well within the popular

narratives about the White man and Indians. Tales of adventure also spiced up an otherwise staid inventory of intellectual and material culture. Hence, descriptions of the Blackfoot emphasize stealing horses and proving bravery in battle, with the prospects of social advancement motivating young men (Ewers 1971: 127, 142). Jackson (2000: 163-4) contends most fighting between the Blackfoot and other Aboriginal groups was mainly for posturing, and that decisive military victories were usually the result of surprise attacks or ambushes, but this ignores the fact that after 1770, the Blackfoot likely displaced many other Plains groups by virtue of possessing large horse herds and numerous guns (Secoy 1966: 52).

When the Canadian-American border was established, it bisected Peigan territory (as it did for many Aboriginal groups). While the border essentially created two administrative groups controlled by foreign governments, the cultural division between the Peigan were already established. The Peigan were divided into northern and southern divisions by late 1853 or early 1854, and may have been so since ca.1810 (Hungry Wolf 1975: 11). Ewers (1971: 208-212) states the North Peigan, numbering about 800, came together after their winter dispersal and summered in the Saskatchewan basin, trading with the Hudson's Bay Company, while the South Piegan, numbering about 1,800, came together and summered in the Missouri River basin, trading with Americans. The Peigan were in the last phases of political separation, on the way to becoming separate political units or perhaps tribes, when the treaties were signed in the late 19th-century with the American, and later, Canadian, governments (Notzke 1985: 6;

Raczka 1979: 7). Culturally, the border had little impact on either group: members of the “Canadian” and “American” groups routinely crossed the boundary to visit friends and relatives, to hunt bison, and to participate in ceremonies.

The Piikani were called the Peigan by Canadian authorities, and the Peigan in Montana were called the South Peigans. Americans refer to the Montana group as the Piegan, and to the Canadian group as the North Piegan. To add to the confusion, the American spelling of Peigan is different than Canadian: both nations reverse the “ie.” The Americans also refer to the South Piegan as the “Blackfeet,” a name also applied to other Aboriginal groups within the political boundaries of the United States that have no political or cultural association with the Blackfoot Confederacy (Coues 1897: 523-4). Explorers such as Alexander Henry used the terms “Blackfoot” and “Blackfeet” interchangeably in their journals. Canadian convention is to refer to the Confederacy nations as “Blackfoot” whereas American literature typically uses the term “Blackfeet” (e.g., Ewers, 1971; Jackson 2000; McClintock 1910). “Blackfoot” is the official spelling of the Blackfoot Confederacy, and thus the term “Blackfeet” is the American rendition coincidental with the Blackfeet Indian reservation in Montana, the administrative center of the Blackfeet Nation where many of the South Piegan live. Yet another layer of potential confusion is the fact that Jackson (2000) refers to both the North and South Piegan as “Piikani” and then contradicts himself in his Synonymy list, saying Piikani refers only to the North Peigan (Jackson 2000:

x). “Pikuni” and numerous variations are also used for the Piikani and/or the Peigan, often without explicitly identifying a specific group.

While Jackson’s (2000: x) statement that “Piikani” can apply to both the northern and southern divisions may have been culturally appropriate and was legally so when he wrote his book, this is no longer the case. The (North) Peigan officially changed their name to Piikani in May 2002 (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada [INAC]: 2002), emulating a continent-wide Aboriginal movement in reclaiming, or deciding upon, their chosen name. Most tribal names applied in Canada before the 1970s were derived from observers in previous centuries. Gros Ventres,[20] for example, is a French term for people who call themselves the A'aninin today.

As the above paragraphs demonstrate, there is an unfortunate level of uncertainty in ethnographic and government records, as well as contemporary scholarship, to someone unfamiliar with these people. For simplicity’s sake, I therefore refer to the “Piikani” as those people who settled on Indian Reserve [IR] 147 and IR 147B (discussed below) after 1880, but use “Peigan” to refer to the Peigan group as a whole when discussing their history. “Blackfoot” refers to the Confederacy in general and “Siksika” to the Siksika Nation specifically, formerly known as the “Northern Blackfoot.”

[20] The name is usually translated as “Big Bellies,” hardly a flattering or even historically accurate term. Ironically, given the links between obesity and poverty, it may be so now: many Aboriginals have become “gros ventres.”

The Bison Robe Trade

The bison robe trade expanded rapidly on the Plains around 1833 (Lewis 1966: 40) and the concept of individualism, already extant among the Blackfoot prior to European contact, intensified, as new opportunities to increase prestige appeared (Secoy 1966: 92-3). The Blackfoot economy shifted away from subsistence production, which satisfied their needs, to creating surplus for trade (Lewis 1966: 34). Unlike other Aboriginal groups, they never came to rely on European goods to sustain themselves, except in the case of tobacco and ceramics (Yellowhorn 2003: 330), until the Reserve-Era. Gradually, however, European items once considered time-saving luxuries, such as guns, metal axes, kettles, blankets, and beads, became necessities. Eventually, the lack of such goods in a household became a marker of poverty (Lewis 1966: 34-5).

The horse was simultaneously the ultimate trophy and the currency standard in the new economy. Horses revolutionized Plains societies, redrawing ethnic boundaries; even horticultural groups adopted these animals for hunting and to more effectively ward off attacks by mounted enemies (Anthony *et al*. 1991: 98). Horses were also private property, so large herds became status and class[21] markers among the Blackfoot (Carter 1999: 86). A man who owned 40-50 horses was well to do in the 19th-century (Ewers 1943: 604). Horseless Blackfoot were pitied and reproached in a manner that Ancient Sleeper related: he said death was a better option than selling his horse and subjecting his wife to the shame of going afoot (Schultz 1907: 308).

[21] Ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl (1989: 53), however, believes the Blackfoot had no class division at this time.

The largest herds were among the Peigan, unsurprising since they were closest to the southern sources for horses and would have had an easier time raiding for them. Circa 1830, the Peigan had an average of 10 horses per tipi, compared to five for their northern Blackfoot allies, the Siksika and Kainai (Ewers 1943: 603). Horses allowed for a greater accumulation of personal wealth, as they aided in the transport of property in the Blackfoot seasonal round. Owners of large herds could afford to take on social roles, such as owning several medicine bundles to enhance their prestige[22] (Carter 1999: 86). By the mid 19th-century, Blackfoot tipis had expanded in size, partially due to horses (Dempsey 2001: 610), since these beasts of burden could transport the increased property most families possessed compared to the Dog Days. Increased wealth was also positively correlated with increased family size, which also necessitated larger tipis. Horses became the preeminent wealth item among the Blackfoot, and brought the Piikani the kind of property other Blackfoot coveted (Dempsey 2001: 608).

The lucrative bison robe trade, in conjunction with the horse-raiding complex, brought prosperity to the Blackfoot after 1833. The bison, however, were under increasing pressure from competing hunters starting roughly the same time. By the time of the Rupert's Land transfer of 1870, the end of the trade was only a handful of years away. The Blackfoot were about to enter a tumultuous decade in which they had to radically transform their lives.

[22] Not all medicine bundles, however, were sought after: as McClintock (1910: 252-3) points out, some bundles, such as the Medicine Pipe, were so expensive that they were essentially forced upon the wealthy by their current owners, who had be paid for the transfer. He states that many wealthy people went to great lengths to avoid purchasing them. Some contemporary Blackfoot, however, still actively seek to purchase and care for bundles.

Rupert's Land

The *Rupert's Land Act* of 1868 authorized the transfer of Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory from the Hudson's Bay Company [HBC] to the Dominion of Canada. Completed in 1870, this transfer revealed the full extent of Euro-Canadian expansionism, and sustained relations between the Blackfoot and European immigrants became inevitable. Canada essentially doubled in size when it took possession of the Aboriginal land that the HBC had claimed by royal charter since 1670.

The dynamic between Aboriginal people and government had changed by the 1870s: once important as military and trade associates, Aboriginals were recast as obstacles to progress. Canadians had less need for Aboriginals as military or commercial allies, and government policy shifted towards "civilizing" them, which meant settling them—often coercively—on reserves (Dickason 2002: 203; Notzke 1985: 10). Changing economic conditions devalued former commercial partnerships to mere consumers with little buying power (Notzke 1985: 10). Although Aboriginal people became obstacles to Canadian interests, they were nevertheless everywhere the Dominion's borders spread, and where Canadians settled. While Aboriginal people had to accept Canadian expansionism, Aboriginal resistance to it was at the forefront of the government's and westward-moving settler's minds.

The American Influence on Canadian Policy

South of the border, the United States was embroiled in the so-called Indian Wars, the result of its expansion into Indian territory guided by the doctrine

of manifest destiny. The 1862 Sioux conflict resulted from rapid American settlement of Minnesota (Brown 2001: 312) when Americans, many of them considered intolerable "in any civilized society" (Ewers 1971: 236-7) swarmed the Plains seeking gold. The Montana Territory was created in 1864, a response to yet another gold rush (Fowler 1996: 34). Aboriginal peoples of the region began moving into Canada to escape the onslaught and the depredations of Americans, including some Blackfoot from all three bands (Fowler 1996: 34).

Many of the westward-moving Americans used aggressive measures to dispossess the Indians, and this, along with the introduction of whiskey in the region, led to the so-called "Blackfeet Wars" of 1865-70, a series of escalating revenge killings that culminated with the Baker Massacre[23] of 1870 (Ewers 1971: 249-51). Effective control of the plains after the gold rush was inevitable when the U.S. Army occupied the region and targeted the bison for extinction, seeking to bring ruin to the thousands of Aboriginals whose livelihood depended upon the beasts. While Americans were overtly intent on military conquest to assert control, Canadians were no less ambitious in their plans to usurp Aboriginal lands.

The vicious period of American settlement and huge military expenditure focused Canadian attention on the various Plains groups. The United States spent approximately twenty million dollars a year on war, a sum

[23] On January 23rd, two-hundred U.S. soldiers under the command of Colonel Eugene Baker surrounded Heavy Runner's village along the Marias River, erroneously believing his camp to be that of a hostile group of Blackfoot. Heavy Runner walked towards the soldiers, waving his safe-conduct papers. An Army scout with Blackfoot ancestry, Joe Kipp, warned his men they had surrounded the wrong camp, but the Army opened fire. Also known the Marias Massacre, the attack killed 173 Peigan, mostly elderly or children: the camp's warriors were away hunting at the time (Welch and Stekler 1994: 22, 31-33).

larger than the total Canadian budget of the era (Macleod 1985: 189). Canada had laid claim to the former HBC lands, but could not claim effective control over them. Canadian politicians looked nervously across the border, wondering if the seemingly insatiable American appetite for land would stop at the 49th parallel. This led to some politicians viewing a peaceful relationship with Aboriginals as the only viable option for Canadian settlement. Such action would keep American expansionism at bay, an especially powerful motivator since Canada's military was virtually non-existent (Dickason 2002: 260; Macleod 1985: 189, 192). Treaties, and the presence of a police force—the North-West Mounted Police [NWMP]—became the Canadian way to avoid the devastating wars to the south while simultaneously pacifying the western prairie (Dickason 2002: 25; Macleod 1985: 188).

Blackfoot Influence on Canadian Policy

Well aware of the American propensity to speak with the gun, Indians also desired treaties with Canada. Overexploitation of resources was occurring due to Canadian settlement, and Indians desired lands they did not have to share with immigrants. The bison had been in decline since the 1830s (Dickason 2002: 215), and observers knew by 1845-46 that bison herds were diminishing (Jackson 2000: 152). In 1876, some 5,000 Sioux crossed the Medicine Line[24] from the United States, further straining the dwindling bison herds (Taylor 1999:

[24] The Blackfoot called the Canada/United States border by this name. Blackfoot on both sides of the frontier actively manipulated the legal restrictions the border placed on Canadian and American officials. The Blackfoot knew that if they raided horses in one country and could cross into the other with their booty, the agents pursuing them could not cross it to apprehend them.

26). Aboriginal people north of the border thus saw an agreement with Canada as security against American settlers, while simultaneously protecting access to vital resources.

Like the bison, the Blackfoot nation grew smaller each year after 1860 for a variety of reasons, chief among them being the recurring smallpox epidemics that had plagued them for at least 80 years (Ewers 1971: 28-9, 65-6). Another harsh outbreak occurred among the Piikani in 1860 (Treaty 7 Elders *et al*. 1996: 103). The winter of 1861 is recorded by Blackfoot winter counts as "when they eat [sic] dogs" (Raczka 1979: 55), indicating they were facing starvation (see McClintock 1910: 422). A scarlet-fever outbreak in 1864 claimed over 1,100 Blackfoot lives (Raczka 1979: 56). Before the Blackfoot population could recover, another smallpox epidemic struck in July 1870 (Doucet n.d.: 4; Treaty 7 Elders *et al.* 1996: 103). Brother Doucet (Doucet n.d.: 4), a Catholic missionary working in Blackfoot territory at the time, said rumours were heard that the Americans introduced the disease to the Blackfoot "to clear their ranks, finding them too numerous." Approximately 3,000 more Blackfoot died before smallpox ran its course by years' end, a number Blackfoot elders say represented half their population (Doucet n.d.; Treaty 7 Elders *et al*. 1996).

As if recurring epidemics were not enough, American whiskey traders expanded into the Saskatchewan basin by the late 1860s. Some estimate that as many as 25% of the Blackfoot who survived the smallpox epidemics died as a result of the "White man's water" (Ewers 1971: 257-9). Between 1871 and 1874

alone, whiskey was implicated in the deaths of at least 162 Blackfoot (Ewers 1971: 258).

In the United States, two presidential Executive Orders (in 1873 and 1874) drastically and unilaterally reduced the Blackfoot bison hunting lands negotiated in 1855 (Farr 1984: 2, 7). A Piikani winter count kept by either Running Wolf (who signed Treaty 7 and was later known as Brings-Down-the-Sun) or Bull Plume records the winter of 1876-77 as the "year when all the horses were frozen to death" (cited in Raczka 1979: 13, 16, 67). Hardship turned to desperation when the bison became virtually extinct in Canada, and those that remained were thin in 1879 (Doucet n.d.). Compounding Piikani misery was the increasing Canadian encroachment on their lands and the remaining game animals in the region. The Blackfoot may have regarded a treaty with Canada that included land for their exclusive use as the least perilous option in a decade of tumultuous change that was rife with sorrow and uncertainty.

Treaty 7

Signed on September 22, 1877, at Blackfoot Crossing on the Bow River, Treaty 7 inaugurated a new relationship between the government of Canada and the Blackfoot nations. With the signing, the Blackfoot and the Crown entered into a legal agreement. On December 4th of the same year, several chiefs who could not attend the initial negotiations had a chance to ratify it (INAC 2007). Treaty 7 established Peigan (Piikani), Blood (Kainai), Blackfoot (Siksika), Stoney, and Sarcee (Tsuu T'ina) reserves. The area allocated to each Treaty 7 reserve was 2.58 km^2 (one square mile) for each family of five persons, or in that

proportion for larger and smaller families (INAC 2007). Canada's government promised ammunition, hunting rights in tracts of land surrendered, teachers, cattle, farm implements, and seeds once Indians signed the treaty (INAC 2007). Signatory chiefs received annual payments: head chiefs receiving $25.00, minor chiefs $15.00, and to every other Indian of whatever age, $5.00 (INAC 2007). These annual payments continue to occur at the above rates, as no one could foresee the effects of inflation[25]. Figure 4 depicts the Treaty 7 area.

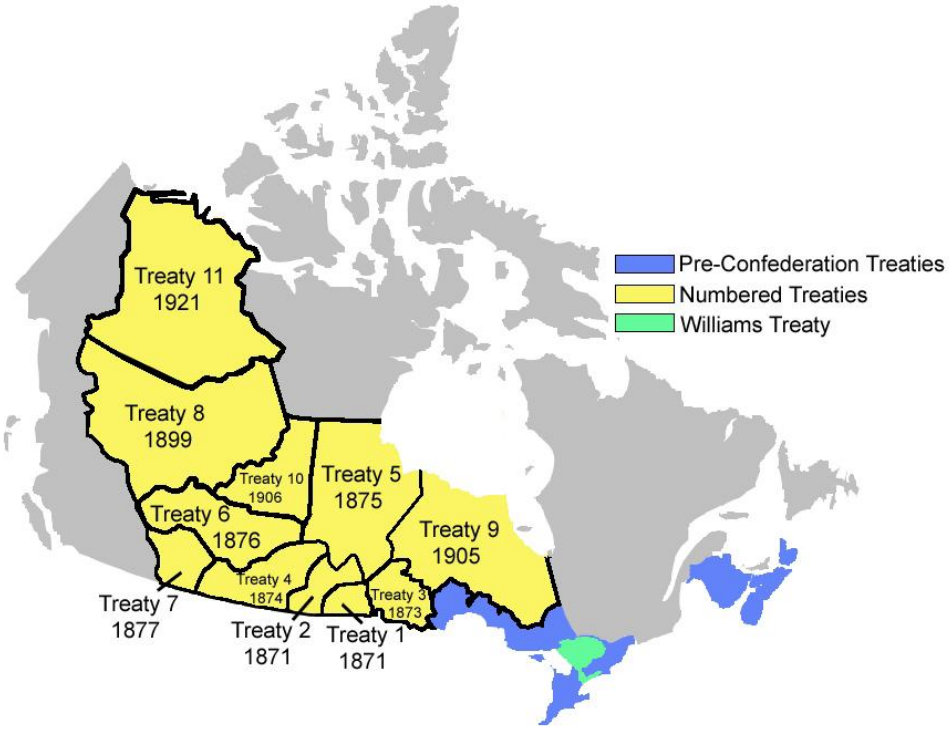


Figure 4. Generalized map of treaties in Canada. Base map from Natural Resources Canada 2007.

[25] When interviewed about Treaty 7 in the 1970s, several Blackfoot stated every individual was promised $12.00 annually, not $5.00 (e.g., OSCRIAA: 1973c; OSCRIAA: 1975). This likely stems from the fact that when the treaty was signed, all present received $12.00, and the text stipulates that from 1878 onwards, annuities would be at the rates stated above. The confusion could be due to translation difficulties during the treaty discussion and ratification. Some Blackfoot believe the government lied, however, and that they were verbally promised a minimum of $12.00 a year, "for as long as the sun shone and the rivers flowed."

The First Nations who signed Treaty 7 regard it primarily as a peace and friendship treaty (Taylor 1999: 44; Treaty 7 Elders *et al.* 1996: 111). For example, the Blackfoot consider it a peace treaty made between the Blackfoot Confederacy and the Queen of England and her representatives (Treaty 7 Management Corporation [T7MC] 2006; Yellowhorn 1993: 111). When interviewed about the subject, elders of the Treaty 7 nations unanimously agreed the government representatives said nothing that linked a land surrender to the acceptance of the peace treaty (Taylor 1999: 44; Treaty 7 Elders *et al*. 1996: 112). Other signatories, such as the Stoneys, believed Treaty 7 would end the chronic enmity with the Blackfoot, who for their part believed much the same about their former enemies, as well as believing the treaty would help further stem the flow of whiskey into their region (Treaty 7 Elders *et al*. 1996: 113, 115). Establishing peace was foremost in the minds of the Blackfoot, who had seen their population decimated by war, disease and liquor.

Canadian authorities wanted peace too, but the government perceived it differently. They defined "peace" in terms of Indian surrender of land in exchange for reserves and various other promises (Treaty 7 Elders *et al*. 1996: 112). Negotiated treaties with Indians were the burden of the Dominion when it acquired Rupert's Land from Britain in 1870: Canada had promised Britain it would continue the practice of making treaties to extinguish Aboriginal title, and to establish reserve lands for their use and benefit (Dickason 2002: 253). Federal politicians saw exploiting the coal and mineral wealth of the west, the need for a continental rail-line connection to British Columbia, and beginning large-scale

agriculture in the west as their mandate. Thus, a sense of urgency brought political expediency to the task of making treaties with the Indians in Rupert's Land (Dickason 2002: 253-255; Hildebrant and Carter 1996: 193; McMillan 1995: 318).

The Dominion's intention was to remove Aboriginal title, left unresolved in the transfer of Rupert's Land, as cheaply as possible. In fact, only at the insistence of Aboriginals did terms for agricultural assistance, provisions for schools, and supplies, appear in the Numbered Treaties (Taylor 1999: 5-7). Canada concluded seven Numbered Treaties with Aboriginals between 1871 and 1877 that replaced Aboriginal rights with treaty rights (Dickason 2002: 255; McMillan 1995: 316-318) and created reserves.

After the Numbered Treaties

Reserves are tracts of federal land set aside for the use and occupation of Indians. After the British lost thirteen of their American colonies, they were obligated to compensate their Mohawk allies who had just been forced off their homeland. The land grant made to Joseph Brant in 1784—the Haldimand Grant—became the template for subsequent public policy regarding Indians and reserves, whereby Indians could "sell" their land in exchange for specific terms (Dickason 2002: 164). By the 1830s, this precedent had become an experiment in "civilizing" Indians by isolating them in a circumscribed area, establishing villages, and training those who did not know of agriculture, English literacy, or Christianity (Tobias1985: 201-202). Since July 1st, 1869, this reserve system has been the keystone in Canada's Indian policy. The Crown holds the

title to reserve lands, meaning each province in Canada has land to which it has no jurisdiction (McMillan 1995: 315). Indians have fared poorly under this flawed arrangement, mostly because the government failed to grasp the tremendous cultural heterogeneity among Aboriginals. Such a simplistic blanket policy was destined to fail, because it ignored both this diversity, as well as local geography (e.g., McMillan and Yellowhorn 2004: 4, 326).

Legislation passed in Canada, such as the *Gradual Civilization Act* (1857), defined who was an Indian, and therefore who was able to live on reserve lands. Indians were not accorded the rights and privileges of citizenship until they demonstrated their proficiency at reading and writing either French or English, owed no debt, and were of good moral character, something many Canadians themselves could not demonstrate (Tobias 1985: 202-204). By the 1860s, the Dominion government viewed the Indians of Rupert's Land as incapable of dealing with civilized men without being exploited, and on what could be called humanitarian grounds, imposed more control over them (Tobias 1985: 200). The *Constitution Act* of 1867[26], reserved for the federal government responsibility over Indians and their lands. Government policy thereafter focused on civilizing, acculturating, and protecting Indians.

"Civilizing" Indians meant instilling European values, especially those of private property ownership and the Christian faith. The hope was that, through use of schools, the Church and exposure to Canadians (an illogical goal, given that reserves prevented large-scale contact) Indians would neatly accept

[26] Formerly known the *British North America Act,*1867.

Western values and cease to be Indians. Despite assessments which by the 1850s pronounced the early reserve experiments as failures, the federal government still held on to its Indian policy (Tobias 1985: 203).

Reserves

Many reserves are in isolated regions of the country, with poor road access and few of the services most Canadians take for granted (McMillan 1995: 316). On the Piikani reserve, for instance, electricity was only available in the early 1960s[27], indoor plumbing a few years later, and residential phone service in 1974 (Notzke 1985: 92). Most home heating was by woodstove until the 1960s (Notzke 1985: 92). The *Indian Act* (1876) granted "virtually complete control over the personal, political, social, and economic life of native people" (Samek 1987: 19). Duncan C. Scott, a career civil servant of the DIA who was deputy superintendent general of the department (1913-1932), stated the purpose of the government's Indian policy was assimilation (Samek 1987: 25).

Reserves were multi-purpose tools of the Dominion government. Their very nature meant they were "arenas of exchange, negotiation, and conflict, places where Native traditions encountered non-native demands" (Hoxie 1996: 185). Reserves granted the government control over Indian movements to the extent that after 1885, they would need official passes to leave their reserves. Although this policy—never codified by the *Indian Act*—was illegal and contrary to the treaties, it remained the official route to keeping Indians on reserves

[27] Romeo Yellowhorn (personal communication), who was born on the reserve, informed me the reserve began getting wired for electricity in 1958, and the work was completed by 1963.

(Carter 1999: 162-3). A side effect of the pass system was to restrict Indian access to immigrant market demands for labourers and resources, though the workers needed by White farmers occasionally made officials turn a blind eye (Regular 2009: 21). The Bible and the plough were twin pillars supporting the project of “civilizing” Indians: reserves fit the plan as they made missionary work easier by virtue of having a geographically circumscribed people, and ostensibly hastened the appearance of Blackfoot farming. Social policy designed in Canada, such as the *Indian Act*, built upon this worldview and thus cemented the Indian status as dependent wards of a paternalistic government.

The Oldman River

The Oldman River is a meandering river system that runs through the Piikani reserve (Figure 5). It supports lush riparian forests along its sandy, gravelly floodplain, with silty, loamy soils that result in good water retention (Elliot 1987: 16). The river valley is home to a mosaic of plants, dominated by alder (*Alnus* spp.) cottonwoods (*Populus trichocarpa*), birch (*Betula occidentalis*) and willow (*Salix* spp.), interspersed with chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), saskatoon (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), and silver buffaloberry (*Shepherdia argentea*) (Elliot 1987: 21). Older sections of the floodplain, now with little water, are dominated by various grasses, with small areas of buckbrush (*Ceanothus cuneatus*) and wild rose (either Common Wild rose, *Rosa woodsii*, or Prickly Wild rose, *Rosa acicularis*). As meandering rivers are wont to do, it has frequently changed course due to flood events. Abandoned river channels are easily discernable by changes in land contour and vegetation. Cyclic flooding events have washed

away several older bridges and at least one ferry crossing on the Piikani reserve since 1880 (Doucet n.d.).

Figure 5. The Oldman River valley in mid June 2009, looking south-east. By August, much of the green turns sun-bleached yellow. Photo by author.

While the Blackfoot would winter on the open plains if necessary (Malainey and Sherriff 1996: 351-352), they preferred the shelter of woodlands for their winter camps. A wide river valley such as the Oldman was the preferred location, as its high walls broke the cold winds and driving snow (Ewers 1971: 88; Yellowhorn 1993: 10). River valleys also provided sources of wood to fuel fires in southwestern Alberta's harsh winters: burnable buffalo chips make excellent fuel in the summer, but are hard to locate when buried under snow (Vickers and Peck 2004: 95). The sheltering valley walls also provided a haven for game animals (Treaty 7 Elders *et al.* 1996: 99). Additionally, owning horse

herds necessitated finding winter pasturage for them (Dempsey 2001: 608). Cottonwood trees grow in the Oldman river valley: horses will eat cottonwood bark in the winter when grass is unavailable (Fowler 1996: 9). Obtaining fresh drinking water was as simple as melting snow or cutting holes in the river ice (Ewers 1971: 89). The Oldman river valley provided fuel, food, and water to the Piikani in the winter. It was for such reasons that the Piikani desired to have a portion of the Oldman River for their reserve.

The Piikani Reserves

Under the terms of Treaty 7, the Piikani were assigned Indian Reserve [IR] Number 147 (Figure 6), which was where they settled and began experimenting with a sedentary lifestyle based on farming. As most of IR No.147 lacked wood for construction, the government also set aside a timber limit for the Piikani, formally known as Peigan Timber Limit “B”, or Indian Reserve 147B.

