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THE METHODISTS' GREAT 1869 CAMP MEETING AND ABORIGINAL CONSERVATION STRATEGIES IN THE NORTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER VALLEY

GEORGE COLPITTS

George McDougall, chairman of the Methodist Missions to the Indians of the Northwest Territories, kept a large, black book in which he jotted sermon notes, references to classical and biblical literature and sometimes simply his itineraries by horseback from Victoria, the primary Methodist mission in the far British northwest. Under the "S" tab and labeled "Saskatchewan," he noted repeatedly in the 1860s the food crisis facing North Saskatchewan residents. In sum: "A time of starvation. No buffalo."¹

In this article I analyze a buffalo hunt which occurred in 1869.² That spring, many hundreds of Cree, Assiniboine, Stoney, and Métis hunters going to the Plains were joined by a contin-

gent of Wesleyan Methodists and their Native affiliates from Fort Edmonton, Pigeon Lake, Lac Ste. Anne, Lac La Biche, and Whitefish Lake—all located on the most northern and westerly fringes of the northern Great Plains. Their expedition and other hunts joined by Protestant or Roman Catholic missions help identify some of the strategies of competition and cooperation emerging in the western boreal and parkland regions in the midst of predicted but rapid environmental change. Missionaries of the North Saskatchewan river basin joined the multiethnic hunt of 1869 to serve both the spiritual and physical needs of their followers. The aboriginal hunting parties who had long employed cooperative hunts, however, used this occasion as a further means to open up new territories and better coordinate their efforts.³ It also marked a larger shift in strategies of political and social importance. Instead of following nearby herds and waiting for their seasonal migration to areas within reach of home territories,⁴ this assembly and others of the decade fell into a larger pattern of cooperation, successful or not. Milloy identified them as "heavily armed migrations" launched by the Cree, who for want of food were traveling with

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larger assemblies into traditional Blackfoot territory, "not as a party of warriors, in search of plunder and glory" but as hunters.⁵

John McDougall, George's son, still a young clergyman that year, later remembered the gathering as a triumph of tent evangelism, and that "this famous gathering on the plains is often referred to by the Indians and half-breeds all over the country."⁶ However, this was likely an exaggerated retelling, as was another memoir account, written more than thirty years later, that saw the 1869 congregation bringing numerous otherwise warring groups into a single Christian cooperative.⁷ These groups were already predisposed to cooperate, given the close association of a Cree and Assiniboiné (both Mountain Stoney and Nakota) coalition.⁸ With the pemmican and buffalo robe hunt commercialization between the 1820s and 1840s, Plains Cree, Nakota (Assiniboiné), and Métis traders shared similar interests and more frequently coordinated buffalo hunting and the trade in buffalo products from semipermanent camps, wintering places, and fishing locations along the North Saskatchewan river valley.⁹ Indeed, behind Methodist mission officials like George McDougall were Native leaders such as Cree chief Maskepetoon, who likely used the 1869 hunt to best contain a hunting organization that had been developing at least since the 1840s. This drew on a strengthening and cohesive multiethnic association forming in the upper sections of the North Saskatchewan, where Methodist missions had situated themselves. In this case, parties used the hunt to organize a cooperative large and powerful enough to penetrate into Blackfoot territory beyond the Battle River.¹⁰ Great Plains history can benefit from a better understanding of such an expedition, given that more attention is presently falling on how Native groups were coping with dwindling resources, converging into new territories, or competing in an ever-smaller "buffalo commons" in the mid-nineteenth century.¹¹ Increasing historical interest is directed toward the surviving cultural traditions at the end of the bison era in the period of treaty making and reservations.¹² Most certainly, this

event suggests a feature of Elliott West's view of Great Plains history, where, since contact, "white and Indian worlds" had "rippled into each other" and where the "frontier never separated things. It brought things together." In this case, missionary work was joining and helping reveal Native hunting organizations emerging in specific areas of the northwestern plains and parklands.¹³

From a logistical perspective, the 1869 hunt from Fort Edmonton to Nose Hill, 200 miles to the southeast, was an impressive undertaking (Fig. 1).¹⁴ Hunters, women, and children joined an ever-larger column, forming a cavalcade that moved onto the plains. Some 200 horse-drawn carts, with squeaking wooden wheels and screaming greaseless axles, announced the hunters' coming miles ahead. Joshua's trumpets would have been drowned out by the estimated 500 dogs, many of them fighting each other, beaten to keep line, many dragging travois loaded with provisions or bundled with wailing babies. The dangers of prairie traveling, fear of Blackfoot raids, and uneasiness mounting as guides led these travelers onto waterless expanses occasioned the missionaries to draw similarities between these people and Abraham's wandering and besieged tribe, and between the North Saskatchewan River and that of the River Jordan.¹⁵

The elder missionary, George McDougall, John's father and tutor, estimated the total number of participants on this buffalo tent revival at 1,000.¹⁶ Of this number, however, were a few Hudson's Bay Company traders and hunters, and a separate section of "Catholic Cree." Two Oblate priests, who briefly accompanied the "Protestant Indians" with their own Catholic adherents, left descriptions of the eventual assembly that suggested it numbered over one hundred *cabanes*: "Almost all of the natives of this camp were Protestants," one of the priests reported. The other estimated seventy of the tents were "Protestants and Infidels." Their journey, meanwhile, extended at least over fifty-one days and took participants well beyond the Battle River into Blackfoot territory. There, under cover of their large, armed

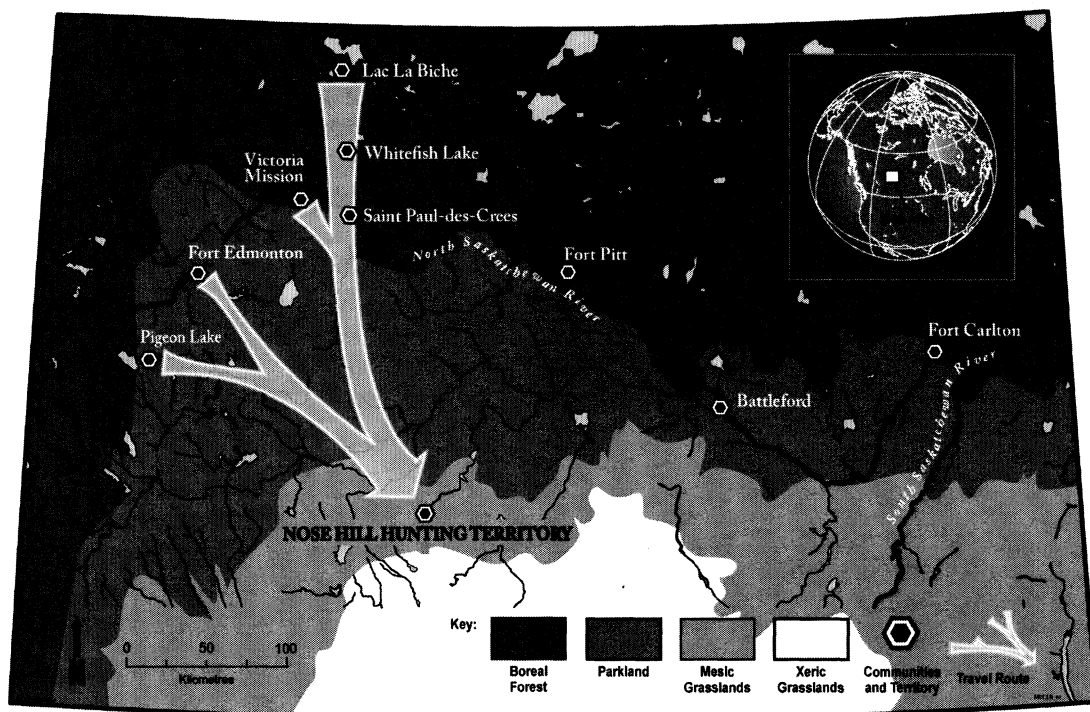


FIG. 1. *The 1869 Nose Hill Hunt*. Cartography: Shawn Mueller

escort, the hunters slaughtered about 5,000 buffalo. The camp eventually took away some 120,000 pounds of dried meat, which probably represented only a fraction of the total provisions eaten in camp and on the way home.¹⁷

In this article, I will first discuss the Methodists' hopes in a camp meeting on the Plains, one that had both practical and spiritual ends. However, it also had a context that helps explain how human cooperative capacity was developing in the face of rapid environmental change.¹⁸ Now that buffalo were frequently remaining year-round in Blackfoot territory and hunters were turning to an earlier spring hunt, their traditional means of diplomacy and organization were under stress. The gathering tempo of summer sorties in the late 1860s meant that more hunters were entering a "war zone" where bands could only hunt by the sheer force of numbers and their large assemblies required considerably strengthened intertribal and cross-tribal affiliations, issues that form

the second part of this essay.¹⁹ As suggested in a description of the hunt itself, which follows, "Lower River" Cree formed separate parties identifiable by Roman Catholic Oblates. They were delineating their differing interests from what Protestant Wesleyan Methodists understood as separate Cree and Stoney parties in such venues. Similar in size to those previously organized by Red River Métis, these hunts now drew upon emerging and quite tightly knit associations that aligned the similar needs in western boreal and parkland Cree-speaking communities.²⁰ In 1869 one developed that Methodists hoped would constitute a great movable religious feast on the Plains.²¹

TO THE GREAT PLAINS IN A FRONTIER CAMP MEETING

The Wesleyan Methodists began planning a large buffalo hunt in the form of a camp meeting during their spring Western

Conference early in 1869.²² By then, tent evangelism had become a “signature” feature of North American Methodism, with well-established albeit evolving rituals, forms, and organization.²³ To these ministers, a large hunt adhering to the model of a camp meeting held tantalizing evangelical possibilities. In a period when their home organizations were having greater difficulty raising converts, missionaries like the McDougalls hoped to provide readers of Methodist publications evidence of success in the Great Northwest mission field.²⁴ But missionaries themselves invested great hopes in a Plains gathering. The “terror theology” still preached in camp meetings, the intense prayer that followed, and the almost inevitable emotional transport of individuals were effective means of moving others to conversion. Such events had already proven successful in the evangelical frontier areas of Upper Canada, most importantly, among Native people.²⁵

Furthermore, Methodists had gained efficiency organizing these large meetings and overcoming the very practical logistic, social, and planning problems they posed. These were highly ritualized mass events. Though charged with emotion, they were hardly chaotic. Their organizers strictly scheduled daily prayers, structured services, and organized smaller prayer assemblies. In such planned space and stretches of time, individuals could be effectively moved to their moment of conversion, or, in prayer and counseling, shepherded in their first steps of Christian faith—all the while being provided their essential needs in a safe environment.

Beyond the necessity of gathering provisions for the missions, the 1869 bison hunt was altogether designed to both move aboriginal converts further in their sanctification and to spark belief among the many more uncommitted mission adherents. Camp meetings in eastern Canada and the United States were quite explicitly organized around both believers and nonbeliever onlookers (converts, “mourners,” and “sinners”), while protecting the entire assembly from unruly and potentially disruptive rabble always found in frontier zones.