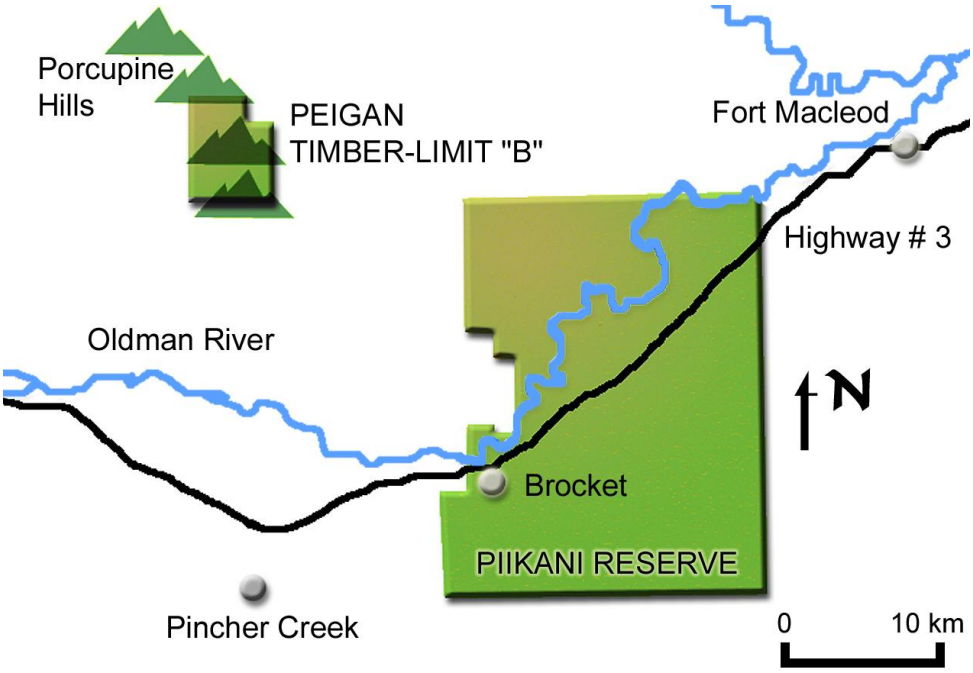


Figure 6. Map of the Piikani reserves. Figure by author.

Reserve No.147B

Located in the Porcupine Hills, the timber limit was surveyed in 1888 (Notzke 1985: 15), and the Piikani were drawing timber from it by at least the winter of 1889[28] for log cabins and fence rails (Indian Affairs Canada [IAC]1889a). Few people lived within the timber limit in the early days of the reserve, a practice that continues today: only four families were living there in my 2007 and 2009 field-seasons. While legally a Piikani reserve, the Kainai also claim a connection to the Porcupine Hills and neighbouring Head-Smashed-In, as they also used the region (Brink 2008: 283).

Sandstone outcrops and small natural rock-shelters add a dramatic element to the Porcupine Hills and likely reflect many supernatural experiences.

[28] The fragmentary archival record for the early years of IR 147B makes defining earliest use difficult.

High, remote areas with commanding views were and remain typical sites for vision-quests (Hughes 1986: 375). In 1889, young Blackfoot men still visited isolated areas such as the in Belly Buttes, to fast and pray (Hungry Wolf 1975: 34). As recently as 2009, offerings left at powerful locales within the Porcupine Hills, such as Old Woman's Butte, demonstrate that Piikani people continue to exercise this tradition. The Porcupine Hills also possess petroforms, such as those at site DkPj-21, which commemorate recent events like the 1976 suicide of the American Indian Movement leader Nelson Small Legs, Jr. (see Hughes 1986).

Reserve No.147

Indian Reserve No. 147 is the larger of the Piikani reserves, and is where the town of Brocket is located, alongside Highway 3 in southwestern Alberta. The village of Brocket is the administrative center of the contemporary Piikani Nation, and is where most residents live. While the reserve formally came into existence in 1880, it was not surveyed until 1882 (Notzke 1985: 15), and formal boundaries not demarcated until ca. 1900. This lag proved to be a source of constant vexation for Piikani Agent Robert Nathaniel Wilson (e.g., IAC 1899a; IAC 1900).

Piikani elders specifically requested the location of their reserve in 1877. The Piikani, then led by Chief Sitting on the Eagle Tail Feathers, claimed the Porcupine Hills and the Crowlodge country for their reserves, as the portion of the Oldman River that runs through it was their peri-contact and ethnographic wintering grounds (Office of Specific Claims and Research of the Indian

Association of Alberta: 1973). Excavations carried out in the Oldman River basin demonstrate people were intensively using the valley near the Oldman River dam in the protohistoric period, taken by Van Dyke *et al.* (1991: 60) to be ca. A.D. 1840.

Geographically, IR No.147 is in a transitional zone between the northern Great Plains to the east, and the Rocky Mountains to the west (Elliot 1987: 2). Sandstone of the Porcupine Hills Formation underlies the thin loamy soils (Elliot 1987: 2-3), which support extensive grasslands that have been heavily grazed by horse and cattle herds since 1880. Such grazing has exacerbated the problems of moisture retention in this semi-arid region, as plants whose root systems allow for better water infiltration and soil retention have been devoured (Elliot 1987: 3). This, combined with periodic droughts, has rendered the land marginal for agriculture without substantial irrigation systems. Much of the indigenous flora is mixed-prairie, and is adapted to survive cyclical droughts (Elliot 1987: 3; Forbis 1962: 66). Overgrazing became chronic after 1880, when the Piikani started experimenting with farming and ranching. Bison did temporarily overgraze areas, but they were migratory and did not follow precise seasonal rounds. The fauna of the region has also changed since 1880. For example, grizzly bears used to live on the open prairie; today, they rarely range out of the Rockies (Brink 2008: 217).

The Oldman River and the Developing Reserve

The Oldman River bisects IR No.147 into a north and south side (see Figure 3.2). Brocket and Highway 3 are on the south side of the river, where

most people live, due in part to a lack of bridges on the reserve connecting the two sides. The concentration of people around Brocket began ca.1907, when the Peigan Agency, originally on the north side of the Oldman, relocated next to Canadian Pacific Railway [CPR] Brocket station founded in 1897, and many of the Piikani followed (Doucet n.d.: 93). By early 1908, a village had sprung up around Brocket, even before the Agency buildings were completed (Doucet n.d.: 94). Brocket station brought the Piikani a wider range of mass-produced consumer goods at lower costs, allowing easy continuation of the consumerism established a century earlier. Despite Brocket's existence, most Piikani lived dispersed across their reserve: population consolidation around Brocket did not occur until the 1950s, after the construction of Highway 3 (Reeves 1982: 28).

Early in the reserve period, the only bridge across the Oldman River was in Fort Macleod (Doucet n.d.: 90), about 33 km east of Brocket. By 1912, a bridge near Brocket was extant, finally connecting the north and south sides of the reserve (Canada 1913: 186). Destroyed in the flood of 1953, the bridge was never rebuilt, further encouraging residents to move to the south side, near Brocket. Fording the Oldman was not safe when its waters were high (Doucet n.d.: 90, 93), meaning people were often isolated on the northern side for part of the year. Poor grazing, especially in the northwest corner, was another reason few Piikani lived north of the Oldman, as by the early 20th-century ranching was a popular vocation and proved an effective means of keeping Piikani men employed (Elliot 1987; IAC 1904).

Chapter Summary

By the 1850s, the Blackfoot were the dominant military power on the northwestern Plains. The “horse culture” was by this time intertwined with Blackfoot identity. The horse was simultaneously a trophy, a symbol of wealth, a status marker, and means of transport. Some Blackfoot would have preferred death to enduring the shame of not owning at least one mount. No one could have imagined that by 1880 few Piikani could afford to maintain large steed herds, the bison would be virtually extinct, and the Blackfoot restricted to reserves, learning an agricultural lifestyle.

The Dominion inherited Rupert’s Land from the British Crown in 1870, yet lacked the ability to enforce its laws within the vast region. The sale of Rupert’s Land and the resultant Euro-Canadian immigration into unceded Indian territory was a concern for Indian and non-Indian alike. As Canada lacked the funds and personnel to duplicate the American westwards expansion spearheaded by the military, it decided to use treaties to accomplish the same goal. Aboriginals also desired treaties with Canada. The Blackfoot believed treaties would ensure they would be able to hunt and move about the land freely, regardless of how many immigrants settled in what is now southwest Alberta. The Dominion viewed the treaties differently, seeing them as both a legal surrender of Indian territory, and a vehicle through which the Indian could be “civilized.”

The Blackfoot, seeing their resource base diminish, accepted Treaty 7; with their acceptance, the government was legally obligated to provide a reserve

to each of the Blackfoot groups. The Piikani requested and received a portion of the Oldman River valley as their reserve. As their primary reserve, No. 147, had few trees outside the Oldman River valley, they also received a timber-lot in the Porcupine Hills, No.147B. While the Piikani signed Treaty 7 in 1877, they would have to wait nearly three years for their reserves and supporting infrastructure, during which time the bison herds collapsed and immigration into the region continued. The government chose to apply a reserve model that had proven a failure in the 1850s to all reserves in Canada, and the European acculturation efforts among the Piikani began in earnest. The Blackfoot began experimenting with an alien way of life, determined to adapt to drastically changed circumstances in their own way.

CHAPTER 4: THE PIIKANI IN THE RESERVE-ERA

Understanding something of the social history of the Piikani during the Reserve-Era is fundamental to understanding how the Piikani engaged with Euro-Canadian society. Transitioning from bison hunting to farming and ranching on the reserve cannot be separated from the transition from tipis to cabins, since the degree of Piikani economic integration and the types of work preferred, is itself an indicator of engagement and cultural recontextualization. In this chapter, I examine the differences between the goals the government had for Indians and the execution and results of government policy amidst the impact such programmes had upon the Piikani. Some traditions were cast aside, some lost due to attrition of people and interest, and others modified so they could continue to function alongside a new political and economic reality and subsistence base.

This chapter synthesizes the little-used archival record contained in RG 10 files at Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa. The changes that occurred in Piikani culture must be contextualized against larger socio-political trends in Canada in the late 19th- and early 20th-centuries if an understanding of why certain practices persisted even as others ceased is to be approached. I also sketch a broad picture of historical events on the reserve, based on various archival sources, something not yet done for the Piikani. I focus most heavily on the years 1880-1920, as these are the pivotal years in terms of sculpting a new Piikani identity.

Census data for the early years of Indian Reserve No.147 are discussed, as are the number of bands and camps extant and known camp locations in the Oldman River valley. Some of the Christian and political uses of starvation amongst Indians in general and the Blackfoot specifically are detailed, as are some of the roles of the Indian Agents. A discussion of the inadequate ration system set up to help the Piikani in those years between the collapse of the bison herds and the produce yielded from their agricultural endeavours follows, and the *ad hoc* government implementation of reserve farming explored. A brief examination of the continuation of the Sun Dance follows, a ritual outlawed by the *Indian Act* in 1885, contextualized amidst the poor health conditions on IR No.147. Colonial notions of domesticity and changes in Piikani housing from 1880-1920 are analyzed, as is the change from seasonal moves from cabins to tipis ca. 1880-1900. Many Piikani gradually abandoned such seasonal moves by the 1920s and 1930s, and a fully sedentary adaptation emerged.

The Reserve-Era 1880-1920

Population estimates for Piikani are sporadic in the early years of their reserve, and are of suspect accuracy as the government often edited the reports submitted by Indian Agents prior to publication, so that the general public received only the official, distilled rendition. For example, the officials in Ottawa altered statistics to reduce death rates on reserves (Carter 1999: 167). The first official population census figure of the Piikani in the Indian Affairs annual reports is 1887, when the approximate on-reserve population was 938 (Canada 1888: 216). An extract from an 1880 report lists the Piikani as having an on-reserve

population of 738 in 1880 (Indian Affairs Canada [IAC] 1880a). A population of 738 seems low, even with the starvation noted among the Piikani and other Blackfoot groups of the era (e.g., IAC 188x[29]), given that the area of the Piikani reserve was calculated on the basis of roughly one square mile (2.58 km^2) to a family of five (T7MC: 2006). Nonetheless, this trend of Aboriginal population loss was not unique to the Piikani, and was observable across the continent in the late 19th-century. This decrease reached its nadir shortly after the 1918 flu pandemic.

In 1870, the Peigan community was comprised of 15 bands, an increase over the number extant in the 1850s, though their total population was likely much reduced (Dempsey 2001: 605). There were only five Piikani bands listed in 1880 (IAC 1880a). This reduction reflects both a lower population density of Peigan in Canada (a trait noted in the 1850s), and the population decline many Plains groups suffered after the bison were virtually exterminated. Between 1879 and 1881, over 1,000 Blackfoot died of starvation and related maladies (Samek 1987: 40). The recorded reduction could also represent that fact that the first Indian Agent, Norman T. Macleod, was not sent to the Treaty 7 region until 1880 (Samek 1987: 41). As sole Agent for all the Treaty 7 reserves, Norman Macleod was overworked, understaffed, and underpaid. He resigned as Agent in 1882. His replacement was Cecil E. Denny, whose tenure as Indian Agent was even shorter than Norman Macleod's. Frustration over government cuts that continued to reduce already paltry support to the Agency, such as cutting rations and

[29] Last digit unintelligible in the microform reel.

further reducing support staff[30], was the reason for Denny's short tenure (Samek 1987: 45, 47). Chronic administrative shortages over a large area and the fact that the Blackfoot were still relatively mobile until 1885 (discussed shortly), visiting friends and family on other reserves, doubtless explain the inconsistencies in the earliest government records for all Treaty 7 Indians.

With the assignment of one of five letters (A, B, C, D, or E) to them by the government in 1880, the five Piikani bands on IR No.147 entered bureaucratic officialdom (IAC 1880a). Government officials named these five bands after their chiefs, a break from the pre-reserve pattern, when bands were named for an observed trait, e.g., Grease Melters, or for a famous incident among them. Such a break with tradition merely reflects bureaucratic efficiency. The bands and corresponding letters are presented in Table 1.

Letter	Name of band	Details
A	Eagle Tail	191 Piikani, 52 cows, 1 bull
B	Morning Plume	108 Piikani, 25 cows, 1 bull
C	Big Swan	157 Piikani, 42 cows, 1 bull
D	Running Wolf	111 Piikani, 32 cows, 1 bull
E	Crow Eagle	171 Piikani, 47 cows, 1 bull

Table 1. Piikani band statistics, 1880 (IAC 1880a).

These bands had settled in three villages by the winter of 1881-2, but expanded to four by 1883, and are referred to as "camps" in the government records (Doucet: n.d.; IAC 1884a). The Lower Camp comprised of Running Wolf's and Morning Plume's bands, the Center Camp was Eagle Tail's band, the

[30] The Piikani reserve was left without an interpreter, for instance (Samek 1987: 47).

Upper Camp Crow Eagle's and the fourth camp was simply called Big Swan (IAC 1884a). With the exception of Big Swan's camp, their locations are not mentioned in the government records, and Big Swan's is merely recorded as being "across the river" (IAC 1884a). In the early days of the reserve, the Piikani Agency buildings were on the north side of the Oldman River. The Agency moved to Brocket, on the south side of the river, in 1908 (Doucet n.d.: 94). Since the Agency reports were usually written at the Agency, when they say "across the river" referring to Big Swan's camp, logically his camp was on the south side of the Oldman River. His camp was still on the south side in 1891 (IAC 1891a), and many of his descendants live there today.

There were many more settlements by 1891, but again the documentation is inconsistent. One report, written by Inspector McGibbon on February 12th, 1891, states there were 17 Piikani villages along the Oldman River; 11 on the north side and six on the south (IAC 1891a). Piikani Agent A.R. Springett's report, written four months after McGibbon's, lists 28 settlements and includes a sketch of their approximate locations. Figure 7 and Table 2 present the residential data compiled in agency reports (IAC 1891b). It is probable that these villages were strategically located in the Oldman River valley, in the manner consistent with ethnographic descriptions of preferred Blackfoot wintering locations in the region. Springett's report indicates a minimum of 73 houses were extant. This assumes that Takes Gun Back's village had at least one house, which cannot be accurately determined from the archival map but is a

reasonable assumption given the modal value for number of houses per village is one.

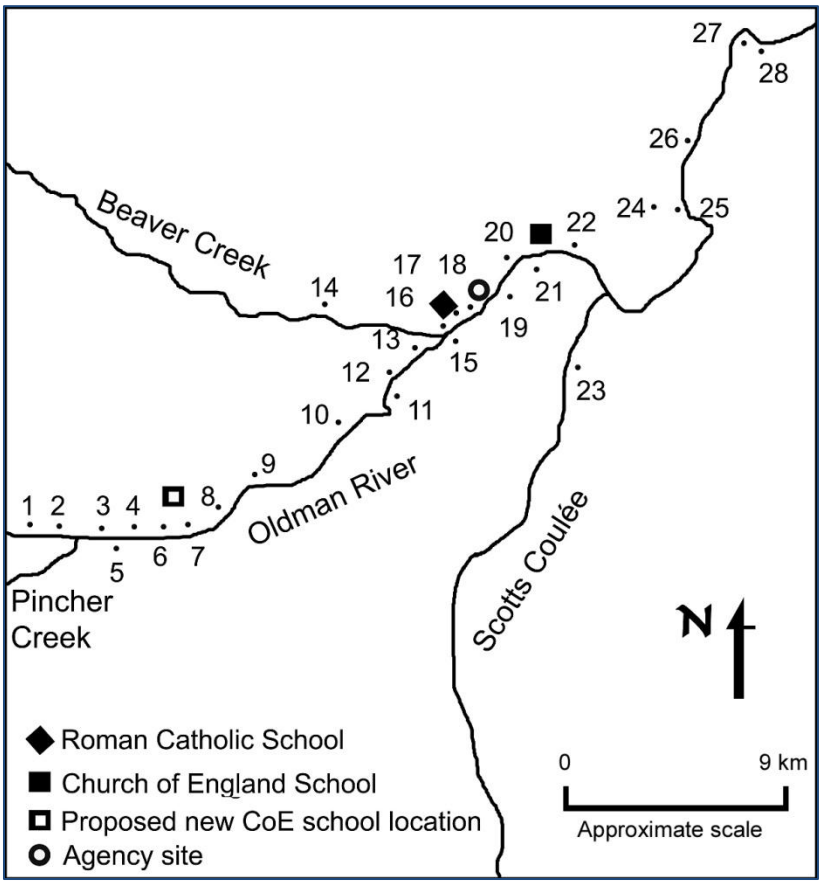


Figure 7. Map of the villages on the Piikani reserve in 1891. No scale provided in original. After Springett (IAC): 1891b.

Table 2. Names of villages listed in Figure 7.

Number	Settlement Name (named after village chief)*	Number of Houses	Number of People in Houses	Approximate Number of School-Aged Children
1	Many Chiefs	3	25	6
2	Sits in Middle	1	7	2
3	Understands It	3	25	4
4	Crow Chief	5	35	7
5	Crooked Face	1	5	1
6	Cross Chief	4	38	4
7	(Pulls?) Back	1	4	1
8	Pretty Face	1	8	2
9	Little (Boy? Dog?)	2	20	3
10	Commodore	2	35	7
11	Many (Horses? Guns?)	2	10	[Illegible, possibly 8]
12	Little Plume	3	28	12
13	Big Bull	2	10	2
14	Rides Ahead	1	5	1
15	Crow Eagle	6	5	2
16	R(?)	3	16	0
17	(Louepsa? Louapee?)	3	25	0
18	Bay Boy	4	32	0
19	Takes Gun in Middle	1	5	0
20	Prairie Head	7	5	0
21	Big (?)	2	3	0
22	Meas(uiusei Loigush?)	1	7	0
23	Big Swan	1	5	0

Number	Settlement Name (named after village chief)*	Number of Houses	Number of People in Houses	Approximate Number of School-Aged Children
24	Plain Eagle	1	7	[Illegible]
25	Medicine (Bribe?)	4	35	0
26	Running Wolf	6	7	0
27	Bulls Plume	2	10	0
28	Takes Gun Back	[Illegible]	[Illegible]	[Illegible]

*** Some names are illegible in the source list, indicated by a "?" in my table. Where multiple names with a "?" are listed, they are done so in order of best to least likely interpretation. They are included in the hopes future researchers or informants may possess information that can refine this list.**

Census data identify approximately 881 Piikani on reserve in 1891 (Canada 1891: 268). If accurate, this means the average occupancy of each house was 12 people, suggesting a continuation of the ethnographic residence pattern where a tipi usually housed more than a nuclear family. The 1891 census seemingly indicates an increase over the population listed in 1880, but as mentioned earlier, the 1880 figure seems far too low and makes no sense in context of the area given per family of five, even given deaths due to illness and starvation in the 1880s. The fissioning of bands is consistent with ethnographic accounts of Blackfoot culture. According to ethnographic data, band chiefs had little coercive power, attracting followers by virtue of their abilities and people were free to leave the band if they did not like its leadership (Ewers 1971: 39; McMillan and Yellowhorn 2004: 150). However, census data show the on-reserve Piikani population was dwindling from 1887 onward (e.g., Canada 1888: 216;

Canada 1892 :268; Canada 1900 :495; Canada 1905: 81). Given that the number of bands apparently increased even as populations dwindled, several explanations present themselves.

First, the census data could simply be inaccurate and the number of Piikani bands extant in 1880 and/or their populations underestimated. The Indian Agents were often writing to their superiors about the difficulty of obtaining accurate census data, as Blackfoot from Siksika, Kainai, and the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana would freely come and go, especially when annuity payments[31] were made (e.g., IAC, 1882; IAC 1898a). And second, perhaps band fissioning was occurring, even with small numbers of people. Given the drastic social upheavals (discussed below) of the era, people were conceivably striking out and forming new bands, disenchanted with band leadership and blaming them for some of the problems. I surmise that a combination of these explanations, in conjunction with the understaffing of government agencies, may explain the inconsistencies in the archival record.

The Reserve Starvation Years: When they Ate Dogs

When the bison were hunted to the brink of extinction in Canada in 1877 (and the survivors too few, sick, and dispersed to be viably hunted), starvation hit the Plains groups hard. Canadian officials knew bison populations were under severe threat by the mid 1870s, but made no plans to deal with the looming crisis (Samek 1987: 38). The lack of bison—and the hopes a herd would

[31] The problem of Indians receiving annuities they were not entitled to was one reason some agents argued for having annuity day be the same for all the Blackfoot reserves (e.g., IAC 1888).

be encountered soon—were mentioned repeatedly by Indian Agents and the Blackfoot alike (e.g., IAC1879a). After 1879, some Peigan still believed the bison would return (Schultz 1974: 261). Red Bird's Tail believed the Sun would not let them starve, but would send them new herds (Schultz 1907: 362). Some Blackfoot created various stories to explain the disappearance of the bison in culturally meaningful ways. Old Red Eagle, for instance, a powerful medicine man, believed an evil spirit had captured and cached the bison in a great cave in the Rocky Mountains, an event that had happened at least once before in Blackfoot tradition (Schultz 1907: 338). Others believed the bison had found a path across the Rockies, perhaps down to the plains of the Columbia (Schultz 1907: 355). Some Piikani did not turn to their cultural stories to explain the loss of the herds: they knew and said the White man had taken them (Office of Specific Claims and Research of the Indian Association of Alberta [OSCRIAA]: 1975).

Hope did not spring eternal among the Blackfoot, and the herds never returned. As a result, by 1879, other game had begun to disappear due to over-hunting (Samek 1987: 39). The government lacked a realistic appraisal of the remaining species in the region, believing there was enough small game to keep the Blackfoot satiated. A report from D. Kittson of the NWMP at Fort Macleod dated July 18xx[32] asserts that federal officials in Ottawa did not have a realistic understanding of the amount of small game in southwestern Alberta and erred on the side of bounty when the opposite was true (IAC18xx). Kittson wrote "there is not enough small game in any hundred square miles of this prairie-land to furnish

[32] While the last two digits are unintelligible on the microform reel, the file index within this series starts in 1880.

food to a small family the year out" (IAC 18xx). Elk, moose, deer, sheep, goats, and grizzly[33] were mainly in the Rockies, where Kittson noted the Blackfoot feared to go, believing that area to be the "mysterious abode of the spirits" (IAC 18xx).

Even if the Blackfoot had been willing to travel to the Rockies, Kittson pointed out that Indians were about to be legally confined to their reserves. His report references the pass system imposed on Indians following the North-West Rebellion, suggesting his testimony dates to ca. 1885. According to eyewitness accounts, the Peigan "scoured the foothills in quest of deer and elk and antelope, finding some, it is true, but barely enough to keep their families from actual starvation" (Schultz 1907: 355). Such were the conditions in the aftermath of the collapse of the bison herds.

Another report to the DIA, dated July 22, 1879, states the Blackfoot[34] were starving; some were described as emaciated (IAC 1879a). The antelope were all but gone, though the lakes were full of fish and the Blackfoot were happy to get hooks to fish with (IAC 1879a). Prior to 1870, however, the Blackfoot disdained fish, as they did birds, and relegated such species to the role of starvation food (Schultz 1907: 60; Wissler 1910: 20). Earlier, in 1858, the Blackfoot agent at Fort Benton asked his government not to send fish hooks, combs, or mirrors to the post as trade goods, since the Blackfoot had no use for them (Ewers 1971: 231). The fact that the Blackfoot were happy to be able to fish

[33] An animal the Blackfoot considered sacred and were thus unlikely to eat (Wissler 1910: 20).

[34] The context seems to be of the Siksika, but many records do not explicitly state which Blackfoot group is being referenced. In fact, most government documents simply refer to Aboriginals as "Indians," masking the diversity of cultures that fall under that monolithic term.

a generation later demonstrates the severity of the starvation. By the early 20th-century, Wissler (1910: 21) noted the Blackfoot would eat fish "when at hand," indicating how starvation—or at least persistent food shortages—had affected their culture.

The Ration System

The DIA only began considering a ration system to deal with starvation in 1879 (IAC 1879a), nearly two years after the bison disappeared. The Dominion, recognizing an "impending famine" and deaths due to starvation nearly two years after the fact, bought and distributed beef and flour throughout the Treaty 6, 7, and western portions of Treaty 4 areas with $10,000 in emergency funds granted for relief (IAC 1879b). Even with this funding, food shortages continued to occur. In March 1884, acting Agent Pocklington wrote to his superiors, stating that flour rations would run out by May (IAC 1884b), months before any crops were harvestable. Flour shortages in late winter/early spring continued for several years (e.g., IAC 1887a; IAC 1887b). Heavy snows in the region, which sometimes forced the supply trains to stop running, only worsened the situation (IAC 1887b). Accidents further reduced rations: acting Piikani Agent Pocklington noted in 1884 that fire[35] and water rendered 500 of 600 sacks of flour useless (IAC 1884b). A year later, there were still reports of Indians eating the

[35] This is remembered among the older generation of Piikani as "The time the flour burned" and used as a calendric mnemonic, precisely as winter counts were (OSCRIAA: 1973b). In fact, the event was also recorded in an 1882 winter count (Raczka 1979: 70). I am uncertain if the inconsistency in the date reflects a lapse in memory or two fires, one of which was either unrecorded by the Indian Agents or whose record has been lost, or is recorded on RG 10 reels that have been classified.

half-rotten flesh of horses killed by disease, and the carrion outside of slaughterhouses (IAC 1886a).