Effective in reaching new recruits this way, camp meetings generated many of their most fervent Native followers through open-air congregations.²⁶ In the Northwest, missionaries undoubtedly remembered the example of one of their own, Ojibwa convert and missionary Shahwanegezhick, or Henry Bird Steinhauer, whose own conversion and those of many of his Lake Simcoe Ojibwa band were traced to a series of camp meetings in Upper Canada in the early nineteenth century.²⁷ Peter Jones, or Kahkewaquonaby, a prominent Methodist convert and later preacher, had also been converted at a tent meeting earlier in the nineteenth century. In a marathon-like five-day event, Jones had gone through the typical process of emotional questioning on the peripheries of the meetings, tortured self-examination, “mourning” for his sin, followed by a dramatic moment of conversion upon hearing the fervent prayers by ministers. At that point, he fell in front of the “mourner’s bench,” a central focus point in the entire assembly.²⁸

To the Methodists of the North Saskatchewan, a tent meeting would provide the setting where such a special dispensation of the Holy Spirit could be loosened in the Northwest, especially since up to that time, missions were comparatively small and could not afford a practical setting for bringing together large numbers of hunting and gathering bands.²⁹ The meeting in that respect caught momentum with the expansionary and warlike nature of hunting now forming on the Plains. In the long tradition of Methodism in the American West, ministers had always pursued the ends of spiritual “conquest and subjugation” in camp meetings; these missionaries, too, would be taking both lands and people for their Christian transformation, all the while gathering dearly needed provisions.³⁰

Although John McDougall said that this tent revival in the Plains was “the first effort of its kind” in the British American Northwest, group hunts were not. The most northerly fringe of the Great Plains is bordered in a “parkland ecotone”; it comprises an intermediary belt of aspen and fescue parkland forming

a zone of transition between prairie and boreal forest. Aboriginal people and newcomers had often cooperated across tribal boundaries and coordinated activities for their survival in this area, to take and protect hunting territories from rivals, and to stop small groups of individuals from dispersing herds during the critical winter pounding season. It was here, too, where on "neutral territory" stretched, even bitter enemies such as the Blackfoot and Cree had traditionally brokered tenuous and usually only seasonal peace accords.³¹ In the North Saskatchewan river valley, cooperation of this type was most evidenced in the case of western or "Upstream" bands and their Stoney Assinboine allies, who frequently sorted out winter agreements in the pounding season with the Blackfoot (Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani), Sarcee (Tsu-Tsina), and Gros Ventres (Atsina).³²

However, by the 1860s, ecological changes in the North Saskatchewan river basin made diplomatic traditions and existing winter hunting associations increasingly irrelevant.³³ Crisis had by then struck bison populations north of the Missouri River, which had declined from an estimated 5 to 6 million at the beginning of the century. Drought and fire, coupled with the cumulative effects of the large provisions trade for the Hudson's Bay Company, had thinned the herds, forcing hunters into higher concentration as the summer bison territory receded westward and southward.³⁴

Throughout the decade, climate change, first beginning in the 1850s, dried the western grassland and parkland ecotone, sharply reducing grass-carrying capacity and seriously affecting the wheat, barley, and potato harvests at the missions and fur posts.³⁵ Aboriginal groups who traditionally situated themselves in the parkland during the winter to meet the buffalo suffered when herds often failed to "rise," or reach winter shelter and fescue grasses, because Plains hunting pressures or fires disrupted their seasonal migrations. Herd sizes were taxed further by the high mortality rates when buffalo were driven in winter onto the poor grasses and exposed conditions of the open prairie.³⁶

Meanwhile, the same groups who had made shorter hunting expeditions after June or July into the territory north of the Battle River now found that the summer ranges had receded much farther south.

The most convincing evidence of crisis was the frequent failure of the winter (green) buffalo hunts at Fort Edmonton, which left employees often on short rations by July and August. Figure 2 shows the number of "cows" hunted for the fort and left on ice for spring to be dried and pounded to make pemmican. Pemmican, in this graph, represents the total product of both summer and winter hunting. Most of it, however, was prepared within the fort in the spring from winter hunts.³⁷ Fort Edmonton personnel now understood their disadvantageous location compared with posts closer to the forks of the Saskatchewan and therefore the Plains themselves.³⁸ During the summer of 1866 the problematic winter hunt was made worse by hunters returning short-handed from the Plains.³⁹ By 1869 William Christie, Edmonton's chief factor, recognized his fort's declining provisioning capacity: "Buffalo are fast decreasing and population is increasing. . . . [T]he Saskatchewan can never be depended upon for large supplies of provisions, as in former years."⁴⁰

Variable returns in the winter hunt now raised the value of longer-ranged and spring expeditions within communities on the North Saskatchewan River, whose estimated population ran to about 23,000 by 1870, before the eruption of the smallpox epidemic that year.⁴¹ Previously established Métis settlements and aboriginal hunting camps that frequented Pigeon Lake, Lac La Biche, Lac Ste. Anne, Fort Edmonton, and the Victoria Mission were most dependent on the bison's seasonal movement into the parkland,⁴² and it was clearly these people who now suffered when migration patterns began breaking down by the 1860s. As historian Hugh Dempsey pointed out, "Bands that had lived comfortably in the woodlands during the winter and killed buffalo just south of the North Saskatchewan River now had to go farther and farther onto the plains."⁴³

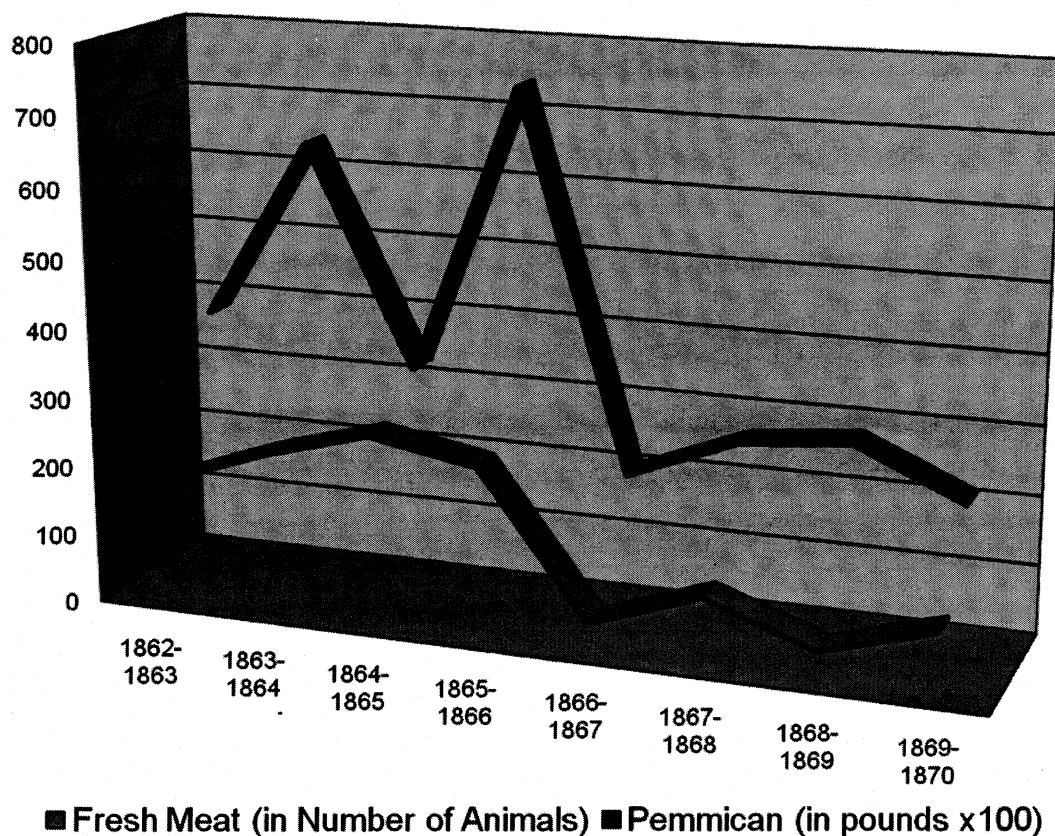


FIG. 2. *The provisioning crisis at Fort Edmonton: Fresh meat and pemmican production, 1862-69.* Compiled from Hudson's Bay Company journals of daily occurrence, Fort Edmonton.

Hunters were forced to depend on remnant herds that followed more erratic behavior and conformed to what Henry Epp later described as the buffalo's "dual dispersion": these smaller herds likely remained year-round on the Plains "near water, wooded, anomalous, frequently topographically more abrupt landscapes, such as river valleys, ranges of hills and sand hills, but often feeding on grassy uplands nearby."⁴⁴

THE LOGISTICS AND DIPLOMACY OF LONG-DISTANCE HUNTING

The longer distance to this hunt, however, raised three logistical challenges. First, these expeditions demanded greater interband coor-

dination, diplomacy, and hunting cooperation. The "last of the buffalo" on the northwestern Plains often roamed beyond "neutral" grounds or, more problematic still, clearly within enemy Blackfoot territory. Methodist guide and interpreter Peter Erasmus remembered in 1870 that bison ten years prior had been within ten miles of the Saskatchewan: "Now we had to travel more than thirty miles further south before we spotted buffalo and this was a herd of only fifteen."⁴⁵ Erasmus was well aware that this type of hunting raised the need for more complex and coordinated politics, since larger hunting parties would often have to first meet to elect a leader of a contingent of fifty tipis and tents or more. Their size indeed ultimately provided

protection, as it would make "it highly improbable that we would be attacked."⁴⁶

Still, given the consensual nature of Native political organization, there were sometimes limits to the size such hunting parties could attain. Isaac Cowie's description of a Cree hunt forming the year before the Methodists joined a similar one on the North Saskatchewan—and very likely inspiring the McDougalls to organize a camp meeting within one⁴⁷—makes this abundantly clear. From their usual territories in the Qu'Appelle Valley and Touchwood Hills, some 2,500 to 3,000 women, men, and children made the decision to enter traditional Blackfoot territories near the more southerly Cypress Hills. The Cree participants took this extraordinary step because the buffalo had all but disappeared in their own vicinity. Cowie found it a memorable spectacle—a wide assortment of Crees, Saulteaux Ojibwa from the Fort Ellice area, Mountain Stoney (Nakoda), "a few English and French Metis . . . some Assiniboines from Wood Mountain and a few from the North Saskatchewan" were all gathered.⁴⁸ Cowie, however, suggested that in the end, the camp's size and diverse ethnic composition seriously weakened it: the Cree and Ojibwa were united against their "ill-behaved allies of Assiniboine or semi-Assiniboine [Stoney] origin, . . . every one of the Indians resented the intrusion of the half-breed whites on the plains for hunting purposes."⁴⁹ Cowie explained the camp's problems: "Amongst these Indians there were no all-powerful nor any hereditary chiefs. The Sioux and Blackfeet called them the people without chiefs."⁵⁰ As its disunities mounted, the Blackfoot attacked the party's warriors, inflicting great losses; the party's cohesion split and defections increased: the estimated 3,000-member multinational expedition had dwindled to around 1,000 by its conclusion.⁵¹ The need to find common ground between quite separate hunting bands, to coordinate them, and ultimately to conserve the herds remained a significant challenge for these multiethnic hunts.⁵²

The greater distances to the herds necessitated as well a political organization capable

of coordinating hunting among many separate groups and settling disputes among them in peaceable manner. Camps and communities of the North Saskatchewan invariably faced political issues when larger numbers of hunters met to divide up the hunt. In the 1860s increasing strain developed among the Cree, particularly between the bands west of Whitefish Lake (the "Upper Country" or Beaver Hill Cree) and "Lower Country" bands to the east toward Fort Pitt and the forks of the Battle River.⁵³ Their divergent interests (one to find accommodation with the Blackfoot over the hunt, the other to raid the Gros Ventres for horses) placed an onus upon groups to find accommodation and assign what were limited remaining hunting territories to each other in an equitable manner.