The quality of some rations was reputedly horrific. Repeated complaints about bad flour were common in the 1880s. A report on the flour provided to Treaty 7 Indians concluded it to be “unwholesome and unfit for human food” and had caused several deaths (IAC 1886a). The government had contracted with suppliers to provide flour “equal in quality to No.1 superfine” (IAC, 1886a). The government paid for first-class flour—over $10,000 for 1,225 sacks, or approximately 53,454 kg, for the Piikani alone for a single year ca. 1883-5—but was cheated by its contractors, or at least claimed they were (IAC 1886a). Doucet (n.d.) noted unscrupulous companies—or at least their employees—were selling spoilt food to the Blackfoot. Enteritis caused many deaths, though Blackfoot healers were also blamed by various officials as causal agents, especially in regards to the high infant mortality rate (Doucet n.d.). However, the beef on the Treaty 7 reserves was considered to be of excellent quality by Dr. Girard, the Treaty 7 medical attendant, in 1883 (IAC 1886a). The Walrond Ranch Company, which leased grazing land on IR No.147, was the primary supplier of beef to the Piikani ration house from approximately 1881-1900 (OSCRIAA: 1975a).

Ration allotments were the same for a single person, or a family of four, and young people—those in their late teens and early twenties—could not draw rations. They typically consisted of three pounds of beef, and four scoops of flour, for one week, though flour rations eventually reduced to two scoops per

week. As a result of the fixed allocation that ignored the number of people it was meant to feed, the Piikani often pooled their food together, in an attempt to redistribute what they had more evenly (OSCRIAA: 1973; OSCRIAA: 1973b). According to Piikani Jack Crow, who was born in 1901, the government always charged them for meat, even improperly bled and dressed[36] meat: only people over the age of 70 received meat free of charge (OSCRIAA: 1973). However, nothing in the government documents I accessed indicated the DIA was charging its wards for meat. If true, it explains why the Piikani, even those who were successful ranchers and farmers, were often chronically poor and usually owed the DIA money. Ethnographic records indicate that the Blackfoot detested stinginess, and would often change their band if they perceived their chief to be stingy. The government management of its ration system, itself part of the assimilationist programme, may have reinforced the communal style of living it was determined to break.

It did not help Plains Indians that during this time, deputy superintendent of DIA L.G. Vankoughnet's greatest concern was to reduce the financial expenditures of the department (Samek 1987: 34). The epitome of a Victorian civil servant, Vankoughnet believed in precise departmental control of minute details and shunned local initiatives or adaptations (Samek 1987: 34). Under his orders, ration funding was cut by 15% between 1882-4, and the government instituted a "no work, no food" policy (McCrady 2001: 317). Some

[36] Dysentery often resulted from this poorly prepared meat, some of which seems to have come from provincial parks rather than the reserve herds or the Walrond Ranch Company. Faced with endemic food shortages, people consumed this meat rather than starve, knowing it would likely make them sick (OSCRIAA: 1973).

agents, such as A. MacDonald, stationed in the Cypress Hills, made a practice of punishing starving Indians by reducing their flour rations, and openly wrote that he liked doing so (McCrady 2001: 317). By 1884, funding for rations was so low that several reserves on the Plains saw their ration-houses broken into by starving people (Fowler 1996: 46). Yet in 1885, E. Dewdney, the Indian Commissioner, considered the food expenditure very large and instructed Inspector T.P. Wadsworth to curtail in such a manner as to "not effect [sic] the progress of the Indians" (IAC 1885). By tacitly supporting the virtual extermination of the bison and simultaneously encouraging Canadian settlement of the West, the government had conspired to destroy the ability of Plains Indians to be self-sufficient. Euro-Canadian expectations intended that Indians be self-reliant and practice an intensive agricultural system of which the Blackfoot, at least, had no experience.

Two contradictory polices emanated from the DIA. The first was to turn former hunter-gatherers into farmers, while the second was withdrawing financial support needed to achieve this policy. Trapped within the confines of these opposing policies, the Piikani, and all other Indians, "lost out in this struggle between budget and ideology" (Samek 1987: 57). It was expected the Blackfoot, and other Plains Indians, do in one or two generations what other cultures did over centuries or millennia. Moreover, they had to. The Piikani and other Plains Indians were expected to work hard to develop agriculture on essentially empty stomachs and with as little capital investment as possible. The situation worsened for the Blackfoot by the early 20th-century when mechanization was

discouraged for Indian farmers (Carter 1990: 12). Official policy expected the Blackfoot to work like peasant farmers in a feudal system, yet still compete in the open market with Canadian farmers who embraced automation.

Cattle Rustling

Some unscrupulous Euro-Canadian settlers in Blackfoot territory attempted to twist to their advantage the widespread starvation of Plains groups. A report by Indian Commissioner Edgar Dewdney, dated January 2nd, 1880, states that settlers in this era of Indian starvation often claimed Indians were killing their cattle, when in fact most settlers were incompetent ranchers, incapable of properly keeping their herds. Such ranchers and farmers often applied to the government for compensation for livestock supposedly killed by Indians. Many of the ranchers' herds were imported from Saskatchewan and Montana, and such animals often attempted to migrate to their calving grounds (IAC 1880). Seldom was evidence of Indians killing cattle found, and in one case, the Piikani on the north side of the Milk River found several herds, which settlers reported as killed by Indians. The Piikani drove these cattle to Stand-Off-Butte, where they informed the authorities of their recovery (IAC 1880). Yet livestock theft, long associated with Plains Indians, was not limited to Indians (e.g., IAC 1884c; Haydon 1918). In 1899, for instance, Piikani Agent R.N. Wilson wrote to his superiors that some Whites would have no problem surreptitiously making away with Indian cattle (IAC 1899b).

Christian and Political Uses for Starvation

Starvation was also used to the advantage of some missionaries on the prairies. B. Richard, of Saint Saviour's Mission, at Dunvegan, Athabaska, notes in a letter dated September 1st, 1886, "[the] Indians are in a chronic state of semi-starvation…[and the mill the missionaries controlled] will thus be a power for good in our work as missionaries among them" (IAC 1886b). For hungry residents, acceptance of the Christian God apparently meant more food. Nor was the government above using the promise of more food to encourage Indians to conform to Western values. In 1882, rations were used as work incentives on the Piikani reserve: Inspector T.P. Wadsworth reported that Piikani families considered by the Indian Agent to be hard workers were given more food than regulations allowed, while those considered indigent had their meagre rations reduced to below regulated quantities (IAC 1882). The policy of restricting rations to those the Indian Agent felt were not working hard enough was still in effect eight years later (IAC 1890a). Rations were also withheld at the discretion of the Agent as punishment: when Piikani minor chief Big Swan killed a calf without obtaining, as policy demanded, the Agent's permission, his rations were denied and the cost of the calf taken out of his annuity (IAC 1887c). By 1914, Ottawa had amended the *Indian Act*, making the slaughter of cattle without express permission from the Indian Agent a punishable act (Canada 1915: 83).

Government maltreatment of Indians even garnered attention in the House of Commons. In 1886, Malcolm Colin Cameron, the Liberal member for West Huron, condemned the DIA and the Conservatives' policies under Prime

Minister Macdonald. Mr. Cameron, citing Indian starvation, deaths and mistreatment at the hands of officials supposedly hired to look after their interests, decried the unilateral breaking of treaty obligations by the government. To no avail, he criticized the official position that Indians had no reason to revolt in the North-West Rebellion, and claimed many people in the DIA had “robbed and cheated and swindled the Indian” (IAC 1886a). His speech accomplished little. A few months later, Hayter Reed, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, issued instructions to all agencies in the North-West Territories not to requisition rations for the month of October. He felt that game was plentiful in the region, and that crops would be sufficient, to feed the Piikani for one month, if they were forced to do so (IAC 1886c).

With the bison gone, the Blackfoot economy collapsed: not only was their “staff of life” gone, but also many could not afford to buy Western-style clothing (Schultz 1907: 401) or food from traders. The irony was bitter: the Blackfoot had never been more productive at bison robe tanning than in the 1870s, abilities that would have served them well when they could not afford to buy clothes. Upon leaving school, pupils had to justify to the Indian Agent why they wanted their treaty money. The Agent then wrote a recommendation on whether-or-not the DIA should grant the request. The Piikani Agents usually recommended the issuing of payment, whereas DIA responses were typically paternalistic in nature. “To buy clothes” was the most common reason listed by Piikani ex-students for withdrawing their funds, but DIA officials did not consider this a good use of their money. Directives from the DIA typically met little

resistance, though in at least one instance the Agent did not gainsay the Indian's request (INAC 1897-1916). DIA opposition likely stemmed from their policy of attempting to break the relatively mobile and communal nature of most Indian cultures and replace it with a sedentary, capitalist ethos. Buying highly portable objects such as clothing did nothing to further the government's agenda.

Malnutrition remained entrenched at least into the 1910s, and probably into the 1920s. Born in 1903, Thomas Yellowhorn[37] remembered people frequently going hungry and children dying of starvation. When interviewed by the Office of Specific Claims and Research of the Indian Association of Alberta [OSCRIAA] in the 1970s, he recalled:

> People were always very hungry. Anyone who could work -I'll try to remember back as far as I can recall concerning this 'poverty stricken existence.' They used to go out and work at farm harvest and whatever money they earned, they really hung [on] to and spent sparingly as they knew there would be no more. Even though they spared this money in every way, it did barely keep them from total starvation. The three pound ration of beef was for a single person, older and disabled, as well as for a married couple with children. Two scoops of flour per week was [sic] issued on the same basis. People would assemble together in order to share what little they had. Come weekend there was no more food left. The able-bodied ones were more apt to survive and manage. The people who owned horses always got along best, as horses were always prized and valuable. But those without were extremely poor and had just no way of making a living and providing for themselves… [t]he people would go around to each others' camps in the hope of finding food. But everybody was in the same condition; no one had food of any sort available. I experienced these pitiful times as a young man. Others living today about my

[37] This is not the same individual who is discussed in Chapter 5. Thomas Yellowhorn occupied the homestead site excavated, and was the son of Chief Tomas Yellow Horn. The elder individual will be referred to as Chief Yellow Horn, and the younger, Thomas Yellowhorn. Interviews with Thomas Yellowhorn indicate he had conventionalized his last name, which is explained in Chapter 5.

> age also know these times to be factual (OSCRIAA: 1973b; OSCRIAA: 1975a).

Tillers of the Soil

The food crisis, which began on the Plains in 1877 (IAC 1879b), compelled the government to institute reserve-based farming more as an *ad hoc* decision made in crisis mode, rather than a sapient policy founded on experience (McCrady 2001: 315). Politicians and bureaucrats believed farming would solve the food shortage, eliminating the need for government spending on rations and creating a long-term economic base for Aboriginals (McCrady 2001: 315; Samek 1987: 40, 56-57). Most Canadians believed farming was the panacea to the "Indian problem" (Carter 1990: 15). Even Hayter Reed, deputy superintendent general of Indian Affairs 1893-1897, supposed that agriculture removed the inclination for war from hands that tilled the soil (Carter 1990: 15). Reed, a man with considerable military and legal experience (Titley 1993: 110), chose to overlook millennia of human history when making this claim.

As with many reserves in western Canada, the Piikani reserve agricultural programme only sowed failure in abundance. None of the farm instructors had farming experience on the prairies, nor adequate knowledge of the variable climate. Moreover, many of them were political appointees rather than qualified farmers (McCrady 2001: 315-316). Some farm instructors did the work themselves, rather than bore themselves with teaching their Indian wards (Titley 1993: 112). For the Piikani, and Plains Indians in general, the first years of reserve life reaped only starvation and malnutrition (Fowler 1996: 46).

Public spending on the needy was a morally repugnant idea to late 19th-century neo-mercantilist politicians, so there was little opposition from most Canadians whenever the government reduced the DIA budget (McCrady 2001: 317; Titley 1993: 115). Social Darwinism, popular at the time, suggested charity would weaken society and cause more problems than it would solve. This proposition neatly justified refusing additional government aid. Prevailing thought held that charity was the responsibility of family and the various churches (Dyck 1986: 125). The Blackfoot suffered heavily under this ideology: they were all starving, so turning to family for help was impossible. Turning to the churches for help was not practical for the Blackfoot either, as the Catholic and Protestant missions in Blackfoot territory were occasionally provisioning themselves from reserve ration-houses. In 1879, even Catholic priests were begging for food in southwestern Alberta (Doucet n.d.: 63; Schultz 1907: 404).

Gaunt Indians pleading for food were familiar sights at some NWMP stations (IAC 1879b). The Blackfoot, however, were not expecting "handouts" as the stereotype goes: many sold their horses[38] and guns for food, and even resorted to eating their dogs[39] (IAC 1879b). The Blackfoot did not typically consume dog (Wissler 1910: 20-21). Their change of mind reflected both their willingness to avoid "handouts" as well as the severity of the situation they were facing. A frequent complaint among settlers at this time concerned Indians

[38] In a 1973 interview, Thomas Yellowhorn stated that Indian Agents often interfered with the sale of horses by the Piikani to settlers, convincing the potential buyer the horse was worth far less than its actual value. Having no other choice, some Piikani were forced to sell their property at much reduced prices (OSCRIAA: 1973b), thereby perpetuating poverty and hastening the transformation of the Blackfoot into a peasant class.

[39] Tom Little Plume, working as a scout for the NWMP, reported butchered dogs hanging from trees (OSCRIAA: 1973).

stealing and killing their livestock. Yet as of August 6th, 1879, the Department of Interior stated there had been no reports of robbery, murder, or the killing of cattle by Indians (IAC 1879b).

The Blackfoot themselves were eager to learn the ways of agriculture. In a letter from Council House, Blackfoot Crossing dated July 19th, 1879, the chiefs of the Blackfoot nations said they were once “tillers of the soil” (IAC 1879c), possibly referencing their former cultivation of tobacco. The Blackfoot were anxious to become farmers, desiring instruction in this radically different form of subsistence, in spite of popular Euro-Canadian reservations about former hunter-gatherers being incapable of adapting to an agrarian lifestyle (IAC 1879c). These statements contradict Samek’s (1987: 56-57) claim that agriculture was difficult for the Blackfoot to accept on cultural grounds. In fact, the Blackfoot had practiced tobacco cultivation since at least A.D. 1200 (Yellowhorn 2003: 332). Although such cultivation was done on a small scale only, the Blackfoot—or at least members of the Tobacco Society—were well acquainted with the notions of when to plant the crop, carefully locating and preparing a suitable the site prior to planting, the importance of fertilizing, and the need to fence the plot (Yellowhorn 2003: 333-335). During the fur trade, commercially available tobacco abrogated the need for the Blackfoot to plant it, but they retained the vocabulary of their horticultural past in their farming efforts in the Reserve-Era (Yellowhorn 2003: 337).

According to records, the Piikani were the most eager of all Blackfoot to take up farming (Samek 1987: 76). Both Piikani Agent A.R. Springett and

Inspector Alexander McGibbon wrote that some Piikani farmers tended excellent fields (IAC 1887d; IAC 1887e). Yet Carter (1990: 8, 12) points out Euro-Canadians have typically blamed the Indian for failure to adapt to agriculture, on the basis of assuming Indians somehow had an almost genetic aversion to the work. Such implicit racial ideology supported cultural determinism. Euro-Canadians typically saw Indians as incapable of learning the skills for agriculture and other so-called “civilized” pursuits, so when Indian agriculture failed, it was patently obvious to critics as to why (Dyck 1986: 121). The “inevitability” of Indian agricultural failure absolved poor public policy, such as banning mechanized farming on reserves (Carter 1990: 12). Some historians (e.g., Dyck 1986: 121) argue that government policy effectively sabotaged all agricultural pursuits Indians undertook, something my archival research seems to confirm.

Legislated Fallow

The fundamental reason why agricultural ventures failed for the Piikani was stubbornness on the part of the federal government to force large-scale agriculture in a region incapable of supporting it without a substantial investment in machinery and irrigation. The first irrigation attempts on a Treaty 7 reserve did not occur until 1893, on the Siksika reserve (Samek 1987: 78). Even before it knew much about the climate of the western prairies, the Dominion government convinced farmers that agriculture was a viable occupation, and early settlement of the region coincidently occurred during a wet cycle in which crops did well, which seemed to support federal assertions (Samek 1987: 75; Thomas 1985: 227). Cultivation practices and seed-types suited to the region would not be well

understood until the 1900s, and reliable soil surveys were not available until the 1930s (Dyck 1986: 125; Thomas 1985: 228).

All three Blackfoot reserves are in the Palliser Triangle, a semi-arid region deemed unfit for cultivation during the Palliser Expedition of 1857-1860 (Samek 1987: 78; Thomas 1985: 226). Drought, frosts, and blizzards hit the southwestern prairie hard starting 1883, and by 1891 more than a million settlers had abandoned the region and their farms (Samek 1987: 75). Desperate to continue European settlement in and agricultural production of the region in 1890, Canada paid a bonus of $10.00 to each family head, $5.00 to each child over 12 years of age, and $10.00 to each family member who, within six months of arriving in the country, settled on land west of Ontario[40] (Canada 1892: 93). Bound to their reserves after 1885, the Blackfoot could neither leave them nor pre-empt land outside them, and so were forced to make the best they could of government under-funding, and endemic starvation.

Another example of governmental incompetence was the banning of mechanization on reserves. Indian Commissioner Hayter Reed announced in 1889 that Aboriginals needed to learn proper work habits, and thus were to emulate peasant farmers of various countries (Hoxie 1996: 216). Indians were to give up agricultural machinery and content themselves with tools to eke out a hand-to-mouth existence. Reed's reasoning was that Indians desired labour-saving tools merely so they would have more time to sit idle and "smoke their

[40] Canada, still suffering from its post-Confederation recession—itself a symptom of a global economic depression—had suspended this policy of agricultural assistance for immigrants in the North-West in 1888 (Canada 1892: 93).

pipes" (Titley 1993:122). Such attitudes and beliefs about Indians were ingrained in much of the North American immigrant population by the 17th-century, a belief designed to justify alien conscription of Aboriginal land (Rubertone 1989: 34). There were nationalistic and ideological overtones to this policy as well, because European control of the land meant they were "improving" it via agriculture, making full use of the land Aboriginals were "squandering[41]." Banning Indians from mechanization meant they could not farm as effectively as Canadians, thereby justifying Euro-Canadian control in an era when the government was actively trying to reduce reserve land.

Not all reserves followed the policy of banning machinery, however: mechanized farming did occur on the Piikani reserve, for a time. Details are scant, but between at least 1910 and 1916, the reserve had a two ploughs: a 36-horse-power, steam-driven plough (referred to simply as the "Steam Engine") and an oil-powered plough ("Oil Pull Engine") (IAC 1910a; IAC 1916a; IAC 1916b). The steam-powered plough crew consisted of an engineer, who was White, a fireman, a ploughman, a waterman, coalmen (all Indians, presumably Piikani) and a cook, who was Chinese (IAC 1910a). The steam-powered plough crew consisted of an engineer, who was White, a fireman, a ploughman, a waterman, coalmen (all Indians, presumably Piikani) and a cook, who was Chinese (IAC 1910a). No details are found in the RG 10 records regarding the crew required to operate the Oil Pull Engine.

[41] Rodney Harrison (2002: 340) documents that colonial Australians held similar beliefs about the land they were conscripting from its original inhabitants, indicating such ideology was rooted in Eurocentric notions of superiority.

The equipment was costly to maintain: in 1916 alone, the ploughs required almost $1,000 dollars worth of repair and overhaul costs, which inspired the Indian Agent to try and sell the machines (IAC 1916a). In accordance with DIA policy, he had to write or wire to Ottawa for permission to use the ploughs. As if federal politics were not enough, settlers in the region objected to Indians owning farming machines. Most settlers could not afford mechanization, and felt the Piikani had an unfair advantage over them (Samek 1987: 77). The settlers complained loudly to politicians who responded to the needs of their constituents by rewriting laws, and the ploughs eventually ceased to break Piikani soil. The fact that the funds used to purchase the machines for the Piikani largely derived from the illegal[42] sale of their land was irrelevant to immigrant farmers or the DIA (Canada 1910: 181, 190; Doucet n.d; OSCRIAA: 1973).

Indians were also encouraged to abandon communal farming practices. A lot system was introduced to facilitate private ownership of farmland, though hay fields and woodlands remained communal. Reserves grew to resemble serfdoms: confined to the land, Indians had few legal rights (technically, they were not even considered adults, much less citizens), and worked under the supervision of Agents and farm instructors (Titley 1993: 117-118). When Hayter Reed left office in 1897, the effects of his policy had so devastated Indian farming that few observers believed Indians capable of being farmers (Hoxie 1996: 216).

[42] Additional information on the legal and political machinations surrounding the “sale” are found in Smith (2009: 210-213, 219-222).

The Role of Indian Agents

One factor overlooked in the failure of farming is the role of the Indian Agent, the local representative of the DIA responsible for executing government policy on reserves. They often interfered with the work of their wards on behalf of their superiors as per policy objectives, though Indian Agents themselves had little say in the formulation of government policy (Samek 1987: 36, 38). This is exemplified by the case of a Piikani named Four Horns. Tired of being saddled with incessant, institutionalized debt and required to perform *pro bono* work, Four Horns set out on an ambitious, two-year farming project. He ploughed 30 acres with the help of a hired crew and grew a successful crop for sale. As per policy, all monies had to be handled by the Indian Agent. After deducting what he owed the government[43], the Agent paid Four Hours $2.80 for two years' work[44]. Little wonder that Four Horns retired from farming after this, and others were reluctant to take up the plough after witnessing first-hand how hard work was "rewarded" (OSCRIAA: 1973b). By essentially creating serfs, the government ensured that its goal of assimilation was unachievable, and the Indian bore the blame for this failure.

Not all Indian Agents tried to hinder the Piikani, however. Some believed their wards would be better ranchers than farmers, and fought against their superiors in Ottawa, who were willing to force agriculture at the expense of

[43] With the collapse of the bison herds, many Indians were forced to buy goods on credit, and some Agents acted as collection agents for various creditors (Regular 2009: 143).

[44] The interviewee did not specify the precise years this event occurred. Assuming it was between 1910 and 1920, plummeting market values for wheat, coupled with agricultural failures at approximately the same time (ca. 1918), are likely partially responsible for Four Horn's low pay-out (Regular 2009: 142-143).

Piikani self-sufficiency. Inspector McGibbon stated this to his superiors in 1891, and tried to convince the DIA to lessen its emphasis on agriculture. His plea was ignored. McGibbon also stated the Piikani were willing to trade their horses for American cattle, but were prevented from doing so by customs regulations (IAC 1891a). The Piikani managed to increase their cattle herds by selling many horses by 1893, but who they sold them to went unrecorded (Canada 1893). Agent R.N. Wilson, very much the epitome of a field man who resented policy made in offices half a continent to the east, also believed the Piikani economy depended on ranching, not agriculture. In his view, the government had spent approximately 15 years throwing seed away, by trying to force agricultural success in Palliser's Triangle (IAC 1898b). Two years later, apparently tired of fighting his superiors, Wilson wrote to them:

> Many years of fruitless experience having demonstrated the fact that this reserve is unsuitable for farming, no further efforts in that direction are being made beyond the growing of root crops. Particular attention is being given to cattle-raising, as it is thought that the Indians and surrounding conditions are more congenial to that industry than to any other (Canada 1900: 107).

By 1901, officials in the Department of Indian Affairs decided to act upon a decade and a half worth of reports from its Indian Agents. The DIA abandoned its ideal of creating Aboriginal farmers, but only a few years later reversed it policy and again insisted on farming (Samek 1987: 76).

Unsurprisingly, the Piikani took to ranching more quickly than to farming. Scarcely had one generation passed between the collapse of the bison herds and Wilson's report. Many Piikani who had hunted bison—and thus were

knowledgeable about the habits of the large bovines—were still alive, and may have viewed managing cattle more favourably than planting seeds, a new and rather alien vocation, ethnographic tobacco horticulture notwithstanding. Both domestic cattle and the plains bison belong to the subfamily *Bovinae*, and many of their behaviours are similar[45]. Perhaps the mix of excitement and romantic nostalgia associated with riding the range on the horses that still served as Blackfoot signals of wealth, while herding cattle explains the popularity of this new vocation. The federal government, still believing agriculture was more indicative of civilization than ranching, continued to insist upon the practice of farming, and ranching received even less financial support from the government (Samek 1987: 79, 82). The Piikani enjoyed a few bountiful harvest years: by 1912, farming was more lucrative than ranching, and 1915 saw the best crop year in the history of the reserve (Canada 1913; Canada 1916). Late winters and early frosts still conspired to make agricultural yields inconsistent year to year, however. Drought years from 1917 to 1919 created extreme conditions on the reserve, testing Piikani commitment to their adopted life-style. Crops failed, and livestock perished by the hundreds, but there were few options for investing their labour (IAC 1920).

Health and Family Life

With entrenched malnutrition came endemic illness. Piikani Agent A.R. Springett noted in June 1887 that sickness was prevalent on the reserve, but the

[45] In fact, many so-called cattle trails on the prairie—created by grazing and movement between water sources—were created by bison. Cattle adopted these wholesale when introduced on the plains.

only doctor in the region had not visited since April, despite being under contract to visit monthly (IAC 1887d). A decade later, little had changed: Agent Wilson noted tuberculosis (then called consumption of the lungs) and scrofula as the main causes of mortality, with diphtheria and smallpox completing the quadrad of killers (IAC 1898b). Infant mortality remained high throughout the 1890s, prompting the Indian Commissioner to write a condescending letter to the Piikani Agent, calling for him to "lead the Indians to a recognition of the seriousness of the situation" (IAC 1896a), as if the Piikani were unaware their children were dying.

The railway built through the reserve shortly after it was established not only facilitated access to European markets and wares, but also functioned as a conduit for disease. A letter from the Indian Commissioner in 1898 noted the placement of a hospital car containing diphtheria patients on the reserve by Canadian National Pacific [CNP] Railway. The DIA was unable to force its removal, since the rail-line was CNP property. No explanation whatsoever was found in the archival records as to why a hospital car loaded with a fatal disease capable of aerosol transmission was placed on the reserve, and not some other isolated area. The Commissioner advised Agent Wilson to get the NWMP to help keep the Indians away from it (IAC 1898c). Wilson responded by writing a letter to NWMP Corporal Ambrose, asking for a guard to be posted near the car, as he believed a simple warning to the Piikani to avoid it insufficient discouragement (IAC 1898d). The RG 10 files do not record the posting of a Mountie there.

Assistant Indian Commissioner Hayter Reed believed the cost of providing medical aid to the Indians of the West was too high. In 1887, he advocated that a "competent farming instructor," not a doctor, should deal with "trifling" aliments[46] (IAC 1887f). Unfortunately, many people working on reserves for the DIA were not qualified to carry out even these duties, having been political appointments (McCrady 2001: 316). Reed also decreed that Indians would not receive paid medical service unless the Agent swore out a certificate, stating the Indian was destitute and unable to pay for the service personally (IAC 1887g). By 1903, even though the Piikani birth rate was 4.75% (compared to a 3.6% birth rate for non-Aboriginals), their high death rate still meant their population was declining (Canada 1904: 238).