Many of the sharper negotiations now occurring between groups with such divergent interests took place before hunting even began, raising the importance of such key entranceways to the hunt as Saint-Paul-des-Cris. This was a boreal and parkland carryover spot into the southerly hunting territories. The Oblate fathers had chosen *Matabes ku te weyak* (or *Atapeskuteweyak*), the Cree word for "The prairie which comes out of the river,"⁵⁴ after discovering by 1864 that it constituted "the great passage for everyone, those of Lac la Biche and Whitefish Lake who go into the prairie." Its disadvantages were soon apparent to these priests, since few hunters were actually remaining in nearby parkland forests to hunt year-round and were instead jumping off from here into the territories to the south.⁵⁵

All the same, Saint-Paul-des-Cris was seasonally a hectic and quite chaotic crossroads. Hunting parties, sometimes many dozen at a time, camped together and, as Oblate records suggest, took council, likely to divide up and coordinate the hunt. It was here indeed where bands from the western and northern areas of the river that the Oblates identified as "Protestant" met with and sorted out accommodations with the downriver Cree, identified as "Catholic." Tensions between these groups could at times be well evident. The Methodist

mixed-blood interpreter Peter Erasmus had the audacity to try to evict the Oblate missionaries—likely with their Catholic faithful—by claiming the carryover spot as part of Whitefish Cree traditional territory, a position soundly rejected by downriver Cree adherents to the mission.⁵⁶

It was at carrying-over places where new diplomacy and divergent interests were worked out in principles of fusion and fission. The mission's *Codex Historicus* for the fall of 1868 suggests as much. Beginning in September that year, the small mission was overwhelmed first by returning brigades of Cree and Métis hunters from the Plains who, over a two-month period, began stopping and staying at the mission to form a council. During this time, these primarily downriver hunters remained "quiet and pacific." The Oblates recorded that parties attended the priests' evening prayer services. The meetings culminated in October with the arrival of Okimasis, Le Petit Chef, and his camp of forty lodges en route to Nose Hill for the winter hunt. This leader would soon be known as Sweet Grass, one of the more influential Catholic adherents in the West, receiving the name Abraham after his baptism in 1870. Okimasis's importance is suggested with his arrival, when he remained on the north side of the mission and refused to cross, likely waiting for correct preparations to be made at the mission. The priests had already gone to great lengths to please the chief and later hosted his entire group for a dinner when the new bishop, Vital Grandin, paid the area a visit.⁵⁷

After numerous Cree and Métis parties had settled in, all tranquility ended with the appearance of the Whitefish Cree, who were also heading for a winter on the Plains. The great Methodist hunting chief, Maskepetoon, led them on this occasion. "Once all these Indians had been established, we had almost 100 lodges around us. But what scenes of disorder and trouble," the mission's *Codex* recorded. The mission already had had difficulty distributing enough potatoes from its fields. Now young men (likely from Whitefish Lake) began acting insolently toward the priests, who were

happy to see the entire assembly finally breaking up and moving off onto the Plains.⁵⁸

The meetings at Saint-Paul-des-Cris had certainly been tumultuous. Numerous bands from a massive territory of the North Saskatchewan used this occasion to divide up efforts on a highly congested hunting ground. However, the outcome was cooperative. Both groups had in the past joined each other on Nose Hill for extended periods of time, and most eventually worked out as best as they could an overall strategy to hunt the last of the herds while not dispersing them farther into Blackfoot territory.

Besides having a means of sorting out and organizing hunting before large parties ventured south, a third challenge was more fundamental: the hunt itself. New territories were gaining value and were more frequently hunted in intensive ways in this period. Many of the remaining buffalo were situated within the Cree-Blackfoot frontier, the traditional "neutral territory" bordered by the Neutral Hills, and beyond, within Blackfoot territories.⁵⁹ Although the bison could now be found ranging over the area north of the Red Deer River, one territory gaining vast importance stretched between the Hand and Heart Hills to the Nose Hill country. The itinerant Catholic priest and former Oblate initiate Jean L'Heureux, who traveled extensively among the Blackfoot as an unofficial and controversial Catholic representative, produced a map in 1871 that, although now lost, contained detailed descriptions of areas of the Blackfoot territories that survived. It listed places of consequence to parkland communities and Hudson's Bay Company factors. One of them was "Nose Hill," extending north to south some thirty miles, with Nose Butte "rising more than 400 feet above the plain." "Deep ravines, covered principally with big willows and berries," were in abundance here.⁶⁰ McDougall called Nose Hill "a great eminence which stands out as the landmark to be seen for many miles in every direction."⁶¹ The Oblate missionary Léon Doucet followed Métis hunters to this spot in 1874. He referred to the butte as "the culminating point on the prairie," and, not surprisingly, given aboriginal

spiritual attachments to these hills, held mass on its evocative summit. Despite its repose and almost Edenic game abundance, it is worth noting that Doucet and his Métis caravan made sure to gather sufficient numbers and firepower before crossing over the Battle River to reach this territory. It constituted indeed a quite good example of a game-rich war "zone" now recently opening up to hunting and warfare.⁶²

It was certainly here in 1866 where carts had congregated for the hunt, as "it appears Buffalo is not to be found within reach" of Fort Edmonton, although it was also learned that the Métis guide Joseph Bondue was "returning from the [N]ose, with little or nothing."⁶³ The Oblate fathers Albert Lacombe, Constantine Scollen, and J.-J. Dupin accompanied Cree to this spot in the late 1860s. In January 1868 Lacombe visited "all the [Catholic] Christians of this mission" dispersed in the territory around Nose Hill. Directly in front of its magnificent rise, he built his mission, where he reported that "our Indians demonstrate still a marvelous disposition for religious instruction and are full of respect for the missionary." These Cree took advantage of Lacombe's recently manufactured "tente-chapelle," a structure conveniently larger than existing Indian tipis⁶⁴ and one undoubtedly useful for the bands dispersed across the winter terrain to meet together, exchange intelligence, and share provisions.⁶⁵

Not only downriver Cree were on these grounds. By the time Maskepetoon was throwing support behind the large expedition forming in the spring of 1869, he was undoubtedly aware that the western sections of Cree had already visited the region and were having hunting success. It was via Cree informants, likely attached to Maskepetoon, that Fort Edmonton learned by early March 1869 that the Cree had a camp "at the Nose" and were hunting within five days of there; by the end of the month, Cree again confirmed that "Buffalo [were] down at the Nose."⁶⁶ By 1869, then, the Nose was again a "culminating point of the prairie," as Doucet would term it. Indeed, these three factors were shaping the great

hunt in 1869: a far more distant hunt requiring multiethnic cooperation, the greater need to designate territories and delimit the hunting of Crees and their allies, and, finally, the convergence of the same hunters on smaller territories clustered around the hilly regions beyond the Neutral Hills.

TO NOSE HILL COUNTRY

The spring hunt of 1869 to Nose Hill country began the day after Methodist missionaries performed Sunday service for Fort Edmonton's Protestant faithful. The chosen date for the Methodists' departure, well before any Sun Dances might be held, was likely due to the length of travel it would take to reach the buffalo grounds.⁶⁷ The fort's resident missionary, Peter Campbell, whom the Cree called Black Head because of his thick, dark hair, along with John McDougall and Campbell's brother-in-law and mission school instructor Adam Snyder, left the fort's tall bastion walls, "crossed over" the Saskatchewan River, and disappeared toward the Plains. The hunt had begun. It was the tenth of May, "dry, windy weather," the post's journal noted. The inauspicious departure of the missionaries, with only a few carts in their care, prompted the journal writer to add the trio's "sanguine hopes of converting a few of the poor benighted heathens who rove on the plains."⁶⁸

Although difficult to trace precisely, McDougall, Snyder, and Campbell likely traveled what was later the Edmonton-Battle River trail, adhering to overland sections to skirt the Hay Lakes and Bittern Lake to finally cross the Battle River just west of Driedmeat Lake. There they caught up with the Pigeon Lake Cree from the Woodville Mission who had started before them.⁶⁹ Eventually joining this contingent would be prominent Cree chiefs such as Samson, baptized in 1844 by Robert Rundle,⁷⁰ who undertook some of the difficult diplomacy to keep Stoney and Cree encampments together, and Jacob Bigstoney, a Mountain and Wood Stoney, soon a long-time affiliate of the McDougalls' missions.⁷¹ The Methodists had

likely traveled some of this route before, in sections and in small parties. At least one of their ministers had traveled with a Cree band as far as Iron Creek by 1866.⁷²

From there, the hunt's western component traveled as a large, foraging army across the remaining stretch of parkland, passing beyond Beaver Lake, "Buffalo Running Valley," and Willow Creek, and just before crossing onto the Plains, the party made sure to cut deciduous saplings and sturdy aspen branches to serve as drying stages. With these on travois and packhorses, they moved on to the Nose Hills and then eastward to Sounding Lake, where the party met the much larger contingents that had left from Victoria Mission, downriver from Fort Edmonton, ostensibly led by George McDougall, and the Whitefish Lake people, accompanied by Henry B. Steinhauer.⁷³ The "Whitefish Christians" were themselves headed by Pakan, a Wood Cree Methodist. Although the missionaries described this gathering as a camp meeting, it now assumed the shape of a quite typical multiethnic hunt for the period. Here, the assembly was joined by at least ten Hudson's Bay Company carts from Fort Edmonton that had left a few days after they had, probably led by the Métis trader Andrie Cardinal.⁷⁴ Just before arriving to Sounding Lake, the party was also joined, accidentally, by Cree with whom Oblate father Constantine Scollen and a new initiate, Father J.-J. Dupin, were traveling. This camp had left Saint-Paul-des-Cris on May 9, 1869,⁷⁵ met up with others already on the grounds, and went onward with the intention of locating a large assembly on the Plains that the Oblates considered "Catholic." Meeting instead the western Cree and Stoney, this party of some thirty tents stayed in camp about a month before finally breaking away to join the larger assembly that they had originally intended to meet.

Once together, a hunt council was formed among the "mostly Protestant Indians." But it was nevertheless a diverse arrangement. By now it comprised, according to John McDougall, Wood and Plains Cree, Mountain and Wood Stoney, English, Scotch and French

Métis, Catholic and Protestant. The group's assembled parts, many on foot, had traveled a staggering distance from the massive North Saskatchewan basin: some came as far as sixty miles beyond Pigeon Lake, others from 150 miles north of Victoria, and then as far from Lac la Biche beyond Whitefish Lake.⁷⁶

Given the high expectations of a spiritual renewal in such settings, missionaries joining the 1869 hunt maintained as best as they could strict discipline en route and once in camp. George and John McDougall, Henry Steinhauer, and Peter Campbell adhered to a grueling regime of early morning group prayers, afternoon school teaching, and evening services, and on Sunday, rest from the hunt.⁷⁷ How many of the "Protestant" Natives in camp followed this schedule is not really clear. Steinhauer had developed much of this system on previous travels to the Plains among smaller parties of Christianized hunters, that of establishing "a kind of movable camp-meeting, prayer before moving camp, the schoolmaster calling the children together morning, noon, and evening; public prayer at night; on Sabbath, morning 5 o'clock prayer-meeting."⁷⁸ In such settings, the entire suite of Methodist observance was maintained, including the rite of baptism.⁷⁹

These morning and evening services were, however, likely grafted upon a larger fusion already occurring between the sizable camps of Whitefish Lake and Victoria in this hunt. Sunday meetings, both morning and night, returned participants to a central meeting place where significant unity in this hunting block had been achieved. "[G]reat earnestness was manifested in our prayer meeting for an abundant effusion of the Holy Spirit to accompany our travelling camp-meeting," Steinhauer reported.⁸⁰ This coordination between camps was critical for self-defense, when it was learned that a Cree had been killed in a Blackfoot raid, and these services being held "in the open sanctuary" were within sight of Blackfoot parties who nonetheless dared not "molest us."⁸¹ But the fusion occurring between parties, understood by missionaries as

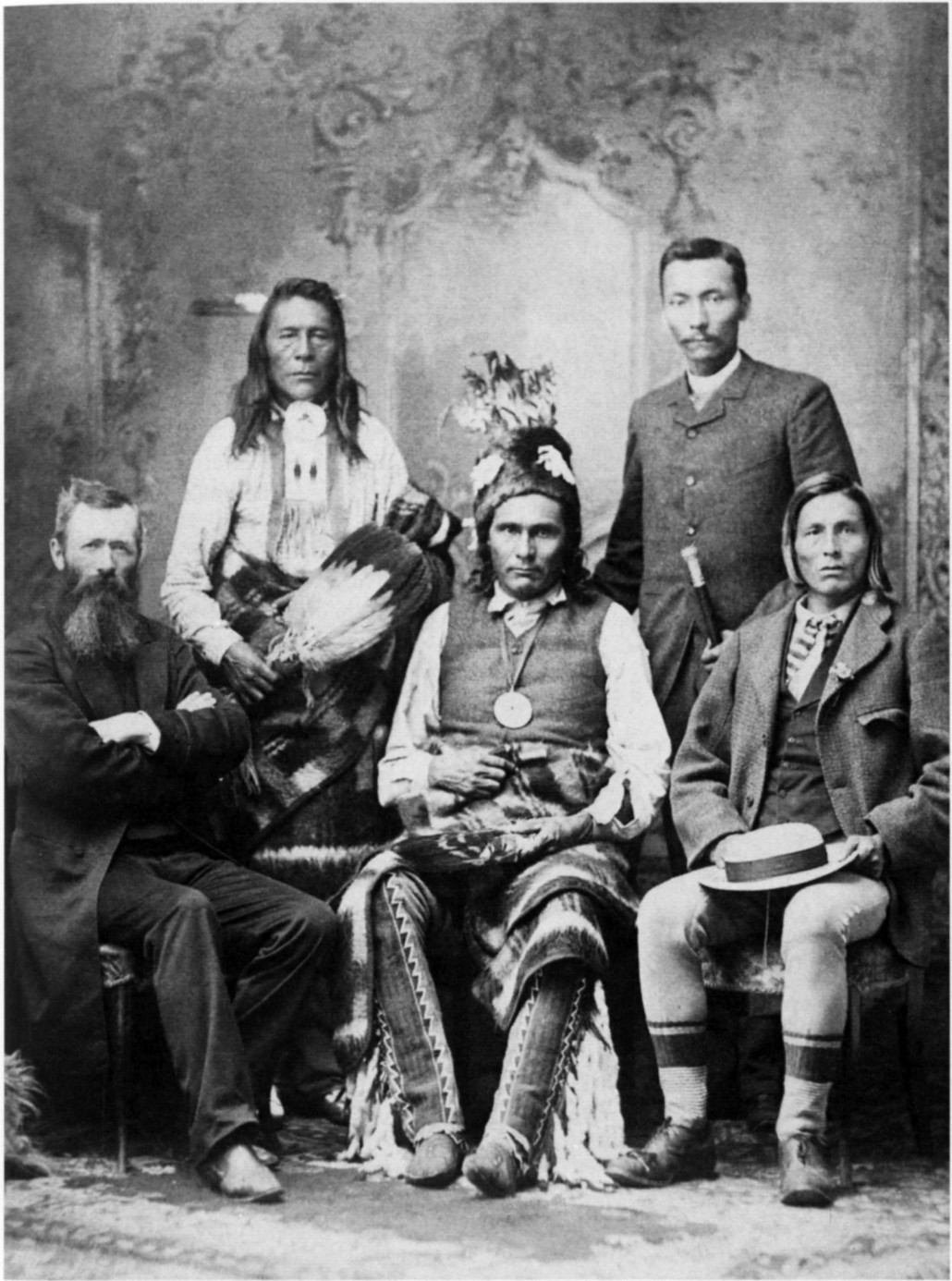


FIG. 3. *Three of the participants in the Methodist hunt. In 1886, Methodist missionary John McDougall (seated at left) accompanied Cree chief James Samson (standing at left) and Cree chief Pakan, or James Seenum (seated in middle), to Toronto. Stoney chief Jonas Goodstoney (seated at right) represented the Methodist mission to the Stoneys. Standing to the right is R. B. Steinhauer, who would be ordained a Methodist missionary and was the son of Henry Bird Steinhauer, who took part in the 1869 hunt. Glenbow Archives, NA-4216-33.*

a Protestant adherence, was equally important in keeping the large party from dividing in dissension around the hunt itself.⁸² Similar to the role Catholic Oblate priests played as leaders, mediators, and conciliators among Métis bison hunters on long-distance hunts, the Methodist ministers quite likely served as intermediaries, diplomats, and arbiters among the hunters finally assembling to hunt buffalo.⁸³

What Oblates and Protestants saw as clear Protestant and Catholic religious affiliation within the camp was likely significant political differentiation between Upper Country Cree and Stoney parties who were finding necessary accommodation with downriver, likely Fort Pitt, Cree bands. Both sections organized themselves cohesively around the work, ritual, and services undertaken by their respective Protestant and Catholic missionaries.⁸⁴ The smaller camp, recognized by both Oblates and Methodist missionaries as "Catholic," for instance, continued hunting on Sundays, unlike at least some of the "Protestant" faithful.⁸⁵ Father Scollen remained actively catechizing within his own section and, at the end of the month in camp, threw a "glorious feast in these wild prairies" where twenty of his assembly made their first communion and confirmation.⁸⁶ Both sections were differentiated enough that they seemed to missionaries to attend separate services, but were close enough that many apparently heard the priests and pastors commenting upon (and freely criticizing) the practices of their missionary counterparts. At least some of the aboriginal hunters witnessed what became the great debate of the event, on theology, between Father Scollen and one of the Protestants, likely John McDougall. Given his superior linguistic skills in Cree, Scollen apparently prevailed.⁸⁷

"METHODIST" AND "CATHOLIC" HUNTING ASSOCIATIONS

What Protestants and Catholics saw as distinct mission affiliation among hunters in 1869 should be placed into a larger and more complex context of strategies emerging in the

western sections of the North Saskatchewan River basin by the 1840s. "Methodist" hunters were cooperating in new ways to meet the challenges of a more competitive hunt on smaller territories. Many of the Wood Cree, Stoney, and country-born who lived near and occasionally met around small missions had a vested interest in finding a means of coordinating their hunt. Many of them indeed met frequently at the church and rectory built by the McDougalls after their arrival in 1862 at "Royal Victoria," founded by George McDougall with the help of his sons. By 1873 official membership constituted about seventy, thirty of whom had been "received on trial" in a revival that occurred in 1872. Even before that, Methodist missionaries found progress in this territory, if difficult, at least encouraging, if baptisms can be taken as an indication. Over the previous decade this and other Methodist missions had seen remarkable movements toward either Methodism or, generally farther eastward on the North Saskatchewan, the Roman Catholic faith. Steinhauer and early Methodist missionary Thomas Woolsey together had performed some 600 baptisms in the North Saskatchewan basin by 1861.⁸⁸

Missionaries, however, did not account for the anomalies apparent in their baptismal registers, most notably the high incidence of "mother" baptisms, whereby adult females were initiating themselves into the Methodist fold sometimes at a proportion of 2:1. While an almost equal number of Victoria's 1865 child baptisms were male and female, twenty-two of the thirty-three initiates between twenty and ninety years of age were in fact female.⁸⁹ The aboriginal use of baptism and godparenting has already been noted in the Great Lakes region. There, females used these rites to establish fictive kin relations and augment trade networks. Victoria's mission indeed seems to have been swept up in a larger pattern of aboriginal networking, ritualized through baptism, which likely had as many social and political associations as religious.⁹⁰

The considerable hunting and political cohesion growing in this area of the North

Saskatchewan, in turn, became most pronounced when parties came in contact with downriver Fort Pitt and Carlton bands. In 1872 Father Léon Doucet recorded how his band of Catholic Cree en route to distant Ile-à-la-Crosse had encountered a camp from Whitefish Lake. One of his Catholic devotees, Alexis Cardinal, a Blackfoot Métis and long-time helper to Father Lacombe, left to visit it. Cardinal had, Doucet said, picked up European medical procedures that he practiced among the Plains Cree: he carried numerous small sacks filled with medicine, and bled and purged Indians, all the while wearing colored glasses "to give himself more importance." Cardinal was thus fusing western practices with a Christian rite to arrive at aboriginal meaning and influence. Apparently he did so very effectively, at least among the Cree with whom Doucet ministered. Doucet said they "have great confidence in him" (even though Doucet himself considered Cardinal a "lunatic").⁹¹

Doucet recorded what happened when "[o]ne Sunday, a party of Methodist Cree from Whitefish Lake (Chief Pakkan, La Noisette) was camped not far from us." Alexis Cardinal went to visit them. "These Protestants attacked him on the subject of the religion of the Bible, etc. They had with them an enormous Bible in syllabic characters used by the Indians. They were numerous and loudly screamed" at the Catholic adherent, who returned to camp visibly shaken. Cardinal already had had a run-in with these Bible-wielding Whitefish Cree. A contingent of Protestants in Pakan's camp had nearly killed Cardinal at Saint-Paul-des-Cris some years before. The missionaries took the incident as further evidence that, under the instigation of the Methodists, the Victoria and Whitefish Lake Indians were trying to drive the Catholics and their hunters from that place.⁹²

Oblate missionaries frequently made note of the cohesiveness of the Whitefish Lake and Victoria mission hunters. Their unity, strength, and organization, however, had developed over time by the efforts of key chiefs of western bands. One of the more influential, affiliated with the Victoria Mission, was Maskepetoon.

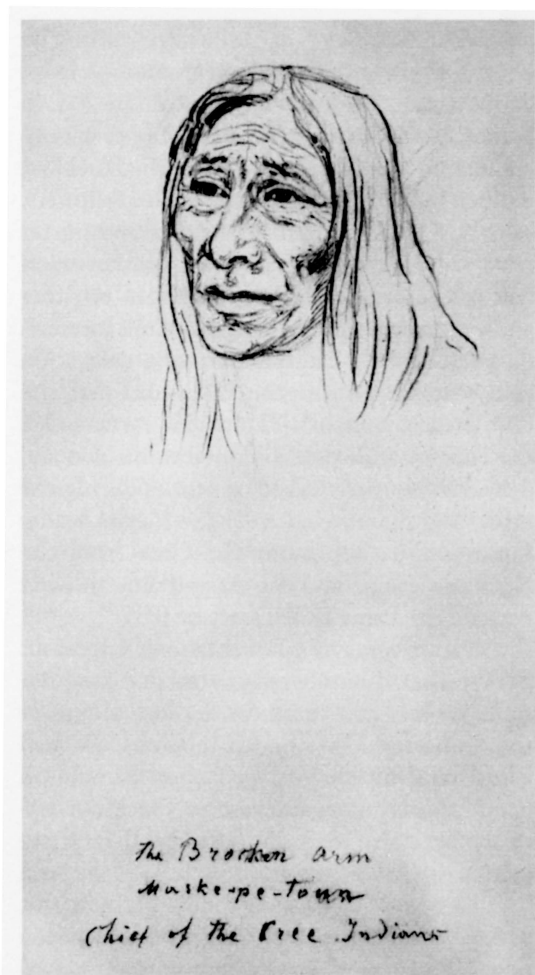


FIG. 4. A sketch of Cree chief Maskepetoon, or Broken Arm, who threw early support behind the 1869 hunt, just before he was killed by the Blackfoot. No date. Glenbow Archives, NA-4169-1.

John McDougall recorded that the Cree chief took a leading role in first planning the 1869 hunt. Maskepetoon, or Broken Arm, was to bring the entire "big Wood Cree camp" to the event, and the Cree chief "went into it heartily."⁹³ Maskepetoon probably not only planned which parties were involved but likely chose where the hunt would take place and began the difficult task of bringing support behind it. He did so not really to form a Methodist camp meeting, as McDougall suggested—there is no evidence that aboriginal participants viewed

the event that way—but as a large hunt. The chief had already organized numerous large expeditions; he was one of the few North Saskatchewan Cree with the capacity to coordinate bands and broker peace with the Blackfoot to open hunting opportunities for his followers. An individual with influence extending far from the North Saskatchewan, Maskepetoon had passed frequently into Blackfoot territory and even represented Northern Cree interests on the Missouri. He was part of a delegation that visited Washington, DC, and met the U.S. president in 1831-32. In 1851 he attended the Fort Laramie peace council to include and delineate Northern Cree territories during the talks, and he traveled with the Piegan leader Little Dog to represent the Cree from the Northern Plains and the Assiniboine in what became the *Lame Bull Treaty* of 1855.⁹⁴

At least some of Maskepetoon's enormous personal influence rested on the associations he had cultivated for decades alongside the founding of Methodist missions. He had guided and interpreted for Robert Rundle on the first Methodist forays into Blackfoot territory between 1841 and 1848, and in these critical years Maskepetoon helped extend Rundle's work with the Stoney, Plains Cree, and Assiniboine tribes that traveled between Fort Edmonton, Rocky Mountain House, and the Red Deer River. By 1845 he was one of the driving organizers of Rundle's missions, even providing the missionary that year with a map of the Red Deer River area where he believed a mission station was needed. After seven years associating with Rundle, the chief established the contacts and itineraries for the missionary's visits between bands. Rundle's work was no longer haphazard but was largely and explicitly coordinated by the Cree chief among similarly minded hunting bands: "Sponsoring Indian groups under the leadership of Maskepetoon could conduct Rundle on an extensive tour, across the Bow river."⁹⁵ It is more than likely that when Rundle had seen revival occurring among the Assiniboine and Cree camps, he was seeing the hand of Maskepetoon strengthening political and hunting ties on the westernmost

sections of the North Saskatchewan basin in a period when they were becoming necessary. Such mass baptisms occurring at Tobacco Weed Plains in 1843, at Rocky Mountain House in 1846 (with 200 Assiniboine present and Rundle registering forty baptisms), and finally at Victoria were likely sites where Maskepetoon and other Cree leaders were fusing more closely a hunting bloc among key families who in turn were becoming familiar faces at mission sites.