The Dominion, from its inception until ca. 1900, was concerned with economic development and was inherently fiscally conservative when dealing with its people (see Herman 1971). The introduction of federal sanitation measures in the late 19th- century was due only to complaints from industrialists that high mortality and morbidity rates were stifling economic development (Herman 1971: 133). This, rather than a humanitarian ethos, better describe the reason vaccinations were introduced on reserves (e.g., IAC 1898b), and indeed, in most of Canada. Laissez-faire attitudes, coupled with a frontier ethos that encouraged individual effort and initiative, and a largely self-sufficient rural population of about 2.8 million (four fifths of the total population of Canada)

[46] What constituted "competence" among farming instructors and a "trifling" ailment is unspecified.

meant there was little demand or expectation for federal or provincial assistance of any kind (Herman 1971: 132-3).

Unfortunately, the Blackfoot themselves occasionally made poor choices that encouraged sickness. In 1901, a smallpox epidemic broke out in the Alberta District,[47] and the NWMP were under orders to return to their reserves any Indians found off them (IAC 1901a). A subsequent letter from the Siksika Agent stated the Blackfoot did not believe the smallpox reports and were intent on visiting the South Peigan via the Piikani reserve, in spite of their agent refusing them passes to leave (IAC 1901b). Many Blackfoot also refused Western medical treatment, relying on Blackfoot healers and their remedies, as they had since time immemorial. On the Blood reserve in the 1910s, for instance, many residents disavowed the hospital at St. Paul's school, preferring to trust the medicine of their ancestors (Johnston 1982: 4). While many of these remedies were successful in treating a variety of ailments, tuberculosis and smallpox were immune to the ministrations of Blackfoot healers.

Sun Dancing on the Reserve

Unsurprisingly, the Piikani continued to hold and attend Sun Dances in this period of ill health, though the ritual was no longer annual. The Sun Dance was the most important of Blackfoot rituals, and the result of a contractual obligation entered into between a woman and the Great Spirit. In times of illness, an upstanding woman made a vow to sponsor a Sun Dance if her family or loved

[47] The Alberta District was created in 1882, and was the forerunner of the province of Alberta, which gained provincial status September 1st, 1905.

one(s) was spared death from a life-threatening illness they were suffering from (McMillan 1995: 148). Usually held around the summer solstice, when the berries were ripe, Sun Dance camps were the times of highest population consolidation: bands from all divisions came together to trade, seek out new partners, settle debts, and renew acquaintances (IAC 1891c; McMillan 1995: 149). While officially banned by the 1885 amendment to the *Indian Act*, and made an indictable offence by a further amendment in 1895, seldom were Blackfoot Sun Dance practitioners prosecuted by the Indian Agents, at least in comparison to other Aboriginal rituals, such as the Northwest coast potlatch (McMillan 1995: 224).

The various Agents assigned to the Piikani had diverse opinions on the Sun Dance. Agent A.R. Springett allowed the ritual in 1889, despite it being outlawed (IAC 1889b). When H.H. Nash was the Piikani Agent, he believed the Sun Dance was harmless and allowed it to continue, with restrictions. Nash believed restricting the objectionable elements[48] of the Sun Dance, rather than outright prohibition, was the key to its eventual death. Restriction had failed on other reserves, and had led to an increase in "numerous other dances which do not come under the *Indian Act*, but which are much more vexatious" (IAC 1896b).

Customarily, bison tongues were a key part of the ceremony. In the Reserve-Era, when bison were rare and difficult to procure, the tongues of cattle

[48] There were three elements the government objected to: the self-torture aspect, the giving away of property, and the fact the Sun Dance occurred in the summer, meaning people were away from their farms and livestock for days (Samek 1987: 130). Samek (1987: 131) argues the Piikani had come to find self-torture distasteful and gave up that part of the ceremony in the 1870s.

substituted. The Indian Agents typically cut cattle tongues—issued from the Agency ration house—in half, making them useless for ritual purposes, if they agreed to issue tongues at all (IAC1898e; IAC 1889c), though Father Doucet (n.d.) states Agent Wilson issued whole tongues to the Piikani[49].

The government recognized the Sun Dance continued into the 20th-century, despite having outlawed it. Officials considered the ritual a waste of time but encountered difficulty encouraging its abandonment. Indian Agents pointed out its practitioners neglected their farming even after the dance was over, as people feasted and recovered: Agents claimed the ritual destroyed the "civilizing influence of education" (IAC 1911). The Indian Commissioner for the North-West Territories went so far as to suggest in 1908 that, since the Piikani intended to hold another Sun Dance due to the influence of their "utterly useless" Head Chief and minor chief Bull Plume, the Indian Agent depose them (IAC 1908).

In 1896, the Piikani agreed they would hold no more Sun Dances on their reserve, when the Indian Commissioner for the North-West Territories promised them they would receive "substantial cash prizes for a days' horse racing and sports each year" (IAC 1899c). The government only paid them one year though, so the Piikani viewed the agreement as void and prepared to hold the Sun Dance on their reserve. They anticipated no problems, and said that if friction resulted, it would be due to White men "who interfere with other people worshipping their God in their own way" (IAC 1899c). After this, the Piikani began

[49] As mentioned in Chapter 1, Doucet had a rivalry with Wilson. Claims either man made of the other should be scrutinized with this in mind.

to modify the Sun Dance, to get around government restrictions and continue to practice it. Once fundamental to the Sun Dance, cattle tongues were de-emphasized in the ritual, though nobody declined whole tongues if they could get them.

The Piikani also shortened the duration of the ceremony: the 1899 Sun Dance ran only four days, from Tuesday to Saturday, at the request of Agent Wilson (IAC 1899d). The Sun Dance of 1902 was also four days long, running from Tuesday, July 8th to Saturday, July 12th (IAC 1902). Father Doucet (n.d.: 103) and Nettl (1989: 14) state that four was a sacred number to the Blackfoot, which could imply that shortening the ritual to four days may not have been difficult for the Piikani to accept. Doucet also claims some Indian Agents did nothing to prevent the Sun Dance, and indirectly encouraged it, while falsifying their reports to DIA to appear as if they discouraged it (Doucet n.d.).

By 1913, the Piikani had partially commercialized the Sun Dance: non-Blackfoot were encouraged to view it, for a price (IAC 1913). Four years later, the Indian Agent stationed on TR 147 wrote his superiors that as far as he could tell, the Sun Dance was just “a big picnic” (IAC 1917). These pragmatic alterations to the Sun Dance demonstrate Piikani flexibility in negotiating its practice. The fact that it became increasingly commercialized takes nothing away from its spiritual and cultural significance, since in the pre-Reserve-Era, medicine bundles and some tipi imagery were also purchasable commodities. Sun Dancing is still practiced among the Blackfoot today, and is usually held in July.

According to the RG 10 files, in the first two generations of reserve life, the Piikani held Sun Dances on their reserve at least 10 times. The ritual occurred in 1888, 1889, 1896, 1899, 1902, 1910, 1913, and 1917[50]. A report from Agent Springett, in 1888, notes the Sun Dance that year was the first in two or three years and followed a winter of great sickness (IAC 1888a), meaning one was held in 1885 or 1886. T.P. Wadsworth, Inspector, Indian Agents and Superintendent of Farms, noted in 1884 that a Sun Dance had occurred on IR 147, but did not specify the year (IAC 1884a). The Piikani were talked out of a planned Sun Dance in 1890, but made arrangements to hold one in 1891, though none of the reports reviewed indicate the latter rite occurred (IAC 1890b; IAC 1891c). In Montana, Blackfoot women still made vows requiring a Sun Dance into the 1940s (Farr 1984: 170).

Colonial Notions of Domesticity

Convincing Indians to live in European-style housing was central to the acculturation effort. The government insisted that Indians adopt Victorian notions of domestic private space and consumerism, hoping to break the communal style of living which reinforced an egalitarian ethos and replacing it with nuclear families in the style of Euro-Canadians (see Smith 1971; Raibmon 2003: 69-70). An analysis of Indian domestic space within European-style houses determined if its occupants were "progressing" towards "civilization." The colonial mindset was that outer form revealed the character of an individual (Raibmon 2003: 78, 82).

[50] IAC 1888a; IAC 1889b; IAC 1891c; IAC 1899d ; IAC 1902 ; IAC 1910b; IAC 1913; IAC 1917

This Victorian assumption was never critically examined by government agents, who believed that neat, tidy houses belonged to “progressive” Indians, while messy ones were the domiciles of savages (Raibmon 2003: 81). While such assumptions reveal the bias of Eurocentric belief, Raibmon overlooks the religious aspect of Western acculturation, especially the Roman Catholic perspective, which brought daily routine into the realm of religious morality. Those who Sun Danced, sang in their native languages, drummed, and such, were seen as idolaters and therefore savages, regardless of the condition of their house or the number of Western goods it contained.

Piikani Housing 1880-1920

Sarah Carter (1999: 166-167), writing about western Canadian reserve housing in general, states living conditions were as poor as, if not poorer, than urban slums of the late 19th-century. Houses were little more than single-roomed shacks supporting low roofs over a stove and chimney. The walls were plastered with mud and hay, and the cabins typically had no flooring; roofs were built of logs or poles over which rows of straw or grass were laid. Carter’s grim description, while no doubt accurate as a generalization, matches only the archival records for the earliest of Piikani cabins. Willard Schultz (1907: 413) lived with his Blackfoot wife near Browning, Montana, and writes that in the 1880s, the houses of the Blackfoot[51] were cleaner and better maintained than many White homes in the cities. The RG 10 files consulted for this project

[51] He is likely referring to the South Peigan, however: as mentioned, few authors are explicit if they are referring to the Siksika, the Confederacy, or the Blackfoot in the United States.

indicate Schultz's interpretations, while a touch romantic, are accurate as far as Piikani housing in ca. 1880-1920 goes. However, interviews with Piikani elders relate a different perspective, much closer to Carter's description than the federal government's.

According to government records, there were approximately 60 cabins built on the Piikani reserve in 1880; by 1882, this had increased to approximately 86 cabins (IAC 1882). In a 1973 interview, Thomas Yellowhorn states that there were only about 40 cabins extant ca.1882. He describes the earliest cabins as sod-roofed houses, roughly 3 x 3 metres (10' x 10'), sheathed with mud plaster, with most lacking any furniture. Those who had mattresses used hay and straw to stuff them, a trait that continued into the 1910s and perhaps the 1920s. Windows and doors were then non-existent: simple cloth[52] covered these openings, despite cabins primarily being winter homes (OSCRIAA: 1973b). Such rudimentary housing did not represent the first Piikani experience with non-portable shelter, since the Blackfoot had constructed war lodges out of logs and bark during the days when bison darkened the prairie (Ewers 1944). War lodges, however, were temporary, expedient dwellings, whereas cabins represented an experiment in creating a new style of architecture for a home.

In 1887, most Piikani were still living in tipis year round, despite pressure to live in cabins, a more "civilized" dwelling in the eyes of Canadian officials: only 86 families were living in cabins on IR 147 that year (Canada 1888; IAC 1887e). While officials in Ottawa considered use of tipis as proof of Indian

[52] The interview does not state whether cloth was used year-round or just in summer.

backwardness, many Indian Agents viewed them as “airy and healthful” compared to log cabins (IAC 1888b; IAC 1905a). Air circulated poorly in cabins of the era. Air might seep in along the edges of the door or a poorly sealed window, but a cabin is largely an impermeable membrane against airflow. Tipis, with their adjustable earflaps, easily drew air in and vented air out, even in winter. Lit hearths essentially drew cold air in through the tipi door as hot air, smoke from the fire rose up and exited out the earflaps, ensuring constant air circulation. Blackfoot cabins had stoves, not fireplaces (IAC 1888c), meaning similar airflow within the home was not possible.

Once the Piikani began living in cabins, airborne diseases such as tuberculosis became more common (e.g., IAC 1898f). Father Doucet noted Blackfoot health deteriorating since the adoption cabins on their reserves. According to him, cabins were “dirty, too cramped for the number of people, over-heated…and with inadequate nourishment, besides. All of this becomes a breeding ground for scrofula, enteritis, lung and skin infection, and even in too many cases, the kinds of bad diseases that loose living white people have given them” (Doucet n.d.: 112). Although the government knew such living conditions were unhealthier than tipis, Indians were encouraged to live in cabins, as an essential transitional step towards civilization (Canada 1914: 301; Samek 1987: 173).

Cash incentives were used to encourage the Blackfoot to adopt cabins and Victorian notions of cleanliness and décor. An 1890 report by Agent A.R. Springett’s notes that prize money was awarded to three Piikani for the best-built

and cleanest homes (IAC 1890c). One year later, he awarded a $23.00 prize, split between three winners, for the best dwelling (IAC 1891d). The Walrond Ranch Company gave $25.00 annually for the best houses, with first, second, and third prizes all awarded in 1891, when Crow Eagle, a prominent Piikani chief, took first prize (IAC 1891a). Twenty-five dollars in 1891 was a substantial incentive, given that many Piikani could only secure seasonal employment such as branding calves for the Walrond Ranch Company, or working at autumn harvests. Other sources of income, such as trapping, were banned for a time[53], and the Piikani who set traps did so illegally, selling their furs on the black market. Much of the work the Piikani did paid nothing, such as picking up rocks, building fences, or constructing the Agency buildings. Even threshing was mandatory, unpaid work for a time, and threshers could not expect financial compensation for their labour, nor an increase in their rations (OSCRIAA: 1973b; OSCRIAA: 1975a).

The cabins built in the first decade of IR 147's existence were primarily of cottonwood, readily available in the Oldman River valley. Most of these early cabins featured notched interlocking logs with projecting ends and dirt floors. By the 1890s, pine hauled from IR 147B had become the preferred building material. These cabins had interlocking dovetailed ends and wood floors were becoming standard, built upon a cement foundation (see Figures 8 and 9). Logs were usually white-washed with lime, for sanitary reasons. Window frames, doors, and

[53] When trapping finally became legal, the Indian Agent again interfered. All sales had to go through the Agent first, who deducted whatever debts the individual owed first (OSCRIAA: 1973b). As others have stated, reserves resembled serfdoms, and despite officially stating assimilation as its policy, the DIA's actions seemed aimed at creating and maintaining a peasant class.

the edges of roofs (facia?) were typically painted green (IAC 1891a; IAC 1898b). In order to reduce illness, reserve policy included raking and burning all refuse(IAC 1898f). Cabins were disinfected in the spring, once families had moved into tents for the summer (IAC 1916c).

Figure 8. Dovetailed corners on cabins. Left: One-Owl cabin; right: Fort Macleod NWMP detachment. Note the nails on both. Photo by author.

Figure 9. Floor joist from Charlie Grier's cabin on the Piikani Reserve. Not all floor joists were notched to seat the foundation as this one is. Photo by author.

Dovetailing the corners of cabins is a time-consuming construction method. Among the Saskatchewan Métis, dovetailed corners seem to have appeared on their cabins after having to adopt an agrarian lifestyle with the elimination of the bison herds (Burley 2000: 30). Burley provides no functional explanation for the correlation: he simply documents their appearance and associates the construction technique with a permanent (i.e., non-seasonal) house. Piikani encountered similar conditions during their early reserve days, but this fact alone does not explain their preferred home style. Functionally, dovetail construction is stronger than the simple un-cut projecting ends that dominated the early 1880s style of Piikani cabin, due to its increased ability to tolerate stress (Kirby 2001: 20). The downward angle of the dovetail means it also sheds water more efficiently, reducing rot. Of the three cabin sites I surveyed, only the One-Owl cabin was still standing (Figures 1 and 10), allowing me to observe it had dovetailed ends (Figure 8). Charlie Grier's cabin has long ago collapsed, but most of its remaining logs are squared, suggesting it too possessed dovetails (Figure 11).

Figure 10. Close-up view of a wall of the One-Owl cabin, looking out. Little remained of the chinking. Photo by author.

Figure 11. Looking into the cellar at Charlie Grier's cabin. Most of the logs in this picture are squared. The broken foundation is in the background.

The earliest cabins built by the Piikani had dirt floors. Indian Agents considered this proof of traditional, therefore, primitive, living, even though most such floors were hard-packed and looked "cement-laid" (IAC 1881; IAC 1887e; IAC 1891a; OSCRIAA: 1973b). Presumably, most Piikani built their houses under guidance from the Indian Agent and/or farm instructor in the early years of the reserve. One notable exception was Crow Eagle's home, which the DIA built for him, roofing it with shingles (IAC 1898g) in the manner of the Agency buildings (IAC 1888d). This was almost certainly the same house that was awarded first prize for the best dwellings by the Indian Agent. Elected Head Chief by his people in the spring or summer of 1890, Crow Eagle retained his position until his death in 1901 and, based on correspondences in the RG 10 files, seems to have been a popular chief (IAC 1890d; IAC 1901c). Perhaps the ulterior motive for the government funding his house's construction was to showcase a new model, hoping to encourage other Piikani to follow Crow Eagle's example.

When discussing early reserve housing, Thomas Yellowhorn stated in an interview that, to his knowledge, the government did not begin to build houses for the Piikani until the 1930s[54]. Prior to that, band funds partially or wholly paid for the construction of housing. Government funds were typically not used to finance house construction until the 1950s, but by then in rural Alberta, house building required a skilled carpenter (OSCRIAA: 1973b). Vernacular architecture synonymous with the settler era disappeared, replaced by standardized frame structures.

[54] The context of the interview indicates Mr. Yellowhorn meant the government did not begin to pay to have houses built, not that they or their agents were providing the labour themselves.

Crow Eagle was one of the first Piikani to have a singled-roofed house. Agents had been encouraging the Piikani to build such roofs, as the Piikani preferred turf roofs, a less civilized construction style in the eyes of the government (e.g., Canada 1901: 179). Just as they began experimenting with shingled roofs, a storm blew down a shingled-roofed house in 1890, leading the Indian Agent to report that the incident convinced some to conclude a turf roof was more durable (IAC 1891a). When Under Badger began building a shingled roof on his house in 1898, he was only the second person on the reserve at the time to do so. By 1898, Henry Potts and Good Prairie Chicken intended to build houses with shingled roofs (IAC 1898g). Whether from government pressure, a desire to emulate their chief, or a personal belief that sod roofs were structurally weaker than shingled ones, after a generation of experimentation with their new vernacular architecture, shingled roofs became a standard cabin for families.

The government judged frame houses, though far more expensive to build, to be a superior style of dwelling to cabins, and Indians who lived in such housing were considered more civilized. Frame houses with separate rooms promoted healthier living than single-room cabins (Canada 1914: 301), and multi-room housing fractured communalism and encouraged individualism. Considered "homesteads"(demonstrating the implicit superiority literally built into these structures), frame houses require milled lumber, whereas even today, though one might live in one year-round, the word "cabin" retains a rustic notion of transient occupation. In 1905, a 4.8 x 7.3 metre (16' x 24') frame house cost about $400.00, an expense four times greater than most Blackfoot on any

reserve could afford (IAC 1905a). The Piikani Bad Boy was among the first people on his reserve to afford this when, on March 2nd, 1903, his 30' x 30' (9.1metre^2) storey-and-a-half frame house was completed. Henry Potts was the next to build a frame house when his two-storey 30' x 30' house was completed two months later on May 7th. Strikes-with-a-Gun was close to completing a similar house when the agent filed his report (IAC 1903a). The Indian Affairs Annual Report for 1900, strangely, lists 94 frame houses on the Piikani reserve (Canada 1901: 244). This was either an error by Agent R.N. Wilson, or an example of selective editing on behalf of the Canadian government. The year 1900 is the first time listings for frame houses appear in these reports for the Piikani and in 1901, Wilson noted there were only seven frame houses on the reserve (Canada 1901: 220). His report on houses for 1900 reads:

> More or less building is continually in operation on the reserve. While it cannot be claimed that dwellings are increasing in number, because an Indian generally destroys an old house upon the completion of a new one, it is easily seen that a change for the better is taking place in the houses, dirt roofs are giving way to shingles, un-floored cabins are almost a thing of the past, and several individuals have provided for the erection of frame houses during the course of the present year (Canada 1901:179).

Inter-Household Spacing

Reserve life resulted in fewer seasonal moves and greater distance between dwellings, compared to the ethnographic period. In the pre-Reserve-Era, a Blackfoot band might move over 20 times a year to various resource acquisition sites, trading posts, and to shelter from extreme weather (Kehoe 1993: 89). During the early Reserve-Era, annual moves were minimal. Living in cabins in sheltered regions during the winter, the Piikani moved out onto the

prairie around April, to work their farms. They lived primarily in tents (the records are explicit these are not tipis) during this time (IAC 1916c). They would not reoccupy their cabins until winter, roughly late October or early November. By the 1930s however, some families were living in their cabins year round and commuting to their fields. After half a century of living the way of life promoted by the federal government, some Piikani were becoming accustomed to the settled, farming lifestyle. A discussion of the archaeological assemblage from a fully sedentary occupation forms the bulk of Chapter 5.

A second change occurred even more rapidly. Tipis were usually set up a few metres apart from each other. Once the Blackfoot began building cabins, they replicated their customary habits and built clusters of houses close to each other. An excerpt of a report from Dr. Girard dated November 6th, 1883, stated he found that, with exception of the Stoneys, all Treaty 7 Indians had built their houses too close together. Given the diseases rampant in the region at the time, Girard advised existing houses to be pulled down and rebuilt with at least 100 feet (30 metres) between them (IAC 1886a). By 1889, villages on the reserve were so scattered across the landscape that school attendance dropped, due to travel being more difficult (IAC 1889c). Some Indian Agents wanted to break these villages up and further scatter the Piikani across the landscape, believing such a move would force them to “take more interest in their work, when they felt that they owned a certain portion of land upon which no other Indian could encroach” (IAC 1896c). Rural clusters became increasingly dispersed, and

households became fixed in relationship to other households, on IR No.147.

Changing Material Culture

Contents of Piikani cabins, as recorded in the reports of Indian Agents, indicate great strides in the adoption of Euro-Canadian material culture. Beds and chairs replaced willow-framed, rawhide-lashed bison-hide couches, and tables, an object with no cultural precedent, entered the Piikani household (IAC 1891a). Many people put pictures on their walls, as well as clocks, mirrors, lamps, cupboards, and store-bought dishes (IAC 1891a). Windows typically had curtains, which would have pleased the Indian Agents: such notions of privacy were Victorian ideals, an encouraging sign of civilization. The RG 10 documents do not specify if glass had replaced the cloth-covered window apertures.

Curtained windows may have suited Blackfoot sensibilities too: tipis had no windows, but they often did have curtains lining their interior, and one "knocked" before entering the home of another. So when Prairie Head lined the inside walls of his cabin with white cotton in 1887, he was likely trying to keep out the weather in the manner he knew (IAC 1887e). Unfortunately, no other records have been found to indicate if Piikani were commonly lining their walls with cotton or plaster. The Piikani would have been familiar with plaster walls from the various Agency buildings. Cabins with hewn interior logs could have accommodated plaster, whereas logs left rounded would make plastering pointless. The ethnographic records demonstrate the pre-reserve Blackfoot had selectively adopted European material culture. Once the Blackfoot became

sedentary, with only one major annual move (which eventually ceased), they adopted new material culture that suited their new lifestyle.

Discussion

The first two decades of reserve life were difficult for the Piikani. Lamenting the loss of the bison, they nevertheless committed to becoming self-supporting farmers. DIA bureaucratic incompetence prevented this government ideal from being realized: Eurocentric notions of superiority, continued fiscal cutbacks, unilateral decision making, an insistence of forcing agriculture in a region unsuited to it and a top-down government model, which prescribed a national blanket policy for reserves in Canada, meant the Blackfoot were generally forced into a hand-to-mouth existence. Ranching proved to be a more popular vocation than farming for many Piikani, as well as a viable economic practice. Despite the successes of Piikani ranching and support for the endeavour by the Indian Agent, officials in Ottawa insisted their wards engage in agricultural pursuits, even when evidence demonstrated an agrarian lifestyle was not a viable option for creating long-term self-sufficiency in the Palliser Triangle.

As their populations plummeted due to disease and starvation, the Piikani continued to turn to their own religion for salvation. Despite the objections of church and state, the Piikani held Sun Dances on their reserve, or travelled to other reserves holding a ritual outlawed in 1885 but whose practice continues into the 21st century[55]. Blackfoot populations would continue to fall, due to

[55] The ban against the Sun Dance and other rituals was removed from the *Indian Act* in 1951.

disease and starvation-related maladies, until after the flu pandemic of 1918-1919.

The Blackfoot were building cabins by 1880 and lived in them during the winter, but typically moved back into tipis and tents during the summer, replicating on a much reduced scale the mobile seasonal-round lifestyle familiar to many in the 1870s. Populations on the Piikani reserve remained dispersed, with at least 28 different camps comprising an on-reserve population of approximately 881 in 1891. By the 1930s, the Piikani had abandoned the last vestiges of the highly-mobile lifestyle of their elders and were living year-round in their cabins or frame-houses. Cabins were seen as a transitional dwelling by the government: more civilized than the tipi, yet not the epitome of true civilized domestic life as marked by the multi-room frame house, where Victorian notions of social propriety and order were reinforced. The earliest frame house on the Piikani reserve dates to ca. 1903, a dwelling only the wealthiest in the band could afford. As the Piikani adopted a foreign dwelling and made it their own, they became increasingly sedentary, and their domestic material culture changed as a result.

The earliest cabins on the reserve were little more than small, one-room shacks. Few doorways possessed physical doors, nor did most window frames hold glass: cloth covered these apertures. In 1887, seven years after the creation of their reserve, most Piikani still chose to live in tipis year-round. While the DIA considered tipis proof of “backwardness” among Indians, the Indian Agents—who lived among the people they were responsible for—noted tipis were a healthier

abode than the cabins the government insisted Indians use. Slowly, the Piikani did adopt cabins, however, and these became winter residences. Tipis saw continued use as the summer home. The federal government provided cash incentives to the Blackfoot as encouragement to adopt cabins, which were themselves seen as a necessary transitory step in getting the Piikani to live in multi-room frame houses.

Once the Piikani began adopting cabins as their new home, they replicated their ethnographically documented practice of building their homes only a few metres apart. This resulted in disastrous health conditions, and within a decade of reserve life, households became widely spaced on the reserve. By the 1930s, some Piikani had abandoned their bi-annual move from the cabin to the tipi, electing to live annually in the wooden structure. The Oldman River valley remained a popular location for homes, just as it had in the pre-Reserve-Era.

CHAPTER 5: THE EXCAVATIONS AT THE YELLOW HORN CABIN

As discussed in Chapter 1, historical archaeology in North America typically focuses on sites of European origins, or Indian sites in the early contact-eras. Reserves have been all but overlooked by researchers. This chapter describes the first research-oriented excavation of a Reserve-Era Piikani homestead.

I begin by describing site DjPk-149 (the Yellow Horn cabin), including some construction details of the house flooring, and then move to a discussion of my sampling strategy. Following that, I describe the site stratigraphy, and then detail the recovered artifact assemblage. I describe and analyze the recovered artifact assemblage by type (e.g., glass vessels, ceramic vessels, faunal remains, etc.), then move to a discussion of each major artifact type. Of particular interest is the visibility of children at the site, something which is typically difficult to document archaeologically (as will be discussed), and the likely continuation of some pre-Reserve-Era food practices.