The nature of Maskepetoon's religious conversion is difficult to fully assess. Similar to the case of western Ojibwa Christianization,⁹⁶ Wood Cree conversions present many problems for analysis. Rundle had seen syncretistic practices overtake his own efforts. Frequently he was frustrated by the evidence of only tenuous long-term fidelity to his Christian message. Paul Kane's reminiscences suggest that Maskepetoon's own conversion is difficult to substantiate; he certainly remained entirely independent of the missionaries who counted him as one of their first and most loyal followers.⁹⁷

Whatever his Methodist convictions, Maskepetoon still moved within an aboriginal tradition of magical and shamanistic practices linked to one's invincibility in battle or success in the hunt. Milloy has pointed out the great respect Maskepetoon gathered for himself in his peace negotiations with the Blackfoot and escape from death in enemy raids.⁹⁸ It is equally possible to place the Cree leader in a wider movement among aboriginal groups who were either appropriating magical practices or imitating rituals that were believed would improve hunting success, now in a period of dwindling bison herds. Maskepetoon and others who were converting explicitly or simply adopting Christian rituals were likely testing imported spiritual power in the context of the more difficult and risky hunt in Blackfoot country.⁹⁹ He is indeed reminiscent of many of the "converts" to Methodism who appropriated the new religion as a means of personal power, with associated capacity to foresee the success of buffalo pounding locations or best anticipate the movements of animals.¹⁰⁰

His considerable presence as a hunt leader was evident by the 1860s. In 1865 John McDougall met the chief who kept "both plains and wood Cree" followers in his camp, on this occasion now inside Blackfoot territory. McDougall and other Victoria Mission people had joined the Cree on this occasion to hunt provisions. The Cree chief instructed John "what the camp's movements were to be, and that there was to be an immense gathering of several camps for the holding of the annual festival and 'Thirst Dance' of the pagan Indians. He also told me that the buffalo were coming northward and westward, and we should move slowly to give them a chance to come in; that the plain Crees who were coming up country to join us were behind the herd of buffalo."¹⁰¹

Coordinating the efforts of small hunting parties over such vast distances required messengers, firm respect for alliances, and trust in the overseeing capacity of a chief or his subchiefs. Such cooperation was absolutely critical to Wood Cree hunters, who relied on a northern migration and then on further coordination between bands to ensure that pounds were used effectively, without dispersing wintering herds.¹⁰² Fur traders occasionally witnessed the cohesiveness Maskepetoon had helped develop among the western sections of the North Saskatchewan Cree. By 1855 Maskepetoon was likely in control of the post's provisions trade, at least over the quantities that were coming in from parkland Cree bands pounding buffalo nearby.¹⁰³ Quite frustrating to the post, Cree bands could in concert reject the post's request for buffalo because "due to fine weather, buffalo still far on plains," and "for fear of driving them further onto the plains, they were killing only bulls for their own consumption."¹⁰⁴

Maskepetoon developed some of his influence through ritual and comportment, communicating his *atayohkanuak*, or the power evidencing a spirit helper, that protected an individual in warfare or granted him favor in the hunt. His appropriation of European religious material goods and clothing seems to have been connected to such a spirit helper

association. When the chief guided Captain John Palliser into Blackfoot country, he did so only on the promise of receiving a suit of clothes and a horse. The value of the former was seen on the edge of Neutral Territory, when, within attack of Blackfoot parties, the chief "smartened himself up considerably, having obtained from me an old shooting jacket, from the Doctor a pair of corduroys, and from Mr. Sullivan a waistcoat and neckhandkerchief."¹⁰⁵ However comical this costuming appeared to Palliser, Maskepetoon's appropriation of European clothing and Christian magical rites worked among his followers. Costuming and ritual, combined with hunting success, suggested that this leader had the foreknowledge of where best to construct buffalo pounds or the capacity to foretell where the buffalo would move.¹⁰⁶

John McDougall described how effectively these ritual elements came together in the case of Maskepetoon by 1864. That year, he described how the chief successfully forged a short-term winter peace treaty with the Blackfoot to share in the buffalo hunt on his territory. The buffalo had risen early and rapidly, leaving destitute large Blackfoot camps to the south. They had moved northward and had eaten their dogs and some of their horses by the time they reached the southern fringe of the parkland belt. Knowing that the Siksika were not more than one hundred miles south of his own location, and that the Kainai and Piikani would not be far behind, Maskepetoon decided to reach an agreement over the hunt, first to stop warfare but more likely, above all, to manage the herds in the winter pounding season.

The Cree leader's actions speak to patently Native cosmology. Maskepetoon met a Blackfoot party while holding up in his hands a syllabic Cree Bible. It was said that he recited verses from it while his Cree followers fled in terror, certain that their destruction was near. The Blackfoot embassy that met him, reportedly amazed by the strength of Maskepetoon's spirit and bravery, brokered a peace, or at least an accord sufficient to last the winter

hunting season. The event inestimably raised Maskepetoon's esteem among his followers and undoubtedly certified that surely this man's Manitou spirit was considerable.¹⁰⁷

It was quite possibly a short-term peace treaty to allow for a larger Cree penetration into Blackfoot territory—of which the Methodists' spring hunt would be part—that led Maskepetoon to his last, and in the end fatal, diplomatic mission early in the season in 1869. Having helped the Methodists organize their hunt, and likely with the view of other parties forming in the North Saskatchewan basin in a period of heightened Cree-Blackfoot warfare, the chief launched a diplomatic embassy alone into Blackfoot territory. He did so in almost identical ways to his mission in 1864. The Blackfoot oral history of the killing of the Cree chief and his sons and grandsons on the Bow River recounts that Maskepetoon and his followers "set out from the Battle River country, and when their scout discovered the Blackfoot camps on the Bow River, they all dressed in their finest clothes, cached their horses in a coulee, and made for a hill overlooking their foes. There they placed a Union Jack on a staff and sat beneath it with a Bible, pipe, and tobacco, waiting for the enemy to arrive."¹⁰⁸ Many Swans, the Blackfoot leader who met Maskepetoon, raised his own esteem among his followers by negotiating the disarming of the Cree before slaughtering them.

CONCLUSION

The killing of Maskapetoon sparked further warfare as Cree bands retaliated against the Blackfoot. Undoubtedly revenge was one of the major reasons the Cree continued participating in the 1869 event, now led by Sayakemat.¹⁰⁹ Despite Maskepetoon's absence, the spring hunt went on as planned. The mission adherents returned to their respective territories by the end of June and early July of that summer.¹¹⁰

Environmental historians have had difficulty ascertaining whether Plains people successfully adapted their culture to the horse and

equestrian bison hunt, since the introduction of one led so quickly to the end of the other. Historians indeed tend to minimize Native adaptive capacity in the face of larger forces of climatic change, biotic exchange, and infusion of the European market into the Great Plains. "Regardless of how Indians viewed their place in nature, environmental flux, caused both by people and other forces, rendered many of their adaptation strategies ineffective," as Sherow pointed out.¹¹¹ Historians Pekka Hämäläinen, Dan Flores, and William Dobak echo the same view that Natives, caught off guard by the rapid cultural changes of Plains life and the commercialized buffalo hunt, could not form an adequate response and strike "equilibrium" with the bison upon which they now depended.¹¹²

The story of the 1869 hunt suggests that historians should look for innovation and adaptation in the waning years of the buffalo herds. Often the 1860s and 1870s are generalized as a period of rising competition and violence on the Northern Plains as larger numbers of hunters converged on the last remaining vestiges of the buffalo "commons." This study suggests a different ending was occurring among people hunting the last herds. In the face of rapid environmental change, Native response was to search for a means of coordinating the efforts of many hunters around fewer resources and territories. Native hunters facing difficult circumstances by the 1860s had to look beyond traditions of winter cooperation and diplomacy that had prevailed between Blackfoot and Cree/Assiniboiné hunters in parkland areas. Now, the bison were fully within Blackfoot territories, and rather than seeking diplomatic entry, Cree and Assiniboiné in very large parties were hunting more cohesively in what was a battleground upon which might made right and large numbers mattered. All of this required new political and diplomatic means of reaching agreement, organizing hunters from a variety of tribal associations, and dividing up the bison's spring territories. In other words, changing circumstances prompted a creative adaptation among Native people that requires far more study.

Native response in these years, of course, could not remove the pressure on the smaller herds. Despite organization around hunting associations, deliberations at such sites as Saint-Paul-des-Cris, and whatever last, temporary hunting accords could be established between the Cree and Blackfoot, bison populations were in a chronic downward cycle. Respite only came with the horrific biological contagion of 1870, when a massive smallpox epidemic struck down Blackfoot and Cree hunters throughout the Plains.¹¹³ The true end of the buffalo era was then moved forward only a decade, when in 1879, the last of the scarce Canadian buffalo herds disappeared forever from the range of now Treaty 6 and 7 hunters. But the circumstances following the 1870 smallpox epidemic and the Great Peace between the Cree and Blackfoot in 1871 were now markedly different. John McDougall believed that the buffalo's end began with the chaos of these last years of peace, not when competition intensified but when hunting cooperation forming in the 1860s failed. In 1916 old-time trader of the Northwest Isaac Cowie, himself a participant in the large multiethnic hunts of the late 1860s, recounted McDougall's theory of the extermination of the bison, at least on the Saskatchewan, where after Peace was established,

the hunters were no longer compelled to band together in large camps for self-protection and to regulate the hunting of the buffalo, especially by preventing bands of straggling hunters driving them about. When general peace conditions were established, however, each hunter became a law to himself and these individuals became scattered all over the plains and drove the animal about so incessantly as to give them no time to fatten up for the winter. The winter which followed this harassing pursuit was an exceedingly severe one which they were in no condition to withstand, and so miserably perished.¹¹⁴

In this article I have argued that one source for such cooperation emerged in hunting blocs that formed in the upper sections of the

North Saskatchewan river basin. The actual Christianization occurring in these areas is really beside the point. The leaders of hunting associations, such as Maskepetoon, raised their status and means of coordinating buffalo hunting among Plains and Wood Cree followers through magico-religious observances, traditional Native shamanism, and, undoubtedly, some rituals borrowed from newcomers and the missions establishing in their areas. Among the Western Cree, Stoney, and some Métis groups, a bloc had fused cohesively near Pigeon Lake, Victoria, Fort Edmonton, and Whitefish Lake to be recognized by missionaries as "Protestant." Their cohesion in turn helped them to effectively negotiate with other blocs forming among the Cree from down country. These last years of cooperation around the hunt should be studied as much for their brief moments of success as their long-term failure in maintaining a way of life around bison hunting.

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NOTES

1. Glenbow Archives (hereafter GA), George McDougall Fonds, Series 1-B, M-729-5. The book of events is in File 10, Series 1-D. By 1869 one of his letters reported that "We have a large number of starving Crees" (ibid., George McDougall letter, February 6, 1869).