The research agreement with the Piikani Band Council mandated all artifacts be reburied once excavations were completed. Since no further examinations of the assemblage are possible, I describe it in greater detail than required for my research, so that it may be useful to future researchers. Much of the assemblage is detailed in the Appendix.

The Yellow Horn Site

The Yellow Horn cabin, DjPk-149, is located on the north side of the Oldman River valley. As the crow flies, it is only about three kilometres from Brocket. However, with only one bridge to cross the river and limited road access, reaching the site from Brocket requires approximately a 15-minute drive followed by an additional 20-minute hike. The site takes its name from the most recent occupants, the Yellow Horn family: the lead excavator and my supervisor, Dr. Eldon Yellowhorn, is the grandson of Thomas Yellowhorn, who lived here in the early 20th-century. Two of Dr. Yellowhorn's older brothers, Romeo and Joe, lived at this site as children.

According to Romeo Yellowhorn, the cabin was built ca. 1911 and originally belonged to the Bastien family. Its proximity to Brocket may suggest the Bastien's desire to be close to the emerging village. The Bastien's nearly all died in an epidemic, perhaps by the influenza pandemic of 1918-20. The sole survivor was the patriarch, who left the cabin and Brocket, possibly due to the Blackfoot belief that one abandons their home after a death occurs in it (Ewers 1958: 289). The dwelling sat abandoned until taken over by Thomas Yellowhorn ca.1935, who built a corral, barn, and possibly the garden (Figure 12). Romeo Yellowhorn was born in 1937; a photo dated 1939 shows him at the homestead. The family abandoned their home in 1953, when a flood in the river valley destroyed a bridge west of the site (Alberta 2008: 8). Like the old bridge, the cabin itself is no longer standing. Without a living connection to the village, the cabin was once

again abandoned. Thereafter, local residents recycled the building materials for fence rails and firewood.

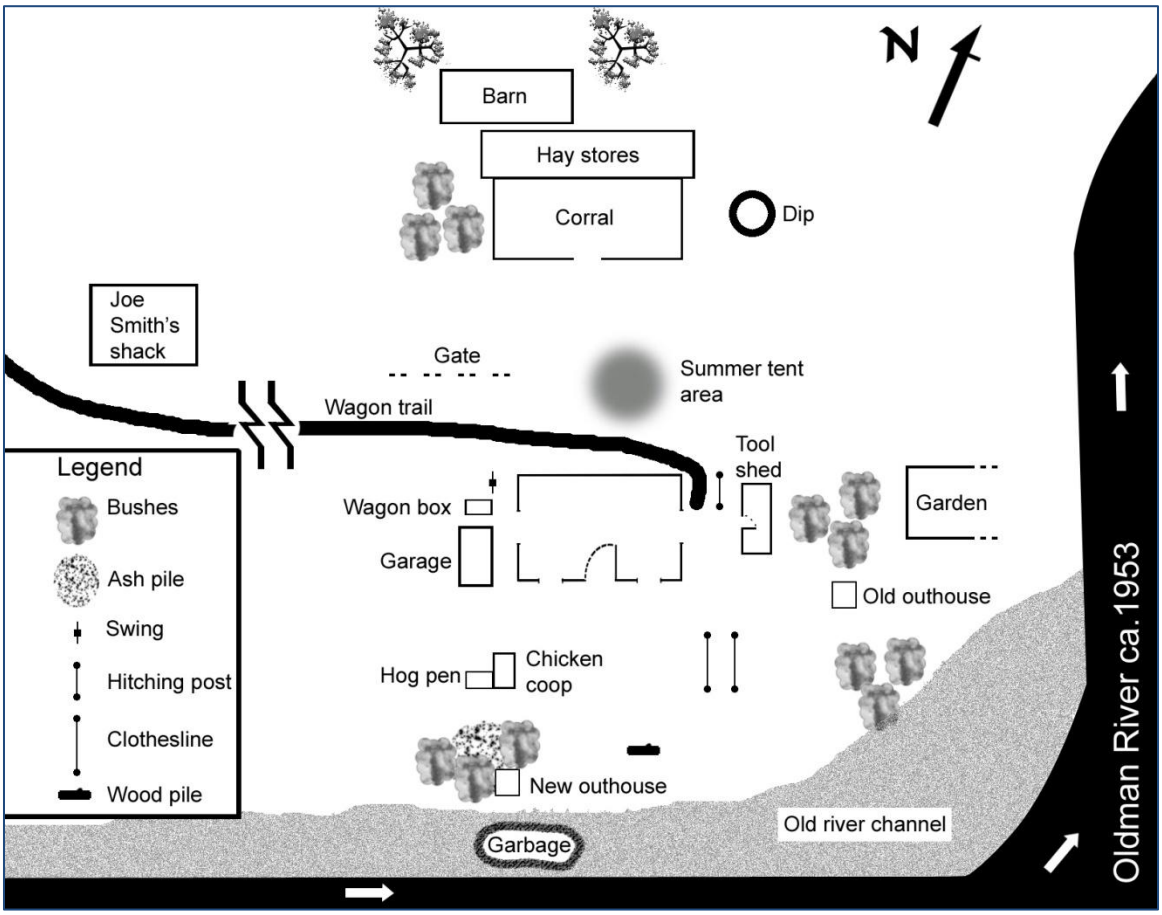


Figure 12. Composite map of the Yellow Horn site. Map by author, based on sketches by Joe and Romeo Yellowhorn and the 2007 survey and excavations.

Figure 12 has no scale as I have chosen to compress both the vertical and horizontal dimensions in order to show content, a standard architectural practice when detail is more important than metric accuracy. The "break in a continuous line" architectural symbol depicts the horizontal compression. The vertical compression is difficult to depict with a symbol, but occurs between the top of the "summer tent area" and the corral. The area depicted in Figure 12 is approximately 0.5 km^2. While we were unable to ascertain when the chicken

coops and hog pens depicted on the map were built, such features started becoming widespread on the reserve in the early 1920s (Canada 1921: 44; Canada 1923: 36; Canada 1925: 8, 40).

The Yellow Horn House Foundation

What remains of the household is a cement foundation with some floorboards. Aligned roughly along a WNW-ESE axis, the cement cabin foundation measures 5.4 metres wide by 7.2 metres long; Figure 13 shows the foundation as it was when first located in 2007. The south side of the foundation was clearly visible, being 17 cm above ground at the SW corner, and 16 cm above ground at the SE corner. The northwest corner was flush with ground level, whereas the northeast corner was a few centimetres below ground level. The cement foundation has a mean thickness of 30 cm.

There were 28 visible floor planks, each two-centimetres thick, running the length of the house. These planks were supported by 12 floor joists, most of which were 4.5 cm x 10 cm, though two on the east end were 14 cm tall, and two other joists were so decayed as to make accurate measurement impossible. Located approximately 63 cm apart, the joists were un-notched to seat on the foundation. The fact that they were un-notched (see Figure 9 for a notched example) is likely due to this cabin being located in a flood zone. Un-notched joists meant the floor was further elevated from the foundation, allowing it to escape seasonal flooding. Romeo Yellowhorn stated the flooding usually came up to the south foundation, but never ran over it. This is likely due to the slight south-to-north rise in the landscape, away from the river.

Figure 13. The Yellow Horn cabin foundation, looking north. Photo by author.

On the south side, the floor planks extend past the inside edge of the foundation by 10 cm, and on the west side by 6 cm. Comparable houses on display at the historic village in Fort Macleod, which date to no earlier than 1884, had walls of about 10 cm, which extended flush to the outside edge of the foundation. A just barely standing cabin, which belonged to the One-Owl family on the Piikani Reserve, had walls 13.5 cm thick (Figure 1). Using the Fort Macleod and One-Owl building walls as guides for estimation, the Yellow Horn cabin had an approximate floor space of between 37.8^2 metres (407.7^2 feet) and 37.7^2 metres (406.6^2 feet), respectively. The Yellow Horn cabin thus had greater

floor space than the average Blackfoot tipi in the ethnographic era (18-18.6^2 metres), but was well within the range of Blackfoot tipi space.

According to Romeo and Joe Yellowhorn, there was a single entrance to the home on the south side, facing the river (which was only a few dozen metres south of the house until the 1953 flood). Joe stated the house had three windows, one in roughly the centre of each of the west, south, and east sides. Romeo stated the south side had two windows, one on either side of the door, for four windows. A photo dated 1939, in the possession of Romeo Yellow Horn, shows the front door of the house. The door had no window.

Surface finds at the site included the food warmer of an iron stove, or cooking range, as it is called in some regions (Figure 14), an iron trough, a quart paint can with dried orange (presumably alkyd) paint still inside, remnants of the garden fence-posts, and the remains of a tin-roofed chicken coop. Strewn about the site were various other metal objects. A barrel resting less than two metres south of the foundation was, according to Joe and Romeo, was for water storage (Figure 15).

Figure 14. The food warmer from a stove, oriented as it would have been when mounted above the cooking range. Photo by author.

Figure 15 Metal barrel in front of the cabin foundation. The grove of trees in the background against the north valley wall marks the location of the barn and stable. Photo by author.

Sampling Strategy

The initial site survey included a metal detector sweep of the area immediately surrounding the cabin. The areas south and east of the foundation yielded the highest concentrations of metal signatures. There was a strong correlation between metal signatures and buckbrush. Areas with metal concentrations were flagged, allowing Dr. Yellowhorn and me to target areas of high-metal density, as well as zero metal density, for comparisons resulting from excavations.

Time constraints limited our excavations to a single site, where we excavated seven 1 metre x 1 metre units. We had hoped to excavate two other sites as well. In attempting to gain permission to excavate these sites, we spent a great deal of time travelling around the southern part of the province to talk directly to the appropriate people: while telephone calls are an acceptable way to arrange a meeting, they not the culturally-appropriate way to obtain permission to excavate. Unfortunately, despite making arrangements to meet, these people failed to be at the meeting places, and usually declined to call and inform us they could not attend. As many of the individuals we needed to obtain permission from were living off-reserve, several days of excavation time were lost. Ultimately, we did obtain permission to excavate around the One-Owl cabin, but consent came too late in the season to conduct a proper excavation. Other challenges, such as the vandalization of our equipment at DjPk-149, and the daily commute along Highway 3[56], which was undergoing construction that often reduced vehicle flow to single-lane alternating traffic, further delayed our work.

At the Yellow Horn site, the plan had been to excavate on all sides of the foundation, and I began excavating on the south side first. By the middle of the field-season, both Romeo and Joe Yellowhorn informed me that most outdoor activities took place on the south side of the cabin. With the close of the field season approaching, the dilemma was either attempt to obtain a representative sample from all sides of the cabin and potentially recover little material culture, or

[56] We were staying in Fort Macleod, and so drove to and from the site every day. The construction meant that we often spent an hour driving to the access road near Brocket, and as mentioned above, the site was approximately a 35 minute commute from Brocket.

focus excavations where informant information indicated I was more likely to retrieve artifacts. I decided to use Romeo and Joe's information to concentrate the excavations on the south side.

I acknowledge that the testing is inadequate to capture a representative look of the site, but the archaeology nonetheless helps refine the historical component of my research. The artifact assemblage also enables the first academic examination and documentation of a Reserve-Era household on Piikani territory. We can now begin to assess culture contact in a later colonial period context than has been typically explored by archaeologists.

Stratigraphy

Located on a fluvial terrace immediately above the flood plain, the soils of the Yellow Horn site consisted of well-drained, sandy loam. As the strata were difficult to delineate, and the soil tended to be both visually and texturally homogenous, excavating by following natural levels was impossible. Unit 3 possessed the only exception to homogeneity: its soil showed mottling below the root layer (~7 cm below surface). A degree of mottling is a trait consistent with water table fluctuations (Holliday 2004: 34), an unsurprising feature to document in the valley of a meandering river. Since following natural layers proved impossible, we excavated in 10-cm arbitrary levels. Seven $1m^2$ units were excavated around the homestead foundation; Figure 16 shows their locations in relation to the homestead and Table 3 details the unit soil characteristics. The matrix was sifted through 9.5 mm (3/8") mesh screens onto traps to capture any

artifacts not discernable in situ. All units were backfilled at the completion of the excavation.

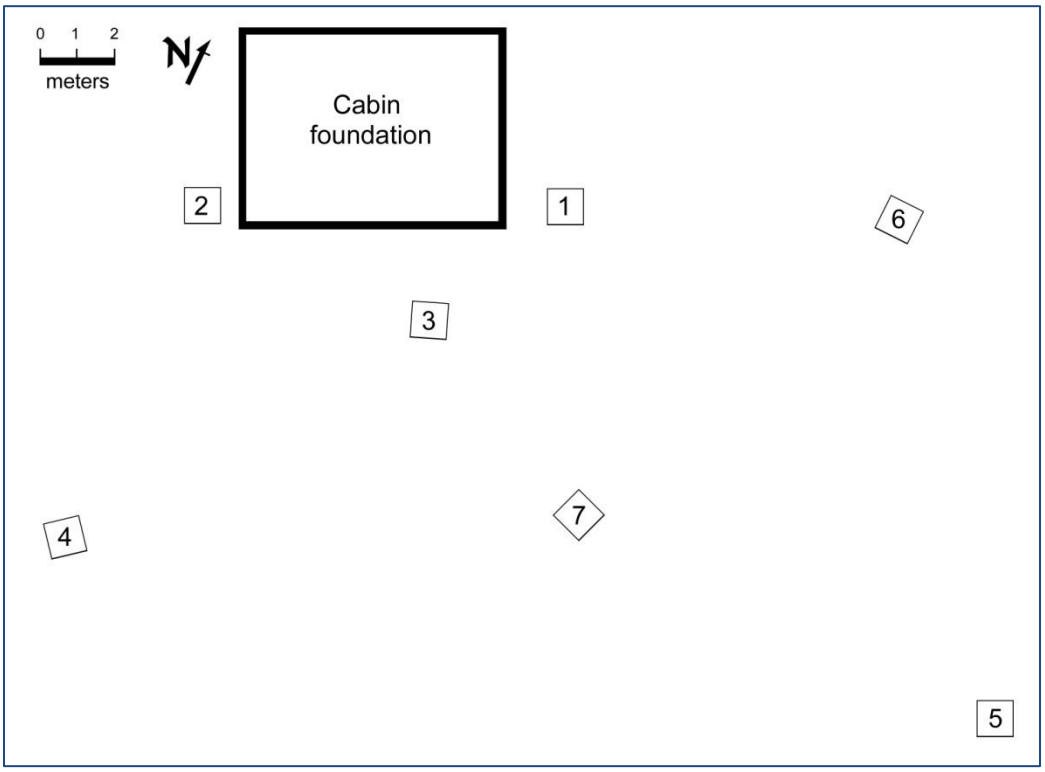


Figure 16. Map of excavation units. Diagram by author.

Unit	Colour	Soil Texture
1	2.5Y 3/2 Very dark grayish brown	Sandy loam
2	2.5Y 3/2 Very dark grayish brown	Sandy loam
3	2.5Y 3/2 Very dark grayish brown	Sandy clay loam
4	2.5Y 3/2 Very dark grayish brown	Silt loam
5	2.5Y 3/2 Very dark grayish brown	Sandy clay loam
6	2.5Y 3/2 Very dark grayish brown	Sandy loam
7	2.5Y 3/2 Very dark grayish brown	Sandy clay loam

Table 3. Munsell colours and soil texture classifications from DjPk-149.

The Artifact Assemblage

The assemblage consisted entirely of historic-era artifacts and faunal remains representing at least three species. The root layer extended an average of 7 cm below the surface across the site, below which was a hard-packed layer, likely representing the occupational surface of the terminal years of the site. Artifacts began appearing at approximately 9 cm below the surface until reaching the matrix devoid of cultural material at approximately 20 cm below surface (see Table 5.2).

Four hundred eighty-two glass pieces, one hundred eighty-two artifacts, as well as 362 faunal remains were recovered, bringing the assemblage to 1,026 pieces. Artifacts and pieces were individually numbered either directly, or on the bag if the artifact/piece was placed in if it was too small to write on. Several fragmentary glass sherds were bagged together and given a single

number, as were fragmentary faunal remains. Of the 1,026 pieces, 513 artifacts had precise in situ provenience, and an additional 270 were recovered from the screen from a known layer below ground. All artifacts from Unit 1 (n=5) were found in the screen, and have been excluded from analysis in my thesis, for reasons discussed in Appendix A. Table 4 details the number of artifacts recovered by depth.

As is typical of historic sites in the region, the cultural deposits of the Yellow Horn site were not extensive. Sixty-four percent of the assemblage was found between 10.1 cm and 15 cm below the surface. With the exception of Unit 2, no artifacts were found below 17 cm (27 cm below datum [BD]) in any unit. Unit 2 was excavated to a depth of 23 cm below surface as an exploratory measure. No artifacts were recovered below 21 cm. Units 3 and 5 were excavated to a depth of 20 cm. All other units were excavated to between 17 cm to 20 cm below surface (27-30 cm below datum). Figure 16 details unit locations. A 2007 Canadian penny was placed in the bottom of each unit prior to backfilling. The only exception to this was Unit 4, which had a penny placed in each quadrant simply because the excavators had too many pennies and wanted to divest themselves of the coins.

Depth below ground level	Total #	% total
0-5 cm	6	1%
5.1-10 cm	180*	23%
10.1-15 cm	499	64%
15.1-20 cm	83	11%
20.1-25 cm	15	2%
Grand total	**783**	**100%**

Table 4. Provenienced artifact quantity by level for units 2-7.* Ninety artifacts found in this interval were recovered from depths of 9-10 cm. Once adjusted for precise *in situ* artifacts (n=123), only 27% of artifacts were recovered at depths of 5.1-8 cm below the surface.

The following discussion is of the material culture unearthed and its implications. Glass, flat glass, and faunal remains were recovered from five of the six units under consideration here. In terms of relative proportion, these three categories dominated the assemblage. Figure 17 presents a graphical breakdown of the assemblage, whereas Figure 18 shows the spatial distribution and relative frequencies of the major artifact categories. Figure 19 depicts the approximate location of the units on the reconstructed composite site diagram. Appendix A provides the results of the examination artifact types not relevant to my discussion in this chapter.

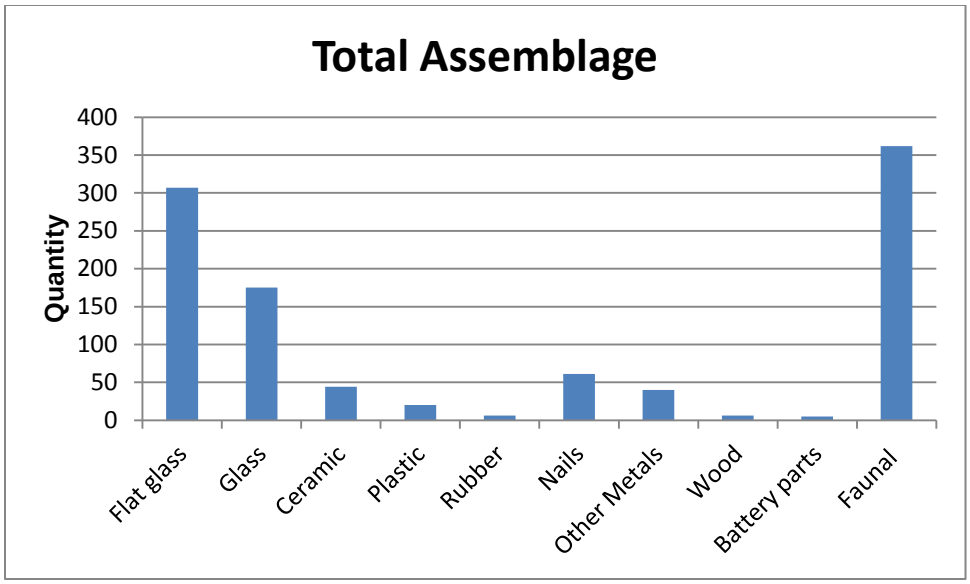


Figure 17. The assemblage from Units 2 to 7 at DjPk-149. n=1,026.

The informants indicated the cabin was constructed ca. 1911, and archaeology confirms a basal date of 1908, based on two Robertson No. 2 screws (artifact Nos. YH0682 and YH0683, Unit 3). Peter L. Robertson patented the design in 1907 (Rybczynski 2000: 81). Manufacturing of the square-headed screws began in 1908 in Milton, Ontario (Robertson Inc., 2004). I could find no records of when these screws were available in the Canadian west, but they are nevertheless useful as a chronological marker.

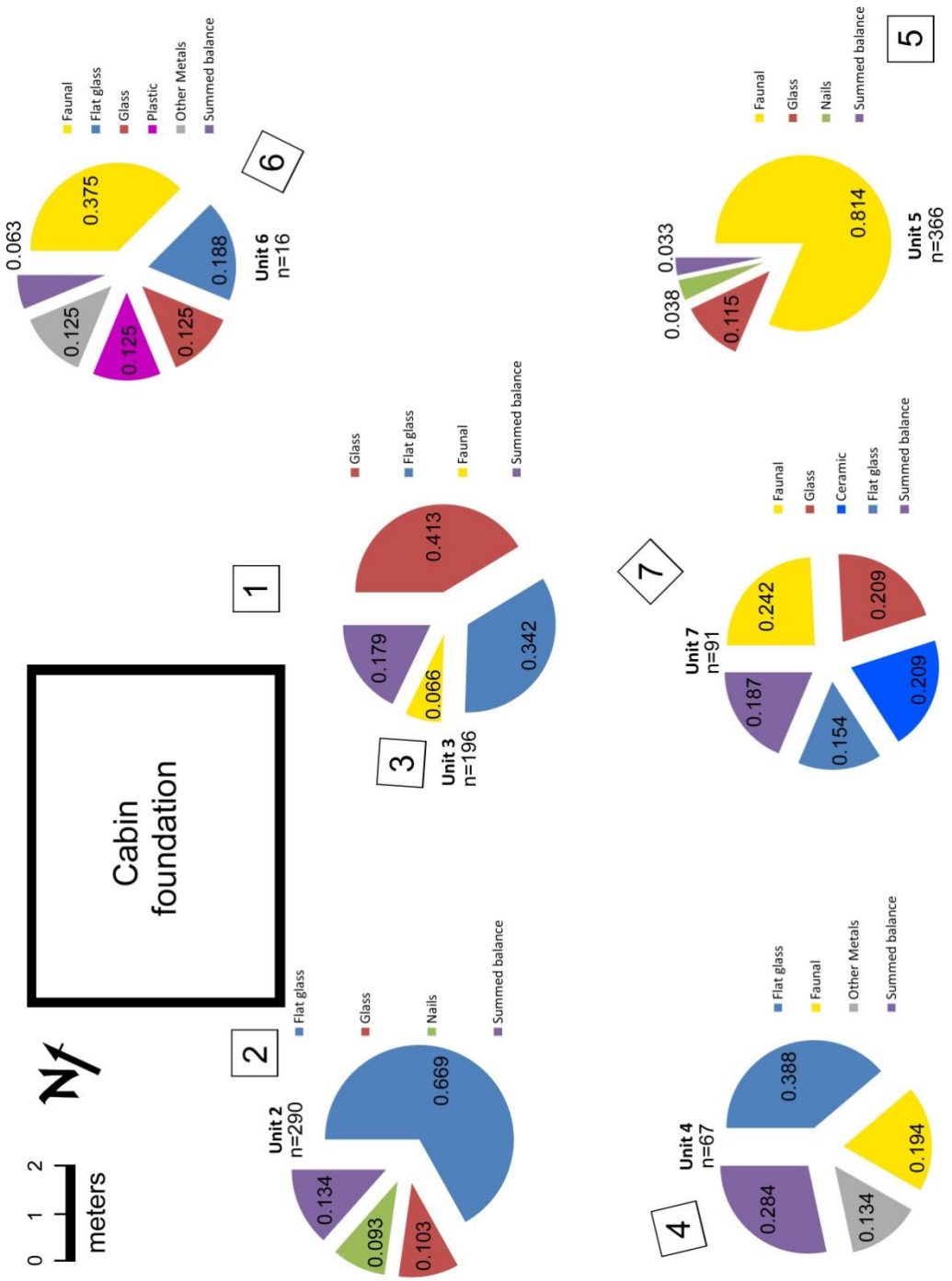


Figure 18. Relative proportions of the three largest artifact categories from each unit. The "summed balance" category combines the remaining artifact classes from each unit.

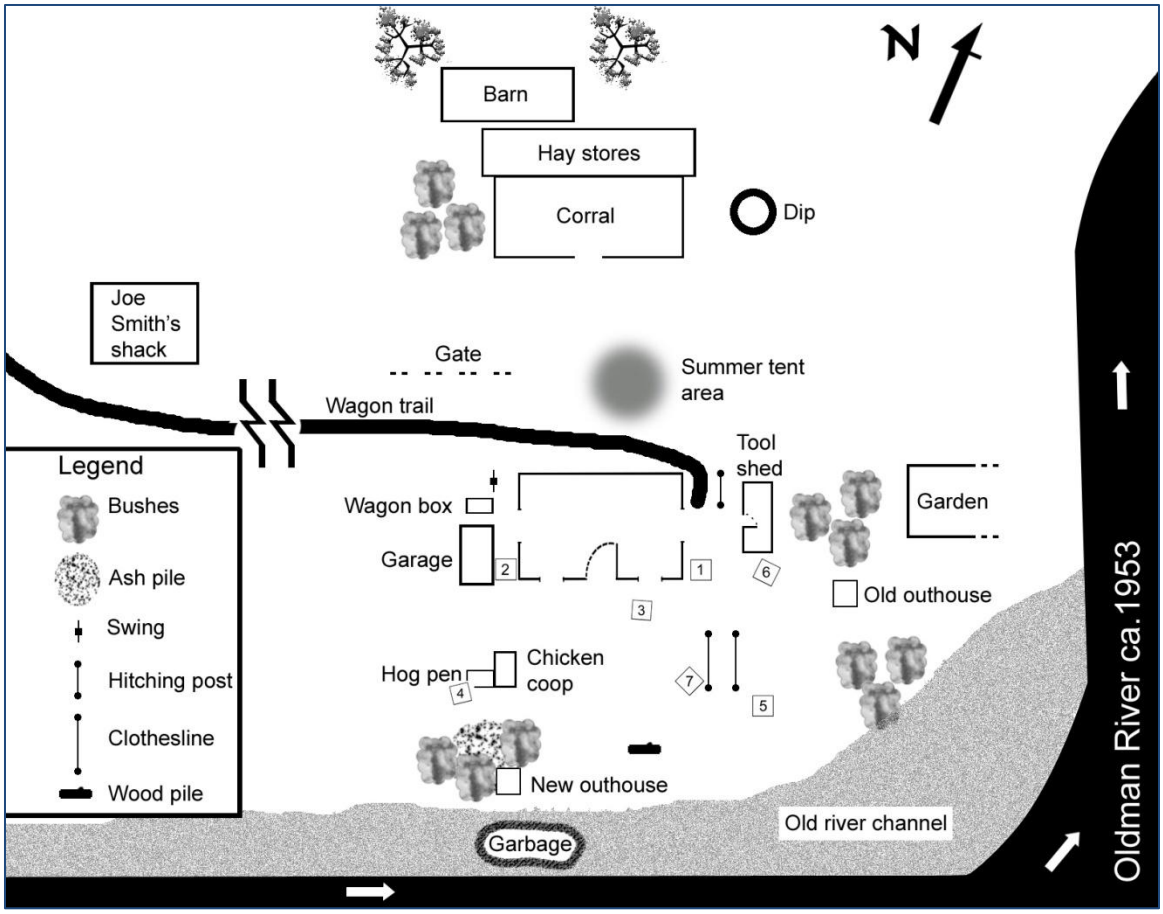


Figure 19. The reconstructed site with the approximate locations of the excavation units, for illustrative purposes only. Diagram by author.

Glass Vessels

One hundred and eighty pieces of glass, representing a minimum of six different vessels, and one mirror, were recovered. Five pieces (3% of the vessel glass assemblage) were recovered from Unit 1, which as mentioned, have been excluded from analysis. Table 5 depicts the glass quantities recovered by unit. Most of the pieces lacked identifying marks, and will not be discussed. In Canada, the only way to identify a bottle made prior to 1917 was if the company

embossed a symbol or logo on their product (King 1987: 247). The following discussion uses the terminology depicted in Figure 20.

Unit	# of sherds	% of total
2	30	17
3	81	45
4	1	1
5	42	23
6	2	1
7	19	11

Table 5. Vessel glass recovered, by excavation unit.

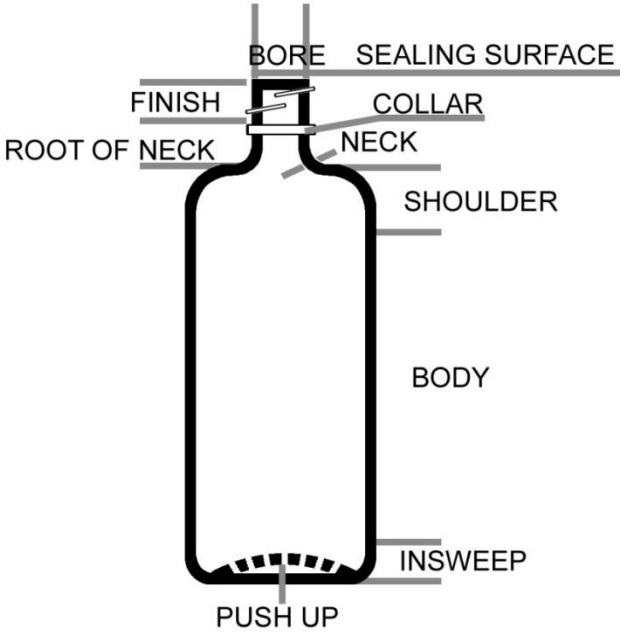


Figure 20. The landmarks on a glass bottle with a screw-top finish. After King (1987:246).

Most vessel pieces were fragmentary, lacking diagnostic features such as mold seams, which would indicate if the vessel in question was machine made. Even if more sherds had possessed mold seams, a further issue is that some manufacturers used hand-blown techniques alongside machine production into the 1970s (Historic Glass Bottle Identification and Information [HGBII] 2009). However, by 1917 in the United States, approximately 90% of bottle-makers were using machines to produce their wares (HGBII 2009). The Canadian glass industry followed a similar historical trajectory, usually lagging about five years behind its American counterpart (King 1987: 239), so most of the glass vessel assemblage represents machine-produced goods.

The remains of four vessels were recovered from Unit 3 (Figure 21). The blue glass (n=5) includes two pieces from a screw-top finish, properly called a continuous thread finish. The size and colour of the blue glass remains (YH0408-0412) are consistent with bottles of Vicks Vaporub©, which have been available in cobalt blue glass ointment jars with screw-on lids since 1911 (Procter & Gamble 2009). Historically, cobalt blue bottles are associated with types of medicines and cosmetics, but colour itself is a typically weak indicator of the manufactured function of a bottle. Cobalt blue was also used for beer and soda bottles, food bottles, and even ink bottles, for instance (HGBII 2009). The glass industry did not create a uniform standard for the continuous-thread finish until 1919 (Miller *et al*. 2000: 2). I was not able to determine if the continuous-thread finish from the two sherds were consistent with the standard adopted in 1919.

They remain useful as a chronological indicator nonetheless, as they cannot predate 1911.

Figure 21. Coloured glass from Unit 3. Photo by author.

Six amber pieces, one a fragment of a screw top, and two "7-Up ®"-green[57] pieces, constitute the remaining coloured glass from Unit 3. These coloured pieces likely represent ale/beer and soda/mineral water bottles, given their mean thickness (3.3 mm and 2.3 mm, respectively): such bottles were made to withstand the gaseous pressures of their contents. As with the cobalt blue glass remains, however, there are no marks that can conclusively demonstrate the designed function of the bottles, though amber glass is more consistently associated with beer/ale bottles than any other colour (HBGII 2009).

[57] This is a recognized colour among bottle collectors (*cf*. HBGII 2009). I use the term merely to clarify the colour of the glass, and not to imply anything about its former contents.

The last glass artifact of interest is YH0458, a piece of opal glass recovered from Unit 6. More commonly known today as milk glass, opal glass was viewed as an inexpensive alternative to porcelain sometime after 1825, when it began to be widely produced in North America and elsewhere. In fact, another name for opal or milk glass is porcelain glass, and its primary function is decorative (Husfloen 2007). Milk glass was used for toiletry, cosmetic, and ointment bottles from the 1870s into the 1950s (HBGII 2009). There were no identifying marks on YH0458, nor was the piece large enough to estimate what percentage of the vessel it represented, or even what type of vessel (e.g., jar, bottle, etc.). Opal glass was popular in the "glass culture" that swept through the Victorian world in the 19th-century, and remained so into the 20th-century (Armstrong 2008: 14, 16, 362).

Ceramic Vessels

The remains of three mass-produced stoneware vessels were recovered, as well as three ceramic vessels. Nineteen stoneware sherds were recovered from Unit 2, six from Unit 4, and 19 from Unit 7. The sherds from Unit 2 are seemingly from the same vessel, likely a saucer. The stoneware was buff, decorated with pink flowers outlined in red, with green leaves. Four rim sherds demonstrated that a gold band, or gilding, was painted along the lateral boarder. The ventral aspect of the rims demonstrated a two-step pattern, and a portion of the foot of the saucer (YH0480) had part of a word ending with "LAND" painted in blue.

Even into the early 20th-century, Canada imported more goods than it produced—as a colony, Canada historically transported raw materials to Britain, which then shipped finished goods back for sale, a trait codified in law that eschewed local development of such goods—so the saucer almost certainly came from England. Gold gilding began appearing on English tableware in 1870, and continues to be a common motif today (Miller *et al.* 2000: 13). Based on estimates derived from the circumference of the rim sherds, the saucer was small, approximately 6 cm in diameter, with a foot measuring approximately 3 cm in diameter. Saucers of this size typically support a tea cup.

Figure 22. Unit 2 ceramic assemblage. Photo by author.

The six sherds from Unit 4 were white unpainted stoneware. YH0502 is a rim sherd from a shallow vessel with scalloped edges. The scallops were orientated perpendicular to the rim, extending almost two centimetres in length. Circumference estimates suggest this vessel was approximately 9.5 cm in diameter. A portion of the foot (YH0500) was also recovered, indicating the base was approximately 5.5 cm in diameter. Figure 23 shows the remains of this plate. Of the 19 sherds recovered from Unit 7, only one (YH0513) had any indication of decoration, a trace of red paint, too small to determine if it represented a design or text. The sherds are white, and the size is reminiscent of small tea-cup or butter saucers.

Figure 23. Basal view of Unit 4 ceramics. Photo by author.

Faunal Remains

Three hundred and sixty-two faunal elements, representing at least four individuals, were recovered. An unidentified avian is represented by a single fused left distal radius with no anthropogenic modifications. At least two cattle (*Bos taurus*) are represented, one adult and one juvenile. A third mammal, likely American Pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*), is represented by a single right distal humerus (discussed below). Cut marks are evident on some of the cattle remains, as well as the unidentified humerus. Other than one partial bovine mandible, no body parts that have little meat or fat associated with them, and thus little nutritional value, such as metacarpals, were identified. Eighty-two percent (n=298) of all faunal remains were recovered from Unit 5. Unit 7 yielded the next largest proportion, a meagre six percent (n=6). The bones were examined visually with a 10x magnification hand-loop. I recorded weathering and burn stages as well, and these details are presented in Tables 7 and 8 (see Appendix A).

The minimum number of individuals [MNI] of two cattle was calculated on the basis of the entire assemblage, not on a summed total of bones recovered in individual units, as the latter approach can over-estimate MNI (O'Connor 2000: 60). I made the osteological distinction between cattle (*Bos taurus*), horse *(Equus ferus caballus*), and bison (*Bison bison bison*) on the basis of Simon Fraser University's zooarchaeology comparative collection, and Sisson and Grossman's *The Anatomy of Domestic Animals* (1975). I also consulted with Dr. Jon Driver, a zooarchaeologist at Simon Fraser University.

The right distal humerus (artifact YH0635a) is approximately the size of a white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), and American Pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*). All three species are found in southwest Alberta, though white-tailed deer are more common in the prairie ecotone (Banfield 1974: 394). Driver (1992: 44) points out that mule deer and white-tailed deer should only be distinguished osteologically on the basis of their antler, suggesting their bones are so similar they confound attempts at identification. Furthermore, deer do not have a prominent ectepicondylar ridge that extends past the articular surface (Lawrence 1968: 30), as YH0635a does. Based on comparative collections and publication keys, the humerus is most similar to American Pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*) (Figure 24).

Figure 24. Posterior view of *Antilocapra americana* (left) and YH0635a (right). YH0635a is slightly rotated to the right, having refused all attempts at 'levelling' it.

Artifact YH0634a is the largest single element recovered. It is the ascending ramus portion of the right mandible of an adult large mammal, almost certainly *Bos taurus* (Figure 25). The mandibular condyle is intact, but the coronoid process is missing. The bone is broken such that the lateral portion of the mandibular foramen is visible, and the angle is not present. Furrowing and scoring is present primarily along the caudal (posterior) border of the lateral side, and also on the anterior edge. The anterior side has crenulated edges, a sign of canid gnawing (Binford 1981: 49). The scores are ~1 mm wide. The deepest furrow is 1.2 mm. The longest cut-mark is 50.1mm, which typically run anterior to posterior, mostly within 52 mm of the mandibular condyle. The ramus is rootlet etched, unburned, and weathered to Stage 2 (Table 7 in Appendix A).

Figure 25. Lateral views of the ascending ramus. The top image shows it oriented roughly as would have been in life, the bottom details the carnivore furrows and scours. Note the cut-marks.

Other elements that likely represent *Bos taurus* are a rib (burn stage 0, weather stage 1) from the near-sternal portion, a possible glenoid fossa (burn stage 0, weather stage 1), a portion of a long bone (possibly the anterior portion of the distal femur, also at burn stage 0, weather stage 1), six intact teeth, and a seventh, broken tooth attributed to *Bos*. The teeth are listed in Table 10 (see Appendix A). None of these elements displayed evidence of human modification, and with exception to the teeth, none were able to provide age estimates (and the teeth were limited to juvenile/adult classification). The only natural modification was rootlet etch. Ten other bone fragments are from an animal of the same approximate size class as *Bos*, but no species attribution was possible. Of these ten, only one, YH0639a, a long bone portion, had cut-marks. None of these ten were burned (burn stage 0). Three were at weathering stage 0, three at stage 1, and four at stage 2. The three un-weathered bones felt waxy, as did YH0639a. All 10 fragments were identified as long bones.

The excellent state of preservation of the faunal assemblage (31 bones or bone fragments had a “waxy” feel), coupled with the lack of rodent gnaw marks and weathering stage data, indicates that refuse which could not be easily burned was quickly buried after butchering and cooking (discussed below). Exposed bone left on the surface deteriorates quickly, and may also be subject to scavenging. The burned bones likely represents a continuation of reserve policy of burning all refuse possible to control disease and illness (as discussed in Chapter 4), something the Piikani did not typically do prior to the Reserve-Era, when they lived a highly-mobile lifestyle (e.g., Indian Affairs Canada [IAC] 1898f).

Such mobility meant people were seldom in an area long enough to experience the negative impact of garbage accumulation.

Butchering Evidence

YH0635a was sawn across the shaft, and had cut marks on the caudal side within 15mm of the sawn portion, angled roughly 40 degrees off the shaft axis. No break-away spur was present, but a portion of the bone had spalled away, roughly parallel to the striae, suggesting the break-away spur broke off with it. The striae are consistent with a fine toothed saw, such as a hacksaw (Byers 2005: 389). Bone marrow in long-bones provides many nutritional benefits, particularly fat (Kooyman 2004: 187-88). While marrow was a preferred food on the Plains, as will be discussed below, there are other reasons for breaking bone other than marrow extraction (Kooyman 2004: 187-88). The bone was unburned (stage 0), and at weathering stage 0 (See Tables 7 and 9 in Appendix A). The only natural modification is rootlet-etching, and the bone had a waxy texture. Figure 26 details the saw-marks.

Figure 26. Cut marks on YH0635a.

YH0634a shows evidence of skinning and disarticulation, as well carnivore damage, in the same region. The cut-marks indicate connective tissue was severed to remove the mandible from the cranium, and the carnivore marks are consistent with consumption of the masseter muscle by a canid (Binford 1981: 63). One interpretation is the mandible was removed during butchering, and thrown to the dogs. Dogs have always been common across the reserve (e.g., IAC 1891a) and remain so. This suggests the bovine was one of the herd belonging to the Yellow Horn's and was killed on-site. If the bovine had been killed elsewhere, it is unlikely a portion with little nutritional value (low-yield), such as a mandible, would be transported to the site.

Other than the mandible, no low-yield elements were identified. Little of the total skeleton was recovered for any animal present. I cannot even

demonstrate the faunal remains are from the Yellow Horn's occupation due to issues of time compression: the faunal remains could have been deposited during the Bastien's occupation. The sample of size from DjPk-149 is too small to make interpretations about subsistence at the site. In some archaeofaunal contexts, the presence of juveniles can indicate hunting pressure, but the sample size from DjPk-149 is too little to allow for such inferences.

Battery

Remains of at least one dry-cell battery were recovered (artifacts YH0626-0630). The reserve only began to receive electricity via transmission lines in the late 1950s, so batteries were the only source of this commodity before that. Dry-cell batteries were used to power a variety of devices, such as telephones, clocks, sewing machines, flashlights, and radios. Residential telephone service was not available to the Piikani until the 1970s, and the Yellow Horn site was abandoned in 1953, so the presence of a telephone is ruled out. Clocks were becoming common in Piikani cabins by 1891(IAC 1891a), but the clocks owned by the Yellow Horns were of the wind up variety. Joe and Romeo told me they had a radio in the house. Artifact YH0628 appears to be Masonite, a wood-derivative, which began manufacture in 1924 (Masonite© Europe 2009), and likely served as the battery end-cap. Based on the dimensions of the component, the battery was likely a zinc-carbon Columbia brand No. 6 type (also called an EN6 type), also known as an ignition cell. The National Carbon Company, the corporate predecessor of the Energizer Battery Company (Energizer Battery Company n.d), trademarked No. 6's as the "Columbia". The

No. 6 produced 1.5 volts and was widely available from 1896 to at least the 1950s; it was only recently discontinued (Clarke 2007; Energizer Consumer Relations, personal communication 2009). Figure 27 shows the recovered components of the cell, Figure 28 depicts a reproduction of what most No.6 type batteries looked like, and Figure 29 is from a 1916 catalogue.

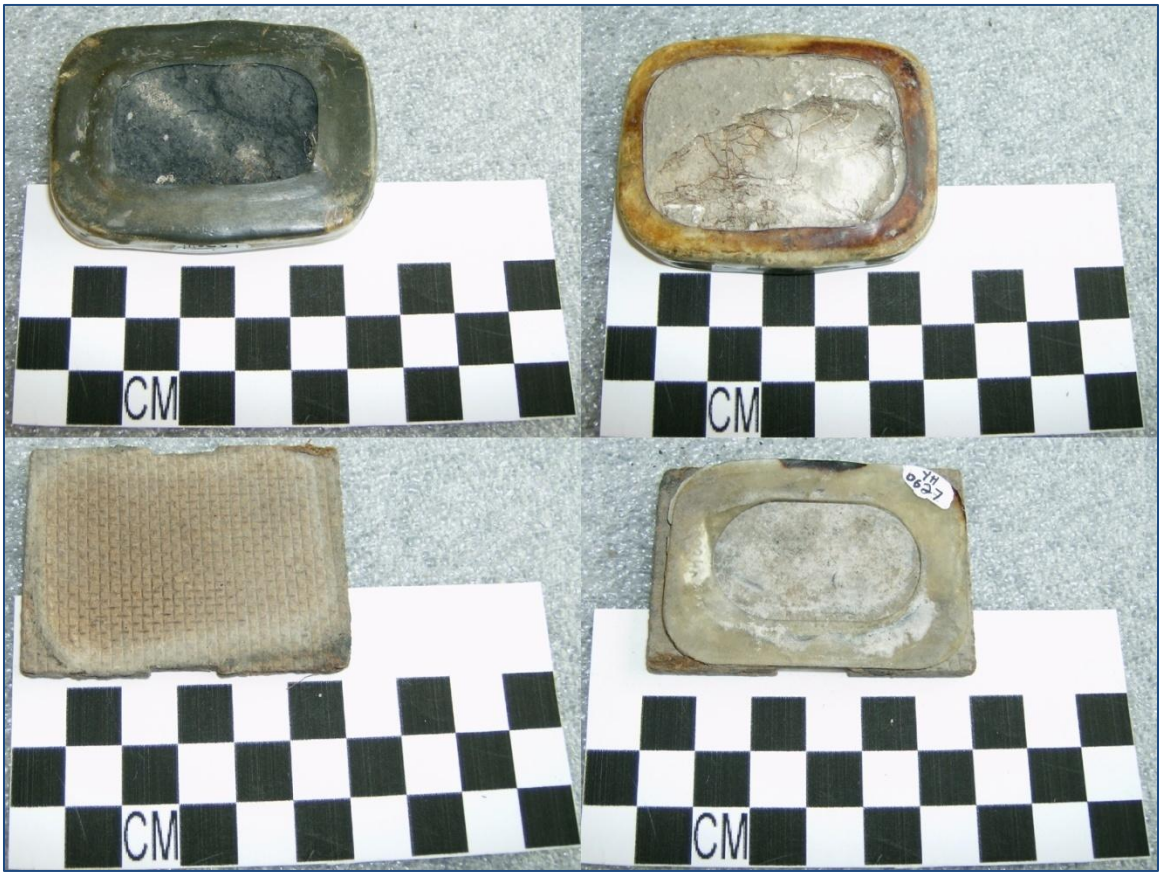
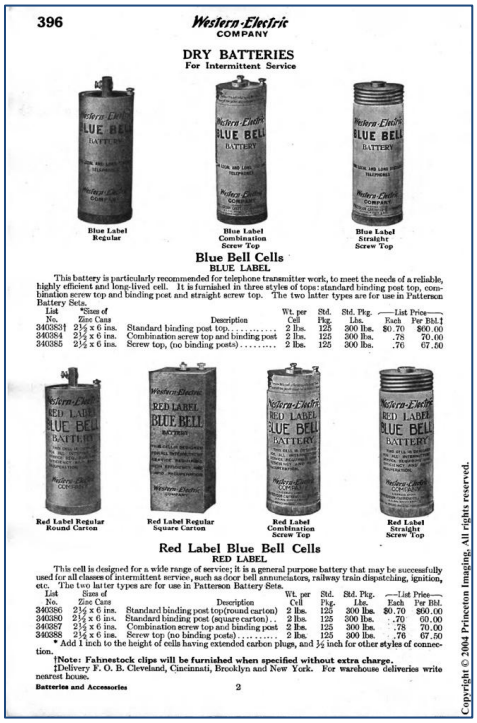


Figure 27. Clockwise from top right: YH0629, dorsal aspect, YH0629, ventral aspect. This is an individual dry-cell. YH0628 is either an electrode or end-cap constructed from Masonite; the notches on either side of it are to allow passage of the metal band which held all the components of the battery together. The cross-hatch pattern is only on one side. The last image is a conjectural refit of YH0626, YH0627, and YH0628. Photo by author.

Figure 28. Cylindrical No.6 battery cells. The one on the left is an original, the right a modern reconstruction. Most such batteries cells were circular or rectangular in cross-section, and a reference picture of the rarer elliptical type recovered at the site could not be found. Images courtesy of Sonny Clutter, Radiolaguy.com.


396

Western Electric COMPANY

DRY BATTERIES
For Intermittent Service

Blue Label Regular

Blue Label Combination Screw Top

Blue Label Straight Screw Top

Blue Bell Cells
BLUE LABEL

This battery is particularly recommended for telephone transmitter work, to meet the needs of a reliable, highly efficient and long-lived cell. It is furnished in three styles of tops: standard binding post top, combination screw top and binding post and straight screw top. The two latter types are for use in Patterson Battery Sets.

List No.	*Size of Zinc Cans	Description	Wt. per Cell	Std. Pkg.	Std. Pkg. Lbs.	List Price Each	List Price Per Bbl.‡
340383†	2½ x 6 ins.	Standard binding post top	2 lbs.	125	300 lbs.	$0.70	$80.00
340384	2½ x 6 ins.	Combination screw top and binding post	2 lbs.	125	300 lbs.	.78	70.00
340385	2½ x 6 ins.	Screw top, (no binding posts)	2 lbs.	125	300 lbs.	.76	67.50

Red Label Regular Round Carton

Red Label Regular Square Carton

Red Label Combination Screw Top

Red Label Straight Screw Top

Red Label Blue Bell Cells
RED LABEL

This cell is designed for a wide range of service; it is a general purpose battery that may be successfully used for all classes of intermittent service, such as door bell annunciators, railway train dispatching, ignition, etc. The two latter types are for use in Patterson Battery Sets.

List No.	Size of Zinc Cans	Description	Wt. per Cell	Std. Pkg.	Std. Pkg. Lbs.	List Price Each	List Price Per Bbl.
340386	2½ x 6 ins.	Standard binding post top(round carton)	2 lbs.	125	300 lbs.	$0.70	$80.00
340380	2½ x 6 ins.	Standard binding post (square carton)	2 lbs.	125	300 lbs.	.70	60.00
340387	2½ x 6 ins.	Combination screw top and binding post	2 lbs.	125	300 lbs.	.78	70.00
340388	2½ x 6 ins.	Screw top (no binding posts)	2 lbs.	125	300 lbs.	.76	67.50

* Add 1 inch to the height of cells having extended carbon plugs, and ½ inch for other styles of connection.

†Note: Fahnestock clips will be furnished when specified without extra charge.

‡Delivery F. O. B. Cleveland, Cincinnati, Brooklyn and New York. For warehouse deliveries write nearest house.

Batteries and Accessories 2

Figure 29. Western Electric Co. catalogue from 1916. Second left battery on the lower row is a rectangular style. Image courtesy of Princeton Imaging.

Plastic Items

The remains of 20 plastic artifacts were recovered. All were fragmentary, and only six could be attributed to any specific object. Four buttons were recovered. Two of them are similar in shape and size to the utilitarian variety commonly recovered at historic sites (White 2002: 74-5). Three are the two-eyed variety. One is brown (YH0537, Unit 7), one is dark blue (YH0618, Unit 5), and the third (YH0526, Unit 3) was designed to simulate mother-of-pearl. Buttons designed to look like mother-of-pearl were widely produced of celluloid plastic between 1868 and 1920 (Miller *et al*. 2000: 16). The fourth button (YH0522, Unit 2), was a half-circle type, with the single eye for affixing to clothes being on the tapered cylindrical shank extending from the inside apex of the convex portion. None of these have any special design motifs or material usage (e.g., Bakelite, Artids) that enable further identification. Plastic buttons were widely available by the 1930s, and their simple style and general lack of ornamentation (relative to the die-cut metal buttons of the 19th century and other button types, such as the Bakelite and Artids styles) are usually associated with the growing middle-class.

Two plastic artifacts (YH0523 and YH0538) represent toys. YH0523 (Unit 3) is a red toy animal leg, likely representing a horse. There is a peg in the hoof as if it were designed to mount into something. The leg is broken at the proximal end, where it would have joined the underside of the animal. There are incised grooves along the top of the hoof, simulating hair. Romeo described the toy horse in great detail. It attached to a small platform with wheels that could be

pulled along by a string. A broken toy wheel (YH0538) was recovered from Unit 7. Approximately 2 cm in diameter, the wheel had incised grooves to simulate tread and was moulded in black plastic. Children are both consumers of material culture and contributors to the archaeological record, yet their archaeological visibility is rare. A sample size of two broken (and likely ubiquitous) toys is not enough to say anything meaningful about behaviour, but they do indicate children lived at the site.

Figure 30. Plastic artifacts from Unit 3. The button is YH0526, and the toy horse leg YH0523. The three red sherds in-between the button and the toy leg refit with YH0523. The blue sherd is YH0528, and may be a comb tine. The remaining artifacts are unidentified.

Discussion

The assemblage recovered from DjPk-149 consisted of faunal remains and items of European manufacture. From an archaeological perspective, the Yellow Horn site tells us little about the number of occupants. Toys indicate at least one child was present, which implies at least one adult was, too. Therefore, two individuals—one adult, one child—is the most we can infer from the assemblage, though the barn, corral, and garden suggest a greater population. The assemblage provides good evidence for a basal and terminal date for occupation of the site, from ca.1908 to ca.1944, which closely matches what informants know about the cabin.

Ceramic Assemblage Discussion

The ceramic assemblage could be interpreted as indicating adoption of Euro-Canadian tastes once the Piikani settled on their reserve. I established earlier that dishes were part of at least some Piikani's households by 1891, though the Indian Agent's report does not specify if the dishes were ceramic or tin. The Blackfoot adopted tin plates in the trade era, and these imported metal goods led to the demise of the Blackfoot ceramic industry by 1833 (Ewers 1945: 296). The saucers suggest tea, and their decorative patterns are not functional requirements of a saucer. No mention is made in the ethnographic documents about coffee or tea (e.g., Johnston 1970: 301).

The Blackfoot had once made earthenware pottery, but abandoned its manufacture shortly after metal pots were introduced by European traders (Ewers 1945: 292-3). Cocking, in 1754, noted "their victuals are dressed in

earthen pots, of their own manufacturing; much in the same form as Newcastle pots, but without feet" (Burpee 1907: 317). Blackfoot ceramic production was in its terminal phase by the early 19th- century, and was completely gone by the 1870s (but cf. Ewers 1945: 293-4). By 1833, records indicate almost every Blackfoot home possessed a trade kettle, and hand-made ceramics seem to have been abandoned (Ewers 1945).

While ethnographies do not record European ceramics in Piikani households prior to settling on their reserve, an obvious interpretation is that they were emulating their neighbours. Burley (1989: 99-100, 103-104) notes that fragile earthenware tea-cups are a common find at seasonal Métis sites, where purely utilitarian, functional considerations predict a preference for durable tin cups and dishes. He attributed their presence as a signalling device: within Métis communities, they functioned as a method of reinforcing social position. They displayed for outsiders the claim that Métis were observed protocols like the English gentry to whom tea was a part of daily social life. By the 1840s, even very poor Métis owed ceramic teacups and saucers. Perhaps the occupants of DjPk-149 were sending similar social signals by choosing to use more expensive and fragile ceramics, rather than less costly and more durable tin dishware.