2. John McDougall left a description of the hunt in his reminiscence, *In the Days of the Red River Rebellion* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1983), 49-50, 62-85. He also reprinted some

of his father's letters describing the hunt, and the one taking place in the fall of the same year, in *George Millward McDougall: The Pioneer, Patriot and Missionary* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1888), 138-49. Probably the most detailed surviving account was left by the Reverend H. Steinhauer, "Saskatchewan District—Letter from Rev. H. Steinhauer," appearing in *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, no. 11, May 1871, 165-69. Many thanks to Hugh Dempsey, who alerted me to Steinhauer's and Father Constantin Scollen's valuable description of the hunt (Lettres du P. Constantin Scollen O.M.I. (Extraits), B/2/Sc, GA). Gerhard Ens helpfully recommended the diary of Father Léon Doucet, who, although he did not witness the hunt, well described Nose Hill and Catholic hunting bands (Provincial Archives of Alberta, Oblate Collection [hereafter PAA o.m.i.], Doucet Journal, 1868-90, o.m.i., 71.220, Item 6382, Box 151). Donald B. Smith has been very helpful in directing me to both Oblate and Methodist archives, especially in relation to the work and writing of George and John McDougall.

3. James Ernest Nix makes mention of the hunt, and the one following it in the fall of 1869 in *Mission among the Buffalo: The Labours of the Reverends George M. and John C. McDougall in the Canadian Northwest, 1860-1876* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1960), 53-54. See also, on the McDougalls' ministry, Peter Melnycky, *A Veritable Canaan: Alberta's Victoria Settlement* (Edmonton: Friends of Fort Victoria Historical Society, 1997). There are a number of useful works on prominent Methodist missionaries and aboriginal converts. See Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Susan Elain Gray, "I will fear no evil": *Ojibwa-Missionary Encounter Along the Berens River, 1875-1940* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006); John W. Niddrie, *Niddrie of the North-West: Memoirs of a Pioneer Canadian Missionary* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2000); and Myra Rutherdale, *Women and the White Man's God: Gender and Race in the Canadian Mission Field* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002), which provide important perspectives on the mission field in the West.

4. Richmond Clow identifies sedentary, seasonal hunting strategies employed by the Yankton and Métis in 1832-33 in "Bison Ecology, Brulé and Yankton Winter Hunting, and the Starving Winter of 1832-33," *Great Plains Quarterly* 15 (Fall 1995): 265. David G. Mandelbaum suggests the limited extent of migration among the Plains Cree in *The Plains Cree: An Ethnographic, Historical, and Comparative Study* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1979), 52.

5. John S. Milloy, *The Plains Cree: Trade, Diplomacy, and War, 1790-1870* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1988), 114-15.

6. John McDougall, *George Millward McDougall*, 138.

7. John McDougall, *In the Days of the Red River Rebellion*, 49-50, 62-85. McDougall's value as a writer, however, is suggested in Susan Jackel's analysis. See her introduction to *ibid.*, as well as chapter 8 in her "Images of the Canadian West, 1872-1911" (PhD thesis, University of Alberta, 1977), and, for the events of 1869, pp. 129-32.

8. Theodore Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground: A Human and Environmental History of the Northwestern Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 195-96.

9. John E. Foster, "The Métis and the End of the Plains Buffalo in Alberta," in *Buffalo*, ed. John Foster, Dick Harrison and I. S. MacLaren (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1994), 61-77.

10. Foster suggested this function of religious leadership: A Roman Catholic priest became key in mediating affairs between Métis groups: "With his presence, larger, more stable hunting parties were possible" that could travel to the prairie (*ibid.*, 67-68). See also Maureen K. Lux's remarks on aboriginal views of missionaries ("Priests presented themselves to people as spiritual people deserving of respect, and they were generally accepted as such") in *Medicine that Walks: Disease, Medicine and Canadian Plains Native People, 1880-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 104. On the hunt and Native spiritualism, see Heather Devine, "Les Desjarlais: The Development and Dispersion of a Proto Métis Hunting Band, 1785-1870," in *From Rupert's Land to Canada*, ed. Theodore Binnema, Gerard J. Ens, and R. C. Macleod (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2001), 139.

11. New perspectives on the demise of the herds, especially in relation to the peace established in the Southern Plains, are offered by Pekka Hämäläinen, "The First Phase of Destruction: Killing the Southern Plains Buffalo, 1790-1840," *Great Plains Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (Spring 2001): 101-4. In the same volume, see William E. Farr, "When we were first paid: The Blackfoot Treaty, the Western Tribes, and the Creation of the Common Hunting Ground, 1855," *ibid.*, 131-54. On the ongoing cultural associations around the hunt, even after the end of the bison era, see Kenneth Winkle's remarks in "Bison: The Past, Present, and Future of the Great Plains: An Introduction," *ibid.*, 99-100, a preface to this special volume devoted to the bison hunt.

12. For instance, Jeffrey Ostler, "'The Last Buffalo Hunt' and Beyond: Plains Sioux Economic Strategies in the Early Reservation Period," *ibid.*, 115-30. Although not addressing the same time period, David Lulka discusses more recent Native cooperation around bison herding, and tribal attachment to wild bison, in "Bison and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations," *Great Plains Research* 16 (Spring 2006): 73-84.

13. Elliott West, *The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 13. For ethno-historical work on this phenomenon, see Scott Hamilton and B. A. Nicholson, "Aboriginal Seasonal Subsistence and Land Use on the Northeastern Plains: Insights from Ethnohistoric Sources," *Plains Anthropologist* 51, no. 199 (2006): 261; Susan Sharrock, "Cree, Cree-Assiniboinés, and Assiniboinés: Interethnic Social Organization on the Northern Plains," *Ethnohistory* 21, no. 2 (1974): 95-122, and especially, Patricia C. Albers, "Changing Patterns of Ethnicity in the Northeastern Plains 1780-1870," in *History, Power, and Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Americas, 1492-1992*, ed. Jonathan D. Hill (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996), 1-110.

14. This complex should not be confused with the Nose Hill that rises in the northwest of present-day Calgary, Alberta.

15. John McDougall uses this imagery in *In the Days of the Red River Rebellion*, 84. The Reverend J. Woolsey in 1861 described his crossing over "River Jordan" from Fort Ellice to the south branch of the Saskatchewan. J. Woolsey to Rev. G. McDougall, December 21, 1861, GA, George McDougall Fonds, Series 1-b, M-729-5.

16. J. McDougall, *George Millward McDougall*. John Kerr left the estimate of the carrying capacity of Red River carts. C. K. Sissons, ed., *John Kerr*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), 86. See Nix's description in *Mission among the Buffalo*, 54.

17. George McDougall provided an inventory of the hunt's provisions in a letter: John McDougall, *George Millward McDougall*, 138. Father Dupin listed precise numbers of dogs and *cabanes* involved. Of the one hundred tents, "Almost all the natives of this camp were Protestant," GA, Scollen File, 8038, "The Reverent Father Constantin Scollen O.M.I." But Scollen's own account of the camp in a letter to Ireland, December 16, 1872, suggests seventy of the one hundred tents were "Protestants and infidels." Lettres du P. Constantin Scollen, extraits, b/e/Sc, GA. Doucet describes caravans and the treatment of dogs that pulled travois in the June 1870 entries of his Journal, 22-23. I am using the Oblate estimates of lodge capacity as reported by Bishop Grandin at about 6.75 people per "loge" during the winter of 1869 when Father Lacombe was ministering to group of 400 lodges which he enumerated as 2,700 individuals. PAA o.m.i., Lettre de Mgr Grandin à MM. Les Membres des conseils centraux, 1 septembre 1870, *Missions de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée* (Paris, 1870), 9:173.

18. In other contexts, see the rising competition and political issues developing among aboriginal hunters entering Wyoming and Montana in William

E. Farr, "Going to the Buffalo: Indian Hunting Migrations Across the Rocky Mountains," part 1, "Making Meat and Taking Robes," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 53, no. 4 (2003): 2-21. For Southern Plains adaptations to the buffalo hunt and the strategies it encouraged, see Paul H. Carlson and Thomas R. Wessel, "Indian Agriculture, Changing Subsistence Patterns, and the Environment on the Southern Great Plains," *Agricultural History* 66, no. 2 (1992): 52-60.

19. On this phenomenon, see Farr, "When we were first paid," 140-41, and Paul S. Martin and Christine R. Szuter, "War Zones and Game Sinks in Lewis and Clark's West," *Conservation Biology* 13, no. 1 (February 1999): 38-39, 42-44. Archeological precedents are worth considering in this discussion; see Lauren W. Ritterbush, "Drawn by the Bison: Late Prehistorical Native Migration into the Central Plains," *Great Plains Quarterly* 22 (Fall 2002): 259-70.

20. On the Red River hunt, see Gerhard J. Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Métis in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996). He describes the last stages of the Red River hunt by 1869, with Métis hunters locating permanently in western *hivernants* camps, including those of the North Saskatchewan River, Lac La Biche, and the Fort Edmonton area (77-78, 118-20).

21. On the regional fate of the Canadian herds, see William A. Dobak, "Killing the Canadian Buffalo, 1821-1881," *Western Historical Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 39-48. On the continental hunt of the buffalo, see Dan Flores, "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy: The Southern Plains from 1800-1850," *Journal of American History* 78, no. 2 (September 1991): 465-85, and Andrew Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison: An Environmental History, 1750-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). William T. Hornady provided one of the first analyses of the buffalo's extermination in *The Extermination of the American Bison* (1889; Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002).

22. J. McDougall, *In the Days of the Red River Rebellion*, 49.

23. Roger Robins, "Vernacular American Landscapes: Methodists, Camp Meetings and Social Respectability," *Religion and American Culture* 4, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 168. See also Kenneth O. Brown, *Holy Ground: A Study of the American Camp Meeting* (New York: Garland, 1992), 22-32.

24. See David B. Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 99-100.

25. Isaac Kholisile Mabindisa, "The Praying Man: the Life and Times of Henry Bird Steinhauer"

(PhD thesis, University of Alberta, 1984), 34-35. Mabindisa has interpreted the 1869 camp meeting as being primarily intended to prepare Indians for the surrender of their land (487).

26. On its organization, see Dickson D. Bruce Jr., *And They All Sang Hallelujah: Plain-Folk Camp-Meeting Religion, 1800-1845* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1974), 9, 53-56, 70-77.

27. Mabindisa, "The Praying Man," 72-75.

28. See Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 57-61.

29. "This was to be turned, as much as possible into the shape of a camp-meeting. In those days the only place where large companies could congregate for any length of time was in the vicinity of the big herds of buffalo, as no other food supply in the country would be adequate." J. McDougall, *George Millward McDougall*, 137. Father Scollen, who described the 1869 hunt, said of the Methodists: "Il paraît que, selon les idées de la secte (c'étaient des méthodistes), ces ministres, hommes et femmes, tenaient leurs assemblées en plein air afin de recevoir plus immédiatement les communications de l'Esprit." *Missions de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, 9:241. For scholarly analysis on this, see Neil Semple, *The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 86-87, 127-47, and John Webster Grant, *A Profusion of Spires: Religion in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto: Ontario Historical Studies Series, 1988), 58-60. By the 1860s, the peak period of Methodist open-air evangelism, they were cognizant of the exciting meetings occurring in eastern Canada and Britain at the time. Thomas Woolsey, the Methodist's stalwart representative in the Edmonton region from 1855 to 1864, by 1867 had written back to his younger replacements to report on his speaking tour in England, where he preached to thousands at a series of meetings at London's Exeter Hall and Manchester's Free Trade Hall. Letter, Thomas Woolsey to G. McDougall, November 24, 1866, McDougall Fonds, 729, File 3, GA. A valuable overview of Woolsey's life and ministry is found in Hugh A. Dempsey, ed., *Heaven Is Near the Rocky Mountains: The Journals and Letters of Thomas Woolsey, 1855-1869* (Calgary: Glenbow Museum, 1989).

30. Robins, "Vernacular American Landscapes," 168. See also Charles A. Johnson, *The Frontier Camp Meeting: Religion's Harvest Time* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1955), particularly chapter 5.

31. Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba (hereafter HBCA), Fort Edmonton's post journal, December 30, 1832, B.60/a/27: "The provisions secured from the Plains tribes since the Spring are so inconsiderable that it is found unnecessary to add them to the returns of the place excepting

grease and back fat." December 9, 1833, B.60/a/28: "I do not recollect having heard such a general cry for food before." Clow, in "Bison Ecology, Brulé, and Yankton Winter Hunting," attributed the bad hunt to a mild winter, which kept herds on the open plains (260-62).