Faunal Remains Discussion

The faunal remains uncovered at the Yellow Horn site do not convincingly demonstrate continuity with the pre-Reserve-Era. Most of the faunal remains were attributable to cattle, a species which the Blackfoot adopted after 1879. By the 1930s, beef was as much a staple in Blackfoot diet as bison had been sixty-

years earlier. In some colonial contexts, the replacement of wild animals (e.g., bison) with European domestic stock as a subsistence-base is seen as evidence of acculturation (e.g., Wagner 1998: 446). Such claims cannot be made here, however, as there were virtually no bison left for the Blackfoot to hunt in Canada by 1878. Only if bison had remained a viable option and the Piikani were choosing to utilize beef instead could one make an argument that the use of cattle indicates acculturation. The Piikani adoption of cattle as a staple was a pragmatic decision, especially once other game in southwest Alberta became scare in the 1880s (as discussed in Chapter 4).

A single ungulate distal humerus (YH0635a) represents the only wild animal in the faunal assemblage with evidence of human modifications: the bone was sawn with a fine-toothed blade. While it may have been sawn to extract the rich marrow the humerus contained, marrow extraction on the Plains usually resulted in spiral fractures (Kooyman 2004: 188), though Wissler (1910: 22) documents the Blackfoot also used hammers to smash long-bones to get at marrow. Sawing a long-bone is consistent with segmenting a carcass for transport, or to portion it up, as well as to boil smaller portions to extract bone grease, and to obtain bone for tool-making (Kooyman 2004: 189). No bone tools, expedient or otherwise, were unearthed at DjPk-149, so it is unlikely YH0635a represents tool manufacture. If the cut marks indicated portioning, which would have occurred while flesh was still attached, then we should expect to see false start kerfs, which are produced by the saw bouncing on the push stroke (Byers 2005 :386), especially since false start kerfs are particularly associated with

handsaws, and I have already established the cut marks are most consistent with a fine-toothed blade such as a hacksaw. No such kerfs are present. As most bone grease is typically found in the articular ends of long-bones (e.g., Kooyman 2004: 198), the most parsimonious interpretation is the bone was cut after defleshing, to boil it to extract its grease. The most efficient way to extract bone grease is to break the articular end into several smaller sections (Kooyman 2004: 198), which was not done to YH0635a. Overall, the evidence suggests the bone was cut to boil for its grease, which was a pre-reserve Blackfoot subsistence trait (e.g., Wissler 1910: 23), and that food shortages were not a problem at the time, as the bone was not prepared to extract maximum nutrition.

Battery Discussion

The battery could have powered many devices, but what is significant is the presence of a radio at the homestead. Blackfoot remained the primary language spoken on the reserve until after the Second World War, making English the *lingua franca* of the day for the Piikani in dealing with the settler population (Yellowhorn 2002: 98). No identifiable remnants of the radio were recovered, nor was the year of its purchase recalled. The presence of a radio suggests that at least some Blackfoot had adopted Western entertainment and/or newscasting into their cultural schema. Actively tuning into radio indicates a form of social interaction was occurring between the Blackfoot and the settler population that surrounded them, even if was not face-to-face interaction. It also indicates that, despite being minimally spoken on reserve until post-1945, colloquial English was understood by some. The radio also marks the beginning

of English-language hegemony on the reserve: as Piikani began tuning in to radio, and later, television, in ever-greater numbers, they spoke the Blackfoot language less often. Today among the Piikani, it is usually only the elder generations that speak Blackfoot (McMillan 1995: 160).

Conclusion

This chapter has described the archaeological excavation of an annually occupied cabin site in the Oldman River valley on the Piikani reserve. Built around 1911, the cabin was home to two families: the Bastiens, who abandoned it after they were nearly all killed in an epidemic, and later, the Yellow Horns, who abandoned it after the flood of 1953. The recovered artifacts are entirely historical in nature, and the majority of the assemblage indicates discard, not loss.

While the shift to agriculture was challenging for the Piikani accustomed to the seasonal round, elements of their customary lives continued into the Reserve-Era. Winter remained a time of relative inactivity and isolation, with families emerging out of river valleys onto the prairie to sow crops in their fields in spring, and summer brought people together for ceremonial practices. Such bi-annual moves also worked well for ranching, a vocation that has two seasonal rounds: the highly mobile spring round-up lasting six to eight weeks, and a less-intensive autumn round-up (Potyondi 1992: 74). Agricultural production outcomes remained just as uncertain as large-scale bison hunting, due to the dual influences of weather and government insistence of forcing agriculture in a region inherently incapable of delivering reliable harvests.

The assemblage consisted entirely of historic era artifacts: shattered glass and broken animal bones dominate the assemblage. Most of the glass represent window panes, a common find on historic sites, though some glass pieces indicate the remains of vessels, such as soda bottles. The majority of the faunal assemblage is attributable to cattle, an animal the Piikani had been encouraged to adopt by the government once bison were no longer reliable as a subsistence source. Broken pieces of plastic toys indicate children lived at the site, and printed ceramics suggest at least some Piikani were emulating the tastes of their non-Blackfoot neighbours, and perhaps sending social signals. While cattle were part of the new Blackfoot subsistence strategy which arose in the late 19th-century, tentative evidence suggests some ethnographically-documented practices, such as boiling bones to extract their grease, continued.

CHAPTER 6: USE OF DOMESTIC SPACE WITHIN THE YELLOW HORN CABIN

In the late 1950s, sociologist Evon Z. Vogt, in his survey of Aboriginal acculturation in the United States, observed " ...it has been startling to many of us to observe how completely the inventories of material culture in Indian households are composed of items derived from white American culture...and, yet, how relatively slow the rate of change is in social organization in the same community" (Vogt 1957: 138, cited in Cusick 1998: 128). Certainly, my discussion of the archaeological assemblage in Chapter 5 indicates the occupants of DjPk-149 had adopted and incorporated Euro-Canadian material culture into their daily lives. As I will discuss in this chapter, Vogt's statement about the relative lack of social assimilation may have applied at the Yellow Horn site.

In this chapter, I examine social use of space within the cabin, as informed by the memories of two people who lived there as children. I then draw upon housing examples from other cultures in the region, demonstrating the pattern seen at the Yellow Horn's home was unique to the Piikani. Despite adopting new vernacular architecture, the use of space within the homes may have been influenced by domestic patterns extant within a tipi.

Inside a Piikani Home

The family cabin was the nucleus of both Piikani life and my study. No excavation was done inside the foundation. Such work would have required

destroying what remains of the structure. As the floor-boards were nailed to the joists, a metal detector scan was inconclusive. Eye-witness accounts, however, help fill in the details of occupant interaction areas.

From interviews with Romeo and Joe Yellowhorn, I reconstructed how the space inside the cabin was arranged. Figure 31 depicts the internal configuration of the Yellow Horn homestead, as recalled by both Romeo and Joe Yellow Horn (compare with Figure 32). Both men sketched the interior of the cabin for me in 2007. They did so separately, on different days. In 2009, Romeo again sketched the interior for me. Each of these three diagrams varied only in minor details, such as the position and number of steamer trunks along the east and west walls, number of chairs, and the existence of a second window on the south face. My reproduction below essentially conflates the three sketches. While the exterior walls of my diagram are proportionate to each other based on the foundation measurements and represent approximately 38-square metres (~407 ft^2), there was no way for me to provide internal dimensions (e.g., the precise dimensions of the table and its position to the walls). Figure 31 is only representative of the internal arrangement of the cabin, which remained consistent until the home was abandoned in 1953.

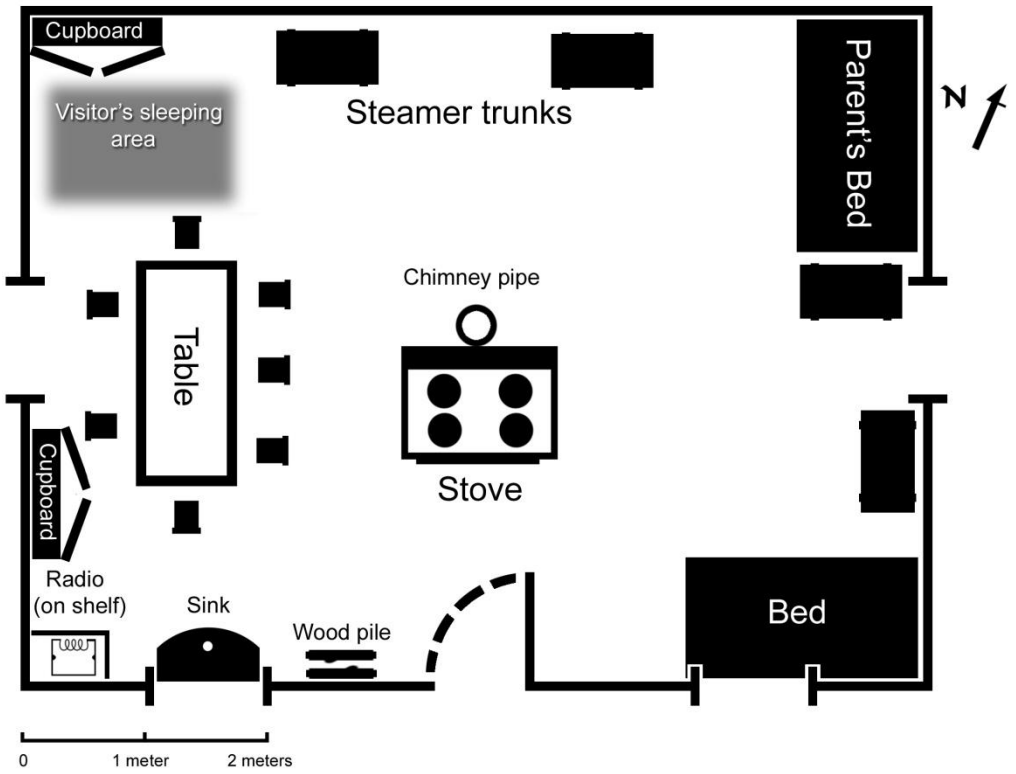


Figure 31. Internal arrangement of the Yellow Horn homestead, based on interviews with Romeo and Joe Yellowhorn. As discussed in the previous paragraph, the scale is for the external walls only.

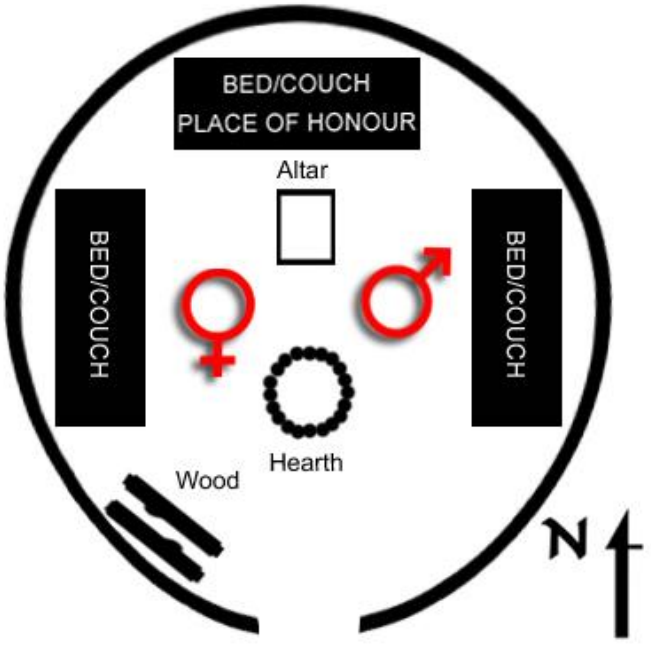


Figure 32. The generalized diagram on the internal arrangement of a Blackfoot tipi presented in Chapter 2. As discussed below, the orientation of this tipi, with the door facing to the south, was preferred in the winter. Diagram by author.

When discussing early reserve housing, all Blackfoot informants told me their houses were built with the front facing south, to maximize the amount of light entering the house. Winter tipis were often constructed to the same orientation: winter winds typically blow in from the north, and the warm Chinook winds arrive from the south (Oetelaar 2000:46-47). This suggests there were two windows on the south side of the Yellow Horn homestead, a point Joe, who claimed there were two windows, and Romeo, who insisted there was only one, disagreed on. Nothing in the RG 10 files examined detailed anything regarding reserve housing prior to the early 20th-century: there are no construction

blueprints, sketches, or discussions[58]. Companies such as WiseHeat, which produce reproductions of early 20th- century iron woodstoves, rate their products as being able to heat 92-185 metres^2 (WiseHeat.com 2011; WiseHeat.com 2011a), meaning the single stove provided more than enough heat for the Yellowhorn's home. No windows interrupted the length of the north wall, a design likely intended to limit heat loss through their panes during the winter.

Some aspects of space use within the cabin parallel that of ethnographic descriptions of a tipi, even though the shape of the dwelling was radically different. The cooking range replaced the hearth at the center of the dwelling, aligned so it faced the door. The One-Owl house (Figure 33), also on the Piikani reserve, likewise had a centrally placed chimney hole, and my informants indicated a centrally-placed stove was typical of Blackfoot cabins. This may indicate a continuation of ethnographic patterns, since non-Blackfoot sites in the region seem to indicate a different pattern (see below). On IR No. 147B, however, there is a standing cabin which belonged to Sam Yellowface. Built in the early 1940s as a year-round home for himself, his wife, and their three children, its stove was in the southwest corner (Figure 34).

[58] The RG 10 files for the Siksika Agency, however, does have diagrams of frame houses designed by the British Columbia Mills Timber and Trading Company dating to 1905 (IAC, Ottawa, RG 10, vol. 3983, file # 163,163: 1905).

Figure 33. Inside the One-Owl cabin, looking at the chimney hole. Photo by author.

Figure 34. Sam Yellowface's cabin, looking east-northeast. The stove is near the front door, on what would be the "female" side of a tipi, and was the location of the kitchen at the Yellow Horn homestead. Photo courtesy of Kristina Hannis.

Both Joe and Romeo were certain that their father, Thomas, owned ceremonial regalia, which he stored in steam trunks (also called “steamers” or “flat-tops”) along the north wall their house, behind the stove and opposite the door. In a tipi, regalia were stored behind the hearth, opposite the door. The stove and the door may have been key points in Blackfoot homes because of the way they had arranged their tipis from time immemorial. Once those two points were fixed in space, all social activity within the dwelling occurred in relation to them. Such notions of space would only work within cabins or homesteads lacking internal partitions. Once frame-housing was adopted, its multi-room nature requires a further adoption of European notions of domestic space with a concomitant erosion of Blackfoot ones. The occupants of the Yellow Horn homestead, however, were socialized to express their Blackfoot aesthetic when organizing their home. An issue with this interpretation, however, is that the homestead was not built by the Yellow Horns, but by the Bastien’s: the central location of the stove may simply reflect that fact that the chimney hole was already extant, assuming that Thomas Yellowhorn did not have to replace the roof prior to moving his family into the homestead.

Other features than the stove and regalia-storage locations suggest continuity from tipi life. Going clockwise from the door, the homestead’s firewood was to the immediate left of the door, and the kitchen was to the left of the woodpile. This mirrored tipi life: firewood was piled to the left of the door, and the area to the left of it doubled as the public space and woman’s side, and was where food preparation occurred. The ethnographic data presented in chapter 2

demonstrated that cooking was the responsibility of Blackfoot women. Victorian gender roles likewise placed a wife "in the kitchen"; hence, despite attempts to socialize Indians to Euro-Canadian gender roles, this aspect featured continuity, rather than a new mode of house-keeping. The placement of the kitchen within the homestead manifests the Blackfoot template of women's work and its spatial anchor.

Other ethnographic spatial patterns differ from the Yellow Horn homestead. As discussed in Chapter 2, husband and wife slept on the south side[59] of a tipi (left of the door) with their younger children, while elder of the brood slept on the north side, which is where guests also slept. Yet within the Yellow Horn homestead, the parents slept on the north (right of the door), while the children largely slept on the south. Visitors also slept on the north side, opposite the door and behind the stove. In a tipi, the region behind the hearth opposite the door was "private" and "secular" space: most visitors would usually sleep by the door, the "public" and "profane" part of the tipi (Oetelaar 2000: 40).

To assess if there are elements of Blackfoot ethnographic traits at the Yellow Horn site, other historic sites of the same approximate age in southern Alberta must be examined. I had planned to access data from the Alberta Archaeological Survey, as they have a wealth of "grey literature" on historic sites in southwestern Alberta. Unfortunately, for various logistical and financial reasons, I was unable to go to Edmonton and peruse their reports, and no one at the Archaeological Survey—which is dealing with budgetary cuts—was able to

[59] Assuming a west-facing tipi.

help me over the phone or via email, or even responded to the applications I submitted. As such, I have only a limited amount of comparative data to draw upon.

The North-West Mounted Police Barracks

The town of Fort Macleod is approximately 30 kilometres northeast of Brocket, and was home to the North-West Mounted Police barracks. The barracks predate the founding of the Piikani reserve by only six years, and have been preserved and transformed into a museum. Not all the cabins belonged to the NWMP; some were the homes of private citizens, meaning a cross-section of both paramilitary and non-military homes was available for study. I visited the barracks in 2007 and examined the cabins. The exterior construction utilized nailed, dovetailed corners, just as the One-Owl cabin did. Door locations were variable. Stoves were located along the exterior walls, and most cabins did not have internal partitioning[60].

At my colloquium, one professor asked if the centrally-located stove in the One-Owl home was simply a logical location for a heat source, pointing out a centrally-located stove would be the most efficient way to warm a house. After receiving the question, I was glad I had taken the time to examine the NWMP post. The relevance of the barracks and private homes to my research are as comparisons. They were built slightly earlier than the first wood housing on the reserve, and were only a short distance away from it. The buildings thus are of

[60] The home of Sir Fredrick Haultain did have a partial partition. Sir Haultain was a lawyer who ran his business out of his home, and his office was on one side of the partition.

essentially contemporary age, and located in the same region, as the earliest Blackfoot cabins. The barracks and homes at Fort Macleod, however, were built by members of a different culture. While on the outside, the cabins at the North-West Mounted Police barracks used the same construction techniques seen on the Piikani reserve, their insides differed in terms of stove location and layout.

Métis Households

Having briefly examined Euro-Canadian layouts in terms of stove location, we must also examine other Aboriginal homes from the 19th-century. Unfortunately, few such examinations have been undertaken. An exception is in the Buffalo Lake region, approximately half way between Calgary and Edmonton. While much farther from the reserve than Fort Macleod is, the region is within the northern range of Blackfoot territory ca.1850. Site FdPe-1 is a historic Métis occupation. Five cabins were excavated here from the mid 1970s to early 1980s, and date to approximately 1872-1878 (Doll 1993). The cabins averaged 7.2 x 5.3 metres, similar in size to the Yellow Horns' cabin (7.2 x 5.4 metres). Researchers found evidence of only hard-packed clays floors, despite historical references to wood flooring in Métis cabins at Tail Creek, St. Albert, Cypress Hills, and Batoche. All cabins were heated by fireplaces located in the center of the south, north, or west walls. Fireplace hearths were typically constructed of granitic cobbles. Associated structures, such as barns, sheds, or outhouses, have not been found. The assemblages at Buffalo Lake were "generally homogenous, suggesting cultural contemporaneity, and…comparable to the assemblages from other historic sites which date to the mid-1870s" (Doll 1993: 52). Few iron nails

were found, indicating a construction technique that minimized the use of nails (Doll 1993).

Some of the nails recovered from DjPk-149 are large enough to have been used to nail dove-tailed corners on a cabin, and the curvature on some of them suggests they were removed from such construction (see Figure 37 in Appendix A). Dove-tailing is a construction method that does not require nails, though the historic cabins at Fort Macleod in Alberta are dove-tailed and nailed (see Figure 8). The lack of nails at Métis sites may be related to their distance from supply posts or the railway, as well as their expense. Nails would be heavy to transport to remote cabin sites and are not a functional requirement for dove-tailed construction. The Piikani had a railway running through their reserve, and the towns of Pincher Creek and Fort Macleod were in close proximity, meaning nails would have been easily obtainable.

Discussion

Certain spatial elements link the Yellow Horn homestead to ethnographic descriptions of Blackfoot culture, even though the house form—a rectangular, robust, permanent dwelling—represents a radical departure from the circular, gracile, ephemeral tipi that required annual replacement. Oral history interviews fill in the gaps both in the archival records are recovered archaeological data.

Access to informant memories allowed me to move beyond the information provided by the artifacts and document the layout inside the cabin. Both continuity with, and changes from, pre-reserve life are implicated. The stove

remained at the center of the cabin, perhaps emulating tipi life, whereas non-Blackfoot cabins from the same era in Alberta had stoves located along the exterior walls. The Yellow Horn's stored their ceremonial opposite the door and behind the stove; wood was stacked to the left of the door; the kitchen was to the left of the woodpile. These aspects all represent continuity from the pre-Reserve-Era, suggesting persistence in the layout of space within the house, despite acculturative pressures the government and missionaries of the 19th- and 20th-centuries exerted upon the Blackfoot. The location of the beds within the cabin, as well as the visitor's sleeping area, represent changes from the ethnographically-documented residential pattern. My informants could provide no insight into these departures from the pre-reserve tipi pattern. Indian Affairs documents, as well as journals from priests I consulted (e.g., Doucet) are, as mentioned earlier, silent on this point. Archaeological methods would not detect such spatial divisions in floor-boards. These differences could be explored by future researchers.

Additional research is needed to examine if the use of domestic space documented at DjPk-149 represents a continuation of tipi life made permissible by a single-room house, or idiosyncratic choices of the Yellow Horns as they took over a cabin built by an older generation of Piikani and made it their home. Piikani cabins represent a transitionary period as they gradually moved from the tipis their elders inhabited year-round to multi-room frame houses their children would later reside in. Tipis taught and reinforced Blackfoot norms regarding public/private/profane/secular beliefs, whereas multi-room houses eroded the

ability of elders to use their architecture to codify messages about worldview. Future work exploring these themes needs to be done that draws upon the remembrances of the elder generation of Piikani, but it needs to be done before the few dozen remaining Piikani old enough to recall the 1930s pass on.

CHAPTER 7: THE *SHATTERED GLASS* FINALE: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE INTEGRATION OF ARCHIVES, ORAL HISTORIES, AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF THE PIIKANI RESERVE

In Chapter 1, I noted that few researchers have examined what elements of reserve "Indian" culture persisted or were discarded, what new elements they chose and what was chosen for them, during the Reserve-Era. I have proposed answers to these questions for the Piikani using a combination of largely unpublished archival documents, interviews, and an archaeological investigation of a cabin site. I have documented both the continuity with the pre-reserve Piikani culture and change in the colonial Reserve-Era within the Piikani homeland. I examined official policies that brought change to the Piikani, and interpreted the available data about domestic spaces to ascertain some of the transformations occurring on Piikani Indian Reserve No. 147 after 1880.

The contents of this chapter primarily serve to summarize and synthesize the concepts explored thus far. For those embarking on similar research, this chapter begins with a discussion of some of the contradictions and confirmations encountered through the various datasets used in this research. I then move on to discussion of Piikani settlements and the material culture unearthed at DjPk-149. Finally, I describe some of the steps I would have liked to taken and

recommend research possibilities that could emerge from this work in the section on “Future Research”.

Contradictions and Confirmations

The combination of documentary sources, interviews, and archaeological information provided information within this study which would have been undetected through the use of only one or two of the above datasets. The synthesis of these different sources of information also revealed contradictions. Prior to commencing excavations at the Yellow Horn site, I had not explicitly considered that such contradictions would occur, though I was implicitly expecting them.

Some of the contradictions are potentially informative. For instance, in Chapter 4, I noted that government records typically refer to the quality of cabins in positive terms. Interviews conducted with Piikani elders in the 1960s and 1970s spoke of these same houses in much less glowing terms, pointing out that some buildings lacked glass panes to fill window frames, despite cabins being used primarily as winter homes. I did not attempt to explain the contractions between the various sources. I believe these contradictions are important to document, and may serve to inspire future research questions.

Not all of the datasets I used produced contradictory information. Archival data and interviews concurred that Sun Dancing continued, despite increasingly coercive governmental actions codified in the *Indian Act*. The fact that many Piikani ignored the pass-system imposed after the North-West

Rebellion is likewise recalled. Acculturation, assumed in the government records, is apparent today, with the most obvious example being that English has replaced Blackfoot as the daily language on the reserve.

Piikani Settlements in the Reserve-Era

If the material culture record had been my only guide, I could make no distinctions between this site and any number of homes attributed to Euro-Canadian settlers. Fortunately, my data include archival documents and oral history interviews that contribute details not revealed by archaeological methods. Likewise, the archaeological records are able to reveal details that are not apparent through other sources. While Piikani domestic spaces came to resemble their White neighbours' homesteads, the Blackfoot custom of living in the round tempered their use. The rectangular nature of their new homes mirrored the function of the reserve post-1885, literally boxing in people accustomed to unfettered mobility. Within the confines of their new life, however, some customs persisted that influenced the internal geography of the household.

Piikani cognitive geography oriented their settlement patterns toward places where they pitched winter camps in the pre-Reserve-Era. Cabins replaced tipis in sheltered valleys with easy access to fuel, food, and water. Initially, Piikani built their new wooden home close to neighbouring dwellings, emulating tipi placement in camps. Over time and at the insistence of doctors and Indian Agents, this practice ceased, for health reasons. Transitioning from tipi to cabin also meant reorienting domestic geography from circles to squares. Some Blackfoot took to settled life in permanent houses wholesale, and Indian Agents

considered such individuals “progressive.” These Piikani lived in cabins year-round even in the 1880s, though such individuals were in the minority.

For most people, the seasonal round continued, albeit much reduced to two seasonal moves and associated with an agrarian lifestyle. Families lived in cabins in the winter, and tipis or tents located on the prairie near their fields became the summer home. Such biannual moves became less common ca. 1930, when people opted to live fulltime in their cabins or frame houses, making daily trips to their fields. This shift may be related to population consolidation around Brocket, which began earlier in the 20th-century. It may also represent a generational change. Piikani who were adults prior to the decimation of the bison herds and establishment of the reserves may have been less likely to embrace fully a foreign style of living than those born a generation after the Piikani reserve was established and who were socialized to cabin life.

Just as the Piikani’s former spatial template influenced their settlement patterns upon the reserve, it also impelled them to emulate the living arrangement within a tipi. Ethnographic texts are not fine-grained enough to allow detailed examination of variations within tipi life that may have occurred due to the wealth and status of individual families, but some patterns are clear. In both the Yellow Horn and One-Owl homes, the cabin stove replaced the tipi hearth and remained in the centre of the residence, whereas other cultures, such as the Métis within Alberta’s borders, and Canadians who living in the NWMP barracks of Fort Macleod, placed their stoves along an exterior wall. Behind the stove and opposite the only entrance, Yellow Horn stored his ceremonial regalia, precisely

where such ritual objects would be located in a tipi. The area left of the cabin door was where women held sway, and where they entertained guests, replicating the tipi pattern documented in ethnographies. Right of the threshold was the place identified with the man of the tipi, and the house. Such spatial utilization is only possible in houses without internal partitions. As discussed in Chapter 4, once the Piikani adopted multi-room homes, the Blackfoot aesthetic socialized from tipi life proved incompatible with the compartmental design of this type of Western housing.

According to my informants, the summer tent area at the Yellow Horn site functioned as a refuge, to escape the seasonal flooding of the Oldman River, and not out of a desire to emulate pre-reserve ethnographic patterns. Due to the cyclical flooding of the Oldman River, nobody builds in the valley today. The settlement pattern documented in Chapter 4 is as much an artifact as the few cabins still standing from that era. Historic maps and sketches indicate the river valley was the central place for the reserve community when the practice of a summer and winter move was common, whereas today, the main village and homes are above the valley, on the prairie itself.

Built a century ago, the cabin documented in Chapter 5 was home to occupants who consumed Western material culture. Its residents ate off printed ceramics dishes, rather than inexpensive tin plates. They purchased consumables in glass containers they obtained in nearby towns, owned eye-catching glass vessels and wore Western clothing, some with ornate buttons. They owned battery powered devices and tuned into the radio. Their children

played with plastic toys, perhaps bought out of store catalogues. Like their counterparts in Canadian society, the occupants here cared for livestock, yet ate both domesticated and country foods.

The influence of Canadian society asserted itself in spite of contradictory governmental policy objectives. For example, the government desired to integrate Indians into Canadian society, then sequestered them on reserves away from urban centres. Officially, the government wanted to replace the bison economy with farming, yet removed the necessary financial support and introduced legislation to prevent the idealized agrarian lifestyle from ever being a viable option. The cabin site I examined is an archaeological signature of such policies. Without knowing the site history I have presented, there was nothing to distinguish DjPk-149 from other settlements. The narrative produced from the combination of historic, oral, and archaeological data reveals something of how one family adapted to changing social conditions and were incorporating their "Indianness" into a Euro-Canadian lifestyle. Once entrenched, Piikani households became microcosms of change in Blackfoot culture during the Reserve-Era. .

Material Culture

Surfacially, the Yellow Horn assemblage appears to be no different than settler assemblages from the region: the artifact assemblage consists of mass-produced items that were manufactured in different provinces and countries. Shattered glass and broken bones of domestic species dominate the assemblage, construction detritus such as nails, tacks, screws, bolts, and fencing staples are present; ceramic tableware and metal cutlery at hand. The

assemblage demonstrates its Piikani creators had adopted a wide range of Euro-Canadian technology.

Most of my description of the artifacts focuses on the manufacturing history and possible usage of the goods prior to their deposition in the archaeological record. As one of my objectives was to document what a Piikani domestic assemblage looked like in the Reserve-Era, this was entirely appropriate. However, I cannot say much from the case study I have presented about what the goods might have meant. Such interpretations must wait until a larger sample of reserve-era sites are excavated and analyzed. Triangulating all lines of evidence, however, suggest the recovered consumer goods were used by the Yellow Horns within a creolized Piikani social schema, and as such represent “Indian” artifacts.

My analysis of the Yellow Horn assemblage was primarily descriptive and chronological. In this regard, my thesis differs little from most historical archaeology methodology on the prairies (Klimko 2004: 166-169). A descriptive and chronological focus, coupled with site identification, has been extant since historic archaeology emerged in Canada during the 1960s (Klimko 2004: 164-169). Primarily, this is because most historical assemblages are poorly known: the details of most are sequestered away in so-called grey literature, mainly in reports that languish, largely inaccessible, in provincial and federal archives, if they are filed at all (Klimko 2004: 165, 171). Without easy access to these reports, site-to-site comparisons are impossible, forcing each researcher to answer basic historical questions that may have already been asked and

answered by others. A regional synthesis of historical sites on the prairies is badly needed.

I have attempted to move beyond simple chronology and description, though both are important aspects to my thesis and archaeological work in general. As historical archaeology on the prairies has typically been done by provincial and federal archaeologists with the twin goals of reconstructing the past for tourism—i.e., economic reasons—and for creating a Canadian national identity, the history presented is light on critical analysis and interpretation. Furthermore, the history is usually sanitized and written for Caucasian, middle-class consumers of cultural products, the intended audience for such reconstructions (Klimko 2004: 170). Public consumption partially perpetuates the myth of the degenerate Indian, usually depicted as a colourful backdrop to the main event: the heroic narrative of Euro-Canadian expansion into the former Rupert's Land after 1870 (Klimko 2004: 172-173). I have demonstrated that Piikani history was far messier and convoluted than the simplistic accounts most Canadians accept. Judging by the artifacts recovered, some Piikani were making space for Canadian material culture of the time and were including it in their cultural repertoire, yet their adoption of such goods did not erode previously-held beliefs.

Future Research

There are several steps I would have liked to taken during this research, but due to limits on time and resources, was unable to. The first of these was discussed in Chapter 5, when I mentioned wanting to excavate other Piikani

cabin sites built between 1880 and 1960. Excavating sites to which there remains a living connection which affords me the ability to interview people, as in the Yellow Horn “phase” at DjPk-149, would be ideal. The cabins built in the few decades of the reserve’s existence, however, do not permit such interviews. Their builders and residents have long been buried, though of course this does not remotely prevent the archaeological exploration of these old homes. Given the age of the Piikani who grew up in cabins in the early 20th-century, however, means we could shortly lose the first-hand knowledge of how cabin space was utilized. Thus, I would give priority to examining cabin sites that belonged to people still alive.

A more systematic archaeological exploration of DjPk-149 is warranted. The area on all sides of the cabin should be explored. If, as Romeo and Joe stated, there was little activity on the north side of the cabin, we should expect to find few deposits. The privies should also be targeted.

A study incorporating the differential experience of genders in culture contact situations would be interesting. My study has a male bias, as both my informants were men. If possible, future studies should ensure a more representative sample of genders, to recall memories of the Reserve-Era and examine though documentary and archaeological methods if such remembrances are influenced by gender and gender roles. In order for such a study to be holistic for the Blackfoot experience, would need to examine all genders, including Manly-Hearted Women.

Finally….

Historical archaeology possesses great explanatory potential. Its use of multiple lines of evidence has the promise to produce a more inclusive understanding of the past. My prototypical study of the Piikani experience during the Reserve-Era has permitted multiple voices to be heard, though it is short on explanation. This is expected of a study that has no body of directly relevant research to draw upon. The exploratory-descriptive work presented here enables other researchers to begin asking further questions of the Piikani experience post-1880. It is obvious that the approach I have used is not only applicable to the Piikani. The questions I have asked, the methods I employed, are transferable to any reserve in Canada, or similar colonial landscapes internationally.

As I discussed in Chapter 1, White North Americans seem fascinated with the various Indian heritages on this continent. Studying reserves and the sometimes forced, sometimes negotiated changes and continuities their inhabitants struggled with in these colonial landscapes may not inspire public imagination the way “cowboys and Indians” do. Speaking as an Indian, however, examining those changes, and learning from people like Joe and Romeo, who found a balance between the Canadian and Piikani worlds, is far more stimulating that archetypal Hollywood entertainment. Real life is always more interesting than invented tales. The possibilities of exploring and documenting largely unknown chapters of Piikani, Siksika, Kainai—or even my community of Henvey Inlet—engagements with the colonial system and the resultant creation,

discard, maintenance, and adoption, of cultural traits are both exciting and quite likely anthropologically informative. Since we Indians are popular in fictional media representations, we owe it to ourselves and our communities to write factual representations of our ways of adapting to, and engaging with, Euro-Canadian society since the 19th-century. Being able to pass on to our future generations some of the successes and failures of our ancestors, and the reasons for either, within the reserve systems, would be a wonderful legacy.

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APPENDIX A: THE ASSEMBLAGE FROM DJPK-149

This appendix presents a detailed description and examination of the artifacts unearthed at the Yellow Horn site not covered in Chapter 5. As per the research agreement with the Piikani band council, all artifacts had to be re-buried at the site. As reburial of artifacts precludes the possibility of future examination, I have recorded many details not relevant to my research in case future researchers need more data on the assemblage from DjPk-149. I start by discussing the reasons for excluding the artifacts recovered from Unit 1 from consideration. I then present information on flat glass, followed by bottle and vessel glass, recovered. Additional information on faunal remains are detailed, and brief discussions of nails and “miscellaneous” artifacts round out the chapter.

Unit 1

I have excluded the artifacts from Unit 1 analysis. Three sherds of blue-clear, and one sherd clear, window glass, were recovered during screening, as well as one sherd of blue glass. I did not excavate down very far into this unit—when I hit the hardpan, I unquestioningly accepted that I had hit the old river bottom. It was not until I began Unit 2 that it occurred to me that the hardpan may have represented the occupational surface near the terminal phase of the site’s occupation. For reasons I still cannot recall, I did not track the depth of the screen material accurately enough in this unit to say approximately how deeply

buried the artifacts were. As such, I felt it best to exclude all four artifacts for reasons of intra-site representation and variation.

Flat Glass

There is reluctance among many historical archaeologists to devote time to the analysis and description of flat glass (Cohen 1992: ii; Moir 1982: 73). Many archaeologists simply weigh and then bag the pieces (Cohen 1992: 54). Working under the assumption that the analysis of flat glass will generate little—if any—information, its destination is occasionally the trash bin, since space is always at a premium for the storage of archaeological materials (Cohen 1992: 54). Yet window pane glass—a type of flat glass—is an artifact type that can indicate the approximate age of a historic structure.

Confusing window pane fragments and other types of flat glass, such as picture or lantern glass, is a hazard if there is no control over context and glass thickness, the two best characteristics for improving the reliability of interpreting glass function. Between them, context is most important, because pane glass typically falls immediately around architectural remains and its quantities “drop off” farther away from the structure (Moir 1982: 2, 8). Moir (1982: 5) also concluded glass thicker than 3.3 mm was not window pane glass. As I had controls over context in-place during my excavations, I decided to analyze the flat glass assemblage, to see if such analysis presented any useful information to me.

I rinsed the pieces in water to remove soil, and then air dried them prior to analysis. Thickness was measured with a dial caliper, to the nearest tenth of a millimetre. The fragments were examined for colour, thickness, surface condition (scratches, bubbles, patina), as well as for evidence of lithic flaking. Hayden and Nelson (1981) documented chipped glass tools being produced by contemporary Maya. The ethnohistoric data for the Blackfoot indicate lithic technology was quickly abandoned once metal tools were available in the fur trade era (e.g., Brink 2008: 249-50; Ewers 1971: 122). One would not expect to find significant evidence of lithic technology among the Blackfoot post-1830. Yet excavations during the 1990s in the Oldman river valley revealed a number of sites dating to approximately the 1840s with metal and glass tools, including three sites that produced 80 lithic tools (Van Dyke *et al*. 1991).

Flat glass pieces recovered from the Yellow Horn site generally conform to Moir's (1982) pattern, and have thus been interpreted as window pane glass. Three hundred and eleven glass pieces (185 g) initially interpreted as window glass were recovered from all seven excavation units. Once Moirs' criterion that pane glass is thinner than 3.3mm was applied, three pieces recovered from Unit 1 totalling 11.3 g were rejected as too thick to be pane glass (artifact Nos. YH0001-0003). A fourth flat glass piece (YH0004) from Unit 1 was later excluded from analysis, for reasons discussed above. Of the remaining 307 flat glass pieces, 194 (63 %) were recovered from Unit 2, the unit closest to the cabin foundation (its eastern edge was 50 cm, and southern edge was 12.5 cm, from the southwestern corner of the foundation). A pattern of fewer pane sherds

being recovered the farther we moved away from the cabin existed, as Moir (1982: 2, 8) predicted (see Table 6 and Figure 35).

Unit	Distance from datum (m)	No. of sherds	Weight of sherds (g)	Percentage (rounded)
2	7.7 east	194	100.4	63
3	2.5 south-west	67	57.3	22
4	13.7 south-west	26	10.6	8
5	18.0 south-east	3	0.6	1
6	10.0 east	3	1.4	1
7	13.7 south-west	14	8.1	5

Table 6. Recovered window pane sherds by unit and distance.

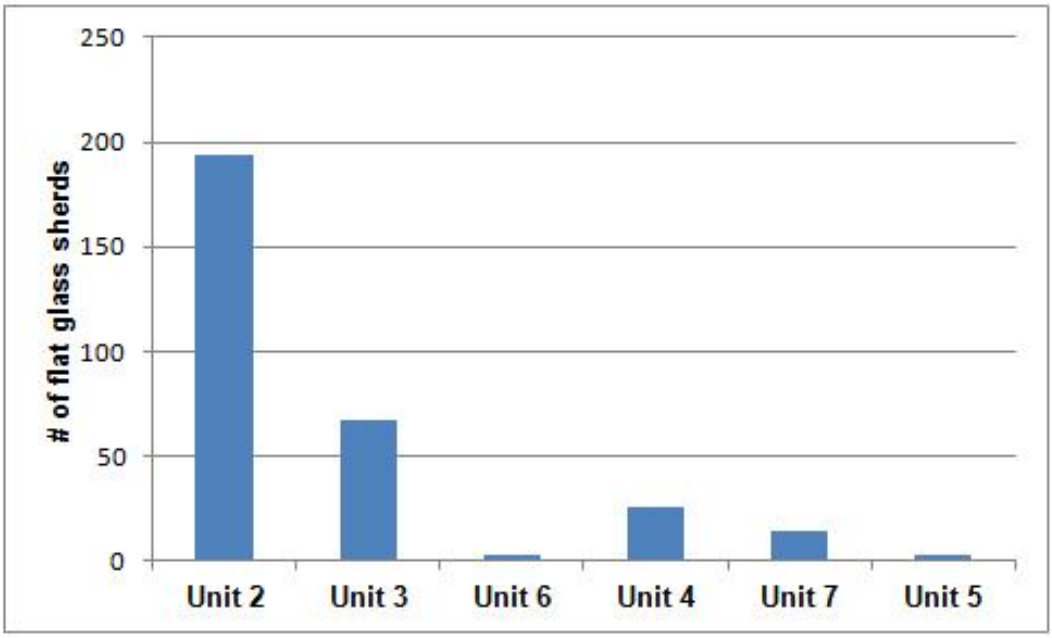

Figure 35. Flat glass quantities per excavation unit, arranged by proximity to the foundation.

There are two types of window glass in the assemblage: clear glass, and glass that has a light blue tint. The tint is incorporated into the glass, not a film, indicating it is the result of chemicals deliberately added during the manufacturing process. Tinted window glass is used to both absorb and block heat, as well as to reduce the amount ultraviolet light that passes through. Both sodium sulphate and cobalt impart a blue tint to glass, and were used historically in window glass manufacture (Cohen 1992: 7). The clear type accounted for 53% (n=162) of the window glass, and the blue tint 47% (n=145).

The thickness of each type of glass was different: the clear glass averaged 2.25 mm, while the blue tinted averaged 3 mm (n=154 and 141, respectively, the difference being the result of 12 glass sherds being too small to

accurately measure). The modal thickness, which is perhaps more instructive, are 2.2 mm for clear glass, and 2.0 mm for blue tinted. Seventy-five percent (n=109) of the tinted glass was recovered from Unit 2. If Moir's (1982) pattern can be applied to southwestern Alberta, then the clear glass would have been manufactured between 1900 and 1910, and the blue tinted between 1880 and 1890, on the basis of thickness alone. The thickness of the clear glass recovered at DjPk-149 thus correlates well with a construction date of ca. 1911, but the blue tinted glass does not. I was unable to locate any sources that state the age range for the manufacture of this colour of window glass. A database for window glass in southwestern Alberta akin to Moir's work would be useful.

In the 19th-century, Canada produced very little window glass. Large-scale domestic production ended ca. 1857, and by 1883, no companies were producing window glass (Pacey 1981: 38-39, 42). Window glass was imported primarily from Europe into the 1940s (Pacey 1981). Little information is available on regional distribution of window glass types, maximum pane thickness by company and era, or even degree and tone of colouration (Pacey 1981: 44-5). As a result, the window glass at the Yellow Horn site cannot be used as a good indicator of age, unless we accept that it came from the United States, where Moir (1982) did his study of American pane thickness through the 19th and early 20th centuries. No glass houses were operating in Alberta until the mid-20th century (King 1987: 123-125), so it is likely the entire glass assemblage, including bottles (see below), was imported.

If regional glass chronologies become available for southwestern Alberta, it may be possible to use window glass as a chronological indicator for historic sites where oral and/or written records do not exist, and key artifacts such as Robertson screws are not recovered, to inform interpretations about when the building was constructed. Since such chronologies either do not exist, or are buried in grey literature, the window glass assemblage from the Yellow Horn site tells us little that can be used to date the occupation of the site. At least two types of glass were used, which generally indicates a long-term occupation (Weiland 2009: 38). Given that window glass became thicker over time, the blue-tinted glass likely indicates a later replacement of a broken window pane, possibly of the window in the south-west corner of the cabin. The pattern of glass quantities reducing across the site the farther one moves away from the foundation indicates the panes were broken roughly *in situ*, some of which is likely a result of the cabin being torn down.

Bottle and Vessel Glass

Thirty-seven clear glass pieces were also recovered from Unit 3, likely representing a single bottle with “soft-square” corners and an ovoid cross-section. It too was a screw-top bottle, machine produced, and unlike the other vessels represented, had markings. One sherd (YH0333) had the numerals “1,” “2”, and “3” embossed, with a “full” line below each number. Two lines half the length o the “full” lines are also embossed; their position indicates they represent values of “1.5” and “2.5.” YH0337 represents part of the root of the bottle neck, and the entire neck and bore of the bottle. It possesses a continuous thread

finish for a screw-on cap. The bore has an outside diameter of 21 mm, and an inside diameter of 12 mm. The base, artifact YH0336 (Figure 36) has embossed lettering within the push up: a "C" inside an inverted triangle, below which reads "1404", below which is "1", immediately followed by a vertical bar. The “C” inside a triangle was the trademark of the Consumers Glass Company, from its incorporation in 1917 until 1962, when they changed it to an upright triangle with rounded corners, and the two sets of numbers represent the mould number (King 1987: 247). The Consumer Glass Company was located in Ville St. Pierre, Québec. The company exists today as Consumers Packaging. In 1962, when Consumer Glass changed their trademark, they also added embossed information on each bottle to identify the day and the plant which produced it. YH0336 does not possess this information. However, the embossed 1404 represents the mould number, and indicates the bottle was produced prior to 1945 (King 1987: 249). While its original contents and function remain unknown, the shape suggests a medicinal or toiletry (e.g., shampoo) bottle (Chopping 1978:317-327).

Figure 36. Dorsal view of YH0336. Photo by author.

Unit 5 produced 35 pieces of glass with a slight blue tint. Twenty-six of these possessed a pearlescent coating, which was so deteriorated it flaked off during excavation and recovery. These 26 pieces were not cleaned to prevent further deterioration, but the coating was so fragmentary that no good photographs could be taken of it. The coating seemed to deteriorate via what appears to be crystallization into thin flakes, tentatively suggesting it may have consisted of mica, a mineral used in making pearlescent coatings. Pearlescent coating are eye catching, and as such the vessel was likely decorative as well as utilitarian.

Faunal Remains: Bones

Weathering and burn stages were recorded based on the works of Behrensmyer (1978) and Stiner *et al*. (1995), respectively. Behrensmyer lists five weathering categories. Her categories assumed one was able to meet all of her criteria of identification, one of which was that all pieces must be larger than one cm^2. As this was not possible with all the faunal remains, I added a sixth category (Table 7). Table 7 also presents the breakdown of weathered bone recovered from DjPk-149. Just six percent (n=24) of the faunal assemblage showed evidence of burning: 23 fragments from Unit 5, and one from Unit 6. Eight fragments each fell into burn codes 4-6 (see Table 8 for coding). The burnt fragments combined for a weight of less than four grams.

Weathering stage	**# of remains**
Stage 0	36
Stage1	57
Stage 2	12
Stage 3	4
Stage 4	0
Stage 5	0
Stage 6	253

Table 7. Weathered remains from DjPk-149.

Burn Code	Description
0	Not burned (cream/tan)
1	Slightly burned; localized and <half carbonized
2	Lightly burned; >half carbonized
3	Fully carbonized (completely black)
4	Localized <half calcined (more black than white)
5	>half calcined (more white than black)
6	Fully calcined (completely white)

Table 8. Burn codes, after Stiner et al. 1995.

Stage	Description
0	No cracking or flaking visible. Bone may still be greasy and marrow cavities may still have tissue, and soft tissues may be present on its surface.
1	Bone has cracking, usually parallel to the fibber structure of the bone. Mosaic cracking may be present on articular surfaces, and soft tissue may or may not be present.
2	Flaking present on outermost concentric thin layers of bone, usually associated with cracks. Long thin flakes with one or more sides still attached to the bone are common in the earliest part of Stage 2. Deeper, more extensive flaking is common in the latter portions of Stage 2, and continues until most of the outermost bone is gone. Crack edges are usually angular in cross-section, and remnants of soft tissue may still be present.
3	Bone surface is characterized by sections of rough, homogenously weathered compact bone, imparting a fibrous texture. Within these sections, the external, concentrically layered bone is gone. These rough sections will eventually cover the entire bone surface and will penetrate ~1.0-1.5mm. Bone fibres are still firmly attached, and crack edges are usually rounded in cross-section. Soft-tissue is rarely found.
4	The bone surface is coarsely fibrous with a rough texture, and splinters of bone will be loose and may fall off when the bone is moved. Weathering penetrates into the inner cavities and cracks are open with splintered or rounded edges.
5	Bone is falling apart *in situ*, with many splinters surrounding the main bone mass. Original bone shape may be difficult to determine. Cancellous bone is usually exposed (if present) and may outlast the former cortical bone which was once present.
6	Bone is too small or irregular to determine weathering stage.

Table 9. Weathering classification, modified from Behrensmyer (1978).

O'Connor (2000: 45) advocates describing bone by colour using Munsell codes. I chose not to do so, as the Munsell Soil Colour Charts were insufficient to this task. Additionally, since bone is a three-dimensional object, colouring often differs within osteological remains. I have thus only recorded

colouring as it relates to burning or rare (in terms of the entire faunal assemblage) patina.

The avian bone was recovered from Unit 3. No human or non-human animal modifications were present, nor was there evidence of burning. The bone had rootlet etching, and conformed to weathering stage zero.

Faunal Remains: Teeth

Table A1.5 lists the teeth recovered. The 20 moral fragments (*Attr. Bos)* were recovered from the same context, and are treated as representing a single tooth to avoid MNI inflation. I did not attempt to reconstruct to side, or determine which molar is represented.

Taxon	Element	Side	Notes
Bos taurus	2nd adult molar, lower	left	No root portion
Bos taurus	1st or 2nd adult incisor	left	Distal lingual edge worn
Bos taurus	2nd or 3rd adult incisor	left	Distal lingual edge worn
Bos taurus	1st or 2nd adult incisor	right	Distal lingual edge worn
Bos taurus	1st or 2nd adult incisor	right	Too broken to see lingual edge
Bos taurus	Deciduous incisor	right	Significant enamel wear
Attr. Bos	Molar	-	20 fragments

Table 10. Teeth recovered.

Nails

Sixty-one complete or partial nails were recovered. Wire-cut nails made up 69% (n=43) of the nail assemblage, with machine-cut nails comprising 23% (n=13) of the assemblage. Five nails were too fragmentary to ascribe to any manufacturing method. No nails were hand-wrought. Forty-four percent (n=27) of the nails were recovered from Unit 2; of these, 23 were wire-cut, and four were indeterminate. Wire-cut nails were found in every excavation unit, while the machine-cut nails were only found in Units 5 (n=12) and 7 (n=1). All of the wire-cut nails are smooth-shanked, non-spiral and non-fluted. Of the 43 wire-cut nails, only two were specialized: one (YH0561) was a shingle nail, the other (YH0611) was a tack. The remaining 41 wire-cut nails were general purpose exterior nails, as evidenced by their galvanized hot-dipped finish, resulting in good

preservation. Fifty nails were intact enough to determine how bent they were: 28 had no, or only a very slight, curve to their shanks, seven were curved, and 15 were bent. The curved and bent shanks represent used construction materials. Eleven of the 15 bent shank nails were recovered from Unit 5, and all of these were machine-cut nails. See Figure 37.

Figure 37. Metal artifacts from Unit 5. The two arrows point to the wire-cut nails; all other nails are machine-cut. The object in the lower mid-right is fencing staple. Photo by author.

The nail assemblage is not temporally sensitive enough to use as a dating technique. Hand-wrought nails are common on many colonial sites from

the 16th- to early 19th-centuries, when they were replaced by cheaper machine-cut, and later wire-cut varieties (Frurip *et al*. 1983: 2-3; Nelson 1968[61]). The lack of hand-wrought nails in the Yellow Horn assemblage is thus not surprising. Machine-cut nails made after ca.1830 are virtually indistinguishable from nails made in the late 1960s (Nelson 1968). Emerging in the mid-19th-century, wire-cut nails had less clinching power than machine or hand-wrought varieties, but were cheaper to produce and easier to handle: as a result, they were popular in North America by the 1880s (Nelson 1968; Rybczynski 2000: 69). The improved clenching power of machine-cut nails explains why 11 of the 14 machine cut nails with enough of a shank to examine shank curvature were bent: great force was required to remove them.

Wire-cut nails were less popular in rural areas than in urban centres (Nelson 1968). Nelson ascribes this to people in rural regions being less progressive than their urban counterparts, though he does not present data to substantiate this claim. Even if his claim is true, we cannot ascribe "progressiveness" on the part of the Piikani as an explanation for why wire cut nails were found in a rural area. As was typical of 19th-century Victorian bureaucracy, the Department of Indian Affairs operated in a strict top-down approach. If Indians needed supplies that the government was obligated to provide, the Indian Agent had to write to Ottawa, requesting the items, which the DIA then sourced out. Sometimes Ottawa asked the Agent to source out the items themselves, and send DIA the quotes. Regardless of which approach was

[61] No page numbers are provided in the Nelson article.

taken, it was ultimately the DIA's decision as to which supplier they purchased from, and what goods were bought, with cost being the over-riding concern of the department.

Miscellaneous artifacts

Several other artifacts were recovered. Clothing-related artifacts include two partial safety pins, a brass thimble, a clothespin spring, a four-eyed metal button and a more elaborate metal button that attached to its clothing (likely a coat) via a loop on the rear, and a seed bead. A cutlery handle from either a fork or spoon was found, as was a metal lid initially thought an automobile license plate. Construction-related artifacts include a flat-head screw, several fencing staples, a bolt shank, a pulley 37 mm in diameter with a 4-mm track, a window pane shim, several pieces of crumpled foil with no identifiable marks, and various unidentifiable pieces of folded metal (e.g., YH0576-0581). Several pieces of rubber recovered from Unit 4 are likely part of an automobile running board. As a whole, the assemblage seems to indicate discard, not loss.

In accordance with the wishes of the Piikani Band Council and the research agreement for this project, all artifacts and soil samples recovered from my 2007 excavations were reburied once analysis was complete. They were placed under a floor-board in the south-eastern portion of the Yellow Horn cabin on June 16, 2009. No one present had a 2009 coin, but most artifacts bore catalogue numbers.