32. See references to these winter pounding peace accords recorded in HBCA, June 9, 1830; January 10, 1831; January 18, 1831; February 1, 1832; and February 4, 1832, Fort Pitt Journals, B.165/a/1. On the overall impact of the difficult winter of 1832-33 in eastern hunting territories, see Clow, "Bison Ecology, Brulé and Yankton Winter Hunting," 259-70.

33. The "large multiethnic camps" observed by Isaac Cowie and Walter Traill in the late 1860s involving the Western Ojibwa are cited by Laura Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780-1870* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1994), 187.

34. Milloy, *Plains Cree*, 105; Dobak, "Killing the Canadian Buffalo," 44. See also the overview of this western movement in Martha Harroun Foster, "Just Following the Buffalo: Origins of a Montana Métis Community," *Great Plains Quarterly* 26 (Summer 2006): 185-202.

35. Father Léon Doucet, an Oblate missionary beginning his diary reminiscences in 1868 at St. Albert, outside Fort Edmonton, noted the impact of summer drought on even the potato harvests (Doucet Journal, 1869 notes, 1-3). Fort Edmonton's crops failed in a cyclical boom and bust period in the 1860s, finally bottoming out completely in 1869, "the most miserable crop ever had here, want of rain, and not enough seed planted cause of scarcity," the post's journal noted. HBCA, Fort Edmonton Journals, October 5, 1869, B.60/a./37.

36. Jim Daschuk and Greg Marchildon, "Climate and Aboriginal-Newcomer Adaptation in the South Saskatchewan River Basin, 1700-1800," University of Regina, Institutional Adaptation to Climate Change (IACC) Project Working Paper no. 8, April 15, 2005, 5-6, 20-21.

37. This graph is derived from Fort Edmonton journals of daily occurrence. During this decade, journal writers conscientiously recorded the arrival of sleds carrying meat, according to the number of cows slaughtered. The journal writer also kept track of the output of the pemmican making, beginning in spring when dry and warm conditions allowed post personnel to dry, pound, and mix the powdered meat with berries and buffalo fat.

38. In comparison with Forts Pitt and Carlton, "we will cut a poor figure—our trade, if good, is hard earned and dearly bought" (April 21, 1863, B.60/a/33).

39. This was "surely a hard and uncertain state of affairs," Fort Edmonton's journal noted, July 17, 1866.

40. Christie is quoted in Dobak, "Killing the Canadian Buffalo," 48. Peter Campbell reported to his Toronto-based directors that "Game of all kinds is getting scarce now" in the annual report published in 1869-70, 45th Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, 1869-70, Acc. 75.387, Item 157, Box UC5, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

41. Maurice F. V. Doll, Robert S. Kidd, and John P. Day, *The Buffalo Lake Métis Site: A Late Nineteenth Century Settlement in the Parkland of Central Alberta*, Human History Occasional Paper no. 4 (Edmonton: Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism, 1988), 16. On the origins of North Saskatchewan Métis communities, having formed separately and before the Red River dispersion, see pp. 12-14.

42. As James Bird, at Edmonton House in 1815 reported: "At Paint River [Vermillion River] the buffalo are generally near from December till March and then no difficulty is found in procuring meat." Quoted in D. W. Moodie and Arthur J. Ray, "Buffalo Migration in the Canadian Plains," *Plains* 21, no. 71 (1976): 45-54.

43. Hugh Dempsey, *The Amazing Death of Calf Shirt and Other Blackfoot Stories: Three Hundred Years of Blackfoot History* (Calgary: Fifth House, 1994), 67-68.

44. Henry T. Epp, "Way of the Migrant Herds: Dual Dispersion Strategies among Bison," *Plains Anthropologist* 33, no. 121 (1988): 314-15, and David Meyer and Henry T. Epp, "North-South Interaction in the Late Prehistory of Central Saskatchewan," *Plains Anthropologist* 35, no. 132 (1990): 321-42. See also J. Rod Vickers and Trevor R. Peck's views on other factors than predictability of herds in "Islands in a Sea of Grass: The Significance of Wood in Winter Campsite Selection on the Northwestern Plains," in *Archaeology on the Edge: New Perspectives from the Northern Plains*, ed. Brian Kooyman and Jane H. Kelley, Canadian Archaeological Association Occasional Paper no. 4 (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004), 95-123.

45. Peter Erasmus, *Buffalo Days and Nights* (Calgary: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1976), 182.

46. *Ibid.*, 201.

47. The return of some of the Ojibwa from the multiethnic hunt to Cypress Hills in 1868 coincided with George McDougall's visit from Canada en route to Fort Edmonton. He passed through Fort Ellice with the Edmonton missionary Peter Campbell three days after the Ojibwa returned on August 3 with almost 4,000 pounds of pemmican and other provisions (HBCA, Fort Ellice Journal, August 6, 1868, B.63/a/10). I have analyzed the Ojibwa participation in this 1868 hunt in "Trading Places: Fort Ellice, the Ojibwa and the Multi-Ethnic Hunt to Cypress Hills, 1868," presented at the Annual

Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, June 2008, Vancouver.

48. Isaac Cowie, *The Company of Adventurers: A Narrative of Seven Years in the Service of the Hudson's Bay Company during 1807-1874* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1913), 302.

49. *Ibid.*, 303.

50. He believed that the Cree, in their trading relationship with the Hudson's Bay Company, had become "influential as peacemakers rather than warriors" (*ibid.*, 305).

51. *Ibid.*, 342. Cowie estimated 2,500 to 3,000 (p. 303); Willie Traill joined this camp by its conclusion, estimating its numbers now at "300 tents—more than 1000 souls." A letter he wrote remarked on the "mixture of Crees Seaulteaux [sic] & Stoney's [sic]. There are several different tribes of each so there was no small amount of jealousy amongst themselves as is always the case when many Indian tribes meet" (Traill Letter, Summer 1866?, Traill Family Papers, M1241, GA).

52. On Blackfoot assemblies on the march, see Eugene Y. Arima, *Blackfeet and Palefaces: The Pikani and Rocky Mountain House* (Ottawa: Golden Dog Press, 1995), 24-25.

53. Their distances were revealed as early as 1862, when one of the more influential western Cree leaders, Maskepetoon, that year accompanied Okimasis (soon known as Sweet Grass) and some fifty Cree escorts to lead peace talks among the Blackfoot via Hudson's Bay Company intermediaries. The peace they struck soon broke down, largely because of the already diverging interests of the more aggressive eastern Cree, who understood the disadvantage of peace in their preferential trading relationship with the Hudson's Bay Company and, more importantly, the emerging rivalry between them and the Piikani. See Milloy's description and analysis of the failure of this early peace initiative in his *Plains Cree*, 112. From 1862, indeed, these "lower country" Fort Pitt "horse thieves," as the Fort Edmonton journals described them, continually raised the stakes against the Blackfoot. The most prominent, such as Minahikosis (Little Pine), had more to gain by such conflict than their more westerly Cree brethren, the latter seeking peaceable entry into the southern plains for a buffalo hunt becoming more and more uncertain by the 1860s. For descriptions of the "Fort Pitt Cree" and contrasts with Maskepetoon's western bands, see Fort Edmonton Journal, October 3, 1863, B.60/a/33; "A party of Crees arrived in afternoon Maskipitoun, etc. etc. Horse thieves from below still handing about here" (October 5, 1863, *ibid.*). See arrival of Minahikosis and Cuminacoose and their attack against Sarcee at the fort (April 5, 1864, B.60/a/34) and the arrival of Fort Pitt Cree "lurking hereabouts thieving whatever they can" (September 19 1864, *ibid.*).

54. Codex Historicus, January 17, 1865, entry, Saint-Paul-des-Cris, 1866-1873, Acc. 71.220, Item 2238, Box 250, PAA o.m.i. I find three spellings for the spot: Matabes ku te weyak, Matapeskuteweyak or, Atapeskuteweyak.

55. Ibid. The opening entry for the Codex contains the rationale for the mission's location; Le Chevallier also provides an overview of the advantageous location situated "au sommet du triangle avec la mission de McDougall," and that of Steinhauer at Whitefish Lake, closing off passage to those who might otherwise go to these two sources of evil. See PAA o.m.i., unpublished manuscript of Jules Le Chevallier, "Pionniers de la Croix," vol. 1, 1864-1876, 71.220/6673.

56. Peter Erasmus protested the mission on the grounds that it was on the lands of his band's forefathers. When his letter was brought to the attention of the Cree chiefs, they broke into laughter and said that the land was on territory where all had hunted and lived (November 1872 report of Vital Grandin, Rapport sur les missions, 1868-1872, 84.400/973, Box 33, PAA o.m.i.). Writing from Fort Pitt in 1879, Father Lestanc said Saint-Paul-des-Cris was finally closed when peace was established between the Cree and Blackfoot after 1871. The peace allowed all hunters to winter along the Battle and Red Deer rivers. "Little by little, these animals [the bison] moved beyond the Saskatchewan [to the Battle River] and the Cree similarly moved and abandoned the mission." See note at end of Codex Historicus written by P. Lestanc, July 30, 1879.

57. Codex Historicus, October 12, 1870.

58. Ibid., September to October 1868.

59. Described by Milloy, *The Plains Cree*, 110.

60. Jean L'Heureux's description of a portion of the Nor'West and the Indians, November 1871, translation (GA, A L689). These berries were likely Saskatoon (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), currants, or wild cherry, or, more likely, choke-cherry (*Prunus virginiana*) and bush-cranberry (*Verburnum edule*, also known as Pembina berry). Thanks again to Hugh Dempsey for alerting me to this document.

61. McDougall, *In the Days of the Red River Rebellion*, 67.

62. The enlarged caravan moved to the south side of the Saskatchewan: "Le chemin du sud était plus exposé que l'autre aux rencontres d'Indiens maraudeurs. Etant en nombre et bien armés nous n'avions pas à craindre ces ennemis" (Doucet Diary, July 24, 1874, 9). They reached the butte by August 15, in time to have mass on its summit (ibid., August 15, 1874). On such hills' spiritual significance, see Hector's remarks on the Touchwood Hills in Irene M. Spry, ed., *The Papers of the Palliser Expedition: 1857-1860* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1968), 178, and Martin and Suter, "War Zones and Game Sinks," 38-39, 42-44.

63. Fort Edmonton Journal, September 8, 1866, B.60/a/35.

64. "Il est facile de juger la grandeur de ce tabernacle en songeant que, tandis que les Indiens ne se servaient que de quatorze peaux tannées pour la construction des tentes les plus spacieuses, pour celle-ci le P. Lacombe en employa cinquante" (Chevallier manuscript, "Pionniers de la croix," 77).

65. Codex Historicus, Saint-Paul-des-Cris, 1866-1873, Acc. 71.220, Item 2238, Box 250. Father Doucet recorded for the 1868-69 season: "Le P. Lacombe au camp des Cris avec Alexis Cardinal. Il se fait faire une grande loge carrée avec des peaux" (Doucet Journal, 1869, 4). Le Chevallier dates the tent's inauguration to November 1867 when Lacombe "devait inaugurer sa tente-chapelle" (Le Chevallier, Pionniers de la Croix, 77).

66. HBCA, March 6 and March 30, 1869, Fort Edmonton Journal, B.60/a/37.

67. Thanks to Jean Friesen for suggesting this optic and references to the spring Sun Dance in Jacqueline Kennedy, "Qu'Appelle Industrial School: White 'Rites' for the Indians of the Old North-West" (MA thesis, Institute of Canadian Studies, Carlton University, 1970), 185-86, 188-91. On attitudes toward the Sun Dance, see Katherine Pettipas, *Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 1994), 97-101. John McDougall was conscious of the connections Native hunters made with shamanism and hunting success. See his *Forest, Lake, and Prairie* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1895), 190-200.

68. Fort Edmonton Post Journal, May 10, 1869, B.60/a/37, HBCA. John McDougall recorded the Cree name for Campbell in his published description of the hunt (*In the Days of the Red River Rebellion*, 64).

69. John McDougall and Henry Steinhauer, in their descriptions of the 1869 hunt, provide some of the information for this reconstruction. I am also relying on trails indicated in the sectional map trail study compiled at the Glenbow Museum map room and Department of Interior Maps, Ottawa, which indicated common trails. See "Map of Part of the North West Territory," 1878; "Alberta, Assiniboia, Athabasca, and Saskatchewan," 1898; and "General Map of Part of the North-West Territories including the Province of Manitoba," 1883.

70. Hugh Dempsey, ed., with Gerald Hutchinson, introduction and notes, *The Rundle Journals* (Edmonton: Historical Society of Alberta, 1977), xxxvii.

71. Many of the hunt participants continued to have close associations with the mission afterward. Pakan and Samson later traveled with John McDougall to Toronto in 1886 to speak, through

John's interpretation, to eastern and Methodist audiences about their loyalty during the Riel Rebellion. See the report in the *Manitoba Free Press*, August 5, 1886.

72. This was the expedition that brought back to the missions the sacred iron meteorite. See J. McDougall, *George Millard McDougall*, 141-42, and Allen Ronaghan, "The Iron Creek Meteorite," *Alberta Historical Review* 21, no. 3 (Summer 1973): 10-12.

73. See Steinhauer's notice, appearing in May of the year of the bison hunt, in the *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, and description of his conversion and education by A. A. Den Otter, "The Education of Henry Bird Steinhauer, Indigenous Missionary in Western Canada," *Historical Papers: Canadian Society of Church History* (2003): 109-28.

74. Cardinal left two days after the missionaries left Fort Edmonton, and a little over a week after Campbell returned to the post on July 8, with six carts, four left out on the plains (July 8, 1869, B.60/a/37).

75. As recorded in *Codex Historicus*, May 9, 1869.

76. J. McDougall, *In the Days of the Red River Rebellion*, 70-71.

77. In the fall hunt following the first, George reported on August 20: "Sabbath—our services are still well attended, and the holy day sacredly kept. This is our sowing time. We shall reap if we faint not. On the plains there is much to divide the attention" (George McDougall's letters reprinted in J. McDougall, *George Millard McDougall*, 141) and "These are the additional toils of the hunter. The missionary has additional ones. Night and morning he collects the people for prayer" (*ibid.*, 145).

78. H. B. Steinhauer, "Beginnings at Whitefish Lake," *Missionary Outlook*, vol. 1, no. 7, July 1881, 74.

79. See Taylor's description of "our Missionary Rev. Steinhauer and teacher who was the celebrated Erasmus, absent with their flocks on 'the Plains' hunting the buffalo for their supply of summer food . . . the Minister preaching and holding prayer meetings" (Victoria Archives, United Church of Canada, Toronto, 86.189C, Box 2, Lachlin Taylor Journals, Journal no. 9, 1873). John McDougall said of the 1869 hunt: "Meetings were held morning and evening and all day Sunday" (*In the Days of the Red River Rebellion*, 79).

80. Steinhauer, "Saskatchewan District—Letter from Rev. H. Steinhauer," 166.

81. *Ibid.*

82. The Mountain Stoney, according to John McDougall, "were ready to fight at a moment's notice." The Plains Cree accused the Stoney of horse stealing. "We as missionaries had our hands full to keep the peace" (J. McDougall, *In the Days of the Red River Rebellion*, 72).

83. See J. E. Foster, "The Métis and the End of the Plains Buffalo in Alberta," in *Buffalo*, ed. J. E. Foster, 67-68 (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1992); Martha Harroun Foster also describes an 1868 Turtle Mountain Métis hunt in the Milk River area of present-day Southern Alberta and Northern Montana, numbering some 400 carts, and the importance of religion in "Just Following the Buffalo," 189-90. "For some of these people this was a first venture out on the treeless plains, and they were manifesting unmistakable signs of discontent" (Foster, 67-68). Steinhauer pointed out that his wife, an Ojibwa, had never been on the plains before this excursion.

84. As, for example, the case of Father Scollen in 1872 moving out onto the Plains and joining "about twenty" tents of Cree, "most of them were Christians or catechumens." After traveling eleven days, "we came to the open Plains; here we met another camp of 20 tents and we numbered altogether 70 tents of which about 30 were occupied by Catholic families; the rest were Protestants and infidels." Having joined a group hunt, they stayed about one month in the camp, where Scollen gave first communion and confirmed about twenty Cree (Scollen letter from Lake Ste. Anne, December 16, 1872, Correspondance Constantin Scollen, Trans. Provenant des archives générales à Rome, 71.220/7333, Box 86, PAA o.m.i.).

85. Steinhauer reported that on Sunday, June 12, "A day imperatively commanded by the lord of the universe to 'remember to keep it holy.' How annoying it was to those trying to keep the command when they saw our Roman Catholic neighbours running and killing buffalo while we were holding our morning prayer-meeting! . . . We, however, carried on our services in the open sanctuary" (Steinhauer, "White Fish Lake," 167).

86. Scollen Letter, December 16, 1872.

87. *Missions de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Imaculée*, 9:240-42. Compare this account with John McDougall's public criticism of Scollen and Dupin, *In the Days of the Red River Rebellion*, 73. Steinhauer said the Catholic Cree were astonished by the Methodist teaching methods; later, joining the Catholics for a "feast," the Whitefish Cree "saw the distinction, with the different way he (the priest) taught his pupils" (Steinhauer, "White Fish Lake," 167).

88. Steinhauer to London Methodists, from Whitefish Lake, May 6, 1861, Box 42, File 308, 8.128C, Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, All Districts, Box 45, File 337.

89. There were thirty-nine children aged between a few months to fourteen years old, six between fifteen and twenty years old, and thirty-three above that age.

90. Bishop Vital Grandin advised his priests to make sure to use holy water for such ceremony, because their Native clientele appreciated it as something more special than the ordinary water used by the Methodists from lakes and rivers (Letter, June 1868, Vital Grandin Correspondence, 1861-1870, 84.400/912, PAA o.m.i.). On Great Lakes baptism and godparenting practices, see Susan Sleeper-Smith, "Women, Kin and Catholicism: New Perspectives on the Fur Trade," *Ethnohistory* 47, no. 2 (Spring 2000): 423-52. A good example of the politics of baptism is the intriguing case of Maskepetoon bringing four Cree, two Blackfoot, and two Sarcee chiefs to a meeting in 1859 on the occasion of his mother's baptism (Thomas Wolley's diary, March 27, 1859; Dempsey, *Heaven is Near the Rocky Mountains*, 69). Another feature of the male baptisms, meanwhile, is that they followed or required the permission of their spouses. See case of Little Fish, at Lac Ste. Anne, in Dempsey, *Rundle Journals*, July 3-5, 1847, 273, and the case of Pakan himself, who waited for the 1884 Love Feast and his wife's conversion before officially committing himself (Steinhauer, "Saskatchewan District," *The Missionary Outlook* 4, no. 3 [1884]: 47).

91. See description of Cardinal in Doucet Journal, 1871, 25.

92. Doucet Journal, in its 1872 descriptions, p. 36. The Codex Historicus, Saint-Paul-des-Cris, records that in May 1867, some Whitefish Lake Indians had come to fight Alexis, who was alone. After having been chased from the house, one of the assailants came back with a stick and struck Alexis on the head, knocking him unconscious for two days.

93. J. McDougall, *In the Days of the Red River Rebellion*, 49.

94. Farr, "When we were first paid," 136-37.

95. Dempsey, *Rundle Journals*, liii.

96. See Peers, *Ojibwa of Western Canada*, 183-84.

97. "The Cree convert Maskepetoon held aloof from all Missionaries," including Rundle, according to Paul Kane, quoted in Dempsey, *Rundle Journals*, lviii. For Kane's full comments, see *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1859), 393-95.

98. Milloy, *Plains Cree*, 76. Palliser noted that Maskepetoon had been one of the few Cree in a party that had escaped massacre by the Blackfoot in spring of 1857 (Spry, *Papers of the Palliser Expedition*, 138, 142-43).

99. See Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada*, 187. Milloy writes that "the growing scarcity of buffalo created a new interest in woodland hunting magic" and such examples as the two Cree bands who "tried to buy a buffalo-calling dance from 'outside men' (Milloy, "Our Country": The Significance of the Buffalo Resource for a Plains Cree Sense of

Territory," in *Aboriginal Resource Use in Canada: Historical and Legal Aspects*, eds. Kerry Abel and Jen Friesen (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1991), 65.

100. Woolsey wrote about the young Stoney who, after a trance for six days, "stated that he had received revelations from the master of Life which he was to make known to his fellowmen!" Dempsey, ed., *Heaven is Near the Rocky Mountains*, 24. On the Shaman's adoption of Christianity, and his falling under the influence of a self-proclaimed "Jesus," who was dressed "grandly" and professed to speak any language, and writing indecipherable scripture on bark (ibid., 40, 49). See also the Doucet's encounter with the Montagnais (Chipewyan) "Son of God" who for a period of time posed as a "grand Prêtre" with a following who briefly followed him in the "new religion" (Doucet Journal, 1872 entries, 41).

101. John McDougall, *Pathfinding on Plain and Prairie: Stirring Scenes of Life in the Canadian North-West*, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898), 74. On "calling" the buffalo, see George W. Arthur, "An Introduction to the Ecology of Early Historic Communal Bison Hunting," National Museum of Man Mercury Series Paper no. 37 (Ottawa: Archaeological Survey of Canada, 1975), 95-96.

102. The Fort Edmonton journal reported the pounding happening to the south on February 10, 1855: "The hunters are not better lucked. They cannot get the buffalo into the pound so that they will be obliged to shoot them where they can—the Freeman are now along with the hunters, it is better it should be so than if they were scattered over a large extent of country, driving off everything in shape of an animal" (B.60/1/29a).

103. "A message arrived from the tents of Maskepetoon, he reports that there are many Buffalo. He is come principally to state that Indians are desirous that some person shall go and trade with them" (February 21, 1855, B.60/a/29a).

104. November 24, 1855, B.60/a/29a

105. Palliser added, "He never was an imposing or a fine-looking Indian, but now he looked more like a monkey than ever" (Spry, *Palliser Papers*, September 20, 1857, 143-44). On the extraordinary pressure on even a larger party attempting to penetrate farther into Blackfoot territory beyond the South Saskatchewan, see pp. 150-51.

106. On the shamanistic rituals around visions and vision prerogatives, see Mandelbaum, *The Plains Cree*, 178.

107. John McDougall, *Saddle, Sled, and Snowshoe* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1896), 237.

108. Dempsey, *The Amazing Death of Calf Shirt*, 69.

109. Ibid., 70.

110. Campbell returned to Fort Edmonton on June 29; Andrie Cardinal on July 7 (HBCA B.60/a/37).

111. James E. Sherow, "Workings of the Geo-dialectic: High Plains Indians and Their Horses in the Region of the Arkansas River, 1800-1870," *Environmental History Review* 16 (Summer 1992): 81.

112. Pekka Hämäläinen, "The Rise and Fall of Plains Indian Horse Cultures," *Journal of American History*, December 2003, particularly p. 834. Flores rules out the Plains Indians' success in working out "a dynamic, ecological equilibrium with the bison herds" because "the relationship was never allowed to play itself out" ("Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy," 484; Dobak, "Killing the Canadian

Buffalo," 52). In many respects, a greater appreciation for conservation was encouraged by individuals beyond eastern conservationists and western ranchers, as suggested in David Nesheim, "How William F. Cody Helped Save the Buffalo Without Really Trying," *Great Plains Quarterly* 27 (Summer 2007): 163-75, and Ken Zontek, "Hunt, Capture, Raise, Increase: The People Who Saved the Bison," *Great Plains Quarterly* 15 (Spring 1995), 133-49.

113. Doll, Kidd, and Day, *The Buffalo Lake Métis Site*, 16-17.

114. *Winnipeg Free Press*, November 11, 1916.